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Membership and International Cooperation

MEMBER SELECTION forms one of the defining processes of social organization. Whether it be individuals joining a sports team or a social club or countries joining international organizations, the choice of membership imposes categories on who we are and what we do. Group membership determines status. Theories of socialization and institutional commitment depend on our understanding the full context of rules. Even the fundamental difference between types of government derives from the selection process for leaders. Without understanding who takes part in governance, one cannot understand the effectiveness of the organizations that we study. Certainly we know that few organizations are formed around a random sample of actors—self-selecting, screening for talent, and selling access to the highest bidder represent some of the many ways through which groups form.

How does member selection occur at the international level? The concern with selection bias has long confounded research on the effectiveness of international institutions because it is difficult to know whether the conditions leading to membership or the constraints of membership shape behavior. Few international organizations offer automatic admission. Even an organization like the United Nations that espouses universality encounters controversy over membership—North and South Korea were unable to join until 1991, Switzerland did not opt to join until 2002, and Palestine and Taiwan remain outsiders today. Nor do we see consistent enforcement of performance criteria with screening for quality. Indeed, some countries join organizations without making significant policy changes. How can we explain Turkey as a founding member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD) in 1961 and communist Poland joining the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1967? Even regional organizations constitute more than a geographic category, as seen by the British experience in joining the European Economic Community in 1973, 16 years after formation and its most recent decision to exit. Far from being automatic or technocratic, membership decisions are deeply political. States evaluate the benefits of joining the organization and their relationship with other members. Rather than treat biased entry into organizations as a nuisance for research on the effects of institutions, we must seek to understand the complex process by which states coalesce into groups that become members of an institution.

This book develops a theory about international organizations as discriminatory clubs of states. A core of like-minded states with common security interests choose to cooperate on other issues through joining together in international organizations. Their geopolitical alignment shapes who wants to join an organization, whether they are accepted into the club, and the price of entry. In contrast to theories that explain cooperation in terms of market failure within an issue area, my argument shows the channel by which security interests form the basis for cooperation and status. Geopolitical alignment generates the willingness to recognize the authority of another state as a rule-maker in global governance. Approving joint membership in international organizations allocates status. The empirical evidence highlights systematic biases in the patterns of states that enter international organizations. But this is not an argument about screening for compliance—states eschew the narrow selection criteria expected by a contractual approach in favor of discretionary selection as part of broad strategies of economic statecraft. Blackmail, side payments, and favoritism are rife in the accession politics of international organizations.

Despite the emphasis on public goods as the core problem for cooperation, many policy problems present impure public goods for which clubs can provide the benefits to a limited number while excluding others. Most international organizations include provisions for defining membership as a way to restrict cooperation to a subset of states. Moreover, international organizations are discriminatory because members care not only about provision of the cooperative good but also about the identity of other members. Rather than screening for states with the highest capacity, the process of joining international organizations often resembles entry into a social club that admits friends and excludes rivals. Where social clubs may rely on race or socioeconomic status as the basis for discrimination, states use geopolitical alignment as the basis for discrimination in decisions over organizational membership.

The discriminatory politics of membership embed within international society patterns of interaction. For example, not only NATO and other alliances, but also the European Union (EU), OECD, and international economic institutions like the GATT established boundaries of cooperation for a coalition of states that share a common security interest. The group of states commonly referred to as "the West" during the Cold War was defined by these overlapping memberships in institutions more than by a geographic location or liberal ideology. As a rising power, China pursues a strategy that first brings countries together under its umbrella for cooperation in institutions. From its co-leadership with Russia of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation starting in 2002 to formation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in 2016, China unites like-minded states in institutions as a way to build a sphere of influence. Weaker states also use institutional agglomeration as a step toward unified action. The formal rules of membership draw lines to establish who is expected to act together, which is a critical component of social norms.

The argument places security first in the sequence of cooperation. Yet the security interests that motivate coalition-building through shared memberships in institutions are more diffuse than specific threats to survival. Joining organizations is a tool of soft power diplomacy—organizational membership represents an investment in relationships with other states. In some cases, states offer preferential entry to a potential cooperation partner as a reward and bribe intended to entice them toward closer relations. Here institutions broaden and deepen the ties among states that are not allies. In other cases, shared membership helps states to consolidate alliance ties through expanding the range of issues for cooperation beyond security. Finally, rivalry manifests itself through excluding enemies from organizations as a strategy to deny access to both material benefits and relational networks.

This sequential enlargement privileges early entry by allies and gradual enlargement to include others after the rules and membership coalition of allied states have already been consolidated. When allowed to enter, nonallied states may pay a higher price through larger reform commitments relative to the easy path to entry given to allies. Yet overexpansion may arise if too many join. The need to reconfigure which groups of states are willing to work together has become a factor driving the fragmentation of global governance across multiple overlapping international organizations.

The theory looks beyond great power politics. Major powers are at the forefront of establishing institutions and serving as gatekeepers over membership, but they are not the only ones to use this strategy. Coalitions form through a

joint decision by states to form a group, and security interests shape not only the motives of powerful states who lead but also the willingness of others to participate. If anything, smaller states have greater need to use institutions as a way to expand ties and establish their position within the social hierarchy of the international system. For marginal states seeking to normalize relations after a rupture, entry into organizations signals commitment to joint actions and mutual recognition.

The question of whether to join or leave a major international organization goes to the highest levels of authority within a state—these are not decisions left to mid-level diplomats. The Brexit referendum on UK membership in the EU absorbed national politics for years. But even for less high-profile cases, the decisions are taken very seriously. The Mexican debate over joining the GATT offers an interesting example. Having declined to join the original GATT agreement in 1948—the Finance Minister denounced it as a threat to national industries—the government began talks about joining in 1979. Working party negotiations were going well, with GATT members agreeing to allow flexibility for Mexico to preserve many of its core developmental state policies. Alongside those negotiations, Mexican president José López Portillo conducted a domestic evaluation on the merits of GATT accession, with input from economic analysts and in consultation with industry and labor groups. The question was covered in front-page media commentary (Ortiz Mena, 2005, pp. 221–222). Critics portrayed accession as a move toward dependence on the United States as well as a threat to economic sovereignty and the development model writ large. The final vote of the cabinet in March 1980 opposed accession. López Portillo announced the postponement of GATT accession on the forty-second anniversary of Mexico's expropriation of U.S. oil companies, framing rejection of the GATT in terms of Mexican nationalism and anti-American policy (Story, 1982, p. 775).[1] Eventually the government did join the GATT in 1986, after relations with the United States had significantly improved and economic reform held new urgency (Davis and Wilf, 2015).

The foreign policy process at the domestic level reinforces the security framing of membership decisions. The executive leadership and foreign

1. Story (1982) contends that the desire to show independence from the United States perversely pushed López Portillo to decline joining after receiving strong pressure from the United States that it should become a member. López Portillo's relations with the Carter administration were poor at this time.

ministry prioritize security, and they are the lead actors who set the agenda to seek membership. Later, during ratification, other domestic actors must accept or decline membership as a package deal. Broad foreign policy identity augments the attractiveness of an organization that confers status by means of deepening association with other like-minded states. Or, as in the example of Mexico in the GATT, foreign policy tensions could reduce the appeal of joining. Actors who may have little understanding or interest in the details of the rules will pay attention to the high politics of joining an organization.

