1 Governance and security in the twenty-first century

James Sperling

The Handbook of Governance and Security is intended to provide scholars with a current account and stocktaking of the conceptual evolution of security governance as well as its application to specific regional security systems, the role of institutions as critical suppliers or facilitators of security governance, and the ever-widening set of security issues that can be viewed profitably through a governance lens. The problem of global governance has increasingly gained theoretical purchase, which undoubtedly reflects at least three processes. The first, which is especially acute in Europe and North America, stems from the growing complexity of domestic governance and the inability of governments to make good on the domestic social contract without institutionalized cooperation between states. The second arises from the proliferation of security threats: the digitalization of state, economy and society has greatly complicated and compromised the exercise of state authority internally and externally; there has been an overall increase in systemic vulnerability to endogenous and exogenous shocks; and the rising salience of non-state antagonists has complicated national, regional and global security calculations. The third process that has directed scholarly and practitioner attention to the problem of global governance reflects the persistence and growth of domestic and regional non-governance, a development that not only requires an alternative to the Westphalian principal of non-intervention to address the moral imperative of relieving human suffering when possible, but amplifies the vulnerabilities of open societies and constitutionally mature states to the negative externalities of non-governance.

Security governance has not enjoyed the same level of acceptance in the international relations literature as has the generic preoccupation with global governance or its application to issue areas outside the realm of security however defined. In recent surveys of security studies, the authors fail to engage the security governance literature (see Buzan and Hansen 2009; Cavelty and Mauer 2010) despite ample empirical evidence that security governance is a real-world phenomenon that not only needs to be explained, but provides a framework, if not theoretical foundation, for understanding the security challenges of the twenty-first century as well as the evolutionary trajectory of the international system.

George Christou et al. (2010: 343) identified three stages of the security governance literature. The first was preoccupied with matters of definition and restricted in scope to the European case (notably Webber et al. 2004); the second wave produced competing definitions of governance reflecting divergent theoretical foundations ranging from regimes (Young 1999) to networks (Krahmann 2003) to integration (Kirchner 2007) to multilateralism (Lucarelli et al. 2013); and the third has sought to link the transition from the Westphalian to post-Westphalian state, particularly in Europe and its periphery, to the rising saliency and practice of security governance (Sperling 2008, 2013).
This body of work on security governance provided the platform for a fourth stage of the literature that examines the evolution of security governance across time and space, in Europe and beyond (see, for example, Sperling et al. 2003; Kirchner and Sperling 2007, 2010; Wagnsson et al. 2009; Kirchner and Domínguez 2011; Schroeder 2011; Breslin and Croft 2012; Bevir et al. 2013).

Yet, security governance remains disabled as a theory by two tendencies in the literature: conceptual stretching – finding governance where it may not exist – and conceptual compression – limiting its application to the ‘special’ case of Europe (Sperling and Webber 2014). The theoretical progress (or regress) occasioned by security governance is addressed directly and indirectly in Part II, which examines the emergence, evolution, and forms of security governance as well as the theoretical orientations that have so far dominated the literature (networks, multilateralism, regimes and systems). Part III considers the varieties and nature of security governance in eight discrete geopolitical regions of the world, particularly with respect to the relative saliency of the Westphalian identification of security with autonomy, survival and territorial integrity as compared to the multidimensional post-Westphalian security agenda. The critical components of the post-Westphalian security agenda define the contributions to Part IV, which considers nine dimensions of governance that have been securitized in the post-Cold War period, particularly when the agents of insecurity are increasingly non-state actors that exploit the vulnerabilities arising from rapid technological change, structural changes accompanying the process of globalization, and a system-wide decline in state authority, de facto and de jure. Part V considers the role of institutions as facilitators of governance and their acquisition of prerogatives once reserved to states: three institutions are issue-area specific; nine examine a specific regional security institution that constitutes a ‘part’ of the regional security governance ‘whole’; and the final chapter addresses the role of the United Nations (UN), perhaps the only security institution with a near-universal membership and global legitimacy as such.

