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Regionalism

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Introduction

The start of 21st century affirms the importance and enduring relevance of regionalism in world politics. This contradicts the views of sceptics who, since 1945, have viewed the prospects of regionalism as limited, reversible or epiphenomenal. Its significance is evident in the vast array of regional organizations around the world touching all world regions, and the extent of their activity from peace operations and cyber security to human rights and environmental protection. It is evident also in the vast academic production related to its study (Sodebaum 2016; Parthenay 2019). However, the panorama of regionalism has changed: there is huge diversity in the practices of regionalism - from the longstanding European Union (EU) project, to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) or the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) spearheaded by China.

This chapter presents a critical overview and analysis of the state of contemporary regionalism – understood as the policies, ideas and practices of institutionalised cooperation between states (and non-state actors) within a geographically-defined region. It is informed by historical and global perspectives. It seeks to decentre and reposition studies of regionalism, previously dominated by Western models and theories, and relocate them in a wider global and longue durée context. As such it responds both to the general neglect of history in International Relations (Schroeder 1997) and the failure to think globally. A global perspective encourages us to think IR 'differently' (Tickner and Blaney 2012); to reach beyond Europe and the North Atlantic area, to 'embrace greater diversity, especially by recognizing the places, roles and contributions of "non-Western" peoples and societies' (Acharya 2016: 4). A long durée context in turn permits us rather to imagine regionalism as the 'sum' of all regionalisms – a set of overlapping processes and influences - rather than as a product of a particular time or place (Braudel, 2009). Such an approach is

particularly appropriate today as *old* regionalism has given way to not one, but multiple newer forms which, in offering alternative pathways, are quite distinctive according to their origins and context of their subsequent development.

The chapter first reviews regionalism's global progress taking a long view of its evolution and development. It then considers more closely the empirical evidence since the establishment of formal, charter-based organizations and their endorsement by the United Nations Charter in 1945. [1] In so doing it compares and evaluates different experiences across world regions picking out particular features of regionalism. It also discusses the evolving relationship between regional and universal bodies like the United Nations which, to some extent, provided a template and point of reference for regional practices. The chapter then links practice to theory and looks at the different theories and approaches that have characterised studies of regionalism, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses over time, but also suggesting where and how these need to change or adapt precisely to embrace a more inclusive or global approach and to better address the contemporary realities of the international system. Finally, it offers a summary overview and critique of the current state of the art in defence of the perspective offered.

The chapter is critical of the contemporary state of studies on regionalism which, despite notable efforts of some scholars (Acharya 2014; Telò 2015; Fawcett 2017), remains heavily European and Western-centred. This is not to deny the importance of the flagship European Union experience to the history and practice of regionalism, but to suggest it needs to be contextualised and considered alongside a wider set of global experiences. In the suggestive words of Chakrabarty (2007) Europe's experience needs to be 'provincialized'. This is particularly appropriate given that the European Union project, despite its many achievements, finds itself in a period of prolonged crisis which makes its promised travel elsewhere harder to imagine (Zielonka, 2016). Meanwhile, other regions once considered less central to discussions of regionalism, like Africa or Asia, have considerably expanded their own distinctive regional repertoires (Bach, 2016, Brennan and Murray, 2015). In parallel, it argues that the language of regionalism also needs to adapt to reflect newer practices in a fast-changing global order in which power has shifted away from a core of Western states and institutions and permits other world regions and regional

powers greater autonomy. As Yuen Khong (2019) simply puts it: power is shifting from the West to Asia. This power is not just material, it is also normative. As the narrative of liberal internationalism is progressively eroded, the West is no longer seen as the only or most important repository or source of ideas about regional order: the Global South mistrusts the West in 'matters of normative diffusion' (Telò et al 2015: 4). This is widely displayed in new regional practices. The 'Belt and Road Initiative' with key features of 'connectivity' rather than integration reveals this clearly, suggesting how early ideas of regional cooperation need to shift and adjust to take such changes into account. [2] While Asia provides an important and longstanding counter example to the European case, it is not alone in revealing diversity. Both Africa and Latin America also offer different and multiple variations on the regionalism theme, with security and sovereignty concerns topping regional agendas. The Middle East, where regionalism has been relatively underdeveloped, offers a less typical case of the limits to regionalism, revealing regional fragmentation or even failure (Fawcett 2019).

Histories of regionalism

The idea that regionalism and regional governance is important is hardly new, even if the term regionalism was not much used in an international relations context before 1945. The work of Karl Polanyi is one exception. (Dale 2016: 19) As long as states have existed, they have cooperated and competed in regional settings to their mutual advantage. Examples of customs unions (in Europe) or of 'concerts' or alliances based on mutual security concerns attest to this. However, regions have not much been studied historically in international relations (Fawcett, 1995) and any rigorous study and analysis of the mechanisms of regional cooperation was largely absent in the period before the Second World War. This is not because regionalism and regional awareness did not exist, simply that it was not measured or formalised beyond crude balance of power calculations in which European empires predominantly featured (Buzan 1991: 188). In addition, International Relations (IR) itself was a new subject whose analytical tools were still quite rudimentary. And though it was less the case with early IR, particularly the English School, ignorance or neglect of history has been a conspicuous feature of modern IR with its emphasis on testable hypotheses.

