

The weakness in this approach, however, is that it ignores a core insight of legal realism: International rules are frequently vague and admit of more than one plausible reading. As a result, “the direction the law indicates” is often indeterminate. Indeed, it is precisely because international law is subject to multiple, plausible interpretations that states delegate to ICs the authority to say what the law *is*. Yet the same indeterminacy that makes ICs valuable to states also grants international judges considerable discretion in their interpretation and application of the law. ICs can therefore be alternately audacious and activist or cautious and deferential, and they can be (at least among courts like the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights that allow for open judicial dissent) bitterly divided in their rulings. Taken together, these twin pillars of legal realism—the indeterminacy of law and the *de facto* discretion of judges when interpreting that law—mean that the effort to understand *why* international courts rule the way they do, including the questions of judicial independence and state influence, remains an indispensable part of any broader effort to understand the role of ICs in the international system.

Finally, while the tone of Alter’s book is understandably celebratory about the revolutionary power of ICs to promote the rule of international law, a cautionary note may be in order. It is striking that, while a remarkable 18 ICs were indeed created in just 12 years between 1992 and 2006, no new courts have been created since then, and one, the Southern African Development Community Court, has been suspended by its members and its jurisdiction curtailed by removing the right of individual initiative (p. 58). As Alter notes, it is too early to tell how the many young ICs will develop in the coming years, but it may be that Alter’s new-style ICs, which are robust in Europe and increasingly in Latin America, remain fragile in Africa and elsewhere—hothouse flowers in a world not yet fully purged of either domestic authoritarianism or international *realpolitik*. This possibility, however, only increases the value of Alter’s book, an indispensable guide to the workings, the promise, and the limits of international courts in world politics.

Armed Political Organizations: From Conflict to Integration. By Benedetta Berti. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. 256 p. \$49.95.
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— Caroline A. Hartzell, *Gettysburg College*

Western governments have invested significant resources to help stand up political parties in countries emerging from armed intrastate conflict, with the expectation that former antagonists would use the parties as a means to peacefully settle their differences at the polls. As several

scholars have demonstrated, relying on post-conflict elections to stabilize the peace has not always proved to be a successful strategy (e.g. Roland Paris, *At War’s End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*, 2004, and Dawn Brancati and Jack Snyder, “Time to Kill: The Impact of Election Timing on Postconflict Stability,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, 5 [October 2013]: 822–53). Benedetta Berti’s new book adds to the growing number of works critical of the “elections as the road to peace” scenario by challenging the notion that the creation of political parties by armed groups demonstrates a commitment on the part of those actors to disarmament and to playing by the rules of the political game.

In this thought-provoking study, Berti questions what she dubs the dominant “linear” model of post-conflict political transition, which asserts, “political participation and inclusion provide an alternative outlet to armed struggle” (p. 6). Noting that non-state armed groups and political parties are two types of organizations that share a number of similarities, Berti points out that armed groups sometimes develop political wings designed to co-exist with their military wings. This is only likely to occur, she hypothesizes, when four factors are present: an armed group experiences institutional pressures for growth and expansion, the militant organization’s access to resources is threatened or perceived as insufficient for its growth, there is an opening in the political opportunity structure of the state within which the group operates, and an internal commitment to reform the organization emerges. Once a political wing has been formed, Berti argues, an armed group’s participation in institutional politics will not necessarily lead to a process of moderation followed by disarmament. Whether or not a “radical change” (p. 23) of this nature takes place depends on the emergence of divisions and competition between a political faction that endorses a strategy of political accommodation and an armed wing committed to armed struggle. If this type of internal conflict becomes prolonged and intense enough, the political group possesses sufficient legitimacy, and the political structure is open enough to allow the political wing to become politically relevant, a party dedicated to peaceful competition could emerge triumphant. If these conditions do not hold, divisions between the political and armed wings could lead to other outcomes including a permanent split between the two parts of the organization or, the most likely development according to Berti, a cyclical relationship in which political and armed strategies vie for dominance within the organization.

Berti develops three comparative case studies of armed groups’ political involvement as a means of testing her hypotheses on political wing formation. Drawing on primary and secondary materials and a number of interviews with key players, she convincingly demonstrates how threats to their legitimacy and relevancy pushed the Irish Republican Army, Hamas, and Hezbollah to invest in

institutional politics. Additionally, she describes the role that intra-organizational tensions between the IRA and Sinn Féin played in leading to the abandonment of an armed strategy in Northern Ireland—a choice that Hamas and Hezbollah have not seriously contemplated, she argues, because they have experienced less intense levels of cyclical conflict along the politico-military dimension.

