

# Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders: Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Rule-Making in the Third World<sup>1</sup>

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This paper proposes a new conceptual tool to study norm dynamics in world politics. Termed norm subsidiarity, it concerns the process whereby local actors create rules with a view to preserve their autonomy from dominance, neglect, violation, or abuse by more powerful central actors. After a theoretical discussion of the definition, motivations, and effects of norm subsidiarity, the paper offers a case study of normative action against Cold War alliances (especially South East Asia Treaty Organization) by a group of Third World leaders led by India's Jawaharlal Nehru at the Bandung Asia-Africa Conference in 1955. It then offers examples from Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa to highlight the practice of norm subsidiarity. The paper contributes to the literature of international relations in three main ways. First, it reminds constructivist international relation scholars of the importance of understanding norm creation as a bottom-up process, marked by significant contestations and feedback. Second, it highlights the normative behaviors of Third World countries and their regional institutions, a neglected aspect of the literature on norm dynamics. Finally, the theory and practice of norm subsidiarity shed more light on the agency role of Third World countries in world politics.

The study of norms occupies an important place in the recent literature on international relations.<sup>2</sup> While norm scholars have highlighted a variety of actors, processes, and outcomes concerning norm creation and diffusion in world politics, the latter has not received adequate attention in the literature on the international relations of the Third World.<sup>3</sup> Constructivism, the principal theoretical perspective on norms, initially paid little attention to variations between global

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<sup>2</sup> Recent examples of study of norm dynamics focusing on Europe and Asia include Checkel (2005) and Acharya (2009), respectively.

<sup>3</sup> By "Third World," I mean states in Asia, Africa, Latin American, and Caribbean, and other regions which were either full colonies or semicolonies (e.g. Thailand) of Western powers (Bull and Watson 1984a; Jackson 1991; Kessler and Weiss 1991; Job 1992; Ayoob 1995; Acharya 1997; Neuman 1998; Fawcett and Sayigh 1999). As independent states, these countries shared a set of conditions, namely a similar security predicament (where domestic and regime security concerns are more salient than external "national" security concerns (Ayoob 1995), anticolonial foreign policy outlook, relative economic underdevelopment, and membership in the Non-Aligned Movement and

1 and regional norms, and especially to the “ideational role of non-Western regional  
 2 institutions” (Checkel 1999, 2001; Acharya 2004, 2009:24). While there are  
 3 now a growing number of country- and region-specific studies (especially of  
 4 Western Europe) of norms (Checkel 2005; Diez 2005; Dimitrova and Rhinard  
 5 2005; Santa-Cruz 2005; Subotić 2005; Manners 2006; Bloodgood 2007; Busby  
 6 2007; Grugel 2007; Kornprobst 2007; Pace 2007; Williams 2007), few offer a general  
 7 comparative framework for studying the normative behavior of Third World  
 8 states and regions. As a result, the dynamics of rule-making and normative action  
 9 by Third World states remains under theorized.

10 In this essay, I develop and test a theory of norm creation and diffusion to  
 11 explain why and how Third World states and regions engage in rule-making  
 12 and normative action to regulate relationships among them and with the outside  
 13 world. Termed *norm subsidiarity*, it concerns the process whereby local  
 14 actors develop new rules, offer new understandings of global rules or reaffirm  
 15 global rules in the regional context. After a theoretical discussion of the definition,  
 16 motivations, and effects of norm subsidiarity, I offer a case study of  
 17 normative action against a Cold War alliance, the South East Asia Treaty  
 18 Organization (SEATO), by a group of Third World leaders led by India’s  
 19 Jawaharlal Nehru at the Bandung Asia-Africa Conference in 1955. The fate of  
 20 SEATO as an American and British-sponsored collective defense organization  
 21 is certainly of interest to students of Asian security. But it also offers important  
 22 insights into international norm dynamics. It opens the door not only to  
 23 an investigation of why variations occur in norm diffusion, but also to an  
 24 understanding of the response of Third World states to existing global norms,  
 25 and their role in the creation and diffusion of new norms. I then offer examples  
 26 from Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa to highlight the practice  
 27 of norm subsidiarity.

28 The paper seeks to make three main contributions to the literature of international  
 29 relations. First, it stresses the need for constructivist scholars to view norm  
 30 creation and diffusion as a bottom-up process, in which weak local actors can  
 31 challenge and influence global normative processes, rather than a largely top-  
 32 down one.<sup>4</sup> Second, it addresses a general neglect of the normative behavior of  
 33 Third World countries and their regional institutions in the growing literature  
 34 on norm dynamics. Finally, by underscoring the normative agency of Third  
 35 World countries in world politics, it helps to move the theoretical understanding  
 36 of international order-building beyond its hitherto biased framing as a fundamentally  
 37 Western enterprise.

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43 the G-77 economic grouping. These features continue to have an important bearing on their foreign policy and  
 44 security behavior despite the end of the Cold War and growing economic and political development. The utility of  
 45 the term Third World has been criticized on the ground that there is too much cultural, economic, and political  
 46 diversity among its members, and that with the end of the Cold War, the ideological justification for this term had  
 47 ended. In this essay, I use the concept as a historical construct as well on the grounds of analytic convenience to  
 48 denote the agency role of non-Western states and societies. I use Third World interchangeably with “Global  
 49 South,” “developing world,” or “postcolonial states,” bearing in mind, as Neuman observes, that while “Some  
 50 analysts consider the term Third World inaccurate, ...none other has gained general recognition or acceptance”  
 51 (Neuman 1998:18). Ayoob argues that while “there is much diversity as well as a host of intramural conflicts among  
 52 this category of states... The Third World is in important ways a perceptual category, albeit one that is sufficiently  
 53 well-grounded in political, economic, and social realities to make it a useful analytical tool in explaining state behavior.”  
 54 In fact these common realities and perceptions provide important foundations for the concept of norm subsidiarity  
 55 (Ayoob 1995:13).

<sup>4</sup> While the motivations behind norm subsidiarity has something to do with the specific political, economic  
 and psychological conditions of Third World states, much of it can also apply to weak states in general, although  
 more work is needed to test this broader applicability.

## Theorizing Norm Subsidiarity

### Definition

I define norm<sup>5</sup> subsidiarity as a *process whereby local actors create rules with a view to preserve their autonomy from dominance, neglect, violation, or abuse by more powerful central actors*. The concept derives from the general notion of subsidiarity which refers to “a principle of locating governance at the lowest possible level – that closest to the individuals and groups affected by the rules and decisions adopted and enforced” (Slaughter 2004). At its essence, subsidiarity “encourages and authorizes (local) autonomy.”<sup>6</sup> The origins of the concept can be traced to Pius XI’s papal encyclicals of 1931.<sup>7</sup> In international relations, the principle, if not the concept per se, featured in the debate between universalism and regionalism at the time of the drafting of the United Nations Charter at San Francisco in 1945 (Padelford 1954; Haas 1956; Etzioni 1970; Nye 1971). Subsidiarity is also a principle of the European Union (Búrca 1998; Moravcsik 1998:455; Swaine 2000; Pager 2003).<sup>8</sup> With the dramatic expansion, US peace operations in the post-Cold War period, subsidiarity has been invoked as a principle around which a division of labor can be constructed between an overstretched UN Security Council and regional organizations (Knight 1996; Peou 1998; O’Brien 2000; Peck 2001).<sup>9</sup>

Slaughter proposes subsidiarity and proportionality as the “vertical norms” of contemporary world order, “dictated by considerations of practicability rather than a preordained distribution of power,” alongside the “horizontal norms of global deliberative equality, legitimate difference, and positive comity” (Slaughter 2004). Others see subsidiarity as a fundamentally normative obligation (rather than of matter of practicality alone); for example as an element of “panarchy,” i.e. “rule of all by all for all” (Sewell and Salter 1995; Knight 1996).

The concept of norm subsidiarity is very different from “norm localization.” The latter may usefully serve as a point of reference for identifying and distinguishing the essential aspects of the former. Localization is “active construction (through discourse, framing, grafting, and cultural selection) of foreign ideas by local actors, which results in the latter developing significant congruence with local beliefs and practices” (Acharya 2004:245). Although both concepts stress the primacy of local agency, there are five key differences:

- Localization is *inward-looking*. It involves making foreign ideas and norms consistent with a *local* cognitive prior (Wolters 1999; Acharya 2009:21).<sup>10</sup> Subsidiarity is *outward-looking*. Its main focus is on relations

<sup>5</sup> I use norm to mean “standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:251).

<sup>6</sup> Steering Committee on Local and Regional Authorities in Europe, “Definition and Limits of the Principle of Subsidiarity.” Draft study. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, November 9, 1993, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> “Definition and Limits of the Principle of Subsidiarity,” pp.10–11.

<sup>8</sup> “Protocol on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality.” *Official Journal of the European Union* C 310/207, December 16, 2004; *Explanatory Memorandum on the EU Constitutional Treaty* (01/12/04); “Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe including the Protocols and Annexes, and Final Act with Declarations.” *Command Paper* No Cm 6429, Presented to Parliament, December 2004 (London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> See also: Resolution 1631 (2005) SC/8526, Security Council (United Nations: Department of Public Information, 2005); The Director-General’s Programme of Work and Budget 2006–07, Supplement to (Reform proposals) C 2005/3/Sup.1 August 2005 (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2005). Available at: [http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/009/j5800e/j5800e\\_sup1/j5800e03\\_sup1.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/009/j5800e/j5800e_sup1/j5800e03_sup1.htm) (Accessed December 20, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Here, *cognitive prior* is defined as an “existing set of ideas, belief systems, and norms, which determine and condition an individual or social group’s receptivity to new norms.” For the notion of cognitive prior in Europe, see Checkel (2003).

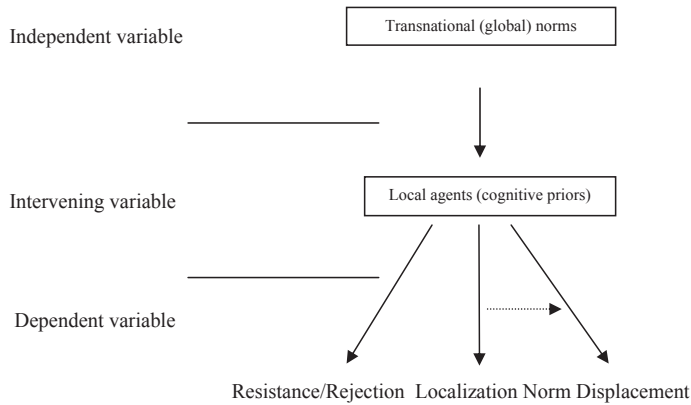


FIG 1. Localization  
Source: Acharya 2004

between local actors and external powers, in terms of the former's fear of domination by the latter.<sup>11</sup>

- In localization, local actors are *always* norm-takers. In contrast, in subsidiary, local actors can be norm rejecters and/or norm makers.
- In localization, foreign norms are *imported for local usage only* (Acharya 2004; 252).<sup>12</sup> In subsidiarity, local actors may *export* or “*universalize*” locally constructed norms (Kirsch 1977).<sup>13</sup> (Compare Figures 1 and 2.) This may involve using locally constructed norms to support or amplify existing global norms against the parochial ideas of powerful actors.
- In localization, local agents redefine foreign norms which they take as generally *good* and *desirable*, but not fully consistent with their existing cognitive prior (hence the need for their redefinition). In subsidiarity, local agents *reject* outside ideas (of powerful central actors, but not universal principles) which they do not view as worthy of selection, borrowing, and adoption in any form.
- Hence, localization is generic to all actors, big or small, powerful or weak. Subsidiarity is specific to peripheral (smaller and/or weaker) actors, because by definition, it's their autonomy which is more likely to be challenged. “Norm localization, or the process of adapting global norms to local ideas, identities, and practices... occurs any time a global norm intersects with local/regional ideas/identities/practices; it happens in almost all instances where global norms need to be justified to domestic audiences.”<sup>14</sup> It does not require either a sense of

<sup>11</sup> Hiro Katsumata suggested this distinction.

