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Regionalisms and Regional Organizations

Introduction

Since the 1950s – with the rise, and despite the financial, the refugee, and the identity crises, of the European Union (EU)[1] – regional organizations have been firmly rooted in the collective memory of the Global North. In contrast, attention to regional identity and integration processes also in the Global South has been more recent and dates back to the years following the end of the Cold War. The academic debate on the phenomena, often described as *regionalisms*, is characterized by the assumption that they have greatly increased in numbers since 1989/90.[2] It remains open whether this perception is caused by terminological insecurity or by a real growth in numbers. Empirical observations about regionalisms and their signification may differ considerably, as can be demonstrated by a short analysis of the difference between the emergence of a specific spatial vocabulary, on the one hand, and its academic interpretation, on the other. According to the Google Ngram Viewer, which allows ca. 5 million books scanned by Google to be searched for the usage of certain terms (currently for the period 1800–2008), "international organization" can be dated back to the 1850s.[3] Depending on language selection – English, British English, American English, German, French, etc. – specific results may differ slightly. While books written in British English or French the combination "international" + "organization" already appears around 1850, in American English books it only appears for the first time around 1868, and in German books around 1910. "International organization" reaches its peak in all

1 K. K. Patel, *Projekt Europa. Eine kritische Geschichte*, München: C.H. Beck 2018.

2 E.D. Mansfield and H.V. Milner, "The New Wave of Regionalism", *International Organization* 53 (1999) 3, pp. 589–627.

3 Here and in the following Google Ngram Viewer 2017, "International Organization", "Regional Organizations", etc., <https://books.google.com/ngrams/> (accessed 25 September 2017).

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four academic languages around 1960, after which the frequency settles back to the level of the 1930s.

The term "regional organization", however, only appears considerably later, exactly during the first decade of the twentieth century, and more frequently after the end of World War I. So semantically two different phases can be identified: one period starting around 1860, in which people started writing about "international organizations" and a shorter period after around 1910, in which people also thought about "regional organizations". Evidently, this says little about the existence in practice of regional organizations before 1910. For many years, the interpretational sovereignty over the question what regional and international organizations, respectively, are and when this spatial format[4] historically came into being was within the domain of political science – and more concretely, its subdiscipline International Relations (IR) – a scientific field that emerged after World War II to become the main interpretational actor in this field.

Accordingly, the history of international organizations traditionally dates back to the League of Nations, founded on 10 January 1920.[5] In contrast, regional organizations are said only to have entered the global stage after World War II. However, some prehistory of international organization is acknowledged by mainstream political science, sometimes dating back to the Congress of Vienna in 1814/15. Although political science makes a difference between *intergovernmental organizations* (IGOs) and *international non-governmental organizations* (INGOs), the majority of IR literature is state-centric and, by and large, ignores, for instance, networks, companies, movements, etc. Usually IGOs are classified according to their membership: universal (all sovereign states), global (worldwide), regional (proximity), multilateral (more than two), or bilateral (two), respectively.[6] This IR majority view has been disputed by two perspectives that grew in popularity during the 1990s: urban studies and global history. The former uses the terms region and regionalization at subnational levels of analysis, including the identification of other types of relevant actors, whereas the latter questions the IR periodization of international organizations, also including an interest in actors that do not match the imagination of a Westphalian system of sovereign nations states, such as empires or networks.

4 For the term see below.

5 D. Armstrong et al., *International Organisation in World Politics*, 3rd ed., Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004 (1982); as well as V. Rittberger and B. Zangl, *International Organization: Polity, Politics and Policies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006 (first German edition 1994).

6 D. Armstrong et al., *International Organisation*, p. 8. An exception is the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, CPLP), the organization of former Portuguese colonies, whose core member in fact do not share any borders.

For this chapter, the global history perspective is of particular interest because it focuses on international organizations during the period 1815 to 1945. The Dutch historian Bob Reinalda, for instance, integrates the Congress of Vienna, which had reordered Europe's political landscape after Napoleon's defeat, on an equal footing with the United Nations into a global history of international organizations. The early part of this global history also includes the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (1815) or the Zollverein, the German customs union (1834–1871).[7] In contrast to its usage of the term "international organization", global history contributions do not make analytical use of the terms "region", "regionalism", or "regional organization": In the 13 volumes of the leading journal of *Global History*, only one article has been published on this field.[8] There is not one single monograph or edited collection mentioned in the review section in which these terms play a central role.

This chapter will provide a summary of the debate about regionalisms and regional organizations. In the following part, an unavoidably incomplete overview will be given on the empirical phenomenon "regional organization", largely from an IR perspective. In the third part, a theoretical vocabulary for the analysis of regional organizations in past and contemporary processes of globalization will be introduced, centred around notions of "spatial format" and processes of "ordering space". In the fourth part, two major IR debates around the epistemology and the periodization of regionalisms will be recapped, inter alia with a focus on the distinction introduced in the 1990s between "old" regionalism in Europe and a "new" regionalism" in the Global South. These perspectives will then be juxtaposed in opposition to the state of the art in global history. Against the background of this discussion, in part five the functioning of regional organizations will be deepened by analysing the African Union (AU) in three fields: (1) The construction of regional order; (2) the establishment of distinct regional policy architecture, with regard to peace and security as well as democracy and governance; and (3) the emergence of interregional and transregional practices between the AU, on the one hand, and the United Nations as well as the European Union, on the other. This will be followed by conclusions.

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7 B. Reinalda, *Routledge History of International Organizations: From 1815 to the Present Day*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2009; and B. Reinalda (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of International Organizations*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2013.

8 See *Journal of Global History* (2006–2018); for an exception, see M. Winkler "Another America: Russian Mental Discoveries of the North-west Pacific Region in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries", *Global History* 7 (2012) 1, pp. 27–51. The same almost holds true for the journal *Globalizations* (2004–2018), whose authors use the category just slightly more often.