Outside the scope of specific policy reforms and institutional constraints, membership plays a role in defining how states fit within international society. When protests erupted in Ukraine in 2013 over the choice between joining a customs union with Russia or signing a trade agreement with Europe, the issue represented more than any terms contained in the agreement—it signaled the future direction of Ukraine: to be a European democracy or to remain within the sphere of Russia.[2] The brutal war to come saw its origins in this turning point. Further back in history, Japan joined the founders of the International Labour Organization in 1919 as part of its foreign policy goal to follow world trends and achieve major power status as a permanent member of the League of Nations, while the government expressed grave concerns about the possibility of foreign imposition of restrictions on labor policies. Neither the trade interests of Ukraine nor the labor policies of Japan would account for their membership choices. Through membership in international institutions, they sought to shape their association with other states. States join organizations as much for the benefit of status gained by their association with a particular group of states as for the need to cooperate on a particular set of policies.

Ending membership represents the ultimate sanction because it breaks all association with the other actor. Russia's invasion of Ukraine provoked proposals to exclude it from international organizations—in 2014, after the first invasion, accession talks for Russia to join the OECD were put on hold, and Russia was removed from the G8; the second invasion in 2022 led the OECD to terminate the Russian accession process, while the Council of Europe voted to end Russia's membership in the organization. An emergency session of the World Tourism Body was called to hear a proposal to expel Russia from its

2. Many inside and outside of Ukraine portrayed the decision as putting its reputation at stake even when the actual levels of economic integration would not have changed in significant ways. Rejection of the association agreement in September 2013 triggered street protests and shook investors' confidence in Ukrainian sovereign debt (Gray and Hicks, 2014, pp. 331–332).

membership, and some called for suspending its membership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO). These were unusual requests, as states rarely ask for and even more rarely succeed in expelling other states. In contrast, offering membership entry as a sign of solidarity happens more often. After years of deflecting Ukraine's wish to enter the EU, in response to Russian aggression the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen proclaimed in February 2022 that "Ukraine is one of us and we want them in EU."[3] Seeking to enhance its ties to Europe, Georgia filed its application to join the EU days after the Russian invasion of its neighbor. In reality Georgia and Ukraine have years before membership, but just the act of applying offers a symbolic step to deepen the association with Europe.

Belonging to institutions has a significant impact on behavior. Empirical studies assess the importance of specific institutions in shaping outcomes within the issue area through comparison of policies of members and nonmembers.[4] Scholars examine how the number of memberships across international organizations more generally can shape trade or conflict (Russett and Oneal, 2001; Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom, 2004; Ingram, Robinson, and Busch, 2005). Bearce and Bondanella (2007) find there is significant convergence of interests among states that share common IGO membership.

Theories of international institutions explain demand for cooperation that arises from the interest in the issue area regulated. This suggests that membership rules would be clearly defined, whether by laying out eligibility for a universal organization or by establishing rigorous conditions for a restrictive organization. To maximize cooperation, accession would follow a review of whether a state meets the provisions in agreements. Members could conduct this review themselves or delegate to a committee or bureaucracy.

Therefore it is puzzling that the rules of membership are discretionary and flexible. In a comprehensive review of charter provisions in international organizations, I find that a surprising number of international organizations are quite vague about membership criteria. Founding members sign up without any review process, while those who join through enlargement may negotiate terms with members but typically do so absent formal guidelines. Club IGOs

3. Euronews, 28 February 2022, available at https://www.euronews.com/2022/02/27/ukraine-is-one-of-us-and-we-want-them-in-eu-ursula-von-der-leyen-tells-euronews, accessed 17 March 2022.

4. For example, see literature on WTO (Rose, 2004; Gowa and Kim, 2005; Goldstein, Rivers, and Tomz, 2007) or environmental policies (Young, 1999; Breitmeier, Underdal, and Young, 2011).

steer a middle course between universality and precise entry conditions. Choosing flexible membership rules supports discriminatory membership. Such institutional design provides maximal discretion to change the terms of membership as part of strategic bargains. Governments have opted to allow themselves discretion over membership in a wide range of institutions from NATO to the WTO. This discretion can be applied to lower the entry bar for some states and raise it for others. Within these organizations, geopolitical alignment strongly predicts membership patterns.

As a club IGO, the OECD illustrates wide discretion over membership. While the organization is often viewed as an exclusive grouping of rich industrial democracies that advocate liberal economic policies and business regulatory standards, the reality is more complex. The OECD counts Turkey as a founding member, welcomed Mexico in 1994 before it had either completed its democratization process or achieved high income status, and most recently admitted Colombia to become its thirty-seventh member. Close affinity with the United States and Europe matter as much as economic policies to explain such decisions. In contrast, since expressing interest in the organization in the mid-1990s, Russia's effort to join was first slowed by reviews of problems in its banking sector and corruption, and then halted in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Charter provisions are even more sparse when it comes to expelling a member from the organization. One might expect that states would enforce compliance through provisions for suspending or even terminating membership of repeat offenders. Designing terms to end a contract in case of violation would strengthen the commitment device of joining the institution. But states do not adopt this strategy of conditional membership. Few international organizations have terms for expelling a member based on noncompliance. As EU negotiators confronted the Greek debt crisis in 2010, the concern about Greek exit missed the point that while Greece could vote itself out of the union, the other EU members could not vote to throw it out! States can act outside of treaty rules, of course, but they do so in order to ostracize a pariah state rather than to enforce rules. For example, the majority of members in the Universal Postal Union (UPU) voted to expel South Africa as an expression of opposition to Apartheid policies, and they did so despite objections that there were no rules in the organization for expulsion and no evidence that South Africa had acted contrary to IGO principles for postal service cooperation. The area most likely to witness suspension is democratic backsliding, not regulatory violations. And even then, democratic backsliding by strategic partners is usually not targeted (Borzyskowski and Vabulas, 2019a).

Individual country departures correspond to a geopolitical rift. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been the center of controversy in superpower rivalries on numerous occasions—the USSR left the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 1949 to protest what they said were unfair actions by the WHO to withhold medical supplies from Eastern Europe (Fee and Brown, 2016). President Trump dramatically announced he would exit the organization amidst a pandemic because he saw the organization as favoring China.[5] Cuba departed the IMF within five years of its revolution over a disagreement about repayment of loans by the Batista government that had just been overthrown. Others have had disagreements with the IMF over loans, but without exiting, though geopolitical tensions may impede the willingness of governments to work through a deal.[6] In their analysis of 200 exit cases, Borzyskowski and Vabulas (2019b) show that foreign policy affinity among members reduces the likelihood of exit.

Viewing international institutions as clubs embedded within broader political relations among states explains the rarity of expulsion. Just as governments do not revoke citizenship as punishment for criminal actions, most IGOs do not include expulsion as a tool for enforcing compliance. Political selection to get into international organizations magnifies the significance of expulsion threats. Not only would it deny the benefits of cooperation, but expulsion would also constitute a rejection of continued association and removal of status within international society. States would not be willing to confront a threat of expulsion for failing to meet criteria that were not necessary for entry. Such provisions would be incompatible with the entire notion of joining a community.

