

late and shape the production of writings on multilateralism. But it is less certain that this succession of concepts has made the theory of international organizations a cumulative process. Francophone authors are more sensitive than their anglophone counterparts to this consideration, since francophone social scientists as a whole have been more distrustful of the positivist and rationalist postulates that American authors frequently accept without questioning their implications. Frederick A. Gareau observes that historically the French have remained unimpressed by a scientism that legitimizes the disciplinary autonomy of international relations *made in the USA*.³⁰ Without a doubt this explains why, instead of mapping out a possible development of 'the' theory, some specialists prefer to speak simply of a taxonomy of approaches.³¹ As it gradually became evident to what extent the actual functioning of international organizations was fraught with confrontation among highly diversified modes of thinking, the scepticism of francophone authors toward excessive theorizing quite naturally strengthened. Above all, their stance draws attention to the fact that the domination of the model devised by English-speaking authors in the analysis of international organizations is geographically limited. In a field of study that, by definition, aspires to produce a scientific discourse with universal validity, one must acknowledge that this presents a serious handicap.

While they have surely provided little grist for the mill of the 'normal science'³² of international relations, the critical epistemology of French-language authors has nourished the reflection of dissident American scholars concerned with international relations and organizations. Curiously, these dissidents have been inspired less by francophone specialists in international relations than by historians and philosophers. In the 1970s, for instance, the work of Fernand Braudel was extensively drawn on by Immanuel Wallerstein and by all other followers of the world-economy theory.³³ During the past decade, the work of Michel Foucault has probably made the greatest impact of all francophones upon English-speaking specialists on international relations.³⁴ This phenomenon is all the more astonishing since Foucault has written virtually nothing on the subject! Nonetheless, his influence on the post-positivists is such that every one of the articles published in a recent issue of *International Studies Quarterly* on the theme 'Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissidence in International Studies' makes reference to his work.³⁵ Foucault has clearly become one of the mentors of the dissident movement that is currently challenging the dominant paradigm in international relations. If for no other reason, we must

pause a moment to consider this author's contribution to the study of international organizations.

Foucault is an historian of ideas whose method could be described as structuralist. His work consists of showing that, as a social practice, the production of knowledge is an historical process framed by a particular culture and discourse. To each historical period there corresponds, he would claim, a power/knowledge configuration defining the conditions that govern the production of ideas. Since it is predicated on a profoundly relativistic epistemology, Foucault's thinking encourages a tendency to call into question the existence of such eternal truths as (for example) those that, it is claimed, underpin the realist view of international relations. Moreover, by insisting that social institutions are largely fashioned by a given body of knowledge and a specific discourse, Foucault has also provided ammunition for the opponents of realism, who believe that the exercise of power cannot be reduced to the material categories of might and money.

Foucault's writings have encouraged the emergence of a highly dynamic cognitive current in the study of international regimes.³⁶ It is well known that the analysis of regimes is dominated by neorealist theory, the epistemology of which is fundamentally positivist. However, a growing number of researchers deem this approach to reality unsatisfactory because it fails to take note of the inter-subjective dimension of principles and norms that form the very architecture of regimes. Foucault inspires these scholars and stimulates inquiry on the manner in which the principles and norms underpinning regimes are internalized and invested with distinct meanings for different international actors. Reworking some of the basic concepts offered by Foucault, James F. Keeley for instance has defined regimes as sets of discourses and disciplines.³⁷ In all this discussion, Foucault's contribution ultimately concerns the responses that may be found to problems raised less than the way these problems are envisaged. In the same context, this seminal author's shadow looms behind the recent emergence of the notion of *epistemic community* in analyzing the processes of international cooperation.³⁸ The research programme to which this idea of epistemic community is geared attempts to show how international cooperation is structured on the basis of consensus formed within a community of experts. It finds support in the Foucauldian method in that Foucault seeks to establish a connection between the formulation of discourse and the construction of reality. In the present state of research, it would be extremely rash to predict where the Foucault effect in international relations will stop. Since francophone intellectuals have often been

accused of lagging behind the fashions set by their English-speaking colleagues, it is somewhat ironic to find American internationalists discovering after his death such a monumental French author.

