

# **REGIONAL COOPERATION AND REGION INTEGRATION: CONCEPTS, MEASUREMENTS AND A BIT OF THEORY<sup>1</sup>**

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Regionalism across national borders has become a global phenomenon. If there is a single sovereign national state (SNS) that has not yet joined some trans-national regional organization (TRO), I personally do not know which one it is.<sup>2</sup> Despite their ubiquity, political science does not seem to know where to place these organizations. Its sub-field of international relations – to the extent that it has been dominated by “realism” and its step-child, “neo-realism” – has some difficulty even in explaining how these islands of regional cooperation and integration can exist in the context of the (allegedly) pervasive antagonism and anarchy that connects SNSs. If their existence is recognized, it is quickly discounted, either as a side-product of domination by some hegemonic power – a sort of second-rate empire, or as a convenient façade behind which sovereign states strike momentary compromises based exclusively on national interests and relative power. Students of comparative politics have been even less well equipped to deal with TROs. They have tried their best to stay away from them, leaving the descriptive effort to so-called “area specialists.” The only scholars who took them at all seriously for many years were members of a declining breed of “International Organization Specialists” – perhaps best exemplified by Innis Claude Jr. and his masterful text, Swords into Plowshares, where regional organizations occupy an honorable but secondary status alongside the more prominent and prestigious global organizations such as the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies.<sup>3</sup>

The great exception, of course, has been a select set of European TROs, i.e., the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community, the European Community and, most recently, the European Union. Although only a very small portion of the total number of such organizations active in Europe, these four have succeeded in generating a

lively and expanding academic enterprise of their own. Virtually all conceptualizing and theorizing about the role of TROs has come to be based on this experience alone. This has had the subtle effect of shifting the focus from cooperation between consenting and still sovereign national states to the voluntary, gradual and fitful process of their integration whereby these autonomous units cede and/or pool their sovereignty to a higher order, supra-national, polity that is capable of taking initiatives, making decisions and implementing rules without the unanimous consent of all of its member states.

From this point of departure, the European process can be regarded as unique. Not only have the many other TROs covering the surface of the globe not yet acquired this property of supra-national legitimate authority, but the European Union itself has only a precarious, selective and contested grasp of it. Nevertheless, the sheer prospect that – maybe – conditions exist elsewhere for successful trans-national regional integration and not just cross-national regional cooperation is so mesmerizing both empirically and normatively that it continues to dominate most efforts at conceptualization and theorization. If this were to happen and, especially, if this were to happen across several regions, it could produce nothing less than “the new world order” that has been such a chimera since its arrival was announced at the end of the Cold War.

### **The Source of the Conceptual Problem**

Politics on this planet gradually became dominated by one type of unit: the sovereign national state (SNS). From its heartland in Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries, this genus of political organization in which a monopoly of authority over all coercive functions came to coincide with a distinctive territory and population spread to other continents – usually by violent means. The juridical doctrine of “Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur” – no land without a sovereign ruler – undoubtedly also helped in this process of extension. Outside of Europe, only those societies that possessed a singular identity and managed early to acquire some rudiments of stateness, e.g., Japan, Thailand and China, managed to escape being subordinated to or colonized by a European SNS. This left only a number of deserted islands, submerged reefs, floating

icebergs, and one uninhabitable continent outside the realm of state authority. Not coincidentally, these ambiguous territories (plus one large rock – Gibraltar) continue to this day to generate interstate conflicts that are particularly difficult to resolve.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the academic discipline of political science has been deeply impregnated with prior assumptions of stateness. All of its proven laws or working hypotheses should be prefaced with the caveat emptor: “Assume the existence of a state and, only then, will the following assumptions, concepts and relations be valid, ... .”<sup>4</sup> We simply do not have a convincing vocabulary or an operational logic for analyzing or even speculating about other forms of political organization.<sup>5</sup>

All of which makes it difficult for us to discuss the properties of and prospects for cooperating or integrating in “trans-national regions.” It is virtually impossible to compare them – unless we are willing to make one of the following two assumptions:

(1) These units are merely SNSs at various early stages in their formation and will therefore follow already established national developmental trajectories; or

(2) These units are merely specialized instances of another political organizational type, namely, the “Intergovernmental Organization” (IGO) formed voluntarily by consenting SNSs and explained exclusively by their powers and purposes.

Only if both of these assumptions seem contestable do we have the burden of inventing a distinctive theory of trans-national regional cooperation and integration. If one suspects that world regions composed of previous SNSs are not going to repeat the state-building experience of their members, and/or if one suspects that they might nevertheless develop some capacity to become actors in their own right, then does one have to give serious thought to developing a specialized vocabulary and a distinctive theory of transnational or interstate integration. And, only with such a vocabulary and

theory in hand, can one compare the practices and performances of such regional organizations.

I suspect, but at this point cannot prove, that:

(1) Trans-National Regional Organizations (TROs) can – under certain circumstances – become significant political actors in their own right;

(2) They are likely – for reasons to be specified – to develop according to processes different from those that previously produced SNSs; and

(3) They may never acquire all of the distinctive properties of a SNS, but still form a new type of stable and significant political unit.

If this is the case, the student of regionalism will have to take on the challenge of trying to develop an approach to explaining why and where such organizations might emerge and how and when they might eventually form “semi-sovereign, non-national, semi-states” (SNS<sup>2</sup>) or, more digestibly, trans-national regional polities (TRPs).

