

The Forces of Attraction: How Security Interests Shape Membership in Economic Institutions *

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Abstract

On what basis do states join together in international institutions? Functional theories emphasize potential gains from cooperation, implying that joint membership is based on shared interests within a specific issue area. This neglects the importance of political relations in shaping state behavior. At moments of institutional creation and later through accession, the decision to cooperate reflects more than just the interests within the issue area at hand. We argue that geopolitical alignment shapes entry into international institutions. Common security interests promote cooperation on non-security issues due to issue linkage and reduced concern about cheating. We analyze membership patterns over sixty years in ninety-one multilateral economic institutions. Several measures capture the underlying geopolitical alignment of states, including alliances, arms transfers, and UN voting similarity. We first use logistic regression to estimate the probability of membership among state-IGO pairings each year. Second, we apply a stochastic actor-oriented model to estimate the dependence of membership decisions across the entire network of states and IGOs. Both specifications yield consistent evidence that geopolitical alignment forms the basis for expanding ties through a wide range of economic institutions.

1 Introduction

Existing theories explain the origin of international institutions as a solution to information asymmetries that could otherwise prevent mutual gains from joint action on policies. Skeptics counter that states only make commitments when they already planned to change their policies or face coercive threats. Both perspectives are too narrow in their focus on cooperation that is bounded within a single issue area. The politics of membership in international organizations reflect broader calculations. States have information sources outside of institutions, and their interests extend beyond single issue areas. Even as states seek gains on specific issues, the decision to join an international institution is tied to prior achievements of security cooperation and is often part of a strategic foreign policy to bolster political relationships with other states.

We argue intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) form around a core of like-minded states with common security interests. As states consider prospective partners for cooperation, they prioritize geopolitical alignment over the potential material gains from cooperation. There are two mechanisms by which security interests promote cooperation through international organizations. First, shared interests provide a basis of trust and information that makes states favor joint membership in international institutions. Second, international institutions are a useful tool to strengthen security coalitions through patronage and bribery.

The security interests that motivate shared memberships in institutions are more diffuse than the specific threats that motivate alliances. States with aligned security interests view the world in similar ways. They often have mutual beliefs regarding the most salient security threats, reducing the information problems that plague cooperation in an environment of uncertainty. These states may also turn to international institutions to broaden and deepen ties. We measure geopolitical alignment with several

proxies that capture the general common orientation of states in their foreign policy. Formal alliances are a starting point, but shared alliance portfolios, arms transfers, and common voting patterns in the United Nations offer additional indicators of geopolitical alignment.

To test our argument that geopolitical alignment supports joint membership in international organizations, we examine the evolution of membership in economic organizations. These have been central to the development of functional theories of international institutions. We use logistic regression to estimate the probability of membership at the level of state-IGO year dyads. In addition, we apply a stochastic actor-oriented model to estimate the dependence of membership decisions across the entire network of states and IGOs.

We compare our theory of attraction based on geopolitics with two alternatives. First, we consider the benchmark functional model that organizational membership reflects state interest in the specific policies regulated by an institution. Trade with members and income of applicant measure the economic interests of states in relation to economic organizations. Second, we consider a geographic model based on common region. Diffusion processes could lead states in the same region to join organizations together. Controlling for these factors allows us to test the independent impact of geopolitical alignment on the likelihood for states to join organizations.

Our findings show strong evidence that security interests shape the membership politics of international economic organizations. Across each measure of geopolitical alignment, we find a robust positive relationship with IGO membership. Furthermore, this effect remains strong when taking into account the interdependent nature of states' IGO membership decisions.

Our contribution to the literature is both theoretical and empirical. We document patterns of IGO membership for an important subset of international organizations. The fact that geopolitics wields influence over the member composition of economic organizations stands in contrast to expectations that

interdependence and multilateral norms create a zone of apolitical cooperation based on contracts and economic interests. To the extent that security ties offer an additional source of information to alleviate the bargaining problem for cooperation, the geopolitical logic is complementary to functional theories. Yet we find a strong effect of geopolitical ties even after states have joined several organizations together and no longer have need for such information. Furthermore, we find that geopolitical alignment with the most powerful states has an independent influence on membership, indicating strong support for the second mechanism in which states seek to reinforce geopolitical ties through IGOs. This represents a direct challenge to conventional views of international institutions. Far from creating a zone of apolitical cooperation, institutions represent an opportunity for states to engage in patronage and bribery.

Finally, the politics of membership should inform research into the effectiveness of international institutions. Too often the discussion about selection bias ends with criticism and no constructive research agenda, or points to alternative empirical approaches (e.g., instrumental variable regression analysis) that rely strongly on questionable assumptions about exogenous variation in membership. We offer instead a direct observational study of membership selection informed by a theory of why states choose to join. On the one hand, our finding that security cooperation shapes the decision to join IGOs challenges the validity of studies that show shared memberships encourage peace. On the other hand, the role of geopolitics in membership decisions mitigates the concern that IGO membership merely reflects screening for compliant states.

The next section lays out our argument about geopolitical alignment as the central force of attraction to determine IGO membership. Then we introduce our data on economic IGOs and present the results of our empirical analysis of membership. A final section concludes.

2 Motivation

Institutionalized cooperation has long fascinated scholars of international relations. Membership in institutions has been shown to have significant impact on behavior. Some empirical studies assess the power of institutions to change outcomes within the issue area by comparing the policies of members and non-members. For example, the debate on whether the WTO increases trade has largely been the assessment of whether members on average trade more with each other in cross-national comparison or within dyad pairs before and after WTO membership (Rose, 2004; Gowa and Kim, 2005; Goldstein, Rivers and Tomz, 2007). Environmental institutions are adjudged as consequential if members reduce their levels of pollution following entry (Young, 1999; Breitmeier, Underdal and Young, 2011). Others ask whether the number and type of memberships across international organizations can shape trade patterns or conflict between states (Russett and Oneal, 2001; Boehmer, Gartzke and Nordstrom, 2004; Ingram, Robinson and Busch, 2005; Hafner-Burton and Montgomery, 2006). Bearce and Bondanella (2007) find significant convergence of interests among states that share common IGO membership. Socialization among members can induce changes of behavior (Johnston, 2001).

Yet analysis of institutional effectiveness confronts the issue of selection bias; the decision to join IGOs is endogenous to state preferences. A longstanding debate exists in IR about whether institutions promote cooperation or only bring together those states that would have adjusted their policies in the absence of an institution. (e.g. Downs, Rocke and Barsoom, 1996; Martin and Simmons, 1998). Skeptics claim that power and interests determine both who forms and joins IGOs as well as policy outcomes, such that the regime is “epiphenomenal” (Mearsheimer, 1994/5). Constructivist theories are equally susceptible to this critique given the possibility that only pro-social states choose to join institutions. Some respond to this criticism by evaluating how institutions promote cooperation while controlling

for selection effects in the use of the institution (e.g. Fortna, 2004; Davis, 2012). Another approach applies statistical models of selection using an instrumental variable to identify the effect of membership (e.g. Von Stein, 2005; Poast and Urpelainen, 2015), or matching to reduce heterogeneity across states in covariates that predict membership (e.g. Simmons and Hopkins, 2005; Lupu, 2013). The most direct response to selection bias, however, is to develop theories and empirical models about selection into international organizations. One cannot understand whether and how institutions promote cooperation without first looking at the conditions that shape membership.

In perhaps the most well known example of conditional membership, research on the enlargement of the European Union documents the depth of reforms undertaken by Eastern European governments as part of accession (e.g. Jacoby, 2004; Schneider, 2009). Thus, studies that only evaluate compliance after membership underestimate the effects of the institution. The challenge is to distinguish whether the prospect of joining the organization or exogenous processes that correlate with entry decisions account for changes of policies. At the same time, some IGOs allow entry without imposing conditions on states. How can we explain unlikely members such as Turkey joining the OECD in 1961 and communist Poland joining the GATT in 1967? One possibility is that organizational rule-makers set accession conditions to screen for compliant states. But geopolitical interests or other ties of affinity may also help identify trustworthy partners. As a result, shared security interests can lead to lower entry barriers for specific states, e.g. allies and former colonies. These examples highlight the non-random selection into IGO membership through screening members on the basis of policy reforms *or* political relations.