<sup>12</sup> “[L]ocalization reshapes both existing beliefs and practices and foreign ideas *in their local context*.” (my emphasis).

<sup>13</sup> This difference between localization and subsidiarity roughly corresponds to Thomas Kirsch's idea of “parochialization” and “universalization.” Analyzing the evolution of Thai religion, Kirsch suggests that the advent of Indian Buddhism did not lead the Thais to abandon their traditional worshipping of local spirits. Instead, Buddhist deities are placed alongside local spirits. This transformed the status of both religions, simultaneously giving a local frame to Indian Buddhism (“parochialization”) and a universal frame to Thai animism (“universalization”).

<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for ISQ for suggesting this distinction between localization and subsidiarity.

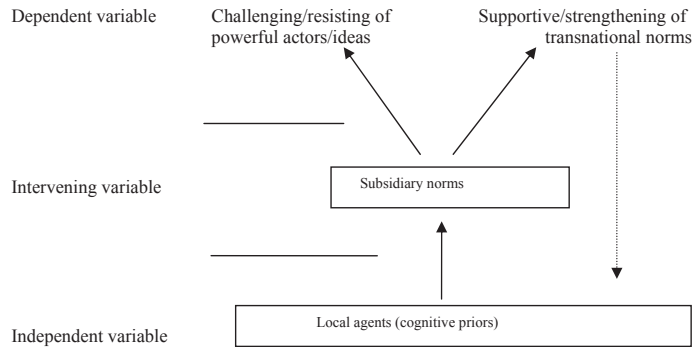


FIG 2. Subsidiarity

(Note. The lower and middle layers do not necessarily comprise a single or coherent set of norms, but rather distinctive, similar, overlapping and mutually reinforcing subsidiary norms developed by different regions. Subsidiary norms may be seen as mediating/intervening between global and local norms.)

exclusion or a perception of big power hypocrisy, or perception of dominance, neglect, violation, or abuse. The latter are the triggers of norm subsidiarity, and they are more likely to be found among smaller, weaker, and peripheral actors.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Actors and Motivations*

This leads to a crucial question: which actors engage in norm subsidiarity, and why do they do it? I begin with the observation, following Hedley Bull and other “English School” scholars, that the postwar international system is essentially the European states system writ large (Bull and Watson 1984a). It is the global extension of an European order that once specified rules of inclusion and exclusion on the basis of a “standards of civilizations” criteria, whereby only states which would meet certain conditions, e.g., ability to provide domestic law and order, administrative integrity, protection of rights of foreign citizens, and the fulfillment of contracts, could be regarded as members of international society and therefore worthy of enjoying its norms such as nonintervention and equality of states (Bull and Watson 1984b:427). Only a handful of the non-Western societies, notably Japan, were accorded a place in the system; all colonies were excluded. Hence, it is not surprising that after gaining independence, and sometimes before it, Third World states and their leaders would question, and wherever possible reject, the norms of an international order that harked back to the era of European dominance and seek to replace or modify them with ones which consistent with their interests and identities. In this sense, Third World states extended what Bull termed as their “revolt against the west” to the normative domain (Bull 1984). Ayoob has introduced an important variation to this argument by contending that Third World countries suffer from an “acute schizophrenia”; they have simultaneously rebelled against and adapted to the norms

<sup>15</sup> Subsidiarity and localization can be complimentary, rather as two sides of the same coin, and run in tandem. Their motivators may occasionally overlap. There is no reason why actors cannot engage in both types of normative behavior. In fact, the creation of a single norm may involve both processes, whereby a global norm is redefined while a local norm is infused into a global common. Third World countries often do both. Together, they offer a comprehensive framework understanding and explaining norm dynamics and diffusion in world politics. Hence, both processes have been at work in the Third World. The Asian response to the Cold War superpower rivalry involved the localization of universal norms of sovereignty (see Acharya 2009), while at the same time, creating new norms concerning great power dominance and military alliances for export and universalization.

	Material	Ideational	
Dominant Power		Power gap	Identity dissonance
Local Actors		Intra-regional disputes	Norm subsidiarity

FIG 3. Alternative Explanations

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(Notes. There could be two other possible alternative explanations of why South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) failed: (i) anticipated opposition from domestic audiences and (ii) whether the conclusion of US–Japan alliance might have rendered SEATO unnecessary. But both can be discounted. To be sure, domestic opposition was a factor in the decision of Ceylon and Indonesia not to join SEATO. It was less important in the case of India and Burma. But even then, why should normative behavior be seen as alternative to domestic explanations? There is plenty of constructivist work that suggests that states/governments borrow international norms to legitimize themselves before domestic audiences and that domestic considerations often motivate normative behavior and norm compliance. (Cortell and Davis 1996:451–478) Moreover, domestic politics explanations can be indeterminate: the leaders of the three Asian countries which did join SEATO, namely Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand, also might have faced domestic opposition to their alignment with the United States, but they still went ahead and did so. The other alternative explanation is also easily dismissed: the conclusion of the US–Japan defense treaty did not prevent Dulles’ passionate advocacy of a Southeast Asian collective defense system. And in the early days of the alliance, which was geared toward both preventing Japanese remilitarization and deterring an overt Soviet communist military threat to Japan, its utility in deterring a Chinese Communist challenge through indirect subversion would be hardly apparent or demonstrated to render SEATO unnecessary.)

of the international system inherited from the colonial powers (Ayoob 1989). But even in their adaptive role, there is a tendency among Third World societies to question existing international norms and develop new ones, including what I call subsidiary norms that redefine the meaning and scope of the preexisting European-derived global norms to reflect Third World conditions.

Opposition to great power-sponsored collective defense pacts was part of the normative predisposition of Third World states. As Rupert Emerson noted, “a widespread sentiment” among societies in Asia and Africa that associated membership in collective defense pacts with “return...to colonial rule” (Emerson 1962:395; Gupta 1964; Miller 1973) Cecil Crab notes that for Third World states, the offer of “protection” by superpower-led collective defense pacts was akin to “a condition of colonialism or dependency” (Crabb 1967:67).

Against this backdrop, Third World states developed subsidiary norms for two main reasons. The first was to challenge their *exclusion* or marginalization from global norm-making processes. Institutions dominated by great powers do not always reflect the ideas, interests, and identities of weaker states. In such cases, norm subsidiarity is a response by the latter to the “tyranny” of higher level institutions (formal or informal, including multilateral organizations or great power security management regimes) in global governance. During the drafting of the UN’s charter, newly independent states argued against investing the sole authority for handling peace and security issues in the UN Security Council and demanded regional solution to regional problems (Claude 1964). The latter was justified because regional actors were better informed about local problems and hence would be better able to devise solutions to them than distant global bodies (Nye 1971). Subsequently, new nations like Ceylon looked to regionalism because their UN membership was yet to be assured. Norm subsidiarity was thus a means toward regional autonomy, a condition in which intraregional “actions and responses predominate over external

1 influences” (Zartman 1973:386) and which allows regional groups to “keep  
2 outsiders from defining the issues that constitute the local agenda” (Thornton  
3 1980:25).

4 Second, Third World states resorted to norm subsidiary when confronted with  
5 great power *hypocrisy*. This occurred when they see the violation of their cher-  
6 ished global norms by powerful actors and when higher level institutions tasked  
7 with their defense seem unwilling or incapable of preventing their violation. A  
8 key principle here is nonintervention in the international affairs of states. As  
9 Krasner’s “organized hypocrisy” formulation holds, this and related norms of  
10 sovereignty are frequently violated, even as they remain formally at the core of  
11 the Westphalian international order (Krasner 1999). Such hypocrisy is often a  
12 trigger for subsidiary norms in the Third World. These subsidiary norms would  
13 limit the scope for great power caprice or unilateralism, at least in the regional  
14 context. Again, however, “...when confronted with big power violations of global  
15 norms, *all* smaller, less powerful actors may perceive hypocrisy, post-colonial  
16 actors might be especially sensitive to norms that are selectively applied/  
17 implemented.”<sup>16</sup> During the Cold War, the global superpower competition and  
18 interventionism and the consequent paralysis of the UN created a demand for  
19 the subsidiary norms of nonintervention in different regions. While such regio-  
20 nal norms did not always turn out to be effective, they at least enjoyed a greater  
21 legitimacy in the Third World than the managerial rules of great powers (like  
22 those of the Monroe Doctrine or the Brezhnev Doctrine).

23 The Third World countries had reasons to be worried about great power  
24 hypocrisy because they felt more marginalized from global rule-making by having  
25 entered an international system that was European created and dominated.  
26 While things may be changing now, this was the case in the formative years of  
27 post-World War II international order, which is the historical and empirical focus  
28 of this essay. Countries like Nehru’s India, Sukarno’s Indonesia, Nasser’s Egypt,  
29 and Mao’s China were largely dissatisfied with the system status quo. Hence, they  
30 had a greater imperative for developing subsidiary norms, in keeping with  
31 the motivations of norm subsidiarity I have outlined. In other words, system-  
32 dissatisfied weak states/powers tend to be more prone to norm subsidiarity than  
33 system-satisfied weak states/powers. While Western weak countries or Middle  
34 Powers may develop norms of their own, these norms are not motivated by an  
35 acute sense of marginalization or a security predicament where internal security  
36 concerns trump external ones.

### 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 *Effects*

A final point concerns the effects of subsidiary norms. Subsidiary norms consti-  
tute an ideational structure that determines the legitimacy of a “higher level”  
authority, including ideas and institutions propagated and controlled by hege-  
monic or great powers, such as collective defense systems that offer protection to  
weaker states. Keohane draws attention to the importance of analyzing the “legit-  
imacy of hegemonic regimes” (Keohane 1984:39). Chayes and Chayes maintain  
that international institutions derive their legitimacy from “the degree of inter-  
national consensus” and “participation” (Chayes and Chayes 1995:41, 128). And  
Ikenberry and Kupchan argue that the legitimacy of great power-led interna-  
tional institutions depends on the “common acceptance of a consensual norma-  
tive order that binds ruler and ruled” (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990:289;  
Ikenberry 2001). As great powers are normally expected to possess the resources  
to offer sufficient material incentives (including security protection and

<sup>16</sup> The quoted words are taken from the written comments of an anonymous reviewer for ISQ on an earlier draft of this essay.

