Pink Papers, Green Rooms and Black Boxes:
Decision-making within the World Trade and
the World Meteorological Organizations

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Workshop on "Decision-making within International Organizations"
"Behind the selection of 'facts' from empirical materials, there is always a theory, whether explicit or not. And theory, whether consciously or not, is not produced from abstractions, by a kind of hydroponics in which theories, like plants, grow without soil, with their roots in water with a few minerals added. Like plants in nature, theories and explanations grow out of the dirt of observations of reality. The observation may not be 'scientific' in the sense that an experiment in chemistry can be objective. But they are not invented either. Getting your hands dirty with the nitty-gritty details of a technology, or with the decision-making process of corporate strategies, or of ministerial policy-making, is a good way to test the abstractions of theory, and perhaps to develop alternative theory, or modifications of theories. Moreover, if you can illustrate a theory or a hypothesis with reference to a concrete situation, it often serves to explain more clearly the thrust of the ideas." (Strange, 1996: xvi).

At an early stage of a new research project, this contribution to the workshop on "Decision-making in IGOs" is no more than a working paper. It is nevertheless theoretically oriented. Because paradigms should be grounded on facts, and mental explanations on real history, I fully subscribe to Susan Strange's definition of theory. Hence, I "got my hands dirty with the nitty-gritty details of a technology"—the very technical matters addressed by the World Meteorological Organization—and "with the decision-making process of corporate strategies"—at work in the World Trade Organization. To be frank, an easy access to both institutions whose seats are in Geneva was the prime mover of my selection of "facts". However, there were many institutions within driving distance from home: deciding to study WMO and WTO was more than a question of convenience.

Actually, they are rich empirical fields to deal with political competence—the main topic of my current research. More vulnerable than many others they nonetheless survived severe crises. Teams of professional experts made this unlikely outcome true, with great talent: political vision, solid skills in consensus-making and confidence-building, and a good knowledge of their own technical fields. The apparent opacity of the decision-making process makes these two institutions even more attractive for a political scientist. They are also good examples of "constructivism" or "interactionism" in action. Whatever the role played by technical needs, neither WMO nor WTO would have been created without a strong political will. Neither would long survive a phase where their "members" would go passive. In spite of international status and legal privileges they would eventually disappear.

Both WTO and WMO are caught in the streams of protest against globalization, and both are trying to accommodate contradictory views about threats to a peaceful life. The first, because of its involvement in the deregulation process of trades in services as well as its agenda on investment and intellectual property; the second, because it cannot adopt a benign neglect towards the depletion of the ozone layer and human activities-related climate changes. Viewed from within, they can be proud of their attempts if not their achievements to handle globalization. Viewed from NGO's, they do not prevent from being "predatory" (Falk, 1999). It is not difficult to understand why such a misunderstanding took shape: it lies in a decision-making process that fits experts' needs rather than peoples' demands. In Rawls' words, "well-ordered" IGOs must be isolated from outside influence, whereas "popular" critics demand transparency.

Confidentiality is not the sole obstacle to democracy. WMO and WTO are excellent illustrations of IGOs where decisions by majority rule are very unlikely. How could it be possible for China (with a population of 1.2 billions) to increase its contribution to WMO if Nioue (a remote Island inhabited by 1700 persons) cast the 93th vote required for such a move? How could the US (contributing 12 million USD to the WTO budget) really agree on the "one person, one vote" rule inscribed in the WTO's constitution—in contrast to other international economic organizations where votes are weighed—when the Solomon Islands pay only 12 thousand dollars a year? Of course, the amount is commensurate to their share of trade between Members, but this is little comfort to the biggest contributors.
These non fictitious examples explain why "nobody wants to go the UN way" in such organizations. They must reach major decisions by consensus, even though voting procedures are detailed in their constitutions. The problem I shall address here may henceforth be formulated as follows: how is this celebrated "consensus" achieved among experts and how is it actually ratified by policy-makers?

To answer this question, I shall start from a brief review of the relevant bulk of theory applied to WTO and WMO (1) before presenting some preliminary outcomes of my comparative survey (2). Then, I shall go into more details about the decision-making process itself (3). Eventually, I shall raise some further questions for future research (4).

1) Reviewing theory in WMO and WTO's context

What "decision-making" means in IGOs is ambiguous because none of them reach compelling policy measures. None of these decisions are imposed on their members by a supranational structure—they are made on a mutually advantageous and reciprocal basis. In Keohane and Nye's words, following a large scholarly consensus, IGOs are "facilitators" more than "lawmakers"; they rely on self-enforcement by their own members rather than on a police force; this, in turn, implies for each an investment in a long term reputation rather than the display of actual power (1989; 256, 276). Hence, it is not so easy to make a clear-cut distinction between rules of behaviour, constitutional and organizational measures, or verbal commitments.

a) Organizations or forums?

Moreover, most of the decisions made by IGOs do not concern citizens of states which do not belong to them. Their main achievement is to preserve, if not increase the capability of the organization as a whole to resume operations after frequent periods of crisis. Their main purpose is to maintain equal opportunity for each member to benefit from coordination channels and coalition-building measures. An IGO is a forum for discussion in which virtual decisions are as important as real ones. What I mean by "virtual" is either decision to postpone decision (a slightly different version of the famous "non-decision" model in local politics); or decision to stick to former albeit contested decision. Responding without delay to a current predicament is often less urgent than "to identify deviations from previous agreements and to engage in planning so that governments will be better prepared to cope with future emergency" (Keohane & Nye 1989: 274):

"In today's world, universal international organizations are more valuable as sounding boards than as decision-making bodies (which) may tell (any state) something about the intensity of, and shifts in, other's views. These forums do influence the agenda of world politics. They may legitimate important decisions reached elsewhere." (1989: 273, emphasis mine).

b) Functional versus universal IGOs
Do specific IGOs have more leverage on limited issues than, say, the UN have on universal problems? Well, it depends on how specific they are. Reciprocity is more self-sustaining when what is at stake is sharing radio frequencies or waiving custom fees. Unlike governments, IGOs are expected to address individual issues for which "knowledge may be better that it was in the past", because "interactions between them is particularly difficult to grasp and deal with effectively in the policymaking process" (Haas, 1992: 13, emphasis mine). However, (i) most of the problems dealt with in the WTO and the WMO are not cut off from global issues debated in UN-type forums; (ii) the two realms are intertwined: trade in goods and trade in services, as well as intellectual property issues or international environment are the very domains where "the complex interplay of components of the ecosystem" made (governments) "unable to anticipate long-term consequences of measures designed to address one of the many environmental issues under current consideration" (idem); (iii) the WTO and the WMO's respective domains are also linked to each other (like trade and the environment). These conditions are more favourable to experts than single-issue IGOs (like the HCR), even when experts become involved in high politics. In complex situations, being able to identify a chain of causes and effects "can in fact lead to the redefinition of preconceived interests or to the identification of new interests" (Haas, 1992: 15). Other skills are also required to make political decisions out of scientific knowledge, like the art of coalition-building in international negotiations which belongs to the cognitive capital of diplomats.

A more comprehensive assessment of functional IGOs' calls for a shift from public policy categories to political theory models. Take the line drawn between "committees" and "assemblies" (Majone, 1997), the former being composed of experts dedicated to consensus inside their own "epistemic community" while playing a non zero-sum game; the latter accommodating mutually exclusive claims voiced by Members of Parliament about a better share of the pie. Let us assume that some "functional" IGOs are making decisions the way committees do, while others, being more "universal" are altogether more parliamentary. This assessment sounds reasonable when comparing Geneva, where WTO and WMO experts are working quietly behind the doors, and New York where the General Assembly of the United Nations is the seat of unending political dispute. However, it loosely fits Marie-Claude Smouts' standards. According to her (1995: 30-35) decision-making in IGOs fulfills four distinctive functions: (i) defining property (or sovereignty) rights in matters involving several countries; (ii) solving coordination problems in the specific realm of global commons; (iii) reconstructing economic and political systems; (iv) protecting states against the risks of turbulence in the international environment. Only two of these objectives are openly pursued by WTO and WMO (the second and the third); while the second and the fourth are regulatory, the two others are more or less redistributive (hence, conducive to open confrontation rather than discreet mediation).

