

# Theorizing Regionalism: Cooperation, Integration, and Governance

by

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*“[W]ith the exception of European institutions, regional institutions have occupied a small and insignificant part of the overall theoretical literature on international institutions” (Acharya and Johnston 2007a: 2).*

The end of the Cold War saw a surge in regionalism. While the number of preferential trading agreements (PTA) exploded (Mansfield and Pevehouse 2013), long-standing regional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), experienced the delegation of more political authority and policy competencies in the past two decades (Börzel 2013). These two trends of more and deeper regionalism, respectively, are often attributed to processes of diffusion or *interdependent* decision-making. Regional cooperation and integration spread across time and space once the constraints of geopolitics had ceased to exist (Risse in this volume).

This chapter explores how mainstream theories of regional cooperation and integration account for the changes in the quantity and quality of regionalism.<sup>1</sup> Unlike diffusion, these theories implicitly or explicitly conceptualize regionalism as driven by *independent* decision-making of regional actors responding to causal factors located within or outside the region.

The chapter starts by arguing that the dominant theories of regional cooperation and integration share a bias towards taking *states* as the main drivers of regionalism and

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<sup>1</sup> Critical theories to regionalism, such as the World Order Approach, are dealt with by the chapters on new regionalism (Söderbaum in this volume) and non-Western approaches (Acharya in this volume)

focusing on processes of *formal* institution-building at the regional level. The discussion is followed by a review of the existing literature, which explores to what extent this double bias still allows theories of cooperation and integration to address the questions this handbook identifies at the heart of comparative regionalism. New regionalism (Söderbaum in this volume) and non-Western approaches (Acharya in this volume) emphasize the role of non-state actors and informal institutions. Rather than substituting main stream theories, the last part of the chapter suggests that the governance concept may strengthen their explanatory power by helping them overcome their statist and formal institutionalist bias. Governance gives equal status to state and non-state actors and does not prioritize formal over informal institutions. It thereby provides a useful framework to systematically compare varieties of regionalism across time and space.

### **Regionalism as State-led Formal Institutional-building**

Research on regional cooperation and integration used to be dominated by International Political Economy (IPE) and European Integration. IPE explores regional trade and investment patterns and the design of formal regional institutions to foster liberalization and settle disputes over market access between states. The main dependent variable is the emergence and effectiveness of preferential and free trade areas (PTA and FTA), concluded by states (*inter alia* Milner 1988; Mansfield and Milner 1997; Mansfield and Reinhardt 2003; also Kim, Mansfield and Milner in this volume). The main drivers for regionalism are (material) gains states expect to reap from trading with each other. These include reduced transaction costs, policy externalities, economies of scale, technological innovation due to greater competition, more foreign direct investments, and greater economic and political weight in international markets and institutions.

Integration theories took off in Europe, where regionalism from the very beginning has sought to go beyond trade liberalization through inter-state bargains (cf. Börzel 2013: 504-507). Intergovernmentalism takes member states and their governments as the principal

agents driving European integration and policy-making to protect their geopolitical interests and the economic concerns of their constituencies (Hoffmann 1982; Taylor 1991; Moravcsik 1991; Moravcsik 1998). Liberal intergovernmentalism, neofunctionalism and multi-level governance approaches, by contrast, privilege domestic actors (such as business associations, trade unions, and regions), which press for further integration to promote their economic or political interests. Liberal intergovernmentalism maintains that state governments act as the main gate-keeper for domestic interests to enter the regional arena (Moravcsik 1991; Moravcsik 1998). Neofunctionalism and multi-level governance, by contrast, consider the alliances they build with supranational actors (particularly the European Commission and the European Court of Justice) circumventing their governments as the main driver of regional institution-building (Haas 1958; Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998; Hooghe and Marks 2001). The unit of analysis to adjudicate their theoretical claims is the making of European Treaties and European laws (Schimmelfennig in this volume).

The various theories that emerged within these two main approaches to regionalism focus on different issue areas and privilege different drivers. Yet, they all take formal processes and outcomes of inter-state bargains as the core. European integration is by definition more than cooperation among states; the main contention between Integration theories, however, is about the extent to which states are (still) the masters of a process, in which political they increasingly delegate authority to supranational institutions through reforming the EU treaties and adopting and enforcing EU laws.

Studies of region-building that are less theory-driven or analytically eclectic in their approach, often adopt a perspective that is centred on the state, too. The literature on “new regionalism” criticizes the state-centrism of the “old regionalism”, which had emerged in Western Europe after the end of the Second World War (Söderbaum in this volume). It emphasizes the social construction of regions, the role of market and civil society actors, as well as the importance of flows of capital, trade and people. New varieties of regionalism are explored, where “the state is no longer regionalism’s only gatekeeper” (Fawcett 2005: 24).