1 economic aid) to lure weak states into their ambit, their failure to attract the  
2 desired level of weak state representation in institutions created by them would  
3 indicate nonmaterial variables at work, including normative forces. Constructiv-  
4 ists have pointed to the effects of norms in legitimation and delegitimation of  
5 specific types of behavior, including power politics (Finnemore and Sikkink  
6 1998:263). Subsidiary norms developed by regional actors could thus determine  
7 whether a “consensual normative order” binding the ruler and the ruled within  
8 hegemonic or great power-led institutions would be possible. A good indicator of  
9 normative consensus in hegemonic or great power-led institutions would be the  
10 willing participation of the “ruled” in the “ruler’s” scheme. When the latter fail  
11 to obtain such participation, despite their expressed wishes, the outcome is a  
12 legitimacy deficit capable of crippling its institutional framework. Hence, the  
13 legitimacy deficit of great power-led institutions is a function of regional or sub-  
14 systemic legitimating structures, which may be put in place through the creation  
15 of subsidiary norms.

16 Against this backdrop, this paper identifies two main effects of norm subsidiar-  
17 ity (Figure 2).<sup>17</sup> The first may be called the *challenging/resisting effect*. Through  
18 subsidiary norms, local actors offer normative resistance to central actors, includ-  
19 ing great powers and institutions controlled by them. At the same time, local  
20 actors claim the right to formulate rules and deal with their own issues without  
21 intervention by any higher authority. The latter are entitled to perform “only  
22 those tasks which cannot be performed at a more immediate or local level”  
23 (Barnes 1998:34). The second effect of norm subsidiarity is supported by local  
24 actors for existing common global norms (consistent with “rules of all by all for  
25 all”) which are vital to preserving their autonomy. Some of these common glo-  
26 bal rules of the contemporary international system that are invoked and sup-  
27 ported by weaker states include sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence  
28 and self-determination, equality of states, racial equality, nonintervention, and  
29 (after the 1945 San Francisco Conference) the principle of regional autonomy  
30 or “regional solutions to regional problems.”<sup>18</sup> This may be called the *support-*  
31 *ive/strengthening effect* of subsidiarity. Here, local agents create norms by invoking  
32 and supporting a *global* normative prior to secure their autonomy and resist pow-  
33 erful actors. The two effects of norm subsidiarity may proceed simultaneously,  
34 with local actors offering resistance to great power-controlled ideas and institu-  
35 tions while invoking existing global norms.

36 In the following section, I trace a subsidiary norm dynamic in postwar South-  
37 east Asia which crippled SEATO.

## 40 The Fate of Collective Defense in PostWar Asia

### 41 Why SEATO?

42 Why study SEATO and the period of the mid-1950s? SEATO was not the first collec-  
43 tive defense pact to be created after World War II. That distinction belonged to  
44 NATO established in 1949. But SEATO, created by an agreement among the United  
45 States, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, and Thailand in Manila  
46 on September 8, 1955, arguably constituted the most important postwar US effort  
47 to organize a multilateral collective defense organization in the entire Third World.

48 SEATO had a greater importance than the contemporaneous Baghdad Pact,  
49 or what eventually became as Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). The Bagh-  
50 dad Pact was signed on February 24, 1955, five and half months after the Manila  
51 Pact. It was originally a bilateral affair, between Turkey and Iraq, to which the  
52

53 <sup>17</sup> “Definition and limits of the principle of subsidiarity.”

54 <sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of these norms, see: Bull and Watson (1984a). On the emergence of the  
55 global norm of regional autonomy, see: Falk and Mendlovitz (1973).



1 UK and Pakistan acceded later. By contrast, SEATO was multilateral from the  
 2 outset and therefore of greater significance as a test of *collective defense*. Moreover,  
 3 the United States did not join CENTO, even though it clearly lent strong sup-  
 4 port to it. SEATO was explicitly American in conception and ownership. During  
 5 the mid-1950s, the United States considered Asia (including Southeast Asia) to  
 6 be a more important strategic theater than the Middle East. As Dulles  
 7 (1952:187) put it, it was in “Asia that Russian imperialism finds its most powerful  
 8 expression.” At the time of SEATO’s creation, Asia had already become the the-  
 9 ater of the first major outright war of the post-Second World War period:  
 10 the Korean War, which was also the first hot war between the United States and  
 11 communist forces. Moreover, Southeast Asia itself (the regional definition of  
 12 which at the time included India)<sup>19</sup> presented as a highly unstable subregion,  
 13 especially with the French defeat in Indochina, which greatly alarmed the United  
 14 States. The Middle East was yet to be that crucial; the formation of SEATO  
 15 occurred well before the 1967 Arab-Israeli War or the 1973 Arab oil embargo,  
 16 which will render the Middle East a theater of greater strategic significance to  
 17 the United States.

18 SEATO’s main purpose was to counter communist advance, whether a direct  
 19 attack or subversion, and to prevent what the Eisenhower administration would  
 20 describe as the ‘domino effect’ of the fall of South Vietnam to communists.  
 21 SEATO did not have NATO’s integrated military command nor did it enjoy a US  
 22 security commitment that would be invoked automatically in punishing aggres-  
 23 sion against any member state. On the other hand, SEATO was a unique alliance  
 24 in the sense that it offered to guarantee the security of not just its members, but  
 25 also of the states which were not part formally of it, namely South Vietnam,  
 26 Cambodia, and Laos.

27 The period of the mid-1950s was also a crucial period for the foreign policy  
 28 development of Third World states. Earlier on, in the late 1940s and early 50s,  
 29 Asian states like India and Indonesia were more concerned with advancing decol-  
 30 onization than developing rules of conduct in international affairs, including  
 31 norms concerning the legitimacy of alliances and power politics. Hence, the first  
 32 major conference of postWar Asia, the Asian Relations Conference organized by  
 33 India and attended by Nationalist China, did not discuss issues like noninterven-  
 34 tion a key Westphalian norm. But by the time of Bandung conference, issues of  
 35 intervention and nonintervention were salient. This was thanks to the escalation  
 36 of superpower rivalry with the Korean War and the onset of what would be the  
 37 long Vietnam War. Whereas some opposition to superpower-led collective  
 38 defense pacts in Asia predated SEATO, as by product of anti-colonial sentiments,  
 39 the association and invocation of the nonintervention norm by Third World  
 40 states to delegitimize collective defense was more evident in the mid-1950s, partly  
 41 because of the emergence of pacts like SEATO and CENTO. Finally, opposition  
 42 to earlier American ideas about collective defense in Asia was muted because  
 43 those proposals were just that: proposals. This was clearly not the case with  
 44 SEATO.

45 The Bandung Conference held April 18–24, 1955, also makes the mid-1950s a  
 46 significant period in the development of Third World international relations. It  
 47 was the first international gathering of the newly independent countries of Asia  
 48 and Africa. It was the first international meeting in which Communist China par-  
 49 ticipated without the presence of the Soviet Union. It was the first appearance  
 50 on the world stage of Egypt’s newly anointed leader, Gamel Abdel Nasser, who  
 51 left the conference, a changed man. And it crucially influenced the foreign pol-  
 52

53  
 54 <sup>19</sup> “Southeast Asia” then included India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (now considered to be part of South Asia).  
 55 They, along with Indonesia and Burma, were members of The Conference of South-East Asian Prime Ministers,  
 otherwise known as the Colombo Powers.

1 icy of Ghana's pan-Africanist leader, Kwame Nkrumah. Bandung was also the  
2 decisive normative beginning of the Non-Aligned Movement. The organization  
3 of the conference reflected powerful forces at work: decolonization, the outbreak  
4 of the Cold War, the escalation of the Indochina conflict, and the leadership  
5 ambitions of new states such as India, Indonesia, Egypt, and Communist China.  
6 In essence then, Bandung captured many of the basic forces and divisions that  
7 shaped the postwar international order.  
8

### 9 10 *Origins*

11 The proposal for SEATO, a brainchild of US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles,  
12 constituted a reversal of previous US policy in Asia. For example, a State  
13 Department Policy Planning Staff paper in March 1949 had argued that the United  
14 States should avoid setting up an "area organization" in the Pacific and  
15 focus on "joint or parallel action" until there was "a pragmatic and desirable  
16 basis for intimate association" for a "formal organization." In the meantime,  
17 the United States "should encourage the Indians, Filipinos, and other Asian  
18 states to take the public lead in political matters," while its own "role should be  
19 the offering of discreet support and guidance" (cited in Mahapatra 1990:48).  
20 Later, when the Truman administration was presented with the idea of a collective  
21 defense system for the Pacific, proposed by Elpidio Quirino of Philippines,  
22 and backed by its other Cold War allies such as Syngman Rhee of South Korea  
23 and Chiang Kai-shek of Republic of China, it rejected this idea, a wise move  
24 given the controversial standing of these Asian leaders both within their own  
25 countries and regionally. The Truman administration subsequently did consider  
26 a multilateral security arrangement to accompany the US-Japan defense treaty,  
27 but this idea was opposed by Dulles himself (who was appointed by Truman to  
28 oversee the negotiations on the US-Japan treaty) and abandoned once the treaty  
29 was successfully concluded.

30 Yet, the Eisenhower administration, spurred by Chinese revolution and the  
31 Korean War, and its own understanding of and approach to world affairs, took  
32 the opposite course, insisting on a formal collective defense organization for  
33 Southeast Asia. Influenced by the Korean War and then the gains made by North  
34 Vietnamese communists, Dulles changed his position on collective defense  
35 (Franklin 2006). Now installed as Secretary of State, he saw collective defense as  
36 a means of preventing a possible Chinese takeover of the region. In a discussion  
37 with Congressional leaders in May 1954, he contended that "if the communists  
38 gained Indochina and nothing was done about it, it was only a question of time  
39 until all of Southeast Asia fall along with Indonesia, thus imperiling our Western  
40 island of defense."<sup>20</sup> A month and half later, he was even more apocalyptic in  
41 discussing Indochina with Eisenhower: "I expressed the thought that it might  
42 well be that the situation in Indochina itself would soon have deteriorated to a  
43 point where nothing effectual can be done to stop the tide of Chinese commu-  
44 nists over-running Southeast Asia except perhaps diversionary activities along the  
45 China coast, which would be conducted primarily by the Nationalist forces, but  
46 would require sea and air support from the United States."<sup>21</sup>

47 Initial planning for a collective defense system for Southeast Asia began with  
48 the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in January 1954. Following the event, the  
49 United States significantly escalated its support for French forces in Indochina.  
50 At the same time, a US National Security Council decision memo, NSC-5405,  
51

52  
53 <sup>20</sup> Memorandum for the Secretary's File, Subject: Conference with Congressional Leaders Concerning the Crisis  
54 in Southeast Asia, Saturday, April 3, 1954, (April 5 1954, Dulles Papers, the Library of Congress).

55 <sup>21</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation with the President, May 19, 1954", (Dulles Papers, The Library of  
Congress).

