Why Regional Economic Organizations Take on Conventional Security Tasks

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Given the level of intrastate and interstate violence currently plaguing the global arena, few people would dispute that security governance worldwide is insufficient.[1] Green Cowles expresses the situation succinctly by noting "a gap between the demand for governance and the supply of governance at the international level."[2] In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, a proliferation of literature suggested that regional organizations in cooperation with the United Nations (UN) represent the best hope for conflict amelioration around the world. Former UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali discussed this idea in terms of democratizing the international community. He believed that regional organizations' assumption of more responsibility would allow the UN to play a larger role in preventive diplomacy and become the instrument of last resort in conflict resolution. He averred that a multipolar world should be led by a multiplicity of institutions.[3] Although the early post–Cold War optimism has been tempered by the scope of security challenges and institutional capacity shortfalls at the global and regional levels, regional organizations have increasingly become mainstays in global security governance. It is difficult to envision a contemporary situation in which a violent conflict would not result in some form of conflict management effort by a regional organization.[4] New relationships obtain between states and markets, weakening distinctions between the public and private and between "internal" and "external/regional" security. Most conventional security threats now have the potential to become transnational and regionalized.[5] That said, we would do well to recall that the tens of regional organizations are quite diverse in terms of their goals, capacity, and willingness to take on conventional security tasks.[6] Why regional economic organizations (REO) decide to assume conventional security roles is an important theoretical and practical concern.

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This article draws upon several bodies of thought to explore this question. Firstly, all organizations are given to inertia and are reticent to change unless forced to do so. Among the organizational change scholarship, the critical junctures and crisis literatures are particularly relevant to considering why and how REOs change when faced with conventional security challenges. Multiple hypotheses and propositions have also been offered within the regional integration and organizations literatures to explain organizational decision making and change. Attempting to bring order to the discussion via categorization, scholars commonly discuss "clusters of factors," including internal versus external factors, realist versus liberal versus ideational factors, and structural- and power-related factors versus institutional factors, among others.[7] After a brief discussion of the organizational change, critical junctures, and crises literatures, this article will follow suit by dividing discussions of regional organizational change literatures into those addressing (1) structural and other power-related factors, (2) functional needs and institutional factors, and (3) cognitive and social factors. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive accounting of factors and discussion regarding each category; however, the article will outline some of the more salient possible explanations for why REOs undertake conventional security tasks. The theoretical and empirical literatures suggest that structural- and organizational-level factors provide opportunities and constraints on regional decision makers faced with a conventional security threat. However, to paraphrase Alexander Wendt, a security threat is what decision makers make of it.[8] The decision to transform the REO from a predominantly economic organization into a conventional security actor is most influenced by decision makers' perceptions of threat and functional necessity. Ideational factors such as humanitarian norms and regional identity are also often employed to legitimate taking on conventional security tasks.

Theorizing Organizational Change, Including the Importance of Crises and Critical Junctures

As noted, once created, formal organizations tend to take on a life of their own and are difficult to transform or destroy. In pursuit of their national and collective interests, states create intergovernmental organizations, after which the organizations, to varying degrees, constrain the creators' and others' choices and actions in the present and in the future. Treaties and other formal agreements codify the existence, form, and goals of organizations, reinforcing their stability and continuity by law. Thus, most organizational change is incremental. Such change may be defined as a shift in norms, goals, rules, enforcement procedures, and resource allocation such that different choices and behaviors are possible, encouraged, or constrained.[9]

The fundamental goals of REOs, such as promoting economic stability, growth, and integration, persist over time, but regional organizations are susceptible to major change when confronted with new security threats. Jorgen Moller contends that organizational change "is *overwhelmingly* the result of events or decisions taken during a short phase of uncertainty, in which the relaxation of structural influence on political agents open [*sic*] up opportunities for a small number of powerful actors to generate lasting institutional change" (emphasis in original).[10] Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen concur that when actors are confronted with an unanticipated security challenge, structural factors constraining their choices are weaker than normal and that unanticipated organizational change can occur.[11]

The literatures dealing with these unexpected security issues employ several terms to capture these phenomena, including *crises*, *critical junctures*, *decision points*, *turning points*, and even *unsettled times*.[12] Crises are defined as threats to the existence and/or fundamental interests of organizations that arise unexpectedly and give decision makers limited time to respond. Crises may be associated with the failure of existing political ideas, norms, and practices as well as a demand and search for alternatives. Security crises require decision makers to lexicographically prioritize conventional security items on their agenda, of necessity may reduce the number of factors they take into account, and legitimate organizational change and political action.[13] Given the fear, stress, time pressures, and moral dilemmas involved, the foreign policy literature identifies several departures from instrumental "rationality" that may characterize crisis decision making, including "satisficing," bureaucratic politics, and "groupthink."[14]