This is a pity, for much of what we need to know about contemporary regionalisms can be arguably be learned by considering their histories. In his seminal work on international organization, Inis Claude (1965:6), wrote how 'the historical approach is important first of all for the obvious reason that the present cannot be adequately understood, nor future prospects be reasonably be assessed, without a grasp of the tendencies and continuities which emerge from the past'. This statement seems so obvious, that it should scarcely need repeating. Yet it does need repeating because the absence or only thinnest veneer of history has led to some bad theorising. One example of this, relevant to this chapter, might be how early theorising about economic integration drew heavily upon the example of Europe where the conditions promoting such integration were arguably unique and simply could not translate to other parts of the world. Hence where other regions like Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean or Central and Latin America sought, or were encouraged to emulate the European experience they were deemed to have failed. Theories of integration, like many other theories, cannot easily travel across time and place, recalling Edward Said's critical essay 'Travelling Theory'. Said writes how 'a theory arrives as the result of specific historical circumstances… What happens to it when, in different circumstances and for new reasons, and under different circumstances, it is used again and again? What does this tell us about the theory and its limitations?' (Said 2000: 199). It is from this idea that my discussion proceeds and in historicizing regionalism I seek to reassert the importance of historical analysis without of course being 'blinded by history' as Claude also warns (1965: 6).

A long view

There are two ways of thinking about the history of regionalism and how it connects with the present global architecture (Fawcett, 2015). The first, a shorter historical perspective, is to consider the establishment and development of organizations – formal mechanisms with legal structures – since 1945, the second to take a longer view of regionalism and its related institutions and practices. The problem with this approach is that it is too closely associated with developments in Western Europe and the North Atlantic area and ignores the longer history and geography of regionalism which is essential to its study. The second, longer view, the longue durée, is particularly helpful as it offers important insights on the development of global regionalisms and opens up a wider world of regional possibilities. It

exposes particular cultural or social influences that informed the creation of regions and the crafting of common ideas and policies. Adopting such a perspective, which chimes with constructivist approaches in International Relations, is revealing in identifying those trends, policies and practices that are both global and also relevant to understanding the contemporary landscape.

The longue durée therefore teaches a number of things. First it highlights the theoretical point related to the concept of region itself, which cannot be restricted to time or place – regions are entities that wax and wane in response to different circumstances, economic political and social. A region becomes a region because a particular actor or set of actors decide it should exist to serve a particular purpose (Van Langenhove, 2011: 60). Long before we talked about regions and regionalism, employing today's international relations vocabulary, regions, 'regionness' or regional awareness or informal regionalism existed in multiple configurations and settings (Hettne and Soderbaum, 2000). Regions, whether comprising states, empires, proximate territories and their peoples, cooperated, collaborated and competed with each other for mutual benefit and advantage. Which ever starting point we take – the Holy Roman Empire, the Silk Road or the Peace of Westphalia – regions and their effects are everywhere.

If the concept of region is inherently flexible and malleable it evidently does not belong to any particular time of place. Let's start with a non-European example – the Americas in the nineteenth century when most (Spanish-speaking) South American states achieved independence. A strong sense of regionness existed prior to any formal organization. Here was a region bursting with regional ideas and projects. While notable in their diversity, American states, both north and south have over time shared differing degrees of American-ness. South American states have articulated particular visions of South or Latin America which stood in distinction to an emerging and eventually dominant Pan-American ideal which shadowed the birth of the Inter-American system (Pope-Atkins 1997: 455). For example, during independence struggles, as the Bolivarian vision of unity faded with the demise of Gran Colombia, other leaders conceived, less ambitiously, of regionalism as a source of unity and strength for the newly emerging Americas. As one prominent scholar and intellectual of the independence period, Andres Bello, wrote in 1849:

'Who could doubt the enormous interest of our young republics in strengthening their friendship, their mutual commercial interests and in offering each other all possible forms of support to promote their security and wellbeing? Between all the American republics there is an alliance formed by nature' (cited in Fawcett 2012: 694). He went on to call for 'similar institutions, a legislation that recognises substantially the same principles, a uniform international law, the cooperation of all states in preserving peace and administering justice in each' (ibid: 695).

So, from this period around the mid-19th century there existed a draft template for regionalism. It was not European, though early (South) American congresses did draw upon the European congress idea; nor was it Western, though the Americas did emulate and adopt Western practices to a degree, they also supplied their own innovations, particularly in relation to international law. It was necessarily an adaptation to local conditions and as such neither Western nor non-Western. And the South American case may be unusual in its timing - after all other still colonized regions were not free to organize their unions or associations - but it was not unusual in the message or content. Other regions, regional activists and leaders before and after independence had started to articulate similar aspirations of autonomy, of resistance to imperialism, or of strength in unity.

