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HEIDI HARDT

**KEEP FRIENDS CLOSE BUT COLLEAGUES CLOSER: EFFICIENCY IN
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE OPERATIONS**

**Project on:
Globalization and the
National Security State**

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**Keep Friends Close but Colleagues Closer:
Efficiency in the Establishment of Peace Operations**

Heidi Hardt

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Heidi Hardt received her Ph.D. degree in International Relations in September 2011 from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. She studies the role of international organizations in managing global peace and security. Heidi holds a Masters in European Studies from the London School of Economics and her doctoral studies included a year exchange at Yale University. Her thesis aims at explaining the efficiency with which regional organizations conduct peace operations. In her post-doctoral position at CERIU, she continues her research on multilateral intervention and studies the politics of the recent NATO intervention in Libya. Heidi Hardt has recently been awarded by the International Studies Association (ISA) best graduate student paper presented at the 2011 Annual Convention.

Abstract

The speed with which international organizations establish peace operations impacts prospects for sustainable peace. In this paper, I explain why some organizations take longer than others to answer calls for intervention. I identify the role of informal relations in a literature that has long favored formality and challenge realist assumptions that intergovernmental decision-making depends strictly on national interests. Based on personal interviews with 50 ambassadors at four regional organizations, I show that differences in response rates largely depend on the strength of interpersonal relations amongst decision-makers. Despite having superior funding, the European Union remains the slowest organization to react because of its highly formalistic culture. Informal bonds of trust help account for the speed with which organizations are able to respond to crises.

“When you need to do business, it is much easier to talk to the person once you’ve talked about Formula 1 and football.” – EU Ambassador¹

In the realm of multilateral crisis response, delays in decision-making can have deadly consequences. The longer that it takes for an international organization to agree on action can lead to the protraction of violence on the ground and damaged credibility for its member states. This study offers an unconventional answer to the question of why some international organizations manage to respond to crises more quickly than others. The impact of speed constitutes one of several critical influences on peace operation effectiveness, but it has yet to be investigated. Empirical data for this study reveals that organizations, like the European Union, with the means to rapidly respond do not do so when compared to others. I argue that this variation in speed is due in large part to differences amongst the overall interpersonal relations of decision-makers within an organization. Those organizations where decision-makers experience high degrees of positive social interaction and subscribe to informal social networks require less time to reach consensus. Closer informal relations facilitate trust and quicker information sharing. This widens the bargaining range but weakens the influence of national interests, in turn limiting the sway of nations’ capitals at the expense of intergovernmental consensus. Interviews with 50 ambassadors on peace operation decision-making committees and with staff at four regional organizations offer evidence demonstrating the impact of interpersonal relations and corresponding informal decision-making on efficiency in the establishment of peace operations. Interviews took place in the respective embassies of permanent representatives in four cities: Addis Ababa (African Union), Brussels (EU), Vienna (OSCE) and Washington (Organization of American States). The article first presents original empirical evidence on speed, engages and

Notes

¹ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 20. 37:56. Brussels. June.

challenges current explanations and provides the central argument. It then examines empirical cases for each of four organizations and offers conclusions.

Efficiency in Crisis Response

Scholars of conflict management have yet to come to a consensus on a definition for efficiency, but this has not deterred them from making the case for its importance in influencing the success or failure of peace operations. I interpret efficiency in the strictest sense of the word, defining it as speed of decision-making toward a negotiated, unanimous agreement for action. Why does efficiency matter for interventions aimed at fostering international peace and security? Chronic delays in responding to international crises threaten the legitimacy and feasibility of cultivating sustainable peace. Ongoing internal conflicts affect regional and global security through spillover - be it through immigration, refugees or organized crime. As months pass between the demand for an intervention and the supply of personnel on the ground, civilians continue to be subjected to violence, conflict, and/or political instability. Speed of response remains a significant determinant of effectiveness of peace operations on the ground. Empirical work by Doyle and Sambanis² and more recently by Fortna³ show that overall peace operations positively affect a region's prospects for long-term stability and growth, yet none has investigated the decision-making process. Literature on international organization response durations has been limited to authors' calls for the development of rapid response capabilities⁴, a recommendation in the Brahimi Report⁵ and a recent study on bureaucracy⁶.

² Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis. *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*. Princeton University Press, 2006.

³ Virginia Page Fortna. *Does Peacekeeping Work?: Shaping Belligerents' Choices After Civil War*. Princeton University Press, (2008).

⁴ E.g. Jean E Krasno, Bradd C Hayes, and Donald Charles Daniel. *Leveraging for Success in United Nations Peace Operations*. Praeger Publishers, (2003). 237.; Alex Bellamy. "Who's Keeping the Peace? Regionalization and Contemporary Peace Operations." *International Security* (2005), 189 and 195.; Victoria Holt and Moira Shanahan.

My creation of an original dataset on response rates in the post-Cold War era offers the puzzling picture of a slow but affluent European Union in contrast to faster but less wealthy regional organizations such as the AU, OAS, OSCE. The table below shows the average speed of response rates by four regional organizations for all 70 interventions from 1991 to 2009. Having compiled data from leading peace operation databases⁷, international news sources and organization websites, I measured the duration between the date an operation is demanded, in the form of a UN Security Council Resolution or a host country's official request, and the date an operation begins on the ground:

Table 1: Mean Response Rates in the Establishment of Peace Operations (in months)

AU	EU	OAS	OSCE
3.84	6.17	4.28	4.49

In contrast to the EU's six-month delay in establishing personnel and/or troops on the ground, the African Union takes just under four months and the OAS and OSCE take just over four months on average. This contrasts the literature's assumptions of the EU as a de facto role model⁸ for crisis management because the findings indicate a relatively limited ability to rapidly respond.

"African Capacity-Building for Peace Operations: UN Collaboration with the African Union and ECOWAS." Henry L Stimson Center. *Henry L Stimson Center*, (2005).

⁵ United Nations Panel on U.N. Peace Operations. *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*. United Nations. New York, (2000).

⁶ Heidi Hardt. "Rapid Response or Evasive Action? Regional Organization Responses to Peace Operation Demands." *European Security* 18.4 (2009): 383-415.

⁷ E.g. SIPRI. 'Multilateral Peace Operations Database'. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Stockholm: (2011); Center on International Cooperation. *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations, 2009*. London: Lynne Rienner: (2009).