Empirical Overview

Because the field of international organizations is extremely dynamic, the exact number of regional organizations existing today is very difficult to tell. Only a few institutions regularly try to offer overviews. The spectrum ranges from aspirations to be comprehensive to measurments of, however defined, political relevance. At one end of the spectrum is the *Yearbook of International Organizations*, edited by the Union of International Associations, which by mandate goes beyond regional organizations. Here there is detailed information on 38,000 active and another 32,000 dormant international organizations in 300 states and territories, including intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations. Every year another 1,200 organizations are added to the yearbook.[9] At the other end of the spectrum is the annual report of the UN secretary-general on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations: It only lists 26 "important" regional organizations that actively participate in the work of the United Nations – from the African Union to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.[10] Somewhat between these two positions, the *Europa Directory of International Organizations*, in addition to the United Nations and its five regional commissions, counts a further 15 UN organizations and 18 specialized UN agencies. It further lists 65 "important" international organizations outside the United Nations and a variety of other international organizations.[11]

To give an impression of the regional embeddedness and functional scope of regional organizations, the following part focuses on world regions and their regional organizations. In Europe, the field stretches from the European Economic Community (EEC, 1957), which later was developed into the political European Union (EU, 1993), to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA, 1960), to the European Patent Office (EPO, 1977), to the European Science Foundation (ESF, 1974) and the European Space Agency (ESA, 1975), to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, 1975). Below this European space, subregional groups of EU member states have been formed, for instance in the finance sector with the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB, 1976)

9 See Union of International Associations (ed.), *Yearbook of International Organizations*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, <http://www.uia.org/yearbook> (accessed 15 April 2019). The yearbook is published by Brill, and the entries allegedly are updated every six to eight weeks.

10 United Nations Secretary-General, *Cooperation Between the United Nations and Regional and Other Organizations* (A/71/160 and S/2016/621), New York: United Nations, 2016.

11 Europa Publications, *The Europa Directory of International Organizations*, London: Europa Publications, 1999.

or the political/cultural alliance of the Visegrád Group (V4, 1991), with its central East European members: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. Among the more prominent transatlantic regional organizations is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, 1949) and the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (ZPCAS, 1986).

Yet what has been at the heart of the debate in the past 25 years is the launch, or revival, of regional organizations in the Global South – though some academics claim that the peak of this dynamic is already over.[12] On the African continent, this includes the African Union (which emerged in 2001 from the transformation of its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity, 1963), and eight officially recognized regional economic communities (or RECs): the Communauté des Etats Sahélo-Sahariens (CEN-SAD, 1998), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA, 1994), the East African Community (EAC, 1967–1977, revived in 2000), the Communauté Economique des États de l'Afrique Centrale (CEEAC, 1981), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, 1975), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD, 1986) at the Horn of Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC, founded in 1979 and relaunched in 1992), as well as the Union Maghreb Arabe (UMA, 1989).

In Asia, among the more prominent regional organizations are the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 1966), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN, 1967), and the Mekong River Commission (MRC, 1995). In the Arab world, there are the Arab League (1945) and the Saudi-dominated Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC, 1981). Important Eurasian regional organizations include the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO, 1992); the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS, 1991), states that formerly belonged to the Soviet Union; as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on Security and Trade (SCO, 1996), of which Russia, China, and India are members. In the Americas, "relevant" regionalism projects include the Organization of American States (OAS, 1948); the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR, 1991), with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay; the Andean Community (CAN, 1996, founded as the Andean Pact, 1969); the Caribbean Community (CARICOM, 1973); and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA, 2004). Around the Indian Ocean, there is the Commission de l'Océan Indien (COI, 1982) and for the Arctic neighbours the Arctic Council (1996), which also includes as permanent participants so-called identitarian NGOs, such as the Aleut International Association or the Saami Council. In the Pacific, there are the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS,

12 A. Malamud and G.L. Gardini, "Has Regionalism Peaked? The Latin American Quagmire and its Lessons", *International Spectator* 47 (2012) 1, pp. 116–133.

1951) and the economic Pacific Islands Forum (1991, founded as the South Pacific Forum, 1971).

In IR, this trend of geographical extension and functional proliferation of regional organizations is discussed in terms of diffusion theories: the idea of regionalism "travels".[13] Critics of this approach argue that diffusion theories generally overlook concrete actors and processes of hybridization. As an alternative to linear or staged cases of diffusion, culture studies approaches of cultural transfer have emphasized that the active search of societies, organizations, etc. for finding solutions elsewhere, their active and often transnational transfer, as well as the process of appropriation of out-of-own-context models and their subsequent hybridization should take centre stage.[14]

Regionalisms and Regional Organizations in Processes of Globalization

In this part of the chapter, the role of regionalisms and regional organizations in past and contemporary processes of globalization is discussed. First, a theoretical vocabulary will be introduced that is based on the work of the Leipzig-based Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1199: "Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition", which was launched in January 2016.[15] Second, it will recap how regionalisms and regional organizations so far have been discussed by mainstream IR in order to, finally, confront these viewpoints in a global history perspective.

13 See A. Jetschke and T. Lenz, "Does Regionalism Diffuse? A New Research Agenda for the Study of Regional Organizations", *Journal of European Public Policy* 20 (2013) 4, pp. 626–637; and A. Jetschke and P. Murray, "Diffusing Regional Integration: The EU and Southeast Asia", *West European Politics* 35 (2012) 1, pp. 174–191. But also see A. Acharya, "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism", *International Organization* 58 (2004) 2, pp. 239–275.

14 See M. Middell, "Kulturtransfer und historische Komparatistik – Thesen zu ihrem Verhältnis", *Comparativ* 10 (2000) 1, pp. 7–41; and M. Middell, "Kulturtransfer, Transferts culturels, Version: 1.0", *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, 28 January 2016, <http://docupedia.de/zg/Kulturtransfer>.

15 See Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1199: "Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition", <http://research.uni-leipzig.de/~sfb1199/index.php?id=7> (accessed 15 April 2019).

The spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences has generated a consensus that space is not simply a given but is actively constructed through social interactions – hence, the talk about "social spaces".[16] These social spaces are based on the historical sedimentation of other social spaces; they can be territorialized, but they do not have to be. In case of the former, distinct regimes of territorialization emerge. Social spaces exist in parallel and at various, entangled scales, and they are utilized accordingly by various actors. This is so far the conventional wisdom of the spatial turn. Against this background, the SFB 1199 is now trying to further develop this line of reasoning by introducing the category of "spatial formats" and fine-tuning the relation between spatial formats, the practice of spatial by spatial entrepreneurs, and the resulting emergence of spatial orders. At the centre of this endeavour is the signification of spatial imaginations of specific social actors in intersubjective processes that lead to tangible spatial order.

First and foremost, spatial formats are attributes based on a spatial semantic by which things are named by actor Y as X (apparently, some actors are more successful than others in framing spatial formats). Examples of spatial formats could be "empire", "value chain", or "regionalism". The SFB 1199 assumes that references to spatial formats have increased since the end of the Cold War (the SFB is, of course, also enquiring into the historicity of this observation). This increase also seems to be linked to the fact that actors are not yet in a position to clearly identify and unequivocally classify their various activities, and it seems that the use of spatial semantics makes spatial formats appear more stable. The increase of semantic references to space, secondly, also means that actions become more diverse in terms of scales, networks, etc. – though obviously it may very well be that simply the number of significations has increased, rather than the number of empirical observations.

