

Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung
Center for European Integration Studies
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**The Global Proliferation
of Regional Integration**
European Experience and
Worldwide Trends

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Ludger Kühnhardt

The Global Proliferation of Regional Integration

European Experience and Worldwide Trends

1. Assessing stages: from de-colonization to globalization

European integration has gained global interest. Increasingly, European integration is perceived as a source of inspiration for other processes of regional cooperation and integration around the world. But the European integration experience cannot be used as a simple “role model”. Yet, symmetric developments in other parts of the world are not necessary to prove the global relevance of European integration experiences. European integration does not serve as a static model that can be proliferated: Neither European sources nor its goals, neither its policies nor its institutions can be found with identical characteristics elsewhere in the world. Yet, growing reference is made in other parts of the world to the European integration experience as schemes of cooperation and integration existing elsewhere are being reexamined, streamlined and strengthened. In the course of the 21st century this shared experience with regional integration will be increasingly linked with more thorough reflection on the effects of the global proliferation of regional integration schemes on regional developments, governance structures, cultural identities and – last but not least – world order building.

The global proliferation of regional integration coincides with a more assertive global role of the European Union. With its policies, the European

Union supports regional integration efforts elsewhere. Since the late 20th century, EU policies and instruments of cooperation with other regions have broadened: from trade to economic integration (EU relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council), from developmental aid to association and political cooperation (EU relations with Mercosur, the Andean Community and the Central American Integration System), from trade to development and governance issues (EU relations with the partner countries of the Cotonou Agreement in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific), from economics to a preferential strategic partnership (EU relations with ASEAN). None of these developments are static or have gained final results. Over time, some processes of bi-regional cooperation might become more stable, sustainable and successful than others. Some of them are responses to past experiences with bi-regional cooperation or even a remote echo of colonial and post-colonial memories. Others are a reaction to “globalization” and the global role of the United States. Most relations between the European Union and other regional integration schemes are asymmetrical, with the EU being more integrated and economically much stronger. Yet, more attention is paid to them in reality than in the academic reflection about regional integration formation and its effects. Along these lines, it is revealing that the two regions with the lowest degree of regional integration efforts – North Asia and the Greater Middle East – are the most difficult trouble spots in world affairs. And they are the source of many differences, if not controversies between the European Union and the United States.

Academic literature about the global proliferation of regionalism is confusing because of its use of confusing definitions of regionalism. “Open regionalism”, “new regionalism”, “regional cooperation”, “regional integration”, “sub-regionalism” or “regionalization” are but some of the terms used to characterize trends and processes of different speed, depths, and structures. Those who compare the European Union with other regional cooperation and integration schemes tend to underestimate the relevance and strength of EU integration while at the same time maintaining a static focus of comparison that fails to sufficiently take into account the dynamic and evolving character of integration formation outside Europe. It is not convincing to conclude that while no regional integration schemes outside

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Europe have reached the EU level of supranationality, they are doomed to remain flawed and irrelevant. It is also not sufficient to base the comparison on economic parity by concluding that the economic giant that is the EU is incomparable with, for instance, the Caribbean Community because of grossly disparate GDP rates. It will be necessary to broaden the scope of the comparative study of regional integration efforts. Global proliferation of regional integration will have to be taken seriously in light of a combination of two sets of experiences. On the one hand it is important to understand regional integration as a process of contingent historical circumstances, specific combinations of challenge and response and local conclusions and consequences. On the other hand, regional integration is always linked with global trends in politics and economics. It is an indigenous response to exogenous challenges as much as it is a local scheme that might also echo distant experiences of others. Comparative global regionalism will be a source of useful and valuable new research efforts in the years to come.

This reflects the growing relevance of processes under-way in many regions of the world. Area studies will have to be linked with studies about the relationship between democratic transformation and the evolution of regional stability. Research must also consider regional developments of integration or cooperation in light of specific regional economic, social, cultural, political and security challenges. The global proliferation of regional integration schemes has to be put into its specific historical, cultural, socio-economic and political context. It must generate multidimensional approaches of comparative research regarding motivation, structure, function, scope, depth and deficits of all the regional integration schemes that exist in the world of the early 21st century.

Is there a logic of integration?¹ As much as any other historical determinism, the notion of seemingly inevitable path dependencies must be rejected. There is simply no law of history that unfolds in a global and universally applicable form. By the same token, it would be misleading to assume that

1 Werner Mattli, *The Logic of Integration. Europe and Beyond*, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press 1999.

regional integration could be modeled and made suitable for export and implementation elsewhere. Integration can fail (as happened in East Africa in the mid-1970s). It can also endure divergent modes, patterns and processes. It can regain strength after periods of weakness. At least since the turn of the century, global proliferation of regional cooperation and integration has begun to re-map the world. With the end of the Cold War and communist dictatorships, the distinction between a first and a second World has dissolved. Manifold transformation experiences in post-communist countries have substituted geographical and cultural fixations that existed over decades. Realignment such as the inclusion of Central European countries into NATO and the European Union have been experienced, but also the revival of Russia's Great Power status as a neo-autocracy in the midst of enormous economic impoverishment and the reemergence of Central Asia as a geopolitical fact. As the transformation agenda for politics, culture and the economy has developed since the last decade of the 20th century, the developing world, traditionally labeled as "Third World", has also undergone transformations of great magnitude. The global proliferation of regionalism questions the very term of a seemingly cohesive "Third World". In socio-economic terms, the distinction between "newly industrialized countries", "threshold countries" and "least developed countries", measured by indicators of human development and criteria for good governance, has already supported an increasingly differentiated perception. With the global proliferation of regional integration and cooperation on a continental scale, the very term "Third World" must be replaced by a new understanding of the world's continents and specific regions inside these continents. Regional integration brings geography and proximity, but also culture and identity back to the study of world politics and developmental issues.

To understand the global proliferation of regional integration, it is useful to distinguish historical periods in the evolution of sovereignty. It is important to reconsider sovereignty outside of Europe – as much as it is done inside of Europe – in its two fundamental aspects: as state sovereignty and as

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popular sovereignty.² To link regional integration with the evolution of the sovereign state is one important perspective. To link it with the evolution of popular sovereignty – that is to say with the relevance of democratic governance and rule of law among the participating members of an integration scheme – is the other important European experience that needs to be re-considered when embarking on global comparative efforts regarding regional cooperation and integration.

As much as sovereignty – both as state sovereignty and as popular sovereignty – has undergone stages in its development during the 20th century, concepts of integration and experiences with integration schemes have been transformed. None of these followed universal patterns. But it is imperative to link the focus of research across stages of time, conceptual reconfigurations and impacts on regional processes in their complexity. This might be done with the help of understanding the following description of two distinct stages in the relationship between sovereignty and regional integration outside as well as inside Europe.

