



Screening Out Risk: IGOs, Member State Selection, and Interstate Conflict, 1951–2000¹

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Do intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) screen out conflict-prone states? We argue that IGOs have incentives to guard against admitting new members that pose significant security risks. Using a data set based on state-IGO pairings, we find clear evidence of screening: As security risk increases, the probability of IGO membership declines. Our findings underscore the importance of accounting for possible selection bias when studying the effects of IGO membership on conflict. Indeed, the types of IGOs sometimes found to be most effective at promoting peace—namely highly institutionalized organizations and those with a security mandate—also prove particularly selective and sensitive to risk.

Many proponents of the “liberal peace” argue that shared membership in intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) reduces military conflict. Numerous studies find that IGOs both prevent and resolve interstate disputes.² Others find that joining IGOs helps solidify democracy in member states (Pevhouse 2005; Mansfield and Pev-

house 2006, 2008) and confers reputational benefits by allowing states to signal their commitment to multilateralism and nonaggression (Alcaniz 2012). The sources of *demand* for IGO membership therefore seem clear: States with transitional or fragile domestic institutions, or those in need of greater international legitimacy, desire membership in order to ensure peace, enhance their credibility, and reap the benefits of multilateral cooperation. But this raises an important question about the *supply side* of membership. Why should an IGO want to admit such states in the first place? Consider Georgia’s determined but unsuccessful quest for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO’s existing members consistently decline to grant Georgia a Membership Action Plan and thus set it on the road to membership, out of concern over its ongoing risk of conflict with Russia (Razoux 2009). Current research examining the effect of IGO membership on conflict fails to account for this logic of selection—namely that IGOs may favor the admission of more peaceful states.

We argue that international organizations have incentives to guard against the admission of risky new members. We focus on the *security risk* posed by prospective member states, which we operationalize using a recently developed composite measure of a state’s ex ante level of external threat (Nordhaus, Oneal, and Russett 2012). Starting from the basic premise that IGOs exist to reduce conflict and facilitate interstate cooperation, we outline three mechanisms through which security risk undermines their effectiveness. First, risky new members threaten to divert institutional resources away from cooperation-enhancing activities. Second, they disrupt relations among member states, leading to institutional deadlock and paralysis. And third, they entangle other members in their disputes. These considerations supply incentives for IGOs to screen out conflict-prone new

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² See Russett and Oneal (2001), Oneal, Russett, and Berbaum (2003), Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom (2004), Mitchell and Hensel (2007), Pevhouse and Russett (2006), and Hansen, Mitchell, and Nemeth (2008).

members. We argue, further, that *institutionalized* IGOs and *security-oriented* IGOs should be particularly sensitive to risk. These incentives to screen, as well as constrain (Von Stein 2005), in turn affect our ability to draw inferences about the causal effect of IGO membership on interstate conflict. In order to grasp fully whether—and how—IGOs promote peace, we must first understand what determines IGO membership.

To test our hypotheses about IGO screening, we introduce a novel data set with state-IGO (*sig*) pairs as the units of analysis. Previous research has examined the factors associated with joint dyadic membership in IGOs.³ Yet, dyadic data are poorly suited to answering questions about IGO membership, for the simple reason that membership is the product of an interaction between a state and an IGO—specifically between the aspiring member state and the IGO's existing members—and not between two states in a dyad. Our analysis of state-IGO pairings therefore allows us to explore more precise questions about which states are admitted to which IGOs and when.

We find, in short, that IGOs do screen based on security risk. On average, all IGOs favor the admission of less risky new members, but—in line with our expectations—highly institutionalized IGOs prove particularly sensitive to risk. Our findings have far-reaching implications. Among them, they underscore the need for greater attention to selection bias in the study of IGOs and conflict. Our analysis also indicates that the types of IGOs often considered most effective at preventing and resolving conflict—namely institutionalized IGOs and those with a security mandate—also number among the most selective and more likely to screen out security risks.

IGO Membership

A host of studies within the liberal peace research program examine how joint IGO membership influences conflict within dyads. Their mixed results lead some to call this the least robust leg of the Kantian peace (Russett and Oneal 2001:172).⁴ Researchers apply a number of methodological innovations to understand these ambiguous findings (Oneal et al. 2003; Lagazio and Russett 2004; Ward, Siverson, and Cao 2007). We believe that the time is ripe to pursue a different line of inquiry. In order to fully grasp the effect of IGO membership on peace, we must first understand the determinants of IGO membership. Selection bias creates well-known problems for causal inference (Von Stein 2005; Milner 2008). Are IGOs associated with peace because they select peaceful members? The answer to this question is not immediately clear. Pevehouse and Russett (2006:982–3) note that “states may join IGOs...primarily with those states with whom they already have a predominantly peaceful relationship.” Conversely, states may join IGOs in an attempt to resolve or manage their pre-existing disputes (Kinsella and Russett 2002:1059; Pevehouse and Russett 2006:991).

³ See Milanovic (1996), Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan (1996), Russett and Oneal (2001), Mansfield, Milner, and Rosendorff (2002), Pevehouse (2003), and Boehmer and Nordstrom (2008).

⁴ Some have found that IGO membership is positively associated with conflict onset (Kinsella and Russett 2002; Bennett and Stam 2004; Fausett and Volgy 2010) or is not significant (Shannon, Morey, and Boehmke 2010). Evidence for the peace-inducing effect of IGOs may be limited to politically relevant dyads (Oneal and Russett 1999), only for highly structured IGOs (Boehmer et al. 2004; Bearce and Omori 2005), or may be affected by the presence of a hegemon (Mansfield and Pevehouse 2000).

Thus far, efforts to address the selection problem only examine whether previous disputes are associated with IGO membership.⁵ A thorough treatment of this issue, however, requires grounding in a theory of member-state selection.

Existing research sheds light on the *demand side* of this equation—that is, why certain types of states desire IGO membership. One source of demand resides in functional factors: States with common borders and problems seek membership in IGOs in order to manage relations and realize gains from cooperation.⁶ Shared ideas and values provide another source of demand for IGO membership.⁷ Studies of security communities have long noted this insight. It dates at least as far back as Kant's writings and plays a central role in more recent scholarship.⁸ In practice, functional and value-based considerations often overlap, as in the creation and growth of post-World War II European institutions, transatlantic institutions, and other regional organizations such as Mercosur. Accordingly, Boehmer and Nordstrom (2008) find more shared IGO membership among dyads that are democratic, wealthy, and trade dependent—relationships consistent with both what they term a functional logic and also the logic of a Deutschian security community.

