From Utopian One-worldism to Geopolitical Intergovernmentalism: UNESCO’s Department of Social Sciences as an International Boundary Organization, 1946-1955

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Abstract

As a new coordinating organization in the rapidly expanding international field of post-World War II social science, UNESCO’s Department of Social Sciences (SSD), set up in 1946, played a central role. This article explores the formation of the SSD during its first decade with a special focus on its organizational aspects. By conceptualizing the SSD as an "international boundary organization," the article analyses the organizational structuration of agency spaces on different levels – within SSD, in relation to UNESCO and to the UN system at large – as well as over time. As a result, the article discerns four phases, distinguished by organizational changes, under which the SSD was successively transformed from a relatively independent transnational organization, which shared the utopian vision of one-worldism, to an intergovernmental organization considerably more vulnerable to external geopolitical pressures.

Keywords

UNESCO, Department of Social Sciences, international boundary organization, organizational structuration, agency space

INTRODUCTION

On Saturday morning 7 December 1946, on one of the final days of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) inaugural General Conference in Paris, Dr. Julian Huxley proudly declared in his installation speech as the new and very first Director-General: "Geneva is not here. It was a remarkable milestone event, unique in its kind. Huxley pointed out, "never before in the history of the world have there been brought together in one place so many representatives of the arts, sciences, philosophy and education, of all fields of government, of relief activities and social organizations, of the economic and cultural movements of the world."

To Huxley the gathering was a great success, marked by hard work and an endless cooperative spirit. This convinced him that the great tasks and ideals which had inspired the founding of UNESCO and its general mission—“to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the peoples of the world”—would be realizable.

The cosmopolitan internationalism and the hope for a unified world, expressed by Huxley and which underlay the creation of UNESCO, were not only firmly anchored in the Enlightenment tradition of confidence in the power of knowledge and subsequent nineteenth-century conceptions of evolution. They were also historically situated in what Glenda Sluga has aptly described as “that curiously utopian moment bracketed by the end of World War II and the onset of the Cold War” (Sluga 2010: 393). Although the early postwar years witnessed a minor explosion of international organizations, including the creation of the United Nations, none of its other specialized agencies better exemplified the renewed faith in worldwide cooperation than UNESCO (Iriye 2002: 44).

As a result of the inaugural conference in Paris and its “utopian one-worldism” a number of departments were set up within UNESCO, one of them being the Department of Social Sciences, or Social Sciences Department (SSD) as it was most often referred to.

During the decade that followed, UNESCO’s SSD became instrumental for the creation of international associations of political science, sociology, economics, anthropology, law, psychology and other disciplines, but also of interdisciplinarity bodies such as the International Social Science Council, international research institutes, regional social science offices and several major research projects. Furthermore, it systematically worked to improve the infrastructure for the international communication and dissemination of social science by initiating indexing and abstracting services, international inventories, as well as journals, yearbooks, dictionaries and other publications. As one of the central players in the contemporary, increasingly populated, international landscape of social science organizations, SSD is also key to understanding the rapid post-World War II expansion of the social sciences that has been highlighted in a number of recent studies.

Within the broad and steadily growing research on UNESCO, surprisingly few studies have paid more focused attention to the Department of Social Sciences. An early but still useful book is Peter Lengyel’s retrospective “insider’s” account from 1986 which offers a brief overview of SSD’s history, including its “pioneering years” from the inception up to 1961 (Lengyel 1986). More recently historians of science Perrin Selcer (2009, 2011) and Teresa Tomás Rangil (2011, 2013) have contributed with important pieces, enriching our understanding of SSD’s epistemological attempts.
to combine universalism and diversity and its changing intellectual outlook several times.2 But still we do not know very well about the organizational aspects of UNESCO'S earlier Network Department. How were the internal organizational structures on the IS level structured in the UNESCO; how do we know about the international administrative structure shaped and embedded in relation to individual and collective action? And how did the institutionalized relationship between organizational structure and individual action change over time?

By addressing these questions on UNESCO’s organizational embodiment, this article intends to add yet another piece to the body of research referred to by studying the organizational structure of agency spaces on different levels -3 – using SSD in relation to UNESCO and to the UN system at the international level. The operationalization of SSD’s organizational structure relates to the idea of SSD as an "international boundary organization". The concept refers to David Guston’s notion of "boundary organizations" - defined as institutions that mediate and stabilize the boundary between science and policy. Involves participation of actors from different social worlds, provides space for boundary objects that make collaboration across these worlds possible, and includes delegations of authority and integrity between principals and agents (Guston 1974: 21; Guston 1998: 20). In addition to these criteria, my conceptualization of "international boundary organizations" has been critically adjusted to the context of this article with regard to, first, the international level of analysis, second, the historical posture setting, third, the provision rather than the visibility embodied and, fourth, the introduction of "agency space" as an empirically investigable domain in between organizational structures and individual actions.4

The analytical point in this context is that the concept helps us to reformulate the abstract -4  

1 After (some) analysis SSD's attempts to bring epistemic unity to cultural diversity in the formula of "a view from nowhere" (Guston 2001), the concept of SSD was introduced to UNESCO, meaning the possibility of "expatriation" global knowledge by assigning bureaucratic relations and new roles, including, a new study of UNESCO's "international projects" (Bengtsson & Glöckner 2011) to be a new kind of institutions, like "boundary organizations" and "boundary actions" that have been made to avoid an interpretative paralysis (Guston 1999: 89, 106), other cases as well (Guston 1999: 89, 106), other cases as well (Guston 1999: 89, 106). Our case will give us reason to problematize this stability and flexibility in organizing structures and individual actions. Therefore, it must be emphasized that my conceptualization of SSD's organizational embodiment is close to the bureaucratic and institutional perspective of this article. The first reason is that SSD is a result of the level of analysis and is subject to the empirical context of origin of Guston's concept, namely the history of science policy in twentieth-century USA. Although Guston explicitly has argued that the concept is applicable to international organizations and its changing intellectual outlook several times. But still we do not know very well about the organizational aspects of UNESCO'S earlier Network Department. How were the internal organizational structures on the IS level structured in the UNESCO; how do we know about the international administrative structure shaped and embedded in relation to individual and collective action? And how did the institutionalized relationship between organizational structure and individual action change over time?

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With these revisions taken into account, however, I argue that the concept of "international boundary organization" offers a systematic approach with a specific set of tools that heuristically highlight and analytically connect a number of central but seemingly disparate organizational themes within SSD, such as the relationship between science and politics, the problem of collaboration across social worlds, the importance of workable boundary objects, and the organizational structuration of agency spaces. Furthermore, it will help us to discern and analyze four relatively distinct phases during the period, all marked by organizational changes that not only affected the formal conditions for SSD's activities, but also set restrictions for what was possible to initiate and achieve and hence also had an impact on its direction and contents. Taken as a whole, it will be argued that UNESCO's SSD during the period was principally transformed from a relatively independent transnational organization, which shared the optimistic vision of one-worldism, to an intergovernmental organization considerably more open and vulnerable to external geopolitical pressures.

In the following sections, SSD's development during the four phases – labeled "visionary creation" (1946), "organizational problems" (1947–1949), "restitution and consolidation" (1950–1952) and "geopolitical reorganization" (1953–1955) – will be characterized and analysed. The paper ends with a concluding section which summarizes the most important changes with regard to the identified organizational structuration of agency spaces and discusses some theoretical implications when analysing SSD as an international boundary organization.

**The Visionary Creation, 1946**

The birth of the SSD at UNESCO's first General Conference in Paris in 1946 might give the impression that its character as an international boundary organization that mediated and stabilized the boundary between science and politics was more or less given from the very beginning. This was however far from the case. As this section will show, both UNESCO and its SSD emerged out of a primarily political initiative, where the "scientific" component – the "S" in UNESCO – was not included until late in the process. And if the presence and position of the natural sciences were insecure for a long time, this was even more true for the social sciences.

