Regions and Regionalism

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Introduction

This chapter considers the meaning and significance of regions and regionalism and their roles in international politics today. It does so by first considering how regionalism as a concept has come to be defined and understood, and by exploring its characteristics and contours in European and non-European settings. The chapter then tracks the major developments in the history and theory of regionalism. It is particularly concerned to illustrate regionalism as a global process, one that is not uniquely associated with any single regional experience. In that sense it seeks to move beyond a commonly held Eurocentric bias in studies of regionalism and consider regional processes in Latin America, Africa and Asia. In highlighting its contemporary significance it qualifies the notion that regionalism has experienced exponential growth since the end of the Cold War – a point brought sharply into focus by the continuing crisis of the European Union. Rather it argues that regionalism today needs to be understood as part of a complex architecture of multilateralism.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

The question under discussion in this chapter is the role of world regions and regionalism – understood as regional organizations, policies and understandings - in international politics. Regions and regionalism undoubtedly present themselves as important aspects of international politics in the 21st century, as evidenced by the large number of regional associations in existence around the world and their increasingly diverse range of activities. Most states of the world, with few exceptions, are members of at least half a dozen regional organizations. A brief

snapshot of the world of regionalism reveals multiple examples of economic cooperation in the form of preferential or free trade areas; security regionalism in the form of non-proliferation treaties or peace operations; as well a political cooperation over environmental, labour or human rights issues. Cooperation in such areas is visible in regions all over the world, from the South Pacific, to the North Atlantic; from Scandinavia to Southern Africa.

However, against this picture of proliferation, one that has caused authors to speak of the 'global politics of regionalism' (Farrell, Hettne and Langenhove, 2005) lies a more complex multilateral architecture of governance. Regional association is part of a shifting web of overlapping, formal and informal multilateral structures involving states and non-state actors. Claims that the world has become more 'regionalized', particularly since the Cold War's ending, or that the state or multilateral organization has given way to the greater power and attractiveness of regionalism have proved unfounded or premature. Even the flagship of regional integration, the European Union, whose early promise was reflected in the slogan 'ever closer union' has floundered amid economic and political crises of such magnitude, that in 2016, its very future lies in doubt. At best we can argue, uncontroversially, that regionalism has come to occupy a very significant place in international politics but that place is fluid and contested and one that is shared by a range of other actors and organizations, both regional and global, state and non-state.

The above point is well illustrated by the multiple and overlapping global and regional associations of states (and non-state actors) which exist today, some competitive, some complementary. Any given Latin American state, for example, will be part of the United Nations family the Organization of American States (OAS), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), possibly also the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), or World Trade Organization (WTO) but also a host of smaller associations, whether the Andean Community (CAN), or the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur) to name just a few possibilities. Colombia, in 2016, was a member of twelve different regional organizations alone. These different associations reflect the varied interests, identities and personalities of states, and the importance states accord to regional as opposed to wider multilateral structure will vary according to issue area and circumstances. Indeed states will

cherry pick from a menu of regional and global organizations depending on the issue area.

In International Relations regions are best understood as interdependent geographical units, often states; and the related politics of regionalism, is therefore those common policies and understandings agreed upon by members of these units. Regionalization is a related but distinct term often used to refer to less formal, often undirected economic and social activity within a particular region; it may precede or flow from regionalism itself (Fawcett, 2005: 24-25; Hurrell, 1995: 40-41). Although many different definitions and interpretations of regions, regionalism and regionalization have been offered over the years, with adjustments made to incorporate more informal or formal processes, state and non-state actors, this basic formula which draws in part on the early work of Joseph Nye on comparative regionalism has stood the test of time and is probably still the one most cited or drawn upon by subsequent authors (Nye, 1968: vii).

Though regions and regionalisms cannot be isolated to any particular historical period – within any imperial or state system a region or regions may enjoy particular significance - they have featured most prominently in international politics since 1945 (Fawcett 1995). This is unsurprising, partly because of the newness of the discipline: International Relations did not exist as a subject of independent study until the early 20th century and at that time international regions were little theorized as a separate category of analysis, though their potential ordering properties had started to come under scrutiny in the works of a scholar like Karl Polanyi (Dale, 2015: 19). It is also unsurprising given the growth of international organization in this period and the parallel concerns of powerful states in promoting their own regional interests after the Second World War. British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, for example, proposed that any international organization should be underpinned by 'regional councils', arguing that 'it was only the countries directly affected by a dispute that could be expected to apply themselves with sufficient vigour to effect a settlement (Kimball, 1984: 225). This idea – though it has led to the criticism of partiality - has influenced the processes of regionalism since. Informed by debates around the foundation of the United Nations (UN) and by the parallel development of first Arab, American, European, and somewhat later, African and Asian institutions, their importance, whether in measured in

terms of economic, political or social activity, grew steadily throughout the second half of the twentieth century.

