

Comparing Regional Arrangements: The Significance of Security Cultures

Abstract

Though their participants are often facing similar security challenges, regional arrangements tend to differ markedly in their collective declaratory positions and agreed operational responses. Yet despite such divergence there has been remarkably little cross-regional comparison and arguably even less effort to think about how to explain the variance characterising the collective responses to security challenges developed by different regional arrangements. This article seeks to address these lacunae by, first, identifying criteria for the comparison of regional arrangements and, second, pointing to the significance of ‘security cultures’ that is, interlocking beliefs about the legitimacy and efficacy of particular approaches to security. It argues that these security cultures operate as analytically and empirically distinct ideational influences on the collective decisions and action taken by participants of regional arrangements. To illustrate the argument, we discuss the cases of the African Union (AU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In the first section of the article we introduce a framework for comparing the security practices of regional arrangements. The second reviews the value of conventional theoretical approaches to studying variation in the roles of regional arrangements and sets out our thoughts on a significant determinant of the collective action of these arrangements: regionally specific security cultures. In the following two sections, we then identify core values of the prevailing security culture in Africa and Southeast Asia and its associated discourse, with reference to the AU and the ASEAN respectively.

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Since the end of the Cold War, numerous analysts have commented upon the regionalization of international security (Buzan 1991, Fawcett and Hurrell 1995, Lake and Morgan 1997, Buzan and Wæver 2003). The growing focus on security cooperation at the regional level has both reflected and been driven by at least three interrelated realities and developments. First, the nature of many contemporary security challenges is regional in scope since most threats tend to travel more easily over shorter distances than larger ones (Buzan and Wæver 2003:4). Recent wars, for instance, have straddled state borders in the Mano River, Great Lakes and Horn regions of Africa. Transnational disease, criminal activity and environmental catastrophes also increasingly present regional challenges. Second, the United Nations (UN) Security Council's practice of adopting a flexible and increasingly broad interpretation of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security has resulted in a higher tempo of peace operations and mediation efforts which, in turn, has required the UN to develop partnerships with a variety of regional and other institutions (Bellamy and Williams 2005, Durch and Berkman 2006). Third, regional arrangements¹ themselves have become more proactive in addressing security issues, although not always in light of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Relevant efforts by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) illustrate this (see Moore 2007, Howorth 2007, Adebajo 2004, Caballero-Anthony 2005). In short, although the UN remains the primary institution concerned with the management of international peace and security, regional arrangements are playing greater roles in this process (Alagappa and Inoguchi 1999, Pugh and Sidhu 2003, Diehl and Lepgold 2003, Diehl and Cho 2006).

Even a cursory glance at the responses of regional arrangements to contemporary security issues suggests significant variation in their practices. In relation to military peace operations, for example, some regional arrangements have proved far more willing to conduct these than others. The EU and the NATO have since 1995 conducted military operations in the name of "maintaining international peace and security" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo/Serbia, Macedonia, the

¹ In referring to regional arrangement we draw on Hans Kelsen's definition as 'an international agreement entered into by some, not all, Members of the United Nations' (Kelsen 1951: 162).

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Afghanistan. These cases are particularly noteworthy because both the EU and NATO have been willing to conduct security operations outside of their own geographical area. In Africa, since 1990, four regional and sub-regional arrangements – the AU, ECOWAS, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) – have conducted 12 armed peace operations: in Liberia (twice), Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d’Ivoire, Central African Republic, the DRC, Lesotho, Burundi, Sudan, the Comoros and Somalia. In Central and East Asia, on the other hand, as well as in Latin America, regional arrangements have refrained from conducting such corporate military peace operations.

This variation in the security practice of regional arrangements might simply reflect that different regions face different threats. These differences can easily be overplayed, however. Indeed, parts of Africa and East Asia often face similar threats, particularly insurgency, terrorism, or even maritime piracy (IISS 2007). Alternatively, variation in their respective security practice might simply be considered the inevitable result of dissimilar collective capacities and capabilities at the disposal of regional arrangements (some scholars identify the lack of such capacities and capabilities as an impediment to cooperation e.g. Fawcett 2004: 443). Yet again, in terms of corporate capabilities there has so far not been much separating regional arrangements in the developing world.

The important question then is how analysts might explain the variation in security practices of regional arrangements. We are especially interested in establishing whether ideational or *cultural* factors matter and, if they do, whether these are either generally recognized as regional or primarily linked to the domestic environment of individual participants. We feel justified in this pursuit because, in spite of the growing empirical literature on regional arrangements and their respective security cooperation ‘there has been surprisingly little theoretically informed comparative analysis of the phenomenon’ and ‘there is room for much more theory-guided, comparative empirical research on the subject’ (Bailes and Cottey 2006 195, 198; see also Duffield 2006).

To explore variation in how regional arrangements respond to security threats, two steps are necessary. The first concerns designing a conceptual framework that allows for comparative analysis of how regional arrangements respond to diverse threats and challenges. The second is about clarifying what theories we can draw on

to account for the variation in responses by regional arrangements to broadly similar threats.

Consequently, our paper is divided into four sections. The first briefly identifies four possible dimensions along which the security practice of regional arrangements may be distinguished. To illustrate the usefulness of the design of the comparative framework, the paper juxtaposes how the AU and ASEAN have responded to broadly similar security challenges. The second section briefly reviews established theoretical approaches to studying security institutions and regional arrangements to provide the setting in which we lay out our thoughts on regionally specific security cultures. In the following two sections we identify the main characteristics of the prevailing security culture in Africa and Southeast Asia, with reference to the AU and ASEAN respectively.² We conclude that shared security cultures discernibly shape the security practices of regional arrangements and hence deserve greater attention by security analysts.

Analysing Regional Arrangements

The literature has distinguished between several kinds of security institutions over time and space, including highly institutionalized alliances, security management institutions, alignments, and diplomatic conferences (Wallander and Keohane 1999: 26-29). These are ideal types that are based on comparison along three major dimensions: the degree of their institutionalization (how far expectations about appropriate behaviour is shared, the specific and enduring nature of rules, and functional differentiation for individual participants); whether they are organized exclusively or inclusively (as alliances or collective security arrangements); and whether they are exclusive alliances designed to cope with threats or inclusive security arrangements concerned with risks.

While literature on security institutions is relevant for our purposes, we are primarily interested in the ways in which regional arrangements have been dealing with security issues and the variation that can exist in their respective practices. We

² The reasons for focusing on the AU and ASEAN are fourfold: first, a significant number of the world's inter-state and intra-state security issues are located in these two regions; second, the significant variation in the involvement of African and Southeast Asian regional arrangements in meeting security challenges raises important analytical and practical political questions; third, neither the AU nor ASEAN have a major power as one of its members; and, fourth, a direct application of the security culture literature vis-à-vis the AU has yet to be attempted.

propose that in order to highlight this variation, it is useful to first identify a broader set of criteria by which the practical roles of regional arrangements can be distinguished. In this context, it is not necessarily very useful to differentiate regional arrangements according to their commitment to, and success in, addressing only external security threats. This is because most regional arrangements, particularly those with a comprehensive regional membership, were neither solely formed because of external threats, nor are they necessarily preoccupied with such threats. It is also not necessarily helpful to compare regional security arrangements with reference to possible original security rationales because in many cases security institutions adapt considerably over time, as happened in the case of NATO (e.g. Tuschhoff 1999). Instead we propose to compare regional arrangements across the following range of criteria.

First, we ask whether regional arrangements play any explicit role, formal or informal, in dealing with political-security disputes among two or more of the participants. We suggest that regional arrangements differ in terms of the development of mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts among their members. This criterion thus assesses the extent to which the arrangement is committed to maintaining *interstate security* within its region.