1 dated January 16, 1954, contained a reference to a coordinated regional defense  
 2 system to counter any further communist expansion without directly committing  
 3 American forces.<sup>22</sup> The United States move toward a collective defense pact gath-  
 4 ered pace during and immediately after the Geneva Conference on Indochina  
 5 held between May 8 and July 21, 1954.<sup>23</sup> On July 24, 1954, the NSC met and  
 6 argued that such a pact would give the president discretion to attack China  
 7 before a war declaration and get international support. By mid-August, NSC had  
 8 developed NSC 5429, which viewed the Geneva accords as a victory for the com-  
 9 munists, and believed that the United States needed to create a Southeast Asian  
 10 pact to offset the damage to Western interests. It presented two plans: Alterna-  
 11 tive A called for immediate retaliation against China in the case of any aggres-  
 12 sion in “Free” Southeast Asia, while Alternative B asked for a commitment from  
 13 each member to act to meet the common danger according to their own con-  
 14 stitutional requirements. But in either case, NSC 5429 stipulated that the  
 15 United States would retain “its freedom to attack its enemies as it chose, includ-  
 16 ing, if necessary, with the use of nuclear weapons” (Franklin 2006:129–130).

17 Although Britain differed from the United States regarding the organization  
 18 and membership of SEATO, it too had come to accept the need for SEATO. Its  
 19 view was that “...the danger of a third world war is most grave when there is a  
 20 situation of weakness, not when there is one of strength. In Europe, the exist-  
 21 ence of N.A.T.O. has created a clearly defined line that the communists have  
 22 respected because it is strongly defended. It is in the absence of any such line in  
 23 Asia which creates the risk of war, as exemplified in Indochina.”<sup>24</sup>

#### *Resistance*

27 As the plan for collective defense in Southeast Asia intensified, the prime minis-  
 28 ters of five Asian countries, India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, and Ceylon, met  
 29 in Colombo in April 1954 under the informal banner of Colombo Powers (after  
 30 the convener of this group, Ceylon).<sup>25</sup> As the first countries in Asia (along with  
 31 the Philippines) to emerge from colonial rule, theirs was an important voice  
 32 expressing emerging regionalist ideas in Asia. These ideas in turn were heavily  
 33 inspired by nationalism and anti-colonialism. It entailed a desire for enhancing  
 34 Asian representation in global councils and securing autonomy from great power  
 35 meddling in regional affairs. Faced with the Cold War-induced paralysis of the  
 36 UN and the growing United States, Soviet and Chinese involvement in Indo-  
 37 china, one of the first demands of the Colombo Powers, was to call for “a sol-  
 38 emn agreement of nonintervention” by all the great powers “to refrain from  
 39 giving aid to the combatants or intervening in Indochina with troops or war  
 40 material.”<sup>26</sup> The powers also became the focal point for contestation over the  
 41 issue of regional collective defense.

42 This contestation was evident during the Geneva Conference. The fact that  
 43 American planning for SEATO had proceeded while talks were still going on in  
 44 Geneva was a sore point for the Colombo Powers. Although the United States  
 45 would not sign the final Geneva declaration which divided Vietnam at the 17th  
 46 parallel, so as not to recognize the legitimacy of PRC, it issued a separate proto-  
 47 col accepting agreements and undertaking not to violate them. One provision of  
 48 the Geneva Accords on Indochina was that neither section of Vietnam could  
 49

50 <sup>22</sup> *FRUS* 1952–1954, Vol. 12: 362–76; *FRUS* 1952–1954, Vol. 13: 971–973.

51 <sup>23</sup> *FRUS* 1952–1954, Vol. 12: 514–516, 522–525.

52 <sup>24</sup> U.K. Foreign Office Southeast Asia Department Minutes, 17 August 1954, D1074/452, PRO-FO, 371-111881.  
 53 The National Archives, UK, hereafter referred to as TNA-UK.

54 <sup>25</sup> The group was convened by Ceylon’s then Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala.

55 <sup>26</sup> Southeast Asian Prime Ministers’ Conference: Minutes of Meetings and Documents of the Conference, Colombo, April 1954. Hereafter cited as The Colombo Conference Minutes.

1 “constitute part of any military alliance.” The accord also stipulated that that  
2 Cambodia and Laos could not “join in any agreement with other states if this  
3 agreement includes the obligation to participate in a military alliance not in con-  
4 formity with the principles of the charter of the United Nations.”<sup>27</sup> Although  
5 the Indochinese countries would not be formally included in SEATO and the lat-  
6 ter was considered by the United States to be fully consistent with the UN Char-  
7 ter, the Colombo Powers (with the exception of Pakistan, which joined SEATO)  
8 thought the very idea of a regional collective defense pact under the United  
9 States violated the spirit if not the letter of the language of Geneva Agreement.  
10 As Nehru would remark later, SEATO represented “quite a new conception,”  
11 because unlike NATO, “members of this organization are not only responsible  
12 for their own defense but also for that of areas they may designate outside of it  
13 if they so agree, this would mean creating a new form of spheres of influence.”  
14 Nehru contrasted collective defense with the Geneva Agreement which he had  
15 endorsed “because of its clause that no outside interference will be allowed in  
16 Indochina.”<sup>28</sup> The Indonesian response was similar. Conveyed by its Prime Min-  
17 ister Ali Sastroamidjojo, it argued that SEATO’s offer of protection even to non-  
18 members “contravened the principle of international law forbidding armed  
19 interference by foreign powers in the internal affairs of a nation” and “brought  
20 the Cold War to the South East Asian region” (Sastroamidjojo 1979:271).

21 At this point, the British government as well as some senior US officials recog-  
22 nized the importance of securing the participation of the Colombo Powers as a  
23 prerequisite for the proposed alliance’s success. Eden told Dulles that he  
24 “should avoid taking any action which might lead the Governments represented  
25 at Colombo to come out publicly against our security proposals” (Eden 1960:99)  
26 In his view, without such countries, “the pact would simply be a white man’s  
27 pact imposed from the outside and robbed of popular support.”<sup>29</sup> He urged the  
28 United States that “strong efforts to secure the participation of the Colombo  
29 Powers in the collective security arrangement or at least their acquiescence in its  
30 formation should be made prior to the negotiation of the treaty.”<sup>30</sup>

31 There were similar voices within the United States. Defense Secretary Charles  
32 Wilson believed that “without the Colombo Powers we wouldn’t have much in  
33 Southeast Asia.” A State Department official urged giving “real consideration to  
34 the British position – that is, that we should go slowly in forming such an organi-  
35 zation [SEATO] to give ourselves time to persuade Burma, Pakistan, Ceylon,  
36 Indonesia, and India to join in or, at least, to look with favor upon it.”<sup>31</sup> Even  
37 Dulles and Eisenhower recognized the need for Indian participation, despite  
38 Dulles’ personal dislike for Nehru. The US ambassador to India, George V.  
39 Allen, was summoned to the White House in May 1954 to be told of “the  
40 extreme importance they attached to carrying Indian and Asian opinion” on the  
41 matter of SEATO (this language is from a British memo based on conversation  
42 with Allen). Dulles would even maintain that “nothing will suit the Americans  
43

44  
45 <sup>27</sup> Article 5, “The Final Declaration of The Geneva Conference: On Restoring Peace in Indochina, July 21,  
46 1954.” *The Department of State Bulletin*, XXXI, No. 788 (August 2, 1954), p. 164. Available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1954-geneva-indochina.html>. (Accessed 25 December 2009).

47 <sup>28</sup> The Bogor Conference Minutes, 2nd Session, 6.

48 <sup>29</sup> Foreign Office to Washington, 26 May 1954, D1074/189, FO-371/111869. See also: Eden to Casey via Foreign  
49 Office, 22 May 1954, D 1074/45/G, FO 371/111863, TNA, PRO (Public Records Office).

50 <sup>30</sup> “Report of the Joint US-UK Study Group on Southeast Asia,” July 17, 1954. *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Vol. XVI,  
51 p. 1415; “Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, Augusta, GA”, May 19, 1954. Dulles Papers,  
52 Library of Congress; Telegram from British Embassy in Washington to the Foreign Office in London, 10 July 1954,  
53 FO/371/111868. This also means the United States was informed of and accepted the British move to invite all the  
54 Colombo Powers to join SEATO.

55 <sup>31</sup> “Memorandum by the Regional Planning Adviser in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (Ogburn) to the  
Acting Assistant Secretary of States for Far Eastern Affairs (Drumright),” July 23, 1954. *FRUS* 1952-1954, Vol. XII,  
Part I, p. 664.

1 better than that the Indians should not only share but actually take the initiative.  
 2 Could they not organize a scheme of collective defense among South East Asian  
 3 countries with the United States and United Kingdom standing behind in sup-  
 4 port?"<sup>32</sup> This shows that the United States keenly wished for Indian (as well as  
 5 the other Colombo Powers) participation in the SEATO, rather than simply not  
 6 caring about it. The fact that it failed to do get their participation attests to the  
 7 role normative opposition to collective defense from Nehru and the Colombo  
 8 Powers (save Pakistan) played in delegitimizing SEATO.

9 At American urging, Britain took the lead in persuading the Colombo Powers  
 10 to join the proposed collective defense organization, whose treaty was planned  
 11 to be signed at a Conference in Manila in September 1954. On July 30, 1954,  
 12 British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden wrote to Nehru (as well as other Co-  
 13 lombo Powers) asking them whether they would "find an invitation to be repre-  
 14 sented at the proposed meeting (Manila Conference)... acceptable."<sup>33</sup> Dulles  
 15 had asked the British not to formally *invite* the Colombo Powers to the Manila  
 16 Conference unless they had indicated prior willingness to accept the invitation.<sup>34</sup>  
 17 Nehru's reply was unambiguous; to him, the proposed organization

18  
 19 would be an organic military arrangement the participants in which are some  
 20 states in the area and a larger number outside [the] area who seek to align  
 21 themselves with one another for the avowed purpose of safeguarding peace and  
 22 promoting the stability of the participating countries or of the area as a whole  
 23 against other countries and peoples in the area...It is therefore far from being a  
 24 collective peace system; it is rather a military alliance. This may possibly result in  
 25 the formation of a counter-military alliance...You have referred to the role of the  
 26 Asian powers in the defence of South East Asia and mentioned its vital impor-  
 27 tance. Yet the majority of Asian countries [and the] overwhelming majority of  
 28 Asian peoples will not be participants in the organization. Some it may be antici-  
 29 pated would even be strongly opposed to it, thus rendering South East Asia a  
 30 potentially explosive theater of the Cold War.<sup>35</sup>

31 Nehru played a central role in organizing resistance to SEATO. A key figure  
 32 behind early Asian regionalism, he played a central role in postwar Asian regional  
 33 conferences, including the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, 1947, the Con-  
 34 ference on Indonesia, New Delhi, 1949, and later the Bandung Asia-Africa Confer-  
 35 ence, 1955. Even before becoming India's Prime Minister in 1947, Nehru had  
 36 criticized collective defense pacts under great powers as "a continuation of power  
 37 politics on a vaster scale" (Nehru 2005:539). His opposition to collective defense  
 38 invoked the principles of sovereignty, particularly the equality of states and nonin-  
 39 tervention. It was also shaped by his involvement in India's nationalist struggle and  
 40 the influence of Gandhian doctrine of nonviolence. Hence, it was of "little surprise  
 41 that he reacted viscerally to geopoliticians" like Dulles (Karnad 1994:32).

42 But Nehru was not alone. Burma turned down the invitation to attend the  
 43 Manila conference out of concerns about compromising its sovereignty and invit-  
 44 ing great power intervention. As the Burmese Prime Minister U Nu put it, "an  
 45 alliance with a big power immediately means domination by that power. It means  
 46 the loss of independence."<sup>36</sup> The Indonesian government argued that a

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 48  
 49 <sup>32</sup> Inward Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office, From UK High Commissioner in India, 27 May 1954,  
 FO-371-111863, UK National Archives.