<http://www.sipri.org/research/conflict/pko/multilateral>

⁸ E.g. Sheila Coutts, ed. *Regionalization of Peace Operations*. International Peace Academy Workshop Report. Potsdam, New York, 2002; Trevor Salmon. "The EU's Role in Conflict Resolution: Lessons From Northern

Perspectives on Speed in Decision-making

In the realm of international negotiations, realist scholars assert that only national interests can dictate ambassadors' actions through instructions from capitals, but the impact of personal interests remains unacknowledged. National interest trumps all in the hour of crisis as matters of high-politics take on a magnitude distinct from low politics. Applying this realist logic, we could expect that interpersonal dynamics should be the first thing to be put aside when discussions turn to decisions with life-or-death consequences. Diplomats should assume their duty to their countries in debating an intervention. Even liberal realist scholars like Moravcsik, who view national agendas as varying rather than fixed, view the actions of ambassadors as motivated by shifting domestic pressures⁹ not interpersonal ones. Yet only human relations determine who to trust as ambassadors engage in negotiations. Waltz writes that, "the study of society cannot be separated from the study of government, or the study of man from either"¹⁰. I argue that closer interpersonal relations diminish the importance of national interests in an ambassador's decision-making process and expand an ambassador's bargaining space in his or her effort to join peers in consensus-seeking. National agendas set the parameters of negotiating but these shift as trust amongst individuals comes into play.

In contrast, the fields of sociology and business academia have long recognized personal politics as an important role in negotiations¹¹ but have yet to apply this to crisis management.

Ireland." *European foreign affairs review* (2002), 337; Barry Buzan and Ole Waever. *Regions and Powers: the Structure of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2003). 352.; Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler. *The European Union as a Global Actor*. 2nd ed. Oxon, England: Routledge, (2006). 223.

⁹ Andrew Moravcsik. "Preferences and Power in the European Community: a Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31.4 (1993): 481.

¹⁰ Kenneth Waltz. *Man, the State, and War: a Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press: (2001).

¹¹ E.g. Mishra, Aneil. "Trust in Organizations." *Frontiers of Theory and Research*. Roderick Moreland Kramer & Tom R Tyler Edited by. London: Sage Publications, Inc, 1996. 429; Roy J Lewicki, Daniel J McAllister, and Robert J Bies. "Trust and Distrust: New Relationships and Realities." *Academy of Management Review* (1997): 50; Rajesh

Business academia authors Ingram and Zou¹² observe that scholars in their field have produced evidence that informal networks help workers and organizations to be more effective. The pathway for increasing effectiveness in businesses is the same as in international organizations: more communication increases trust, which facilitates information-sharing. While Ingram and Zou cite an array of authors who offer a warning against blending emotion and business, the evidence in this paper confirms the advantages of doing so. The world of diplomacy has long thrived on camaraderie built around social gatherings and after-work drinks. This holds true even when negotiating responses to violent crises.

My argument for the role of interpersonal relations supports a sociological institutionalist explanation in which an inter-subjective understanding amongst actors influences their decision-making¹³. Pre-existing trust eases negotiators' ability to overcome "dysfunctionalities inherent in their interaction"¹⁴. A history of interaction builds trust and in some cases friendship. This shared history then allows ambassadors to have a wider scope in negotiation because of increased access to information and an absence of negative emotional feelings¹⁵. Friendships have the fluidity of surpassing rather than replacing political alliances and geographic alliances.

The relevance of individual connections for negotiating is already reflected at the global level. A senior member of the UN Secretary-General's staff called informal, private consultation "the *real* Security Council - the place where ideas are put to the test, and where compromise is

Kumar and Verner Worm. "Social Capital and the Dynamics of Business Negotiations Between the Northern Europeans and the Chinese." *International Marketing Review* 20.3 (2002): 264.

¹² Paul Ingram and Xi Zou. "Business Friendships". *Research in Organizational Behavior* 28, 167–184 (2008).

¹³ Ian Hurd. "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics." *International Organization* 53.2 (1999): 388.

¹⁴ Rajesh Kumar and Verner Worm. "Social Capital and the Dynamics of Business Negotiations Between the Northern Europeans and the Chinese." *International Marketing Review* 20.3 (2002): 264.

¹⁵ Jennifer George, Gareth Jones and Jorge Gonzalez. "The Role of Affect in Cross-Cultural Negotiations." *Journal of International Business Studies* 29 (1998).

applied in solving international conflicts”¹⁶. Representatives of the permanent members of the UN Security Council have also hosted a biweekly dinner to speak openly and in smaller groups about the issues. Even half-a-century ago, interpersonal relations played a critical role at the Security Council. Hyde wrote, “The cocktail party, luncheon or dinner are occasions when information is exchanged, key people assemble to work on a draft, or ‘trial balloons’ are sent up ... They are where much of the work of an international conference is done.”¹⁷

According to rational choice institutionalists, formal rules that govern the actions of ambassadors are fixed like “scripts that constrain behavior”¹⁸ and informal modes of operating have developed in reaction to these rules. Here, exogenous constraints refer to the codified rules such as those that govern the frequency of official meetings, requisite consultations with other decision-making bodies and rotations of leadership. For example, the EU’s requisite high frequency of meetings has deterred ambassadors from seeking out social engagements. However, Principal-Agent Theory from rationalist literature cannot explain variation in speed of response because information asymmetries exist across all organizations. The theory instead can help explain how interpersonal relationships affect ambassadors’ decision-making with respect to their capitals. In Putnam’s two-level game, state capitals absorb domestic preferences in policy-making, but interactions at the international level involve a balance of more than domestic and international interests because personal interests play a role as well. Principal-Agent Theory examines scenarios in which an agent takes actions that the principal cannot observe and an optimal outcome depends on an optimal amount of risk-sharing between the two¹⁹, but does not

¹⁶ Loie Feurle. “Informal Consultation: a Mechanism in Security Council Decision-Making.” *N.Y.U. Journal of International Law and Politics* 18 (1985): 267.

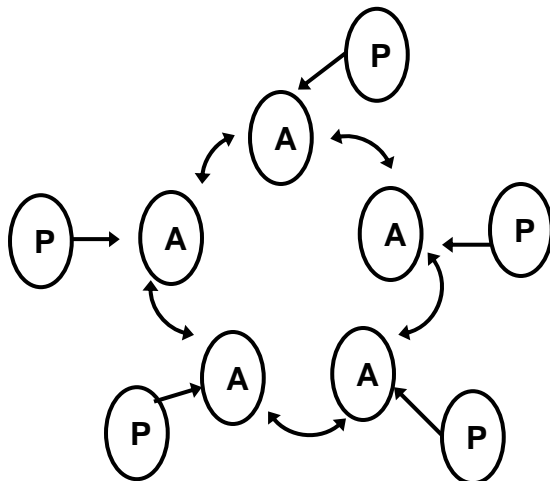
¹⁷ James Hyde. “United States Participation in the United Nations.” *International Organization* 10 (1956): 31.