Arising from historical institutionalism, organizational development is conceptualized by the critical junctures literature as characterized by relatively long periods of path-dependent stability punctuated occasionally by brief periods of organizational change. During critical junctures, more significant, long-term change is possible given that the choices close off alternative options and establish practices that generate self-reinforcing, path-dependent processes that are resistant to change. Critical junctures are situations wherein the organizational, political, economic, ideological, and cultural influences on political action are relaxed for a short period of time, resulting in the expansion of possible options available to powerful political actors and making the organizational consequences of their decisions potentially more momentous.[15]

James Mahoney defines critical junctures as "choice point[s] when a particular option is adopted among two or more alternatives." He continues by noting that "once a particular option is selected, it becomes progressively more difficult to return to the initial point when multiple alternatives were still available."[16] This conceptualization emphasizes the importance of human agency and choice: "In many cases, critical junctures are moments of relative structural indeterminism when willful actors shape outcomes in a more voluntaristic fashion than normal circumstances permit. . . . These choices demonstrate the power of agency by revealing how long-term development patterns can hinge on distant actor decisions of the past."[17] Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo concur that "groups and individuals are not merely spectators as conditions change to favor or penalize them in the political balance of power, but rather strategic actors capable of acting on 'openings' provided by . . . shifting contextual conditions in order to enhance their own position."[18] That said, structural, organizational, and ideational factors must be taken into account to understand actors' range of possible options that contribute to organizational change.[19] These factors are discussed below as clusters of structural and other power-related factors, functional needs and institutional factors, and cognitive and social factors explicated in the international relations, regional integration, and security literatures.

Structural and Other Power-Related Factors

We have suggested that in confrontations with a conventional security crisis, the importance of structural factors may be relaxed in the short term, but realists of various stripes emphasize the importance of structural factors in "shaping and shoving" states' and intergovernmental organizations' choices and actions in the anarchic global system.[20] Survival needs and national power interests are important to explaining the creation of and subsequent changes in regional organizations. When the state cannot achieve economic and/or conventional security autonomously, it will turn to balancing or bandwagoning in the form of short-term coalitions and alliances, or it will create more long-term arrangements like regional organizations.

Great powers on the global and regional levels may offer both positive impetus for or impede creation and change in regional organizations. In 1949 Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay, the first secretary-general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), famously summarized that its purpose was "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down." Similarly, "the common interest in alleviating great power pressure remained key" to explaining Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden's creation of the Nordic Council in 1952.[21] The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was created in 1967 to offset great-power intervention in the region and to manage Indonesia's expansionistic tendencies.[22] Furthermore, the United States has actively encouraged regional integration in, for example, the case of the European Communities and clearly has served as the target for balancing in the creation of Mercosur.[23] Barry Buzan uses the term *overlay* to refer to one or more external powers moving into the region to suppress the indigenous regional security dynamics. However, regional organizations play a role in conditioning whether and how outside powerful actors are able to penetrate the region.[24]

Neorealists understand regionalism as an effort of the most powerful state(s) in the region to manage and simplify the anarchical global system by combining with other states into more or less cohesive groups under its leadership. Each regional power seeks to maximize its wealth and extend its influence; however, territorial aggrandizement has been delegitimated since World War II. The role of the hegemon in these processes has been widely analyzed. Robert Keohane describes hegemony as a "preponderance of material resources," meaning control and competitive advantage over raw materials, markets, capital, and knowledge and technology.[25] Robert Cox adds that hegemony is "dominance of a particular kind where the dominant state creates an order based ideologically on a broad measure of consent, functional according to general principles that in fact ensure the continuing supremacy of the leading state or states and social classes but at the same time offer some measure or prospect of satisfaction to the less powerful."[26] Realists and hegemonic stability theorists argue that clear leadership is vital to the success of regional projects. Uncertain or contested leadership creates instability and undermines regional cooperation. Hegemonic stability relies on the hegemon's willingness to bear a disproportionate share of the costs of providing collective security, act benignly toward its weaker partners, and support redistribution of the gains of integration. The roles played by Brazil in Mercosur, India in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Nigeria in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), South Africa in the Southern African Development Community, and the United States in the North American Free Trade Agreement are held up as examples of the importance of hegemonic leadership for regional cooperation. Although contemporary hegemonic projects are vulnerable to charges of "democratic deficits," hegemons can legitimize their leadership and orchestrate self-serving change if a credible threat is available or can be constructed.[27] It is often difficult to discern whether a regional hegemon leads the REO to undertake security tasks in support of regional interests, its own, or some combination of both. Iver Neumann observes succinctly that "perhaps there exists a general tendency for regional great powers to identify the region with their own sphere of interest."[28]