Yet, in most empirical examples, regionalism is ultimately still analyzed as inter-state institution-building at the regional, inter-regional and trans-regional level (Shaw et al. 1999; Schulz et al. 2001a; Telò 2001; Breslin et al. 2002; Farrell et al., 2005; Telò 2007; Laursen 2010; Warleigh-Lack et al. 2010). More spontaneous and endogenous processes which involve a variety of state-, market and civil society actors organized in formal and informal networks are categorized as regionalization or “cross-border micro-level regionalism” (Söderbaum 2005; Jessop 2003) and, hence, treated as distinct from regionalism (Hurrell 1995; Fawcett 2005: 25; Farrell et al. 2005; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000; Schulz et al. 2001b; Wunderlich 2011).

Whether the dominance of state-led regionalism in the literature results from a bias in our theoretical perspectives or whether the varieties of regionalism that have emerged since the 1980s are after all not that new or distinct as to require new, less state-centric approaches (Acharya 1998; Acharya and Johnston 2007c; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003), are empirical questions that lie at the heart of comparative regionalism and are discussed in the concluding chapter (Börzel and Risse in this volume). The following section discusses to what extent mainstream theories of regional integration and cooperation still offer convincing explanations on the emergence of regionalism, its outcomes, and its effects.

### **Theories of Regional Cooperation and Integration**

The literature features a multitude of mainstream theories of regional cooperation and integration. A first way to organize and classify them is the level of analysis and the logic of action, to which they subscribe. These distinctions are commonly made in international relations (Adler 1997) but also apply to other fields of social science. The level of analysis classifies theories according to whether they consider the main drivers of region-building to lie within (endogenous) or outside (exogenous) the region (Hettne 2002; Söderbaum and

Sbragia 2010). Many theories consider both and do not systematically distinguish between the two types of drivers. Their causal effects on the emergence, outcome and effects of regionalism can follow either an instrumentalist (rationalist) or a norm-based (social constructivist) logic of social action. Social constructivist approaches emphasize the role of collectively shared beliefs, social conventions and behavioural practices, and, hence, are not focused on formal institutions only as many rationalist approaches are.

The relationship between the level of analysis and the logic of social action is orthogonal. Rationalist and constructivist approaches can privilege either exogenous or endogenous explanations. While focusing on causal factors outside the region, exogenous explanations are different from diffusion (Risse in this volume). Institutional similarities are not the result of interdependent decision-making through which actors in one region emulate the institutions of another. Rather, actors in different regions take similar decisions in response to similar external challenges or problems; they institute a regional monetary fund as the best solution to prevent another global financial crisis, establish a regional emission trading system to mitigate global climate change or set up a regional civil protection mechanism to deal with natural disasters.

A third distinction refers to the role of non-state actors. State-centered theories take state governments as the key actors driving and shaping regional institution-building. Society-based approaches, by contrast, emphasize the importance of (trans-)national market and civil society actors, which do not only define state preferences or pressure and persuade them into building regional institutions but engage in their own regional institution-building, with or without states being involved.

The various combinations of the three dimensions generate different causal explanations privileging different drivers of regional cooperation and integration present in the literature. They differ, however, with regard to the outcome. While in international relations, most theories focus on the emergence of regional cooperation, European Union studies take

regional integration as their *explanandum*. The distinction ultimately relates to the institutional design of regionalism, to which an entire chapter of this handbook is dedicated. (Marks and Lenz), This chapter, therefore, concentrates on the emergence and effects of regionalism and deals with outcome only with regard to the distinction between cooperation and integration.

#### *The Emergence of regionalism*

Classical theories of international cooperation and integration are rationalist and state-centred. *Power-based approaches* such as neorealism assume that in the absence of a central enforcement power (anarchy), cooperation is risky for states which are concerned about the equal distribution of power among them (cf. Baldwin 2013; Grieco 1988). To explain regional cooperation, hegemonic stability theory points to powerful states within the region or outside, which are willing to and capable of acting as “regional paymaster, easing distributional tensions and thus smoothing the path of integration” (Mattli 1999a: 56; cf. Gilpin 1987: 87-90; Grieco 1997). The US played a key role as external hegemon in the creation and prevalence of the European Community and ASEAN by mitigating the security dilemma in the region (Gruber 2000; Acharya 2001). Conversely, the ineffectiveness of regionalism in the Middle East or Asia is often blamed on the absence of a regional or external hegemon (Fawcett and Gandois 2010; Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002). Powerful states facilitate the emergence of regionalism in pursuit of economic or geopolitical interests. The US, China, Russia, South Africa or Nigeria supported and engaged in region-building in order to strengthen military alliances, promote stability in neighbouring countries, or secure access to new markets, cheap labour, water and energy resources (Antkiewicz and Whalley 2005; Gowa 1994; Clarkson 2008; Coleman 2007: 155-184). Yet, while hegemonic leadership may help initiate and promote regionalism, powerful states are not always willing to act as hegemons (Destradi 2010). Brazil has been ambivalent towards pushing regional institution-building in Latin America (Spektor 2010). India appears to have aspirations for regional leadership but so far refrained from developing a vision for how to create stability in the conflict-ridden region (Destradi 2012). South Africa has used its economic power to actively

shaped the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) but has played a more ambivalent within Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Lorenz-Carl 2013; Muntschik 2013).

Forming regional alliances to balance powerful states posing a threat in and outside the region, rather than bandwagon with them, is another explanation for regional cooperation under anarchy (Walt 1987). One of NATO's main missions has been to keep Germany down and Russia out by keeping the US in Europe (Risse-Kappen 1995). Brazil and Venezuela have championed Mercosur to counter-balance US influence in Latin America (Gomez Mera 2005; Tussie 2009). A similar competition between two states for containing external powers through promoting (different forms of) regionalism can be observed between Iraq and Egypt in the League of Arab States (Khadduri 1946), Malaysia and Indonesia in ASEAN (Dent 2008: 86-88), Japan and China in East Asia (Beeson 2006), Nigeria and South Africa in Sub-Saharan Africa (Francis 2006), and Russia and Uzbekistan in Central Asia (Kubicek 1997).

*Neoliberal institutionalism and rationalist functionalism* are as rationalist and state-centred as power-based approaches. They also assume international anarchy but emphasize complex interdependence among states and their shared interest in dealing with the problems that arise from it by setting up international institutions (Keohane 1984; Martin and Simmons 1998), which intensify at the regional level. Globalization is a major external driver for regionalism. Global markets entail increased transborder mobility and economic linkages and trade issues are less cumbersome to deal with at the regional than at the multilateral level (Schirm 2002; Breslin et al. 2002). Coping with negative externalities, such as diversions of trade and investment, provides another rational to engage in regional institution-building. States may either seek membership in regional institutions generating the external effects as many European countries have done in the case of the EU and some of the South American countries do with NAFTA (Mattli 1999b: 59-61). Or they create their own regional group. NAFTA can be interpreted as the US' reaction to the fortification of the Single European Market and the emerging economic regionalism in Asia (Mattli 1999b: 183-185). A similar

“domino effect” (Baldwin 1995) was triggered by the US’ turn towards regionalism which has contributed to the proliferation of regional PTA, since states perceived the US as no longer capable of or willing to ensure the stability of the global trading system (Mansfield 1998). The decision of 1992 to complement the ASEAN security community with an ASEAN free trade area is partly explained by concerns over the global positioning of ASEAN markets vis-à-vis NAFTA and the Single European Market (Means 1995). Globalization, hence, is a common stimulus generating a demand for regional institutional-building, to which states have responded independently and often times differently around the globe. While advanced industrialized countries have mostly sought to shape globalization and manage its externalities by setting up regional institutions, developing countries had initially engaged in protective regionalism reducing their dependency on the global markets and former colonial powers (Mistry 2003; Rivarola Puntigliano and Briceño-Ruiz 2013). Increasingly, regional cooperation and integration has become more developmental not only by providing access to global markets and attracting foreign direct investments but also by fostering economic and industrial development as well as social protection in the region (Bruszt and Palestini in this volume).

*Political economy approaches and liberal theories of international cooperation* provide more society-centred explanations for how globalization translates into regionalism. They take economic and social interests as the starting point (Kim et al. and Solingen in this volume). These interests are channeled through the domestic political process of interest aggregation and interest representation. States are the master of regional organizations and gate-keep access to international decision-making processes. Domestic interest groups may try to circumvent them by forming transnational alliances but when push comes to shove they have to rely on their governments if they want to influence regional policy outcomes and institutional reforms (Moravcsik 1998). Depending on their access to domestic decision-making processes and their action capacity, pro-integration interests are more or less successful in making their political demand for regional institution-building heard (Rogowski

1989; Milner 1997). American business, for instance, forcefully lobbied in favour of the NAFTA and APEC agreements (Milner 1995; Cameron and Tomlin 2002).

*Neofunctionalism* also emphasizes the role of interest groups, professional associations, producer groups and labour unions, which do not equally benefit from regionalism. Those, who do, form transnational coalitions with like-minded groups from other member states and ally with regional actors. This is where they differ from liberal intergovernmentalism. Domestic interests can by-pass their governments with their demands for (more) regionalism. Regional actors respond to this demand and push state governments into supplying (more) effective regional institutions to foster trade liberalization by compromising their sovereignty (Stone Sweet and Caporaso 1998). Thus, European companies effectively joined forces with the European Commission to propel the Single European Market and the European Currency (Sandholtz and Zysman 1989; Cowles 1995).

Rationalist society-centred theories, which focus on preferences in domestic and transnational society, explicitly or implicitly, presuppose liberal democracy and advanced market economy as context conditions for regionalism to unfold. Societal interests are unlikely to form and mobilize in favour of regionalism in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian countries with low levels of socio-economic development and/or low levels of economic and social transactions (Haas 1961; Haas and Schmitter 1964). This 'liberal' bias limits the applicability of society-centred theories to the OECD world of industrialized liberal democracies. They have a harder time to explain the emergence of regionalism in other parts of the world. Etel Solingen has shown, however, that domestic coalitions develop different strategies regarding regional cooperation or conflict, which are not determined by liberal domestic structures (Solingen 1998, Solingen in this volume).

Alan Milward, whose historical research on European integration greatly inspired Andrew Moravcsik's theory of liberal intergovernmentalism, provides another explanation for why regionalisms may emerge in the absence of economic interdependence and liberal

democracy. He argued that national governments seek to isolate political decisions with redistributive consequences from particularistic domestic interests by transferring them to the EU level (Milward 1992; cf. Moravcsik 1998). Such a political rationale may also apply in regions that lack economic interdependence as a major driver for regionalism. African, Latin American, Arab and Asian leaders, democratic or not, have supported regional cooperation and integration as a way to control, manage and prevent regional conflict, deal with non-traditional security threats or as a source of domestic power and consolidation of national sovereignty (Graham 2008; Caballero-Anthony 2008; Herbst 2007; Okolo 1985; Acharya 2011; Barnett and Solingen 2007). Weak states, in particular, should be more inclined to engage in such “regime-boosting regionalism” (Söderbaum 2004) because they are more dependent on economic growth to forge domestic stability, tackle societal problems, and strengthen their international standing in terms of bargaining power and legitimacy. Moreover, non-state actors can more easily circumvent their governments in seeking transnational exchange (Bach 2005). Yet, states must not be too weak either – political instability can be a major obstacle to regionalism (Edi 2007). The same ambivalence can be found for neo-patrimonialism. While regional organizations provide governments with additional perks for buying-off the loyalty of their clients, regionalism can also curb resources, e.g. by decreasing tariff revenues (Allison 2008; Collins 2009; Söderbaum 2012). Finally, regionalism has served as a tool for settling conflicts and securing peace among (former) rival nations (Oelsner 2004; Acharya 2001; Francis 2006; Gruber 2000) and, more recently, for consolidating and promoting democracy in member states (Pevehouse 2005). What national governments lose in authority to regional institutions, they gain in legitimacy and problem-solving capacity, particularly since many societal problems and non-traditional security threats, such as environmental pollution, pandemics, drug trafficking or migration, are no longer confined to the boundaries of the nation-state (cf. Börzel and van Hüllen 2015).

*Constructivist approaches* of cooperation and integration feature less prominently in the literature. They place ideas, norms, identities and discourses as ideational drivers of regionalism centre stage. Long before the constructivist turn in international relations

research (cf. Adler 2013), *transactionalism* and *security community* approaches argued that successful integration requires a sense of community (Deutsch et al. 1957; Adler and Barnett 1998; Acharya 2001). While considering the underlying social fabric of regionalism, the focus is still on state-led formal institution-building. According to the transactionalist approach developed by Karl Deutsch in the 1950s (Deutsch et al. 1957) a security community is formed by a group of states, which no longer consider force as a means to solve conflict. States remain formally independent in pluralistic security communities. If they engage in peaceful change agreed to politically merge they become amalgamated security communities. Collectively shared meaning structures, norms and values are important for a regional identity facilitating mutual trust and rendering armed conflict unconceivable (Adler and Barnett 1998; Acharya 2001). Yet, it is unclear whether shared norms and values are a precondition for or rather an indicator of regional integration (Checkel in this volume). Students of European integration still argue to what extent the EU has built a common identity and what it is based upon (Risse 2010). While the sense of community is weaker in North America, Africa, the Middle East or Asia, the question remains whether this is because states are so diverse with regard to their political systems, societal structures and cultures that there is no common interest in (stronger) common institutions (Barnett and Solingen 2007) or whether regional institutions are not strong enough to breed a community (Clarkson 2008; Acharya 2005; Jones and Smith 2007; Barnett 1995; Okolo 1985).

To conclude, power-based and rationalist functionalist approaches in particular offer strong arguments on why states engage in regional institution-building in the first place. Globalization, economic and (non-traditional) security interdependence among neighbouring countries and securing regime survival create powerful demands for regionalism that are not peculiar to specific regions. The demands for dismantling barriers to free trade, on the one hand, and providing common goods, on the other, are best met at the regional level, given the limited governance capacities of both states and multilateral organizations. They have, however, translated into very different outcomes, which theories focusing on emergence have a hard time to account for.

*The Outcome of Regionalism*

Research on regionalism has been divided along explaining two different outcomes. International relations theories have treated regionalism as an instance of international cooperation (Haas 1970; Hoffmann 1966; Puchala 1972). Much of the early research concentrated on the European Community as a long-standing pathfinder in economic and political regionalism. Yet, from the very beginning, theories of international cooperation have had difficulties in capturing the supranational nature of the beast (Puchala 1972). The pooling and delegation of authority in the European Community of Coal and Steel of 1951 already went far beyond any other form of regional cooperation at the time. Theories of international cooperation had great difficulties in coming to terms with the existence of a High Authority (*sic*) and Court of Justice that held decision making powers they could exercise independently from the member states. With the subsequent deepening and broadening of EU powers, students of European integration declared process and outcome unique arguing they required distinct theories (Schimmelfennig in this volume).

The development of EU studies into a proper sub-discipline of international relations had significant implications for research on regionalism. First, cooperation and integration became two distinct outcomes of regionalism. Regional cooperation entails the joint exercise of state-based political authority in intergovernmental institutions to solve collective action problems related to economic, political, or security issues. Regional integration, by contrast, involves the setting up of supranational institutions to which political authority is delegated to make collectively binding decisions, for example, on dismantling national barriers to economic and social exchange (market making), on dealing with negative externalities of liberalization (market correcting; cf. Scharpf 1996) or on peacefully settling international conflicts (Adler and Barnett 1998).

Second, integration theories mainly emerged from explaining the peculiarities of European integration. While initial attempts at theory building were not confined to Europe (Mitrany

1943; Hoffmann 1956; Haas 1964; Nye 1970; Schmitter 1970), they got increasingly refined to accommodate the dynamics of the European integration process and its supranational outcomes. Integration became practically synonymous with European integration and the EU served as the yard stick for measuring regional integration in other parts of the world (Söderbaum in this volume). As a result, integration theories applied to EU regionalism while cooperation theories covered regionalism outside Europe.

With the end of the Cold War, however, the division of labour between theories of international cooperation and European integration started to break down. Major regional organizations outside Europe, including the Arab League, ASEAN, ECOWAS, and Mercosur, aspired to deeper forms of trade and monetary integration (Jetschke and Katada; Bianculli; Hartmann in this volume). They have also taken on new tasks in the realm of external and internal security, dealing with issues such as nuclear nonproliferation, disarmament, territorial disputes, domestic political stability, migration, terrorism, or human trafficking. States are still reluctant to delegate political authority to regional organizations. But they have agreed to formalize decision-making procedures, opening them for majority decisions and parliamentary representation, and to set up enhanced dispute-settlement procedures, which may take the form of courts or tribunals (Marks and Lenz; Rittberger; Alter and Hooghe in this volume). With the broadening and deepening of regionalism elsewhere, the EU has become less unique and more comparable to other forms of regionalism. Rather than treating cooperation and integration as dichotomous outcomes, they are more and more conceptualized as opposite ends on a continuum along which regionalisms around the world can be placed (Börzel 2013). While facilitating comparisons among EU and other forms of regionalism, the main theoretical challenge is now to explain why regionalism in some areas, policy sectors or time periods is closer to cooperation than integration, or vice versa, and why it moves in one direction rather than the other, respectively.

*Power-based approaches* identify the international and regional distribution of power as an important driver of the emergence of regionalism. They have less to say on outcomes other

than that (powerful) states tend to be reluctant to delegate authority to regional institutions, i.e. are unlikely to move beyond regional cooperation.

*Rationalist approaches* of cooperation and integration take regionalism as a strategic response of states and economic actors to the challenges of globalization. The key driver is economic interdependence. While they do not explicitly theorize differences in the degree of cooperation and integration, their functionalist reasoning should explain variation in outcomes by the higher degree of economic interdependence requiring a strengthening of regional institutions to settle resulting conflicts (Mansfield 1998; Mansfield and Milner 1997; Mattli 1999b; Moravcsik 1998; Stone Sweet and Caporaso 1998), the level of uncertainty, the nature of the problem, the number of actors and the asymmetry between them (Marks and Lenz in this volume). Geographic proximity and democracy increase the intensity of economic exchange between countries, and hence should foster closer regional cooperation and integration (Mansfield et al. 2000). Yet, economic interdependence is a poor predictor of different outcomes. We find more integrated forms of regionalism without economic interdependence and economic interdependence with only limited or no regional cooperation. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for instance, shows low levels of intra-regional trade but possesses more political authority than the EU in some issue areas being able to militarily intervene in its member states without requiring their consent. China, Japan, and South Korea are economically as interdependent as EU member states and have so far refrained from setting up formal institutions to manage the trade and capital flows among them. In short, economic interdependence does not always result in more regional cooperation and integration, or appears to be a consequence rather than a cause of regional institution-building.

*Social constructivist approaches* are equally weak when it comes to explaining differential outcomes of regionalism. They often invoke cultural differences to account, e.g. for the loose cooperation ASEAN states had opted for. The “ASEAN way”, which is based on informal consensus-building, organizational minimalism and thin institutionalization, is said to be

incompatible with Western models of legalized institutions (Acharya 2004; Katzenstein 2005; Nesadurai 2009). Such explanations have an essentialist flavour suggesting the existence of Western and non-Western cultures that are more or less compatible with certain outcomes of regionalism. They lose a lot of their explanatory power when applied across time and space (Beeson 2005). With the creation of the Asian Free Trade Area, ASEAN established for the first time a dispute settlement procedure breaking with the ASEAN way of informal and consensus-based institutions. The ASEAN Charter provides another major step towards both more political and more legalized integration (Jetschke and Katada in this volume). Likewise, the League of Arab States, which has shared the reluctance of ASEAN to delegate political authority to regional institutions, has become more forthcoming and is planning institutional changes (van Hüllen 2015).

Moves towards closer cooperation or integration may be the result of diffusion processes (Risse in this volume). However, they could also be driven by functional-rationalist demands driven by factors inside and outside the region. Beside external drivers, such as globalization, states may face similar endogenous challenges such as locking in domestic reforms, curbing negative externalities of neighbours, and signalling credible commitment to attract foreign aid and trade (Börzel and van Hüllen 2015). The literature on international democracy promotion established a link between the democratic quality of states and their membership in regional organizations (Pevehouse in this volume). States use regional organizations to 'lock in' democratic developments through deeper forms of regional cooperation and integration, entailing judicial litigation and sanctioning mechanisms. This may also work for authoritarian governments, which instrumentalize their membership in regional organizations to boost the sovereignty and legitimacy of their regimes (Levitsky and Way 2010; Söderbaum 2004). Institutional lock in at the regional level is not only about committing successor governments to domestic reforms, democratic or otherwise. It can also provide a signaling device by which incumbent regimes seek to publicly commit themselves to certain institutions external donors or investors care about. Domestic and regional stability are important for attracting capital and technology. After all, autocratic rulers often rely on

economic prosperity for their domestic legitimacy (Solingen 2008). Finally, *coups d'état* and massive human rights violations may produce substantial negative externalities for neighboring countries. Flows of refugees or rebel forces often challenge the stability of an entire region. These endogenous factors may explain why regional cooperation in Africa with its high levels of political instability and low levels of economic interdependence has moved towards regional integration over the past two decades (Hartmann in this volume).

Overall, mainstream theories are not well prepared to explain variation across the two different outcomes, given their focus on either cooperation or integration. While they identify economic interdependence as an important driver for emergence, higher economic interdependence does not necessarily result in more regional cooperation or regional integration. Other endogenous factors, such as the political instability within a region, appear more promising to account for variation and changes in outcomes of regionalism. They do not only apply to regions outside Europe. Locking in domestic reforms and curbing negative externalities have been key drivers of the deepening and widening of European integration, too (Schimmelfennig in this volume).

### *Effects of Regionalism*

Mainstream theories have provided some interesting insights in the effects of regionalism, without, however, systematically theorizing them. *Power-based and rationalist functionalist approaches* rather generally expect regional cooperation to advance the hegemon's interests solve collective action problems among the states involved. Beyond the controversy on whether regionalism is a stepping stone or stumbling block for globalization, multilateralism (Woolcock 2008; Tussie 2003; Ito and Krueger 1997) and a global world order more broadly (Van Langehove 2011; Katzenstein 2005; Falk 2003; Solingen 1998), IPE scholars have investigated the effects of regional free trade agreements on regional trade and investment flows, economic growth, poverty, social inequality, and labour migration, particularly in the American context (Weintraub 2004; Preusse 2004; O'Brian 2008; Kim et al.; McNamara in this volume). Likewise, students of international relations have explored whether regional

institutions foster peace, security and stability in a region (Kacowicz and Press-Barnathan in this volume), help create and preserve democracy, human rights and other global norms (Pevehouse in this volume), or curb environmental pollution (Haas in this volume). The broader effects of regionalism on domestic policies, institutions, and political processes have so far only been systematically explored and theorized for the case of the European Union (Schimmelfennig in this volume).

The literature on Europeanization and domestic change yields important implications for the effects of regionalism in other parts of the world. The EU certainly is a most likely case in this regard. Regional integration is deep and broad. Other regional institutions are less likely to deploy an effect on their members given their more limited competencies. Yet, the change mechanisms identified for the EU still apply. Similar to the EU, Mercosur, ECOWAS, the African Union or ASEAN have increasingly defined institutional requirements for “good governance” which their members have to respect (Börzel and van Hüllen 2015). Moreover, they have developed instruments in trying to shape the political and economic institutions of their members, which draw on similar causal mechanisms identified by Europeanization approaches ranging from financial and technical assistance, conditionality to legal and military coercion. To what extent these developments outside Europe have had an impact on the domestic structures of their members is yet to be explored. The active engagement of ECOWAS and, to a lesser extent, MERCOSUR, in protecting and promoting democratic change still appears to be the exception rather than the rule. Yet, the case of ASEAN demonstrates that regional organizations can also have a less direct and probably more long-term effect, establishing a political opportunity structure that provides civil society actors with rights, money, and networks and entrapping their member states in their commitment to human rights and democracy. These findings show that processes of “differential empowerment” found in the EU and NAFTA (Aspinwall 2009) also work in other regions.

## **From Cooperation and Integration to Governance**

Theories of regional cooperation and integration have identified important drivers of the emergence of regionalism. They have less to say on variation and changes in outcomes and even less on effects. This chapter could simply conclude by limiting the scope of mainstream theories to emergence. After all, alternative approaches, such as new regionalism (Söderbaum in this volume), do not provide comprehensive explanations of all three dimensions of regionalism either. Yet, even if confined to emergence, the explanatory power of mainstream theories is limited, particularly outside Europe. Their bias towards state-led formal institution-building does not only lead them to ignore the existence of varieties of regional cooperation and integration that are more informal and society-based. This ignorance at least partly accounts for the failure of rationalist functionalist approaches to explain why formal institution-building has proliferated in Sub-Saharan Africa (Hartmann in this volume) or Latin America (Bianculli in this volume) why it has remained much more subdued in Northeast and South Asia (Jetschke and Katada in this volume) and North America (Duina in this volume).

Governance approaches to regionalism emerged in EU studies. After all, the past 30 years of theorizing about European integration evolved as a critique of state-centrism within EU studies itself. The recognition that the EU was more than an inter-state organization but less than a state (Wallace 1983) had motivated scholars to declare its multifaceted nature unique (*sui generis*), which by definition precluded any comparison with other polities or political orders, both at the international and the domestic level (Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond 2010). With the “governance turn” (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006), however, the parochialism in EU studies has started to fade. The governance concept does not only facilitate the comparison of the EU with regionalism in other parts of the world. By capturing “the various ways in which state, market, and civil society actors relate and come together in different ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ coalitions, networks, and modes of regional and multilevel

governance” (Söderbaum 2012: 52), it broadens the perspective of main stream theories of regional cooperation and integration and also enhance their explanatory power.

Unlike government, governance is not wedded to the state; it provides a framework for comparing institutional settings, in which state and non-state actors at the global, regional, national and subnational level coordinate their actions in multilevel formal and informal networks. Following the work of Renate Mayntz and Fritz W. Scharpf, governance is understood here as institutionalized modes of coordination through which collectively binding decisions are adopted and implemented (Scharpf 1999; Mayntz 2004). Thus, governance consists of both structure and process. Governance structures relate to the institutions and actor constellations while governance processes are modes of social coordination by which actors adjust their behaviour.

Research on governance usually distinguishes three different types of institutionalized rule structures: hierarchy, market (competition systems) and networks (negotiation systems). Actors can coordinate their actions in hierarchical or non-hierarchical ways. Hierarchical coordination usually takes the form of authoritative decisions (e.g. administrative ordinances, court decisions). Actors *must* obey. Hierarchical coordination or direction can, hence, force actors to act against their self-interest. They may be either physically coerced by the use of force or legally obliged by legitimate institutions (law). Non-hierarchical coordination, by contrast, is based on voluntary compliance. Conflicts of interests are solved by negotiations. Voluntary agreement is either achieved by negotiating a compromise and granting mutual concessions (side-payments and issue-linkage) on the basis of fixed preferences (bargaining), or actors engage in processes of non-manipulative persuasion (arguing), through which they develop common interests and change their preferences accordingly. Coordination in competition systems is also non-hierarchical. Actors compete over meeting certain performance criteria, to which they adjust their behaviour accordingly. They are largely motivated by egoistic self-interests but pursue a common goal or some scarce

resources of which they wish to obtain as much as possible by performing better than their competitors.

While being analytically distinct, governance structures and processes are inherently linked since institutions constitute arenas for social coordination and regulate their access. It is important to keep in mind that governance structures do not determine but rather promote specific modes of coordination. Moreover, structures and modes can be formalized or informal. Finally, the institutionalized structures and their modes of coordination are ideal types that hardly exist in reality. Rather, we find combinations. Such governance regimes or governance mixes entail different combinations of ideal types, embedding one in the other by making one subordinate to the other. These mixes form a political order that structures or constitutes a region without confining its institutional architecture to one side of the continuum between intergovernmental cooperation and supranational integration. The governance mix of the EU, for instance, combines intergovernmental negotiation and political competition under the shadow of hierarchy cast by supranational institutions (Börzel 2010).

By avoiding to privilege either the state or formal institutions, the governance approach provides a “framework that can address the complexity of regional organizations/regionalism and at the same time transcend the case of Europe/EU itself” which scholars of both EU studies and new regionalism have called for (Söderbaum and Sbragia 2010: 568; Söderbaum in this volume). It equally captures varieties of regionalism in areas where the capacity of the state to set and enforce is limited, civil society is weakly institutionalized, and neither state nor market actors are constrained by effective rule of law.

Rather than reducing the role of non-state actors to defining state interests on regionalism, or driving states towards accepting deeper forms of regionalism, governance allows them to be as constitutive to regional structures as state actors. Which actors shape regional institution-building is an empirical question. The causal logic of mainstream theories applies in most cases to non-state actors, too. Why should business or environmental organizations seeking

to foster free trade and curb environmental pollution at the regional level, respectively, only put their trust into formal institutions and turn to states to build them? This is particularly counter-intuitive in areas where states are weak and non-state actors have to rely on their own resources for effective governance solutions. In the “shadow of anarchy”, power matters to solving collective action problems, too. Dominant market players, for instance, can offer side-payments to smaller, less visible companies to make them join and honour voluntary commitments to curb their negative impacts on the environment or provide security in a particular region (Börzel and Thauer 2013).

Likewise, instead of contrasting Western-style formal bureaucratic structures and legalistic procedures with informal, consensus-oriented, and discrete decision-making in Asia or informal politics and neo-patrimonialism in Africa, the governance approach allows to explore the relationship between formal (codified and legalized) and informal processes. While ASEAN has explicitly designed its formal institutions to be informal, “the formality of the institutions has been a cover for the informality or weak legalized way in which they have functioned” in other regions (Acharya and Johnston 2007b: 246). “Shadow regionalism” (Söderbaum 2012: 60) or “trans-state regionalism” (Bach 2003; Bach 1999) describes a similar link between formality and informality by which formal regional institutions provide a framework for informal practices of rent-seeking politicians. It provides a compelling explanation for the “Spaghetti Bowl” of overlapping often ineffective regional organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, which rationalist functionalist theories of cooperation have a hard time to come to terms with. Strong networks of informal cooperation among business actors may also explain why no strong formal institutions have emerged in Northeast Asia (Katzenstein and Shiraishi 1997).

Finally, the governance approach is open for constructivist and reflectivist perspectives on regionalism, which emphasize actors’ perceptions, interpretations and social or discursive constructions of what a region is (Neumann 2003; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000; Hettne 2005; Jessop 2003). Social constructivists focus on the role of norms, ideas and identities in

the social construction of Europe (Checkel; Schimmelfennig in this volume). While not systematically engaging with the governance literature (yet), they have emphasized that the EU does not present a particular type of (network) governance but lends itself to different interpretations (Wiener and Diez 2009). Moreover, the governance approach lends itself to tracing which actors engage how in imagining and constructing regions (Neumann 2003; Van Langehove 2011: chapter 3).

In sum, the governance turn in EU studies greatly facilitate cross-regional comparisons involving the EU. Governance is not a theory, but provides an analytical framework for systematic and organized comparison, which does not privilege certain types of actors, institutions, or modes of coordination. It is, hence, not focused on state-led formal institution-building at the regional level but allows to explore how state, market, and society actors come together to coordinate their actions and resources through formal and informal norms, rules and procedures. The governance approach cannot explain when and why regionalism emerges, takes a particular institutional design, changes over time, or proves (in-)effective. But it is compatible with the explanatory logics of mainstream theories and may strengthen their explanatory power by providing a perspective that systematically incorporates the society-based and informal dimensions in the analysis of structures and processes of regional institution-building, their emergence, their outcomes and their effects.

### **Conclusion**

Managing economic interdependence, coping with (non-traditional) security threats and securing regime survival provide powerful accounts for why states and other actors engage in regional institution-building. If treated as equivalent rather than competing explanations, theories of cooperation and integration travel across regions. There is, of course, no global theory of regionalism – as there is no grand theory of European, African or Asian regionalism. Yet, there are important drivers of regionalism whose causal relevance can be compared and may vary depending on the regional context. Thinking in terms of

configurative causality and interaction effects (Levi-Faur in this volume) may help us to identify functionally equivalent combinations of factors that foster or impair regional institution-building, and eventually, also account for its differential outcomes and effects. The literatures on institutional design (Marks and Lenz in this volume) and diffusion (Risse in this volume) offer promising starting points why, for instance, similar degrees of economic interdependence may result in different regional outcomes. Likewise, compliance and Europeanization research has begun to investigate the role of regional institutions for domestic change (Simmons 2009; Pevehouse 2005; Börzel and Risse 2012).

If combined with a governance approach comparative regionalism cannot only overcome the possible bias toward a particular (Western, EU) model of state-led formal institution-building. Next to systematically exploring the role of non-state actors and informal institutions, governance allows to capture the interplay between global, exogenous and local, endogenous factors that drive the emergence of regionalism, shape its institutional design and mediate its effects.

(~ 7.100 words without literature)

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