It should be stressed that these assumptions, concepts and hypotheses would have to begin by focusing on the difference between processes of **regional integration** and those of **regional cooperation**.<sup>6</sup> The latter may or may not be rooted in distinctive organizations, but it always remains contingent on the voluntary, unanimous and continuous decisions of its SNS members. “Entry” into and “exit” from such arrangements is relatively costless; “loyalty” to the region as such is (and remains) minimal. “Legitimacy” – voluntary compliance with collective decisions – is based exclusively on utility of output, not on normative expectations about input, i.e. on what the TRO accomplishes, not on how it does it. Hence, collective efforts at the regional level are likely to be erratic, conditional and confined to pre-specified issues. It is only when a TRO starts to become a TRP, i.e., only when it acquires some legitimate capacity (however limited) to act on its own by initiating proposals, making decisions, and/or implementing policies that the regionalism can be said to switch from cooperation to integration. And, in so doing, both “entry” into the region and “exit” from it become much more

costly – and the latter may eventually become prohibitive. “Loyalty” to a distinctive regional identity seems to come more belatedly, but “conformity” to specific regional norms – even those produced against the consent of a given SNS member – can develop much more rapidly.

### **Placing ‘Regions’ in the Literature**

Political science (with a few exceptions to be noted) has long recognized the descriptive status of “regions,” but denied the need for any special analytical treatment of them. Considered as sub-units within an existing SNS, regions are merely the remnants of territories that might have gained sovereignty but did not. Their past unique identities may be persistent enough so that their inhabitants continue to contest – sometimes, violently – the domination of the winning SNS, but regions only acquire the status of actors if they actually manage to secede or are granted some recognized (but subordinate) role within a federal or decentralized polity. In the latter case, they are considered especially useful for comparative purposes – precisely because they have already been integrated, i.e., share a common political culture, legal system, constitution status and, often, party system, and therefore can be expected to vary in performance only due to exogenous shocks and diverse socio-economic conditions.

Considered as supra-units composed of multiple SNSs, regions have also been declared useful for comparative purposes. Under the label of “Area Studies,” political scientists have conducted considerable research based on the presumption of cultural, historical or geo-strategic properties shared by all of the SNSs within the same region. They have virtually never (except, as we shall see, in the case of Western Europe) considered the region as such a relevant actor worthy of explanation. If the “Area” happened to have some regional organizations in common, their behavior was regarded as strictly “intergovernmental,” i.e., as the mere by-product of the relative power and distinctive interests of its SNS members.

TROs are not a new phenomenon. Functionally speaking, the first to appear was the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine in 1868. Territorially speaking, the first was the Organization of American States in

1890. Both still exist and have experienced some expansion in their cooperative activities, although neither is remotely similar to a TRP. Descriptively speaking, TROs have increased rapidly in number over the past decades and extended their reach to cover most of the Earth – much as national states did several centuries earlier. Today, there is, perhaps, no SNS that does not “belong” to at least one TRO, and there are many that belong to more than one. The reasons for this remarkable proliferation are somewhat obscure, but seem to resemble those that previously promoted national stateness: unconscious diffusion of fashionable practices, deliberate imitation of the success of other regions, self-defense against external predators, calculated imposition by imperial hegemons, and some “cloning” from one TRO to another. Their spread and the resulting cacophony of acronyms have produced considerable confusion and only some timid attempts at comparison.

The experience of Europe since the early 1950s with integrating – peacefully and voluntarily – previously sovereign national states is by far the most significant and far-reaching among all such efforts. As such, it has attracted far more scholarly attention than any other TRO. It stands to reason, therefore, that the European Economic Community (EEC), the European Community (EC) and, most recently, the European Union (EU), are collectively the most likely organizations to provide some lessons for those trans-national regions that are just beginning this complex and historically unprecedented process of integration. But such a “historico-inductive” strategy for theory-building and case-comparison is by no means uncontested.<sup>7</sup> Partly, this is because many students of European integration have quite self-consciously defined it as a unique case and described it as such, or they have denied its status as a potential TRP and filed it away as merely an extreme example of regional cooperation among SNSs, along with hundreds of other intergovernmental organizations. Moreover, those who have tried to identify its more generic “integrative properties” have tended to disagree about what these were and how far they would carry the process. Scholars and practitioners from other regions have not found it easy to exploit their work. In those rare cases where such comparisons were made, the conclusion was invariably negative, i.e., the “other” region could not possibly expect to replicate the relative success of the EEC/EC/EU.<sup>8</sup>

No student of TRPs or even TROs can ignore the disappointing history of most of them in the post-World War II period. Some were never more than mere façades for hegemonic domination. Most of them failed to reach their initial cooperative objectives, much less to expand these objectives or trigger regional integration. Those that have persisted may not have succeeded in doing very much. During the 1960s, there was a flourish of activity among so-called Third World countries in Latin America, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa to produce regional organizations for a variety of ambitiously stated economic, political, and cultural purposes. Eager young scholars went off to study the East African Federation, the West Indian Federation, the Central American Common Market, the United Arab Republic and other such exotic creations.<sup>9</sup> With the exception of the CACM (which does have the dubious distinction of having had two of its members go to war with each other), none of these still exist. The subsequent generation of trans-national regional organizations seem more modest in their initial objectives – most were created as little more than Free Trade Areas or Inter-governmental ‘Talk Shops’ – but they have persisted longer than their forerunners and they have sometimes even acquired additional capabilities. One of which is especially intriguing since it has the potential for generating global implications, namely, the mandate to intervene when one of their members becomes or is threatened with becoming autocratic. Needless to say, regionalism as an insurance policy for domestic democracy has had a checkered history – Paraguay in MERCOSUR was one thing; Zimbabwe in SADC has been quite another. The European Union’s intervention into the internal affairs of Austria turned into something of a farce.

Nevertheless, the mere issuing of such a policy by a regional organization – not to mention its insertion into virtually all treaties negotiated between the EU and other countries or regional organizations – is a path-setting development. Were these formal commitments to become politically effective within each region and were these regions to enter into arrangements for mutual support and collective sanction vis-a-vis each other, the potential exists for eventually providing the building blocks for an alternative, more rule-bound and less violent world order than the present one built on SNSs and capped at the global level by an ineffectual United Nations.

“Peace in Parts” was the provocative title of one of the first attempts at comparing trans-national regional organizations.<sup>10</sup> With their recent proliferation in numbers and extension in area, this prospect may have become less remote.

