FORUM

Introducing Organizational (Dis)Entanglements: How Scholarship on Regime Complexity and Power Dynamics Helps Make Sense of International Order-Making

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Scholars and pundits focusing on the changing international order and its possible fragmentation often pay little attention to the manifold relationships between international organizations (IOs). Neglecting inter-

organizational relationships, we argue, biases discussions towards dooms-day predictions and reinforces the perception of global fragmentation. In this Forum, we address these biases by bringing together two strands of IR scholarship: power rivalry/transition and regime complexity. We do so by introducing the concept of organizational (dis)entanglements. An examination of how more and less powerful national and international policymakers engage and disengage IOs, highlights processes of reinforcing, muddling through, or undermining various ongoing order-making initiatives. The individual contributions examine organizational (dis)entanglements by highlighting actors' various multilateral order-making attempts across IOs, global and regional ordering dynamics through IOs, and the roles international bureaucrats play in these processes. These contributions help identify new directions of inquiry in the study of IOs and international order by, for example, demonstrating that actors can engage with competition and cooperation simultaneously. Not all ordering attempts are equally likely to radically change global politics.

Los académicos y expertos que centran su trabajo en el cambiante orden internacional y en su posible fragmentación tienden, a menudo, a prestar poca atención a las múltiples relaciones existentes entre las organizaciones internacionales (OOII). Argumentamos que el hecho de descuidar las relaciones interorganizacionales sesga los debates con respecto a predicciones apocalípticas y refuerza la percepción de fragmentación global. En este Foro, abordamos estos sesgos reuniendo dos vertientes de la investigación en el campo de las RRII: la rivalidad/transición de poder y la complejidad del régimen. Llevamos esto a cabo mediante la presentación del concepto de (des)enredos organizacionales. Realizamos un estudio en materia de cómo los responsables de la formulación de políticas, nacionales e internacionales, más y menos poderosos, se relacionan y desvinculan de las OOII. Este estudio pone de relieve los procesos de refuerzo, obstaculización o debilitamiento de las iniciativas de generación de órdenes en curso. Las contribuciones individuales examinan la (des)enredo organizacional y destacan los intentos de creación de órdenes multilaterales por parte de los actores poderosos a través de las OOII, la relación dinámica entre el ordenamiento global y regional a través de las OOII y el papel que juegan los burócratas internacionales en estos procesos. Estas contribuciones ayudan a identificar nuevas direcciones de investigación en el estudio de las OOII y el orden internacional ya que, por ejemplo, demuestran que los actores pueden comprometerse con la competencia y la cooperación simultáneamente. No todos los intentos de ordenamiento tienen las mismas probabilidades de cambiar radicalmente la política mundial.

Les chercheurs et experts qui se concentrent sur l'évolution de l'ordre international et sa fragmentation potentielle accordent souvent peu d'attention aux relations multiples entre les organisations internationales (OI). Selon nous, l'omission des relations interorganisationnelles oriente les discussions vers des prédictions catastrophiques et renforce la perception d'une fragmentation mondiale. Dans ce forum, nous traitons de ces biais en rapprochant deux branches de la recherche en RI : rivalité/transition de pouvoir et complexité de régimes. Pour ce faire, nous présentons le concept de (dés)enchevêtrement organisationnel. En examinant comment des législateurs nationaux et internationaux plus ou moins puissants mettent en place et interrompent des collaborations entre OI, nous mettons en lumière les processus de renforcement, de débrouille ou de remise en question concernant les initiatives en cours qui visent à instaurer un ordre. Chaque contribution analyse les (dés)enchevêtrements organisationnels en mettant en lumière les tentatives de création d'ordres multilatéraux de puissants acteurs chez les différentes OI, la relation dynamique entre la création d'ordre mondial et régional par le biais des OI et le rôle que les bureaucrates internationaux jouent dans ces proces-

sus. Ces contributions permettent d'identifier de nouvelles orientations de recherche dans l'étude des OI et de l'ordre international en démontrant par exemple que les acteurs peuvent simultanément avoir recours à la concurrence et la coopération. Toutes les tentatives d'instauration d'ordre n'ont pas les mêmes chances de modifier radicalement la politique mondiale.

Power, Regime Complexity, and Order. Putting the Spotlight on Processes of Order-Making through Organizational (Dis)Entanglements

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Powerful actors formulate and seek to impose their vision of order—how the world should hang together and to whose benefit—*inside and across* international organizations (IOs). During the Cold War, the United States (US) did so with organizations such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), while the Soviet Union pursued its vision through the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. With the end of the Cold War and the dismantling of Soviet-sponsored organizations, the US and most European countries assumed "the end of history" with US-sponsored organizations becoming predominant in facilitating interstate relations based on liberal norms and rules (Ikenberry 2018). For many (US- and Germany-based) scholars, this Western liberal international order (also called LIO) became synonymous with global order (Lake et al. 2021). It finds its institutional expressions in organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the European Union (EU), which develop and diffuse their norms and rules.

Recent scholarship on postcolonial and authoritarian states in IOs (Mantilla 2023; Cottiero et al. 2024) has shown that this is a biased view of the world. Not all actors abide by the same vision of order, nor do they use the same IOs for the same purposes. Powerful authoritarian states such as China have sponsored the creation of new organizations and postcolonial states demand greater inclusion and representation in global governance organizations, such as an African Union (AU) seat in the Group of Twenty (G20) and calls for a permanent African seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). As a result, we observe different forms of contestation occurring within and across IOs. Rather than order, static and singular, we observe various order-aspiring projects and dynamics running in parallel.

All too often, current scholarship on international order-making pays little to no attention to IO density and inter-organizational relations, often referred to as regime complexity. Eschewing the multiple links among IOs, the scholarship on 'order' has looked at IOs such as the WTO or the United Nations (UN) in isolation when analyzing them as sites of order contestation.[1] However, as IO scholars have shown, the number of formal (Pevehouse et al. 2020) and informal (Roger and Rowan 2022) organizations has significantly grown over the last decades. Scholars working on regime complexity have empirically established that across most, if not all, policy domains global and regional governance arrangements are overlapping in mandate and membership (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Westerwinter 2022). The prime explananda of this research program are the structure of inter-organizational constellations as well as the impact of this structure on policy adjustments.

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[1] That is not to say that all scholarship on order looks at IOs.

Although regime complexity scholarship is burgeoning, it has not (yet) much addressed whether and how regime complexity is an expression of, and contributes to, international order-making. Even more, little attention has been paid to power in this research program or to how and why regime complexes evolve and develop over time. We ask whether and how multilateral cooperation can coexist with great-power rivalry, in particular during transition periods?[2] This question encourages us to examine how the world hangs together beyond analyzing power and IOs in isolation, thereby contributing to current debates on the nature and future of international order(s) and order-making.

Organizational (Dis)Entanglements

In this forum, we propose a way to advance the research programs on power rivalry/transition, regime complexity, and international order-making by bringing them into conversation with one another. This conversation, I argue, can best be captured through processes of actor-driven organizational (dis)entanglements. Studying organizational (dis)entanglements helps us understand not only *how* actors are pursuing different visions of international order, but also *which* actors are likely to do so *where* and *when.* Organizational (dis)entanglement goes beyond regime complexity scholarship's focus on either global structural outcomes, such as fragmentation (Biermann et al. 2009), or individual actors' strategies, such as forum shopping (Hofmann 2009; Morse and Keohane 2014). While the focus on structural relationships between IOs accentuates the degree of organizational differentiation, we instead concentrate on what the organizations and their members are actually *doing* over time. And while the focus of actors' strategies helps us understand individual actors' opportunities and constraints, we are interested in how these strategies *interact* to form different (dis)entangling *processes.* We thereby gain a more accurate picture of how international order-making is manifested.

I define organizational (dis)entanglement as an actor-driven process of constructive and disruptive relation-building across organizations. (Dis)entanglements are distributional processes over access and use of material and ideational resources occurring in key international sites. Through these (dis)entanglements actors express their understandings of what values, rules, and resources should be prioritized across the globe. Entanglements occur when actors *increase their commitments across* IOs. Gutner (2023) has conceptualized different entanglements: *coordination, collaboration,* and *cooperation.* These terms are often used interchangeably yet they encompass a wide range of engagement. Their differences matter in terms of how IOs are expected to work together and how much they do so. To engage in these entanglements, actors are likely to engage in brokering (Hofmann 2019) or deference (Pratt 2018), for example. Entanglements can also occur through more asymmetrical relationships such as *exploitation* and other forms of one IO taking advantage of another. Alternatively, disentanglements ensue when actors *reduce their commitments across* IOs, by pooling or investing less resources in them, through *withdrawals* (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019), IO *merger* or *dissolution* (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2020). When actors exit IOs, shift regimes, or forum shops (Morse and Keohane 2014), they often reduce their commitments across IOs. Strategies that are commonly referred to as competitive regime creation can both entangle or disentangle IOs, depending on whether actors continue or not to invest in both IOs.

