

Death and Evolution: Impact of Institutional Design on International Organizations

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Abstract: How do internal design attributes of International Organizations impact their vitality? Do they affect the survival of authoritarian IOs differently than democratic IOs? I argue that internal institutional factors affect an IO's ability to facilitate cooperation and provide net benefits to members, which in turn impacts the survival of the IO. I predict that IOs lacking more structured organization are more likely to 'end' as functioning organizations. Authoritarian IOs cooperate under different conditions than democratic IOs and authoritarian states will make different evaluations of what benefits IO membership provides. I further predict that structured internal organization will be more important to authoritarian IOs. I test a basic relationship between internal organization factors and IO survival using a Cox Hazard Model. I find that greater internal institutionalization and more dedicated staff have a significant effect on IO vitality. I also find that different factors are significant specifically for authoritarian international organizations. I illustrate this theory using the death and replacement of the Organization of African Unity with the African Union, and the failure of Commonwealth of Independent States. My findings support the importance of internal design attributes in understanding the vitality of international organizations.

Introduction

How does the internal structure of an intergovernmental organization affect its operation, its value to its members, and through their continued participation ultimately its vitality? How might this be different for IOs with mostly authoritarian states? Intergovernmental Organizations (IOs) play an integral role in interstate relations, yet only recently has research begun to dig deeper into both the life cycle and internal attributes of these critical organizations. Almost all states are members of at least one IO, with most IOs being regional organizations without a major power member.¹ Over a third of all IOs have been dissolved or otherwise ‘died’ as an organization.² Furthermore, roughly one third of economic IOs exist on paper with minimal function but no substantive participation, essentially ‘zombie’ IOs.³ The average lifespan of IOs is just over two decades, largely due to the much longer lifespan of persistent IOs and the relatively high risk of IO death in the first decade.⁴ The internal attributes of IOs have been shown to have an impact on conflict.⁵ Further refinement is needed in our understanding of the role of internal factors when IOs persist, die, or zombify is needed.⁶ How might these factors have greater impact in IOs with majority authoritarian members?

I argue that the level of structured internal organization of a regional IO has a significant impact on its ability to facilitate cooperation and generate member benefits. The less structured, the more likely an IO is to not be able to provide these benefits and either fall into disuse or be dissolved completely. Additionally, the magnitude of the importance of internal

¹ Blake and Payton “Balancing Design Objectives” 2015

² Eilstrup Sangiovanni, “Death of IOs” 2018

³ Gray “Life, Death, or Zombie?” 2018

⁴ Eilstrup Sangiovanni, “Death of IOs” 2018

⁵ Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom “Do IOs Promote Peace?” 2004

⁶ See Eilstrup Sangiovanni 2018 and Gray 2018

organization may vary depending on the level of authoritarianism in the IO. Authoritarian states face greater obstacles to cooperation, with a large body of research demonstrating cooperative bonds between democracies.⁷ Yet, authoritarian states still need to solve regional collective action problems, and especially given a systemic norm of multilateralism IOs are a likely solution. Largely authoritarian IOs, especially if dominated by a regional power at the expense of other members, may be designed without much of an independent secretariat or internal organization. Yet that may very well diminish cooperation through that IO, making it more likely to die or be ignored. By examining variation in IO death under these specific conditions we refine our understanding of IO vitality.

The Life, Death, and Undeath of International Organizations

The role of IOs broadly in the international system has been well established. IOs serve to foster coordination and cooperation when states fail to do so without a mediating organization, establishing norms of collective behavior, often through mechanisms of relationship building, information brokering, lowering transaction costs, and creating transparency.⁸ IOs importance to international order and political economy has been well studied.⁹ Research shows IOs do have an impact on their member states' behavior and preferences.¹⁰

⁷ See Maoz and Russett 1993, Maoz 1998, Oneal and Russett 1999, Russett and Oneal 2001

⁸ Russett and Oneal 2001, Abbot and Snidal 1998, Pevehouse 2002

⁹ See Keohane 1984, Russett, Oneal, and Davis 1998, Russett and Oneal 2001, Gilpin 2001

¹⁰ Bearce and Bondanella 2007, Taninchev 2015, Chelotti et al 2022

But more research is needed to refine our understanding of IOs, especially in the areas of IO design and resilience. Koremenos et al use rational choice to explain the design of IOs, fitting with other work on why states compromise in forming IOs, the level of independence of the IO itself, and state's flexibility in following IO rules.¹¹ IOs facilitate cooperation among member states through multiple mechanisms that influence state behavior and preferences, and the design of the institution plays a role.