¹⁸ Shepsle, Kenneth. “Rational Choice Institutionalism.” *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (Oxford Handbooks of Political Science)*. Oxford University Press, USA, (2008): 26.

¹⁹ Sanford Grossman and Oliver Hart. “An Analysis of the Principal-Agent Problem.” *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society* 51.1 (1983): 7.

account for interactions amongst agents. Principals represent the governments of member states and agents represent their corresponding ambassadors at the organization peace and security committee. Information asymmetry characterizes the relationship between principals and the agents that they oversee. Moe writes that this “control cannot be perfect, because the informational advantage gives bureaucrats the power to engage in some measure of noncompliant behavior”²⁰. Specifically, ambassadors have an advantage in terms of their expertise, given their experience on the job, and their “private information”. For example, ambassadors receive early warning alerts from the respective Secretariat or Commission about political situations in the region, the status of peace operations and the viability of various responses to crisis. Capitals have only the information that their ambassadors pass back to them and outside information they receive about specific crises.

Figure 1: Adapting Principal-Agent Theory to International Negotiations



²⁰ Terry Moe. “Political Control and the Power of the Agent.” *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 22.1 (2005): 1.

The evidence found from this survey of ambassadors indicates that the principal has surprisingly much less control than previously assumed by realists who expect agents' actions to be defined by national interests. However, the agent - through socialization with other agents - is incentivized to take decisions based on the most *credible* information possible because of trust in the expertise and knowledge of colleagues and friends. The cost for principals to monitor agents is high so the result often consists of the agent's actions diverting from the principal's expectations.

Nonetheless, this impact of interpersonal relations amongst agents remains absent from debates on Principal-Agent Theory in intergovernmental contexts. Here, we see that relations *amongst* agents can equally tear away control from the principals. This occurs as ambassadors share more information and become increasingly more of experts than their delegating authorities²¹. Ambassadors motivated by personal interests in turn serve a key interest of the organization - to enhance peace and security²². Greater agency²³ can therefore increase the

²¹ Matthew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols Versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (1984): 247.

²² All four of the organizations reference the objective of enhancing peace and security in their respective charters and conventions.

²³ Mark Pollack. "Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the European Community." *International Organization* 51.1 (1997): 101.

overall efficiency of the decision-making process.

Interpersonal Relations: A New Explanation for Speed

In order to test the argument that different modes of interpersonal relations explained different response rates, I found face-to-face interviews to be the best method²⁴ for accessing information about decision-making that takes place in closed-door meetings and in private get-togethers amongst ambassadors. Ambassadors were the individuals most active in negotiations on the establishment of an operation, but organizations offered no public meeting notes or open sessions. Ambassadors were asked to respond to survey questions that were both quantitative, (e.g. frequency of informal communication) and qualitative (e.g. routines, practices and relations), and they were only told that the interview would concern decision-making to minimize bias. From qualitative data, I mapped out decision-making and where trust was concentrated. From quantitative data, I identified patterns and modes of interaction²⁵. Frequency of informal communications served as a metric for measuring the strength of interpersonal relations. Heads of state were not interviewed because they were not in as frequent communication on these types of issues and because securing a significant number of interviews was beyond this study's limitations.

Analyses of the evidence from the 50 interviews points to two key findings that challenge previous understandings of how international organizations make decisions in the peace and security realm. First, interpersonal relations through friendships and networks amongst decision-makers can help speed up decision-making, even in reacting to crises. Ambassadors report that

²⁴ Vincent Pouliot. "'Subjectivism': Toward a Constructivist Methodology." *International Studies Quarterly* 51.2 (2007): 370.

²⁵ In conducting analyses, I controlled for three sequencing or follow-on peace operations. Removing them from the sample did not change variation in efficiency.

about half of the time their first phone call following a crisis is not to the capital but to a fellow ambassador who he or she can trust – that is, a friend. As one ambassador explained, “It’s easier if you have a better personal relation. It is much easier to approach the guy and ask, ‘Listen what do you think about it because we have a problem here ... Can you just talk to your people back home?’”²⁶ This contrasts state-based assumptions about how international negotiations occur.

Table 2: Frequency of Communication amongst Ambassadors

Freq Comm	(per week, outside of formal meetings)			
	AU	EU	OAS	OSCE
Mean	6.60	5.38	6.20	6.22
Median	7.00	5.00	7.00	7.00
Mode	7.00	5.00	7.00	7.00

Reflecting survey responses by ambassadors, the table above shows that several organizations, including the AU, OAS and OSCE, have benefited from closer interpersonal relations in their respective peace operation decision-making committee, whereas EU ambassadors have experienced fewer informal interactions. The frequency with which ambassadors communicate outside of formal meetings provides insight into the differences in how socialized the groups of decision-makers were. This measure captured all of an ambassador’s general communications with other acting ambassadors in the respective committee – from working lunches to weekend soccer matches to weekly dinners with members of the same sub-region. Table 2 reveals that AU ambassadors interact the most frequently outside of formal meetings whereas the EU ambassadors did so the least frequently. This supports

²⁶ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 20, 44:31. Brussels. June.

anecdotes shared by ambassadors across organizations that EU interpersonal relations were overall more formal in contrast to those of other organizations where relations were described as fraternal and familial.

Second, findings indicate that frequent formal meetings and structures may inadvertently make the process of peace operation decision-making less efficient. Scholars previously assumed that the introduction of such formal structures would facilitate interaction and, by default, consensus-building. Rather, a requisite high frequency of such meetings restricts the time decision-makers have to socially interact and thus carry out diplomacy in privacy. Despite a requirement of attending official meetings twice a week, ambassadors at the EU Political and Security Committee meet on average every other day. In contrast, ambassadors to the AU, OAS and OSCE enjoy ample time to socialize and therefore build trust in one another for the purposes of exchanging private information.