By (trying to) entangle or disentangle IOs, national and international policymakers reinforce or weaken one set of rules, norms, and visions of order over others as well as emphasize one group of members over others. Consequently, (dis)entanglements are order-defining as they contribute to where the

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[2]We are not the first to ask this question (e.g., Sullivan 1978, 106). However, the research program that emerged in the 1970s looked at IOs in isolation from each other.

core and where the margins of the order-making are located. Through organizational (dis)entanglements, we focus on the politics of making and unmaking of inter-organizational relations, which call into being, stabilize, improve, contest, and breakdown international order(s) as they engage fundamental questions of political agency, legitimacy, and global governance. A focus on organizational (dis)entanglements helps translate the dynamic ways that power is practiced and order constituted.

By capturing a range of changing inter-organizational relationships and how actors foster and destroy them, an analytical focus on organizational (dis)entanglement equips us with the possibility to overcome the analytical divide in existing scholarship between international order, power, and regime complexity. To understand why and how actors (dis)entangle IOs and influence how order is (re)constituted, we combine and advance regime complexity and great power rivalry/transition scholarship. Regime complexity scholarship provides us with a vocabulary to know and operationalize *how* actors attempt to entangle and disentangle organizations. But it is rather silent on *which* actors do so, *when* and *where*.

Power rivalry and transition scholarship, with their emphasis on great powers, provide us with insights into *which* actors are most likely to entangle and disentangle and *where* and *when* they are likely to do so. Not all actors are equally well positioned to pursue (dis)entanglements—nor do all actors want to pursue them. Current power transition scholarship has demonstrated that the US and China are protagonists in order-making, that they occupy key positions in the network of organizations, and that they hold competitive visions of order (Cooley, Nexon, and Ward 2019; Mearsheimer 2019). They understand IOs as vehicle to pursue these visions. This is why great powers are interested in entangling or disentangling organizations.

IOs and their relations with one another are not mere instruments of great powers, however. Great powers might be less constrained (Drezner 2009), but they have to engage and satisfy a broader coalition of states, otherwise their authority claims over how issues should be governed remain hollow (Hofmann and Pawlak 2023). Like other actors, great powers have to tap into organizational repertoires and leverage IOs' organizational capacities to generate and mobilize support for their visions of order. This is even more so the case when alternative organizations provide other actors and power the possibility to pursue their preferences somewhere else.

Organizational (dis)entanglements actively and continuously produce international order-making. Organizational (dis)entanglements occur in different pockets of the world and across different policy domains simultaneously. For example, since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the US, and Russia cannot see eye-to-eye in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and have brought this organization almost to a standstill. However, if we shift focus to another IO, both countries continue to make decisions over ongoing UN peace operations at the UNSC. While each example of (dis)entanglement is not equally meaningful, they point to changes and continuities in order-making that should not be ignored. A focus on (dis)entanglements helps us escape the *a priori* assumptions that focusing on individual "core" LIO IOs such as the IMF or the WTO is enough to understand international politics. This forum is a first step towards addressing inter-organizational changes, and power and linking them to order-making.

This Forum

Individual contributions to this forum bring organizational (dis)entanglements to life as they discuss how national, regional, and international actors try to reform, block, stall, or exit inter-organizational relations in a quest to pursue their visions of order. They show that while great powers are often at the forefront of these processes (Stephen and Cai, Weiss and Rittberger), regional organizations (Gómez-

Mera) can shape the normative underpinnings in which international politics takes place. And powerful regional states at times try to disentangle from global politics (Panke and Stapel). Organizational actors (Margulis and Gutner), on the other hand, often try to increase entanglements, either because state-based power rivalries result in negative spillover effects, which otherwise would reduce IOs' capacities to fulfill their mandates or to ensure that their IOs remain relevant and legitimate.

Overall, we show that actors invest many resources in coalition-building and - reconfiguration in IOs at the global and regional levels. Intra-organizational challenges from both China and Russia have driven Western states to focus more on their regional organizations (also known as regime shifting in regime complexity parlance) and halting Russia- and China-sponsored reform processes (also known as hostage-taking and vetoing). China's additional regime creations are not all competitive, but instead, some engage, and some disengage from the web of entanglements.

Combining insights from power transition/rivalry and regime complexity scholarship demonstrates that actors can engage with competition and cooperation at the same time across different organizations. And while great powers can instigate shifts in the order, other actors also engage in ordering, sometimes navigating around great powers. Therefore, not all ordering attempts are equally likely to radically change global politics as we know it.

No Clean Slate: China's Organizational Entangling and the Prospects for Global Order Transition

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What can a greater awareness of organizational (dis-)entanglement contribute to understanding the consequences of China's rise in international order-making? In debates about China's impact on international order, the role of regime complexity has been underrepresented. Some portray China's rise as being so dependent on its integration into established organizations that China would not seek to fundamentally challenge or overthrow the established order (Zheng 2005; Ikenberry 2011). Others hark back to realist, cyclical accounts of order transitions (Gilpin 1981), which identify China as the main potential challenger to American hegemony and its associated order (Mearsheimer 2019). Such a challenge is thought to begin with delegitimating the existing order and forming "a revisionist counterhegemonic coalition" (Schweller and Pu 2011, 44).

These polarizing accounts do not sit well with the regime complexity and interorganizational entanglements of the contemporary power shift. This contribution to the forum engages with such entanglements in the case of China's organizational strategies from a largely rational institutionalist perspective. Diversity and variation are key to our story. A singular "international order" is at best a shorthand for a multitude of norms, practices, and institutions, and China's options are not limited to integrating into or challenging that order. Instead, China has sought to reform some organizations (e.g., the Bretton Woods ones), defend the status quo in others (e.g., the UN Security Council), and participate in the creation of new ones (e.g., Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa [BRICS], the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank [AIIB], and the New Development Bank [NDB]). The result has been to increase organizational entanglements, not to sever them.

As China has grown more successful at exercising influence within and across IOs, the US has reacted in various ways. These include holding up reform processes (e.g., at the Bretton Woods institutions), taking some organizations hostage (e.g., the WTO Appellate Body), exiting others (e.g., the Paris Agreement), and boycotting China-led organizations (e.g., the AIIB). As international order-making efforts are at least partly constituted by great-power rivalry, both China and the US are left dissatisfied with aspects of an increasingly complex order they uneasily cohabit.

Partly due to growing capabilities and more determined leadership, China has increasingly turned to the creation of new organizations and initiatives that exist alongside, and interact with, existing ones (Paradise 2016; Stuenkel 2016; Stephen 2021). This process deepens rather than diminishes organizational entanglements and can be understood from a historical institutionalist perspective as a kind of "institutional layering" (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, 16–7; Hofmann and Yeo 2023). Fragmenting dynamics have been held in check by China's sustained interest in maintaining entanglements with established organizations. What can account for this additive and entangling nature of change in international order-making?

Theories of Regime Creation and China's Institution-Building

Traditionally, international organizational creation is thought to be rare and a last resort due to its high costs and uncertainty of success (Keohane 1984, 100). A "persistence of the institutional status quo" is, moreover, seen to challenge the "traditional power-politics paradigm" (Jupille, Mattli, and Snidal 2013, 13).

The status quo bias is real but overstated. On the one hand, international power shifts create challenging environments for established organizations to navigate while also endowing new actors with resources to explore alternative options. On the other hand, the proliferation of informal, "low-cost" institutional formats challenges the assumption that organizational creation is associated with high costs.

If informal institutions offer a greater capacity to mediate international power shifts (Vabulas and Snidal 2020), their creation can be an attractive option for a major power like China to seek changes in order-making. They provide valuable platforms to probe other actors' levels of support prior to or alongside the costlier and riskier act of formal institutionalization. While defenders of existing organizations may block radical attempts at internal reform, they may find it harder to prevent the creation of new ones. Many China-led formal organizations were preceded by informal forerunners: the New Development Bank emerged out of the informal BRICS format, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was preceded by the less formal Shanghai Five, and even the AIIB was originally linked to the broader and less institutionalized Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Chung 2006; Wang 2019).