Stage One: Europe emerged destroyed from the ashes of two World Wars and found itself divided along highly ideological and rigid geopolitical lines. Democratic countries began to rebuild Europe through the mechanism of integration. At the same time, the process of de-colonization continued, reflecting causes and effects of Europe's "de-empowerment" in the 20th century. Originally, the newly independent countries of the Southern hemisphere copied European concepts of state building based on rigid notions of national sovereignty. In many developing countries, the hope for democratic statehood was challenged in the name of national unity. Often, notions of state sovereignty and claims to popular sovereignty clashed in what came to be understood as the "Third World". Concepts for regional cooperation and integration often remained a defensive response to the process of de-colonization, if not an element of it. They occurred under conditions of weak sovereignty, both in its state and its governance dimension. Weak economies and enormous social pressure due to high poverty levels

2 Ludger Kühnhardt, *Stufen der Souveränität. Staatsverständnis und Selbstbestimmung in der südlichen Hemisphäre*, Bonn/Berlin: Bouvier 1992.

refocused the priorities of most developing countries. While transnational cooperation and integration were objects of rhetorical invocations, the prime focus was on state-induced socio-economic development and nation building. The state was considered to be the promoter of nation building and the more its capacities were involved in this process, the more it fell short of engaging in regional cooperation, let alone integration. But in the end, neither democracy nor support for trans-national cooperation or even regional integration was achieved in many developing countries.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Europe was still perceived as a (post)-colonial continent while its new reality of democratic integration was still confronted with many internal challenges and backlashes. The 1980s and more so the 1990s brought about two new elements in the relationship between the European integration experience and the evolution of regional integration in other parts of the world: 1. European integration gained speed and substance, leading to the implementation of a Single Market with a common currency and the beginning of political union. 2. The “Third World” began to undergo enormous differentiations with some regions – notably South East Asia and parts of Latin America – improving considerably. They began to reconsider national strategies of import-substitution that dominated during the 1960s in much of the “Third World”. Export-oriented integration into the world market, linked with the use of comparative regional advantages began to prove successful. Most prominently, ASEAN became a case in point although ASEAN integration structures did not aspire to the European degree of supranationality. ASEAN proved that stronger national sovereignty would need the benefits of strengthened regional cooperation and integration that in turn would strengthen the national ambitions of economic and political development.

Stage Two: Three developments coincided during the 1990s and into the early 21st century. First, the European integration process became serious while at the same time the perception of Europe in the developing world changed from post-colonial suspicion toward an attitude of growing partnership, trust and an interest in the European integration experience. Second, geopolitical and geo-economic trends usually characterized as “globalization”, coupled with the experience of the United States as the dominant

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power of the world system, led to reconsiderations of both national policies and regional perspectives on all continents. Third, the fall of communist dictatorships and the Soviet Empire brought about a reassessment of the advantage of democratic governance, rule of law and trans-border cooperation in many developing countries. The conditions for successful development and the resolution of regional conflicts were re-evaluated in light of the European integration experience. This was even the case in Russia and in some of the other successor states of the Soviet Union.

These trends have opened the way to a remapping of the world, based on the characteristics of continents rather than on numerical concepts of a first, second and third world. It has led to an increase in regional, continental and global cooperation efforts, to regulatory processes and continental structures favoring free trade and taking care of necessary arbitration mechanisms (WTO, ASEM, NAFTA, ALCA, Euro-Mediterranean Partnership). This development went hand in hand with a more assertive European Union encouraging developing regions and post-conflict regions to resort to patterns of integration. Finally, these trends have brought about the reinvention of some older cooperation schemes in various parts of the world, often coupled with the trend towards focusing more than ever on political and economic integration along the line of European experiences. This does not suggest that the economic success of Europe could immediately be copied by other regional arrangements. Nor does it imply that the European response to the challenge of state building and nation building under conditions of democratic integration could be transferred into other regions as if European developments of supranational and intergovernmental integration were an export product. The global proliferation of regional integration does not automatically generate a cohesive multi-polar world order. Soft and hard power factors continue in their extremely asymmetrical distribution across the world of the early 21st century with the continuous primacy of the role of the state in defining and providing them. The global proliferation of regional integration schemes should nevertheless be lent more credence, also in transatlantic discourses about the emerging world order. This is also relevant for America's understanding of global trends although the United States as a country of continental dimensions seems to be largely

unaffected by the new surge of interest in and support for regional integration. US interest is usually limited to the concept of free trade without sufficient sensitivity for the psychological, cultural (including geographical) and political components of integration patterns elsewhere, including the European experience.

New mental maps of world politics and international relations are not the one-dimensional outcome of one trend, no matter how recurring and strong it may be. The global proliferation of regional integration efforts can not revolutionize notions of sovereignty, international relations, economic power and patterns of state behavior immediately. The degree of its impact is gradual and long-term. But the prediction can be made that the 21st century will experience a higher degree of regional integration – beyond the formation of free trade zones – in various regions of the globe than during any time in history. As much as this follows the European experience with regional integration, it also attributes to a revival of Europe's global role. It could be argued that the very success of Europe's ability to share its integration experiences does not depend upon linear copies. The most solid and lasting success for Europe might rather occur through indirect and contingent means of an "experience transfer": An applied local adaptation of European insights into integration will most likely generate highly diverse integration schemes elsewhere. Yet it may resemble the European integration experience as a point of reference and hence a new global response of Europe.

This perspective does recognize ongoing differences in economic and social status across the world's regions. European integration might be important for Pacific island nations even if their collective GDP is below one percent of Europe's GDP. And yet, a general insight is valid and noteworthy: As weak sovereignties might generate weak integration schemes, integration can support, if not generate political stability, socio-economic development and strengthened sovereignty while at the same time creating a new reality of multi-level governance. Empirical evidence suggests that this can be done outside of Europe with similar effects of multi-level governance, shared sovereignty and multiple identities, as Europe has generated over the past five decades.

II. An overview: Deepening and widening across continents

Notwithstanding hundreds of multilateral and regional schemes of cooperation all across the world, only eleven distinct regional integration processes suggest useful comparison with the European integration experience. This comparison must be done with caution and in full realization of the fact that each integration approach is different while, at least so far, none of the discussed schemes includes the main dimension that distinguishes the European Union from all of them: a supranational dimension. Yet, structured by continents, those schemes of regional cooperation and integration that aspire to emulate the European integration experience are as following:

Latin America

1. Interestingly enough, Central America has the longest experience with regional integration efforts apart from Europe. Dating back to the early 1950s, the creation of the “Committee of Economic Integration in Central America” (CCE) in 1951 and subsequently the “Organization of Central American Countries” (ODECA) – with the membership of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua – even predated the creation of the European Economic Community in 1957. Inspired by the Spaak Report and the reflection on economic integration in Europe during the early 1950s, but also in view of the fact that Central America had undergone fourteen failed efforts for regional integration since its independence from Spain in 1821, CCE and ODECA laid the groundwork for a successful phase of regional economic cooperation and integration that nevertheless failed in the end. With the “Tratado General de Integración Económica Centro Americana”, signed 1960 in Managua, the five Central American countries departed from the goal of forming a common market (“Mercado Comun Centro Americano” MCCA), intended to grow into a full-fledged customs union with a Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) as its institutional helmet. Intra-regional trade increased from 6 million US-dollars in 1963 to 1.8 billions US-dollars at the end of the 1970s. Sector-specific free trade, the introduction of a common customs

procedure leading to a common customs zone and a joint procedure for dealing with external goods were completed and supported by the creation of a Central American Bank for Economic Integration (“Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica” BCIE) in 1975. Around 5,000 kilometers of road were built in order to enhance the infrastructure necessary for a common market. Agricultural products were exempted from customs, with the exception of some of the strategically critical goods for each of the partner countries, such as coffee, sugar and wheat. Telecommunication did not lag behind and by the late 1970s, Central American countries managed to build a highly efficient telecommunication system. Inflation did stay below three or four percent in any of the participating countries and the growth rates over a period of 15 years from the early 1960s until the mid 1970s hovered around 4 to 5.5 percent.

