

**STRATEGIC REVIEW OF SECURITY
IN THE WORLD**

Daniel C. BACH

DOI : 10.14746/ps.2018.1.24

CNRS and Emile Durkheim Centre, Sciences Po Bordeaux
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1305-2163>

EUROPE WITHIN THE WORLD OF REGIONALISMS

It was initially the emergence of the three core regions of the triad (North America, Europe and North East Asia-Pacific) and the related scramble to conclude Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) in the late 1980s and early 1990s that drew attention to the rise of a new world order, closely entangled with a “world of regions” (Katzenstein, 2001; Bach, 2017) that had previously been ignored or deemed of marginal significance. In the early 1990s, the global geopolitical implications of the processes observed in North East Asia, but also among the countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and within the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) organization prompted the reassessment of the potential of network-led (as opposed to institutionally driven) integration. APEC’s specific model of “open regionalism” combined enticing national macro-economic policies with an ability to create new opportunities for entrepreneurial diasporas and corporate players (Ravenhill, 2001). The formation and dissemination of Global Value Chains (GVCs) across national boundaries was the emblematic feature of this momentum. In Latin America, import-substitution industrialisation behind tariff walls was also replaced by market-oriented programmes and neo-liberal reforms directly inspired by APEC (ECLAC, 1994: 11). In North America, too, the USA, Canada and Mexico were similarly asserting a commitment to regionalism through the establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1992. It is against this background that the “new” regionalism literature undertook to make sense of a diversification of goals and processes that were underwritten by the universal endorsement of multilateralism.

The intellectual legacy of the 1990s resides primarily in its contribution to the dissemination of the analytical distinction between regionalism and integration. The notion of regionalism accounts for ideas or ideologies, programs, policies and goals that seek to transform an identified social space into a regional project. Since regionalism postulates the implementation of a program and the definition of a strategy, it is often associated with institution-building or the conclusion of formal agreements. Regionalism can also relate to the production, invention or reinvention of transnational identities, a process concomitant with the delineation of mental maps and boundaries. By contrast, regionalisation focuses on the build-up of interactions which may or may not relate to an explicitly asserted or acknowledged regionalist project. Regionalisation is a more encompassing notion than regionalism, since it takes into account processes and configurations in which states are frequently not the key players. Regionalisation may correlate with the implementation of regionalist strategies and translate into processes

of cross-border integration. Regionalisation can grow irrespective of state policies and at times even in opposition to their stated purpose. In Africa, as in Asia or the Middle East, the diasporic networks associated with trade or labour migration do not carry any particular ambition to build regional integration. At the same time, the aggregation of individual strategies stimulates cross-border and trans-regional integration processes through the development of markets located in the borderlands that may contribute to the emergence of global hubs and nodes, as famously illustrated by the city of Doha. In such cases, regionalisation is entangled with state policies and corporate strategies that thrive from the instrumentalisation of opportunities created by fiscal, tariff or normative incentives, as much as from the “porosity” of frontiers.

Since the turn of the millennium, newer forms of regionalism have emerged, initially dubbed 21st-century regionalism (Baldwin, 2011) or, in the case of Latin America, ‘post-hegemonic’ (*The Rise*, 2017). As the latter notion implies, regionalism has become entangled with disillusionments generated by multilateral trade negotiations, a movement comforted by the election of Donald Trump and his pledge to renegotiate (or withdraw from) regional agreements and multilateral negotiations. The global ambitions simultaneously associated with China’s “New Silk Road” (a.k.a Belt and Road) initiative also mean that trade negotiations across the world are more than ever entangled with geopolitical considerations that are stimulated by the competing ambition of China, the USA and the EU as global norms makers.

The interplay between regionalism and the concept of “region” have in the process become increasingly diffuse. The issue has only gained acuity with current plans towards the formation of mega-regional RTAs, tying together countries that are in a “paramount driver position or serve as hubs in global value chains,” as in the case of the US, the EU, Japan or China (Meléndez-Ortiz, 2014: 13).

The following pages argue that the study of African regionalisms constitutes a timely invitation to revisit the experience of EU and its contribution to the world of regionalisms. After a review the ongoing relevance of European integration we will draw from the study of Africa five threads which set the basis for a comparative study of regions and regionalisms beyond the classic emphasis on the EU or the world of regions.