### **Distinguishing between Cooperation and Integration**

Let us assume from the literature that the following three characteristics suffice not only to describe TROs, but to predict their behaviour and future evolution:

Variable 1: The Rules that govern their decision-making

Variable 2: The Costs and Benefits that ensue from membership

Variable 3: The Actors involved in their activities

From these three variables, I would argue one can distinguish between regional cooperation and regional integration and lay the foundation for analyzing their distinctive dynamics, as well as their eventual inter-connections. Many TROs are engaged in regional cooperation; only a few of them manage to contribute to regional integration. The former seems to be a precursor to the latter, i.e. SNSs in a specific region seem to find it necessary to engage first in cooperation in order to build up mutual trust among elites and sufficient interdependencies among broader publics before plunging into the much more risky (and potentially rewarding) business of integration, but the relation between the two seems highly contingent. One of the major objectives of a comprehensive theory of regionalism should be precisely to specify the conditions that make this possible.

In Figure One, I have cross-tabulated Variables 1 & 2 in order to generate nine types of TROs. The four in the upper left-hand quadrant represent diverse forms of regional cooperation; the four in the lower right-hand quadrant represent forms of regional integration. They overlap in the critical cell that I have labelled “confederal” where the decisions are made by consensus and withdrawal is possible but costly. The weakest form of



Figure One  
Forms of Regional Cooperation and Integration

Decision-Making Rules x Costs & Benefits of Membership			
	Low	Moderate	High
Cooperative			
Unanimity	SYMBOLIC	STATUS- CONFERRING	IMPERIAL
Consensus	FUNCTIONAL	CONFEDERAL CONFEDERAL	CONSORTIAL
Majority		CONDOMINIAL	FEDERAL
Integrative			

cooperation among SNSs, I have called “symbolic.” In it, SNSs make decisions by unanimity and individual members can withdraw with relative ease. In the inverse corner is a type of regional integration arrangement in which decisions can be made against dissenting members (either by qualified or simple majority) and the costs of withdrawing are prohibitively high. This I have called a “federal” TRO. The European Union has not yet made it into this ‘transformative’ configuration. Many decisions are still subject to consensus decision-making, if not outright unanimity, and individual members still find it possible to opt-out of obligations without incurring punitive responses. This places it in the adjacent cells, “consortial” or “condominial,” depending on the issue arena and the decision-rules that govern it, as well as the capacity of individual members to refuse to accept collective obligations.<sup>11</sup> There are two forms of regional cooperation that I have labelled “status-conferring” and “functional,” again varying with decision-rules (unanimity in the

former; consensus in the latter) and the ease of withdrawal (easy in the latter and more costly in the former). The two cells in the upper right-hand and lower left-hand should logically be empty since the combination of traits seems contradictory; however, it seems possible to imagine an “imperial” form of regional integration where unanimity rests uniquely on the will and resources of some hegemonic member and its capacity to make it extremely costly for subordinate members to withdraw.

It would be too confusing to add the third dimension to this figure and, thereby, transform it into a cube. Suffice it to say, that schemes for regional cooperation and integration tend to involve very different sets of actors. While the former tend to be confined to a restricted set – usually ministers (and especially, if not exclusively, those of foreign affairs) – the latter not only penetrate more deeply into the ranks of the civil service of the respective member states, but also bring into the process representatives of class, sectoral and professional interests and, eventually, those of a variety of social movements. One of the most remarkable characteristics of a federal form of integration would be the participation of mass publics through TRO-wide political parties and authorities from multiple levels of decision-making within the SNS that are its members.

### **Developing a Theory of Regional Cooperation/Integration**

The purpose of a theory of regionalism would be to explain why certain arrangements (most of them) remain confined to the ‘cooperative’ cells, while a few (a very few) manage to break through (“spill-over”) into one or another of the ‘integrative’ ones. The keystone to such an effort rests on the confederal box that shares characteristics of both efforts. How does initial regional cooperation – symbolic, status-conferring or functional – succeed in acquiring the traits of a consensus-oriented but moderately beneficial confederation with (presumably) a greater variety of participating actors? And, more ambitiously, how does this loosely confining and consensual arrangement manage to either increase the salience of its benefits and/or the authority of its decision-making and contribute to forms of regional integration that transform the nature of its SNS members? Most of the literature on

European integration has begun with such a point of departure (often labelled as “intergovernmental”) and disagreed about whether it could be transformed into something more “supra-national.” For the rest of the world’s regions, the point of departure has been considerably more modest and, therefore, most theories and even descriptions of European integration have seemed “out of reach” and irrelevant. What is needed is a more encompassing framework that attempts to explain movements within the realm of regional cooperation, as well as the exceptional contingent conditions that permit this realm to be transcended and for SNSs to engage voluntarily (although often un-intendedly) in the process of regional integration.

All I can offer at this point are a few preliminary “laws” of regionalism between consenting, adult SNSs:

1. All TROs regardless of initial position will tend toward entropy, i.e. they will attempt to encapsulate themselves in order to protect whatever capacities they are given at their foundation. Only exceptional “external” events or “internal” conditions will provide the momentum for them to escape from this status.
2. Member states, under normal conditions, will prefer regional arrangements from which it will be easier to withdraw and in which decisions will be made by unanimity. Only exceptional circumstances will move them from such original positions and, then, it will be the weakest member-states that will favour increasing the scope and authority of TROs.
3. Therefore, much of the movement toward more binding and consequential TROs will be the product of unintended or partially intended outcomes of the cooperative/integrative process itself. Member states will discover that “cheap talk” can become expensive, and that increases in mutual exchanges will produce outcomes whose benefits are not distributed as expected.

4. Although the ideology of regionalism will tend to stress the ‘peculiar’ cultural and historical conditions shared by members, these will be largely irrelevant for predicting further progress in either cooperation or integration. In other words, regionalism – wherever it occurs – engages similar processes and is affected by similar conditions.
5. “Regions” are artefactual constructs produced by negotiation among SNSs and their outcome will depend more on emergent properties and exogenous shocks than upon initial shared conditions.