Second, we compare regional arrangements according to whether they deal with *intrastate conflict* within one of their participants. Intrastate conflicts may involve unconstitutional changes of government, state formation and ethnic-separatist conflicts, or civil wars. We suggest that a key difference is the extent to which regional arrangements pay attention to human security and democratic governance as opposed to state and/or regime security. This criterion thus assesses the extent to which a regional arrangement is committed to promoting human-centred security in the first instance.

Third, we assess the extent, depth and nature of security and military cooperation within regional arrangements (on which see Bailes and Cottey 2006: 202-11). Such cooperation might for example take place to counter transnational challenges. Here, we draw a distinction between *light* and *deep security cooperation*. Light security cooperation involves such activities as defence diplomacy, military training and exchanges, or confidence building measures among the members. Deep security cooperation, on the other hand, implies a more significant attempt to promote a high degree of interoperability between the armed forces, joint operations, or the

convergence of the security policies or military doctrine of members/participants, and even collective defence arrangements. This criterion thus assesses how far the regional arrangement is committed to collective or common foreign and security or defence policies among its participants.

Fourth, we compare whether regional arrangements are prepared to address security threats beyond their own borders through out-of-area operations. This criterion assesses the extent to which the arrangement is willing to act in the name of global, not just regional, security concerns. Applying this analytical framework to Africa and Southeast Asia highlights considerable variation regarding security practices of the AU and ASEAN.

The African Union's Recent Security Practices

The AU has developed a range of instruments that allow it to engage in mediation, facilitation and peacekeeping, as well as quiet diplomacy and, sometimes, public criticism of conflicting members. In practice, the Union has engaged in mediatory roles in numerous inter-member disputes, including its long-standing involvement in the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, or, more recently, the conflicts between Rwanda and the DRC, and Chad and Sudan.

The AU has also defined a wide range of internal or intra-member issues as security challenges and devised new instruments to respond to them (see AU 2002, 2004a). In practice, the Union has engaged in five types of activities in response to security challenges within its member states. First, it has taken action in response to unconstitutional changes of governments, or *coups d'état*. In response to recent coups, in Togo (February 2005) and Mauritania (August 2005), the AU has publicly criticised the juntas concerned, called for the return to constitutional government, and suspended the state concerned from participation in the activities of the Union. The Union has also condemned attempts to unseat an incumbent regime as occurred in the case of Chad (AU 2006d).

Second, the AU has engaged in operations to ensure the smooth conduct of electoral processes within its members. Although these operations have usually been limited to observer delegations, the Union's Mission for Support to the Elections in the Comoros (AMISEC) was more substantial, comprising of election observers plus a South African-led force of 462 military and civilian police personnel (AU 2006a).

During the second round of elections, the force was bolstered by an additional 800 troops.

Third, the AU has engaged in activities intended to assist in the resolution of civil wars within its member states. The most important of these have been the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), which comprised over 3,000 troops (2003-04) and the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), which now involves over 7,000 personnel (2004-present). Beyond peace operations, the Union has also played a mediatory role in civil wars, including recently in Côte d'Ivoire and Somalia. In the Somali case, the AU defined the situation there as a problem 'for the security and stability of the region as a whole' (AU 2006d: 2) and called for an exception to be made to the UN Security Council's arms embargo on Somalia to allow for an African peace operation (AU 2005d). On occasion, the Union has also publicly criticised particular parties in the continent's civil wars by, for example, condemning the Sudanese government's decision to arm *janjaweed* militias in Darfur (AU 2004c,d,e; 2005a,b) and activities of dissident soldiers in eastern DRC (AU 2004b).

Fourthly, the AU has defined 'insecurity' within one of its members as a security challenge for the organization as a whole. This occurred most recently in relation to the situation in the north of the Central African Republic where instability and violence had prompted an influx of refugees into south Chad (AU 2006b).

These practices are linked to a remit for the Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC) to promote human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law within its member states; peacemaking mechanisms such as good offices, mediation and enquiry; preventative mechanisms that permit the Union to anticipate and prevent conflicts, genocide and crimes against humanity; and sanctions whenever an unconstitutional change of government occurs (see AU 2002: Art. 3f, 4c, 6c, 7a, 7g respectively). Testifying to considerable ambition, the AU has also attempted to create standby forces comprised of five regional brigades capable of dealing with six potential crisis management scenarios, including military intervention without host government consent (see below). Indeed, the AU has institutionalised the right to forcibly intervene in one of its member states on humanitarian grounds, or what Article 4(h) of the AU Charter refers to as 'grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity'. However, the AU has yet to undertake any such intervention.

In relation to regional security cooperation, the AU has explicitly modelled its activities on the idea of collective security (AU 2002: Preamble, Art. 2(1); AU 2004a: Preamble para. 12, paras. 9, 13, 15, 16; AU 2005e: Art. 2c) and ‘the spirit of collective defence’ (AU 2004a: para. 10). It has therefore sought to develop a range of instruments to heighten security cooperation between its member states, most notably the Common African Defence and Security Policy;³ its early warning system (AU 2002: Art. 12); the African Standby Force (AU 2002: Art. 13); and treaties on military cooperation.

The policy framework to establish an ASF (and African Chiefs of Defense Staff) was agreed in May 2003 with a view to managing complex peace operations by 30 June 2010. The building blocs of the ASF are brigades developed in Africa’s five regions. These brigades are supposed to cope with six potential crisis management scenarios (AU 2005c):

1. AU/regional military advice to a political mission;
2. AU/regional observer missions co-deployed with a UN mission;
3. stand-alone AU/regional observer mission;
4. AU/regional peacekeeping force for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions (and peacebuilding);
5. AU peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional peacekeeping missions, including those involving low-level spoilers;
6. AU intervention e.g. in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly.

In practice, the Union has had difficulty moving beyond Scenario 4, although its peace operations in Burundi and Sudan have involved wider tasks than traditional peacekeeping missions such as disarmament of combatants and civilian protection. Finally, the AU has developed treaties to enhance regional security cooperation. For instance, in January 2005, the AU agreed a *Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact*. This not only calls for deep cooperation but also seeks to embed such activity within frameworks conducive to promoting the democratic peace.

To date, the AU has not engaged in any out-of-area operations, although it has made occasional statements on issues beyond Africa such as the Iraq crisis, reform of the UN, and the Arab-Israeli conflicts. Although the vast majority of AU members

³ In accordance with Article 4(d) of the AU Constitutive Act.

that contribute to UN peace operations have done so within the African continent, some states have deployed small numbers of troops and civilian police to UN missions operating outside the continent.

ASEAN's Recent Security Practices

ASEAN states have in recent years continued their longstanding practice to foster regional stability and security through political-security dialogue and various forms of practical cooperation, which are open and inclusive (see Acharya 2001, Emmers 2003, Haacke 2003, Narine 2002, Anthony-Cabellero 2005). The Association's management of interstate security is not well developed. First, ASEAN's confidence building processes have not been directed at solving specific intramural problems (Leifer 1999). Dealing with territorial disputes or even serious bilateral tension has been left to the members concerned. In 1994/95 Indonesia was the only ASEAN country so far to attempt to invoke the ASEAN High Council (provided for in the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, TAC) in order to deal with Jakarta's territorial dispute with Kuala Lumpur over Sipadan and Ligitan. Malaysia rejected this option, however. In the event, the parties agreed to turn to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a binding ruling, which eventually went in Malaysia's favour. In 2003, Malaysia and Singapore similarly submitted their cases to the ICJ in relation to Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Putih. In the same year, they also referred a dispute over the implications of Singapore's land reclamation activities to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

As a grouping, ASEAN states have also not formally commented on or become otherwise involved in situations in which serious political tension between members has had the potential to undermine regional stability. In recent years this is illustrated by ASEAN's silence on both the Thai-Myanmar border spat in February 2001, when fighting involving ethnic proxy armies briefly spilled over into a clash between the Thai and Myanmar armies, and the renewed deterioration of Thai-Myanmar relations in 2002.⁴ ASEAN also maintained a conspicuous silence during the episode of gunboat diplomacy over contested maritime areas in the Celebes Sea in 2005 involving Indonesia and Malaysia.