This book will develop a theory to explain why states use club membership design for accession and how they take advantage of the discretion over conditionality and participation mandate to inject geopolitics into their membership decisions. The vague terms and room for exclusion at the time of entry represent a flexibility mechanism in the institutional design. Ad hoc criteria facilitate statecraft that uses IGO membership as carrot and stick to advance purposes beyond cooperation on the issues regulated by the rules.

5. The emergence of leaders seeking to end isolation brought the governments back. Nikita Khrushchev sought "peaceful co-existence" with the United States, and as part of this strategy returned to active engagement in WHO in 1955; President Joseph Biden terminated the process of U.S. withdrawal from the WHO.

6. The Castro government went on to repay the loans without rejoining the organization (Boughton, 2016, p. 5).

1.1 Defining IGO Membership

Membership politics are the process by which states set boundaries around a community of states for cooperation. At the level of self-governing villages, the first design principle of cooperation is setting boundaries for the group (Ostrom, 2000). Global governance also requires community. When going beyond the village, community cannot be taken for granted. Nationalism looms large in the community-building process to form state boundaries. Anderson (2016) established the paradigm to view *imagined communities* that develop when individuals become conscious of belonging with a particular political group. In Anderson's societal argument, the development of capitalism and the printed word opened horizontal ties of shared experience that facilitated identity aggregation.

At the international level, states must also set boundaries and build communities to facilitate governance. They do so through membership in international organizations. An international organization can serve as a forum to gather states together and a resource to facilitate cooperation. An IGO can become an actor that empowers transnational bureaucrats for independent action (Hurd, 2021). Through each of these processes, the IGO builds on relational ties among states and further deepens those ties. The gains of cooperation provide incentives for states to limit joint action to subgroups. Interactions among states create the coherence for shared identity that determines who is included within these boundaries.

The commitment to ongoing interaction differentiates membership from simple treaty commitments. Governments bind themselves together as a group and not just as independent actors agreeing to specific terms about behavior. Hooghe, Lenz, and Marks (2019, p. 15), in their theory of international organization, describe the nature of an evolving cooperation project among members as part of the sociality of incomplete contracting that occurs in international organizations. They emphasize that "participants are not merely making a bargain. They are also consenting to an iterated process of negotiation as circumstances change." The layering of new commitments will often occur at a lower level of approval, without a return to the same domestic ratification process.

This book examines formal intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). These are organizations that are established by three or more states and have a permanent headquarters, with regular meetings among member states. Their founding documents include membership criteria and obligations. The set of formal IGOs encompasses organizations with little institutional structure,

such as the Association of Southeast Nations at its formation in 1967, and those with more of an institutional "footprint," such as the United Nations. It also includes organizations with a narrow focus on a single issue, such as OPEC, and those with a broader scope, such as the OECD.

International organizations sometimes include more complex structures to accomplish tasks, such as emanation organizations or subcommittees. These secondary levels of organizational structure are not the focus of analysis here. In most cases the membership in the primary organization corresponds directly to membership in the subordinate organization. Informal organizations also represent a critical arena for diplomacy that is subject to socializing effects (Vabulas and Snidal, 2013; Roger, 2021). But this lies outside the scope of this study. My focus lies in explaining the puzzle of informal practices that seep into formal structures.

What counts as membership? There are many forms of interaction with an IGO that can fall short of membership but nonetheless represent meaningful diplomacy. For example, observer status is widely used by the United Nations and the OECD. The GATT allowed a range of ad hoc roles that have been considered de facto membership in some studies (Goldstein, Rivers, and Tomz, 2007). This book will focus on formal membership, while considering the intervening steps that may precede a country's joining the organization. Informal participation can ebb and flow, with little observable indication to outsiders.[7] More importantly, there is a substantive difference in the commitment level of a country that chooses to attend meetings and its decision to formally commit to abide by all requirements of membership, including budgetary support and rule compliance. Formal membership brings voting rights and governance authority that implicates status as an equal actor.

There is a demand and a supply side to membership. First, a government must seek to join.[8] What motivates states to seek entry? There have been occasions of coercive pressure, such as Russian threats and bribes to induce former Soviet Republics to join the Commonwealth of Independent States. But at some level, sovereign states choose whether to seek membership. Not all are successful. An applicant must earn approval from other members.

7. See Gray (2018) for measures of this vitality of organizations that records emergence of zombies at the IGO level where activity wanes but the organization remains. It would be more challenging to document the change of engagement at the state level.

8. Others have given attention to expansion of access for nongovernmental organizations that in some cases become members of IGOs (Tallberg et al., 2013). This book focuses on state membership in intergovernmental IGOs.

This leads to the supply side of membership, whereby other states accept an applicant subject to conditions. What incentives shape entry conditions and approval? The conditions set by members can also influence outcomes. Some countries initiate membership talks but do not complete them. This book will examine the application and the approval stages for individual international organizations and country experiences. The more aggregate analysis of membership patterns, however, will examine the final membership outcome.

States can become a member either as a founder of the organization or by accession. While there are important differences in the bargaining dynamic experienced by founding states and accession states, this book will treat both forms of joining an IGO as membership. At formation, the demand and supply constraints occur in a simultaneous negotiation over the IGO itself. For accession, the late joining state has less ability to renegotiate the terms of the IGO and is more likely to face one-sided conditions for entry. Nonetheless, states whose participation is critical to the IGO may be in a position to bargain for better terms. Therefore even accession states may shape the rules.

There are three ways for membership to end—dissolution of the IGO, exit, and expulsion. This book focuses on the state-level decisions toward membership, which includes the latter exit and expulsion cases. Indirectly, these actions contribute to the broader trends in the evolution of the IGO population. The "death" of organizations can be seen as the cumulative exit decisions of members who have changing interests toward the issue or in their relations with each other. While geopolitical rivalry provides the core motivation for entry into the organization, rapprochement brings IGO dissolution (e.g., the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance at the end of the Cold War). For others, the emergence of geopolitical rivalry among members acts as catalyst for death, especially in the case of security IGOs (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2020).

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that membership can imply different levels of activity and distribution of benefits. Some members lack influence or choose not to participate (Stone, 2011; Davis and Bermeo, 2009; Libman and Obydenkova, 2013; Hooghe et al., 2017). Research on the vitality of organizations suggests wide variation in the degree to which members engage with each other and deliver expected policy coordination (Gray, 2018). Viola (2020) shows that in many cases the expansion of participation accompanies restriction of rights through procedural rules that favor incumbents. A large swathe of empirical research examines the effectiveness of individual international organizations. Debates continue on whether the trade regime increases trade flows, multilateral aid promotes development, or human rights courts

raise protection of rights. One could reasonably ask, why study membership if some states never attend meetings or change their policies? While there are certainly examples of meaningless membership, they are not the norm. At the outset at least, accepting formal rules brings an expectation of compliance (Franck, 1990; Hooghe et al., 2017). By exploring who comes to the table, this book lays an important foundation for understanding the role of international institutions.

1.2 Membership in International Relations Theory

International relations theory highlights power, material benefits, and social norms as motives for states to join institutions. Examining each in turn reveals the gaps that remain for understanding membership.