Ultimately, these decision-makers shape their positions in reaction to both instructions from their capitals and to the information, opinions and advice gained through professional relations. In interviews, ambassadors indicated that two key factors influence their most critical decisions: informal communication and informal networks. Trust developed over time with certain colleagues facilitates more frequent and valuable information transactions. I find that friendships have more of an impact than collegial relationships on consensus-building. About 91% of ambassadors interviewed asserted that their “friendships” with other ambassadors significantly mattered for their decision-making, particularly in times of crisis. Additionally, 85% reported that their most important negotiations happened not in formal meetings, but informally in either bilateral or sub-regional talks. This informal work is done through bilateral and multilateral face-to-face meetings in delegations as much as it is done over shared lunches

and tennis matches.

Stronger interpersonal relations in a given committee reflects a socialization effect wherein the term ‘socialization’ is taken literally to mean enhanced social interaction, as opposed to the common normative interpretation in the sociology literature. The impact of the informal level in international organizations remains understudied. Scholars have instead privileged formalized sets of rules by devoting vastly disproportionate attention to them - either intentionally or because of logistical limitations²⁷ - and suggested that formalized organizations such as the EU are more effective than those that are less formalized. Informal communications, which manifest themselves in the form of interpersonal relations, and informal networks shape the ways in which ambassadors negotiate on peace operations. Differences in how organizations have internalized these factors help to explain variation in regional organization performance.

Personal versus National Interest

Surprisingly, evidence from interviews and field research demonstrate that ambassadors’ personal relations do not correlate with their member states’ political alliances. Rational choice institutionalists would expect states (here, ambassadors) to seek out and employ all possible venues for maximizing national interest. From this perspective, when ambassadors engage in friendships, they do so rationally for political reasons - to persuade others to support their national interest, but this is not the case. Ambassadors of regional hegemonic states (e.g. Nigeria, Brazil) at the AU and OAS respectively shared weekends and coffees with smaller, less powerful states. Specifically, according to ambassador interviews, the biggest players in each organization

²⁷ Dorothy Heisenberg. “The Institution of ‘Consensus’ in the European Union: Formal Versus Informal Decision-Making in the Council.” *European Journal of Political Research* (2005), 66.

include: Nigeria and South Africa²⁸ at the AU, Britain, France and Germany at the EU²⁹, the US, Russia and EU presidency at the OSCE³⁰ and the US, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico at the OAS³¹. Although each member state has an equal vote and all retain the right to veto, it is understood that smaller states will side with certain bigger states in the formal meeting room. What is unusual is that these bigger states and smaller states establish positive personal relations, even when it is not in their mutual political interest to do so. The repeat game promotes incentives for cooperation, but also poses a loyalty problem. On one hand, ambassadors intend to follow their capitals' instructions but on the other, they are motivated by prestige and peer pressure to honor trust amongst colleagues and be flexible in negotiating.

Equally important is the effect of the absence of positive personal relations. Ambassadors of two of the European Union's "Big Three" states rarely met informally because of a personal, mutual dislike for one another despite the incomparable strength of their countries' bilateral relationship. Staff complained that they were left to themselves to carry out almost all bilateral negotiations and that this substantially slowed down deal-breaking between the delegations. Irrespective of an individual state's national interest, socialization benefits the interest of the regional organization through the facilitation of consensus-building toward solutions for international peace and security.

Shapley and Shubik's study of distributed power in a committee system defines "the power of an individual member as depending on the chance he [or she] has in being critical to the success of a winning coalition"³². Yet if big player states' relative capacity and military

²⁸ AU Ambassador. (2009). Personal Communication. Interview 7. 55:14. Addis Ababa. May.

²⁹ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal Communication. Interview 19. 1:82. Brussels. June.

³⁰ OSCE Ambassador. (2009). Personal Communication. Interview 31. 5:12. Vienna. June.

³¹ OAS Ambassador. (2009). Personal Communication. Interview 58. 11:55. Washington, D.C. March.

³² Lloyd Shapley and Martin Shubik. "A Method for Evaluating the Distribution of Power in a Committee System." *The American Political Science Review* 48.3 (1954), 787.

capability truly served as indicators of their probability to succeed in furthering a particular political agenda, then there would be no need to informally consult with smaller member states because their clout would be sufficient in itself to convince them to fall in line. Evidence in the field of conflict management points to the contrary.

Informal Alliances: Good Friends Share Secrets

Ambassadors gather in informal contexts along the lines of shared identities. As with the development of any interpersonal relation, these friendships tended to be created from a multitude of motivations from shared culture, shared language, shared worldviews, shared gender to even a shared affinity for a sport. Examples include the OSCE Serbian ambassador's close friendship with the Dutch ambassador because of a regular ladies' luncheon or the OSCE Slovenian ambassador's informal relationship with the Russian ambassador because of shared knowledge of language. Some ambassadors reported feeling obligated to make an attempt at friendships with ambassadors with whom they shared a strong, historical link, but this was not reflected as a key variable when friendships were measured within committees.

Friendships particularly reduce information asymmetries by facilitating information sharing through the enhancement of overall knowledge, intelligence, and what the negotiating boundaries were for one another. Ambassadors described having friendships with an average of five other ambassadors in the group, whereas one expressed not having any friendships in the committee. As one ambassador put it, "sometimes you feel comfortable with certain representatives. When it comes to informal discussions, sometimes you feel more comfortable discussing certain issues."³³ I defined a friend as one who an ambassador spent time with outside of meetings and who was trusted. Ambassadors across organizations elaborated on this to say

³³ AU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 1. 3:45. Addis Ababa. May.

that friends were those whom they could call up late in the evening for clarification, information-swapping or simply to chat.³⁴ The motivation to share more information tended to reflect more of an emotional state-of-being rather than a fixed incentive. That is, ambassadors shared more when they simply *felt* comfortable enough in the personal relationship to do so. As in everyday life, time spent socializing cultivates interpersonal trust. One ambassador summarized the role of personal politics in efficiency in crisis decision-making: “I very often think it has nothing to do with the hard lines that have been set by the national positions but it's the personality of the person that makes it easier or harder.”³⁵

Motivations are consistently reduced in the literature to furthering national interest. Scholarly references to human emotion or feelings in studies of international cooperation are discarded as warm and fuzzy concepts holding no real bearing on state decision-making. On the contrary, trust is the currency that humans use to cooperate. With trust, ambassadors are able to share sensitive information that they would not share otherwise. The nature of information could include intelligence learned at an informal meeting of NATO-member delegations to the OSCE or a country's true reservation limit on a particular agreement. This can have direct consequences on the issuance of a peace operation.