The problem is even more complex if we look carefully at the only 'regulatory' goal simultaneously claimed by the two organizations. Following Smouts' distinctions, protecting the atmosphere or freeing Trade are "substantive" issues, not merely "procedural" ones (ibid.: 35-36). In these two directions, progress was made in spite of endless discussions and loud dissent about the best decision-making process: climate-related issues and commercial practices are now under close scrutiny although individual incentives to adopt the most acceptable behaviour in these two fields are very few, and free-riders strategies apparently rewarding. Contrary to the false unanimity achieved by universal IGOs (such as the UN) at the expense of effective decisions, however, the WTO and the WMO are witnessing sharp and publicized conflicts opposing states to other states, and governments to social movements. It is certainly true that procedural decisions are numerous; it is even more obvious that informal working parties are prevailing on plenaries, but they help to reach uneasy decisions on substantive matters.
Of course, the explanation by the so-called "consensus spirit" is flawed: Smouts agrees with most scholars and attributes this achievement to a "hegemonic coalition": she explicitly gives the GATT as an example of governance through hegemony—the domination of the states which created it and to which the organization owes its funds, its impetus and its visibility (ibid.: 37). Knowing that coalitions in WTO sometimes fall apart as soon as states representatives cross the threshold of the William Rappard Center in Geneva, the "hegemonic" argument may look even stronger. However relevant, it should not conceal the fact that important decisions applying to public goods and having a heavy impact on stately finance and legislative activity are made every year, if not every month, with very little bureaucratic mobilization.

This is not congruent with growing criticism of every world institution or forum allegedly conveying globalization at the expense of human beings because it does not accommodate protesters and does not rely on their consent. Criticizing the WTO and the iWMO for their lack of democracy is certainly grounded, but it is unfair: instead of chaining themselves to the WTO gates, protesters coming from industrialized countries should direct their criticism to their own governments and parliaments. It is also true in developing countries. However, within institutions such as the WTO and the WMO, LDC's leaders have more serious incentives to adopt an instrumental strategy rather than an expressive one. When they are not compelled by excessive mediatization to justify their absence from a major meeting, free-riding and entrusting allies are rational strategies. Of course, when a congress is held at the ministerial level (as the WTO conference in Singapore in 1996), the PR who does not participate in last-minute debates has no choice but to express his or her frustration live on the air: what is convenient to junior diplomats might be insulting to senior leaders. Even the more academic WMO is required to become "as transparent and communicative as possible" and to ensure effective participation of developing countries in the planning and decision process. This being said, both organizations are important forums for "small" or "remote" states which have enough incentive to invest in them.

Members at the periphery of the so-called balance of power system have earned the legitimate reputation to make discussions more dynamic. Norway, Belgium, Switzerland; Egypt, Nigeria, India, Pakistan; Brazil, New Zealand and Australia are often singled out for the pugnacity and efficiency of their ambassadors. To knowledgable meteorologists heading efficient National Meteorological Services, or NMSs (even in the most modest countries), and excellent lawyers pushing their argument as far as possible in trade negotiations, the WMO or the WTO offer an unexpected audience and an outstanding influence. In their meetings, diplomats or bureaucrats coming from peripheral states or emerging economies have a leverage out of proportion with the real weight of their flag in the global decision-making process. Part of this comparative advantage can be explained by IGOs' functions as providers of information and producers of alternatives. According to a recent "institutionalist" book this is how a set of preferences becomes public, if not fully publicized:

"Institutions play a role because states are bedevilled by the problem of uncertainty. Uncertainty means not having information on other states intentions and likely choices (...) Governments find it worthwhile to invest in information that will enable them to design strategies that are appropriate to their environments. One way of investing in information is to create institutions that provide it. Institutions can serve as the informational and signalling mechanisms that enable states to get more information about the interests, preferences [sic], and intentions of other states. Furthermore, successful institutions develop norms and rules that regularize the behaviour of states belonging to them, making it more predictable (...) It is not only the information one receives, but the information one is able to provide to others that contributes to more efficient strategies. States that can increase the credibility of their own threats and promises by conveying information about their true intentions have a
bargaining advantage over those who cannot credibly do so (...) Costly actions are more credible signals of intention than costless ones.”
(Haftendorn, Keohane, Wallander, 1999: 3-4)

Selecting the World Trade Organization and the World Meteorological Organization for this study was therefore a good means to test some theoretical statements about decision-making within multilateral organizations. This is also due to some structural or intellectual particularities that single them out.

2) WTO and WMO have in common to deliver global commons

(a) Building Structures: a Path Dependence Analysis

Although most of their Members are Governments, the WMO and the WTO are the heirs of peculiar institutions: the WMO was the successor agency to the non-governmental IMO, while the WTO took the place of the non-organizational GATT. Although most of the present IGOs were born in the aftermath of the war, the WMO’s legal existence dates to 1950—its operations starting in 1951 when the International Meteorological Organization transferred its responsibilities to the new body. The WTO itself came into existence in 1995. Actually, the first was recognized as a UN specialized agency after its birth, and the second was imagined in 1947 to become eventually active only half a century later. In the meantime, both organizations were supported by a cosmopolitan community of experts. The WMO is the most striking example of an expert-driven organization. Although national experts belonged to different countries sometimes at war with each other, they displayed the same dedication to international Meteorology. This was already true when Nazi Germany ruled Europe—German and Scandinavian experts joining their efforts to protect the network of national observatories. It remained the rule during the Cold War—when meteorological information collected by military satellites were systematically exchanged between the US and the USSR. Even during NATO's bombing of Kossovo and Serbia, the US, the EU and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia pursued their daily exchange of datas. At a lesser level of schizophrenia, the WTO is currently a forum where major issues raised by the candidacy of China are unexpectedly addressed by commercial experts from... Hong Kong. According to many people in the Secretariat and some Representatives, delegates from the former British colony are the most determined to push their Chinese fellow citizens into a corner.

This particular history has visible consequences on the two organizations' machineries: designed by experts for their own needs, they are dramatically different from other IGOs’ structures. The WMO devolves operational capabilities and funding responsibilities to its Members: first, states are represented by the Directors of their National Meteorological Services who do not live in Geneva but in their own nation's capital (this being conducive to delicate relationships with their fellow citizens and official Permanent Representatives—PRs—in Geneva). There are transitional periods when some PRs are not heading a NMS (eg, once they are elected to a WMO chairmanship), but it is essential to be an honorarium NMS director. Second, the current activities of the WMO (and most of its meetings) are conducted and financed by each Member, either on a national or a regional basis: collecting, processing and sharing data is a national affair. Moreover, six Regional Associations and eight Technical Commissions are quite autonomous from the Secretariat. They elect their own Presidents or vice-Presidents, and constitute their own Working Groups.
In the WTO, most of the meetings are kept informal, albeit formally announced and followed-up: PRs entering the William Rappard Center in Geneva must find out the room in which they want to sit among several possibilities, and select a "Working Party", a "Committee", a "Seminar", etc. Some of these meetings require a certain amount of legal or economic knowledge—an easy explanation for the growing proportion of jurists and economists in the organization. Moreover, a great majority of the questions debated by Working Parties are technical. To back Delegates in specific realms, experts chosen for their professional capability often achieve an easy consensus on most problems, because the justification given to their respective positions appeals to the logical understanding of their fellow partners. Then, policy makers enter the discussions and "politicize" some of the issues addressed so well that they remain unsolved at this stage. "Hot potatoes" circulate from meeting to meeting until plenary sessions tackle them\(^\text{10}\). In both organizations, "experts tend to forget their national origins" (WTO's commonsensical analyses, explaining why three-quarters of the problems are solved by experts without any political intervention). At the very least, they are supposed or even required to do so (WTO's constitution, applying to PRs freshly elected to the Executive Council).

