

# A Historical Approach on Regionalism

## Evolutions from Geography and Spatialization to Regional Alliance Systems

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### Introduction and Theoretical Concepts

**D**EFINING THE regions is a process still ongoing among the scholars interested in regional development.<sup>1</sup> What makes it so relevant are the multiple layers of meaning attached to the deep tissues that build today our view of a region, of regionalization and, ultimately, of regional integration, all of them expressing a certain constructive potential. The greatest temptation today is to embrace the theoretical analysis of regions and separate the topic from its most relevant background: geography. By virtue of etymology, the word region derives from the Latin *rego* meaning to steer, to lead, to manage, to govern. Consequently, *regio* was linked to a political process, not to the delimitation of frontiers.<sup>2</sup> And yet, no region—fabricated by political power or not, institutionalized or not—could make sense without a territorial setting, therefore a space.

Space (and therefore spatiality) should be differentiated from territoriality because it can be circumscribed to various elements: geography, climate, geology, relief, population, economic resources, administrative structures, religious and linguistic diversity.<sup>3</sup>

Territory implies resources, from demographic to mineral, a self-perception and self-awareness leading to a process of governance, and thus to the management of those resources. For centuries, only individuals who held political power were able (and felt the need) to imagine and set up the governance of large territories, or the management of areas in expansion. Consequently, the political power was the only one aware of the need to observe the available landscape and its immediate neighborhood, in order to exert governance in all its forms, from economy to security, in what we call today praxeology.<sup>4</sup> Knowing how to manage space and neighborhood was, for centuries, a truly exceptional competence, rarer than knowing how to write, read and compute. The natural alliance between space, territory, knowledge and political decision is the one that generates the forces commonly described as history. This is possible only by the constitution of an “active unit”<sup>5</sup> (in sum, a polity).

There is, consequently, a thin line uniting the strategic interests of a political unit, the management of its territory, the project in space of its security interests and the ability to conceive international cooperation based on regional approaches. It is the same line that originates in geography, with a fundamental social utility: the study, the observation, the analysis and forecast of spatial interaction between diverse forces, each of it belonging to

a specific category (geography, sociology, law and institutions). Organizing space with a maximum of political efficiency, the action taken—with all the risks, the failures and all its variables—demonstrate that the reality of governance is not simple, but immensely complicated. To quote Bachelard's observation from his *Applied Rationalism*, “the scientific explanation does not mean moving from confused concretism to the theoretically simple, but from confusion to the intelligibly complex.”<sup>6</sup>

This is the reason why the present article shall define the operative concepts used as follows:

a) *Regions* are considered here as units born from social construction that make references to territorial locations and to geographical or normative contiguity. Usually including at least two countries, partly or entirely, they can be continental (Europe, Africa), sub-continental (Caribbean, West Africa), or transcontinental (North Atlantic, Eurasia, Mediterranean).

b) *Regionalism* is a mainly state-driven process of creating and supporting formal regional institutions and organizations, internally but also externally among at least three states.<sup>7</sup> By institutions, this text implies a set of norms, rules and procedures that enable or constrain “active units” behavior with a certain degree of predictability, and may also constitute their identities and/or preferences. Subsequently, informal institutions are norms, rules and procedures that manifest themselves in shared beliefs, references and common knowledge (see endnote 5) among a group of active units or in behavioral practices.

c) *Organizations* are formal institutions with a certain degree of involvement and presence. Separately, regional organizations are formal and institutionalized cooperative relations among states or sub-state units of different countries, and constitute a part of regionalism. Organizations can be also categorized based on scope and level of cooperation. Based on scope, organizations range on a continuum between task-specific and multi- or general-purpose.<sup>8</sup> In what concerns the level of coordination and collaboration, regional organizations try to solve collective action problems in a specific region or a continuum between regional cooperation and integration. By cooperation, this text understands the direct intergovernmental relations that do not require any transfer of authority to the level of a regional organization.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, regional integration starts when states transfer parts of their sovereign prerogatives to the regional level, in a supranational move whose main characteristics consist in delegating or pooling state power.<sup>10</sup>

d) *Regionalization* (unlike regionalism, explained as a state-led institution-building with partial input from grassroots, non-state actors organized in formal or informal networks) signifies a chain of processes of increasing economic, political, social and cultural interaction among geographically or culturally contiguous states and societies.<sup>11</sup> Regionalization emphasizes transnational relations between non-state actors within active units (interest groups, corporations, NGOs) not as drivers of region-building but directly involved in it.<sup>12</sup>

Conclusively, regional integration is a phenomenon which can be described as the more or less formal institutional grouping of a number of states belonging to a specific area, geographically defined, and aiming for long term political and/or economic cooperation. For instance, today, most of the World Trade Organization members are part of

a regional agreement; however, few of these agreements ever went beyond the limits of free trade or customs union. The European Union is therefore a remarkable exception.

This exceptional position was not necessarily noticed since the beginnings of the European integration project. The creation of substructures within Europe's colonial empires—such as France's West African plans for an imperial federation in the 1930s or for a British East Africa<sup>13</sup>—or the post-colonial states seeking to consolidate their standing by forging regional alliances captured the attention of international relations specialists back in the 1950s and the 1960s. Ernest Haas, Philippe Schmitter<sup>14</sup> and Miguel Wionczek<sup>15</sup> studied regional Latin-American regionalization and sparks of integration.<sup>16</sup> Comparisons have been extended to a wider scale by Amitai Etzioni, who analyses the United Arab Republic, the West Indies Federation and the European Communities—an impressive endeavor by the extent and range of the questions approached.<sup>17</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., compared the economic integration in Eastern Africa, the Arab League, the Organization of American States and the African Union.<sup>18</sup>

Initially, the theoretical approach of regionalism was not conceived outside the comparative methods:<sup>19</sup> at a moment when common markets, free trade associations and specific regional arrangements flourished, the main question about their purpose and the political process they generated had to be examined both in theory and in practice.<sup>20</sup> A historical detour is therefore necessary.