A second point to be emphasized during this founding phase is the importance of complementing Guston's stability-centered concept with a perspective that is more sensitive to the formation of epistemic networks to better understand the dynamics involved in the creation of SSD. The multifaceted pre-history of UNESCO can of course be narrated in several ways, with emphasis on the dynamics of the broader geopolitical context or on different sets of actors, intellectual traditions and sources of origin. In this article, with its focus on the organizational aspects, the retrospective perspective will be restricted to the formative importance of the First Conference of the Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) which took place in London 16 November – 5 December 1942. The red thread connecting this conference initiative with four subsequent meetings – the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) in San Francisco in April 1945; the UNESCO Founding Conference in London in November 1945; the creation of UNESCO's Preparatory Commission, also in London, shortly after the Founding Conference; and finally, the question about the impact of structures on individual action into two empirically investigable research questions, the first being in what way the organizational structuration defined the agency spaces on different levels, whereas the other and quite different question is how the actors on these levels actually made use of the agency spaces available.
UNESCO's inaugural General Conference in Paris – has been analyzed in detail in earlier accounts (F.R. Cowell 1966; Boll De Capelle 1975; Sewell 1975). To this series of conferences we can add a number of complementary organizational initiatives. Like the preceding Commission for Educational Cooperation and Culture, the International Bureau of Education remained the central agency of the League of Nations' International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, the non-governmental International Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). UNESCO's founding conference in Paris, in the context of the post-war reconstruction, had as its explicit aim the establishment of an "international educational organization based on bilateral agreements between the Allied nations of education," now explicitly named, in the particular geopolitical setting – where the initiative in the international education sphere was shifting back and forth between the leading delegations of the United Kingdom, United States and France – and that the zone in explicit focus from the beginning was education (Hilakari union, 1945; Boll De Capelle 1975: 11–12). The idea of an international educational organization based on bilateral agreements, encompassing education as well as science and culture, did not appear until later during the process. By the start of the Founding Conference in London on 1 November 1945, “science” had still not found its place in the plans, as revealed by the full name of the meeting, “Conference of the United Nations for the Establishment of an International Organization for Education and Culture” (Boll De Capelle 1975: 11; Sewell 1975: 12; Lengyel 1986: 11). Instead it was during the two-week long conference that “science” was added to UNESCO’s name, as “International Organization for Education and Cultural Cooperation.” Many in the delegations of the European states, however, feared that it might be extended to “education” and “science” and hence contribute to the establishment of a new world order to be created.

It was clear from the start of the Founding Conference in London, in the first days of the meeting, that the majority of a unified world could not be realized in their most optimistic, internationalist articulations, including UNESCO’s famous preamble. Some were hopeful on the minds of men. It is the minds of men that the decisions of peace must be constructed. “The following thought together and devoted to the advancement of all sorts, from modern proponents of international understanding to radical advocates of world government. Filling the air with expressions about “international cooperation,” “international understanding,” and the “present and future system of supranational cooperation,” as well as more far-reaching hopes about “the solidarity of all peoples,” “universal peace” and “the world […] as a single unit,” where science and society would be harmoniously co-produced with the help of UNESCO, almost filling the function of a “world parliament” and hence contribute to “a new world order to be created.”

These optimistic visions colored not only the debates, but also the concrete organizational proposals. These included an annual general conference open to all National Commissions and international non-governmental organizations, as well as the cosmopolitan principles that the
Executive Board, the Diwaniyat and the Secretariat parts should be acknowledged by presence in an official capacity and based on their individual institutional matrix. These proposals were endorsed at last by Huxley, who, like several other heading parts in the original proposal, had been spared from the usual SEC/ECO welfare. The UN Avicenna observes a few amendments and recommendations made by the intergovernmental structure (Economia 1964: 19). On the last day of the conference, the UNESCO constitution was signed, which has been described as “the last great manifesto of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, a utopian document reflecting fervid belief in education, science and reason” (DeBellevue 2012: 4).

In the preparatory phase, the initial instructions from UNESCO’s Deputy Executive Secretary Howard E. Wilson, Julian Huxley’s right hand man, resulted in the following document, entitled “Discussion Paper” (Elzinga 1996b: 169). It was finished in early June, three weeks before and discussed at the General Conference in Paris. The preparatory discussions, including the central role of SSD for UNESCO at large:

In it several programmatic arguments appeared that would recur in the subsequent discussions, including the overall role of SSD for UNESCO at large. This proposal was also linked to the UNESCO’s idealogy and organizational structure (Elzinga 1996b: 169). Consequently, it is within the organizational context of UNESCO’s formation with its optimistic and almost utopian perspective that is more sensitive to the central group of actors and their formation as an “epistemic community” (Christ 1999; Cross 2013), as well as how this network was positioned hierarchically within the organization and in the program-making process (Croppe and 2012). This will show our attention to the small and relatively anonymous group of scholars set up during the spring of 1946, which was constituted the so-called “Social Service Institute” of the Preparatory Commission Secretariat, based in Belgrave Square in London. The group was headed by a social geographer trained in London and Liverpool, Mohamed Bey Awad, an Egyptian scholar in the USA. One of the very first tasks was to produce a “discussion paper” to be made available to the Secretariat and the Executive Board, the Directorship and the Secretariat posts occupied by persons in an intergovernmental structure (Economia 1964: 19). On the last day of the conference, the UNESCO constitution was signed, which has been described as “the last great manifesto of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, a utopian document reflecting fervid belief in education, science and reason.”

Although Awad was the Senior Counsellor, the available records suggest that Martin and Brodersen played a more important role in the preliminary plan, which was drafted in London, where Awad received the initial instructions from UNESCO’s Deputy Executive Secretary Howard E. Wilson, Julian Huxley’s right hand man in the Preparatory Commission. The instructions included a preliminary plan, months before, for the preparation of the social science activities, together with a suggestion on how the section could be organized — one of the very first tasks was to produce a “discussion paper” to be provoked into discussion at the General Conference in Paris. In early June, this nine-page paper entitled “The Social Sciences in Modern Society,” was finished in one step. In it several programmatic arguments appeared that would recur in the subsequent discussions, including the overall role of SSD for UNESCO at large. By his side Awad had two Counsellors, the British economist Percival W. Martin, with a background from the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Norwegian sociologist Arvid Brodersen, who had a PhD from Berlin and experience as a Rockefeller scholar in the USA.

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The social sciences have a peculiarly close relation to the total program of UNESCO. [...] It is impossible to develop a sound and realistic program in the social sciences for UNESCO in separation from the total UNESCO program. In some ways UNESCO is itself a phenomenon in the field of the social sciences. [...] It is a responsibility of UNESCO not only to serve the established disciplines, fundamental as that is but also to aid in formulating new syntheses of social analysis based on the human experience and problems, hopes and fears involved in living in "one world." 15

The discussion paper was presented at a meeting of the Social Sciences Committee of the Preparatory Commission in London on 13–14 June 1946. Attached as an Appendix to the paper was a three-page list of proposals from a number of governmental advisory bodies, social science organizations, individual experts and other interested people and groups, who had been invited to submit suggestions regarding the coming work of the social science section. 16

In the next step the social science program was included in the draft “Report of the Preparatory Commission on the Programme of UNESCO”, which was delivered in September 1946, in preparation of the coming General Conference. By then, however, the social sciences had been grouped together with philosophy and humanistic studies and integrated under the chapter heading of “The Human Sciences”. 18

As a consequence of the Report of the Preparatory Commission's Programme Committee, the social sciences were by the time of the Paris General Conference grouped together with philosophy and humanistic studies in the programme, although not under the heading of “Human Sciences”, but in the session of the “Sub-Commission on Social Sciences, Philosophy and Humanistic Studies”. (The first session of the Sub-Committee on Thursday morning, 28 November 1946, was introduced by an explicit note from the General Conference that it “very strongly recommends that the programmed sub-committees should not set up new sub-committees”.)
Ironically, the very question about the relation between social sciences, philosophy and humanities immediately became the topic of lengthy discussions. The existing debate concerned whether the three areas should be organisationally kept together or divided into two or more sections. A number of delegates considered that philosophy and humanities should be kept together, whereas others that social sciences could be grouped together with the natural sciences under the heading of “science”. A third option emphasized the affinity between philosophy and social sciences, whereas a fourth proposal spoke in favor of a broad conceptualization of sciences, in accordance with German terminology, which included the exact as well as the social and humanistic sciences. Yet another delegate suggested that the whole issue of classification and division should be postponed and that UNESCO, once it had commenced its work, could bring it up once in one year. At this stage of the discussion, Julian Huxley in his capacity as Executive Secretary modestly interjected and proposed “to come up with what we are doing in the purely administrative and procedural areas and to specify the requirements of the administrative body to separate the social sciences section from the section on human philosophy.” And in it was added that the social sciences should be a separate section, whereas philosophy and humanities should be integrated into one section. The idea of creating three separate sections was rejected, and the resolution was adopted by 30 votes to 1.

