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Regional hierarchy: authority and local international order

DAVID A. LAKE

Abstract. The ordering principle of international relations varies widely across regional security complexes and has profound effects on regional order. States form hierarchies over one another based on relational authority, which itself rests on social contract theories that posit authority as an equilibrium of an exchange between a dominant state and the set of citizens who comprise the subordinate state. Regional orders emerge because of the strong positive externalities of social order and economies of scale in its production, and the mutually reinforcing legitimacy accorded the dominant state by local subordinates. This implies that regions characterised by the hierarchy of single dominant states will possess more peaceful regional orders. Regions often described as pluralistic security communities in which cooperation is understood to have emerged spontaneously from anarchy are better described as regional hierarchies in which peace and conflict regulation are the products of the authority of a dominant state.

Introduction

A regional security complex (RSC) is a set of states continuously affected by one or more security externalities that emanate from a distinct geographic area.¹ In such a complex, the members are so interrelated in terms of their security that actions by any one member, and significant security-related developments inside any member, have

¹ David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan, *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 12. The concept of an RSC originates with Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991), p. 190. There are two key differences between the definition of RSC used in Lake and Morgan and as refined in Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 78–82. First, Lake and Morgan allow for overlapping regions, such that membership in an RSC is not exclusive, whereas Buzan and Wæver insist on exclusivity, but then allow for regional sub-complexes within RSCs. In most cases, our overlapping regions correspond to their sub-complexes and RSCs, although since Lake and Morgan and the authors of the individual regional chapters are admittedly not as systematic in identifying RSCs as Buzan and Wæver this is hard to discern conclusively. Second, Lake and Morgan allow great powers from outside the immediate geographic area to be members of RSCs, muddying the distinction between system and region according to Buzan and Wæver, while again Buzan and Wæver insist on exclusive membership, even for great powers. Buzan and Wæver solve this ‘great power’ problem, on the other hand, by developing the concepts of penetration and overlay, which permit the great powers to be seen as integral to an RSC without being members. I think this is largely an issue of semantics rather than deep theory. For purposes of theoretical cumulation, I will adopt Buzan and Wæver’s conception of RSC on this second point, and refer to the roles of non-regional great powers as penetration and overlay.

a major impact on others. Regional orders describe how states within an RSC manage their security relations and range from balances of power, to regional power concerts, collective security organisations, pluralistic security communities, and integration. As regional states move 'up' this continuum of regional orders, relations generally become more peaceful and interactions less coloured by actual or threatened violence.²

In an earlier essay, I argued that the choice or emergence of a regional order is strongly conditioned by the openness and political structure of the RSC, where structure was largely confined to variations in the distribution of capabilities.³ Unipolar RSCs are most likely to be autonomous (not greatly affected by extra-regional politics) and effectively stabilised by a single, dominant power; multipolar regional systems will also be relatively autonomous but plagued by difficulties of conflict management and limited to balance of power or regional power concerts; and bipolar systems will draw in 'outside' parties and be highly competitive and conflict prone. Evidence from diverse regions offers some support for these predictions.⁴

In this article, I examine variation in the ordering principle of international relations across RSCs and its effects on regional order.⁵ The standard assumption made by scholars and policy makers alike is that the international system is anarchic, or characterised by the absence of authority higher than the state, and all relations between states within that system are likewise anarchic. This assumption, in turn, is based on a formal-legal conception of authority that rules out by definition the possibility of international hierarchy: since there is no source of law higher than states themselves, there is no law that confers authority on states. In related work, I argue that states often form hierarchies over one another based on relational authority, which itself rests on social contract theories that posit authority as an emergent property or equilibrium of an exchange between a dominant state and the set of citizens who comprise the subordinate state. In particular, I argue that this exchange entails the provision by the dominant state of a social order of value to the subordinate state in return for the subordinate's compliance and legitimacy.⁶ Regional orders emerge because of the strong positive externalities of social order and economies of scale in its production, and the mutually reinforcing legitimacy accorded the dominant state by local subordinates. This implies that regions characterised by the hierarchy of single dominant states will possess 'higher' or more peaceful regional orders. Specifically, I suggest that regions often described as

² Patrick M. Morgan, 'Regional Security Complexes and Regional Orders', in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, distinguish only between conflict formations, similar to balance of power orders, security regimes, similar to regional power concerts and collective security organisations, and security communities, similar to pluralistic security communities and integration.

³ David A. Lake, 'Regional Security Complexes: A Systems Approach', in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

⁴ See the chapters in Section IV of Lake and Morgan, *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*.

⁵ To be precise, in the earlier piece, I focused on Waltz's third dimension of structure, and in this essay I examine Waltz's first dimension. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

⁶ See David A. Lake, 'Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics', *International Security*, 32 (2007), pp. 47–79, and David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, forthcoming 2009).

pluralistic security communities in which cooperation is understood to have emerged spontaneously from anarchy are better described, at least in their early stages if not beyond, as regional hierarchies in which peace and conflict regulation are the products of the authority of a dominant state.

Section 1 summarises the notion of relational authority and its implications for dyadic relations between dominant and subordinate states. Section 2 extends this analysis to include regional interactions and their effects. I examine empirical patterns of regional hierarchy in Section 3 and their implications for the regional orders observed over the last half century in Section 4.

Relational authority, hierarchy, and international relations

Scholars of international relationists assume, rightly, that the international system as a whole is anarchic, or lacking in a single overarching authority.⁷ In the absence of a world government, this is a truism. But it is a fallacy of division to assume that because the system is anarchic all relationships within that system are anarchic as well. Relations between states can be and often are characterised by varying degrees of authority and, in turn, hierarchy.⁸

Political authority is most simply defined as rightful or legitimate rule.⁹ When political authority is exercised, the ruler, A, commands a set of subordinates, B, to alter their actions, where command implies that A has the *right* to issue such orders.¹⁰ This right, in turn, implies an obligation or *duty* by B to comply, if possible, with A's order. B's obligation implies a further correlative right by A to *enforce* its commands in the event of B's noncompliance. Authority and, specifically, the right to punish noncompliance ultimately rests on the collective acceptance or legitimacy of the ruler's right to rule. In this way, authority is fundamentally a social construct.

Scholars of international relations typically rely on a formal-legal conception of authority.¹¹ In this view, authority is conferred on rulers by prior lawful institutions.

⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

⁸ In other work, I have addressed the origins of hierarchical relationships in the world system at greater length. See David A. Lake, 'Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations', *International Organization*, 50 (1996), pp. 1–33; David A. Lake, *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in its Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); David A. Lake, 'The New Sovereignty in International Relations', *International Studies Review*, 5 (2003), pp. 303–23. For related but alternative conceptions of hierarchy, see Ian Clark, *The Hierarchy of States: Reform and Resistance in the International Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, 'Hierarchy under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State', *International Organization*, 49 (1995), pp. 689–721; and Jack Donnelly, 'Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy: American Power and International Society', *European Journal of International Relations*, 12 (2006), pp. 139–70.

⁹ The literature on authority is substantial. For a useful guide to the various approaches and debates, see John A. Simmons, 'Political Obligation and Authority', in Robert L. Simon (ed.), *Blackwell Guide to Social and Political Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002). For a collection of the classic readings, see Joseph Raz, *Authority* (New York: New York University Press).

¹⁰ Throughout, A will be used to refer to the ruler, B to the ruled or subordinate. Although B is used in the singular, it is always a *set* of subordinates conceived as individuals as the fundamental units of analysis. Where otherwise unavoidable, I shall use the gendered pronouns of 'she' for A and 'he' for B.

¹¹ On how this formal-legal conception was imported into international relations theory, see Brian C. Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998).

One day, for instance, Arnold Schwarzenegger is simply a B-grade actor famous for his bodybuilding and bloody, violent action movies. The next day, after winning an unprecedented but constitutionally permitted recall election against a slate of over 100 candidates, Schwarzenegger became the Governor of California, with all the rights, duties, and powers – indeed, the authority – of that office. In this way, lawful institutions precede and confer authority upon individuals, who then exercise the prerogatives of office to secure their rule. In turn, since there is no lawful institution to confer authority on particular states within the international system, a formal-legal approach implies that the system and all relations between states within that system must be anarchic, or devoid of authority.