A third demand-side explanation holds that states seek IGO membership in order to enhance their credibility. This implies that transitional states—which face the most severe credibility problems—should be those most eager to join. Mansfield and Pevehouse (2008) find that democratizing states are more likely to experience an increase in their number of IGO memberships.⁹ Adding an intriguing wrinkle to this finding, Poast and Urpelainen (2013) show that democratizing states are more likely to form new organizations, but not more likely to join existing organizations, than other states. Their finding suggests the important possibility that IGOs often screen out transitional states.

As we noted at the outset, the *supply side* of IGO membership—that is, IGOs' decisions regarding whom to admit—receives less scholarly attention.¹⁰ As research on European institutions demonstrates, enlargement creates powerful dynamics that expand zones of peace and economic integration. It also increases an institution's global clout (Kydd 2001; Leonard 2005). Yet, the benefits of enlargement must be balanced against the need to maintain smooth relations among member states, which is the bedrock of any well-functioning institution. Herein lies the incentive to screen. Adding new members inevitably increases the complexity of collective decision making, but countries whose preferences are known to be congruent with those of the existing members can be

⁵ See Mansfield and Pevehouse (2000), Russett and Oneal (2001: chapter 6), Mansfield et al. (2002), and Boehmer and Nordstrom (2008).

⁶ Neofunctionalists explain regional integration as a process sparked by cooperation in technical and economic issue areas, which then spills over into other more politically sensitive domains (c.f., Mitrany 1948; Haas 1961).

⁷ See, for example, Schimmelfennig (2002).

⁸ See Abbott and Snidal (1998), Schimmelfennig (2002), Kupchan (2010), Maoz (2010), and Doyle (2012).

⁹ They show that the impetus to join economic and standards-based organizations is particularly strong, since these help states make credible commitments. Mattli and Plumper (2002) argue that new democracies applied for EU membership to signal their commitment to reform.

¹⁰ Research on enlargement of the EU and WTO is an exception (c.f., Vachudova 2005; Plumper, Schneider, and Troeger 2006; Schneider 2009; Pelc 2011; Allee and Scalera 2012; Davis and Wilf 2012), but efforts to generalize beyond these contexts are scant.

more smoothly integrated than others.¹¹ Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal (2001) explain this in terms of uncertainty, arguing that IGOs are likely to set up barriers to entry when information about prospective member states is poor.¹² Similarly, Downs et al. (1998) predict that the expansion of multilateral institutions will favor those states for whom the costs of admission are sufficiently low; states that threaten to undermine the functioning of the institution are unlikely to be admitted.¹³ It may be true, then, that unstable, conflict-prone, or transitional states are those that benefit most from joining an IGO, but from the IGO's perspective, these are also the states that are the most costly to integrate. The next section develops this insight in greater detail, introducing our concept of security risk as a basis for IGO screening.

IGOs and Security Risk

In April 2009, Albania and Croatia became members of NATO, in the institution's third round of enlargement to former communist states. After years of negotiations, Albania and Croatia's admission reflected NATO's confidence that they could "share the benefits and responsibilities of collective security."¹⁴ For NATO, the benefits of admitting these peaceful, low-risk states were large. This stands in contrast to Georgia's membership bid, which has proven highly controversial among NATO officials and member governments (Madej 2009; Razoux 2009). Georgia's level of security risk is high. It is located in an unfriendly neighborhood, with contested borders, ruled by a government with questionable democratic credentials, and, perhaps most important, locked in an adversarial relationship with Russia. At the April 2008 Bucharest summit, NATO affirmed an intention to admit the country eventually (Gallis 2008:5–6). However, the brief but devastating war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 created even stronger opposition—particularly from Germany, France, and other Western European members—to any further steps toward integration (Nicholl 2008:32). The risk associated with Georgia's unresolved disputes was simply too great. In September 2008, NATO established a special commission for Georgia, but has resolutely avoided offering the country a Membership Action Plan.

As this example suggests, a number of internal and external factors combine to determine a state's level of *security risk*, which we define as the probability of involvement in international militarized conflict. Chief among these factors are the state's geographic situation, its economic and military capabilities relative to other

relevant states, and its formal commitments with respect to allies and potential adversaries. In one way or another, these are familiar conditions in realist analyses of international politics. Typical in other, so-called liberal analyses are such characteristics as whether one or both members of a pair of states are governed as democracies and whether they are economically interdependent.

International organizations have reason to avoid admitting states that pose high security risks and instead, favor the admission of low-risk partners. This logic is not limited to security organizations; even economic organizations like the WTO aim to minimize negative security externalities when making decisions about membership.¹⁵ Moreover, incentives to screen can apply in both regional and global IGOs.¹⁶ The key players in this screening process are the IGO's existing member states, which typically must approve decisions about membership via unanimity, or at least by a super-majority.¹⁷ In certain IGOs, the bureaucracy also plays a gate-keeping role, as in the European Union where the Commission must first certify that a candidate has aligned with the *acquis communautaire*. Even in these more complicated settings, however, the bureaucracy is unlikely to champion the candidacy of a country that is unacceptable to the existing members. In short, though the particular process for determining membership varies across organizations, the fundamental incentive to favor less risky states does not.

We highlight three distinct reasons for IGOs to avoid admitting states with high security risk. We note that these explanations are complementary rather than competing; in any given IGO, the three mechanisms can operate simultaneously. First, conflictual members threaten to *divert the institution's time, resources, and energy* toward conflict resolution and away from other cooperation-enhancing activities. Conflict management and resolution are now part of the repertoire of activities for many IGOs, even those whose primary focus is on economic issues (Powers 2004), as well as multi-issue regional organizations such as the African Union, CARICOM, OSCE, and ASEAN (Hansen et al. 2008). The Organization of American States (OAS), for example, has a track record of mediating border disputes among its member states, most recently between Honduras and Nicaragua (1999–2001) and Guatemala and Belize (2000–2005). Mediation is often the first step in a longer process that includes verification and compliance monitoring, as when the OAS sent teams to verify the locations of military posts along Honduras and Nicaragua's maritime border in 2001. These efforts can and do make a difference.¹⁸ But conflict resolution entails opportunity costs. In even the best funded IGOs, time, attention, and manpower are finite, scarce resources that must be stretched across a range of issues and member states. Conflict management diverts institutional resources away from other issues. Consider, as yet another example, how the Israeli–

¹¹ Veto player models show that as the number of decision makers grows, and as divergences in their preferences increase, the set of mutually agreeable outcomes grows smaller (Tsebelis 1995; Tsebelis and Garrett 2001). Theoretical models of international institutions therefore predict a status quo bias: A state will only gain admission if its preference is not too different from the prevailing median (Downs, Rocke, and Barsboom 1998; Alesina, Angeloni, and Etro 2005).