Realists and liberals agree on certain hegemony stability assumptions, but liberals also emphasize the potential importance of systemic factors like complex interdependence, economic globalization, regionalization, and global governance (usually in the form of the UN) as explanations for the creation of and change in regional organizations. While one might conceptualize regional organizations as constituting one aspect of global governance, the creation of regional organizations may to some extent be regarded as a consequence of the failure of global multilateralism, in many instances the failure of the UN to guarantee security.[29] In a significant number of instances, regional organizations have taken on security tasks because of the UN's failure to act. However, the role of the UN in encouraging, supporting, and legitimating such assumption of security functions should not be underestimated.[30] The creation or change of regional organizations for the purpose of undertaking new tasks may also provide a model or encouragement for other regions to become more integrated and/or take on additional tasks. However, analyses of structural conditions like globalization and regionalization have difficulty providing detailed insights and explanations of specific actors' choices and behaviors within the context of discrete security crises. Arthur Stein contends that structure does not determine states' choices but that structural indeterminacy heightens the importance of bargaining and strategic choice.[31] Morten Bøås and his colleagues recommend focusing analytical attention on how actors perceive their security reality and how they seek to deal with it.[32]

Functional Needs and Institutional Factors

Several propositions in the literature relate to instrumental or functional explanations as to why regional economic organizations take on conventional security tasks, including the following: (a) regional decision makers accept the premise that regional economic organizations are the most effective and efficient agents of conflict amelioration; (b) following neofunctionalist (and to some extent historical institutionalist) logic, regional decision makers believe that their economic objectives cannot be achieved without political stability and security in the region ("natural spillover"), and/or the organization's successful pursuit of economic objectives encouraged decision makers to assume security functions ("cultivated spillover");[33] and (c) regional organizational leaders frame issues in terms of regional rather than national solutions and commonly seek to expand their organizational remit.[34] Buzan summarizes these functionalist arguments:

> First is the natural overspill between sectors, second is the way that policy-makers tend to integrate issues into a single security picture, and third, in some places, is the existence of regional institutions that will try to make issues fit within their own geopolitical framework.
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> This linkage is particularly clear in the economic sector, where what on the surface appears to be economic regionalism is in fact substantially driven by political and cultural motives; what seems to be economic security is in fact about political stability, military power or cultural conservation. The same logic of linkage and overspill also applies to the environmental sectors, even though its dynamics are rooted in the physical world.[35]

Several often-cited, interrelated theoretical advantages of regional organizations' assumption of security tasks relative to external great powers or the UN include the following:

1. regional organizations are more effective in conflict amelioration because of their in-depth understanding of the conflict while external powers and the international community may have difficulties identifying and understanding the motives and actions of combatants in complex situations;
2. a shared history, cultural heritage, and regional identity make regional actors' diplomatic engagement more acceptable to citizens in the contributing states and to combatants and civilians in the country of conflict;
3. regional organizations have stronger incentives to foster long-term stability because of geographical proximity, the potential for negative spillover from the conflict, and economic interdependence; and
4. consensus for action may be easier to achieve among members of the regional organization than in the UN with its larger and diverse membership and great-power dominance in the Security Council.

Each of these arguments for the effectiveness of regional organizations in addressing conventional security issues can be undermined by contextual concerns. Regional organizations may have greater in-depth understanding of a conflict relative to external great powers or the UN, but intimate knowledge and proximity may also convey disadvantages. Neutrality is generally assumed prerequisite for effective diplomatic mediation, and regional organizations' associations with, intimate knowledge of, and proximity to the conflict may preclude their actual and/or perceived neutrality in the struggle. Mary

Spear and Jon Keller assert that "regional organizations tend to be perceived as partial to one side or another in many regional conflicts."[36]

The second argument supporting regional diplomacy also relates to effectiveness and legitimacy issues. Some posit that combatants and the citizenry may find it easier to accept external mediation from regional actors. Paul Diehl writes, "People in governments and regions have a natural affinity with those in that geographic area and an inherent suspicion of what they perceive as outside intervention."[37] It is paramount that all parties trust and accept the diplomatic interlocutors and/or military intervention; otherwise, they can easily become another party among the various warring factions. However, greater legitimacy deriving from a shared culture among regional actors is not available in cases of mixed ethnicity, colonial heritages, and historic enmities.

At the end of the day, the resources, capacity, and legitimacy of the regional economic organization itself may encourage expanding its agenda to include conventional security concerns. The liberal institutionalist literature explains how, over time, organizational structures may foster reciprocity, reduce incentives to free ride, build trust, and socialize participants to the degree that a common identity is cultivated.[38] Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore add that "[international organizations] can become autonomous sites of authority, independent from the state 'principals' who may have created them because of power flowing from at least two sources: (1) the legitimacy of the rational-legal authority they embody, and (2) control over technical expertise and information."[39] However, REOs among less developed countries may lack the material resources, institutional legitimacy, and expertise to take on conventional security missions successfully.