(PRE)-THEORIES OF SECURITY GOVERNANCE

Security governance remains a largely pre-theoretical endeavor. The exclusion of security governance from compendia of theories of security no doubt reflects that status. Those undertaking the initial task of wedding governance and security were self-aware of the difficulty they faced in creating a distinct theory of security governance that would compete or find acceptance within the security studies canon, but also understood that security governance exists as an empirical matter and that no existing theory of international relations could capture that phenomenon, although regime complexity could emerge as a potential solution to the theoretical problem of linking security and governance (Hofmann 2009, 2013; Galbreath and Sauerteig in Chapter 5 of this volume).

Mark Webber (2002: 44) defined security governance expansively as ‘an international system of rule, dependent on the acceptance of a majority of states that are affected, which through regulatory mechanisms (both formal and informal) governs activities across a range of security and security-related issue areas’. This broad
definition of security governance permits an investigation of the role that institutions play in the security domain, particularly the division of labor between states and international or supranational institutions, the proscribed and prescribed instruments and purposes of state action, and the consolidation of a collective definition of interest and threat. The conceptualizations of security governance generally fall into one of four categories: those that focus on state interaction (Webber 2002, 2007; Webber et al. 2004; Sperling and Webber 2014), on networks (Krahmann 2003; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni in Chapter 3 of this volume), on systems of international and transnational regimes (Young 1999; Galbreath and Sauerteig in Chapter 5 of this volume), or on governance as a heuristic device for recasting the problem of security in order to accommodate the coexistence of alternative forms of conflict regulation, the rising number of non-state actors considered relevant to national definitions of security, and the expansion of the security agenda (Holsti 1991; Sperling 2008).

Security governance possesses the virtue of conceptual accommodation: it allows for hierarchical and heterarchical patterns of interaction as well as the disparate substantive bundling and normative content of regional security institutions. Security governance neither precludes nor necessitates the privileging of the state or non-state actors in the security domain; it leaves open the question of whether states are able to provide security across multiple levels and dimensions unilaterally or whether states are compelled to work within multilateral or supranational institutional frameworks. Most important, the concurrent emergence of the post-Westphalian state and broadening of the contemporary security agenda constitute the key rationales for approaching and theorizing security as a problem of regional or global governance.

The initial definition of security governance possessed a treble advantage over existing approaches to security studies: first, it was an open-ended formulation permitting a reconsideration of the nature of security with respect to actors, as well as the agents and definition of threat; second, it provided a mechanism for bridging the axiomatic oppositions characterizing contemporary security debates, particularly between the various varieties of (neo)realism, neoliberal institutionalism and social constructivism; and finally, it directed attention to the variety of mechanisms whereby states and societies make themselves secure. As I observed in 2003, security governance as defined by Webber et al. (2004) was largely consistent with those analysts who insisted that institutions are mechanisms employed by states to further their own goals (Koremenos et al. 2001), states are the primary actors in international relations (Waltz 1978; Gilpin 1981), power relationships are not only material but intersubjective (Wendt 1999), and states are constrained by institutions with respect to proscribed and prescribed behavior (March and Olsen 1998). This broad theoretical accommodation allows scholars to approach the problem of security in the twenty-first century from any number of established theories of international relations, although it has hindered the development of an autonomous theory of security governance that accounts fully for the emergence and practice of security in the contemporary international system. Yet, the elasticity of the concept allowed us to ask initially if security governance is a form of security provision restricted to the charmed circle of those states constituting the transatlantic or even narrower European community, if the system of security governance found in those interdependent geopolitical spaces are transferable, or if there are multiple forms of governance that require identification and investigation. These
questions are asked and (tentative) answers provided in the chapters comprising Part II of this handbook.

REGIONAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE

Regional security and the identification of regions that constitute a conceptually coherent geopolitical or geostrategic space are not recent concerns. The antecedents to contemporary scholarship can be traced to the late 1940s when scholars became particularly interested in the notion of regional integration and regional security institutions in the aftermath of the Second World War (Nye 1968). This early literature tended to be as descriptive and prescriptive as theoretical, whereas the subsequent literature has been divided between those engaged in heated theoretical debates and those treating regional security as a policy issue best unencumbered by theoretical digressions. Increasingly, the regionalization of security has been cited as a feature of the international system, particularly after the end of the Cold War (notably by Lake and Morgan 1997; Solingen 1998; Buzan and Wæver 2003; Katzenstein 2005; Fawn 2009; for an overview of the regional security literature, see Sperling 2011). The proliferation of regional security institutions, as well as the acquisition of security functions by international and regional institutions that were initially created with an alternative remit or intent, strongly suggest that states do perceive security challenges as regional phenomena that are tractable only at the regional level. The regionalization of security may reflect one or all of the following: historically conditioned regional identities; an enduring, broad and dense interaction context; and geopolitical or geostrategic necessity. In their definition of regional security complexes, Buzan and Wæver (2003: 4) adopt the following logic for a regional perspective: ‘most threats travel more easily over short distances than long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters …’. While the notion of a regional security complex provides a rationale for investigating the translation of national security pathologies into a regional security complex, they unduly restrict their definition of which states belong to a particular regional security complex and do not address the paradox of the rising saliency of regional security systems and the countervailing imperatives of globalization (see Fawn 2009).

In the post-war period, alliances provided the theoretical edifice for investigating varieties of regional security orders (Beer 1970) – a tendency no doubt explained by the success of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact as well as US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles’s so-called ‘Pact-o-mania’ in the 1950s. With the collapse of the Cold War, a renewed scholarly interest emerged with respect to the systemic conditions contributing to the (in)stability of the European security orders between 1648 and 1989 (Ikenberry 2000; Holsti 2001) and to the expression of domestic constitutional orders in systemic structures (Bobbitt 2002). The debate over the precise nature, origins and consequences of specific regional security orders has similarly emerged in the literature with respect to security communities (Adler and Barnett 1998), the importance of institutions in fostering regional security cooperation (Haftendorn et al. 1999), and the exploration of the varieties of regional security systems through a social constructivist conceptualization of governance (see Christou et
The chapters on regional governance are informed by these debates, but the starting point for every contributor is either some variation of Webber’s definition of governance in conjunction with either Buzan and Wæver’s concept of regional security complexes or my typology of security governance systems.

**DIMENSIONS OF SECURITY GOVERNANCE**

The conceptual and theoretical challenges of security governance as well as its practice reflect not only the changing nature of the state, particularly the atrophying of sovereign prerogatives and the domestication of international politics (Hanrieder 1978; Foucault 2009), but the securitization of issues that were once considered to be largely the domain of national authorities and reliably contained (and managed) within national boundaries. The change in the conceptualization of security is attributable to the exertions of those scholars constituting the Copenhagen School, particularly Buzan et al. (1998) and their emphasis on societal and human security. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the reigniting of ‘modern hatreds’ (Kaufman 2001) within Europe and in its neighborhood generated a renewed debate about the nature of threat, the role of the state in meeting those threats, and the appropriate instruments of statecraft for doing so.

The dimensions of security governance examined in Part IV are largely attributable to the vulnerabilities of the post-Westphalian state and the securitization process that those vulnerabilities have engendered. That states today now embrace an expanded national security agenda is no longer contested, but the precise boundary between a security threat and a challenge to domestic governance is not yet fixed. The novel vulnerabilities facing the post-Westphalian state are compounded by the rising saliency and multiplicity of non-state actors as the primary agents of threat. Security governance accommodates the emergence, rising number and variety of such threats that go far beyond the traditional security agenda bounded by the search for autonomy and territorial integrity to include threats posed to the systemic or milieu goals of states, to the legitimacy or authority of state structures, and to national social cohesiveness and integrity.