¹² Membership conditionality allows a candidate country to engage in costly signaling that reduces uncertainty about its type. Schneider and Urselainen (2012) show that a unanimity rule for admission is associated with a higher level of reform by candidate states.

¹³ Allee and Scalera (2012:253–4) report that states admitted under the WTO's rigorous accession process implemented substantial reductions in trade barriers.

¹⁴ NATO Secretary General, 1 April 2009. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52342.htm?selectedLocale=en.

¹⁵ On how political considerations shape admission to the WTO, see Davis and Wilf (2012).

¹⁶ A few organizations that are global in scope—such as the United Nations—are broad and inclusive in their approach toward membership, but others—as the WTO or OPEC—are selective.

¹⁷ Unanimous approval is required in regional organizations including ASEAN, the Council of Europe, Mercosur, and SADC. Admission to the United Nations requires a two-third majority.

¹⁸ Active conflict management by IGOs increases the likelihood that disputing parties will reach and comply with peace agreements (Mitchell and Hensel 2007; Hansen et al. 2008).

Palestinian conflict and, more recently, the uprising in Syria have come to dominate the agenda of the Arab League.

Second, and relatedly, conflictual members threaten to *inhibit member-state cooperation*. As entities that exist to facilitate policy coordination, economic integration, and collective security, IGOs require smooth relations among their members in order to make and implement policy. Member states at a high risk for conflict threaten to disrupt these relations—through severed diplomatic ties, reduced trade, and refugee crises, to name a few¹⁹—thereby putting the gains from cooperation at risk. Rather than serving as a productive forum, the IGO may degenerate into an arena for posturing and intransigence. At the extreme, disputes between member states can lead to institutional paralysis. One enduring example of such dysfunction is the UN Security Council during the cold war. More recently, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has been riven by tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which engaged in a protracted border war from 1998 to 2000. IGAD meetings during these years were little more than a forum for the two countries' "festering feud."²⁰ In 2006, in a move vehemently opposed by Eritrea, Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia (also an IGAD member) to shore up the transitional government against the Eritrean-backed Islamist insurgents. Eritrea declared a self-suspension of its IGAD membership in 2007, but has since announced its desire to rejoin the body. The other IGAD members have denied its request for reinstatement, however, citing Eritrea's alleged involvement in a plot to bomb Ethiopia, as well as its ongoing support for Somalian militants.²¹

Third, conflictual members threaten to *entangle other members in their disputes*—both internal disputes (with other IGO members) and external disputes (with states outside the purview of the IGO). A powerful state, for instance, risks being drawn into minor conflicts initiated by its small allies. It can be expected to resist this type of entanglement, but sometimes a weaker ally may have strong influence in the institutional politics of the alliance or the domestic politics of the powerful state (Keohane 1971). The Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) military intervention illustrates how the ties of shared IGO membership can draw states into conflicts that they would otherwise avoid. Under the auspices of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee, Nigeria spearheaded the creation of the ECOMOG force to intervene in the war in Liberia (1990–1998) and, later, Sierra Leone (1997–1999) and Guinea-Bissau (1999). At Nigeria's behest, other member states were induced to contribute troops. Some, like Ghana and Guinea, did so willingly, but others, such as Senegal, were highly reluctant (Khobe 2000).²² From the perspective of an aspiring member—particularly one at risk for conflict—this type of protective "entanglement" may be precisely what it seeks. As with Georgia today, the attraction of NATO membership for the transitioning countries of the Eastern bloc was the promise of protection from Russian

aggression. From the perspective of the existing members, however, this generates an incentive to be selective in the admission of new members, with an eye toward avoiding unessential dangerous affiliations.

In sum, members with high security risk divert institutional resources and thus threaten to undermine IGO functioning, entangle other members in their disputes, and inhibit cooperation among member states. This creates an incentive for IGOs to screen based on security risk.

Hypothesis 1: *As a state's security risk increases, its likelihood of admission to IGOs declines.*

In addition to this baseline expectation, each of the three mechanisms we have identified produces its own testable implications. Since we do not view these as competing explanations, our goal in drawing out these hypotheses is not to disentangle the relative effect of each mechanism, but rather to assess whether empirical patterns are consistent with the logic of each. First, problems of resource diversion and institutional paralysis are most relevant for institutionalized IGOs with a high degree of structure and bureaucratic capacity. Minimally institutionalized organizations have no bureaucracy and few institutional resources to speak of, essentially serving as empty vessels for the coordination of periodic meetings among member states. The outbreak of militarized conflict will have little impact on these IGOs' activities and output. In contrast, more institutionalized organizations contain permanent executive, legislative, and/or judicial bodies, as well as bureaucracies to implement policy.²³ A subset of these also has the potential to intervene in the domestic politics of their member states by enforcing commitments and engaging in third-party conflict management through mediation, arbitration, and monitoring.²⁴ Because members of interventionist IGOs face the possibility of enforcement by other members, incentives to screen are particularly strong. In sum, institutionalized IGOs—and particularly those with the power to intervene—should be more sensitive to security risk when selecting new members. Anecdotal evidence is consistent with this idea. Highly institutionalized organizations like the EU, WTO, and NATO do implement rigorous screening processes in which their bureaucracies play a gate-keeping role.

Hypothesis 2: *As a state's level of security risk rises, its probability of admission to institutionalized IGOs declines more sharply, compared to other IGOs.*

The risk that members will become entangled in new members' disputes is particularly salient for IGOs with a security mandate, because these institutions are premised explicitly upon a commitment to collective security and conflict resolution. However, the fear of entanglement should also be mitigated by pre-existing alliance ties. If an aspiring member is party to a military alliance with one or

¹⁹ On conflict and trade, see Mansfield and Pevehouse (2000), Simmons (2002), Oneal et al. (2003), Robst, Polachek, and Chan (2007), Long (2008), Goenner (2010), and Hegre, Oneal, and Russett (2010).

²⁰ Reuters, July 28, 2011. "Eritrea rejoins East African bloc IGAD."

²¹ BBC News, August 2, 2011. "Eritrea seeks to rejoin East African body Igdad."

²² Indeed, after suffering humiliating casualties at the hands of Liberian rebels in 1992, Senegal withdrew its troops from ECOMOG.

²³ In our analysis, institutionalized IGOs include Boehmer et al.'s (2004) categories of "structured" and "interventionist" organizations.