Cognitive and Constructivist Understandings

Since the "third debate" beginning in the late 1980s and the subsequent strengthening of constructivist thought in international relations, several variants of cognitive and socially oriented literatures challenging materialist, rationalist, and individualist approaches have emerged to generate understandings regarding REOs' assumption of conventional security roles.[40] These approaches raise ontological questions concerning, for example, the separation of subject and object, structure and agent, "facts" and values, state centrism, and rationalist epistemologies. Rather than accepting ideas, interests, and identities of leaders, states, and REOs as preexisting or given, one conceptualizes these factors as constructed in social interaction. Fredrik Söderbaum writes that "agency is often motivated and explained by ideas, identity, accumulation of knowledge and learning rather than by traditional routines, structural factors or established institutions."[41] Proponents of these perspectives look to ideas, norms, ideology, culture, learning, discourse, and/or identity for understandings as to why REOs undertake conventional security tasks.

Judith Goldstein and Keohane define norms as principled ideas and beliefs that "translate fundamental doctrines into guidance for contemporary human actions."[42] Norms like economic liberalism, reciprocity, fairness, regionalism, and democracy are embedded in regional economic organizations in the formal and informal processes by which organizations are created and organizational rules are made, implemented, and revised. They are also the foundations legitimating the political processes, organizations, rules, and policies.[43] Value and norm consensus is a very powerful source of states' and other actors' support for and compliance with organizational rules and policies beyond what rational choice theorists would predict, given the material benefits and costs. A commitment to ideas, values, and norms such as humanitarianism and human rights may encourage regional leaders to take on conventional security tasks when faced with egregious violations of human rights or violence against regional citizens. Bjorn Hettne points out that the powerful values and norms involved are often universal and that the region serves as a temporary platform for promoting universal values like humanitarianism.[44]

Ideas, values, and norms interact with power, functionalist, and identity and other cognitive factors as sources of organizational change. Ideational-, value-, and norm-based change occurs when the new ideas coincide with the perceived interests of actors empowered to make decisions. The ideas and norms may solve pressing political problems, shape actors' perceptions of their interests and the strategies, and legitimate some forms of political action while delegitimating others. Change usually assumes the form of a reinterpretation rather than a complete redefinition of norms. As previously discussed regarding crises, timing is an important consideration in this analysis. A crisis challenging the REO's ontological security may undermine the legitimacy of its ideational and normative framework and necessitate a search for alternatives.[45] Scholarly analysis of the influence of norms must identify their specific aspects that render them politically salient in the time frame when political decisions are being made and ascertain why and how political actors associate particular norms with particular political action.[46]

The importance of norms is often discussed in relation to ASEAN's "ASEAN Way," which distinguishes it from other regional organizations. Preservation of state sovereignty and noninterference in the internal affairs of partners are paramount norms reiterated in successive formal agreements by the relatively young states. However, the ASEAN Way also includes the Malay cultural practices of consultation (*musjawarah*) and consensus (*mufukat*) in problem solving and decision making rather than argumentation and negotiation. If a problem arises, members habitually table the issue and proceed with consultation in other areas. This explicit code of conduct seeks to contain disputes among the disparate member states and, over time, to inculcate the norms into regional standard operating procedures if not a regional identity. Confidence-building measures are the policy instruments of choice, including disseminating military white papers, registering arms and disclosing arms exports, and conducting the routine high-level visits among ASEAN military officials.[47]

The importance of norms and identity has also been discussed in relation to ECOWAS's military intervention in the Liberian civil war in the early 1990s. Emmanuel Kwesi Aning argues that some (continental) African values and norms incline West Africans to undertake the role of "each other's keeper" based on the need to control unanticipated events. He informs that this response to crisis is based on the African philosophy (in the Akan language) *"se wo yondo sese reshye, na se wamoa no andum ogya no a , etra ba wo dea ho,"* which articulates an active, positive engagement to assist a neighbor whose hut is on fire to prevent it from engulfing one's own property. In Swahili, this norm is expressed as "*zima moto, usihoji aliyechoma*" (first put out the fire, and then sit down to ask who started the fire). The "fire" may refer to actual fire or problems such as internal conflict. The Somalis espouse similar philosophies regarding neighbors: "*Guriga ma gadine, jaarkiis baan agay*" (if you buy a house, you also "buy" the neighbors); "*Walaal ka fog deriska ku dhaama*" (better a close neighbor than a distant brother); and "*Guryihii usu dhow baa is guba*" (the huts close together will be destroyed by fire). These norms diverge significantly from the Westphalian diplomatic and legal norms of state sovereignty and nonintervention.[48]

Sufficient evidence to support these normative (African neighborly solidarity, humanitarianism) explanations of the intervention relies on demonstrating that ECOWAS leaders believed that the Liberian conflict required a neighborly response and posed an immediate threat to spreading to neighboring countries—and/or they were moved to act by the violence and humanitarian crisis under way in Liberia. From the beginning, these leaders explained and justified the intervention on humanitarian grounds. Mae King explains that they regarded Liberians as fellow West Africans and that "the wanton destruction of lives and property; the displacement of people and the incidence of starvation were too much to bear for the members to sit idly by and watch."[49] A leading ECOWAS official stated that the organization's military operation was established "as a result of the seeming concern for the loss of lives and property of fellow Africans. This to my mind remains so. Fellow Africans albeit at a sub-regional level, will continue to feel for their brothers in dire straits like the Liberian debacle."[50]