50 <sup>33</sup> FO-371-111875.

51 <sup>34</sup> FO-371-111875.

52 <sup>35</sup> UK Foreign Office, Inward Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office, August 2, 1954, FO 371-11875.  
 53 TNA-UK.

54 <sup>36</sup> U Nu at a Speech to the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., in July 1955, cited in James Barrington,  
 55 (Foreign Secretary of Burma), "The Concept of Neutralism: What Lies Behind Burma's Foreign Policy?", in  
*Perspective of Burma, An Atlantic Monthly Supplement* (Undated), p.29.

collective defense arrangement in the region would undermine its “independent foreign policy.”<sup>37</sup> The Ceylonese Prime Minister John Kotelawala did not want his country to give the “appearance of being committed to either side” in the Cold War.<sup>38</sup> His opposition to SEATO reflected “the general feeling that...a united voice of Asia (should be)... heard in the councils of a world whose destinies had hitherto tended to be controlled almost entirely from another direction” (Kotelawala 1956:118). As such, “What was wrong about SEATO was that the opinion of Free Asia had not been sought in regard to the troubles in Vietnam and Korea...The Colombo Conference (of April–May 1954) was going to demonstrate to the world that the people of Asia knew what was good for them.”<sup>39</sup> In summary, exclusion from decisions about forming such a pact, and the perceived hypocrisy of SEATO’s great power proponents who while professing the principle of nonintervention were using the pact as a tool of their intervention in the region (specifically in the Indochina conflict), and the consequent loss of autonomy of regional actors, shaped the rejection of SEATO by the four Colombo Powers.

### Effects

Although the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty was formally signed on September 8, 1954, normative opposition from the four Colombo Powers would not disappear. In fact, it might have intensified, especially at the Bandung Conference in April 1955.<sup>40</sup> Aside from highlighting great power hypocrisy and the limitations of the UN, the Bandung Conference became an arena for contesting the legitimacy of collective defense as represented by SEATO and CENTO (Johnston 2001:487–516).

At Bandung, Nehru portrayed NATO as “one of the most powerful protectors of colonialism”<sup>41</sup> (presumably because Portugal was seeking support from NATO colleagues to hold on to Goa). He presented collective defense pacts as a threat to the sovereignty and dignity of postcolonial states, finding it “intolerable...that the great countries of Asia and Africa should come out of bondage into freedom only to degrade themselves or humiliate themselves” by joining such pacts.<sup>42</sup>

On the other side, supporters of collective defense, notably Pakistan, Turkey, and the Philippines, argued that SEATO, the first pact to be geared to subversion (rather than just overt military attack), was necessary against the threat of communism, the main security challenge facing them. Philippines’ lead delegate Carlos Romulo pointed out that the communists were routinely violating their own professed doctrine of nonintervention (Romulo 1956:91) Pakistan’s Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali, took Nehru’s attack on collective defense pacts as an affront to Pakistan’s own sovereignty.

New archival evidence suggests that the United States, in close coordination with the UK, tried to influence the Bandung conference through their allies represented there, including SEATO members Pakistan, Philippines, and Thailand,

<sup>37</sup> Foreign Office to Djakarta Embassy, August 13, 1954, D 1074/295, FO 371/111875. TNA-UK.

<sup>38</sup> UK High Commissioner in Ceylon to FO, 9 August 1954, D 1074/367, FO 371/111878. TNA-UK.

<sup>39</sup> P.K.Balachandran, “Kotelawala placed Sri Lanka on the world map, *Daily News* (Colombo), October 5, 2006. Available at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2006/05/10/fea01.asp>. (Accessed April 27, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> Twenty-nine countries participated in the Bandung Conference held between April 18 and 24, 1955: Burma, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, the Vietnam Democratic Republic, South Vietnam (later reunified with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam), and Yemen (Republic of Yemen).

<sup>41</sup> *Proceedings of the Political Committee of the Asian-African Conference*, April 20–23, 1955. Hereafter cited as *Bandung Political Committee Proceedings*. These Proceedings were the verbatim records of the Political Committee of the Conference, where all the heads of delegations met, and were circulated on an extremely limited basis.

<sup>42</sup> Nehru’s Speech on April 23, 1955, *Bandung Political Committee Proceedings*.

1 and the leading CENTO member Turkey. Although Dulles publicly took the  
 2 position that the US attitude toward the Bandung Conference should be one of  
 3 “benevolent indifference,”<sup>43</sup> the administration’s position was anything but  
 4 indifferent. After the British abandoned their initial idea of encouraging a boy-  
 5 cott of the Conference by their allies and friends in favor of encouraging them  
 6 to send “strong” delegations to argue in support of SEATO, the United States  
 7 too did likewise, encouraging its friends to “send the strongest possible delega-  
 8 tions.”<sup>44</sup>

9 The US State Department issued a guidance to its diplomatic missions in  
 10 friendly countries advising them

11  
 12 to avoid an open show of interest. They should however seek to put friendly and  
 13 neutral delegations on their guard against Communist misrepresentations, and  
 14 against Communist attempts to put down for discussion subjects which could be  
 15 used to discredit the West.<sup>45</sup>

16  
 17 The British, too, carried out an extensive effort consisting of supplying  
 18 “guidance” papers, on subjects ranging from communist colonialism to nuclear  
 19 disarmament, to pro-Western delegations going to Bandung.<sup>46</sup>

20 After much debate, the final communiqué issued by the Bandung Conference  
 21 adopted ten principles as a normative charter for the newly independent states  
 22 of Asia and Africa. One of the principles recognized the right of every nation to  
 23 collective defense, but another stipulated the “abstention from the use of  
 24 arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the  
 25 big powers.” This formulation would underpin the normative de-legitimation of  
 26 collective defense in postwar Asia.

27 Although US allies claimed victory for SEATO immediately after Bandung,  
 28 SEATO failed to attract a single new member, as Britain and the United States  
 29 might have hoped for.<sup>47</sup> Why? It was because the logic of norm subsidiarity  
 30 would influence them. Subsidiarity is triggered by the exclusion of regional  
 31 actors from global rule-making and the perceived hypocrisy of great powers in  
 32 defending agreed principles. At Bandung, both the motivating forces were  
 33 clearly at work. The sense of exclusion from global norm-making processes was  
 34 especially felt. At the San Francisco Conference that drafted in the UN Charter,  
 35 Asia had been barely represented; the only countries being India (still a British  
 36 colony) and the Republic of China.<sup>48</sup> Western dominance of the UN became a  
 37 sore point with Asian nationalists especially after the Netherlands tried to enlist  
 38 the UN’s help to support its return to Indonesia. Even by 1955, more than half  
 39 of the participants in the Bandung Conference, including sponsor Ceylon, were  
 40 not even members of the UN as yet.

41 Moreover, Bandung participants also perceived hypocrisy on the part of great  
 42 powers in upholding the nonintervention norm and saw the UN as being incapa-  
 43 ble of preventing its violation by the great powers. The UN was seen as being  
 44 ineffective in dealing with superpower interventionism in Indochina. The UN’s  
 45

43 *Washington Post*, May 6, 1955; D2231/235, FO 371/116980. TNA-UK.

44 Roger Makins, Washington, to Foreign Office, London, January 27, 1955, D2231/78, FO 371/116976.  
 45 TNA-UK.

45 Roger Makins, British Embassy, Washington, to Foreign Office, London, “Addressed to Foreign Office  
 46 telegram No. 132 Saving of February 26, 1955,” 26 February 1955, D2231/119, FO 371/116977. TNA-UK.

46 Foreign Office, London, to Ankara, 15 March 1955, D2231/136, FO 371/116978. TNA-UK.

47 “The Afro-Asian Conference,” Foreign Office Research Department, May 5, 1955, 2231/368, FO 371-116986.  
 48 TNA-UK.

48 See the debates over “Regional Arrangements,” Commission III (Security Council), Committee 4, *Documents  
 49 of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945*, Vol.12, (London and New York:  
 50 United Nations Information Organizations, 1945), pp.663–844. Hereafter cited as UNCIO Documents.

1 failure to deal with West Iran was resolutely criticized at Bandung. As Ceylon's  
 2 Prime Minister John Kotelawala lamented:  
 3

4 It is not the United Nations which has preserved the uneasy peace of the last  
 5 decade. In all the major issues of world politics, such as the Korean and Indo-  
 6 Chinese disputes, negotiations for settlement had to be carried on outside the  
 7 framework of the United Nations...what we of Asia and Africa can appropriately  
 8 demand, is that the United Nations Organization should be so reconstituted as  
 9 to become a fully representative organ of the people's of the world, in which all  
 10 nations can meet in free and equal terms.<sup>49</sup>

11 As noted, the effect of norm subsidiarity may be judged from the extent to  
 12 which it resists and erodes the legitimacy enjoyed by norms and institutions  
 13 created by great powers. And this legitimacy rested not just on the material vari-  
 14 ables, like military or economic aid to allies, but more crucially on issues of rep-  
 15 resentation and participation. The Bandung Conference not only put paid to  
 16 any US and British hopes for drawing new members to SEATO, it also aggra-  
 17 vated anti-SEATO sentiments in two key Southeast Asian members: Thailand and  
 18 the Philippines. Despite having embraced SEATO membership, these two coun-  
 19 tries had already "resented not being taken into the confidence of their Western  
 20 partners" – the United States, the UK, France, Australia, and New Zealand –  
 21 especially when the latter began discussions on a regional collective defense pact  
 22 in 1954 (Modelski 1962:155–156). This sense of exclusion was aggravated by the  
 23 growing perception of the "un-Asianness" of SEATO created at Bandung. In the  
 24 Philippines, it strengthened domestic elements which advocated an Asian iden-  
 25 tity for the country by moving away from too close a security relationship with  
 26 the United States. Emanuel Paelez, a Philippine Senator and member of its dele-  
 27 gation to Bandung, felt a "sense of pride" after listening to Indonesian Presi-  
 28 dent Sukarno's opening speech. Sukarno to him was a "fellow Asian...a voice of  
 29 Asia, to which we Filipinos belong."<sup>50</sup> After Bandung, Thailand signaled a more  
 30 accommodating attitude toward China, which led a US State Department memo  
 31 to remark that Bangkok seemed to be "reverting to their historic policy of hav-  
 32 ing at least a toe in either camp."<sup>51</sup> Later, a former Thai Secretary-General of  
 33 SEATO echoed Nehru's normative argument against SEATO. He noted: "When  
 34 membership is disparate and composed of great and small nations, the latter  
 35 having to rely heavily on the former, the organization is bound to be at the  
 36 mercy of the whip and whim of the larger nations." As regards the reason for  
 37 SEATO's demise, he would stress its failure "to gather new members," and the  
 38 "ironical" fact that "it was Thailand and the Philippines whose security SEATO  
 39 was principally conceived to ensure, who asked...for its gradual phasing  
 40 out..."<sup>52</sup> In short, the exclusion of Philippines and Thailand from earlier Anglo-  
 41 American deliberations over collective defense, the subsequent failure of  
 42 Western powers to secure wider Asian participation in the alliance, and the  
 43 evident conflict between the sense of Asian identity fostered by Bandung and  
 44 the nature of SEATO as an outsiders' project weakened the alliance from its very  
 45 inception, and strengthened its alternative: a subsidiary norm against collective  
 46 defense pacts.  
 47  
 48

49 See Text of Kotelawala's speech to the opening session of the Bandung Conference, in *Asia Africa Speaks from Bandung* (Jakarta: Department of Foreign Affairs), p.40.