While the Cold War was seen as a brake on regionalism and international organization generally, because cooperation tended to revolve around the two Cold War blocs, the ending of the Cold War was viewed as an important turning point in the development and expansion of regionalism, ushering in a period dubbed 'new regionalism'. In removing the effects of Cold War bipolarity, it further empowered regional actors, giving them more autonomy while strengthening international organization generally. In this way the Cold War's ending, together with the processes of globalization, accelerated the rise of today's rising powers, helping to complete a process of maturation since independence, and making them increasingly important regional actors. As Barry Buzan commented in respect of regional security patterns: 'The shift away from bipolarity towards a more polycentric power structure at the system level cannot but have profound consequences for regional security' (Buzan, 1991: 208). The growth and development of regional organization, though uneven, has continued into the 21st century, as witnessed by the increase in their numbers; their vastly expanded range of activities; and the growth of scholarly interest in the practices of an increasingly diverse group of regional and cross regional organizations (Borzel and Risse: 623-30).

Regional organizations, and their names suggest this, are usually based upon geographical regions: the Organization of American States, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), South Pacific Forum, mostly comprising neighbouring, or at least proximate states, they need not be strictly geographical constructions. Organizations based upon other common variables that transcend geographical regions like a shared imperial history and trading patterns (in the case of the Commonwealth) or religion (in the case of the Islamic Conference Organization - ICO) are also referred to as regional; so is the cross-regional North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Further, they need not necessarily be composed only of states. One feature of regional developments since the ending of the Cold War, and studies of so-called 'new' regionalism associated with this period attest, is precisely that the state may not be the only or even necessarily the most important actor

in designing and driving regional policies: 'On the contrary, the new regionalism is characterized by its multidimensionality, complexity, fluidity and non-conformity, and by the fact that is involves a variety of state and non-state actors, who often come together in rather informal multi-actor coalitions' (Sodebaum 2003: 1-2). One example of non-state based regionalism is the phenomenon of the cross-border region, or growth triangle, reflecting increased interactions across state borders (Perkmann and Sum, 2002). Another example of the increasing role of non-state actors in regional processes is the influence that NGOs have in helping to define regional agendas, whether in respect of human rights (as in Southeast Asia) or the environment (as in Europe).

Without disregarding the importance of such phenomena, it is nonetheless a claim of this chapter that the state should still be seen as the main 'gatekeeper' of regionalism (Russet and Oneal: 2001), and that state-based regional organization, whether or not based on strict geographical regions, is the most helpful way to understand its contemporary significance. Even if non-state actors contribute to the design and construction of regional policies, it is the member states of regional organizations that are largely responsible for the delivery and implementation of such policies. Moreover, it is often the strongest states in regional organizations that are their most active promoters, suggesting how considerations of state power are closely related to explanations for regionalism.

Another distinguishing and empowering feature of regional organizations is their recognition by universal multilateral institutions. The League Covenant (in Article 22) and the UN Charter (see Chapter VIII especially Articles 51-54) both accorded formal status to regional 'understandings' and agencies. In the former case this recognition was limited and the only regional understanding mentioned was the Monroe Doctrine, which afforded the US a particular relationship in respect to South America (Zimmern, 1945: 522). Whatever the founders' intentions regarding the development of these universal organizations, the language of their charters highlights how regionalism was always envisioned as a global process. In the case of the UN, the provision was much wider, admitting the delegation, by the Security Council, under certain circumstances, of its Chapter VII powers. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) also, despite its commitment to fostering a multilateral trading system, made provision, in Article 24, for

regional arrangements, provided they did not discriminate against non-members. This official international sanctioning was important, giving regionalism a firm basis in international law. Arguably the success of regionalism has depended, in part, on its wider legitimization by the UN, though this does not imply that regional organizations have always operated within the letter of the UN Charter – NATO's intervention in the former Yugoslavia is one example - or enjoyed the capabilities to do so.

In a Cold War environment, the scope for international organization to develop was limited, particularly among newly independent developing countries, who were more concerned about state and nation building and without the necessary resources to develop regional association. It was six states of Western Europe, following the Treaty of Rome in 1957, which oversaw the establishment of the flagship regional organization, the European Economic Community (EEC), later the European Union (EU), which became the point of reference for many subsequent regional projects. Security regionalism, in Western Europe at least, was provided by NATO which was underwritten by the US. Not only did the existence of NATO greatly facilitate the ongoing processes of economic integration, it too became a model for security regionalism around the world. In this way, regionalism, in its early days, was often represented by the European project and its North Atlantic security accompaniment, with little attention paid to non-European areas. Some of the most famous works on regionalism, as suggested by the title of the work by Ernst Haas *The Uniting of Europe* reflect precisely on the European experience after the Second World War (Haas, 1958). And many other world regions emerging in the post-WW2 period tried to emulate the European experience, in the construction of customs unions and free trade areas as their acronyms, like CARICOM, NAFTA and LAFTA, suggest.