The result has not been a "replacement" of incumbent organizations (Cottrell 2009) but the layering of new institutions alongside existing ones, leading to entanglements between China-led and the legacy organizations of the Western-dominated "liberal" international order. In contrast to the US's experience at the close of the WWII, China has emerged as a global power in an already deeply institutionalized order. Consequently, China-led organizational creation has reinforced pre-existing trends toward organizational proliferation and regime complexity. The result is an additive form of change in order-making that is hard to capture by traditional narratives of integration or challenge/overthrow.

The Implications of China's Institutional Layering

In light of rapid changes in order-making, the kinds of relationships that develop between China-led IOs and established ones remain an open question. Part of the answer depends on the extent to which they become entangled in geopolitical competition between major powers, which can give rise to dis-entangling dynamics (see

Weiss and Rittberger, this forum). But part of the answer also depends on the Chinese government's vision for its organization-building activities and whether they are part of a project to "delegitimize the hegemon's global authority and order" (Schweller and Pu 2011, 44). At this point, we see more evidence of Chinese order-building being a challenge to the hegemon's global authority and less of an attempt to discredit the established ordering *per se.*

At least at the rhetorical level, China's new organizations are depicted as additive and complementary to existing ones (Ling and Li 2021). In public addresses, President Xi Jinping stresses that China's "new mechanisms and initiatives" are not meant to "reinvent the wheels or target any other country," but to "complement and improve the current international mechanisms to achieve win–win cooperation and common development" (Xi 2016). This also applies to recently announced initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative. Xi has repeated this point throughout his presidency: In 2013 when proposing "an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future," and later when promoting initiatives like the BRI, the AIIB, and the Silk Road Fund, both at public forums and in internal government workshops (Xi 2018, *passim*; Liu and Hu 2023). The declared aim is thus not to delegitimate existing organizations nor to compete against them. Rather, it is to innovate and fill in gaps in global governance and to refine and work in tandem with existing organizations, for China to act as a responsible power and supply "more public goods to the international community" (Xi 2017) in addressing complex problems that cannot be solved by a single country or a limited group of states.

This may challenge Western countries' leadership in established organizations, but it contributes to order-making processes. Self-conceived as a leader of the developing world, China maintains its goal to "win more institutional power and rights of voice" for developing countries in global governance, which entails taking the lead in reforming old mechanisms, creating new platforms, and facilitating regional multilateralism (Wu and Liu 2020). Such an objective involves a "redistribution of authority" in international regime complexes (Morse and Keohane 2014, 408), implying a shift towards a more polycentric process of order-making. This is predicated on China's hope to both preserve and improve the current multilateral framework, identified as UN-led, not American-led. The Chinese government distinguishes a "true multilateralism" from what it repudiates as "selective multilateralism," denouncing American practices as deviating from or lording over the UN and as bullying alleged challengers by institutional and other means (Liu 2022).

China's official discourse and practice of multilateral institution-building thus show a counterhegemonic state's grievances-based "rightful resistance" to American dominance (Schweller and Pu 2011), but they do not delegitimize the broader order, even if the creation of new organizations may alter the impact of existing ones by generating normative dissonances, promulgating new rules, and facilitating polycentric processes. Overall, China's organizational strategies display a high commitment to maintaining inter-organizational entanglement with organizations closely associated with American leadership and liberal norms, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, as a way of opening up new spaces for inter-organizational strategies (such as forum shopping) and heading off attempts at strategic disentanglement by established powers (such as the US' failed attempt to hinder participation in the AIIB).

China's institutional layering contributes to a gradual reshaping of international rules and continuous order-making. China-founded organizations are likely to play a part in fostering Chinese network power, setting the global agenda, (re-)interpreting norms and practices, and engendering new rules and role expectations. The AIIB formulates its own policies and practices. The SCO enumerates its own visions and procedures for security cooperation. Memoranda of Understanding signed under the aegis of the BRI embed their own principles and goals. China-

led institutions, simply put, "are likely to generate rules" (Wang 2020, 591). This layering of new rules provides no clean slate but may alter the efficacy of existing institutions and lead to partial displacement if the new institutions benefit from the defection of established ones or the process of differential growth (Skålnes 2021).

Conclusion

China has sought to defend or reform existing organizations and create new ones that are strongly entangled with established ones. Conventional wisdom presumes that international regime creation is costlier and riskier than status quo maintenance, but it turns out that informal formats can offer a low-cost, flexible mechanism for order-making and often serve as a basis for formal institutionalization. China's stated purpose for its institution-building activities is complementary to the UN-based system, but it shows a potential to substitute some of the American-led institutions where China tries to enhance the voice and representation of developing countries through "true multilateralism" that normatively delegitimizes the hegemon's selective multilateralism. This indicates China's hope to become *a* (if not *the*) rule-setter by its institutional entrepreneurship and reform efforts, though China has expressed no wish—nor capability, given the institutional complexity—to have a clean slate through hegemonic war (Gilpin 1981).

The exacerbation of tensions between China and Western countries, aggravated by Russia's war against Ukraine, is manifest at the level of order-making. But while there is contestation, China-led and non-China-led organizations are still frequently entangled, and competition in one area can coexist with cooperation in another. One hypothesis for the future is that intensifying power-political polarization will favor disentangling dynamics, fragmenting the globe into competing camps in a manner reminiscent of the Cold War. An alternative is that a Cold Peace will facilitate the continuation of uneasy coexistence and mutually entangled order-making efforts in which forces of economic securitization are contained. Both scenarios suggest that scholars of great-power politics and scholars of regime complexity cannot afford to ignore each other.

Global Disentanglement, Regional Entanglement: The West's Response to Russia's War of Aggression

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Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is a brazen attempt to fundamentally change global security order-making. We take issue with the Western response to this challenge by drawing on the concept of organizational (dis-)entanglement. While the post-Cold War global security ordering, founded on the US' military primacy, faces challenges on various fronts, Vladimir Putin has been outspoken about Russia's intention to break the US's hegemony, bringing an end to the American-led security organizational constellation and the principles upon which it rests. One of the orderings' key tenets is the belief in collective security and thus the feasibility of peaceful relations with multilateral organizations at the global and regional levels (Lake et al. 2021, 232). We thus focus on the UN at the global level, as well as on NATO as the predominant regional security organization in the "transatlantic core" (Lake et al. 2021, 236). We also address the nexus between NATO and the

EU, the latter of which has assumed an ever more prominent role with a declared commitment to promote collective security.

Has Russia's challenge unleashed processes of *entanglement* or *disentanglement* of the organizations underpinning the global security ordering? Despite widespread contestation of what precisely constitutes a global security order, few would dispute minimal standards, such as nonintervention, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and prohibitions of altering territorial boundaries by brute force (Lake et al. 2021, 227–32). Russia's military assault on Ukraine's territorial integrity met not only with instant condemnation but also with a resolute response amongst Western nations—to the surprise of many observers skeptical about the ability of NATO and the EU to mobilize capacious support to Ukraine's struggle for existence. At the same time, the UN responded with a combination of symbolic condemnation, ostracism, and mediation, while the UN's most consequential body, the UNSC, remained deadlocked.

Against this backdrop, we advance two arguments. First, we observe a process of *disengagement* reflected in the *disentanglement* of global and regional security organizations. With a deadlocked UNSC, the West's key security organizations, NATO as well as the EU, have disentangled from the UN. Other than symbolic legitimation and limited mediation efforts, such as in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the UN has largely lost relevance in the West's response. Second, we suggest a process of *regional entanglement.* Russia's war of aggression has not only reinforced the American position in Europe, it has also led to closer *collaboration* between NATO and the EU—a relationship that had been marked by strained and competitive episodes in the past. Since Russia's aggression, both organizations have come to focus on their complementarities instead. The responses of NATO and the EU have been marked by a high degree of coordination and coherence. This entanglement at the regional level manifests itself through two processes: First, both organizations have 'brokered' a division of labor between them (Hofmann 2019); second, emblematic for this division of labor is the EU's deference to NATO in matters of collective defense (Pratt 2018). To date, despite their partially overlapping mandates, NATO–EU relations have not entailed observable conflicts in their responses to Russia's invasion.