Hegemony and rule creation

Powerful states often take the lead role in establishment of IGOs. Writing the rules of international order promotes their interests in systemic stability and a political order that reinforces their own position (Krasner, 1976; Gilpin, 1981; Kindleberger, 1986).[9] Lake (2009) argues that a hierarchy among states arises from differential power and forms the basis for social contracts that establish an authority structure between dominant and subordinate states. Institutions connect these partners more closely to work together for common interests, and membership changes such as NATO enlargement broaden the reach of U.S. hierarchy (Lake, 2009, p. 134). Lascurettes (2020) highlights how excluding rivals through membership rules is necessary to support the depth of behavior rules among the subgroup of states that support the order.

What determines the threshold when the hegemon will value participation of other states more than the risk of losing control over the organization? Stone (2011) argues that informal influence allows the United States to balance competing goals for participation and control. He argues that institutions such as the IMF and the WTO induce the hegemon to follow the rules in normal times while allowing deviation over critical issues. This theory suggests IGOs will admit a broad membership on the assumption that there is differential application of the rules. Sponsoring allies and former colonies for

9. While power is the basis of hegemonic leadership over institutional creation, the specific orientation of the hegemon toward the ideas of liberal multilateralism shape their propensity to build institutions (Ikenberry, 2001).

membership represents an important side of informal politics exercised in the shadow of universalistic rules.

Small states also form and join IGOs. Democratizing states fit rules to their own needs in new organizations and join at higher rates than other states as a way to provide for public demands (Poast and Urpelainen, 2013, 2018). Outside of institutions they have the least influence and their capacity constraints often prevent their achieving important governance tasks. International cooperation offers a solution to their weakness—even if power asymmetry continues within a rule framework. Gruber (2000, p. 8) contends that large states use their "going it alone" capacity to force on smaller states terms that they would not prefer over the status quo, while setting new baselines such that joining a coercive institution is still better than "being completely shut out."

Even within the constraints of power, states retain the choice to join. At the multilateral level, participation arises from a national decision and a collective decision. This requires looking more carefully at how IGOs form a club with capacity to provide benefits to members and exclude benefits from nonmembers.

Designing Rules to Overcome Barriers to Collective Action

Demand for regimes arises when states would benefit from cooperation and an institution helps them overcome market failures that would prevent such cooperation. Keohane (1984) develops the core logic of functional demand for institutions based on their ability to lower transaction costs. His theory focuses on the collective action problems and asymmetric information that characterize cooperation for public goods. On the assumption that benefits are non-rival and non-excludable, institutions are necessary to provide information, monitor compliance, and link issues in ways that support cooperation among a large group. Membership itself is not a central question. For a pure public good, screening membership is ineffective because members and nonmembers alike can benefit from the cooperative output.

Nevertheless, limiting cooperation to a subset of states is widespread practice by international institutions. Using a club model of cooperation builds on common interests within a smaller group of states on a subset of issues—for example, the early years of the trade regime excluded illiberal states and kept narrow focus on trade policies at the border to facilitate easier bargaining over agreements (Keohane and Nye, 2001). Trade policies allow states to discriminate in provision of market access to members and nonmembers in

the multilateral trade regime, and governments apply elaborate rules of origin to further differentiate trade among states with preferential trade agreements (e.g. Gowa and Kim, 2005; Mansfield and Milner, 2015). States rely on alliances to defend against shared threats, with careful selection of members to maximize security (Sandler, 1999). This reflects the fact that many cooperation problems constitute impure public goods where *exclusion is possible*.

Even in the area of climate change, which represents a classic public goods issue, Keohane and Victor (2011) argue that the environmental regime complex will function better when multiple institutions such as the G8 and EU compete to find solutions to problems among smaller clubs of leading governments. In order to transform environmental cooperation into a club good, Nordhaus (2015) recommends linking climate policies to trade. He proposes using tariffs as a punitive measure against states that do not join the climate change organization. The article highlights that the key to success for international cooperation lies in finding an effective exclusion mechanism. Yet few IGOs follow this solution to expand issue scope and coerce membership through punitive sanctions. Doing so relies on positive utility from enacting sanctions for current members, and this rarely attains credibility. Even in the trade mechanism suggested by Nordhaus (2015), economic theory and empirical trends in trade agreements both contradict his assumption that all states benefit from raising tariffs. More often, such as in the IAEA or climate change protocol, issue linkage uses various forms of aid as a carrot to entice membership. In both positive or negative sanctions in a universal group and reducing membership to smaller groups, these theories recommend changing the issue scope so that cooperation can be treated as a club good for provision by a subgroup of states rather than as universal cooperation for public good provision.

This leads to the question of how states design the exclusion mechanism for international institutions. To address fears of free riding and cheating, membership conditions should represent a significant hurdle such that those unwilling to comply with the rules will not become members (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal, 2001). Lower barriers to entry would be expected for coordination games like standard-setting, where wider participation generates more benefits. This leads to contradictory predictions for membership provisions when cooperation involves both distributional and enforcement challenges (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal, 2001, p. 796).

The trade-off between depth of rules and breadth of participation can be considerable in the face of diverse state interests. The optimal size of an IGO depends on the enforcement concerns and the distribution of gains

from cooperation in an issue area as well as on the preferences of states (e.g. Martin, 1992; Drezner, 2007; Koremenos, 2016). A small group with similar preferences can more readily reach agreement for cooperation and faces fewer monitoring problems (Kahler, 1992; Downs and Rocke, 1995; Thompson and Verdier, 2014). This justifies rigorous screening based on performance capacity. In the context of public goods provision, however, a smaller group also means that other states can free ride as they choose not to contribute to cooperation at the high level demanded (Stone, Slantchev, and London, 2008). The substantive significance of "deep" agreements diminishes due to the limited number of participants. A larger membership gains from pooling resources and taking advantage of the economies of scale, which is the rationale for cooperation through formal organizations in the first place (Abbott and Snidal, 1998).

Where international relations theories highlight distributional conflict over accession, they build the expectation for international organizations to sort states into subgroups with similar preferences on the regulated issue. Downs, Rocke, and Barsoom (1998) suggest the optimal pathway for cooperation outcomes lies in *sequential liberalization*, whereby small groups set the rules and gradually expand to admit new members after their preferences have converged. Gray, Lindstädt, and Slapin (2017) model enlargement scenarios in which the location of the original group and applicants on a unidimensional space determine the probability for enlargement. Small and homogenous founding groups can achieve stable enlargement without changing the organization, whereas a more diverse set of founding states may find that misperceptions about applicants lead to enlargement that changes the level of ambition in agreements. Both of these theories focus on the unidimensional preferences of members in the issue regulated by the regime. Voeten (2021) contends that the differences among states lie within a low-dimensional space that can be defined in terms of support for the Western liberal order. Viola (2020) develops a theory of how states manage diversity through a strategy of *assimilative multilateralism*, with entry conditional on conformity within a specific range of issues. These theories follow the logic that similarity supports cooperation, but leave open the question of how states coalesce around similar interests within the regime issue area or broader world order.