While the initial focus on Europe has, to some extent remained, this overlooks the wider world of regionalism both before and since 1945, not least the fact that developing countries increasingly came to see regionalism as a source of collective identity and a safeguard against powerful external actors and quickly developed their own regional repertoires. A central claim of this chapter, therefore, is that though Europe was very important as an example and point of reference as to how integration might proceed, it was not, as often implied, the only

example of how regions might develop and consolidate for the purposes of promoting common interests and policies. By the late 20th century it was clear even to those who had failed to take non-European regionalisms seriously that that there were multiple regionalisms both complementary to and competitive with the European model. And these regionalisms also had a global reach. In this respect we need to take seriously the call to move beyond Euro-centrism (Telo et al, 2015) or to decentre regionalism by considering multiple alternative 'regional worlds' (Acharya, 2014: 79-105). This is particularly appropriate at a time when the European project itself is in the midst of a prolonged crisis and its early ambitions appear are under threat. Consider, the two recent statements below regarding 21st century developments in Africa and Asia:

'Africa, which was not long ago discarded as a hopeless and irrelevant region, has become a new "frontier" for global trade, investment and the conduct of international relations.' (Bach 2016: preface)

Indeed 'it is in Asia that debates on regional architectures have been particularly vibrant among scholars and policy makers (Brennan and Murray 2015: 17)

PARTICULAR SALIENCE

This above story of the globalization of regionalism already points to its contemporary salience. By the 21st century regional organizations were increasingly regarded as an important, if not an integral part of the global governance architecture, though their importance relative to states and other multilateral actors is still debated. International regionalism, as distinct from regionalism as a sub-state phenomenon, however, is firmly established in the vocabulary of International Relations. Some have argued that we are moving from world of states into a more regionalized world (Van Langenhove, 2011:2); others that we are living in a 'world of regions' – particularly apparent since the end of the Cold War. A world of regions can be interpreted as simply reflecting the existence of a more multipolar world with the corresponding rise of a variety of regional powers of roughly equal stature; a more decentred world in the sense of or of where great powers are more regionally focused Buzan (2011), or where power has shifted away from the European and North Atlantic cores, (Acharya

2014); or in the sense of Peter Katzenstein's idea of regions existing under US unipolarity, or what he calls 'the US imperium' (Katzenstein, 2005). All these interpretations, however, point to the conclusion that the region is a particularly useful unit of analysis. Others argue that the region is less useful, either because regions are analytically diverse and abstract concepts, but also because the region as a unit of analysis is ultimately less significant than either the state or the wider international system. Evidence for this kind of argument would point to state power, resilience and autonomy which has proved remarkable and defies the constraints of regional institutions. States repeatedly show a propensity to act self-interestedly and not to cooperate at times of crisis (as the Eurozone crisis has illustrated) or to respond to the pull of a wider multilateral institutional architecture containing hegemonic powers like the US. This could explain the appeal of cross-cutting multilateral groups like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) or the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TRIPP).

In examining the above positions this chapter supports the claim that regions are useful and meaningful units of analysis in 21st century politics, and that there is an important distinction to be made between the global and regional level and their contrasting – and overlapping - structures of governance. Regional organizations are therefore worthy of serious independent study. Using social science terms it may be argued that regions, or their product regional organizations, are independent variables that help to explain different outcomes in world politics. For example, the actions of African organizations – for example ECOWAS in West Africa can contribute to conflict resolution (Adebajo, 2002); Latin American and European institutions promote democracy consolidation (Pevehouse, 2002: 612); Asian institutions, like the ASEAN family support a broad consensus on security issues which has contributed to a more secure regional order (Haake, 2007). The region and regional organization may not be the only, or necessarily the most important variables here, but they play a significant independent role.