By the early 20th century, as the Pan-American movement was taking shape, fledgling Arab states, emerging first from the Ottoman Empire and later European colonialism similarly entertained ideas of Arab congresses or unions, a weak version of which surfaced later in the admittedly statist League of Arab States, and much more strongly in the United Arab Republic 1958-61. Arguably this Arabism has never disappeared, continuing to inform choices and manoeuvres between Arab states, particularly on questions relating to the state of Israel (Barnett 1998). Similarly, around the same time, and long before the formal ending of colonial rule, pan-Africanism and ideas of African Unity, later associated with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) were gaining ground. They were aired at the pan-African congress convened in Paris in 1919 by WE Dubois (Murithi 2005: 2), where Africans in the diaspora combined to combat colonialism and racism. Pan-Asianism also had a 19th century root. Though associated with Japanese imperialism of the 1930s, its earlier form conceived Asianism as a form of regional solidarity, a defence against external powers

(Hotta, 2008: 2-3). While none of these pan-ideas, like the loose pan-Islamic ideas that later informed the creation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the 1960s, translated directly into formal institutions – all of which would emerge as state based and sovereignty preserving - the languages and intentions of the pan-movements would be captured in subsequent decades of regional ideas and practices. They sought, above all, to preserve and defend the independence and autonomy of their members and nurture their collective interests and identities. Such ideas are still present today, forming part of a wider post-colonial critique of still-hierarchical world of global regionalism. One cannot discuss the state of African cooperation or the African Peace and Security Architecture absent some notion of African solidarity. Even in the face of a widely acknowledged wrong doing by member states, the call for 'African solutions to African problems' remains strong. And in Latin America, notions of solidarity in the recent wave of so-called post-hegemonic regionalism (for example the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas or UNASUR) speak directly if somewhat crudely back to the post-independence solidarity in the face of imperialism and the hegemony of Western powers (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012).

The above section focused deliberately on some non-European examples to illustrate the global point. Europe for its part, notwithstanding the impact of destructive wars, had its own templates for regional cooperation in the form of customs unions, security alliances or concerts of powers (Mattli, 1999). The Congress of Vienna in 1815 gave rise to the so-called European Concert, not a formal organization but one which represented something of a 'dry run' for European cooperation or what Claude has called 'board meetings' for European states (Claude, 1965: 21). The Prussian Zollverien was an early small-scale customs union for pre-unification German states. The late 19th century saw further unsuccessful efforts to unite European states prior to the advent of a devastating war. So, whether in Europe or the wider world, ideas of region, regional security, common purpose and order both preceded as well as flowed from the existence of formal organizations post-1945. Even if states in a given region would ultimately reject unions or maximalist formulas, the ideas underlying such unions have continued to inform practice of states and non-state actors. Consider, for example, the appeal of so-called Islamic State to a wider, if heavily distorted, pan-Islamic ideal. This is why an historical approach is particularly helpful to understanding contemporary regionalism.

‘Old’ regionalism

So, there was ‘regionalism before regionalism’ and its reach was truly global – a world of global regionalisms before the arrival of formal regionalism as fact and subject of study after 1945. And when we arrive at 1945 and after, the world of regionalism – represented by a growing bundle of acronyms – immediately becomes more familiar [see Table 1]. This was the ‘apogee’ of internationalism (Sluga, 2013: 79) and, despite the views of sceptics, regionalism was part of it. It was also defined by formal as opposed to more informal institutions and practices. These were organizations with charters and constitutions embedded in international law (Fawcett, 2016). The Second World War, much more emphatically than the first sanctioned international organizations as keepers of peace. And though the aspiration was *world* government, the UN Charter, notably in Chapter VIII articles 51-4, provided formal space for regional bodies to act under UN auspices (and the UN Charter also included provision for five regional commissions of which the Economic Commission for Latin America was one important example). This was the result of powerful influences demanding regional representation; not only leaders like Winston Churchill in the Global North, but also voices from the Americas and Arab countries in the Global South. Despite regionalism’s dark side, as revealed in the 1930s, in facilitating the ambitions of strong regional powers, this newly minted voluntary regionalism was now hailed as potential partner in the provision of international order. Indeed, the European project was conceived precisely to contain and regulate any such ambitions – for example through integrating the German and French industrial sectors in the European Coal and Steel Community - and constituted an integral part of a post-war architecture.

Beyond Europe, however, there were multiple opportunities for regionalism to develop provided by the globalization of sovereignty, as former empires became independent states and that sovereignty was legitimised in international law and institutions under the UN umbrella. So, whether Arab states in the LAS, African states in the OAU, or South Asian States in ASEAN (South American states already enjoyed independence, but their membership of the OAS also served a legitimising function) to name the most prominent examples, regionalism took off becoming an integral part of this new international era.

Regional organizations in this early Cold War period were characterised by a number of key features. First, the so-called multipurpose organizations in the above cluster operated under the loose UN umbrella collecting the interests of the newly emerging powers. Though focused on promoting and defending the sovereignty and independence of their members, and indeed completing decolonisation in some cases, they quickly became part of a wider Cold War dynamic being pushed and pulled by superpower influences. Attempts to resist such influences and to improve room for manoeuvre, led also to the articulation of a wider and complementary non-aligned stance among southern states, a form of 'Third World' regionalism (Fawcett, 1995: 14-15). Second, security alliances, like NATO for their part, were driven by dominant states, notably the US, and resisted any UN encroachment, but attempted to implant a security structure within a specific geographic area – CENTO and SEATO are two examples. Finally, in regard to attempts at economic cooperation, the European Economic Community (EEC), founded under the Treaty of Rome in 1957, undoubtedly offered the most important model and source of emulation. From an initial membership of six states the EEC would quickly develop and expand, building a set of institutions and practices which led to a unique experiment in widening and deepening integration, expanding its membership and activities over the years with an aspiration to develop greater union.