Some delegates emphasized that in accordance with the formal power structures and the organizational instructions for UNESCO’s SSD during this initial phase was how UNESCO’s SSD during this initial phase was conceived, and the Director-General responsible for developing an efficient organization and for adapting it to changing programs and needs. Furthermore, which we will
have reason to go into more detail in the next section, the Heads or Program Directors of the different departments “were to be responsible directly to the Director-General” and “be assigned in his field the functions of research, stimulation of services, liaison and operation”.22

**ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS, 1947–1950**

Once the organizational structure of UNESCO had been settled – initially with eight different program sections: Education, Natural Sciences, Philosophy & Humanistic Studies, Museum, Libraries, Social Sciences, Arts & Letters, Mass Communication – it was time to translate UNESCO’s visionary constitution into practice and to start organizing the internal program work of the individual sections.23 For that purpose directly after the General Conference Julian Huxley called for a first Heads of Sections meeting on 15 January 1947, at which SSD, then formally the Social Sciences Section, was represented by Awad.24 However, to launch a large and completely new organization was easier said than done. The delicate task, as described by Léon Blum at the General Conference, was to “put into operation a very complicated administrative system” and to remain “true to the great ideas and ideals which inspired its creation”, while at the same time avoiding the risk, pointed out by the Preparatory Commission, of the UNESCO Secretariat becoming “an isolated bureaucracy”.25

On the departmental level the task was not much easier. These HSR’s two most pressing questions were, according to Brodersen (1956: 401), “how to translate the general ideas and principles of the constitution into specific objectives in the field of social sciences; and how to design in line with these policy objectives, concrete projects according to priorities of urgency and importance, at the same time adjusting them realistically to existing conditions of implementation.” Added to this was the general challenge of fostering cooperation in spite of the many heterogeneous participants involved, that is, to manage collective action across social worlds and to achieve enough agreement to get work done, as to speak with Guston’s terminology, to provide a space for the creation of workable boundary objects (Guston 1999: 93, 2000: 109; c.f. Star & Griesemer 1989: 387; Fujimura 1992: 168). During this second phase, as we will see, UNESCO’s SSD confronted several practical problems due, among other things, to organizational instability, institutional overlapping and inadequate boundary objects.

22 UNESCO/CR/30 [Records from GC Paris]”Annex III: Report on Organisation of the Secretariat”: 254-5. In terms of recruitment, the Director-General was the only post elected by the General Conference on the recommendation of the Executive Board, while all other positions, the programme directors included, were formally employed by the Director-General. See UNESCO Preparatory Commission, Report on Programme, 15 Sept 1946: 27.


levels. On the general UNESCO level, Julian Huxley was the one who laid the practical foundation work during this early phase. The way he set his mark on the organization with its visionary cornerstone — combined with his unique work on a world cosmic foundation, global in spatial and temporal terms, and maintained through his personal contacts, the vision of internationalism — and his energetic and forthright style of heading UNESCO's attempts to make sense and the idea of a world society, have been analyzed by several scholars. But since his thoughts — especially his materialisms — were controversial, Shushan's mandate had been restricted to only two years instead of the constitutional one (Sewell 1970: 95–97; Toye & Toye 1977: 42).

Hence, already at the General Conference in Beirut in December 1946, Huxley was succeeded by the Mexican lawyer and former Secretary and education minister Jaime Torres Bodet, who was elected for six years with an overwhelming majority of votes (Sewell 1975: 136). Although Huxley and Torres Bodet shared many visions, for instance, on the role of education, and their inspiring split-off into the whole organizations, there were also significant changes marking UNESCO's first five years of practical work (see Sewell 1970: 95–97; Brodersen 1982: 258). From only one year in the office, Torres Bodet expanded the acute situation caused by the rapid expansion of the organization. In the last six months of 1946, almost ten new staff members had been recruited (marking an increase from 717 to 810). This meant that more than half of the budget (50%) went directly to wages and had caused signs of overstrain among the personnel. Torres Bodet complained and summarized: "We have been so occupied with reporting on the past and preparing for the future that we have scarcely had time to do anything in the present." (Domínguez & Torres Bodet 1955: 2).

On the departmental level, lack of steady leadership caused an even greater problem. During UNESCO's first four years there was a succession of no less than four different Heads. Mohand Bey Ahmed, who had led the work in the preparatory fiscal bureau headquartered in Senior Foreman's Unit in 1946, held the position of Head for only a few weeks after the General Conference in Paris. The transition to Arvid Brodersen was however a smooth one, since he too, as mentioned, had been in the preparatory Secretariat. Brodersen stayed for two and a half years, from early 1947 until August 1949, when he moved to a post as Professor of Sociology at the New School for Social Research in New York. However, only three months later, in late October, Ahmed suddenly died. In that situation, the American sociologist Robert Cottrell Angel, who was currently directing SSD's "Research Project," volunteered as Acting Head for UNESCO for six years with a half of the budget (56%) going directly to wages and having caused signs of overstrain among the personnel. Torres Bodet complained and summarized: "We have been so occupied with reporting on the past and preparing for the future that we have scarcely had time to do anything in the present." (Domínguez & Torres Bodet 1955: 2).

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Like UNESCO at large, SSD too expanded during the decade. However, as one of the smallest departments throughout the period in terms of workforce and budget, this did not cause a problem in the same way as in the general UNESCO level. The basic organizational principles, as the administrative staff was organized into four divisions – with a head (Office 1 Acting Head + 3 administrative), “Tensions Affecting International Understanding” (5 Head of Project + 2 Program Specialists + 1 Program Assistant + 1 Junior Analyst + 2 Secretaries), “Studies of International Organizations” (1 Head of Project + 2 Program Specialists + 1 Junior Analyst + 2 Secretaries), “Methods in Political Science” (1 Programme Specialist + 1 Program Assistant + 1 Junior Analyst + 2 Secretaries), “Study of International Processes” (1 Program Assistant + 1 Junior Analyst + 2 Secretaries), “Tensions Affecting International Understanding”, and “Methods in Political Science” – seemed not to have posed a problem. However in the early stage, SSD was too small to motivate an internal structure with separate divisions, that is, “what scope and role was to be assigned to UNESCO generally, and to its Department of Social Science (SSD) in particular, within the United Nations group” (Lengyel 1986: 3). Although UNESCO’s contribution strongly encouraged organizational collaboration with the UN as well as other intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations whose interests and activities overlapped with UNESCO’s. Some of these organizations were the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and WHO as well as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) formed at an early stage in 1947, for instance, UNESCO’s Social Department planned to set up a whole Educational, Scientific and cultural Division – which would have completely duplicated UNESCO’s existing scope – while UNESCO in its recent report to the ECOSOC recommended that UN should have an exclusively coordinating interagency function and not a program implementation role (Boel 2016: 155). For SSD these organizational overlaps meant that only pilot projects were sometimes abandoned in order to avoid violating similar initiatives under consideration by other UN agencies.