In support of the above assumption about regionalism's contemporary importance is the large literature that examines regional organizations and their roles, or the politics regionalism, from a variety of perspectives. Though the volume of publications may not, in itself, be a good indicator, the amount of academic work and effort that has gone into their study is suggestive. Without detailing the wider literature on

regionalism since 1945 here (see Further Readings) in the period 2015-6 alone there were a number of books, including some large collected volumes, dedicated to their study. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* (a comprehensive overview of 27 chapters) appeared in early 2016 (Borzel and Risse), as did Frederik Sodebaum's, *Rethinking Regionalism* (2016). In *Inter-regionalism and the European Union,* Telo, Fawcett and Ponjaert (2015) take a critical look at how the European experience has travelled and been received globally. On specific regions, Daniel Bach's (2016) *Regionalism in Africa* explores new developments on that continent; while the *Drivers of Regional integration,* compares the European and Asian experiences (Brennan and Murray 2015). These recent examples, built upon a wider literature which has addressed the first and second waves of regionalism respectively as discussed in the historical section below.

The story of regionalism does not end with the incremental rise of regional organizations and their acknowledged importance in scholarly debates. Their evolution has been far from linear, their spread uneven and their overall position contested by scholars and policy makers. But their relevance and contribution to international order is not questioned. Most believe that it is desirable and appropriate that regional organizations take some responsibility for their regions in matters relating to trade, security and development and that international organizations like the UN or WTO will need buttressing, a point made forcefully by former UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali, in a post-Cold War document 'Agenda for Peace' (1992). The reform of African organizations after the Cold War reflects the relative decline of great power interests in Africa after the Cold War, the efforts by African states to generate solutions to African problems and new international interest in the enhancing the capacity of regional organizations to deal with the pressing economic and security problems of the continent. However, on the downside, there is also intense speculation about the future of the flagship European Union following a prolonged economic (and political) crisis in the Eurozone which started in 2008. Linked to the wider global financial crisis, its effects in the recently expanded European Union were particularly profound, contributing to the possibility of a first, a Greek exit from the Eurozone in 2015, and second a British exit from the European Union itself in 2016. Since 2015, another equally serious and not unrelated crisis was posed to the EU's very identity and purpose by the rising pressures of migration, in part

the product of the fall-out from the Arab uprisings, which the EU had failed both to predict and adequately address. And Europe is not the only region facing a crisis of identity. Latin America faces different pressures – from the pull to greater alignment with the North, to greater autonomy and reorientation towards the South (Fawcett and Serrano, 2005). Since regions are social and political constructions, their orientation is not fixed but fluid: they must operate within a complex and evolving set of international, transnational, domestic and subnational pressures.

HISTORY/THEORY and CONTEMPORARY FORMS

Regions and the processes of regionalism or regional integration are studied theoretically and empirically by describing their main features and activities and by isolating those factors, which contribute to regional cooperation and improved security and welfare among the member states of any given organization. Much energy has gone into designing and applying theoretical explanations which provide the best fit for explaining the process of integration in different regions and across different issue areas (Hurrell, 1995). Such theories draw on a wider body of IR theory and consider the neo-liberal and neo-realist positions in particular, the first conceiving of the possibilities of cooperation under certain favourable conditions, the second skeptical of anything but short term episodes of cooperation reflecting the self-interest of states and their pursuit of relative gains (Baldwin, 1993). Constructivists, in contrast, consider that 'the building blocs of international reality are ideational as well as material' (Ruggie, 1998: 33) an idea which can be fruitfully applied to international cooperation, particularly in thinking about why regional organizations might be attractive. Many theories have focused on explicitly on economic integration – indeed for a considerable period economic integration was held to be synonymous with regionalism - and European integration in particular (Mansfield and Milner, 1997).

There is also an important subset of theories applied to regionalism of which neo-functionalism and inter-governmentalism are the most important (Haas, 1958; Hoffman, 1964). Neo-functionalism describes an incremental process of functional cooperation with spillovers occurring across different issue areas – from economics to politics - such that states will eventually transfer their loyalties to a new sovereign body.

The European Union, at various stages of its history, has provided the best, though imperfect, illustration of the workings of neo-functionalism, thought attempts have been made (less successfully) to apply the theory to other regions, like South America, notably to the expansion of Mercosur (Malamud and Schmitter, 2011). Inter-governmentalism focuses on national governments as the most important actors in integration processes – an approach close to realism which also fits well with parts of the story of European story but also regionalism in other parts of the world like South East Asia, where national (as opposed to supra-national) interests have tended to predominate. Liberal inter-governmentalism, associated with the work of Andrew Moravscik (1998) goes further in highlighting how the domestic preferences of states, or state elites, are an important factor in negotiating regional treaties.

