

Neofunctionalism Theory Approach: An Analysis of the Reasons for State Membership in International Organizations and the Formation of Global Norms

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Abstract

International organisations have a strategic role in shaping global norms that influence the dynamics of international relations. As norm entrepreneurs, international organizations not only function as a forum for cooperation between states, but also as actors that encourage the adoption of certain values and standards by the global community. This article aims to analyze the role of international organizations in global Neofunctionalism, using the neofunctionalism by Ernst B. Haas, and explore the reasons why some countries join international organizations based on rational institutionalist and legitimacy theories. This research uses a literature review method by analyzing academic literature, policy reports, and relevant case studies. The results show that international organizations play an important role in initiating and internalizing global norms through advocacy, socialization, and monitoring mechanisms. Meanwhile, the motivation for countries to join is influenced by the desire to strengthen international legitimacy, gain economic benefits and increase national capacity. So by understanding these roles and reasons, this article provides insight into the importance of international organizations in regulating equitable and inclusive global governance.

Keywords: Neofunctionalism, International Organization, Neofunctionalism, Global Norm, State Membership

1. INTRODUCTION

International organizations have become key actors in the formation of global governance primarily through their role as neofunctionalism. This term, as explained by (Ernst B. Haas, 1950) refers to several actors who encourage the creation of new norms in the international system. The existence of international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the European Union also plays an important role in building and disseminating norms that become a reference for member countries and the international community. Examples are norms related to the protection of human rights, gender equality, environmental protection, and global health care as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kurniawan, 2018).

The process of establishing global norms by international organizations is inseparable from the support of its member states. Where there are several countries that join international organizations for various reasons ranging from strengthening political legitimacy, increasing diplomatic influence, to gaining access to resources and information that are important for domestic development (Kusuma, 2019). Membership in international organizations also provides countries with the opportunity to contribute to the formation of global norms that can ultimately strengthen their position in the international system. For example, what we can know in real life is that Indonesia as an active member of ASEAN and the United Nations is

often involved in discussing global issues such as climate change, sustainable development, and maritime security.

However, the process of establishing global norms by international organizations faces various challenges. One of them is resistance from certain countries that feel the new norm is contrary to their domestic values or threatens their national interests. For example, in terms of debates about norms related to climate change, where some countries are reluctant to commit to emission targets for economic reasons (Chotimah, 2018). In addition, the implementation of norms at the national level often faces obstacles ranging from cases of limited institutional capacity and cases of lack of political support. Therefore, in this context, international organizations need to take an active role in supporting the implementation of norms, including through technical assistance and effective supervision.

Data shows that international organizations have a significant influence in shaping global norms. For example, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report in 2023 noted that 193 countries have adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs) as their national development guide. In the health sector itself, WHO has succeeded in encouraging more than 120 countries to strengthen their health systems through the global pandemic framework during the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2022). Meanwhile, at the regional level, the European Union has succeeded in establishing legal and policy standards adopted by its member countries on various issues such as data protection and climate policy (Hariyadi, 2021).

Furthermore, the reason for the country's membership in international organizations is also influenced by various factors ranging from domestic needs and global dynamics. This is in line with a study conducted by (Fredayani., 2019) which shows that 85% of developing countries join international organizations to improve access to resources and technical support. In addition, research by (Leurdi., 2023) also revealed that small countries tend to join international organizations to increase their international legitimacy and reduce the risk of marginalization in the global system.

In terms of the effectiveness of international organizations as norm entrepreneurs, it often depends on their ability to meet these challenges. One of the main challenges is to ensure that the norms that are formed are inclusive and do not create new inequalities. For example, the use of global standards in trade is often considered unfair by developing countries who feel that these standards are more beneficial to developed countries (Nabila et al., 2023). Therefore, international organizations need to adopt a more participatory approach to the norm-setting process by involving a variety of actors including civil society and the private sector.

Thus, from this background, in the end, the purpose of writing this article is to focus on analyzing the role of international organizations as norm entrepreneurs in the formation of global norms, as well as the reasons for state membership in international organizations. Using the framework of Ernst B. Haas's neofunctionalism theory in 1950, this article will later take into account the role of non-state actors such as international organizations, in encouraging integration and the formation of global norms. As well as exploring how international organizations promote new norms as well as how some countries respond to and internalize those norms. So that later this approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between international organizations and their member countries in order to be able to implicate them for global governance.