These factors also influence the fate of the IO over time. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni's findings suggest IOs 'die' more often than was commonly understood.¹² She also argues that states are often more willing to replace an IO than reform it despite the additional costs that creates.¹³ Gray demonstrates that over a third of IOs are 'zombies' that, while still technically existing on the books, receive minimal resources and have ceased function in any meaningful sense.¹⁴ Eilstrup-Sangiovanni touches on design as one of multiple contributors why IO fail, specifically small memberships without more centralized internal organization.¹⁵ Borzyskowski and Vabulas explore how political factors, such as difference in state preferences, reactions to other states, and democracy levels, drive states withdrawing from an IO.¹⁶ Several authors call for further research to refine theories on IO institutions and their vitality.¹⁷ Debre and Dijkstra examine how IO design attributes help IOs persist through external pressures, focusing on flexibility, but

¹¹ Koremenos et al 2001, Debre and Dijkstra 2021,

¹² Eilstrup-Sangiovanni "Death of IOs" 2018

¹³ "...my analysis shows that states have repeatedly chosen to dismantle existing institutions and to start over from scratch – negotiating new rules of cooperation and creating new organizations to oversee their implementation" Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, "Death of IOs" 2018 p366

¹⁴ Gray "Life, Death, or Zombie" 2018

¹⁵ Eilstrup-Sangiovanni "What Kills IOs" 2018

¹⁶ Borzyskowski and Vabulas "Hello Goodbye" 2019

¹⁷ See Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2018, Gray 2018, Debre and Dijkstra 2021

find instead that an internal bureaucratic factor, staff size, increases likelihood of survival.¹⁸ They did find that one design factor, majority voting, was also significant.¹⁹ This is a key recent work establishing the importance of internal factors to IO, but it is only a first step. These works leave questions about how IOs evolve or are replaced and how IOs with mostly authoritarian states might have different designs or outcomes.

Much of past research has focused on the democratizing effects of IOs, but some recent work looks at authoritarian states. Several works such as Miller (2020) show how authoritarian states may adopt behaviors, such as weak elections, to gain access to IO incentives, which can lead to electoral authoritarianism rather than liberal democracy.²⁰ Vieira uses the AIIB as an example case for how non-western institutions attract authoritarian states, at least non-allied authoritarian states.²¹ Mazumder finds that the more authoritarian states participate in preferential trade agreements they not only have fewer MIDs, but also higher levels of transparency in economic dealings due to greater information in forming agreements.²² This raises questions about how more formal IOs could provide a similar information and transparency mechanism to enable cooperation among authoritarian member states.

Institutionalization and Authoritarian Preferences

IOs arose out of a need for states to cooperate with each other on specific issues, such as preserving peace after the Napoleonic wars or coordinate economic travel along riverways.²³

¹⁸ Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021

¹⁹ Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021

²⁰ Miller "Strategic origins of electoral authoritarianism" 2020

²¹ Vieira "Who joins counter-hegemonic IGOs?" 2018

²² Mazumder "Autocracies and the International Sources of Cooperation" 2017

²³ Russett and Oneal *Triangulating Peace* 2001

States will seek to pursue their own interests, certainly, but the purpose of IOs is to facilitate overcoming obstacles to cooperation. States create, join, and use IOs to achieve their own interests, which also mean they design those institutions to achieve those interests.²⁴ To participate in organizations states must believe that they are better off than not.²⁵ This logic also holds for states choosing to leave or stop using organizations. Organizations that fail to provide a majority of member states with net benefits will see members either withdraw from the organization, or simply stop participating. Enough member states of an IO must view that IO as useful to continue to work through the IO and provide it with resources to continue operation. Without enough member state support IOs will either cease to exist, termed 'death,' or possibly more often than death they will persist without active participation, termed 'zombify.'²⁶ Many IOs also, either by design or over time, achieve some level of independence which enables them to more effectively perform some of their facilitation functions.²⁷ Viewing IOs as an actor themselves, it is in their own best interest to develop features that will encourage state participation and avoid death or zombification.

Previous studies have often looked at the role of external pressures and exogenous factors, such as economic depression or conflict, in the survival of IOs, at least partially due to the impact on decisions by states to support and use the IO.²⁸ IOs must demonstrate value to member states, especially during times of increased external shocks that make the utility of IO membership uncertain. Understanding how internal organization helps IOs survive exogenous

²⁴ Koremenos "Rational Design of IO" 2001

²⁵ Keohane *After Hegemony* 1984

²⁶ Gray "Life, Death, or Zombie?" 2018

²⁷ Abbot and Snidal "Why State's Act" 1998

²⁸ Debre Dijkstra 2021, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2021

shocks such as conflict or economic depression contributes an important piece of the IO puzzle. Simply put, IOs must provide value to member states for those states to keep using the IO especially when dealing with external factors, making their internal organization even more important.