## Regionalism and Regionalization in Time

**W**HILE STUDIES of regionalism as part of the theories of international relations have a specific point of departure in time, the feeling of regional belongingness seems to have preceded the construction of economic and political regional units.<sup>21</sup> In various other areas, where institutionalization of regional cooperation is limited, this description of a regional awareness is still valid, and, from this point of view, Nye's definition—according to which an international region means a limited number of countries linked by geography and a certain degree of mutual interdependence<sup>22</sup>—is still applicable.

In Europe however, regionalism receives a more specific and more substantial content. If Europe's model was considered *the* standard, it would be difficult to talk about regional integration anywhere in the world before 1950. With the exception of this part of the world, there would be very few associations; the earliest were determined by postwar political or economic considerations (the 1949 COMECON can be mentioned as a non-Western, non-Atlantic regional conduct), but also by the expansion and the transformation of the world's security structures.

The Second World War destroyed the classic regional order of Europe and divided the continent into opposing spheres where two hegemonic powers established their influence. This is why an active-unit concept like the *region* became the unit of measure for political processes, and thus increasingly central for the political and economic elites. As Stanley Hoffmann was noticing, one of the political consequences of the Second World War was the “division of an enormous heterogeneous international system [pre-

1939] in a world of sub-systems” where cooperation and conflict control mechanisms became more intense than those of global systems.<sup>23</sup> Emerging regional systems, such as the Commonwealth, the Arab League, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were considered agencies whose main purpose was to manage conflicts between its members; based on this *distinguo*, Nye categorized regional integration in two: 1° microeconomic regional organizations leading to a formal economic integration; and 2° political organizations focusing on the prevention, control or management of conflicts.<sup>24</sup>

To these, a third aspect can plausibly be linked to the presence of the United Nations Organization as a facilitator of regional integration and the constitution of regional systems.<sup>25</sup> Ideas focusing on peacekeeping stemmed from the creation of the United Nations; the projects of regional integration could be perceived therefore as a part of this UN objective, formalized during the Dumbarton Oaks Conference of 1944. Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter stipulates the following:

*Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.*<sup>26</sup>

(One can investigate if such provisos foresaw the possible revival of the 1920s and 1930s European unification projects, or the governance methods applied in the British Empire with the purpose of creating regional units able to self-govern.<sup>27</sup>)

So, the experience of international cooperation during the first years of the Cold War rather seemed to favor the neorealist hypothesis according to which states are rational, unitary actors, looking for security in anarchic times. At the same time, a part of the emerging regional systems was circumscribed to the East–West conflict, or subordinated to the extended exigencies of the two existing superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union: NATO, the Treaty of Warsaw or the Organization of American States illustrate it. The post–1945 European institutions were created as well for managing security in Western Europe against the Soviet Union.

Simultaneously, post-colonial developing countries were engaged in the creation of regional structures. An opposition to the East–West conflict, especially to the North–South relations, generated a powerful coalition of southern nations, the so-called Group of the 77 (G77),<sup>28</sup> whose rise triggered a substantial amount of theoretical debate circumscribed to the Dependency school of thought and to Third World structuralists.<sup>29</sup>

The emergence of subregional security organizations such as the Association of the South Eastern Asian Nations in 1967, the Community of the Caribbean (CariCom) in 1973, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, the Southern African Development Community in 1980, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981 or the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in 1985 can be interpreted as attempts to create security organizations without the support of one of the global superpowers. However, given the instability of the period, these new constructions did not play an important role on the world stage, nor had any influence—with the noticeable exception of ASEAN.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, European integration made less and less acceptable the hypothesis founded on the premise that states, as actors, are above all looking to enhance their security<sup>31</sup> when entering regional arrangements. The European phenomenon generated, since the 1960s, similar attempts in various other parts of the world; the emergence of these regional groups triggered a number of studies analyzing the conditions that influence the regionalization of the world, and the consequences of this phenomenon.<sup>32</sup> Neo-functionalism is, among others, their intellectual product.

At the end of the 1960s, the hopes that were initially placed in regionalism increasingly faded. The evolution of European integration determined even neo-functionalists to revise their own regionalist theory and declare it obsolete for Europe's realities, even if applicable in other parts of the world.<sup>33</sup> It was in this moment that researchers of regionalism became interested in the analysis of the interdependence between the actors of integration and the role of emerging international regimes.<sup>34</sup>

At the beginning of the 1980s however, with organizations already functional, regional systems started to play an increasing role as actors on the global stage. Demands for a regional organization of the world, coming from the United Nations, increased.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the growing importance of regional economic integration, the globalization of economy and finance, the process of democratization and the emergence of new democracies following the collapse of the communist regimes in Eurasia turned out to be incentives for new approaches of regionalism and of regional integration.

## Reconsidering Regional Integration

**I**N THE ensemble of theoretical work generated since the end of the 1960s, we are able to identify three theoretical concepts, expressed mainly in the theory of international relations. Their specificity is to insist on interstate relations and on the reasons why states have to unite and compose an innovative, unprecedented political system.<sup>36</sup>

The first category of analysis<sup>37</sup> can be called *interdependentist* and is founded on criteria such as geographic and cognitive proximity, as well as a degree of interdependence. The second approach is *transactionalist* and focuses on exchanges and the transformations needed in order to create such regions. The third approach, *realist*, explains the creation of regional systems as a consequence of external pressure by a threat or a hegemonic power.