Table 1: Early, first wave regionalisms

- League of Arab States LAS (1945)
- Organization of American States OAS (1945)
- European Economic Community EEC (1957)
- Organization of African Unity OAU (1963)
- Association of South East Asian Nations ASEAN (1967)
- Pacific Islands Forum (1971)
- Regional security alliances: NATO/SEATO/CENTO/ANZUS
- Customs unions/FTAs: EFTA/CARICOM/CACM/NAFTA/PAFTA/LAFTA

Despite the global presence of regional groups of all three types and the blurring of their tasks over time, there was a clear hierarchy of regionalisms in this period. Western Europe evidently led the way on economic cooperation, while NATO, another Cold War construct

on security cooperation. And the conditions giving rise to these two groupings were quite context specific (as were the theories underpinning them). NATO depended on the willingness of the US to underwrite European security within a wider Western alliance. The EEC, in turn, while depending upon the US security umbrella, was both a rational response to the depleted economic and political (and post-imperial) conditions in which European states found themselves after WW2; and an emotional response to a region marked by war and a desire to escape new cycles of violence. Though developing country organizations attempted to emulate such projects, particularly those embracing the idea of free trade areas or customs unions, they fared less well amid very different start up conditions. There was low-level cooperation, involving regular meetings and the issuing of statements and declarations but not much integration or security cooperation. Caught between the pressures of bipolarity and the challenges of state and nation building, newer states necessarily played subordinate roles in the emerging institutional architecture. Their organizations were rather weak, their resources few and reliant on the commitment of more powerful members and external partners.

The above description, however, takes a rather narrow view of the possibilities of non-Western regionalism in the early decades after 1945. Beneath these shallow episodes of cooperation lay another story which has received less attention. Most non-European regionalisms did not aspire to integration as such; rather regionalism was a means of strengthening weak states and regimes, of enhancing sovereignty and self-reliance. Further, as one early scholar of regionalism noted, the conditions of different regions were so varied that they should be focussed on finding solutions to special problems of local interest addressing poverty or local conflicts for example. Those problems would necessarily look different from region to region (Panikkar, 1991).

Thus, the perception of regionalism as a Western-driven project was always somewhat deceiving, one driven by the main protagonists of the post-1945 international order and the theories underpinning it. As the Cold War progressed, it became clear that first, Europe was not the only place to look for regionalism and second in explaining regionalism it was important to take a wider theoretical and analytical perspective than those in the conventional IR repertoire. ASEAN provided an early example of this with 'soft' or informal

rather than 'hard' regionalism as a dominant feature (Foot 1995: 229). These distinctions became more apparent in the decades that followed the end of the Cold War. And, though the supporting theories of inter-governmentalism, neo-functionalism and institutionalism (as discussed below) provided a useful base for understanding certain aspects of regionalism, they failed to capture its wider horizons which included emotional and ideological reasons for cooperation which often transcended the purely material or rational explanations. Why did Third World states cohere, however imperfectly, around certain sets of ideas and practices? They did so because they sought to distinguish themselves from superpower blocs, finding strength in admittedly looser forms of identity or group politics.

The continuing progress of regionalism, whether as an idea, a countervailing force against dominant power blocs, a complement to the UN, or simply as a way of addressing local problems was evident, if suppressed, throughout the Cold War and accelerated thereafter. It is notable that the longer standing multipurpose institutions all survived and went on to expand and reform their activities; some even engaged in early peacekeeping operations which are often unrecognised – the OAU in Chad (1981) or the LAS in Lebanon (1976) for example. Many trade-promoting groups faltered – the early LAFTAs PAFTAs and NAFTAs - though some were later reconfigured. Outside Europe, the US-promoted security pacts proved less robust, with CENTO and SEATO disappearing by the late 1970s, but this did not mean the end of security regionalism. Quite the contrary: ASEAN, for example, was founded in 1967, partly in response to the security challenges of the Vietnam War. It never followed a Western template. And it was not alone in attempting a different type of project based on looser consensus building – the ASEAN way - rather than integration. ECOWAS, founded in 1975, while promising economic cooperation, also responded to the changing security environment in West Africa; so did the South African Development Community (1980), in managing relationships with pre- and post-apartheid South Africa. Another example was the GCC founded in 1982 after Iranian revolution and onset of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) revealed the security vulnerabilities among the Gulf states which demanded broad alignment on defence and security matters. These types of organizations certainly borrowed ideas of security and economic cooperation and indeed collaborated with Western states and institutions in inter-regional projects but also advanced their own local agendas, setting them on quite different pathways as future events would show.

Meanwhile, the European project itself following its initial successes faltered in the global economic down turn of the 1970s and then recovered strongly with the 1980s with a wave of new developments that progressed beyond economics into political and security cooperation culminating in the Single European Act (SEA) adopted in 1986 and the subsequent Maastricht Treaty (1992).