(b) Building legitimacy: the management of global commons

This delicate mix of rationally solvable matters and sensitive political problems mitigate political confrontation. Some issues addressed by other IGOs—like AIDS or child work—are bones of contention between North and South. When raised inside the WMO and the WTO these same issues are the battlefields of North-North and South-South strategists. "Regional" groupings must deal with them first, be they formed from the top (as in the WMO, with its six constitutional associations) or from the bottom (in WTO, with its numerous informal-formal factions). Disagreement has to be overcome at this basic level, before the whole organization tries to settle the hottest issues.

Because they claim a specific legitimacy to deal with such encompassing problems, they both present an elaborate set of goals allegedly benefitting humanity as a whole—what some authors would call "global commons" or "public goods" at the world level (Nordhaus, 1996). Resources which do not belong to any individual agent, community or generation must be open to all. Freedom to benefit as fairly as possible from a sustainable environment—made of weather and climate, on the one hand; freedom to trade and an equal right to share a higher growth, on the other hand.

A third potential "public good" is worth mentioning: participating in a win-win game played by Members of both organizations. Actually, neither the number of "consumers" nor the quantities "bought" have any impact on the global "consumption" of this "good". This is why, according to Aggarwal & Dupont (1999: 397), a specific multilateral organization cannot be spontaneously produced. It must be the voluntary outcome of some great powers' investment which can afford to take risks in spite of an imperfect knowledge on profits. Because the problem with public goods is free-riding—no rational Member will pay the costs of managing global commons if imbalance of commitment is likely—even an agreement between the US and the former Soviet Union would not have sufficed to build a new Trade Organization. Only a "chicken game" could produce such an achievement. The same with climate: rich countries are reluctant to reduce their gas emissions at the expense of their own industrial output when economic growth in poor states increasingly contributes to environmental change. The challenge for the WMO and the
WTO is to keep convincing each party that competitors can benefit from cooperation, that a resource belonging to all—the very original meaning of "commons", before the enclosures episode in England—has to be maintained by some. In a way, they "expropriate" countries from the free use of these commons each time they phase out sovereign policy measures authorizing pollution or trade barriers.

The main objective of both organizations is not only to assuage economic competition: as already mentioned, meteorologists managed to keep active and maintain the tools of weather forecast and climate watch intact in time of war, while free-traders are persuaded to prevent a new war because protectionism is conducive to conflict (e.g. the impact of trade restrictions on diplomacy in the thirties). The WMO and the WTO offer solutions to a puzzling problem in political theory—the exclusion/inclusion dilemma: how to protect the planet against some of its inhabitants while opening it to all? For those of us who keep Kant dream of a "perpetual peace" in mind, the obligations imposed by the WMO and the WTO are the very means by which 'nature' achieves its major end—conquering the Earth, opening it to human endeavours and making it possible for each person to enjoy a 'right of visit' to any land (if not a right of residence, cautiously turned down by Kant). According to the German philosopher, local wars were the necessary tool to achieve global peace; following WMO and WTO literature, this utopian objective can be pursued and achieved without any localized conflict or limited war—a salient improvement on Kant's theory. For example, the WTO Website places "peacekeeping" ahead of the ten "benefits" expected from its trading system—the last is "to encourage good government". This dedication to peace is due to a "constructive" although "sometimes acrimonious" way to handle disputes, and a "rule-based system which makes no room for (political) power" while "giving more bargaining power to smaller countries".

However, such claims are full of ambiguities. Both organizations are simultaneously committed to trade and peace, they service corporations and governments. While this singles them out from other functional IGOs like the FAO or the ILO, it may be contradictory. This, in turn, eventually jeopardizes their structure. In Meteorology, a heated debate led in 1995 to "Resolution 40"11, "a milestone in the history of the WMO, and crucial for its further development"12. At the time, the organization was confronted by a deep opposition between Members about the nature and scope of commercialization. A US-led group claimed a right for any National Meteorological Service to a free delivery of all datas collected through the NMSs world network to any national corporation. A EU-led coalition opposed this claim, on the grounds (i) that corporations operating abroad and intending to sell this information on a foreign national market would be in competition with the very NMS that produced the datas; (ii) that nearly 40% of national meteorological information was already paid for, either by airlines and airports (about a half of the commercial income of big NMSs), or by the medias and other private corporations. Furthermore, the American basic argument was disputable: the taxpayers certainly "buy" meteorological datas when providing for the budget of their own public NMS; however, they do not buy datas freely sent by foreign meteorological services. Addressing this very controversial issue in an appropriate way was a question of life and death for the organization, since the whole system depended on (i) free access for all NMS to meteorological datas and (ii) fair budgeting of the activities coordinated by the WMO via each national meteorological service. The solution found was cunning: "basic" datas (meaning: "essential datas and products which are necessary for the provision of services in support of the protection of life and property and the well-being of nations") were declared "free and unrestricted" (meaning "non-discriminatory and without charge—at no more than the cost of reproduction and delivery"); but "conditions" may be placed by the NMSs "on their re-export for commercial purposes" of "additional" datas and products (...) which are required to sustain WMO Programmes (...) for reasons such as national laws or costs of
production”. At the May 2000 EC meeting, the Chair “reminded the participants that WMO is built on the concept of cooperation among nations and a commitment to mutual assistance in the interests of the entire global community.”

The WTO is threatened by many more contradictions (among which the difficult combination of efficiency and transparency in its procedures, to which I shall return soon). As far as substantial issues are concerned, the question of “safeguards” seems to be in the WTO the best approximation of the WMO's dilemma. Designed to help Members enhance their “offers” to phase out tariffs and other public obstacles to commerce without unnecessary injury on their national economies and private industries, safeguards provide for the waiving of some commitments for a limited period of time—in particular, during transitory phases. Although they are too many to be counted, WTO Members considered them as “exceptions to the rules”, and allow Members not to implement an agreement provided these claims are “WTO consistent”. Here again, an astute albeit disputed measure eventually proved vital to the organization: Members have a room of manoeuvre to convince their private sector and public opinion of the benefits expected in the long run from their Membership in the WTO. They might even pretend to be compelled in the short run to adopt an unwelcome policy as wished so: compliance to the resolutions of the organization is a good excuse to decide against the mainstream of national convictions.

c) Distributing knowledge and justice

The two organizations share the same goals—to provide recommendation and guidance. They give technical or scientific advice to Governments, and fight hard to maintain their "authoritative" status against a trend towards politicization. Simultaneously, they are ruled by principles of distributive justice: concerns are repeatedly expressed for fairness—"capacity-building in the developing countries" (WMO), or "technical assistance to LDC" (WTO). These concerns are on an equal footing with equality—meaning "policy-neutrality" (WMO) or the "Most-favoured Nation principle", MFN (WTO).

Independence—or "autonomy" (Reinalda & Verbeek: 1998)—is at stake in both organizations. While the WMO can rely on the scientific nature of its activities to limit governmental or multilateral interference (on which it nevertheless relies for weather observation and data), the WTO must contradict its founding motto to accommodate anti-globalization movements (supposed to be a "member-driven organization" servicing governments, it must now pretend to pursue more "popular" goals). Take the Climate Change issue: while "strongly" supporting the idea of a "Third World Climate Conference" sponsored by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the WMO Executive Council Advisory Group on this issue "recognized the considerable constraints that the UNCED review would place on the convening of a fully independent event". Consequently, it recommended to keep it at the expert level, "leaving open the option of attracting ministerial representation". This did not prevent the WMO to "feel the need for enhanced promotion of the status and visibility of NMSs, particularly through a better appreciation of their roles by governments.