NEITHER OLD NOR NEW: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AS AN UNFOLDING EXPERIENCE

The assumption that newer forms of regionalism meant that the EU would become an outdated (“old”) model of region-building never materialized. The global revival of regionalism in the 1990s owed much to the EU’s completion of a single market, the adoption of the Maastricht treaty and the process of expansion to eastern and central countries that contributed to secure their transitions towards democratisation and the market economy. The EU, through structural funds and pre-accession packages, gave substance to a process of region-building that through “self-proclaimed empiricism and *ad hoc* compromises” (Dehousse, 2000: 1–2) managed to enhance its global market integration while implementing common policies and a regulation of the costs and benefits of integration among members, e.g. through structural funds.

Across Europe (in conjunction with the lure of EU membership), Africa and Latin America (through the establishment of Mercosur), the EU was celebrated for its ability to transcend strict neo-liberal or linear prescriptions on regional economic integration. In Latin America, this informed the establishment of Mercosur (1991), while in Africa, the revision of the treaties of the regional economic communities was equally inspired by the EU, viewed as a path to region-building particularly well suited to fulfil the goals and ideals of Pan-Africanism. In Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was equally explicit about its ambition to emulate, the EU's structural and regional programmes in Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Greece as part of its own strategy towards developmental regionalism. The ability to reduce *core-periphery* disparities and bridge *development gaps* featured at the core of the Bank's reinterpretation of developmental regionalism as "a capacity-building process targeted at periphery states to help them engage in the regional economic dynamic and draw them closer into core economic zones of the region" (Dent, 2008: 781). It is in accordance with such orientations that ADB undertook efforts to sponsor initiatives such as growth triangles and positioned itself as a pilot in promoting "regionally integrated markets and infrastructure systems" (Dent, 2008: 781). In post-Soviet Russia and Central Asia, the more recently established Eurasian Economic Community (EAEU) also explicitly aspired to operate as an opponent of the EU in the field of integration (Staeger, 2017).

The most severe challenges to the EU have, *in fine*, stemmed from evolutions within the Union. Since the late 2000s, the EU has been facing a rising tide of Europhobia associated with, *inter alia*, the rise of populism, disunion over the management of the Eurozone and the migration crisis. This has also given way to unprecedented calls for incorporating disintegration into the neofunctionalist research agenda (Schmitter, Lefkofridi, 2016), as the uncertainty resulting from Britain's June 2016 referendum in favour of Brexit, combined with gloomy scenarios on the fate of the Eurozone in the wake of the French presidential election of 2017. Since then, Theresa May's negotiations have turned into a call for European unity and a stinging reminder of an endless list of benefits (not least with respect to the EU's decisive contribution to the return of peace in Ireland) that will no longer be available after March 2019.

THE STUDY OF AFRICA AS A LENS AND A MIRROR

The processes at play across the African continent provide vital insights into cross-border regionalisation processes and the interplay between territory, space and networks. This relates to five specific threads, associated with ideal-types that enable to shift away from binary oppositions (such as old vs. new regionalism, integration vs. cooperation, regime boosting vs. regional integration) in order to focus on the plurality of strategies and processes that coexist within regional organisations and landscapes. Accordingly, the following pages successively discusses the empirical and ideational legacies rooted in the (colonial or anti-colonial) past; the politics of region-building; the endorsement of holistic and developmental agendas; the interplay between trans-state networks and regionalisation processes and, finally, defragmentation and connectivity.

Hysteresis: genealogies and mental maps

In Africa, the legacy of colonial amalgamation policies is part of the DNA of a large number of regional groupings and, more generally, shapes representations of federalism and regional initiatives in general. Similarly, the regionalist ideologies that challenged colour discrimination and colonialism (Pan-Africanism, Bolivarism, Pan-Arabism, Pan-Asianism) still contribute to shape the goals and design of regional organisations.