If geopolitical alignment influences membership in IGOs, rapid shifts in a state's foreign policy orientation should change its membership behavior. The Iranian Revolution in 1979, for example, led to a sharp break in its political relations with the United States. Our theory of shared security interests predicts a similar break in the level of institutionalized cooperation between the two states. Figure

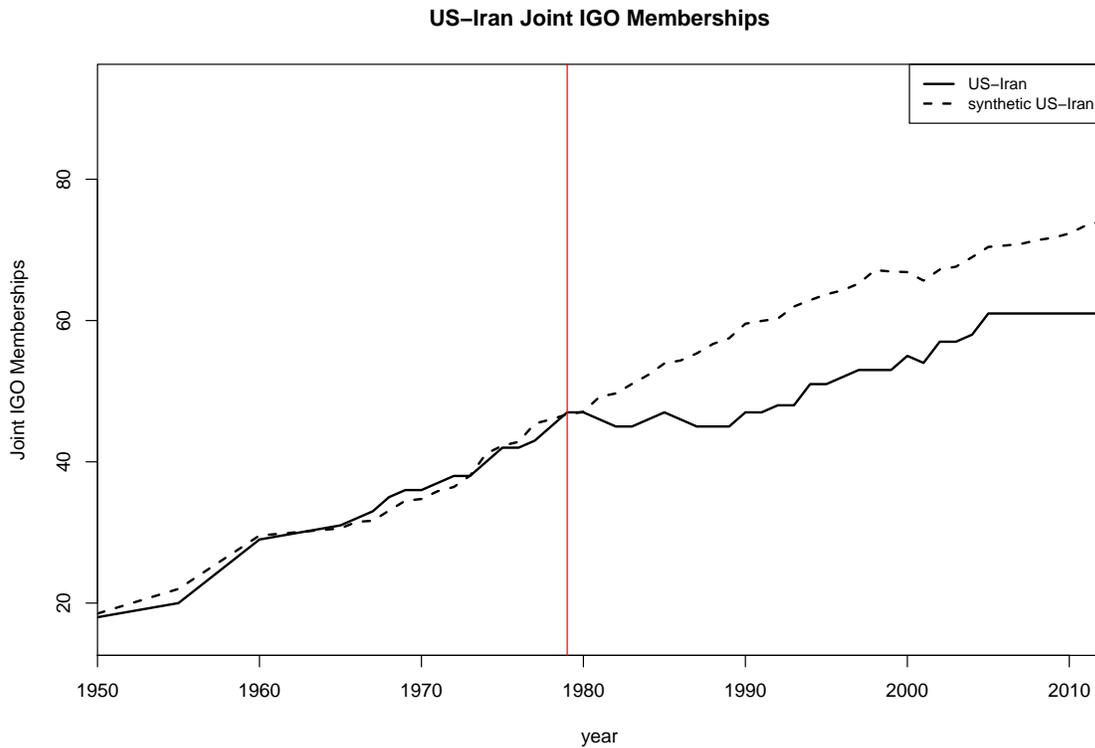


Figure 1: *Iran’s IGO Membership Pattern*: The figure shows the synthetic control and observed membership for Iran’s shared IGO memberships with the United States.

1 reveals the impact of this geopolitical shift on the rate of joint IGO membership between Iran and the United States. We compare these states’ observed joint membership (solid line) with a “synthetic control” designed to approximate the counterfactual rate of joint membership in the absence of the 1979 revolution (dashed line).¹ The data demonstrate a clear discrepancy as the two states’ security interests diverge.

Both universal membership principles and the pursuit of optimal performance as a functional institution would leave very little room for unrelated political considerations to enter into membership politics. But a surprising number of international organizations are quite vague about membership criteria. Governments often grant themselves discretion over membership. Exclusive yet vague membership rules or

¹The synthetic control observation is created by identifying a weighted average of joint membership in other country pairs which minimizes the difference between the observed and synthetic control joint membership rates in the pretreatment (pre-1979) period. See Alberto Abadie (2003) for additional information.

universal principles modified by approval processes provide flexibility for states to engage in strategic selection of IGO members. By steering a middle course between universality and precise entry conditions, states restrict cooperation to a subset of states.

In short, most IGOs resemble limited membership clubs more than universal organizations. Even as states are becoming more interconnected, this occurs through overlapping memberships in a wide range of international institutions rather than a single focal institution in each issue area (Alter and Meunier, 2009; Morse and Keohane, 2014; Greenhill and Lupu, 2015). Through selecting members, club-style IGOs engage states in provision of an *impure* public good where benefits are excludable and congestion may diminish benefits so that membership will be limited (Cornes and Sandler, 1996, p. 4). Diminishing returns from status of association, slower decision-making processes, and other characteristics of groups reduce the marginal utility from an additional member. In discriminatory clubs, the choice of members is not anonymous but rather discriminates based on features that may not be related to whether a state contributes to provision of the cooperative good (ibid., p. 385).

Based on the premise that cooperation for economic policy represents a club good where exclusion is possible, we explore the criteria that shape the composition of membership. Performance capacity, such as the economic conditions that correlate with the likelihood of compliance in economic institutions, and political suitability, such as geopolitical conditions that reflect similar security interests, offer two different principles for selection of members.

3 The Importance of IGO Membership

This paper examines membership in formal intergovernmental organizations as the dependent variable. These are organizations that are established by three or more states and have a permanent entity sustain-

ing regular meetings among members.² This definition encompasses organizations with little institutional structure, such as the Association of Southeast Nations at its formation in 1967, and also those with more of an institutional “footprint” such as the United Nations. It also includes organizations narrowly focused on a single issue such as OPEC and those of broader scope such as the OECD. An IGO consists of more than simply a treaty that forms a contract between groups of states. Rather, it is a durable forum supporting an ongoing relationship among states, designed to sustain the commitments of the agreement and to address new problems as they arise.

Membership helps to set apart IGOs from other forms of international cooperation. Martin and Simmons (2012, p. 329) wrote:

International organizations are associations of actors, typically states. IOs have membership criteria, and membership may entail privileges (as well as costs). While a state may unilaterally decide to follow a set of rules – the United States, for example can decide to abide by the Law of the Sea without any other state’s permission – a state cannot typically unilaterally decide to join an IO; they have to be admitted.

The formal charters that establish IGOs almost always include some entry provisions agreed to by its founding members. As such membership is a mutual decision reached by states that agree to cooperate within an organization.

States can become a member as either an original founder of the organization or by accession to an existing organization. While there are important differences in the bargaining dynamic experienced by founding states and accession states, we treat both forms of joining an IGO as membership and then test for differences in the two processes. The end of membership can arise through the ‘death’ of the IGO or

²We follow the definition from the Yearbook of International Organizations that is the basis for COW dataset on inter-governmental organizations. This excludes subsidiary organizations established by an existing IGO, which are referred to as “emanations.”

the exit of the state, either willingly or as the result of expulsion.

Existing theories offer several insights into membership. “Demand-side” explanations consider why states pursue institutionalized cooperation. “Supply-side” arguments examine how states design institutions to limit or expand membership. We will develop our argument about how the political relations between states simultaneously shape the demand and supply of membership. In doing so, we turn from *whether* and *how* states use IGOs to promote cooperation, to the question of *with whom*.

Demand for regimes arises when states would benefit from cooperation and an institution helps them overcome market failures that would prevent such cooperation. Keohane (1984) develops the core logic of functional demand for institutions based on their ability to lower transaction costs. Those states with the most need for cooperation and those issues that present persistent conditions preventing cooperation are where one would expect to observe regime formation. Membership should reflect the functional demand across states. When states use a club model of cooperation, this is portrayed as a selection process based on common interests within the single issue area – for example, the early years of the trade regime are cited as having excluded other issue areas such as environment and labor and excluded illiberal states to facilitate easier bargaining over agreements (Keohane and Nye, 2001).

Skeptics ask whether joining the institution simply reflects underlying power and preferences, depriving the institution *per se* of its independent status (Mearsheimer, 1994/5). In these explanations, demand for institutional membership comes from states who already planned to comply with an organization’s rules; institutions therefore require them to do little beyond their existing policies (Downs, Rocke and Barsoom, 1996). The challenge for empirical studies of institutions has been to demonstrate that there is a commitment effect above and beyond the selection of states into the institution (Martin and Simmons, 1998; Simmons and Hopkins, 2005). The presumption of the selection bias criticism is that membership in organizations screens for states that will cooperate, whether through self-selection or conditional

membership that would exclude likely cheaters.

Another hypothesized source of demand for IGO membership is democratic political institutions. Scholars have shown that democracy increases the propensity for states to join IGOs (e.g. Shanks, Jacobson and Kaplan, 1996; Russett and Oneal, 2001). Democratizing states form a distinct group with their own demands for credibility that increase the need for binding policies through international commitments (Pevehouse, 2002; Mansfield and Pevehouse, 2006; Poast and Urpelainen, 2015). When uncertainty about their policy stability prevents them from joining existing organizations, democratizing states instead found their own IGOs as a means to demonstrate their readiness to cooperate and erect screening criteria to uphold high standards (Poast and Urpelainen, 2013; Kaoutzanis, Poast and Urpelainen, Forthcoming).