Another crucial and – as it would turn out – recurrent problem, emerging from the complicated UN context with its different levels, was concerned with organizational overlapping, that is, “what scope and role was to be assigned to UNESCO generally, and to its Department of Social Science (SSD) in particular, within the United Nations group” (Lengyel 1986: 3). Although UNESCO’s contribution strongly encouraged organizational collaboration with the UN as well as other intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations whose interests and activities overlapped with UNESCO’s. Some of these organizations were the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and WHO as well as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) formed at an early stage in 1947, for instance, UNESCO’s Social Department planned to set up a whole Educational, Scientific and cultural Division – which would have completely duplicated UNESCO’s existing scope – while UNESCO in its recent report to the ECOSOC recommended that UN should have an exclusively coordinating interagency function and not a program implementation role (Boel 2016: 155). For SSD these organizational overlaps meant that only pilot projects were sometimes abandoned in order to avoid violating similar initiatives under consideration by other UN agencies.
An even more central and fundamental problem concerned the object of SSD itself: “It rapidly became clear that the very expression ‘social science’ meant quite different things in different countries,” admitted in the very first issue of International Social Science Bulletin. Interpreted with David Guston, the SSD’s organizational problems in general and the conceptual disagreements in particular during this early phase, may well be understood as a lack of necessary boundary objects, that is, common objectives agile enough to offer shared reference frames for the heterogeneous participants and different traditions involved, and robust enough to make successful collective action possible (Star, 1989: 138, cited in Star & Griesemer, 1989: 37). Hence, when the first issue of International Social Science Bulletin was launched in July 1949, the editorial admitted that “the social sciences of various countries are still to a large extent difficult to get under way.” (ISSB 1949: 9).

In spite of these problems, several activities were initiated during this phase—although Brodersen admits that the projects often were “rather loosely coordinated” and indicated from a propagandistic “blue-print” approach, covering vast ground by minor attacks in many different directions (Brodersen 1949, 1952, cited in Star & Griesemer, 1989: 37). Among these projects were first and foremost the mentioned “Tensions Project”, 1950 described as the “oldest and largest undertaking of the Social Science Department” investigating “the factors in the human mind and in cultures and societies which positively or negatively affect international understanding and peace” (ISSB 1949: 36).

Originally named “Tensions Crucial to Peace”, the project was renamed several times over the years—from “Tensions Crucial to Peace”, through “Tensions Leading to War”, “Tensions Affecting International Understanding”, to “Studien der Sozialwissenschaften”—in a way that reveals its successively displaced focus from the psychological purpose of war to questions about how to foster peace and thus to more general questions about international understanding.
Wisselgren, UNESCO


(Rangil 2011: 8n10). However, although it was founded in 1948, but did not belong organizationally to the SSD but to the Philosophy and Humanistic Studies Section, although it later, from 1952, was represented in the ISSC.

Relatively soon, however, it became clear to Brodersen and the SSD Secretariat that the most robust way to help the social scientists of all countries develop ways and means by which they could best cooperate with each other so as to increase the scientific strength on a world-wide scale would be to establish comprehensive networks of what they referred to as “single-disciplined bodies”, that is, separate international associations for each discipline. A list of its most important participants over the years is included several meta-studies on international collaborations. It became an integral part of UNESCO’s social science program in the early years and resulted among other things in a special issue of the International Social Science Bulletin on the “The Technique of International Conferences” and a book on Program-Making in Economic Science 1946–1952 by the American professor of public administration Charles A. Kindleberger.

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...
establishment of contacts, by correspondence and face to face, with men and women of the profession wherever they could be reached. (Brodersen 1956: 403-404)

By bringing together prominent and engaged international social scientists and by providing a new transnational platform, collaborations and gradually extended networks, partly institutionalized in new professional associations, UNESCO's SSD contributed with what one of the staff members called the "international spade-work concerning the infrastructure" (Franz 1969: 407). Although this "essential part of the initial groundwork" for international social sciences, according to Brodersen (1956: 404), "the international spade-work was in a long-term and large-scale operation", it is still worth noting that the "infrastructure" was laid down in its central junction, the United States, which was "centered in the USA", as Selcer (2009: 314, 317) observes, usually with a rotating series of American scholars in the central posts as research leaders or presidents of the international associations, whereas the operational secretary functions often went to Europeans, hence establishing a structural trans-Atlantic beam. A second pattern is that the emerging international social science was built on discipline-based organizational structures, and of the disciplines contemporary American social psychology and public administration in particular served as models (c.f. Backhouse & Fontaine 2010: 207-216). Third, the "international" component of SSD's enterprise was largely implicitly interpreted in terms of a relatively one-way directed social knowledge transfer across the Atlantic to different countries in Europe and other parts of the world (c.f. Myrdal 1951).

The foundation laid during Brodersen's term was further ordered by Robert Angell during his period as Acting Head of SSD, with an even more marked disciplinary approach, a slight sociological twist, and an even stronger emphasis on American research. In late December 1949, for example, Angell in his double role as Acting Head of SSD and Director of the Tensions Project gave a speech to the American Sociological Society – an association that he would become the President of only one year later – that was published in American Sociological Review – a journal that he had been editing during the previous three years (1946-48). In the speech he did not regard the American dominance within SSD as a problem, but quite the opposite as a risk if his colleagues failed to contribute to UNESCO: "There is always the danger that an international secretariat will become isolated from the most dynamic currents of research." Another of UNESCO's problems, pointed out by Angell, concerned its lack of organizational stability and short planning horizons: "the grouping of studies within the Social Science Department has shifted between 1949 and 1950, and threatens to shift again between 1950 and 1951" (Angell 1950: 282). He probably did not know by then how right he would be about this forecast only a few months later.

REVITALIZATION AND CONSOLIDATION, 1950–1953

From around 1950 a new phase in SSD's early history is discernible, characterized by both revitalization and organizational consolidation. Although several practical outcomes during this phase emanated from the previous period, there were also a broad and varied range of new developments.
When Gunnar Myrdal started to outline the plans for SSD’s programme for the coming years in January 1951, he typed a manuscript entitled “The Cost of National Isolation in the Social Sciences.” In this programmatic work, Myrdal was well prepared and immediately started to outline the plans for SSD’s programme for the coming years. In January 1951, he typed a manuscript entitled “The Cost of National Isolation in the Social Sciences.” In this programmatic...
Myrdal problematized the “immaturity of the social sciences” and the lack of “international pooling”, which according to him were evident in a newly articulated “system of stimulation between social science development in different countries”. In this situation, Myrdal emphasized the need for “internationalism” that would allow the creation of new fields of knowledge and the exchange of researchers, which resulted in a minor cascade of publications from 1950 and onwards. He believed that this discipline-based internationalism was complemented by a more interdisciplinary and polycentric approach, as evidenced in his early manuscript “The Cost of National Isolation in the Social Sciences”, presented in New York in 1955. However, this early manuscript was highly important as it just consisted in bringing individuals and institutions together to foster the exchange of knowledge and ideas. In this situation, Myrdal envisioned an “international focus that maximizes both the similarities and differences between social science developments in different countries”. In this situation, Myrdal envisioned “internationalism, as expressed in this early manuscript, basically continued intact during her term as Director — although some minor displacements are discernible during the latter half of the period.”

In comparison with Brodersen and Angell, there are both important similarities and differences. All three were in agreement that contemporary U.S. social science was a model. In a lecture held in New York in 1955, for instance, Myrdal suggested that “as advances in social science might be America’s greatest gift to the rest of the world” (Myrdal 1955: 144, index in original). In fact, it is in contrast to Brodersen’s “single-discipline” strategy and Angell’s promotion of U.S. sociology, that Myrdal’s appeal to internationalism always remained truly interdisciplinary in her problem-oriented approach. In that sense she both followed in the footsteps of Brodersen and Angell and refined and partly redirected the scope of SSD. Despite the many activities of SSD during this phase forming a pattern that mirrors both the similarities and differences between, on the one hand, Brodersen’s and Angell’s discipline-based and U.S.-oriented international social science and, on the other, Myrdal’s U.S.-focused and proponent social scientific internationalization as well as her more interdisciplinary and polycentric approach.

Among the initiatives inherited from the previous phase were, as mentioned, the creation of the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and the International Union of Social Science Organizations (IUSO). These new efforts were accompanied by their counterparts in comparative law (ICLA 1950) and population studies (IUSSP 1951). More significant though was the creation of IUSO, as it suggested that this discipline-based institutional infrastructure was complemented in 1958 by a new organization when the International Social Science Council (ISSC) was set up as an interdisciplinary coordinating body which was, according to Langley (1986: 20), “the clearest more-than ever other formal efforts to internationalize social science.”

