

# Editors' Introduction: Reading the Intellectual History of Regionalism

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## 1. *Raison d'être* of this Four Volume Set

**T**his unique four-volume set captures and organizes more than 60 years of academic research on regional integration and regionalism. The general ambition is to contribute to the consolidation of a deeply fragmented field of study, still in search of its own intellectual history.

While there is a strong tendency in both policy and academia to acknowledge the importance of regions and regionalism, the approach of different academic specializations varies considerably, and regionalism means different things to different people in different contexts. In principle such diversity could be productive and could indicate increasing maturity of the field of study. Even if we may speak of an emerging academic community of regionalism, the prevailing fragmentation is a sign of weakness more than strength. The problem is a general lack of dialogue among academic disciplines, regional specializations (e.g. European integration, Latin American, Asian, and African regionalism), as well as theoretical traditions and approaches (e.g. rationalism, institutionalism, constructivism, critical and postmodern approaches). There is also thematic fragmentation in the sense that various forms of regionalism, such as economic, security, and environmental regionalism, are only rarely related to one another. These divisions undermine further generation of cumulative knowledge as well as theoretical and methodological developments. Indeed, the divisions and lack of dialogue lead to unproductive contestations, among both academics and policy-makers, about the meaning of regionalism, its causes and effects, how it should be studied, what to compare and how, and not least, what are the costs and benefits of regionalism and regional integration.

The purpose of these four volumes is therefore to provide a multi-disciplinary community of regionalism scholars with a collection of key original texts that have contributed to shaping the thinking about regional integration, regionalism and regionalization. The set of books will allow an interaction across different discourses, theoretical standpoints and disciplines, which is quite rare in the current debate. Even if there has been a proliferation of very useful handbooks and theoretical works in recent decades (e.g. El-Agraa 1999; Rosamond 2000; Pelkmans 2001; Wiener and Diez 2003; Laursen 2003, 2010; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003; Telò 2007; Shaw, Grant and Cornelissen 2011; Jovanović 2011; De Grauwe 2012), many of such works are rather selective and tend to favour particular theoretical perspectives, time periods, discourses or themes, thereby reinforcing the existing divisions in the field. It is our conviction that the future development of the study of regionalism is contingent on a better understanding of the intellectual roots of the field and that academics should increasingly engage with other texts and researchers across existing boundaries and discourses. In our selection we have opted for radically crossing disciplinary borders within the social sciences, especially those between economics and political science (on the latter see also Mattli 1999a, 1999b [**article 47**]).

This set of volumes is founded on the notion that an intellectual history of regionalism needs to acknowledge but also transcend the aforementioned divisions and disciplines in the field. While preparing this set we have approached a large number of experts with questionnaires, and it was very evident that, with a few exceptions, there is no consensus at all which articles to include in a collection such as this. We do not, by any means, claim that our list represents *the* ultimate and shared intellectual history of the field. A different editorial team would undoubtedly make a different selection. Our claim is that the articles included in the four volumes represent *one* way to read (or construct) the intellectual history of regionalism.

## **2. Our Approach to the Intellectual History of Regionalism**

While constructing and reading the intellectual history of regionalism our emphasis lies on the evolution of the subject and the general intellectual history in a broad sense rather than on particular and more narrow themes, regions, theories and discourses *per se*. It would certainly have been possible to organize the work thematically, regionally or theoretically instead of chronologically. It could also have been done with a more narrow time span. In our view, however, it is both interesting and essential to be able to trace the original ideas and how these have developed (or not) over time and in different settings and discourses. In this context it may be mentioned that the historical-chronological approach is widely practiced in the construction of intellectual histories, which in general tries to understand ideas within their

appropriate context. The fact that many of the core ideas in the current debate have been elaborated by others earlier is too often ignored by too many. The lack of knowledge of the intellectual history of the field undermines the quality of debate as well as theoretical development. In addition, it negatively affects the overall efficiency of the research programme on regionalism.

There is a related problem with the lack of readership. While many scholars refer to earlier theorists and ideas, it is clear that there is often a second-hand or even third-hand reading of many earlier (as well as contemporary) texts. A lack of first-hand readership may of course be caused by the fact that older texts are not always easily accessible. However, it appears also to be a result of other factors, such as a general lack of knowledge of the intellectual roots of the field, a lack of knowledge of other sub-discourses within the field or simply sheer time pressure. Regardless of reason, the lack of readership undermines the quality of research, and it is therefore a goal in itself to provide the key texts that have shaped the intellectual history of the research field.

Another reason to organize the work chronologically is that it is possible to distinguish rather distinct phases of regional integration and regionalism during the last 60 years. There is no consensus among experts about these phases and time periods. Different scholars have referred to 'waves', 'generations' or 'phases' of regionalism and regional integration (Bhagwati 1993; de Melo and Panagariya 1995; Lawrence 1996; Mansfield and Milner 1999; Costea and Van Langenhove 2007; Van Langenhove and Marchesi 2008; Shaw, Grant and Cornelissen 2011; Moncayo 2012; Moncayo *et al.* 2012). Perhaps the most common distinction during the last two decades is between what is often referred to as 'old' and 'new' regionalism. We have opted for a more comprehensive as well as more nuanced approach than most previous distinctions:

Volume 1: Classical Regional Integration (1945–1970)

Volume 2: Revisions of Classical Regional Integration (1970–1990)

Volume 3: The New Regionalism (1990–2000)

Volume 4: Comparative Regionalism (2000–2010)

It is uncontroversial to speak about a phase of Classical Regional Integration. This phase started around WWII and is often assimilated with mainstream European integration theories (federalism, neo-functionalism) (Haas 1958; Haas 1961 [**article 8**]; Nye 1968 [**article 14**]; Schmitter 1969 [**article 15**]). However, the discussions on the role of regions in peace and security in a UN context (Mitrany 1943/1966 [**article 1**]; Polanyi 1945 [**article 2**]; Panikkar 1948; see also Haas 1971 [**article 20**]) and the development of the concept of regional sub-system (and similar concepts) (see e.g. Binder 1958 [**article 6**]; Cantori and Spiegel 1969 [**article 16**]; Thompson 1973) are equally important features of that phase. In addition, critical and neo-marxist interpretations of the European integration process were also presented (Mandel 1967 [**article 13**]).

Many scholars would agree that some kind of a turn occurred around 1970, which here is referred to as Revisions of Classical Regional Integration. The main contestation appears to lie in what actually characterizes the second phase and the historical turning point between the two phases. To some observers both phases are perceived as one single period of 'old regionalism' (or rather 'regional integration'). Yet, what is often overlooked by scholars in the current debate is the fact that the 1960s was an extremely dynamic and innovative period of scholarship, which in many ways could be compared to the 1990s and early 2000s. From the early 1970s classical scholarship was not only revised and questioned from within (Haas 1970 [**article 17**], 1976 [**article 23**]; Nye 1970 [**article 18**]; Puchala 1971 [**article 19**]; Hveem 1974 [**article 21**]; Scharpf [**article 27**] and others) but became ever more diverse and classical integration theory was also challenged hand in hand with the changing reality of regionalism. Gradually the study of regions and regionalism was deserted in favour of wider and non-territorial logics and patterns of integration. It is important to acknowledge, however, that the scholarship conducted during the rather long revision phase (1970–1990) was an important inspiration for the third phase.