### Interdependentism

**B**RUCE RUSSETT suggested three criteria for the definition of a regional political system:<sup>38</sup> 1° geographic proximity despite differentiation between units; 2° economic and social interdependence; and 3° cognitive homogeneity in the region (a specific similitude of values).<sup>39</sup> If geography takes a central place in the analysis, the interconnection and the interdependence of the economies are supplementary key issues in explaining the robustness of regional integration. Attention has to be paid to the level

of commercial and financial exchanges between the states, the flux of services and labor, the activity and range of the multinational enterprises, cultural exchanges or various other cooperation programs.

Last but not least, cognitive homogeneity is more complex because it is simultaneously more relative; it comes with a proximity of values, defined as similarities between political and economic systems, of lifestyle and level of development.

Within the frame of the above, Amitai Etzioni<sup>40</sup> explores the conditions that lead to sustainable political unification and, while avoiding normative features,<sup>41</sup> he explains the paradoxical features of regional integration where emotional allegiance to the nation-state is so intense and widespread that regionalization is strengthening the state interests,<sup>42</sup> and does not replace the latter. In doing so, Etzioni's approach meets Stanley Hoffmann's intergovernmentalism,<sup>43</sup> who considers that regional integration is an international regime that reinforces the nation-state. Accordingly, the author focuses specifically on the powers of the actors involved, especially the "movers and shakers" of the process of institutionalized regionalization, with their specific efforts, the conditions favorable to such initiatives, and the final outcome. He proposes seventeen hypotheses grouped into three general themes: 1) the distribution of the power of integration,<sup>43</sup> 2) its composition,<sup>44</sup> and 3) its dynamic in time.<sup>45</sup> These hypotheses—analyzed by using a rigorous and historically detailed comparative method—explain why two of the four regional integration experiments that the author studied (namely the United Arab Republic<sup>46</sup> and the West Indies federation<sup>47</sup>) failed; the cause was identified in the little support granted by foreign elites to the integration process, and the weakness of each unit's internal elites. The European Economic Community succeeded because of the more homogeneous political elite, united within common organizations allowing them to overcome the extremely unstable first phases of the integration, when breakdown could have easily occurred.

One has to underline that post-1990 transformations of state, society and economies preserved the validity of Etzioni's observations, while Russett's slid into obsolescence. Geographic proximity lost importance in a world where strategic economic communication takes place via networks, financial exchanges are almost instant and mass-media is globalized; it therefore ceased to play a central role, but maintains a position of principle once political debates move in the field of enlargement of regional, with geographic criteria of neighborhood and proximity being invoked. Interdependence is also questioned in its ability to serve integration: it would suffice to give the example of the 1920s and 1930s, when, despite global commercial exchanges, no stable and peaceful regional system could emerge. Finally, homogeneity is relative; the emergence of a regional organization to the degree of social, cultural, linguistic or cognitive homogeneity cannot be attributed to a group of states: while being less homogenous than the countries of Latin America, Europe was more successful in achieving regional integration.<sup>48</sup> Overall, what made these three arguments lose weight is related to the absence of any analysis of political institutions. These can motivate and support integration, or discourage it—especially visible in the case of Europe.

Consequently, as institutions are platforms of interaction, theories concerning *communication* emerged in what we call today the transactionalist approach.

## Transactionalism

IT WAS in the 1950s that, starting from a question centered on state security, Karl Deutsch attempted to give an answer to the origins of regional security arrangements,<sup>49</sup> having conflicts and the spirit of war as its point of departure. For Deutsch, integration envisages the creation of stable security communities, in a specific region, by a group of states that enjoy relations of dependable expectations of peace.<sup>50</sup> Deutsch specifically defined a security community as “a group of people” considering that “they have come to agreement on at least one point: that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of ‘peaceful change,’” and thus become an integrated entity.<sup>51</sup>

A specialist of international relations as well as of political sociology, he developed his researches starting from the connection between the emergence of nations and the communication between individuals or communities. His central hypothesis places communication as the key to the social mobilization of communities that leads to the emergence of a nation. Among these individuals arises a community feeling that leads to the creation of institutions, founded by mutually accepted practices allowing for peaceful changes of the status quo.<sup>52</sup> He makes the difference between *amalgamated* and *pluralistic* security communities,<sup>53</sup> and he identifies eight conditions that should be satisfied in the first case: the mutual compatibility of main values, a distinctive way of life, capabilities and processes of cross-cutting communication, high geographic and social mobility, multiplicity and balance of transactions, a significant frequency of some interchange in group roles, a broadening of the political elite, and high political and administrative capabilities. This background would support the merger of smaller units into greater ones, therefore generating a new entity, with new institutions—a hypothesis very close to the federalist thinking. His definition of a pluralistic security community is the one that attracts researchers favorable to the transactionalist theory. For these to exist, Deutsch considers three elements are indispensable: 1) the compatibility of values, 2) a peaceful approach of all participants in the internal conflict resolution, and 3) the predictability of social, political and economic behavior of other members of the same community.

Transactionalism revolves around the idea that the degree (or sense) of community between units (states) is the consequence of the level of communication, and of the existence of a network of transactions between the active-units. Only a high degree of communications and transactions allows cognitive adaptations for—and of—all the actors, not just the existence of an elite coordinating the process of regional integration. In Deutsch’s view, the functionalist and neofunctionalist focus on institutional elites (high policy makers, civil servants, parliamentarians, interest group leaders and others) is a minus; he is more concerned with the identity and the governance of such security communities, waiving altogether the realist and neorealist hypotheses according to which state governance and citizens are irrelevant because of their secondary status. Deutsch’s expertise in sociology explores the feelings of belongingness in such security communities; his perspective leads to a focus that is less on formal institutions, and more on communication procedures, on transactions between individuals or the composing parts of the community.<sup>54</sup>