In similar ways, SSD’s first major effort from the early years, the loose-knit Tension Project, bore fruit and resulted in a minor cascade of publications from 1950 and onwards (see Lengyel 1986: 41). In the same way these publications partly marked the end of a dominant social psychological paradigm, which during the period was smoothly phased out in the U.S. during the period.
a displacement of SSD's focus from questions concerned with the origin of warfare to more general issues on international welfare. From 1950, research SSD became involved in the so-called Technical Assistance (TA) program, an extension of US efforts launched on aid for economic development. However, the SSD's activities were also mirrored in SSD's internal organization with separate divisions for statistical, social science, international science and applied social science divisions. The reason was that the TA program assigned the social sciences in general and anthropologists in particular a key role, especially after Margaret Mead's influential 1956 report on Cultural Patterns and Technical Change, which emphasized the "danger of technical assistance" if it was not combined with a deeper knowledge and understanding of local cultures and societies.\(^1\)

Another project founded and prepared before Myrdal entered UNESCO was the project on race and discrimination, initiated by Amaia Romea and others, which resulted in a UNESCO conference in 1950 and the book series "The Race Question in Modern Science." This was accompanied by new anti-discrimination initiatives by SSD on women's political role and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women project 1952–53 – all of which Myrdal advocated behind the scenes – as well as more general population and welfare-oriented projects.\(^2\)

Before 1950 most of SSD's activities had been centered along the transatlantic axis concerning US social research and the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. In 1951, a first social science field mission was organized, and during the period social science officers were being attached to the already existing UNESCO Science Cooperation Offices in New Delhi and Cairo set up under Joseph Needham's pioneering directorship in the Natural Sciences Department (Franz 2001: Hölhö 1990: Potjeva 2007). Other initiatives aimed at strengthening the international infrastructure of the social sciences, included a country-wise survey of university teaching in the social sciences, documentary services, terminological issues and several journals (Métraux 1955: 44; Lengyel 1986: 2; Rangil 2011: 8). These initiatives were also attended in SSD's annual organization with separate divisions for "Art and International Scientific Cooperation" and "Women's Cooperation office", respectively.

Taken as a whole, during Myrdal's directorship SSD expanded its staff from several ten people in 1949, to more twenty staff members in 1951, and to more than forty people in 1955.\(^3\) The budget expanded accordingly, from less than $300,000 in 1949, to somewhat over half a million in 1955, and over three-quarters of a million by 1956 expanded accordingly, from less than $300,000 in 1949, to somewhat over half a million in 1955, and over three-quarters of a million by 1956.

\(^1\) Rangil (2011: 7) focuses on the SSRG's political role of women, especially after Margaret Mead's influential 1956 report on Cultural Patterns and Technical Change, which emphasized the "danger of technical assistance" if it was not combined with a deeper knowledge and understanding of local cultures and societies.


\(^3\) The most exact numbers depend on which staff categories are included. Rough came (1) persons on the permanent staff, and counts less than 12 in 1951, 24 in 1952; 48 in 1955-56, and over half a million in 1955-56; 53 in 1959. The expansion by 1956 is primarily explained by the inclusion of a whole new division, besides the "applied social science" and "international scientific collaboration" divisions.

References:
- Friedrich, Social Science Program, 1951.
- Venkateswarlu, 1955.
- K. M. Basu, Women, guest.
- Friedrich, Social Science Program, 1951.
- Venkateswarlu, 1955.
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- Friedrich, Social Science Program, 1951.
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oriented Tensions Project was replaced by activities related to the more anthropologically-oriented Technical Assistance program as its major undertaking.

Viewed through the lens of Glisson's definition of boundary organizations – as mediating and stabilizing institutions, characterized by different worlds participation, variable boundary objects, and interaction of authority between principal and agents – and my additional revisions as mentioned in the introduction, I argue that SSH during this phase, and is marked distinct from the previous one, stood out as an almost ideal (and international boundary) organization by late 1952. However, as in note 68 et al. (1952) point out, Glisson is not always clear about what it is that makes a boundary organization recognizable. To answer that question, Glisson et al. characterize the SSH as mediating and stabilizing institutions, characterized by different worlds participation, variable boundary objects, and interaction of authority between principal and agents, among divergent interests, while maintaining a committed focus on science, but also that stability should be seen as "a process of transition rather than a measure of it" (Glisson et al. 1952: 376, 392, 393). My point here is that these two latter voices should encourage us to open the door to alternative interpretations and to avoid too simplistic explanations that reduce the question about organizational change to the role of single actors, either in leadership positions.

This gives us a reason, at this stage of the argument, to regard the notion of agency space as an analytical tool. I suggest that the notion lends us to avoid both the scope of structuralist reduction and the lack of methodological individualism. Instead, "agency space", as a middle-range concept, reiterates the altered relationship between situations and actors into two empirically investigable research questions. First, how did the organizational changes affect the agency spaces available (in this case on the level of director of SSH)? Second, how did the (in this case Myrdal) actually make use of this agency space? This rephramed the first question draws our attention to the relatively wide agency space available during UNESCO's early years, including when Myrdal assumed the post of SSH's Director. Both Leith and Torres Bodet were supporters of the "reductionist and charybdis of methodological individualism", and Myrdal characterized the agency space available as mediating and stabilizing institutions, characterized by different worlds participation, variable boundary objects, and interaction of authority between principal and agents. Thus, the SSH is characterized by "group dynamics emerging from expert meetings or conferences" and characterized

1. See note 68. 
2. See note 7.

165
by “a probing flexibility,” based on the fact that “UNESCO was not yet a highly centralized institution” (Lengyel 1986: 18). The second and quite different question, then, is how the individuals in the organization actually made use of these agency spaces. For some, like Brodersen, that freedom was rather seen as a lack of clear and workable guidelines; amplified by a problematic gap between strategic logics and practical concrete action. For others, like Alva Myrdal, the very same gap probably appeared as a challenging opportunity space. When entering UNESCO, or at a stage when it had suffered from several organizational problems that had been recognized by a lack of firm leadership, it could be a somewhat easier task to get the organizational role that she had been prepared for. That said, Myrdal indeed took the chance to bring in new ideas, new energy and enthusiasm to various levels of the organization, partly as a result of her experience from the UN level, in order to transform it into practice, and to introduce new working routines. Among the latter ones are, I argue, her cross-organizational-collaborative approach and her skills in understanding diverse interests and activities in multiple domains – what Miller (2000: 87) calls “hybrid management” – partly based on her experience from working in similar boundary organizations, both international ones (at the UN) and domestic ones (in Sweden). In a private letter to the Swedish Minister of Social Affairs, for instance, she explicitly referred to her long experience from a number of domestic Royal Commissions that she had participated in during the interwar period and wrote: “All that I ever learned from commission work in Sweden has now come to use”, including how to mediate among different groups of interests and how to plan and coordinate action in an efficient way. Even more important, though, is that she did not introduce this cross-cultural management in an opportunistic way, but rather as a way to transform the SSD as an international boundary organization, partly because of the ingredients that she brought from her experience at the UN, and partly because of the opportunities that she saw in the specific challenges of working at the SSD. Myrdal’s interest in organizational transformation and innovation, in other words, was partly based on the fact that “UNESCO was not yet a highly centralized institution” (Lengyel 1986: 18). The second and quite different question, then, is how the individuals in the organization actually made use of these agency spaces. For some, like Brodersen, that freedom was rather seen as a lack of clear and workable guidelines; amplified by a problematic gap between strategic logics and practical concrete action. For others, like Alva Myrdal, the very same gap probably appeared as a challenging opportunity space. When entering UNESCO, or at a stage when it had suffered from several organizational problems that had been recognized by a lack of firm leadership, it could be a somewhat easier task to get the organizational role that she had been prepared for. That said, Myrdal indeed took the chance to bring in new ideas, new energy and enthusiasm to various levels of the organization, partly as a result of her experience from the UN level, in order to transform it into practice, and to introduce new working routines. Among the latter ones are, I argue, her cross-organizational-collaborative approach and her skills in understanding diverse interests and activities in multiple domains – what Miller (2000: 87) calls “hybrid management” – partly based on her experience from working in similar boundary organizations, both international ones (at the UN) and domestic ones (in Sweden). In a private letter to the Swedish Minister of Social Affairs, for instance, she explicitly referred to her long experience from a number of domestic Royal Commissions that she had participated in during the interwar period and wrote: “All that I ever learned from commission work in Sweden has now come to use”, including how to mediate among different groups of interests and how to plan and coordinate action in an efficient way. Even more important, though, is that she did not introduce this cross-cultural management in an opportunistic way, but rather as a way to transform the SSD as an international boundary organization, partly because of the ingredients that she brought from her experience at the UN, and partly because of the opportunities that she saw in the specific challenges of working at the SSD. Myrdal’s interest in organizational transformation and innovation, in other words, was partly based on the fact that “UNESCO was not yet a highly centralized institution” (Lengyel 1986: 18).
in that respect, the following phases will show that the achieved stability was not that long-lasting after all.