50 "The Asian-African Conference", Address by Senator Emanuel Paelez to the Rotary Club of Manila, undated, 2231/379, 11 August 1955, FO 371-116986. TNA-UK.

51 "Letter from the Acting Officer in Charge of Thai and Malayan Affairs (Foster) to Ambassador in Thailand (Peurifoy)," *FRUS* Vol. XXII, Southeast Asia: 826.

52 Konthi Suphamongkon, "From SEATO to ASEAN," undated paper (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), pp. 32-35.



*Alternative Explanations*

1  
2  
3 Against this normative explanation of why SEATO failed, let me offer three alter-  
4 native explanations, one each from functionalist, realist, and constructivist (a dif-  
5 ferent one from mine) perspectives. Functionalists have argued that America's  
6 "half-hearted commitment" was what really doomed SEATO (Liska 1968:121;  
7 Buszynski 1983:221). The US commitment to SEATO was based not on the  
8 NATO formula of automatic and immediate collective action against aggression,  
9 but mimicked the Monroe Doctrine which only asked for consultations among  
10 the allies. Any collective action would be subject to the constitutional processes  
11 of each member. But Dulles insisted that the SEATO formula was "as effective  
12 as that we used in" NATO. This type of formula was necessary to preclude  
13 Congressional objections which suggested that the NATO formula allowed the  
14 President too much power over war-making at the expense of the Congress  
15 (such objections had almost wrecked Senate ratification of NATO, which Dul-  
16 les did not want to see repeated).<sup>53</sup> And while SEATO did not have a perma-  
17 nent military command, neither did ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, and the  
18 United States), a far more successful military alliance than SEATO, suggesting  
19 that a unified command is not a prerequisite for the political success of an  
20 alliance. Moreover, as described earlier, under the SEATO formula, the Uni-  
21 ted States retained the option of a direct attack on China, including limited  
22 nuclear strikes, which would be more credible than defending against such an  
23 attack militarily.

24 A realist explanation of why Asia did not develop a viable postwar multilateral  
25 security organization attributes it to the United States' "extreme hegemony," or  
26 the huge *power gap* between the United States and its Asian allies. Because the  
27 potential Asian partners had too little to offer either individually or collectively  
28 to a multilateral security grouping, Washington saw no point in a regional secu-  
29 rity organization (Crone 1993). A constructivist explanation blames *identity disso-*  
30 *nance*. The United States recognized a greater sense of a transatlantic community  
31 than a transpacific one; hence, Europe rather than Asia was seen as a more desir-  
32 able arena for multilateral engagement (Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002; Katzen-  
33 stein 2005). But both these perspectives are top down. They stress why the  
34 United States did not want a multilateral defense organization in Asia, rather  
35 than why Asian actors did not themselves want it. They give no consideration to  
36 the norms developed by Asians themselves. I have shown that the US and allies  
37 did seek a multilateral defense organization, but simply could not get what they  
38 wanted due to strong normative opposition *from within Asia*, which limited Asian  
39 participation and representation in SEATO, undercutting its legitimacy and  
40 viability.

41 Another alternative explanation for SEATO's failure is intraregional rivalry  
42 such as that between India and Pakistan. But this does not explain why three  
43 other Colombo Powers, namely Indonesia, Ceylon, and Burma, refused to join  
44 SEATO, even though they had no conflicts with the three who did, namely Thai-  
45 land, the Philippines, and Pakistan. Multilateral alliances between a hegemonic  
46 power and weaker states are possible despite quarrels among the latter because a  
47 hegemonic power usually possesses the resources to goad quarrelling partners  
48 into a system of collective defense, as the United States was able to do in relation  
49 to Greece and Turkey in NATO.

50 In considering normative versus rationalist/materialist explanations of why  
51 SEATO failed, I should stress that my essay deals with what might be considered,  
52 following Katzenstein (1996:11), a "hard case" for normative explanations.  
53

54 <sup>53</sup> "Verbatim Proceedings of the Third Plenary Session, Manila Conference," September 7, 1954, *FRUS*, 1952-  
55 1954, Vol. XII, Part I, pp. 878-879. The Manila Conference was where SEATO was formed.

1 Explanations of the failure of alliances usually favor established realist and func-  
 2 tional perspectives on national security. But I have demonstrated that a norma-  
 3 tive explanation of why SEATO failed is possible, and this should encourage  
 4 generalizations about norm subsidiarity that are applicable to other Third World  
 5 regions.

#### 7 *Long-Term Consequences*

8  
 9 The norm against regional collective defense shaped Asian regionalism after the  
 10 Bandung Conference. Indeed, what was originally an injunction against “the use  
 11 of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of  
 12 the big powers” expanded into a more general norm against regional collective  
 13 defense, even when not sponsored by the great powers, because of the fear that  
 14 such defense arrangements might be seen as a SEATO through the backdoor.  
 15 Thus, the founding documents of ASEAN, created in 1967, avoided any mention  
 16 on collective defense so as not to “lend credence to charges that [ASEAN]  
 17 was a substitute for the ill-fated South-East Asia Treaty Organization in the  
 18 making” (Leifer 1989:28; see also Acharya 1990). ASEAN members consis-  
 19 tently rejected any defense role for the grouping despite the Vietnamese inva-  
 20 sion of Cambodia and the Soviet naval expansion in the Pacific in the 1980s.  
 21 And ASEAN would become the driver of subsequent regional institutions in  
 22 Asia, especially the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), created in 1994. The ARF,  
 23 the first Asia-wide regional organization devoted to security issues, has pur-  
 24 posely avoided any collective defense role. The agenda of ARF consists of  
 25 three stages: confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, and conflict-resolution.  
 26 Its primary goal is to induce defense transparency among its member states,  
 27 not collective defense against common threats Acharya ([2001] 2009). Some  
 28 recent media reports suggest the possibility of an Asian NATO,<sup>54</sup> but this  
 29 seems highly unlikely.

30 To conclude the implications of the above for Asian security regionalism, the  
 31 concept of norm subsidiarity offers a better explanation of the absence of a col-  
 32 lective defense organization in Asia than rationalist or other constructivist expla-  
 33 nations. Why did Asian actors engage in such norm subsidiarity? The generic  
 34 factor, deriving from the norm localization perspective, was the desire of local  
 35 actors to fit the more abstractly defined universal norms to local context and  
 36 beliefs. But more relevant were the specific factors, applicable mainly to Third  
 37 World states, including their exclusion from global norm-making processes and  
 38 their resistance to the hypocrisy of powerful actors in selectively applying global  
 39 rules of sovereignty. During the postwar period, many Asian nationalist leaders  
 40 with little say or representation in the global decision-making bodies perceived  
 41 the two superpowers as violating the norm of nonintervention, especially  
 42 through their rivalry over Indochina. Yet, the UN seemed to be too paralyzed by  
 43 the Cold War to address their security concerns. Hence, developing a local norm  
 44 against collective defense pacts was seen as a necessary way not only of counter-  
 45 ing superpower interventionism but also for compensating for the deficiencies of  
 46 the UN. Moreover, while nonintervention was supposedly a “universal” norm, in  
 47 reality, its European application had not been unexceptional, allowing interven-  
 48 tion to maintain the balance of power. Yet, in postwar Asia, local conditions,  
 49 especially the new-found interdependence of Asian states which had to be safe-  
 50 guarded, and the ideas of nationalist leaders such as Nehru or Aung San reject-

51  
 52  
 53 <sup>54</sup> See for example, M.D. Nalpat, “Outside View: Why Not an Asian NATO?” United Press International. 26  
 54 April 2003. Available at: [http://www.upi.com/Business\\_News/Security-Industry/2003/04/26/Outside-View-Why-not-an-Asian-NATO/UPI-49681051393516/](http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2003/04/26/Outside-View-Why-not-an-Asian-NATO/UPI-49681051393516/); Wu Yixue, “US Dreams of Asian NATO.” *China Daily*, July 18, 2003, p.4;  
 55 Shekhar Iyer, “As Comrades Listen, Abe Moots ‘Asian Nato,’” *Hindustan Times*, August 23, 2007.

ing great power spheres of influence, provided the basis for reformulating the norm of nonintervention with a view to delegitimize great power-led military pacts.

### Norm Subsidiarity in the Third World

The concept of norm subsidiarity can be used to study norm creation and diffusion in other regions. Here, I am not so much interested in causal inferences about norm subsidiarity, but in making a bounded generalization that is applicable to other cases under similar conditions. This means that under similar circumstances, norm subsidiarity will develop in other parts of the world.<sup>55</sup> In this section, I show examples of norm subsidiarity in regions which share similar historical (colonial/semi-colonial status), political (weak socio-political cohesion and regime insecurity), and strategic (marginalization through great power dominance and hypocrisy) conditions. Thus, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa developed subsidiary norms, whereby they have sought to develop local rules to challenge great powers dominance and hypocrisy and secure regional autonomy. In so doing, they also supported existing global norms such as territorial integrity, self-determination, nonintervention, racial equality, and regional autonomy.

Latin American countries, the first to obtain independence from colonial rule, have been “international rule innovators” (Dominguez 2007:126-127) A key source of regional norms, Bolivarianism, was explicitly geared toward regional autonomy; it “derived from the external threat posed by Europe’s power’s to the nascent South American states” (Kacowitz 2005:50) Although Bolivar’s dream of a Latin American political union never materialized, Latin American regional interactions became the springboard of “ideas that rejected imperialism,... defended sovereignty, self-determination, and nonintervention, and encouraged Latin American coordination and cooperation” (Kacowitz 2005:50).

One of the most prominent Latin American subsidiary norms being the doctrine of *uti possidetis juris*, or honoring inherited boundaries, after the break-up of the Spanish empire. This norm, which respected the Spanish empire’s administrative boundaries, became “a framework of domestic and international legitimacy in the otherwise bloody passage from the empire to its successor American states” (Dominguez 2007:90). This norm clearly supported and contributed to the global territorial integrity norm, or what Brownlie calls the “creation and

<sup>55</sup> This is an entirely defensible approach, even to the critics of the case study method. Indeed, specifying scope conditions under which certain independent variables will produce similar outcomes is the essence of the “social-scientific” study of IR. Moreover, it is useful to bear in mind that while IR scholars disagree over generalizations from single cases, generalizations from in-depth study of single cases or events, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, and NATO expansion, are commonplace in IR literature (Maoz 2002:161). As Flyvbjerg (2006:228) asserts, “One can often generalize on the basis of a single case and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods.”

The literature on case studies also holds that generalizations from single cases are best done with the help of process-tracing method and alternative explanations, both of which feature in this essay. Moreover, single cases are especially useful for rejecting established theories which claim to specify necessary and sufficient conditions (George and Bennett 2005:33) In this essay, I have used the case study of SEATO to refute the thesis that norm creation requires the initiative of central or powerful actors, or that power is a necessary or sufficient condition for norm creation, a bias in both rationalist and constructivist literature.