## Realism

**T**RANSACTIONALISM AND realism meet because both share the idea that the main interest of a state in joining a regional system is to acquire a higher degree of security. However, success does not depend on the level of exchanges and communication between states, realists suggest; this paradigm builds up a few hypotheses that explain the creation of regional alliances.<sup>55</sup>

The first one would be the prerequisite presence of an external factor, either adversarial (the Soviet Union during the Cold War) or a neutrally benevolent hegemon driving states into regional integration (e.g., the United States at the origins of the OECD through the Marshall Plan<sup>56</sup>). It was equally possible that the creation of such unions would succeed against the political will of a rival neighboring country, illustrated by the opposition between communist Vietnam and ASEAN,<sup>57</sup> the Gulf Cooperation Council created in opposition to Iran, or Mercosur as a means to resist the United States. Last but not least, small or medium powers show an interest to associate themselves to the greater in regional systems that maximize their international position by *bandwagoning*.<sup>58</sup>

A neorealist scholar like Joseph Grieco considers neorealism as most compatible with the underlying principles of European integration.<sup>59</sup> Focusing on the Treaty of Maastricht of 1993—which was bringing in a new economic and monetary union frame—, Grieco<sup>60</sup> explored the rationale behind a state's decision to accept specific constraints limiting their autonomy; his assumption is that the less powerful member states negotiate with the more powerful ones in order to increase their influence within the regional system. Grieco calls it “the voice of opportunity thesis”: an informal agreement concluded between lesser powers with the greater, allowing favorable conditions for the former.<sup>61</sup>

## Still to Define

**I**S THERE any definition of the region, of regionalism and of the driving factors of regional integration that one could discover in the assumptions, premises and hypotheses presented above? Factors leading to regional integration—and therefore impacting on the definition and role of a region—are multiple. One is confronted, theoretically and empirically, with a high variety of regions, not with an easily identifiable type.

The only common criterion is the fact that the notion of *region* is applied to forms of integration which are more limited than the global integration; we are talking, therefore, about “less-than-global-organizations.”<sup>62</sup> This definition might in itself particularly ambiguous; but what makes the difference is the *perception*.

Perception is an element shared by all the theses and concepts discussed above, inviting analysts to inquire into how the (concept and the usefulness of a) region is perceived and interpreted by a member state.

At the intersection of certain elements from the three previous approaches, as Andrew Hurrell emphasizes,<sup>63</sup> one can discern four types of approach of the region from



the member state (active unit) perspective: 1) region understood as a process of regionalization; 2) region as an identity; 3) region defined by interstate cooperation, and 4) region defined by cohesion.

### Regionalization

**T**O THE definition given at the beginning of the article, one can add that, in itself, regionalization indicates a process, more specifically the reinforcement of economic, political, social or cultural integration within a specific geographical region. This might be interpreted as informal integration or soft regionalism.<sup>64</sup> In Hurrell's view, the process of regionalization that leads to more institutionalized structures is usually based on economic integration purposes. While the process may be influenced by state-led policies, integration is developed around economic imperatives, based on market dynamics and economic units, enterprises and transnational economic networks, therefore also concerning labor force fluxes. In both cases—as non-state actors are involved with their specific interests—regionalization becomes a matter of fluxes, networks or amalgams, generating new forms of identity, situated on a level both above and under the framework of the state. This transnational regionalism can have a powerful economic component, largely economic (well demonstrated by the development of transborder areas, industrial corridors or networks connecting industrial areas), but can also be built on the private connection between individuals (such as diasporas or traditional cultural-historical links).

### Region As Identity

**I**F REGIONS are perceived with identity awareness, this implies a *cognitive dimension* of regions. Cognitive regions include elements such as common culture, history or common religious traditions; but—on a larger scale—it can also be defined against another region or area, perceived as a menace. Additional factors contributing to it (categorized by some authors<sup>65</sup>) are: historical exploration, the creation of myths and of the invented traditions.

### Region As Interstate Cooperation

**A**SIGNIFICANT PART of the regional processes analyzed by the aforementioned authors regard interstate activities such as negotiations, cooperation, be it formal or informal. In this context, the focus of analysis is on the growth and affirmation of state authority after decades of having agreed to abandon a part of their sovereignty, or their legislative autonomy, in order to obtain greater influence in the political decisions of partner states and the management of a common agenda.

## Region Defined by Cohesion

**O**VERALL, THE combination of these three elements (regionalization, regional identity and interstate cooperation) sheds new light on the meaning and substance of consolidated regional unity.

Cohesion can be understood in a dual manner: 1) one where the region plays a decisive role in the definition of the relations between states, or between central actors and the rest of the world; and 2) a second where the region is the organizational background for its own political structuring. Consequently, the political significance of a region does not derive from any factor reflecting a degree of interdependence, but from how interdependence generates new actors and the costs it entails.

Past analyses of the phenomenon<sup>66</sup> demonstrated that regional cohesion can be produced by at least five causes:

1. the gradual creation of a regional supranational organization, especially within the context of economic integration;
2. superposed interstate agreements, mutually influencing each other;
3. a combination between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism (EU-style);
4. the emergence of a “neo-medieval” order,<sup>67</sup> where, within the European Union, the principles of territoriality and sovereignty are replaced by identities and authorities which are intersecting;
5. a form of regional hegemony, carrying enough influence in order to give birth to a region.