Informal Networks: For Socializing ... and Negotiating

Beyond bilateral informal communications and even friendships, ambassadors have institutionalized informal regular meetings through social networks, and these meetings serve as

³⁴ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 28. 53:03. Brussels. June.

³⁵ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 25. 16:05. Brussels. June.

forums for critical, private negotiations to take place. With respect to pursuing their objectives as diplomats, ambassadors view informal fora as a means for removing the threat of ambassadors' positions being "on record". Instead the forums allow the ambassadors to be open about what are their actual reservation limits and their room for maneuver. Informal fora also exist for a social purpose: they make people happier. According to scholarship in economics, "joining a group that meets just once a month produces the same increase in happiness as doubling your income."³⁶

In his work on informal agreements, Lipson describes how networks are an ad-hoc means to an end, with 'no intention (and no realistic possibility) of extending them to wider issues, other actors, longer time periods, or more formal obligations'³⁷. Yet these informal networks seem to have done exactly the opposite by surviving diplomatic rotations. Without formal obligations, sub-groups of peace operation committees regularly spend leisure time together, discussing politics over tennis, coffee and the like. They are only ad-hoc by creation. Rather, interviews indicated that the groups were relatively stable, despite periodic rotations by ambassadors to other posts. As aforementioned, such groups formed based off of shared sense of communal identity (e.g. language, gender, region, sport). Each ambassador wears many hats representing each of the different identities he or she adopts. The networks that an ambassador chooses to engage reflects which hat has been chosen. These determine how ambassadors personally identify with a group within the group. This sub-group shapes negotiations because it determines with whom an ambassador speaks privately.

At the most basic level, networks are defined as "a set of interconnected nodes"³⁸. Nodes can be understood here to mean individual member state ambassadors where as connections or

³⁶ Daniel Kahneman et al. "Would You Be Happier if You Were Richer? Focusing Illusion." *Science* 312.5782 (2006): 1908–1910. In David Brooks. "Social Animals." *The New Yorker* (17 Jan. 2011).

³⁷ Charles Lipson. "Why Are Some International Agreements Informal?." *International Organization* 45.4 (1991), 538.

³⁸ Miles Kahler. *Networked Politics: Agency, Power, and Governance*. Cornell University Press, (2009). 4.

links represent interpersonal relationships. In other words, networks constrain and enable behavior³⁹. Ambassadors' weekly group dinners and informal meetings of like-minded states do just this. They strengthen existing single links between nodes and create new ties as new ambassadors rotate in. Trust acts as the mechanism for allowing interpersonal relationship linkages to develop.

To understand the sustainability of these social networks, it is helpful to draw a comparison of an ambassador's respective social network to the system described by Hurd in his seminal book *After Anarchy*. Hurd writes that in a system based primarily on self-interest, actors' loyalty to the system depends on the system eliciting them a series of benefits while they continuously reconsider the payoffs of staying in the system. "Such a system can be stable while the payoff structure is in equilibrium". Second, Hurd writes that "long-term relationships between self-interested agents are difficult to maintain because actors do not value the relation itself, only the benefits accruing from it."⁴⁰ Even if we assume that ambassadors are purely self-interested, it would still behoove them to remain in their respective social networks because payoffs do not correlate with political shifts at the peace committees. In other words, if a crisis or change in government occurs that forces member states to reevaluate their political positions, this would not interfere with social payoffs ambassadors receive on the individual level from social dinners. Adapting Hurd's last statement above, ambassadors at regional organizations do place value on the personal relationships they share with fellow ambassadors, and this value is *in addition to* value they put on the intangible benefits they receive as well - including greater access to information and ample opportunities to socialize and gossip.

These social networks also inherently reflect power through their connections. A state's

³⁹ John P. Scott. *Social Network Analysis: a Handbook*. 2nd ed. Sage Publications Ltd, (2000). 2-3.

⁴⁰ Ian Hurd. *After Anarchy*. Princeton University Press, 2008. Print. Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council. 39.

power depends not only on its respective capabilities but on its structural position in the network with other agents⁴¹. This suggests that states with less capacity can compensate in influencing decision-making at the peace committee level by becoming the most well-connected members of the organization.

Trust as Facilitator

Trust is the primary causal mechanism for determining the strength of personal relations amongst ambassadors and facilitating information sharing. Decision-makers at each of these four regional organizations take advantage of opportunities to negotiate outside of formal contexts, and it is through these interactions that trust develops. Such interpersonal trust is ultimately responsible for cementing the relationships that facilitate quicker negotiations. Rather than limiting conversations to before weekly or biweekly meetings, ambassadors have creatively responded to existing formal procedures to establish different standardized means and modes for socializing and negotiating. With respect to developing such friendships outside of work, former U.S. Ambassador Edward Djerejian explained that creating such personal bonds was a technique for establishing “pre-emptive trust”. In this way, when a crisis occurred, an ambassador could lean on those fellow ambassadors for credible information. He explained, “If you don’t build relations between other ambassadors, you’re going to be stymied”. Business scholars Kumar and Worm show that pre-existing relationships represents one of the ways that negotiators succeed in overcoming “expectational inconsistencies inherent in the intercultural negotiation process”⁴². This is because “prior interactions may have engendered trust or distrust among the negotiators”.

⁴¹ Miles Kahler. *Networked Politics: Agency, Power, and Governance*. Cornell University Press, (2009). 4.

⁴² Rajesh Kumar and Verner Worm. “Social Capital and the Dynamics of Business Negotiations Between the Northern Europeans and the Chinese.” *International Marketing Review* 20.3 (2002): 264.

The Cloak of Privacy in Diplomacy

Privacy represents a secondary causal mechanism for facilitating interpersonal relations. The development of interpersonal trust not only depends on a time investment in socializing but on an environment of privacy. In informal negotiations, diplomatic privacy provides an environment of openness amongst ambassadors and this openness allows for an agreement to be found more rapidly. Whereas privacy in these informal negotiations refers to discussions held outside of formal meetings and thus away from fellow *ambassadors*, the majority of scholarly literature on diplomatic privacy focuses on whether negotiations take place away from the *public* domain. In November 2010, the Wikileaks publication of almost 2000 secret U.S. diplomatic cables reawakened this centuries-long debate over the costs and benefits of transparency in diplomacy. Stasavage refers to this as open- and closed-door bargaining⁴³. Proponents emphasize that transparency holds governments accountable to the public for their national positions and actions whereas those supporting privacy emphasize the benefits for efficiency of decision-making. In spite of Woodrow Wilson's call for "open covenants of peace, openly arrived at"⁴⁴, formal meetings on peace and security at regional organizations are still conducted in closed-door sessions, just as the meetings of the UN Security Council are done. The AU, EU and OSCE meetings are not open to the public, and the OAS meetings are open or closed depending on if the chair or any of the 35 representatives requests the meeting to be closed⁴⁵.