The response to these threats cannot be reduced to a state-centric security calculus where the state is both subject and object of the analysis. Instead, the expanding number of both threats and agents demands a more nuanced and complicated treatment of security. Non-state actors play an important role as agents of insecurity; there has simultaneously been a relative diminution of the state, both as a target and source of threat. The new threat environment may be described along two dimensions: the target of the threat (state, society or milieu) and the agent of threat (state or non-state) (see Table 1.1).
Table 1.1 Typology of security threats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agent of threat</th>
<th>Target of threat</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Milieu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Traditional war:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Conventional war</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Nuclear deterrence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Nuclear proliferation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Cyber networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-state</td>
<td>Asymmetric war:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Transnational terrorism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Civil war</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Nuclear proliferation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions or infrastructure:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Civil institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Cyber networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System stability:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Macroeconomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Energy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Global commons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Transnational crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Migratory pressures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System stability:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Global commons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The resulting typology reveals the range of threats factored into national threat assessments and security policies; it underscores the relative intractability of the contemporary security environment. Both the range of threats and their intractability may be traced to two developments: first, states play a relatively minor role as protagonists in the present security system as compared with the not-too-distant past and non-state actors increasingly function as agents of threat beyond the reach of states or the traditional instruments of statecraft; second, threats against the state are indirect rather than direct and now purposely target society or regional milieu. Transnational non-state actors, the agent of threat most likely to target societal rather than state structures, are of most concern to post-Westphalian states, whereas a state-centric calculus still dominates for Westphalian states. Many of the new security challenges threaten social structures or cohesion. Still others target institutionalized governance structures or the milieu goals of states in a specific region, particularly where national systems are democratically governed and adhere to economic liberalism. Where these conditions present themselves, the state itself is largely bypassed as a target of threat. As problematically, national authorities are denied a well-defined threat referent and the ability to rely on the time-tested strategies of defense and deterrence.

INSTITUTIONS OF SECURITY GOVERNANCE

Any system of security governance will be defined in part by the level of institutionalization and the prerogatives of those institutions vis-à-vis the state with respect to threat definition, the identification of the appropriate policy instruments for mitigating those threats, and their role as an agent (or principal) in the formulation and the execution of security policies. It is the very presence of international security institutions that initially gave rise to the preoccupation with security governance as well as the observed change in authority structures in the international system, particularly with respect to the diffusion of responsibility for security above and below the state. As the scholarship on regimes, particularly, has demonstrated, international institutions acquire roles that states are incapable of assuming individually or collectively on a routine basis. With respect to security governance, institutions foster cooperation between states and perform the critical roles of lowering transaction costs, promoting confidence-building across and within specific categories of threat, enhancing the prospect of collective action in the absence of a hegemon, and facilitating the emergence of a transnational understanding of the content of security.4

Security institutions have played critical roles in mediating interstate conflicts, fostering cooperation between states under conditions of anarchy, identifying common threats and best practices for mitigating them, and facilitating the practice of cooperation in the provision of security. Europe represents a densely institutionalized geopolitical space where foreign policy elites view security as a collective endeavor executed within an institutional framework. Outside Europe the institutionalization of security – and the concomitant qualification or forfeiture of the state’s sovereign authority – is less well developed and in some cases almost entirely absent.