Finally, there are plenty of examples in the IR literature of generalizations from single cases that have been used to challenge an existing theory or build a new one. Liddle’s (1991) study of Indonesia’s development strategy refutes the earlier dependency theory literature regarding the lack of autonomy of Third World states. Wallander (2000) develops the concept of “asset specificity” to explain why NATO persists after the end of the Cold War. The Cuban Missile Crisis (a single event) and the end of the Cold War (both as a single event and as a complex set of events) have spawned a great number of theoretical generalizations about decision-making and role of ideas in international relations, respectively.

1 transfer of territorial sovereignty”<sup>56</sup> (Brownlie 1998:132). Another subsidiary  
2 norm of Latin America is “absolute nonintervention in the hemispheric commu-  
3 nity,” both as an abstract principle and as a means to challenge US hegemony  
4 in the region (embodied in the “Monroe Doctrine”). Developed under the ban-  
5 ner of pan-Americanism, this norm responded to the perceived hypocrisy of a  
6 superpower in dealing with its southern neighbors (Castle 2000:36; Leonard  
7 2000:96).

8 Thus, the Calvo Doctrine (after Argentine jurist Carlos Calvo) rejected the  
9 right of intervention claimed by foreign powers (European and US), to protect  
10 their citizens resident in Latin America. Another rule, the Drago Doctrine,  
11 named after Argentine Foreign Minister Luis Drago, challenged the US and  
12 European position that they had a right to intervene to force states to honor  
13 their sovereign debts (Dominguez 2007:92). Over US opposition, Latin American  
14 congresses recognized revolutionary governments as *de jure*. Both Calvo and  
15 Drago doctrines constituted subsidiary norms of state sovereignty in Latin Amer-  
16 ica’s regional order. The Latin American advocacy led the United States to aban-  
17 don the Monroe Doctrine in 1933 and accept nonintervention as a basic  
18 principle in its relations with the region.

19 Advocacy of “regional arrangements” is yet another example of norm subsidi-  
20 arity by Latin American states. Expressed during the debate over the postwar glo-  
21 bal security architecture, this was clearly in response to the potential “tyranny”  
22 of a higher level institution, the UN. Faced with the Roosevelt administration’s  
23 clear preference for a universal organization, Latin American states argued that  
24 placing the whole responsibility for international peace and security in the hands  
25 of the UN Security Council would compromise the autonomy of regional institu-  
26 tions such as their own inter-American system (the Organization of American  
27 States). Regional arrangements, of which the Inter-American system was the old-  
28 est and most elaborate example, not only had a better understanding of local  
29 challenges to peace and security, they might also be in a better position to pro-  
30 vide assistance and mediation in regional conflicts than a distant UN Security  
31 Council (Wilcox 1965; Etzioni 1970). Hence, to quote a Latin American delegate  
32 to the San Francisco Conference which drafted the UN Charter, “inserting the  
33 inter-American system into the [UN] Charter...was a question of safeguarding a  
34 whole tradition which was dear to our continent...and a very active one” and  
35 would “contribute...to world peace and security.”<sup>57</sup> Thanks to Latin American  
36 advocacy, supported by Arab League member states, the Charter formally recog-  
37 nized the role of regional organizations as instruments of conflict control, and  
38 member states were asked to “make every effort to achieve peaceful settlement  
39 of local disputes through such regional arrangements” (Article 33/1, Chapter VI  
40 and Article 52/2, Chapter VIII). This outcome, as US Senator Arthur Van-  
41 denberg put it, “infinitely strengthened the world Organization” by incorporat-  
42 ing “these regional king-links into the global chain.”<sup>58</sup> In other words,  
43 subsidiary norms embodied in regional conflict-control arrangements constituted  
44 “a sub-systemic structure underpinning the framework of global norms” embod-  
45 ied in the UN, as per Figure 1.

46 In the Middle East, norm subsidiary could be discerned from what Barnett  
47 calls the “norms of Arabism” (Barnett 1998:56, 106; Lynch 1999:34; Hinnebusch  
48 2003:64), which includes the “quest for independence, the cause of Palestine,  
49 and the search for [Arab] unity” and nonalignment. (Barnett 1998:56, 106)  
50 These norms were both challenging/resisting of great power ideas and policies  
51 and supportive/strengthening of existing global norms. The initial pan-Arabist  
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54 <sup>56</sup> On the high level of compliance with the global territorial integrity norm, see Zacher (2001).

55 <sup>57</sup> *UNCIO Documents*, Vol. VI, p.9.

<sup>58</sup> *UNCIO Documents*, Vol. VI, p.5

1 norms, especially those associated with Egypt's Nasser, resisted the Baghdad Pact  
 2 sponsored by the United States. Nasser led the opposition to the Baghdad Pact  
 3 as an instrument of US and British hegemony which subverted regional aspira-  
 4 tions and arrangements for peace and security. As noted earlier, the Pact was  
 5 signed in February 1955 on the same pretext of fighting communism as had  
 6 been the case with SEATO. Prior to its signing, Nasser had been judged by the  
 7 US State Department to be "friendly to West, especially to the United States."  
 8 But the Department also pointed out that Nasser had become more "reserved"  
 9 toward West since the signing of the Baghdad Pact, which he "believes will dam-  
 10 age Egypt's position of leadership among the Arab states".<sup>59</sup> Nehru himself had  
 11 warned before the Bandung Conference that the Baghdad Pact would make an  
 12 otherwise friendly Egyptian government wary of US intentions and radicalize the  
 13 Middle East, while undermining indigenous efforts at regional cooperation  
 14 (Nehru 2000:310). Among other things, Nasser viewed the Baghdad Pact as  
 15 severely undermining the scheme for an indigenous Arab Collective Security Sys-  
 16 tem, which had been mooted by Egypt. The Bandung Conference's "spirited  
 17 rhetoric of anticolonialism, independence, and rejection of alliances with the  
 18 West had a major influence on Nasser" (Podeh 1995; Barnett 1998:299). Within  
 19 months of the Bandung Conference, Nasser would sign an arms deal with  
 20 Czechoslovakia and nationalize the Suez Canal, thereby setting the path for a  
 21 major confrontation with the United States and the West in 1956.

22 In rejecting the Baghdad Pact, the Arab subsidiary norms were also support-  
 23 ing/strengthening of the existing global norms of nationalism, self-determina-  
 24 tion, nonintervention, and regional autonomy. Indeed, the Nasserite ideal of  
 25 creating a single Arab nation out of existing postcolonial states gradually  
 26 faded. But this only illustrates the working of the other subsidiary norms  
 27 of the region and their supporting/strengthening effect on the existing uni-  
 28 versal norms of national sovereignty<sup>60</sup> (Barnett 1995). Moreover, the cause of  
 29 Palestine and the quest for regional autonomy, cooperation, and nonalign-  
 30 ment continued to define the normative order of the Arab Middle East long  
 31 after Nasser.

32 Finally, in Africa, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, the first sub-Saharan African  
 33 country to gain independence, led the formulation of the subsidiary norms of an  
 34 African regional order which would stress nonintervention by outside powers in  
 35 African affairs,<sup>61</sup> and the abstention of Africans in superpower-led collective  
 36 defense pacts. As in the Middle East, these African norms supported the com-  
 37 mon global norms of territorial sovereignty, racial equality, liberation from colo-  
 38 nial rule and regional cooperation. Nkrumah had been prevented by the British  
 39 (Ghana was still under British dominion status) from attending the Bandung  
 40 Conference, despite his keen desire to do so. But he too deeply influenced  
 41 by the Conference.<sup>62</sup> In April 1958, Nkrumah hosted the first Conference of  
 42 Independent African States. Like the Bandung meeting, the African Conference  
 43 was geared not only to discussing ways to secure independence from colonial  
 44 rule but also to developing norms of foreign policy conduct aimed at addressing  
 45

46 <sup>59</sup> British Embassy, Washington, to Foreign Office, London, US Department of State Intelligence Report No.  
 47 6830.3, "Developments relating to the Bandung Conference," March 18, 1955, D2231/283, FO 371/116982.  
 48 TNA-UK.

49 <sup>60</sup> The ultimate defeat of Nasserism could be seen as an example of challenging/resisting effects of norm  
 50 subsidiarity (against a regional hegemon).

51 <sup>61</sup> In common with Nasser, Nkrumah distinguished nonintervention by outside (non-African) powers in African  
 52 affairs (hence "African solution to African problems"), from involvement by African states and institutions in the  
 53 internal affairs of African states. Hence, their respective brands of pan-Arabism and pan-Africanism permitted their  
 54 own intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries in the region. Nasser conceived of a single Arab nation,  
 55 and Nkrumah advocated an African intervention force.

<sup>62</sup> On the normative link between Bandung and African regionalist concepts, see: Legum (1958); Nkrumah  
 (1961:151-152, 219); Mohammed (1978:21, 54-55, 184).

1 “the central problem of how to secure peace” (similar to the Bandung agenda  
 2 of World Peace and Cooperation). Among the principles agreed to at the  
 3 African conference was Bandung’s: “abstention from the use of arrangements of  
 4 collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the great powers”  
 5 (Woronoff 1970:39). As Nkrumah saw it, the conference was the first time that  
 6 “Free Africans were actually meeting together, *in Africa*, to examine and con-  
 7 sider African affairs.” Moreover, the normative result of the Conference was “a  
 8 signal departure from established custom, a jar to the arrogant assumption of  
 9 non-African nations that Africa affairs were solely the concern of states outside  
 10 our continent” (Nkrumah 1963:136).

11 This marked the beginning of the African subsidiary norms of regional self-  
 12 reliance in regional security and economic development. Even after Nkrumah’s  
 13 eclipse, the African normative order would continue to reject superpower inter-  
 14 vention, espouse regional autonomy, and develop regional institutions geared to  
 15 achieving African cooperation if not outright political unity (Jackson and Rose-  
 16 berg 1982; Herbst 2007).

17 Africa scholars have pointed to a range of interrelated African norms, includ-  
 18 ing noninterference, territorial integrity, and African solutions to African prob-  
 19 lems (Foltz 1991:352), self-determination, and territorial integrity (which Young  
 20 terms as the “norm of inter-state boundary harmony in Africa”) (Young  
 21 1991:326, 328).

22 As noted, norm subsidiarity may involve transregional extensions of locally  
 23 developed rules. Asian norm subsidiarity clearly had a discernable effect on  
 24 other Third World regions. The Non-Aligned Movement, which attracted con-  
 25 siderable membership in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, was a  
 26 direct offshoot of the Bandung Conference (Jansen 1966; Singham and Hune  
 27 1986). A meeting of Foreign Ministers in 1961 limited membership in NAM  
 28 to states that were not members of “a multilateral alliance concluded in the  
 29 context of Great Power conflicts” (Ayooob 1995:104) This remained a core  
 30 principle of NAM.