Empire, colonial rule and decolonization were, in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, as much about partition as about region-building. In the early days of post-colonial Latin America, Simon Bolivar hoped to preserve to the unity of former Spanish Latin American colonies through the establishment of the Federal Republic of Gran Colombia, drawn from the Spanish Viceroyalty of New Granada. The project subsequently faltered, yet Bolivarism still retains powerful political and ideological significance, as reflected by the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA), launched in 2004 for the purpose of promoting social, political, and economic integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In Africa, the Southern African Customs Union/Common Monetary Area (SACU/CMA) and the CFA franc currency zone offer another striking instance of continuity with colonial policies. In both cases, integration proceeds from the persistence of integration regimes that were conceived and implemented under colonial rule, hence their conceptualization through the notion of integration through hysteresis (Bach, 2017). In both cases, integration does not result from transfers of sovereign competences to supranational institutions, but from a renunciation to exercise their full sovereignty at independence, respectively in the fields of customs and currency. The genealogy of these integration schemes is clearly asymptomatic, since integration is not the outcome of transfers of sovereign competencies to a supranational core. Most member states of the CFA zone and the SACU never had the opportunity to exercise their sovereignty in the areas concerned. The stability of the CFA currency zone is still guaranteed by the French Treasury, while within the SACU, it is South Africa that, as in the past, dominates and stabilizes what is in effect the oldest working customs union in the world.

Economic integration as politics

Unlike the notion of regional integration, regionalism has no difficulty to account for agendas which, as the track-record of Association of South-East Nations (ASEAN) illustrates, seek to promote region-building through sovereignty “enhancement” as opposed to the transfer and “pooling” of sovereignties (Higgot, 1995: 361–63). This is of particular relevance to the study of regional initiatives in Africa, across the Middle East and in Latin America, where member states have historically been prone to combine stated commitments to the ideals of trans-regional integration with emphasis on strict respect for sovereignty and regime consolidation.

Accordingly, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was designed from the onset (1963) to promote Pan-African unity, but this objective was, in practice, relegated

to a distant and indefinite future. Regional governance was interpreted as strict non-interference in regard to the domestic affairs of member states, decision-making through consensus and respect for the boundaries inherited at independence. Three interrelated notions contributed to shape the morphology and trajectory of African Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs): the primacy of “club” diplomacy over bureaucratic and intergovernmental interactions, stated emphasis on regime consolidation and donor shopping. These three ingredients still form the least common denominator that glues together some regional groupings.

Holistic and developmental agendas

The association of Africa’s regional organizations with holistic and developmental agendas is an offshoot of the revision of most of the founding charters and treaties of Africa’s regional groupings in the 1990s. Within a decade, the calls for a re-foundation of Pan-Africanism (Murithi, 2005) had translated into new agendas and institutional architectures that were strongly inspired by the EU (Adebajo, 2012: 45–82; Bach, 2017: 81–85).

The identification of ambitious economic and financial integration goal posts went along with the adoption of norms and institutions designed to promote democracy and the rule of law, including through peace-keeping operations (PKOs) across the continent. The Constitutive Act of the African Union (2001) actually set the foundations for a fundamental policy shift that substituted the principle of non-indifference to the norm of strict non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states. This drastic overhaul of the normative tenets of the (O)AU also included those of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) earmarked to set the foundations for an African Economic Community (AEC).

Two decades later the engagement of the AU and the RECs into PKOs has kept growing in conjunction with the formation of specific cultures in the field of security governance. Regional peace and security governance has also gained preeminence over the economic and financial blueprints meant to promote the establishment of a quasi-federal and continental AEC.

Trans-state and transregional networks

In Africa, the inability of states and regional organizations to implement policies designed to loosen the effects of territorial fragmentation contrasts with the integrative power of (so-called informal) trans-state and trans-regional networks. The notion of trans-state networks and practices refers to patterns of regionalisation that, in contrast with trans-national flows and networks, owe their dynamism to processes of domestication of state regulatory power. Trans-state networks thrive from their capacity to penetrate the territory of the state as much as its institutions (state capture).

The success of trans-state networks revolves around their capacity to bend rules and policies on at least one side of the border. Their ability to trade across borders

builds upon social, religious and geo-ethnic affiliations, as opposed to territorially anchored identities. As a result, their reach goes well beyond the borderlands and shapes spaces that are both mobile and socially defined. Trans-state networks cut across borders and penetrate state institutions at times, sometimes to the extent that they can freeze their capacity to produce public policies on specific issues. Another outcome is the emergence of trans-state and (due to the instrumentalization of the opportunities drawn from the globalisation of the world economy) trans-regional spaces that craft landscapes that thrive from the failure to implement institutionally defined regional agendas.