If the survival of IOs, especially during times of external pressures on states, depends on facilitating productive interaction then internal attributes of an IO that affect its ability to facilitate cooperation should also impact the vitality of the IO. Research on IO vitality has begun looking at internal factors. I contribute by looking at how the structured internal organization of an IO affects its likelihood of survival and how this effect is different for majority authoritarian IOs. My core argument is that IOs with less *structured internal organization* (SIO) are more likely to experience death or zombification. To distinguish from other institutionalization theories, I define SIO as a multidimensional concept which includes a dedicated, independent body (a secretariat, sub-organizations of the secretariat, that have their own staff and facilities), the authority to act independently of a single member state's influence, standardized procedures, and transparent record keeping. The greater degree an IO has this structured internal organization the more it can facilitate cooperation between states. Individual states might rationally prefer surrendering less sovereignty, meaning a preference for less independent and organized IOs. However, when cooperation goals require more concrete credible commitments, a greater level of flexibility or less specification of that flexibility, for states can undermine that credibility. Less structured IOs have less autonomy, codified procedures, and independence to provide transparency about agreements between member states. More structured IOs create greater potential costs for members who do not follow through on their

commitments facilitated by the IO. This refines findings that the size and independence of IO bureaucracies impact their survival.²⁹ A lack of credibility and information are key obstacles to trust between states which IOs overcome by providing information and building credibility through transparency.³⁰ I argue on average a formal IO with more structured internal organization has a greater capacity to consistently provide transparency for all of its members. It also has greater credibility that it will do so equally, instilling higher confidence in the IO by the members to function as a mediator and relationship broker. An independent body with some level of its own authority reduces concerns of bias towards a single state's interests at the expense of other member states. Standardized procedures and records create transparency by giving states confidence in knowing those procedures, that all states are following the same rules, and actions of states are being recorded. Instead of only state officials dealing with each other, the involvement of a dedicated staff member of the IO using set procedures increases transparency and facilitates credible commitments on non-security agreements. Terms of agreements being public also increases transparency. IOs with a higher level of SIO are more likely to provide value to member states and less likely to become dissolved, neglected, or replaced.

As mentioned previously, exogenous factors have a great impact on IO operation. My theory focuses on regional IOs, especially non-security IOs. IOs with a security mandate have different determinants of survival than non-security IOs.³¹ Security IOs may not require as much independence to facilitate cooperation. The existence of an external threat prompting

²⁹ Debre Dijkstra 2020 and Gray 2018

³⁰ Russett and Oneal *Triangulating Peace* 2001

³¹ Eilstrup Sangiovanni, "Death of IOs" 2018, p356

cooperation combined with mutual mobilization as the common requirement of all states, structured internal organization is not as critical to the value of a security focused IO. They are also more likely to be affected, and terminated, due to exogenous geopolitical factors.³² This is not to say they do not benefit from such organization, but specifically that it is not as important for states to perceive a value in membership and therefore to the survival of the IO. Conversely, regional IOs are more likely to be affected by a lack of structured organization. Regional IOs generally have smaller memberships, making it easier both to dissolve and form an IO as a fewer number of states are needed. While regional powers can have greater influence, often the difference between a regional power and other states is smaller than the gap between great powers and most other member states in a global IO.

IOs with a high unity of preferences or high democracy scores have multiple external factors encouraging cooperation between states, lessening the importance of internal attributes of the IO to facilitating cooperation. IOs with more autocracies, especially rivals, have more obstacles to overcome for cooperation. Authoritarian states generally lack many of the institutional, societal, and economic features that are shown to foster cooperation in democracies.³³ Cooperation between authoritarian states is based on different interests and utility calculation than democratic states.³⁴ States are less likely to exit IOs where more of their fellow member states are democratic.³⁵ This heightens the importance of IO member states perceiving a self-interested benefit to membership in the organization, especially if regional

³² Eilstrup Sangiovanni, "Death of IOs" 2018

³³ Maoz and Russett 1993, Maoz 1998

³⁴ Yilmaz and Yildirim "Authoritarian diffusion or cooperation?" 2020

³⁵ Borzyskowski and Vabulas "Hello Goodbye" 2019

rivals are also present. To overcome trust issues between autocracies, IOs must be able to provide credible mediation, information brokering, and transparency. A more independent IO body with standardized rules and procedures applied to all members provides this credibility that states will follow through with their commitments. Yet a more structured and independent IO may be the opposite of what authoritarian states would seek to design or join. While IOs tend to have less bureaucratic institutionalization in general, the distribution of institutionalization among majority authoritarian IOs is far more left skewed than among majority democratic IOs.³⁶ Authoritarian states may prefer a level of IO organization that is inherently less effective at facilitating cooperation and more likely to fail.