Regions are also studied comparatively by considering which variables can best explain a wider set of cases. Walter Mattli (1999), for example, has examined the demand-supply conditions for integration by focusing on the role of economic elites. Scholars are right in noting, however, that the role of comparison is underdeveloped (Lombaerde et al 2010; Borzel and Risse, 2016; Brennan and Murray, 2015). They are less often studied historically. This is a shortcoming for while the precise effects of history are admittedly hard to measure, a great deal about the contemporary importance of regions can be learned from studying their histories and comparing them (Sodebaum, 2016; Fawcett, 2004). History also helps to inform theory, since theoretical explanations for regionalism have also tended to follow major trends in regional histories – neo-functionalism is a good example as it appeared to fit well as an early explanation for what was happening in Europe (Bache, George, Bulmer 2011: 10). And when the integration project started to falter in the 1960s, neo-functionalism gave way to inter-governmentalism as a dominant explanation which focused principally on the interests of national governments alongside the workings of the international system (Bache et al: 11).

Every world region has a past in which ideas about whether and how to cooperate were developed under a particular set of conditions. And that past, without exception continues to inform present experience, dictating 'logics of appropriateness'. Hence any theoretical explanation which fails to provide some historical and indeed geographical context somehow misses the mark. 'The history of place' is therefore a central

accompaniment to the study of regionalism (Beeson, 2009: 5). In this regard both a constructivist lens – showing how and whose ideas matter to developing regionalism and a historical institutionalist approach, which illustrates how history informs regional pathways, are helpful if not essential accompaniments to understanding (Pierson, 2004).

The history of the Americas is a good place to demonstrate this point. American regionalism, which dates from the early 19th century, has been fed by quite particular ideas of how the post-independence Americas – both north and south – should view the international order and their emerging position within that order (Fawcett, 2005). Such ideas persist in the language of both hegemonic and anti-hegemonic regionalism as suggested by the FTAA and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) respectively. African and Arab regionalism, in turn, were built upon the fertile bases of pan-Africanism and pan-Arabism incorporating shared ideas about a possible post-colonial African or African order and so on (Murithi 2005: 2; Dawisha, 2003). This does not mean that African or Arab regionalism can only be understood by reference to their historical and colonial experiences, but it means that we must include serious consideration of those experiences in order to understand their trajectory. The longstanding reluctance of Arab states to accept the principle of intervention in states' domestic affairs, or the slogan 'African solutions to African problems' is testament to this. In this respect, and using the language of constructivism in IR theory, independent of the important material considerations which impact on state behaviour, there is a great deal to be said about the manner in which regions are constructed and which underlying ideas and beliefs inform the process. To turn to another prominent example, understanding the development of European institutions since the Second World War is impossible without considering prior patterns of cooperation and conflict and the need to build upon the former and overcome the latter by developing a common set of policies and practices. Full justice cannot be done to the rich and diverse histories of different regionalisms across the long twentieth and short twenty-first centuries, so a short illustrative section must suffice to demonstrate their establishment and trajectory.

As should be clear from the above, while much of both the theoretical and empirical focus on regionalism has been upon Europe, regionalism has always been a global process with formal European institutions (the EEC) themselves following the prior development of American and Arab

institutions (OAS and LAS). And despite some important antecedents as noted, the post-WW2 world provides the most compelling starting point for a study of contemporary regionalism because of the relative novelty of international organization, the expansion of international society through decolonization and the legitimacy afforded to regional organizations by the UN and other multilateral bodies. While prior regional histories fed into the new organizations, post-WW2 regionalisms were clustered around three main, if overlapping types, focusing respectively on security cooperation (like NATO), economic integration (like the EEC) or a mixture of the two in the so-called 'multi-purpose' often continent-wide organization (like the Organization of African Unity or today's AU). The divides are not so neat, as economic organizations soon came to combine economic with some political and security mechanisms as the EEC/EU case showed; nor did security cooperation occur in a vacuum with a common security language often reflecting other areas of interdependence. While multipurpose organizations aspired to both, they often performed better in one area than another. The League of Arab States was able to determine a common position of opposition to the state Israel, but not to agree on an Arab Free Trade Area – a project that remains incomplete to this day. This point also shows that security cooperation was not necessarily harder to achieve than economic integration. The latter process responded to particular supply and demand conditions which were simply absent in a number of developing countries where levels of inter-regional trade, for example, were low.

In general, early regionalisms, at least outside Europe and the North Atlantic area were regarded as unsuccessful in terms of delivery on security or economic cooperation. 'Integration' in the sense of a shift in decision-making authority from a state to a supranational institution, did not mostly occur, or only at a limited level. However, an alternative perspective suggests that rather than failure, this period should be seen as one where states learned to value regionalism as a mechanism for cooperation, to foster regional identities and lay down structures for future development. For example, the possibility of balancing stronger powers via a regional organization was one that gained hold: whether in Africa or Europe or the Americas. Regional organization provided weaker states with voice and some lobbying potential – they also allowed for some internal accountability. Thus the Cold War rather than

being seen as a desert for regional cooperation outside the European context was one which revealed multiple possibilities and pathways.