The institutional design theories reviewed here highlight the importance of studying conditions for entry. Yet they cannot answer why so few IGOs apply rigorous screening. Letting in noncompliers lowers cooperation while adding to the burden of high cooperation states.

The Social Role of Organizations

States may look outside of the policies regulated by the regime when considering the benefits of collaboration with particular states. Association with other actors through organizational membership carries spillover effects. Joint membership forms an association that shapes investor perceptions and security coalitions (Gray, 2009; Brooks, Cunha, and Mosley, 2015; Henke, 2019). Following the foundational work of Bull (1977), I examine international society from a perspective that heeds both power and the dimensions that are based on a social process of interaction and shared community norms. Hooghe, Lenz, and Marks (2019, p. 2) make the critical point that "we need to consider how participants feel about being bound together in collective rule" through studying international governance as it serves functional and social purposes. They compare market traders to those bound in marriage to illustrate how the different perceptions of community could influence cooperation. This turns us to the question of group formation. Absent dating services, how do states form the right group with a sense of community? Membership decisions account for the probability of cooperation by the new entrant and the expected gains from establishing a closer association.

When members care about both the shared good and the attributes of other members, they may devise "discriminatory clubs" that select according to the desirability of the applicant and not just their expected contribution to cooperation outcomes (Cornes and Sandler, 1996, p. 385). As an example, members in a social club care not only about the entertainment activity itself but also about member composition. This changes the logic of cooperation. In most models of membership in institutions, the bargaining problem models anonymous states holding proportional contribution to cooperation based on their size and interests (e.g. Stone, Slantchev, and London, 2008). In discriminatory clubs, where the attributes of other actors are important to members, the utility of joining a club consists of two components—provision of goods by the club, and consumption of characteristics of other members (Cornes and Sandler, 1996, p. 385). When members care about *who* joins, there is "nonanonymous crowding" in the provision of the club good. The common example is a golf club, where members value association with those of high socioeconomic status as opposed to simply caring about the number of people using the course or their golf abilities. There are several reasons why governments should care about which states they form ties with through IGO membership.

First, membership defines legal status. Belonging to organizations forms the basis of a state's position in international society. Recognition by other states is necessary to establish international legal sovereignty, but there are no consistent rules guiding such recognition (Krasner, 1999, p. 15). Indeed, research on diplomatic recognition, which is the most basic status requirement, indicates that relational variables matter more than country attributes (Kinne, 2014; Duque, 2018).[10] In addition to diplomatic recognition by other states, membership in organizations such as the United Nations is one of the most visible forms of recognition. States that may otherwise not benefit from full rights of sovereignty in the sense of independent control of their territory may nonetheless gain equality through membership, such as the case of India being a member of the League of Nations and founding member of the United Nations while it remained a British colony. Diplomatic recognition reveals network effects in which states pattern their own decisions on those of other states that are seen as friends (Kinne, 2014, p. 248). Similar kinds of dependent decisions across IGOs occur, such as when membership in the United Nations forms a precondition for membership in many other organizations. Each additional membership can reinforce the extent to which a state enjoys recognition. As distinct from the specific benefits of the IGO, through supporting international legal sovereignty, IGO membership brings diffuse benefits that include both material and normative resources, such as prestige before domestic audiences from the appearance at international venues and reassurance to investors about certainty of contracts when dealing with a recognized state (Krasner, 1999, p. 16).

Second, membership creates peer groups. Through the activities of an organization, opportunities for interaction with other members increase and the norms of the organization shape behavior of members. States become identified with the organization such that the members' own reputation can be influenced by the reputation of fellow members of the organization. Both economic and security actors may respond to this reputation in ways that generate material consequences. Organizational membership can impact country risk ratings and bond yields. Dreher and Voigt (2011) find that independently of the quality of domestic institutions, membership in international organizations improves the country risk rating. Gray (2013) identifies peer effects in

10. Social identity theories may not readily apply to the formation of collective identity among states, but state recognition provides a first step in such a process. See the discussion by Greenhill (2008).

which a state joining an organization can be seen as a better or worse investment environment simply because of its association with a particular group of states through joint membership in a regional economic organization. She theorizes that investors use the IGO membership information to inform their risk assessment, and finds evidence that bond yields change in response to accession negotiations.

Third, membership establishes a forum for interaction. States build trust through social ties, which can occur irrespective of the issue area of cooperation and hold positive externalities for trade and security. The step to establishing closer relations through participation in a formal organization with joint governance creates opportunities for members both to learn more about each other and to form in-group identity. Indeed, Ingram, Robinson, and Busch (2005) find sociocultural IGOs promote trade as much as economic IGOs. Yet the quality and degree of interaction may vary depending on the institutional context and relative status of each additional tie for groups of states. Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom (2004) find that membership in structured IGOs with formal rules and procedures reduces the probability of conflict onset, while Hafner-Burton and Montgomery (2006) emphasize IGO membership holds pacifying effect conditional on how the IGO determines the social network position of a state. Taking a network approach to examine convergence of IGO membership, Kinne (2013a) shows that deepening ties across IGOs reduces the probability of militarized disputes. This could arise through states screening out conflict-prone states when making membership decisions (Donno, Metzger, and Russett, 2015). States that associate together in IGOs send informative signals about their type to both potential investors and disputants.

Across each of these dimensions, the attributes of other members shape the benefits of shared membership. States will want to be selective about whom they recognize as equal and associate with as a peer for greater interactions. They hold incentives to favor entry for states with desirable characteristics. Criteria for discrimination in social clubs range from income to race, but it is unclear what would be the equivalent criteria for desirable attributes of states within international society. Region, economic development, prestige, and security alliances all form potential bases for discrimination. Internal politics may elevate one dimension over another.

The promise of gains from status by association makes membership more attractive. A government could even decide to join an organization that offers few benefits from the provision of goods but yields large status gains from

association with a particular group of states. Classifications within organizations take on larger significance because of their role of sorting states into groups.[11] At the same time, members may screen out those who offer less benefits from association even when they could otherwise meet performance conditions for compliance with rules. This can be seen from data on networks of diplomatic recognition, whereby states cue off of central states' decisions more than of those on the periphery (Kinne, 2014).

States have reason to fear that they will be branded according to joint association with other states. Johnson (2011) argues that there is a process of *guilt by association*, whereby unfavorable views toward one member can lead to overall skepticism toward the organization as a whole. The perception that the hostile state holds institutional or ideational influence gives rise to such negative feelings, which is supported by evidence from public opinion polls. Gray (2013) further demonstrates that the strength of association with other states can have unexpected spillover; membership in a regional organization will impact bond yields, as members gain better reputation from joining an organization with low risk countries and suffer when joining an organization with high risk countries.

Group membership is how international society allocates status across states. But rather than being a uniform and objective metric, status by association varies according to the criteria used as the exclusion mechanism in group formation. Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth (2014, p. 375) define the concept:

> 'Status' is an attribute of an individual or social role that refers to position vis-a-vis a comparison group; status informs patterns of deference and expectations of behavior, rights, and responsibilities. Status categories may be dichotomous (e.g. membership in a group) or rank based (e.g. position in a hierarchy). A change in an actor's status implies a change in at least one other actor's status, either because of a change in rank or because of a (perhaps slight) change in the meaning of membership in a group.