Others focus on the supply of IGO membership. Here scholars contend that states adjust the rules and membership size of IGOs according to the enforcement and distributional nature of the issue area (Martin, 1992; Kahler, 1992). In a special issue of *International Organization*, Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal (2001) argue that the nature of the cooperation problem can explain the variation in the design of institutions, including membership. The rational design project put forward three conjectures about membership: severity of the enforcement problem and uncertainty about preferences are posited as conditions that lead to restricted membership, while severity of the distributional problem favors inclusive membership. This would lead one to expect restricted membership for most international organizations where there are fears of free-riding and cheating. Membership should represent a significant hurdle such that it signals effectively whether a state is the type that will cooperate and those unwilling to comply with the rules will not become a member. Inclusive membership is expected for coordination games like standard-setting where wider participation is beneficial to all and a large group setting allows for trade-offs. To the extent that cooperation involves both distributional and enforcement challenges,

these represent contradictory predictions for membership provisions and other institutional design aspects must be considered as interacting to offset choices on the membership dimension (Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal, 2001, p. 796).

The trade-off between depth of rules and breadth of participation can be considerable in the face of diverse interests of states. A small group with similar preferences can more readily reach agreement for cooperative agreements and faces fewer problems monitoring compliance (Kahler, 1992; Downs and Rocke, 1995; Thompson and Verdier, 2014). This justifies rigorous screening to produce smaller group. In the context of a public good provision, however, a smaller group also means that other states will be free-riding as they choose not to contribute to cooperation at the high level demanded (Stone, Slantchev and London, 2008). The substantive significance of such “deep” agreements is small because of the limited participants. A larger membership benefits from pooling resources and efficiency gains from economies of scale, and this forms a significant rationale for cooperation through formal organizations (Abbott and Snidal, 1998).

Supply-side explanations have also provided expectations for dynamic change in IGO membership over time. Downs, Rocke and Barsoom (1998) suggest the optimal pathway for cooperation outcomes lies in *sequential liberalization*, whereby small groups set the rules and gradually expand to admit new members after their preferences have converged. Gray, Lindstadt and Slapin (2015) model enlargement scenarios in which the location of the original group and applicants on a unidimensional space determine the probability for enlargement. Small and homogenous founding groups can achieve stable enlargement without changing the organization, whereas a more diverse set of founding states may find that misperceptions about applicants lead to enlargement that changes the level of ambition in agreements. Both of these theories focus on the unidimensional preferences of members in the issue regulated by the regime. Downs, Rocke and Barsoom (1998) suggest an exogenous process of preference convergence will de-

termine which states join institutions, while Gray, Lindstadt and Slapin (2015) argue that misperception leaves room for the accidental admission of states that have not yet fully converged in their preferences.

To explain why some states want to join and others favor their entry, however, one must look more closely at the relations between states. The dyadic ties of states shape incentives on both the demand and supply side of membership decisions as states consider whether to engage in cooperation with each other within IGOs. Association with states through organizational membership carries spillover effects. When members care about both the shared good and the attributes of other members, they may devise “discriminatory clubs” that select according to the desirability of the applicant and not just their expected contribution to provision of cooperation outcomes (Cornes and Sandler, 1996, p. 385). As an example, members in a social club care not only for the entertainment activity itself but also member composition and favor admission of high status individuals. In the case of international organizations, it means relaxing the assumption that cooperation occurs as an interaction among anonymous states holding proportional contribution to cooperation based on their size (e.g. Stone, Slantchev and London, 2008). Instead, membership decisions account for both the new entrant’s ability to contribute to the joint project and their attributes that offer distinct value to the group. Relational explanations show the importance of looking outside of the policies regulated by the regime when considering the benefits of collaboration.

The risk of letting in a bad apple looms large in international affairs where conflict can arise unexpectedly. Kaoutzanis, Poast and Urpelainen (Forthcoming) argue that democratizing states establish strict accession rules to screen out those who would diminish cooperation, such as authoritarian states that could threaten the democratic consolidation process. Donno, Metzger and Russett (2014) show that IGOs favor applicants with a lower security risk because of the concern that outbreak of conflict involving a member state could hinder cooperative working relations within the group or require costly mediation.

Davis and Wilf (2015) argue that foreign policy shapes entry into the trade regime through faster applications on the demand-side and faster accession negotiations on the supply-side. These recent studies are an important step forward to show that states are conditional cooperators that consider more than just mutual interests on a narrow issue. We offer a more general model in which states choose to cooperate based on shared security interests.

4 Geopolitical Alignment as Basis for IGO Cooperation

What is the starting point for cooperation? The challenge lies in how to coordinate actions in an international system plagued by the absence of complete information or external enforcement. These features of anarchy have been widely discussed as a source of insecurity and mistrust among states that hinder cooperation (e.g. Waltz, 1979; Baldwin, 1993). When confronting an issue with distributional consequences, concern that others will cheat could prevent cooperation. Monitoring and enforcement provisions within an institution can alleviate such fears by raising the costs of cheating (Keohane, 1984). Yet the performance of monitoring and enforcement itself depends on the cooperation of members. Even among institutions with high levels of delegation to a central executive agency or third party judicial process such as EU or WTO, the actions of member states remain central to the basic functions of monitoring and enforcement. Hence the original problem of trust in fellow states to contribute to cooperation remains prior to enforcement. Further, as Fearon (1998) contends, the strengthening of enforcement could aggravate the bargaining challenge over distributional problems. The impetus to start a cooperative venture through forming an IGO requires some common interest and assurance about future behavior.

Careful selection of partners for cooperation is one answer, conditional on the issue supporting discrimination and the availability of an exclusion mechanism. In club-style IGOs, states limit members. Exclusionary membership provisions offer a means for states to screen out those states that will cooperate

from those that will not.

This turns us to the key question – *what forms the objective criteria for screening out states?* One approach would be to require common interests in the issue area, but these may generate incentives to cheat as well as to cooperate – the large financial sector of a country could make it both more eager to see prudential rules shared by all states and create vested interests pushing for the short term payoffs of violating rules. A second approach would require costly reforms in advance of membership. But this presumes that states are able to cooperate on a unilateral basis when the premise of founding the organization lies in the challenges that prevent states taking action alone. The first approach could let in states that will cheat while the second approach could exclude states that otherwise would cooperate in a joint effort. In the absence of objective criteria within the issue area that effectively screen states for their resolve to cooperate, subjective judgments are made about which states are likely to be cooperative.

We argue that the most basic criterion at the heart of IGOs are common security interests. There are two mechanisms by which security interests lay the foundation for cooperation in IGOs. First, geopolitical alignment shapes the composition of IGO membership by providing information that builds trust between states. As states seek information about who would serve as a reliable partner for cooperation, geopolitical alignment stands out as a benchmark for selection. Those who cooperate on issues related to core security interests are more likely to take a common approach to other fundamental problems. Their success coordinating on issues related to defense as a public good builds trust to support subsequent cooperation on different issues. The term trust here refers to the “belief that the other side prefers mutual cooperation to exploiting one’s own cooperation,” and results from a rational learning process of observing past actions (Kydd, 2005, p. 6). States that cooperate on key political issues, whether by forming an alliance or simply voting together in United Nations, are more likely to see each other as reliable partners for other issues. For the arena of IGO cooperation on economic issues, geopolitical alignment serves as

an informational tool to screen out states based on past observed actions.

Second, geopolitical alignment may increase the benefits from institutionalized cooperation as states use IGO membership to offer side payments and strengthen their security coalition. This mechanism highlights the indirect channels by which security interests shape joint cooperation on non-security issues. States are aware that they will need to be able to offer side payments to support security cooperation. In hierarchic relations of exchange, states reinforce their ties through such bargains for mutual benefit (Lake, 2009). Favoring entry by allies serves as a reward. Powerful states want to bring into IGOs those states where they will most need side payments. Granting easy entry is a form of patronage to favor allies or bribery to gain leverage over critical swing states in a broad security coalition.

An important benefit of joining an organization is forming a closer association with a particular group of states. Accepting joint membership serves to reassure states within the organization of their willingness to share benefits with each other. To the extent that international society holds structure, IGO membership informs the social categories of which states work together. As expected for any kind of social category, reputation may generalize across members in the institution. This can connect to additional benefits as states improve their standing in the eyes of investors or gain credibility vis a vis hostile states (Kydd, 2001; Gray, 2013; Brooks, Cunha and Mosley, 2014; Gray and Hicks, 2014).

Our argument differs from the kind of issue linkage posited in functional regime theory. Rather, membership decisions reflect security interests outside of the jurisdiction of the regime. States may accept lower regime effectiveness for the sake of extra-regime cooperation benefits. Furthermore, it reverses the expected sequence of cooperation. Neofunctional theorists would posit that joint work on technocratic issues arising around coordination dilemmas could generate positive spillover for later cooperation on more difficult topics (Haas, 1980). Our theory suggests a prior condition – those who cooperate on security matters are the most willing to engage together on other tasks such as regulating

tariffs and coordinating their allocation of foreign aid.