It will be, therefore, the task of a unified theory of transnational regionalism – whether cooperative or integrative – to examine critically and comparatively these hypothesized “laws,” as well as to build upon them when apposite. Here are a few of the puzzles such theorists will have to face:

1. Such a theory would have to stipulate the exceptional conditions or events in which it becomes possible for a given TRO to break out of its “cell.” But, NB, that any given regional arrangement may do so by increasing or by decreasing the extent of cooperation or integration already attained. Can any theory of regionalism be so easily and convincingly turned inside-out?
2. In addition to testing the (somewhat counter-intuitive) hypothesis that it will be the smaller or weaker members that are more likely to prefer the extension of cooperation or integration, such a theory would have to explain why and how such changes in the rules of the game **and** in the magnitude of benefits come about. But why should these co-vary in ways that produce a qualitative shift from one cell to another? And, even more problematic, how would such a change affect the third dimension of regionalism, i.e. the identity and scope of the actors involved.

3. If SNSs actually do rationally pursue their self-interests and are fully informed beforehand of the consequences of their cooperative or integrative actions, how can such unintended consequences – positive or negative – emerge? Why would the members have joined in the first place?
4. If regional cooperation and integration are such ‘generic’ processes, then, their determinants should be largely endogenous and actors in different geo-strategic locations and cultural areas should have a lot to learn from each other’s experiences – but do not seem to do so.
5. If the context is so ‘artefactual,’ then it should follow that regions are unlikely to have individuals or groups who identify as “regionalists,” i.e. who can be relied upon to act out of solidarity with a common identity. What then are the resources that actors in favour of more regional cooperation or integration can draw upon? Will regionalism never be able to transcend “quid-pro-quo” exchanges of material benefits?

### **Measuring the Comparative Development of TROs<sup>12</sup>**

Comparative Inquiry into the nature and role of trans-national regional organizations has neither been a cumulative nor a comprehensive enterprise. The pre-eminence of the European Union in all generic speculation about the past, present and future of regionalism has certainly been one reason for this. When compared to the EU, all other experiences seem marginal. Also, there is the absence of a clearly identifiable and discretely measurable dependent variable .that could encompass both the ‘cooperative’ and the “integrative’ aspects of what TROs are designed to do.

[Robert Keohane way back in 1969 already proposed one such concept-*cum*-variable, “institutionalization.”<sup>13</sup> While I do not deny its utility, institutionalization of TROs (as he uses it) suffers, on the one hand, from its restricted universe of application, i.e., “international organizations with a substantial quasi-parliamentary component,” and, on the other hand, from the

very considerable demands it makes in terms of data collection, i.e., laboriously compiled and detailed information on such events as length of time of actor participation, recurrence in patterns of office-holding, and stability in sources of recruitment. For systematic comparison across the total universe of TROs today ...we would either need another, less elaborate and more parsimonious, set of indicators or a somewhat differently conceptualized, dependent variable. ...

The concept I propose is simply “organizational development.” Development in the specific context of TROs is a process whereby an initially dependent arrangement created by a set of actors representing different and relatively independent SNSs, acquires the capabilities of a self maintaining and self-steering organization or system. Any TRO with such emergent properties remains, of course, related to and interdependent with its environment, but it becomes increasingly flexible, i.e., it is able to survive changes in that environment, and autonomous, i.e., “its future course cannot be predicted from knowing only the characteristics of its environment.”<sup>14</sup> De-development or decay in this context refers to the inverse process whereby a TRO becomes increasingly vulnerable to its context. Without self-directive capabilities, it is buffeted about by the competing demands of its member state environment, and its response—often inactivity—is quite predictable without knowledge of internal characteristics or capabilities.

I would be quick to admit that few, if any, existing trans-national regional organizations (or even for that matter few, if any, contemporary nation-states) approach the status of fully self-maintaining and self-steering social systems. However, I believe that, if it can be operationalized, the concept could provide an acceptable “ideal” standard against which the record of existing organizational performance could be compared. Of course, the self-maintenance and self-steering capacity of an emergent system is oriented toward goals or tasks. The strategy suggested here—that of focusing on organizational development—deliberately ignores variables such as the scope of tasks performed or the importance of such tasks for the survival of member SNSs. These, I submit, are separate conceptual dimensions which are likely to vary somewhat independently of organizational development. In a

comprehensive theory of trans-national regionalism, the organizational dynamics of “scope” and “impact” would certainly deserve attention equal to that of “development.”

The strategy of defining organizational development in terms of system creation or emergent system capabilities has another advantage. It permits us to exploit part of the vast existing literature which deals with the properties of such interrelated units. One particular sub-species of this literature, structural functionalism, is especially useful in that its leading expostulator, Talcott Parsons, has sought to identify certain problems to which internal structures must adapt in order for any social system to be created or to persist. These are the famous “AGIL” functions: 1) Adaptation; 2) Goal attainment; 3) Integration; and 4) Latent pattern maintenance and tension management.<sup>15</sup> Although Parsons is not very explicit about the empirical referents and minimal levels of performance of these functional requisites, their delimitation does offer us a number of conceptual advantages. First, “they . . . provide at least a kind of checklist or elaborate categorization device for the analysis and codification of data about social systems.” Deduced logically rather than induced from observed experience or simply compiled ad hoc, the four are presented at equivalent levels of abstraction and importance with an extensive discussion justifying their differentiation and their exhaustiveness. Second, they are defined ontologically, as generic problems restricted in neither time nor space; a wide variety of structural arrangements may provide “suitable” solutions. Given the structural diversity of international organizations and the possibility that their emerging characteristics may differ significantly from the prototype established by the contemporary nation-state, the Parsonian paradigm may have some advantages over the more politically oriented systems analyses of Harold D. Lasswell, David Easton, Morton A. Kaplan, Gabriel Almond, and David E. Apter. Third, as William C. Mitchell has observed, all four inherent and indispensable problems must be coped with and no concrete system is likely to resolve them successfully.<sup>16</sup> Hence, few systems will be able to deal with all problems simultaneously; “solutions” in one functional area tend to limit the range of alternative solutions to other functional problems; tensions arise due to uneven or unexpected performance;

compensatory or homeostatic forces are likely to emerge where capabilities differ across domains. All these (and others) are important and potentially relevant hypotheses about the dynamics of systemic activity and should alert us to certain not-so-obvious aspects of change in regional organizations.