Constructivists are also interested in how issues become "securitized," necessitating and legitimating a military response. An issue is securitized via discourse when political, economic, and/or intellectual leaders speak about it in terms of its posing an existential threat to some valued referent and garner the attention of the state, general public, and/or regional actors. Securitized threats necessitate and legitimate extraordinary political measures and actions like the use of force; secrecy; additional powers accruing to the executive, intelligence services and/or military; and other activities that might otherwise be regarded as inappropriate or illegal.[51] Buzan informs that perceptions and securitization processes may constitute a "regional security complex," which is "a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both, are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another."[52] A "regional security complex" falls short of but shares some characteristics with Karl Deutsch's "pluralistic security community," discussed below. Bøås and his colleagues contend that West Africa is an empirical example of a regional security complex, but despite the assertions of ECOWAS exponents, it is not a "security community in the making." Rather, informal networks, conflict, and wars that emerge around and out of these networks serve as the integrating security mechanism in West Africa.[53]

Constructivists inform that a "region" (like the "state" and "nation") is an "imagined community" constituted by juxtaposing identity discourses of the Self and Other/s.[54] Regional leaders may or may not consciously envisage creation of the regional organization as the first step toward producing a political identity. However, region builders' discourse often portrays the regional project as "natural" and offers an ideology of regionalism. Shared histories, cultural similarities, and/or social ties are not in themselves relevant but are made salient by political actors to serve their purposes. Neumann writes that "where a region has been part of a discourse for so long that it is taken as a given fact, the approach can show that structures which may at first sight seem to be inevitably given, will remain so long as they are *perceived* as inevitably given" (emphasis in original).[55] Individuals and groups have no single, static identity—identities are multiple, flexible, and always evolving.[56] Identities may be manipulated by political and economic elites, but identity discourses may also "pattern" political interest articulation in nonintentional and unanticipated ways. How the regional identity is constituted may have a major impact on how regionalization proceeds and whether the REO decides to take on conventional security tasks.

In addition to "region builders" or leaders who seek to create and/or promote an ideology of regionalism (Jean Monnet comes to mind), other internal processes of creating a regional identity or community occur when the organization fosters and promotes communication, the convergence of values and norms, and reciprocity and trust throughout the region. Convergence, socialization, and integration may occur in the economic, political, and security realms such that what Deutsch and his colleagues refer to as a "pluralistic security community" is created. Citizens in such a community share common interests, trust, empathy, and "a sense of community." They believe "that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of 'peaceful change,' " defined as "the resolution of social problems, normally by institutionalized procedures, without resort to large-scale physical force."[57] "We" feelings may instigate and legitimate regional military intervention on behalf of fellow citizens. Hettne writes that "crucial areas for regional intervention are the prevention and handling of region-wide natural catastrophes and emergencies, conflict management and conflict resolution and creation of welfare in terms of improved regional balance between different areas." He opines that collective identity is underestimated in theories of regional cooperation.[58] Regional integration commonly attributed to hegemonic leadership based on power asymmetries and dominance may be more related to effective political and/or moral leadership, the acceptance of a common set of norms and ideologies, and/or the construction of a common identity among the hegemon and its subordinates.[59]

As was noted, a strong regional identity is likely created in relation to external partial and/or radical "Others."[60] For example, the European Communities' identity has been forged in relation to its Partial Other (and ally), the United States, and the Soviet Union/Russia—a more Radical Other.[61] For several decades, the European Communities sought to distinguish itself from the United States by fashioning its security identity around the Petersberg tasks as a global "civilian power" without a legacy of wars, colonialism, or power aspirations and/or as a "normative power," leaving the use of heavy military force and compellence to NATO.[62] Its strongest and most consistent contributions to security centers around conflict-preventive policies such as preferential trade agreements, financial and technical aid, and bilateral and interregional cooperation.[63] Perceptions of an existential threat from a Radical Other heighten awareness of distinctions between the Self and Other and strengthen feelings of community. An often-cited example of an articulation of the power of Partial (the United States) and Radical (the Serbs) Others to strengthen perceptions of the Self is the announcement that "the hour of Europe has dawned" at the end of the war in Slovenia in 1991 by Jacques Poos, foreign minister of Luxembourg and holder of the European Communities Council presidency at the time.[64]

Lively debates persist over the degree to which pluralistic security communities can be found outside NATO. Emil Kirchner opines that "Europe's societies and citizens have not made the transition to a post-national identity that would complement post-Westphalian policy arenas, compellence and protection."[65] However, Kirchner and Roberto Dominquez continue that "the EU [European Union] has successfully created both formal and informal authority structures, *enabled states to positively identify with one another in security terms*, acted as a socializing agent both for its members and for aspirants and non-members in the region, and encouraged normative notions of good and democratic governance" [emphasis added]. . . . There is deep amity derived from collective identity where the regional norms have been internalized and the security dilemma has been superseded."[66] Internal threats have been eliminated within a pluralistic security community, and when an external threat emerges in the "neighborhood" or farther afield, regional economic organizations cum pluralistic security communities face fewer obstacles to taking on conventional security tasks.