The coalition-building aspect of IGO membership shares similar expectations with Gowa (1994) for economic cooperation to follow political ties between states. Gowa (1994) theorizes that the security externalities of trade creates incentives for allies to trade more with each other than with either adversaries or other states.³ This point could be generalized to other areas of cooperation as a basis for why states should look first to allies for partners in IGOs. But the role of the security externality as a basis for cooperation remains limited by the structure of international system and the relationship between pairs of state where common security interests are certain – bipolar alliance structures are a necessary condition for states to internalize the security externality (Gowa, 1989). The puzzle remains of why states would make long term commitments of institutionalized cooperation when security relationship could change. Furthermore, attention to a security externality in the context of a long-term commitment to repeated action in an IGO could worsen the original bargaining problem by simply increasing distributional stakes, and thus bring back the problem noted by Fearon (1998).

At the empirical level, we observe a surge of institutionalized cooperation after end of Cold War when there is *less* certainty about which states will be allies or adversaries. This pattern challenges the security externality logic, but does not negate the importance of geopolitics. Geopolitical alignment remains a strong condition for selecting cooperation partners after the end of the Cold War. From a coalition-building view of IGO membership, states seek additional leverage in their relations with other states by broadening and deepening their sphere of connections through IGO membership ties. The end of the Cold War would increase rather than reduce the logic of IGO benefit provision as the threat of uncertainty calls for keeping options open on whom to be able to influence. Declining power and threat uncertainty gives rise to a greater need for this tactic.

³Gowa (1994) shows that trade gains form positive security externality when allies trade, in contrast to the negative externality arising from trade between adversaries.

The argument suggests the following hypothesis: *States with shared geopolitical alignment form organizations together and are more likely to join the same organizations.*

Geopolitical alignment overlaps with alliance structures but can differ in important ways. States ranging from Switzerland to Israel share common positions with the United States regarding questions of international security, but have never established alliance ties. The states of southeast Asia emphasize non-intervention in domestic affairs as a shared principle guiding their security policies even while their alliance affiliations differ. During the Cold War, the non-aligned movement countries coordinated around their joint decision not to become allies with either the United States or USSR. Shared alliances, arms transfers, and similar voting in the United Nations serve as proxies for measuring like-minded orientation to security issues that provides basis for geopolitical alignment.

In order to test the hypothesis, it is necessary to compare the role of geopolitical alignment with the demand for membership based on interests within the issue area regulated by the IGO. The pursuit of mutual gains based on common interests and challenges of market failure underly existing functional theories of international institutions. Since geopolitical alignment and interests within the issue area overlap entirely in the area of security organizations, looking outside security organizations is necessary to test the hypotheses. In the area of economic organizations one can compare how economic interests contribute to expected benefits from membership relative to the impact of geopolitical alignment.

Although we cannot directly test the mechanisms of information and coalition-building incentives, observable implications allow us to explore the plausibility of each mechanism to account for broader patterns. We explore differences along three dimensions: who holds strong political ties among the IGO members, the salience of geopolitical alignment in different phases of IGO evolution, and finally, how membership ties are formed within the broad network of states and IGOs.

The informational role of geopolitical alignment holds relevance for all members of international

organizations. Holding cooperative ties with one member allows it to 'vouch for' the reliability of its partner regardless of the power of that state. The importance of geopolitical ties with the average IGO member serves as the best indicator for the weight given to security ties as a source of information. In contrast, the coalition-building role of IGO membership privileges ties with powerful states. Here one would expect that geopolitical alignment with the the most powerful state in the IGO would be the central factor determining membership outcomes.

The high transaction costs for establishment of an IGO exacerbate the information asymmetry among states who join together as founders of an organization. These states must invest up front in the diplomatic and political costs of negotiating the IGO charter and supporting the infrastructure to establish a headquarters and financial base, while the gains of cooperation depend on whether their partners cooperate in repeated interaction going forward. The information mechanism would expect that geopolitical alignment matters the most at the time of regime formation as a condition for determining which states become founders of an international organization. The enlargement process involves less risk since the group of like-minded states have already set the terms of the charter and can force this on later entrants. The coalition-building mechanism supports selection of allies equally at the time of formation and enlargement.

Taking into account the systemic-level interaction across decisions to join IGOs is also important for the assessment of both mechanisms. Information-seeking states can rely upon geopolitical alignment as one cue for information, but there can also be a cumulative effect as states join more organizations together. The past pattern of joining IGOs together forms an additional source of information that should correspond with membership decisions. The informational mechanism suggests that states with more shared prior multilateral experience will form more joint membership ties in the future. In the coalition-building mechanism, states that accumulate many membership ties and become highly central in the

network of IGOs have a reduced incentive to offer additional patronage via joint membership. States that are already central will have less need to join additional IGOs, while those on the periphery will have the most to gain from more memberships.

5 Empirical Analysis of IGO Membership Patterns

To test the effect of geopolitical alignment on institutional membership decisions, we examine patterns of state membership in salient, economic IGOs. We implement two statistical modeling approaches. First, we use logistic regression models to demonstrate that shared security interests are a powerful driver of state membership in IGOs. This relationship holds across several different measures of geopolitical alignment – formal alliances, arms transfers, and UN voting patterns – and is consistent when controlling for other variables that may influence IGO membership. Second, we analyze IGO membership as a network of evolving membership ties among states in the international system. Drawing on a dynamic statistical model of network formation, we provide evidence that alliance ties drive institutional membership even after accounting for the interdependent nature of membership decisions.

5.1 Data

In order to evaluate the effect of shared security interests while controlling for interests within the issue area regulated by the organization, we focus our analysis on IGOs where states engage in economic cooperation. Economic IGOs create diverging expectations between the role of geopolitical alignment and a functional explanation. Our hypothesis supports a positive relationship between geopolitical alignment and membership in IGOs, whereas functional theories would expect that only economic interests will influence state decisions about joining economic organizations. The economic IGOs offer a hard test of our theory relative to security IGOs where both functional and geopolitical interests point in same direction. We also focus on consequential IGOs that are salient in world politics. Our theory is relevant

for those IGOs where significant stakes could present a risk from cheating and the potential for side payments.

Following these criteria, we select a sample of 91 salient economic IGOs for analysis of the period from 1950 to 2012.⁴ We begin with the set of 496 IGOs included in the Correlates of War (COW) International Organizations Dataset (Pevehouse, Nordstrom and Warnke, 2004). We extend the COW data through 2012, incorporating thirteen additional IGOs formed in the 2005-2012 period.⁵ We code the economic focus of IGOs based on information from the Yearbook of International Organizations that describes the fundamental aims and subject area for all IGOs.⁶ This process eliminates almost 100 organizations; the resulting list of 399 economic IGOs includes dozens of prominent economic organizations (e.g., the World Trade Organization, European Union, and International Labor Organization) along with a large number of relatively obscure IGOs focused on narrow sub-issues (e.g., the African Groundnut Council and the Asian Vegetable Resource and Development Center). We further subset the data to only *salient*, economic IGOs based on their prominence in newspaper coverage. We define as salient any IGO which received at least 50 references in major newspapers in the year of its founding or the year 2014.⁷

We conduct our analysis at the level of the state-IGO-year.⁸ Testing membership in state-IGO units reflects the data-generating process more closely than a dyadic analysis of country pairs or a monadic

⁴See the appendix for the full list of salient, economic organizations. Time coverage includes the years 1950, 1955, and 1960-2012; the 5-year intervals in the first decade are a result of the Correlates of War IGO dataset, our primary source for membership data.

⁵New IGOs include the Global Green Growth Institute, Eurasian Development Bank, Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, Bank of the South, International Renewable Energy Agency, African Leaders Malaria Alliance, Nordic Patent Initiative, Asia Pacific Safeguards Network, Red Iberoamericana Ministerial de Aprendizaje e Investigacin en Salud, International Anti-Corruption Agency, World Nature Institute, and Asian Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative.

⁶The Yearbook of International Organizations is a compendium of information on over 66,000 international organizations produced by the Union of International Associations. Our coding relies on two categories of information: the goals of each organization (“aims”) and the issue area listed for the organization (“subject”). We use software to parse these descriptions for keywords, such as “commerce”, “development” or “finance”, that indicate a focus on economic activity, broadly construed. A full list of keywords is available from the authors upon request.

⁷Coding for salience was conducted by searching the Lexis-Nexis database for newspaper references to each economic organization.