²⁴ Research shows that institutionalized IGOs are more likely to engage in conflict management. Shannon (2009) shows that membership in interventionist organizations with a security mandate is positively associated with third-party dispute settlement. Others find that membership in institutionalized IGOs is associated with fewer and shorter disputes (Boehmer et al. 2004; Shannon et al. 2010) and that conflict management is more successful when undertaken by institutionalized IGOs (Hansen et al. 2008).

more of the IGO's existing members, then their security policies are already intertwined. For example, Leeds, Long, and Mitchell (2000) find that allied states do in fact fulfill their security obligations to each other 75% of the time.²⁵ All else equal, then, the admission of an allied state entails a relatively lower increase in the risk of entanglement, compared to the admission of an aspiring member with whom the IGO shares no pre-existing alliance ties.

Hypothesis 3: *As a state's level of security risk rises, its probability of admission to security IGOs declines more sharply, compared to other IGOs.*

Hypothesis 4: *A state is more likely to be admitted to a security IGO if it shares alliance ties with the IGO's member states.*

Data and Method

Customarily, large-N research on IGOs has used dyadic data, with state-state pairings as the units of analysis. While the benefit of this approach is that it allows for easy comparison with dyadic studies of interstate conflict, it is not otherwise the obvious choice for studying IGO membership. This is so because admission to an IGO is the product of an interaction between a state and an IGO, not between two states in a dyad. Consider the limitations of the dependent variable typically employed in dyadic studies of IGO membership, namely the number of organizations in which the two states share membership. An increase in this count could represent state A joining an IGO in which state B is a member; state B joining an IGO in which state A is a member; state A and B jointly joining an IGO; or state A and B forming a new IGO. By lumping these scenarios together, analysts cannot draw precise conclusions about which states are admitted to which IGOs and when. Moreover, the dyadic count of shared memberships assumes, problematically, that all organizations matter equally and that their effect is additive.

In keeping with a recent call to move beyond the dyad in studying international conflict (Poast 2010), we construct a new data set with state-IGO (*sigo*) pairings as the units of analysis. Our sample includes all state-IGO combinations for 213 IGOs from 1951 to 2000.²⁶ Specifically, for every year t that IGO j is in existence, we create a separate observation for each state i in the international system. The full data set therefore includes both members and non-member observations. An indicator for membership codes whether state i is a member of IGO j at the conclusion of year t . Structuring our data in this way allows us to examine, in a single model, how attributes unique to each state, each IGO, and each state-IGO pairing influence the probability of membership. Notably, the ability to capture IGO and state-IGO attributes distinguishes our research design from dyadic

(state-state) and monadic (state-level) studies of IGO membership. Attesting to the utility of this approach, Gartzke et al. (2012) also employ a state-IGO unit of analysis in their study of interstate crises. However, ours is the first study to use this data structure to predict patterns of membership in international organizations.

Our analysis consists of models that predict IGO admission. We take two steps to identify the appropriate subsample of data for these analyses. First, we exclude all state-IGO panels composed of founding member states (defined as any member of the IGO in the year of its formation). We do so because our hypotheses center on how an existing IGO evaluates potential members—a process that is fundamentally different from the formation of a new IGO (Poast and Urpelainen 2013). Second, because we are interested in predicting a state's initial admittance to the IGO, not the continuation of membership thereafter, we censor the data: If state i attains membership in IGO j , that state-IGO panel is coded as "1" in the year of admission and then drops out of the sample thereafter.²⁷

We estimate probit duration models, correcting for temporal dependence with a year counter and splines (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998).²⁸ The intuition behind this model is that state i 's probability of joining IGO j in year t depends on how long it has already survived as a non-member. Robust standard errors are clustered by country. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for all variables. We estimate the following model, with control variables varying across specifications:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IGO Membership}_{ijt} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Security Risk}_{ijt} \\ & + \beta_2 \text{Structured IGO}_{ijt} \\ & + \beta_3 \text{Interventionist IGO}_{ijt} \\ & + \beta_4 \text{Densely Democratic IGO}_{ijt} \\ & + \sum_{c=1}^C \beta_c \text{Control } c_{ijt} + \varepsilon_{ijt}. \quad (1) \end{aligned}$$

Security Risk

To measure the underlying level of threat that a state faces in its security environment, we derive a country's ex ante predicted probability of MID involvement in a given year. A good ex ante evaluation of security risk should not be based on involvement in actual prior conflict and should not exhibit a high degree of subjectivity. Accordingly, our measure encapsulates key elements of a state's internal characteristics and its external security environment, derived from information available to decision makers as well as to scholars. Building on Bremer's (1992) characterization of "dangerous dyads," many analyses employ both liberal and realist variables in a model that is best characterized as a liberal/realist model (LRM). The liberal variables measure the degree that liberal influences can mitigate, though not eliminate, the security dilemma implied in power-politics analyses of international relations (Russett and Oneal 2001; Kinsella and Russett 2002). A common version of the LRM has recently been used to create a composite index of the

²⁵ Relatedly, Siverson and Starr (1991: chapter 3) find that having a warring alliance partner increases the probability that a state will join a conflict.

²⁶ Data on IGO membership are from the Correlates of War (COW; Pevehouse, Nordstrom, and Warnke 2004). Data on IGO institutionalization and mandate are taken from Boehmer et al. (2004). We use the most recent version of their data, which updates the coding in their 2004 article (Gartzke, Nordstrom, and Boehmer 2012). The sample of IGOs covered by Boehmer et al. is a subset of those in COW, but contains wide variation in terms of the level of institutionalization: 68% are minimally institutionalized, 17% structured, and 16% interventionist. See Table S1 for a list of included IGOs.

²⁷ States almost never exit an IGO once they enter, making the question of re-admission after dropping out effectively irrelevant.

²⁸ Results hold with King and Zeng's (2001) rare-events logit estimator.

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
IGO Membership	605,800	0.007	0.086	0	1
Security Risk	605,800	0.229	0.129	0.036	0.936
Structured IGO	605,800	0.189	0.391	0	1
Interventionist IGO	605,800	0.116	0.320	0	1
Security IGO	605,800	0.114	0.317	0	1
Economic IGO	605,800	0.524	0.499	0	1
Densely Democratic IGO	605,800	0.303	0.460	0	1
System Size	605,800	156.942	26.376	76	190
Alliance Ties	605,800	0.488	0.500	0	1
Membership Eligibility	605,800	0.816	2.584	0	55
Democratization	605,800	0.044	0.205	0	1
Contiguity with IGO Members	605,800	0.123	0.394	0	6
Polity Difference	605,800	8.351	5.531	0	20
No. of IGO Memberships	605,800	47.015	20.044	0	129

overall probability that a state will experience a fatal militarized interstate dispute (MID; Nordhaus et al. 2012). It is compiled by examining the characteristics of each dyad (states i and k) in the international system by year from 1951 to 2000, using the following model²⁹:

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{p}_{ikt} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\min(\text{democracy})_{ikt}) + \beta_2(\max(\text{democracy})_{ikt}) \\ & + \beta_3(\min(\text{trade/GDP})_{ikt}) \\ & + \beta_4(\text{contiguity}_{ikt}) + \beta_5(\ln(\text{distance}_{ikt})) \\ & + \beta_6(\text{GDP ratio}_{ikt}) + \beta_7(\text{allies}_{ikt}) \\ & + \beta_8(\text{GDP relative to world GDP}_{ikt}) \\ & + \beta_9(\text{System size}_t) + \beta(\text{splines}) \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

We then sum the predicted probabilities for each country to provide a year-by-year monadic estimate of the probability of conflict involvement with some other state. We label this composite index *state external security risk*. Table 2 lists, in order, the top fifteen countries with the highest average levels of risk from 1951 to 2000. This index has two advantages over using separate measures for relative power, alliances, regime type, GDP, etc. First, it gives the methodological benefit of sharply reducing the number of control variables that otherwise would have to be in our models, and which might introduce problems of nonlinearity and interaction into the statistical results, as Achen (2005) suggested.³⁰

Second, it reflects the theoretical understanding that different factors can create a good overall summary of the effect of many influences on the security environment of each state. That is, a low-threat environment may derive from different combinations of, for example, geographic location, alliance commitments, and economic interdependence.³¹ A bivariate regression of the average number of MIDs on security risk produces an R^2 of .41 in our full list of states.³² The association is especially strong at high levels, as nine of the 15 states at highest risk also

appear in the top 15 of actual conflict (MIDs) in the whole list. They are marked with an asterisk in column 2. During the cold war decades of German division, both East and West Germany were under acute security risk. Hence, their major allies kept them on short tethers. Most conflicts in Congo and the DRC were with rebellious groups inside the borders, and neighboring governments' overt hostile intervention was rare before the 1990s (Pettersson and Themnér (2011:95–6).

IGO Attributes

We argued that institutionalized IGOs and those with a security mandate should be particularly sensitive to security risk. To measure institutionalization, we use Boehmer et al.'s (2004) three-part typology. We enter variables for *structured* and *interventionist* organizations, leaving "minimally institutionalized" IGOs as the omitted category. Different from minimal IGOs,³³ structured and interventionist organizations possess the requisite level of institutional and bureaucratic capacity such that resource diversion in response to conflict is a relevant concern. Interventionist IGOs have a particular ability to employ coercion to enforce organizational decisions and norms. Membership in these entities therefore entails a greater loss of sovereignty than does membership in a structured IGO. Because this is a theoretically significant distinction, we enter the variables for structured and interventionist IGOs separately in our models.

Next, we employ Boehmer et al.'s (2004) coding of mandate to identify the set of *security IGOs*. This variable reflects the primary mandate appearing in the IGO's constitutive documents at the time of its founding. Both institutionalization and security mandate have been found in prior research to be associated with lower levels of interstate conflict,³⁴ but ours is the first attempt to investigate whether these findings may in fact be related to the selection of more peaceful members.

We also control for *economic* mandate. Economic IGOs constitute a large portion of the sample, and they seek to promote goals that are quite distinct from purely security-oriented IGOs. Moreover, Boehmer et al.'s (2004) coding of interventionist IGOs includes both economic and security organizations, but they note that it is only the latter

²⁹ The model also includes a correction for time dependence.

³⁰ The "Rule of Three" (Achen 2005) is often too strict. A compromise parsimony seems generally accepted as best practice (Kadera and Mitchell 2005; Oneal and Russett 2005; Ray 2005).

³¹ Size, measured as GDP, matters because the largest states are most likely to perceive major risks to their interests even far away and to have the capability to exert their military power at great distance. This is why the United States appears at the top of the "at risk" states in Table 2.

³² Also, in a probit analysis, security risk is a highly significant predictor of MID involvement. For more on security risk and militarized disputes, see Nordhaus et al. (2012).

³³ Minimal IGOs possess, at most, a limited secretariat that deals with the logistics of planning meetings. See Boehmer et al. (2004:18, 37–8).

³⁴ See footnote 23.

TABLE 2. States With Highest Security Risk, 1951–2000

	Country	Average Security Risk	Average No. of MIDs per Year	Average No. of IGO Memberships
1	United States*	0.73	6.49	68.02
2	USSR/Russia*	0.65	5.55	41.65
3	Israel*	0.64	4.61	41.53
4	Democratic Republic of Congo	0.64	1.35	43.20
5	Congo	0.60	0.48	40.65
6	China*	0.46	5.73	30.02
7	Yugoslavia*	0.46	3.67	43.04
8	Jordan	0.46	1.18	34.92
9	India*	0.42	2.10	58.18
10	Syria*	0.41	2.55	41.21
11	Turkey*	0.41	2.35	54.96
12	East Germany	0.39	0.35	18.76
13	West Germany	0.37	0.53	74.33
14	Iran*	0.37	2.47	38.37
15	Albania	0.35	0.39	16.59

*Country is among the list of top 15 states with the highest average number of MIDs per year.

“that are likely to take active, coercive measures to affect the security behavior of states” (25). This may imply that patterns of admission to economic IGOs follow a different logic, making it important to control for economic mandate.

Control Variables

The following control variables account for alternative explanations (including demand-side explanations) for IGO membership.

1. *Alliance ties*, defined as the number of IGO j 's member states with which state i shares an alliance membership.³⁵ This variable is used to test Hypothesis 4.
2. *Democratic density*, coded as any organization whose member states exhibit an average Polity score that is greater than or equal to 7, in a given year.³⁶ Previous research suggests that densely democratic IGOs are more likely to employ membership conditionality (Pevehouse 2005:46–76). They should therefore be less likely to admit new member states.³⁷
3. *System size*, defined as the number of states in the international system in year t . As system size grows, so does the number of potential/aspiring member states, thereby reducing each individual state's probability of membership in a given IGO. This is an essential baseline control included in all models.
4. *Membership eligibility*, which captures whether state i is eligible for membership in IGO j .³⁸ We create this variable using the FIGO data set's indicators for global, regional, and inter-regional IGOs (Volgy, Fausett, Grant, and Rodgers 2008). A state is coded as an eligible potential member for any global IGO and for

any regional IGO that is based in its home region (for example, Bolivia is eligible for membership in a regional IGO based in Latin America, but not one based in Sub-Saharan Africa).