Conclusions

This study has reviewed some literatures associated with why regional economic organizations assume conventional security tasks. This inquiry is important because intrastate and interstate conflicts persist in the absence of effective global security governance. Several organizational-structure and resource-based impediments prevent the UN from providing robust conflict amelioration, and regional organizations are increasingly called upon to step into the breach.

Theory and illustrative empirical cases make clear, however, that intergovernmental organizations are slow to change and only do so abruptly when confronted with some form of "crisis." This article has explored several systemic-level factors such REOs' need or desire to balance or bandwagon hegemonic interests and leadership; however, when decision makers face a crisis, structural factors are relaxed in the short term, and they have more agency to act on their own interests, norms, perceptions, and identities.

The second cluster of factors considered is functional and institutional in nature. Several propositions relate to why regional organizations are likely more effective and efficient in conflict amelioration relative to the larger UN. The fact that states in the region are immediately vulnerable to both the spread of violence and negative economic consequences of conflict in the region provides strong incentives for regional leaders to take on the challenge of amelioration. REOs may undertake conventional security tasks on the assumption that their original goals of economic cooperation and growth cannot be attained in a conflict-ridden milieu. A significant deterrent to REOs' assumption of conventional security tasks in less-developed countries is their lack of military assets relative to more developed countries and the UN. In these instances, regional leaders may prefer assistance from external great power(s) or the UN to deal with the security threat and take on the security tasks only when external assistance is not forthcoming.

The final cluster of factors considered to contribute understanding to why REOs may undertake conventional security tasks relates to cognitive and social factors as espoused in the constructivist literature—including norms, discourse, and identity. Scholars of various stripes concur that consensus regarding and commitment to values and norms is a powerful factor that prompts actors to undertake behaviors inexplicable within rational materialist calculations. The most salient example of this norm is humanitarianism.

The constructivist literature has much to offer with regard to how "regions" are imagined, how issues become "securitized," what the concept of regional security complexes entails, and how regional identities may be created to the extent that regional citizens trust, feel sympathy, and share common interests, making violent conflict virtually impossible. "We" feelings are sufficiently strong that a security challenge to one is regarded as a threat to all. Scholars agree that although members of NATO and the European Union offer evidence of a pluralistic security community relative to internal threats, only in the last 20 years has the European Union approached this level of integration relative to external threats.

One can make the case that each cluster of factors interacts to provide understanding of why REOs decide to take on conventional security tasks, but structural- and organizational-level factors offer opportunities and constraints on regional decision makers faced with conventional security threats. However, to repeat the earlier Wendt paraphrase, a security threat is what decision makers make of it.[67] The decision to transform the REO from a predominantly economic organization into a conventional security actor is most immediately influenced by decision makers' perceptions of threat and functional necessity. Other ideational factors such as humanitarian norms and regional identity may also be employed to legitimate taking on conventional security tasks. The circumstances and mix of factors associated with each empirical case varies, and in-depth analyses will yield a case-specific matrix of explanations and understandings.

Notes

1. During the Cold War, security studies focused on the geopolitical protection of the state, dichotomizing the discussion in terms of conventional and nonconventional military threats, strategies, and weaponry. Nonconventional security concerns commonly addressed nuclear, chemical, and biological threats. Since the 1990s, however, the referents to be protected have been widened to include individuals. Threats to human

security might include poverty; health and environmental challenges; identity, including gender discrimination; crime; and cyber attacks. See Lloyd Axworthy, "Human Security and Global Governance: Putting People First," *Global Governance* 7 (2001): 19–23; Gary King and Christopher J. L. Murray, "Rethinking Human Security," *Political Science Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 585–610; and Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?," *International Security* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 87–102. Regional economic organizations seek to facilitate member-state and regional economic growth, development, and integration, contributing to states' and individuals' economic security. Thus, this article tacitly explores relationships between economic and military security.

2. Maria Green Cowles, "Intergovernmental Organizations: Global Governance and Transsovereign Problems," in *Beyond Sovereignty: Issues for a Global Agenda*, 3rd ed., ed. Maryann Cusimano Love (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007), 47.

3. Benjamin Rivlin, "Regional Arrangements and the UN System for Collective Security and Conflict Resolution: A New Road Ahead," *International Relations* 11 (August 1992): 95–110.