We have analysed in detail elsewhere (Bach, 2017: 52–76) how variations in the depth of the conversion of public resources into private gains refer to two prototypes that generate specific patterns of regionalisation. The first prototype contributes to the emergence of hubs and nodes associated with incentives to cross-border trade that are institutionally endorsed. In West Africa especially, this pattern gained preeminence in the 1970s and 1980s, when a small group of impoverished states (Benin, Niger, The Gambia and Togo) managed to turn boundaries with their immediate neighbours into valuable resources for both public and private operators (Igué, Soulé, 1993). Public support to “re-export” trade granted by state authorities in Gambia or Benin sharply contrasted with the treatment of cross-border flows as smuggling in Nigeria and Senegal. However, this did not bring an end to ability of borderlanders to secure the goodwill of officers, bureaucrats and politicians on each side of the border.

These trade flows drew their strength from the association of porous boundaries with monetary, fiscal, tariff and normative opportunities embedded in distinctive sovereignty regimes and macro-economic policies. For the players involved, this translates into an acute awareness of the adverse effects that would result from the closing of borders (for instance as a result of military tensions between neighbouring states) or from the drive towards a dilution of the tariff, fiscal or normative disparities that would result in the implementation of the plans towards an economic and monetary union prescribed by the charters of African regional groupings. As a result, it is paradoxical that where cross-border integration appears deeply established, institutionalization is most resisted.

The second broad prototype of trans-state regionalization revolves around the extraction of cross-border dividends through the instrumentalisation (and privatisation) of violence and insecurity along with the penetration of government agencies by criminal groups (Neese Bybee, 2012). Since the 1990s, the Great Lakes region has become emblematic of such a pattern of regionalisation contributing to territorial fragmentation without formally challenging claims to territorial sovereignty. The key role played by entrepreneurs of insecurity in conjunction with such processes highlights once more the centrality of interactions with state policies and authorities. Across Africa, regionalisation through violence and insecurity has become associated with a growing number of conflicts (Mazzitelli, 2007: 1071–1090), and the exploitation of opportunities, ranging from the extraction of rare minerals (Great Lakes region), to the transit of illicit drugs (in the Sahel) and the enslavement of human beings (Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region). Not surprisingly, the ability to exploit the edge effects of frontiers relate to situations of governance without government.

Defragmentation and connectivity

In North-East Asia and the Pacific it is essentially through nationally anchored and driven policy reforms that the momentum towards the elimination of import quotas, non-tariff barriers and customs duties has gained consistency since the 1980s. The establishment of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) or Free Trade Agreements (FTA) is today branded as a distinctive path towards “deep” regional integration, the outcome of bilateral or multilateral pledges undertaken by states that remain in control of implementation. In such cases, as in the case of national policy orientations meant to attract or boost private investment, policies are not supervised by supranational institutions.

The metaphor of defragmentation alludes to the computer world where the “defrag” function aims to restore and speed up hard disk efficiency by consolidating programmes that are scattered in different locations. The term also refers to the promotion of “deeper” regional integration through the removal of non-tariff and regulatory barriers that limit the movement of goods, services, peoples and capital across borders (World Bank, 2012: xv). As a result, the logics of defragmentation intrinsically postulate the dilution of the frontiers between national, regional and global integration, and the adoption of leaner functionally driven institutional architectures. In this sense “deep” integration represents a departure from regional institutions that aim to promote integration through sovereignty pooling and holistic agenda.

The dissemination of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and sub-Saharan Africa’s transformation into a global economic frontier have contributed to stimulate and rejuvenate the demand for improved connectivity. This reflects through the growing synergies between new (cell phone) technology and banking, but also through the boost to mega-infrastructure projects designed to link land-locked and coastal states more efficiently. Connectivity, as it infers the introduction of new technologies, has led to a reassessment of what infrastructure development stands for, the *hard* versus *soft* dichotomy. Global pressure to enhance competitiveness stimulates the demand for new seamless cross-border transport infrastructures, and the establishment of more reliable energy grids. Again, the distinction between regional and global integration is diluted here.