Spatial formats, as such, are not material; they are not "social spaces". Instead, they are patterns out which actors recognize and name those that seem to be relevant to them at a given moment in time because they correspond to their particular political projects. In this sense, spatial formats are patterns,

16 In general, see H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991 (1974); E.W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, London: Verso, 1989; D. Massey, J. Allen and P. Sarre (eds.), *Human Geography Today*, Cambridge: Polity, 2005 (1999); and G.Ó'Tuathail and S. Dalby (eds.), *Rethinking Geopolitics*, Abingdon: Routledge, 1999. For a proposed typology, see B. Jessop, N. Brenner and M. Jones, "Theorizing Sociospatial Relations", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (2008) 3, pp. 389–401; and also their updated version: "Territory, Politics, Governance and Multispatial Metagovernance", *Territory, Politics, Governance* 4 (2016) 1, pp. 8–32.

templates, models, or standards. They can also be memories about past real-world spatial orders – for instance, the Cold War order with "the wall" or the "racial order" of apartheid as well as the resurgence of India or China to global greatness.

Secondly, the SFB employs the term "spatial order" by focusing on the practice of space ordering by rendering "accepted", "valid", or "important" spatial formats visible. Ordering space is a cognitive process involving discursive interpretation and social negotiation of what in the past has been described as "social space". Ordering, or signifying, space both means to make something visible and to charge it with meaning.[17] Spatial formats are a lens through which the otherwise only metaphorically existing space can be intersubjectively communicated. For this to happen, it takes entrepreneurs of signification and a respective audience to resonate these significations. And it also takes instruments, media, and strategies of signification: speaking, symbolizing, and doing, for instance by establishing financial flows, practising violence, etc. The successful ordering of space depends on the fact that something can be labelled and institutionalized. This in turn depends on the existence of an actor Y, a spatial entrepreneur, with an interest in labelling and institutionalizing, often in competition with other actors. In the process of ordering space, charging it with meaning becomes central as well as imaginations of "adequacy", "relevance", or "appropriateness" of specific spatial formats – nota bene successful spatial orders in turn produce spatial formats. In the end, spatial orders emerge that have material expressions.

A current example of this nexus, though not exactly concerning a regional organization, is the "One Belt, One Road" vision of an open regionalism – the "new silk road" – which is currently implemented by China.[18] Starting in 2013 and pushed forward by considerable financial, trade, and geostrategic interests, the global remembrance of a spatial format – the "old silk road" – is invoked; eventually, it will lead to the construction of a mega region between China and Europe and a new phase in a Chinese-controlled phase of globalization.

Spatial orders not necessarily "speak" to everyone: actors see, read, experience, translate, and/or understand spatial orders – or do not. Spatial orders are replicable. They can be politicized, be loaded with meaning, be hierarchized,

17 As a "sensitizing concept", the term signification played a central role in the research programme DFG Priority Programme (SPP) 1448: "Adaptation and Creativity: Technologies and Significations in the Production of Order and Disorder", which was coordinated by the universities of Halle and Leipzig: <http://www.spp1448.de> (accessed 15 April 2019).

18 See "Belt and Road Initiative", *South China Morning Post*, <http://www.scmp.com/topics/belt-and-road-initiative> (accessed 15 April 2019).

and although they may be of a temporary nature only, they usually last a rather long time. Spatial orders enable or produce hierarchical or non-hierarchical relations between spatial formats. They provide an influential framework for the signification of specific spatial formats. This includes the possibility that the meaning of spatial formats can change within a spatial order. These significations are the reason why specific spatial formats are asserted over others. With reference to regionalisms and regional organizations, it can be observed that time and again regions are measured through speaking or acting. If successful, this leads to calls for the political organization of a regional project. Thus, the question is why, and for whom, during the past 25 years "the regional" has become more important.

To make a second point in this part of the chapter: for political science, IR regional organizations first and foremost are geographically defined subtypes of international organizations (IOs) and in this sense bureaucracies that exercise different types of authority: "(1) [to] classify the world, creating categories of problems, actors, and action; (2) fix meanings in the social world; and (3) articulate and diffuse new norms and rules".[19] Thus, they are territorialized subtypes of intergovernmental organizations in which regional cooperation among states leads to the establishment of regional interstate regimes in various policy fields.[20]

The academic debate has often focused on undirected processes of regionalization, discussed in terms of economic and/or political integration of societies.[21] Regional organizations are also discussed in terms of "regionalisms", seen as transnational interactions and interdependencies.[22] Regionalism projects usually go hand-in-hand with the development of regional awareness or regional identities, that is to say the construction of different forms of "cognitive regionalism".[23] While in the past the academic debate concentrated on the role of specific regional organizations in global politics, more recent contributions to the debate have highlighted the need to address the interactions between different regional

19 M. Barnett and M. Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 31.

20 A. Hurrell, "One World? Many Worlds? The Place of Regions in the Study of International Society", *International Affairs* 83 (2007) 1, pp. 127–146, at 128.

21 See M.F. Schultz, F. Söderbaum and J. Öjendal, "Introduction: A Framework for Understanding Regionalization", in: M.F. Schultz, F. Söderbaum and J. Öjendal (eds.) *Regionalization in a Globalizing World*, London: Zed Books, 2001, pp. 1–17.

22 F.Söderbaum, *The Political Economy of Regionalisms: The Case of Southern Africa*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p.16.

23 Hurrell, "One World? Many Worlds?", p. 128. See also B.Hettne and F.Söderbaum, "Theorising the Rise of Regionness", *New Political Economy* 5 (2000) 3, pp. 457–474.

organizations. In this case, empirical reconstruction and the quests for theory-building revolves around "interregionalism".[24] From a non-IR perspective, it is remarkable that in this debate "regionalism" is universalized and treated as a distinct spatial format that is given significance in a specific spatial order. Some, though not all, actors that participate in the debate over regionalisms take a social-constructivist position, which allows them to discuss the constructed character of regions. "There are no 'natural' regions, and definitions of 'region' and indicators of 'regionness' vary according to the particular problem or question under investigation", argues the Oxford-based British political scientist Andrew Hurrell.[25] Accordingly, on the one hand, regions, regionalisms, and regional organizations can be studied as "containers for culture and for value diversity; poles and powers; one level in a system of multi-level governance; and/or harbingers of change and possible transformation".[26]

On the other, those academics that are influenced by the spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences treat regional organizations as concrete spatializations of specific social fields under the *global condition*, that is to say the historic transformation towards modern forms of globalization in the period 1840 to 1880.[27] They look both at discursively constructed "regions" as well as at the political, cultural, economic, or social integration practices at the heart of these processes.[28] Arguably, since the end of the Cold War an increase in regionalization projects can be observed because actors want to regain sovereignty and control that they have lost in processes of deterritorialization.[29]

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24 See F. Söderbaum and L. van Langenhove (eds.), *The EU as a Global Player: The Politics of Interregionalism*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006; H. Hänggi, R. Roloff and J. Rüland (eds.), *Interregionalism and International Relations*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006; F. Baert, T. Scaramagli and F. Söderbaum (eds.), *Intersecting Interregionalism: Regions, Global Governance and the EU*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2014; as well as P. de Lombaerde, F. Söderbaum and J.-U. Wunderlich, "Interregionalism", in: K.E. Jorgensen et al. (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of European Foreign Policy*, vol. II, London: Sage, 2015, pp. 750–761.