Table 1. Authoritarian IOs and Institutionalization

	Low	Med	High
Democratic	16	6	6
Authoritarian	70	14	2

Furthermore, authoritarian states may have ulterior motives for joining an IO. Given international norms of multilateralism and cooperation, authoritarian states may use IO membership as way to signal adherence to liberal norms and prevent loss of benefits for authoritarian behavior or democratic backsliding.³⁷ By founding or joining an IO, which requires commitment, time, and resources, they create a credible signal to multilateralism and international norms. However, an IO with weak structures may not only require less of these resources that create credibility, it may also actually be facilitating multilateral cooperation.

³⁶ An OLS regression of average polity score and a dichotomous authoritarian variable on membership in institutionalized IOs was significant with positive and negative coefficients, respectively.

³⁷ Meyerrose and Nooruddin "Trojan Horses" 2022

Similar logic could be applied to authoritarian states, especially more powerful states, designing IOs to create a false signal of norm compliance. Some research shows that generally IOs signal commitment to global liberal norms, yet credible commitments to those norms are only high among a “democratic core” of institutions.³⁸ It follows that democratic member states are more willing to support real commitments to liberal norms, but that does not exclude the possibility of false signaling by authoritarian states, either in substantive participation or even IO design at founding. These factors may create a puzzle where authoritarian IOs lack internal attributes, such as greater institutionalization and larger permanent staff, to survive. Could a counterproductive IO design due to these factors help explain the relatively short lifespan of IOs? Or the high mortality rate in the first decade of IO existence? What is the impact of different motivations and commitments in authoritarian IOs on their survival? The interaction of internal organization of an IO with the level of authoritarianism among its member states requires exploration.

I argue that lower levels of structured internal organization reduce the ability of regional non-security IOs to facilitate members states overcoming obstacles to collective action, leading to less cooperation and perceived benefits. When member states do not perceive they are better off actively participating in an IO than not, they will either leave the IO or stop any substantive participation. When enough member states cease participation, the IO becomes meaningfully dead. The IO itself may not cease to exist, as previously mentioned some IOs simply fall into disuse and are ignored. **For my first hypothesis, I expect that among regional IOs greater structured internal organization will reduce the likelihood of the IO dying or falling**

³⁸ Tallberg et al “Why IOs Commit to Liberal Norms” 2020

into disuse. I also argue that this is especially important among regional IOs with more authoritarian states. **I expect that a lack of structured organization in regional IOs will have a greater impact on IOs with a majority of authoritarian member states.**

While I believe an IO's internal structure impacts all IOs, my theory is especially applicable to non-security regional IO with fewer democratic members. There are many reasons why states join and work through IOs, but those reasons all relate to the perceived value of membership by the states. This value may come in the form of direct cooperative benefits, or benefits gained through false signaling, but both are the state perceiving a benefit. If the benefit comes solely from membership, or also from active participation, is important to the fate of the IO. In the case of participation, this benefit involves how well the IO facilitates cooperation, enabling that state to pursue its interests through cooperation with other states that it could not achieve otherwise. The ability to create that cooperation is impacted by the internal organization of the IO and the amount of information, credibility, and transparency it provides. Lessened or ineffective cooperation then leads the state to be more likely to exit or cease active participation in the IO. As more states follow this route, the more likely it is for the IO to cease function or fall into disuse.

H₁: Regional IOs with a lower level of internal organization will be more likely to cease meaningful operation.

H₂: A lack of structured organization in regional IOs will have a greater impact on IOs with a majority of authoritarian member states.

Research Design

To evaluate this theory, I test the survival of a sample of IOs against their internal organization. The unit of analysis is IO year. My sample is 114 regional IOs covering from 1816 to

2014. Of these 86 have more authoritarian members on average.³⁹ A majority of these IOs are focused on economic, technological, or social cooperation, but also include regional cooperation or cooperation on narrow specific issues. For my primary model I further subset this sample to only the 86 authoritarian IOs. This is based on the average polity score of IO member states in a given year, coded as authoritarian if the average polity score is less than five. This data is sourced from Debre and Dijkstra 2018 and Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019.⁴⁰ Additionally, I contribute the vitality of 30 additional IOs whose status as of 2014 was not present in these data.⁴¹

My dependent variable is *io_end*. I define this as the end of any meaningful independent operation. This includes that cease operation, are absorbed by another IO without keeping their own identity, or fall into disuse (zombify). I consider all other IO vitality statuses as survival. This directly captures when IOs cease meaningful function, either through the end of that organization or lack of use of the organization even though it continues to exist officially. These statuses are sourced from the Debre and Dijkstra 2018 data using the NestIO project.⁴² The theory applies to meaningful participation between member states, which excludes all of the above states.