5. *Democratization*, coded as “1” for countries that experience a transition to a Polity score of 7 or higher over the previous five years. The demand for IGO membership is argued to be higher among transitioning countries that are in need of external hand-tying (Mansfield and Pevehouse 2006).
6. *Contiguity*, coded as a count of the number of member states of IGO j that are contiguous to state i . Here, contiguity is defined as the presence of an adjoining land border or proximity within 150 miles by sea (Stinnett, Tir, Diehl, Schafer, and Gochman 2002; Correlates of War Project 2006). Shared borders represent a fundamental source of demand for IGOs, since neighboring states are linked by the flow of goods and people. Neighbors also face common environmental and economic problems that require multilateral cooperation.
7. *State-IGO Polity difference*, defined as the difference in Polity score between state i and the average Polity score of IGO j 's members. Value-based accounts of demand for IGO membership stress that states prefer to align themselves with other similar states. While a number of historic and cultural factors shape state identity, regime type is perhaps the best single measure to encapsulate a state's values.
8. *Number of IGO memberships*, which is a count of the number of IGOs in which state i is a member. This proxies for the state's general level of international involvement and support for multilateralism.

Findings: Admission to IGOs

Table 3 shows the results, first, of a baseline model that includes variables for security risk, IGO attributes, system size, and membership eligibility. Model 2 adds the additional controls. Model 3 includes interaction terms to test our hypotheses that certain types of IGOs are more averse to security risk than others. Models 4–5 examine the effect of alliance ties on IGO membership.

Our first hypothesis holds that the probability of admission to an IGO should decline as the state's security risk rises. In support of this claim, the coefficient on security

³⁵ We exclude non-aggression pacts. Alliance data are from the ATOP project (Leeds, Ritter, Mitchell, and Long 2002). This variable is correlated with security risk at $r = -0.06$.

³⁶ This follows Pevehouse and Russett (2006). Results are substantively unchanged if democratic density is the average Polity score of the member states.

³⁷ We have no a priori expectation, however, that densely democratic IGOs should be particularly swayed by the state's level of security risk.

³⁸ This variable is a good proxy for eligibility, but it may not capture all scenarios in which a state is a potential IGO member. In practice, each IGO imposes different criteria for enlargement. For this reason, we do not limit our sample to the set of states coded as “eligible,” choosing instead to include it as a control.

TABLE 3. Determinants of IGO Membership, 1951–2000

	1	2	3	4	5
Security Risk	-0.165 (0.135)	-0.255 (0.122)*	-0.104 (0.133)	-0.083 (0.105)	-0.076 (0.104)
Structured IGO	0.197 (0.019)**	0.179 (0.021)**	0.214 (0.042)**	0.162 (0.021)**	0.155 (0.022)**
Interventionist IGO	0.403 (0.016)**	0.345 (0.018)**	0.409 (0.035)**	0.324 (0.019)**	0.329 (0.018)**
Security IGO	-0.271 (0.027)**	-0.27 (0.029)**	-0.245 (0.068)**	-0.245 (0.03)**	-0.428 (0.04)**
Economic IGO	-0.138 (0.014)**	-0.145 (0.015)**	-0.114 (0.03)**	-0.123 (0.016)**	-0.128 (0.016)**
Densely Democratic IGO	-0.449 (0.026)**	-0.431 (0.027)**	-0.431 (0.027)**	-0.413 (0.028)**	-0.408 (0.028)**
System Size	-0.005 (0.001)**	-0.007 (0.001)**	-0.007 (0.001)**	-0.007 (0.001)**	-0.007 (0.001)**
Membership Eligibility	1.025 (0.03)**	0.9 (0.03)**	0.901 (0.03)**	0.977 (0.036)**	0.966 (0.035)**
Structured IGO *			-0.151 (0.162)		
Security Risk					
Interventionist IGO *			-0.271 (0.127)*		
Security Risk					
Security IGO *			-0.102 (0.262)		
Security Risk					
Economic IGO *			-0.128 (0.109)		
Security Risk					
Alliance Ties				0.069 (0.002)**	0.067 (0.002)**
Security IGO *					0.048 (0.005)**
Alliance Ties					
Democratization		0.05 (0.054)	0.05 (0.054)	-0.016 (0.057)	-0.016 (0.057)
Contiguity		0.515 (0.014)**	0.517 (0.014)**	0.389 (0.014)**	0.389 (0.014)**
Polity Difference		-0.028 (0.002)**	-0.028 (0.002)**	-0.022 (0.002)**	-0.022 (0.002)**
No. of IGO Memberships		0.009 (0.001)**	0.009 (0.001)**	0.005 (0.001)**	0.005 (0.001)**
Non-Member Years	-0.145 (0.008)**	-0.136 (0.007)**	-0.136 (0.007)**	-0.128 (0.007)**	-0.127 (0.007)**
Splines (not reported)					
Constant	-1.697 (0.105)**	-1.675 (0.096)**	-1.711 (0.095)**	-1.869 (0.097)**	-1.863 (0.098)**
N	605,800	605,800	605,800	605,800	605,800
Pseudo-R ²	.22	.3	.3	.353	.355
Log-likelihood	-20672.761	-18568.851	-18565.292	-17144.443	-17102.186

(Notes. Standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$.)

risk is significant and negative in model 2, and the magnitude of this effect is sizeable. Holding all other variables constant, a one standard deviation increase in security risk decreases the probability of IGO membership by 12.6%. However, the lack of significance in the baseline specification (model 1) indicates that the effect of risk is contingent on other relevant factors. Further investigation reveals that geographic contiguity plays an important role: Security risk exhibits a significant impact on the probability of IGO membership once we control for contiguity's effect. This suggests that contiguity may dampen the (negative) effect of security risk. Or, in other words, non-contiguous states are more likely than contiguous states to be screened based on their risk.

Thus, our core hypothesis is confirmed. IGOs are less likely to admit states at a high risk for conflict. As model 2 shows, even after controlling for several alternative factors, IGOs are, on average, avoiding the admission of more risky states and favoring the less risky ones. But does this relationship differ across IGOs? Before assessing which IGOs are most sensitive to risk (hypotheses 2 and 3), consider what the results reveal about the baseline propensity of different IGOs to admit new members. Which IGOs are expansionist, and which are more restrictive? We find some intriguing divergences. Institutionalized IGOs (both structured and interventionist) are significantly more expansionist than others, perhaps reflecting a logic whereby deeper levels of cooperation

produce additional incentives to bring new members into the fold. These results are unaffected by including the variables for economic and security mandate. Thus, irrespective of their mandate, structured and interventionist IGOs are more likely to admit new members. In contrast, holding constant the level of institutionalization, IGOs with security or economic mandates are less likely to admit new members. They operate as more exclusive "clubs." For security IGOs, we have argued that this selectivity stems from the need to guard against admitting states that threaten to entangle members in unwanted disputes. For economic IGOs, instead, selectivity likely reflects the need to carefully admit only those members with whom integration will produce net economic benefits.