This formal-legal conception of authority may be appropriate for established regimes in which the rule of law prevails. But it is only one possible conception of authority. Even excluding religious, traditional or other forms of authority, political authority has multiple sources. In contractual theories of the state,¹² the anthropological literature on emergent societies,¹³ and sociology more generally,¹⁴ authority is understood to emerge from ‘practice’ based on an exchange of public goods and services by the ruler for compliance and obligation by the ruled. In equilibrium, A provides a social order of sufficient value to B to earn his compliance to the extractions necessary to the provision of that order, where following Hedley Bull a social order is defined as ‘a pattern of human activity that sustains elementary, primary, or universal goals of social life’, including security against violence resulting in death or bodily harm, an assurance that property will not be subject to challenges that are constant or without limit, and an expectation that promises and agreements, once made, will be kept.¹⁵ Such relational authorities can exist not only within but also between states, with one state providing an international order of value to others to earn their compliance with its authority. Dominant states provide order and, in turn, make demands on other states; subordinate states benefit from the order and regard the commands of the dominant state necessary for that order as legitimate and, therefore, authoritative. Key is that both the dominant and subordinate states understand that the dominant state has the *right* to make certain demands, rooted in its ‘special responsibilities’ for social order, and the subordinate state has an obligation to comply with those commands if made.

Hierarchy exists when one actor possesses authority over a second. Authority is never total, of course, but varies in extent. A may possess authority over B and issue commands regulating possible actions 1–5 but not on actions 6–n, which remain ‘private’ to B or beyond A’s ability to expect compliance. In other words, B may recognise the legitimacy of A’s commands regulating its security relations with third parties (A commands B not to ally with others), but not that of any commands she may or may not issue on security cooperation with itself (A commands B to join her in a war). In this case, a partial hierarchy exists. Hierarchy increases with the number

¹² Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), Douglass C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981).

¹³ Michael W. Diehl, *Hierarchies in Action: Cui Bono?* (Carbondale, IL: Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 2000), Timothy Earle, *How Chiefs Come to Power: The Political Economy in Prehistory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

¹⁴ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁵ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 4–5.

of B's actions A can legitimately regulate. If A previously possessed authority over actions 1–5 and now exerts authority over issues 1–8, for instance, her hierarchy over B has increased; to continue the example, if A now gains the authority to command B to assist it in a conflict, A's hierarchy over B has expanded.

So defined, hierarchy is a continuous variable that varies by the number of actions over which A can legitimately issue commands and expect compliance by B. At one extreme, A possesses no authority over any action B might perform. This is the ideal of 'Westphalian sovereignty' and the condition of anarchy that is commonly (but mistakenly) thought to characterise all relationships within the international system.¹⁶ At the other extreme, A possesses the authority to regulate all actions B might perform. In this extreme of complete hierarchy, B possesses no independent rights or autonomous ability to decide anything and is subservient to A in all aspects of social life. In international relations, the most hierarchical relationships take the form of empires, where B is subordinate to A in a broad range of economic and security actions. There are many intermediate forms, however, including spheres of influence and economic zones, in which the dominant state prohibits subordinates from allying or exchanging with other potential great powers, and protectorates and economic dependencies, where the dominant state regulates broad areas of security or economic policy, respectively.¹⁷

As I demonstrate in detail elsewhere but only summarise here, hierarchy has at least four systematic effects on the behaviours of dominant and subordinate states.¹⁸ First, states that are subordinate to another spend less on defence relative to GDP than non-subordinate states. Subordinate states depend upon dominant states for a measure of social order and, having received protection for their persons, property and promises, divert scarce resources to other valued uses. It follows, therefore, that countries in hierarchical security relationships, all else held constant, spend fewer of their own resources on security and rely more on the efforts of their dominant protector. This is a key national benefit for which states are willing to give up some measure of their sovereignty.

Second, subordinate states are more open to trade, and this effect is stronger in pairs of countries that are subordinate to the same dominant state. To the extent that subordinates escape the state of nature through international hierarchy and enjoy a measure of social order, they are more willing to open themselves to international trade and to risk becoming dependent on others. Where international rules governing exchange are secure, and especially when the dominant state itself has an interest in enforcing those rules, states are more likely to engage in international commerce and seek the benefits of an international division of labour. Thus, the greater the hierarchy exerted by the dominant state over a subordinate, the more economically open it will be. This effect is particularly evident when both parties to an exchange are subordinate to the same dominant state. In such cases, the dominant state not only

¹⁶ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

¹⁷ The continua and measures discussed in this section are defined in greater detail in Lake, 'The New Sovereignty in International Relations', Lake, 'Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics', and Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*. See also Donnelly, 'Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy: American Power and International Society'.

¹⁸ These results are presented and discussed at length in Lake, 'Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics', and Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*.

protects both parties to a degree but they enjoy similar rules governing exchange, thereby reducing transactions costs, and can expect assistance from the dominant state in adjudicating disputes should they arise. Greater openness to international exchange, a deeper division of labour, and by inference greater economic welfare are immediate benefits for subordinate countries of the social order provided by a dominant state.

Third, dominant states are significantly more likely to join or come to the aid of a subordinate embroiled in an interstate crisis. If subordinates are exchanging sovereignty for protection, in equilibrium, dominant states must actually provide the promised defence or else the former will withdraw their legitimacy. Both dominant and subordinate states must fulfil their parts in the exchange for any authority relationship to endure. This implies that dominant states will come to the aid of subordinates more often than non-subordinate states in a crisis, and that this effect will be increasing in the level of hierarchy. The expectation that the dominant state will come to the aid of a subordinate is not absolute, however, as one means of limiting opportunistic behaviour or moral hazard by subordinates is not to make completely binding commitments to their defence. Nonetheless, some number must be protected for subordinates to believe on average that they will benefit from their relationship with the dominant state. Protection from others is a third benefit for which some states give up a measure of their sovereignty.

Finally, subordinate states are more likely to join wars once their dominant state enters a conflict. In return for social order, relational authority implies that subordinates legitimate dominant states by complying with their commands. Subordinates demonstrate respect for authority by 'following their leaders' into war even when, as is often the case, they have no immediate interests in the conflict. Much of this behaviour is purely symbolic, as the subordinates contribute few and often no resources to the war effort. This was certainly the case when nearly all Latin American states followed the US into World Wars I and II. Nonetheless, declaring war on another state is always a costly act and not taken lightly. Even while hierarchy may provide substantial benefits for subordinate states, as above, the price of complying with the demands of the dominant state and legitimating its actions may not be inconsequential.

Regional hierarchies

Although considered only as dyads in the work summarised above, hierarchies tend to cluster by region, with many states possessing relatively similar levels of subordination to the same dominant state. This mutual subordination, in turn, reinforces the effects of hierarchy just enumerated, creating a regional *systems* effect that arises from their interaction within a shared or common condition. Feeling more secure under the protective umbrella of the dominant state (a dyadic effect), subordinate states know that their neighbours are similarly protected and constrained by the dominant state against overly aggressive actions. Subordinates also know that disputes with other subordinates are likely to be (at least informally) managed or arbitrated by the dominant state. This can lead to tough or even extreme bargaining between subordinates, and may generate considerable ill-will, but disputes

are less likely to escalate to violence. Moreover, knowing that their partners are bound under the same economic regimes and more likely to be open to trade, mutual subordinates are even more willing to enter a division of labour and allow exchange to flourish. These regional systems effects are hard to distinguish from the dyadic effects summarised above, but there are strong reasons to expect them to be real and substantively important.¹⁹ Hierarchy tends to cluster by region for three related reasons: positive externalities, scale economies in producing social order, and international legitimacy.