Global Disentanglement

In their response to Russia's invasion, members of both the EU and NATO engaged with the UN at two levels. First, they turned to the UN General Assembly to condemn Russia's aggression in a fashion that reflected their individual organizations' responses. The suspension of Russia's membership in the UN Human Rights Council has to be seen in this context. Beyond these efforts to delegitimize Russia's actions, more ambitious attempts to contain Moscow via the UNSC were out of reach, given Russia's as well as China's veto. For instance, the US, the United Kingdom (UK), and France had jointly attempted to condemn Russia's military operations early on, but it had rapidly turned out that these attempts were futile. While the UNSC addressed the war in Ukraine in more than twenty meetings in 2022, only two (minor) resolutions have been passed, three had failed, and the rest did not even make it to a vote.[3]

Second, Western powers supported the UN's humanitarian efforts on the ground. For instance, the European Council welcomed the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the creation of humanitarian corridors in October 2022. Moreover, the International Atomic Energy Agency played a critical role in conflict management as it helped to protect the nuclear power plants in Zaporizhia from attack.[4] Though

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[3]See https://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick/meetings/2022.
[4]See https://unric.org/en/the-un-and-the-war-in-ukraine-key-information/.

legally in charge, the most important body to ensure global security—the UNSC—proved negligible for outcomes in this global security crisis. In Russia's war against Ukraine, the UN ceases to be a major factor in the global system of collective security that it used to be under American unipolarity following the end of the Cold War. With the UN weakened in a critical moment for collective security, the West disengaged from the UN and thus disentangled its security aspirations from the global level and turned to regional security organizations instead. Yet, it was no foregone conclusion that NATO and the EU would be able to muster a joint security response through inter-organizational entanglement, by deepening their collaboration.

Regional Entanglement

Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, relations between NATO and the EU had been less concerned with global security ordering in a strict sense, but rather with the management of functional overlaps as well as conflicts over the distribution of responsibilities (Hofmann 2019). As of February 24, 2022, the transatlantic community has become the object of an outside challenger: NATO and EU have become frontline actors in defense of their global security order vision and their activities have switched to collective defense. Coming to their order's defense implied, in turn, that inter-organizational quarrels had to be overcome. Since the onset of the war, inter-organizational relations amongst NATO and the EU have seen a deepening of collaboration in the form of functional differentiation and a relatively smooth division of labor.

First, NATO has become the focal organization to assist Ukraine in countering Russia's military advance and it sees itself as the champion of upholding the principle of collective security (Lake et al. 2021, 232). NATO member states also serve as focal actors of the *Ukraine Defense Contact Group* to organize military support (i.e., monthly meetings in NATO headquarters or Ramstein). These activities did not only signal resolve towards Russia but helped to bolster mutual reassurance among Western powers. On the one hand, NATO has reinforced its deterrent posture vis-à-vis Russia. It boosted troop levels up to 40.000 at its Eastern flank and reinforced pre-positioned equipment, weapons, and more forward-deployed capabilities (NATO 2022a). NATO's response also implied welcoming Finland and Sweden as new members. This implied Western resolve vis-à-vis Russia, and it (provisionally) ended a decades-long NATO–EU competition over who is in charge of collective defense (Weiss 2012). On the other hand, NATO assists Ukraine's self-defense effort. The so-called Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP), which was significantly boosted in 2022, includes secure communications, cyber resilience, fuel, and portable anti-drone systems. This collaboration was more extensive than with any other partner. Moreover, Ukraine participates in NATO's air situation data exchange program, which has gained significant operational relevance since Russia's invasion (NATO 2022b). While the implementation of support is often bilateral, NATO acts as a hub to coordinate military assistance.

Second, unlike NATO or its individual member states, the EU is in a unique position to mobilize its economic leverage in this conflict, for example, by imposing economic sanctions as a means of coercion.[5] The EU's sanctions target a large number of Russian individuals (e.g., Duma members, oligarchs), restrict exports of dual-use technology in the defense sector (e.g., semiconductors), close EU airspace to Russian-controlled aircrafts and prohibit transactions with the Russian Central Bank. Beyond exploiting its sheer market size, the EU also sought to punch above its weight by drawing on chokepoints (Farrell and Newman 2019) to magnify negative economic repercussions. For instance, it bans several Russian banks from

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[5]The EU also promoted a membership perspective for Ukraine, should the war end, and backed these aspirations by granting it candidate status.

the SWIFT system, harming interbank payment transactions. This ban undoubtedly signaled the EU's resolve to exploit its power over specific networks for coercive purposes. Moreover, the EU supplements NATO's military support of Ukraine by leveraging EU-specific capacities, which NATO cannot draw on: The EU entered uncharted territory by funding member states to transfer lethal arms into a conflict zone. Some of their individual deliveries were reimbursed through the European Peace Facility (EPF), which has meanwhile exceeded the material scope of NATO's CAP. Totaling €11.1 billion by 2024, EU member states have created a *Ukraine Assistance Fund* and used the EPF to respond to Ukraine's requests for lethal military equipment (Council of the EU 2024). While the specific demand is normally defined outside the EU context, the EU's High Representative and Common Foreign and Security Policy committees have now brokered agreements between Ukraine and EU member states over weapon deliveries. Beyond hardware, the EU's military assistance mission *EUMAM Ukraine* enhances operational capabilities by training soldiers of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Again, the EU implements this mission but extensively draws on NATO experiences and informal collaboration in military terms.[6]

In sum, the West's multilateral response to Russia's aggression has intensified the regional entanglement of its pivotal IOs, NATO, and the EU. Their specific 'multilateral terms' reflect a collaborative division of labor: NATO as the focal point of organizing the collective military response and the EU in leveraging its considerable market power as well as its financial prowess.

War and Organizational (Dis)Entanglements

The West's response to Russia's aggression thus manifests itself in the disentanglement of transatlantic regional security organizations from global ones: For now, the UN seems to have run its course as an integral part of the global system of collective security. This disentanglement of the West from the UN in security matters has reinvigorated the relationship between NATO and the EU. Russia's war of aggression has thus led to a reinforced commitment in the West to salvage the key tenets of their waning global security order vision, multilateralism and collective security, on a regional rather than on a global scale.

Our analysis highlights the importance of coalition-building in the attempts of ordering. First, in matters of collective security, Western powers have sidestepped the deadlocked UNSC at the global level. Russia and China, but also other rising powers, such as India or Brazil, have such divergent security interests on display that a common notion of what constitutes a global security order is difficult to obtain in the near future. The consequence of such interest divergence is a disentanglement of the regional (transatlantic) from the global level.

Second, Western powers have used existing IOs (NATO and EU) to foster likeminded coalitions to defend the key tenets of their waning American-led global security order vision. Faced with an existential threat—directed at the order per se— particularistic institutional interests have been subordinated to the greater cause of defending the order's basic tenets—multilateralism and collective security— as well as the principle of democratic self-determination. The objective of ordermaintenance has thus led to a process of further entanglement between NATO and EU, and, ultimately, to the (re-)affirmation of a liberal, Western security community.

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[6]Authors' interview with NATO senior official (online), Munich/Brussels: March 27, 2023.

Vertical Entanglements: How Regional-Global Collaborations Contribute to Global Order-Making from the South

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Does regime complexity widen or mitigate prevailing power asymmetries in global order-making? In addressing this question, I engage with this forum's introduction and examine the way in which states and regional IOs (RIOs) from the South engage with multilateral IOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) to push for a more inclusive rules-based international order. Using evidence from the international regime complexes for the protection of refugees and indigenous peoples, I highlight how vertical entanglements between regional and multilateral IOs and CSOs contributed to the spread and implementation of global protection norms.

The essay makes three contributions to debates on regime complexity, power, and global order-making. First, I emphasize the opportunities that organizational entanglements create for IOs and CSOs to enhance a particular vision of global order. Second, I add to recent work emphasizing the role of states and RIOs from the Global South in influencing and co-constituting global order-making (Acharya 2018; Tourinho 2021; Rodriguez and Thornton 2022). Finally, I bring attention to the role of RIOs in filling enforcement and protection gaps in global governance.

The Protection Gap in the LIO

The protection of universal human rights through multilateral organizations was an important component of the LIO. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights set the foundations of an increasingly dense international regime, which grew to include specialized instruments protecting specific groups such as refugees, migrant workers, and indigenous peoples. Yet, in practice, implementation of these global protection norms has been uneven and selective, reflecting tensions among liberal and Westphalian principles in the postwar international order (Lake et al. 2021).