Yet, the renewed interest of academic observers in regional integration was an expression of a general transformation of the international society: the internal and international context was more favorable to the emergence of integration, with demonstrated efficiency. This new regionalism was based on four components: the end of the Cold War, the transformations of the global economy, the end of third-worldism, and the extensive process of democratization occurring between 1990 and ca. 2010.

a) The end of the Cold War with its bipolar system triggered revised attitudes toward international cooperation. The United Nations, especially, pleaded for regional organizations not just in Europe but also in Africa, Latin America and Southeastern Asia.<sup>68</sup>

b) Economic transformations contributed to the deepening of regional units who had to adopt unified monetary and/or commercial policies; hence, the changes leading to a European Union in 1992, the creation of the Southern Market Mercosur in Latin America and of NAFTA in North America.

c) The end of the “Third World”<sup>69</sup> could already be noticed in the negotiations leading to the creation of the World Trade Organization, where the influence of G-77 has clearly diminished. The heterogeneity of its members and the absence of common institutions or objectives were largely responsible for the situation.

d) The process of democratization—mainly in Central and Eastern Europe, in Latin America as well as the one earlier in Spain and Portugal—opened new perspectives on the analysis of the democratic nature and mechanisms of regional integration. If the debates around cosmopolitan multilateralism<sup>70</sup> or polyilateralism<sup>71</sup> concern the global

system as a whole, it is in the European Union that the democratic nature of regional integration, or its democratic deficit, were questioned, and where such debates thrived.

## As a Conclusion

**F**ROM GEOGRAPHY to state building, statecraft, the strategic management of space and of neighborhood by way of instruments harmonizing mutual interests and diminishing conflict, the concept of region went through a metamorphosis of ever increasing complexity that intersects with—and connects to—both the theories of international relations and of European integration; it became probably the most successful operative mechanism for pacification and prosperity creation.

Regions are, to a large degree, political or functional constructs, with institutional support but not a priori categories. Like states, regions are an investment of political narrative, resources and political decisions. Paraphrasing Fukuyama's<sup>72</sup> definition of state-building, region-building is the creation of new governance institutions (with a regional range) and the strengthening of existing ones; this brought a growing consensus that regional institutions and regional active-units can play a significant and valuable role in promoting at least economic development, and—by virtue of it—pacification and stability. Among the advantages of regional policymaking are the possibility to coordinate between different policy areas and actors, to create synergy and an efficient use of resources, to pay attention to region-specific problems, and to build on particular regional strengths and advantages.

Regions, regional development and regionalization require broad governance perspectives derived from geographic and geostrategic appreciations, and the involvement of a range of actors, state and non-state. Durable success is seldom achieved based on economic policy alone: it also needs success in terms of social cohesion, social inclusion and the achievement of a form of identity, all depending on the extent to which the diverse actors (domestic or external), institutions and social groups concerned are participating—or are included—in decision-making processes, with sufficient cooperation and coordination.

□

## Notes

1. M. Farrell, B. Hettne, and L. Van Langenhove, eds., *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice* (London–Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005); P. De Lombaerde et al., *The Regional Integration Manual: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods* (London–New York: Routledge, 2011); T. M. Shaw, J. A. Grant, and S. Cornelissen, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms* (Farnham, Surrey–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011); T. A. Börzel and T. Risse, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); P. Söderbaum and T. M. Shaw, eds., *Theories of New Re-*

- gionalism: A Palgrave Reader* (Houdmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire–New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
2. L. Van Langenhove, *Building Regions: The Regionalization of the World Order* (Farnham, Surrey–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 1.
  3. Y. Lacoste, *Paysages politiques: Braudel, Gracq, Reclus...* (Paris, Librairie générale française, 1990).
  4. The term is adopted here as defined by T. de Montbrial in *L'Action et le système du monde* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002) and *Action and Reaction in the World System: The Dynamics of Economic and Political Power* (Vancouver–Toronto: UBC Press, 2013): the science of organized human activities, seen from the perspective of political power. These include the built of potency, the management of conflicts, the design of strategy, the mechanisms of stability of an active unit, the know-how in international relations, the economic system (internal and external), the ideology, culture, ethics and politics, the expression of sovereignty, etc. The word *praxeology* was created by the French sociologist A. Espinas in 1897, re-used by Polish philosopher and ethicist T. Kotarbiński in 1937 and by L. von Mises in his 1949 magnum opus, *Human Action*.
  5. De Montbrial, indicating that he uses the formula coined by F. Perroux, in *Unités actives et mathématiques nouvelles: Révision de la théorie de l'équilibre économique général* (Paris: Dunod, 1975). Such active units have a structure based on “Culture and Organization”; they are a human group whose members are connected (a) through a system of practices, references and beliefs, therefore a Culture; and (b) through an organization that impacts effectively on the internal and external functioning and direction of the unit.
  6. G. Bachelard, *Le Rationalisme appliqué*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966).
  7. A relationship established between two states is bilateral only.
  8. NATO is, in these conditions, a task-specific organizations, while the EU and ASEAN are multi- or general-purpose organizations. Cf. T. Lenz, J. Bezuijen, L. Hooghe, and G. Marks, “Patterns of International Organization: Task Specific vs. General Purpose,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, special issue, 49 (2014): 131–156, [https://garymarks.web.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13018/2016/12/Lenz.Bezuijen.Hooghe.Marks\\_2014\\_patterns-of-delegation.pdf](https://garymarks.web.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13018/2016/12/Lenz.Bezuijen.Hooghe.Marks_2014_patterns-of-delegation.pdf).
  9. The Shanghai Cooperation Group is such an example of purely intergovernmental cooperation.
  10. By pooling one must understand the joint exercise of sovereignty rights (with the exclusion of the right to veto); delegation implies the transfer of authority and sovereignty rights to supranational organizations.
  11. F. Söderbaum, “Old, New, and Comparative Regionalism: The History and Scholarly Development of the Field,” in Börzel and Risse, 16–41; A.-G. Corpădean, “The Role of the Committee of the Regions in the Implementation of ‘Europe 2020’: Mechanisms, Actions, Prospects,” in *Regional Development and Integration: New Challenges for the EU: EURINI 2015: EURINI Conference Proceedings May 22–23, 2015*, edited by G. C. Pascariu et al. (Iași: Ed. Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iași, 2015), 121–130.
  12. In addition, scholars underlined the existence of two other possible operative concepts: (1) the *regional order* stands for the combinations of regionalization and regionalism in a specific region, encompassing both grassroots processes of economic, political, so-