**GEOPOLITICAL RE-ORGANIZATION, 1953–1955**

Roughly by the time of Alva Myrdal's mentioned positive self-assessment in late November 1952, a significant multilateral transformation of UNESCO's SSD was initiated from above and partly outside the organization. During the following seven months a complicated chain of events evolved in which three of the most significant manifestations were Jaime Torres Bodet's early resignation as Director-General of the U.S. Government's introduction of an International Organizations Employees Loyalty Board, and the installation of Luther Evans as new Director-General. Together these changes laid the ground for two direct and seemingly minor constitutional amendments of the UNESCO Statutes at the Montevideo General Conference in November 1954. The two amendments not only the relative autonomy of SSD in general and the agency space of its Director in particular, but also the organizational status of UNESCO at large as well as its crucial principal-agent relations.

Jaime Torres Bodet's declaration of his early resignation as UNESCO's Director-General at the General Conference in Paris on 22 November 1952, one year before his mandate elapsed, did not come as a total surprise. Although Torres Bodet had had broad and strong support when he succeeded Huxley as Director-General in Beirut in 1948, there had been a growing conflict between Torres Bodet's energetic visions for UNESCO and some of the most important financial supporting member states.

Already at the conference in Florence in 1950, Torres Bodet planned to resign with reference to the budgetary restrictions and an emerging critique against his way of leading the organization. At that time, in Florence, he was persuaded to stay on. When the issue about the budgetary needs of UNESCO resurfaced in 1952—when Torres Bodet had asked for $20 million but was confronted by a cutback of the budget of 7.8 per cent and the introduction of a provisional budget ceiling proposed by the Delegations of USA, United Kingdom and France—he saw no other recourse than to resign his post.

There were of course two sides of the coin. From Torres Bodet's point of view, he had been recruited to the organization with a long suitable merit list, including a term as Minister of Education in the Mexican government where he had led a successful campaign against illiteracy. He had also been an ardent advocate of both the UN and UNESCO, which he had followed closely at the CAME and Founding conferences, and in them saw "the noblest and most important [initiatives] that men have been able to conceive" (quoted from Sewell 1975: 128–130; cf. Petitjean 2006: 31). When approached as a nominee, he had also spoken in favor of a more concentrated program—a plan which he partly followed with the large "Fundamental Education" program. Nevertheless, as UNESCO's work and not least the world had evolved, the budget question was of principle importance since programs had to be expanded if UNESCO was to advance. In this situation, Torres Bodet motivated his resignation: "You had the choice of three possibilities:..."
regression, stabilization, and development. You have chosen regression,” (quoted from Sewell 1975: 73).

The U.S. Government, represented by the U.S. National Commission, was on the other hand, less from the very beginning been one of the most substantial funders of UNESCO. In 1945, for instance, the USA contributed 24 per cent of UNESCO’s total budget, and together with the shares of the United Kingdom and France, accounting to 14 and 7 per cent respectively, two thirds of the whole budget. Over the years the U.S. share monotonously declined, to 5 per cent in 1950 and to one third in 1955. For the first years of life it was not reasonable for these National Commissions to expect that their opinions should be paid relative weight. Rather, it shall be a surprise that they were even listened to at all. It was an era where everything was possible, even if it was not necessarily sanctioned by the consent of the money, including the inherent argument that UNESCO’s program should concentrate on a smaller number of major projects rather than be spread out over numerous smaller ones (see Düring 1953: 11, 15). Partly because of this both the U.S. and the French, as well as the British, delegations had been skeptical about Julian Huxley’s energetic but also ambitious – and very costly – visions. In that sense, Torres Bodet followed the footsteps of Huxley (Sewell 1975: 17).

But there were more factors other than the monetary aspects playing a role. On the geopolitical level, Torres Bodet was greatly annoyed by the fact that the U.S. National Commission (an umbrella organization for all U.S. agencies) had been skeptical of the UNESCO budget. The U.S. National Commission, represented by the U.S. State Department, led by the U.S. National Commission, as the U.S. National Commission, had been critical of the UNESCO budget. They were critical of the UNESCO budget. In that sense, Torres Bodet followed the footsteps of Huxley (Sewell 1975: 17).

On this point there was a direct confrontation with the U.S. Government and the U.S. Delegation which since the very inception had spoken in favor of an internationalism based on nation states as the basic units and actors, for which the international organizations were primarily a means for

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62 On the close relation between the U.S. National Commission and the U.S. State Department, see Sewell 1975: 73.
63 Jaime Torres Bodet was a strong proponent of Julian Huxley’s energetic but also ambitious – and very costly – visions. In that sense, Torres Bodet followed the footsteps of Huxley (Sewell 1975: 17).
64 Jaime Torres Bodet was greatly annoyed by the fact that the U.S. National Commission had been skeptical of the UNESCO budget. The U.S. National Commission, represented by the U.S. State Department, led by the U.S. National Commission, had been critical of the UNESCO budget. They were critical of the UNESCO budget. In that sense, Torres Bodet followed the footsteps of Huxley (Sewell 1975: 17).
65 On the close relation between the U.S. National Commission and the U.S. State Department, see Sewell 1975: 73.
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order to prove their loyalty towards the
diplomatic contacts on all levels, inside UNESCO, with the U.S. Immigration Office, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs and all the way up to UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie. From Myrdal, however, who as usual was keen to sort things out and understand the full picture – and also documented the event and the correspondences in detail – the problem seemed to him that the incident had raised her great practical problems that seemed afflicting her right from the start. But, more importantly, it suggested the more general principle of the status of "international civil servants" and the "freedom for UNESCO staff members to travel", which meant – even more importantly – that "[t]he integrity of UN and UNESCO was at stake" and the way this may "damage the Organization itself". 71

When Luther Evans assumed office as Director-General on 1 July 1953, and replaced Taylor on his six-months interim period as Acting Director-General after Torres Bodet’s resignation, Evans more or less directly had to handle the principal questions regarding UNESCO’s status as an international organization, including the rights of its staff as international civil servants and its relations to the member states. For Evans, however, these issues were far from new. With his background as a political scientist and Chief Librarian of Congress, and more importantly as a former member of the U.S. delegation to the first CAME Conference and later member of U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, where he had held the positions of both Vice-Chairman and Chairman, Evans had followed the birth and growth of UNESCO and knew the organization from within.

In fact Evans was not only familiar with but had also played an active part in the development of the U.S. policy towards UNESCO’s internationalism and the principal issues on UNESCO staff members’ status as international officers versus citizens of their home countries, already in the U.S. National Delegation’s meetings in late October 1945, in preparation of the UNESCO Founding Conference. Evans participated in the discussions of the draft constitution in which he “thought he saw an expression of a desire to undermine governments” (Evans 1971: 35). As one of UNESCO’s most explicit political realists, Evans never doubted that governments were the ones who made UNESCO’s choices. In line with the same argument he was of the opinion that the members of the Executive Board should represent their respective national governments. UNESCO is definitely an intergovernmental organization, subject to the limitations and procedures inherent in official action, but firmly based on the machinery of government within our Member States including the National Commissions. [...] The fact remains that UNESCO works for its Member States, that it works largely through the governments of Member States, and that its success or failure in any Member State is a direct outcome of the degree of understanding and support it enjoys on the part of the government of that State (quoted from Sewell 1975: 166).