And these pathways extended beyond the Cold War, or emerged even before its ending. Just as the early Cold War provided a selective arena for regional institution building and learning, the late Cold War also saw some freeing up of regions in terms of the expansion of activities into new spheres. The period from the late 1960s saw the rise of a number of sub-regional (as opposed to continental) organizations, reflecting a new security dynamics and demand for regionalism. ASEAN (founded in 1967) emerged as a sovereignty nurturing and consensus building organization; ECOWAS (1975) responded to the changing security and economic environment in West Africa; in the Gulf, the GCC (1981) formed in direct response to the threats posed by the Iran revolution and subsequent Iran-Iraq War. The later Cold War also saw the appearance of a pan-European security organization the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (later OSCE) and a pan-Islamic organization the ICO. All the above organizations, despite emerging in a restrictive Cold War framework remain highly relevant and part of the regional economic and security architecture today and demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of regional projects. The CSCE was an important organization in reintegrating the USSR/Russia into European security.

To the above picture must be include developments within Western Europe itself which flowed from Europe's earlier experiences and represented a new direction and mission for the European project after its disappointing performance in the 1970s. Its reinvigoration was marked first by Single European Act (1986), membership expansion and the Treaty on European Union or Maastricht Treaty (1992). By the time of the latter, the end of the Cold War had intervened and this event, in itself, constituted a critical turning point, marking the start of an era of new regionalism in a more globalized world, characterised by quantitative and qualitative changes (Hettne et al. 1999). Not only did new institutions emerge, old organizations expanded, while revising and upgrading their charters, embracing new agendas and actors.

Not all regarded Europe's regrowth and its consequences in an entirely positive light, since it was perceived as potentially threatening to the emergence of a multilateral liberal trading order. It sparked a debate about the tensions between the forces of globalization and

regionalisation and the relationship between the two. The European project generated competitive region building elsewhere – NAFTA was a good example as was APEC. Amid such debates, 'new' regionalism developed as a fertile and multi-dimensional project many of whose features transcended state-to-state relations or economic bloc building. The post-Cold War period was therefore one of region building and new scholarship with regionalism expanding into ever-new domains (Fawcett, 2004). While some of these domains were an extension of earlier efforts to better integrate regional economies and again the European example was important here (Breslin and Higgott, 2000), others were a response to a new security order in which the removal of superpower 'overlay' led regions and regional powers to take more control of their security affairs (Buzan and Weaver, 2003). Some examples were the Commonwealth of Independent States – Russia's answer to the break up of the USSR, ASEAN + 3 and the ASEAN Regional Forum – an expansion of ASEAN's narrow remit, or MERCOSUR. Still others, like the reformed African Union, sought further to redefine regional identity in a globalizing world.

Despite the high level of interest generated by new regionalism, it did not deliver on the expectations of its proponents, or indeed the fears of its critics. On the one hand, regional organizations were not a panacea for regional order, nor were they necessarily a pathway or an obstacle to global order. The case of Africa, with its multiple peace operations, illustrates how regional organizations could play an important role in regional conflicts, but required the additional support of strong states and international institutions like the UN. Such organizations did not herald the decline of states or state power: in fact many regions witnessed the consolidation of a regional hegemon (like the US in NATO previously) which sought to manage and direct regional affairs – Nigeria in ECOWAS is one example. Some regions, in contrast, saw little sustained institutional development post-Cold War (Fawcett, 2016). The Middle East is a good example of a region where new regionalism had relatively little impact and the region's security dilemmas and outward looking economies persisted well beyond the Cold War. On the other hand, surveying the range of security activities of a number of regional organizations – from peace operations, to non-proliferation of dangerous weapons, to anti-terrorist measures, it can be seen that they – alongside the United Nations – continue to play crucial roles in supporting a multilateral security architecture.

CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS AND FUTURE TRAJECTORY

Following on from the brief historical and theoretical discussion above, which are the most important contemporary dynamics of regionalism in world politics today? Which features of regionalism are most compelling and which are its possible future pathways? On the one hand there is no doubt that there has been a steady increase in different types and activities of regionalism. Regionalism, with its variegated institutional architecture, is here to stay. The difficulty with new regionalism however lies in determining what its relative importance really is, how new it is, and whether it represents a real break with the past. Theorists of new regionalism have acknowledged that the predicted trajectory and potential of their object of study have not been fulfilled, whether in terms of transcending state power or sustained regionalization (Nolte, 2016). In answering this question it is useful both to consider the contours of contemporary regionalism, but also to reflect on what these experiences show us regarding prior assumptions.