The author's use of organizational theory to elucidate a cyclical development model of armed groups complements current research that seeks to understand the impacts that the internal organization of armed groups have on the potential for peaceful post-conflict politics. Rather than acting as "spoilers," Berti makes clear that groups like Hezbollah and Hamas behave strategically in response to organizational imperatives when they make use of bullets as well as ballots. Unless something significantly alters intra-group dynamics, there is little reason to expect that such groups will abandon their military wings.

While the foregoing insight is an important corrective to those who believe that the presence of political parties and the holding of elections necessarily implies a commitment by armed groups to abjure the use of violent tactics, a weakness of the book is that it does not make clear what the universe of cases is to which this analysis applies. Berti refers to "terrorist groups" and "terrorist activities" at various points in the book and especially in reference to the three cases she examines. The use of those terms seems to suggest that the dynamics she focuses on are limited to particular types of groups or conflicts. The fact that in many cases of intra-state armed conflict, armed groups do not create political parties until after a settlement has been reached and their military wings deactivated (e.g., Mozambique's Renamo), also raises questions regarding the number and kind of cases of armed conflict to which the cyclical development model might apply. Just how typical is the phenomenon of armed groups that maintain a hybrid armed-political apparatus? Do such groups differ markedly, either in terms of their behavior or their fates, from armed groups that do not fit that mold? By neglecting these issues, Berti misses an opportunity to carefully situate her arguments within the literature on intrastate conflict.

An additional weakness on the part of the book is its relative neglect of the effects that regional and international factors exercise on the formation of political wings and subsequent intra-group dynamics. One cannot help but wonder, for example, what effects the "neighborhoods" in which groups like the IRA, Hamas, and Hezbollah operate have on their choice of strategies and subsequent development. What role, for example, might growing European integration as well as globalization have played in the dynamics of the Northern Ireland conflict? Has the international community's growing involvement in peace processes since the end of the Cold War—via mediation, funding for pro-democracy movements, peacekeeping forces,

etc.—had any influence on the interaction between the political and military wings of armed groups? Although Berti does note that the "environment" is one of the three levels of analysis she takes into account in her work (the other two being the organization and the individual), readers should note that the environmental factors on which she focuses consist mainly of those that operate at the state level.

These critiques do not detract from the major contribution of this book, which is its challenge to the dominant paradigm that political participation necessarily equates with a commitment to political accommodation. Works like these that call our attention to the internal logic and functioning of armed groups can help to provide the international community with a more realistic understanding of the conditions under which it is and is not possible to help construct a durable peace.

The European Union as Crisis Manager: Patterns and Prospects.

By Arjen Boin, Magnus Ekengren, and Mark Rhinard. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 195p. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.99 paper.

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— Tristan James Mabry, *Naval Postgraduate School*

As events in Ukraine spiraled out of control earlier in 2014, regional observers frequently raised the question of how the European Union *could* respond. This is the kind of question addressed directly by the authors of *The European Union as Crisis Manager*, a helpful volume especially well suited for students of international public administration. A separate question, however, is how the European Union *should* respond, one that is not addressed directly by this timely book, other than to say that the EU can and should do *more*.

This is both explicable and justifiable. Any work tackling "crisis management" writ large is immediately confronted with the challenge of scope and scale. Certainly a massive flood is a "crisis," but so is an earthquake, a terrorist campaign, a lethal epidemic, a radioactive discharge, or even a civil war. In this book, the scope is inclusive to all manner of crises, but in regard to scale, Arjen Boin, Magnus Ekengren, and Mark Rhinard are careful to parse what is meant by the term. They identify three domains—national, external and transboundary—that are dealt with in dedicated chapters.

A "national" crisis addresses a scenario whereby one or more EU member states are overwhelmed by a catastrophic event, including but not limited to natural disasters and terrorism. The key institutional organ for handling such crises is the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism. Founded in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the Mechanism was inspired by the need for a "clear, coordinated disaster response strategy, which would ensure mutual assistance in times of disaster" (p. 25). Examples provided include the 2002