Justice as fairness is also pursued. Reviewing major issues facing the WMO, the Executive Council noted "the widening gap between the level of NMHSs services provided in the developed countries on the one hand, and the developing countries and those with economies in transition", on the other hand, whether this gap is due to lack of investment or lack of maintenance; it "recognized the importance of participation in the relevant constituent body sessions from [the latter]." If Regional
associations suggest to set up new Committees, and when too many demands are conveyed to the Secretariat at the same time, the Secretary General may turn down applications from some regions to avoid any imbalance between the funds accruing to each.

Such concerns are not new in the WTO. Equality of treatment is guaranteed by the MFN clause. Fairness is a major achievement of a kind of affirmative action programme. LDCs have privileges: they can obtain more safeguards for a longer period of time; they are entitled to special funds to assist their bureaucrats in dealing with existing Trade Agreements or in negotiating new ones. These privileges are legitimized by a sort of "politics of recognition" (in Charles Taylor's words): because they were exploited by colonizing powers which mistook plunder for commerce, they are latecomers in world trade. To compensate for this past victimization, they can now benefit from an exclusive treatment.

The use of existing or ad hoc training programmes to fill the gap between LDCs, emerging, and developed countries is therefore extensive. Both organizations spend large amounts of money to achieve this end. The WMO benefits from the UNDP assistance, as well as donations from rich states to support the "Voluntary Cooperation Programme" (nearly USD 290 000 in the year 2000). G8 countries plus Australia are the most active benefactors. Some of them tend to spend their money on "trust-funds projects", i.e. special programmes for particular Members—among which "rich" countries of the Third World, like Saudi Arabia or Brazil as well as poor African countries. The WTO has an even more ambitious assistance programme: in Geneva and in Members' capital cities, many seminars are conducted for new PRs or ministerial personnel. This is not a mere concession to all that aid rhetoric so popular today. Participants are invited to imagine the ultimate consequences of their commitments, an unusual type of training which makes room for second thoughts. Simulation games played with the latest available tools are designed to integrate newcomers in small groups; hence, future PRs will not be drowned in a maelstrom of debates when real negotiations bring together a hundred and forty participants. Moreover, they will form an "epistemic community" of experts who go back and forth between Geneva and other appointments. Their competence in Trade affairs will include a good command of the adequate vocabulary and usual idioms. They will learn how to "provide much insight", "give comprehensive information", "frank and comprehensive responses" ("TPRB on Thailand", in Focus 44) to conduct "a positive and open debate" ("TPRB on Iceland", in Focus 45). They will make an extensive use of understatements (disappointed Members "express concerns" or even "serious concerns" about unfriendly measures; unsatisfied parties congratulate others for their "creative way", "cooperative spirit", and "tremendous amount of goodwill" when negotiations end up in a deadlock (Focus, 44, about... the Seattle Conference). At any rate, sharing common beliefs about the nature of someone's expertise is conducive to a consensus-reaching attitude. However, when experts come to an agreement it still has to be shaped into a treaty by politicians.

3) Are WTO and WMO's "decisions" virtual or actual?

This is a prefatory question: most of the time, WMO and WTO's decisions are not "rules" but "agreements". Some "are binding only for those Members which accept them". WTO, for instance, call for more "discipline" in national trade policies. It does not promote "sanctions" against "policy-makers" (the governments). Courts do not have "verdicts", they issue "reports". Last but not least, polls are not contested and campaigning does not lead to real voting procedures.
When Members "play by the rules", it is with the sole aim to maximize their own interests, while pretending to raise issues for the sake of the whole community (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999: 708). Moreover, these very "rules" are the temporary outcomes of a general equilibrium of commitments. In the WTO, the provisional aspect of any agreement is allegedly a proof of the organization's healthy condition. Even the DSU ("Dispute Settlement Understanding") is amendable. Since the Marrakech agreements, there were no less than three attempts to modify it (Annual Report, 2000: 91). In less decisive cases, some Committees' participants express their discontent by blocking the adoption of minutes of their proceedings (Annual Report, 2000: 59). Moreover, the WTO is less organizational than contractual: governments are not bound by "decisions", they make "offers"—if there is no phasing out offer, there is no commitment, hence no sanction for non complying to a "rule". Once made, offers can be withdrawn until a certain date. After the deadline, Members cannot contest the schedule of the negociation—although they keep the right to challenge its content (Croome, 1999), with the exception of new Members which have no power to suggest amendments to the agreements signed before they were admitted. Although many trade issues are still to be addressed in 2001, this negociating style already produced a "rule-book for trade in goods" more than 30 000 pages thick. It is no surprise that such a complexity is the field of legal specialists trained in law offices (like Hammond Suddards Solicitors, see Adamantopoulos, 1997), another mitigation of the "decisive" aspect of the "decisions" made: experts have less power than policy makers.

a) Consensus, which consensus?

Since WMO and WTO's Members are definitely committed to achieve a consensus on every issue, it is crucial to understand what "consensus" means in these particular contexts. First of all, consensus-seeking is a substitute for voting procedures:

"Decisions are made by the entire membership. This is typically by consensus. A majority of votes is also possible but it has never been used in the WTO, and was extremely rare under the WTO's predecessor, GATT" (Website).

Out of exasperation towards those developing countries that delayed the launching of the Uruguay Round, the US once asked for a formal vote: in a formal poll, the minority of countries which blocked the whole process would come to the fore. Opponents to the Round had no alternative but to rally the majority: voting against the launching of a new negociation cycle would amount to their self-exclusion from the GATT (Croome, 1999). Loosing face was the (heavy) price they paid for dragging their feet. Even when it is unavoidable, voting has no meaning: admissions, for example, require a majority vote, but new Members are always unanimously welcome... by mailed ballots; waivers are submitted to a poll, but abstentions are presumably supportive of the measure; amendments to the Marrakech Agreements—when and if they are demanded—will constitutionally require a two-third majority. Then, and only then, Members will really exercize their voting right.

Short of voting, there are several types of consensual outcomes, and several ways of reaching consensus. At the one end, "positive consensus" is actually unanimous, since each participant in the debate has a veto-power on any outcome. It is a well-established diplomatic practice. In April 1975, when President Giscard d'Estaing called for a "North-South Conference", a preliminary meeting disagreed on the agenda but found an agreement on procedure. The parties invited to Paris started from the
"aide-mémoire" written by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs. In this document, they could find a first definition of what "consensus" meant in international negotiations:

"Nous avons préparé un projet de règlement de procédure très simple... basé sur le principe du consensus, seul principe qui soit de nature à donner aux résultats de nos travaux le poids nécessaire, le seul également qui donne à chaque délégation le pouvoir d'écarte toute recommandation ou décision qui lui paraitrait réellement contraire à ses vues et à ses intérêts essentiels..." (emphasis mine)

Apparently, this definition was commonsense. In the final statement of this preliminary meeting on the rules of procedures, although the wording was slightly different, it came to the same conclusions:

"La réunion Préparatoire...recommande à la Conférence de se doter des règles de procédure qu'elle avait elle-même adoptées et qui reposent, en particulier sur le principe du 'consensus', d'après lequel les décisions et recommandations sont adoptées quand la présidence a constaté qu'aucune délégation membre n'y fait objection."

This was too demanding a prerequisite: the Paris meeting came to a dead end. To avoid such a stalemate, the old GATT had already invented the "consensus of all Members but one", a quasi-unanimous rule which made room for exceptions. The WTO went further with its "reverse consensus". According to the 1994 Dispute Settlement Understanding, "thirty days after it is issued, the Appelate Body's report will be adopted by the Dispute Settlement Body, and unconditionally accepted by the parties to the dispute, unless there is a consensus against its adoption."

Most of the time, however, the WTO does not make decisions by a reverse consensus but by a sort of "pluralistic consensus"—a mix of two opposed concepts, pluralism and consensus (Rescher, 1993). When the chair raises the gavel to declare that an agreement is reached, voters not raising their country-card or not sitting in the room are presumably supporting it. Of course, their behaviour often means that they are not committed enough to defeat a nascent consensus, or not strong enough to countervail hegemonic manoeuvres. Between these two extremes lie the risks of a "premature consensus", not legitimate enough to be self-enforcing. And its own reverse, a long lasting and exhausting process of consensus-reaching with no foreseeable conclusion (Johnston, 1999: 298-99).