The Golden Age for Central American integration with growth and modernization came to a halt as a consequence of deep sociological changes and subsequent cleavages, escalating from the “Football War” between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969 into bloody civil wars during the 1980s, primarily in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Uprisings against the political systems and their underlying social order turned into full-fledged civil war, coupled with an enormous and tragic refugee plight. The marxist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua fuelled political antagonism in the region and provoked US military interventions under the Reagan administration. For a time, regional integration broke down. As part of the pacification process for the region, the European Community initiated the “San Jose Dialogue” in 1984 with a Declaration, jointly signed by the then six 9 EC member states, the acceding countries Spain and Portugal and six states of Central America – by now including Panama –, in the presence of representatives of the UN, the Contadora Group and the Organization of American States (OAS). This ministerial meeting is considered the foundation of EU relations with Central America. Political support of the EC went hand in hand with renewed socio-economic co-operation in the region. The EU claims to have successfully contributed to the reemergence of regional integration efforts in the early 1990s. US efforts in exercising rather hard-power tactics in what is traditionally considered America’s sphere of influ-

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ence attributed to the fall of the Sandinistas and to the reemergence of like-minded democratic political regimes in the region. Parallel efforts of the United Nations and the Contadora Group (Mexico, Columbia, Venezuela and Panama) prevented a spill-over of the conflicts into the broader region. In 1989, the Peace Treaties of Esquipulas ended the most dramatic period in the modern history of Central America.

In 1993, new efforts for regional integration began. As per capita income had decreased by almost 70 percent since the early 1970s and poverty had sharply increased (25 percent in Costa Rica, and 70 percent in Guatemala live below the poverty line), the pressure of “neo-liberal globalization” and the perspective of the North American Free Trade Zone NAFTA (since 1990 emerging between the US, Canada and Mexico) almost forced Central America into new efforts of regional cooperation and subsequently integration. The “Protocolo de Reforma a la Carta de la Organization de Estados Centro Americanos” (signed in Tegucigalpa in 1991) established new institutional mechanisms for regional integration. It was followed by the “Protocolo de Guatemala al Tratado General de Integración Economica Centro Americana”, signed by Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama on February 10, 1993, marking a new beginning for Central American regional integration through the “Central American System of Integration” (SICAM).

Institutional arrangements to support Central American integration enhanced: The “Consejo de Ministros de Integración Economica” composed of Ministers for Economic Affairs and the Presidents of the Central Banks of the member states, is the highest body of the “Central American Integration System”. The General Secretariat is based in El Salvador, (“Secretaria General del Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana” SICA), the Constitutional Court in Nicaragua has begun to work again after years of being practically closed, the Parliamentary Assembly in Guatemala and the Bank for Economic Integration (Banco Centroamericana de Integración Economica) with branch offices in all five member states of the “Central American Integration System” have been charged with new tasks. A whole set of interregional specialized agencies has been established or streamlined, including an academic structure. As the “Central American System for Inte-

gration” does not contain supranational elements, it has been criticized for remaining too weak to lastingly impact the integration of the region. And decisions taken by the heads of state (450 between 1990 and 1999) were implemented in only 60 percent of the cases.³

Nevertheless, certain progress is noteworthy, all the more in light of the long and persistent history of crisis and conflict in the region. In 1995, the members of the reinvented integration system agreed upon common customs tariffs as the first important step toward a customs union. In 1996, Guatemala and El Salvador agreed to establish a full customs union, a proposition joined by Honduras and Nicaragua in 2000 and by Costa Rica in 2002. According to a decision of the Presidents of the “Central American System for Integration”, comprehensive economic integration was to be implemented by 2004; this was to include all necessary normative arrangements, tariff harmonization, removal of obstacles to trade, common customs administration and an external trade policy aimed at ultimately achieving full customs union. 19 percent of Central American trade is intraregional trade. While the target date 2004 was missed, the trend seems to be more promising than ever before in the history of the region, all the more given the great obstacles to regional integration – poverty levels, lack of infrastructure, and strong dependency on the US with which 40 percent of all trade of the Central American countries is conducted while the US remains the most important investor in this region.

In El Salvador alone, 18 percent of the GDP is based on financial transfers (remesas) from migrants living in the US. The prospect of a Pan-American Free Trade Zone (“Area de Libre Comercio de las Americas” ALCA) as proposed by the US and which is to be completed by 2005 is not without contradiction to the concept of stronger regional integration including the perspective of supranational elements. The European Union supports re-

3 Alvaro de la Ossa, Der zentralamerikanische Integrationsprozess. Ende einer Entwicklungsalternative, in: IBERO-Analysen, Vol.6, December 2000, Berlin: Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut 2000, p.17; also: Mechtild Minkner-Bünjer, Zentralamerika zwischen regionaler Integration und Eingliederung in die Weltwirtschaft im “Schlepptau” der USA, in: Brennpunkt Lateinamerika, Hamburg: Institut für Ibero-amerika-Kunde Hamburg, No.13, July 2002.

gional integration in Central America with about 60 percent of all EU funds for the region. Its economic stake in the region – Central America represents 0.4 percent of the total external trade of the EU – alone cannot explain this commitment. For political reasons, the EU genuinely encourages Central America to take further steps along the long road toward substantial integration. Compared to where the EU might stand after more than a decade of civil wars and refugee movements, it seems fair to judge Central American integration by the path that began anew after 1991. European integration was not more advanced in the second decade of its beginning. In spite of the promises of the Treaties of Rome, European customs union was not completed until 1970. As far as Central American perspectives are concerned, the EU does not seem to be ready for negotiations of a bi-regional association agreement before a visible transfer of sovereignty in the region becomes visible.⁴ Whether or not the “role model” of the European Union will be able to support such a development remains to be seen.

2. Integration efforts in the Andean Region date back to the foundation of the “Pacto Andino” in 1969. The “Treaty of Cartagena” marked the beginning of almost thirty years of rather unsuccessful integration as its intention ran counter to national political strategies. Individually, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Chile and Venezuela tried to pursue policies designed by “dependencia”-theories about center-periphery-relations in the capitalist world order. Pointing to the fact that American, European and Japanese capital controlled many industrial investments in Latin America, “dependencia”-theorists argued in favor of strict control of foreign investment and import-substitution as elements of a strategy to gain stronger national independence and hence strengthen national sovereignty. This approach was neither cohesive, nor successful while it paralyzed the hope for regional integration. Furthermore, the geopolitical climate was as unfavorable to sustainable regional integration in Latin America as the recurrent threat of democracy by neo-authoritarian military dictatorships in the region.

4 See Stephan Ulrich, *Die zentralamerikanische Integration. Stand und Entwicklungsperspektiven*, Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik 2000, p. 30 f.

The “Pacto Andino” failed its historic test and yet aspirations for regional integration in the Andean region reverberated in a new and different global context. With the rise of neo-liberal economics and the return to democratic governance in most of Latin America during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the logic for regional integration as a tool to enhanced economic well being and ultimately generating a stronger political voice spread anew. After four years of intermission, the Presidents of the Andean countries met again for the first time in 1995 and approved a new strategy of increased regional integration as a response to the challenges and opportunities of globalization. The “Cartagena Agreement” of 1997 established a new “Andean Integration System”, transforming the original “Pacto Andino” into the “Andean Community of Nations” (“Comunidad Andina de Naciones”, CAN). The Andean Presidential Council, composed of the Presidents of CAN, became the highest body. In addition to the Andean Community Foreign Ministers Council, the Commission of the Andean Community was established, composed of Ministers of Trade and Industry. A General Secretariat was established in Lima, an Andean Parliament as a deliberative body in Bogotá, and a Court of Justice of the Andean Community in Quito. A whole array of institutions was established, covering social partners, banking, investment and academic life in the Andean Community.

The resurrected “Comunidad Andina de Naciones” consists of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela. Chile remains absent from the Community, preferring bilateral free-trade agreements with the US and the European Union as well as bilateral relations with the leading Latin American economies. During the first decade of the 21st century, the civil war in Colombia remained a troubling burden for CAN’s development. In the early years of the 21st century, the populist neo-socialist authoritarian regime of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela further undermined the hope of developing CAN into a solid community of democratic Andean nations as a precondition for substantial political integration. Infrastructure remained weak, a huge obstacle for intensified inter-regional trade given the difficult geography in the Andean mountain region.