25 A. Hurrell, "Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective", in: L. Fawcett and A. Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 37–73, at 38.

26 Hurrell, "One World? Many Worlds?", p. 136.

27 See R. Robinson, "Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept", *Theory, Culture & Society* 7 (1990) 2, pp. 15–30; and M. Geyer and C. Bright, "World History in a Global Age", *The American Historical Review* 100 (1995) 4, pp. 1034–1060.

28 From an urban studies perspective, see J.-P.D. Addie and R. Keil, "Real Existing Regionalism: The Region between Talk, Territory and Technology", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39 (2015) 2, pp. 407–417.

29 On the theoretical foundations and the underlying notion of sovereignty, see N. Brenner, "Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies",

With the development of a debate in politics and academia on the nature of the world order emerging after the end of the Cold War,[30] it has been increasingly discussed how regionalisms and regional organizations both theoretically and practically relate to current processes of globalization.[31] On the relation between the "one world of the international system and the many worlds of the different regionalisms", Hurrell provides four arguments that try to explain the attractiveness of regionalisms for states of the Global South. First, to many "the region is the most appropriate and viable level to reconcile the changing and intensifying pressures of global capitalist competition on the one hand with the need for political regulation and management on the other". Second, he holds, for these countries "it is easier to negotiate 'deep integration' and the sorts of profoundly intrusive rules needed to manage globalization at the regional rather than the global level." Third, Hurrell also finds that regionalism – "given that value and societal consensus are likely to be bigger and the practical problems of governance beyond the state more manageable at that level" – for many countries of the Global South "can be part of a process of controlled or negotiated integration into the global economy". And, fourth, in particular for countries of the Global North, regionalism "offers a favourable level at which to recast the post-1945 bargain between market liberalization and social protection".[32]

Theory and Society 28 (1999) 1, pp. 39–78; A. Acharya, "Regionalism and the Emerging World Orders: Sovereignty, Autonomy, Identity", in: S. Breslin et al. (eds.), *New Regionalism in the Global Political Economy: Theories and Cases*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2002, pp. 20–32; and J. Agnew, "Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95 (2005) 2, pp. 437–461.

30 See G. Sørensen, "What Kind of World Order? The International System in the New Millennium", *Cooperation and Conflict* 41 (2006) 2, pp. 343–363; and S. Chaturvedi and J. Painter, "Whose World, Whose Order? Spatiality, Geopolitics and the Limits of the World Order Concept", *Cooperation and Conflict* 42 (2007) 2, pp. 375–395.

31 See A. Gamble and A. Payne (eds.), *Regionalism and World Order*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996; J.H. Mittelman, "Rethinking the 'New Regionalism' in the Context of Globalization", *Global Governance* 2 (1996) 2, pp. 189–213; B. Hettne, "Globalization and the New Regionalism: The Second Great Transformation", in: B. Hettne, A. Inotai and O. Sunkel (eds.) *Globalism and the New Regionalism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, pp. 1–24; as well as B, Hettne, "Reconstructing World Order", in: M. Farrell, B. Hettne and L. van Langenhove (eds.), *Global Politics of Regionalism*, London: Pluto Press, 2005, pp. 269–286.

32 See Hurrell, "One World? Many Worlds?", p. 131.

Regionalisms and the establishment of regional organizations can be seen as "sovereignty-boosting" practices of the Global South.[33] They are characterized by a specific form of political rationality: actors are taking deliberate decisions about the spatial dimension (or *scale*) that they want to achieve a specific aim with. [34] With reference to the French historian Jacques Revel, this can be called a *jeux d'échelles* (a play with the scales).[35] In the different world regions, this is playing out in different ways. Because of selective integration practices in Latin America and Asia and also overlapping membership in African regional organizations, some authors talk about "modular", "loose", or "bifurcated" regionalism, respectively.[36]

Sometimes these sovereignty strategies may work against established international norms and their territorialization regimes,[37] as the current debate about impunity for African heads of state and government in cases of gross human rights violations illustrates. The African Union decided – though not unanimously – at its 28th summit on 30–31 January 2017, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia upon a withdrawal strategy from the International Court of Justice. To summarize, because "the West", allegedly for imperialist and racist reasons, is instrumentalizing the Court against acting African heads of state and government, the 34 African signatories of the Rome Statute should withdrawal from this agreement. Instead, the African Union, in principle, wants to bring perpetrators of genocide, crime against humanity, or war crimes only *after* their term of offices has ended before the not yet ratified African Court of Justice and Human and Peoples' Rights.[38]

33 See F. Söderbaum, "Modes of Regional Governance in Africa: Neoliberalism, Sovereignty Boosting, and Shadow Networks", *Global Governance* 10 (2004) 4, pp. 419–436; and F. Söderbaum, *Rethinking Regionalism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

34 U. Engel et al. (eds.), "Introduction: The Challenge of Emerging Regionalisms Outside Europe", in: U. Engel et al. (eds.), *The New Politics of Regionalism: Perspectives from Africa, Latin America and Asia-Pacific*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2016, pp. 1–15, at 5.

35 See J. Revel, *Jeux d'échelles: La micro-analyse à l'expérience*, Paris: Gallimard, 1996.

36 See G.L. Gardini, "Towards Modular regionalism: The Proliferation of Latin American Cooperation", in: U. Engel et al., *The New Politics of Regionalism*, pp. 19–36; R. Mushkat, "'Loose' Regionalism and Global Governance: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Factor", *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 17 (2016) 1, pp. 238–256; and F. Mattheis, "Towards Bifurcated Regionalism: The Production of Regional Overlaps in Central Africa", in: U. Engel et al., *The New Politics of Regionalism*, pp. 37–51.

37 On the term sovereignty strategy, see Agnew, "Sovereignty Regimes".

38 African Union, "Decision on the International Criminal Court", Assembly/AU/Dec.622 (XXVIII), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30–31 January 2017.