Of course, all of these possibilities are premised on, first, the construction of valid and inter-subjectively reliable monitors of organizational performance in each of the four functional arenas and, second, the application of some analytical technique which will demonstrate the dimensionality and direction of this process of system creation, hopefully, by reducing it to a single indicator. The second operational dilemma is more easily resolved than the first. A convenient, if stringent, test for dimensionality is the scalogram, or cumulative index. Although designed initially to be applied to dichotomized attitudinal responses to survey questions, the technique has been used by anthropologists and sociologists to probe qualitative data on the presence/absence of institutional traits for such dimensions as “social complexity,” “social evolution,” “legal evolution,” “industrial diversity,” and so forth.”<sup>17</sup> By compiling information on whether a given TRO did or did not have particular capabilities within each of the AGIL functions and it would become possible subsequently to test for uni-dimensionality by means of scalogram analysis, first, within each of the four arenas and, second, across all four combined. If the results were positive, we might obtain either operational scalar indicators of separate “progress” in each of the functions leading (hypothetically) to eventual system autonomy and/or, more optimistically, a single scale of overall organizational development. Either way we would have some multivariate, composite empirical referents around which to build theoretical speculation and with which to test operational hypotheses. Even more optimistically this scale or scales would permit such discrete measurements that we could not only compare a sample of TROs at one point in time but also monitor across time the development or decay of a single organization. ...

With some assistance from William Mitchell, the political science “translator” of Talcott Parsons, I have derived some 43 dichotomous “attribute items” that measure the capacity of a given TRO to perform certain activities.



Below I have grouped these attribute items under four rubrics, each related to one of the four functional problem arenas proposed by Parsons. I am hesitant at this pretest stage to advance any strong claims as to validity (the extent to which the attributes measure the intended concept or function) or inclusiveness (the extent to which the questions posed cover all “performances” relevant to the emergence of that system property). Only criticism by other students of the field as to what is misleading, misplaced, or missing can improve the schedule of items as it develops from a tentative pretest into an efficient instrument of measurement.

## **“ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:” ATTRIBUTE QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **I. GOAL ATTAINMENT**

1. Can discuss goals/problems suggested by its own organization staff
2. Can implement decisions through formal binding decisions on national agencies.
3. Can make binding decisions with unanimous approval and formal ratification by member states.
4. Can implement decisions through informal (positive and negative) sanctions on national agencies.
5. Can discuss goals/problems raised by individual citizens and firms.
6. Can implement decisions through recommendations to national agencies.
7. Can make binding decisions without specific approval of member state representatives.
8. Can discuss goals/problems raised by member states.
9. Can make binding decisions with the unanimous approval of member state representatives.
10. Can implement decisions directly through own (field) agencies.

11. Can discuss goals/problems raised by infra-national and transnational interest groups or parties.
12. Can make binding decisions with majority approval of member state representatives.

## **II. ADAPTATION**

1. Can increase regular fixed contributions from member states.
2. Can allocate values which have some impact upon status/resources of some members.
3. Can levy a tax directly upon national actors (producers, traders, or consumers).
4. Can allocate values which have no impact upon status/resources of member states.
5. Can allocate values which have some impact upon status/resources of all member states.
6. Can solicit occasional ad hoc supplementary contributions from member states or other international organizations.
7. Can collect regular fixed contributions from member states.
8. Can allocate values which have a major impact upon status/resources of member states.

## **III. INTERNAL INTEGRATION**

1. Can prevent resignation of member state from organization.
2. Can convoke regular, well-attended meetings constantly.
3. Can recruit personnel recommended/approved by member states.
4. Can increase permanent staff or create new agencies with approval of member states.
5. Must administer most of own programs through temporary personnel.
6. Can recruit personnel according to own performance criteria.
7. Can refuse request of member state to withdraw from specific negotiation.

8. Can convoke regular, well-attended meetings at least yearly.
9. Must recruit personnel by geographic/territorial quotas.
10. Must administer some of own programs through temporary personnel.
11. Can maintain stable, permanent administrative staff.
12. Can punish uncooperative, recalcitrant member or force its resignation.
13. Can convoke regular, well-attended meetings at least monthly.
14. Can increase permanent staff or create new agencies on own initiative.
15. Can administer all programs through own, permanent administrative personnel.

#### **IV. LATENT PATTERN MAINTENANCE**

1. Can elicit normative support from specialized national interest groups.
2. Must recruit personnel with exclusively national training.
3. Can generate own distinctive ideology or leadership.
4. Can recruit some personnel with transnational training (formal education or in-service training).
5. Can elicit normative support from national mass organizations or parties.
6. Can utilize ideology/leadership provided by member states.
7. Can elicit normative support from specialized technical elites in member states.
8. Can utilize ideology/leadership provided by other international organization(s).

#### **Scoring Instructions:**

Yes = The TRO has this attribute/capacity.

No = The TRO does not have this attribute/capacity.

ND = Data is indeterminate or not available.

IA = Attribute/capacity is inappropriate for this international organization.

NC = Attribute/capacity is too ambivalently defined to code.