31 It might be asked whether the subsidiary norms of Latin America, the Arab  
 32 Middle East, and Africa (or more broadly nonintervention in the Third World)  
 33 can be really regarded as norms because they have not always been upheld in  
 34 practice. One might also ask whether those subsidiary norms could not be  
 35 explained in terms of more straightforward instrumental political reasons such  
 36 as political expediency. But just because norms are violated from time to time  
 37 by some actors does not disqualify their claim to be norms (Bull 1977; 55–56;  
 38 Nyhamar 2000).<sup>63</sup> What makes norms *norms* is that they develop “stickiness,”  
 39 backed by a “logic of appropriateness” to replace an initial “logic of conse-  
 40 quences.” The *uti possidetis* norm might have been initially motivated by “con-  
 41 venience and expediency” on the part of the newly independent Latin American  
 42 states (Cukwurah 1967:112–13). But while the norm “did not preclude the  
 43 emergence of boundary disputes among the Latin American states,” it was fre-  
 44 quently applied to territorial disputes and “by recognizing the same norm...the  
 45 parties at least managed to resolve their border disputes, in most cases, peace-  
 46 fully” (Kacowitz 2005:60). Asia has had no single instance of a collective defense  
 47 pact since SEATO. The boundary maintenance regime in Africa has been  
 48 remarkably resilient and successful. While some Africa scholars find norms sec-  
 49 ondary to power (Young 1991), others point to the role of norms in reducing  
 50 conflicts in Africa (Foltz 1991). Zartman argues that despite power disparity  
 51 among African states, and the attendant temptation for intervention by powerful  
 52 African states in the affairs of their weaker neighbors, the fundamental norms of  
 53

54 <sup>63</sup> Nyhamar (2000), interpreting Bull (1977:55–56), holds that the test of normative behavior is not whether  
 55 norms are complied with at the end, but whether they were a factor in the calculation of actors before acting.

1 the African system “have in no instance been clearly and decisively reversed”  
2 (Zartman 1984:29).

3 The quest for regional autonomy has been a persistent feature of all Third  
4 World regions, as seen from the policy and actions of their regional organiza-  
5 tions. (Acharya and Johnston 2007) While nonintervention (or the Latin Ameri-  
6 can, Arab, and African norms discussed above) has been selectively complied  
7 with, and that there are double standards in norm compliance in both the West  
8 and the Third World, this does not invalidate their claim to be norms.<sup>64</sup> More-  
9 over, constructivists have long accepted that norm creation and compliance need  
10 not be inconsistent with self-interested (instrumental) motivations, expediency,  
11 and behavior. As Finnemore and Sikkink put it, “frequently heard arguments  
12 about whether behavior is norm-based or interest-based miss the point that norm  
13 conformance can often be self-interested, depending on how one specifies inter-  
14 ests and the nature of the norm” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:912). Moreover,  
15 the tendency to juxtapose starkly interest-based explanations and normative  
16 explanations of behavior has been increasingly challenged by constructivists  
17 themselves. The “rationalist-constructivist synthesis” in the international rela-  
18 tions theory points to the possibility of both normative and instrumental calcula-  
19 tions in norm compliance. As Zurn and Checkel points out, most behavior can  
20 be subject to a “double interpretation,” one from a rationalist/instrumental per-  
21 spective, the other from a constructivist/normative (logic of appropriateness)  
22 perspective (Zurn and Checkel 2005:1057) This is true of all the aforesaid  
23 norms.

24 Finally, although subsidiary norms may travel from one region to another  
25 through snowballing, learning, and emulation, and thereby retain a certain basic  
26 meaning across regions, the process of diffusion can also cause new variations in  
27 their understanding and application. African states resisting Western colonialism  
28 were moved to channel their normative resistance not only against the Apartheid  
29 regime in South Africa but also to other regions, including the Arab struggle  
30 against Israel over Palestine, a process consistent with the idea of “universaliza-  
31 tion” in norm subsidiarity (Young 1991:325). But the process of interregional  
32 diffusion can cause important variations. The norm of honoring postcolonial  
33 boundaries, originally developed in Latin America, was adopted in Africa and  
34 to some extent in Asia. But its application in Latin America was much more  
35 legalized than in the other regions. Thus, to say that norm subsidiarity is a gen-  
36 eral feature of Third World regions does not mean that these norms would  
37 have exactly the same meaning in different regions. Region specificity is a hall-  
38 mark of norm subsidiarity. The Latin Americans doctrine of nonintervention  
39 was a more *absolute* doctrine than that in European practice, where intervention  
40 could still be justified for the sake of maintaining balance of power. Asians too  
41 zealously adopted nonintervention, but introduced another significant local vari-  
42 ation: abstention from superpower-led military pacts. Hence, while all Third  
43 World regions, including Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa,  
44 developed subsidiary norms linked to nonintervention, this took different  
45 forms. In Asia, as the SEATO experience suggests, it produced a total opposi-  
46 tion to collective security or defense pacts, but Latin Americans used it as a pre-  
47 condition for participating in a regional collective security system with the  
48 United States as long as Washington pledged not to interfere in their internal  
49 affairs. The Arabs and Africans rejected superpower-led defense pacts much like  
50

51  
52 <sup>64</sup> Krasner (1999, back cover) notes the “presence of long-standing norms that are frequently violated.” These  
53 norms include nonintervention (note that Krasner calls nonintervention a “norm”) and human rights. But the cat-  
54 alog of violations he compiles does not negate the fact that human rights remains a norm, arguably ever more  
55 important. The selective adherence of nonintervention by both the North and South (West and the non-West) does  
not invalidate its historical status as a norm, because it endures (it’s “long-standing”).

1 the Asians, but they were prepared at least to try indigenous schemes for collec-  
 2 tive security and defense cooperation to an extent not found in Asia. Regional  
 3 context, need, and discourses determine how subsidiary norms develop in dif-  
 4 ferent regions.

### 6 Conclusion

7  
 8 The concept of subsidiarity is yet to receive the attention it deserves in the theo-  
 9 retical literature on international relations. In this essay, I have explored the con-  
 10 cept's rich potential to propose and conceptualize a process of norm creation  
 11 and diffusion in the Third World. In the conclusion, I outline three main contri-  
 12 butions of the norm subsidiarity concept for international relations scholars.

13 The first concerns constructivism. Constructivism has been more interested in  
 14 studying the diffusion of moral principles, such as norms against apartheid,  
 15 chemical weapons, or for the protection of whales, than the diffusion of norms  
 16 whose moral claim is contested, such as the nonintervention norm, which has  
 17 lost appeal in the West (especially in the European Union) but remains impor-  
 18 tant in most parts of the Third World.<sup>65</sup> By the time constructivism came into  
 19 vogue, nonintervention was no longer regarded in the West as a moral principle;  
 20 in fact just the opposite was the case. For some Western constructivists, as state  
 21 sovereignty (and hence nonintervention) can be "neither resilient nor moral,"  
 22 acknowledging its "constructed" nature is important in highlighting its deca-  
 23 dence and obsolescence (Biersteker and Weber 1996). Hence, the constructivist  
 24 literature has been more concerned with studying the diffusion of norms *against*  
 25 nonintervention, for example humanitarian intervention, than of the original  
 26 norm itself (Finnemore 2003). Yet, it should not be forgotten that although non-  
 27 intervention has been discredited owing to its association with human rights  
 28 abuses, it was once deemed to be a *moral* norm and espoused by such nationalist  
 29 and democratic leaders as Jawaharlal Nehru of India as a bulwark against neoco-  
 30 lonialism and superpower intervention. The idea of norm subsidiarity helps an  
 31 understanding, from a bottom-up perspective, of the complexities and contesta-  
 32 tions that goes with norm creation in world politics.

33 Second, studies of the normative behavior of Third World states and their  
 34 regional institutions remain scarce, especially compared with Western actors and  
 35 European regional institutions. To be sure, there is much work on the foreign  
 36 policy behavior of Third World states (Moon 1983:315-340; Hey 1995). But they  
 37 rarely deal with normative or ideational variables. While studies of norm develop-  
 38 ment by individual Third World states or regions are beginning to appear (as  
 39 discussed in the previous section), thanks mainly to the work of different area  
 40 specialists, what we do not have until now is an overarching framework that  
 41 explains the dynamics of norm diffusion, that is applicable across regions in the  
 42 Third World. This essay offers one such framework, which has comparative  
 43 potential. Along with the idea of norm localization, norm subsidiarity opens the  
 44 door to a systematic attempt to develop a theory of norm creation and diffusion

45  
 46  
 47 <sup>65</sup> While nonintervention is *now* under attack (I should stress that my focus on nonintervention was for the  
 48 early post-World War II period), as is the whole idea of absolute sovereignty, both sovereignty and nonintervention  
 49 remain very popular in the non-Western world. For example, neither India nor China has accepted the idea of  
 50 "responsibility to protect" (R2P), or the humanitarian intervention principle, which stands as the most serious con-  
 51 temporary challenge to the doctrine of nonintervention. At the recent UN debate over R2P, Egypt on behalf of the  
 52 Non-Aligned Movement noted that "mixed feelings and thoughts on implementing R2P still persist. There are con-  
 53 cerns about the possible abuse of R2P by expanding its application to situations that fall beyond the four areas  
 54 defined in the 2005 World Summit Document, misusing it to legitimize unilateral coercive measures or intervention  
 55 in the internal affairs of States." (H.E. Ambassador Maged A. Abdelaziz, The Permanent Representative on behalf  
 of the Non-Aligned Movement, "Statement." Available at: [http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/NAM\\_Egypt\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/NAM_Egypt_ENG.pdf).)



1 in the Third World, thereby countering the Westerncentrism in the literature on  
2 the international relations of the Third World.

3 The final contribution of norm subsidiarity concerns the *agency role* of Third  
4 World states. Most early accounts of the role of the Third World in world politics  
5 focused on its “revolt against the West” (Bull 1984) and the North–South  
6 “structural conflict” (Krasner 1985). As latecomers with scant material resources,  
7 and with a rebellious disposition, the Third World was cast as a spoiler of, rather  
8 than a contributor to, international order. Missing from the picture is the agency  
9 role of Third World states in constituting the world polity and managing interna-  
10 tional order. The essay highlights a special type of agency namely, the ideational  
11 and normative agency of Third World states in world politics. As Puchala notes,  
12 for “Third World countries, ideas and ideologies are far more important” than  
13 power or wealth. This is because whereas “powerlessness” and “unequal distribu-  
14 tion of the world’s wealth” are “constants,” ideas can be empowering (Puchala  
15 2000:151).

16 I share Ayoob’s perspective on the “schizophrenia” of Third World states  
17 that have simultaneously challenged and adapted to the “system of states”  
18 (Ayoob 1989:67–79). But this essay also highlights the constitutive role of the  
19 Third World in global order in the normative domain. Moreover, while like  
20 Ayoob I deal with the “subaltern” strata of the world polity (without using  
21 the term), the idea of norm subsidiarity speaks to a “subaltern” constructiv-  
22 ism, rather than Ayoob’s “subaltern realism” (Ayoob 2002; Barnett 2002;  
23 Cicek 2004). Unlike Ayoob and to a much greater extent than the English  
24 School, I stress the role of ideational forces as “weapons of the weak” avail-  
25 able to and employed by Third World actors as constitutive instruments of  
26 the world polity.

27 Lacking in structural and material power, Third World states resort to ideas  
28 and norms to construct world politics. The concept and practice of norm subsidi-  
29 arity provides an important starting point for understanding this role. It deserves  
30 due attention side by side with the contribution of Western nations and the  
31 norms and institutions created and controlled by them.

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