'New' regionalism

Developments in Western Europe, alongside the expansion of global regionalism, were partly responsible for the emergence of the second wave or so-called *new* regionalism which began around the ending of the Cold War period. It was furthered by the greater empowerment of international organizations, notably the UN, whose activities had been suppressed by the Cold War, but also the general effects of globalization on trade and security issues widely conceived. Such global processes might have slowed down or discouraged regionalism, but instead they served to advance it. The uneven and unequal pace of globalisation required local management, while the need for UN to share pressing security burdens meant that regionalism was called upon to take on ever more significant roles. As Weiss (1998: xii) notes, the overextension of the UN helped to revive the 'logic behind Chapter VIII'. However, also important, was the move from away from bipolarity to what would become a more multipolar order which, inevitably, provided greater space for regional level action and leadership. Commenting on this trend, Barry Buzan (1991: 208) wrote how 'the shift away from bipolarity towards a more polycentric power structure at the system level cannot but have profound consequences for regional security'. Hence the globalization of regionalism continued apace as the new demands of the post-Cold War era were superimposed on the older demands of regions for greater autonomy and security independence within the structures of global governance.

In terms of institutional architecture, the new regionalism provided multiple examples of how old and new organizations could respond to contemporary challenges. In practical terms this meant both the creation of new institutions and the expansion of memberships, tasks and accompanying charter changes in pre-existing ones. The changes were substantial and are covered in the extensive literature on the global politics of new regionalism (Fawcett and Hurrell 1995; Gamble and Payne 1996; Mansfield and Milner

1991; Farrell, Hettne and Van Langenhove 2005). One example of a brand new institution was MERCOSUR (1991), designed to address the desire for cooperation among a southern tier of Latin American states and to balance the pressures of hemispheric regionalism posed by the older OAS but also the new NAFTA. In Africa the OAU was transformed into the AU, fitted with a reformed constitution and tasked with a raft of new initiatives to promote both development and security of which NEPAD was one example. Peace operations, some partnered with the UN, became a familiar feature of a number of new and old regional organizations in Africa and elsewhere, including the reformed EU and newer pan-European organizations like the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CIC 2006-10). In Asia, new institutions evolved both around and beyond ASEAN like the ARF and APEC. And, following the events of 9/11 and the subsequent wave of terrorist attacks on major cities around the world, counter-terrorism measures were widely adopted by a range of organizations including the SCO with its provision for a Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure based in Tashkent.

Space does not permit an extensive review of all the different organizations, projects and ideas encompassed by the new era of regionalism [see Table 2]. There was continuity as well as change: many of the tendencies already apparent in the first wave of regionalisms would emerge much more clearly after the end of the Cold War as more mature regional states emerging from colonialism and superpower influences were better able to articulate local agendas and priorities. They were not completely free from external pressures: if bipolarity was a thing of the past, there was still considerable influence exercised by the US in certain strategic settings, particularly in regions like the Middle East; the same was true of Russia in Central Asia, and increasingly China in the Asia-Pacific. But in general, systemic pressures were reduced and this was a period of empowerment for regions and regional actors.

Table 2: New, second wave regionalisms (post-1980)

- Europe: EU/OSCE/CIS
- Middle East: GCC/AMU/ICO
- North/South America: NAFTA/MERCOSUR/ALBA/UNASUR/PACIFIC ALLIANCE
- Africa: AU/ECOWAS/SADC/IGAD/CEMAC

- Asia: APEC/ARF/APT+3/SCO/BRI

Reporting some institutional facts and figures about regionalism belies its wider agenda which sought to transcend older understandings of what was mainly state-based cooperation with a more complex and multifaceted view of regionalism in an age of globalization incorporating sub- trans- and supra-state levels of analysis. This New Regionalism Approach (NRA) advanced in particular by Björn Hettne and colleagues (1999) constituted an approach rather than a theory but it was dynamic, eclectic and progressive, embracing a far wider range of actors than hitherto. Rather than fixing on states as the main drivers of regional projects, NRA literature invoked social movements and civil society activism as well as pointing to transregional and sub-regional patterns. In that sense it was embedded in new thinking about globalization but retaining the regional perspective in imagining how regions would play an important complementary, if not defining part in sustaining global order. The interwar work of Karl Polyani was once more invoked in imagining how a second 'Great Transformation' would occur as a result of these interactions between globalization and new regionalizing forces (Sodebaum 2016: 51-2).

Undoubtedly there was much promise in the innovative approach and plural methods proposed by the NRA. For example, it opened an important space for more critical theories, including feminist thought since NRA evidently picked up on social changes in which women were key players. Though evidently global in reach, like earlier approaches to regionalism it particularly drew on the reinvigorated European experience and that of a presumed post-Westphalian order with the Western world at its core. Indeed, Europe itself was, again, the focus of many studies of new regionalism and inter-regionalism which was concerned with the export or diffusion of the 'new' European model in particular (Telò, 2007). Hence the difficulties of the excessively European or at least Western-centred focus of earlier studies were not fully overcome in the newer approaches.