Two major categories of institutions governing security are considered in Part V. The first category consists of those institutions responsible for governing a specific security
threat – for example, health, finance and energy. These representative threat-specific institutions of governance owe their existence to the structural process of globalization and the draining of Westphalian sovereignty attending rapid technological change and the process of globalization. The construction or adaptation of institutions – and their contribution to the governance of security – reflects not only the dangers that a financial crisis, disruption of energy supplies or pandemics pose to states and societies alike, but their potential implication in the intentional act of systemic or societal disruption by state and non-state actors alike. The second category consists of institutions with a specific regional or pan-regional responsibility for maintaining regional order, the security of states and the containment of civil conflicts. The second category figures prominently in the analyses of regional governance. The consideration of regional governance from the vantage point of a specific institution is intended to illuminate the precise role of an institutional ‘part’ of the regional security order ‘whole’, its contribution to regional security governance and the accretion of security responsibilities that go beyond original constitutional remits – an evolution of responsibility found in many of the institutions considered in this volume.

CONCLUSION

Much of the initial empirical work on security governance reflected the preoccupation of security analysts with the institutionalization of security in Europe, the persistence of peace, the proliferation of security tasks and the problem of institutional design. It was also a reaction to the relative discounting of institutions in the study of security, a state of affairs reflecting not only a disciplinary bias, but a reasonable skepticism grounded in the historical record. The unraveling of the Cold War order, the persistence of security institutions designed to meet the challenge of collective defense (NATO) or mitigating the historical enmities vexing European history (the European Union – EU) or contributing to the process of détente (CSCE), and the changing nature of threat led scholars of European security to question whether the European system of governance could be fruitfully reproduced in conflict prone geopolitical spaces – an understandable preoccupation given Europe’s transition from the crucible of world war to exemplar of non-violent conflict resolution. Security governance – and Europe – could be treated as a special case without relevance for the management of security in other geopolitical spaces or as a compelling logic for reproduction. Or Europe could be treated instead as a case where the changing dynamic of security and the requirements for its management in the twenty-first century were first manifest. Nonetheless, Europe remains an ‘easy’ case: a unique set of historical circumstances – the bloodshed and devastation of the two ‘world’ wars conjoined to an overweening pride in a common civilization – convinced the Europeans to relax their sovereign prerogatives in the interest of peace and prosperity. The focus on Europe carries with it the danger of an inherent European bias with respect to the preference for a multilateralized and institutionalized statecraft as well as the essential content of the norms necessary to govern those states’ behavior. It remains open whether Europe is a special case or if the European form of security governance is indeed transferrable in part or whole.
The precise role of institutions in the post-Cold War governance of regional (and global) security will remain an object of debate. In those regions where security cooperation remains constrained by acute regional security dilemmas and the intensity with which states guard their sovereign authority, the prospects for successfully addressing those transnational threats that extend beyond the traditional concern of assuring territorial integrity or the physical protection of national assets from military threat will remain low. Yet the chapters addressing the security governance role of institutions in regions where those two conditions hold (for example, Northeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia) suggest that mutually recognized transnational security threats have provided the policy space for bounded security cooperation. The security dilemmas facing states in regions other than Europe and the regional definitions of threat provide a good empirical test of the proposition that formal or informal institutions and the norm of multilateralism are (or are not) particular to Euro-Atlantic states, in either a cultural or geographic sense. The empirical evidence presented in this volume suggests that it is not so restricted and is already manifest in most of the world’s regions.

NOTES

2. In his contribution, Mark Webber focuses on three threads in the security governance literature, which he identifies as substantive, normative, and empirical security governance – an approach that can accommodate the progression of security governance as a theoretical endeavor consistent with Christou et al. (2010).
3. Peter J. Katzenstein’s (2005) notion of ‘porous regional orders’ is a significant conceptual and empirical advance in this regard.
4. Singular contributions to the understanding of international institutions include Keohane (1984), Martin (1992) and Koremenos et al. (2003). For a recent overview of the literature, see Jupille et al. (2013: 19–53).

REFERENCES

12 Handbook of governance and security

Kirchner, E.J. and J. Sperling (2007), European Security Governance, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

James Sperling - 9781781953174
Downloaded from Elgar Online at 12/13/2018 08:42:43PM
via free access
Governance and security in the twenty-first century