With these baseline tendencies in mind, model 3 includes interaction terms to assess the relative effect of security risk in different types of IGOs. Recall our expectation that institutionalized IGOs and those with a security mandate should be particularly sensitive to risk (hypotheses 2 and 3). This prediction is most clearly borne out in the case of interventionist IGOs, where the interaction term is negative and statistically significant; security risk is a stronger negative predictor of membership in this category, which represents the set of IGOs with the best developed mechanisms for enforcement and coercion. In contrast, the interaction terms for structured, security, and economic IGOs are not statistically

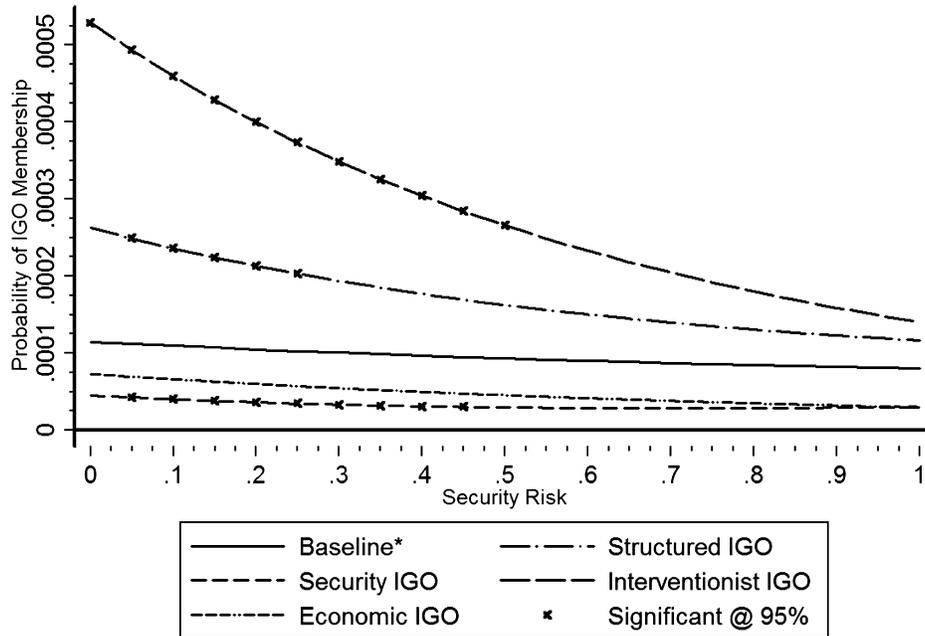


FIG 1. Effect of Security Risk on IGO Membership

*Baseline: Non-security, non-economic IGO with minimal levels of institutionalization.

significant, though the sign of the coefficients is negative, as expected. To provide a clearer interpretation of these results, Figure 1 maps the predicted probability of admission to security, economic, structured, and interventionist IGOs, as well as a “baseline” IGO that is non-security, non-economic, and minimally institutionalized.³⁹ X-marks denote the regions where the probability of membership is significantly different from the baseline, implying fundamentally different patterns of admission for interventionist, structured, and security IGOs, compared to IGOs possessing none of those characteristics.

Differences in the slopes of the lines are of interest for evaluating hypotheses 2 and 3. In support of our claims, Figure 1 shows a more steeply negative slope for interventionist organizations, which attests to their heightened risk sensitivity. As a country’s security risk increases, its probability of admission to an interventionist organization declines more sharply, compared to other IGOs. Countries at a high level of security risk are significantly less likely to be admitted to interventionist organizations than those with low risk. While interventionist organizations are more likely, overall, to add new members, our results make clear that the admission of less risky, less conflict-prone states drives their expansionist tendency. In other words, they “screen in” peaceful states.

To interpret the risk sensitivity of security IGOs, it is useful to consider the proportionate decline in the probability of membership as risk rises: An increase in security risk of one standard deviation from its mean value lowers the likelihood of admission to a security IGO by 29.7%, compared to a reduction of 4.8% for the baseline. Thus, security IGOs are relatively more risk averse than a “baseline” (non-security, non-economic, minimally institutionalized) IGO. Further support for our argument about security IGOs comes from examining the role played by shared alliance membership (hypothesis 4). We argued

that the central concern governing security IGOs’ decision to admit new members is the increased risk of entanglement in these new members’ disputes. This concern is mitigated, however, if the aspiring member and the IGO’s existing members already share membership in the same alliances (since their security policies would already be intertwined). Alliance ties should therefore be associated with a higher probability of admission to organizations with a security mandate. In line with this expectation, we find that shared alliance membership is positively associated with admission to IGOs (model 4) and that this effect is significantly magnified in security IGOs (model 5).⁴⁰

Finally, our results shed light on demand-side explanations for IGO membership. In line with expectations, IGOs are more likely to admit states with whom they share contiguous borders. Consistent with the idea that shared values are a driver of membership, our findings indicate that IGOs are less willing to admit states whose regime type differs from their existing members. However, democratization is not a significant predictor of membership. To understand this result in context, recall that the analysis excludes observations composed of founding IGO member states. Our results are therefore consistent with Poast and Urpelainen’s (2013) finding that democratization is associated with the formation of new IGOs, but not with joining existing IGOs.

To sum up, the argument that IGOs screen potential new members based on their security risk finds strong support. Evidence also supports our proposed causal mechanisms: that the motivation to screen stems from concerns about institutional paralysis, the diversion of institutional resources and the risk of entanglement in other members’ disputes.

³⁹ Predicted probabilities are taken from model 3, derived using *Clarify* (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2001).

⁴⁰ See also Figure S1. The inclusion of *alliance ties* reduces the significance of security risk to more marginal levels ($p = .09$ and $p = .10$) in models 5 and 6, suggesting that alliance membership is positively associated with security risk.

Implications and Robustness Checks

The implications of our findings are far-reaching. Dyadic studies have shown that membership in IGOs—particularly security and interventionist organizations—is negatively associated with conflict (Boehmer et al. 2004; Shannon et al. 2010). Yet, we found that security IGOs are particularly selective in admitting new members and that the bulk of new admittees to institutionalized IGOs are countries with less challenging security environments. Thus, although our analysis does not directly address previous findings about conflict within dyads, it does strongly suggest that selection effects may contribute to the empirical association between security/institutionalized IGOs and peace. At a minimum, it underscores the importance, when studying the effects of IGOs, to control not only for the factors that influence the probability of conflict within a dyad, but also for the factors that shape a state's monadic propensity for conflict. We emphasize that our measure of security risk captures the state's security environment as *observable* factors predicted and that this variable measures the probability of conflict with any other state in the international system as a whole.