The European Union nevertheless continuously supported the development of the “Comunidad Andina de Naciones”, up to the point that it at some

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stage contributed to the salaries in the Lima-based Secretariat. The EU's policy toward CAN is geared towards strengthening integration with the ultimate goal of introducing supranational structures. This policy might come as a surprise, given the limited economic relevance of CAN for the EU. EU exports from CAN represent 0.9 percent of total EU imports, while EU exports to CAN represents 0.7 percent of EU's total global exports. It should not be underestimated that the EU is the largest investor in CAN as it is in the whole of Latin America. Nevertheless, the main driving force is not primarily the immediate economic interest of the European Union toward a community with 115 million inhabitants. The rationale of EU policy toward CAN and other regional integration efforts is grounded in the EU's understanding of sustainable and "real" regional integration as a basis for successful development in the context of democratic governance and a new global order of the 21st century. Supranational orientation is still missing in CAN although the discussion about its usefulness has grown during the initial years of the 21st century. Following the EU model, discussions have begun inside CAN about the possible path toward monetary union, a directly elected community parliament and the creation of Andean citizenship.⁵

Since the new beginning of Andean integration in the 1990s, progress toward complementary economic structures has been made, although it remains incremental and slow. While Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia agreed on common external tariffs as the cornerstone of a common free trade zone, Peru preferred to remain absent. The less developed economies of Bolivia and Ecuador received temporary exemptions from complete liberalization of their markets. CAN's goal to implement a free trade zone by 2005 and the subsequent realization of a common market will not be implemented in time and with full force. Yet, the path toward free

5 See Raul Barrios (ed.), *Comunidad Andina de Naciones. Desafios Politicos y Percepciones de la Sociedad*, La Paz: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 1999; Rene Lauer, *Las Politicas Sociales en la Integracion Regional. Estudio Comparativo de la Union Europea y la Comunidad Andina de Naciones*, Quito: Universidad Andino Simon Bolivar 2001; Angel Maria Casas Gragea, *El Modelo Regional Andino. Enfoque de Economia Politica Internacional*, Quito: Universidad Andina Simon Bolivar 2003.

trade and a common market has been more serious during one decade of CAN than during three decades of “Pacto Andino”.⁶

One interesting feature of this development is the effect of increased trade between CAN and the “Mercado del Sur”(MERCOSUR), established in 1991 in the Southern Cone of Latin America. 8.5 per cent of MERCOSUR imports come from CAN countries while 10.8 per cent of CAN imports originate in MERCOSUR. Both regional integration schemes are contemplating ways towards a bilateral free trade agreement and visionaries even talk about fusion of both processes under the label MERCOCAN.⁷ Such plans meet with skepticism among poorer CAN countries that are afraid of opening up their markets to Brazil, the dominate economy of the Latin American continent. The idea of MERCOCAN has to be seen in the context of the debate about advantages and disadvantages of ALCA. In 1991, the US had proposed the completion of a free trade area for the Americas (“Area de Libre Comercio de las Americas” ALCA) by 2005, a project whose implementation began in 1994. Often, skeptics argue that ALCA strengthens Latin American dependency on the US economy: The GDP of the US is close to 73 percent of the combined GDP of all the other countries on the American continent, including Canada, Mexico and Brazil.⁸

The efforts to transform economic cooperation into political integration remain daunting for CAN and feasible only over the long haul. Yet, the changing attitude in the region, the awareness of the advantages of pooling of sovereignties in the European Union and the pressure not to fall behind in the process of creating a free trade zone for both Americas have exerted new interest in and pressure geared at more coherent economic and gradual political integration in the Andean Community. The EU insists on negotiat-

6 See Gilbert Le Gras, *The New New World. The Re-emerging Markets of Latin America*, London: Reuters 2002.

7 See Rita Giacalone (ed.), *CAN-Mercosur a la Sombra del ALCA*, Merida: Editorial Venezolano 2003.

8 See Alan Fairlie Reinoso, *Las Relaciones Comunidad Andina – Union Europea y la Zona de Libre Comercio del Sur*, Lima: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Economicas y Politicas 2000; Emir Sader (ed.), *ALCA: Integracao Soberana ou Subordinada?*, Sao Paulo: Expressao Popular 2001; Tullo Vigevani/Marcelo Passini Mariano (ed.), *ALCA. O Gigante e os Anoes*, Sao Paulo: Editora Senac 2001.

ing only with CAN as a whole instead of pursuing bilateral trade negotiations with each individual country in CAN. The political dialogue established between EU and CAN in 2003 adds another element to this orientation. EU's pro-active policy will continue to favor integration over cooperation and supranational orientation over intergovernmental procedures. Given that the new CAN has only completed the first decade of its existence, the chances are high to see progress along this line of reasoning, provided enough patience and a long-term perspective are applied.

3. Caribbean integration began as a counterintuitive mechanism to its European counterpart. It was meant to be a strategy to tame the inevitable end of British colonial rule over many of the island nations that today consist of 34 million inhabitants. The West Indian Federation, founded for the purpose of persevering British influence in the region, failed in 1962. Functional cooperation among some of the Commonwealth Caribbean territories continued, but it remained tainted as a leftover of the failed process of decolonization. The Caribbean development echoed the same trend as other processes of de-colonization during the 20th century did: based in a strong belief in the value of state sovereignty, individual statehood was soon followed by difficult processes of nation building under conditions of development economies, weak and often non-democratic governance. A truly post-colonial effort toward regional cooperation and eventual integration was begun in that region only in 1973 – coinciding with Great Britain's entry into the European Community that forced the Caribbean island states to reconsider their strategic interests and market patterns. The "Treaty of Chaguaramas" established the objectives of the "Caribbean Community" (CARICOM) and a Common Market as two separate entities of a broader process eventually heading toward the same goal: greater independence from the global economic centers both in Europe and in the US.

The revised "Treaty of Charuagamas" of 2001 came close to a re-founding of the "Caribbean Community". While the broad objectives essentially remained the same – economic integration, co-ordination of foreign policies and functional co-operation – the "Caribbean Community" has launched a reinforced effort to implement its goals. With the incorporation of the "Ca-

Caribbean Community” and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy under one legal personality, the revised “Treaty of Charuagamas” resembles European efforts to overcome structures of parallel institutions and mechanisms of “pillars” distinguishing different degrees of integration and cooperation. As a consequence, CARICOM is considered to be “in an advanced stage of transition”.⁹ The goal is set for a full-fledged Single Market with an increased degree of institutionalization that will however continue to fall short of introducing elements of supranationality into CARICOM. Nevertheless – as in the case of CAN and SICAM – the EU strongly supports the evolution of the Caribbean integration experience toward that goal.¹⁰ In terms of trade relations, the role of CARICOM is rather marginal for the EU: Imports from the region amount to 0.5 per cent of total EU imports, exports amount to 0.7 per cent of total imports into the EU.

Membership in CARICOM includes Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana – in whose capital Georgetown the CARICOM Secretariat is located–, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Associate members are the British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Turks and Caicos Islands, Anguilla, and the Cayman Islands. Discussion on membership of the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and – potentially with the strongest implications – of Cuba has begun as well as that of the remaining French, Dutch, British and US territories in the region.¹¹ The perspective of a “Caribbean Community” for the whole Caribbean basin might be a far-fetched vision today, but it is no longer inconceivable. In the Caribbean, the European experience of linking “deepen-

9 Duke Pollard (ed.), *The Caricom System. Basic Instruments*, Kingston: The Caribbean Law Publishing House Company 2003, p. 4; see also Anthony Payne/Paul Sutton, *Charting Caribbean Developments*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida 2001; Gerardo Gonzalez Nunez/Emilio Pantojas Garcia, *El Caribe en la Era de la Globalization*, Puerto Rico: Publicaciones Puertorriquenas 2002.