Further, the promise of new regionalism, or at least the NRA, was never quite fulfilled. While it rightly pointed to regionalism as a global process (Farrell, Hettne and Van Langenhove, 2005), taking place in multiple settings and at multiple levels, like some earlier models of regionalism its travel was not inevitable or linear. Neither globalization, nor the

predicted political responses to it at the local level played out as anticipated, particularly when it came to the diminution of state authority. Rather the NRA proved just to be one more approach among many. And even as scholars continued to focus on the evidence supplied by new regionalism across a variety of issue areas – the environment, education and human rights are some examples - there was no obvious move 'beyond the state' or towards the decisive empowerment of civil society and transnational forces in the management and moderation of globalization. Despite the delegation of certain regulatory powers to private actors (in the financial sector for example), states were still the main gatekeepers of regionalism, particularly on high politics and security questions as the events post 9/11 showed. Indeed, as the 21st century progressed, and the contours of the 'liberal' international order receded, the tendency was towards a reassertion rather than a diminution of state sovereignty and authority which impacted directly on ongoing processes of regionalism. This became visible in the challenges facing European institutions (for example in response to financial crisis post-2008, or issues of migration post-Arab Spring), but also in a raft of newer organizations particularly in Asia, but also Africa and Latin America in their responses to new security challenges in which sovereignty first formulas prevailed. This did not stop both expansion and, in some cases, deepening of regional cooperation, but it once more exposed considerable diversity of practice, particularly where 'rising' or emerging powers were concerned. For such powers, regionalism was a way to affirm authority and legitimacy on the local and international stage. This point is reviewed in the final, concluding section.

A theoretical perspective

Any theoretical perspective on regionalism evidently needs to map on to and help marshall and explain the evidence assembled above. A single workable theory cannot be designed to fit all regionalisms since that would be to ignore the effects of geography, history, ideology and a host of other factors unique to time and place. While modern regionalism has been compartmentalised by theories explaining the European Union, the North Atlantic area or the West in general, these do not export well. Nor has the promise of new regionalism yet translated into any workable theory. Thus, there is a need to be analytically flexible, to

engage with and deploy theories selectively to better acknowledge and accommodate the diversity of practice (Sil and Katzenstein 2010: 411)

Regions and regionalism have been studied theoretically by identifying those factors which explain the formation of regions and the politics of regional cooperation that contribute to increasing the security and welfare of member states. The first step is to identify the region in question. This a task that scholars often describe as an obstacle to understanding regionalism, though it should not detain us here. First, as already noted above, the concept of region itself is a highly subjective one, it does not follow any fixed set of criteria except that regions are evidently formed by a group of actors who design them to serve a particular purpose. They are, therefore, in the Wendtian sense what states (and other actors) make of them (Wendt 1992). All operate within systemic power constraints but also within local political and social environments.

However, since regions are inherently subjective and malleable, it follows that theories of regionalism will need to be similarly flexible to accommodate the diversity of any given regional project. But not all theories of regionalism have accommodated this basic fact meaning that many simply do not fit beyond a given locale. This was case with early, or first wave theorising where indicators for economic integration in particular, were sought and found wanting, particularly in less developed regions. But even the NRA did not succeed in capturing the multiplicity of regionalisms.

Scholars have contributed many theoretical explanations, often identified with different phases or waves of regionalism, contributing to a significant body of theory, from those relating to early customs unions and economic integration to more general theorising about the various processes underpinning regionalism (Hurrell 1995; Hettne 1999; Sodebaum 2016). The task, as stated by Haas (1970: 610), is to understand why states, acting voluntarily, seek to mix and merge, even to the extent of surrendering their sovereignty. The most famous of these theories – notably neo-functionalism and inter-governmentalism – both closely related to phases of European integration - helped to provide explanations for the particular conditions under which European states and their leaders chose to cooperate after WW2 and how such cooperation fostered the creation of new institutions

(Haas, 1958; Hoffman 1964). Supplementary theories which emphasise the primacy of domestic politics and elite decision making in determining policy choices have enhanced and refined this agenda (Moravscik 1998). Again, such models throw light on different regional experiences, whether Europe's moves to incremental integration, or a 'presidential' model of regionalism as applied to MERCOSUR which highlights regime type and security concerns within an inter-governmental framework (Malamud 2014).

Other region-specific theories explore the concept of a security complex or security community to explain patterns of war and peace, particularly the conditions needed to secure the latter (Buzan 1991; Adler). However, beyond such categories, all theories of regionalism draw on a wider body of IR theory, notably the neorealist and neoliberal variants which both understand episodes of international cooperation as driven by the pursuit of rational self-interest, but with liberalism identifying those general conditions under which states and their representatives will find it in their interests to cooperate and showing how institutions can facilitate and sustain such cooperation (Baldwin, 1993). Clearly both theories are at work in many examples of regionalism, and both inter-governmentalism and neo-functionalism are subsets of these theories. Self-interest and state security will often trump any cooperative agenda as the downgrading of NAFTA to the USMCA, or the fracture within the GCC reveal - but institutional design and stickiness can also be invoked in exploring the development and longevity of many regionalisms. This is why more mature regional bodies tend to survive and adapt to new challenges. And here historical institutionalism can also help understanding by revealing how institutions, operating in different contexts can lock in and sustain certain practices and patterns of cooperation over time (Pierson, 2004). Though this approach has not been much used in understanding regionalism, its attention to institutional cultures, path dependence and turning points, has obvious potential.