- cial and cultural exchange (regionalization) and formal or informal state-led institution-building (regionalism), cf. E. Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); (2) *regional governance* (in Börzel and Risse) is seen as an institutionalized mode of socio-economic coordination destined to produce binding rules and/or public goods and services in one or several areas of regional integration. Using the term governance is a balanced manner of not privileging state over non-state actors and of examining policy-making in both a hierarchical and non-hierarchical way (e.g. top-down exerted powers *plus* inclusion of horizontal levels defined by negotiations, competition, etc., Börzel and Risse, 9).
13. J. Banfield, "Federation in East Africa," *International Journal* 18, 2 (1963): 181–193, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40198786>.
  14. E. B. Haas and P. C. Schmitter, "Economics and Differential Patterns of Political Integration: Projections About Unity in Latin America," *International Organization* 18, 4 (1964): 705–737, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300025297>.
  15. M. S. Wionczek, "The Rise and Decline of Latin American Integration," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 9, 1 (1970): 49–66.
  16. P. C. Schmitter also compared Central-American and European models of integration: "Three Neo-Functional Hypotheses about International Integration," *International Organization* 23, 1 (1969): 161–166, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2705772>; "A Revised Theory of Regional Integration," *International Organization* 24, 4 (1970): 836–868, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706154>.
  17. E.g. security context, the nature of societies, their relationship with foreign powers: A. Etzioni, *Political Unification: A Comparative Study of Leaders and Forces* (New York etc.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965); id., *Political Unification Revisited: On Building Supranational Communities* (Lanham etc.: Lexington Books, 2001), <https://books.google.ro/books?id=FIQcoK07TGsC>.
  18. J. S. Nye, "East African Economic Integration," in *International Political Communities: An Anthology* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1966); id., "Comparing Common Markets: A Revised Neo-Functionalist Model," *International Organization* 24, 4 (1970): 796–835, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706153>.
  19. Börzel and Risse, 41–132, with a special mention to A. Acharva's study "Regionalism beyond EU-centrism," 109–130.
  20. "A way of connecting the two phenomena is the intensive and comparative study of common markets and of free trade associations in their capacity to transform member states into a political union": M. Barrera and E. B. Haas, "The Operationalization of Some Variables Related to Regional Integration: A Research Note," *International Organization* 23, 1 (1969): 150–160, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2705771>.
  21. L. Fawcett, "Regionalism in Historical Perspective," in *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, edited by L. Fawcett and A. Hurrell (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 9–36, <https://docenti.unimc.it/u1.chelavidirar/teaching/2015/14864/files/reading-materials-on-regionalism/historical-perspectives>.
  22. J. S. Nye, *International Regionalism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), xii.
  23. S. Hoffmann, "International Organization and the International System," *International Organization* 24, 3 (1970): 389–413, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2705963>.

24. J. S. Nye, *Peace in Parts: Integration and Conflict in Regional Organization* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 4–5.
25. I. L. Claude, Jr., has set this factor as primordial in the development of area integration: “The OAS, the UN, and the United States,” *International Conciliation* 547 (March 1964): 11–15.
26. United Nations Charter, Chapter VIII: Regional Arrangements, article 52, §1, accessed 1 Oct. 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-8>.
27. On the other hand, article 53 of the same Charter granted the Security Council the power to: “where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority;” see Chapter VIII, Regional Arrangements, article 53, accessed 1 Oct. 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-8>.
28. G-77 or G77, standing for the Group of 77, is a coalition of (now) 134 developing countries (initially 77), designed to promote collective economic interests, and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations.
29. H. B. Chenery, “The Structuralist Approach to Development Policy,” *American Economic Review* 65, 2 (1975): 310–316, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1818870>; J. Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927–1992)* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019). For a theoretical frame, see F. Missio, F. G. Jayme Jr., and J. L. Oreiro, “The Structuralist Tradition in Economics: Methodological and Macroeconomics Aspects,” *Brazilian Journal of Political Economy* 35, 2 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1590/0101-31572015v35n02a03>.
30. Fawcett. In a different category, organizations such as the Arab League or the Organization of African Unity were confronted with a different range of problems; founded on the shared ideology of “pan-” movements, they faced difficulties in acquiring internal cohesion.
31. The concept of security must be understood within the limits of the definition given to it in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
32. L. J. Cantori and S. L. Spiegel, “The International Relations of Regions,” *Polity* 2, 4 (1970): 397–425, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3233994>; preceded by iid., “International Regions: A Comparative Approach to Five Subordinate Systems,” *International Studies Quarterly* 13, 4 (1969): 361–380, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3013600>.
33. E. B. Haas, *The Obsolescence of Regional Integration Theory* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1975), 1; id., “The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing,” *International Organization* 24, 4 (1970): 607–646, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706149>.
34. J. S. Nye, Jr., and R. O. Keohane, “Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction,” *International Organization* 25, 3 (1971): 329–349, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706043>.
35. R. Rosecrance, “Regionalism and the Post-Cold War Era,” *International Journal* 46, 3 (1991): 373–393, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002070209104600301>; K. Ohmae, “The Rise of the Region State,” *Foreign Affairs* 72, 2 (1993): 78–87, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20045526>. See *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping*, a report written for the United Nations by Secretary-General B. Boutros-Ghali in 1992 as a response to the UN Security Council request for an “analysis and recommendations” to strengthen peacemaking and peace-keeping in the world, accessed 1 Oct. 2021, [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/47/277](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/47/277). “In the past, regional arrangements often were created because of the absence of a universal system for collective security; thus their activities could on occasion work at cross-purposes