Another line of research would be to explore the effect of unobservable factors on a state's propensity for conflict specifically with other IGO member states. In a preliminary analysis using a Heckman selection model, we uncovered evidence suggesting that, indeed, unobserved factors predicting selection into the IGO also influence the likelihood of conflict thereafter.⁴¹ Specifically, in addition to avoiding states with high levels of (observable) security risk, IGOs also appear to favor admitting "friendly" states that are less likely to experience conflict with their existing members. This is consistent with our essential insight that IGOs avoid admitting conflictual states. A full exploration of the nuances and robustness of this selection model remains outside the scope of this article. But it is clear that further investigation into how IGO selection processes affect analyses of interstate conflict constitutes a fruitful avenue for future research. Our findings about the determinants of IGO membership provide an essential starting point.

We also undertake a series of additional tests to ensure the robustness of our results. First, we explored whether our findings are affected by any overlap between interventionist and security IGOs. While these two attributes are not highly correlated in our sample (at just 0.08), we reran our main model entering the variables for security and interventionist IGOs separately. Our results hold: Interventionist organizations are more likely to admit new members, while security organizations are less likely (Table S2). We find, further, that interventionist security IGOs are less likely to admit new member states overall, but they do not exhibit any particular sensitivity to security risk. This is consistent with our general findings for security IGOs.

Next, we explore the robustness of our findings to the inclusion of additional control variables that could influence a state's probability of IGO membership. In the interest of maintaining parsimony in our main models, we present these results in Table S3. While several of these additional control variables were significant when added to our base model (Table 3, model 2), their addition did not substantively alter our results for the effect of security risk and IGO attributes. We find, in sum, that

states are more likely to join IGOs during the post-cold war years,⁴² when their alliance portfolio is highly similar to that of the United States⁴³ and when the IGO in question is a global organization (whose membership is not limited by geographic region).⁴⁴ Moreover, as the percent of states in the international system that are not members of the IGO increase, membership in that organization becomes less likely. In other words, smaller IGOs tend to stay small. Further probing the effects of regime type (both among IGO members and of the potential member state), we find that densely autocratic IGOs are (like densely democratic IGOs) less likely to admit new member states, but that changes in a country's Polity score are not associated with any change in the probability of membership. This is consistent with our earlier finding that democratization is not a significant predictor of admission to extant IGOs.

Finally, an avenue not explored in our main analyses relates to the effects of state and IGO age on the admission of new members. Jacobson, Reisinger, and Mathers (1986), for example, find that IGO membership increases with the number of years that a country has been a member of the international system. They also show that IGOs experienced an explosion in membership in the wake of decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s. In exploring this issue (Table S4), we find, as expected, that "young" states that recently gained independence are more likely to be admitted to IGOs. The age of the IGO also matters: Older, established organizations are more likely to admit new members, likely reflecting processes of organizational evolution, expansion, and change over time. On average, older IGOs are no more or less sensitive to security risk than younger IGOs, but interventionist IGOs are the exception—becoming less likely to admit risky new members as they age. This is consistent with our earlier finding that interventionist organizations screen based on security risk, but it further suggests that this aversion to risk increases over time.

Conclusion

Do international organizations select more peaceful member states? A large body of scholarly research examines whether IGOs reduce militarized conflict, but fails to grapple with the fact that membership in these organizations is neither random nor exogenous. This article draws renewed attention to IGO screening. We find that IGOs favor the admission of less "risky" states—those whose internal characteristics and external relations make them unlikely to engage in militarized conflict—and screen out the more risky ones. The motivation to screen is multifaceted. It stems from concerns about resource diversion, institutional deadlock, and entanglement in other members' disputes.

The implications of our findings are consequential and far-reaching. If IGOs tend to select more peaceful states, scholars and analysts should show more caution about attributing a *causal* effect of IGO membership on peace.

⁴² Many IGOs experienced an expansion and rejuvenation in the early 1990s. Table S3 enters the post-cold war dummy. When we include it in our Table 3 models, it is significant and positive in 4 of 5 specifications, but does not alter any results.

⁴³ This suggests that as global leader, the United States favors the admission of its allies to IGOs.

⁴⁴ The importance of the regional–global distinction is stressed by Jacobson (1984) and other early quantitative research on IGOs.

⁴¹ See Appendix S1.

We need to consider—and account for—possible selection bias when studying the effects of IGOs on their member states. To be clear, our findings do not necessarily imply a spurious relationship between IGOs and peace; we remain convinced that international organizations can play an important causal role in preventing and resolving disputes. The fact that certain types of IGOs prove more sensitive to security risk than others indicates that member states' underlying risk of conflict—and the consequent difficulty of promoting and maintaining peace—differs systematically across IGOs. Research on international treaties and commitments has long recognized this selection problem—and has nevertheless found that institutions have real effects on domestic politics (c.f., Simmons and Hopkins 2005; Von Stein 2005; Simmons 2009), but research on interstate conflict can, and should, do more to address this issue. Our use of the composite measure of state security risk will prove valuable for future research in this vein. Similarly, our “*sig*” data set composed of state-IGO pairings provides an important innovation compared to the typical dyadic (state-state pairings) setup and allows for more precise inferences about the effects of both state- and IGO-level factors.

Our analyses in this article represent the first steps in what we hope will be a fruitful new line of research. While our focus here is limited to the admission of non-founding member states to pre-existing IGOs, future efforts should explore whether state security risk also plays a role in the formation of IGOs. As Downs et al. (1998) note, founding an IGO is a different—and fundamentally more complex—process than that of expanding an existing IGO, where key aspects of institutional design are already in place. Relatedly, our findings underscore the importance of an IGO's institutionalization and mandate for member-state selection, but several more nuanced questions remain to be explored. Of particular interest would be efforts to code for—and test the effect of—variation in the specific procedures and voting rules that IGOs use for admitting new members. A final area ripe for further empirical investigation concerns the consequences of member-state selection for scholars' inferences about the effects of IGOs. We find suggestive evidence that selection shapes the extent of militarized conflict among member states. Future research should do more to probe the size and robustness of this relationship. The consequences of member-state selection for IGOs' internal politics also remain ripe for exploration: Do IGOs select members in order to reduce institutional gridlock? Does selection influence the extent to which an IGO produces economic benefits for its members? Does selection affect the degree to which an IGO fosters socialization and preference convergence among its members? Future research should explore these kinds of questions.

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Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:

Table S1. List of IGOs in the dataset.

Table S2. Alternate specifications and coding for institutionalization.

Table S3. Additional control variables and robustness checks.

Table S4. Effect of state and IGO age on IGO membership.

Appendix S1. Selection bias.

Figure S1. Effect of alliance ties on IGO membership.