Defragmentation is tied to the notion of “deep” integration that has become associated with free trade agreements involving the removal of non-tariff and regulatory barriers, a response to the rise of intra-firm trade and services. In Africa, defragmentation has also become a shortcut for the revival of functionally driven projects, especially in the field of hard and soft infrastructure development. In the past decade, a new generation of Tripartite and Continental Free Trade Agreements has emerged in Africa, prompted, at least initially, by the search for an alternative path to the adoption of mutually exclusive customs arrangements by the regional economic communities.

The conclusion of the Canada-EU Trade Agreement (CETA) and China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are the latest expressions of a momentum that retains its global relevance despite Donald Trump’s withdrawal of the USA from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement in January 2017. Chinese investment into cross-regional infrastructures contributes to weaving hub-and-spoke interactions with harbours, free

trade zones and infrastructure nodes that radiate well beyond the old Silk Road. During the second Belt and Road Forum in Beijing in May 2017, no less than 1,500 delegates representing 130 countries were in attendance. The dynamics at play point to a dilution of the frontiers between local, regional and global arenas, but also a strategic shift of trade routes that confers new centrality to hubs located in East Africa, Central Asia and the Gulf.

Deep integration circumvents the problems of loss or delegation of sovereignty to the benefit of supranational institutions, but ushers equally intrusive constraints since member states of the FTAs remain solely accountable for their policy orientations. Transforming border and “behind the border” cultures and practices rests upon the capacity of states to craft and implement smart public policies. The relevant scale for decision-making, as highlighted by the trajectory of the Asian developmental states, is not so much the region as the state. Of key relevance here is its regulatory and *developmental* capacity, namely the ability to undertake and pursue long term strategies, apt to sustain value-added industries that are competitive in local and, eventually, international markets.

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This text has argued that shifting away from the *world of regions* (Katzenstein, 2005) in order to study the *world of regionalisms* (Bach, 2017) enables to account for the diversity of landscapes and patterns of interaction between and across regions. Africa, despite its longstanding treatment as a peripheral region, offers a perfect arena to review the heuristic implications of the coexistence of distinct threads of regionalism. The five prototypes that we have identified provide a matrix that is informed by ongoing developments and draws from the conceptual legacy of the new regionalism literature and the equally significant contributions of constructivist and border studies. They also provide an incentive to revisit the dynamics at play within and across the EU.

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ABSTRACT

The surge of diversified forms of regionalism and regional integration within the past few decades has stimulated the reappraisal of the conceptual tools traditionally designed to benchmark and monitor region-building processes across the world. More recently, the Brexit negotiations have become a reminder that the EU remains an unfolding experience. This article argues that the study of African regionalisms constitutes a timely invitation to revisit the experience of the EU and its contribution to the world of regionalisms. After a brief survey of the classic definition of the region, we will discuss the ongoing relevance of European integration and the implications of the analytical distinction between regionalism, regionalisation and regional integration, before drawing from the study of Africa five threads which set the basis for a comparative study of regions and regionalisms beyond the classic emphasis on the EU or the world of regions.

Keywords: regionalism, regional integration, Europe, Brexit, EU, Africa

EUROPA W ŚWIECIE REGIONALIZMÓW

STRESZCZENIE

Powstanie różnorodnych form regionalizacji oraz integracji regionalnej w przeciągu ostatnich dekad stymulowało ponowną ocenę konceptualnych narzędzi, tradycyjnie skonstruowanych w celu tworzenia punktów odniesienia oraz monitorowania procesu regionalizacji na świecie. Negocjacje w sprawie Brexitu przypomniały, iż sama Unia Europejska pozostaje zmieniającą się rzeczywistością. Główna teza poniższego artykułu zakłada, iż studiowanie Afrykańskich procesów regionalizacji stanowi zaproszenie do ponownego przeanalizowania doświadczeń Unii Europejskiej oraz jej miejsca w świecie regionalizacji. Po krótkim przeglądzie klasycznych definicji regionu, omówione zostanie współczesne znaczenie integracji europejskiej oraz implikacji rozróżnienia regionalizmu, regionalizacji oraz integracji regionalnej. Przed wyciągnięciem wniosków płynących ze studiowania Afrykańskich regionalizmów, przedstawione zostanie pięć kategorii, które stanowią podstawę badań wychodzących poza klasyczne spojrzenie na Unię Europejską oraz świat regionów.

Słowa kluczowe: regionalizacja, integracja regionalna, Europa, Brexit, UE, Afryka