10 See Stephen J.H. Dearden (ed.), *The European Union and the Caribbean*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2002.

11 For a Cuban perspective see: *Camara de Comercio de la Republica de Cuba* (ed.), *Cuba, el Caricom y sus Paises Miembros*, Havana: Camara de Comercio 2001.

ing” and “widening” of the integration process is carefully studied. The CARICOM dialogue with the European Union might impact this.¹²

The original CARICOM suffered from the shortcomings of weak sovereignties and strong ideological rifts among its member states as far as attitudes toward the US and Europe were concerned. The fundamental dilemma of the region has not disappeared with the revision of the “Treaty of Charuagamas”: the dilemma between “the desire, on the one hand, to enjoy the status of sovereign States, and, on the other, an unwillingness to acknowledge the inadequacy of required capabilities to translate legal sovereignty into a political and economic reality”.¹³ Increasing reference to the success of European integration is an indication of the continuous soul searching in CARICOM.

The decision to establish a CARICOM Single Market echoed not only the European experience. It also came as a response to the pressure of neo-liberal globalization and the power of the US economy in its immediate neighborhood. The “North American Free Trade Area” (NAFTA), established in 1991 between the US, Canada and Mexico, enhanced the feeling of peripheral neglect in the Caribbean. With the end of the Cold War, the Caribbean was bereft of opting for an alternative model, notwithstanding the continuous reality of Fidel Castro’s Cuba. Its socialist regime stayed its authoritarian course into the early years of the 21st century while endemic economic dilapidation undermined the last vestiges of its former pride and legitimacy. Uncertainty about the future course of Cuba prevailed.

The “Caribbean Community” has begun to develop a sense of foreign policy identity. Support of CARICOM for membership of Suriname and Belize into the continent-wide “Organization of American States” prevented possible escalations of territorial disputes with Venezuela and Guatemala. More important was the positive experience of structured relations with the European Community all the way from the Lome Agreements (four Lome Agreements were concluded with the European Community and later the

12 See Anthony Pague/Paul Sutton, *Charting Caribbean Development*, op.cit., pp. 197ff.

13 Duke Pollard (ed.), *The Caricom System. Basic Instruments*, op. cit., p.17.

European Union between 1970 and 1995 with preferential trade arrangements for up to 70 developing countries) to the Cotonou Agreement of 2000. CARICOM thought of itself as instrumental for bringing about these widely praised arrangements between Europe and so many countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Not only for them, these agreements constituted “a watershed in north-south relations”.¹⁴

The establishment of a Caribbean Commission, an Assembly of Commonwealth Caribbean Parliamentarians, the establishment of a Caribbean Supreme Court and the replacement of the Community Council of Ministers with the Caribbean Common Market Council as the second highest decision making body in CARICOM were the most important institutional additions introduced by the revised “Treaty of Charuagamas” in 2001. Contradictions remain, some of which are reminiscent of similar problems of the European Union as far as “opting-out clauses” for Denmark on key policy goals of the EU are concerned: The Bahamas are a member of CARICOM and yet they do not participate in the economic structures and goals of the community. As far as the decision-making mechanism is concerned, the “Treaty of Charuagamas” introduced interesting reforms. While the principle of unanimity continues to be applied to decision-making in the Conference of Heads of Government, it has virtually been abolished in the other organs of the community. Consequently, this facilitates decisions favoring speedy reactions to the challenges of neo-liberal globalization that require an export-oriented, internationally competitive production of goods and services in CARICOM.

It seems likely that the process of incremental yet steady fusion of economic integration with corresponding political processes will continue in the Caribbean. No matter how mixed the current character of CARICOM is, the history of the Caribbean will no longer be written with reference to sugar and slavery only. Integration has become a new mantra in the region. This coincides with new sensitivity about democratic governance in the Caribbean. Since American pressure in the Caribbean against the revolutionary government in Grenada during the early 1980's, it is also increas-

14 Ibid., p.20.

ingly understood that economic development and democratic governance cannot be separated from a successful and substantial integration strategy. The speedy reaction of CARICOM to civil unrest in Haiti in early 2004 was indicative of this realization.

4. The “Mercado del Sur” (MERCOSUR; MERCOSUL in Portuguese) was founded in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, signing the “Treaty of Asuncion”. Originally it was meant to create a common market and a customs union between the participating countries grown out of the experiences of economic cooperation between Brazil and Argentina since the mid-1980s. MERCOSUR proceeded from their sectoral agreements to wide-range liberalization of trade relations. In 1988, Brazil had import tariffs of 51 percent and Argentina of 30 per cent. Trade liberalization thus became the first priority in strengthening the partners involved. The “Treaty of Ouro Preto” of 1994 added much to the institutional structure of MERCOSUR.¹⁵ A transition phase was set into motion with the goal to create a common market by 2006. During the 1990s alone, intra-regional trade jumped up from 4.6 billion US-dollars to 20.4 billion US-dollars, while foreign investment grew from 22.8 billion US-dollars to 32.5 billion US-dollars. Since the mid-1990s, most of intra-regional trade has been free of tariffs; in some sensitive areas this was realized until 2001. In 1996, MERCOSUR signed treaties with Chile and Bolivia, establishing free trade areas with both countries that became associate members of MERCOSUR. During the same time, MERCOSUR also established a common mechanism for political consultations. Like-minded new Presidents in Argentina and in Brazil (Kirchner and Lula) have helped to rekindle the idea of institutional advancements into MERCOSUR since 2002. Suggestions for establishing a common parliament, the establishment of a Dispute Settlement Court and growing understanding that integration is the only forward strategy to overcome economic and financial constraints to development went hand in hand. The weak institutionalization of MERCOSUR remains the Achilles’ heel of the project although awareness about this deficit is clearly

15 See Oscar Abadie Aicardi, *Fundamentos Historicos y Politicos del Mercosur*, Montevideo: Melibea Ediciones 1999; Peggy Becak, *Mercosul. Uma Experiencia de Integracao Regional*, Sao Paulo: Editora Contexto 2000.

rising in MERCOSUR – not the least in light of weak public legitimacy of national political institutions.¹⁶

The European Union negotiated an Interregional Association Agreement with MERCOSUR between 1999 and 2004. This intensified bi-regional relationship echoes not only the increasing importance of EU-MERCOSUR trade and investment relations. MERCOSUR, a market with 217 million inhabitants, holds a share of 2.4 per cent of EU total imports while the export of the EU to MERCOSUR is 1.8 per cent of all EU export. EU direct investment in MERCOSUR has increased since the mid-1990s, making the EU the largest investor in MERCOSUR as in all of Latin America, except for Central America. The EU is also the largest donor of developmental aid to the region as well as to Latin America in general. The path toward the first Interregional Association Agreement of the European Union with another regional integration process is more than a reflection of the economic importance of the relationship. The EU has always considered MERCOSUR a project of political relevance in accordance with the European perspective of strengthened regional integration as an important element in a multi-polar world.

Economic liberalization and deregulation, but also a renewed commitment to democracy and a strengthened rule of law have contributed to the rise in the importance of MERCOSUR since the end of the 1990s. Next to the US, the EU and Japan, MERCOSUR is the fourth largest economy in the world and has gained the image of the most advanced regional integration scheme in Latin America, although this is certainly debatable when compared with the structures of CAN. MERCOSUR was as much a response to the American project of NAFTA as it was an echo of the success of regional integration in Europe. The relationship between MERCOSUR and the Free Trade

16 See Gerardo Caetano/Ruben M. Perina (eds.) *La Encrucijada Política del Mercosur. Parlamentos y Nueva Institucionalidad*, Montevideo: Impresora Editorial 2003.