First, social order is a local public good that often extends beyond the boundaries of any single subordinate state. Within countries, social order is usually provided by states, which can legitimately use violence to enforce rules and thereby have a comparative advantage in solving collective action problems. Similarly, within a dyad, a dominant state provides a measure of social order for the subordinate state in return for compliance with the rules it creates. Social order, however, can extend beyond the boundaries of a given state. Deterring threats to a single subordinate from, say, a rogue regime may also reduce threats to others in same region. Intervening in conflicts involving a subordinate also reduces the likelihood of violence getting 'out of hand' for the other parties to the dispute as well. By mitigating anarchy for a single subordinate, in turn, the dominant state reduces the security dilemma for its neighbours that might otherwise fuel suspicion and conflict.²⁰ In short, the benefits of a social order provided for a single subordinate may not be limited to that subordinate but can easily 'spill over' onto other neighbouring states or those in positions similar to that subordinate.

When social order has local public benefits, dominant states gain an incentive to capture or 'internalise' the political benefits by extending their rule over the other beneficiaries of that order.²¹ To the extent that neighbours get the benefits of social order 'for free' or without having to accept the rule of the dominant state, they have little incentive to yield their sovereignty or comply with the demands of that state. The dominant state, however, can credibly threaten to side with the single subordinate in disputes with others in the region, shifting the bargaining advantage in that subordinate's favour. This may induce others to subordinate themselves to the dominant state in order to keep the diplomatic playing field level. At an extreme, the dominant state can threaten direct coercion to force the beneficiaries of social order to accept its rule.

A key problem for the US in the early Cold War, for example, was precisely how to internalise the positive externalities created by the security provided to its subordinates in Western Europe and, especially, to West Germany.²² Through the occupation, the US both established a significant degree of authority over Germany and, in return, created a new social order that supported democracy within the defeated country and protected it from external threats, most notably from the Soviet

¹⁹ Given the clustering, the regional systems effect is absorbed into the dyadic measures of security and economic hierarchy (which correlate highly by region). Regional dummy variables, on the other hand, absorb much of the effect of security and economic hierarchy, rendering the coefficients in the models whose implications are discussed above typically insignificant. This reflects not so much a lack of robustness, but rather the difficulty in separating the dyadic and regional effects of hierarchy.

²⁰ Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics*, 30 (1978).

²¹ See Lake, *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in its Century*, pp. 44–7.

²² Discussed in detail in *Ibid.*, pp. 157–9.

Union and its imperial subordinate of East Germany. By limiting its sovereignty, the US integrated the Federal Republic into a Western system and effectively demilitarised its relations with its neighbours, in essence protecting other regional states from the possibility of future revanchism. By protecting Germany from potential Soviet expansionism, in turn, it also secured other European countries to the West. Although early in the period the US was committed to the occupation of West Germany, and all that entailed, it was not eager to engage with the rest of the continent, largely for fear that the Europeans would free ride and exploit its defence efforts. The solution, supported by leaders on both sides of the Atlantic, was to multilateralise the American commitment to European defence while expanding the authority of the US over additional states and, through NATO, over the region as a whole.

The free rider problem was addressed, at American insistence, through Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which specified that countries should engage in ‘continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid’. For the Europeans, this article promised them access to the American aid and military resources they so desperately needed, while to the Americans it implied reciprocity and mutuality of effort. As Acheson emphasised to Britain and France in 1949, the US was ‘not thinking in terms of “lend-lease” but of “mutual aid”’.²³ On-going pressure on the Europeans to increase their defence contributions and honour fully their commitments to NATO was institutionalised in the so-called Annual Review exercise, in which members publicly justified and explained any shortfalls from their defence targets.

American authority, especially over the security policies of its nominal allies, was established through the NATO hierarchy, and especially the position of the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, always an American general reporting to the president. In addition, and perhaps more important, the US gained additional authority through the bilateral agreements negotiated under Section 402 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, which required that recipients of aid grant the US military facilities and specific military operating rights. As explored in more detail below, such bases always give the dominant state at least a measure of authority over the subordinate’s security policy.

As additional leverage over all of the negotiations both about burden sharing and American authority within the region was the threat of German rearmament, unilaterally by the US if necessary but preferable under the auspices of NATO (but not under a wholly European command). By linking its troop commitments to Europe specifically to German rearmament, the US sought to mitigate the free rider problem and to extend its control over NATO and its member states. In this case, the authority over one subordinate, and the threat to favour Germany by unilaterally permitting and supporting its rearmament, was used effectively to expand the authority of the US over others in the region.

Second, there are large economies of scale in producing social order for subordinates. One of the largest costs to a dominant state in producing order is developing the military reach to protect a subordinate and, if necessary, enforce its rule in instances of non-compliance. The dominant state must invest in the technology and equipment to project force over distance – sea power in the 19th century, sea and air

²³ Quoted in Timothy P. Ireland, *Creating the Entangling Alliance: The Origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 129.

power in the 20th – and develop a local infrastructure of bases within a region. Once these large fixed costs are incurred for one subordinate state in a given region, however, the marginal costs of extending the social order to a second subordinate or beyond are very much lower.²⁴

As an example, its substantial military presence in Panama, even after the repatriation of the Canal, gives the US the ability not only to project force in Panama but also in other countries in Central America. Thus, from its Panamanian bases, the US both launched its 1989 overthrow and seizure of President Manuel Noriega and, during the Reagan administration, trained and resupplied the Nicaraguan Contras. The US is similarly seeking a forward presence in the Persian Gulf from which it can project force throughout the region when necessary. In the Persian Gulf War of 1991, it first secured bases in Saudi Arabia, from which it was subsequently forced to withdraw, then in Qatar, Bahrain, and other smaller Persian Gulf states, and now in Iraq.

Increasing economies of scale create incentives for a dominant state to bring as many subordinates in a region under its rule as possible.²⁵ It can do so by providing the order desired by potential subordinates at a lower ‘price’, defined in terms of a smaller reduction in sovereignty (or less hierarchy). Equivalently, it can also provide more social order for both the original and additional subordinates at the same cost. Combined with the positive externalities of social order, economies of scale permit a doubly beneficial bargain in which the dominant state reduces its costs of providing social order for a given subordinate and subordinates get more social order while yielding a smaller fraction of sovereignty than otherwise.

Third, and perhaps most important, multiple subordinates legitimate the dominant state’s hierarchy within a region and permit greater and more effective enforcement of its rule. Authority and, specifically, the right to punish noncompliance ultimately rest on the collective acceptance or legitimacy of the ruler’s right to rule. It is conferred by the ruled, not claimed by the ruler. As Flathman notes, ‘sustained coercion is impossible without substantial agreement among the members of the association about those very propositions whose rejection commonly brings coercion into play’.²⁶ If recognised as legitimate, the ruler acquires the ability to punish dissidents or rule violators because of the broad backing of others. Political authority is, thus, never a relationship between a ruler and a single subject, but rather derives from a collective that confers rights or legitimacy upon the ruler.

Dyadic hierarchy, as explained above, entails a dominant state exercising greater or lesser authority over a set of individuals who comprise the subordinate state. Just as individuals confer authority on their state over more or less of their lives, so these same individuals can confer varying authority on another state over particular policy areas through international hierarchies. Citizens collectively ‘dollarize’, granting a dominant state authority over their monetary policy. By inviting or at least

²⁴ This holds up to some point where distance and complexity cause the marginal costs to flatten out and, perhaps, to increase, creating diseconomies of scale. This cost structure interacts with geography. Although air power that allows a dominant state to project force to one region of the globe is interchangeable, to the extent that local infrastructure remains necessary to support power projection economies of scale will not increase indefinitely. A base in Central America, for instance, will not substitute for a base in Northeast Asia.

²⁵ Lake, *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in its Century*, pp. 44–9.

²⁶ Richard E. Flathman, *The Practice of Political Authority: Authority and the Authoritative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 29.

acquiescing in military bases of the dominant state on their territory, citizens accept restrictions on their foreign and defence policies, and run the risk that they may actually be entrapped into otherwise avoidable wars led by the dominant state. In turn, this collective conferral of authority over selected policy areas to the dominant state is rendered binding on all citizens of the subordinate state, whether or not they personally support that grant. As long as a sufficient number of others grant the dominant state legitimacy, it can enforce its will on those who reject its authority.