4. Rodrigo Tavares, *Regional Security: The Capacity of International Organizations* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

5. See Robin Luckham, "The Discordant Voices of 'Security,'" *Development in Practice* 17, nos. 4–5 (2007): 682–90.

6. The World Trade Organization provides a list of and basic information on bilateral and multilateral trade agreements in force, including those creating regional economic organizations. See "Welcome to the Regional Trade Agreements Information System (RTA-IS)," World Trade Organization, accessed 15 September 2015, http://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicAllRTAList.aspx.

7. See Fredrik Söderbaum, "Introduction: Theories of New Regionalism," in *Theories of New Regionalism: A Palgrave Reader*, ed. Fredrik Söderbaum and Timothy M. Shaw (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 16; and Xymena Kurowska, "Introduction: The Role of Theory in Research on Common Security and Defense Policy," in *Explaining the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: Theory in Action*, ed. Xymena Kurowska and Fabian Breuer (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 7.

8. Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391–425.

9. Margaret Levi, "A Logic of Institutional Change," in *The Limits of Rationality*, ed. Karen Schweers Cook and Margaret Levi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 402–18.

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14. See Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization* (New York: Macmillan, 1947); Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971); Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972); and Mark Schafer and Scott Crichlow, *Groupthink versus High-Quality Decision Making in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

15. Capoccia and Kelemen, "Study of Critical Junctures," 341–47.

16. James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (August 2000): 513; and Mahoney, "Path-Dependent Explanations of Regime Change: Central America in Comparative Perspective," *Studies in Comparative and International Development* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 113.

17. James Mahoney, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 7.

18. Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," in *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, ed. Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen, and Frank Longstreth (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17.

19. Moller, "One Might Not See," 706–7.

20. Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 27; and Adrian Hyde-Price, "Neorealism: A Structural Approach to CSDP," in Kurowska and Breuer, *Explaining the EU's Common Security*, 23.

21. Finland joined the Nordic Council in 1955. The council may take up any issue of common interest except defense matters. Among its accomplishments are the abolition of visas, creation of a common labor market, mutual recognition of academic degrees, and law enforcement cooperation. See Iver B. Neumann, "A Region-Building Approach," in Söderbaum and Shaw, *Theories of New Regionalism*, 169; and Norden, accessed 15 September 2015, http://www.norden.org.

22. ASEAN was born during a period of great political and security turmoil in Southeast Asia. In July 1967, the United Kingdom announced plans to withdraw its military assets east of the Suez by the mid-1970s. China was in the throes of the Cultural Revolution, and the United States' involvement in Vietnam was escalating at an alarming pace. The five original members (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) viewed cooperation within ASEAN as a potential mechanism for dealing with these uncertainties. Adam Malik, the Indonesian foreign minister at the time, explained the usefulness of regionalism to enhancing the bargaining position of the young, small, and weak states in dealing with the great powers: "The smaller nations of the region have no hope of ever making any impact on this pattern of dominance influence of the big powers, unless they act collectively and until they develop the capacity to forge among themselves an area of internal cohesion, stability and common purpose. Thus regional cooperation within ASEAN also came to represent the conscious effort by its member countries to try to re-assert their position and contribute their own concepts and goals within the ongoing process of stabilization of a new power equilibrium in the region." See Adam Malik, "Regional Cooperation in International Politics," in *Regionalism in Southeast Asia* (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1975), 162–63.

23. Charles Grant of the Centre for European Reform (London) summarizes the US role: "Let's also not forget: it was always an American plot too to create an European [U]nion which of course the Eurosceptics have no idea about. The Americans were always there behind the scenes trying to help Monnet, trying to persuade the French and the Germans to reach agreement and also to persuade the British to join in. They failed on that last thing. But the Americans always saw the EU as a good way of preventing them being drawn into another European war and a good way of creating a bulwark against communism which it was. Right through to more recent times, when George Bush [Snr] supported German unification and the Maastricht treaty while Margaret Thatcher did not—the Americans have nearly always been pushers of European integration for most of the past 60 years." Quoted in Nicholas Watt, "Nobel Peace Prize Leads EU to Question Its Raison D'être," *Guardian*, 12 October 2012. See also Max Beloff, *The United States and the Unity of Europe* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963); and Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham, eds., *The United States and the Integration of Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

24. Barry Buzan, "Regional Security Complex Theory in the Post–Cold War World," in Söderbaum and Shaw, *Theories of New Regionalism*, 142–45.

25. Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 32–33.

26. Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 7.

27. Helge Hveem, "The Regional Project in Global Governance," in Söderbaum and Shaw, *Theories of New Regionalism*, 85–86.

28. Neumann, "Region-Building Approach," 171.

29. Bjorn Hettne, "The New Regionalism Revisited," in Söderbaum and Shaw, *Theories of New Regionalism*, 25.

30. Ramesh Thakur and Luk Van Langenhove, "Enhancing Global Governance through Regional Integration," *Global Governance* 12 (2006): 235.

31. Arthur A. Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate: Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 22.