- with the sense of solidarity required for the effectiveness of the world Organization. But in this new era of opportunity, regional arrangements or agencies can render great service if their activities are undertaken in a manner consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the [UN] Charter, and if their relationship with the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, is governed by Chapter VIII,” 18.
36. This distinction is important in order to understand the differences between these approaches and theories like functionalism and neo-functionalism. Neo-functionalist analysis goes beyond the state-centered methodology of comparative regional integration, but focus on the process of European integration. Regarding the formula “political system,” which in our opinion describes the best the sui generis construct of the European Union, see S. Hix, *The Political System of the European Union* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire–New York: Palgrave, 1999), 1–16.
  37. If we were to use a set of criteria based on Börzel, “Theorizing Regionalism: Cooperation, Integration, and Governance,” draft paper for *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* (ut supra), <https://www.eustudies.org/conference/papers/download/33>. For a more or less similar partition of the types of analysis: S. Yamakage, “Modeling Interdependence and Analyzing Conflict: Mathematical Representation,” *International Political Science Review* 3, 4 (1982): 479–503, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1600850>; B. M. Weiss, “The Economics of Integration, The Politics of Regionalism: Interdependence and Integration Theory Revisited” (presentation at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual International Studies Association Convention, Washington, DC, 16–20 Feb. 1999, accessed 1 Oct. 2021, <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/isa/wbm01>).
  38. B. M. Russett, *International Regions and the International System: A Study in Political Ecology* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967).
  39. Russett places geographic proximity at the heart of regionalization. Political and economic aspects aside, geography facilitates the establishment of regions: it is easier to build a regional entity between France and Germany or Denmark and Sweden than ‘regionalize’ Switzerland, Portugal and Norway, as the European Free Trade Association attempted in the 1960s.
  40. Etzioni, *Political Unification Revisited*.
  41. “The conditions under which political unification is (not should be or could be) initiated are the subject of this study,” Etzioni, *Political Unification Revisited*, LXIII.
  42. S. Hofmann, “Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe,” *Daedalus* 95, 3 (1966): 862–915, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027004>.
  43. Etzioni emphasizes both the action of states and of their elites. When the degree of integration increases within a regional organization (via the process of unification), the functions of the system, its authority and the loyalty of its members tend to augment. Like E. B. Haas in *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces 1950–1957* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958), he notices that non-local elites have a tendency to support such regional constructions if the structure of the new system of power proves to be more favorable to their interests compared to the preexisting situation.
  44. The coherence and the identity narrative of the elites will lead to multiple levels of integration; a narrative on reunification will bring more thrust to integration than any coercive power exerted by a (regional) organization. The stability of a regional unit is threatened only when the mechanisms of political representation are dysfunctional.
  45. Etzioni underlines the various phases of integration. In a first phase, the power exerted by the elites needs to be more intense than in a (secondary) phase of consolidation.

46. A political union between Egypt and Syria from 1958 to 1961, when Syria seceded after a coup d'état. (The Kingdom of Yemen—in north Yemen—, an ally of Egypt, joined the new state from 1958 to 1961. This tripartite, loose confederation was called the United Arab States; however, Yemen did not share the common institutions set up by Cairo and Damascus.) After the dissolution, Egypt continued to be known officially as the United Arab Republic until 1971. The very next year, Mu'ammad Al-Qadhafi, the Islamic republican leader of the former Libyan kingdom, picked up the project in an attempt to merge Libya, Egypt and Syria into a Federation of Arab Republics. Approval by referendum in each country (in September 1971) did not help any of the three countries overcome their disagreement on the terms of the merger. The federation lasted from 1 January 1972 to 19 November 1977. The Arab North Africa and the Near East was otherwise the scene of multiple federative attempts: the federation between Egypt, Libya and Sudan (1969/70–1971), between Egypt, Libya and Syria (1971/72–1974/77), the Union between Egypt and Libya within the Arab Federation (1972–1973/74), the renewed Union between Egypt and Syria within the Arab Federation (1976–1977), and the federation between Egypt, Sudan and Syria (1977). Cf. J.-P. Alem, *Le Proche-Orient arabe* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982), 41–55, 70–73.
47. A fleeting political union from January 1958 to May 1962. Caribbean islands once part of the British Empire intended to create a political unit that would become independent from Britain as a single state—largely based on the models of the Canadian Confederation, the Australian Commonwealth, or the former Central African Federation. With 20,240 km<sup>2</sup> spanning on 2,500 km across the seas, 3–4 mil. inhab. and the capital city in Port of Spain, the Federation would have brought together Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos, Barbados (who decided to turn into a Republic in 2020 and replace Elizabeth II of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as head of state in 2021), Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Anguilla, Montserrat, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago. Disputes and conflicts over how it would be governed or viably function undermined its creation.
48. An explanation for the causes of it in N. Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (London etc.: Penguin Books, 2011).
49. K. W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957); republished in *The European Union: Readings on the Practice and Theory of European Integration*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, edited by B. F. Nelsen and A. Stubbs (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 121–143, [https://www.lsu.edu/faculty/lray2/teaching/7971\\_1s2009/deutsch1957.pdf](https://www.lsu.edu/faculty/lray2/teaching/7971_1s2009/deutsch1957.pdf).
50. The aim of the integration is to generate means that would allow individuals to put an end to war. Efficient integration can be measured through the diminishment of violence employed by the (member) states.
51. Deutsch, 123.
52. Deutsch, 123.
53. Deutsch, 124.
54. D. J. Puchala from the Institute of International Studies at the University of South Carolina underlined, however, a few incongruences that alter the transactionalist approach; cf. "Integration Theory and the Study of International Relations," in *From National Development to Global Community: Essays in Honor of Karl W. Deutsch*, edited by R. L. Merritt and B. M. Russett (London–Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 145–163.