⁸This is similar to the approach employed in recent research on IGO membership (Poast and Urpelainen, 2013; Donno, Metzger and Russett, 2014).

analysis that counts total memberships of each state. When a state joins an IGO, it makes an informed decision about a specific organization including its relationship with the full set of member states in the organization. It is incorrect to disaggregate membership as if states form separate dyadic organizations with each of the IGO's members; and it is equally problematic to aggregate all IGO entry decisions into a single count. Our sample consists of all state-IGO pairings for the 91 salient, economic IGOs from 1950-2012.⁹ The dependent variable, *IGO Membership*, is a dichotomous measure of whether state i is a member of organization j in year t . *IGO Membership* is equal to 1 in 32.6% of the 455,221 state-IGO-year observations. Subsequently we subset the sample for separate analyses of two types of entry to assess whether geopolitical alignment holds different effects for joining an IGO as a founding member in the year of IGO formation or later as an entrant by accession during IGO enlargement.¹⁰

We use formal alliances as our primary measure of geopolitical alignment. Alliances signal an underlying shared security interest between states, which we believe facilitates institutionalized cooperation on economic issues. Data on alliances comes from version 4.1 of the COW Formal Alliances dataset (Gibler, 2009). We construct two variables to assess the actor-orientation by which security interests drive IGO membership. For observations with state i and IGO j , *Average Alliances* measures the proportion of IGO j 's member states with which state i shares a formal alliance in a given year. The effect of *Average Alliances* reflects the overall tendency of states to seek out partners for cooperation with whom they share underlying security interests. In the sample, it ranges from 0 (62.8% of observations) to 1 (2.3%) with a mean value of 0.083. We interpret a positive effect of *Average Alliances* as support for the informational mechanism: as a state shares more alliances with members, it is more likely to be trusted as a reliable partner for cooperation. Holding an alliance with any member will be equally useful

⁹IGOs enter the dataset in the year in which they are founded and continue until 2012 or until the organization ends.

¹⁰Donno, Metzger and Russett (2014) focus their analysis of IGO accession on the enlargement phase, but Poast and Urpelainen (2013) demonstrate that conditions may differ for the politics of forming new IGOs or joining existing IGOs. We subject our hypotheses to empirical tests to determine whether the phase of entry matters for our argument.

additional information.

Our second variable, *Lead State Alliance*, indicates whether state i shares an alliance with the leading economic power among member states of IGO j during year t , with economic power measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Although there is considerable stability in lead states, our dynamic measure incorporates power shifts that change the lead state over time. A list of lead states for each IGO is included in the appendix. The *Lead State Alliance* variable reflects the patronage mechanism, in which powerful states use IGO membership as a strategic tool to reinforce their geopolitical coalition. States are allied with an IGO's most powerful economic member state in 19.2% of state-IGO-years in our sample.

We supplement the alliance variables with alternative measures of geopolitical alignment. *S-scores* is a continuous measure of similarity across states' entire portfolio of alliances; it reaches its maximum (1) when two states have identical alliance portfolios.¹¹ This variable accounts for the importance of overlapping alliance partners as a way to identify common security interests. *Arms transfers* is a dichotomous indicator equal to one if two states exchange military hardware.¹² The willingness to conduct arms trade signifies cooperation to support the military strength of another state, although their presence may indicate anything from direct subsidies to help build the military capacity of allies to business transactions that are predicated on positive relations. *UN Ideal Point Similarity* is a continuous variable that increases as the UN voting records of two states converge (Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten, forthcoming). This measure offers a broader perspective on the foreign policy orientation of states across a range of topics on the international agenda. As with formal alliances, each alternative measure is operationalized to create both an "average" and "lead state" variable.

We include several variables related to states' functional demand for economic cooperation. Trade

¹¹S-scores are calculated using the COW formal alliance dataset according to the methodology proposed by Signorino and Ritter (1999).

¹²Data on arms transfers is from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). See <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>.

with IGO members and trade with the IGO lead state control for the possibility that shared economic ties influence membership in salient, economic IGOs.¹³ We also include monadic variables that measure the economic interests of states: income (GDP per capita), market size (GDP), and trade openness (total trade / GDP). As these variables increase, so do the prospective gains from economic cooperation and thus the functional demand for institutional membership.

We include control variables for additional features of states that may influence their demand to join IGOs and the willingness of other states to accept their entry. We use Polity scores to capture the tendency of democratic states to join and form IGOs with higher frequency (Russett and Oneal, 2001; Poast and Urpelainen, 2015). To control for the possibility that IGOs seek to screen out conflict-prone states (Donno, Metzger and Russett (2014), we include a variable measuring the average number of fatal militarized disputes (MIDs) between state i and members of IGO j .¹⁴

Diffusion effects are addressed in two ways. A variable for total IGO membership accounts for the size of the IGO, which could exert positive attraction for other states to enter.¹⁵ Since the behavior of neighbors may exert stronger influence over states, we include a variable for “Members from region” indicating the number of states residing in state i ’s geographic region that are members of IGO j .

The design of the IGO influences the openness of membership. An indicator for exclusive IGOs identifies whether an IGO charter provision restricts eligibility for membership based on defined characteristics such as commodity production, culture, or region.¹⁶ For regional organizations we include both an indicator for whether the organization is defined in its name or charter as a regional organization, and

¹³Bilateral trade data is from the IMF Direction of Trade dataset. The “trade with members” variable measures average volume of imports and exports between state i and each member of IGO j . The “trade with lead state” variable measures trade volume with the lead state.

¹⁴Data on fatal MIDs are from the dyadic version of the COW Militarized Interstate Disputes Dataset (Ghosn and Bennett, 2003). The dyadic MID data currently extend only to 2001, so we interact this variable with an dichotomous indicator for the pre-2001 period.

¹⁵Total IGO membership is measured with a count of the number of states that are members of IGO j in year t .

¹⁶This variable was coded from IGO treaty documents following broad criteria to differentiate between universal IGOs that explicitly encourage membership access for all states from those IGOs that explicitly limit membership to a subset of states.

an indicator for whether the state belongs to the region of the IGO.¹⁷ The interactive effect of “State-IGO Same region” addresses the likelihood that regional IGOs accept members from their region at a higher rate than other states.¹⁸

5.2 Regression Analysis

Our first set of empirical tests consist of a series of logistic regression models predicting the dichotomous outcome variable, IGO membership. All independent variables are lagged by one year to mitigate potential simultaneity bias, and robust standard errors are clustered at the country level. We estimate the following model of IGO membership for state i in IGO j and year t :

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr(\text{IGO membership}_{ijt} = 1) = & \text{logit}^{-1}(\alpha + \beta_1 \text{Alliances}_{ijt-1} + \beta_2 X_{ijt-1} + \beta_3 D_{ijt-1} \\ & + \beta_4 V_{it-1} + \beta_5 M_j) \end{aligned}$$

The model predicts IGO membership using our primary explanatory variable of geopolitical alignment, formal alliances, operationalized as either an “average” and “lead state” measure. All models further include a set of control variables X_{ijt} measured at the state-IGO-year level (e.g., Trade and fatal MIDs with IGO Members); dynamic state-level variables D_{it} (Trade Openness, GDP, GDP per capita, Polity); static state-IGO variables V_{ij} (IGO-State Same Region); and static IGO-level variables M_j (Exclusive IGO, Regional IGO). Following Carter and Signorino (2010), we model time dependence by incorporating a cubic polynomial for year in all models (not shown).

¹⁷State regions are coded using the World Bank’s “country and lending groups” classification scheme (<http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-and-lending-groups>). IGOs are coded as regional if their IGO charter or organizational title references a specific geographic region.

¹⁸Several IGOs are regional in scope of work but allow states outside of the region to become members.

5.2.1 Average Member models

We begin with a set of models using the *Average Alliances* measure of geopolitical alignment. Table 1 displays logistic regression estimates for a baseline specification that pools observations (Model 1), and specifications that include IGO fixed effects (Model 2), and both IGO and state fixed effects (Model 3). The latter two models account for heterogeneity across IGOs and states in their approach to membership.

	<i>Dependent variable: IGO Membership</i>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Baseline	IGO FE	IGO & State FE
Avg. Alliances	2.715*** (0.232)	4.072*** (0.392)	5.218*** (0.446)
Trade with Members	0.119*** (0.038)	0.112* (0.044)	0.152* (0.064)
Polity	0.026*** (0.007)	0.034*** (0.007)	0.001 (0.002)
GDP	0.270*** (0.051)	0.266*** (0.052)	0.153 (0.172)
GDP per capita	-0.083 (0.050)	-0.062 (0.049)	-0.057 (0.148)
Trade Openness	-0.012** (0.004)	-0.011** (0.004)	-0.012*** (0.003)
Fatal MIDs with Members	0.047 (0.079)	0.039 (0.079)	0.031 (0.064)
Members from Region	0.125*** (0.011)	0.113*** (0.010)	0.146*** (0.012)
Total IGO Membership	0.027*** (0.002)	0.017*** (0.002)	0.015*** (0.002)
Exclusive IGO	-0.004 (0.060)	0.040 (0.104)	0.034 (0.999)
Regional IGO	-1.600*** (0.146)	-3.261*** (0.487)	-3.447*** (0.589)
State-IGO Same Region	2.133*** (0.235)	2.679*** (0.280)	2.163*** (0.242)
Observations	455,221	455,221	455,221

Table 1: *Effect of Alliances on IGO Membership*. Results of logistic regression models estimating the effect of the average alliance variable on membership in salient, economic IGOs. Coefficient estimates are displayed with robust standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

The regression results provide strong support for our primary hypothesis: as states share more alliances with an IGO's member states, they are significantly more likely to join the organization. This result is even stronger in the specifications that include fixed effects for IGOs and states, suggesting that even after controlling for unobserved heterogeneity across actors and organizations, geopolitical alignment exerts a strong, positive influence on IGO membership. The models provide mixed support for the role of economic interests. Functional economic interest, as measured by trade with IGO members and GDP, has a positive and statistically significant association with IGO membership in models 1 and 2. However, other measures of economic interests are generally insignificant (income) or negative (trade openness). The results support the importance of regional dynamics: a state is more likely to join an IGO as others within its geographic region join, and states are more likely to join a regional organization in their own region.