This is how agreements are informally reached in both organizations before being formally noted. Including agreements on some flexibility not to disagree openly—a prerequisite to play cooperative and iterative "win-win" games since each member can refrain from using its permanent veto right. This may explain why some people in the Secretariat regret a growing excess of precision in writing the minutes: each time a PR who takes the lead in defeating a motion is identified and his arguments detailed on paper he has no choice but to refrain from a last-minute change towards supporting the final agreement. Such dramatic moves are much easier to make if kept unnoticed (as I was told, "negociators don't speak for the records", only representatives do).

Being committed to consensus allows Members to know exactly at which stage of the discussions agreement is reached: it is the very moment when the chair has to switch from informal methods of debating to formal IGOs' procedures registering the outcome ("agreed ?"— if no objection is raised: "it is so agreed"). Most of the time, chairs themselves do not abide by the rules
of procedure, statements circulate freely at any stage, there is neither deadline nor "vote"—with some codified exceptions. Formal meetings have but one function: to check that informal outcomes will not be defeated in plenary and officially convened sessions.

Informal governance is a challenge. Since in both organizations a self-enforcing consensus is sought among a growing number of divided Members, there is no alternative but to break up the decision-making process into several phases before deliberation is completed. Therefore, coalition-building relies on discreet bottoms-up preliminary transactions in "working groups", "working parties" and even "workshops".

In the WMO, to compensate for the exclusiveness of the Executive Council and its subcommittees, Congresses are more participatory. Their agenda makes room for participation of every PR at Plenaries, whatever the issue discussed. Hence, the successive meetings of the Congress take the shape of "Committees" (A, B, C), each specialized on some issues—so specialized, indeed, that the technical aspects of the questions raised in each should deter many potential participants from attending sessions. In the WTO, the General Council frequently meets informally under the guise of a "HOD" (Heads of Delegations) before convening a formal session as a "Plenary GC", a "Trade Policy Review Board", or a "Dispute Settlement Body". Such a sophisticated division of work is a rule of good decision-making:

"To this day, informal consultations in various forms play a vital role in allowing consensus to be reached but they never appear in organization charts. They are not separate from the formal meetings, however. They are necessary for making formal decisions in the councils and committees... They are forums for exchanging views, putting countries' positions on the record, and ultimately confirming decisions" (WTO Website).

In each body, a local consensus is reached. When it is out of kilter with another coalition's own consensus, a new round of discussion starts until both coalitions merge at a later stage—there is now a larger circle of supporters for the proposal under consideration. Eventually, the whole Membership agrees on a "unanimous" motion—when it actually gets a majority of promised votes. Most of the time, the process is launched by the "Quads" (the US, EU, Canada and Japan). In the WTO they play the roles held by the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council. Then, Members from various regions and types of economies join the core Membership, followed by hard-liners like India, Pakistan, Egypt, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico (as for 2001). When half of the Members are counted in, the way to an enhanced consensus is open. However, the Quads are losing their hand on the negotiation process; not only due to an expanding Membership, but because their share of world trade is lessening. This might well explain the growing difficulty in reaching a consensus.

In both organizations, experts are mobilized to pave the way for consensual agreements. It is easier to involve them in small discussion groups than to let plenaries handle all the issues. In the WTO, where "very technical problems can rapidly evolve into political issues", experts are "kept under control" by the structure of the negotiation process. In the WMO, the World Watch Program Commission on Basic Systems was recently complimented by the EC

"on the initiative it had taken in adopting new arrangements to carry out the work of the Commission... The Commission had embarked on a trial of more flexible and cost-effective working arrangements, which involves more experts than before... and addresses well defined tasks
through several small expert teams... The Council noted that the success of the new structure depended critically upon the dedication of experts to serve on the various teams.25 (WMO, emphasis mine)

b) Local consensus

Because it is costly in time and resources, the informal and unending process of coalition-seeking must in a way be organized and... formalized.

In the WMO, a subcommittee of the Executive Council is a sort of co-ordinating or steering committee—French: "bureau"), although the constitution does not mention a practice inaugurated at the Second World Congress in 1955. This "Working Committee" is more exclusive than the "Committee of the Whole": it includes the President, Vice-President, Secretary General, the Presidents of the six Regional Associations, the Russian and the American PR (a legacy of the Cold War) plus a few guests selected every year among the most prominent heads of NMSs—ie, PRs identified by the Secretariat for their blunt statements in the case under review. The most adament opponents to a proposal are always included in this group. The "Working Committee" meets twice a year in January, and immediately before an Executive or a Congress meeting (to prevent or settle last-minute crises). Moreover, on the first Executive of the year and on Congress day, this WC appoints the chairs of every Committees and sub-Committees, the Financial Advisory Committee or FINAC included. Members of the FINAC reflect a "core membership" of important countries in meteorology. Selection is also governed by a sincere effort to represent all regions, and countries of all sizes, with special attention to those LDC which cannot be included and must feel "represented" by some more prominent Members. There is, however, a particular category of people who are not yet fully integrated in this framework: heads of Hydrological Services, who were ignored until 1972. They may feel marginalized as "advisors" to heads of NMSs and President of Regional Associations. Indeed, few hydrologists attend Congress meetings—to which they were not invited in the past— notwithstanding the fact that Hydrological Services are often more powerful than their Meteorological counterparts.

Upgrading WMO in "WHMO" is one of the challenges facing the Secretariat during the next decade. Such a controlled enhancement would stop half-way on the road to a possible merging with UNEP and IPCC in a bigger environmental organization.

In WTO, "blocks and alliances" are openly encouraged, provided they help avoiding a formal vote. They are almost countless: GATT "Founding Parties"; US-UE dialogue; the Quads; G7; G77; the Cairns Group; the regional groupings (African Group, ALENA, Mercosur, APEC, ASEAN); and a number of gatherings called after the number of PRs attending the first of their meetings. "The Eighteen", for instance, was an advisory group officially constituted in July 1975 to help launch the Uruguay Round. Originally convening on a temporary basis, it remained active until 1990. Its main purpose was to accommodate conflicting demands from developed and developing countries about the rhythm and scope of phasing out measures in agriculture and in launching GATS. The gap became so serious as to threaten the Punta del Este Meeting—until the two provisional and diverging drafts merged in a unique document. Committing Members for the first time in GATT's history to a "single undertaking"—instead of Tokyo Round type "à la carte" commitments—was the outstanding achievement of the "18". Another group, "the Twenty-Five", met in Singapore during the Ministerial Conference of 1996 to settle diverging views about trade-related social rights measures. It included hard-liners of both sides, a sort of "advocacy coalition" acting as proxy for
other Members ready to contribute to the drafting of the final statement. This was rather weird a demand: drafting was so far the privilege and duty of the Secretariat. Since discussions launched several months earlier were still tense on the very eve of the summit, the decision-making process was broken down into successive phases: first, the “25” met at PR level; then, they sent a detailed report to each participant to the ministerial conference. Things went even worse at the 1999 Conference, because the Chairwoman (Charlene Barshefsky, from the US) organized a close meeting at ministerial level, excluding policy-makers from more than a hundred countries. Since “disaster” in Seattle has been partly attributed to this procedure, Members then demanded for a more participatory process: they can now meet in Plenary before and not only after going to small room meetings—a far cry from a real democracy although a more difficult way to reach consensus than in previous GATT meetings.

Here comes the so called “green-room” process. There was a time, indeed, when a single “green-room” gathered about half of the Membership. Actually, there are about 35 seats in this main floor room, with its American colonial-style furniture and portraits hanging on beige walls. With Arthur Dunkel as Secretary General (the conceptor of such brainstorming moments), people talked, drank, and smoked freely for hours in this rather exclusive gentlemen's club, to which they felt privileged to be admitted. Now drinking anything else but water is prohibited and this non-smoking area is open to all, whether urged to come or not. Large and modernized or bright new lecture rooms accommodate up to a hundred and fifty people, most of them anonymous and obviously bored by the topics under review. Since consensus is really impossible to achieve with such numbers, large circles progressively give place to smaller meetings until the “old GATT green-room process” is discreetly reactivated by the Chairman or chairpersons, the Director General or other Directors—with a multiplying effect on “off-the-records” statements.