My primary explanatory variable to capture structured internal organization is ***institutionalization***. This measurement was first created by Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom

³⁹ Some IOs do change from non-authoritarian to authoritarian on average over time which is reflected in the IO year values in the dataset

⁴⁰ Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021, Borzyskowski & Vabulas "Hello, goodbye" 2019

⁴¹ IO vitality was coded for variable *io_end*, a 0 for 'living' as of 2014 and 1 if they had ceased function as of 2014.

⁴² Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021, Borzyskowski & Vabulas "Hello, goodbye" 2019

(2004) and has been expanded by Karreth and Tir (2013) and Debre and Dijkstra (2021).⁴³ I draw upon Debre and Dijkstra (2021) and Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019 for these values.⁴⁴ I employ the original three-category version of institutionalization, low, medium, and high. Low institutionalization indicates a lack of a formal bureaucracy with dedicated staff, fewer divisions, little to no autonomy, and little to no surrendered sovereignty.⁴⁵ Medium institutionalization has a formal bureaucracy with codified procedures to make and implement decisions, sometimes without relying on member states, and some surrendered sovereignty.⁴⁶ High institutionalization indicates more organizational structures, extensive codification of procedures, have greater influence over their member states' behavior, and contain a dispute adjudication body.⁴⁷ While not a complete measure of the structured internal organization and bureaucratic capability of an IO, it provides the most comprehensive measure available with this data. Working with regional IOs excludes the larger much more elaborately structured global IOs, with few regional IOs qualifying as highly institutionalized. I use the three-category *institutionalization* variable because I expect the variation between low and medium levels of institutionalization has a significant impact on the operation of these regional IOs, especially more authoritarian IOs as explained above. *Institutionalization* serves as my primary variable to test the role of internal organization and the capacity to foster cooperation between member states providing them a net benefit, increasing the resilience and survival of an IO.

⁴³ Boehmer et al "Do IOs promote peace" 2004, Karreth and Tir "IOs and civil war prevention" 2013, Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021

⁴⁴ Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021, Borzyskowski & Vabulas "Hello, goodbye" 2019

⁴⁵ Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom "Do IOs Promote Peace?" 2004

⁴⁶ Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom "Do IOs Promote Peace?" 2004

⁴⁷ Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom "Do IOs Promote Peace?" 2004

Table 2. Institutionalization in IOs

Institutionalization Levels	Approx Count	Example
Low	86	<i>Central African Common Market</i>
Medium	20	<i>Central European Initiative</i>
High	8	<i>European Union</i>

My secondary explanatory variable, following the example of previous research, is *staff* capturing the number of permanent staff members an IO has. Using Debre and Dijkstra's criteria, *staff* is a dichotomous variable coded as small if IOs have less than 50 permanent staff and large if they have more than 50 permanent staff.⁴⁸ Ideally in studying regional IOs where staff size variation might have more impact, this variable would have more staff categories, but data limitations make this difficult. I consider this a secondary variable due to its dichotomous nature and as *institutionalization* already captures staff size to some extent. However, past research has established the significance of *staff* in studying bureaucratic operation and *staff* provides a more narrow proxy for internal organization. More staff requires more procedures and management. I expect both explanatory variables to be significant.

For my control variables I follow established controls for IOs given data limitations used by previous research.⁴⁹ I use *shared preferences* to capture how closely IO member states' interests align. This is measured through UN General Assembly voting.⁵⁰ I account for *competition* from similar IOs that might contribute to the failure of an IO using Debre and Dijkstra (2021) measure of the logged number of regional IOs in a policy domain.⁵¹ Flexibility in IO rules is an important institutional design feature and impacts member state participation in

⁴⁸ Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021

⁴⁹ See Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2018, Borzyskowski & Vabulus 2019, and Debre and Dijkstra 2021

⁵⁰ Bailey et al, "Estimating Dynamic State Preferences" 2017

⁵¹ Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021

the IO. I use Debre and Dijkstra's combined *flexibility* measure that aggregates several flexibility measures into a single dichotomous variable.⁵² I control for levels of democratic or authoritarian states using *polity*, measured as the average polity score across IO members.⁵³ Differing state capacity in the IO is controlled for using Debre and Dijkstra's power distribution *capabilities* variable based on logged CINC scores of member states.⁵⁴ Controlling for IO size is important as more states means simultaneously more obstacles to cooperation and more states to provide resources for the IO. This is captured with the variable *membership size*, the logged total membership for each IO year as used in previous research.⁵⁵ Other studies have identified that conflict can have an impact on IO survival, so I use the dichotomous variable *conflict* based on the presence of militarized interstate disputes.⁵⁶ As I argue security IOs have fundamentally different benefits than other regional IOs I control only for a security or non-security mandate. I create the dichotomous variable *security* based on the IO's mandate category.⁵⁷