To assess the robustness of our findings, we estimate the same model with the three alternative measures of geopolitical alignment (*S-scores*, *UN Ideal Point similarity*, and *Arms transfers*). All have a positive and statistically significant effect on IGO membership. Figure 2 displays the marginal effect of a shift in geopolitical alignment variables on the probability that a state is a member of an IGO.¹⁹ Trade with IGO members is also included for comparison. The figure also displays the same effect for the “lead state” operationalization of each variable. These results emphasize the large substantive impact of geopolitical alignment. Shifting the *Average Alliances* variable by one standard deviation above the mean (from .087 to .287) increases the probability of IGO membership, on average, by more than 3.8%. Moving the *Lead State Alliance* variable from 0 to 1 increases probability of membership by 8.9%. These are substantial effects, given a baseline IGO membership rate of only 32.6%. Notably, the effect of both

¹⁹Predicted probabilities and confidence intervals are generated via 1000 bootstrapped simulations of Model 1. In each simulation, a “new” sample is drawn from the dataset and the model is re-estimated. The change in predicted probability is measured by moving continuous variables from the sample mean to one standard deviation above the mean, and dichotomous variables from zero to one.

alliance variables are larger than the estimated effect for shifting trade dependence on members above the mean by one standard deviation.

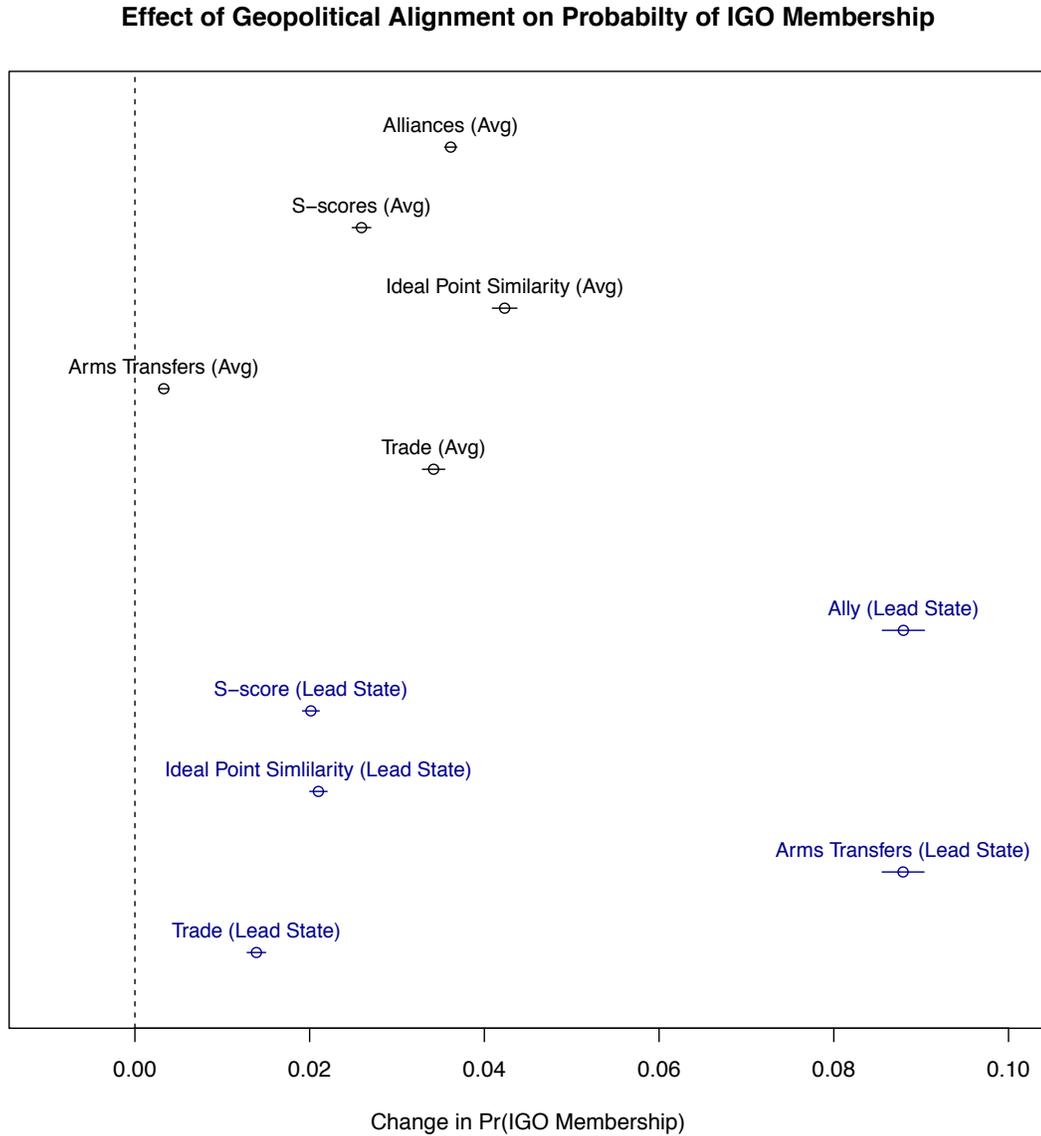


Figure 2: *Substantive Effect of Geopolitical Alignment*: Predicted probabilities and confidence intervals are generated via bootstrapping. Continuous variables are shifted from the sample mean to one standard deviation above the mean, and dichotomous variables from zero to one.

5.2.2 IGO Entry, Formation and Expansion models

In this section, we examine how geopolitical alignment shapes IGO membership at different stages in the evolution of a regime. Table 2 displays estimates from a logistic regression model of IGO *entry*. These specifications exclude observations in the years after a state joins an IGO. This is a more appropriate model if state membership in IGOs is sufficiently sticky that states do not reevaluate their membership every year. We estimate pooled models (1,4) that examine IGO entry that occurs in either the formation year of IGO creation or during expansion when a state joins by means of accession. Then we disaggregate the two phases into separate subsets of the data. Models 2 and 5 estimate IGO formation, while models 3 and 6 estimate IGO expansion. Results are shown for both the average and lead state alliance variables, and are also robust to the three alternative measures of geopolitical alignment. In addition to the estimates shown, each model includes IGO fixed effects, cubic polynomials to correct for time dependence, and IGO-level design traits (regional IGO, exclusive IGO).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Pooled	Formation	Expansion	Pooled	Formation	Expansion
Alliances (Members)	2.274*** (0.296)	3.604*** (0.302)	1.154*** (0.301)			
Trade with Members	-0.070** (0.020)	0.183** (0.018)	0.043** (0.014)			
Alliance (Lead State)				0.766*** (0.124)	1.093*** (0.123)	0.276* (0.120)
Trade with Lead State				0.049*** (0.007)	0.064*** (0.011)	0.031*** (0.008)
Polity	0.044*** (0.007)	0.011 (0.008)	0.040*** (0.008)	0.025** (0.008)	0.010 (0.008)	0.032*** (0.009)
GDP	0.143*** (0.043)	0.152 (0.041)	0.041 (0.031)	0.098** (0.036)	0.189*** (0.036)	0.018 (0.036)
GDP per capita	0.008 (0.044)	-0.085 (0.052)	-0.007 (0.032)	-0.026 (0.042)	-0.008 (0.051)	0.056 (0.048)
Fatal MIDs with members	-0.234 (0.121)	4.179 (2.991)	-0.064 (0.087)	-0.108 (0.125)	-1.988 (3.143)	-0.010 (0.099)
Trade Openness	-0.013* (0.005)	-0.028* (0.014)	-0.015*** (0.004)	-0.029*** (0.005)	-0.026* (0.012)	-0.018*** (0.005)
Members from Region	0.059*** (0.006)	0.100*** (0.008)	0.052* (0.007)	0.070*** (0.008)	0.114*** (0.009)	0.059*** (0.007)
Total IGO Membership	0.016*** (0.002)	0.041*** (0.011)	0.010*** (0.002)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.028** (0.010)	0.013*** (0.002)
Observations	299,597	6,869	292,728	227,279	6,822	220,407
Akaike Inf. Crit.	180,009.9	3590.0	180,009.9	185,496.8	185,496.8	185,496.8

Table 2: *Effect of Alliances on IGO Entry*. Results of logistic regression models estimating the effect of alliances with IGO members (Models 1-3) and alliances with IGO lead state (Models 4-6) on initial entry into salient, economic IGOs. After a state's initial entry, subsequent observations are excluded. Formation models examine only entry decisions made in the year of IGO creation, while expansion models examine post-formation entry. Coefficient estimates are displayed with robust standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted by: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

The results are consistent with a strong effect of shared security interests on IGO entry. In both periods of formation and expansion, geopolitical alignment with IGO members and with the IGO lead state has a positive, significant association with membership. Notably, the effect is strongest during the formation period. We interpret this as evidence in favor of the information mechanism, in which states use geopolitical alignment to overcome uncertainty about the trustworthiness of partners for cooperation in the face of high start-up costs.