The connection to membership is clear—status is a function of community recognition, and joint membership in organizations is one visible signal of such recognition. While diplomatic recognition is the baseline of status, membership in organizations offers a more differentiated perspective. Paul, Larson,

11. In one such example, states seek to "graduate" from World Bank lending programs despite the prospect of less foreign aid, and undertake more political reforms for this goal (Carnegie and Samii, 2017).

and Wohlforth (2014, p. 7) define status as "beliefs about a state's ranking on valued attributes," such as wealth or diplomatic clout, and note that status manifests itself in international politics through "membership in a defined club of actors." Elite clubs like the G7 or the permanent five members of the UN Security Council are considered status markers.

The pursuit of status has long served as motivation of states. From Thucydides to contemporary scholarship, theories account for wars fought in the name of honor and prestige. Keohane (2010) advocates "esteem" as a source of incentives for governments to support climate change policies. Although there are different nuances across terms, one can reasonably aggregate honor, prestige, and esteem as forms of status. Furthermore, the rival nature of status can also be understood through its relative position. If all states are members of an organization, membership no longer confers status to one state relative to another. Finally, the status by association in IGO membership is differentiated by the quality of other members rather than simply by an attribute of one state.

Notably, status as a motivation for entry into organizations differs from both the socialization that occurs *after* joining and scripted behavior. Johnston (2001) argues that institutions represent a social context in which shaming and backpatting influence states toward compliance. This socialization process, however, depends on the state having first joined the organization. To the extent only pro-social states choose to join the organization and are allowed to accede by members, constructivist theory about socialization in IGOs is equally subject to the selection bias concerns that face functional theories of institutions. In his study of China's decision to engage with international institutions for security cooperation, Johnston (2007) argues that concerns about avoiding isolation and taking conformist positions were more important than the impact of proposed commitments on relative power. In his theory, the first step occurs as mimicking, when states follow the behavior of others, based on the assumption that if others are joining the institution it must present benefits. After entry, states are then socialized through interaction as they respond to social rewards and punishments and build their own internal organizations to support their work within the institution. A government that once was content to be isolated, through membership becomes attuned to its position within the group in ways that make it susceptible to social pressures and lock in a new direction of cooperative policies. But the theory does not answer the question about why states choose to mimic one group of states and not another.

Placing social interaction at the center of theories, constructivist international relations scholarship offers several insights related to membership in organizations. In constructivist theories, the historical context of relations among states and the decision processes within states exhibit path dependence and cognitive biases that differ from simple calculation of interests. Organizations may serve as an arena for rule-bound behavior that follows a logic of appropriateness (March and Olsen, 1998). From this perspective, states join organizations because that is what states do, irrespective of the costs and benefits of specific organizational membership decisions. Current members find themselves caught in their own rhetoric of inclusion and cooperation, and are unable to turn away applicants (Schimmelfennig, 2001). Variation in membership patterns could arise through channels of emulation, whereby states follow the IGO membership decisions of influential regional leaders.

When states join organizations as part of a script for modernity to follow the behavior of other states, membership in organizations takes on larger purpose than the simple provision of benefits. As described by March and Olsen (1998, p. 964), organizations like the OECD or European Union are "creators of meaning in general and more specifically of identities." Through joint membership, deep ties emerge that could influence state preferences. Constructivist theory emphasizes the possibility for states to set aside self-interest within a larger collective identity (Wendt, 1994). This collective identity emerges from repeated interaction. These theories of socialization acknowledge the importance of forming ties in an IGO. Next we consider how security underlies the choices about which states seek closer association—the choice of whom to mimic and what attributes to value in cooperation partners arises from geopolitical alignment.

1.3 Geopolitical Alignment as Basis for IGO Cooperation

States take sides within international politics. The shorthand term for this is *geopolitical alignment,* which refers to a like-minded approach to world affairs and especially to international security problems. The concept overlaps with alliance structures but can differ in important ways. States ranging from Switzerland to Israel fall within a sphere of common security interests with the United States while never having established alliance ties. The states of Southeast Asia have formed a like-minded approach to security that emphasizes non-intervention in domestic affairs even while their alliance

affiliations differ. During the Cold War, the nonaligned movement countries engaged in security cooperation by the joint decision not to become allies with either the United States or USSR. The concept of geopolitical alignment differs from that of ideology because of the defining role of security. Whereas liberal ideology differentiates between democratic and authoritarian regimes or market and non-market economies, geopolitical alignment supports cooperation with any political regime type. Likewise, ideology prioritizes differences in economic policy orientation that are not significant from a security standpoint—partnering with states that uphold liberal markets or with those with more intervention for developmental or socialist policies may serve security interests despite vast differences in ideology.

Two features of geopolitical alignment make it the favored selection criterion in the politics of joining international organizations. First, alignment offers information about reliability. Second, it aggregates interests to support bargaining. The former reduces fears that a prospective cooperation partner will cheat while the latter encourages a broader view of the distributional gains from cooperation. Here I briefly take up each in turn.

As an information tool, geopolitical alignment provides a valuable cue about the quality of cooperation expected from another country. Selecting partners for cooperation requires an assurance about future behavior. States that change regulatory policies or pool resources expose themselves to risk if the others fail to comply. But since compliance types are difficult to judge ex ante, states must seek information from other sources. The accumulation of security cooperation reflected in activities ranging from alliances to military training exercises and joint foreign policy statements or voting in the United Nations provides many opportunities for states to learn about the geopolitical alignment of prospective partners. Their success coordinating on issues related to security builds trust to support subsequent cooperation on new challenges.

Equally importantly, geopolitical alignment expands the bargaining range to include more issues. States that share interests for foreign policy can more readily generate mutual gains from trade-offs between economic and security policies. More expansive cooperation is possible when linkages support sharing economic gains. This can facilitate bargaining even beyond the narrow sphere of allies and for cases where the economic exchange is asymmetric. States may tolerate cheating or unequal distributional outcomes within the confines of the regime in exchange for wider benefits across the relationship.

The role of shared security interests, to provide information and linkage channels, differs from the conventional view in the literature on cooperation. In his foundational theory of international regimes, Keohane (1984) focuses on the role of enforcement and issue linkages carried out *within* the regime jurisdiction as ways to overcome the information asymmetry that hinders cooperation. Instead, my argument highlights how political relations that exist prior to and *outside* of the regime provide information about expected compliance. When states let non-regime issues such as security determine membership choices, they open themselves to less effective regimes through overexpansion, as they let in unqualified applicants, or underprovision of cooperation, when they leave out otherwise qualified entrants.

In the leading realist perspective on overlapping security and economic interests, Gowa (1994) theorizes that the security externality of trade motivates allies to trade more with each other in order to share the income gains from economic exchange.[12] But this logic applies to the relationship between pairs of states where common security interests are certain, such as bilateral trade between allies during the Cold War. It cannot explain the surge of institutionalized cooperation after the end of the Cold War, when there is *less* certainty about which states will be allies or adversaries. The puzzle remains of why states would commit to multilateral cooperation when their security relationship could change. Indeed, within the context of the long-term commitment to repeated action in an IGO, a security externality could worsen the bargaining problem by increasing distributional stakes (Fearon, 1998).