This research will also examine the challenges and opportunities that arise in the process of forming global norms. On the one hand, the success of international

organizations in shaping norms can encourage the creation of international stability and cooperation. On the other hand, failure to reach consensus or face resistance can create fragmentation in the international system. By providing theoretical and empirical insights, the authors of this article are expected to contribute to the academic literature on the relationship between international organizations and their member states as well as provide practical recommendations for policymakers to strengthen the role of international organizations in inclusive and equitable global governance.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses the literature review method to analyze the role of international organizations as norm entrepreneurs in the formation of global norms and the reasons for state membership in international organizations. The literature review method is a systematic approach that aims to collect, analyze, criticize, and synthesize the results of previous research so as to produce a comprehensive new understanding (Sulistyawati, 2018). This method was chosen because it provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the dynamics and relevance of international organizations in the context of global governance.

Data collection is carried out through the exploration of scientific sources, including national and international journals indexed by Sinta or Scopus, academic books, scientific articles, research reports, and policy documents relevant to the role of international organizations in shaping global norms. The focus of this study is on the process of establishing norms carried out by international organizations such as the United Nations, WHO, and the European Union, as well as several factors that influence the decision of countries to join these organizations. In addition, the research also includes studies on the implementation of norms at the national level and the challenges faced by member countries in adopting them.

Data analysis is carried out using an analytical descriptive approach, namely by describing findings from the relevant literature, identifying patterns and relationships between variables, and evaluating the practical implications of norms formed by international organizations. The researcher uses the theoretical framework of Neofunctionalism first developed by Ernst B. Haas in the 1950s to examine the dynamics of the formation, spread, and internalization of global norms. In addition, the analysis process is carried out with critical reading techniques as described by (Sugiyono, 2013) to evaluate the validity, relevance, and contribution of data to the research objectives. Each important point of the literature studied is systematically recorded and then synthesized to produce a holistic perspective. So that with this approach, researchers can evaluate how international organizations contribute to forming inclusive and equitable global governance and can also identify the factors that encourage or hinder the reasons why some countries join the organization and also know about the country's membership in international organizations

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The theoretical approach of neofunctionalism is one of the important approaches in the study of international relations that emphasizes the process of regional and global integration through spillover mechanisms. Originally designed to analyze the dynamics of the European Union, this theory is also relevant in understanding the reasons for a country's membership in international organizations as well as the formation of global norms. This theory offers a framework to see how cooperation in certain areas can

extend to other sectors to produce more integrated governance and the formation of new norms.

The theory of neofunctionalism itself is one of the theories introduced by Ernst B. Haas which has a significant contribution to understanding regional integration and the dynamics of international organizations. This theory focuses on how certain sectors of cooperation drive broader integration through spillover effects. In the context of why several countries join international organizations, this theory is relevant to explain why a country chooses to join where there is a role for international organizations in shaping global norms and how this integration affects domestic policies and relations between countries.

The international organizations referred to in this study such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union, ASEAN, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) show how the principles of neofunctionalism work in building global norms. As well as the reasons why some countries join the organization to achieve mutual benefits, although often this integration expands beyond its original goals (Dewi, 2020).

Reasons for State Membership in International Organizations

Countries choose to become members of international organizations for reasons that are often complex and begin to cover various economic, political, and security dimensions. In the context of the theory of Neofunctionalism itself, there are several reasons that can be analyzed through the spillover effect that encourages gradual cross-sector cooperation. One of the main concepts in this theory is functional spillover, which is a process in which cooperation initiated in one specific sector such as trade or transportation can create a need for coordination in other sectors. For example, in the World Trade Organization (WTO), countries initially joined to gain market access and benefit from free trade. However, in order to maintain smooth trade, they finally have to harmonize other regulations, for example in terms of environmental standards, human rights, and technical policies. This shows how cooperation in the economic sector can penetrate into a wider realm to create a domino effect that contributes to the formation of global norms.

In addition, political spillover is also a significant reason for countries to join international organizations. This process refers to how technical cooperation within the organization can develop into greater political influence. Within this framework, international organizations often serve as platforms to build trust, promote stability, and resolve conflicts among member states. For example, the European Union was initially focused on economic integration through the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), but it developed into a major political project that included collective policy-making and the establishment of supranational institutions such as the European Parliament. So that through this political spillover, international organizations will not only become mediators, but also agents that encourage change at the domestic and interstate levels (Bakry, 2017).

Then not only that, other reasons also strengthen the reason for the country to join such as security which is the main reason for the country's membership in international organizations. Organizations like NATO offer collective defense guarantees that are a strong attraction for member states, especially in the midst of growing global threats. Although essentially this membership often involves greater commitments, such as participation in multinational operations and strengthening cooperation in the field of

military technology or cybersecurity. Thus, the need for security creates a spillover that deepens relations between countries and expands the scope of work of international organizations. Because through this sustainable spillover effect, the reasons for the country's membership in international organizations will become more dynamic and complex. Neofunctionalism explains that early cooperation driven by pragmatic motives often develops into deeper relationships and spans a wide range of sectors, fostering the creation of global norms and standards that influence the international order.