5.2.3 Network models

One potential concern within a regression model of IGO membership is the assumption of independence among observations. This requires believing states make a series of independent decisions to join or refrain from joining each IGO – irrespective of the membership decisions of other states and their own portfolio of IGO memberships. If states take the actions of other actors into account, for example by evaluating potential partners on the basis of previously existing IGO memberships, the independence assumption is likely to be violated. To control for these complex dependencies, we draw on the stochastic actor-oriented model (SAOM), a dynamic network model developed by Snijders, Van de Bunt and Steglich (2010) which analyzes the decision to join IGOs as part of an interdependent, evolving system of IGO membership.

As before, the dependent variable of interest is state-IGO membership decisions. We examine the entire network of membership patterns among all salient, economic IGOs and all states in the system. Membership data for each year is represented as an $n \times m$ sociomatrix, with each row representing one of n states and each column representing one of m organizations. The sociomatrix represents individual membership ties as an affiliation network, with entry i, j indicating whether state i is a member of IGO j in a given year. The SAOM allows us to estimate the effect of key variables, such as geopolitical alignment, on the evolution of this network while controlling for certain endogenous network effects.

This evolution is assumed to result from the intentional, utility-maximizing decisions of actors (in this case, states), which evaluate their position in the network and make adjustments that maximize their utility (Snijders, Van de Bunt and Steglich, 2010). These adjustments correspond to adding or subtracting ties (IGO memberships) in the network. For example, if a state joins a new organization, it is assumed that this new tie increases that state’s utility. The goal of the model is to understand how states evaluate membership ties.

In the model, states’ utility is determined by an objective function, represented by a linear combination of network influences and exogenous covariates ($f_i(\beta, x)$ for actor i and independent variables x). As (Snijders, Van de Bunt and Steglich, 2010) explain, this equation “expresses how likely it is for the actor to change her/his network in a particular way...each actor ‘tries to’ move into a direction of higher values of her/his objective function, subject to the constraints of the current network structure and the changes made by the other actors in the network; and subject to random influences” (8). The probability that state i decides to make a particular change in its membership portfolio can be expressed as:

$$\frac{\exp(f_i(\beta, x))}{\sum_{x' \in C} \exp(f_i(\beta, x'))} \quad (1)$$

where $f_i(\beta, x)$ is the utility associated with the proposed new membership portfolio and C is the set of all other potential membership portfolios available to the state.

Due to the complexity of the network model, we can only feasibly include a limited number of covariates.²⁰ We estimate stochastic actor-oriented models for each of the two alliance-based measures of geopolitical alignment. We also include income (GDP per capita), market size (GDP), Polity scores, and an indicator for exclusive IGO membership provision as controls. In addition, we add two “network ef-

²⁰Our data constitute 51 “network evolution” observations, each composed of 200 states and 91 IGOs. In this model, an observation refers to the entire set of membership changes across all states and IGOs in a given year. A stochastic actor-oriented model using a network of this size with 8-10 covariates takes roughly 50-60 hours to estimate.

fects” designed to capture exogeneous network influences that may influence IGO membership decisions. *Outdegree* is a state-level effect that measures the number of existing IGO membership ties of each state in a given year. A positive effect of *outdegree* on membership indicates that states which are highly central in the IGO network (i.e., those with a high number of pre-existing membership ties) are more likely to join additional IGOs; a negative coefficient suggests states with many existing ties are less likely to add IGO memberships. We interpret a negative coefficient as support for the coalition-building mechanism of geopolitical alignment. This is because we expect patronage to feature diminishing returns: if IGO membership is used as a bribe to cement geopolitical coalitions, each additional membership tie should satisfy rather than intensify the demand for more IGO memberships.

The second network effect, *4-cycles*, measures the tendency of states to judge prospective cooperative partners on the basis of pre-existing multilateral experience in other IGOs. A positive coefficient signals that as states share more joint memberships, they are increasingly likely to seek out more joint memberships in the future. We interpret a positive estimate as consistent with the information mechanism. If states are primarily concerned with overcoming uncertainty about the expected cooperative behavior of others, they should be able to use pre-existing joint memberships to build trust with others, facilitating new instances of institutionalized cooperation.

Results from the stochastic actor-oriented models are presented in table 3. The positive and significant effect of geopolitical alignment is robust to testing in a network setting. Even after controlling for the interdependent nature of membership decisions, states are more likely to cooperate on economic issues with partners that share basic security interests. In addition, both network variables have a measurable influence on IGO membership ties. Consistent with our coalition-building mechanism, states with more cumulative IGO memberships (higher *outdegree*) are less likely to form additional membership ties in the future. The effect of *4-cycles* is comparatively modest but statistically significant, suggesting that

states are more likely to join organizations when they have prior multilateral experience with its member states.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	IGO Membership Network	
	(1)	(2)
Alliances (IGO Members)	2.170*** (0.116)	
Alliance (IGO Lead State)		0.587*** (0.076)
Polity	0.055 (0.010)	0.047*** (0.005)
GDP	-0.416*** (0.059)	-0.404*** (0.056)
GDP per capita	0.118* (0.072)	0.158** (0.065)
Exclusive IGO	-0.320*** (0.040)	-0.324*** (0.039)
Network Effect: Outdegree	-0.359*** (0.101)	-0.310*** (0.097)
Network Effect: 4-cycles	0.002*** (0.0001)	0.002*** (0.0001)
Network Observations	51	51
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 3: *Stochastic Actor Oriented Model*. Results of SAOM estimation examining the effect of geopolitical alignment on the evolution of the network of states and IGOs. As in logistic regression, coefficients represent the effect of each variable on the log odds ratio of membership tie formation. Statistical significance is denoted by: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Together, these tests provide strong support for our primary hypothesis. Geopolitical alignment looms large as states make judgments about prospective partners for cooperation. This effect is strongest

at the moment of IGO formation, when uncertainty is highest, but is also evident during periods of IGO expansion. The finding is remarkably robust, holding when we examine multiple operationalizations of IGO membership (persistent membership vs. entry only) and for alternative measures of geopolitical alignment (formal alliances, S-scores, UN voting patterns, and arms transfers). It also persists when we relax the assumption of conditional independence and conceive of states making interdependent membership decisions in a complex network of IGOs.

6 Concluding remarks

This paper demonstrates that geopolitical alignment is an important force of attraction for institutional membership. Proximity between states on a range of geopolitical measures increases the probability that they will become members of the same international economic institutions. This relationship holds at both the formation and expansion stage of institutions, and exhibits network effects when viewed across the full set of institutions in the economic policy-making regime complex.

At one level, the security logic of IGO membership challenges institutionalist theories by introducing a different source of demand for institutions. Nevertheless, this opens the possibility for more impact by the institution on state behavior because entry is not simply derivative to the policy interest in the issue area. States that join for other reasons related to foreign policy bring upon themselves pressure to reform policies. Entry triggers domestic mobilization of interest groups, reputation incentives, and socialization that serve as mechanisms about how institutions support cooperation. The role played by foreign policy at the time of entry increases the scope for unexpected reforms brought by the institution that are distinct from what the state would otherwise have done outside the institution.

As an information mechanism, geopolitical ties could support cooperation that would not otherwise be possible given uncertainty over the reliability of other states for cooperation. European integration

progressed on the basis of mutual economic interests, but was also conditional on the shared security interests of European states in their alliance against the Soviet threat. Our findings show this pattern to be more generally true of international institutions. The political basis of cooperation has been neglected by existing theories because of their focus on market failure and specific interests within the issue area of cooperation. Too often the issue-area benefits will be insufficient to overcome market failure, and only by drawing on a wider set of information and interests can states initiate cooperation.

The coalition-building mechanism suggests a more cynical interpretation. To the extent that geopolitical ties introduce patronage and bribery as the reason for joining institutions, demand for institutions may be disconnected from the logic of market failure. Instead, the use of institutions may reflect the need for states to maximize gains across a multi-dimensional set of interests. Here institutions are an exclusion device that restricts cooperation to the set of allies and neutral states at the expense of the rival states. This logic extends on research showing that the allocation of loans is conditional on geopolitical interests (e.g. Thacker, 1999; Lim and Vreeland, 2013; Vreeland and Dreher, 2014). But our findings highlight that discrimination begins even sooner and extends more broadly because states determine membership on the basis of security interests. Furthermore, just as political allocation undermines the efficacy of foreign aid (Alesina and Dollar, 2000; Dreher et al., 2013), the geopolitics of IGO membership may distort institutional effectiveness.