- A first one comes with the impossibility to quantify the scientific data required by this hypothesis. If long-term historical studies might certainly be the best adapted method in this case, the problem is how to evaluate and estimate changes within the feeling of belongingness. The second obstacle is again of methodological nature and concerns the question of knowing how to recognize when a cognitive change or an adaptation took place. Cognitive adaptation is inherent to transactionalist analysis, but there is no evidence of it which could be scientifically brought forward.
55. S. M. Walt, *Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987) (synthesis of the first chapters available at [http://www.rochelleterman.com/ir/sites/default/files/Walt1987\\_0.pdf](http://www.rochelleterman.com/ir/sites/default/files/Walt1987_0.pdf), accessed 1 Oct. 2021).
  56. In theory, the USSR acted as well as a hegemon and was at the origins of COMECON, but the system developed by the Kremlin—despite an institutionally more flexible cooperation—was managed according to the needs of the Soviet economy, created and maintained through the use of bilateral barter and of currency inconvertibility. These methods proved to be economically inefficient, but the Soviets resisted any attempts at reform, fearing that economic dependency would be lost through multilateralism and convertibility. Cf. “Comecon,” *European Studies* 8 (1970), <http://aei.pitt.edu/73844/1/DODGE013.pdf>.
  57. A. Hurrell, “Latin America in the New World Order: A Regional Bloc of the Americas?” *International Affairs* 68, 1 (1992): 121–139, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2620464>; D. Crone, “Does Hegemony Matter? The Reorganization of the Pacific Political Economy,” *World Politics* 45, 4 (1993): 501–525, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2950707>.
  58. Walt.
  59. J. M. Grieco, “Understanding the Problem of International Cooperation: The Limits of Neoliberal Institutionalism and the Future of Realist Theory,” in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, edited by D. A. Baldwin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 301–338.
  60. J. M. Grieco, “The Maastricht Treaty, Economic and Monetary Union and the Neo-Realist Research Programme,” *Review of International Studies* 21, 1 (1995): 21–40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20097394>.
  61. J. M. Grieco, “State Interests and Institutional Rule Trajectories: A Neorealist Interpretation of the Maastricht Treaty and European Economic and Monetary Union,” *Security Studies* 5, 3 (1996): 261–306, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09636419608429281>. A caveat, however: realists are less interested in issues related to regions, regional integration or regionalism, but they use it as an illustration of larger phenomena occurring within the international system. Their interest focuses on understanding the behavior of regional powers; no importance is given to the notion of region or regional identity, nor to the internal dynamic of politics, economy or society, which are of essence if regions are being created by integration.
  62. A. Hurrell, “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics,” *Review of International Studies* 21, 4 (1995): 331–358, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20097421>; see above, Fawcett and Hurrell.
  63. A. Hurrell, “Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective,” in Fawcett and Hurrell, 37–74.
  64. R. Scalapino, *Major Power Relations in Northeast Asia* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 7. See also: S. Zhao, “Soft versus Structured Regionalism: Organizational Forms of Cooperation in Asia-Pacific,” *Journal of East Asian Affairs* 12, 1 (1998): 96–134, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23255765>.

65. I. Manners, "Symbols and Myths of European Union Transnational Solidarity," in *Transnational Solidarity: Concept, Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by H. Krunke, H. Petersen, and I. Manners (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 76–100.
66. S. Piattoni and L. Polverari, eds., *Handbook on Cohesion Policy in the EU* (Cheltenham–Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016); additionally: X. Sala-i-Martin, *Regional Cohesion: Evidence and Theories of Regional Growth and Convergence*, Economic Growth Center, Yale University, Center Discussion Paper no. 716; P. Pachura, *Regional Cohesion: Effectiveness of Network Structures* (Berlin–Heidelberg: Springer Science & Business Media, 2009); P. Popelier, *Dynamic Federalism: A New Theory for Cohesion and Regional Autonomy* (London–New York: Routledge, 2021) (see Part II).
67. B. Buzan, M. Kelstrup, P. Lemaitre, E. Tromer, and O. Wæver, *The European Security Order Recast: Scenarios for the Post-Cold War Era* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990); B. Buzan, C. Jones, and R. Little, *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
68. A. Roberts, "The United Nations and International Security," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 35, 2 (1993): 3–30, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00396339308442683>.
69. R. Gilpin with the assistance of J. M. Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt19wcct3>.
70. D. Held, "From Executive to Cosmopolitan Multilateralism," in *Taming Globalization: Frontiers of Governance*, edited by D. Held and M. Koenig-Archibugi (Cambridge–Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2003), 160–186.
71. "Polylateralism As the Way Forward: A Conversation with Pascal Lamy," Groupe d'études géopolitiques, 7 Dec. 2020, accessed 1 Oct. 2021, <https://geopolitique.eu/en/2020/12/07/polylateralism-as-the-way-forward-a-conversation-with-pascal-lamy/>.
72. F. Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), xvii.

### Abstract

A Historical Approach on Regionalism: Evolutions from Geography and Spatialization to Regional Alliance Systems

Regionalism and its origins were long studied as a method of cooperation and integration, mainly in the context of multilateral liberal networks and the promotion of globalization processes. Yet, regionalism changed nature as regions take a more active role in shaping global policies and addressing issues previously dealt with only in national frameworks or multilateral institutions. The paper follows the transformation of regional reasoning to full-scale institutionalized regionalism as a set of policies and economic measures adopted by actors (defined as active units) in the context of a changing global world order. In explaining the new regional dynamic, the text explores the theories of regional integration and moves toward a mixed methodological toolkit destined to expound the trends that govern regionalism today.

### Keywords

region, regionalism, regionalization, integration, geography, statecraft