Regional hierarchies have much the same effect, but at the level of interstate relations; the relevant community shifts from individuals within a single subordinate, to the set of subordinate states within the same region or who otherwise identify with one another. If a critical mass of subordinate states arises in any region, it can legitimate the dominant state's role in providing order and, especially, enforcing its rules. In Central America, for instance, the OAS supported the US in its military intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 to restore internal stability and prevent possibly leftist forces from coming to power, creating an Inter-American Peace Force within days of the initial invasion and transforming the American operation into a multilateral mission under Brazilian command several weeks later.²⁷ Similarly, the US sought and received a measure of legitimacy for its invasion of Grenada in 1983 from the approval and participation of members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

International legitimacy also permits the dominant state to enforce its rules and isolate rogue states in which a majority of the individuals do not (or no longer) recognise the legitimacy of the dominant state's authority. Where we might expect the legitimacy of the dominant state's authority to evaporate because of the withdrawal or absence of support by individual citizens, it can endure (if in somewhat attenuated form) due to the legitimacy conferred by other, similarly placed regional states. In this way, the effort of the US to discipline Cuba for rejecting its informal empire was supported and legitimated by other Latin American countries through the OAS, which declared that adherence to Marxist-Leninist ideology is incompatible with the inter-American system (1962, only Cuba voted against), unanimously voted to quarantine Cuba during the missile crisis (1964), and voted for mandatory sanctions covering all trade (except food and medicine) and the severing of diplomatic relations (1964).²⁸

As a result of positive externalities, economies of scale, and greater legitimacy, dominant states have strong incentives to seek regional hierarchy. Since dominant states can offer to provide order at lower cost or threaten to tilt the regional playing field in favour of one state or another, subordinates also have incentives to subordinate themselves to their rule. Once in place, the regional hierarchy becomes self-reinforcing as subordinates further legitimate the rule of the dominant state. We should, as a consequence, see a strong regional clustering of international hierarchies.

²⁷ G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), p. 138. The Latin American contingent remained small – less than 14 per cent of US troops at its peak – but was important symbolically.

²⁸ Mandatory sanctions were later lifted in 1975, as the US temporarily relaxed its ban on trade; tougher sanctions were reimposed starting in 1981, which were not followed by the OAS. For a brief chronology sanctions against Cuba, see (<http://www.petersoninstitute.org/research/topics/sanctions/cuba.cfm>).

Patterns of regional hierarchy

To see variations in patterns of regional hierarchy, it is first necessary to operationalise the concept of international hierarchy. Authority can be disaggregated and hierarchy constructed in any number of ways. Following common practice in international relations, I first distinguish between the broad issue areas of security and economics and, then, pose two indicators of hierarchy which are also summed into an aggregate index for each dimension.²⁹ These two sets of measures are available, at this time, only for the US from 1950–2000, so this discussion of regional patterns is necessarily restricted to American hierarchy. The measures are also clearly tailored to the modern international system; I do not pretend that they are universally valid.³⁰ But importantly, they are intended to capture not purely coercive relations between states but, rather, the authority and legitimate coercion that are central to hierarchical relationships. All four indicators reflect the more or less discretionary nature of the ties between dominant and subordinate states, and thus the conferral of authority by the latter to the former.

Security hierarchy varies from diplomacy, at the anarchic end of a continuum, to protectorates, at the hierarchic end. Security hierarchy can be captured by two sets of indicators. First, hierarchy is suggested by the presence of military forces from the US on the territory of a second state. Troops stationed on its territory enable the US to influence the security policies of the subordinate state. It can embroil the subordinate in foreign conflicts if it chooses; by launching attacks from the subordinate's territory, for instance, the US automatically implicates the subordinate in the conflict and makes it a target for retaliation by the US' antagonist, as was the case with Saudi Arabia in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. In turn, military bases and personnel enable the US to restrain possible foreign policy initiatives of the subordinate. In South Korea, for instance, the American troops stationed near the border not only serve as a tripwire to immediately draw the US into any possible conflict started by the North, but they also insulate North Korea from any potentially provocative actions by the South, important in the early years of the Cold War.³¹ Thus, military personnel give the US positive and negative control over a subordinate's security policy. The larger the deployment of US forces in another country relative to that country's home population, the more control the US can be expected to exert. To the extent that the subordinate accepts American personnel, and indeed integrates these forces into its own defence planning, this control can be regarded as 'normalized' or legitimate and, therefore, authoritative. Overseas troop deployments by the US are divided by national population to adjust for differences in country size. The indicator is then normalised to one by its highest value in 1995 (Panama) to make the measure comparable both over time and with the others explained below.

A second indicator of security hierarchy is the number of independent alliances possessed by the potentially subordinate state. Two states may share many alliances,

²⁹ Data sources and definitions are available as an appendix to Lake, 'Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics', at: http://dss.ucsd.edu/~dlake/documents/ISDataAppendix_000.pdf.

³⁰ For a longer discussion and defence of the construct, face, convergent, and discriminant validity of these measures, see Ibid, Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*.

³¹ As the need to constrain South Korea recedes in importance, and the possible threat from North Korea diminishes or at least changes in nature, the US is now redeploying its troops away from the demilitarised zone.

indicating only that they are both embedded in a common security network. Such shared alliances may contain within them a security hierarchy, but this cannot be discerned simply by observing the pattern of relationships. If two countries possess an alliance but also enter into alliances with other states that are not shared – referred to here as independent alliances – this is *prima facie* evidence of foreign policy autonomy. Neither is then obviously dependent on the aid of the other. Most important, the subordinate has an ‘outside’ option that reduces the dominant state’s ability to exercise control. Alternatively, if all of the subordinate’s alliances are shared with the dominant state, this may indicate a security hierarchy. The subordinate is then dependent on the dominant state or that state’s other allies for assistance and has no established claims on states not allied with A. The larger the number of such independent alliances possessed by the subordinate, the less hierarchical the security relationship is likely to be. To the extent that the subordinate’s lack of alternative alliance support makes it dependent on the dominant state and therefore subject, at least in part, to that state’s influence over its security policy, and the subordinate does not undertake actions to diversify its sources of support or break its own alliance and dependence, then the subordinate is likely to regard the dominant state’s influence as necessary and legitimate and, like military personnel, authoritative. Independent alliances are defined as $1/\text{number of alliance partners of a second state that are not also alliance partners of the US}$.³² Higher values represent fewer independent alliances and, by implication, greater hierarchy. In cases where the US and a second state are not themselves allied, the number of independent alliances is treated as zero (no security hierarchy). This measure is also normalised to one by its highest value for 1995 (shared by nearly all countries in the Americas and Western Europe).

I compute an aggregate indicator of US security hierarchy as the simple sum of the indices of US troops deployed per capita and the number of independent alliances, again, normalised to one for 1995. According to the aggregate index, Panama was the most subordinate state in the system in 1995.

Economic hierarchy between states varies from market exchange, at the anarchic end of a continuum, to dependency, at the hierarchic end. It is also captured by two indicators. First, economic hierarchy varies inversely with a country’s monetary policy autonomy, which is defined, in turn, by its exchange rate regime.³³ Key to any economy’s prices and monetary stability is its exchange rate regime, or how the price of its national currency is set relative to the price of other currencies. At one extreme, a country can allow its currency to float against others, with its exchange rate being determined by demand and supply in financial markets. Under floating exchange rates, domestic monetary policy is freed from concerns about the current account balance and, thus, implies no economic hierarchy. At the other extreme, a country adopts the currency of a foreign state as its own, a process known as ‘dollarization’ but actually more general than the name implies. Even though small amounts of the national currency may remain in circulation, the country uses the foreign currency as

³² The potentially subordinate state is assumed to be allied with itself: the denominator is always at least one. Alliances are coded by the Correlates of War. Limited to *de jure* alliances, this indicator produces several false negatives for states that are *de facto* allied with the US, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Israel.