My models explain *io_end* using *institutionalization* and *staff* explanatory variables. I control for important design and vitality variables in *flexibility* and *shared preferences*. My full model includes additional established controls in *competition*, *capabilities*, *polity*, *membership size*, *conflict*, and *security* mandate. To evaluate this relationship I use a Cox Proportional Hazard Model. Cox hazard models are a "partial likelihood" method commonly used for survival data to determine the risk factors for an observation to failure.⁵⁸ They are better able to model the

⁵² Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021

⁵³ Borzyskowski & Vabulus 2019, and Debre and Dijkstra 2021

⁵⁴ Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021

⁵⁵ Debre and Dijkstra, "Institutional design for a post liberal order" 2021

⁵⁶ Maoz et al "Dyadic MIDS Dataset" 2019

⁵⁷ Borzyskowski & Vabulus 2019, and Debre and Dijkstra 2021

⁵⁸ Box-Steffensmeier and Jones *Event history modeling*, 2004

‘hazard’ of failure at a given time point than a simple logit model.⁵⁹ I use clustered robust standard errors to account for possible correlation within each IO.⁶⁰ Model one for all regional IOs includes only the most theoretically salient variables to have the largest number of observations and includes both dependent variables. Model two adds additional control variables for a more precisely fit model, but with fewer observations. Model three drops the *staff* dependent variables to focus on *institutionalization*. These results are displayed in table 3 below. Models four and five use the authoritarian only subset of the sample. For these models *polity* is dropped as the sample is already subset for higher authoritarian scores. Model four tests only *institutionalization* as a dependent variable, while model five also includes *staff*. These results are displayed in table 4 below.

Results

In the first three models for both democratic and authoritarian regional IOs only one structured internal organization variable is statistically significant, *staff*. This includes other theoretical variables and the control variables. The *staff* variable has a negative coefficient, meaning the hazard risk of an IO ‘ending’ is lowered by having 50 or more permanent staff members. No other variables were significant, including *shared preferences* and *flexibility*.

These results provide some support for hypothesis one, but only for the presence of greater staff. In all three models, including model three where *staff* is not included,

⁵⁹ A logit model of these variables is included in the appendix.

⁶⁰ Cleves et al, *Introduction to Survival Analysis*, 2002

Table 3. Cox Hazard Model of Regional IOs

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>institutionalization</i>	.250 (0.464)	.061 (0.575)	-.483 (0.287)
<i>staff</i>	-1.42* (0.568)	-1.306* (0.603)	
<i>shared preferences</i>	.455 (0.546)	.498 (0.653)	.287 (0.720)
<i>flexibility</i>	-.139 (0.462)	-.065 (0.528)	-.170 (0.485)
<i>competition</i>	.128 (0.195)	.259 (0.197)	.290 (0.177)
<i>polity</i>	.008 (0.040)	.010 (0.047)	.037 (0.045)
<i>capabilities</i>		.034 (0.183)	.115 (0.177)
<i>membership size</i>		.331 (0.331)	.424 (0.316)
<i>conflict</i>		-.229 (0.461)	-.089 (0.441)
<i>security</i>		.920 (0.563)	.750 (0.602)
N	2472	2284	2314

* $p < 0.05$

institutionalization is not significant. This is counter to my expectation that *institutionalization* would be the more predictive explanatory variable. Additionally, the lack of significance in both large and small models for other theoretical variables is unexpected. This supports the influence of internal organization on IO vitality but suggests that only very specific organizational factors have an impact.

In models four and five, again only one structured internal organization variable is significant, but now it is *institutionalization*. *Staff* is no longer significant when included in the

model.⁶¹ This is surprising, but more in line with my expectation. *Institutionalization* has a negative coefficient, indicating that higher levels of institutionalization reduce the risk of an IO ending meaningful operation. For authoritarian IOs *competition*, *membership size*, and *security* are all statistically significant with positive coefficients. This indicates that the presence of competing IOs, larger memberships, and a security mandate all increase the risk of IO end.

Table 4. Cox Hazard Models of Authoritarian Regional IOs

	Model 4	Model 5
<i>institutionalization</i>	-2.505* (0.847)	-2.072* (1.013)
<i>staff</i>		-1.516 (0.850)
<i>shared preferences</i>	.323 (1.043)	.401 (1.072)
<i>flexibility</i>	-.483 (0.632)	-.279 (0.680)
<i>competition</i>	.704* (0.346)	.670* (0.339)
<i>capabilities</i>	.223 (0.177)	.094 (0.189)
<i>membership size</i>	1.12* (0.316)	.951* (0.322)
<i>conflict</i>	-.243 (0.640)	-.420 (0.587)
<i>security</i>	1.642* (0.749)	1.70* (0.607)
N	1404	1379

* p < 0.05

This provides some support for hypothesis two with the primary IV of *institutionalization* being significant with a negative sign. However, as neither explanatory variable is statistically

⁶¹ A model run with only the statistically significant controls from models 4 and 5 does yield significant results for both *institutionalization* and *staff* and is included in appendix C.

significant in both regional IO models and authoritarian regional IO models this hampers comparing magnitude of effect. The authoritarian models also yield more significant controls. *Competition* has a positive coefficient, as expected, as does *membership size*. An interesting finding is that a security mandate, while significant, also has a positive coefficient. This suggests that authoritarian states are more likely to dissolve or discontinue use of regional security IOs despite having a greater need for a third party to facilitate cooperation.