Both forms of transparency – openness to the public through open-door meetings and openness to the committee on peace and security – impede speed of decision-making because

⁴³ David Stasavage. "Open-Door or Closed-Door? Transparency in Domestic and International Bargaining." *International Organization* 58 (2004): 668, 690.

⁴⁴ David Stasavage. "Open-Door or Closed-Door? Transparency in Domestic and International Bargaining." *International Organization* 58 (2004): 668, 690.

⁴⁵ Organization of American States. *Amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States*. (2003).

under the circumstance of public oversight a) ambassadors are less willing to compromise and b) they are less willing to propose creative but risky solutions to political problems. There are two important parallels that can be drawn from this literature on diplomatic transparency and applied to the case of informal negotiations.

First, ambassadors that enjoy privacy in their communications amongst themselves have more flexibility in their bargaining position. Describing negotiations at the European Council of Ministers, Stasavage reflects this as “the idea that open negotiations might make national representatives less likely to move away from their initial positions, triggering a greater incidence of bargaining breakdowns”⁴⁶. Second, under the condition of private negotiations, ambassadors are less concerned with prestige and thus less likely to “posture”. As almost all of the peace committee meetings are permitted to take place behind closed doors, ambassadors do not feel pressure to commit to uncompromising positions as they would if negotiating under the public eye. This avoids direct conflict in the official session. Engaging in informal negotiations outside of formal meetings represents the next level of privacy. In informal networks or small groupings, ambassadors feel less pressure to posture in front of their peers and to present themselves as fixed on certain national interests. Instead, they can rely on interpersonal trust to share their instructions from capitals and even abandon them on certain points where need be. This complements findings from regional organization ambassador interviews, in which ambassadors stressed the importance of maintaining prestige in the eyes of colleagues. By limiting discussions to only a few people, this pressure was alleviated. The following examination of four organizations illustrates the impact of these bonds of interpersonal relations in practice on efficiency of decision-making.

⁴⁶ David Stasavage. “Open-Door or Closed-Door? Transparency in Domestic and International Bargaining.” *International Organization* 58 (2004): 668, 690.

Table 3: Organizational Characteristics of Peace Decision-making Committees

Org.	Size	Institution	Agenda-setting Powers	Expertise / Support	Formal Meetings
AU	53	Peace Security Council (PSC)	Presidency and Commission	Commission	2x/month
EU	27	Political Security Committee (PSC)	EU Presidency	European Council Secretariat	2x/week
OAS	35	Permanent Council (PC)	PC Chairmanship	Secretariat	2x/month
OSCE	56	Permanent Council (PC)	PC Chairmanship	Secretariat	1x/week

European Union

As noted above, the EU Political and Security Committee exhibits a more formalistic institutional culture when compared to the committees of other similar regional organizations. Keohane reminds us that “institutions should both constrain states, through the operation of rules, and provide them with opportunities to cooperate⁴⁷”. The high frequency of formal committee meetings constrains ambassadors’ time and their desire for engaging in the socializing and critical negotiations that take place therein. “They meet so often,” said one diplomat, “they want to see new faces when they go out in the evenings. That’s the reality.”⁴⁸ Meetings occur on average every other day and the minimum requirement is two times per week as seen in Table 3. In contrast, other organizations hold formal meetings much less frequently. Additionally, the committee reflected formality with respect to the perceptions of ambassadors about their own work environment. They referred to one another as “colleagues”, “not friends”,

⁴⁷ Robert Keohane. “Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge After the Cold War.” *Neorealism and Neorealism: the Contemporary Debate*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1993): 273.

⁴⁸ EU Diplomat 1. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 28. 44:11. June. Brussels.

and cited the “respect” they had for one another, which contrasted environments composed of familial and fraternal bonds at the other organizations examined here.

In situations where political tensions are high, interpersonal relations can facilitate a breakthrough depending on whether they are positive or negative. With respect to the EU Political and Security Committee, several ambassadors confidently stated that until the blocking behavior by Cyprus is solved, the EU will systematically no longer cooperate with NATO on peace operations, making moot the Berlin Plus Agreements.⁴⁹ Additionally, PSC ambassadors equally expressed having cool interpersonal relations with the Cypriot ambassador. This hampered attempts to carry out negotiations informally. Cyprus refuses to engage in NATO cooperation so long as Turkey is a NATO member and the conflict over Cypriot territory remains unresolved. Yet a recent example involving negotiations on the EU Mission Atalanta illustrates how one key friendship facilitated a compromise despite the collegial, rather than friendly, atmosphere. Negotiations on establishing the anti-piracy mission were stopped because Cyprus refused to allow for any EU cooperation with NATO despite discussion on using NATO helicopters and equipment. Such blockages cost precious time. The motion was tabled until a solution was found amongst EU states to rely solely on EU assets but maintain lines of communication. Cyprus felt compelled to maintain its hard-line position, but thanks to a rare friendship with one of the Eastern European member states, the two were able to work out a solution that insured that the mission would proceed.

Echoed by ambassadors at other organizations, the majority of EU ambassadors described having a familiarity with the other ambassadors’ worldviews and their stances on broad issues. One identified the typical geopolitical interests of many of the member states that play out at the

⁴⁹ e.g. EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 19. 46:45. Brussels. June.; EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 15. 42:59 Brussels. June.

PSC: “Germany doesn't like missions in Africa. France is always pressing for missions in Africa in Congo. Greece is very interested in missions on Balkans, which is not the case for Lithuania. It depends where you're situated on the map. Big countries are always protagonists, there are minor actors in concrete area. Greece is active in the Western Balkans and less perhaps in the Caucuses while it's not the case in Afghanistan, but [Greece is] active in Somalia.”⁵⁰ They also “know which are the red lines for [each] delegation”, said one ambassador.⁵¹ “We know more or less which are the biases of each country,” said another. “There are sensitive issues that we know that we cannot do a direct approach.”⁵² Informal communications and further solidifying personal relations are even more necessary for sensitive issues, yet the EU proved lacking in these.