³³ On exchange rate regimes as hierarchies, see Benjamin J. Cohen, *The Geography of Money* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 47–8.

its primary legal tender. At this step, without variable foreign reserves to cushion the impact of external shocks, the country directly imports the dominant state's monetary policy; the quantity of currency in circulation depends not on its policy decisions, but entirely on the dominant state's monetary policy. Exchange rate regimes are coded here into a four point scale ranging from various floating exchange rate mechanisms, to a crawling peg relative to the dollar, a fixed exchange rate to the dollar, and finally to a 'merged' currency in the form of either a currency board or 'dollarization'. At each step on this scale, the tie between the country's currency and the dollar becomes tighter and more costly to break, giving the US more control over the subordinate country's monetary policy. This index is also normalised by its highest value in 1995 (common to 11 countries, mostly in the Caribbean and Central America).

Economic hierarchy is also implied by trade dependence. Trade has long been understood to create the potential for political influence. This key insight parallels that on independent alliances in security hierarchies. If a state has many trade partners it is likely to have greater political autonomy and any attempt to manipulate trade for political purposes will be ineffective. If a country is highly dependent on trade with another, however, it is vulnerable to the influence of that state. Countries trade for many reasons. Nonetheless, the failure of governments over the long term to diversify their trading partners indicates a tacit acceptance of the dominant state's potential influence and therefore its legitimacy and authority. Relative trade dependence is measured as each country's total trade with the US divided by its own GDP, minus similar ratios for the other permanent members of the UN Security Council. The index is truncated at a zero (no hierarchy) and normalised to one for the highest value in 1995 (Canada). Countries that trade more as a percentage of GDP with the US than with all the other permanent security council members are relatively trade dependent, and countries that trade more with the other great powers states than with the US are relatively independent.

As with the security measures, I compute an aggregate indicator of US economic hierarchy as the simple sum of two indices, again normalised to one for 1995. By this measure, Canada is the state most economically subordinate to the US in 1995.

Using these indicators, we can now map the pattern of hierarchy by region, using the RSCs as defined by Buzan and Wæver.³⁴ As expected, there is a strong regional clustering to the hierarchies possessed by the US. Regionally, the US dominates more states in North and South America, its traditional areas of concern, than elsewhere. The US possesses at least a measure of hierarchy over nearly every country in its hemisphere (see Figures 1 and 2). The 'American system' that was constructed by the US in the early decades of the 20th century persists to this day. This dominance is especially strong over states on the Caribbean littoral (included in North America). Many countries in the hemisphere possess an exclusive alliance with the US through the multilateral Rio Pact, more formally known as the Inter-American Treaty of

³⁴ The discussion and figures in this section use the post-Cold War RSCs as identified by Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* in their several maps, pp. 99, 189, 231, 266, 350. Some distortions are introduced by using post-Cold War RSC membership and projecting backwards to 1950, especially in West Europe which includes all of what used to be regarded as Eastern Europe. Changing the membership in RSCs in 1989 to reflect these redefinitions of actual RSCs produces breaks in the series that are unrelated to any substantive change in US hierarchy. I opt therefore to keep RSC membership constant.

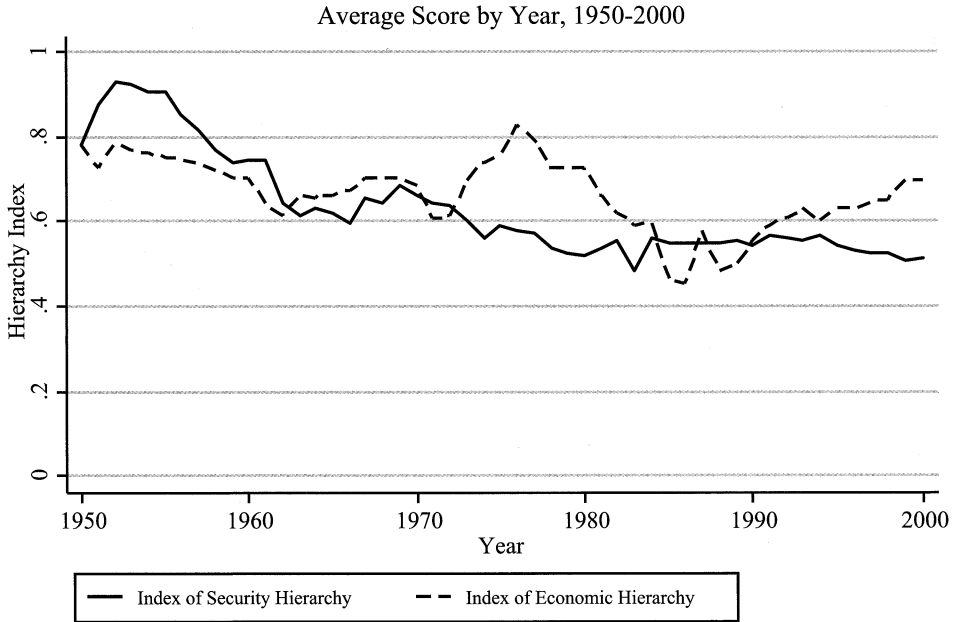


Figure 1. *United States Hierarchy in the North American RSC.*

Reciprocal Assistance.³⁵ It is this exclusive alliance, described by historian David Green as creating ‘a militarily closed hemisphere under United States domination’, that most clearly manifests the US sphere of influence in the hemisphere.³⁶ The US also has extensive deployments of troops in the Caribbean and Central America. Even though the size of the deployments is small compared to other regions and declining, only Western Europe has a greater proportion of countries ‘hosting’ American troops.

Economically, a relatively large proportion of countries in North and South America link their currencies to the dollar and possess high levels of trade dependence. Of the 13 countries that had merged their currencies with the US dollar in 2000, either adopting a currency board or dollarising, nine were in Latin America and, of those, eight were in Central America or the Caribbean. And even though most countries are dependent on trade with the US, only in North America are most countries exclusively dependent on that trade, exchanging a greater share of their GDP with the US than with all the other permanent members of the US Security Council combined. Although economic hierarchy declined sharply from the mid-1970s to 1990, it has since rebounded and is now both deep and broad. Although higher in North than South America, the regional dominance of the US appears strong and robust.

After World War II, the US extended its security and economic hierarchies beyond the Western hemisphere to Europe (see Figure 3).³⁷ Until the 1990s, the countries of

³⁵ Few countries that became independent after 1948 have joined the Pact. Mexico formally withdrew in 2004, calling for a new hemispheric agreement.

³⁶ David Green, *The Containment of Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

³⁷ The expanded membership of the West Europe RSC after the Cold War significantly deflates the hierarchy measures during the Cold War. By including the former Eastern European countries in the Cold War measures of United States hierarchy, the regional averages are significantly reduced. Excluding the Eastern European states during the Cold War produces averages for security hierarchy, especially, that look more similar to South American levels.



Figure 2. *United States Hierarchy in the South American RSC.*

Western Europe shared the largest overseas deployments of US military forces. These same states were also embedded into an exclusive alliance network centred on NATO. Similar to the countries of Latin America, the states of Western Europe appear to form a sphere of influence, clearly so in the early postwar years but most likely through the end of the Cold War.

Likewise, the US used its relative prosperity during and after World War II to assert new economic dominance over its prior great power rivals. Partly by plan, and partly due to an unexpected dollar shortage after the war, the Bretton Woods monetary institutions created a de facto exchange rate regime in which the major countries in the region fixed their currencies to the dollar. Thus, the US dollar became the effective medium of international trade and investment and gave Washington unprecedented leverage over and responsibility for the international monetary system and, more important, the monetary policies of most countries in Western Europe. The US also insisted that its new subordinates end their systems of imperial preference and liberalise their trade.³⁸ Combined with the strength of the American economy, this led to a radical reorientation of trade flows and created a degree of relative trade dependence upon the US.

Unlike in the Western hemisphere, however, the regional dominance of the US did not endure. By 1975, the US had broken the fixed exchange rate regime, largely for domestic political and economic reasons,³⁹ and replaced it with a floating rate system that reduced the special role of the dollar in the international economy and allowed

³⁸ One of the best studies of this period remains David P. Calleo and Benjamin Rowland, *American and the World Political Economy: Atlantic Dreams and National Realities* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973).