The contrast between the two sets of models is also interesting. In addition to providing support for the importance of internal organizational factors, it demonstrates that different factors matter under different conditions. This supports my theory that authoritarian states make different evaluations of the benefits of continued IO membership than democratic states and therefore different factors will matter for survival of majority authoritarian IOs. Among all regional IOs other organizational factors, increased divisions, the presence of adjudication bodies, measured by *institutionalization* did not predict IO death. Only large or small *staff* proved to be significant. But it is unclear if it's the larger staff members themselves, or if staff is serving as a proxy for a different variable, such as investment in the IO which would also enable it to hire more staff. But among authoritarian IOs, *staff* is no longer significant, indicating that those same more structural institutional factors that were not important for all regional IOs became important when only looking at majority authoritarian regional IOs. This provides evidence that authoritarian IOs need further research on how they differ.

Disuse, Death, and Rebirth

To demonstrate the role of structured internal organization in IO vitality, I will use two illustrative cases, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the replacement of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) with the African Union(AU). The CIS demonstrates a less structured regional cooperation IO where most member states cease participation, rejecting the influence of the major power in the IO. The Organization of African Unity demonstrates the death of a less structured regional I which is followed by a more structured successor. These are also organizations with primarily authoritarian member states, illustrating the theoretical impact of structured internal organization for cooperation among non-democracies. The CIS is considered by many scholars to be a failure, and objectively has produced very little in the form of agreements or tangible cooperation between its members. Similarly, the OAU was also seen as unable to address the needs of its members and create collective action and was disbanded in favor of forming a new organization, the African Union. These three cases illustrate different examples of how structured internal organization plays a role in the success or failure of an IO.

The Commonwealth of Independent States was first formed in 1991 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union to coordinate collection actions between post-soviet states. First founded by Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, the three core soviet states, another eight post-soviet states would almost immediately join.⁶² At its height it would have twelve members, but as dissatisfaction grew several states, including Ukraine, would leave the CIS reducing its membership to nine. At the millennium criticism of the CIS was high, failing to meaningfully integrate its member states,

⁶² Brzezinski *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States* 2016

considered a failure by most measures, and predicting its collapse.⁶³ In that first decade the CIS was a “loose and unstructured regime” that served as an “engine for bilateral relations” mainly between Russia and the other states rather than between themselves.⁶⁴ It did not have a well-organized internal structure, the independence of the CIS was limited, in particular from Russia, and member states delegated very little authority or sovereignty to the CIS. Member states frequently violated or ignored CIS statutes regarding sovereignty, adopting a single currency, or movement of people across borders. As the CIS did begin to organize, eventually creating over 60 institutions for subject area cooperation, many member states refused to participate in these institutions or sign on to new agreements.⁶⁵ Member states often simply negotiate their own bilateral or even multilateral agreements between themselves without working through the CIS.⁶⁶ Post 2000 develops in the CIS that show some positive cooperation on energy and security have been driven primarily by Russia and Belarus, with less involvement or even exclusion of the Central Asian members.⁶⁷ As Central Asian states have grown more distant from Russia geopolitically, this speaks to Russian influence and its strong ties with Belarus, not the ability of the CIS to foster cooperation. To date the primary significant example of regional cooperation from the CIS is a customs union that has had some success in organizing trade and tariffs. However, as more member states joined the World Trade Organization the importance of the customs union has lessened, and some analysts have concluded the overall impact of the CIS on economic integration is negative.⁶⁸ The CIS does continue operation, although several members

⁶³ Brzezinski 2016, Sakwa and Webber 1999, and Kubicek 1999

⁶⁴ Dragneva and Kort “The Legal Regime for Free Trade in the CIS” 2007

⁶⁵ Kubicek “The End of the Line for the CIS” 2009

⁶⁶ Sakwa and Webber “The Commonwealth of Independent States” 1999

⁶⁷ Kubicek “The End of the Line for the CIS” 2009

⁶⁸ Kubicek “The End of the Line for the CIS” 2009

have left or are currently in the process of leaving the organization, but it is functionally a discussion forum for “low politics” that demands “virtually nothing” from its members.⁶⁹ Multiple other organizations have been created, either on specific issue areas to facilitate cooperation where the CIS failed, or IOs sponsored by European states as an alternative to the Russian dominated CIS. The CIS represents a failure in creating cooperation by a regional IO that did not have structured internal organization. The specific nature of this failure could be attributed to several possibilities, such as distrust of Russia. However, different possibilities still share the commonality that the CIS is unable to help member states overcome them, indicating a lack of confidence in the credibility of CIS. This meant inconsistent rules and procedures, less transparency for its members, and an inability to prevent the major power in the IO, Russia, from attempting to control the CIS.