The security linkage that underlies multilateral institutions offers an alternative logic to one based on principled beliefs. In his theory about ideology and multilateralism, Voeten (2021) argues that the United States uses multilateralism to advance its ideological principles. In order to move the status quo in the preferred policy direction, the United States coerces those joining institutions to follow regime rules as part of a strategy to diffuse liberal principles of free tade and democracy. Screening for shared beliefs at entry and upholding high compliance with policies would advance those goals. But security linkage has no such restrictions—patronage politics to favor allies could even motivate states to lower standards for entry and compliance. Indeed, U.S.

12. Gowa (1994) shows that trade gains form a positive security externality when allies trade, in contrast to the negative externality arising from trade between adversaries. The bipolar structure of an international system supports open markets more than a multipolar system because the security externality motivates altruism between allies in their trade relations (Gowa, 1989).

allies have been shown to undertake less economic reform when entering the GATT or receiving IMF loans than their counterparts (Stone, 2008; Davis and Wilf, 2017).

It is difficult to differentiate between the ideological and security logic. Shared values and beliefs about the organization of society form a foundation for cooperation on security, which contributes to the overlap between geopolitical alignment and ideology. During the Cold War this overlap occurred in the bipolar division of competing alliances between communist and capitalist sides. One might expect that the role of alliances in shaping entry into multilateralism would end after the Cold War, along with the decline of the ideological basis for alliances. But it has not. States are still more likely to enter IGOs with their allies. The security logic of geopolitical alignment to build a coalition through multilateralism remains amidst the uncertainty of a changing order.

Joining international organizations together strengthens security coalitions. In hierarchical relations of exchange, states reinforce their ties through offering side payments to support security cooperation (Lake, 2009). This process is easier when states share membership in organizations so they can exchange favors on priority issues (Henke, 2019). As fellow members in an IGO, states can use patronage or bribery to gain leverage over critical swing states in a broad security coalition. Research confirms that within multilateral economic institutions, allied states lend more and trade more with each other than with other members (Thacker, 1999; Gowa and Kim, 2005; Stone, 2008; Dreher et al., 2013).

Policy coordination outside of defense policies also helps states to signal intentions of goodwill and commitment to security partners (Morrow, 2000). Henke (2019) shows that diplomatic embeddedness through the exchanges that take place in multilateral fora support the formation and maintenance of multilateral military coalitions. Linking economic and security cooperation has also been shown to reduce conflict within alliances and increase alliance performance (Powers, 2004; Poast, 2013). Joint association in an international organization sends a message of solidarity.

At the same time, excluding rivals denies them the benefits of the organization. States have less leverage to punish a rival after it has joined a multilateral organization. Indeed, according to Carnegie (2014), rivals receive a large boost to their trade after entry into the trade regime. Multilateral norms do not prevent biased allocation within organizations, but they make it more difficult to restrict access to a state than if it were a nonmember. Exclusion of rivals also signals outsider status by isolating them from routine diplomatic exchanges.

The status benefits of IGO membership also engender cooperation among allies. From basic recognition of sovereignty to major power status, IGO membership converts relationships into a broader standing within international society. Reputation may generalize across members in the institution. This can deliver additional benefits as states improve their standing in the eyes of investors or gain credibility vis a vis hostile states. Keeping these benefits within a security community is optimal. The social interaction amplifies the preference for association with security partners. Choosing to form closer relations by joint membership arises from willingness to engage in close interaction and share cooperation benefits. Joint membership also informs all states about the social categories of which states work together. States will value status by association with security partners more than status by association with other states.

In the domestic politics of international cooperation, accession offers a window for security to take priority. Diplomats and top leaders take charge of treaty negotiations. Given their mandate over foreign policy, these actors have incentives to allocate significant attention to security stakes and diplomacy (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2012; Milner and Tingley, 2015). As these negotiators coordinate with domestic actors over treaty ratification, they can emphasize geopolitical alignment with other states to build support outside of the direct constituencies for the agreement. Policies within the regulated issue areas confront stakeholders lobbying for gains and resisting costly adjustment. Issue linkage offers an effective tactic for breaking through divisions. In this case, joining organizations helps diplomats and leaders with strategic goals frame the broader stakes in cooperation and avoid zero-sum single-issue politics. The public may favor cooperation with allies independently of the specific issues in the treaty (Carnegie and Gaikwad, 2022). Adding potential gains from the security dimension makes entry more likely than if partners are seen as rivals or the IGO is evaluated only in terms of the issue area.

From a coalition-building view of IGO membership, states seek additional leverage in their relations with other states by broadening and deepening their sphere of connections through IGO membership ties. As a form of balancing, strategic use of IGO membership represents a useful tactic for both strong and weak states. It also remains relevant during periods of low certainty over alliance relationships, which calls for keeping options open on whom to be able to influence. This supports an expectation that many states will design IGOs as discriminatory clubs and use that flexibility to favor their security partners. There will be less variation by issue area or distribution of power

than implied by competing explanations focused on cooperation problems and distribution of power.

To evaluate the argument, the book will test three core claims about how states discriminate over membership. The first hypothesis addresses the rules and decision-making procedures that form a background condition for discrimination. The second hypothesis looks at the nature of bias that shapes membership patterns. The third considers how the entry process allows for differential costs of entry.

Hypothesis 1, Discretionary Rules: States will design IGO accession rules to provide discretion over selection. More international organizations will follow the design of club models, with an exclusion mechanism based on voting rather than policy evaluation of rule compliance. At the design stage, it is difficult to define ex ante the in-group, and states want the flexibility to engage in discriminatory practices. Therefore, they leave the entry qualifications vague while assuring control over selecting who gets in. The selection could favor anything—security, culture, economic interests, or compliance—because the rules do not specify. The second hypothesis explains the geopolitical logic that drives the pattern of membership in IGOs and is the primary focus of the book.

Hypothesis 2, Geopolitical Discrimination: States with shared geopolitical alignment form organizations together and are more likely to join the same organizations. In this relational theory, states discriminate to favor others based on their preexisting security ties. Shared alliances and similar voting in the United Nations serve as proxies for measuring like-minded orientation to security issues. Alignment with other members and not just the largest power can support entry and continued membership. Yet non-allies and even rivals can and do join IGOs—the hypotheses are probabilistic and not deterministic. As states consider cooperation partners, non-security gains may outweigh the security factors. In the sequencing of member expansion, early entry by allies will consolidate the voting core and rules, while non-allies must wait longer and do more to win approval. The third hypothesis explains the conditions for entry.

Hypothesis 3, Favoring Friends: States with shared geopolitical alignment with other members will make fewer reforms as a condition of entry. This final hypothesis is nested within the first two because discretionary terms of membership allow variable conditions across applicants, and lowering the bar for friends

facilitates early entry. Holding up non-allied states until they meet a higher threshold accommodates mixed incentives about who can join—as in societal discrimination where the out-group applicant must be twice as qualified on performance basis to overcome the bias against them.

The argument holds implications over the politics for ending membership as well. Geopolitical alignment supports ongoing membership after having joined an organization. The discretionary approach to accession extends to rules for exit and expulsion. States are not required to prove compliance in order to remain in the club.