As already indicated, it is rather uncontroversial to refer to a phase of 'new' or revitalized regionalism (not everyone employs the prefix 'new'). The original intention with the distinction between old and new regionalism, at least according to one of its main proponents Björn Hettne, was to draw attention to the different world order context shaping regionalism in the late 1980s and 1990s, and to pinpoint what were the 'new' features of regionalism in contradistinction to the so-called 'old' (or classical) features. Even if there is disagreement about what is old and new, few observers contested that it was a 'new' wave or phase of regionalism. This discussion subsequently resulted in a series of so-called new regionalism approaches and frameworks (see Hettne 1993 [**article 30**]; Fawcett and Hurrell 1995; Mansfield and Milner 1997; Hettne *et al.* 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003; Shaw, Grant and Cornelissen 2011). However, there is also much confusion about so-called new regionalism, and in our view the distinction has been badly misunderstood as well as misused. This is related to the fact that the 'new regionalism' concept has been used in various ways: It has been used to refer to the spectacular increase in the number of regional trade agreements in the late 1980s and 1990s, their 'new' contents (including a series of non-trade issues), but it has also been used to refer to new theories and theorization about regionalism (emphasizing the link between regionalization and globalization à la Hettne, giving a more prominent role to non-state actors, etc), and new methodological approaches (including cross-disciplinary and comparative approaches) (De Lombaerde 2004: 968–969).

The multiplication of regional trade agreements worldwide since the 1990s – which is *one* way of defining new regionalism – also led to an interesting development at the level of empirical methodology. Sufficient statistical

data became available for large  $n$  statistical analyses (see also Genna and De Lombaerde 2010 **[article 58]**), not only on the economic effects of trade agreements but also on the (causal) linkages between economic cooperation and integration, on the one hand, and political and security variables, on the other (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1998 **[article 43]**; Mansfield 1998 **[article 44]**; Pevehouse 2002 **[article 50]**; Estevadeordal and Suominen **[article 56]**), based on new conceptualizations of the linkages between the economic and political spheres and the political-economy of regional trade agreements (see e.g. Grossman and Helpman 1995; Solingen 1996 **[article 37]**; Baldwin 1997 **[article 41]**; Mansfield and Milner 1999).

As Hettne correctly pointed out in the early 2000s (2003, 2005 **[article 54]**), after almost two decades of 'new' regionalism it is time to transcend the distinction and move 'beyond the new regionalism'. Even if the new regionalism can be said to continue into the 2000s, it is evident that the field of study reached a new phase 'beyond the new regionalism' around the turn of the millennium (Hettne 2005) **[article 54]**. The fourth phase may be the most diverse, but its core essential characteristic is arguably the consolidation of the comparative element (see also Breslin and Higgott 2000). Even if the phase of the new regionalism also paid attention to comparison, scholarship during this phase was first and foremost built around case studies and most comparisons were somewhat sweeping or shallow. Following on from this, between the 1990s and the 2000s there was a poor debate between European integration studies and regionalism in other regions. That is, in the fourth phase the debate between European integration and regionalism elsewhere has deepened considerably, and there is now a large potential for improved cross-fertilization and theory-building between Europe and other regions (Telò 2007; Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond 2010 **[article 59]**; Warleigh-Lack and van Langenhove 2010; Söderbaum and Sbragia 2010; Laursen 2010). Recently, there is speculation about a new phase for regionalism in the context of emerging countries, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. Labels such as 'post-hegemonic', 'post-neo-liberal', 'new' (again), and 'heterodox' regionalism have been used to refer to this (suggested) new phase (Telò 2007; Riggiozzi and Tussie 2012; Vivares 2013). However, these views are not shared by all observers (Malamud and Gardini 2012), and it may be discussed whether there is a new turning point, and if so, what is the core characteristic of the new phase.

Although there can thus be good arguments to distinguish the various phases we have suggested, we would like to emphasize, however, that the importance of the 'turning points' should not be overestimated. The periods and labels are easily contested. In the real world there is both overlap and gradual transformation between different time periods. Our historical approach is in itself an indication that we acknowledge both continuities and discontinuities between different time periods and their labels. It also needs mentioning that in some way the time periods and labels are instrumental; the key goal is to

provide the intellectual history, which in itself does not necessarily require historical breaking points or labels of the different volumes. For similar reasons, it is not necessary that all articles and ideas within a given volume correspond to the label for each time period. More important is to observe the longer term development of academic thinking about regionalism, with its accelerations and slow-downs, its multiple lines of influence and descendance, its cross-fertilizations, etc.

Furthermore, while recognizing the historical importance of the literature related to the European integration process, we have opted for a global approach to the intellectual history of the field by including key texts that emerged in non-European contexts and/or refer to non-European regionalisms and/or were written by non-European authors. This way, the four volumes should be relevant for the global community of regionalism scholars. While the European case and scholarship seem to have dominated the academic debate on post-war regionalism, it is clear that there was also an early debate in Latin America (e.g. ECLA 1959 **[article 7]**), Asia (e.g. Panikkar 1948) and other regions. It is also clear that the broader debates on regionalism are as old as independence from European colonialism. Several political leaders in post-independence America (Bolívar and others) and Africa (N'Krumah and others) have developed interesting ideas about regional cooperation, regional integration, regional unity and 'pan-regionalism'. Others (including Bunge and others in South America) proposed the creation of customs unions already in the very early 20th century. In our selection, we included texts referring to non-European cases ranging from those by Prebisch-led ECLA and Binder in the 1950s (Binder, 1958 **[article 6]**; ECLA, 1959 **[article 7]**), Axline (1977) **[article 25]**, Bach (1999, **[article 46]**) to Acharya's 2004 article **[article 53]**. What all these texts have in common is conceptual innovation: Binder develops the idea of a regional sub-system in the context of the Middle East, ECLA builds a case for creating a common market among developing countries in the context of a structuralist framework and development strategy, Axline presents a novel reading of the role of political integration in a development context, and Acharya suggests concepts like norm localization in an Asian context. Bach (1999) **[article 46]** suggests a new paradigm for the study of regionalism in Africa. According to Bach, regionalism in Africa is characterized by informal and *de facto* trans-state networks that deliberately seek to prevent the implementation of formal regional integration programmes. Other relevant concepts that emerged outside Europe include e.g. Akamatsu's concept of 'flying-geese pattern' which helps to understand Asian bottom-up regionalism (Akamatsu 1962), or Malamud's concepts of 'inter-presidentialism' which helps to understand the dynamics of today's Latin American regionalism (Malamud 2005).

This brings us to another important feature of our approach, namely that we have selected contributions on the basis of their conceptually, theoretically and/or methodologically innovative content. Rather than pursuing the objective of



having a broad geographical coverage in our series *per se*, the papers dealing with specific world regions have been selected because they are innovative and produce more general knowledge which is relevant for theorizing about regionalism more broadly. We have generally not included case studies – as good and intriguing they may be – which lack an explicit ambition to contribute to debates beyond the single case or more general comparative debates (in terms of theory, conceptual debates, methodology).

Rather than judging the European case as historically more important than other cases, it is the observation that the European case has led to relatively more conceptual, theoretical and methodological work that explains why Europe is overrepresented in our selection. Many of the texts dealing with European integration are included because they are relevant for debates about regions and regionalism in comparative and theoretical perspective. We think that much of the theoretical work that looks/looked at the European case as a reference is sufficiently abstract to be relevant beyond Europe, independently of the geo-political role Europe has played or is playing in the world, and independently of the fact that some people and organizations refer to European integration as a model.

We are convinced that this European bias in the academic production is in any case becoming less and less problematic, not only because of the increasing experimentation with different regional governance architectures outside Europe, but also because of the increasing strength and autonomy of academic centres outside Europe (and the US).

Inevitably, a number of other more pragmatic choices have to be made when embarking upon this type of project. This starts already with the number of articles (59) that could be included. This is obviously an arbitrary number, excluding a considerable number of other articles, some which may certainly be as meritory as some of those included. In addition, in a limited number of cases our initial choices faced legal or budgetary constraints (although we are convinced that we found good alternative solutions in these cases). There are also other constraints related to space. For example, not all important contributions to the intellectual history of regionalism have been published in article- or article-format. Many important books, such as Haas's monumental *The Uniting of Europe* (1958) Buzan's *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (1983) or Acharya and Johnston's *Crafting Cooperation* (2007), and even book series, such as the five volumes on new regionalism edited by Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel for UNU-WIDER (1999, 2000a,b,c, 2001) have been written which cannot be reproduced in a series like ours. In some cases the main messages of these books have also been published as condensed journal articles. If that was the case, the latter have been included. That is why we have included, for example, Balassa (1961b) **[article 9]** instead of Balassa's *Theory of Economic Integration* (1961a) and Mattli (1999b) **[article 47]** instead of Mattli's *Logic of Regional Integration* (1999a). In some cases, the main or crucial conceptual innovation in the book

could be found in a specific article. This was the case for Viner's *Customs Union Issue* (1950) [**article 3**], and Tinbergen's *International Economic Integration* (1954) [**article 4**]. We have tried to avoid to include introductions or conclusions of books. Although they often present a summary of the finding of the books, they are usually difficult to read without the book. An exception is Deutsch *et al.* (1957) [**article 5**], where essential concepts such as security community, integration and amalgamation are introduced, and which has shaped the debate for several decades.

In principle, the paper where the first reference is made to a particular conceptual innovation is the one we selected, but there are a few exceptions (e.g. in the case of books, see above). Sometimes, authors develop their ideas in a sequence of texts, gradually refining and complementing their argument (see e.g. Krugman 1991a, 1991b, 1993 [**article 29**]). It is not always the case neither that the first article is the best one or the most influential. Sometimes, initial contributions reached their full impact thanks to essential complementary publications. This is e.g. the case for Viner's article (Viner 1950 [**article 3**]) in combination with the work by Lipsey (1957, 1960) and others. Mundell's seminal article (Mundell 1961 [**article 10**]) has been complemented by McKinnon's (1963) and Kenen's (1969), and many other examples could be given. Sometimes, the first publication where an innovative idea is developed does not even mention the concept which will later be picked up in the literature. This is the case, for example, with Wonnacott's concept of 'hubs and spokes' (Wonnacott 1975 [**article 22**]).

The remainder of this introduction is an elaboration of some of the key issues shaping the development of the field and which also have been essential for our selection of articles. We have concentrated on three key issues central to the intellectual history of the field: (i) the ontology of regionalism and regional integration; (ii) the role of European integration theory/practice and comparison; and (iii) the role of theory. Many (but not all) articles in the four volumes relate one way or the other to these three key issues. Section 3 deals with the ontology of regionalism and how core concepts such as region, regional integration and regionalism have been debated during the last six decades. Section 4 deals with the contentious role of European integration theory and practice in relation to the more 'universal' and world-wide process. This issue has been discussed since the 1950s and it is interesting to see the continuities since the debate about classical regional integration. In this context we also explain how we tried to present a geographically and geo-politically balanced collection. Finally, the core issues of theorizing and theory-building are dealt with in section 5.

### **3. The Ontology of Regionalism**

Scholars in the field are still facing a deep-seated 'ontological problem', resulting from an uncertainty about the object of inquiry. In many ways, Puchala's famous article about the blind men and the elephant is still highly



relevant. Puchala (1971: 267) **[article 19]** complained that “[m]ore than fifteen years of defining, redefining, refining, modeling and theorizing have failed to generate satisfactory conceptualizations of exactly what it is we are talking about when we refer to ‘international integration’ and exactly what it is we are trying to learn when we study this phenomenon”. Since then the confusion has not decreased. There is a wide range of partly overlapping and partly competing definitions of key concepts, such as ‘region’, ‘regional (sub-)system’, ‘regionalism’, ‘regionalization’, or ‘regional integration’. It is thus striking that more recent lamenting about ontological confusion (for example, Sbragia 2008; Fawn 2009; Warleigh-Lack and Van Langenhove 2010; Börzel 2011; Shaw, Grant and Cornelissen 2011; and Hameiri 2012) is not very different from contestations in the 1960s and 1970s. Whereas Nye spoke about a ‘Babylonian’ conceptual confusion (1968a: 27) **[article 14]**, Balassa (1961a: 1) observed that integration had no clear-cut meaning. This led Haas (1970: 610) **[article 17]** to make a plea that “[s]emantic confusion about ‘integration’ must be limited even if it cannot be eliminated”. Thompson further added that – in his view – the conceptual problem was mainly one of lacking uniformity rather than one of ‘false’ definitions (Thompson 1973: 95). For Caporaso (1971: 228), this lack of agreement on definitions indicated that studies on regional integration were still in the ‘pre-paradigm stage’ of the development of science.

Our position is that some of today’s ontological discussions are not always productive. A returning problem has been that the conceptual discussions have sometimes been presented about finding the ‘best’ definition for a given phenomenon (especially ‘regional integration’), whereas in reality we are confronted with a multi-faceted phenomenon or even a cluster of inter-related phenomena for which we necessarily need a more elaborated and diversified conceptual toolbox. Many controversies could have been left out if scholars could appreciate that they are not, to paraphrase Puchala, dealing with the same ‘part’ of the elephant. Some scholars are focused on regional sub-systems, regions and region-building whereas others are more concerned with regional integration and regional organizations. In our view, all concerns and focuses are legitimate as well as necessary in order to better understand the regional phenomenon in a broad sense. With this said, however, it should be acknowledged that real progress has been made in better understanding the regional phenomenon and its various sub-components. One important improvement is the increasing recognition and acceptance that regions are not givens but socially constructed and transformed over time. A broad rather than a narrow ontological position has therefore been adopted to delimit what we consider as being the field of regionalism.

Let us have a quick look at the definitional issues and provide some examples how they have been addressed over time. Whereas political discourses of regional cooperation and integration are much older, a good starting point for the post-war academic debate is the definition of ‘security communities’

by Deutsch et al. (1957) **[article 5]**, which has been very influential in the further development of regional integration theory (Nye 1968a: 857) **[article 14]**. Deutsch *et al.* (1957: 5) **[article 5]** define 'security community' as "a group of people which has become 'integrated'" and 'integration' is defined as "the attainment, within a territory, of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a 'long' time, dependable expectations of 'peaceful change' among its population". Members of a security community believe "that they have come to agreement on at least this one point: that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of 'peaceful change'". An 'amalgamated community' is characterized by a political union or common government (i.e., there is a "formal merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit"), whereas a 'pluralistic community' is characterized by the fact that countries retain their sovereignty (i.e. the legal independence of separate governments) (Deutsch *et al.* 1967: 6) **[article 5]**. This type of conceptualization contains already the seeds for the ambiguities in the definitional debates until today: state versus non-state actors, policy versus process, intergovernmentalism versus supra-nationalism, formal versus informal regionalism.

Other cleavages, such as endogenous versus exogenous approaches to regions also appeared early in the literature. In the 1950s the concept of 'regional system' (and its variants) was suggested. Binder (1958) **[article 6]**, for example, used the term 'subordinate international system' to capture the position of the Middle East in the global system of international relations. Inspired by the systems approach, a series of other scholars in the 1960s and 1970s tried to define regions 'scientifically'. Cantori and Spiegel (1970: 6–7) identified the following characteristics of a region: geographic proximity, common bonds (historical, social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic), a sense of identity, and international interactions; whereas Russett (1967: 11) emphasized geographical proximity, social and cultural homogeneity, political attitudes or external behavior, political institutions, and economic interdependence.

This early literature connects with more recent work by Katzenstein (1996: 7) **[article 38]** and others, re-discovering *de facto* regions as the result of 'regionalization' processes (see more below). Katzenstein (1996: 3, 2005: 21–35) **[article 38]** criticizes the ambiguities in the early work, stresses the dynamic and non-deterministic character of geography, and emphasizes the 'porous' character of regions. He defines a region as "a set of countries markedly interdependent over a wide range of different dimensions. . . [which is] often, but not always, indicated by a flow of socio-economic transactions and communications and high political salience that differentiates a group of countries from others" (Katzenstein 1996: 8) **[article 38]**. Adler (1997) **[article 42]** also seeks to build on and draw upon Deutsch's security community approach. A very 'modern' claim in this context was made by Young (1964: 250) who defended the flexibility of the systems approach on the basis that it did not require a 'once-and-for-all' decision regarding the focus

of research and allowed for tailoring the level(s) of analysis to the research question(s). This was recently stressed again, although moving beyond the systems approach, by De Lombaerde *et al.* (2010) **[article 57]**.

During the early debate, neofunctionalists like Haas (1970: 612) **[article 17]** criticized the regional systems approach (as merely descriptive) and stressed that the concerns of the regional integration scholars were different from those of the regional systems scholars. Regional integration was famously defined by Haas (1958: 16) as "the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdictions over the pre-existing national states". Regional integration is seen as a path along which 'progress' can be measured (Haas 1961) **[article 8]**. Later, Haas (1970: 607–608, 610) **[article 17]**, defined it (radically) as "political unification of nations through non-coercive efforts [...] [t]he study of regional integration is concerned with explaining how and why states cease to be wholly sovereign, how and why they voluntarily mingle, merge, and mix with their neighbours so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflict between themselves".

According to another famous neofunctionalist, Joseph Nye (1968b: vii), a macro-region could be defined as: "a limited number of states linked together by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence". This classical definition is frequently referred to in the current debate. The meaning of a number of geographically contiguous states is rather obvious, but Nye recognized that the degree of interdependence could vary between different fields, which is very evident in the contemporary discussion where there is an emphasis on different types of regions. With this rather minimalistic definition as a point of departure, Nye could distinguish between political integration (the formation of a transnational political system), economic integration (the formation of a transnational economy) and social integration (the formation of a transnational society) (Nye 1968a) **[article 14]**.

During the classical debate there was a close affinity and dialogue between neofunctionalists in political science and many economists. Bela Balassa (1961a: 1) **[article 9]** defined regional economic integration "[. . .] as a process and as a state of affairs. Regarded as a process, it encompasses measures designed to abolish discrimination between economic units belonging to different national states; viewed as a state of affairs, it can be represented by the absence of various forms of discrimination between national economies." Even if there is some dialogue, there appears to be sharper disciplinary divides in the debate of regionalism since the late 1980s. In the pluralistic conceptual landscape that we have today, Sbragia (2008) suggested that the different views on regions coincide with disciplinary divides: most economists would have a 'thin' view of regions, while most political scientists would have a 'thick' view (i.e., incorporating a relatively dense set of interconnectors) of regions (see also, De Lombaerde 2011a).

Ever since Classical Regional Integration there has been a strong tendency to take regions as pre-given, defined in advance of research. This is related to the emphasis placed on regional integration as political unification within regional organizations. Even if it is elementary for geographers and sociologists to acknowledge the socially constructed nature of regions (see Murphy (1991) **[article 28]**, and Paasi (2001) **[article 49]**), it is only since the 1990s that this aspect has become more widely accepted in the field as a whole. An important precursor within the field of IR was Barry Buzan with his concept of regional security complex (Buzan 1983) (see also Väyrynen 1984 **[article 26]**). Buzan combined previous ideas about intra-regional interdependencies with an emphasis on structure and the exogenous forces that shaped regions. Buzan's definition of a 'regional security complex' refers to a "a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another".

Buzan's early perspective had state-centric origins. For instance, security complexes were seen as 'miniature anarchies', and in a rather orthodox manner the states were taken more-or-less as 'given', and as the units in the international system. Buzan also shared the conventional neorealist conviction that strong states make strong and 'mature' regions (cooperative 'anarchies'), whereas weak states, in their quest for power and security, tend to create (regional) conflicts and 'immature' regions, or are considered so weak that they do not form a region at all. Not surprisingly, Western Europe (and the EU in particular) is an example of the former, whereas weak states in Africa, for example, create weak regions. In collaboration with Ole Wæver, Buzan has subsequently revised the regional security complex theory in order to take account of his switch to the constructivist method, and to move away from state-centric assumptions. The new definition of a regional security complex is "a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both, are so interlinked that their security problems cannot be reasonably analyzed apart from one another" (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 44). Buzan argues that the constructivist approach is necessary if one is to keep the concept of security coherent, while adding 'new security sectors' – economic, environmental and societal – beyond the traditional military and political ones. The new formulation allows for a deeper analysis of non-state actors and informality, and that regions are not givens but constructed in the process of securitization.

The constructed nature of regions has been more heavily emphasized by constructivist, critical and post-structuralist scholars. According to Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) **[article 48]**, regions are processes; they are in the making (or un-making), their boundaries are shifting. When moving away from hermetically sealed understandings of regional space; then the region automatically becomes more fluid, multilevel and elusive. According to Jessop (2003), "rather than seek an elusive objective [. . .] criterion for defining a

region, one should treat regions as emergent, socially constituted phenomena". Furthermore, Bøås, Marchand and Shaw (2003) **[article 52]** claim that the region should be understood as lived social space whose delimitation is determined through social practice. In other words, the boundaries of a region are being constructed and reconstructed through discursive practices, the region operates as a signifier. Neumann shows that from such constructivist perspective "multiple alien interpretations of the region struggle, clash, deconstruct, and displace one another" (Neumann 1994) **[article 34]**.

Neumann (1994) **[article 34]** then also emphasizes the need to ask *whose region* is actually being constructed (see also Hveem 1974 **[article 21]** for an earlier discussion). In so doing Neumann identifies a blank spot in much of previous research. All theories make assumptions about what a region is, but according to Neumann most earlier thinking neglected the "politics of defining and redefining the region". The point, Neumann claims, is that "this is an inherently political act, and it must therefore be reflectively acknowledged and undertaken as such". Similarly, Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) **[article 48]** emphasize that the socially constructed nature of regions implies that they are politically contested, and there is nearly always a multitude of strategies and ideas about a particular region. Since regions are political and social projects, devised by human (state and non-state) actors in order to protect or transform existing structures, they may, just like other social projects, fail. Hence, regions can be disrupted from within and from without, sometimes by the same forces that built them up. The socially constructed nature of regions draws attention to who are the relevant regional actors (and how to conceptualize these actors) – an issue which has been heavily discussed during the last few decades.

Even if classical theories of regional (European) integration and cooperation, such as functionalism and neofunctionalism, appreciated liberal-pluralist assumptions as well as cordial relations between states and non-state actors for the promotion of commerce, these early perspectives were usually subordinated to the analysis of what 'states' did in the pursuit of their so-called 'interests' as well as the consequences of state-society relations for supranational and intergovernmental regional organizations. This preference for 'states' and regional organizations continues in the current debate, but it is then increasingly framed in terms of 'institutional design' (Acharya and Johnston 2007).

The heavy emphasis on state actors in the field is seen in how the phenomenon is conceptualized. A widely used definition of regionalism is as the policy and the project designed to form regions (Gamble and Payne 1996 **[article 51]**). Hameiri (2012: 6) defines regionalism as "formal, state-led projects of region-making that often involve a certain degree of institutionalization". According to Acharya, 'regionalism' refers to a "purposive interaction, formal or informal, among state actors of a given area in pursuit of shared external, domestic and transnational goals" (Acharya 2012: 3). But



it is, according to Acharya, nevertheless tied to a main referent: "regional international institutions and the transnational dynamics around them".

The strongest tendency in the field is thus to define regionalism as a states-led project, whereas regionalization is used to capture "the growth of societal integration within a region and the often undirected processes of social and economic interaction" (Hurrell 1995: 39; Gamble and Payne 2003 **[article 51]**; Ravenhill 2007). According to Fawn, regionalization "[. . .] refers to those processes being driven from below, that is by non-state, private actors" or are at least "substantially influenced by non-state or private actors" (Fawn: 2009:13).

This conceptualization is challenged by scholars, such as Bøås, Marchand and Shaw (2003) **[article 52]**, who argue that "regionalism is clearly a political project, but it is obviously not necessarily state-led, as states are not the only political actor around [. . .] we clearly believe that, within each regional project (official or not), several competing regionalizing actors with different regional visions and ideas coexist" (see Hettne 2005 **[article 54]**). Yet the conceptual differences in the current debate should not be exaggerated: broadly speaking most observers agree that regionalism is best understood as policy and project, and regionalisation as process. The differences lay in the attention given to state versus non-state actors and this tends to be heavily dependent on paradigmatic choices.

Few would dispute that states and inter-governmental organizations are crucial actors and objects of analysis. The point is that some analysts and approaches privilege them more than others. Most scholars in the field of IPE and IR tend to emphasize state actors. Yet, one feature of regionalism since the 1990s is that an increasing number of studies give more agency also to non-state actors as well as the intricate relationship between state and non-state actor (Bach 1999 **[article 46]**, Hettne and Söderbaum 2000 **[article 48]**, Lorenz-Carl and Rempe 2013). Indeed, there is a rich variety of market and society actors that have begun to operate within, as well as beyond, state-led institutional frameworks, illustrating a complex relationship between formal and informal regionalism.

"There is so much more to current regionalization processes than what ever can be captured by a focus on states and formal regional organization. In many parts of the world, what feeds people, organizes them and constructs their worldview is not the state and its formal representations (at local, national or regional levels), but the informal sector and its multitude of networks, civil societies and associations (again at many levels). Of course, people participate not solely in the formal or the informal sector. Rather, they move in and out of both, and it is precisely these kinds of interactions and the various forms of regionalism that they create which studies of regionalization should try to capture" (Bøås, Marchand and Shaw 2003) **[article 52]**.

In this context it should also be acknowledged that regional projects and regional organizations have become more diverse over time. Whereas



they were initially often dominated by sectoral or specialized regional organisations, they have gradually become much more multidimensional and with a greater diversity of institutional forms and modes of governance (Hettne and Söderbaum 2004: 5–6). This has led to an important diversity of regionalisms, further enhanced by the global spread of regionalism in different geographical, cultural, and historical contexts. As a consequence, the 'region' is not only a 'moving target', but the population of 'regions' in comparative regionalism is much more heterogeneous than the population of 'states' in comparative politics (Genna and De Lombaerde 2010) **[article 58]**; see also Hänggi 2006 **[article 55]**).

This review illustrates that the discourse and debate on formal-informal regionalism is both expanding and vibrant. However, even if individual researchers often apply coherent definitions, a large number of partly overlapping and partly competing labels have been used in the debate, in order to capture similar (but not always identical) phenomena, such as: top-down vs. bottom-up regionalism; *de jure* vs. *de facto* regionalization; state-led regionalism vs. market- and society-induced regionalisation; hard vs. soft regionalism; and official vs. unofficial/informal regionalism. A range of the articles in these four volumes are concerned with the relationships, often using different terminologies for similar phenomena (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997 **[article 40]**; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000 **[article 48]**; Bøås, Marchand and Shaw 2003 **[article 52]**; to name only a few). It is important to be able to follow the historical evolution of these debates, but they are quite often regionally specific, which leads to a problem of comparison across regions.

Finally, there have been some recent attempts to build conceptual bridges between (supra-national) macro-regions and (sub-national or cross-border) micro-regions (Söderbaum 2005; De Lombaerde 2011b). Although the main interest in this series goes to the former, some articles that establish such bridges between macro- and micro-regions include, Murphy (1991) **[article 28]**, Neumann (1994) **[article 34]**, Paasi (2001) **[article 49]**, and De Lombaerde *et al.* (2010) **[article 57]**.

#### 4. Comparative Regionalism and the Role of Europe

Ever since the consolidation of the study of regional integration after World War II, Europe has dominated the field – for conceptual and theoretical development as well as in terms of empirical focus. During the era of classical regional integration, theories were often developed for and from the European experience and then frequently 'exported' around the world. Although the neofunctionalists were rather conscious of their own Europe-centredness, in their comparative analyses they looked mainly for patterns that resembled the European path (Hettne 2003). All too often (but not always) the European

Community was seen and advocated as the model, and other modes of regionalism were, wherever they appeared, characterized as 'weaker' or 'failed'. As Haas (1961: 657 [**Article 8**]) pointed out in the early 1960s: "Integration among discrete political units is a historical fact in Europe, but disintegration seems to be the dominant motif elsewhere. Cannot the example of successful integration in Europe be imitated?" There are some good and rather legitimate reasons why these notions developed in the first place, especially that there were relatively few other cases to theorize from at the time. The role of European integration theory and praxis is one of the most widely discussed issues throughout the history of the field. Several of the articles in the four volumes link up to this rather contentious issue.

One of the central debates in the study of regionalism has indeed been about the role of the European case and, more specifically, about its uniqueness or *sui generis* character (the so-called 'n = 1' problem). The question is whether the EU is a category which is sufficiently general but still relevant (Caporaso 1997). The early neofunctionalists, such as Haas and Nye, were conscious of the ambiguous and complex character of the EU and the problem of comparability of the regional integration experiences in different regions, but they did by no means reject comparison (which others did later) (Haas 1961 [**article 8**]; Nye 1968a: 880 [**Article 14**]). As noted above, one of Haas' concerns was that regional processes did not follow the European path of regional integration. One reason for the lack of integrative dynamics, according to Haas, was that "countries dominated by a non-pluralistic social structure are poor candidates for participation in the integration process. Even if their governments do partake at the official level, the consequences of their participation are unlikely to be felt elsewhere in the social structure" (Haas 1961: 149–150 [**article 8**]). For similar reasons, Nye developed a slightly revised neofunctionalist model which *inter alia* could accommodate the higher degree of politicization in non-pluralistic/less developed societies such as those in Africa (1971). For those closer to the regional subsystem approach, it was argued that "[. . .] there is an [...] excellent opportunity for gaining further insight through comparative analysis. For how else are we to learn which forms of behavior are 'universally' regional and which are peculiar to specific types of region? In this fashion, it should be possible to avoid area-centricities or at least learn where they are appropriate" (Thompson 1973: 91).

It should be noted that during the classical period there was no sharp distinction: the study of European integration and comparative regional integration was part of the same discourse. Subsequently, however, large parts of the more recent EU studies community have considered the EU as a nascent, if unconventional, polity in its own right with hybrid, multi-level and network features, exploring issues such as Europeanization and the EU's own political system (Keohane and Hoffman 1991; Burley and Mattli 1993 [**article 32**]; Hix 1994 [**article 33**]; Caporaso 1996; Marks, Hooghe and Blank (1996)

[**article 39**]; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997 [**article 40**]; Hooghe and Marks 2001; and many others).

This perspective has generated useful insights, but as Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond (2010) [**article 59**] assert, it has also carried a certain intellectual parochialism and thereby kept us from deepening our understanding of the EU as a political system. Furthermore, it has reinforced the notion that the EU is *sui generis*, thereby down-playing the respects in which the EU resembles other federalist or regionalist projects around the world. This is a similar type of parochialism that has characterized other forms of regional and area studies specializations (see Söderbaum 2009). What makes EU studies somewhat special is that whereas other regional specializations have little or no negative influence on comparative debates more broadly, the concepts, frameworks and research results of EU studies are often exported to other regions, but with no corresponding import from other regions.

Since the mid-1990s there is a rather important trend in the EU studies community whereby the EU is explicitly compared with federal systems in advanced industrial states, with the United States playing a prominent role in such comparisons (Sbragia 1992; Hix 1994 [**article 33**]; Fabbrini 2008). Comparability between the EU and federal states is thereby a logical consequence of accepting the hybrid nature of the EU. In this context it has been observed that it is in a way paradoxical that the deepening of an institutionalized regionalization process leads to acquiring more statehood properties (De Lombaerde 2011c). It should further also be observed that EU-US comparisons have also been proposed when analyzing the conditions for monetary integration based on optimum currency area theory (Eichengreen 1998).

Such hybrid comparisons have enabled scholars to transcend the  $n = 1$  problématique, but it has at the same time favoured a rather particular perspective about (comparative and scientific) methods as well as cases, thereby widening the gap between EU studies and regionalisms in the rest of the world (Hix 1994 [**article 33**]). Hence, there is a rather uneasy relationship between European integration studies and comparative regionalism. In recent decades many scholars tend to emphasize the incomparability between Europe and other regions. To some extent this has grown out of the strong emphasis on 'regional integration' as a concept.

Rather similar to the case in the 1960s and the 1970s, a significant portion of today's scholars claim that integration in Europe is the deepest and most sophisticated whereas regionalism in other regions are only weakly institutionalized and reduced to either an economic or security-related phenomenon. For instance, Christiansen *et al.* (2001) argue that 'regional integration' is happening in Europe, whereas regional cooperation is the category that best captures the regional phenomenon in the rest of the world. To some scholars, non-European cases and experiences are usually considered atypical, or do not constitute 'the real thing', according to the orthodox (read neofunctional) definition of 'regional integration' (Schmitter and Kim 2008: 23).

By contrast, many scholars within the field of IR/IPE tend to move beyond the distinction between regional cooperation and regional integration and instead give more emphasis on the distinction between regionalism and regionalization instead. According to Hettne (2005: 185) **[article 54]**, "regional integration belongs to an earlier discourse". Even if the concepts of regional integration and regional cooperation still may provide powerful insights, regionalism/regionalization gives, according to this perspective, a better account of the complexity and multidimensionality of the regional phenomenon, involving cooperation and integration among a variety of actors and supported by a diversity of institutional frameworks in both formal and informal settings. There are clearly different views about the concept of regional integration, but it is quite evident that a range of partly overlapping concepts are used for different purposes.

Regardless of conceptualization and research focus, it is difficult to dispute that different types of Europe-centred generalizations continue to influence and shape the research field. These prescriptions have resulted in that few concepts and theories generated from the study of non-European regions have been able to influence the way we study and conceive European integration. In our view, this has limited our understanding of European integration itself, but it has also prevented the development of more general conceptual and theoretical toolboxes which are genuinely global (*cf.* Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond 2010 **[article 59]**; De Lombaerde *et al.* 2010 **[article 57]**).

The exaggerated Europe-centredness lies above all in the ways the underlying assumptions and understandings about the nature of regionalism (which most often stem from a *particular* reading of European integration) condition perceptions about how regionalism in other parts of the world does (and should) look. Indeed, there is heavy emphasis on the economic and political trajectory of the EC/EU, and other modes of regionalism are, where they appear, characterized as loose and informal (such as Asia) or as failed (such as Africa), reflecting "a teleological prejudice informed by the assumption that 'progress' in regional organization is defined in terms of EU-style institutionalization" (Breslin *et al.* 2002: 11; see also Breslin and Higgott 2000). Similarly, as Hurrell (2005: 39) asserts, "the study of comparative regionalism has been hindered by so-called theories of regionalism which turn out to be little more than the translation of a particular set of European experiences into a more abstract theoretical language". This may be understood as a 'false universalism' and it tends to show a lack of sensitivity to other regions which occupy unequal positions in the world order and consisting of radically different state forms (Söderbaum and Sbragia 2010).

A number of prominent EU scholars have argued in favour of a more balanced position according to which the specificity of the EU is recognized but cross-regional comparison is defended. One example is the debate in the 1997 special issue of the *ECSA Review* (Caporaso 1997; Marks 1997; Moravcsik 1997; Pollack 1997). Other scholars who recently argued in favour of the

re-integration of the EU in comparative regional studies include Checkel (2007), Postel-Vinay (2007), De Lombaerde *et al.* (2010) [**article 57**]; Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond (2010) [**article 59**], Söderbaum and Sbragia (2010); and Warleigh-Lack and Van Langenhove (2010). Others have argued in favour of a dialogue between European integration theory and globalization theory (Rosamond 1995 [**article 36**]).

Another important catalyst for an improved relationship between EU studies and comparative regionalism is the growing salience of social constructivism within the study of European integration (Christiansen *et al.* 2001; see also Neumann 1994 [**article 34**]; Paasi 2001 [**article 49**]). This line of thinking has entered the discussion on European integration mainly as a spill-over from the discipline of International Relations (IR). The social constructivist approach in the European debate emphasizes the mutual constitutiveness of structure and agency, and pays particular attention to the role of ideas, values, norms and identities in the social construction of Europe, which in turn draws away attention from the formality and particularities of the EU. One unintended consequence is that it has facilitated comparisons and cross-fertilization with other regions. As Checkel points out, the differences between Europe and the rest of the world are overstated (even if some differences remain). According to Checkel: "If not yet completely gone, then the days of *sui generis* arguments about Europe are numbered, which is very good news indeed" (Checkel 2007: 243).

Few can dispute that Europe as a region is diverse. It is indeed positive that there has been a corresponding explosion of interesting theorizing on European integration in recent decades. Hence, there is no single EU mode of governance but a series of different interpretations of the EU (see Wiener and Diez 2003). This diversity has already started to have a positive influence on the study of regionalism in general and the debate between European integration and comparative regionalism in particular. Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond's (2010) [**article 59**] injunction that scholars of regions other than the EU cannot afford to lock themselves away from the most advanced instance of regionalism in world politics (i.e. the EU) is important. This is one of the main reasons why so many diverse scholarly articles focusing on Europe are included in the last two volumes. But, as also emphasized by Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond, there is need for a framework that can address the complexity of regionalism, and at the same time transcend the case of Europe/EU itself (also see De Lombaerde *et al.* 2010 [**article 57**]; Hettne 2005 [**article 54**]).

In this context it must also be acknowledged that many scholars of non-European regions are uncertain about the advantages of incorporating Europe into comparative regionalism. Numerous innovative and rather successful attempts to develop a regional approach specifically aimed at the developing world have evolved from this work (Axline 1977 [**article 25**], 1994; Bach 1999 [**article 46**]; Bøås, Marchand and Shaw 2003 [**article 52**]; Bøås,



Marchand and Shaw 2005). It must be recognized that, on the one hand, there are good reasons for taking stock of this cumulative research on non-European regions and for being cautious regarding EU-style institutionalization dominating in mainstream perspectives. On the other hand, large parts of this scholarship tend to mirror the Europe-dominated view mentioned previously by taking the EU as an 'anti-model' and by celebrating the differences in theory and practice between regionalism in Europe and in the developing world. As a consequence, many of these scholars have not engaged with EU studies scholars and thus they are actually reinforcing the  $n = 1$  problem. According to Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond (2010) [**article 59**], many of these scholars have even made a caricature of the EU or classical regional integration theory (especially neofunctionalism, which is claimed to be misunderstood), which has resulted in a failure to learn from both its successes and its failures, giving rise to unnecessary fragmentation within the research field. Arguably it may even be seen as an inverted Eurocentrism, or a different form of parochialism.

In other words, the fragmentation in the study and practice of regionalism is tightly connected to dominance of regional specialization, and what Thompson previously refers to as 'area-centricity'. There is therefore a tension between regional specialization and comparative research in the study of regionalism and regional integration. At least empirically, most scholars specialize in a particular region, which they will often consider 'special' or 'unique'. Some of the most informative studies in the field of regional integration are case studies or studies situated in debates within a particular region, such as Europe, East Asia, the Americas, or Africa. Detailed case studies of regionalism are certainly necessary; these identify historical and contextual specificities and allow for a detailed and 'intensive' analysis of a single case (according to mono-, multi- or interdisciplinary studies).

Let us add two final considerations. The first is that Europe and the EU are often (wrongly) considered as synonymous. However, Europe counts a number of varied and partly overlapping schemes of different depths and degrees of institutionalization. Neumann's contribution is a case in point (Neumann 1994) [**article 34**]. Historically, Europe was also home to an institutionalized economic integration scheme that was not based on a market logic: the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON or CMEA) (see e.g. Kaser 1965; Korbonski 1971; Marer 1976; Pinder 1979). The second consideration is that singling out a case of regionalism as *sui generis* is not exclusively done in the European case. Since the 1990s, a growing number of scholars has addressed the specificity of East Asian regionalism. Its specificity is then linked to its open character, the existence of multiple centers of influence, the predominance of *de facto* regional integration driven by sub-state and/or non-state actors, and the relative absence of formal regional institutions (Katzenstein 1996:2–3, 12 [**article 38**]; Higgott 1997; Pempel 2005; Katzenstein and Shiraishi 2006). Other features that are highlighted are the importance of partnerships between the private sector and the state



or 'trans-state development' (Parsonage 1997), the non-confrontational ways for dealing with differences and conflicts between states based on consensus culture (Goh 2003: 14; Poon 2009: 255).

## 5. The Role of Theory

These four volumes capture some of the most important ideas, theories and approaches that have shaped the intellectual history of regionalism. We have selected articles formulated in the 'academic' community, and which have a distinct 'scientific' quality. As mentioned before, many important ideas about regional integration and regionalism have been formulated by policy-makers and politicians. Some of these ideas have been published but even if they have a clear academic-scientific quality they are not included in this set of volumes.

The term 'theory' has many different meanings, and scholars do not share the same understanding of what constitutes 'good' theory', or theory at all. Furthermore, the dividing line between an 'approach' and a 'theory' is by no means crystal-clear. Some scholars are thereby more concerned with theory-building than others. The most radical and ambitious, but not necessarily realistic, position in this respect was formulated by Haas (1970: 614) **[article 17]** who labelled the various approaches to regionalism at the beginning of the 1970s still as 'pre-theories': "[t]he findings of regional integration studies, in so far as they are understood and accepted by all students, are thus no more than empirical generalizations. They are 'true', i.e., they are verified hypotheses. But their distance from the primitive facts of behaviour is unclear, and hence their theoretical status is doubtful because their relationship to still other variables and their relative weight in a group of potentially important variables is not specified. Nor is their position in a recurring sequence of trends or events spelled out." It is likely that Haas would have been able to repeat this statement for several of the approaches and 'theories' included in volume three and four. As already noted, however, this understanding of theory is not necessarily shared by everyone.

Our position is that theorizing can take different forms and that it can take place at different levels. If, in contrast with Haas's original research programme on the conditions for regional integration, a broader ontological perspective is used to delimit the field of regionalism in combination with a diversity of research questions, theorizing will and should be diverse. We have also adopted an innovative multi-disciplinary position, trying to bridge the theoretical languages of a variety of social science disciplines (political science, IR, economics, political economy, social geography). Some of the frameworks elaborated in this set of volumes may often be understood as frameworks or approaches rather than the narrow understanding of 'theory',

because they do not always stipulate a causal relation between independent and dependent variables. However, the independent/dependent causality is only one particular way to build theories. Equally more important, several authors do not even consider their own frameworks to be theories. Instead they use the more open-ended label of approach. Taken together this collection highlights the richness of theory and the multitude of focuses under the broad banner of regionalism and regional integration.