Debates on Epistemology and Periodization of Regional Organizations

The academic debate over regionalisms and regional organizations started in the 1940s, mainly within the relatively young discipline of political science. Since, controversial discussions have been held, first, about "the right" epistemological approach to the study of the nature and development of regionalisms and, second, about the periodization and historical depth of the phenomenon. Traditional rational choice-based approaches from International Relations, for instance, have turned to the subfield of regional security politics, with a focus on states that face a so-called security dilemma (that is to say at risk of an arms race in case that they are arming themselves) and those who engage in regional security cooperation to reduce opportunity costs.[39] Neo-functional approaches have tried to demonstrate how states become members of forms of security cooperation as a result of spillover effects.[40] And intergovernmental approaches have stressed that the establishment of regions is the result of deliberate government decisions taken during negotiations.[41] These positions have become mainstream in political science. But because of their, often only implicit, metatheoretical assumptions, they are also facing critique.

First, all three approaches mentioned above are grounded in methodological nationalism, that is to say they are privileging the state as the only unit of analysis.[42] Second, they are deeply rooted in modernization theory: successful regional integration can only be based in societies that function according to a constructed "European model". Third, they are sharing a skewed vocabulary. The term "region", for instance, is equated with the process of "regionalization"; the focus is merely on economic and political organizations and the results of integration, rather than on processes of spatialization and the ordering of space. And, fourth, this orthodoxy has been criticized because of its underlying conceptual Eurocentrism.[43] A contingent post-World War II West European experience, which

39 K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979.

40 For two classics, see D. Mitrany, "The Functional Approach to World Organization", *International Affairs* 24 (1948) 3, pp. 350–363; and E.B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe*, London: Stevens & Sons, 1958.

41 As a representative take of this approach, see A. Moravcsik, "Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community", *International Organization* 45 (1991) 1, pp. 19–56.

42 On the term, see J.Agnew, "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory", *Review of International Political Economy* 1 (1994) 1, pp. 53–80.

43 Engel et al., "Introduction", pp. 2, 6.

finally led to the establishment of the European Union, is universalized and serves as a role model for regional integration everywhere. At least until the 2016 referendum on Brexit, the planned withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU,[44] most theories of regional integration assumed a linear "European model" that consists of five consecutive stages. The removal of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers is followed by a free trade zone, which is followed by a customs union with a single external tariff. This is followed by a common market based on the free traffic of goods, services, labour, and capital; then the common market grows into an economic and monetary union. Finally, this integration model reaches its peak with the formation of a political union.[45]

In contrast to this orthodoxy, new approaches in regionalism research have turned to the study of the non-European world. They also focus on cases of informal regionalism, non-state regionalisms, and dynamic regionalisms. In view of a post-Cold War increase in research on regionalisms in Africa, Asia, and Latin America,[46] a group of Scandinavian academics at the University of

44 For one of many alarmist discussions, see L. Scuira, "Brexit Beyond Borders: Beginning of the EU Collapse and Return to Nationalism", *Journal of International Affairs* 70 (2017) 2, pp. 109–123. But also see B. Jessop "The Organic Crisis of the British State: Putting Brexit in its Place", *Globalizations* 14 (2017) 1, pp. 133–141.

45 For a typical, more recent example of this kind of argumentation, see R. Baldwin, "Sequencing Asian Regionalism: Theory and Lessons from Europe", *Journal of Economic Integration* 27 (2012) 1, pp. 1–32.

46 In general, see S. Breslin et al. (eds.), *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2002; and F. Söderbaum and T.M. Shaw (eds.), *Theories of New Regionalism: A Palgrave Reader*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Also see M. Telò (ed.), *European Union and New Regionalism: Regional Actors and Global Governance in a Post-hegemonic Era*, Farnham: Ashgate, 1999. On Africa see D. Bach, "Regionalism & Globalization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Revisiting a Paradigm", in D. Bach (ed.), *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and Disintegration*, Oxford: James Currey, 1999, pp. 1–13; M. Bøås, M.H. Marchand and T.M. Shaw, "The Political Economy of New Regionalisms", *Third World Quarterly* 20 (1999) 5, pp. 897–910; J.A. Grant and F. Söderbaum (eds.), *The New Regionalism in Africa*, Farnham: Ashgate 2003; and U. Lorenz and M. Rempe (eds.), *Mapping Agency: Comparing Regionalisms in Africa*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. On the Middle East, see M.-M.O. Mohamedou, "Arab Agency and the UN Project: The League of Arab States between Universality and Regionalism", *Third World Quarterly* 37 (2016) 7, pp. 1219–1233. On Asia, see M. Beeson, *Regionalism and Globalization in East Asia: Politics, Security and Economic Development*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; M. Beeson (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Asian Regionalism*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2012; C.M. Dent, *East Asian Regionalism*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2008; E.L. Frost, *Asia's New Regionalisms*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2008; and N. Thomas (ed.), *Governance and Regionalism in Asia*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2009. And on Latin America, see J.W. Cason, *The Political Economy of Integration: The Experience of Mercosur*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2011; O. Dabène, *The Politics of Regional Integration in Latin*

Gothenburg around 2000 proclaimed a new paradigm: the *New Regionalism Approach* (NRA).[47] Dissociating itself from neo-functionalism, this approach claims to be reflexive, process-oriented and multidimensional (meaning, going beyond politics and economics).[48] Epistemologically, the NRA is based on a "new", "critical", or "heterodox" reading of International Political Economy, as coined by the Canadian political scientist Robert W. Cox.[49]

Quite successfully, the NRA has constructed a contrast between the "old regionalism" and the "new regionalism". This is based, first, on the temporal juxtaposition of developments after 1945 and those after 1989; second, on a geographical differentiation between Europe and the Global South; and, third, on the claim that regionalisms in the Global South are different from regionalisms in Europe in number and scope ("narrow vs. broad"). In addition, the NRA stresses the social construction of new regions. At least rhetorically, this invokes a spatial turn dimension. However, in most cases this pledge is not honoured by systematic spatial reasoning. This may be explained by the fact that most NRA authors consider regionalization processes to be quasi-natural – although, first and foremost, one should ask who and why has an interest to utilize the spatial format regionalism.

The NRA debate thus far can be separated into six overlapping periods, starting with the late 1990s in which the "new regionalisms" were identified as the reason for fundamental social change of the international system.[50] Around the same time, some NRA authors started to locate the "new regionalisms" in "globalization", mainly conceiving globalization as a single economic process

America, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; L. Gómez-Mera, *Power and Regionalism in Latin America*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013; and P. Riggirozzi and D. Tussie (eds.), *The Rise of Post-Hegemonic Regionalism: The Case of Latin America*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2012.