And when the U.S. Government in 1950 tried to convince UNESCO about the so-called “containment doctrine”, that is, that international organizations contained subversive elements, Evans in his role as Vice-Chairman of UNESCO’s Executive Board firmly supported the U.S. standpoint that UNESCO should awaken the conscience of the world with regard to security (Brod 1975: 149; B. Graham 2006: 245). A couple of years later, when he had advanced to Chairman of the Board Program Commission in 1952, Evans was in the forefront about “program cuts” and a frozen budget, in opposition to Torres Bodet’s expansionist policy – and hence actively.
contributed to Torres Bodet’s resignation (Sewell 1975: 133). And one of the very last things Luther Evans did in his capacity as Chairman of the Executive Board, before assuming his post as Director-General of UNESCO, was to present a draft resolution in which he proposed that it should be defined that the Organization was, first, an instrument for the increase of collaboration among the Member States and, second, the even more supreme role of the Member States:

Evans is an instrument for the increase of collaboration among the Member States. The latter was explicitly expressed in a 34th session of the General Conference in 1952. Although most points in this policy were not new, there were some, in view of Evans’ view, remarkably good hopes that they could be realized, Salomon argued.

It may be unanticipated that the new Director-General, who has been a member of the United States delegation to all but one of the Sessions of the General Conference will carry into his job the convictions which he had demonstrated when speaking as United States delegate. In one point after the other Evans would also, as expected, enforce the mentioned policy. Already in his inaugural statement as the new Director-General he made it clear that he identified himself not as a nonprofessional intellectual but as a “professional administrator” with well-developed “administrative methods” according to which “arrangements of power” were meant “to avoid […] confusion of purpose” and that he expected “widespread participation of the staff at all levels in the development of policy.” Furthermore, “[a]s the member of the Executive Board with the longest tenure” Evans also wanted to emphasize, first, the central function of “the Board [as] one of the principal organs of UNESCO” and, second, the core main supreme role of the Member States. UNESCO is an instrument for the increase of collaboration among the Member States. The organization is not, it should not be, an independent power. It should have no goals except your (referring to the present representatives of the Member States) goals.”

1 UNESCO Archives, Records of the General Conference: Second Extraordinary Session, Paris, 1952, Minutes and proceedings, pp. 316–329. (Referring to the words of Evans: “[b]e carried into his new position, unusually good hopes that they could be realized, Salomon argued.”)
During the next 18 months Evans systematically and insistently implemented the U.S. policy with regard to the status of international officers and the supreme role of member states, as the local organizational level. Evans had been a student of international relations at the University of Wisconsin and was a member of the Special Advisory Board (SAB), “Report of the first meeting”, SAB/R 1, 27 April 1955: 18 76; Amendments to Regulation 9.1.1, and II.1.2 Amendments to Article V.

The first amendment concerned the Obligations and Rights of Staff Members, where it was stipulated that “The Director-General may […] terminate the appointment of a staff member if the staff member does not meet the highest standards”. The second concerned the composition of the Executive Board, where it was stipulated that each member “shall represent the government of the State of which he is a national”. 77

In practice for the substantive reorganization of the statute, in the first respect, meant that Evans was given the right to suspend the staff members who had refused to swear in the U.S. Legally bound, not though with reference to their lack of loyalty as American citizens but to their lack of “integrity” and incapacity to live up to the “highest standards” as expected in their role as UNESCO staff members. The new staff regulations took effect on 31 December 1954 and on the very same day seven staff members were suspended or placed on special leave. 78 In the second respect, the implications were that UNESCO’s Executive Board instead of being composed of a group of individual members, more directly represented the governments. In combination with the supreme role of the Board in relation to the UNESCO investment, in contrast to its prior relative autonomy, this meant that UNESCO’s work as a whole, including SSD, became organizationally and formally more dependent on the interests of the member states as represented in the Executive Board. With this, the autonomy, constitutionally guaranteed by the Statutes, was seemingly lost. 79

A critical transformation of UNESCO’s status to a relatively autonomous hybrid international organization – encompassing international and governmental as well as governmental organizations – in an intergovernmental organization more directly, inculcated into the contemporary geopolitical arena 80 translated to our conceptualization of UNESCO’s HAB as an international boundary organization. This change furthermore gives us reason to reconsider how the delegation of authority and the transformation of the role of the principal agent – with its focus on the conflicting interests and the delegation of authority between the principal and its subordinated agents – allows us to highlight the organizational significance of the two amendments by interpreting the related statutes, almost literally, as a renegotiated contract of UNESCO’s principal-agent relations – in a dual sense. An additional point in our case is namely to recognize that this renegotiation included two separate but interrelated parts, two different principal-agent relations, one aimed at protecting the local member countries in their role as member states through their direct representation in the Executive Board; combined, the two amendments instilled all three organizational levels and hence fundamentally restructured the formal organizational structures.

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delegation of authority and autonomy within the organization. However, whereas Evans's approach is focused on how principal-agent relations are used to stabilize the relations between science and politics, I argue, that it is more plausible to interpret the organizational change that took place in the social sciences at UNESCO under Alva Myrdal's direction as being more about a decentralization of authority and autonomy within the organization. It is a structural reconfiguration of UNESCO's SSD and its numerous activities.

From the viewpoint of SSD, this re-organization drastically decreased the agency spaces of both its Director and its staff, whereas the agency spaces of the Director toward the Executive Board and member states increased. Formulated otherwise, Alva Myrdal and the SSD staff— as well as all other departments— became more directly dependent on the new key role figures (to further borrow Evans's notion) of the Executive Board and the General Assembly (defined). In this context, the question of the potential agency spaces were overall reduced. The empirical question is then how Evans chose to use his enlarged agency space in relation to SSD. An option would of course have been to let the practical day-to-day work proceed pretty much as before. At a distance at already in his installation speech, this was not however his intention. Additionally, new organizational routines had been introduced along with Torres Bodet, but Evans's leadership brought with them a number of principal changes and a new conception of the Organization's work, as further clarified in an retrospective article in 1963, which included the introduction of a more direct top-down leadership, a further concentration of projects to a restricted number of "skyscraper projects", and a redirection of UNESCO's role from opera to problem-solving agency space in relation to SSD.

In practice this meant, as Evans (1950: 1) states, that "Evans acted as judge [...] of innovations advanced by others". A crucial difference is that respect is that Evans was much less engaged in the social sciences than his predecessors. Huxley had regarded the social sciences, and especially social psychology, as part of his scientific mission, whereas Torres Bodet was not only the one who recruited Myrdal but was also eager to speak a language of social sciences for UNESCO more generally. Evans was much less engaged in the social sciences, and especially social psychology, as part of his scientific mission, whereas Torres Bodet was not only the one who recruited Myrdal but was also eager to speak a language of social sciences for UNESCO more generally.

For Alva Myrdal as SSD Director the consequence was a drastically increased administrative workload. Under Torres Bodet she had become accustomed to a wide agency space and positive responses to initiatives in need of confirmation. The increased task of reporting on the activities of SSD has included in the Director's annual report, for example, had been a time-consuming but still rather smooth bottom-up process, whereas Myrdal's only draft was then handed back or were heavily revised. At other times Myrdal had to remind Evans and the Executive Board about...
proposals that “disappeared” along the way and – like many other proposals that did not fit the general agenda, according to Sewell (1975: 103) – “were gently laid to rest, quietly forgotten, or left for others”.

Without being able to offer a more robust empirical support, I would like to suggest in more tentative terms that it is not too bold to set Alva Myrdal’s decision to leave her post in relation to her drastically decreased agency space as SSD Director during this very phase. And she was not alone in doing so. The Director of the Education Department, Lionel Elwin, who like Myrdal had been recruited by Torres Bodet, chose to leave at the same time. Others, like Paolo de Berredo Carneiro and Vladislav Ribnikar, had left the Executive Board already when Torres Bodet resigned in 1950. Myrdal’s decision to leave SSD as Director was, at times, met with repeated requests to remain at the position, but she finally chose to go. The new Director, the Swedish economist Kurt Eriksson, was appointed in January 1955.