The foreign policy role of IGOs should moderate any assessment about institutional effects. When states form club-style IGOs that favor entry by friends, they lower the level of compliance relative to a meritocratic process with rigid conditions for reform as condition of entry. Evaluating outcomes based on policy reforms and gains observed within the issue area neglects the broader foreign policy benefits achieved by participating in the organization. If states use institutions as tools of economic statecraft, future research must turn to evaluate how effective they are to build alliance cohesion and broaden

support for common foreign policy orientation beyond the economic goals of any specific institution.

At the same time, the biased selection of members raises serious challenges to research on institutional effectiveness. The studies that have examined aggregate counts of IGO membership are unable to identify the underlying mechanism that generates the observed correlation between IGO membership and peace. Our evidence of a geopolitical bias in membership suggests the potential for a spurious relationship – states join IGOs because they already have common security interests.

This paper offers a necessary correction to research on international institutions by turning to focus on the politics of membership. We develop a theory by which states are more likely to enter cooperation with the additional reassurance that comes from successful coordination on security policies and for the additional benefits that arise from using institutional venues as a tool of economic statecraft. The question of why and how states cooperate is fundamentally connected to the question of *who* states choose as partners for cooperation. Joining an institution is not the same as signing a contract with an anonymous actor. In the small community of states, political relations provide a rich context for every interaction as both sources of information and mutual interests.

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7 Appendix

Table 4: Salient, Economic IGOs with Lead State

ORGANIZATION	LEAD STATE
1 Afr. Exp/Import Bank	USA (1997-2012)
2 African Development Bank	USA (1965-2012)
3 African Union	South Africa (2001-2011), Nigeria (2012-2012)
4 Africare	Nigeria (1976, 2012), Algeria (1985), South Africa (1993-2011)
5 Arab Bank for Econ. Dev. in Africa	Saudi Arabia (1974-2012)
6 Arab Fund for Social/Economic Development	Egypt (1968-1971), Saudi Arabia (1972-2012)
7 Arab Maghreb Union	Algeria (1989-2012)
8 Arab Monetary Fund	Saudi Arabia (1977-2012)
9 Artic Council	USA (1996-2012)
10 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation	USA (1989-2012)
11 Asian Dev. Bank	USA (1966-2012)
12 Asian Productivity Organization	Japan (1965-2008), China (2009-2012)
13 Association of Southeast Asian Nations	Philippines (1967-1969), Thailand (1998), Indonesia (1970-1997, 1999-2012)
14 Bank for International Settlements	USA (1950-2012)
15 Black Sea Economic Council	Russia (1992-2012)
16 Caribb. Examinations Council	Jamaica (1972-1977, 1989, 1993, 1995-1999), Trinidad-Tobago (1978-1988, 1990-1992, 1994, 2000-2012)
17 Caribbean Community	Jamaica (1973-1977, 1989, 1993, 1995-1999), Trinidad-Tobago (1978-1988, 1990-1992, 1994, 2000-2012)
18 Caribbean Development Bank	West Germany (1973-1989), Germany (1990-2006), China (2007-2012)
19 Central American Integration System	Guatemala (1991-2012)
20 Comm Market for East/South Africa	Egypt (1994-2012)
21 Commonwealth of Independent States	Russia (1994-2012)
22 Commonwealth Secretariat	USA (1965-2012)
23 Council of Europe	Russia (1950-1988), West Germany (1989), Germany (1990-2012)
24 Economic Community of Central African States	Cameroon (1985-2000), Angola (2001-2012)
25 Economic Community of West African States	Nigeria (1975-2012)
26 Economic Cooperation Organization	Iran (1985-1989, 1991-1992), Turkey (1990, 1993-2012)
27 Euro Free Trade Assn	UK (1960-2012)
28 Euro Investment Bank	UK (1960), West Germany (1973-1989), Germany (1990-2012)
29 Euro Org Safety Air Navig	UK (1960), West Germany (1973-1989), Germany (1990-2012)
30 European Atomic Energy Agency	USA (1960, 1965-1992)

Table 4: Salient, Economic IGOs with Lead State (Continued)

ORGANIZATION	LEAD STATE
31 European Bank for Reconstruction & Development	USA (1990-2012)
32 European Central Bank	Germany (1998-2012)
33 European Coal & Steel Community	UK (1955-1960), West Germany (1973-1989), Germany (1990-1992)
34 European Economic Community	UK (1960), West Germany (1973-1989), Germany (1990-1992)
35 European Patent Organization	West Germany (1977-1989), Germany (1990-2012)
36 European Space Agency	West Germany (1975-1989), Germany (1990-2012)
37 European Union	Germany (1993-2012)
38 Food & Ag Org	USA (1950-2012)
39 General Agreement Tariff & Trade	USA (1950-1995)
40 Global Environ. Fund	USA (1994-2012)
41 Gulf Cooperation Council	Saudi Arabia (1981-2012)
42 Int Fund for Agriculture & Development	USA (1977-2012)
43 Int'l Cocoa Org.	Russia (1973-1977), Japan (1978-2012)
44 Int'l Finance Corporation	USA (1960-2012)
45 Int'l Telecomm. Satellite Org.	USA (1974-2000)
46 Inter-Am Dev Bank	USA (1960-2012)
47 Inter-Gov Authority on Drought Protection	Sudan (1986-1991, 1993-1994, 1997-2012), Kenya (1992, 1995-1996)
48 International Organization of Vine and Wine	Russia (1974-1988), France (1989), Germany (1990-2012)
49 Intl Atomic Energy Agency	USA (1960-2012)
50 Intl Civil Aviation Org	USA (1950-2012)
51 Intl Coffee Org	USA (1973-2012)
52 Intl Cotton Adv Comte	USA (1950-2012)
53 Intl Council for Exploration of Sea	USA (1950-2012)
54 Intl Energy Agency	USA (1974-2012)
55 Intl Grains Council	USA (1950-2012)
56 Intl Labour Org	USA (1950-2012)
57 Intl Maritime Org	USA (1950-2012)
58 Intl Monetary Fund	USA (1950-2012)
59 Intl Telecom Union	USA (1950-2012)
60 Intl Whaling Comm	USA (1950-2012)
61 Islamic Dev. Bank	Saudi Arabia (1974, 1978-1982, 2001-2002), Iran (1975-1977, 1983-1989, 1991-1992), Turkey (1990, 1993, 1998-2000, 2003-2009), Indonesia (1994-1997, 2010-2012)
62 Latin American Economic System	Brazil (1976-2000, 2005-2012), Mexico (2001-2004)
63 League of Arab States	UK (1950-2012)
64 Mano River Union	Cote d'Ivoire (1980-2012)

Table 4: Salient, Economic IGOs with Lead State (Continued)

ORGANIZATION	LEAD STATE
65 MERCOSUR	Brazil (1991-2012)
66 Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency	USA (1988-2012)
67 Non-Aligned Movement	India (1965-1990, 1993-2012), Iran (1991-1992)
68 Nordic Investment Bank	Sweden (1976-2012)
69 North American FTA	USA (1993-2012)
70 Org for Econ Coop and Development	USA (1965-2012)
71 Org of Petroleum Exporting Countries	Venezuela (1960-1972), Iran (1973, 1975-1977, 1983-1992), Saudi Arabia (1974, 1978-1982, 1998-2006, 2008), Indonesia (1993-1997, 2007, 2009-2012)
72 Org. Eastern Caribbean States	St Lucia (1981-1984, 1990-2000, 2010-2012), Antigua-Barbuda (1985-1989, 2001-2009)
73 Pan-Am Union/Org of Am States	USA (1950-2012)
74 Permanent Court of Arbitration	USA (1950-2012)
75 South Asian Assoc Regional Coop	India (1985-2012)
76 Southern African CU	South Africa (1969-1974, 1993-2012)
77 Southern African Dev. Community	South Africa (1993-2012)
78 UN Industrial Development Org	USA (1966-2012)
79 United Nations	USA (1950-2012)
80 Universal Postal Union	USA (1950-2012)
81 West African Economic & Monetary Union	Cote d'Ivoire (1994-2012)
82 Western European Union	UK (1955-1960), West Germany (1973-1989), Germany (1990-2012)
83 World Bank	USA (1950-2012)
84 World Health Org	USA (1950-2012)
85 World Intell Prop Org	USA (1970-2012)
86 World Meteorological Org	USA (1950-2012)
87 World Tourism Org.	USA (1975-2012)
88 World Trade Org	USA (1995-2012)
89 International Renewable Energy Agency	Germany (2009), Japan (2010), USA (2011-2012)
90 Global Green Growth Initiative	UK (2010-2012)
91 Eurasian Development Bank	Russia (2006-2012)