To be sure, francophone writers on international relations do not share the infatuation of their English-speaking colleagues with Foucault. All the same, Philippe Hugon has usefully reminded us that the whole cultural background to francophone thinking has been influenced by those authors who, like Bachelard and Lévi-Strauss before Foucault, gave pride of place to meaning and tended to distrust empiricism.³⁹ Such a context makes it easier to understand why francophone research on international relations and international organizations has a strong anthropological bent. This bent is frequently reflected in a concern to highlight the role of culture and cultural differences in the analysis of social processes. Such a perspective leads authors to assign great significance to values, ideologies and world visions as axes structuring international political and economic relations.⁴⁰ Francophone literature has notably helped draw attention to the extent to which the project for an international society underpinning the mandate of the UN and its specialized institutions is predicated on liberal individualism and on a western, unilinear conception of progress.⁴¹

b. The UN crisis and development: focal subjects

In terms of research fields, francophone authors have over the years addressed virtually the entire spectrum of international organizations' activities and all facets of multilateralism. Of course subjects have not received equal attention. Some matters, such as multilateral trade negotiations, the specialized technical agencies and the growing realm of environmental issues, have received less attention from francophone authors than from their English-language counterparts.⁴² By contrast, other issues have received considerable attention. Paramount among these are two subjects: the intertwined issues of crisis/reform with respect to the UN system, and development.

Francophone authors have subjected to particularly close scrutiny the UN system's tendency to drift off course throughout the first half of the 1980s. Their analyses make it clear first of all that this tendency, which since 1987 has gradually abated, previously applied globally. Thus francophone literature has insisted that even though the crisis was felt more acutely in certain specialized agencies such as UNESCO and ILO, this crisis affected the entire UN structure and thereby the very logic of multilateralism. Francophone specialists have also pointed up the diversity of symptoms marking the deterioration in the UN's functioning

during the early 1980s. The main parameters of their diagnosis may be outlined as follows.⁴³

On the operational level, the UN's leadership totally failed to function in the face of the rekindling cold war, the worsening of regional conflicts, the failure of global North-South negotiations, and the explosion of Third World debt. On the administrative level, the extensive fragmentation of the UN system made planning of activities progressively more difficult, and the lack of coordination within the organization favoured bureaucratization and duplication. Finally, on the financial level, the UN had to cope with serious budget restrictions following a unilateral decision on the part of the United States, the organization's principal financial backer, to reduce the proportion of its contribution. Francophone authors did not, however, confine themselves to simple description of the institutional stalemate; they proceeded to seek the social and political factors that might explain the shift away from multilateralism.

Given what was said earlier about the impact of the historical perspective upon the francophone literature on international relations, it is not surprising that such authors should have stressed that the UN crisis did not come about, as if by the wave of a magic wand, in the aftermath of some particular event, such as the hike in crude oil prices or Ronald Reagan's election as President of the United States.⁴⁴ Rather the tendency has been to stress that the so-called crisis stemmed from a profoundly conflict-ridden structure of international power and from a growing polarization of state interests.⁴⁵ The North-South cleavage activated spiraling tensions as this cleavage superseded East-West confrontation. Thus the systematic opposition between the will of the developing countries to convert their automatic majority into political authority and the ability of the developed countries to resist this pressure stands out in francophone analyses.

Moreover, francophone authors have given great prominence to the ideological dimension of the UN crisis. They support the idea that the North-South confrontation masked a conflict of values without historical precedent. Victor-Yves Ghébali quite rightly points out that politicization has always been a feature of the international system, and that what has changed since the early 1970s has been the tendency for such politicization to operate in favour of a new majority.⁴⁶ In short, the South's strategy has been to derive the greatest gain possible from those western values that benefit them and to denounce those that do not.

This atmosphere of tension reached its culmination at UNESCO, from which the US and the United Kingdom respectively withdrew in 1984

and 1985. Thus it is perfectly natural that francophone authors should have written so extensively on this organization and the troubled period it went through during the early 1980s.⁴⁷ Their analyses make it clear that the crisis of UNESCO, characterized by its administrative and budgetary problems, arose essentially from political factors. Indisputably, the adoption of many excommunicative resolutions beyond its mandate, as well as the debate on the New World Information and Communications Order (NWICO), led to serious reassessment of the institution's objectives. Francophone authors have attributed the erosion of UNESCO's capacity for action above all to the failure of the universalization of those liberal principles enshrined within its Constitution in 1945. For such authors, the emergence of Third World countries on the international scene has been accompanied by a rejection of the hegemony of western culture and of the development model based on the laws of the market. Given the symbolic importance of UNESCO's cultural mission, the ideological nature of this rejection led to the paralysis of the organization.