Beyond these mainstream theories, constructivism offers a powerful competing or complementary claim that states' (and therefore regions') interests are not fixed but shaped by different social environments. As Ruggie (1998: 33) puts it: 'the building blocs of international reality are ideational as well as material'. The constructivist claim is clearly an important one. This chapter has underlined throughout how ideas, working alongside

interests, have informed different regional projects over time. And this makes good sense when one considers the inputs into say, a pan-African, pan-Arab or Third Worldist vision of cooperation – inputs that are carried through to today's regionalism. If constructivism fails to provides a complete explanation, it is a necessary accompaniment to rational approaches particularly in allowing for distinctive regional outcomes according to time and place.

Beyond these theories and their application, there are a number of approaches that may be usefully employed to explore regionalism as a global phenomenon. The NRA agenda, with its strengths and limitations, has already been discussed in the section on new regionalism above. It offers a range of perspectives and insights on the new trends in regionalism that emerged during the 1990s which critique and advance earlier, mainly state based understandings of regional cooperation. Critical approaches more generally also take issue with dependence on dominant theories and models of International Relations and these can be usefully applied to regionalism. For example, the form, content and purpose of a given region, may be heavily overdetermined by theories which focus on material forces. In a developing country context, regions were often defined by imperial interests as post-colonial scholars point out. Feminist scholars, in turn, rightly critique the heavily gendered language and sources of mainstream IR with its focus on conflict and competition between states. This critique can equally be applied to regionalism where, despite contribution from the NRA, the transformative potential of regional governance in the area of women's rights remains understudied (Van Der Vleuten 2016: 420). Indeed, it is striking how little feminist scholarship has been applied specifically to field of regionalism. Global IR forms part of this critique as it demands that the object of study in IR should not only be powerful states and actors but also weaker states, middle or emerging powers, transnational and non-state actors from different parts of the world. Here the works of those who call for theories to speak to a more global IR agenda are also important (Qin, 2007).

For example, a critique of approaches to regionalism in the Middle East might suggest first that the region itself was externally defined (by Western powers) and therefore not the relevant referent for analysis; second that the focus on the state is anyway unhelpful because Middle East states are new and ultimately quite fragile constructs; third, and related, that broad cross-cutting ideas or identities such as Arabism or Islam are powerful

alternative guides to action which means that cross-regional identities may trump and transcend state identities. (Bilgin 2010) This chimes with the general critique in this paper that non-Western regionalisms need to be considered on their own terms. A broad consideration of critical approaches need not imply, however, that the entire language of IR and regionalism need fundamental reform but that necessary adjustment should be made to arrive at a more balanced and therefore global and representative perspective. (Seth 2011: 167-69) This again, demands an analytically eclectic approach to making sense of the diversity of regionalism or the overall messiness of regional projects. No one viewing Middle East today can ignore either the pull of ideas, or the evident fracturing of regional consensus around competing power blocs for whom the region is a useful mechanism in the balance of power.

Conclusion: the prospects of global regionalism

In an early and still much cited work on international regionalism, Joseph Nye warned that regionalism was in danger of becoming just another fashion, or 'fad' whose importance could quickly wane (Nye, 1968). In a general sense, he was wrong; regionalism has remained firmly on the international agenda, but its contours have greatly changed alongside the changing shape and characteristics of the international system. Certainly, the current profile of regionalism, despite some familiar features, does not match that of the first wave. Regionalisms display extraordinary diversity: 'Regional orders are made of multiple details, and changing contingencies, of security dilemmas and economic interdependence, of relations between democracies and autocracies, or war and peace' (Solingen 1998: xi).

Against the backdrop of history, practice and accompanying theories over time, which lessons and conclusions can be drawn about the state contemporary regionalisms? The historical analysis of comparative cases discussed here reveals a number of common features. First, that regionalism is a global process, one which both defies and extends earlier Eurocentric logics and approaches. Second, the demand for regionalism has increased over time: quantitatively there is more regionalism, more regional organizations

and more regionally focused-governance, but in the multiple and overlapping waves that have accompanied regional processes we have not seen any clear linear or unidirectional trends.

The above point is illustrated in recent practice. By the early 21st century it was possible to speak of Africa, Latin America and Asia as dynamic sites of regionalism revealing new regional architectures and practices. However, the picture is contradictory. Amid this process of globalising regionalism recent experience has also checked and revised assumptions about the so-called new regional wave – particularly in its heartlands. On the one hand, the EU has faced what is arguably its greatest crisis since its establishment in the 1950s, a crisis which threatens to undermine its original vision. The financial crisis of 2008 sparked off a crisis throughout the Eurozone, which has challenged the integrity of the institution, as exemplified by the threats of Greek and British exit and subsequent issues over immigration policy. Scepticism over the European project as model and expression of the regional idea has been widespread and infectious. On the other hand, and not unrelated to the problems faced by Europe, the global project of regionalism, as well as its relationship with multilateralism, has also been challenged. In Latin America, for example, the multiplication of overlapping (and contradictory) regionalisms led scholars to ask if regionalism has over-extended itself devaluing its early content and purpose (Malamud 2012). The Middle East, for its part, despite some promising signs around the early events of the Arab Spring, provides evidence of a near failure of regionalism with both the flagship LAS and the trimmer, overtly more efficient GCC both experiencing serious fractures leading to virtual paralysis (Fawcett, 2019). In Asia and Africa regional initiatives proceed apace but on quite different terms and conditions as the Belt and Road Initiative reveals. In the words of the World Bank, the BRI 'aims to strengthen infrastructure, trade, and investment links between China and some 65 other countries' (World Bank 2018). But this is a far cry from early regional integration models (Ferdinand, 2016). More generally all regionalisms face the particular challenges of an era which has witnessed a new 'nationalist turn to global politics' (Paasi Morrison and Jones, 2018). This is exemplified not only in parts of Europe, including the UK, but in the US as shown by the policies of the administration of Donald Trump, which has withdrawn from the TPP and downgraded NAFTA. In such settings there has been a short-term move away from deeper cooperation.