Nowadays, too many Members are scrutinizing too many agreements in too many realms and too many rooms. True, PRs are informed of closed meetings and may attend them on most occasions (exceptions made for the WMO Committees on human and financial resources), even though free-riding strategies, limited competences, lack of time, and the number of chairs in meeting-rooms explain why the whole Membership do not contribute much to them. In spite of renewed attacks against the green-room mechanism (each newcomer and each new conference participant taking their share of the critics), meetings of this kind are almost daily conducted in WTO and WMO’s buildings. Now, any PR can walk in the room, or read a report on the proceedings of a green-room session. Members who do not attend them can be confident in their capability of achieving an acceptable “package”.

To indulge in this very rational strategy, ordinary PRs pay lip-service to the cause of “transparency”, and then entrust “Friends”-type groups. These groups are named after the first “Friends of the Chair”—those who supported the GATT Chairman in 1984-85—still meeting today (Croome, 1999: 317). According to this model, ”the Friends of such and such proponent or such and such proposal” are now flourishing (eventually, “Friends” sympathizing with the Indian PR’s initiatives will be known as “the Indian Group”, etc.). ”Friends” often meet outdoors, with no formal assistance from the Secretariat (however, the Director General may be present). When convening indoors, any informal group can benefit from the logistics of more formal bodies (except for translation services). People from the Secretariat know how to behave in each context, how to become active and how to remain discreet at meetings where they are informally invited although not on duty (Croome, 1999). There are no minutes of such informal proceedings, although a “memorandum of understanding” may circulate afterwards.
among Directors. The Director General himself attends all multilateral roundtables, either formal or informal, and a couple of bilateral meetings if held in the William Rappard Center in Geneva.

c) Global consensus

Bottom-up and top-down processes must be handled with caution. Officially, the WMO Secretary General and the WTO Director General have no power over the Members—if not over the outcomes. Contrary to what happens at the IMF and the World Bank, they do not get any mandate from the PRs. The WMO relies on National Meteorological and Hydrological Services whose heads agree on scientific evidence and deliver "authoritative" statements; the WTO is a member-driven, consensus-based organization", which "belongs to its members" (Website). The Secretary- or Director-General is sincerely servicing them in spite of their constant suspicion. To reduce the cost of collective action, WMO Members do their best to cut his budget and call for auditing procedures. In the WTO, they put his statements under close scrutiny to make sure he does not express normative views on the agreements—he is even deterred to coin his own interpretation. His legitimacy is sometimes questioned, as in Seattle: Members could not agree on one single name for the six years to come, they had to divide it by two, with Mike Moore in charge the first half and Suppatchai Panithpakdi will come into power during the second half— incentives to translate "member-driven" by "politics-driven" and not by "expert-driven". As I was told, believing that experts have a leading role in WTO is "a fantasy" since "there is nothing more irrational than trade policy". On the other hand, competence in world commerce matters much more in WTO than in other IGOs, say, UNCTAD where PRs can quietly make mistakes about facts or figures. One can conclude that those WTO Members who are represented by Trade experts gain momentum in the organization. For instance, they increasingly endorse the mediating role once fulfilled by the Secretariat—with less success. Pressures from the political experts (the Members) on the functional ones (the Secretariat) are more frequent than in more autonomous, institutionalized, and legitimate bodies—like the European Commission. Moreover, they are growing: emergent countries have their charismatic leaders (such as Brazil, Argentina, Malaysia, India, Pakistan and now South Africa) who want to contribute to the definition of the agenda.

This being said, Secretariats are not powerless. They can draw arguments from the past to settle conflicts or promote consensus, they are facilitators and arbiters backed by a solid structure. In the WTO, the DG is assisted by several Directors, although the unusually young head of his cabinet does not belong to the Trade world. Strategic decisions about the agenda of the next ministerial summit and the improvement of communication channels are made up in this "core group". As far as internal communication is concerned, great efforts are made to improve the way information is disseminated within the organization. In the WMO, "recommandations" have to be conveyed to appropriate bodies—as well as IGO partners in joint programs. In some cases, confidentiality is at stake. DGs or SG's cabinets must do whatever they can to prevent leakages—a growing woe in the WTO, where premature releases are conducive to a mess, some PRs loosing face, others feeling cheated. SG/DG are also responsible for implementation and follow-up (WMO "concerned chairpersons... are requested to ensure that appropriate actions are taken")29. They are often pressed to "consult" Members—an invitation to use green-room procedures!

For these purposes, the Head of the administration organizes the circulation of many documents issued by his services: not only "minutes of the plenary meetings", but also "progress reports", "action documents", "informations papers", "reports submitted
by the plenary to the chairpersons of the working committees” fall into three categories: “normal”, “restricted”, “confidential” (WMO). “Drafts” written by Committees and Sub-Committees’ chairpersons with or without the material support of the Secretariat also circulate between Members. In WTO, “memorandums of understanding” between Member’s, and Chairmen’s “statements” are rivalling “studies” and “reports” from the Secretariat. To help their own Members assess the authority carried in each case, the two organizations rely less on the legal hierarchy of motions, recommendations, and binding votes (for which they have an extensive set of terms like “noting, moving, agreeing, adopting”), and more on O & M standards, such as the origin of the “decision”. Examples are (a) the “pink papers” issued by WMO’s Secretariat compared to white or blue sheets subsuming debates in other bodies, either more technical—the commissions—or more political—the plenaries; (b) ‘the green room’ agreements in the WTO, compared to unofficial accounts of working parties’ debates as well as official minutes of proceedings of more formal meetings. Contrary to constitutional regulations, a document issued by the Secretariat is often considered more important than a motion voted by Congress.

The truth is that the Head of the bureaucracy works closely with the Head of the political structure, ie the Chairman of the plenary Council/Congress, who is allegedly the most prominent person in both organizations (and the most authoritative in WMO where he has the privilege to address Plenaries to give them some vision about strategy). This tandem is certainly conducive to consensus: elected by the Members (the only disputed vote in both organizations), the two heads are the watching brief of any incident that may end up in a quagmire, and their joint efforts help to give full attention to every Member’s views. Through attentive observation in meetings, intense consultation between them, and a very active cocktail life after work, the Secretariat identifies proponents and opponents to any debated policy measure—and their respective “friends”. Reports are made to the Chairman who completes them with his own conclusions before sending a joint text to the Membership, or suggesting further meetings to clarify some Members’ positions. At each stage and on each occasion, administrators send written documents to the Chair (“chairman’ notes” or “notes to the Chairperson”): such notes forecast difficulties to overcome and traps to avoid (WTO). Chairing a committee is a real issue. Applicants must rally a majority of supporters, be trustworthy, and accept unwritten rules (like the alternance between Developed and Less Developed Countries, and a strict equilibrium between Europe and America). Short of these red lines, PR proposed to chair meetings are free to handle discussions in their own way—hence, procedure may vary from one session to another.

Intersessions, the DG and the GC Chairman are together in charge of the “housekeeping”. The arrangement runs well when there is a close cooperation between Committee chairs and their partners in the appropriate section of the Secretariat. This team work provides for delay if any of the two heads fears an uninvited PR may try to indulge in filibustering; it allows suspension of formal meetings for more consultation, off-the-records statements while in session, last-minute adoption of new items on the agenda. Once the debate is launched, the member of the Secretariat in charge of each particular Committee facilitates agreements, inviting PRs to assess the impact of their policy preferences on their own economies and making room for more “brainstorming”. At this point, politics make a noticeable come-back: while their own experts are debating on apparently technical matters, Governments eventually understand what is at stake (Drake & Nikolaïs, 1992 on the Uruguay Round and the GATS).