Needless to say, one has to be clear about what type of theory, approach or perspective, that one seeks to construct. Some theories are strictly causal and 'objective', in which 'facts' and 'theories' are separated, while others are based on different meta-theoretical foundations. This divide is closely related to the distinction between so called 'rationalist' and 'reflectivist' approaches to international theory, with (various types of) social constructivism occupying the 'middle ground' (Adler 1997 **[article 42]**; Smith 1999). Rationalism may refer to a variety of realist, intergovernmentalist, liberal approaches, whereas the reflectivist position refers to a diverse group of theories, such as critical theory, historical sociology, post-structuralism, post-modernism, feminism and normative theory. Rationalist theories are based on rational choice and take the interests, ideas and identities of actors (which are seen as self-interested egos) as given, while reflectivists and constructivists focus on how inter-subjective practices between actors result in how interests, ideas and identities are formed in the process of social interaction (rather than prior to such interaction).

Clearly, the study of regionalism is dominated by a variety of rationalist theories. This is in fact one way to define what is 'mainstream' in the study of regionalism. Even if the 'rationalists' share several meta-theoretical assumptions there is at the same time diversity and many important differences, especially related to the different views given to power versus the independent effects of institutions (see for instance Haas 1961 **[article 8]**, 1970 **[article 17]**; Hoffmann 1966 **[article 12]**; Nye 1970 **[article 18]**). In the study of regionalism since the 1990s, the various rationalist approaches have moved closer together. Not only do they often share a common epistemology and agree on some core assumptions, they focus on the same or similar research questions, in particular "Why has integration proceeded more rapidly in some policy domains than it has in others? To what extent is the Community governed by 'intergovernmental' or 'supranational' modes of decision-making?" (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997: 297 **[article 40]**; also see e.g. Moravcsik 1993 **[article 31]**; Mansfield and Milner 1997; Mansfield 1998 **[article 44]**; Moravcsik 1998).

Most economic theories about regional integration also fall under the broad umbrella of 'rationalism'. They cover questions related to the effects of forming a free trade area, a customs union and/or a common market, and their compatibility with multilateral trade liberalization (Viner, 1950 **[article 3]**; Tinbergen, 1954 **[article 4]**; Meade 1956; Gehrels 1956–1957; Lipsey 1957,

1960; ECLA 1959 **[article 7]**; Johnson (1965); Cooper and Massell (1965) **[article 11]**; Vanek 1965; Wonnacott 1975 **[article 22]**; Kemp and Wan 1976; Krugman 1993 **[article 29]**; Bhagwati 1994 **[article 35]**; Baldwin 1997 **[article 41]**; Ethier 1998; see also Ethier 2011). Economic theories and approaches within the neo-classical paradigm also address questions related to establishing the optimal level of providing public goods (Tinbergen 1965; Cooper 1977 **[article 24]**; Sandler 1998 **[article 45]**) and the criteria for the formation of monetary unions (Mundell 1961 **[article 10]**; McKinnon 1963; Kenen 1969; Frankel and Rose 1997).

Since the mid-1990s a multitude of reflectivist and critical approaches to regionalism have developed, to a large extent as a direct result of the strengthening of this type of scholarship in other fields of inquiry and international studies more broadly. These approaches challenge core rationalist features, such as the separation of subject and object, fact and value, state-centric ontology and rationalist epistemology and the way regions are formed and for what reasons. There are a large number of diverse reflectivist theories of regionalism. To some extent their common denominator is their dissatisfaction with mainstream and rationalist assumptions and theory. As Neumann (1994: 192) **[article 34]** points out with regard to his own region-building approach: instead of the accepting attitude inherent in many mainstream approaches, "it insists on an non-accepting, irreverent and therefore invariance-breaking attitude. By denying the absolute claims of states and authors to sovereignty, it adds itself to the forces whose existence negates those very claims, and thus serves to open the social field for new actors and new initiatives".

In general most of these scholars are concerned with the political aspects of regionalism in the context of globalization. They are also looking at the links and relationship of state as well as non-state actors in the construction of regions instead of more specific questions around institutionalization and institutional design. Furthermore, whereas most (but not all) rationalist work with pre-given regional delimitations, and usually takes interests and ideas as given, many reflectivists and constructivists are concerned with how regions are constituted and constructed (Murphy 1991 **[article 28]**; Neumann 1994 **[article 34]**; Adler 1997 **[article 42]**; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000 **[article 48]**; see also Duina 2006; Van Langenhove 2011, 2013).

The diversity of constructivism also needs to be acknowledged in this context. Some constructivists are first and foremost engaged in a debate with the rationalists and mainstream discourses (such as liberalism and realism) (Adler 1997 **[article 42]**; Katzenstein 1996 **[article 38]**; Acharya 2004 **[article 53]**), whereas others are more engaged with more radical and critical reflectivist variants of regionalism. Regarding the former, it may be somewhat difficult to draw the line between constructivism and reflectivism (Neumann 1994 **[article 34]**; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000 **[article 48]**; Paasi 2001 **[article 49]**).

Another distinction is between those who are leaning towards structural and macro-oriented explanations compared to those who are more agency- and micro-oriented. Some scholars are particularly concerned with historical structures and the construction of world orders, while other analysts are more interested in the particularities of agencies and lived social spaces. There is no need to be dogmatic about what position and balance between structure and agency (macro versus micro; outside-in versus inside-out) to prefer; or exactly how to balance structure-agency, because to a large extent it is closely related to differences in meta-theoretical position as well as the research focus. It is, for instance, often somewhat difficult to provide a coherent and graspable analysis of long-term structural transformation processes focusing mainly on a multiplicity of lived agencies and micro-processes. On the other hand, sometimes structural analyses have difficulty providing detailed insights/explanations of the specificities and details of agents and events on the ground. Here it is important to recognize that, as Neumann points out, different assumptions may be chosen to illuminate different aspects of regional politics, and that different perspectives and their concomitant narratives often tend to be complementary rather than mutually exclusive. For instance, Hettne (2003) points out that regionalism needs to be understood "both from an *endogenous perspective*, according to which regionalization is shaped from within the region by a large number of different actors, and an *exogenous perspective*, according to which regionalization and globalization are intertwined articulations, contradictory as well as complementary, of global transformation". Similarly, Neumann refers to inside-out versus outside-in approaches.

## Conclusions

There are various possible ways to read the intellectual history of regionalism. The selection of 59 key texts that is presented here is therefore necessarily the result of a number of decisions and choices, including pragmatic ones. We started from a broad – but still coherent – ontology, thereby trying to find a balance between contributing to dealing with the – often noticed – conceptual confusion in the field and to making communication within the field more efficient, on the one hand, and acknowledging the socially constructed nature of the key concepts and the need for each student to make ontological choices and construct his/her own conceptual framework, on the other hand. We limited ourselves to the post-WWII academic literature, while recognising the value of older ideas about regionalism. The selected texts were organized chronologically, showing historical dynamisms, the various lines of influence, cross-fertilization and descendance. And although the texts were organized in four volumes, corresponding to labeled time periods, we stressed the long term development of the field.

We crossed the borders of the various social science disciplines (especially the one between the political and economic sciences), and included theoretically

mainstream as well as heterodox or alternative approaches. Finally, we tried to build a globally relevant collection of texts, thereby balancing European and non-European texts, basically selecting the literature on its – in our opinion – conceptually, theoretically and/or methodologically innovative character. We hope this collection will help to serve the purpose of consolidating the field of regionalism studies.

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