African Union

In contrast to the formalistic nature of EU decision-making, the AU, OAS and OSCE carry out critical decision-making in informal settings and exhibit strong positive interpersonal relations. Due to the high degree of social interaction, smaller states like Gabon through networking can exert as much influence as Nigeria, Africa's regional hegemon, on the search for consensus. With closer relationships, one AU ambassador explained, “you tend to be more expressive and that certainly helps us all understand better the situation that we are dealing with.”⁵³ The AU Peace and Security Council typically meets along sub-regional lines outside of regular meetings in one of the member states' embassies. One ambassador remarked, “The first criteria of informal contact is the sub-region. It's the region. It's not the language, it's first the

⁵⁰ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 13. 15:06. Brussels. June.

⁵¹ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 13. 15:46. Brussels. June.

⁵² EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 27. 28:39. Brussels. June.

⁵³ AU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 1. 7:42. Addis Ababa. May.

region.”⁵⁴ A formal requirement for the PSC to represent all five of the African sub-regions (north, south, east, west and central) corresponds with the informal ties that have developed at the sub-regional level. Like in the OAS, there are subsidiary sub-regional organizations that also exist (e.g. the Rio Group or ALADI),⁵⁵ and these help determine which states identify with which sub-region. Yet these are typically economic organizations and up to three of such organizations may fit in one geographic sub-region, as is the case in West Africa (ECOWAS, EGAT and COMESA).⁵⁶ Therefore, it is the African Union PSC ambassadors who are responsible for summarizing and truly representing the views of the respective sub-region. Ambassadors elected to represent the North African member states meet informally at a different ambassador’s embassy prior to each AU meeting of the PSC. “North Africa has its group. They harmonize their point of view.”⁵⁷

Friendships enable communication to pervade typical sub-regional social networks, connect ambassadors from different backgrounds and geography and increase the number of channels of communication, enhancing the institution’s overall efficiency. An African Union ambassador explains this phenomenon:

“I am from the West African region. I naturally have closer relationships with the ambassadors from the West but I also have close relationships with other ambassadors. I do not limit myself to contact with my brothers of the west. There are my brothers but also my friends. Sometimes your friends become even closer than your brother. It’s necessary to be open.”⁵⁸

More specifically, across organizations, ambassadors agree that friendships matter “in an

⁵⁴ AU Ambassador. (2009). Personal Communication. Interview 7. 19:15. Addis Ababa. June.

⁵⁵ See a list of current OAS sub-regional organizations: http://www.oas.org/en/about/subregional_organizations.asp

⁵⁶ AU Ambassador. (2009). Personal Communication. Interview 4. 42:43. Addis Ababa. June.

⁵⁷ AU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 7. 16:47. Addis Ababa. May.

⁵⁸ AU Ambassador. (2009). Personal Communication. Interview 3. 37:35. Addis Ababa. May.

informal way.”⁵⁹ They repeatedly offered anecdotes of how, whenever necessary, they call up their ambassador friends at a late hour and inquire privately about the sessions and the issues. Friendships allow ambassadors opportunities to clear up confusions in the formal sessions and give each other warning when others have not understood the position presented. “It means that this kind of informal body-to-body talking gives the opportunity to say perhaps I should go back and do some more explanation or perhaps I should go back to my capital.”⁶⁰

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

As aforementioned, the OSCE also is particularly informally institutionalized. The OSCE ambassadors informally met weekly in respective groupings by their NATO, EU and GUAM membership, providing an opportunity for intelligence sharing and trust-building. Socialization makes a different impact depending on just how social is a given committee. At the OSCE, such frequent social interactions are standard and solutions are found, as at the AU and OAS, through informal meetings and communications. One OSCE ambassador reported that after counting, she had had 150 lunches and dinners in one year, which is about three per week.⁶¹

An OSCE chargé⁶² reiterated this need for interpersonal trust to be established a priori by recounting how he guided his staff in a crisis:

“We said early on as the crisis developed you got to reach out to the mission, start calling up people and getting to know them and establish a much more robust relationship than you might have. If Albania or Moldova blew up at that moment, you better start thinking about who you need to know at the mission so if the demand comes, you've got people

⁵⁹ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 23. 4:47. Brussels. June.

⁶⁰ EU Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 23. 5:20. Brussels. June.

⁶¹ OSCE Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 40. 16:52. Vienna. June.

⁶² At the time of the interview, this delegation to the OSCE did not have an ambassador. I therefore interviewed the *chargé d'affaires* who was leading the delegation.

now who not only know what the US mission is but they know who Joe Schmoe is and will pay attention.”⁶³

Rather than flat decision-making, negotiations in these more informal organizations empirically appear to occur in layers of networks of trust. For example, the process of OSCE ambassadors informally organizing and carrying out weekly meetings amongst like-minded states has been institutionalized over time to become part of the modus operandi of the organization. Multiple weekly, informal meetings of multiple groups of states constitute these layers of networks.

As earlier mentioned, gender constituted one commonality that motivated OSCE ambassadors to assemble their own informal network in the form of what they call a monthly “ladies’ luncheon”. Female ambassadors continued to be a minority in the realm of diplomacy. By late 2011, the AU Peace and Security Council was 7% female; the EU Political and Security Committee 26%; the OAS Permanent Council 23% and the OSCE Permanent Council 25%. One of the OSCE female ambassadors described the luncheon as “a very constructive exchange of views” where ambassadors are “pragmatic and solution-oriented” in their discussion and even negotiating over relevant security issues that were facing the OSCE. She remarked that she has the most contact with her fellow female ambassadors: “I can say they are my friends. I can call them at anytime and ask them something and get information.”⁶⁴ Friendships reinforce the critical asset of trust in negotiations and facilitate quicker back-door deals.

While ambassadorial friendships tend to develop haphazardly through common interest or culture, they can be powerful conduits for ambassadors to access information to which they would not have otherwise been privy. In one example at the OSCE, several non-EU state

⁶³ OSCE Ambassador. (2009). Personal Communication. Interview 36, 1:10:10. Vienna. June.

⁶⁴ OSCE Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 40. 19:24. Vienna. June.

ambassadors lamented the difficulties of negotiating at the OSCE because all EU states are required to adopt a common position. Since EU members constitute 48% of the OSCE membership, this means that non-EU members have to find ways of negotiating with the EU states as a block. One way is to befriend EU state members who will likely be most influential in shaping the common EU position. The Serbian ambassador to the OSCE described how she became close friends with an EU member state delegation to the OSCE through a ladies luncheon that takes place every two weeks. This in itself was surprising. It remains to be said that at the time, their governments' bilateral relations were far from warm because of lingering controversies over the mass murder at Srebrenica and the fruitless efforts by Dutch UN peacekeepers to stop it. In addition to emphasizing how much she enjoyed the other's company on a personal level, the non-EU ambassador was able to gain insider information on upcoming EU positions and was able to learn some of the information shared only amongst EU members. This helped her be better informed on formulating her own position as well as on how to negotiate with the EU members themselves. Similar numerous cases of unlikely friendships existed at other regional organizations, which indicates further that personal friendships matter to formulating negotiated outcomes even when debating issues related to peace and security.