47 See R. Väyrynen, "Regionalism: Old and New", *International Studies Review* 5 (2003) 1, pp. 25–51.

48 Söderbaum, *The Political Economy of Regionalisms*, p. 16.

49 R.W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10 (1981) 2, pp. 126–155; and R.W. Cox, *Approaches to World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Also see the appreciation of his oeuvre in *Globalizations* 13 (2016) 5.

50 See Hettne, "Globalization and the New Regionalism"; and F. Söderbaum and T.M. Shaw (eds.), *Theories of New Regionalism*. This periodization is inspired by N. Bisley, *Rethinking Globalization*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

that has a geographic centre and can objectively be measured, etc.[51] This was followed by a third phase in which this relationship was theoretically reflected upon.[52] In the 2000s, NRA authors tried to empirically ground the analytical category "new regionalisms".[53] In the fifth phase, starting in the early 2010s, the NRA has been consolidated into an academic field, which can be seen with the institutionalization of this knowledge order, for instance through the editing of a "companion" as well as through the retransfer of knowledge from the NRA debate to the field of European studies.[54] A sixth phase started when some NRA authors began to transcend the boundaries of NRA by provincializing the NRA as just one discourse formation among many. They admitted that some discourse entrepreneurs have initiated a specific talk about regional phenomena, which, no doubt, became rather influential – but they state that this talk represents only one of many ways to signify the spatial format "regionalism".

The critiques of the NRA is that it is based on methodological nationalism and that the empirical recognition of "new regionalisms" beyond the state is not paralleled by a theoretical debate. And also, despite the assumption that regions are the result of cultural constructions, these very regions are equated with the states that are constituting the regions.[55]

In the late 2000s, some scholars started to discuss the concept of "comparative regionalism" as an alternative to the NRA.[56] Although this has produced some interesting ideas,[57] substantial empirical contributions to this debate are

51 L. Fawcett and A. Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in World Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995; and Gamble and Payne, *Regionalism and World Order*.

52 See S. Breslin and G. Hook (eds.), *Microregionalism and World Order*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002; and Hurrell, "One World? Many Worlds?".

53 See, e.g., F. Söderbaum and I. Taylor (eds.), *Afro-Regions: The Dynamics of Cross-Border Micro-Regionalism in Africa*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2008.

54 See T.M. Shaw, J.A. Grant and S. Cornelissen, "Introduction and Overview: The Study of New Regionalism(s) at the Start of the Second Decade of the Twenty-First Century", in: T.M. Shaw, J.A. Grant and S. Cornelissen (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, pp. 3–30; A. Sbragia and F. Söderbaum, "EU-Studies and the 'New Regionalism': What can be Gained from Dialogue?", *Journal of European Integration* 32 (2010) 6, pp. 563–582; and A. Warleigh-Lack, N. Robinson and B. Rosamund (eds.), *New Regionalism and the European Union: Dialogues, Comparisons and New Research Directions*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

55 Engel et al., "Introduction", pp. 1–10.

56 F. Söderbaum, "Old, New and Comparative Regionalism: The History and Scholarly Development of the Field", in T.A. Börzel and T. Risse (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 16–37, at 31.

57 In chronological order, see A. Warleigh-Lack, "Studying Regionalisation Comparatively: A Conceptual Framework" in A.F. Cooper, C.W.H. Hughes and P. de Lombaerde (eds.), *Regionalisation and Global Governance: The Taming of Globalisation?*, Abingdon: Routledge,

yet to come – partly because methodologically they are fairly demanding and call for multilingualism and familiarity with the research traditions of more than just one discipline.[58]

With regard to the second major debate in research on regionalisms and regional organizations, periodization, and historicization, mainly two competing narratives have been developed in political science. According to the first, the history of regionalisms and regional organizations starts in the 1920s with the League of Nations, while the second narrative begins with the end of World War II. Representing the first strand of reasoning, the Italian political scientist Mario Tèlo has developed a *longue durée* of regionalism marked by four "epochs" between 1900 and 2016.[59] The first epoch stretches from World War I to the Great Depression years of 1929 to 1936. It is characterized by an authoritarian and hierarchical regionalism (e.g. the British Commonwealth). The second epoch of "the regionalism" starts with World War II and is marked by the bipolar world order during the Cold War. During the 1950s to 1980s, it was determined by US hegemony and a myriad of multilateral institutions (e.g. NATO, ASEAN, etc.). After a brief historical moment of US hegemony after the decline of the Soviet Union in the post-1989 years, the third epoch of regionalisms has also seen the demise of

2008, pp. 43–60; A. Acharya, "Comparative Regionalism: A Field Whose Time Has Come?", *International Spectator* 47 (2012) 1, pp. 3–15; T.A. Börzel, "Comparative Regionalism: European Integration and Beyond", in: W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse and B. Simmons (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations*, London: Sage, 2013, pp. 503–530; T.A. Börzel and T. Risse (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*; F. Söderbaum, *Rethinking Regionalism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; L. Fioramonti (ed.), *Regions and Crises: New Challenges for Contemporary Regionalisms*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; L. Fioramonti (ed.), *Regionalism in a Changing World: Comparative Perspectives in the New Global Order*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2012; L. Fioramonti and F. Mattheis, "Is Africa Really Following Europe? An Integrated Framework for Comparative Regionalism", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54 (2016) 3, pp. 674–690; and E. Solingen, *Comparative Regionalism: Economics and Security*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2015.

58 For an exception, see F. Mattheis, *New Regionalism in the South: Mercosur and SADC in a Comparative and Interregional Perspective*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2015. On the methodological challenge, see P. de Lombaerde et al., "The Problem of Comparison in Comparative Regionalism", *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010), pp. 731–753.

59 M. Telò, *Regionalism in Hard Times: Competitive and post-liberal trends in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2017, p. 67. Arguing in a similar way, see also L. Fawcett, "Regionalism from an Historical Perspective", in M. Farrell, B. Hettne and L. van Langenhove (eds.), *Global Politics of Regionalism: An Introduction*, London: Pluto Press, 2005, pp. 21–37; and D. Rodogno, S. Gaunthier and F. Piana, "What does Transnational History Tell Us about a World with International Organizations? The Historians' Point Of View", in: B. Reinalda (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of International Organizations*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2013, pp. 94–105.

the US during what Tèlo calls "globalization". This epoch is described as belle époque; it is dominated by regional organizations such as ASEAN, MERCOSUR, the African Union, and SADC. The contemporary epoch starts with the global financial crisis 2007/08; it is characterized by fragmentation and the emergence of a multipolar world order with competing regionalisms and interregionalisms, "instrumental regionalism", trade that mainly is focusing on allies, and the securitization of many realms (e.g. the 2000 Russian project of the Eurasian Economic Community, which became the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015, or the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which has been being negotiated between the United States and the EU since 2013).