Legal fragmentation, some have argued, deepens norm implementation problems by enabling powerful states to avoid costly international protection commitments (Alter and Meunier 2009). Yet, the proliferation of entangled norms and organizations also widens the strategic options for weaker actors, including states and IOs from the South and CSOs. These weaker actors can navigate and use organizational entanglements to promote alternative visions of global order (Gómez-Mera 2016).

In the refugees and indigenous peoples' regime complex, there are important entanglements between specialized multilateral treaties, such as the 1950 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention C169 on Indigenous Peoples of 1989, and the broader human rights systems in Africa and the Americas. The AU and the Organization of American States (OAS) include judicial and quasi-judicial bodies that are responsible for monitoring, protecting, and enforcing human rights laws in member states: the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR),[7] and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court on Human Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR).[8]

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[7] The IACHR and IACtHR are responsible for interpreting, upholding, and enforcing the 1948 American Declaration and the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights.

[8] The AfCHPR Court applies and enforces implementation of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights. The Commission monitors implementation of the Charter and refers cases to the Court.

Below, I illustrate how these entanglements have allowed for collaboration among multilateral IOs, RIOs from the South, and local and regional CSOs, which have contributed to the spread and implementation of global protection norms. In the refugee regime complex, the collaboration between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and RIOs was crucial in broadening the operationalization and application of the refugee protection norm. The indigenous peoples' regime, in turn, shows how CSOs and activists can take advantage of regime complexity and build entanglements with RIOs to push for greater enforcement of global norms.

UNCHR-Organization of African Unity-OAS Entanglements and the Broadening of Global Refugee Protection Norm

The contemporary refugee protection regime emerged after the end of WWII with the adoption of the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the creation of the UNHCR. The Convention defined a refugee as someone "who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." It also outlined member states' obligations to protect refugees' rights, based on the principle of *nonrefoulement*. Yet the instrument limited those protections to those fleeing "events occurring in *Europe*" prior to 1951, rendering it largely irrelevant for dealing with displacements in other regions.

Through their entanglements with UNHCR, RIOs from the South established refugee protection frameworks that complemented and went beyond multilateral agreements. For the OAU (Organization of African Unity) refugee protection was indeed a priority since its creation in 1963. Dissatisfaction with the geographical and temporal limitations of the UN Convention led to the creation of a commission to examine a regional instrument that would consider the links between displacement in Africa and decolonization and independence (Rutinwa 2002). Invited to participate in these African-level discussions, the UNHCR recommended the development of a complementary instrument that would preserve the centrality of the UN Convention (Palacios-Arapiles 2021). As a key interlocutor between member states in the South and in the North, the UNHCR was also centrally involved in the drafting of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Considering African member states' concerns, UNHCR pushed for a broader refugee definition during the negotiations of the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (Glasman 2017). While the Protocol removed the temporal and geographical limitations in the 1951 Convention, the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention further broadened the refugee definition, to include those escaping "external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing the public order."

UNHCR also helped in diffusing these normative developments across regions through its entanglements with the OAS. Like their African counterparts, Latin American countries saw the UN Convention as inadequate in confronting the growing displacement problems in the region in the 1960s and 1970s. As the displacement situation in Central and South America worsened, UNCHR expanded its institutional presence in the region and began collaborating actively with the OAS (UNCHR 2005). In a joint 1983 study, they brought attention to the lack of an adequate refugee definition in the Inter-American system, which crucially influenced the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees in 1984 (Murillo-Gonzalez 2004). Acknowledging "the precedent of the OAU Convention," the Declaration adds "massive violations of human rights" to the qualifying conditions for refugee identification. This additional reference to human rights violations, in turn, reflected the influence of the IACHR, which through its multiple reports had highlighted the displacement consequences of violence from civil conflict and military

dictatorships in the region (IACHR 2015). While nonbinding, this instrument has become the cornerstone of refugee protection in Latin America.

The collaboration between UNHCR and RIOs from the South resulted in regional refugee protection frameworks that filled a legal gap in the LIO. Their definitions of refugees have informed UNHCR's more inclusive practices of refugee status determination, effectively broadening protection for forced migrants globally.[9]

OAS-CSOs Entanglements and the Enforcement of Indigenous Rights

Organizational and legal entanglements in the indigenous rights regime complex have allowed Latin American indigenous activists and their allies to use these entanglements with OAS in enforcing their legal rights under multilateral and regional treaties.

Following the controversial 1957 ILO Convention 107 concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations (C107), a strengthened indigenous network shifted its advocacy to the more diffuse UN human rights system, which proved more receptive to indigenous' re-ordering demands. In 1982, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established and began working on a universal declaration on indigenous rights. It would take 17 years of protracted negotiations for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to be adopted in 2007.

In the meantime, in 1989, the ILO adopted Convention No. 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (C169) to replace C107. Apart from recognizing the political, social, economic, cultural, and territorial rights of indigenous peoples, C169 established the requirement of prior consultation with indigenous peoples in decision-making and policies affecting their interests. The new convention was widely embraced by Latin American countries, with fifteen OAS members who were also parties to the ACHR and had accepted jurisdiction of the IACtHR joined C169. Because the ACHR explicitly acknowledges it should be interpreted in consideration of members' other international and national legal commitments, the Commission and the Court can refer to C169 and the UNDRIP when interpreting indigenous communities' rights under American instruments (Mackay 2002; ILO 2008). These emerging organizational entanglements overlaps had significant consequences.

First, the entanglement between C169 and ADHR allows indigenous peoples to forum shop when presenting complaints against alleged violations. While only states and the Commission can submit cases for adjudication with the IACtHR, the Commission can refer the cases to the Court. Indeed, indigenous activists and their allies in civil society have increasingly relied on the IACHR, instead of the C169 complaints procedure, to push for enforcement of their collective rights (Barelli 2010). Through their entanglements with the Commission, indigenous activists have placed thirty-one cases with the IACtHR since 1998.

Second, the IACtHR has helped enforce national implementation of C169 within member states. In 2012, for example, the Court found that the Ecuadorian government's decision to award a foreign concession for oil exploitation in Kichwa People of Sarayaku's ancestral lands without prior consultations violated the rights to indigenous communal property recognized under Art. 21 of the American Convention on Human Rights, as well as the right to FPIC under ILO C169. The IACtHR's ruling led to the halting of seismic exploration work and to an apology from the Ecuadorean government.

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[9]Indeed, UNHCR (1994), recognizes that it "adopted the regional usage of regional instruments such as the OAU Refugee Convention and the Cartagena Declaration … to denote persons outside their countries who are in need of international protection because of a serious threat […] as a result of persecution or armed conflict, or serious public disorder."

Finally, the IACtHR's jurisprudence on indigenous rights has also had cross-regional effects, helping "shape arguments and interpretations concerning indigenous rights in global legal arenas" (Medina 2016, 140). Its rulings have been referenced in decisions issued by the ACHR and the AfCHR in cases involving indigenous peoples in Nigeria (Ogoni) and Kenya (Endorois) (Elguera Alvarez 2015). Moreover, landmark IACtHR cases such as the Awas Tingni v. Nicaragua, influenced the inclusion of strong land rights provisions in the UNDRIP, further contributing to global ordering (Barelli 2010).

In sum, the study of regime complexity shines new light on our understanding of an increasingly dense rules-based international order-making. As this essay has shown, RIOs from the from the South can collaborate with multilateral IOs and CSOs in regime complexes to push for a more inclusive and just rules-based global order vision.

South Africa and Nigeria as Promoters of Entangled Regionalism in Africa

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Regional governance has become increasingly important and complementary to global developments, which is reflected by the proliferation, membership, and scope expansion of RIOs over time (Panke and Stapel 2023). The number of RIOs not only increased to more than seventy since 1945 but also the organizations grew in size from about an average of four member states in 1945 to more than thirteen members by 2020. Hence, except for North Korea and Israel, all sovereign states are now in two or more RIOs. Moreover, these RIOs were over time equipped with a broader mandate in an increasing number of different policy areas. In 1945, the average RIO encompassed about twelve different policy competencies which has increased to more than forty-eight today. Hence, RIOs increasingly overlap. The resulting regional regime complexity can be used especially by strong states to pursue their interests in multiple RIOs and entangle them. The remainder of this section focuses on the African case, in which ordering resulted from organizational (dis)entanglements that major African powers pursued in times of geopolitical transformations.