The purpose here has not been to celebrate or reify one type of regionalism, but to highlight its diversity both and present and when viewed across the longue durée. And, in making the case for global regionalisms, and taking them seriously, one should not, of course, lose sight of the historical uniqueness or Europe or its continuing potential for travel. In writing a defence of Europe and asking in the sub-title: 'Can the European project be saved?' Loukas Tsoukalis reminds us of the remarkable transformation that Europe underwent in the 20th century. That experience remains a model and inspiration but today is just one element in the wider stable of regionalisms, hence the emphasis in this chapter on the need to move beyond Europe and beyond new/old regionalism dichotomy to reflect changing realities.

Further, we cannot isolate a single theoretical approach. That is because regional organizations were designed by different actors at different times and in different places to serve different purposes. Some have spoken directly to local security concerns; others were prompted by the perceived benefits of economic cooperation; still others saw regionalism as a way of reinforcing state sovereignty or autonomy or a means of balancing strong external powers. As a result, we have seen regions and their institutions and purposes wax and wane from the age of empires, the Cold War period right through to the present. The current crisis surrounding European and multilateral institutions and in an era of nationalism and populism reveals this. Both have impacted upon different regional projects but also illustrate the changing dynamics and logics of regionalism.

This chapter has argued that in moving beyond the categories of old and new regionalism a global and integrated or synthetic view of regionalism is required. In the historiography of the Cold War, a 'post-revisionist' synthesis suggested a move away from old or 'orthodox' and new or 'revisionist' explanations of Cold War origins towards a synthesis of existing views and positions, drawing in a wider range of explanations and actors (Gaddis 1983; Fawcett 2016). This exercise, in turn, required a more flexible theoretical approach than offered by mainstream IR. Such an approach can be usefully applied to regionalism: it is well-established in the lexicon of IR, yet the evidence and theories devised to explain it still focus unduly on the experience of core states on dominant explanations for cooperation.

Björn Hettne, one of the fathers of the new regionalism project wrote a piece in 2005 called 'Beyond new regionalism'. In it he addressed a number of the questions facing the regional project after the end of the Cold War. His findings were inconclusive, except in one sense: he suggested there is a need to do more both to critique the old/new dichotomy and advance and refine the newer formulations of regionalism. In other words, regionalism was a work in progress. Endorsing this approach, I seek to go beyond the Hettne appraisal by adding in still further reflections and perspectives on the current state of the art, but with a particular focus on global regionalism in a 21st world order. Hettne still envisaged regionalism as sitting between the two contrasting world order models, represented by the EU and the US. The argument here is that there are more models on offer. As such I take 'new' regionalism a step further by placing it in global and critical perspective and accepting the need for analytical flexibility. In doing so I drew upon the historical pathways and practices of regionalism to illustrate how any view of contemporary regionalism requires such a synthetic approach.

This is, arguably neither new nor old, neither western nor non-western but the sum or synthesis of already existing regionalisms (Braudel: 2009: 182) plus the new dynamics provided by a changing world order where 'liberal' institutionalism is no longer the yardstick for measuring regional cooperation. The Belt and Road Initiative is one illustration of this; so is the SCO or the sovereignty-enhancing features of cooperation in Latin America or the Middle East. The notion that regionalism would or should follow a prescribed path to greater integration with both local and international spill-overs, as early theorists predicted, has been repeatedly challenged. The mixing and merging of states in common projects, identified by early theorists remains as important as ever but just how states choose to mix and merge cannot be subject to any single template. In a world of global regionalisms 'integration' is but one possible pathway among many.

A recent Oxford handbook on *Comparative Regionalism* (Borzel and Risse 2016) concluded on an upbeat note: 'Three cheers for comparative regionalism'. The handbook is indeed comprehensive in its content and reach, it draws on multiple approaches and perspectives to regionalism. In respect of capturing the full extent of the progress of global regionalism over the long term and encouraging the move away from Eurocentrism it may be that three

cheers are one too many. Regionalism has come a very long way since the early days when both practice and IR theory supported the quite narrow notion of a particular type of regionalism and accompanying theoretical models. This chapter, by combining a global and longue durée approach, has aimed to widen our empirical and theoretical perspectives still further.

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Notes

1 The League of Nations Covenant included a single provision for 'regional understandings' in Article 21.

2 See: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative