Review of International Studies (2009), 35, 5–34 *Copyright © British International Studies Association*
doi:10.1017/S0260210509008419

'Regions' and their study: wherefrom, what for and whereto?

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Abstract. Long a focal point in the study of Geography, regions have become a major concern of International Relations, and for some even its essence. Principle definitions and approaches, however, remain contested, as do the contexts in which and how they matter, from economic to security. This article examines contested views on what constitutes a region and on the nature and functioning of regional architecture, drawing from thematic and case-specific literature to indicate the expanse of analytical enquiry. These include the roles and interpretations of geography, identity, culture, institutionalisation, and the role of actors, including a hegemon, major regional powers and others actors from within a region, both state and societal. A final section indicates additional areas for future research.

Introduction

Regions, regionalism and regionalisation matter. While globalisation secures much attention in the study of world politics, scholars of regionalism see regions as the fundamental, even driving force of world politics. One recent study asserts 'one of the most widely noted and counter-intuitive features of the contemporary ''global'' era is that it has a distinctly regional flavour'.[1] In policy terms, 'almost every country in the world has chosen to meet the challenge of globalization in part through a regional response'.[2]

Regions cut across every dimension of the study of world politics; for their proponents, they even constitute *the* study of International Relations (IR). While some will reject or downplay the importance of regions in world order,[3] one major reader asserts that 'The resurrection and redefinition of regionalism are among the dominating trends

* Thanks are due to the issue's referees for careful and extensive comments as well as to Patrick Morgan, John Ravenhill and Nicholas Rengger for very helpful comments, and the usual caveats apply of responsibility resting with the author.

[1] Mark Beeson, 'Rethinking Regionalism: Europe and the East Asia in Comparative Historical Perspective', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12:6 (December 2005), p. 969.

[2] Victor Bulmer-Thomas, 'Regional Integration in Latin America and the Caribbean', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 20:3 (2001), p. 363. Richard Pomfret, however, argues that regional trade agreements often end in failure. Richard Pomfret, 'Is Regionalism an Increasing Feature of the World Economy?', *The World Economy*, 30:6 (June 2007), pp. 923–47.

[3] Amitva Acharya warns that 'not all international relations scholars are going to be persuaded' of the centrality of regions in world politics. 'The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics', *World Politics*, 59:4 (July 2007), p. 630.

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in today's international studies'.[4] Another work contends that 'The regional momentum has proved unstoppable, constantly extending into new and diverse domains',[5] while another describes the analysis of regionalism in IR as 'so conspicuous'.[6]

Indeed, the importance of considering regions is reflected through policy and academic debate. From economics, the recent substantial, arguably even overwhelming, policy and scholarly attention to global trade must be moderated by the fact of over fifty per cent of the total volume of world trade occurring within preferential regional trade agreements (RTAs).[7] The World Trade Organization (WTO) observes that RTAs 'have become in recent years a very prominent feature of the Multilateral Trading System', and that 'the surge in RTAs has continued unabated since the early 1990s'. The WTO further observers that by July 2007, 380 RTA were notified to it and that almost 400 RTAs are expected to come into force by 2010.[8]

The economic is but a part of the impact and importance of regions; their growing significance comes also from how they constitute global order. Regions provide a 'significant complementary layer of governance',[9] important enough that 'regionalism might actually shape world order'.[10] Far from negating regionalismation, American 'unilateralism' since 9/11 but can be seen to operate through regional order and even to encourage more.[11] Peter J. Katzenstein's 2005 *A World of Regions* contends that, in association with what he calls American 'imperium' rather than hegemony, regions are now fundamental to the structure of world politics and may also provide solutions to some global dilemmas.[12]

Whatever one's views, the study of regions in IR offers a thriving if immensely heterogeneous literature. A brief consideration of the rise of regions, both as an historical phenomenon as a study, and then a review of terminology and competing views of the significance and consequences of regions demonstrate the diversity.

Advent of the 'region' as phenomenon and study

Depending on perspective, 'regions' have always been part of IR. Some scholars associate the term with major empires; others observe that a 'regionalized' world' has

[4] Timothy M. Shaw and Fredrik Soderbaum (eds), *Theories of New Regionalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[5] Louise Fawcett, 'Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism', *International Affairs*, 80:3 (2004), p. 431.
[6] Shaun Breslin, Richard Higgott and Ben Rosamond, 'Regions in comparative perspective', in Shaun Breslin, Richard Higgott, Nicola Phillips and Ben Rosamond (eds), *New Regionalism in the Global Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 1. The literature is now so vast that it cannot all, as its authors will appreciate, be realistically cited in one place. Among very useful literature surveys, from which the present work has benefited, are: Edward D. Mansfield and Helen V. Milner, 'The New Wave of Regionalism', *International Organization*, 53:3 (Summer 1999), pp. 589–627; Raimo Väyrynen, 'Regionalism: Old and New', *International Studies Review*, 5 (2003), pp. 25–51; and Björn Hettne, 'Beyond the "New" Regionalism', *New Political Economy*, 10:4 (December 2005), pp. 543–71.
[7] Mansfield and Milner, 'New Wave', citing Serra et al., 1997.
[8] ⟨http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/region_e/region_e.htm⟩, last accessed 10 June 2008.
[9] Fawcett, 'Explaining regional domains', p. 431.
[10] Hettne, 'Beyond the "new" regionalism'.
[11] This is the generalisation conclusion from East Asia as analysed in Joakim Öjendal, 'Back to the Future? Regionalism in South-East Asia Under Unilateral Pressure', *International Affairs*, 80:3 (May 2004), pp. 519–33.
[12] Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

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always featured in human history.[13] Recent comparative work of regionalism has analysed even nineteenth-century European phenomena, such as the *Zollverein* customs union among Germanic principalities, in wider terms of regional integration of the later twentieth century,[14] and some of Arnold Toynbee's edited annual surveys of international affairs categorised some of the processes and used language that would be familiar to region studies today.[15] The Americas, with a series of independent countries, began developing both regional identities and inter-state structures in the late nineteenth-century.[16] Usually, however, the advent of regions as cooperation among states is taken to be a phenomenon of a multi-numerical states-system, that which arose after the First World War and expanded after the Second. The experience of the former, however, came to be judged nearly universally as negative for being constituted of closed trading blocs that led to global economic depression. The prospects for regionalism after World War II were far greater, though the occurrences varied considerably. The League of Arab States was the first institutionalised regional cooperation initiative in this period; although the 'shared identities and interests would surely place the Arab states system high on most predictors of regional institutionization', its successes, however, seem to be severely limited.[17]

Western Europe gave rise to a regionalism with both analytical and normative dimensions in functionalist integration that identified the pacific benefits of linking socio-economic interests across national boundaries.[18] As insightful and groundbreaking as they were, these works have subsequently been seen as referring to the specific experience of initial West European integration, and a case that itself changed too fundamentally to provide wider lessons.[19] Lest intellectual doors be firmly closed, however, arguments have recently been made, such as by Walter Mattli, that earlier works by leading neofunctionalist Ernst B. Haas were not only path-breaking but also offer insights applicable across time and geographies.[20] Issues of how the EU can be used comparatively are considered in the conclusion.

[13] Morten Bøås, Marianne H. Marchand and Timothy M. Shaw, 'The Weave-world: The Regional intervening of Economies, Ideas and Identities', in Timothy M. Shaw and Fredrik Söderbaum (eds), *Theories of New Regionalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Ravenhill also writes that regionalism dates 'back several centuries'. 'Regionalism', p. 183. A study of IR as system over time is given in Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[14] See Walter Mattli, *The Logic of Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[15] See, for example, Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs: The Islamic world since the peace settlement* (London: Oxford University Press for Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1927). I appreciate this point in particular from Nick Rengger.

[16] Some discussion and sources are given in Diana Tussie, 'Latin America: Contrasting Motivations for Regional Projects', in this collection.

[17] Michael Barnett and Etel Solingen, 'Designed to Fail or Failure of Design?' The Origins and Legacy of the Arab League', in Acharya and Johnstone, p. 180. As mentioned below, the Arab League also seems to have to preserve rather than weaken state sovereignty. A relative early account of several post-World War II intergovernmental organisations, including some regional, is Mark Zacher, *International Conflicts and Collective Security, 1946–1977: The United Nations, Organization of American States, Organization for African Unity, and Arab League* (New York: Praeger, 1979).

[18] Leading works were: David Mitrany, *A Working Peace System*; Bela A. Balassa, *The Theory of Economic Integration* (Homewood, IL: R. D. Irwin, 1961); Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958) and *Beyond the Nation-State: Functionalism and International Organization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964).

[19] Even Haas subsequently declared the theory outmoded in his *Obsolescence of Regional Integration Theory* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Institute of International Studies, 1975).

[20] Walter Mattli, 'Ernst Haas's Evolving Thinking on Comparative Regional Integration: of Virtues and Infelicities', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12:2 (April 2005), pp. 327–48.

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Different regionalist perspectives still concur that two distinct waves of post-World War II regionalism have occurred, the first between the 1950s and the 1970s, and then the second starting in the mid-1980s,[21] the latter process now being labelled by many in IR and IPE as the 'new regionalism'. Some nevertheless contend that 'significant periods of economic regionalism' occurred in the interwar period and then (only) in the 1980s,[22] while a major comparative study argues that 'regionalism has been a *consistent* feature of the global security and economic architecture since World War II'.[23]

Apart from questions of time periods of regionalism, debate remains over whether RTAs are 'stumbling blocs' or 'building blocs' in achieving global trade.[24] The perspectives also tend to be different in different subject areas. While some parts of the fields of IR and international political economy saw the three main regional trading areas of Western Europe, North America and Japan/East Asia as mutually exclusive blocs, other argued that trade patterns showed that regions were trading more of their Gross Domestic Product with the wider world.[25]

Although interwar blocs were seen as pernicious to the global economy, views on the postwar remains contested,[26] and interpretations of more contemporary economic regional trade liberalisation incline towards seeing it as at least neutral towards global trade liberalisation and probably complimentary. In practice, regional trade initiatives of the 1980s and 1990s ceased the 'old' regionalism that concentrated on import-substituting collapse. Summarised in the term 'open regionalism', which was initiated by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, regional economic liberalisation opened members' economies to each other while *also* opening economies to third parties. The 1980s saw little expectation of what would, by the early 1990s, already be termed the 'new regionalism'. Previously, economic expectations were for continuity of developments in multilateral trade, that is, on a largely global basis, with the exception of the European Economic Community. In addition, regionally-based preferential trade agreements had a record of failure,[27] and, in the 1980s international financial institutions resisted regionally-based trade arrangements and American policy was either uninterested or even oppositional.

[21] Jagdish Bhagwati, 'Regionalism and Multilateralism: An Overview', in Jamie de Melo and Arvind Panagariya (eds), *New Dimensions in Regional Integration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 22–51.

[22] Michael Kitson and Jonathan Michie, 'Trade and Growth: An Historical Perspective', in Jonathan Michie and John Grieve Smith (eds), *Managing the Global Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 18.

[23] Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Comparing Regional Institutions: An Introduction', in Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston (eds), *Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 1. Italics added.

[24] Some of the major literature includes Jeffrey A. Frankel, *Regional Trading Blocs in the World Economic System* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1997), and *The Regionalization of the World Economy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[25] Jessie P. Poon, 'The Cosmopolitanization of Trade Regions: Global Trends and Implications, 1965–1990', *Economic Geography*, 73:4 (October 1997), pp. 390–404, and Jessie P. H. Poon, Edmund R. Thompson and Philip F. Kelly, 'Myth of the Triad? The Geography of Trade and Investment "Blocs" ', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 25:4 (2000), pp. 427–44.

[26] A summary is given in Mansfield and Milner, 'New Wave', esp. p. 592.

[27] Takatoshi Ito and Ann O. Krueger, 'Introduction', in Takatoshi Ito and Ann O. Krueger (eds), *Regionalism Versus Multilateral Trade Agreements* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press for National Bureau on Economic Research, 1997).

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The re-ignition of regionalism required the end of the systemic constraints of the Cold War, even if that order has been called 'an exemplary regional system'.[28] Thereafter not only were actors given expanded foreign policy choice, but states that traditionally eschewed regionalism (or supported it only selectively), reoriented themselves towards regionalism. In this regard the US represented a substantial change – both for its own foreign policy and for the impact on the rest of the international system, even if it is accused of using regionalism as part of its hegemonic power.[29] Previously isolationist China also engaged in regional activities, including in promotion of cooperation between itself, Russia and four Central Asian states.[30] Japan, considered previously 'reluctant' to partake in regionalism, became pro-active.[31] Even Iran, while ideological defiant and generally politically isolated, initiated and has gained some limited benefits from its Economic Cooperation Organization, which was launched in 1992, to involve ten countries.[32]

The expansion of regional activities – in number, in the change of the nature of memberships (between 'North' and 'South'), in sectoral activity and in the qualitative increase in their goals – has led to the aforementioned second round or a 'new' regionalism. Qualitatively large change occurred in terms of regionalism, foremost with NAFTA, but also generally with an expansion of Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) in terms numbers of countries and sizes of populations included, and also in areas of the world that obtain less world attention, such as the Central American Common Market (CACM) which began in 1960, and was relaunched as open regionalism in the 1990s.[33] Some studies in the 'new regionalism' fold are inclined to resolve the stumbling/building bloc question as benign towards global trade harmonisation; some economists, while still concerned about the protectionist potential of the new regionalism, even see that phenomenon as a successful product of multilateralism.[34] Indeed, because many of the RTAs and their content concerned opening trade between developed and developing economies, they were not focused on creating regional self-sufficiency, which was a break with the objectives of regionalism in the two decades after World War II.[35] The new regionalism has also moved beyond trade and functionalism to incorporate an analytical and a normative dimension towards the developmental promise of regionalism. The policy and analytical widening of regionalism from economics

[28] Fawcett, 'Exploring Regional Domains', p. 437.
[29] For such an argument, see James H. Mittelman and Richard Falk, 'Hegemony: The Relevance of Regionalism?', in Björn Hettne, Andreas Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel (eds), *National perspectives on new regionalism in the North* (London: Macmillan, 1999).
[30] For Chinese multilateralism, including SCO, see Marc Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power* (London: Routledge, 2005), esp. ch. 4, 'Labyrinth's edge: China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization'.
[31] See such assessment in the important example of Japan, which is then attributed to the increased strength of ASEAN in Chang-Gun Park, 'Japan's Policy Stance on East Asian Neo-Regionalism: From Being a "Reluctant", to Becoming a "Proactive" State', *Global Economic Review*, 35:3 (September 2006), pp. 285–301.
[32] Edmund Herzig, 'Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia', *International Affairs*, 80:3 (May 2004). The official website of ECO is ⟨http://www.ecosecretariat.org/⟩.
[33] Victor Bulmer-Thomas, 'The Central American common market: From closed to open regionalism', *World Development*, 26:2 (February 1998), pp. 313–22.
[34] See, for example, Wilfred J. Ethier, 'The New Regionalism', *The Economic Journal*, 108 (July 1998), p. 1161.
[35] See Robert Z. Lawrence, *Regionalism, Multilateralism and Deeper Integration* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1995).

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has necessarily, and rightly, called for more attention to the political, the relative absence of which has been called 'glaring'.[36]

Even before many of the questions that have been prompted by the new regionalism have been settled, calls have emerged, including by a leading new regionalism proponent to view it as 'old', in part because the idea has existed for almost two decades.[37] Studies of specific geographic areas that have adopted the new regionalism approach have also suggested that we need to advance upon it.[38] Simultaneously, arguments are made to bridge aspects of old and new regionalism.[39] Indeed, as some new regionalism proponents caution, the new regionalism is so diverse in form and content that we should be careful to draw a complete break between all forms of the old and new. Unsurprisingly, a major study of the new regionalism warns of the 'fragmentation and division' within it.[40]

Apart from any inherent interest in reconciling such differences, the academic study of regionalism needs also to continue because regions now appear destined to remain a feature of world politics; few dispute the intensity and frequency of regional cooperation initiatives since the end of the Cold War; those researching it assert that regionalism is now worldwide and cannot be dismissed as passing.[41] What do we know and mean by these terms and processes?

Definitions and phenomena

Major literature reviews call regionalism 'an elusive concept' and note that 'extensive scholarly interest in regionalism has yet to generate a widely accepted definition of it'.[42] Geographer John Agnew warns 'At the moment only philosophical confusion reigns supreme in much writing about place, space and region',[43] while fellow Geographer Anssi Paasi warns further of the challenges of dealing with 'region' as 'a complicated category since it brings together both material and ''virtual'' elements, as well as very diverging social practices and discourses'.[44] In addition to regions having different constituting characteristics, many countries belong to several regional arrangements, some of which overlap but do not coincide, and as later discussion shows, some of grouping are used specifically to bolster others, as in Europe and the Pacific, while occasionally, as in the post-Soviet space, their coexistence may signal discord and even conflict.

[36] Mansfield and Milner, 'New Wave', pp. 619–21, quotation at p. 621.
[37] See Hettne, 'Beyond', p. 543.
[38] See the collection 'Governing the Asia Pacific: Beyond the ''New Regionalism''', *Third World Quarterly*, 24:2 (April 2003).
[39] Alex Warleigh-Lack, 'Towards a Conceptual Framework for Regionalisation: Bridging ''New Regionalism'' and ''Integration Theory''', *Review of International Political Economy*, 13:5 (December 2006), pp. 750–71.
[40] Fredrik Söderbaum, 'Introduction: New Theories of Regionalism', in Timothy M. Shaw and Fredrik Söderbaum (eds), *Theories of New Regionalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 3.
[41] Fawcettt, 'Exploring Regional Domains', p. 438.
[42] Mansfield and Milner, 'New Wave', p. 590.
[43] John Agnew, 'Regions on the Mind Does Not Equal Regions of the Mind', *Progress in Human Geography*, 23:1 (1999), p. 93.
[44] Anssi Paasi, 'The Resurgence of the ''Region'' and ''Regional Identity'': Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Observations on Regional Dynamics in Europe', in this collection.

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The concept and understanding of region is clouded also by divergent understandings in cognate subjects. In geography regional studies are the 'core of theoretical and empirical research' and 'new regionalism' constitutes central debate.[45] But geographers generally refer to a region as a substate entity (and also employ the term 'constructionist' where IR uses 'constructivism'), and, in contradistinction to prominent areas of IR research on the borderless world, question the demise of the Westphalian system with a 'renaissance of border studies'.[46] In IR, a subregion may also be used for interlinkages across the national boundaries of two or more states but involving units below the national level of governance. And while subregional cooperation in that sense has occurred considerably, for example, across post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, some of the literature on post-communist *state-level* activity has been called subregional, taking 'Europe', however that might be practically identified, as the region. 'Subregion' has also used in the European context to characterise regional cooperation initiatives *among* states.[47]

Apart from subregions, microregions, which do not otherwise feature in analysis hereafter, are increasingly a worldwide phenomenon, and perhaps are particularly prevalent in development questions in the global south, and consequently hold implications for both policy-making and as another level of analysis, particularly also from their direct impact on populations. As a recent study of such regionalising processes in Africa found: 'The neglect of micro-regionalism in the study of international studies is unfortunate, since it is perhaps the form of regionalism most beholden to ''real'' processes on the ground . . . micro-regions are most obviously constructed at the interface between the top-down and the bottom-up, and with very ''real'' implications for people living in the area'.[48]

Further confusion over terminology arises from policy usage: the EU is not only a major 'region', but also a producer of various types of other 'regions'. Apart from its supranational identity, EU projects include the formation of regions as subnational entities within existing states, the significance and implications of which Paasi outlines,[49] as well as cross-border regional initiatives, including the Euroregions.[50]

[45] Iwona Sagan, 'Looking for the Nature of the Contemporary Region', *Progress in Human Geography*, 28:2 (2004), p. 141; more generally on new regionalism in Geography. See John Harrison, 'Re-reading the New Regionalism: A Sympathetic Critique', *Polity & Space*, 10:1 (April 2006), pp. 21–46.

[46] A useful overview of these developments in Geography, including suggestions for use of terminology across disciplines, is given in David Newman, 'Borders and Bordering: Towards an Interdisciplinary Dialogue', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9:2 (2006), pp. 171–86.

[47] For this argument as applied to the Baltic Sea region, see Helmut Hubel, 'The Baltic Sea Subregion after Dual Enlargement', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 39:3 (2004), pp. 283–98. Two of the larger works on regional cooperation in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe use 'subregional': Andrew Cottey (ed.), *Subregional Cooperation in the New Europe: Building Security, Prosperity and Solidarity from the Barents to the Black Sea* (Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan in Association with the East-West Center, 1999) and Martin Dangerfield, *Subregional Economic Cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe: The Political Economy of CEFTA* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2000).

[48] Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor, 'Introduction: Understanding the Dynamics of Micro-Regionalism in Southern Africa', in Fredrick Söderbaum and Ian Taylor (eds), *Regionalism and Uneven Development in Southern Africa: The Case of the Maputo Development Corridor* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 3. For microregions more broadly, see Shaun Breslin and Glenn D. Hook (eds), *Microregionalism and World Order* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

[49] Passi, 'The Resurgence of the 'Region' and 'Regional Identity': Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Observations on Regional Dynamics in Europe'. This is not to say that the EU has outright imposed national-level regionalisation on accession candidates, as elites in those countries have used the premise of EU conditionality to enact some reforms. For two cases, see Martin

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These policy initiatives in turn have generated another aspect of region studies that compares the impact of regional formations on subregionalism within individual member-states and across their national boundaries. Thus, for example, the North American Free Trade Agreement between the US, Mexico and Canada signed in 1992 has been analysed in contradistinction to the EU as *dis*empowering the development of substate and cross-border regions.[51] That said, such subregional initiatives, especially in North America and the EU, are seen, at least normatively, to imply a ' ''higher'' level of interstate co-operation, contributing to the development of new forms of regional governance above and beyond traditional administrative and nationally-oriented frameworks'.[52]

A further issue is whether and how larger units can be considered as regions, particularly for continents. The term is still used, and perhaps particularly appropriately in consideration of one of the purported three main 'blocs', North America. While geographers question even the natural existence of continents, political scientists, particularly those concerned with North America, use frameworks and levels of analysis that incorporate that term. Thus a Canadian political-economist such as Stephen Clarkson refers to 'regional' as subnational and uses continental in the context of North America where others might use 'region'.[53] In practical terms we cannot ignore definitional developments in these areas or the impact of findings generated from them; they are indicative of the diversity surrounding 'regions'. The impact of the interrelationship between globalisation and regionalisation is being found at all levels, from the urban 'region' through to the international system.[54]

All of the above said, *region* itself need not mystify – no definitional consistency has (yet) been forced across researchers, even less so across disciplines, and such is extremely unlikely. While not ideal, historians and political scientists are said to 'know a region when they see one', and economists identify them through the existence of formal trading structures.[55] The term 'region' is left fairly open with one definition listing: 'Besides proximity . . . cultural, economic, linguistic, or political ties'.[56] A measure of common sense, based on the explicit terms that the region itself employs (such as geographical, historical or cultural), and careful and explicit references to those points of identification, designates a region as such. Region need not have institutional forms to be one; how a region, however, moves from using such its (chosen) shared identifiers to more formalised interactions and even institutionalisation is an important area of study.

Brusis, 'The Instrumental Use of European Union Conditionality: Regionalization in the Czech Republic and Slovakia', *East European Politics & Societies*, 19:2 (2005), pp. 291–316.

[50] See, for example, Jennifer A. Yoder, 'Bridging the European Union and Eastern Europe: Cross-border Cooperation and the Euroregions', *Regional & Federal Studies*, 13:3 (April 2003), pp. 90–106.

[51] See, for example, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, 'Comparing Local Cross-Border Relations under the EU and NAFTA', *Canadian-American Public Policy*, 58 (2004).

[52] James Wesley Scott, 'European and North American Contexts for Cross-border Regionalism', *Regional Studies*, 33:7 (October 1999), p. 606.

[53] Stephen Clarkson, 'The Multi-level State: Canada in the Semi-periphery of Both Continentalism and Globalization', *Review of International Political Economy*, 8:3 (September 2001), pp. 501–27.

[54] Recent examples include Jefferey M. Sellers, *Governing from Below: Urban Regions and the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). See also, Frank Moulaert, *Globalization and Integrated Area Development in European Cities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[55] Väyrynen, 'Regional', p. 26.

[56] Mansfield and Milner, 'New Wave', p. 591.

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These processes constitute *regionalism*, which has been defined as 'the urge for a regionalist order, either in a particular geographic area or as a type of world order'.[57] The use of 'regionalism' suggests a policy of cooperation and coordination among actors 'within a given region', whereby this coordination in itself can further define the region (even in it is employing either an objective sense of region created by geographic features or if it is creating such with selective choices of shared historical experiences).[58] In an extensive collaborative work on the 'new regionalism', regionalism has been defined as exploring 'contemporary flows of transnational co-operation and cross-border flows through comparative, historical, and multilevel perspectives'.[59] Thus, regionalism is a wide-ranging set of activities by different actors, in different ways and at different times. The question of what processes are to be included (or excluded) in any 'urge for a regionalist order' may remain analytically broad or intangible. The process might then range from intentional activities across more than two international boundaries, but even extend as far as integration, ceding significant amounts of national decision-making to a supranational authority.[60] We will later turn to some of the markers that are used in the process of defining a region.

Regionalisation in (international) political-economic literature, refers to 'the growth of economic interdependence within a given geographical area',[61] and this sensible definition is often further specified to those processes being driven from below, that is by non-state, private actors.[62] The important and valuable differentiation between state and non-states actors may not necessarily hold universally. Richard Higgott writes of the limits of a dichotomous approach, explaining that in East Asia 'the interpenetration and blurring of public and private power is a given of the political economies of the region'.[63] Apart from any operational difficulty of neatly separating private and public regionalising initiatives, studies relating to the new regionalism have defined regionalisation as the '*political* ambition of establishing territorial control and regional coherence cum identity'.[64] Despite these caveats, it is important to distinguish between state-led regional programmes, which we can call regionalism, and those substantially influenced by non-state/private actors. The latter, then, can be called regionalisation; but we continue here on the basis that regionalisation so defined is not enough in itself to create a region. A region exists when actors, including governmental, define and promulgate to others a specific identity. Thus, the term *regionness*, as advanced by Björn Hettne, becomes fundamental in our ability to recognise a region as such, and this we can take as the

[57] Björn Hettne, 'The New Regionalism: Prologue', p. xvi.
[58] See Fawcett, 'Exploring Regional Domains', p. 433.
[59] James H. Mittelman, 'Rethinking the New Regionalism in the Context of Globalization', in Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel (eds), *Globalism and the New Regionalism* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1999), p. 26.
[60] For the inclusion of integration, see, for example, Hurrell.
[61] Ravenhill, 'Regionalism', p. 174.
[62] Thus, with this distinction between regionalism and regionalisation, Ann Capling and Kim Richard Nossal argue that the latter has occurred under NAFTA, but not the former. See 'The Contradictions of Regionalism in North America' in this collection. For important IR discussion of the differences, see Andrew Hurrell, 'Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics' *Review of International Studies*, 21 (1995), pp. 331–58.
[63] Richard Higgott, '*De facto* and *de jure* Regionalism: The Double Discourse of Regionalism in the Asia Pacific', *Global Society*, 11:2 (May 1997), p. 166.
[64] Björn Hettne, 'Globalization and the New Regionalism: The Second Great Transformation', in Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel (eds), *Globalism and the New Regionalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999), p. 17. Italics added.

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capacity of a self-defined region to articulate its identity and interests to other actors. How well a region expresses regionness (we discuss presently some means for such assessment) serves as an indication of how 'real' and successful a region has become. Hettne suggests that regionness is therefore similar to actorness.[65]

Different analytical formulations of region, and what actors are responsible for them, become fundamental features of core debates in IR. One work summarises: 'the new regionalism reflects and affects a complex interplay of local, regional, and global forces, simultaneously involving states as well as non-state, market, and societal actors'.[66] Assessing how regions function and interact is further complicated by acceptance that regions are works in progress, indeed that they are perpetually unfinished projects, and that they are also 'porous',[67] interlinking, influencing and being influenced regularly by others actors and regions. Even in the economic realm, trade patterns are now seen to involve 'globally diffused network regions',[68] rather than being tidy, self-contained units, and in contradistinction to the bloc idea prevalent even in the 1990s. This makes their analysis more exciting and more challenging, particularly in terms of security, and some terminology is again beneficial as region, regional community, and regional system may be related but are nevertheless distinct. That regional communities and regional systems do not necessarily coincide is evident from the fact that an outsider power may be integral to the functioning of the latter, and not necessarily share any of its values.

While a region can exist as a series of shared values, and a regional community advances on those, different qualities of interaction – and with different meanings for security – have been observed. Coinciding with both policy and academy developments in regional initiatives for postwar Western Europe was Karl Deutsch's conception of the 'pluralistic security community' as a quality of relations among states that possess 'a real assurance that the members of the community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way'.[69]

Save for the few powers with capacity for global power projection, the region generates the principle forum for conflict and peace. Accounting for the dynamics and change has generated important theories, and much of the work in this area, which can be addressed fully here, now intimates progressions or evolutions within regions. The foundational idea of a regional security complex has been expanded to include cooperative as well as confrontation relations.[70] Regions have also been

[65] Hettne, 'Beyond', p. 556.

[66] Samuel S. Kim, 'Northeast Asia in the Local-Regional-Global Nexus: Multiple Challenges and Contending Explanations', in Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *The International Relations of Northeast Asia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), p. 11.

[67] For the latter see, Katzenstein, *World of regions*, pp. 21–35.

[68] Jessie P. H. Poon, Edmund R. Thompson and Philip F. Kelly, 'Myth of the Triad? The Geography of Trade and Investment "Blocs" ', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 25:4 (2000), pp. 427–44.

[69] Karl Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957). A more recent and comparative work is that of Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[70] This was originally defined as a group of countries whose security concerns are connected to one another and which must be addressed in relation to each other. Barry Buzan, *Peoples, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1983). While this approach notes that '[a]ll states in the system are to some extent enmeshed in a global web of security interdependence', it maintains the 'basic premise that security interdependence tends to be regionally focused' because 'it is strongly mediated by the power of the units concerned'. See

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characterised in broader security thinking as generating different forms of security, stretching from political-power competition to integration. Patrick Morgan argues that there are 'rungs on a ladder up which regional security complexes may climb as they pursue security management'.[71]

Why and how do pluralist security communities arise, in which interlinkages are so great as to remove violence as a policy option and what are their relationship to wider order? David A. Lake argues that, rather than cooperation emerging instinctively from anarchy, peaceful regional orders arise because of a dominant state; regions are local international order.[72] Emanuel Adler and Patricia Greve indicate that different forms of international order have been identified, how they (co)exist and in time and space has lacked theorisation, and distinct orders may overlap in time and space.[73] Arguments that suggest particular state practices for war – what Benjamin Miller elaborates as state-war propensity – are tested against regions, in this case between Latin America and the Middle East, providing insights both into conflict and into the nature of regions.[74]

Although the study of regions concurs on the centrality of regions to contemporary international order; fundamental differences as we have already suggested, arise on what constitutes regions, from where they arise, and on how they affect and interact with the larger international system. Potent arguments are made that policy-makers must take regions seriously, but that they need also to distinguish the differences among.[75] Considerable attention is now given to understanding how regions fit into and actually construct the post-Cold War order,[76] both in their own right and as a general widening of approaches to world order that have added new referents of security.[77] While human security has become important in security studies, expanding the referent of security away from the state, so too has the idea of the region become a referent.[78] The works of Katzenstein and of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver have done much recently to make the case for the region as a level of analysis distinct from the international.[79]

We know turn to how we identify and conceptualise regions, commencing with debates about the (non-)role of geography.

Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 46.

[71] Patrick M. Morgan, 'Regional Security Complexes and Regional Order', in Lake and Morgan, p. 16.

[72] David A. Lake, 'Regional Hierarchy: Authority and Local International Order', in this collection.

[73] Emanuel Adler and Patricia Greve, 'When Security Community Meets Balance of Power: Overlapping Regional Mechanisms of Security Governance', in this collection.

[74] Benjamin Miller, 'Between the Revisionist State and the Frontier State: Regional Variations in State War-Propensity', in this collection.

[75] See the findings in one of the major comparative works on post-Cold war regionalism, in David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

[76] Lake and Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders*.

[77] 'In the absence of a new overarching and overriding global-level security dynamic, domestic, bilateral and regional dynamics have become more salient and have to be addressed in their own terms'. Muthiah Alagappa, 'Regionalism and conflict management: a framework for analysis', *Review of International Studies*, 21:4 (1995), pp. 359–87.

[78] See James J. Hentz, 'Introduction: New Regionalism and the "Theory of Security Studies" ', in James J. Hentz and Martin Bøås (eds), *New and Critical Security and Regionalism: Beyond the Nation State* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), esp. p. 4.

[79] Katzenstein, *World of Regions*; Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*.

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Features of 'regions'

Geography and imagined regional communities

How much does geography matter in the study of regions? While there is a strong tendency in the social sciences towards social constructivism, a leading geographer states 'The 'region' typically conjures up the idea of an homogenous block of space that has a persisting distinctiveness due to its physical and cultural characteristics' and advises that 'Regional schemes are never simply intellectual'.[80] Some recent major regionalism works in IR acknowledged that geography itself reveals little about a region and its dynamics, and still see that can 'helpfully distinguish regionalism from other forms of ''less than global'' organization'. Furthermore 'Without some geographical limits the term ''regionalism'' becomes diffuse and unmanageable'.[81] Occasional efforts have been made to re-impose geography against the emphasis on social construction;[82] early studies of regionalism considered geographical proximity not necessarily as the only, but at least an essential factor of a region.[83] Some current debates on economic regionalism still 'hinge on the importance of geographic proximity'.[84] 'Regionalization' is identified in a major recent IPE textbook as 'the growth of economic interdependence within a *given geographical area*',[85] although some earlier works deem the existence of a PTA as sufficient, specifically noting that its membership is irrespective of geographic adjacency or proximity.[86] And probably the largest set of work on regionalism defined regionness as 'the convergence of several dimensions', defined as including 'cultural affinity, political regimes, security arrangements and economic policies', that result in 'regional coherence within a *particular geographic area*'.[87]

Geography should not therefore be dismissed outright as a starting point for identification of regions. Many regions, and especially those better-known and considered successful, use geographical markers. Both old and newer regional organisations employ geographic expressions, although post-communist Europe which has generated many regional institutions in the past configurations as drawn on a mix of geographic and non-geographic appellations.[88]

[80] Agnew, 'Regions on the Mind', p. 95.
[81] Hurrell, 'Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective', p. 38.
[82] Zoleka Ndayi, 'Theorising the rise of regionness' by Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum', *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 33:1 (April 2006), pp. 113–24.
[83] See, for example, in the earlier study of Joseph Nye, *Peace in parts: Integration and conflict in regional organization* (New York: Little, Brown, 1971). Nye's work nevertheless primarily categorised regions as economic or political.
[84] Mansfield and Milner, 'New Wave', p. 590.
[85] John Ravenhill, 'Regionalism', in John Ravenhill (ed.), *Global Political Economy*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 174, emphasis added.
[86] See, for example, L. Alan Winters, 'Regionalism vs. Multilateralism', in Richard E. Baldwin, Daniel Cohen, Andre Sapir and Anthony Venables (eds), *Market Integration, Regionalism and the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. p. 8.
[87] Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel, 'Editors' Introduction', in Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel (eds), *Comparing Regionalisms: Implications for Global Development* (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2001), p. xxviii, which is part of a five-volume series.
[88] Thus the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea have been so used for Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, even if they have stretched their memberships in the process. BSEC includes some, but not all, Balkan states, which were not Black Sea littorals. Iceland and Norway are not on the Baltic Sea; yet the former was included by special invitation, and as a senior diplomat involved in CBSS put it, because of its wealth 'Norway *had* to be included'.

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Yet geographic regions in themselves show nothing. In the Caucasus, a region determined by a shared mountain chain, in the distance roughly between St Andrews (the editorship's institutional base) and Cambridge (the place of publication) several conflicts remain unsettled that have caused thousands of deaths and made two million people internally displaced or refugees. The Arctic might seem a case of objective geography. Yet studies demonstrate that conceptions of the Arctic and of its management are conceived, even imagined, and result in competing interpretations.[89]

Depending on the characteristic emphasised, geography can become antithetical to region. The flipside to geography is identity. One the one hand, cultural connections (vestiges of empire) and especially language have been argued to provide far stronger bonds than geography. The British Commonwealth, though global but physically diffuse, has been considered a region. *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, simplified to the latter, refers to itself as a 'geocultural space' that includes 50 countries on most continents.[90] Thematic analysis of regionalism are sympathetic to these of cultural, religious or economic groupings that are not geographically contiguous nevertheless being called regions.[91] If linguistic, cultural or even religious commonalities allow for 'regions' across incongruent areas, can we say the same for functional groupings such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or indeed, on the basis of being a democracy? Definitions of region need to reflect the subject's terminology. Developing frameworks for assessing the declarations and institutions of regional grouping therefore become even more vital.

Quality and purpose of regionalism: what regions claim of and for themselves

What a regional grouping says it intends to do and what it actually does can reveal the essence of that formation. In assessing intentions and outcomes of regional formation, we should not presume that regional activities are always necessarily 'good'. 'Regionalism' has been used to describe the 'cooperation' of transnational non-state actors engaged in illicit activities.[92] State constructs of regional cooperation

Interview, January 2008. Even landlocked Belarus wants participation in CBSS and has been considered by Baltic regional specialists as a 'geopolitical presence both inside and outside the narrower region needs to be taken into account' and that therefore a Baltic region in at least some respects also embraces it'. Olav F. Knudsen, 'Introduction: A General perspective on the security of the Baltic sea region', in Olav F. Knudsen (ed.), *Stability and Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Russian, Nordic and European Aspects* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), pp. x–xi. By contrast, in many cases the geographic expression of the Balkans – referring apolitically to a stretch of mountains – has been sidelined by the region, even if intergovernmental organisations have reintroduced it in aid programmes in the name 'Western Balkans'.

[89] See Carina Keskitalo, 'International Region-Building: Development of the Arctic as an International Region', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 42 (June 2007), pp. 187–205, and E. C. H. Keskitalo, *Negotiating the Arctic: The Construction of an International Region* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[90] Georg Glasze, 'The Discursive Constitution of a World-Spanning Region and the Role of Empty Signifiers: The Case of Francophonia', *Geopolitics*, 12:4 (October 2007), pp. 656–79.

[91] See, for example, Fawcett, 'Exploring Regional Domains'.

[92] Michael Schulz, Fredrik Söderbaum and Joakim Öjendal, 'Key Issues in the New Regionalism', in Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkels, *Comparing Regionalisms: Implications for Global Development* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 269. They are not excluding states from malign activities.

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can even serve as 'enclaves of reaction'.[93] Certainly the positive humanistic values of many regional initiatives that bolster the universality of human rights such as the Council of Europe or the OSCE are absent from ECO, or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, whose cooperation between Russia, China and four Central Asian states contains no provisions or requirements for democratisation, rule of law or minority rights protection.[94]

More broadly, Robert Gilpin classified regionalism in 1975 into benevolent and malevolent forms, the latter contributing to economic downturns and even conflict.[95] By contrast, recent attention has been given to cases of 'developmental regionalism', a normative and analytical dimension generally welcomed in the new regionalism. The Mekong valley of southeast Asia has generated some benefits, but apart from 'negative consequences' for some parties it has even 'exacerbated underlying tensions stemming from sharing common resources, and generated new insecurities by magnifying power asymmetries in the region'.[96] James J. Hentz demonstrates how developmental regionalism in southern Africa, where such seems highly desirable, has created security concerns for its members.[97]

As the brief discussion of RTAs suggests, trade is a major, and common, activity of 'regions', and trade liberalisation is a value in itself. In addition, the absence of trade, not least when trade is a declared intention, could be both an indictor and an explanatory tool for the absence of deeper regional cooperation.[98] But in order to be a region, a region should have more than that – it would need self-declarations of its scope and identity. Indeed, even studies concentrating on economic regionalism note that 'questions of identity – are now deemed to be salient'.[99] On the basis of declarations, the Arab Middle East, for example, appeared in the later 1980s as embracing fully the ideas of the new regionalism, but with little content to match. Such juxtaposition of declarations and deeds allowed analysts to conclude that Middle Eastern regionalism has been largely empty.[100]

While the EU is often used both in academic and policy terms as the model for other regional initiatives, the EU's ideational basis for cooperation is not emulated. Contrasting the (lack) of declaratory values by regional initiatives gives indications of intentions. As James Mittelman, for example, writes 'African and Asian countries do not share the state aspirations found in the Treaty of Rome

[93] Richard Falk, 'The post-Westphalia enigma', in Björn Hettne and Bertil Odöen (eds), *Global Governance in the 21st Century: Alternative Perspectives on World Order* (Stockholm: Almkvist & Wiksell, 2002) p. 177, cited in Fawcett, 'Exploring Regional Domains', p. 429.

[94] For the pernicious influence of the SCO in this regard, see Thomas Ambrosio, 'Catching the 'Shanghai Spirit': How the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Promotes Authoritarian Norms in Central Asia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60:8 (October 2008), pp. 1321–44.

[95] Robert Gilpin, *U.S. Power and the Multinational Corporation: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

[96] Evelyn Goh, *Developing the Mekong: Regionalism and Regional Security in China-Southeast Asian* Relations (London: IISS Adelphi Papers No. 387, 2006), p. 41.

[97] See James J. Hentz, 'The Southern African Security Order: Regional Economic Integration and Security among Developing States', in this collection.

[98] Declared trade aims among Arab states and the lack of trade and other inter-regional economic development in practice is given in Barnett and Solingen, 'Origins and Legacy', p. 207.

[99] Richard Higgott, 'The International Political Economy of Regionalism: Asia-Pacific and Europe Compared', in William D. Coleman and Geoffrey R. D. Underhill (eds), *Regionalism and Global Economic Integration: Europe, Asia and the Americas* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 42.

[100] Charles Tripp, 'Regional Organizations in the Arab Middle East', in Fawcett and Hurrell (eds), esp. pp. 283–4.

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and that inspire the EU. Legally biding instruments are not characteristic of SADC or ASEAN, and are unlikely to propel their experience'.[101] The declaratory principles behind a grouping (or by some of its promoters) can be analysed to determine the relative strength/weakness to a regional project. Felix Ciută identifies, competing conceptions among BSEC members about the essence of the grouping which hamper the ability of the 'region' to be such. This would be a good case to show much declaration of intentions, but one that ultimately proves counterproductive.[102] Similarly competing regional economic allegiances have been found in East Asia.[103]

Institutionalisation

The degree of institutionalisation – formal procedures and structures that regulate and facilitate the functioning of the region – of course depends on the nature of the regional project. It equally serves as a means to determine the group's aims and evaluate them and the strength of the grouping in practice. As noted, many definitions relating to regional activity see institutionalisation as a later stage of a region's progression in any case and regional literature attaches importance to how a regional grouping can assert control over a territory.[104]

The existence of institutions in themselves can be misleading. Some bodies with formal institutions, like the OAS, 'historically sustained themselves through their inaction, rather than through multilateral activism'.[105] Acharya and Johnstone conclude more generally that 'more formally institutionalised regional groups do not necessarily produce more effective cooperation'.[106] To add to the difficulty of analysis, regional organisations themselves measure their relative functionality and effectiveness in such terms – the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), for example, points to the existence of its Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and to its Parliamentary Assembly, and contrast them to similar regional formations lacking that, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), to demonstrate the commitment of it members to the region and to its 'real existence'.[107] We need thereafter, to ask how existing these institutions are; for example, BSEC's Bank is formally committed to 'accelerate development and promote co-operation among' its member countries and 'supports regional trade and investment, providing financing for commercial transactions and projects in order to help Member States to establish stronger economic linkages'.[108] Its potential notwithstanding, the Bank has only

[101] Mittelman, *Globalization Syndrome*, p. 115.
[102] Felix Ciută, 'Region? Why Region? Security, Hermeneutics, and the Making of the Black Sea Region', *Geopolitics*, 13:1 (2008), pp. 120–47.
[103] Higgott, '*De facto*', p. 181.
[104] See for example, Hettne, 'Globalization'.
[105] Brian L. Job, 'Matters of Multilateralism: Implications for Regional Conflict Management', in Lake and Morgan (eds), p. 182.
[106] Acharya and Johnstone, 'Conclusion', *Crafting Cooperation*, p. 268.
[107] Interview with senior official of BSEC, Istanbul, March 2008. At the same time, it was pointed out the Bank thus far had only financed projects on a national, rather than a regional basis.
[108] ⟨http://www.bstdb.org/mandateneo.htm⟩, last accessed 30 June 2008. At the same time, the Bank has intentions to expand its activities and to work on a regional basis. And such clearly could not be done without its existence.

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funded projects on a national, not a bilateral, let alone regional basis.[109] On a larger scale, some regional institutions, particularly in the Middle East, may have been created, despite official rhetoric otherwise, to reinforce state sovereignty rather than to modify or transcend it.[110]

Institutions are taken as markers of achievement in other respects: NAFTA is deemed successful beyond trade increases because it has and is developing institutions; similarly southern America's MERCOSUR has also been deemed to be developing because it is introducing similar mechanisms. We require caveats in how we assess institutionalisation. Effective security communities might exist not so much because of formal and substantial institutionalisation (of which the EU again is a principle example) but because shared values and almost instinctive responses to mutual needs have arisen.[111] Regional cooperation may 'entail the creation of formal institutions, but it can often be based on a much looser structure, involving patterns of regular meetings with some rules attached, together with mechanisms for preparation and follow-up'.[112] Thus, institutionalisation in itself can be misleading; post-communist Central Europe's Visegrád Group deliberately did not institutionalise itself, although it has regularised summits of heads of state and ministers, rotating presidencies and annual agendas, and the remits of the body have been integrated into all relevant sections of each country's Foreign Ministry. Rather, it can be argued that the *lack* of institutionalisation has allowed the grouping to function well.[113] By contrast, 'resource-poor Africa is spawning these bureaucratically laden entities, too numerous to enumerate'[114] for regional cooperation but which are generally considered as failures. An intermediate position on institutional assessment might be APEC. As John Ravenhill has observed, since its foundation in 1989 APEC has expanded its activities and formal existence with a secretariat and a range and level of its meetings that includes major 'staged' annual summits, and yet its members still question its degree of progress.[115]

Identity

To understand the making and functioning of regions also requires examination of its identity projection. As Iver Neumann observers, advocates of a regional 'political project imagine a certain spatial and chronological identity for a region, and

[109] Interview at BSEC, March 2008. For a positive account of the Bank in 'levating and sustaining economic growth and development' in the region, written by one of its officials, see Ahmet Imre, 'Financial Cooperation within the Black Sea Region: The Experience of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 6:2 (June 2006), pp. 243–55.

[110] See, again, some of the discussion in Barnett and Solingen, 'Origins and Legacy'.

[111] For such a distinction between security communities (rather than just regional groupings), see Alex J. Bellamy, *Security Communities and their Neighbours Regional Fortresses or Global Integrators?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).

[112] Hurrell, 'Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective', p. 42.

[113] Some of this is discussed in Rick Fawn, 'The Elusive Defined? Visegrad Co-operation as the Contemporary Contours of Central Europe', *Geopolitics*, 6:1 (2001), pp. 47–68.

[114] Mittelman, *Globalization Syndrome*, p. 118.

[115] See John Ravenhill, *APEC and the Construction of Pacific Rim Regionalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

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disseminated their imagined identity to others'.[116] We should examine how regional identity formations are made, sustained, institutionalised and, in cases such as expansion or role-transformation, how they are modified and adapted.

The intentions to create identity by those who run the regional project (whether from above or below) offers an indication of its strength and diversity. If it remains at a level of trade liberalisation it can provide better-priced and more varied consumer goods; but if it does not reach further into the popular hearts and minds then the regional project can be considered limited. As successful as NAFTA might be on the *economic* level, that is in terms of regionalisation, its North American identity-creating dimensions seem profoundly limited, and this will contribute to analysis, as offered effectively by Ann Capling and Kim Richard Nossal of the overall limitations to North America truly becoming a region.[117] These limitations may be especially so because globalisation, which is so often seen as creating or even forcing new regional formations, is attributed to creating regional identities other than national or North American, because other forms of regions on that continent 'have been shown to be key contributors to innovation'.[118]

Although NAFTA is unquestionably creating economic integration and has been unusual among regional trade agreements for its extensive inclusion of services, it has also created institutions, such as dispute resolution boards, a trinational labour and environmental commissions and border agencies. NAFTA's inclusion of fair trade provisions on labour and environmental standards was also unprecedented in a regional trade deal,[119] though some of these in practice have not fulfilled expectations.[120] NAFTA has proved enormously successful in terms of trade, to the extent that the institutional capacity of the Agreement cannot cope, and that the economic integration is similar to that of a customs union or common market.[121]

Rare, however, is consideration, either normatively or analytically, of the potential for common identity within NAFTA (as opposed to its absence).[122] A sympathetic study that called North America 'fertile soil' for a common identity, even mooting the idea of a North American community, still approached the idea in sectoral terms, with heavy concentration on infrastructure and devoting only a couple of pages to 'a North American education plan'.[123] NAFTA's accomplishments would likely be viewed differently if it engaged in a programme of creating a North American identity, and even more ambitious would be such for the whole Americas. Rather, the fear of the loss of identity by Canada and Mexico has prompted arguments that,

[116] Iver B. Neumann, 'A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe', *Review of International Studies*, 20:1 (1994), p. 58.
[117] See Capling and Nossal, 'Contradictions of Regionalism'.
[118] Leonel Corona, Jerome Doutriaux and Sarfraz A. Mian, *Building Knowledge Regions in North America: Emerging Technology Innovation Poles* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2005), p. 1.
[119] Andrew Wyatt-Walter, 'Regionalism, Globalization, and World Economic Order', in Fawcett and Hurrell (eds), *Regions in World Politics*, p. 87.
[120] Among early assessments of the environmental provisions, see John Kirton 'Commission for Environmental Cooperation and Canada-U.S. Environmental Governance in the NAFTA Era', *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 27 (1997).
[121] Thomas J. Courchene, 'FTA at 15, NAFTA at 10: A Canadian Perspective on North American Integration, *The North American Journal of Economics and Finance*, 14 (2003), p. 263.
[122] For some discussion see Andrew Hurrell, 'Hegemony in a region that dares not speak its name', *International Journal*, LXI:3 (Summer 2006), pp. 545–66, and Caplin and Nossal, 'Contradictions of Regionalism'.
[123] Robert A. Pastor, *Toward a North American Community: Lessons from the Old World for the New* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2001).

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despite other successes, in this respect NAFTA might not be considered a full trading bloc.[124] Instead, the FTAA will dilute that aspect as much as it might open trade. It also lacks (stated) ambitions to function like a regional actor.[125]

Huge obstacles even to subcontinental integration exist and therefore also to subregional identities,[126] which arguably were already far stronger than either a national or continental identity.[127] Jerome R. Corsi's popular *The Late Great U.S.A.: The Coming Merger With Mexico and Canada* contends that the 'Security and Prosperity Partnership' of the leaderships of the US, Canada and Mexico is a far more deep integration project than NAFTA. Similar to the EU, the Partnership's ultimate aims have to be kept concealed from the public in order to succeed. Nevertheless, this assertion concentrates on economic and political interests (and circumvention of public accountability) rather than on the development of a common identity.[128] Instead NAFTA's future seems to be in an Americas-wide economic area, which then begs the question of widening versus deepening.[129] Seeing that a North American regional cultural identity is already very weak, expanding its membership or creating an Americas-wide Free Trade Agreement will almost certainly ensure that development of a common identity, no matter how thin, will be impaired further.

'Identity' of course invokes many disciples and is difficult to determine. In terms of region-building, we cannot, however, be deterred from trying to establish how much identity is created and how. Geographers particularly identify the use of metaphors as essential to the construction and maintenance of regional identity.[130] Indeed, geographers tend to argue that the region may provides more identity than a state.[131] While public relations cannot be a substitute or effective policy, the extent to which a region can 'market' itself indicates levels of agreement and commitment to a common purpose and identity. A further, and arguably a more advanced claim that regional cooperation makes, as distinct from becoming a security community, is of conflict prevention and management. Both the salience of such claims and their general important in IR suggest it to be an additional dimension of identifying regionalism.

Conflict prevention, resolution and management

A particular aim of regionalism, other than in its occasionally malevolent forms, that deserves distinct attention is as conflict prevent and management, either between and

[124] Fawcett, 'Regionalism in Historical Perspective', p. 87.
[125] For such a view, see Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel, 'Editors' Introduction', p. xxxi.
[126] See James Wesley Scott, 'European and North American Contexts for Cross-border Regionalism', *Regional Studies*, 33:7 (October 1999), pp. 605–17.
[127] A major study that identified subcontinental dentities in North America – calling them nations – was Joel Garreau, *Nine Nations of North America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin,1984).
[128] Jerome R. Corsi, *The Late Great U.S.A.: The Coming Merger With Mexico and Canada* (New York: WND Books, 2007.
[129] Courchene, 'FTA at 15', p. 283.
[130] See Anssi Paasi, 'Region and Place: Regional Identity in Question', *Progress in Human Geography*, 27 (2003), pp. 475–85, and Resurgence of the ''Region'' '.
[131] Iwona Sagan, 'Looking for the Nature of the Contemporary Region', *Progress in Human Geography*, 28:2 (2004), p. 142, who illustrates this from differing referendum results on EU membership that corresponded to identities in centuries-old parts of Poland that were part of other empires.

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among its members or as a mechanism to moderate conflict among neighbours of the grouping. A continuum of possibilities might existence between the role of conflict and regional institutional formations. At one end, it might seem that the fact of conflict excludes cooperation at all, such as in Central Africa or South Asia,[132] while other areas have use regionalism to overcome existing tensions, such as for ASEAN, which was motivated in part to deal with Vietnam and its expansion was seen as providing rapprochement of Vietnam and Laos with other members. Yuen Foong Khong and Helen E. S. Nesadurai write that it was 'remarkable' that ASEAN 'could be established at all'.[133] Still others can be a peace but draw on the avoidance of violent historical experience to construct pacific unions. In any case, conflict management remains integral to the study of regions. First, normative calls exist in literature conceive of regionalism for this role.[134] Second, many regional initiatives had framed themselves in this way. Arguments have been made that in ASEAN, economic motivations that were once clearly central, have now become secondary to conflict management and resolution.[135]

Conflict management needs subtle analysis as some of these forums work on the basis of 'quiet' diplomacy, where issues are addressed behind closed doors, so that the public may not know of the successes. The opportunity provided for contact should not be underestimated, even if that does not provide concrete and media-ready results. Thus, BSEC claims to have improved relations between its member states of Georgia and Russia in 2007, a year before outright war, when tensions included the expulsions of Russian diplomats from Georgia on charges of spying and the imposition by Russia of an extensive boycott of Georgian good for hitherto unknown health reasons. In addition, it is a grouping which provides a smaller group format where representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan meet, who lack bilateral diplomatic relations due to Armenia's continuing occupation of Nagorno-Karabagh and surrounding territories. While open conflict has not occurred in the post-Cold War Baltic area (discounting what has been termed the cyber war by sources based in Russia against Estonia), the CBSS has been ascribed a high-politics dimension (even though its mandate does not specifically include such), precisely by its inclusion in such an intimate grouping of the three (small and fearful) Baltic states along with Russia.[136]

More broadly, assessments are being made of regional capacity and success in providing security, both within and without any self-designed region.[137] Cooperation with the UN is important but not necessarily a requirement, although there has

[132] For example, as in the discussion regarding why some areas were excluded in Alberta Sbragia's 'Comparative Regionalism', JCMS Annual Lecture, given at the UACES Conference, Edinburgh, (2 September 2008).

[133] Yuen Foong Khong and Helen E. S. Nesadurai, 'Hanging together: institutional design, and cooperation in Southeast Asia', in Acharya and Johnston (eds), *Crafting Cooperation*, p. 40.

[134] Particularly Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel, *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development* (WIDER 4). See also Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, 'Intervening in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: The Role of Regional Cooperation', *European Journal of Development Research*, 17:3 (September 2005), pp. 449–61.

[135] Ramses Amer, 'Conflict Management and Constructive Engagement in ASEAN's Expansion', *Third World Quarterly*, 20:5 (October 1999), pp. 1031–48.

[136] See Hans Mouritzen, 'Security Communities in the Baltic Sea Region: Real and Imagined', *Security Dialogue*, 32:3 (2001), p. 306.

[137] Among literature, see Louise Fawcett, 'The Evolving Architecture of Regionalization', in Michael Pugh and W. P. S. Sidhu (eds), *The United Nations and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003), pp. 11–30.

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also been a growth in normative expectations of such coordination, as well as a substantial degree of pessimism. In any case, it is not clear how a regional organisation is accepted as a partner for the UN and there have been calls for this to be improved.[138]

Furthermore, the failure of UN conflict management efforts have resulted in calls for decentralisation to regional bodies, as well as for some concrete changes.[139] Africa and the former Soviet Union are particularly illustrative of how declarations and actions regarding regional peacekeeping can eluminate the depth of regionness. While Africa has had substantial UN peacekeeping deployments, the resulting claims of 'strategic overstretch' have given added impulse that 'regional organizations will continue to play a dominant role in the management and resolution of regional conflicts'.[140] While the OAU engaged in peacekeeping as early as in 1981–82 in Chad, the better-case scenarios of African regional intervention was that of ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone. That may be said to have accomplished its basic goals, and it was novel for its 'regional origins and character',[141] the ways in which that was done were highly questionable. These included the essentially unilateral form of intervention and the high degree of criminality, to the extent that the mission was nicknamed Every Commodity and Movable Object Gone'.[142] Even though the states that created ECOMOG have been applauded for the act, not least when other powers ignored particularly the situation in Liberia, its aims of building regional stability instead resulted in 'greater regional instability'.[143] Although ECOMOG maintained that it never received even the basic support from the international community that it requested, this intrinsic weakness of logistics may further indicate,[144] at least for the immediate future, the overall weaknesses of regional conflict management and intervention in Africa.

Likewise in the former Soviet Union, supposedly CIS peacekeeping missions were, or became, Russian, and are unlikely therefore to serve as evidence of regional multilateralism in practice.[145] These cases aside, limited optimism suggests that regional multilateral institutions after the Cold War were 'proving largely incapable of addressing the conceptual and practical issues that must be confronted in

[138] 'To date no criteria have been developed for acceptance by the UN of an organization at its meetings with regional organizations . . . some regional agencies have observers status, some receive invitations from the Secretary-General, others have unilaterally declared themselves to be a ''regional management'' for the purposed of Chapter VIII'. Kennedy Graham and Tânia Felício, *Regional Security and Global Governance: A Study of Interaction Between Regional Agencies and the UN Security Council, With a Proposal for a Regional-global Security Mechanism* (Brussels: VUB Press, 2008), p. 276.

[139] For such a view, but one seeing conflict management passing not only to regional bodies but coalitions and individual states, see Michèle Griffin, 'Retrenchment Reform and Regionalization: Trends in UN Peace Support Operations', *International Peacekeeping*, 6:1 (Spring 1999), pp. 1–31.

[140] David J. Francis, *Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems*, p. 113.

[141] Edmond J. Keller, 'Rethinking African Regional Security', in Lake and Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders*, p. 311.

[142] See Fredrik Söderbaum, 'The Role of the Regional Factor in West Africa', in Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel (eds), *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

[143] Herbert M. Howe, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2004), p. 165.

[144] Adekeye Adebajo, 'Liberia: A Warlord's Peace', in by Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild and Elizabeth Cousens (eds), *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), p. 611; and Howe, *Ambiguous Order*, esp. p. 163.

[145] For an overview of Russian 'peacekeeping', see Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: The Case of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999).

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contemporary, deadly, regional conflicts'.[146] Indeed, ASEAN has been characterised as possessing the expertise to settle border disputes among its members but also there are calls for it to assume new policy directions including 'bold constructive intervention in cases where a domestic concern poses a threat to regional security'.[147]

Having considered some of the ways and limitations in identifying and assessing regions and the quality of their regionness, we turn now to larger questions of what drives regions and how they function in the international system.

Balancing between globalisation and regionalism?

The new regionalism suggests that a range of actors initiate regionalism, and has been (sympathetically) criticised for even downplaying the role states and governments.[148] A comprehensive approach to actors – but sensitive to them having different roles at different times – seems an essential feature of regional analysis. While institutionalisation of regional activity is all an important feature of the new regionalism, one not necessarily initiated by the state but certainly made formal and more functionable by it, this approach recognises the multiplicity of actors driving regionalism, especially ones from below.

What actors we choose will be influenced by what kind of regionalism we expect. If we anticipate regionalism to start with and/or be predominantly economic, we may well find the substate, transnational and private economic interests that some have identified now as major forces for regionalism and integration. We must also widen the lens of actors, because regionalism does not necessarily start with economics.[149] We tend to see regions develop first from increased trade, usually progressing to more formal and developed arrangements as a customs union.[150] While receiving less attention that other regional cooperation initiatives, perhaps in part because they are mistakenly seen as only existing to facilitate integration into larger groupings, the post-communist cases are important in this regard: Central Europe's Visegrád began in 1991 among three states, on a principally political and security basis; but one of its products, arguably its most successful, was a *subsequent* free trade agreement; in that case, economics was a subset of regional political cooperation.[151]

Hegemon and globalisation

To what extent the hegemon differs from globalisation is central to IR, as is how much an American hegemon may differ from another. In turn, how much both

[146] Brian L. Job, 'Matters of Multilateralism: Implications for Regional Conflict Management', in Lake and Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders*, p. 166.
[147] Vivian Louis Forbes, 'Geopolitical Change: Direction and Continuing Issues', in Lin Sien Chia (ed.), *Southeast Asia Transformed: A Geography of Change* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 87.
[148] Harrison, 'Re-reading'.
[149] An overview of economic limitations in the study of regions is given in Väyrynen, 'Regionalism', p. 26.
[150] As with much work on the development (rather than evolution) of regions, the political-economic dimension outlines possible stages but indicates that not all stages must be passed. See Ravenhill, 'Regionalism'.
[151] See Dangerfield, *Subregional Economic Cooperation*.

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globalisation and a, or the, hegemon are the makers of regional orders constitute key questions in the study of regions. Some major theorists warn against any divide in analysis between globalisation and regionalisation, as any supposed conflict between them 'is more theoretical than real, for political and economic units are fully capable of walking on two legs'.[152] In addition, the five-volume WIDER study concluded that a significant amount of (new) regionalism has been undertaken with even no connection to globalisation.[153]

Nevertheless, the role of the hegemon/US remains considerable. The 1970 work by Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel identified the US has having a substantial (and intrusive) influence in the dozen subregional systems they demarcated.[154] Katzenstein demonstrates 'imperium' as central to regional formations, finding that American policy 'made regionalism a central feature of world politics'.[155] He determines that the imperium can act differently in different geographic areas, arguing that the European 'region' was built by the US to be multilateral, but the East Asian to be bilateral. A hegemon can also have preventative influences on regionalism, either by stalling potential multilateral initiatives or by puncturing the role of a regional power that might otherwise generate regional cooperation. American involvement, especially after 9/11, thus has been seen to have fractured the (weak) sense of regionalism there was in post-Soviet Central Asia and the wider Commonwealth of Independent States.[156]

If the role of hegemon receives accented analytical attention it must then be assessed for how it acts differently in and towards regions, and also how and when the attitude of the hegemon to regionalism changes. In terms at least of economic regionalism, as we have already seen, part of the rationale for the 'new' regionalism was that the US itself engaged in free trade agreements in North America and by the 1990s changed from opposing the creation of regional PTAs worldwide.[157] In more military-security terms, even before major change in US unilateralism in the twenty-first century predictions were that the US no longer possessed the desire or capacity to continue as the upholder of the global institutions and values it had previously advanced.[158] Furthermore, American 'unilateralism' after 9/11 has not necessarily harmed regionalism, and in some ways has been analysed as galvanising it. As one example, it had been argued that the US push for ASEAN to continue to anti-terrorism has encouraged China and Japan to make long-awaited progress of intensification of regional cooperation.[159]

Hegemonic influences must also be considered indirectly. While some internal weaknesses of ASEAN have been well documented, forceful arguments have been

[152] Mittelman, 'Rethinking the New Regionalism in the Context of Globalization', in Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel, *Globalism and the New Regionalism*, p. 25.
[153] Helge Hveen, 'Political Regionalism: Master or Servant of Economic Internationalization', in Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel (eds), *Globalism and the New Regionalism*.
[154] Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions: A Comparative Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970).
[155] Katzenstein, *World of Regions*, p. 24.
[156] Roy Allison, 'Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security Management in Central Asia', *International Affairs*, 80:3 (2004), esp. p. 483. Again, this is not to suggest that regional integration would have otherwise happened in the former Soviet Union.
[157] See Mansfield and Milner, 'New Wave of Regionalism', p. 621.
[158] A major statement is given in Robert Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[159] Öjendal, 'Back to the Future?'.

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made that the grouping both drew closer and its members developed a greater sense of a regional identity because of outside pressures. John Ravenhill confirms ASEAN's renewed cooperation began in this context.[160] Indeed, Amitav Acharya contends that recent works that take the region as central to world politics nevertheless neglect the resistance that forces within a region can present to the hegemon.[161]

Forming regional cooperation may or may not need a powerful leader within a region. If we place integration into a distinct category of regional, then as Mattli contends: 'successful integration requires the presence of an undisputed leader among the group of countries seeking closer ties'.[162] This may fit with recent arguments that East Asia is a unique regional system, one that possesses several strong and distinctive national forms, and which prevents the ascendance of a single power.[163] If integration is the key word, then 'an undisputed leader' may well be necessary, although again differences exist regarding the role of the an outside power in establishing the EEC (whether, thus the US served as a more distant but still single power, or whether there was an unusual duality of power between Germany and France). In most cases, however, some power seems necessary, although the context in which it operates will differ from case to case. It may not be one that grabs obvious attention – Sweden is seen as a 'generous' leader of Nordic cooperation.[164] The criterion of undisputed leader remains important in seeing the absence of integration in among post-soviet states. The importance of Russia in the CIS was considered great; in accounting terms, it was the undisputed power and was still seen well into the 1990s as acting as an undisputed regional hegemon.[165]

One study, drawing particularly from Africa but extrapolating, writes that security regionalism 'is inherently fraught with unequal power relations or asymmetries in that the strong, viable and dominant states often determine or ''dictate'' the contents, interests and directions of the ''regional'' collective organization, usually to the detriment of smaller and weaker members'.[166]

We need to ask what role a dominant power plays in regionalism more broadly – either as the initiator or in reaction to it. The (perceived) absence of a hegemon may also be a cause for cooperation. In the early 1990s, the absence of a clear European security order was a contributing factor to initiatives of post-communist states towards cooperation. Visegrád never sought integration among its members, although it has done important work on defense procurement, air defense and even aspects of foreign policy. BSEC may fail in part because it has two major powers, Turkey and Russia.

[160] See John Ravenhill, 'East Asian Regionalism: Much Ado about Nothing?', in this collection. Others have also written 'It was from perception of collective humiliation by essentially ''Western'' institutions like the IMF and World Bank that the felt need for greater regional solidarity emerged'. David Martin Jones and Michael L. R. Smith, 'Constructing communities: The Curious Case of East Asian Regionalism', *Review of International Studies*, 33:1 (2007), p. 169.

[161] Amitav Acharya, 'The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics', *World Politics*, 59:4 (July 2007).

[162] Mattli, *Globalization Syndrome*, p. 56.

[163] See the findings in Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi (eds), *Beyond Japan: The Dynamics of East Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[164] Mouritzen, 'Security Communities'.

[165] Philip Roeder, 'From Hierarchy to Hegemony: the Post-Soviet Security Complex', in Lake and Morgan (eds). For a more recent interpretation, see Paul Kubicek, 'The Commonwealth of Independent States: An Example of Failed Regionalism?', in this collection.

[166] Francis, *Uniting Africa*, p. 114.

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Challenges remain in identifying a region's major power. Significant differences exist, for example, on Japan's importance to East Asian regionalism. Recent works suggest that it is being overtaken by China (and India) while others argued that it still remains overwhelmingly the key economic force.[167] A regional power may not even be necessary for regional cooperation. In Latin America major powers, often Brazil, are seen as leading regional resistance to US policies through the construction of multilateral frameworks. Post-communist Central European cooperation occurred without one. The establishment of SADC and ASEAN, without a clear single major power, were seen as having arisen as a collective measure to counterbalance or resist neighbouring powers. The former served to resist the influence of apartheid South Africa, the latter revolutionary overflow from China and southeast Asia.[168] The absence of regionalism in places where it might seem logical, as in post-Soviet Central Asia, are also inhibited because of hegemonic rivalries.[169]

In addition, rather than either a hegemon or a regional power specifically driving regionalism, regionalism can arise in response to others regions. Areas in which states have sought to limit American hegemony, especially in Western Europe and east Asia, are seen thereby as having undertaken measures that in turn have prompted American economic regionalism, through NAFTA.[170]

In certain instances, a hegemon can be forced to pursue regionalism. The Pacific-bordering industrial states of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and even the US *responded* in the 1980s to economic confidence in east Asia and also a fear that regionalism there might exclude them.[171] Thus APEC has been interpreted as 'nesting' the 'subregional' groupings of NAFTA, the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement,[172] although this is a matter of interpretation, and one subject also to changes in policy. Thus Ellen L. Frost argued in 2008 that the poor response of 'Pacific' powers, namely non-Asian industrial powers and foremost the US, to the Asian financial crisis weakened the relevance of APEC and allowed ASEAN to augment its importance in driving integration in the region. Nevertheless, even in this case Frost identifies 'circles' of regional influence.[173] It has also been argued that ASEAN within APEC might strengthen the latter.[174] Unidirectional analysis of the influence of one region on another is incomplete. As Andrew Hurrell writes 'there can be no wholly self-contained regions, immune from outside pressures'.[175] The connections between and among regional grouping should expand as an area of research.

[167] For the former view see Hitoshi Tanaka, 'Japan's Policy for East Asia', *Asia-Pacific Review*, 14:2 (November 2007), pp. 30–44; for the latter view, see T. J. Pempel, 'Northeast Asian Economic Integration: A Region in Flux', *Asia-Pacific Review*, 14:2 (November 2007), pp. 45–61.
[168] Mittelman, *Globalization Syndrome*, p. 115.
[169] Allison, 'Regionalism'.
[170] Theodore Pelagidis and Harry Papasotiriou, 'Globalisation or Regionalism? States, Markets and the Structure of International Trade', *Review of International Studies*, 28:3 (July 2002), pp. 519–35.
[171] James D. Sidaway, 'Pacific Dreaming, APEC, ASEAN and Their Geographies: Reflections on Poon (2001)', *Area*, 34:2 (2002), p. 205.
[172] Jessie P. H. Poon, 'Regionalism in the Asia Pacific: Is Geography Destiny?', *Area*, 33:3 (2001), p. 254.
[173] Ellen. L. Frost, *Asia's New Regionalism* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008).
[174] Hadi Soesastro, 'ASEAN and APEC: Do Concentric Circles Work?', *The Pacific Review*, 8:3 (1995), pp. 475–93.
[175] Hurrell, 'Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective', p. 46.

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Incorporating actors and resistance from below

The hegemon and a major regional power may act differently in different regions. Apart from that, however, how actors within regions respond to or resist such outside pressures 'may matter even more in the construction of regional orders'.[176] Opening the lens of actors and processes expands the scope of influences that must be considered; and these will differ considerably across regions and then within their states and societies. This approach may also bring us back to country-specific examinations of Foreign Policy Analysis. Indeed, individual country analysis of regionalism by authors also well-familiar with or even contributing to the new regional paradigm show the fundamentality of domestic factors, including competing ones, in state-policy towards regionalism.[177] The use of regionalism for domestic political purposes must not be discounted either.[178]

East Asia has been described as one region driven very much by substate and/or non-governmental actors,[179] becoming 'considerably more interdependent, connected and cohesive' from 'trade and investment, cross-border production, banking, technology sharing, popular culture, transportation, communication and environment cooperation'.[180] Others have argued that the inclusion through democratisation of more non-elites in Indonesia has weakened the cooperative identity of the grouping.[181] Even if there is much bottom-up input in ASEAN, the body is also seen as serving to protect delicate domestic coalitions.[182]

As much as non-state actors may be important to East Asia regionalism, in Latin America by contrast, few 'bottom-up' impulses seem to drive MERCOSUR, which has instead been categorised by Diana Tussie as an 'extreme type of intergovernmentalism: "interpresidentialism"'.[183] Such concentration of decision-making may also preclude future societal impulses. Post-communist regional cooperation indicates another consideration in assessing influences from below: by having had a highly centralised planned economy and the absence of any significant private ownership, the region lacked the private economic interests that are often seen as driving at least the economic integration of other regional projects. It may be that some of post-communist regional cooperation was driven by anticipation of foreign business interests, or by those through the EC/EU, but at best they were an indirect influence. Instead, Visegrád has been a case of governments undertaking change, rather than business or societal interests, and also one in which the governments are

[176] Acharya, 'Emerging Regional Architecture', esp. p. 630.
[177] As one example, see James J. Hentz, 'South Africa and the political economy of regional cooperation in Southern Africa', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 43:1 (2005), pp. 21–51.
[178] Etel Solingen particularly shows the salience of domestic coalitions in influencing regional formations. *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
[179] See again Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi (eds), *Beyond Japan: The dynamics of East Asian regionalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). See also T. J. Pempel (ed.), *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).
[180] T. J. Pempel, 'Introduction: Emerging Webs of Regional Connectedness', in T. J. Pempel (ed.), *Remapping East Asia*, p. 2.
[181] Donald K. Emmerson, 'Security, Community, and Democracy in Southeast Asia: Analyzing ASEAN', *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 6 (2005), pp. 165–85.
[182] Yuen Foong Khong and Helen E. S. Nesadurai, 'Hanging Together, Institutional Design and Cooperation in Southeast Asia: AFTA and the ARF', in Acharya and Johnston (eds), *Crafting Cooperation*.
[183] Diana Tussie, 'Latin America'.

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developing a regional civic culture and identity.[184] Nevertheless, in the former Soviet Union, where the creation of a region remains underdeveloped if not impossible,[185] 'bottom-up' Russian (non-state) economic activity and investment might both contribute to regionalism and even assist that failing project.

Regionalism, broadly construed, can also be said to exist through transitional connections forged by criminal activities. This phenomenon is very strong in the Balkans and one of the sadly unifying influences.[186] These examples illustrate the varying nature of the bottom-up influence in regionalism, but also its uneven presence. Ignoring it provides imprecision; overplaying it obscures.

Analysing regions: further roads of enquiry

The above discussion indicates that regions are formed and operate in very different ways. Comparative regionalism studies that are conscious of the need for theory still also give their contributors scope for their cases rather than imposing it on them.[187] Must we analyse individual regions as we might the foreign policies of individual states? Is there enough commonality to generate a Foreign Policy Analysis of regions? Do we need to jettison major theories of IR in the process? Just as major developments in the 'real' world of IR are put through put through lenses of major paradigms, insights arise in so doing with regions. As Paul Kubicek demonstrates in the case of the former Soviet Union/Commonwealth of Independent States, major theories each offer insights. Similarly, such work as by Sarah Eaton and Richard Stubbs demonstrates how neorealism and constructivism give plausibly different analysis of ASEAN's effectiveness and also policy prescriptions.[188]

However, regions have generally been created as policy projects to address perceived problems, and we in turn have to accept that what issue or problem we are looking at will define the region, and applying different approaches will generate divergent results.[189] (Neo)realism can remain relevant for those who deem regions to be fundamentally products of state activity and that operate only and to the limits of what are determined to be in the interests of the states. In short, the study of regions, especially aspects of the new regionalism, should not overcompensate for previous state-centricity, by downgrading the role of the state and augmenting disproportionately non-state actors. We are well familiar with the challenges that EU integration presents to this but seeming that other initiative have not achieved such integration

[184] See the activities of the International Visegrád Fund.
[185] See the very defensible reasons for the limitations of the CIS becoming a 'region', given in Kubicek, 'Commonwealth of Independent States'.
[186] A recent assessment that shows the centrality in Western policy for the reconstruction of the Balkans on a regional level and the challenge thereto, inter alia, from transitional crime, is provided in Jim Seroka, 'Issues with regional reintegration of the Western Balkans', *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 10:1 (April 2008), pp. 15–29.
[187] Fredrik Söderbaum, 'Introduction: New Theories of Regionalism', in Timothy M. Shaw and Fredrik Söderbaum (eds), *Theories of New Regionalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), esp. p. 2.
[188] Sarah Eaton and Richard Stubbs, 'Is ASEAN Powerful? Neo-realist Versus Constructivist Approaches to Power in Southeast Asia', *The Pacific Review*, 19:2 (June 2006). pp. 135–55.
[189] See, for example, Hurrell, 'Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective', p. 38. Väyrynen demonstrates this effectively by analysing regions through different purposes such as economic and political-military. See 'Regionalism'.

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and state interests continue to predominate, such as in NAFTA and as a break on ASEAN integration, realism may provide important caveats. Realism also fits with views of regions as either products essentially of either one regional major power or of a global hegemon (some issues of which are discussed presently). This approach, concentrating on systemic considerations, also sees international order has built upon a series of hierarchies.

The economic dimension of regionalism has routinely been understood through neoliberalism, and that is also particularly important in continued explorations of the relationship between regionalism and globalisation. But regionalism should not only or primarily be construed in economic terms; even those with an economic focus to regionalism acknowledge that identity, inadequately addressed through this approach, is extremely important. In addition, as regionalism fundamentally concerns spatiality, we are cautioned by Raimo Väyrynen that both neorealism and neoliberalism give that aspect minimal attention.[190] At most basic we gain empirical evidence of economic interaction and, considering that such increases are considering important precursors to other cooperation or even integration, this is important. Indeed, that type of analysis is also being used to show the lack of regionness: some studies argue the weakness of 'region' in East Asia by indicating how relatively little trade occurs among the members of ASEAN and how much they individually and collectively still trade with non-members.

Consensus drawn from the new regionalism approach indicates that whatever theories are used or constructed for understanding regionalism, as discussed, they must allow for a variety of actors. Schulz, Söderbaum and Öjendal assert 'contrary to the tendency in mainstream theories, it is important to recognize the diversity of actors involved'.[191] That said, and not being mutually exclusive, the agreement that regions are imagined, much like the nation,[192] underscores the relevance of constructivism in analysis of regionalism. Furthermore, at least some of the cohesion of regions must derive from the trust and the 'cognitive interdependence' that Hurrell finds in 'cognitive regionalism'.[193] The study of regions may be a particular area in IR in which to develop further analytical synergies between realism and constructivism.[194]

The study of culture in regionalism, while necessary, is complicated by being both a major driving force and an obstacle to regionalism. In east Asia, for example, on one hand, we are warned 'that different cultures do not fit together and never will',[195]

[190] Väyrynen, 'Regionalism', p. 34. This absence is particularly important considering that discussions of global governance were also considered to avoid spatiality, especially international terms of regions and regional organisations, are doing so more. For brief discussion, see Mathias Albert and Paul Reuber, 'Introduction: The Production of Regions in the Emerging Global Order – Perspectives on 'Strategic Regionalisation', *Geopolitics*, 12:4 (October 2007), p. 550.

[191] Schulz, Söderbaum and Öjendal assert 'contrary to the tendency in mainstream theories, it is important to recognize the diversity of actors involved [in regionalization]'. 'Key Issues in the New Regionalism', p. 268.

[192] Such arguments naturally give reference, as is done also here, to Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

[193] Hurrell, 'Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective', in Fawcett and Hurrell, p. 64.

[194] While, for example, Buzan and Wæver retain aspects of neorealism in their study of regional security orders, Wendt writes 'Neorealists' growing reliance on social forces to do their explanatory work suggests that if ever there were a candidate for a degenerating research program in IR theory, this is it'. Alexander Wendt, 'Constructing International Politics', *International Security*, 20:1 (Summer 1995), p. 79.

[195] Writing in the Asia-Pacific context, see Dominique Shirer, 'Communities and Security in Pacific Asia', in Stephen Hoadley and Jürgen Rüland (eds), *Asian Security Reassessed* (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), p. 329.

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and on the other, told that in ASEAN, 'Asian leaders have promoted an ''Asian way'' of regional expression of domestic institutions, namely consensus culture, as the main mechanism for regional co-operation'.[196] In turn, many Asia and Asian regionalism specialists argue that that area will have its own form of regionalism: 'ASEAN's approach suggests the need for international relations theorists to consider ASEAN's style without being conditioned by assumptions arising out of existing theories, recognizing the usefulness of a mode of security cooperation that reflects the region's particular character'.[197]

Identity and culture are intertwined, the latter also being an area of growing interest in the study of IR. If, as shall be discussed presently in another context, regions need also to be assessed in their ability to sustain themselves and to draw allegiances, culture becomes important.

Culture of course remains a challenging material for analysis. In the study of regions apparent cultural inputs into or even determinants of a region are interrupted very widely. Thus, much acceptance of 'Asian culture' exists in literature to explain ASEAN. Yet others see East Asia as full of diverse cultures (that cultures are different is not disputed), none of which predominate, *limiting* the region's integration to less than that of other areas, not just the EU but also MERCOSUR or Central America.[198]

Still, many works on regionalism argue that we lack a theory of regions, and despite the existence of some interesting literature in this regard, further opportunities and necessities for the development of what we might call a grand theory of regions remain. Security institutions have received comparison over time and space but regions have received relatively little despite growing calls for doing so.[199] Regionalism literature rightly warns about the necessity of knowing about what we are comparing; criticisms of comparative regional works note, for example, 'the failure to nail down what exactly is meant by a ''region'' '.[200] Some scholars, such as in the major collection by David Lake and Patrick Morgan, determine that contemporary regions are different, but still advance a common approach.[201] Calls have been issued for mapping regionalism over time,[202] and for the applications of broader theory, rather than (just) working on the regions.[203] Comparison has been undertaken between the EU and NAFTA as the two principle blocs or regions,[204] and

[196] Poon, 'Regionalism in the Asia Pacific', p. 255.
[197] Yukiko Nishikawa, 'The ''ASEAN Way'' and Asian Regional Security', *Politics & Policy*, 35:1 (March 2007), pp. 42–56, quoting the abstract.
[198] T. J. Pempel, 'Introduction: Emerging Webs of Regional Connectedness', in T. J. Pempel (ed.), *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 1–2.
[199] See for example, Helga Haftendorn, Celeste Wallender and Robert O. Keohane (eds), *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions Over Time and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), which also contains two chapters on ASEAN.
[200] See the review of Edward D. Mansfield and Helen V. Milner (eds), *The Political Economy of Regionalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), by William Roberts Clark, *The Journal of Politics*, 60:3 (August 1998), p. 908.
[201] See, again, Lake and Morgan (eds), *Regional Orders*.
[202] Fawcett, 'Exploring Regional Domains', p. 430.
[203] See Hurrell, 'The Regional Dimension in International Relations Theory', in Mary Farrell, Björn Hettne and Luk van Langenhove (eds), *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).
[204] The literature on these two comparative cases is relatively large, as is that between the EU and East Asia. For an overview of work on the former, see Edmé Domingues and Björn Hettne, 'The

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of East Asia and the EC/EU, including historically, even if the conclusions may reinforce that even apparently comparable cases nevertheless arise in unique historical conditions.[205] We can also expect the policy arena to force further comparative regional studies – several regional groupings, foremost but not only the EU, are developing or enhancing their *regional* relations, that is, as one region to another. We can thus expect and should encourage more inter-regional comparisons.[206] Some regional promoters and analysts are also calling especially on the EU to invigorate existing regional cooperation, such as BSEC.[207] Nevertheless, even with a number of works on comparative regionalism,[208] one leading author observers 'research on comparative regionalism remains surprisingly sparse'.[209] *How* to use the EU as a point of comparison is disputed. Overattention to the EU has been called an obstacle to the development of more innovative studies of comparative regionalism,[210] although Jeffrey Checkel has recently asserted 'the days of *sui generis* arguments about Europe are numbered, which is very good news indeed'.[211] Some work suggests that applying historical context to the rise of the European region demonstrates fundamental differences between the EU and other regional groupings, while others contend that 'despite the apparent singularity of the European experience, its relevance for the purpose of comparison is much broader than is typically acknowledged in the community studies literature'.[212]

In short, the study of regions is fundamental to IR. But regions are ongoing projects; arguably, because not only their goals and capacities but also their very memberships can change, they are potentially more complicated to study even than states. The very degree of change among region is a requirement in itself for ongoing study. The diverse view on how they interrelate to and influence one another, the different goals they can assume – from (mere) trade to the formation of security communities – again make them difficult to theorise, while making that also a necessity.

European Union and NAFTA Compared', in Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel, 'Editors' Introduction', in Björn Hettne, András Inotai and Osvaldo Sunkel (eds), *Comparing Regionalisms*, pp. 187–213.

[205] Beeson, 'Rethinking Regionalism'; Mark Beeson, *Regionalism and Globalization in East Asia: Politics, Security and Economic Development* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006).

[206] Although an Americas-wide trading arrangement gives direct policy overtones to any comparison of NAFTA to other initiatives in the Americas, useful analytical comparisons are made in Daniel Lederman, William F. Maloney and Luis Servén, *Lessons from NAFTA for Latin America and the Caribbean* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press and the World Bank, 2005). In reviewing two major works on regions, Acharya notes the insufficiency of attention to the 'horizontal relationship between regions'. 'Emerging Regional Architecture', p. 637. On the EU and inter-regional relations, see for example, Mario Telò (ed.), *European Union and New Regionalism: Regional Actors and Global Governance in a Post-Hegemonic Era*, 2nd edn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

[207] Sergiu Celac and Panagiota Manoli, 'Towards a New Model of Comprehensive Regionalism in the Black Sea Area', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 6:2 (June 2006), pp. 193–205.

[208] Among them the five-volume WIDER collection cited at various points herein.

[209] Andrew Hurrell, 'One World? Many Worlds? The Place of Regions in the Study of International Society', *International Affairs*, 83:1 (January 2007), p. 218.

[210] See Breslin, Higgott and Rosamond, 'Regions in Comparative Perspective', in Breslin, Higgott, Phillips and Rosamond (eds), *New Regionalism*, p. 11.

[211] Jeffrey T. Checkel, 'Social Mechanisms and Regional Cooperation: Are Europe and the EU Really all that Different', in Acharya and Johnston (eds), *Crafting Cooperation*, p. 243.

[212] Karoline Postel-Vinay, 'The Historicity of the International Region: Revisiting the ''Europe and the Rest'' Divide', *Geopolitics*, 12:4 (2007), pp. 555–67. For particularly the relationship between integration and democracy, see Jeffrey J. Anderson, 'Introduction', in Jeffrey J. Anderson (ed.), *Regional Integration and Democracy: Expanding on the European Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), p. 2.

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The choice of both themes and of case studies in this collection – and then the specific choices within each of those – should be reflective of fundamental issues and debates in study of regionalism. The nature of the study of regions also requires that the approach not be a straightjacket.[213] Among the themes that can emerge from this collection is precisely the prevalence of divergence among the formation, form and self-declared purpose of regions, and of how regions interact with one another, other actors and the international system. If these articles consequently generate more questions in the study of regions, we hope that too might serve as a contribution to the continuing debates and dynamism of this subject.

[213] The few major comparative studies regionalism, including one focusing beneficially especially on instititionalisation, provided its contributors with variables but did not impose a common methodology. See Amitav Acharya and Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Conclusion: Institutional Features, Cooperation Effects, and the Agenda for Future Research on Comparative Regionalism', in Acharya and Johnston (eds), *Crafting Cooperation*, esp. p. 244.

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