

# Building the Diverse Community

## Beyond Regionalism in East Asia

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Contemporary Asian Studies Series



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## **Building the Diverse Community. Beyond Regionalism in East Asia. Region, regionalism, regionalization – definitions, settlements and research field**

This study refers only to the interpretation of these occurrences in the context of the science of international relations. It is necessary to emphasize that regionalism is an important feature of contemporary international relations and, by many theoreticians, is used also as a method, which the processes undergoing in the world, can be analyzed. The notion of “regionalism” can be set forth at least on two middle grounds: on the international level – as the creation of the integration constructions and institutions, on which are based through defining the group of states and the rules; but also in the national sphere – as approval of dynamism and the independent international activities of separate regions. The purpose of this study is to recall selected manners of the definition of the notion of regionalism and research meanings of this notion for contemporary international relations.

### **Old regionalism, modern regionalism, regionalization**

Generally, in the source literature Joseph Nye is considered to be a founding figure of regional analysis. In his definition, which applied in the science of international relations in the 1960s, a region is pictured as a limited number of states linked by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence. However, regionalism is de-

defined as correlative interstate institutions, associations grouped by a regional base. In the article *"Comparative Regional Integration: Concept and Measurement,"* and others from this period, Nye tried to explain the occurrences that consist the model of regional integration (Nye 1968, pp. 855–880). The definition of the integration occurrences, which were connected with the process of regionalization, were found in the theoretical considerations of many other researchers of international relations of this period. Its juxtaposition and short analysis is in, for example, Karolina Klecha-Tylec's book *Regionalism in the theory and practice of East Asia States* (Klecha-Tylec 2013, pp. 23–24). The analysis of these first post-war connected theories with liberalization of regional markets can be also found in the A. Panagagariya's article *"Preferential trade liberalization: The traditional theory and new development"* (Panagagariya 2000, pp. 287–331). From a current perspective this regionalism is described as "traditional" or "old" regionalism. The regional associations were awaited to deal with the peaceful settlement of disputes and support for stable and peaceful development, which is determined in the Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations. Obviously this classic regionalism was concentrated on state actors, often featured through the prism of the Cold War game, based on Cold War alliances, in economic and social spheres was more protectionist and closed, and states were usually engaged in one regional trade agreement. Regional trade agreements were characterized by limited trade liberalization (Klecha-Tylec 2013, pp. 31–32).

We can therefore assume that: first of all, regionalism is not a new occurrence, such a process was stimulated after World War Two with the hope of the more effective disposal of the disputes and conflicts of neighbors. Second, the meaning of regionalism was mainly connected with regional security, political and economic cooperation. Therefore, the research area of contemporary regional processes was restricted.

Edward Haliżak says there was a decrease of interest in regionalism in the mid-1970s on account of the disappointment of the effects of West-European integration. However, in the late 1980s, a new bout of regionalism began (Haliżak 2006, p. 19). The end of the Cold War, the intensification of globalization processes, the appearance of a number of new initiatives and regional formations, development of a new wide-ranging commercial system fixed itself to be crucial incentives to the intensification of regional links after the end of the Uruguay Round. In the context of global processes, the force and significance of regions and regionalism fixed itself to be the object of theoretical research of many outstanding

scientists at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. At the moment, what is being observed is the increasing multidimensional aspect of regional processes, regionalism influences on the processes in security, culture, social, communication and economic integration. These new occurrences connected with the intensification of the processes of regionalization and institutionalization are described in the literature as **new regionalism**. The features of new regionalism are such as: deep economic integration, coexistence of many forms of regionalization, a development of arrangements imposing on itself that liberalize trade, dictation of new integrations by the regions that were not participating in these processes so far, e.g. East Asia is featured in the Polish and the foreign source literature. (K. Klechta-Tylec, 2013).

In political doctrine this notion often appears as incoherent, inaccurate and difficult to explain. Among many theoretical works relating to this occurrence, A. Hurrell's is worth mentioning as Hurrell answers the questions: what the notion of regionalism really means and whether it is possible to describe the comprehensive theories that explain the dynamics of regionalism. He adds, that it is difficult because there are three levels of the analysis of regionalism: 1. the international system; 2. the system of regions; 3. the internal system.

Each of these levels describes the research field of regionalism in various ways. At the same time, Hurrell notices that if this notion could be defined it would be possible to distinguish different figures of regionalism alike in the historic and geographic sense, because regionalism in the different parts of world has its specificity. The theoretical perspective provides the chance of the arrangement of a notional occurrence and shows on research directions. Therefore, this generalization, which Hurrell constructs, defines regionalism by the prism of the degree of cohesion: a social (ethnic group, nationality, race, language, religion, culture, tradition); economic (trade, investments, financial union, complementary of the economies); political (political system, shared ideologies, political culture); and organizational (existence of structural regional institutions). However, the most important idea is a perception of regionalism by the prism of a regional correlation (Hurrell 1995, p. 38). The states of a region "go in the same boat" they struggle in with the similar ecological, strategic as well as economic problems and they must restrain national egoisms to solve them.

This correlation is explicitly emphasized in all case studies. B. Drelich-Skulska understands "regionalism" as the cooperation of several

states, which are connected with geographical proximity, however, Drelich-Skulska claims it is not the sufficient criterion: "Regionalism can be interpreted as a multi-sided process that includes various related and multidimensional economic, social, political and cultural determinates" (Drelich-Skulska 2012).

In fact, regionalism is considered as a profitable occurrence in the majority of debates. It is necessary to differentiate regionalism as the description of a situation and regionalism as a doctrine, the manner of the organization of international relations (Hurrell 1995, p. 39).

This makes it especially important to distinguish between regionalism as description and regionalism as prescription-regionalism as a moral position or as a doctrine as to how international relations ought to be organized. As with the more general idea of interdependence, there is often a strong sense that the states of a given region are all in the same 'regional boat', ecologically, strategically, economically; that they are not pulling together; but that, either explicitly stated or implicitly implied, they should put aside national egoisms and devise new forms of co-operation. In much of the political and academic debate, then, there is a strong implication that regionalism is a naturally good thing.

Hurrell distinguishes the notion of regionalism from regionalization, which he defines as a growth of social integration in the region and the frequent indirect processes of a social and economic interaction.

"Regionalization refers to the growth of societal integration within a region and to the often undirected processes of social and economic interaction" (Hurrell 1995, p. 39).

The process of regionalization is particularly visible in the Asia-Pacific region, where the connections of different types of institutions and specialized transnational companies (supply chains) are particularly strong. Regionalization indicates also the various opportunities to transfer ideas, social behaviors and the creation of transnational civil society.

Regionalization is therefore commonly conceptualized in terms of 'complexes', 'flows', 'networks' or 'mosaics'. It is seen as undermining the monolithic character of the state, leading to the creation of cross-governmental alliances, multi-level and multiplayer games and to the emergence of new forms of identity both above and below existing territorially defined states. (Hurrell 1995, p. 40)

The difference between the notions of regionalism and regionalization is also in O.W. Plotnikova's work *The international co-operation of regions: conceptual aspect* (Płotnikowa 2005). She explains regionalism as a natural base, the natural manner of a territorial organization of social, political,



economic and cultural aspects of activities and the existence of societies. In this meaning regionalism, Plotnikova assumes, is examined as:

- a) the social group connected by ethnic, racial and language links;
- b) economic and economic individuals acting within the framework of the territory;
- c) the community of values, religion and historic traditions;
- d) political solidarity.

Regionalism, which is treated by Plotnikova in an internal and national context, is directed at the practical utilization of these chances, which emerge from a natural division of a country. Because regionalism is characteristic for all contemporary states, it can be utilized as the characteristic method for a different type of intellectual model, doctrines directed by the rational natural utilization of differences existing within contemporary societies.

Portiakova emphasizes, that it is the process of a repeatedly fuller inclusion of regions in the economic, social and political sphere on the national and transnational level and it passes into **regionalization**; in other words, it is the regional process to structure areas.

Furthermore, B. Drelich-Skulska based on the F. Lu's analysis differentiates both notions: regionalism refers to the initiatives of government relating to a region, regionalization, she assumes, is the integration taking place by means of market mechanisms (Drelich-Skulska 2012).

## Research models

In order to study regionalism paradigms are used, which were developed in the science of international relations, including realist and neo-realist, liberal, constructivist and behavioral theories. Each one of them changes research optics and determines the research field. To give one example, systemic theories emphasize the structure of the system. The theories of a structural and globalization correlation emphasize the meaning of the international system and the influence of economic and technological changes (Hurrell 1995, p. 46). Regionalism, analyzed via the prism of neo-realist theory, emphasizes an anarchical international system and battle for political influences (the period of the Cold War, rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States, battle for their zones). There are no significant differences between economic and political regionalism. Realists and neo-realists emphasize the scale of an outer configuration of the force of powers.

Powers often stimulate the formation of the sub-regional organizations and the institutions regulating the international system. Some of the organizations were founded to balance influences, others formed to be anti-Power organizations, like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (formed in 1967) during the Vietnam War and was recognized as anti-Vietnamese, Persian Gulf Cooperation Council was against Iran, the Southern African Development Community was against the Republic of South Africa, the Contadora Group and Mercosur were anti-American. Hurrell assumes that all these regional organizations "cannot be understood except against the background of their respective regional balances of power and the policies of the regionally dominant power" (Hurrell 1995, p. 41). In other words, regional organizations can be formed as the confirmation of balance of power in the region, however, also to prevent the domination of one of the states.

Hurrell refers also to the problem which is often recalled in scientific literature, i.e. the relation between the globalization and regionalization, and he notices that on one side, these occurrences act in spite of themselves, regions fight for strong position in the globalized world, so they can disturb the interests of other regions, on the other side, globalization stimulates regionalism. The approach to the occurrence of regionalism from the perspective of the processes of the globalization of the international environment can be found in C.M. Dent's works. Dent perceives a strict correlation between these occurrences and argues that these occurrences are not excluding each other, but rather they are supplying and stimulating each other.

There are strong interconnections between regionalism and globalisation that cover a variety of issues and draw on similar motivational forces. Actions leading to the advancement of both can, at a general level, be interpreted as risk averse, strategic responses to counter apparent extraneous pressures while consolidating a more impregnable defence against them and any other future potential threats. These will include efforts to improve the efficiency, competitiveness and international stature of those parties involved and collaborative enterprises with compatible partners. (Dent 1997, p. 12)

Many researchers analyzing contemporary regionalism use constructivism. It is the conceptualization of interaction between: material motives, inter-subjective structures, identity and interests of actors. Then liberal theories increase the role of the institution of co-ordinations, which bond regions. At last, the research method can be a return to the research of dependences between the political economy and the necessity of the policy changes of an internal coalition of national-social groups which are examples of new regionalism (Hurrell 1995, p. 73). New regionalism

emphasizes the necessity of applying attention to the non-state actors as important participants of this process.

The study of regionalism based on the “stage-theory” directs the interest of a researcher on economic cooperation in the search of a common enemy, or leader that can be defeated together. However, in constructivist theories community appears in the foreground.

Some theoreticians consider that there should exist one level of analysis, others, like Kenneth Waltz, affirm that everything will be explained with not one systemic theory, and processes should be analyzed with the use of inductive method through research of small and large events. Many research methods, which are used, are not a barrier in the factual analysis of the problem. On the contrary, the different theories should be used to research different occurrences, e.g. neo-realists preferably explain the early period of the formation of the European Union (EU), however, they could not explain the dynamics of the creation of the EU in the later years. It also concerns the processes of regionalization in other regions of world.

## Soft regionalism and hard regionalism

Many researchers, such as Hurrell, turn their attention to the specificity of regionalism of the Asia-Pacific region. In his work *Regionalism in theoretical perspective*, Hurrell introduces five categories of this process (Hurrell 1995, p. 73). The first one is the regionalization which refers to narrow social integration in a given region. The principal motive forces of this process is the economy – markets, companies and the private sector. However, determinants are deemed the growth of the number of international fusions and taking over, the increase of commercial turns within companies (Klecha-Tylec 2013, p. 17). Drelich-Skulska describing new regionalism in East Asia turns her attention to its following features:

- (1) removal of commercial barriers through the bilateral understandings about free trade and economic partnerships and through the creation of a regional free trade zone;
- (2) predominant role of international chains of production in the region;
- (3) idea of a regional cooperation relating to financial markets;
- (4) political, social, economic, religious and civilization heterogeneity of the region that has influence on the perspectives and the range of the institutionalization process of regional cooperation (Drelich-Skulska 2012).



Hurrell introduces the notion of soft regionalism, which he assumes, is the process particularly developing in the Asia-Pacific region. Hurrell, concerning the process of regionalization, emphasizes that it is characterized by two features: this process does not base on the deliberate action of states and is not necessarily in accordance with the borders of states.

Kevin G. Cai also analyzed the notion of soft regionalism. Cai on his schema, describing the international economic order, places soft regionalism besides other paradigms of an international economic order. Hard regionalism is defined as institutionalized, closely defined by agreements signed by states. Soft – open regionalism is more loose, autonomous, taken by economies (Cai 2003, p. 92).

Ivo Strecker, the German ethnologist, also refers to the notions of hard and soft regionalism. He defines soft regionalism as the reaction to the internationalism and the deterioration of international environment in the 1960s, in other words, soft regionalism is based on environmental policy. Ivo Strecker unites soft regionalism with postmodernism and the resigns it from wealth. According to him, it is a return to individual values and tradition, and it develops as a reaction to the vices of internationalism and modernism. The main aim of soft regionalism is to preserve an existing environment and preserve or restore a local lifestyle. Stecker assumes that soft regionalism is a reaction to internationalism and hard regionalism is a reaction to imperialism. These are centralized structures. However, each regionalism has its own economic aspect (Strecker 1994, pp. 47–52).

Not only is the notion of regionalism ambiguous and difficult to define. Professor Halizak says that the notion of international region and criteria of its separation is also ambiguous (Halizak 2006, p. 12). Each time the approach of a researcher to a given occurrence decides about its separation: "In the science about international relations region is a theoretical construct reflected in the larger or smaller precision of international reality" (Halizak 2006, p. 12).

In many analyses of geographic criteria, as most explicit and hard as e.g. in the works of Edward Mansfield and Helen Milner, were used to separate regions (Mansfield & Milner 1999). In the historical and political sciences a region is isolated when it perceives identity and is defined. Anne Marcusen affirms that: a region – is historically, the evolutionally formed, definite territorial community, the notion of region is characterized by the prism of physical and socioeconomic environment, political culture as well as spatial structure that makes it distinctive from other regions and the

territorial units such as city or nation (Marcusen 1987, p. 251). In the economic sciences a region is united with trade agreements and customs unions (Vayrenen 2003, pp. 25–51). However, the problem is that regions have recently changed, they are dynamic, they go through transformation process and it is possible to apply the different levels of analysis, from the global, to the regional and national. So the definition of region cannot be univocally treated (Vayrenen 2003, p. 26). However, the more philosophical definition of region can be mentioned. F. Brodel, the philosopher, describes a region as a special “world” with the typical mentality, way of thinking, world around and traditions (Płotnikowa 2005, p. 26).

In the Cold War era criterion of attachments to the region were connected with ideological divisions, military and political criteria such as NATO or the Organization of African Unity (OAU) were used to separate regions. In the 1980s, sub-regions appeared on the basis of an authentic sense of communion of goals and identities. Thus occurred e.g. the Council of the Baltic Sea States or the Visegrád Group. It was connected with the fragmentation of Cold War blocs, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, and with the globalization pressure considering local thinking. The second criterion of separating sub-regions was differentiation between the physical (geographic and strategic), function (economic and environmental) and culture of the regions (Vayrenen 2003, p. 26).

The separation of regions is also connected with applied methodology, hereon occurs differences between the realists and constructivists. In the past, in the Cold War era the regions were often separated with the utilization of economic and organizational relations between the states. The realist approach permitted to research so formed regions in a correct manner. Currently, the majority of economists look on the regions, which are marked by the institutions and integration associations, e.g. EU, NAFTA, MERCOSUR, and are mainly occupied with changes inside and among the regions (Vayrenen 2003, p. 26). On the other hand, constructivists emphasize how regions redefine rules and build identities by governments, social groups and companies. Constructivism emphasizes the instrumental use of regionalism as exposed specific political and economic aims.

The study of the evolution of a contemporary international system with the use of the concept of region is analyzed in neo-realist works, e.g. Barry Buzan about the regional patterns of security (Buzan & Waever 2003).

Accordingly, in the study of regions a division (the use of division) of the world on the levels of analysis with the use of functional criteria is essential. Physically regions refer to territorial, military and economic areas

controlled originally by states, however, regions are functionally defined by the non-territorial factors such as culture and the market, which are often created by non-state actors (Vayrenen 2003, p. 27). Like ethnic groups are willing to create cultural regions and use them to the promotion of an independent political community.

To sum up. The notions of regionalism, region, regionalization are ambiguous – their content and range have changed historically. Even the scientific approach to regionalism has evolved into an objective process characterizing international relations, and into a research perspective. This other perspective is obtained through applying the various theoretical approaches, or defining elements consisting on the research field.

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# Building the Diverse Community

## Beyond Regionalism in East Asia

The processes in East and South Asian became a peculiar subject for global community of international relations in the field. The presented volume is a collection of papers dealing with the processes of regionalization in East and South Asia. We collected papers from different academic unit both from Europe and Asia. Taking regionalization as a core subject of the volume the readers will discover the complexity of ongoing processes in East and South Asia. We present collection of papers from a very different perspectives starting from the theoretical debates, through economic dimensions of integration to political and military scope of regionalization in East and South Asia. The whole volume presents the diversity of understanding among international relations scholars community. By shaping the diverse view we can possess the better and in depth understanding of East Asia.



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The book is also available  
as an e-book

ISBN 978-83-8088-153-2



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