In contrast, the Gothenburg-based political scientist Fredrik Söderbaum proposes a shorter periodization, starting with the end of World War II.[60] Initially the important world order context is bipolarity during the Cold War in Europe and the decolonization of the countries in the Global South. The connections between national, regional, and global forms of governance emerge in the context of European integration beyond the nation-state, on the one hand, and the development of post-colonial states in the Global South, on the other. The actors of this first phase of (an essentialized) "regionalism" are organized as sector-specific, with regionalisms driven by states being organized in regional organizations. A second phase of regionalism then began with the end of the Cold War, around 1989. The world order context was characterized by "globalization" and "neo-liberalism". Different forms of multilateralism became instable, and at the same time nation-states were transformed. During this period, regionalisms served as a means to "resist" or "tame" "globalization", or to "advance" it. Dominant regionalisms are described as multisectoral or specialized. The importance of non-state actors has increased; there is a contrast between formal and informal regionalisms. Söderbaum also observes a difference between regionalisms and process of regionalization. And during the 2000s, with the "war on terror", the global financial crisis, as well as the rise of the BRICS (i.e. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and other "emerging powers", a multipolar or multiplex world order has arisen. Regional governance has become an important element of global governance, with states and non-state actors, both formal and informal, act in a growing number of sectors.

In contrast to political science, global history writing has developed a different periodization of regionalisms. However, global history scholars are not using the

60 Here and in the following, see Söderbaum, "Old, New and Comparative Regionalism", p. 31.

term "regional organization", but they consistently talk about "international organizations", even when they look at regional organizations. Despite this difference in signification, global history has developed rich empirical evidence of regional organizations, whose origins date well before 1919[61] – although they, too, differ on the question when exactly the history of regionalisms started. While Reinalda in his *Routledge History of International Organizations* has the history of regional organizations begin with the Vienna Congress (1814/15) and the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (1815 – clearly is a distinctively regional organization), the Basel-based historian Madeleine Herren, in a global history of the international order, chooses the International Committee of the Red Cross (1863/64) and the International Telecommunication Union (1865) as the starting point – according to her, everything between 1815 and 1865 is considered to be a prehistory of the international order of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[62]

Regional Practices in Africa

In this section, three fundamental practices of regional organizations will be discussed based on the example of the African Union: The making of a regional spatial order during the transformation of the Organization of African Unity to the AU in 1999–20002; the establishment of regional policy architectures in the fields of peace and security and democracy and governance; and the emergence of interregional routines, for instance the strategic partnerships between the AU and the United Nations as well as the AU and the European Union.

First, the foundation of the African Union in 2001 as a supranational organization with little delegation of member states' sovereignty to the AU Commission (AUC) was a compromise. The conventional wisdom of academia argues that negotiations were held between a "minimalist" camp, led by South Africa's then president Thabo Mbeki and Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo, and "maximalists", spearheaded by Libya's Muammar al-Gaddafi.[63] The Frankfurt-based political scientist Antonia Witt has developed a more nuanced understanding of the

61 See K. Dykmann, "The History of International Organizations – What is New?", *Journal of International Organizations Studies* 2 (2011) 2, pp. 79–82.

62 Reinalda, *Routledge History of International Organizations*, pp. 17–21, 28–30; as well as Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: Eine Globalgeschichte der Internationen Ordnung*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009, p. 15.

63 See T.K. Tieku, "Explaining the Clash and Accommodation of Interests of Major Actors in the Creation of the African Union", *African Affairs* 103 (2004) 411, pp. 249–267.

various interests and identities. She identifies three positions: a "defence union", a "people's union" and a "manager-states' union".[64] The first version was proposed by Libya and supported, at a certain moment in time, by states such as Chad, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Senegal, and Sudan. They regarded "the globalization" as a hostile environment and wanted to protect themselves, with recourse to a pan-African tradition, by establishing the "United States of Africa". This regionalism would be a union without any state boundaries and based on a complete transfer of sovereignty of AU member states to the new centre. The nature of integration and unity of the African continent has indeed been subject to decades of intellectual and political debates, though the sequencing – gradual incrementalism vs. accelerated implementation – was always controversial.[65] In any case, in 2009 Gaddafi pushed the African Union to adopt a roadmap for the implementation of the United States of Africa by the year 2017. According to this plan, the AU Commission should have been replaced by an AU Authority that would take over from member states the sole international representation in the fields of peace and security, regional integration, development assistance, as well as "shared values" and institution- and capacity-building.[66] The project collapsed with the violent death of Gaddafi in 2011.[67]

The second position regarding the future of the African Union was supported by South Africa and Ghana (after a change of government), and later also by the AU Commission and the Pan-African Parliament. The concept of a *people's union* aimed at providing public goods (e.g. security) and democratic participation. In contrast, the *manager-states' union* only regarded states as actors of African unity; this vision was supported, among others, by regional heavyweights such as Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda. As a result of these

64 Here and in the following, see A. Witt, "The African Union and Contested Political Order(s)", in: U. Engel and J. Gomes Porto (eds.), *Towards an African Peace and Security Regim: Continental Embeddedness, Transnational Linkages, Strategic Relevance*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013, pp. 11–30.

65 See K. van Walraven, *Dreams of Power: The Role of the Organization of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963–1993*, Farnham: Ashgate, 1999.

66 See African Union Assembly, *Special Session of the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly. Report on the Outcome of the Special Session on Follow Up to the Sharm El Sheikh Assembly Decision AU/Dec. 206 (XI) on the Union Government* [Sp/Assembly/AU/Draft/Rpt(1)], Addis Ababa: African Union, 2009.

67 See U. Engel, "The Changing Role of the AU Commission in Inter-African Relations – The Case of APSA and AGA", in: J.W. Harbeson and D. Rothchild (eds.), *Africa in World Politics: Engaging a Changing Global Order*, 5th ed., Boulder: Westview Press, 2013, pp. 186–206, at 188–194.

competing visions of a spatial format, the African Union is a compromise of supranational regionalism, in which member states have ceded little sovereignty. Nevertheless, the Union – and especially the AUC – has developed into an influential actor in its own right.[68]

Second, and opposite to its predecessor – the OAU, which was mainly concerned with decolonization and the struggle against apartheid – the African Union had to deal with violent conflict, terrorism, and extremism (e.g. forms of jihadism), as well as cases of unconstitutional changes of government, including coups d'etats, electoral violence, and controversial debates about presidential term limits. Based on the same political principles as the OAU – most importantly sovereignty of member states and non-interference in each other's internal affairs – the Union has introduced an innovative new principle to inter-African relations: the right to intervene in member states, pursuant to a decision of the AU Assembly of Heads and Government, in cases of "grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity".[69] In order to meet the various challenges the African Union is implementing, an ambitious African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), comprising a Peace and Security Council (PSC), a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) to anticipate and mitigate potential violent conflicts, a military African Standby Force (ASF) for short-term deployment in cases of conflict, an advisory Panel of the Wise, and a Peace Fund to finance respective interventions.[70] Most elements of APSA have been implemented (initially 2010 was the target), although, when comparing the five AU-defined meta-regions (North, Central, West, East, and South), with different speed and efficiency.[71] At the same time, this reorientation has increased the pressure to coordinate and harmonize AU activities with those of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The division of labour between the Union and the eight officially recognized partner RECs is still a work in progress.