³⁹ See Joanne Gowa, *Closing the Gold Window: Domestic Politics and the End of Bretton Woods* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

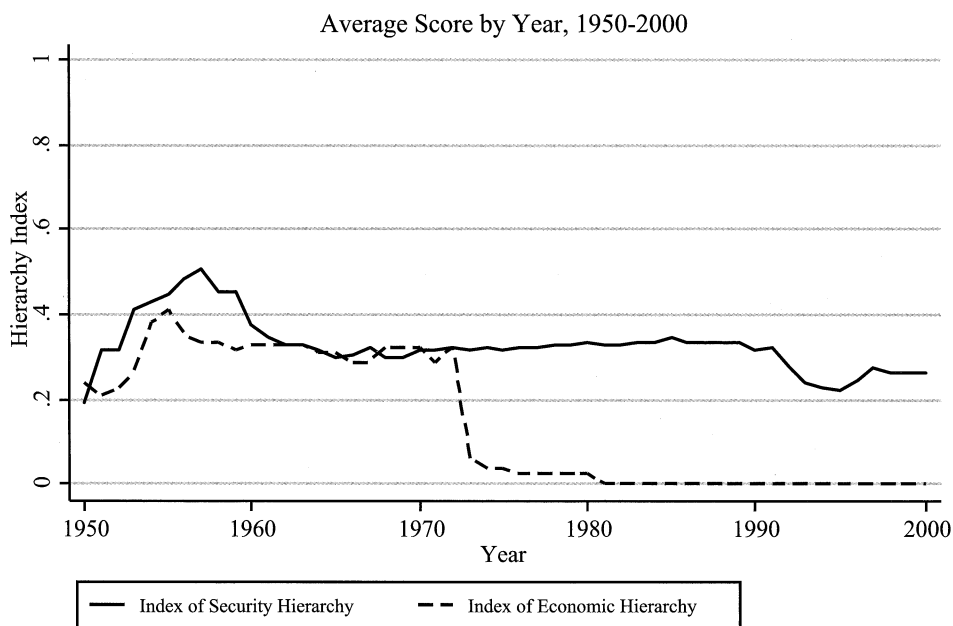


Figure 3. *United States Hierarchy in the West European RSC.*

other states to reassert a measure of monetary policy autonomy. After 1975, with the rise of floating exchange rates and various attempts at European monetary unification, eventually realised in the creation of the euro in 1999, the special role of the dollar in maintaining America's economic hierarchy over Europe was lost. By the early 1970s, America's economic hierarchies over countries in Western Europe had clearly vanished. With the end of the Cold War, in turn, America's security hierarchy showed the first signs of transformation, with the number of troops and the range of countries in which they were stationed starting to decline after 1991. Despite the realignment of international power that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, America's hierarchies in Europe were clearly waning – even as a number of important countries, including the UK and Germany, remained subordinate to the US. Nonetheless, in 2000, a larger proportion of the countries most subordinate to the US in security were in Europe than in the 1950s.

The US also enjoyed relatively high levels of security and economic hierarchy in East Asia, especially during the early Cold War (Figure 4). US security hierarchy peaked during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, but then fell far below levels in the Western hemisphere and West Europe by 1973. Conversely, US economic hierarchy rose steadily and reached a plateau from the early 1970s on. There is, however, wide variation in US hierarchy within the RSC, with considerably higher levels in Northeast Asia (Japan, South Korea) and select countries in Southeast Asia (Australia, in security; Singapore and Thailand, in economics).

The pattern of regional hierarchy is quite different in all other RSCs. In South Asia (Figure 5), the Post-Soviet region (Figure 6), the Middle East (Figure 7), and Southern Africa (Figure 8), US security hierarchy has been virtually non-existent throughout the last half century. Only in the Middle East in the 1950s and after 1990 does the index of security hierarchy rise above zero in any of these RSCs. Economic

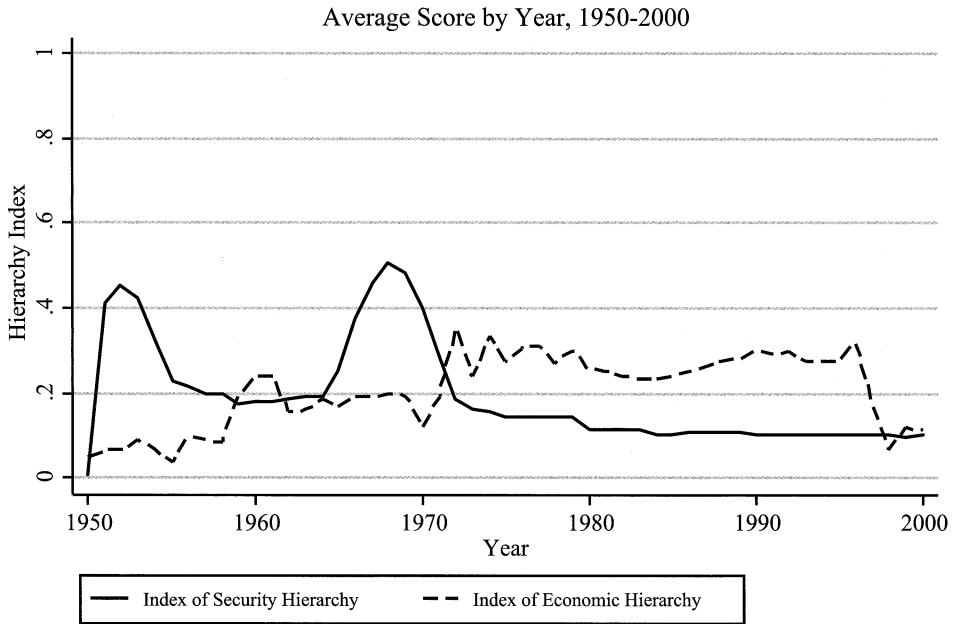


Figure 4. *United States Hierarchy in the East Asian RSC.*



Figure 5. *United States Hierarchy in the South Asian RSC.*

hierarchies with the US are also limited relative to the Western hemisphere and West Europe, reaching significant levels only in South Asia and the Middle East after 1970.