⁴ On intra-ASEAN tension see Tan (2006) and Jones and Smith (2006)

ASEAN states have not developed a general collective mandate to resolve domestic strife in member states. The ongoing conflicts in southern Thailand or the Moro region of the Philippines have thus so far not become the subject of formal ASEAN discussions, as was true for the conflicts in Aceh or East Timor. Third-party mediation by individual ASEAN states on a non-ASEAN basis has taken place, however. When the Thai military staged a coup in September 2006 to oust former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, ASEAN offered no corporate response.

In this light, ASEAN's approach towards Myanmar seems noteworthy. First, the slow pace towards democratization in Myanmar is regularly addressed by ASEAN. Second, after Aung San Suu Kyi's detention in May 2003 the grouping's demand *vis-à-vis* the military leadership has been for political detainees to be released and for all parties to participate in a political dialogue (ASEAN 2003a, 2006b, also see Haacke 2006: ch.3). However, the Association has commented neither on the humanitarian situation in Myanmar nor on the ongoing ethnic conflict and alleged human rights abuses.

In recent years ASEAN has expanded but not significantly deepened its security cooperation, which has been on the agenda formally only since 1992. ASEAN has been increasingly preoccupied with human security issues, including SARS, the 2004 tsunami, and bird flu. In 2003, ASEAN agreed on the establishment of an ASEAN Security Community by 2020. The objective is to move ASEAN's political and security cooperation to a higher plane to ensure that its members live at peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment (ASEAN 2003). The modalities designed to reinforce ASEAN's part in strengthening peace, stability and security, as outlined in the Bali Concord II, focus on norms setting, conflict prevention, approaches to conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building (ASEAN 2004a,b).

To give substance to the Bali Concord II, the inaugural ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting took place in May 2006. One objective is to give guidance to existing senior defence and military officials' dialogues and cooperation within ASEAN and between ASEAN and dialogue partners (ASEAN 2006a).⁵ It builds on informal dialogues between the ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (or Chiefs of Staff), ASEAN Chiefs of Army, ASEAN Navy Chiefs, ASEAN Air Force Chiefs,

⁵ The Myanmar defence minister, who is also the Head of State, was not present.

and ASEAN Heads of Military Intelligence units. Nonetheless, ASEAN countries have emphasize light security cooperation over building shared capacities, developing shared foreign and security policies, let alone moving towards a collective military role or becoming a defense community.

Having issued in 1992 the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea (ASEAN 1992), the Association in the wake of the 1995 Mischief Reef incident urged all claimants to resolve by peaceful means their differences about sovereignty and jurisdictional issues and called on them to refrain from taking actions that could destabilize the region. Diplomatic efforts to conclude with China a regional code of conduct produced in 2002 the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties, in which claimants to the South China Sea undertake to exercise self-restraint (ASEAN 2002; also see Buszynski 2003).

The Association played a major role in the establishment and development of the ASEAN Regional Forum. In December 1995, all ten Southeast Asian countries signed the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) to promote nuclear disarmament and strengthen regional security,⁶ and they continue to call (unsuccessfully) on the nuclear states to accede to the protocol. ASEAN has also pursued economic security and development by promoting the ASEAN+3 process involving China, Japan and South Korea. More recently, the new regional security architecture has been enlarged by ASEAN to include the East Asia Summit.

ASEAN has not yet undertaken collective peace operations in its name, let alone conducted out-of-area operations. However, individual members such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have an established track record of involvement in UN missions, including peacekeeping operations in Southeast Asia. Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia all participated in the UN-authorized INTERFET operation in East Timor in 1999. They also contributed military personnel and civilian police personnel to the subsequent UN peace operations that helped manage East Timor's transition into the independent state of Timor Leste.

This brief overview of the AU and ASEAN indicates considerable variation in the way in which regional arrangements address security challenges.⁷ The chief difference concerns the way in which the AU and ASEAN deal with interstate and intrastate security issues. In contrast to ASEAN, the AU has assumed a greater role in

⁶ The treaty entered into force on 27 March 1997.

⁷ For an application of our criteria to a variety of regional arrangements see Table 1 (Annex A).

addressing interstate conflict between its members. It has also identified a series of intrastate circumstances warranting corporate attention and engaged in a variety of related activities approved by its membership. Even in terms of its thickness, regional security cooperation among the AU states exceeds that of ASEAN, discounting bilateral cooperation in security and defence. The differences extend beyond rhetorical commitments to actual collective practice. The question is why the security practices of the AU and ASEAN are so dissimilar? Both memberships comprise a combination of small states and budding regional powers, without the overarching influence of any one member. Both memberships also consist overwhelmingly of weak states. Both Africa and Southeast Asia have faced serious intrastate bloodletting and continue to face serious insurgencies or armed conflict. In both cases, collective capacities are de facto absent. Both the AU and ASEAN Secretariat are small and serve facilitation functions. While the following section seeks to make sense of the basic differences, it should not be misread as providing an account that would explain all of the many decisions the AU and ASEAN have (not) taken in relation to security.

Understanding Variation in the Security Roles of Regional Arrangements

Within the mainstream International Relations (IR) literature, there are at least four approaches to analyzing the relationships between international security institutions and their participants: (neo)realism, (neo)institutionalism, constructivism, and organization theory (Duffield 2006). In addition, there is a literature focusing on regionalism and regionalization in international relations (Fawcett and Hurrell 1995, Hurrell 2005). Our interest focuses on theorizing the regionalization of particular collective security practices, specifically with a view to understanding the broad variation in corporate practices adopted by different regional arrangements (with regards to interstate as well as intrastate security problems and regional security cooperation). The key issue is to what extent the mainstream approaches and the available literature on regionalism and regionalization can meaningfully address the question we are posing. Our short answer is that while the mainstream approaches can in principle shed light on important aspects regarding the workings of the two regional arrangements analyzed here, they would not appear to be as helpful as we would like. We argue that there are limits in terms of what they offer to explain of the

variation in the security practice of regional arrangements in the developing world under investigation here.

For neorealists, interstate cooperation in security institutions such as alliances to deter or defeat threats is possible until the removal of power imbalances or threats (Waltz 1979, Walt 1987). Regional arrangements are expected to exert only a minimal influence over state behaviour (Mearsheimer 1994/95) and would usually respond to the priorities of the strongest power, a posture Hurrell (2005: 51) calls 'hegemonic deference'. In the absence of such hegemonic leadership, neorealists normally expect little or no security cooperation to get off the ground. Neorealism's concern with material state power and the role of major powers in the international system does not make the theory's application straightforward to Africa and Southeast Asia where we are accounting for the security practices of regional arrangements consisting only of small and middle powers, many of which suffer from significant state weakness. Other realist literatures, such as neoclassical realism, have produced insights into the security behaviour of states by adopting a dual focus on the effects of the international system and states' threat perceptions and agency (e.g. Chistensen 1996, Schweller 1998, Zakaria 1998), and while they can therefore provide a more nuanced explanation of interstate security dynamics there are questions as to whether they easily lend themselves to explaining the variation in the behaviour of security institutions at a regional level. At the same time, realist thought suggests that institutions provide a locus for soft balancing involving efforts to deflect preferences and policies of the more powerful participants (e.g. Paul 2005).