32. Morten Bøås, Marianne H. Marchand, and Timothy M. Shaw, "The Weave-World: The Regional Interweaving of Economies, Ideas and Identities," in Söderbaum and Shaw, *Theories of New Regionalism*, 197–210.

33. Functionalist and neofunctionalist approaches focusing mainly on the European Communities dominated scholarship during the early years of theorizing regarding regional economic and political integration. See Bøås, Marchand, and Shaw, "Weave-World," 202.

34. Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950–1957* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958).

35. Buzan, "Regional Security Complex Theory," 157–58.

36. Mary Spear and Jon Keller, "Conflict Resolution in Africa: Insights from UN Representatives and U.S. Government Officials," *Africa Today* 43, no. 2 (April 1996): 120.

37. Paul F. Diehl, *International Peacekeeping* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 125.

38. Hveem, "Regional Project in Global Governance," 90.

39. Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): 707.

40. Or perhaps the "fourth" debate. See Yosef Lapid, "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-positivist Era," *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (1989): 235–54; and Steve Smith, "Introduction," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1–13. See also Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches," *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1988): 379–96.

41. Söderbaum, "Introduction," 10–11.

42. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 9.

43. Dimitrakopoulos, "Norms, Interests and Institutional Change," 676–77.

44. Hettne, "New Regionalism Revisited," 37.

45. Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

46. Dimitrakopoulos, "Norms, Interests and Institutional Change."

47. See Shaun Narine, *Explaining ASEAN: Regionalism in Southeast Asia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 13; Amitav Acharya, *Regionalism and Multilateralism: Essays on Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 2002), 149; and Katja Weber, "Lessons from the ASEAN Regional Forum: Transcending the Image of Paper Tiger?," in *The Security Governance of Regional Organizations*, ed. Emil J. Kirchner and Roberto Dominguez (London: Routledge, 2011), 220–28.

48. Emmanuel Kwesi Aning, *Security in the West African Subregion: An Analysis of ECOWAS' Policies in Liberia* (Copenhagen: Institute of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, 1999), 17.

49. Mae C. King, *Basic Currents of Nigerian Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 216.

50. Quoted in ibid., 238.

51. See Ole Wæver, "Securitization-Desecuritization," in *On Security*, ed. Ronnie Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner, 1998); and Buzan, "Regional Security Complex Theory."

52. Buzan, "Regional Security Complex Theory."

53. Bøås, Marchand, and Shaw, "Weave-World," 250.

54. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

55. Neumann, "Region-Building Approach," 161–62.

56. See Valentin Y. Mudimbe, "The Politics of War: A Mediation," in *Ethnicity Kills? The Politics of War, Peace and Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Einar Braathen, Morten Bøås, and Gjermund Sæther (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 23–34; and Bøås, Marchand, and Shaw, "Weave-World," 208.

57. Karl W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957). See also Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, eds., *Security Communities* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

58. Hettne, "New Regionalism Revisited," 29.

59. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Stephen Gill, ed., *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne, "The World Order Approach," in Söderbaum and Shaw, *Theories of New Regionalism*, 59.

60. See Michael J. Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); and Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006).

61. Barry Posen, "ESDP: Response to Unipolarity?," *Security Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 149–86.

62. The Petersberg tasks are military and security priorities incorporated within the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy, including humanitarian and rescue missions, crisis management, conflict prevention, disarmament, peacekeeping and peacemaking, military advice and assistance, and post-conflict stabilization tasks. These tasks were initially articulated by Western European Union leaders at a 1992 summit convened in Germany and were incorporated into Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union. For "civilian power," see Brigid Laffan, Rory O'Donnell, and Michael Smith, *Europe's Experimental Union: Rethinking Integration* (London: Routledge, 2000), 38–39; and Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Daniel Verdier, "European Integration as a Solution to War," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 1 (March 2005): 99–135. For "normative power," see Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (June 2002): 235–58. For critiques of the notion of the European Union as a normative power, see Thomas Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe,'" *Millennium* 33, no. 3 (June 2005): 613–36; and Michael Merlingen, "Everything Is Dangerous: A Critique of 'Normative Power Europe,'" *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (December 2007): 435–53. By 2006, Manners conceded that the European Security Strategy signaled a "sharp turn away from the normative path of sustainable peace toward the full spectrum of instruments for robust interventions." Quoted in Emil J. Kirchner, "The European Union as a Regional and Global Security Provider," in Kirchner and Dominguez, *Security Governance of Regional Organizations,* 39. See Ian Manners, "Normative Power Reconsidered: Beyond the Crossroads," *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006): 182–99.

63. Kirchner, "Regional and Global Security Provider," 32.

64. Watt, "Nobel Peace Prize."

65. Kirchner, "Regional and Global Security Provider," 41.

66. Emil J. Kirchner and Roberto Dominguez, "The Performance of Regional Organizations in Security Governance," in Kirchner and Dominguez, *Security Governance of Regional Organizations*, 14, 326.

67. Wendt, "Anarchy."

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