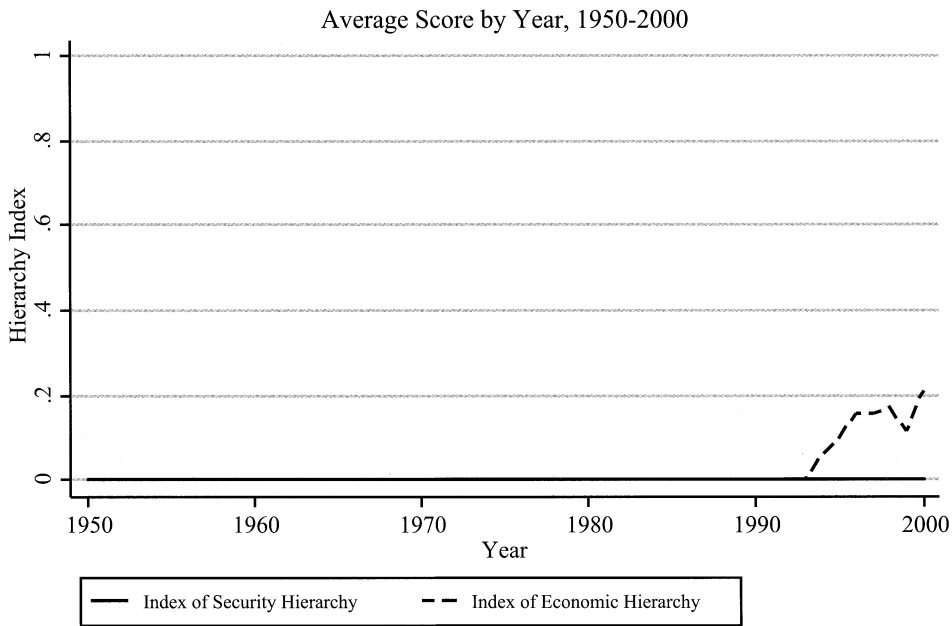


Figure 6. *United States Hierarchy in the Post-Soviet RSC.*

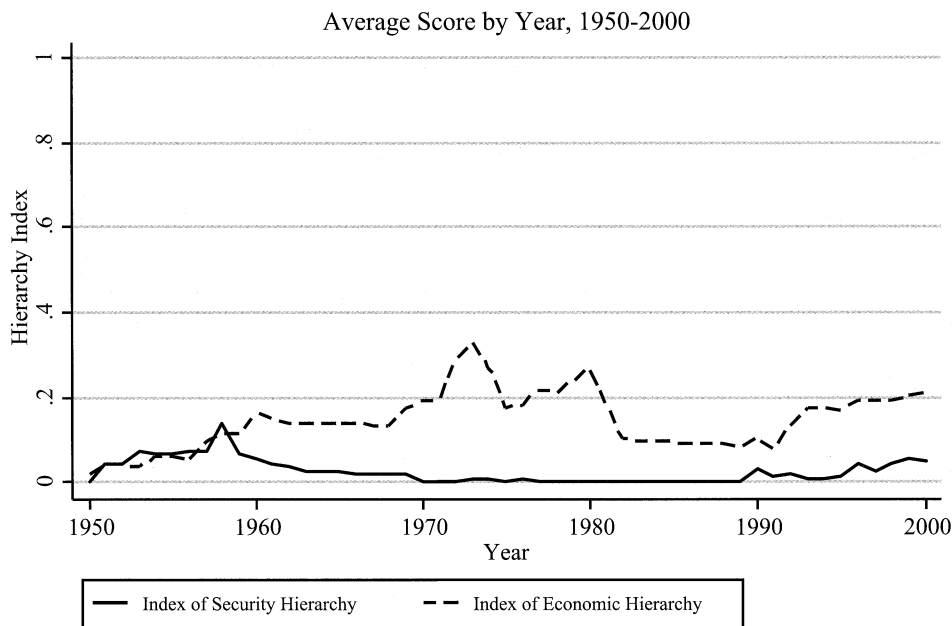


Figure 7. *United States Hierarchy in the Middle East RSC.*

Overall, and despite the end of the Cold War, the security and economic hierarchies of the US remain surprisingly constant over time and RSC. Although the proportion of countries subordinate to the US in security relations has declined, with

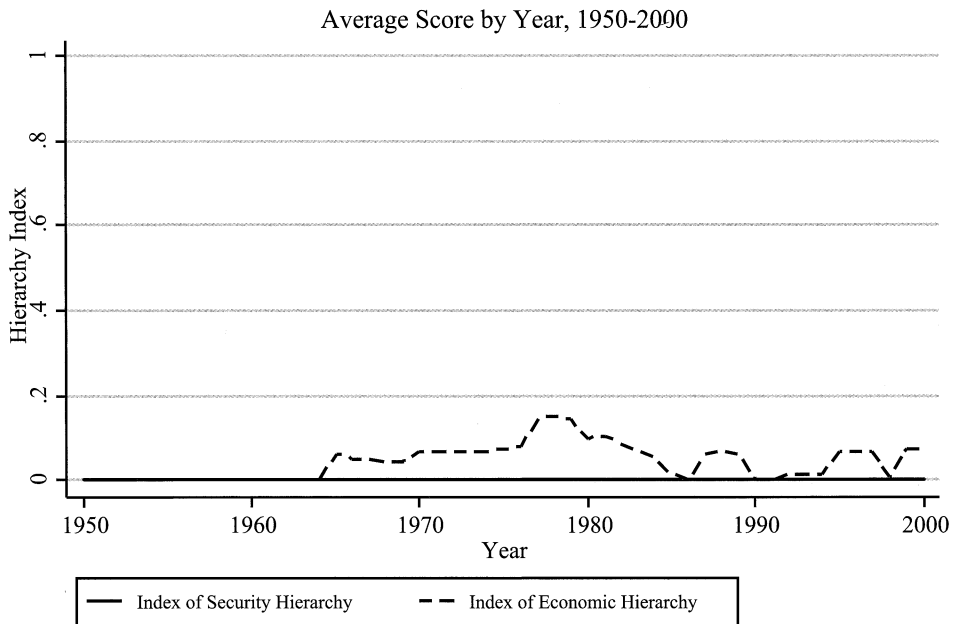


Figure 8. *United States Hierarchy in the Southern African RSC.*

the most significant drop occurring between the early 1950s and early 1970s, the overall level of security hierarchy has remained relatively constant for the last three decades and highest in North and South America and West Europe. Military deployments may fluctuate in number, but the countries hosting those troops and the alliance structures more generally are quite static, evolving only very slowly even after the end of the Cold War. Similarly, although falling significantly in West Europe, economic hierarchy has either fluctuated within each RSC (for example South America) or increased after 1970 (for example East and South Asia). In most RSCs, US economic hierarchy has increased noticeably since the mid-1980s, suggesting that the current wave of globalisation may, as its critics imply, have a strongly American accent.

Regional orders

There is a strong correlation between levels of US security and economic hierarchy and the regional order that predominates in each RSC. Regions are not uniform in either their level of hierarchy or orders, of course, but as seen above these characteristics do tend to cluster spatially. Table 1 presents an overview of each RSC as described by Buzan and Wæver.⁴⁰ As is readily apparent, higher average levels of US security and economic hierarchy (from Figures 1–8) are associated with ‘higher’ or more peaceful regional orders less prone to actual or threatened violence.

⁴⁰ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*.

Regional Security Complex	Regional Order (Buzan and Wæver/Lake and Morgan coding)
North America	Security Community/ Pluralistic Security Community
West Europe	Security Community/ Pluralistic Security Community
South America	Security Regime/Regional Power Concert
Post-Soviet	Security regime, Russian Hegemony/Regional Power Concert
East Asia	Conflict Formation/Balance of Power; Emergent Security Regime/Collective Security Organization in ASEAN
South Asia	Conflict Formation/Balance of Power
Middle East	Conflict Formation/Balance of Power
Southern Africa	Conflict Formation/Balance of Power

Table 1. *US hierarchy and regional orders, circa 2000*

In South Asia and Southern Africa, levels of security and economic hierarchy are quite low, on average, and the US plays a relatively minor role in each region.⁴¹ In East Asia and the Middle East, the US also has relatively little authority and typically interacts with members of the RSC as simply one of several great powers in a balance of power order.⁴² Although lacking precise data on the indicators, anecdotal evidence suggests that, although Britain and France retain some residual hierarchies in some of their former colonies (for example France in Chad), these are not extensive. Buzan and Wæver, in turn, describe each RSC as a conflict formation characterised by ‘a pattern of security interdependence shaped by fear of war and expectations of the use of violence in political relations’.⁴³ The origins of the insecurity that plagues each region is different, ranging from the internal weakness of post-colonial states in Africa to regional power rivalries in South Asia to great power rivalries in East Asia. But in each, the use of force in relations between states is largely unregulated, as might be expected in a traditionally ‘anarchic’ environment as understood in international relations theory.

Within the conflict formations that characterise these regions, ASEAN stands out as a nascent security regime or collective security organisation.⁴⁴ An autonomous development formed almost entirely outside of US hierarchy – and in many ways, in opposition to outside influences within the region – this emergent order is the principal anomaly here between hierarchy and more peaceful regional orders. ASEAN was founded in 1967 near the peak of US involvement in Vietnam, an

⁴¹ Edmond J. Keller, ‘Rethinking African Regional Security’, in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), and Fred H. Lawson, ‘New Twists, More Intricate Configurations: The Changing Israel-Palestinian Regional Security Complex’, *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 6 (2007), pp. 345–62.