In addition, the African Union is implementing a complimentary African Governance Architecture (AGA).[72] It is based on universal values, democratic aspirations, and respect for human rights as well as principles of rule of law,

68 Engel, "The Changing Role of the AU Commission"; and U. Engel, "The African Union's Peace and Security Architecture. From aspiration to operationalization", in: J.W. Harbeson and D. Rothchild (eds.), *Africa in World Politics: Constructing Political and Economic Order*, 6TH ed., Boulder: Westview Press, 2016, pp. 262–282.

69 See Organisation of African Unity, *Constitutive Act of the African Union*, Lomé: Organization of African Unity, 2000, § 4 (a, g-h).

70 See African Union, *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council*, Durban: African Union, 2002.

71 See Engel, "The African Union's Peace and Security Architecture".

72 See African Union, *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*, 30 January 2007.

constitutional order, regular free and fair elections, the independence of the judiciary, etc. However, ratification of the relevant legal document, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007), took five years. By 6 February 2019, only 32 out of 54 member states had ratified the charter, and only Togo had tabled the mandatory report on the state of democracy and human rights in its country. The further integration of APSA and AGA within the AUC, between the AUC and member states and RECs, as well as between RECs remains a huge challenge.[73]

Third, the African Union pursues a specific form of sovereignty-boosting – interregionalism – by developing strategic partnerships with both the United Nations and the European Union in the field of peace and security.[74] Both institutions play an important role in financing respective interventions in Africa, especially in the terms of peace-keeping operations and police missions. Beginning in the mid-2000s, the partnerships are based on a dense network of institutional connections that has led to closer policy coordination and the enhancement of the institutional capacities of the Union. Since 2006, there are annual consultations between the AU PSC and the UN Security Council (UNSC), there is a permanent working group on conflict prevention and resolution, and twice a year there are meetings at working level (desk-to-desk meetings). In 2009, a Permanent Mission at the United Nations was opened, and the following year a Joint Task Force on Peace and Security was established. In the same year the UN Office to the African Union was established. And since 2014, cooperation has been facilitated through annual Joint UN-AU Frameworks for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

The partnership between the African Union and the European Union is based on the Joint Africa Strategy and its Plan of Action (2007). Institutionally, there are regular meetings at the level of summits of heads of state and government, ministers, and the commissions (college-to-college), as well as the PSC and the EU Political and Security Committee, the AU Military Committee and the AU Military Staff Committee, and the Joint Africa Expert Groups. Both partnerships are considered to be vital to the African Union to increase its room to

73 Engel, "The African Union's Peace and Security Architecture".

74 Here and in the following, see U. Engel, "The African Union and the United Nations: Crafting international partnerships in the field of peace and security", in: T. Karbo and T. Murithi (eds.), *The African Union: Autocracy, Diplomacy and Peacebuilding in Africa*, London, New York: I.B. Tauris 2017, pp. 265–281.; and U. Engel, "An Emerging Inter-Regional Peace and Security Partnership: The African Union and the European Union", in: S. Aris, A. Snetkov and A. Wenger (eds.) *Inter-organizational Relations in International Security. Cooperation and Competition*. London and New York: Routledge, 170–187.

manoeuvre – in this sense the partnerships are a core sovereignty strategy. This is despite the fact that political disagreement continues within important issues, for instance the question of the UNSC reform and stronger representation of African states (including a veto right); the NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 that led to regime change and the dissolution of the state; the international policy on Mali in 2013 in view of an armed jihadist insurgency and a coup d'etat; as well as various hegemonic agendas driven by the P3 (France, United Kingdom, and United States). The Union, therefore, argues that the respective partnerships should be based on stronger African ownership and recognition of its priorities.[75]

The three examples drawn from the practices of the African Union demonstrate how regional organizations establish distinct functional policy architectures and how they try to increase their sovereignty through interregional partnerships. Politically, African regionalism remains contested by member states, the RECs, or international partners. This also illustrates that regionalisms are characterized by processes of negotiation over interests and identities. This example shows the spatial format of regionalism can only be implemented in collaboration with other spatial formats. At the same time, it increases the options of member states to boost or reclaim some of their sovereignty. Regionalisms play a central role in ordering space and producing a continental spatial order. For the creation of a global spatial order, regionalisms have gained influence during the last three decades – so much so that some authors envisage a fragmented system of multilevel governance, a global governance run by regional organizations.[76]

Conclusions

Regional organizations play an important role in regional and global processes, in almost all policy fields. Since the end of the Cold War, they have grown in number and relevance. In academic debates on regional organizations and the processes of regionalization and region-building, a number of fundamental

75 African Union Commission Chairperson, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Partnership between the African Union and the United Nations on Peace and Security: Towards Greater Political Coherence*, Tabled at the 307th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PSC/PR/2. (CCCVII), Addis Ababa: African Union, 9 January 2012, §§ 94–97.

76 See A. Acharya, "The Future of Global Governance: Fragmentation May Be Inevitable and Creative", *Global Governance* 22 (2016) 4, pp. 453–460.

intellectual challenges remain. This holds true for the active role of regional organizations in contemporary processes of globalization, the periodization of regionalisms during the past 200 years, and comparative research on regionalisms and regional organizations. Empirically, there is still a need for detailed case studies on the internal dynamics and decision-making processes of regional organizations, but also with regard to inter-regional practices. This also goes for the reconstruction of often undocumented national interests in regional organizations, the interplay between state and non-state organization, or the finances of regional organizations.[77] Today, the actorness of regional organizations is rarely disputed; however, there is a lack of empirical studies that reconstruct this agency vis-à-vis member states or with regard to the "international system" and other regional organizations. And, finally, there is a wide open space to analyse the professionalization and institutionalization of regional organizations from the Global South, their internal processes of learning, and the cultural transfers among different regional organizations.

77 On the last point, see U. Engel and F. Mattheis (eds.), *The finances of regional organisations in the Global South – Follow the money*, Abingdon: Routledge (in print).