It nonetheless deserves emphasizing that francophone specialists have not painted a wholly negative picture of UNESCO's work and that at times they have gone to great lengths to underscore some of its successes in the areas of literacy and the safeguarding of humanity's common heritage.⁴⁸ The special attention paid to UNESCO also confirms the importance that francophone authors accord the cultural dimension of international relations.

Francophone authors have also commented abundantly on the reforms that the UN and its specialized agencies have finally undertaken in recent years.⁴⁹ One of the most prolific commentators on this process, Maurice Bertrand, was indeed one of the reform's main architects, first as a member of the Joint Inspection Unit and subsequently as a member of the Group of 18. The fact is generally accepted that, from the administrative standpoint, the UN has embarked upon an unprecedented process of self-criticism. Despite their strong emphasis upon problems of planning and management, the recommendations of the Group of 18, it is widely held, led to a political breakthrough by instituting a new procedure based on consensus for approval of the budget.

To be sure, there remains a feeling that the UN's reform has not been completed. And yet, though few studies have so far been made on the subject, the experts seem to see the end of the cold war as a major turning point in the history of the United Nations.⁵⁰ This turning point is often depicted as a result of the structural redefinition of East-West relations. With regard to this shift, the episode of American-Soviet

collaboration during the Gulf War and the desire expressed by the former USSR to join GATT, the IMF and the World Bank served as major eye openers. It has also been pointed out that the developing countries are now less hostile to liberalism, and that the developed countries are more conscious of the global dimensions of issues confronting the international community.

For many long years the optimistic analyses of the UN were few in number.⁵¹ Today, however, they make up a majority. Francophone authors are by and large convinced that by the end of the 1980s, things had changed for the better in the universe of international organizations.⁵² Yet they do anticipate many more challenges on the UN's agenda. Regarding the political level, the inefficacy of the UN's decisionmaking apparatus has been extensively debated.⁵³ Specialists are far from agreement on the urgency of need for certain changes, though some agree that there exists a growing contradiction between the sclerosis of the decisionmaking procedures and the evolution of the international power structure. Various blueprints for reform have been proposed. Some have suggested enlarging the Security Council to accommodate the emergence of new economic powers and the distinct interests of the Third World.⁵⁴ Others have taken up the idea out of America of a 'binding triad', a procedure whereby the decisions of the General Assembly would become obligatory if approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the General Assembly accounting simultaneously for two-thirds of the world's population and two-thirds of the contributions to the UN's budget.⁵⁵ On the economic level, Bertrand's proposals, which have had little impact upon decisionmakers, continue to arouse interest among scholars. Postulating that peace is seriously jeopardized by international disparities of income, and that the international economic institutions are failing to meet the needs of today, Bertrand has proposed setting up an 'economic security council' whose operation would be modelled upon the EU.⁵⁶ Adopting an even more *avant-garde* position, some authors have concluded that the management of world affairs can no longer be left to states alone, and that as a consequence the UN should ensure truer representation of the peoples.⁵⁷ Marc Nerfin in particular proposes that the UN be restructured around three chambers, the first of which would represent governments, the second businesses and the third non-governmental organizations. It matters little that such a project is for the time being no more than a pipe dream. It further confirms the interest shown by francophone authors to redefine multilateralism and the role of the United Nations.

Along with the profusion of francophone studies on the UN crisis, considerable importance has been accorded the theme of international organizations and development. These two lines of inquiry are obviously not mutually exclusive, since most authors have held that the UN crisis was primarily provoked by the deadlock in the North-South dialogue. But francophone specialists in international organizations have gone much further in their treatment of development issues. The attention paid to these questions stems from two parallel series of factors. On one hand, development is a favourite topic throughout the francophone social science community. It is no coincidence that the concept of Third World (*Tiers Monde*) was invented by a Frenchman, Alfred Sauvy.⁵⁸ Furthermore, because of the UN's failure in matters of collective security, the promotion of development gradually became established as that organization's operational priority. R.-J. Dupuy captured this trend in an evocative formula when he asserted that development had become Job One in UN lingo (*le signifiant du langage de l'ONU*).⁵⁹

For quite some time now the development process has prompted a flow of contributions by francophone authors. While it is more and more difficult to speak of a single, homogeneous Third World current, it can fairly be said that various 'Third World sensibilities' have exerted a decisive influence on the orientation of historical, legal, sociological, political, anthropological and economic research produced in French. The reasons for this phenomenon are historical: both France and Belgium were colonial powers, and the trade flows, migratory movements and cultural exchanges between these two countries and their former colonies have always been very substantial. In recent years, francophone research on development has been marked by various changes, the chief of these undoubtedly being the withering away of general theories and the rehabilitation of cultural factors.⁶⁰ Although it is passing through a period of radical self-scrutiny, francophone research on development continues full of vitality.