Regional Entanglements between the AU, ECOWAS, and SADCs

Following the end of the Cold War, two important transformations took place: First, the world shifted from bipolarity towards unipolarity with the US as the only remaining superpower. As the US did not place great emphasis on Africa relative to Europe at that time, African regional powers stepped up and took the reins and coined the term "African solutions to African problems" (Coe 2019). Second, while the 1980s have been referred to as the "lost decade in Africa" due to widespread underdevelopment, debt crises, coups d'état, and security challenges, the shift of the dominant paradigm for economic development during the 1990s brought about novel opportunities to shape African polities and politics. Both domestic and external actors, such as the World Bank and donors, maintained that economic liberalization and development could only be achieved when fundamental governance norms and security would be guaranteed (Söderbaum and Stapel 2022). At the same time, many African countries underwent regime changes, such as South Africa and Nigeria, and the new governments framed the policy fields of good governance and security

as highly intertwined (Coe 2019). In this context of geopolitical transformations, African agency further shaped the continent most notably by reforming RIOs, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1993, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 2001, and the AU in 2001. Thereby, they created new and reinforced existing entanglements.

Nigeria and South Africa as regional powerhouses possessed the financial, personnel, and political resources needed to make use of the opportunity structure by reforming existing RIOs through new initiatives in line with their interests (Alden and Schoeman 2015; Hofmann et al. 2016; Mickler et al. 2019). Nigeria and South Africa were furthermore in a position to find coalition partners with less powerful members across different RIOs. The two regional powers were well-suited to pursue their interests across multiple organizations and in this sense use existing entanglements to increase their margins of maneuver (Pratt 2021) rather than dissolving some of the RIOs in order to save costs resulting from duplicated efforts and multiple membership fees. Nigeria and South Africa furthered additional organizational entanglements as part of their strategy of regional ordering. For instance, Nigeria ignited the "Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security" in ECOWAS, in order to be in a better position to cope with regional conflicts, including Burkina Faso, Liberia, and Guinea-Bissau, and foster stability as a basis for economic growth. South Africa, as the most powerful state in SADC, favored similar institutional reform processes (Nathan 2012). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the regional powers spearheaded proposals to address, condemn, and sanction unconstitutional changes of government, democratic backsliding, coups d'état, and security challenges in ECOWAS and SADC, respectively. Importantly, Nigeria and South Africa initiated similar policy proposals in other RIOs as well. South Africa's Thabo Mbeki pursued his African Renaissance doctrine and Millennium African Plan on economic development not only in SADC but also in the AU (Tieku 2004). This culminated in the establishment of the AU's New Partnership for Africa's Development (Murithi 2005). Nigeria's Obasanjo strived to accommodate the good governance and security topics not only in ECOWAS but also in the AU reform processes, which is reflected in a similar mandate and institutional set-up of the two RIOs' peace and security councils (Hartmann and Striebinger 2015). The two regional powers succeeded with their respective endeavors in the AU, as they formed a like-minded coalition also including states such as Tunisia, Libya, and Senegal. As a result, these African organizations became increasingly equipped with similar competencies in the governance and security realm and nested entanglements became more pronounced since there is also membership overlap as all ECOWAS and SADC members also belong to the AU at the same time.

Nigeria's and South Africa's Motivations for Pursuing Regional Entanglements

The entanglements in the security and governance realm pursued by South Africa and Nigeria allowed them to streamline their policies across different organizations (Darkwa and Attuquayefio 2014).[10] Following South African and Nigerian efforts, the economic-oriented ECOWAS and SADC as well as the political-oriented AU became important fora for the promotion and protection of security and fundamental good governance standards. Despite their similarity and compatibility in the late 1990s and early 2000s, ECOWAS, SADC, and the AU partly differed in the application of their good governance and security mandates afterward due to contextualization and adaptation of the respective norms and policies to different conditions

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[10]On occasion, the regional powers additionally benefited from entanglements by increasing their respective margins of maneuver. For instance, Nigeria used its centrality in ECOWAS to safeguard influence in the AU's peace and security policies in successfully pushing for the informal norm of having a permanent seat in the Peace and Security Council of the AU, thereby representing West Africa (Wilén and Williams 2022).

in the respective member states on the ground. In effect, this created a complex patchwork of partially differing governance and security approaches across the continent. As the regime complexity literature points out, this can bring about negative side effects including the waste of scarce resources, incompatible RIO policies and activities, noncompliance, and an overall compromised effectiveness of regional governance (Hofmann 2009; Panke and Stapel 2018). Yet, not all states are equally exposed to such entanglement effects. Especially regional powers are unlikely to suffer from potential negative externalities. Due to their relative power, they can implement and enforce rules and norms in their RIOs in line with their own interests and thus reduce noncompliance. When regional powers respond to entanglements with noncompliance, they either circumvent being condemned and sanctioned by their peers or they can bear the financial and political costs of centralized or decentralized sanctioning (Panke and Stapel 2023).

Hence, regional powers not only create regional entanglements on purpose to pursue their scheme of ordering regional security and governance affairs simultaneously across different RIOs, but they are also the ones that directly benefit from pursuing their interests in multiple organizations. Even if negative side effects of entanglements materialize over time, regional powers are in a better position to avoid carrying the costs or can bear them—compared to smaller member states.

Contestation of Regional Entanglements and Order-Making

Regional ordering is not uncontested. As the introduction to this forum has argued, dissatisfied states can pursue disentanglement strategies to shape or reform a regional order more closely to their liking. Scholarship on global and regional IOs suggests that there are different possibilities to promote disentanglement between RIOs. First, states dissatisfied with the status quo can opt for exits from some RIOs (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019). When they leave some of the overlapping RIOs to which they belong, these states reduce the exposure to entanglements and the corresponding potential negative effects and also delimit the membership-based entanglements. Second, dissatisfied states push for curtailing RIOs policy mandates in order to reduce the policy-related entanglements, which calls for treaty changes, and, thus, unanimity, which has never happened. A third option to curb the extent of regional entanglements would be the death of an existing RIO, yet this cannot be brought about by an individual state. Moreover, as long as regional powers have an interest in a particular organization, it is unlikely that they let it die (Gray 2018; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2020). With respect to the African case, after the end of the Cold War, there were only instances of member state withdrawal from the twenty-three African RIOs. Other than that, pushes for disentanglements by dissatisfied states did not take place and none of the African RIO has curtailed its mandate or has been abolished after 1990.

In sum, regional powers have densely entangled RIOs and created an African regional order. As long as regional powers wish to hold on to the order they created, it cannot easily be disentangled. Yet, regional orders are not set in stone. They can change, either due to hegemonic overstretch and decline (Kindleberger 1973), the emergence of new powerhouses (e.g., China on the global level, see Stephen and Cai, this forum), or the ideological re-orientation of great powers (e.g., American withdrawal from multilateralism during the Trump administration, Bosco 2017). In addition, opportunity structures for global and regional re-ordering are subject to domestic and global transformations, such as economic nationalism, democratic backsliding, climate change, or pandemics. Adjusted opportunity structures—especially if they go hand in hand with a re-configuration of resources and power—provide possibilities for new agencies to emerge, which, in turn, can pursue new ordering strategies.

UN Staff and Experts Navigating Organizational Entanglements

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This contribution considers how IOs are navigating organizational (dis)entanglements driven by the confluence of global reordering and regime complexity. IOs are not just institutions at which great powers decide global rules or vie for control; IR scholarship has long recognized that IO actors have their own interests, goals, and capabilities for action (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Bauer et al. 2017). The contribution intended here is to advance conceptual tools and present preliminary observations of how IO actors may navigate organizational (dis)entanglements. I do so by drawing attention to a type of self-directed behavior by IOs termed *intervention* and illustrate intervention behavior by two IO actors—the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) secretariat and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to food—at the WTO as a response to great power rivalry and regime complexity at the intersection of international trade and food security.[11]

Organization (Dis)Entanglements and Intervention by IOs

Treating IOs as independent actors prompts us to consider how their behavior is shaped by, and responds to, organizational (dis)entanglements. The focus here is on the behavior of IO actors—which encompasses international bureaucracies, including executive heads and international civil servants, and other relevant agents granted mandates and authority by states—in contrast to the behavior of an IO's member states. Intervention is defined as "independent action taken by one IO [actor] intended to alter a decision of another organization that it perceives as undermining its ability to achieve its own goals or those of the international community it has been charged to uphold" (Margulis 2023, 3). Intervention can entangle or disentangle IOs by influencing the trajectory of inter-state decision-making. If we take IOs as actors seriously, it is reasonable to assume that they will not be indifferent to the challenges, risks, and opportunities posed by organizational (dis)entanglements. It follows that there could be situations where an IO actor, rather than sitting on the sidelines, may choose to take independent action to influence inter-state decision-making at another organization caught in the throes of organizational (dis)entanglement.