⁴² See Susan Shirk, ‘Asia-Pacific Regional Security: Balance of Power or Concert of Powers?’, in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), and David J. Pervin, ‘Building Order in Arab-Israeli Relations: From Balance to Concert?’, in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

⁴³ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, p. 489.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 93. See also Amitav Acharya, ‘Collective Identity and Conflict Management in Southeast Asia’, in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Yuen Foong Khong, ‘ASEAN and the Southeast Asian Security Complex’, in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

extreme subordinate during the war, but flowered into a collective security organisation only after the US withdrew from both Vietnam and the region more generally. ASEAN's growth into a collective security organisation was halted and possibly reversed, however, by the economic crisis of the late 1990s, the organisation's failure to deal effectively with the fragmentation of East Timor, and the reemergence of security tensions between Singapore and Malaysia and new ones between Thailand and Burma.⁴⁵

The Post-Soviet and South American RSCs have elements of security regimes in place that do not eliminate the fear or threat of war but do regulate the conduct of states in the use of force. Despite the absence of any US hierarchy in the region, the Post-Soviet sphere is nonetheless hierarchically organised. Although I do not have consistent data on levels of hierarchy similar to that for the US, Russia dominates its neighbourhood and regulates potential conflict between itself and its subordinates and between other dyads in the region.⁴⁶ This is consistent with the larger argument here on US hierarchy and regional orders.

In South America, and specifically the Southern cone region, Buzan and Wæver point to the rise of a security regime under a regional concert of powers despite continued antagonisms and occasional sabre-rattling between member states. Yet, South America remains highly penetrated by the US, in Buzan and Wæver's term, and the security regime has developed under the umbrella of continued American hierarchy.⁴⁷ By providing a measure of security to South America, such that conflicts do not escalate to actual violence, and by prohibiting other great powers from becoming involved in disputes, the US has created a foundation upon which the regional powers, especially Argentina and Brazil, can develop their own rules for further managing regional relations. The pacifying effect of US hierarchy in South America may be seen in contrast to South Asia where two comparable regional powers – India and Pakistan – have failed to regulate their conflict in similar ways. That South Asia was penetrated and certainly more deeply integrated into the superpower competition of the Cold War than South America is directly related to the US sphere of influence constructed over the latter region in the early 20th century.⁴⁸

The two regions with the 'highest' level of regional order are also characterised by high average levels of US hierarchy. In North America, the US has long exercised authority over the member states, providing basic security, adjudicating disputes, and disciplining subordinates who either posed a threat to others in the region or threatened to leave the informal empire. In turn, the subordinate states have largely complied with the restrictions on their sovereignty perceived as necessary to the maintenance of the regional order. Strikingly, the exercise of US hierarchy and the

⁴⁵ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, p. 155.

⁴⁶ Kathleen J. Hancock, *Delegated Sovereignty and Economic Integration: Lessons from Eurasia, Southern Africa, and Prussia* (forthcoming). See also Philip G. Roeder, 'From Hierarchy to Hegemony: The Post-Soviet Security Complex', in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

⁴⁷ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, p. 309. See also David R. Mares, *Violent Peace: Militarized Interstate Bargaining in Latin America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), and Andrew Hurrell, 'An Emerging Security Community in South America?', in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴⁸ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, p. 104.

regional order itself is not institutionalised in a true multilateral body. Rather, the Organization of American States – even with a large contingent of South American members – has largely been an instrument of the US. The security community has also developed without a common identity. Although NAFTA has gone some distance toward creating a common North American identity for the US, Canada, and Mexico – linking the latter to its northern neighbours in a shared space for, perhaps, the first time in history – no common identity has been forged with the rest of Central America or the numerous island states of the Caribbean.⁴⁹ This raises significant doubts, contrary to Adler and Barnett, about whether either multilateral institutions or a common identity are necessary conditions for a pluralistic security community.⁵⁰

West Europe began the postwar era in ways similar to North America. The US provided basic security within the region, both suppressing conflicts between members states, especially between Germany and its neighbours, and deterring possible expansionism by the Soviet Union. In return, regional states complied with an American-led security and economic regime that locked them into tight interdependence with one another. The regional hierarchy of the US pre-existed the rise of the pluralistic security community, as in North America, and appears to have contributed to its development. It was, at least, what Adler and Barnett describe as a ‘tier two’ factor that was ‘conducive to the development of mutual trust and collective identity’ of a pluralistic security community.⁵¹ As in the case of the security regime in South America, this higher level regional order was built on a foundation of order created by the US.

Unlike in North America, however, the hierarchy of the US has been superseded by a collective or supranational hierarchy in the form of the European Union, at least in economic affairs. This has led, in turn, to greater institutionalisation and an emergent European identity, a ‘tier three’ factor in Adler and Barnett’s scheme.⁵² As US economic hierarchy in Europe disappeared over the course of the 1970s, the European Union rose to fill the gap. Nonetheless, the trajectory suggests that pluralistic security communities require not so much a common institution or identity as a measure of international authority and hierarchy that protects, constrains, and disciplines member states. As US security hierarchy in West Europe has diminished since the end of the Cold War (see Figure 3), it remains an open question whether Europe can forge a supranational foreign and defence policy. Collective identity may be the glue that holds countries together and allows nascent pluralistic security communities to evolve into mature communities or even integrated communities – the highest level of regional order. The relationship between regional hierarchy and regional order presented here is one of correlation rather than causation. To be confident of causal effects will require more detailed research into the hows and whys of producing regional security. But the evidence here clearly suggests that hierarchy

⁴⁹ See Guadalupe Gonzales and Stephan Haggard, ‘The United States and Mexico: A Pluralistic Security Community?’, in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Sean M. Shore, ‘No Fences Make Good Neighbors: The Development of the US-Canadian Security Community, 1871–1940’, in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

⁵⁰ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, *Security Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 31.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 39–45.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 45–8.

may be a necessary and is certainly a facilitating condition for pluralistic security communities to arise.

Conclusion

Adopting a relational conception of authority reveals international hierarchies now hidden by a formal-legal approach. In turn, the degree of hierarchy between states and in regions has important implications for state behavior and regional order, respectively. In providing order to build and sustain their authority over subordinates, dominant states also create order within regions. Greater US hierarchy, as we have seen, is plausibly related to higher or more peaceful regional orders. To the extent that the post-Soviet RSC possesses a higher level security regime, this may also be a function of Russian hierarchy within the region. Understood in this way, ASEAN appears to be the only security regime or higher order that has developed outside some regional hierarchy. Collective identities may support pluralistic security communities, but they appear to follow rather than begin a process that both theoretically and empirically is associated with regional hierarchy.

The key unanswered questions, it seems to me, relate to What makes a region a 'region'? and How are these traits related to regional hierarchy and order? Like authority, regions themselves are political constructs. RSCs are not fixed and static, but change members and evolve over time. Regions are sets of states affected by security externalities that arise from a common geographic centre. Security externalities are affected by technology, the 'stopping power of water',⁵³ and other exogenous factors, but they are also influenced by the quality of hierarchy and regional order. In particular, when dominant states produce a measure of order as a condition for earning authority, they also shape the security policies of states and the nature of the security externalities that define the region. Hierarchy, order, and the region itself are mutually constituted. Similarly, the legitimacy granted by regional states to a dominant state creates and shapes its authority. By complying with its commands and supporting its enforcement actions against rebels within the region, member states empower the dominant state to act authoritatively to produce the order they desire. Sorting through these tangled causal arrows remains tremendously difficult.

Despite the end of the post-Cold War era on 11 September 2001, the trend that Morgan and I identified toward the disaggregation and regionalisation of security continues.⁵⁴ Except for a handful of great powers, and perhaps only the US, the demonstrated global reach of both states and terrorists does not a global threat make. Where the bipolar competition or overlay of the Cold War drew many into its web, for most states today their security concerns are almost entirely local. Regions are an increasingly salient unit of analysis. As is now clear, regions vary substantially in their structures – including levels of hierarchy – and order. Policy should recognise these important differences.

A danger for the US – and through it, others – is that in its new insecurity brought on by the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and its poorly executed (and ill-advised) war in

⁵³ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), p.44.

⁵⁴ Lake and Morgan, *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, pp. 3–7.

Iraq, it will once again see the world through the single lens of the global war on terror. In the 1990s, US policy was largely but incrementally, hesitantly, following the trend toward the regionalisation of security. At least under the administration of President George W. Bush, this movement was reversed and other countries were pressed to choose sides in what is perceived by many Americans as a global battle. The US risks treating threats in one region the same as threats in others. Even radical Islam, which could be perceived as a worldwide movement, means very different things and requires very different responses in, say, the Persian Gulf, Europe, and Southeast Asia. The need to think and act regionally remains real – and a continuing challenge.