Organization of American States

As at the OSCE, OAS ambassadors of smaller states gain through social interaction access to bigger states that they would not have otherwise in a more formalistic environment. Although not quite popularity contests, social networks provide smaller states leverage through socialization. At the OAS, five of the 10 OAS ambassadors interviewed mentioned their positive and personal informal relationship with the Canadian ambassador, which suggests that Canada

has strengthened its social power and in turn its negotiating power at the Permanent Council. The US ambassador to the OAS equally cited three OAS ambassadors as close friends, but who failed to offer strong political leverage to the United States at the time. Ambassadors at the OAS describe a fraternal sense of community and in interviews referred to one another as “brothers” and “sisters”.

Member state ambassadors also organically socialize with ambassadors from neighboring states that often share a common geo-political history and may even share linguistic commonalities. Individuals migrate toward familiar territory. At the OAS, embracing cultural familiarity has been institutionalized as a standard part of the decision-making procedure. During the breaks that take place in Permanent Council meetings, ambassadors segregate into their respective sub-regions for informal talks. This is referred to as “an informal mechanism of sub-regional groups”⁶⁵. They provide their sub-regional input in the process and eventually a common agreement is found amongst these sub-regional positions when the Permanent Council meeting resumes. At the OAS, approximately 70-75% of these negotiations take place outside of the formal Permanent Council meetings and instead in such informal groupings.⁶⁶ An OAS ambassador observes, “It is very difficult to negotiate a sensitive document in the plenary because people are not going to be able to speak freely, first of all because everything is on the record.”⁶⁷

A March 2008 inter-state dispute represents a case in which pre-existing bonds of trust amongst OAS ambassadors succeeded in securing a consensus in crisis response. The Colombian army’s raid of a rebel base in Ecuador triggered the deliberations at the Permanent Council. On one hand, the Colombian government accused the Ecuadorian government of aiding the activities

⁶⁵ OAS Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 63. 28:10. Washington. March.

⁶⁶ OAS Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 46. 15:57. Washington. March.

⁶⁷ OAS Ambassador. (2009). Personal communication. Interview 46. 15:57. Washington. March.

of the rebels by taking on actions with ‘the characteristics of hostage trafficking’⁶⁸. Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa publicly declared, ‘My government has a zero-tolerance policy towards the FARC; zero tolerance for any armed irregular group in our territory.’⁶⁹ As accusations of a breach of sovereignty arose, diplomats met bilaterally and at the sub-regional level to informally garner support for a resolution. Yet despite these challenges, the Colombian and Ecuadorian government strongly expressed their interest in committing to a diplomatic solution at the initial emergency meeting of the Permanent Council. To secure a consensus, all players - ambassadors, foreign ministers and staff - at the OAS employed informal negotiations across levels of hierarchy and at headquarters, as well as consulting with those on the ground through the already present OAS mission to Colombia. Within four days, the OAS Permanent Council reached a consensus amongst all member states, including Colombia and Ecuador, to send a commission to investigate and within 13 days the commission had already sent back an assessment to the Council. This rapid response indicates that no matter how cantankerous rhetoric becomes between two states, strong and *pre-existing* interpersonal relations between those state representatives and mediating state representatives can overcome harsh words.

Conclusion

In summary, the evidence presented in this article indicates that informal dynamics work just like those of other international organizations in that interpersonal relations matter. The fact that regional organizations, including the AU, EU, OAS and OSCE, engage in hard security

⁶⁸ BBC. (2008). ‘Ecuador breaks relations with Colombia; says deal for Betancourt’s release blown’. BBC Monitoring Latin America – Political. BBC Worldwide Monitoring. March 4. London.

⁶⁹ BBC. (2008). ‘Ecuador breaks relations with Colombia; says deal for Betancourt’s release blown’. BBC Monitoring Latin America – Political. BBC Worldwide Monitoring. March 4. London.

matters does not hinder the interpersonal relations that drive negotiations in any way. What is surprising is that the severity of the negotiations (e.g. life or death decisions from peace operation inception) seems to have had no impact on these informal relations. Rather, interpersonal trust is the first factor to which ambassadors default. They communicate informally even more frequently when confronting crises, and more communication helps speed things up in seeking a deal. Ambassadors at the regional organizations involved in international peace and security also continue to socialize bilaterally and in networks, just as they do in international organizations in other domains of economics and trade. Conversely, this positive impact on efficiency is not exhibited by the European Union due to its formalized culture. The collegial atmosphere and high frequency of formal meetings prevented ambassadors from establishing the same degree of trust as at other regional organizations.

Several policy implications can be drawn from the evidence in this volume on how regional organizations establish peace operations. These focus on informing decision-makers on how to organize so as to maximize the efficiency of their negotiations. First, organizations may best be served by directing more attention to nurturing pre-existing informal linkages amongst decision-makers by reducing the frequency of required formal meetings so as to encourage more positive interpersonal relations to develop. Second, elite decision-makers in regional organizations need to collectively acknowledge the importance of speed for long-term effectiveness in the establishment of peace operations through actions rather than words. Third, the efficiency of decision-making on peace operations could be equally improved by the institutionalization of lessons learned in each regional organization. Currently, no formal mechanism exists as such to capture these organizations' institutional memory.

Ultimately, interpersonal friendships matter to the efficient establishment of peace operations. Scholars need to recognize that the decision-making taking place in regional organizations, and likely all international organizations, that intervene abroad in the name of peace cannot be simplistically modeled as an aggregate of national interests. Rather the institutions in these organizations comprise webs of social networks linked by informal communication and cemented by trust. These networks and personal alliances color how ambassadors relate to one another and determine with whom they negotiate and with whom they do not. They also decide who an ambassador's first point of contact will be immediately after a crisis. These interpersonal factors are largely responsible for how efficiently the process of establishing a peace operation can take place. Whereas the consequences of success in finding an agreement quickly can translate into conflict prevention, the consequences of failure to find consensus rapidly can mean the continuation of unabated violence on the ground.

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