Regionalism and globalization

First, the debate regarding the relationship between globalization and regionalization, both of which were seen as characteristics of the 'new global era' and in which regionalism was seen as a potential competitor to globalization, is largely over, or has lost much of its power. Regionalism is undoubtedly part of the new global era, but the relationship between regionalization and globalization is complex and evolving but the two are not fundamentally in competition. The stepping stone/stumbling block claim of the 1980s and 1990s, or the idea that a revitalized European Union represented a 'fortress' were overstated. The liberal internationalist or cosmopolitan arguments that accompanied globalization (like early arguments about the UN or the League of Nations) idealized the possibilities of global governance and placed regionalism as a competitor. It is more appropriate to see the two as part of variegated multilateral architecture in which global, regional, domestic and transnational patterns coexist, sometimes competing, sometimes complementing each other. This is kind of messy multilateralism, if more complex, is not wholly dissimilar to that which

emerged after WW2 (Ruggie, 1993), albeit embracing a far wider range of actors (Acharya, 2014).

Regionalism and the primacy of economics

Regionalism was, for a long time was dominated by discussions about economics and the possibilities of improving welfare through economic integration, and much of the early literature on the progression from regional trade agreements, to free trade areas and customs unions (Belassa, 1961) reflected this. This state of affairs ignored the parallel developments in regional security that took place alongside the United Nations Charter provision and the rise of regional organizations that represented and expressed regional identity and purpose above and beyond the prescriptions of integration theorists. The passage of time has revealed regionalism to be a multi-dimensional process encompassing multiple issue areas (Mansfield and Solingen, 2010). The construction of regions and regional organizations, the expression of identity politics, and the patterns of security regionalism defy explanations that focus on economic logics. Security regionalism, embracing peace operations, counter–terrorism and non-proliferation have proved to be just as important as the construction of welfare-enhancing economic communities (Tavares, 2009). In this respect the prior neglect of the role of ideas and security understandings among non-Western regionalisms has obscured the reality that regionalism has always been a multidimensional project without boundaries imposed by issue area or geography.

Regionalism and Europe

Just as regionalism cannot be limited to any single issue area, its variegated architecture shows emphatically a world that is no longer dominated by Europe or the West, and by scholars reflecting upon the experience of these regions. The chapter started with quotes about Africa and Asia, demonstrating the importance of new developments in these regions. This is not to say that models of cooperation, integration, and more, recently, inter-regionalism have not had a Eurocentric quality, or that Europe is still not a admired model, or indeed that much of the scholarship on regionalism is not Western-centred or inspired by Western academia: it is! The institutional design of many regional organizations still closely mirrors that of the EU as the reformed African

Union, with its African Parliament and Peer Review Mechanism shows. However, regionalism has moved beyond its early European home into new domains. Some regionalisms are explicitly anti-Western or anti-hegemonic like ALBA - a post-colonial project drawing on early ideas about sovereignty and autonomy in the Americas; UNASUR likewise offers an alterative perspective on a security community in the Americas. The influence of hegemonic power (or hegemonic institutions) remain but its expressions are ever more varied and reflective of new or 'rising' powers and their agendas. Further, given the ongoing crisis in the European Union, which has led to predictions of its weakening or even demise, it is particularly appropriate to reflect upon the European experience and its wider relevance to the world of regionalism and global governance, as discussed below.

'New' regionalism and the future

The expanding remit and diversity of regionalism does not mean its success as a global ordering project. Rather it is a wakeup call to at best a partly regionalized world. The twenty-first century has been witness to the limits to regionalism whether in terms of its relationship to states, globalization or other multilateral bodies, but also as a project in itself. While some regionalisms have enjoyed upward trajectories, the overall picture is mixed with fragmentation among the most integrated, and limited integration among the less cohesive groups. If crisis has proved formative in institutional start up and development, it has also demonstrated the obstacles to further integration (FIoramonti, 2012). In other words, the overall capacity of regionalism in different setting remains constrained. This is not just an observation about the European Union, which has faced some of its most difficult challenges in recent years: from the Eurozone crisis which commenced in 2008, the threat of 'Grexit' in 2015, the immigration crisis and finally the issue of 'Brexit' in 2016. This is the contemporary reality of the European experiment in integration and one whose lessons will not be lost on other observers. Western Europe, so long an aspiration for Europeans and others, is facing an existential challenge such that one-time apologists, like Jan Zielonka (2014) now consider it 'doomed'. This is also reflected in the new, more skeptical note in studies of inter-regionalism, which have hitherto focused principally on the European export of the theory and practice of regionalism (Telo et al, 2015). To the European case we can add the multiple setbacks or relative lack of progress in core areas

elsewhere: institutional fragmentation in Latin America (Malamud, and Gardini: 2012); in Africa the difficulty of creating a common security architecture (Vines, 2013) and in the Middle East where the slow development of regionalism since independence has been further arrested by events since the Arab Spring. The Asian region has shown some hopeful signs, for example the signature of the ASEAN Charter in 2007 - and is the site of important debates - but has witnessed few moves towards deeper integration. Despite the growth of functional cooperation in many different issue areas, the incremental process of deeper integration envisaged by the founders of the European project remains illusory.