The Organization of African Unity, established in 1963, attempted to provide a unified organization to facilitate cooperation among most of the African states and three different ideological blocs.⁷⁰ The OAU had four original organs, with most of its policy to be determined by the heads of state of its members and executed by ministers from those member states.⁷¹ The OAU lacked a strong independent organization or enforcement mechanisms on its members. The OAU was commonly described as a “bull dog that could only bark, but could not bite.”⁷² Struggling with frequent coups that changed the heads of state and their preferences, the OAU was especially seen as a failure at resolving civil conflict on the continent.⁷³ By 1999

⁶⁹ Kubicek “The End of the Line for the CIS” 2009

⁷⁰ Edo and Olanrewaju “An Assessment of the Transformation of the OAU to the AU” 2012

⁷¹ Mathews “The Organization of African Unity” 1977

⁷² Edo and Olanrewaju “An Assessment of the Transformation of the OAU to the AU” 2012

⁷³ Edo and Olanrewaju “An Assessment of the Transformation of the OAU to the AU” 2012

OAU member states agreed it was a failure and should be dissolved in favor of a new institution. This came to pass in 2002 when the OAU was disbanded after the creation of the African Union to take its place. The African Union established multiple sub-organs for cooperation on multiple issue areas, from economic to conflict prevention, and set immediate priorities to create independent sub-organizations in the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Union, and the African Court of Justice.⁷⁴ This implies the lack of a larger organizational structure was possibly part of what the OAU lacked.

The OAU persisted for three decades, facilitating discussion and some cooperation between its states, but eventually its member states viewed it as a failure. They chose full dissolution and replacement rather than attempting reform. The African Union, whose membership was slightly different from that of the OAU, held more independence of operation, more structured internal organization, and strong sub-bodies that was able to foster greater cooperation between its states. The AU is not perfect, and still faces many of the conflict challenges as its predecessor, but it is seen as a more successful replacement to the less organized and impotent OAU.

Discussion

This article has demonstrated the significance of differing levels of structured internal organization in IOs to understanding their vitality, especially *institutionalization* for authoritarian IOs. The different models also demonstrate that majority authoritarian regional IOs are affected by different factors than majority democratic regional IOs. The more narrow conditions of the

⁷⁴ Edo and Olanrewaju "An Assessment of the Transformation of the OAU to the AU" 2012

authoritarian models yielding more significant variables also may present a puzzle for generalizable theories on IO vitality. A better understanding of IO survival may require a narrow scope, distinguishing different conditions and attributes, such as majority authoritarian IOs and majority democratic IOs. These findings do suggest a different evaluation by authoritarian states in using IOs. Further research should tackle the possible conflict between authoritarian states' reluctance to surrender sovereignty and preference for less structured IOs when those factors also make those IOs more likely to fail.

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Appendix

A. IO Descriptive Stats⁷⁵

Type	Approx Count
Economic	27
Social-Environmental	19
Research & Technology	18
General Purpose	13
Security	6
Other	31

Institutionalization	Approx Count
Low	86
Medium	20
High	8
Staff Level ⁷⁶	Approx Count
Low	54
High	30

B. Logit Model

(Coefficient / Standard Error)

<i>institutionalization</i>	-.186 / .440
<i>staff</i>	-1.20* / .551
<i>shared preferences</i>	.134 / .717
<i>flexibility</i>	-.181 / .440
<i>capabilities</i>	.012 / .160
<i>competition</i>	.261 / .203
<i>polity</i>	.007 / .050
<i>membership size</i>	.445 / .281
<i>conflict</i>	-.182 / .454
<i>security</i>	.919 / .638
Constant	-5.23 / 1.66
N	2284

* p < 0.05

⁷⁵ Where categories change over time, such as shift authoritarian membership, the category of interest is used for the count.

Appendix C.

Cox Hazard Model of Authoritarian Regional IOs with only statistically significant controls.

	Model
<i>institutionalization</i>	-2.187* (1.02)
<i>staff</i>	-1.707* (0.736)
<i>competition</i>	.584 (0.337)
<i>membership size</i>	.635 (0.396)
<i>security</i>	1.595* (0.570)
N	1688

* p < 0.05