IO actors are more likely to intervene when they expect organizational (dis)entanglement will result in dysfunction in global governance, which makes it difficult for organizations to carry out their mandates and social purpose. There is growing evidence that global reordering is politicizing IOs and producing institutional gridlock as status quo and emerging powers compete to shape international norms and rules (Stephen and Zürn 2019; Lavenex et al. 2021). From the perspective of IO actors, politicization and gridlock make it more difficult to perform their current functions and obtain political buy-in to respond to new problems (Dingwerth et al. 2019). It also puts IOs under more political pressure to satisfy rival coalitions of members.

Regime complexity brings its own attendant set of pressures on IO actors. While regime complexity provides states with greater institutional choice (Alter and Meunier 2009), for IO actors, alterations to their operating environment may drive them to respond with their own adaptive strategies, including cooperation and competition with other institutions, intervention, and expanding into adjacent or new

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[11]IO intervention is distinct from the concept of "international intervention" associated with the use of military force.

issue areas (Hall 2015; Holzscheiter 2017; Haftel and Hofmann 2019). In other words, regime complexity is driving IO actors to look beyond their own institutional boundaries in order to be effective global governors.

As the introduction to this forum emphasizes, global reordering and regime complexity are not isolated phenomena, but co-arising and mutually reinforcing. Rivalry encourages states to pursue contested multilateralism strategies that foster regime complexity, while regime complexity increases the opportunities for rival states to engage in chessboard politics (Hofmann 2009; Morse and Keohane 2014; Haftel and Hofmann 2019). For IO actors, intervention can come to look attractive when a critical organization in a regime complex is gridlocked by great power rivalry and resulting in dysfunction across the governance system: An IO actor may be motivated to intervene to break the logjam. Intervention may affect IO actors' relations with states: in contexts of great power rivalry, we would expect that intervention by an IO actor will attract support from some powerful states and resistance from others. Of course, not all IO actors will choose to engage in intervention due to a lack of autonomy, capacity, will, and/or concerns of backlash (Hawkins et al. 2006; Louis and Maertens 2023).

IO Intervention to Break the Gridlock at the WTO

This section briefly illustrates IO intervention at a core organization of the LIO—the WTO. The WTO is a key site to analyze organizational (dis)entanglements: it is at the forefront of contemporary great power competition and a major driver of regime complexity. Due to their diverse interests and levels of economic development, states have continually contested the rules and outcomes of multilateral trade agreements, relying on the trade regime's system of iterative bargaining to pursue mutual accommodations. Contemporary rivalry between status quo and emerging powers, however, has created an unprecedented institutional crisis, resulting in both the collapse of the Doha Round negotiations and the WTO's dispute settlement system (Hopewell 2016). The WTO's broad authority over several economic sectors and regulation at, and beyond, the border makes it a "linkage machine" (Alvarez 2002). Indeed, the WTO's expansive authority has given rise to multiple regime complexes, including those at the intersection of trade and intellectual property rights (Helfer 2009); trade and genetic resources (Raustalia and Victor 2004); trade and environment (Jinnah 2010); and most relevant for this essay, trade and food security.

The FAO secretariat and UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to food have intervened with respect to WTO rulemaking on public food stockholding (PFS). PFS, which involves government purchases, storage, and distribution of basic food staples, is a policy used by states to promote food security, which has become more widespread following the global food crises of 2008 and 2011. While seemingly a domestic policy issue, the governance of PFS falls under a regime complex characterized by overlap between trade and food security, where the binding rules of the WTO *Agreement on Agriculture* seek to ensure that PFS policies are used for legitimate food security purposes and not as a tool to unfairly advantage domestic producers and/or displace commercial food imports (Margulis 2018).

WTO rules governing PFS are a significant source of rivalry between India and the US due to diverging interpretations over who benefits and loses from agriculture trade liberalization and the role of the state in safeguarding national food security (Wilkinson et al. 2014; Hopewell 2016). India, which has the world's largest PFS program and is home to the highest number of hungry people (approximately 500 million) in the world, views WTO rules as unfair and privileging Northern agricultural export interests at the expense of developing countries' capacity to pursue food security goals (Singh and Gupta 2016). At the WTO, India has pushed to reform the rules of the *Agreement on Agriculture* to ensure its expansion of PFS

does not violate its international trade commitments. The US—the world's largest agricultural producer and exporter—rejects India's demands at the WTO for more flexible PFS rules because it regards this position as inconsistent with its preferred vision of more market-oriented international agriculture trade.

Concerns that the negotiation impasse on PFS resulting from India–US rivalry could have negative spillover effects for global food security, by blocking much-needed pro-food security trade reforms, spurred FAO officials and the UN Special Rapporteur to intervene at the WTO. While these two distinct IO actors do not have formal authority to make trade rules or govern PFS, they are charged by states to promote global food security. These IO actors broadly support PFS as a tool to advance global food security and, as a result, develop a significant stake in WTO rulemaking. Since the WTO is a "member-driven" organization where the FAO and Special Rapporteur lack a formal seat at the bargaining table, these IO actors sought to influence WTO negotiations through other means.

Consistent with its role as a knowledge broker, the FAO's intervention centered on shaping states' understanding of the entanglements between PFS and international trade, and diffusing its ideas for a pragmatic negotiating workaround to the India–US impasse. FAO officials sought to reframe the debate on PFS through analysis in their organization's flagship publications (i.e., *The State of Food and Agriculture in the World*); producing and disseminating specialized information in a series of policy briefs, expert roundtables, and presentations targeted at WTO member states; and directly lobbying WTO members, including the Group of 33 (G33) bargaining coalition of food insecure developing countries at the WTO led by India, to take up their recommended rule changes in the negotiations.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to food pursued an adversarial strategy that involved publicly naming and shaming Western WTO members for "taking food security hostage," putting commercial trade interests above global food security, and failing to meet their international human rights obligations (Margulis 2023). In addition, the Special Rapporteur publicly took the side of food-insecure WTO members, such as by claiming that proposals on PFS put forward by the G33 were consistent with international human rights law, thereby helping to legitimize the position of some members over that of others. However, taking sides drew significant backlash from the US and other developed countries dissatisfied with the UN Special Rapporteur's intervention. Another controversial action was putting forward an unsolicited proposal to WTO members that called for the establishment of a legal waiver at the WTO that would prevent developing countries whose PFS programs violated WTO subsidy rules from being vulnerable to a legal dispute.

The interventions by FAO officials and the UN Special Rapporteur were taken independently and not at the behest of states. These IO actors argued that their actions to influence WTO negotiations were consistent with their mandates to promote and improve global food security. Though not formal parties to the WTO negotiations, intervention by these IO actors was successful in shaping the trajectory of global trade rulemaking. Of most significance is that WTO members took up the Special Rapporteur's proposal for a legal waiver. At the 2013 WTO Ministerial, an 11th-hour deal between India and the US—aided by India's threat to not ratify a new WTO agreement on trade facilitation—resulted in agreement by WTO members to a legal waiver for PFS. While the legal waiver was designated an interim measure, it remains in force as negotiations to arrive at a permanent solution remain blocked by the ongoing India–US rivalry.

Concluding Thoughts

Scholars should pay attention to the behavior of IO actors in order to fully comprehend the dynamics and consequences of organizational (dis)entanglements. This is because IOs are not only sites of inter-state contestation and comprise the com-

ponent parts of regime complexes, but can be important actors in international order-making. This essay has highlighted the concept of intervention to shed light on how IOs are navigating the confluence of global reordering and regime complexity. Analysis of interventions by the FAO and Special Rapporteur at the WTO suggests that great power rivalry-induced gridlock at a critical institution in a regime complex may drive IO actors to take matters into their own hands to get global governance back on track. More research is required to better understand how IOs, as well as other nonstate actors, are responding to opportunities and challenges posed by organizational (dis)entanglement.