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In the original article I relied on a panel of colleagues and students who were asked (voluntarily by mail in the first case) or required (as part of a seminar exercise in the latter) to evaluate the intergovernmental organizations with which they were most familiar in terms of their capacities to perform stated tasks. Panel participants were given a variety of alternative responses and encouraged to state complaints in writing. Many did so—profusely—although most responses were encouraging in general, if not in detail. Of 52 requests sent to professional colleagues in the United States and abroad, 25 were returned completed. When added to the nineteen questionnaires of my students, the result was 44 returns covering 36 different international organizations: Eighteen were of the politico-military type; 25 were of the functional type; eight were universal or near universal in membership; 36 were regional. All were intergovernmental organizations (

By consulting the marginal distributions I obtained from the pre-test, one can clearly see that for “goal attainment” and “internal integration” I had less difficulty deriving items covering a wide range of activities and drawing a wide range of positive and negative responses. Two questions (“can discuss goals/problems raised by member states” and “can convoke regular, well-attended meetings at least yearly”) are threshold items; without a positive capability to do these the entity could hardly be considered a functioning regional organization. At the other end, ...only 2.3 percent of the ‘14 cases could refuse the request of a member state to withdraw from specific negotiations and only 4.5 percent could prevent resignation altogether. The operational indicators for “adaptation” and “latent pattern maintenance” are less numerous and tap a narrower range of performances: 61.4 to 9. percent and to 18.2 percent, respectively.

[For example, in revising items for “latent pattern maintenance” I would pay more attention to the capacity of emerging systems for collecting, storing, retrieving, and utilizing information and for creating organizational “memories” of their own. Subsequent reading of Karl Deutsch’s The Nerves of

Government: Models of Political Communication and Control (London: Free Press of Glencoe, '963), has contributed to my awareness of this lacuna.]

The pattern of marginal responses also alerts us to measurement deficiencies. The total number of “inappropriate” answers was encouragingly low, and it can be assumed that when they occur they are more or less equivalent to a statement that the organization does not have that capability. In most cases, the panelists did consider the questions relevant to the IGO or IGOs with which they were familiar. They did, however, have marked difficulty interpreting some of the items, as testified by the number of “NC”—too ambiguous to code—responses. Clearly, Items I.3, II.4, II.5, II.8, III.14, IV.2, and IV.8 should be either reworded or replaced. Incidentally, the student respondents used this option much less frequently than my colleagues, indicating either that class discussion helped to clear up ambiguities or that students were noticeably more inclined to accept their professor’s wording as authoritative, evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. The more intangible the organizational attribute (or the more nebulous my conceptualization), the greater the propensity for the “no data” (ND) response to appear. This was especially the case for Functions II and IV and reflects, no doubt, my weaker grasp of what capabilities were involved. The relatively large number of NDs, IAs, and NCs, while an expected outcome of the tentative nature of such a pre-test, does result in a dramatic reduction in the units which can be incorporated in the actual scalogram analysis which will not tolerate missing values.

Another internal check on the reliability of the coding procedure is the extent of the agreement between evaluators of the same organization. Unfortunately (and despite my intentions) there was little coder overlap. This is in part a reflection of the tendency for researchers to space themselves out—each with his “own” IGO like an anthropologist with “his” tribe—but also it was due in part to the failure of some of my colleagues to respond as entreated. For the limited cases in which responses could be compared for inter-subjective reliability the results were very revealing and very discouraging. For example, three “judges” scored the structural capabilities of the Nordic Council. In only sixteen of 43 possible instances was there perfect

agreement! Fourteen times two of the respondents agreed, but the third found the question either inappropriate or unintelligible. Finally, there were thirteen occasions in which there was a clear divergence in “yes/no” answers. The pattern for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was somewhat more encouraging but marred (realistically) by an excessive number of “no data” and “inappropriate” responses. Nevertheless, on eleven of 43 possible occasions, there was an unambiguous difference in evaluation. Curiously, the respondents could not even agree on which items were “too ambivalently defined to code”; the second OAU respondent preferred to consider such questions as inappropriate.

The reliability of the scorings obtained in the pre-test was, therefore, low and must be improved in future measurement efforts. One major problem, pointed out by several respondents, stems from the use of the conditional tense rather than the more clear-cut past. Rephrasing the questions in the indicative mode may remove some divergent evaluations. A more open type of panel procedure wherein initially independent codings would be subsequently redistributed for mutual comment and revision could produce more consensual results. Of course, one could shift to a more “objective” (and costly) form of measurement by consulting public documentation, internal administrative records, and/or secondary monographs, when available.

### **A SINGLE SCALE for ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT?**

For global comparative purposes, diachronic or synchronic, it would be useful to have a single, poly-functional but uni-dimensional scale. Practical considerations (a computer program which limited the number of scalogram items to twelve) forced me to be selective and to pare each function down to three “representative” attributes, themselves cumulatively scaled. In my first attempt at such a “global scale” of organizational development I simply combined the four best three-item, functional subscales (I.10, I.5, I.1, II.3, II.5, II.4; III.1, III.6, III.4; IV.3, IV.1, IV.7). The result was an encouraging coefficient of

reproducibility (.814) and a very discouraging coefficient of scalability (.191) – indicating excessive sensitivity to a few outlying cases.

Subsequent deletion and addition of items finally resulted in a scale with the following twelve items in decreasing order of frequency:

1. Item IV.7 Can elicit normative support from specialized technical elites in member states
2. Item IV.4 Can recruit some personnel with transnational training (formal education or in-service training).
3. Item III.4 Can recruit personnel recommended/approved by member states.
4. Item II.4 Can allocate values which have no impact upon status/resources of member states.
5. Item III.10 Must administer some of own programs through temporary personnel
6. Item I.9 Can make binding decisions with the unanimous approval of member state representatives.
7. Item IV.3 Can generate own distinctive ideology or leadership.
8. Item I.5 Can discuss goals/problems raised by individual citizens and firms
9. Item II.5 Can allocate values which have some impact upon status or resources of all member states.
10. Item I.10 Can implement decisions directly through own (field) agencies
11. Item II.3 Can levy a tax directly upon national actors (producers, traders, or consumers).
12. Item III.7 Can refuse request of member state to withdraw from specific negotiation

The coefficient of reproducibility of this scale is .863 and its scalability is .482.