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Zone of the Americas (Area Libre de Comercio de las Americas) remains ambivalent.¹⁷

MERCOSUR started as an intergovernmental concept and has remained so until now. Nevertheless, it has begun to develop a legal code comparable to the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union.¹⁸ The original “Treaty of Asuncion” included the establishment of common external tariffs. In 1995 the Common Market was supposed to be completed, but the project remains incomplete to this day. MERCOSUR has gained the mere reputation of an incomplete customs union and a free trade zone. It required the experience of further economic shocks and new political initiative between the two big countries of MERCOSUR to re-launch the process and speed it up in the early 21st century.

MERCOSUR remains basically intergovernmental. The Common Market Council (Consejo del Mercado Comun) is considered the highest body, consisting of the Foreign and Economic Ministers of MERCOSUR member states. The Council meets once a year in the presence of the Heads of State of MERCOSUR member states. The Presidency in MERCOSUR rotates and is coordinated by the Foreign Minister in charge. The Treaty of Ouro Preto specified the competencies of the existing organs and added new ones to MERCOSUR: most notable are the Commerce Commission (Comision Comercial del Mercosur), the Common Parliamentary Commission (Comision Parlamentaria Conjunta) and the Consultative Forum for Economic and Social Affairs (Foro Consultativo Economico y Social). A Secretariat has been established in Montevideo that remains largely technical. A MERCOSUR Court of Justice has been established in Asuncion, still projecting more good will than power.

17 See Wilson Nerys Fernandez, MERCOSUR, Estados Unidos, ALCA. Globalizacion y Regionalizacion en el Cambio del Siglo, Montevideo: Fundacion de Cultura Universitaria 2000; Rita Giacalone (ed.), CAN-MERCOSUR a la Sombra del ALCA, op.cit.

18 See Marta Haines Ferrari (ed.), The Mercosur Codes, London: BIICL 2000; Max Planck Institut für Ausländisches und Internationales Privatrecht (ed.), Rechtsquellen des Mercosur, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2000.

MERCOSUR has been involved in the process of deepening its structures. The possibility of a common currency, the “merco-peso”, and the need to improve co-ordination of macroeconomic policies has been debated in the region. Whether or not the Customs Union and the incomplete Common Market will advance through norm standardization and legislative measures into a comprehensive Single Market remains to be seen. Much will depend upon the political will generated in the member states of MERCOSUR, notably in Brazil and Argentina.

In spite of its shortcomings, MERCOSUR has also begun to “discover” the sphere of foreign and security policy as relevant for building regional integration. Joint military maneuvers between Argentina and Brazil and meetings of the Chiefs of Staff of both countries are still light-years away from the European stage of a Common Foreign and Security Policy. After 150 years of suspicion between Argentina and Brazil, in the context of the history of Latin America, they constitute however a promising step forward toward understanding the meaning and usefulness of regional cooperation. The end of military dictatorships in both countries, the decrease in power and prestige of the armed forces and the return to civilian rule in all MERCOSUR member states has been a critical precondition for enhancing the potential of MERCOSUR integration.¹⁹ No matter how limited MERCOSUR remains as far as the prospects of an early inclusion of supranational elements is concerned, it might well grow into a structure beyond free trade and an integrated market. This is certainly the understanding of the European Union and the rationale for its broadening relations with MERCOSUR.²⁰

19 See Rut Diamint (ed.), *La OTAN y los Desafios en el MERCOSUR*. Comunidad de Seguridad y Estabilidad Democratica, Buenos Aires: Nuevohacer 2001.

20 See Juan Algorta Pla, *O Mercosul e a Comunidade Europeia. Uma Abordagem Comparativa*, Porto Alegre: Editorial da Universidade 1994; Ramiro Vera-Fluixa, *Regionalbildungsansätze in Lateinamerika und ihr Vergleich mit der Europäischen Union*, ZEI Discussion Paper C 73/2000, Bonn: Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung 2000; Wulfdieter Zippel (ed.), *Die Beziehungen zwischen der EU und den Mercosur-Staaten. Stand und Perspektiven*, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2002; Udo Diedrichs, *Die Politik der Europäischen Union gegenüber dem Mercosur. Die EU als internationaler Akteur*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich 2003; Helio Jaguaribe/

The international financial and economic crisis of the late 1990s and the early 21st century raised awareness in MERCOSUR member states of the need to speed up the regional integration process and to give MERCOSUR a stronger role, and ultimately also a stronger voice. The continuous backing of MERCOSUR by the European Union might have added to the understanding in the region that MERCOSUR would have to use its second chance in order to implement the original goals of the project while at the same time focus on how to move ahead and turn it into a viable process of “real” – and that means also political and supranational – integration.²¹

Africa

5. The African search for regional integration has been torn between the ambition to unite the continent as a whole and the inability to develop existing regional schemes of cooperation into viable success stories. Therefore, a confusing overlap of regional integration efforts coincides with the general underdevelopment of the continent, including the underdevelopment of its regional integration. Nevertheless, both on the regional as well as on the continental level, the idea of integration as the path toward economic success has never vanished from the political agenda, although competing paradigms were pushing toward continental or pulling toward regional solutions. From the creation of the “Organization of African Unity” in 1963 with the aim of promoting African self-government to the creation of the “African Union” in 2001 with the aim of fostering an African Economic Community by 2025, regional efforts in Africa were always considered partial expressions in search of a broader goal, the African Renaissance.²²

Alvaro de Vasconcelos (eds.), *The European Union, Mercosul and the New World Order*, London/Portland: Frank Cass 2003.

21 See also: Carlos Alberto Montoya, *Teoria de la Integracion. Los Procesos de Integracion Economica en America Latina*, Medellin: Eafit Fondo Editorial Universidad 2000; Inter-American Development Bank (ed.) *Beyond Borders. The New Regionalism in Latin America*, Washington D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank 2002.

22 Thus is the vision South African President Thabo Mbeki has been developing since the late 20th century. See for his thoughts www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki-

The most ambitious effort to integrate Africa is being conducted at the continental level. Since the de-colonization struggle in mid-20th century, African leaders have dreamt of the vision of a united continent. While the Organization of African Unity (OAU) remained incapable of limiting the quest for national sovereignty across the continent, it also failed to support economic development and good governance. It also failed to prevent ethnic conflicts and regional crises that have blurred the image of Africa during much of the past three decades.

Africa is by far the poorest continent. Of a total of 765 million inhabitants, close to 350 million live below the line of absolute poverty (less than 1 US-dollar per day), more than 150 million of them children. During the last decade of the 20th century, Africa's share in global imports and exports fell to 1.6 per cent compared with 4.6 per cent in 1980. It was only in light of the recognition of a deep crisis affecting the whole continent – in spite of certain pockets of progress and limited success stories – that leaders from all across Africa made a new beginning. The “Abuja Treaty”, signed at the Summit of the “Organization of African Unity” in 1991 with the aim of establishing an African Economic Community by the year 2025 and the foundation of the “African Union” in 2001 after the required number of 36 ratifications of the Treaty signed in Lome in 2000 have begun to generate fresh impulses geared at a long-term improvement of the overall prospects for Africa. With all African states participating, the “African Union” is the most comprehensive scheme of continental-wide cooperation and thus comparable to the Council of Europe rather than to the European Union. In light of the intricate and mutually reinforcing relationship between the two during decades of crisis and uncertainty in Europe, this might not be a bad start for the “African Union”.