In late December 1954, more or less directly after the constitutional changes had been accepted by the General Conference in Montevideo, with its far-reaching consequences for UNESCO in general and SSD in particular, she sat down and drafted the very first version of a private letter that only a couple of months thereafter would result in a new job offer. Less than one year later, on 3 December 1955, Alva Myrdal took up the post as Sweden’s first woman envoyé, later Ambassador, at the Swedish Embassy in New Delhi.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This paper has aimed at analysing the creation and early formation of UNESCO’s Department of Social Sciences during its first decade with a special focus on its organizational aspects. Interpreted as an “international boundary organization”, that is, as a transnational institution that mediated the relation between science and politics during the early post-World War II period, and with regard to the intra- and inter-organizational structuration of multilayered agency spaces, it has been argued that SSD went through a number of important organizational changes – principal and explicit ones as well as minor and discreet administrative ones – that indirectly but fundamentally affected the direction and character of its activities. More specifically four phases have been discerned.

During the first visionary founding phase, it was pointed out that UNESCO’s SSD emerged out of a geopolitically structured and highly contingent setting, characterized by the optimistic and utopian one-worldism underlying UNESCO’s birth, and that it was only at a late stage of this process that SSD was included and qualified as an international boundary organization. Once set up, however, an epistemic network centered around a core of people within the UNESCO Secretariat, backed up by outer layers, played an important formative role for the intellectual project on SSD’s work.

However, when it was time to translate the ideas into practice, during the second phase, SSD as well as UNESCO in large encountered several organizational problems in their efforts to establish a “working machinery of cooperation” that, among other things, to the rigid organizational structure, frequent rotations to the post as Head of SSD, a diffuse aim and strategy as well as growing frictions between different traditions and conceptualizations of social science where the

83 See e.g. UNESCO Archives, 34EX/CP/SR.1-2, Programme Commission meeting, 4 August 1953, pp. 3; UNESCO Archives, H.S.4-6, Record of Meeting, 12 April 1954: 3; ARBARK 405/4/1/7/8-9.

day-to-day work, according to one of its Heads, was characterized as an ad hoc approach. It has been argued that these organizational problems can be interpreted in terms of a lack of stability as well as a lack of boundary objects, that is, common goals, workable standards and shared objectives, for structure and practice. This is in line with the broader literature on the absence of clear roles and responsibilities. In practice, the basic infrastructure in the form of networking was mainly centered around a group of American social psychologists and public administrators, which in one way or the other was also reflected in the practical outcomes by the end of the period. In similar ways the number of international disciplinary organizations that were being set up were typical for the dominant discipline-based way of thinking around SSD's work. The department remained limited in size and the single most important project during this phase was the Tensions Project.

From around 1950 a revitalization and consolidation of SSD's activities took place. During this third phase, previous initiatives matured into concrete results, with a "cascade of publications" from the Tensions Project and a number of new more interdisciplinary and collaborative projects with other departments, other specializ ed agencies and the UN. The ISSC was set up, as well as research institutes and regional social science officers. The large Technical Assistance Program on the general UN level started, besides projects on human rights, race and women's political role. A number of "infrastructure" projects concerned with the communication among international social science were initiated. I have argued that SSD during this phase matured into an almost ideal typical international boundary organization, and that part of the explanation for this is to be found in Alva Myrdal's cross-organizational collaborative approach and her way of making use of the available agency space as SSD Program Director.

However, this period of consolidation was soon ended, during the fourth phase, by a series of events around 1953 which in the following year resulted in two constitutional amendments of the UNESCO Statutes, which radically changed not only the official status of SSD's staff, but also the relative autonomy and integrity of SSD in general and the agency space of its Director in particular, as well as the organizational status of UNESCO at large. These changes have been analyzed in terms of a renegotiated contract between principals and agents on multiple levels.

Whereas earlier studies have tended either to treat the period under scrutiny as a relatively coherent unit, in terms of a pioneering era or as characterized by one major conceptual change in the very middle of the period under scrutiny, that is around 1950, my organizational focus has put greater emphasis on the processual and more fine-grained administrative changes as well as the series of events during the latter half of the period that – on the whole – not only destabilized UNESCO's SSD as an international boundary organization but also fundamentally transformed it from a hybrid organization, which shared the optimistic vision of one-worldism, to an intergovernmental organization considerably more open and vulnerable to external geopolitical pressures.

In terms of the intra- and inter-organizational structuration of agency spaces on different levels of UNESCO during this formative period, the paper has argued that there were relatively wide as well as narrow levels of the organization especially during the early phase. Julian Huxley made use of this in his role as Director-General, and so did Jaime Torres Bodet – until he confronted resistance, first in 1950 and then even more so in 1952 when he resigned. Among the Heads and Directors of SSD, both Arvid Brodersen's and Robert Angell's leadership left footprints on the discipline-based activities. But the one who really made use of the wide agency space available was Alva Myrdal – until she started to face problems during the fourth phase and chose to leave SSD and UNESCO in 1955. On the level of project leaders, Edward Shils, Hadley Cantril, Otto Klineberg and Angell set...
their marks on the Tensions Project, as did Alfred Metraux on the Race Project and Margaret Mead on the Technical Assistance Project. This led to a certain degree of tension for the general UNESCO staff with their initially relatively independent status as international elders. These observations are true for each of the cases of the innovative period during the mid period as well as on the leadership of UNESCO (Longitud: 1954–1964; 1972–1980).

This pattern was however drastically changed by the series of events culminating in the constitutional amendments in 1962, which instantly increased the agency spaces of Program Directors, project leaders and international officers, while at the same time decreased the agency spaces of the Director-General, the Executive Board as well as the National Commissions and the General Conference. This pattern was changed by the fact that the latter was, through the multiple breakdowns of the organization, the first to experience the increased vulnerability to geopolitical pressures from the outside, namely processes of destabilization. In this sense, the post-1970 development of UNESCO’s SSD as an international boundary organization is, evidently, an open empirical question, though outside the scope of this article.

The renegotiated multilevel relationship between principals and agents has been interpreted as a new “contract” in David Guston’s terms. The crucial difference is that our case offers an example of how UNESCO’s SSD was reconstituted as an international boundary organization, in contrast to Guston’s case on the Evolution of U.S. space policy, where he focuses on the introduction of multilevel processes in an already existent agency. In Guston’s case, the multilevel structuring of the SSD is emphasized in the introductory conceptual discussion, my aim of the concept has been explicitly conceptualized from Guston’s historically oriented definition and used as an analytical concept. I am also in agreement with Miller’s critique that it is important to be aware of the increased complexity in dynamics when scaling up to an international level of analysis (Miller 2001), as well as Leith et al’s argument to view “stability” as a means rather than an end and a defining criteria of boundary organizations (Leith et al. 2009). Nevertheless, there are some striking similarities between Guston’s original case and ours in that both are concerned with processes of reorganization, that where Guston focuses on the stabilization after the organizational change in question, I am interested in the processes and mechanisms that result in the stabilization as well as in the mechanisms of the breakdown. This is especially important for understanding the potential of boundary organizations in terms of self-regulatory science and the issues model (Leith et al. 2009). The conceptual analysis of the renegotiation of the multilevel relationship between principals and agents has been based on the point of diminishing returns leading up to a major organizational change. One way of turning this around could be to argue that the two cases are concerned with different sides of one and the same phenomenon, namely processes of reorganization. In that sense, my revision of Guston’s concept can be understood as a positive critique, speaking in favor of (international) boundary organizations as an analytic concept with an even broader applicability.

Finally, a general argument in this study has been to highlight the decreased agency spaces on several levels within the organization and the increased vulnerability to geopolitical pressures from the outside. Here it needs to be emphasized that this does not imply that the subsequent development of UNESCO’s SSD can be reduced to the role of facilitations of external geopolitical interests (Z. 1984; 1985; T. 1993; 1994). Instead, the analytical point of the concept of “agency space” has been to clearly distinguish the empirical question about the potential agency spaces available from the question about how the actors within these chronic organizational structures actually made use of these spaces (sometime in order to change the structures themselves). In that sense, the post-1970 development of UNESCO’s SSD as an international boundary organization is, evidently, an open empirical question, though outside the scope of this article.
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