Empirical analysis will compare the role of geopolitical alignment with the demand for membership based on interests within the issue area regulated by the IGO. The large body of literature on functional theories of institutions posits that the desire to achieve mutual gains in the face of market failure motivates cooperation in international institutions; this leads to the baseline expectation that interests, information, and policies within the issue area should explain who joins. Since geopolitical alignment and interests within the issue area overlap entirely in the area of security organizations, looking outside security organizations is necessary to test the hypotheses. In the area of economic organizations one can compare how economic interests contribute to expected benefits from membership relative to the impact of geopolitical alignment. Supporting evidence would include examples where states that have little engagement in international trade join the trade regime at the encouragement of an ally. Further evidence would include internal statements from diplomats and security hawks in support of joining the IGO, and lenient provisions to allow entry without requiring substantial economic policy reforms. Raising non-trade issues and extra concessions as a condition for membership to block entry by a rival state represents the exclusionary side of discrimination. In contrast, support for functional theories would include evidence that most of the variation in membership arises from differences in the trade interests of states. The domestic political interests would largely revolve around debate among different economic ministries and business groups, and accession negotiations would extract substantial concessions to ensure conformity with rules. There would also be divergent expectations about the conditions that would lead states to exit or be expelled from an organization. Whereas the discriminatory club model of IGO membership suggests exit would be largely independent of compliance with IGO rules, the functional model of institutions implies that exit and expulsion would occur after a period of noncompliance.

Although the argument implies that states expect to deepen cooperation with other states through shared membership, this book will not evaluate the effects of entry. Nevertheless, there is a dynamic where states are selecting based not simply on existing security but also on the security relationships they want to develop by means of shared membership. The politics of engagement with Eastern Europe or newly independent states during the Cold War stand out as such examples. At the two ends of the spectrum of geopolitical alignment, there are clear incentives to favor allies and exclude rivals. But for swing states there may be differences in approach, as diplomats are making bets on the future trajectory of a state and trying to shift that trajectory. The hypotheses above can only partially capture this strategic dynamic: flexible rules maximize discretion for borderline cases and on average those that are closer in geopolitical alignment will be more likely to join, with lower conditions. Many of the hardest cases to predict will be those where contextual factors will shape perceptions of whether geopolitical alignment of the state is in transition.

1.4 Chapter Overview

The book proceeds to further develop the logic of the argument and explore the patterns of membership politics. Moving from the general theory of international organizations as discriminatory clubs to applications in the context of specific international organizations and country experiences, I will balance conceptual approaches with the nuance of history and mixed motives. Where the aggregate analysis of international organizations uses proxies to measure geopolitical alignment, case studies will probe more deeply the various forms of in-group identity on security issues and the interaction between domestic politics and international cooperation. Although unable to leverage exogenous shocks or randomized experiments for rigorous identification of causal effects, the sum of descriptive inferences across mixed methods analysis supports the hypotheses and builds an agenda for future research.

The central research question of the book asks how states choose their cooperation partners. This introductory chapter has laid out the core claim that geopolitical alignment shapes multilateral cooperation on non-security issues through membership politics. When international organizations become discriminatory clubs, they set the boundaries for cooperation among a subset of states chosen for their affinity. Security forms the basis for affinity in this study, but the larger claim contends that like-minded states cooperate

by means of biased membership decisions. Viewing membership as a choice of association within international society differs from the conventional expectation that international organizations represent contracts to uphold the interests of powerful states and coordinate common interests within an issue area.

International organizations are a heterogenous set of institutions that vary in size, rules, and issue mandate. The research design of the book takes different approaches to assess geopolitical alignment relative to other conditions when controlling for some of the features that differ among organizations. Chapter 2 compares the design of all IGO charters, looking at how discretion appears across IGOs in different issue areas and with different membership size. The empirical analysis of membership decisions in chapters 3–5 focuses on economic IGOs to evaluate whether security interests unrelated to the mandate of the organization emerge as a factor over membership alongside economic interests. Chapter 6 looks from a country perspective at membership decisions across all organizations over time. Then the book turns to IGOs with two different types of entry rules: chapter 7 focuses on organizations with a regional focus, while chapter 8 looks at those that explicitly embrace the principle of open eligibility for all states. Across this range of institutional settings, geopolitical alignment emerges as a consistent factor in membership. This is not limited to the domain of global institutions or those within Europe; organizations large and small and those across different regions heed the pull of geopolitical alignment when considering members. Yet other factors also matter, and statistical analyses with control variables and case studies with attention to different narratives reflect on these mixed motives.

Chapter 2 develops the theory of membership that makes IGOs form discriminatory clubs. States seek both gains from cooperation and status from association with other states. This dual purpose explains the form of membership provisions that are designed to promote cooperation among a community of states. The central importance of geopolitics motivates the prevalence of discretion over member approval. States retain control to choose with whom they cooperate.

The chapter goes on to test the hypothesis about discretionary design of membership provisions with a comprehensive analysis of IGO charters and their terms for membership selection. A typology of IGO membership provisions illustrates variation across the dimensions of participation mandate and conditionality terms. These concepts are mapped onto accession rules for 322 international organizations using a new dataset. For issues that represent

global public goods, universalistic principles underlie membership with open eligibility for all states. Most join easily. Nevertheless, screening for entry into universal organizations determines who counts as a state within international society, and so even universal organizations include some selection. Attention is given to how design varies by issue area, but there are surprisingly consistent features across issues. For the majority of issues that constitute club goods where exclusion is possible, states design IGO membership provisions to select a smaller group of states. Surprisingly few organizations screen for compliance based on objective performance standards or policy review. Instead, vague eligibility terms, negotiable terms, and the requirement of member approval characterize club standards for membership. I argue that states choose this design structure in order to maximize their flexibility to have informal norms and geopolitical interests operate as de facto criteria for who joins. Alongside the discretionary approach to accepting new members, IGOs rarely terminate membership over noncompliance. This chapter explores why states refrain from following reciprocity strategies that would call for threatening to expel states that repeatedly reject IGO rules. Analysis of IGO charters examines which types of IGOs include provisions for expulsion and exit. The infrequency of member suspension for noncompliance upholds the logic that membership in an IGO confers a form of citizenship within society rather than a simple contract.

Chapter 3 evaluates the second hypothesis that geopolitics correlates with membership.[13] Looking at multilateral economic IGO membership offers a sharper test, since the substantive focus of the organization itself does not require coordination of security policies. We use data on alliances and UN voting similarity to measure geopolitical alignment, and compare the geopolitics hypothesis with the benchmark model that organization membership reflects economic interests measured by the trade ties between countries. Analyzing membership patterns for 231 multilateral economic organizations from 1949 to 2014, we use a finite mixture model to examine the relative importance of economic and security considerations, finding that geopolitical alignment accounts for nearly *half* of the membership decisions in economic institutions. The geopolitical origins of IGO membership represent an important mechanism connecting the security and economic behaviors of states.

13. This chapter is based on an article co-authored with Tyler Pratt, "The Forces of Attraction: How Security Interests Shape Membership in Economic Institutions," *Review of International Organizations* 2021.

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Note: Page numbers in *italics* refer to figures and tables.