Its Constitutive Act, ratified by all member states of the “African Union” as an instrument of international law, has established an African Court of Justice, a Pan-African Parliament, the African Commission on Human and Civil Rights, a Monetary Fund and a Central Bank. Its Secretariat is based

/1998/tm0928.htm and www.unu.edu/unupress/mbeki.html. For a scholarly analysis of the prospects for this vision see Fantu Cheru, African Renaissance. Roadmaps to the Challenge of Globalization, London/New York: Zed Books 2002.

in Addis Ababa. The four institutions of the African Union are: The Assembly, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives' Committee and the Commission of the Union. Although the terminology resembles European experiences, the principal of supranationality has not been applied to the structures and competencies of the "African Union". It remains an intergovernmental body, "meant to be a pro-active organization to swiftly respond to the Continent's new challenges, especially, with regard to promoting and protecting human and civil rights, promotion of self reliance and economic development within the framework of the Union and the promotion of gender equality, peaceful co-existence of Member States and their rights to live in peace and security".²³ The ambition of Libya's leader Qaddafi as far as the creation of a pan-African defense force and an immediate common market with a common currency are concerned, has not materialized yet.

The "African Union" is meant to work as a catalyst to bring various regional schemes of economic cooperation and integration together under the roof of a pan-African vision. The structures of the "Africa Union" include mechanisms to deal with human rights protection as well as those intended to contribute to conflict prevention and conflict resolution on the African continent. In the absence of qualified majority voting as key to efficiency and success of this work, it will yet remain open to long-term judgment how strong the indirect effect of these reinforced commitments on the member states of the "African Union" can be. Self-commitments might have a better effect than efforts geared at a formal limiting of national sovereignty.

A Peace and Security Council of 15 member states of the AU, early warning and preventive diplomacy as well as peace-making, including the use of

23 Desmond T. Orijako, Road to the African Union (AU). Opportunities and Challenges, in: African Union (ed.) The African Union Directory 2002, 1st Heads of State Summit, Mauritius: Millenium African Communications 2002, p. 14; see also: Manelisi Genge/Francis Kornegay/Stephen Rule, African Union and a Panafrican Parliament, Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa 2000; Henning Melber, The New African Initiative and the African Union. A Preliminary Assessment and Documentation, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet 2001; Malinda S. Smith (ed.), Globalizing Africa, Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press 2003.

good offices, mediation, conciliation and enquiry add to the ambitious plan of the AU to impact open or pending political crises in the continent. The right to intervene in a Member State “pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect to grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity”(Article 40h of the Constitutive Act) stipulates a new direction in African self-rule and self-criticism. It is not clear whether or not the Assembly of the AU – comprised of the Heads of State and Government – will ever apply the principle of consensus for decisions of this magnitude. The Constitutive Act states that in case the Assembly fails to reach decisions by consensus, a two-third majority would be sufficient to proceed with decisions in the framework of the competencies of the Assembly. Beside issues of peacekeeping and human rights, this might also include questions relating to the budget of the African Union. The mere wording of the Constitutional Act reflects growing sensitivity towards issues of peace and human rights in Africa. Whether or not this can impact state behavior or that of warring forces has to be seen. Skepticism also prevails regarding the potential for the Commission of the “African Union” to truly turn into a supranational executive analogous to the European Commission.

The same uncertainty applies to the ability of the “African Union” to promote economic cooperation and development by advancing the gradual merger of various regional cooperation and integration schemes into an African Economic Community. The “African Union” has identified the following regional schemes of economic cooperation as the engines for creating a pan-African Economic Community by 2025: the 16 member states “Economic Community of West Africa” ECOWAS (founded in 1975); the 16 member states “Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa” COMESA (founded in 1981 as Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa); the ten member states “Economic Community of Central African States” ECCAS (founded in 1983); the 10 member states “Southern African Development Community” SADC (founded in 1992 as successor institution to the Southern African Development Coordination Conference founded in 1980), and the five member states “Arab Maghreb Union” AMU (founded in 1989). As the then EU Commissioner for External

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Trade, Pascal Lamy, put it at the outset of the 21st century: “Recent advances in regional integration in Africa are a clear indication that most African countries have themselves decided to anchor their integration into the world economy through regional economic integration. Regional economic integration will increase the stability of economic policy and the legal framework, provide a multiplier effect on growth, and should be complementary to multilateral trade liberalization. In the case of many African countries, it can be a stepping stone for their integration into the world economy.”²⁴ No matter how much skepticism will be aired in face of African experiences in past decades, the “African Union” is a promising new and ambitious beginning of a certainly rough and daunting road ahead for the continent.

6. The eldest among more than a dozen schemes for economic cooperation and integration in Africa is the market-oriented experience in Western Africa with the “Economic Community of West African States” (ECOWAS). During the critical 1990s, ECOWAS was one of the few regions in Africa that could claim an increase in intra-regional trade. The original “Treaty of Lagos”, signed in 1975, was revised in 1993 in order to make ECOWAS compatible with the planned African Economic Community. In the meantime, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo were members of ECOWAS. The total population of 250 million people is experiencing the first effort “to transcend the traditional historical and linguistic cleavages between French, English, and Portuguese-speaking African states”.²⁵ The main objective of ECOWAS, according to its Treaty, was the creation of an economic and monetary union

24 Pascal Lamy, *The Challenge of Integrating Africa into the World Economy*, in: Christopher Clapham et.al. (eds.), *Regional Integration in Southern Africa. Comparative International Perspectives*, Johannesburg: The South African Institute of International Affairs 2001, p. 15.

25 Guy Martin, *Africa in World Politics. A Pan-African Perspective*, Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press 2002, p. 138; see also: Ibrahim A. Gambari, *Political and Comparative Dimensions of Regional Integration: The Case of ECOWAS*, New Jersey/London: Humanities Press 1991; Real Lavergne (ed.), *Regional Integration and Cooperation in West Africa. A Multidimensional Perspective*, Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press 1997.

by 2004. The plan was outlined in stages, its medium-term goal being the achievement of regional convertibility, before the ten currencies of ECOWAS member states (nine local currencies plus the CFA franc) could create a monetary union at the end of the process. As a practical step into the direction of the overall goal, ECOWAS traveler checks were introduced to facilitate regional travel and commercial transactions.

Civil wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau slowed down the prospects for speedy economic integration in the region. At the same time, they widened the agenda of ECOWAS and introduced the first elements of security cooperation. The ECOWAS monitoring group ECOMOG became instrumental in ending the seven-year civil war in Liberia and helped manage the bitter conflict in Sierra Leone. During the 1990s, conflict prevention, peace keeping and the establishment of a Mediation and Security Council went hand in hand with measures to facilitate the free movement of people and goods and the harmonization of economic policies among ECOWAS countries as the original approach of the economic community was forced to broaden by security challenges inside some of its member states.

Setbacks had become obvious already during the 1980s. Inter-regional trade decreased by 50 per cent during that decade, labor mobility was blocked through the unilateral measures of Ghana, closing its borders in 1982, and of Nigeria, expelling 2 million “illegal immigrants” mostly Ghanaians, in 1983. Even with new impetuses and the pan-continental perspective, there is minimal movement of capital within the region.

The ECOWAS Treaty established a Court of Justice, a Parliament and an Economic and Social Council. Its Secretariat is based in Lagos. Non-compliance of member states with community decisions have been as notorious as problems with the budget appropriation. In light of the grave development crisis of Africa in general, it remains the sad truth that ECOWAS must still be considered more of a success than of a failed attempt to bring about regional cooperation and integration in one part of Africa.