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No organization received a perfect score of twelve. The (then) European Economic Community scored 11 and the East African Common Services Organization scored 10. The Organization of American States and

the European Coal and Steel Community were tied at 9; the United Nations and NATO at 8; the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Mekong River Development Project at 7. The Economic Commission for Latin America, Regional Cooperation for Development and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade all received a 6, followed closely by the Organization for African Unity at 5. The Nordic Council and the League of Arab States had four points, followed at the bottom of the table by the Council of Europe (3), the Conseil de l'Entente (2) and the Western European Union (1).

[The reader is reminded that these scores refer to the early 1970s. Several of the organizations no longer exist.]

The scale scores and even the relative ranking of specific trans-national organizations should, of course, be considered tentative, but the results do pass that crucial “inter-ocular impact test,” i.e., they do not violate our commonsense ordering of reality.<sup>18</sup> I suspect that the rankings by scale score are not far removed from those which a panel of experts would have independently produced. Both coverage and distribution are relatively good although for future development one might ...want to add some more items at the more difficult end of the scale, culminating in “can (or better, has been able to) exercise the legitimate monopoly of physical violence over a given territory.” It seems worth stressing, however, that this final scale of “organizational development” is the outcome of a series of choices made on technical, not conceptual, grounds. Numerous attributes, prominent in the descriptive and theoretical literature, were eliminated. Better drafting of questionnaire items and/or a more reliable data-gathering operation might restore them.

### **AN (EARLY) CONCLUSION**

My preliminary exploration into the organizational development of TROs has been encouraging in conceptual terms, if somewhat discouraging in operational terms. Despite ambiguities in the wording of the original questionnaire and low inter-coder reliability in the actual scores, uni-dimensionalities emerged in anticipated directions. With an improved and more sensitive instrument there seems little doubt that we could measure



confidently cumulative tendencies within each of the four differentiated functional domains or, for broader comparative purposes, evolutionary change in emergent system properties for TROs as a whole. Either as a set of indices or as a single scale of “organizational development” it seems to be an operationally feasible variable and one that is not excessive calibrated to capture the performance of the EEC/EC/EU.

These interrelated characteristics that I have labeled, “organizational development,” should prove of multiple utility in the construction of “systematic and testable theory” for the universe of TROs or the broader one of IGOs. First, use of these characteristics encourages the conceptual exploitation and empirical replication of the vast literature on organization theory and administrative behavior. Systematic comparison of structural attributes such as measured above could demonstrate the extent to which regional and international organizations do or do not resemble their national or infra-national confrères. Numerous propositions have been advanced and tested comparatively through use of attribute data on the relationship between such variables as size, age, professionalization, division of labor, decisional centralization, nature of managerial authority, functional complexity, “rationality,” “bureaucracy,” multiplicity or diffuseness of goals, formalization of tasks, morale, patterns of participation in decision-making, nature of job codification, frequency of program change, and hierarchy of authority<sup>19</sup>. We could even test such dynamic propositions as Talcott Parsons’ suggestion, reformulated by Amitai Etzioni, that system change tends to follow regular patterns, moving clock wise from adaptation to goal attainment to internal integration to latent pattern maintenance, or counter-clockwise in a reverse sequence.<sup>20</sup> To my knowledge, students of regional or international organization have still not dredged this literature on organizational structure for concepts, propositions, techniques of observation, or modes of analysis.

The second area of inquiry seems even more promising, (if of more traditional interest): the relationship between “organizational development” and the environment of the organization. Again, there is a rich and suggestive sociological literature on which to draw. To what extent does spatial dispersion, disparity in size and power, difference in economic structure or

level of technology, rank incongruence, pattern of shared or overlapping memberships, degree of internal pluralism, divergence in cultural values, or ideological polarization of member states affect the emergent ...capabilities of TROs? Their most obvious distinguishing characteristic ... is that their members and principal clients are formally sovereign and relatively autonomous political units, i.e. SNSs. Presumably, this makes them unusually vulnerable to their respective environments— even more than in the case of those infra-national organizations (trade unions, business firms, voluntary associations, hospitals, governmental agencies, etc.) which have been the heretofore exclusive objects of sociological scrutiny.

In the third area of potential inquiry, “organizational development” would become an independent, not a dependent, variable. The structural capabilities of TROs could be examined in relation to their impact upon their member state environments. Are economic growth rates higher where regional investment banks are more developed? Does trade increase more rapidly between members of common markets with more developed organizational structures? Are international and/or internal peace and security more likely to be promoted in areas where trans-national regional organizations are most developed? What, in short, are the consequences of change in the structural capabilities of TROs?

Ultimately, I suspect, a grand theory of regional cooperation and integration will treat “organizational development;’ along with such other characteristics as “scope” and “impact,” as an intervening variable, on the one hand, partially determined by the parameters imposed by the present individual and interactive properties of its member states; on the other hand, partially determinative of the future individual and interactive properties of these same SNSs. Are environmental properties at Time One alone good and exclusive predictors of environmental properties at Time Two? Or can we improve our predictive understanding of the future behavior of a regional system by introducing into our calculation intervening changes in the structural attributes of its TROs? If so— if these organizations do seem to be making a difference—what is the nature of that difference? Is the existing and evolving panoply of such efforts serving to perpetuate a nation-state--centered system

or is it leading to some transcendent system “beyond the nation-state ?“ This, I submit, is a, if not the, central substantive issue for our field, and only by more explicit attention to concept formation, measurement, and comparison are we likely to marshal convincing evidence about it.

## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>1</sup> The essay is a much revised (and cannibalized) version of a very recently written preface, “Ancient Method, Novel Subject, Ambiguous Outcome” to a volume edited by Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann and Anna van der Vleuten and entitled Legitimacy, Democracy and Regional International Organizations, to be published by Ashgate, and a virtually antique article that was published decades ago in International Organization: “The ‘Organizational Development’ of International Organizations”, International Organization, XXV, 4 (Autumn 1971), pp. 917-937.