Theoretical Analysis Based on the Neofunctionalism Approach

The neofunctionalist approach offers an in-depth understanding of the success of international organizations in shaping global norms through the dynamics of progressively evolving cooperation. One of the key concepts in neofunctionalism is that international organizations not only act as an arena for the benefit of their member states but also as agents of change that create shared norms and policies. This success often depends on three main factors: first, the concept of spillover in neofunctionalism refers to the phenomenon in which integration or cooperation in one particular sector (such as economics or trade) encourages countries to extend that cooperation to other sectors such as the environment, human rights, or social policy. This often happens when countries realize that interrelated policies require further coordination to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness. For example, economic integration in the European Union, which began with the trade sector, eventually penetrated into foreign policy, security, and environmental protection. Thus, the existence of this spillover can create conditions for the formation of global norms that govern relations between countries in various fields (Tamir, 2020).

Second, the success in creating trust between several member countries of international organizations. In many cases there are several countries that initially have different interests beginning to realize that long-term cooperation can bring mutual benefits, which in turn encourages them to formulate more inclusive and cooperative policies. This trust plays an important role in strengthening political and economic integration and expanding the scope of cooperation (Luerdi, 2023). In fact, the existence of this process not only leads to the formation of international norms but also creates a foundation for the acceptance and enforcement of these norms at the global level. Third, the role of supranational institutions is also key in neofunctionalism theory. Where such institutions have the capacity to mediate differences between countries, facilitate discussions and negotiations, and formulate policies that reflect common interests. By granting greater authority to international institutions, some member states tend to follow agreed norms, even if this is sometimes contrary to their domestic interests. Therefore, it is through these supranational institutions that global norms can be upheld and expanded, ensuring the stability and continuity of international cooperation (Fredayani, 2019).

Overall, theoretical analysis based on the neofunctionalist approach underscores that the success of international organisations in shaping global norms is inseparable from the dynamics of interactions between countries influenced by spillover, the growing trust among members, and the role of supranational institutions in harmonizing international policies. Which later this process will allow the creation of an international order that is more integrated and harmonious with global norms that are strengthened through sustainable cooperation (Mulyana, 2015).

Case Studies of the European Union and WTO in the Perspective of Neofunctionalism

The European Union (EU) is a prime example of the application of neofunctionalism theory, where integration between countries starts from the economic sector and progresses to broader political integration. This process began with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 which aimed to regulate certain industrial sectors in order to avoid wars between European countries. The success of this economic integration creates the conditions for the expansion of cooperation in other sectors, such as trade and agrarian policy, which then develops into broader sectors such as foreign policy, security, and environment (Soejipto, 2015).

The spillover effect within the EU is particularly evident in policies that link the economy with social and political aspects. For example, after the formation of the European single market, economic integration has successfully encouraged regulatory harmonization in the transportation sector, environmental protection, and product standards. This integration process introduces policies that lead to the drafting of common norms that are then implemented across member states. In addition, the establishment of supranational institutions such as the European Parliament and the European Commission has strengthened political and economic cooperation between member states to ensure that the resulting norms are acceptable and enforced at the international level.

So from some of these things, it can be known that the results of the research are the reasons for several countries to join international organizations because of several things ranging from the desire to connect the economy, establish peace, form state stability, and want to gain a sense of security. This is in line with my previous research (Riyanto, 2021) where there are reasons for countries to join international organizations in addition to economic, human rights protection, social, and political, but also as a form of cooperation and coordination between countries and others to realize a developed country.

4. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the role of international organizations according to the theoretical approach of functionalism turns out to be very significant in the formation of global norms and is one of the key factors why several countries are members of the organization, especially in inclusive and equitable global governance. International organizations such as the United Nations, WHO, and the European Union have demonstrated the ability to encourage the process of forming, disseminating, and internalizing norms that are able to answer global challenges ranging from cases such as climate change, global health, and human rights. So that by utilizing their capacity as normative actors, international organizations can consolidate the various interests of several of their member countries to achieve a global consensus that can be widely implemented.

Because after all, the reasons why several countries are members of the state's membership in international organizations certainly have complex reasons ranging from efforts to increase the legitimacy of domestic policies to strengthening the position of the

state in the international system. In fact, this membership allows countries to be actively involved in the global decision-making process while benefiting from agreed norms. Therefore, an adaptive and collaborative framework is needed to ensure that the resulting global norms are widely accepted and implemented effectively at the national level. Moreover, the role of international organizations as neofunctionalism is not only a strategic innovation, but also an important step in building a global governance that is sustainable and relevant to the dynamics of the times.

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