In both organizations, the actual selection of PRs seating in discussion groups—allegedly in the hands of restricted subcommittee members—is jointly made by the two heads. All chairs are designated by the President and the Director/Secretary
General for one meeting (WMO) or one year (WTO). In the WMO, PRs attending "steering committee" meetings or presenting "working papers" in technical committees are carefully selected to make everyone politically happy while keeping a high degree of scientific sophistication. In the WTO, this situation compares favourably to GATT times when selecting guests for "green-room" was a discretionary competence of the Secretary General. However, to use what I found an enlightening metaphor, "there is only one driver in a vehicle", even if the driver pays more attention to the passenger who travels on the front seat than to the others.

Furthermore, this team work is no guarantee of global transparency. The second pillar of the WTO—and a celebrated improvement over the GATT system—is the Appelate Body. Officially, it is composed of professional judges and legal specialists designated by a Plenary (The General Council, in the guise of the "Dispute Settlement Body", DSB). Actually, the DSB nominate a search committee including some of the present chairmen, some advisors to the DG, the Director of the DSB division in the Secretariat, and the DG himself. They have some room for manoeuvre, provided they respect some unwritten rules—like the systematic appointment of one American, one European and one Japanese judge. This search process is "far from being transparent", the more so when one looks carefully at the previous stage of the dispute settlement process, the "panels" (when gentlemen's agreements cannot be reached at this level, the case is referred to the Appelate Body; this court checks that the procedure followed to settle the dispute meets International Law standards). Such panels are composed of experts appointed by the parties themselves. As in ordinary courts, each one may challenge the other party's nominations with no justification to give whatsoever. It is worth noting that reviews and appeals are not congruent with the WTO's philosophy: they are ruled by zero-sum game constraints, not win-win strategies.

The creation of a Judiciary in the WTO relieves the Secretariat of the "mediating" role he played under the GATT regime. Using legal and formal arguments is now the privilege of the Appelate Body. Therefore, the DG must stay out of the many disputes between Members to remain "neutral"—particularly when "politics" is at stake. He must nonetheless be dedicated to consensus-building in the organization. The contradictions between the two roles explain why people in the WTO Secretariat, while having no contradictory views about its degree of politicization, put the emphasis either on "neutrality" or "politicization".

Of course things are not always handled as smoothly as expected. There are success stories, and failures: some debates reach a turning point between a formalized pre-existing consensus and a last-minute politicization of some issues. At the present moment, the WMO is struck into budgetary problems, and the WTO is divided about its future negotiations "round".

4) Summary, further comments and next steps

Decision-making in the WMO and the WTO is a complex mechanism which vindicates "institutionalist" views and regime theories (Rittberger, 1993), about international organizations. Evidence from the two organizations show that "institutions are driving forces in the sense that it is possible to explain or predict a sizeable proportion of the variance in individual and collective behavior in terms of the operations of institutional arrangements." Although they are not fully "efficient", they are "effective" enough (Young, 1992: 160, 164).
Difference between efficiency and effectiveness is like distinction between cosmopolitism and multilateralism. It is visible in the way negotiations are conducted in the WMO and the WTO. The structure of the negotiation process in each organization is not designed to achieve a fully convincing global consensus at the world level, but to break down the existing blocks of countries into sub-groups. These coalitions are made up of similar enough participants to reach a local consensus, albeit dissimilar to the point they feel compelled to seek a difficult agreement inducing sacrifices on some realms, to get profits from other items on the agenda. In the past, Meteorologists took great care to represent "schools of thought", while Trade powers were concerned with "stages of development". Things are much more complicated now: no Member can achieve his ends without the cooperation of all, but to get everyone's support is a real challenge. Consequently, making decisions is not a chess game but a construction game: each piece of the puzzle is important, but to pick them out, one has first to put them together according to colors, shapes, picture, etc. Analogies have their limits: even upside down, some pieces and some piles are prominent enough to catch attention. The United States and the European Union on the one hand, big emerging economies on the other hand, are major players in the game.

Only the first two have a real "equal retaliatory power" in trade disputes. Members of the next group may embarrass the two superpowers or the big four politically or even economically if they play by the rules. Some, like the Oceanic and Pacific countries are major stakeholders because of their geographical position—tropical cyclonic observations or agricultural exports give them a comparative advantage in the WMO and the WTO. Investing in the two organizations—via modern meteorological systems in WMO, and large teams of experts in WTO—is a winning strategy in spite of the imbalance of resources and power between, say, the Northern and Southern hemispheres, the old industrialized countries and their new competitors. Stigmatizing violators, free-riders, or passive participants is profitable to the more active Members in the long run. With challengers like Australia and New Zealand, Malaysia, India and Pakistan, Brazil and Argentina—not to speak of incoming China—Western countries may find incentives to keep the system running. A Freeing trade through an organization is a contradiction in terms—already pointed out by Karl Polanyi and his analysis on markets-building (Polanyi, The Great Transformation). Monitoring weather and climate via an egalitarian meteorological institution is going upstream since the woes of storms, cyclones and excessive exposure to natural radiations are unequally distributed on the globe. This is why cooperative mutually advantageous regimes like the WTO and the WMO must nonetheless be maintained by the will of some of their components.

To enhance my explanation, I now plan to work on UN-style Conferences on the very topics usually addressed by the WTO and the WMO—like the environement, the depletion of the ozone layer and the climate, intellectual property rights, labour regulations and health policies. The technical expertise available in the two organizations is fully used in such political forums. I shall focus first on the IPCC and related Conferences to implement the resolutions on Climate Change because it is a very controversial field where the WTO or the WMO way and the UN way of decision-making are combined. Once stated, "current commitments" are a couple of years later "described as 'inadequate'; Parties cannot even reach an agreement on formal rules of procedures". In Berlin, February 1995, there was a deep opposition between some regional blocks (mention is made of a "shuttle diplomacy" between OECD Members and the Developing countries), or more original types of groupings (among which the AOSIS—"Alliance of Small Islands States"—was the major proponent of a 20% reduction in atmospheric and stratospheric emissions in 2005... for the sole industrialized economies). Moreover,
Several countries held out for a formal requirement for consensus on major decisions. Other countries feared that it would give them effective veto power over the whole process and sought some forms of enhanced majority process. The impasse means that the Conference was conducted under draft rules without voting, which placed more power in the hands of the Chairman to judge when to push through decisions even if some countries were still unhappy with them.35

I could not find a better illustration of my argument to complete this paper and make room for further research.

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\(^1\) It is a pity to wait until reading is completed to fully understand the meaning of this wink. Suffice here to say: (i) that I tried to follow the workshop’s directors instructions to open the black box; (ii) that pink and green are colors in use in WMO and WTO buildings and documents. The impatient reader can go to pages 20 and 23.

\(^2\) This is also the appropriate place to say a few words about method: I did not conduct interviews by numbers in order to make a quantitative use of these qualitative datas—something I could try sooner or later. Hence, I did not register the interviews, although I could take as many notes as required. My purpose at this early stage of my inquiry was to get information from the top users of the two organizations. What I needed (following Aaron Cicourel, 1988, on this point) was facts and not opinions. To justify my conclusions, criss-crossing answers from several Directors on issues and rule-implementing was more relevant than computing beliefs about these very disputes and procedures. Of course, even though I avoided quoting personal understandings of the situations, I still risk taking for granted a corporate interpretation (or a common political culture, see Schemeil, 2000). This is where *comparison* is a step towards *objectivation*: There is no other reason for the similarities of explanations given to me in both contexts than a common structural dilemma (on very debatable issues, how to reach consensus without voting?). The alternative is less convincing: there might be no unity at all but "a fairy coinage of my mind" (Hamlet).

\(^3\) As for the WTO, theory shows that big traders do not need such an organization (Luterbacher et Norrlöf, 1999 : 351-352). Major exporters should opt for a "fair" rather than "free" trade system, with an allowance for limited and discreet "gray-area" type of arrangements Their competitors should be perfectly happy with GATT's coalition-building, since WTO brings unnecessary constraints on their scale of preferences.