<sup>2</sup> Come to think of it, the only one could be Israel.

<sup>3</sup> Claude If I am not mistaken, this textbook has been continuously in print – which must be some indication that it is still used in undergraduate courses in the United States.

<sup>4</sup> Nationhood, however, has not proven so easy to presume. An immense literature has been devoted to exploring the (mostly negative) consequences of states without nations and nations without states. The notion that the coincidence of the two was a prerequisite for orderly and legitimate politics (the so-called Westphalian System) was theoretically convincing, but almost impossible to attain empirically.

<sup>5</sup> The major exception would be the literature in anthropology on so-called “stateless societies” although it does not seem to have developed a distinctive and alternative set of concepts.

<sup>6</sup> In Europe, cooperation at the regional level began as early as 1815 with the creation of the Concert of Europe. It was not until the treaty forming the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952 was signed and ratified that the region acquired its first formal instrument of integration.

<sup>7</sup> A literature has recently emerged that intentionally seeks to liberate the study of regional integration from its European roots and biases. For a representative collection of essays on the “new” regionalism, see Fredrik Soderbaum and Timothy M. Shaw (eds.), Theories of New Regionalism: A Palgrave Reader (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004). Also, Finn Laursen (ed.), Comparative Regional Integration: Theoretical Perspectives (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> For an early example of this, see Ernst B. Haas and Philippe C. Schmitter, “Economics and Differential Patterns of Political Integration: Projections about Unity in Latin America,” International Organization 18(4) (1964), pp. 705-737.

<sup>9</sup> I have to confess that I was among them: Mexico and Latin American Economic Integration, with Ernst B. Haas, Research Series, No.5, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1964; “Economics and Differential Patterns of Political Integration: Projections about Unity in Latin America”, with Ernst B. Haas, International Organization,

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XVIII, No.4 (1964), 705-737; The Politics of Economics in Latin American Regionalism, with Ernst B. Haas, Monograph Series, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Denver, September 1965; "The Process of Central American Integration: Spill-Over, Spill-Around or Encapsulation?", Journal of Common Market Studies IX, 1(Fall 1970), 1-48.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr. Peace in Parts (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1987), a re-issue from the original (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1970).

<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these categories, see ....

<sup>12</sup> This is the point at which my antique article from I-O kicks int.

<sup>13</sup> Robert O. Keohane, "Institutionalization in the United Nations General Assembly," International Organization, Autumn 1969 (Vol. 23, No. 4), p. 859.

<sup>14</sup> This concept has been frequently, if often ambiguously, used by theorists of organizational structure. For a good summary of the literature, see Peter M. Blau and Robert Scott, Formal Organizations: A Comparative Approach (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 223

<sup>15</sup> These were first elaborated in T. Parsons, R. F. Bales, and E. Shils, Working Papers in the Theory of Action (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1953), pp. 242—245. A concise and useful restatement can be found in T. Parsons and N. Smelser, Economy and Society: A Study in the Integration of Economic and Social Theory (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1956), pp. 13—20.

<sup>16</sup> ° William C. Mitchell, Sociological Analysis and Politics: The Theories of Talcott Parsons (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 62. I have found this "translation" of great utility in my operationalist exploitation of Parsons' thought.

<sup>17</sup> Louis Guttman, 'The Basis for Scalogram Analysis,' in Measurement and Prediction, Samuel A. Stouffer et al, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1950) • is the original, seminal statement on the utility and characteristics of scalogram analysis. Hans Zeisel in his Say It with Figures (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), pp. 93—127, offers a particularly clear and concise description of the technique. Essentially it consists of ordering a set of dichotomized (yes/no) attributes by degree of difficulty and testing whether those units which are scored positively on some more difficult, scarce, or demanding items are likely to have also scored positively on all "lesser" ones. Conversely, those failing to have the most elementary, frequent, or easiest items are not expected to have any of the "higher order" qualities.

<sup>18</sup> If anything, errors in reliability should decrease potential unidimensionality since we have no evidence that the bias is likely to be systematic (regularly optimistic or pessimistic as regards capabilities). If the errors are randomly distributed, this should decrease the two coefficients much as it does for correlation coefficients, a phenomenon generally referred to as "attenuation."

<sup>19</sup> For some early empirical examples from the organizational sociology literature, see W. Terrien and Donald L. Mills, "The Effect of changing Size upon the Internal Structure of Organization," American Sociological Review, February 1955 (Vol. 20, No. i), pp. 11—14; Peter M. Blau, Wolf V. Heyderbrand, and Robert E. Stauffer, "The Structure of Small Bureaucracies," American Sociological Review, April 1966 (Vol. 3 No. 2), pp. 179—191; Theodore R. Anderson and Seymour Warkov, "Organizational Size and Functional Complexity: A Study of Administration in Hospitals." American Sociological Review, February 1961 (Vol. 26, No. 1), pp. 23-28; S. H. Udy, Jr., "'Bureaucracy' and 'Rationality' in Weber's Organization Theory: An Empirical Study," American Sociological Review December 1962

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(Vol. 24, No. 6), pp. 791—795; Richard H. Hall, "The Concept of Bureaucracy: An Empirical Assessment," American Journal of Sociology, December 1962 (Vol. 69, No. 4), pp. 295—308; Richard H. Hall and Charles R. Tittle, "A Note on Bureaucracy and Its 'Correlates,'" American Journal of Sociology, November 1966 (Vol. 72, No. 3), pp. 267-272; Gerald Hage and Michael Aiken, "Program Change and Organizational Properties: A Comparative Analysis," American Journal of Sociology, March 1967 (Vol. 72, No.5), pp. 503—519; Peter M. Blau, "The Hierarchy of Authority in Organizations," American Journal of Sociology, January 1968 (Vol. 73, No. 4), pp. 453—467.

<sup>20</sup> Amitai Etzioni, "The Epigenesis of Communities," Studies in Social Change (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), pp. 42—51.