CONCLUSION

The above analysis, which has focused on both the opportunities but also some of the limitations of contemporary regionalism in different settings, does not necessarily indicate the failure of regionalism as a project or a new downward trajectory. It does however mean that idealism about 'new' (or old) regionalism needs to be tempered. In a reflective work published in 2016, one of the leading authors of the new regionalism school, Frederik Sodebaum, concurs that regionalism requires serious 'rethinking', not least that regionalism or regionalization cannot only be associated with a borderless of states-free world. Meanwhile, the conclusion to the large multi-author volume on regionalism ends on a positive note calling for 'three cheers' for comparative regionalism (Borzel and Risse, 2016). While it is true that studies of regionalism have come a long way since the European-centered literature of the 1960s, and there is much more rigorous analysis of comparative regionalism, the success of regionalism as a project remains ambiguous. It is likely that regionalism, like the regions that constitute and flow from its activities, will remain a feature of world politics well into the foreseeable future. It is not a 'stepping stone' to a more united world, but nor is it a 'stumbling bloc' to international cooperation as regional sceptics once supposed. As such it is an integral part of and inextricably merged with the present complex multilateral structures (Prantl, 2013: 14-16). Its contours and parameters will reshape and change responding to new economic, social and security challenges. History shows how its path has been an evolutionary one,

waxing and waning in different international as well as domestic environments depending on the interests and strategies of key players. It is also constantly adapting to meet new challenges: regional organizations today have repertoires that include environmental protection; migration regimes and human rights provision – as recently witnessed in the ASEAN Charter. Similarly, new theoretical explanations will be devised and old ones reviewed and refined. New pathways and theories respond in turn to new events, crises and evolving spheres of action.

If we just consider just how much change has occurred since 1945 when regionalism was associated first, with the security provision outlined in the UN Charter and second, with the growth and development of the EU we can appreciate its overall evolution and speculate about its prospects. While the relationship between the UN and regions and regionalism has remained largely constant in the sense that regionalism is still closely bound to and empowered by Charter definitions and practices, its remit has vastly expanded, particularly where the former 'Third World' is concerned (De Lombaerde et al 2012). This is particularly evident in the area of peace operations where regional organizations have taken on important roles. Moreover, the model and predominance of Europe in debates about the political economy of regionalism has also shifted considerably, as this chapter has argued. This is particularly apparent in the current crisis in the Eurozone and the ongoing political fragmentation visible over the migration crisis and debates about the impact of a British exit. It is not that Europe doesn't matter in the debates about regionalism, far from it. Those who are sceptical of Eurocentrism should beware of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Europe's experience is, and will remain, a central point of reference. However, it has become increasingly clear that regions are created to serve many different purposes and to suit the interests of different actors according to time and place. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization's robust anti-terrorist, or cyber-security framework, belongs to an era where terrorism and the threats of nationalist/separatist movements are viewed as particularly acute in Central Asia. This was not an organization born of the desire to mimic the European experience of economic integration or to conform to any Western security order. While many regional organizations share a general position of seeking to consolidate their members' autonomy and relative influence on the global stage, the manner in which they do so

and mechanisms they choose to employ will vary considerably: 'Regional orders are made of multiple details and changing contingencies, of security dilemmas and economic interdependence, of relations between democracies and autocracies, of war and peace' (Solingen, 1998: xi).

Further reading

There is a growing literature on regionalism reflecting major developments in the field. From early works focusing on the European experience (Haas, 1958) to comparative studies (Nye, 1968) there was a major boom in the literature following Cold War which saw overviews of new and old regionalism like Fawcett and Hurrell, (1995); Gamble and Payne (1996); Mansfield and Milner (1997); Farrell et al, (2005); Sodebaum and Shaw edited an important text on Theories of New Regionalism (2002); Acharya and Johnstone, (2007) compared different institutional designs. On specific regions, developments in Asia are well covered in Beeson (2009); the Americas in Fawcett and Serrano (2006); a recent work on Africa is Bach (2016). On Europe Ben Rosamund (2000) remains an excellent introduction to theory and practice of European integration. Finally, there are two recent two multi-author edited handbooks with wide coverage of different regions and issues: *Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalism* (Shaw, Grant and Cornelissen, 2011); and the *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* (Borzel and Risse, 2016).

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