For liberal institutionalists, on the other hand, not only do regional arrangements affect state behaviour, they may also have important independent consequences. They may do so by increasing the range of options available to participants and by altering the incentives for participants to pursue one course of action over another. In particular, regional arrangements can help solve coordination problems; they can provide standards of behaviour that reinforce the incentives to cooperate; they reduce uncertainty; and they can provide negotiating opportunities for their participants (Duffield 2006: 644-46; also see Haftendorn et al. 1999). Institutional liberalism might thus yield explanations for different levels of cooperation; low-key security cooperation may simply reflect success in meeting sufficiently the limited objectives or requirements of its participants. To account for these, liberal intergovernmentalism emphasizes a process of preference formation

involving domestic forces and bargaining (Moravscik 1998). However, the kind of broader domestic bargaining processes leading to the formation of state preferences as outlined by liberal intergovernmentalism are not necessarily visible in most of the still authoritarian countries in Africa and Southeast Asia, where foreign policy-making usually remains the preserve of small groups of elites.

Understanding the variation in the practices of regional arrangements with reference to norms and ideas makes constructivism potentially the most relevant of approaches for our purposes. For constructivists, as actors and social structures are thought to be mutually constituted, a state's participation in a security institution may eventually also lead to changes in the way it defines its interests and in the way it perceives its own identity, leading to new foreign and security policies. This in turn may produce changes in the corporate behaviour of the regional arrangement in question. From this perspective, as Duffield (2006: 649) argues, security institutions may be seen as 'schools in which actors learn or are taught new understandings and meanings' (see also Johnston 2003). For us the insight into the role of institutions in legitimating certain types of action and de-legitimizing others is particularly important. We note, however, that constructivists have mainly chosen to focus on the effect of ostensibly global norms on local state behaviour (e.g. Klotz 1995, Price 1997, Finnemore 2001), or linked the security practice associated with regional arrangements to a strong sense of collective regional identity (e.g. Busse 1999). Neither focus is adopted here, while we note the sophisticated account of constructivism to make sense of the process of norm diffusion within world politics and how regional arrangements have contributed to it (Acharya 2004).⁸

A related, but distinct constructivist literature has focused on the ways in which organizational and/or bureaucratic cultures might affect behaviour. In works exploring questions of military power, organizational culture is said to 'consist of beliefs, symbols, rituals and practices which give meaning to the activity of an organization' (Farrell 1998: 410; see also Kier 1997). Addressing a broader range of issues, Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 19) define bureaucratic culture as 'the solutions that are produced by groups of people to meet specific problems they face in

⁸ Acharya (2004: 241, 239), for example, defines the process of norm localization as 'contestation between emerging transnational norms and preexisting regional normative and social orders' wherein 'local agents reconstruct foreign norms to ensure the norms fit with the agents' cognitive priors and identities.'

common. These solutions become institutionalized, remembered and passed on as the rules, rituals, and values of the group.’⁹

While such cultures are said to guide and contextualize rather than determine the behaviour of particular arrangements, this approach has been used to explore the extent to which international organizations may operate either as collective or as autonomous actors. As collective actors, regional arrangements may allow their participants to speak with one voice, thus bestowing greater legitimacy upon particular decisions; facilitate issue linkage; or to centralize their resources and activities, which may open up avenues for individual participants to specialize in certain areas or for the participants to collectively develop capabilities that were unavailable to any of them individually. As autonomous actors, regional arrangements may develop the ability to perform certain functions more effectively than individual states or groups of states, most commonly by developing a professional bureaucracy and/or secretariat (Duffield 2006: 646-48). While it is clear that the AU and ASEAN do not qualify as autonomous actors, there are also questions about whether either one amounts to a collective actor as understood by Barnett and Finnemore. Indeed, the problem with drawing on organizational culture to explain the variation of security behaviour of the AU and ASEAN is twofold: first, both are intergovernmental processes partially institutionalised, where key leaders have emphasised personal diplomacy (Severino 2006). Second, organizational culture as defined above is likely embedded in broader sets of ideas about effective and appropriate behaviour that are expressive of and grounded in the political conditions of its members rather than the arrangement *per se*.

The Regionalism and Regionalization Literature

It is clear that the study of regionalism is broader than the analysis of regional arrangements (Fawcett 2004). However, given the preceding discussion, we agree with Hurrell (2005) that there are several good reasons to concentrate on the regional dimension in IR theory. Hurrell (2005: 40) pointed to the usefulness of drawing on ‘categories of explanation, which although intrinsically general and universal, serve to highlight differences across regions’, such as the state. He also highlights the usefulness of a focus on culture ‘understood not necessarily in terms of a particular

⁹ The corresponding footnote suggests that they see the terms organizational and bureaucratic culture as interchangeable.

civilisation but rather in terms of the lasting legacy of attitudes and beliefs in society derived from authoritative teachings and recurrent, large-scale socialisation processes and embedded in complex and elaborate systems of discourse' (Hurrell 2005:40). In particular, we take Hurrell (2007) to be saying that ideational structures that help us to explain the behaviour of regional arrangements are not located primarily or even only at the level of participant states or the international system but also within regional dynamics themselves.

We submit that the security practices of regional arrangements are shaped by what we call security cultures and that these influence how the arrangements construct threat agendas and define legitimate security responses to those threats. This understanding, in turn, demands that we set out what we mean by security cultures, the processes by which they form, develop over time, and how they influence the behaviour of regional arrangements and the states that participate in them. Once we have done this, we discuss the security cultures bearing on two regional arrangements, namely the AU and ASEAN, in relation to the four criteria discussed above, and offer some thoughts on the distinctiveness of the two security cultures.

Defining Security Cultures: Formation, Effects and Development

Different views of culture are evident within the literature on IR, which has included discussions of diplomatic culture, political culture, strategic culture, and, to a lesser extent, security culture (Krause 1999). Within this literature, a broad consensus has developed that culture refers 'to any set of interlocking values, beliefs and assumptions that are held collectively, by a given group, and passed on through socialization' (Dueck 2005: 200, cf Hurrell 2005). IR could thus be seen to have basically followed the modern anthropological conception of culture as an integrated system of symbols, ideas, and values elaborated by Hans Boas in the 1930s. Key works like that of Alastair Iain Johnston (1995a, b) on strategic culture have built in particular on Clifford Geertz (1973). Geertz saw culture as providing guidelines for action, which in turn would shape social structure, but he had problems in addressing the interplay of local, national and international politics in a modern state. His focus on ideas and values rather than norms, let alone actual practices has not been uncontroversial; as Adam Kuper (1999: 16) has argued, '[p]eople not only construct a world of symbols; they actually live in it.' Indeed, the idealist position assumed by

Geertz and others has been widely repudiated. More recent works on culture in anthropology and sociology have emphasised that culture is also about practice, which should not be thought apart from the exercise of power and coercion (e.g. Gellner 1996, Clifford and Marcus 1986).

Epistemological debates in the social sciences have not left unaffected the study of culture in IR, particularly as regards the relationship between culture and behaviour. In the literature on strategic culture, for instance, the principal divide is over whether culture should be understood as a concept that captures the unavoidable context for all behaviour, or whether it constitutes an independent causal variable to account for behaviour, the explanatory power of which can be tested against other ostensibly non-cultural variables (see the debate between Johnston 1995b, Gray 1999, Poore 2003). Johnston has been a key exponent of this approach, although Clifford Geertz, on whom Johnston (1995b) draws in important ways, argued that anthropologists should aim to interpret the meaning of social action rather than search for scientific explanation (Geertz 1973). Within European IR, the weight of opinion increasingly sides with the former, ‘culture as context’ approach (e.g. Gray 1999, Neumann and Heikka 2005, Poore 2003).

We too favour an understanding of culture as providing an ideational context for understanding wherein certain preferences have become established. With this in mind, we see *security* cultures as encompassing shared patterns of thought and argumentation that establish pervasive and durable security preferences by formulating concepts of the role, legitimacy, and efficacy of particular approaches to protecting values.¹⁰ But we also see the strength of the argument that culture is manifested in specific norms and practices. We take this to mean that if distinct security cultures exist we would, for instance, expect to find international norms interpreted in different ways in different regional contexts. In relation to humanitarian intervention, for example, this is very much the case with regional arrangements around the world adopting different interpretations of, and approaches to this issue (Ladnier 2003, Acharya 2004).

Our definition of security culture encompasses a broader set of concerns than the more widely debated but narrower concept of *strategic* culture, which focuses on questions related to the use of military force. In this sense, beliefs and normative

¹⁰ This point draws on the work of Johnston (1995a: 36).

preferences concerning the use of force are but one component of a broader security culture concerned with shared understandings about what is security and what approaches (military and non-military) are legitimate and effective and as such best suited to dealing with particular threats to values. This move is important; for us it is justified on the grounds that academics and officials conceptualise security well beyond the use of force.

Despite our disagreements with Johnston (1995a,b), we nevertheless intend to build on his differentiation between central tenets and operational assumptions and apply this to our concept of security culture. The central tenets of a security culture involve shared basic assumptions about, for instance, the importance of particular referents of security (e.g. state, regime, community or individual), the significant dimensions of security (e.g. military, political, economic etc.), the nature of the general political-security environment (i.e. benign or difficult), and the basic security purpose of the regional arrangement.

Operational assumptions, on the other hand, involve answering more praxeological questions about, for instance, whether particular developments are classified as a security threat, the most appropriate relationship between the arrangement and its individual members in given cases, and which policy instruments are the most effective, feasible and legitimate in view of the security situation at hand. Following Johnston, security culture includes a set of preferences on effective and legitimate responses to security challenges that delimit the range of appropriate options available to the regional arrangement.

The existence of a security culture at a regional level implies the sharing of both the central tenets and operational assumptions by decision-makers from participant states. In other words, it requires what Wendt (1999: 159-60) has called interlocking beliefs whereby actors not only share the same beliefs but also believe that other actors hold similar beliefs as they do. However, we submit that the usefulness of drawing on the language of security culture is compatible with the notion that at the regional level we are dealing with a 'majoritarian conception of culture' (Meyer 2005: 529), which is able to accommodate a degree of divergence or occasional contestation in relation at least to the so-called operational assumptions and, more rarely though, the core tenets (following a regime change for instance).

Notably, as mentioned above, our notion of culture is not reduced to ideas. The ideas informing a shared culture find expression in shared discourses and are

themselves actualised in habitual practices. Indeed, as Neumann and Heikka (2005: 11) have argued, discourses and practices are mutually constitutive. In other words, behaviour represents a constitutive part of culture.

Following our argument so far, security cultures at the level of regional arrangements may be quite different in substantive terms. Regionally specific security cultures may vary depending on whether the participant states making up the regional arrangement primarily are strong and democratic states or weak and authoritarian states facing domestic legitimacy challenges (Buzan 1991: 96-107). The expectation is that while the former are more likely to also emphasise challenges to human security, the latter will remain more narrowly focused on state and regime security. In the case of strong states forming a regional arrangement, we might expect to see the states in question provide sufficient resources and the political breathing space to establish a relatively powerful and efficient bureaucratic apparatus as has happened in the case of the EU (Howorth 2004) and NATO (McCalla 1996). It is this scenario that is most likely to see regional arrangements develop what Barnett and Finnemore (2004) call autonomous power. In contrast, where weak states dominate, regional arrangements will more likely lack strong secretariats or bureaucracies, not least due to concerns about the loss of their sovereignty and a general insecurity about external dominance.

Formation

Security cultures shared by participants of a regional arrangement do not necessarily have uniform origins, but we would expect them to have historically formed in reaction to a shared security outlook or security dynamics experienced by those states making up the regional arrangement. In other words, though security cultures function as ideational influences bearing on collective decisions of participants in a regional arrangement, they are connected to participants' beliefs about state and regional security. They only form a regional security culture in the event of interlocking beliefs, however. In this regard, shared security preferences of state representatives and bureaucrats may for instance be underpinned by similar historical experiences with external predators (e.g. colonial powers or aggressor countries) or they may emerge against the backdrop of shared experiences of (sub-) regional conflict, and stem in part from efforts to prevent their re-occurrence. In other words, security cultures are likely to build on shared analysis about what behaviour tends to generate

or reinforce bilateral or intra-regional conflict. The formation of a security culture among the EU states is a case in point (Wæver 1996, 2000). Interlocking beliefs about the importance of protecting existing regimes and the interdependence of internal and external security may also underpin regional security cultures, as illustrated in the case of the Central Asian states (Allison 2004).

The Effects of Security Culture

We submit that a regional security culture affects both state and regional decision-making, but it primarily influences *collective action by regional arrangements*. John Duffield (1999: 772) has argued that, ‘The overall effect of culture is to predispose collectivities toward certain actions and policies rather than others. Some options will simply not be imagined. Of those that are contemplated, some are more likely to be rejected as inappropriate, ineffective, or counterproductive than others. To be sure, culture is not deterministic. It may not and often does not precisely determine behaviour. But it can significantly narrow the range of actions likely to be adopted in any given set of circumstances.’

With this in mind, security cultures can be said to effect regional arrangements in two ways. First, security culture will influence the nature of the institution, including its decision-making procedures. However, although security culture and organizational culture seem similar, they are not identical concepts. Also, organizational culture is for us the outgrowth of shared understandings about the running of the organization that will reflect security culture, rather than vice versa.

Second, security culture will impinge directly on the substantive collective decision-making within regional arrangements, insofar as shared preferences and consensus exist relative to security cooperation, which give rise to a particular security discourse. By implication security culture shapes the way regional decision-makers react to pressures and conditions, and hence the choices that state leaderships make collectively in the context of regional cooperation (also see Dueck 2005: 200). This may involve the failure to securitize collectively particular challenges. In other words, the consensus shared by decision-makers about what constitutes a security challenge might in practice mean that a particular issue may not be considered as a threat even if the analyst believes it has security implications. The securitization or failed securitization of new security challenges by regional arrangements is a case in

point.¹¹ Likewise, a security culture will focus the attention of policymakers on particular issues and developments that are understood as security challenges. Security culture will thus go a long way in explaining why a regional arrangement does or does not become involved in meeting particular categories of threats and how it will respond. One example of this is NATO's response to maritime threats in the Mediterranean in the form of 'Active Endeavour' (Hammick 2007).

In practice, a security culture might involve a shared reluctance to interpret sovereignty and non-interference flexibly, which would translate into limited interest in collective action on issues seen to impinge on these principles including their formal deliberation. This is illustrated by the positions of the Central Asian states within the SCO when, for instance, compared with the members of ECOWAS (Bailes and Dunay 2007, Adebajo 2004). A key further contention is that security culture obstructs the participants of a regional arrangement from collectively agreeing on operational solutions to security problems that are either not conceived as such or where the proposed operational solution is deemed ineffective or illegitimate. The reluctance of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to more fully embrace preventive diplomacy within the first seven years is indicative in this regard (IDSS 2002). In short, the effects of shared security culture at the regional level will be to shape, often limit, the behavioural choices of a regional arrangement, and its participants, through the setting of preferred courses of collective action in response to security threats (see also Johnston 1995a: 35, 53; and Adler 1997: 330, 337).

Consequently, security cultures will limit the choice of tactics and instruments in principle available to regional decision-makers. That is not the same as arguing that security cultures will necessarily cause or prevent particular decisions altogether. However, we would expect there to be strong resistance to approaches that are not considered either effective or legitimate in the eyes of those jointly committed to a security culture just as we would expect support for approaches considered appropriately effective or legitimate. Security culture will influence the responses by the regional arrangement to outsiders and regional states. What is particularly important in our view is that security cultures will mediate both the understandings of what requires the attention of policymakers *qua* security issues (i.e. what issues make

¹¹ Author(s)

it onto particular threat agendas) and the thinking and deliberations on how to deal with a particular challenge.

It is important to recall that our interest in security culture is limited here to the ways it shapes collective behaviour on the part of regional arrangements. We appreciate that there exist overlapping yet varied foreign policy contexts for participants of regional arrangements (Hill 2003, White 1999). Importantly, as we adopt a majoritarian conception of culture there is no contradiction between our argument that security culture is bound to influence the collective responses of regional arrangements, and the possible finding that particular member states may choose to pursue operational solutions to security problems outside this institutional context, individually or with outsiders.

Development

Security cultures are not impervious to change over time although as with all cultures they are ‘sticky,’ i.e. a regional arrangement’s security culture should only be expected to adapt slowly to challenges to its core tenets and associated operational preferences. For example, a security culture that has emphasised state and regime security is unlikely to be transformed overnight into one that focuses on human security. Equally, a shared preference for non-military means is unlikely to be suddenly cast aside in favour of military approaches to security or vice versa, as made clear in the literature on strategic culture. After all, we are talking about consolidated understandings of what constitutes security, what leads to insecurity, and how security may be improved. Consequently, we would expect the security culture of a regional arrangement to be more durable than the security culture of an individual country because the former represents interlocking perspectives and preferences that are not altered simply by changes in the security outlook within one of the participant states or even a measure of associated contestation. Within the EU, for example, the process of institutionalizing new security preferences regarding the use of military force has involved an extended period wherein more interventionist states, notably Britain and France, have had to persuade other EU members of the legitimacy and efficacy of using force beyond the Union’s borders for purposes other than self-defence (Meyer 2005).

We suggest that there are at least three processes that invite investigation when grappling with the question of how security cultures evolve in practice. In some cases,

major external developments in international politics or particular crises might influence the development of regionally specific security culture. For instance, 9/11 inspired a major re-assessment by NATO in relation to so-called non-traditional security issues (Moore 2007). In other cases, intramural challenges are articulated by states when their (often new) leaders call for a reassessment of longstanding ideas and practices on security. An example might be the British government's attempts during the late 1990s to build support for a norm of unilateral humanitarian intervention within NATO and EU states, as well as the UN, in cases of supreme humanitarian emergency (Williams 2005: chs 3 and 8).

The predominant way of making sense of the development of culture is in terms of a communicative process (Crawford 2002) in which arguments and counter-arguments in favour of particular ideas, the validity of particular norms and the effectiveness of particular approaches is explored, yielding over time a shifting consensus on the core ideas at the heart of a security culture. Ideas and norm entrepreneurs may play a particular role in this regard (e.g. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, Raymond 1997, Risse et al. 1999, Wheeler 2000). For our purposes, it is also important in this context to note how ideas generated in one particular state or region may travel over time and eventually shape the preferences and behaviour of actors in other regions. Acharya (2004) has outlined a sophisticated framework for thinking about this process using the concepts of localization, grafting, framing, and resistance (see also Williams 2007).

This section has introduced in more detail the concept of security culture, which we argue shapes in particular ways the corporate responses by regional arrangements to existing and emerging issues and challenges. This concept is distinct from that of organizational culture. While it emphasises the importance of ideational factors, we recognize that these are linked by perceptions to the material environment as well as the domestic political reality of participant states. It produces discourses and is actualised in corporate behaviour. Our key point is that it is regionally shared security cultures rather than power imbalances among participants or the lack of collective capacity *per se* that impinges on the corporate policies by the regional arrangement. The next two sections seek to make sense of the variation in the security practices of the AU and ASEAN (see first section) with reference to the disparate security cultures of these two arrangements by showing how the practices noted above

are tied to particular shared assumptions about security and a related collective discourse.

The Security Culture of the African Union

Most of the central tenets of the AU's security culture remain heavily influenced by its predecessor's (the Organization of African Unity, OAU) emphasis on anti-imperialism, African unity and non-intervention (Amate 1986, van Walraven 2000). In terms of its operational assumptions, for the most part, the AU has retained the OAU's preferences for mediation, diplomacy, the non-use of force and consensus-building. However, it has also been willing to sanction recalcitrant members and envisage the use of military force without host-government consent. Consequently, the AU's security culture can be understood as undergoing a period of transition from an almost exclusive concern with challenges to regime security to a broader range of threats that impinge upon democratic governance and human security. For some, this has reflected a shift in the organization's security culture from the guiding principle of non-interference to one of non-indifference (Kioko 2003).

Values to be protected

From today's vantage point, the AU's security culture is comprised of an interesting mixture of traditional and relatively novel elements. Traditional expectations are still clearly paramount in several areas. For example, the AU's Constitutive Act is similar to the OAU's Charter in many ways: it emphasizes the sovereign equality of member states (Article 4a) and affirms that members are not permitted to intervene in each other's internal affairs (Article 4g). The AU Constitutive Act also insists that disputes between member states should be settled without the use of military force (Articles 4e, 4f, 4i), and like the OAU Charter it commits member states to the legal norm of *uti possidetis*, which in the African context means respecting the borders that existed at the time of independence (Article 4b). The new Union also remains a vocal advocate of anti-imperialism and of "African solutions first." The origins of these traditional beliefs lie in three related sources: (1) the discourses about African identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; (2) the debates over how best to pursue the objective of African unity and the establishment of the OAU; and (3) the

early phases of decolonization during which the newly independent African states became members of a largely pluralist international society (Williams 2007).

However, two important changes have also been institutionalized within the AU Constitutive Act. The first is the Union's condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of governments (Article 4p). The second is the Union's assertion of the right to forcibly intervene in a member state in what it calls 'grave circumstances' (Article 4h). Consequently, the following interlocking beliefs regarding the importance of key norms and practices could be said to constitute the central tenets of the AU's security culture, namely the sovereign equality of members; non-intervention by member states; anti-imperialism/African solutions first; *uti possidetis*; non-use of force/peaceful settlement of disputes; condemnation of unconstitutional changes of governments; and the Union's right to intervene in a member state in grave circumstances.

Security Culture and its Expression in Official AU Documents

The AU's security culture has found consistent expression in the various texts that it has agreed. Apart from the Constitutive Act, of particular relevance here are the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council* (AU 2002), the *Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy* (AU 2004a), the *Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force* (AU 2005c), and the *Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact* (AU 2005e). In addition, evidence of the relevant interlocking beliefs can also be found in the declarations and decisions of the AU Assembly, and in the communiqués of the PSC noted above.

Among other things, these texts reveal a broad understanding of security as being about far more than military threats (including issues of food security, disease, environmental issues and criminality); at least formal acknowledgement of the importance of human beings, not just states, as referents for security; and the vital need to develop structures and mechanisms to promote this understanding of security. The emphasis has been on making the Union better able to manage crises that develop within one of its member states rather than conflicts between them. An important dimension of this debate has focused on the traditional theme of African unity and autonomy and the fact that history suggests Africans cannot rely on outsiders, such as the UN or Western coalitions, to respond effectively and consistently to security challenges on the continent.

Changing beliefs about the Union's operational assumptions are also visible within these recent documents. Clearly, the Union retains its predecessor's preference for mediation, diplomacy, consensus and the non-use of force. But it has also been willing to impose sanctions on members in certain circumstances, such as when unconstitutional changes of government have occurred (see below) or for non-payment of membership fees. Arguably the key development in the operational sphere has been the establishment of the PSC, whereby, in a significant break with the OAU's emphasis on decision-making through consensus-building among all its members, the Union has delegated the authority to deal with security issues on the continent to the 15, elected PSC members.

The Evolution of the AU's security culture

As noted above, the last decade has seen two major developments in the core tenets of the AU's security culture: condemnation of unconstitutional changes of government, and the Union's right to intervene in its member states for humanitarian purposes. Both of these developments have affected the AU's security practices, although in different ways.

Since the May 1997 coup that toppled President Kabbah's government in Sierra Leone, African leaders have declared their intention to no longer welcome military juntas into the continental organization. This is a dramatic reversal of the previous belief that the OAU's commitment to non-intervention meant that it should welcome any de facto national authorities into the organization. It is noticeable that the AU has interpreted what counts as an unconstitutional change of government rather narrowly: coups are disqualifying, but massive electoral fraud or incumbent presidents changing constitutions to extend their period in office have not generated the same reaction. The AU has demonstrated its seriousness about this new commitment in relation to coups in Togo (February 2005) and Mauritania (August 2005). On both occasions, the Union condemned the changes of regime and suspended the de facto authorities in Lomé and Nouakchott from participating in its activities. Not surprisingly, this change in security practice has placed the Union in a potentially awkward position both because the governments of many of its current members took power through coups; and because coups may sometimes provide one of the few available means to topple authoritarian regimes and launch a genuine process of democratization. This dilemma has been evident in the Mauritanian case,

since the junta has, to date, proved far more willing to democratize than the ousted dictator Maaouiya Ould Taya.

The second new element of the AU's security culture is the institutionalisation of the Union's right to forcibly intervene in one of its member states 'in respect of grave circumstances: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.' Although Article 4(h) has yet to be invoked in practice, the process that led to its inclusion in the AU Constitutive Act does seem to have changed the terms and tone of the debate about these issues within Africa (see Haggis 2005). However, given that the Union clearly lacks the corporate military capabilities to conduct a humanitarian intervention in anything other than its weakest member states, invoking the Article in the immediate future would be somewhat premature. Like the Union's commitment to condemn unconstitutional changes of governments, Article 4(h) also raises some difficult issues, not least its legal relationship with Article 53 of the UN Charter, which prohibits regional arrangements from engaging in enforcement activities without explicit authorization from the UN Security Council. It is also important to note that Article 4(h) represents a permissive norm: that is, it stipulates what action can legitimately be taken in certain circumstances but does not oblige the Union or a coalition of its members to act in response to those circumstances. These caveats have been reflected in the AU's response to the crisis in Darfur, Sudan since 2004. Although the crisis meets the Union's definition of 'grave circumstances' the Union has been reluctant to prioritize the security of the local civilians over respect for Sudan's sovereignty (Williams 2006).

These developments have involved consciousness-raising, strategic bargaining, and later, the institutionalization of these norms within the Union's relevant organs (Williams 2007). During this process the actors concerned engaged in sustained argumentation over the most appropriate forms of political conduct for 'African' states. Specifically, they articulated what Crawford has described as ethical and identity arguments. Ethical arguments 'are about what it is right to do in particular situations; and identity arguments are about how different understandings or actions in the world are implied on the basis of identity' (Crawford 2002: 14). These arguments were also influenced by global level dynamics – or what Acharya (2004) has referred to as 'norm localization' – specifically in this case in relation to ideas about democratization and later, the responsibility to protect agenda.

The Security Culture of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ASEAN's security culture is marked by distinct 'processes of interactions and socialization within ASEAN which have produced long-term attitudes and habits with respect to the management of issues of conflict and peace' (Acharya 1999:55). These processes of interaction, discussed above, have taken place against a range of sensitivities and a perceived sense of vulnerability shared by regional states. Whereas the former are largely rooted in Southeast Asia's political and ethnic diversity (both within and among regional countries), historical experiences of subjugation by colonial powers and past experiences of intra-regional strife, the latter arises from a number of factors such as geographical location and size, general state weakness, or the limited legitimacy of those in power. The ethnic factor (Snitwongse and Thompson 2005) forms the backdrop even of remaining intra-state tensions that are perceived to require careful management by those in power. Managing political-security issues linked to ethnicity is deemed a sensitive issue for several governments in Southeast Asia because of the cross-border bonds and linkages between ethnic brethren and the potential impact of intrastate ethnic conflict on interstate relations in the region (Tan 2006: 7-9). As ASEAN's discourse illustrates, the consensus on the central tenets and operational preferences of ASEAN's security culture have yet to significantly change.

Values to be protected

In view of their still recent historical experience with colonialism and their exposure to major powers, ASEAN leaders and governments are keen to preserve state sovereignty. Also, especially given territorial disputes between regional states as well as the centrifugal pressures if not secessionist tendencies within them, territorial integrity remains an important objective for ASEAN states. Regional stability is regarded as vital to advance economic development and cooperation; in this context a cohesive ASEAN has itself considerable value. With political change having occurred most notably in Indonesia with the demise of Suharto's New Order, many leaderships in Southeast Asia would appear to remain concerned with regime legitimacy and survival (Alagappa 1998, Collins 2003). Relevant examples include Malaysia where UMNO leaders have confronted the challenge posed by the *Reformasi* movement (Weiss 2006), or the Philippines, where politically entrenched ruling families are said

to contest the spoils of power (Coronel et al. 2007). The Thai coup of September 2006, undertaken by the army with support from the palace, took place in reaction to what has been called the 'Thaksinization of Thailand' (McCargo and Pathmanand 2005). Singapore's leaders are also concerned with relying on the People's Action Party to safeguard the city-state's future (Mauzy and Milne 2002). Other values, such as prosperity, are also pursued with state and regime interests in mind.

Interlocking beliefs about security

The ASEAN members share a belief in the importance of subscribing to and practising peaceful resolution of inter-state conflict between members for the sake of regional stability and security. Allowing individual members to take before ASEAN bilateral disputes is also regarded as very problematic and likely to stymie once more the functioning of the Association (Haacke 2003), as happened when the Philippines in the late 1960s decided to use ASEAN as a venue to press its claim to Sabah. A formal ASEAN role in addressing interstate tensions or conflict would therefore be incompatible with members' shared belief in the importance of ASEAN as a vehicle for improving the atmosphere of intra-regional relations through political-security dialogue and limited economic cooperation from which they benefit in terms of both regional and state security (Tan and Acharya 2004). These interlocking central tenets about the value of ASEAN are linked to the association's organizational culture, particularly to the recognition that ASEAN should move at a pace comfortable to all, i.e. with caution and sufficient gradualism (Severino 2006: 18-23). Members have also shared a reluctance to openly jockey for leadership and seen a need for consensual decision-making, as well as equal financial contributions. Non-interference, meanwhile, has been viewed as the logical preference to avoid members becoming formally entangled in the contestation of neighbours (Bellamy 2004), particularly issues of ethnic separatism. As Michael Leifer (1986) argued, by stressing non-interference members hope to promote a structure of relations that 'would serve to reinforce the domestic basis of conservative-minded governments by reducing external friction between them.' Apprehensive about the likely negative fall-out of great power rivalry over Southeast Asia (Weatherbee 2006), ASEAN states also reached a consensus whereby Southeast Asia should engage all major powers while seeking to reduce strife between them.

Security Culture and its Expression in ASEAN's Official Documents

ASEAN's security practice described in the first section of this paper not only builds on the aforementioned core beliefs about security referents and operational preferences, but also been underpinned by key ASEAN texts: the 1967 Bangkok Declaration, the 1971 Declaration on Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the Declaration of ASEAN Concord (also of 1976), and the 2003 Declaration of Bali Concord II.¹² For instance, the preamble of the Bangkok Declaration expresses members' collective determination to 'ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation...' (ASEAN 1967). The TAC (ASEAN 1976: Art.1) reiterates the fundamental principles that are to guide interstate relations: independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity; the right to lead freedom from external interference, subversion or coercion; non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means; renunciation of the threat or use of force; and effective cooperation among themselves. The Bali Concord II (ASEAN 2003b) explicitly reaffirms ASEAN's commitment to the principles of the aforementioned texts and expressly reiterates them individually, too.

The interlocking belief whereby the Association should not mediate territorial disputes or political differences between members is also well captured in text, notwithstanding Article 14 of the TAC in which provision is made for the ASEAN High Council that would take cognizance of the existence of disputes or situations likely to disturb regional peace and harmony. The High Council could provide recommendations on possible ways of conflict settlement, or offer its good offices, or constitute itself as a committee of mediation, inquiry or conciliation (ASEAN 1976). As such it seems to denote an approach to promote the pacific settlement of conflicts between members through a *regional* process. However, its invocation depends on the failure of direct bilateral negotiations and the agreement of all parties to the dispute. These reservations remain in place, although rules of procedure were agreed in 2001 and the Bali Concord II (ASEAN 2003b) emphasises that the High Council 'would be a principal instrument of the ASEAN Security Community since it reflects ASEAN's commitment to resolve all differences, disputes, and conflicts peacefully.' ASEAN

¹² The texts of these are available at www.aseansec.org.

governments similarly agreed (ASEAN 2000) on the establishment of a Troika mechanism ‘to enable the association to address in a timely manner urgent and important regional political and security issues and situations of common concern likely to disturb regional peace and harmony.’¹³ Significantly, indicative of the actual reservations regarding its operationalization, the Troika would be constituted only as an *ad hoc* body at ministerial level. Its activation is moreover subject to non-interference and consensus. That said, ASEAN’s consensual focus on political development rather than full-fledged interference in intrastate strife is well captured in the discourse on Myanmar. Since the Depayin incident of May 2003 ASEAN has called for ‘tangible progress that would lead to peaceful transition to democracy in the near future’, the early release of political detainees and effective dialogue with all parties concerned (ASEAN 2006). Members have also expressed a ‘commitment to remain constructively engaged with Myanmar’.

If ASEAN countries in 1967 spelled out the importance of freedom from outside interference and, in reaction to US-China rapprochement, formulated a desire to secure the recognition of Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, they registered in the early post-Cold War period ASEAN (1992) an interest in intensifying ‘its external dialogues in political and security matters’. In the ASEAN Concept Paper for the ARF (1995) members argue there ‘would be great hope for the Asia-Pacific if the whole region could emulate ASEAN’s record of enhancing the peace and prosperity of its members.’ In the Bali Concord II (ASEAN 2003b) the Association has stressed that the ‘ASEAN Security Community is open and outward looking in respect of actively engaging ASEAN’s friends and Dialogue Partners to promote peace and stability in the region, and shall build on the ARF to facilitate consultation and cooperation between ASEAN and its friends and Partners on regional security matters.’

The Evolution of ASEAN’s Security Culture

Since 1997 ASEAN’s security culture has increasingly been challenged from within and outside the region, but it retains its tenets despite some conceptual adjustment of its discourse and evolution of its practices (Caballero-Anthony 2005, Katsumata 2003). No fundamental challenge to the consensus that as a grouping ASEAN should

¹³ The ASEAN Troika, terms of references adopted at the 33rd AMM, Bangkok, 24-25 July 2000.

not be involved with bilateral differences or disputes has arisen. By comparison, regarding the way in which ASEAN members practise non-interference, a collective understanding has evolved whereby a more flexible engagement of one another may be necessary when domestic situations have serious cross-border effects. Such 'enhanced interaction' constitutes an important development of ASEAN's security culture but does not involve the abandonment of shared belief in the validity and value of the principles of non-interference (Haacke 2005). The collective decision in 2003 to work towards an ASEAN Security Community has the potential to translate into significant further developments of ASEAN's security culture but has not evidently done so as yet. Indeed, ASEAN has not sanctioned a collective preoccupation with the domestic politics of other members. Attesting to the preference for light security cooperation, the Bali Concord II also explicitly recognizes the sovereign right of the member countries to pursue their individual foreign policies and defense arrangements. The ASC therefore repeats ideas long held, namely that ASEAN does not stand for a defence pact or a joint foreign policy. The need to confront transnational challenges – especially terrorism and maritime violence – has also not had a significant impact on the nature of security cooperation at the corporate level.

Comparing the development of Security Culture within the AU and ASEAN

The preceding pages have attempted to understand the variation of actual security practices of the AU and ASEAN with reference to differences in the central tenets and operations assumptions as well as security discourse of these two arrangements. We submit that two differences in particular stand out when comparing the security culture of the AU and ASEAN: their particular ways of thinking and dealing with interstate and intrastate security challenges. There are at least two explanations: The first concerns a different inculcation of emerging international norms. While the AU's membership has in principle been inclined to integrate normative developments from outside its region into its collective frame of reference and adjusted its stated preferences and actions accordingly, ASEAN has reacted more cautiously. In the AU's case, this may well be due to the importance that some key African rulers (e.g. in Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa and Senegal) place on their international image and their desire to be seen, particularly by the powerful G-7 states, as living up to the ideals of 'good governance' as defined by the international financial

institutions. After all, the commitment of African states to liberal norms of governance was the centrepiece of the international bargain with the G-7 that produced the New Partnership for Africa's Development in 2001 (de Waal 2002).

The second reason is that the extent of interstate and intrastate conflicts in Africa and past failures to address them effectively has encouraged the AU to develop its own regional capacity in order to fill the vacuum often left by the UN Security Council (Boulden 2003). This process has been supported by the P3 states as a way to avoid placing their own troops in complex and dangerous operations on a continent, which has lost most of its strategic importance with the passing of the Cold War. ASEAN has avoided inter-member war, and witnessed only intrastate conflict that, all things considered, has proved far less costly in human lives than in Africa. We submit that the AU has for this reason made a more significant collective effort to develop its security discourse and practice than has ASEAN.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to illustrate and make sense of the variation in the security practices of regional arrangements. Focusing on the AU and ASEAN, it argued that despite a good number of similarities between these two arrangements, their responses to interstate and intrastate security issues have been very different, and that variation also characterises the extent of their members' security cooperation. We argued that while mainstream approaches in IR as well as the literature on regionalism and regionalization can help to illuminate aspects of the behaviour of regional arrangements, a focus on the interlocking understandings about security among state representatives making up the regional arrangement and its attendant security discourse is particularly useful to account for the variation in the approaches to security adopted by the AU and ASEAN. Specifically, we see regional security cultures as involving interlocking beliefs about security, collective discourses and practices. To us these regional security cultures are both analytically and empirically distinct from ideational or norms operating at either the local or global levels. In our understanding this reinforces the arguments of those, like Hurrell, who have called for greater attention to be devoted to the regional level in IR theory.

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Table 1: Comparing the Security Cultures of Regional Arrangements

	Criteria 1 Inter- member conflict	Criteria 2 Intra- member conflict	Criteria 3 Security cooperation	Criteria 4 Out-of-area operations
Commitment to:	Regional interstate security	Regional human security	Regional cooperative security	Global security
Regional Arrangement				
EU	Yes	Yes	Yes (deep)	Yes
OSCE	Yes	Yes	Yes (light)	No
NATO	No	No	Yes (deep)	Yes
CIS	Yes	Yes	Yes (light)	No
OAS	Yes	Yes	Yes (light)	No
AU	Yes	Yes	Yes (deep)	No
ECOWAS	Yes	Yes	Yes (deep)	No
SADC	Yes	Yes	Yes (light)	No
IGAD	No	Yes	Yes (light)	No
ASEAN	No	No	Yes (light)	No
ARF	No	No	Yes (light)	No
SCO	No	No	Yes (light)	No
Etc.				