Navigating Aspects of Entanglement. Collaboration, Cooperation, Coordination, and the Case of the IMF and World Bank

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An important and understudied aspect of how IOs navigate in densely institutionalized global order-making processes is how they work together and with other actors. While IOs have always engaged with each other and other actors, in recent years IOs have ramped up these efforts to cooperate, collaborate, and coordinate (what may be called the 3Cs) as the world faces multiple, complex crises that no one actor can address or solve alone. Recent examples include the Multilateral Leaders Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics for Development Countries, and the Platform for Collaboration on Tax, a joint initiative of the IMF, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the UN. These are efforts typically initiated by IO heads and/or member states. IOs work together and with other actors at different levels, with different degrees of institutionalization, scope, incentives, levels of formality, and accountability mechanisms. As the introduction to this forum suggests, the 3Cs are therefore examples of organizational entanglement processes that are especially important given today's uncertainty about the future of the global order. They are strategies of managing overlap, aimed at strengthening the status quo, rather than challenging it. IOs are asked to work with each other, or more deeply entangle themselves with other IOs and other actors for a variety of often interconnected reasons that include leveraging expertise, creating synergy and complementarity by bringing together their comparative advantages; doing more with limited resources; addressing overlap and competition; and even circumventing other actors. These efforts contribute to order-making because they reflect constant efforts of IOs to adapt and reform in figuring out "who does what" which is increasingly important to their relevance and legitimacy.

However, despite a proliferation of such efforts, analysis by IO scholars and independent IO evaluation bodies of why these relationships arise and how they contribute to order-making remains thin. To advance this research agenda, which has theoretical and policy-relevant implications, we need more clarity on the nature and value of what the 3Cs mean and how they work.

This contribution examines the struggle by the IMF and World Bank to entangle themselves. The Bretton Woods twins were designed to be complementary partners that would work closely together, and their leaders and powerful member states have formally asked them to work together multiple times over the decades, for all of the reasons listed above. A well-functioning relationship between the two organizations is seen as important to strengthening their individual and joint contributions to addressing their respective missions and goals, ideally to improve each performance and contribution to addressing global, regional, and national-level challenges. As Hofmann (2019) has noted, how organizations strategically manage

their overlap also can impact the strategic options available to their member states. Bank and Fund efforts to work together should be the most likely case of successful collaboration. However, such efforts have never been easy. Instead, unavoidable organizational overlap produced an ongoing struggle to define, develop, and improve formal Bank-Fund efforts to work together. Different institutional cultures and processes also complicated their efforts to work together even when there was political will from their leadership and powerful member states (IEO 2020).

The 3Cs

Scholars have pointed out that using the terms collaboration, cooperation, and coordination loosely lumps together relationships with varying degrees of engagement (McNamara 2012; Bryson et al. 2015). Drawing on a rich literature within the fields of public administration, management, and organizational design that has grappled with conceptualizing the modalities of how business and public institutions work together (see Gutner 2023), I focus on the 3Cs as the primary means by which IOs more deeply entangled with each other.

Cooperation can be defined as one actor helping another with the latter's primarily separate goals. An example would be one actor asking another for information. Cooperation is short-term, low-risk, and low-cost. It requires no change in any actor's bureaucratic processes. Cooperation may be formal or informal. Collaboration, by contrast, is a deeper level of engagement that consists of one or more actors working together with *shared* goals and objectives that could not be achieved independently. They may have shared work programs, budgets, and accountability mechanisms (Polenske 2004; Bryson et al. 2015). Partnerships may be defined as a particular form of collaboration. Partnerships may have shared governance or contractual arrangements, and sometimes even a legal foundation. Other forms of collaboration that are not formal partnerships may include efforts by IOs to work together on shared goals but with no formal structure or process. Coordination consists of mechanisms, processes, or practices that can help align people and tasks toward objectives (Metcalfe 1994). They may be organizational arrangements, including technologies, plans, and rules, which facilitate people's efforts to complete their work. Examples include scheduling and planning. Coordination impacts the degree of coherence within and across actors and therefore shapes performance (Dupont and Skjold 2022).

The 3Cs in Action: IMF and World Bank Efforts to Work Together

There are more than twenty-five formal efforts of the IMF and World Bank being asked to work together throughout their 75 years of history (Gutner 2022). Shareholders and management typically drive these efforts as a strategy to improve each institution's effectiveness. The Boards of each organization have reaffirmed the importance of collaboration many times over the years (Gutner 2020). These efforts have typically taken the form of guidelines or statements issued jointly by the heads of the two institutions to staff, or joint initiatives supported by the two boards. Bank and Fund staff also informally work together regularly (Independent Evaluation Office of the IMF 2020). The formal efforts were usually prompted by turf tensions, including overlap, duplication, and conflicting advice. In many cases, it was the Bank venturing into Fund territory, for example, by suggesting the importance of monetary and exchange rate issues as important to a solving country's economic problems or making a loan to a country despite IMF opposition (such as the case of Argentina in 1988). More recently, it has been the Fund venturing into Bank territory, with the Fund's relatively new focus on climate change, gender, and inequality (Stedman 2020).

The primary strategy the Bank and Fund called "collaboration" in these formal efforts from the late 1940s until 2007, was in fact, turf delineation. In the definitions offered above, this would not even be considered collaboration, as the institutions were mainly looking to find ways to pursue their separate goals. Various memos by the two institutions' leaders called for ways of determining the "primary responsibilities" of each institution and calling for one to "yield" to the judgment of the one with primary responsibility in areas over overlap or disagreement (IMF 1966; World Bank 1980). Over the years, these calls for collaboration included more clarification on "who does what," and procedures for resolving disagreements. One of the most prominent of these strategies was the 1989 "Bank-Fund Collaboration in Assisting Member Countries," informally known as the Concordat. The next major effort to strategize Bank-Fund "collaboration" was the 2007 Malan Report (chaired by former Brazilian Finance Minister Pedro Malan), which was critical of Concordat as encouraging each institution to see itself as "first among equals" instead of creating synergy by creating a "culture of collaboration" (IMF and World Bank 2007a). The Malan Report was followed by the Joint Implementation Report (JMAP), produced by staff from the Fund and Bank and then adopted by both institutions (IMF and World Bank 2007b), which sought to implement the Malan Report's recommendations. But instead of addressing the thorny issue of how to change institutional culture as recommended by the Malan report, the JMAP followed the tenets of the old Concordat on the operational division of labor between the two institutions. The JMAP review process quietly disappeared after 2010 and there have been no formal umbrella agreements to collaborate since then. Instead, the two institutions have focused more on initiatives in specific issue areas. Some of these specific initiatives already existed, like the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

Turning to recent years, the two institutions still do not have greatly improved processes for collaboration, and some of the joint initiatives faced their own challenges (Kranke 2022). The Fund has even pursued an essentially unilateral approach of engaging with partners where it called for its staff to "collaborate" with partners by 'leveraging' or 'borrowing' other actors' expertise in some areas of the Fund's work, such as surveillance (IMF 2014, 2015). This approach was developed by the Fund without input from the Bank or other partners. An evaluation by the Fund's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) examined Fund collaboration with the Bank on macrostructural issues and concluded that overall collaboration between the two institutions was "broad, but uneven," reflecting a variety of institutional constraints, including Fund staff's "tendency toward self-reliance, and the institutional complexities of working with the Bank, including finding access to the right people and information, and aligning goals and timetables" (IEO 2020).

Conclusion

In order to understand how IOs entangle with others and what implications that has for order-making, the first step is to be precise about what type of relationship or engagement is being analyzed, as inter-institutional relationships have so much variation. Second, it is important to open the black box of individual organizations and look more closely at how they actually operate, as their individual institutional processes and cultures impact their ability to work with others. Third, additional research is needed in opening a second black box of IO relationships with other actors to better understand the objectives, politics, scope, structure, and design of these relationships. Incentives and accountability mechanisms are also important. An important lesson from the Bank-Fund case is that what leadership and shareholders formally asked staff to do in the guise of "collaboration," focused on turf delineation without sufficient thinking about how to better encourage complementarity, and better align leaders' exhortations to collaborate with institutional prac-

tices and staff incentives. This case study reminds us that even logical attempts at order-making through inter-organizational efforts to work together can face a variety of difficulties, in spite of the preferences of IO member states and leaders.

Acknowledgments

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