\(^4\) On expertise in the decision-making process, see Moravcsik, 1999; Young, 1999 I do not intend to use this case-study to assess the comparative benefits from constructivist, interactionist, and neo-institutionalist research on international organizations, as Barnett & Finnemore did in 1999), nor to trace the history of IGOs’ building (see on that particular point Luterbacher & Norrlöf, 1999 ; Aggarwal& Dupont, 1999).

\(^5\) According to Keohane and Nye (1989), "No one trusts habitual cheaters. Over time, governements develop reputations for compliance, not just to the letter of the law, but to the spirit as well. These reputations constitute one of their most important assets. As the economist Charles Kindleberger once remarked, 'In economics bygones are bygones, but in politics they are
working capital’”; (276) “by generating information about reputations [new institutions] may allow practices of greater reciprocity to evolve in world politics” (277).

As the WTO Website clearly says as an introduction to the next webpages, “The world is complex. This text highlights some of the benefits of the WTO’s multilateral trading system, but it does not claim that everything is perfect — otherwise, there would be no need for further negotiations and for rules to be revised. Nor does it claim that everyone agrees with everything in the WTO. That's one of the most important reasons for having the system: it's a forum for countries to thrash out their differences on trade issues”.

Linkages between issues benefit those who have the biggest “marketing power”, to use Luterbacher & Norrlöf’s words (1999: 346). Because of the scope and variety of their exports and imports, big traders have the ability to impose their preferred trade regime (351).


Most, but not all: WMO still includes seven “territories” with a meteorological service (and many more before present States became independent); WTO has three non state Members with an autonomous custom policy (Hong Kong being the most prominent).

As I was told, “Plenaries are always political”. According to Peter Haas, “even in cases involving what is regarded as a technical issue, policymaking decisions generally involve the weighing of a number of complex and nontechnical issues centering around who is to get what (...) and at what cost (...). Thus, in spite of the increasing involvement of technocrats in government institutions (...) outcomes in technical issues proved little different from those of more conventional high politics” (Haas, 1992: 11-12)

WMO, Cg-XII, Annexes 2 & 3, p. 21 & 23: “WMO policy and practice for the exchange of meteorological and related data and products including guidelines on relationships in commercial meteorological activities”; supplemented by Resolution 23, EC-LXII: “Guidelines on international aspects of provision of basic and special meteorological services”.


According to the WTO Website, the Organization is an excellent shield against narrow interests (“quite often, governments use the WTO as a welcome external constraint on their policies: "we can’t do this because it would violate the WTO agreements’ ”).


OMC, Manuel de coopération technique et de formation

Because Foreign Services usually underline diplomatic careers in UN-type organizations those who specialize in Trade are quite misunderstood by their peers. This is a supplementary motivation to stick together and trust PRs from other countries more than their own colleagues—this latter comment is certainly more adapted to WMO, where PRs are heads of NMSs.
"Networking" soon becomes second nature, and comebacks are frequent (Adamantopoulos, 1997; Petersmann, 1997; Croome, 1999). Such a network is close to Peter Haas' definition of a "transnational epistemic community" sharing a core set of normative principles, practical know-how, scientific beliefs and capacity to assess the real impact of the common knowledge on policymaking (Haas, 1992). The more so in the Trade world, where the specialists of law and economics are numerous (Drake & Nicolaidis, 1992).


23 In other words, the WTO and the WMO exemplify the great difficulty of theory to discriminate synchronically between types of IGOs, and modes of decisions when they are all diachronically mingled in the real world.


25 WMO, EC-LII/Doc 3.1.3 & 4. The number of experts involved is 160.


27 Not to speak of a "users'club", as Oran Young did when dealing with the whaling regime, a structural game opposing "traditional whaling nations which had gone out of business" to "a sizeable number of non-whaling nations (...) acting in many cases with the express intent to using membership to work toward terminating commercial whaling" (Young, 1992: 169).

28 For a study of the relationships between real and formal structures—with a sample of all possible cases—see Friedberg, 1995.

29 In the case under review here, the history of the Uruguay Round is full of dramatic statements from GATT Secretaries General, Arthur Dunkel and Peter Sutherland. (Croome, 1999 contra Moravcsik, 1999, who tends to minimize the explanatory power of leadership theories in international negotiations).

29 WMO, EC-LII/PINK1, Appendix, 1.1.7.

30 WMO, EC-LII/INF.1, 4.11.2000. See also the "review of the secretariat", for instance the paper devoted to "computer-system to assist with the final selection for the awards at the 45th IMO Prize" (EC-LII/INF.3, 11.V.2000). This is the opportunity to mention one other rare occasions to vote—the awards selection.

31 At the WMO 52th Executive Council opening session, the president of the organization, Dr. J.W. Zillman from Australia, mentioned "the need to bring the experience and wisdom of all the members of the Council (...) not just on managing the daunting array of issues, opportunities and threats that confront the organization in the current inter-Congress period, but also, in many ways much more importantly, on laying out the early groundwork for WMO's strategy for the next decade for consideration and decision by the Fourteenth Congress." (EC-LII/PINK.1, Appendix, emphasis mine).

32 A third pillar built by WTO is the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB): states must accept to put their economic and trade policies under close scrutiny and to willy-nilly justify them as far as they can.

33 "The Appellate Body will hear appeals from dispute panel cases on issues of law covered in the panel report and legal interpretations developed in the panel." (WTO Press Release 32, "Appointments to Appelate Body", 29 November 1995). It seems true that WTO's law is a further step towards a real "rule-of-law" (Pace, 2000). Since 1995, a hundred cases were settled by dispute settlement panels with no hearing from the Appelate Body, in order "to minimize the risks of a spillover from one realm to another", an open door to politicization.
“Policy-makers, like private individuals, are sensitive to the social opprobrium that accompanies violations of widely accepted behavioral prescriptions. They are... motivated by a desire to avoid a sense of shame or social disgrace that commonly befalls those who break widely accepted rules (Young, 1992: 176).

In the aftermath of the World Trade Center bombing, the buildings' owner repaired the damage, upgraded elevators and electrical systems, put battery-operated emergency lights and luminescent paint in the stairwells, and set up emergency command centers. By 2000 the complex had reached its highest occupancy rate of all time. But the World Trade Center was struck again during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, when militants associated with the militant Islamist group Al Qaeda flew hijacked planes into the towers, killing nearly 3,000 people. Access hundreds of hours of historical video, Moreover, fragmentation of decision-making makes it difficult to comprehend the potential impact of one set of activities upon another. It prevents us from exploring untapped synergies between different maritime sectors. It is now time to bring all these elements together and forge a new vision for the management of our relations with the oceans. The EU is one of the world's major world fishing powers and the biggest market for processed fish products. While the number of EU fishers has been declining over the years, some 526,000 are employed in the fisheries sector as a whole. Many jobs are generated in processing, packing, transportation and marketing as well as in shipyards, fishing gear manufacturing, chandlers and maintenance, not only in catching fish. Consensus making within the World Trade Organization and the World Meteorological Organization. Yves Schemiell. Introduction1. Trade, weather and climate are specific fields of knowledge entrusted to intergovernmental institutions where experts (academics, advisers, bureaucrats) engage in dialogue with politicians (permanent). Consensus making within the WTO and the WMO. forget their national origins (WTO commonsensical analyses, explaining why three-quarters of the problems are solved by experts without any. LII/PINK 11.1, appendix, 11.2.11). Actually, the two organizations currently give technical or scientific advice to governments and fight hard to defend their authoritative status. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for promoting international cooperation on atmospheric science, climatology, hydrology and geophysics. The WMO originated from the International Meteorological Organization, a nongovernmental organization founded in 1873 as a forum for exchanging weather data and research. Proposals to reform the status and structure of the IMO culminated in the World Meteorological Convention of 1947, which formally