This general interest in development questions is reflected in a variety of ways within francophone research on international organizations. Here we consider two facets of development: the study of *development law* and the study of *multilateral development funding*. In both, francophone authors have made extremely useful contributions to the advancement of knowledge.

The expression 'development law' refers to the body of resolutions and conventions that have been produced, in particular through the UN, for the purpose of establishing a new balance of forces between

developed and developing countries. Guy Feuer has gone so far as to assert, in a rather striking formula, that development law is the creation of francophone thinkers.⁶¹ His claim may not be irrefutable, but it is certainly quite compatible with the traditional predominance of the legal approach in the francophone analysis of international relations. In any case, it was a Frenchman, André Philip, who coined the term 'development law' in 1964.⁶² An article by Virally published the following year is recognized as having had a decisive impact on the emergence of the concept of 'duality of norms', or dual standards.⁶³ This concept is the juridical cornerstone on which the developing countries have erected doctrine to legitimize their strategy for establishing a new international economic order (NIEO).

A controversy has raged among francophone authors as to whether or not the new international economic order is dead.⁶⁴ Be this as it may, the legal doctrine that gave impetus to the new international economic order, namely development law, is alive and well. This doctrine gives rise to a range of discussions concerning the link between individual and community, also the relative importance of economic rights as against political, social and cultural rights in the dynamic of development. Certain radical Third World commentators have condemned development law, calling it an instrument that serves to maintain the dependency of countries in the South.⁶⁵ Following Feuer's lead, the prevailing trend now is to see it instead as a form of 'soft law', occupying an intermediate zone between law and non-law. Given the transformations now taking place in the international system, one may expect that coming years will witness a segmentation of development law that takes greater account of the growing differentiation among Third World countries.⁶⁶ And it is most likely that francophone specialists will continue to exert an important influence in the choices made.

Francophone literature on international organizations has also devoted special attention to the multilateral financing of development. While such authors have referred in passing to the UNDP's loss of credibility and the rise of multi-bilateralism,⁶⁷ they have inquired more particularly into the role played by the international financial institutions – in particular, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – within the Third World. Francophone research on the latter question remains smaller in quantity than that published in English. This said, the 1980s provided francophone authors with an opportunity to interest themselves in financial and monetary issues that had not previously existed. Until this period, the francophone literature on international financial institutions (IFIs) was made up

essentially of textbooks of a rather general nature.⁶⁸ The belated interest in the place of IFIs on the part of francophone specialists can be explained largely by developments in the evolving international environment: whereas trade problems drew most attention during the 1960s and 1970s, the debt burden became palpably the main external constraint upon development in the 1980s. Tying in with this major change in the North-South relationship, it is significant that a growing number of francophone research teams are investigating structural adjustment.⁶⁹

Infused with strong Third World preoccupations, francophone research on multilateral development funding has by and large adopted rather critical positions. In her work on the IMF, Marie-France L'Héritau illustrates this trend particularly well by highlighting the social costs of structural adjustment and showing how the IMF has made itself the promoter of a liberal development model closely geared to economic internationalization.⁷⁰ Francophone authors have nevertheless recognized the great difficulty of finding a coherent alternative to the economic theories of the IMF and the World Bank. The approach taken by L'Héritau, which consists in asking if the rationality of the IMF prevails because of its might (the rationality of the policeman) or because it is right (the rationality of the professor), comes close to the conclusion reached by Zaki Laïdi, for whom the World Bank is 'neither demiurge nor demon'.⁷¹ Laïdi has insisted judiciously on the ability of developing countries to respond each in its own way to the recipes for economic liberalization advocated by the World Bank. In the final analysis, the most solid common denominator among francophone authors on multilateral development funding is their conviction that the IFIs now wield unprecedented power in determining the economic options of Third World countries and in realigning international political relations.

Conclusion

This chapter is very limited in scope, yielding a profile of francophone literature on international organizations that can be no more than an approximation. It nevertheless identifies certain undeniable tendencies. Thus, for instance, it appears that in the francophone community, the study of international organizations has not been clearly defined, straddling as it does several disciplines. Only a fairly limited number of intellectuals regard international organizations as their own distinctive speciality. In spite of all this, because of its ideological openness and the expertise that some researchers have acquired on specific