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Of supporting relevance for regional economic integration in Western and Central Africa are the activities of the “Union douanière et économique de l’Afrique centrale”(UDEAC) and of the “Communauté Economique et monétaire d’Afrique centrale” (CEMAC). UDEAC was founded in 1966 by Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo and Gabon, replacing the Equatorial African Customs Union established in 1959 between the four members of the former “Fédération de l’Afrique Equatoriale Française” (same members as UDEAC minus Cameroon). UDEAC with 25 million people aims to achieve a common market, but has not set a time limit for doing so. After decades of failure to deliver its promulgated goals, UDEAC was reinvigorated and in fact transformed into a “genuine economic and monetary union”,²⁶ the “Central African Economic and Monetary Community” CEMAC, which has been in existence since 1998. Ever since, CEMAC has intended to merge the Economic Union of Central Africa and the Monetary Union of Central Africa. Its structures – including the Conference of Heads of States, the Council of Ministers, the Executive Secretariat, the Court of Justice, the Inter-Parliamentary Committee – remain however bound to be inefficient as long as regional security is not properly established and sustained.

Another supportive element for the advancement of the overall goals of the “African Union” is the “Economic Community of Central African States” (ECCAS). This ten-nation group, representing 70 million people and consisting of Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome et Principe, and the Democratic Republic of Congo aimed to achieve a central African common market and economic community by 1995. Endemic instability and the wars in the Great Lake Region practically ended the activities of ECCAS in the early 1990s.

Finally, the Franc Zone should be mentioned, a monetary cooperation arrangement between France and its former west and central African colonies. Existing since the independence of these states in the early 1960s, the zone – fourteen countries total – is clustered around free movement of capi-

26 Guy Martin, *Africa in World Politics. A Pan-African Perspective*, op. cit., p. 145.

tal within the zone, pooling of gold and foreign exchange reserves on a common French Treasury account, common rules and regulations for foreign commercial and financial transactions, and free convertibility, at par, of the local CFA Franc, first pegged to the French Franc and since 2002 to the Euro. The French Treasury continues to supply Euros to the African Central Banks, which are members of the Franc Zone. “The crucial issue is whether the Euro will eventually replace the Franc Zone in Africa, or whether the Franc Zone will remain a crucial link and central element in the system of Franco-African cooperation.”²⁷

7. Southern and Eastern Africa have been struggling with concepts of regional cooperation and integration in the shadow of de-colonization and on the long road to overcoming Apartheid regimes in Southern Africa. The effort to create an “East African Community” failed after ten years of promising activity in 1977 because of fundamental ideological differences between Socialist Tanzania and pro-Western, market-oriented Kenya.²⁸ This was not the end of integration efforts in Eastern and South Eastern Africa. The struggle against Apartheid brought the front-line states of Southern and Eastern Africa together under the roof of the “Southern African Development Coordination Conference” (SAADC) in 1980. Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe were united in their search to reduce economic dependency on South Africa. In 1992, after the peaceful end of Apartheid, SAADC was transformed into the “Southern African Development Community” (SADC). Namibia had already joined after its independence in 1990. South Africa did the same after the end of Apartheid (in 1994), followed by Mauritius (in 1995), the Seychelles and the Democratic Republic of Congo (in 1997). Ever since, SADC has been considered to be the most viable engine for economic cooperation and potentially for regional integration in Southern and Eastern Africa. South Africa has turned from being the unifying enemy of SAADC into the center of power and engine of SADC. SADC

27 Ibid. p. 151.

28 See Christian P. Potholm/Richard A. Fredland (eds.), *Integration and Disintegration in East Africa*, Lanham: University Press of America 1980.

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countries include 200 million people with a combined gross domestic product of 176 billion US-dollars.

The founding Treaty of SADC makes reference to the noble goals of preserving human rights, peace and security, the rule of law, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the development of common political values, systems and institutions and the harmonization of policies including foreign policy. One of the main organs of SADC is the “Inter-State Defense and Security Committee”. A regional satellite communications network, actions (no matter how vague) against coup makers, peacekeeping training in a Regional Peacekeeping Training Institute and standardized operating procedures for peacekeeping operations have been among the activities of SADC. In the economic field, SADC aims for a Free Trade Area by 2012, paving the way for customs union and subsequently for a common market. Intra-regional trade has increased and stands at 22 percent the highest intra-regional trade level in all of sub-Saharan Africa. Progress on the realization of the Free Trade Area – by substantially reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers – has been accompanied by improvement of transport corridors that are supposed to bring development into the most depressed areas of the regions. Since 1995, the region has an integrated power grid “into which the power generated is pooled and allocated to member states as required”.²⁹

SADCs institutional structures include a SADC Parliamentary Forum, a SADC Tribunal, the SADC Electoral Commission Forum, the SADC Lawyers Association and various other civil society forums. SADCs Secretariat is based in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. SADC was confronted with difficult adaptation challenges after South Africa joined. Economically that could not have come as a surprise since South Africa accounts for almost 75 percent of SADCs GDP. The hegemonic potential of South Africa’s economy has also affected political cooperation in SADC. A South-Africa-Zimbabwe political conflict over control of SADC organs “stretched it almost to the breaking point”. European disputes with Zimbabwe over growing authoritarianism in that country did not affect SADCs stance toward its

29 Guy Martin, *Africa in World Politics. A Pan-African Perspective*, op. cit., p.162.

member state Zimbabwe.³⁰ The military intervention of SADC in Lesotho in 1998 caused further disputes among members of the integration scheme. Nevertheless, the potential of SADC remains strong compared to past or parallel efforts in sub-Saharan Africa.

SADC, as the engine of regional integration in Southern and Eastern Africa is supported by the activities of the “Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa” COMESA. COMESA was established by a treaty signed in Kampala, Uganda, in 1993 by the member states of the former “Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa”(PTA), namely Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. While Lesotho, Mozambique and Somalia left COMESA, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar, Namibia, the Seychelles and Sudan joined COMESA after its creation. COMESA’s main goal remains the fulfillment of a common market. The target dates for realizing a Free Trade Area by 2000 and a common external tariff by 2004 could not be achieved. Yet, COMESA claims considerable achievement as far as facilitating trade and institution building in the region is concerned. Headquartered in Lusaka, Zambia, the accounts of COMESA are denominated in the organization’s Unit of Account, the COMESA dollar, which is equal to one US-Dollar.

The main organ of COMESA is the Authority of Heads of State and Government. The Council of Ministers, the Court of Justice, the Committee of Governors of Central Banks and other institutional mechanisms resemble European experiences. Yet, the practical performance has not been all too impressive. Overlapping membership in COMESA, SADC and ECCAS has been identified as only one of the reasons hindering progress toward the implementation of COMESA’s goals. The weak development level of most African economies is as much an impediment for early integration as political obstacles resulting in Africa’s weak political structures. Weak economic and political sovereignty do not seem fertile breeding ground for a rapid and substantial shift toward regional integration and shared sover-

30 Ibid. p.162.

eignty as a strategy for both stronger economic and political systems on the national level and a changing perception of the overall potential of Africa on the continental level. Yet, Africa has begun to focus on the need for and potential for regional and even continental integration more than ever since the beginning of modern independent statehood on the continent.

Asia

8. The “Association of South East Asian Nations” (ASEAN) is often considered the most favorite partner of the European Union. Since its foundation in 1967, ASEAN has indeed put its mark on the world map. The mutually perceived threat of communist expansion in Indochina was the original motive for Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand to form a system of co-operation. A common response to the threat stemming from escalation of political and military events in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia seemed to be a matter of survival. Over time, like the European integration mechanism, ASEAN became a magnetic force for the communist countries in Indochina and generated one of the large economic success stories of 20th century Asia. With impressive growth rates, the Little Tigers jumped to the forefront of the world economy. ASEAN also widened its membership. In 1984, Brunei Darussalam joined. Most notable was the accession of Vietnam (1995), Laos (1997) – together with Burma/Myanmar – and Cambodia (1999). Among these three war-torn countries at least Vietnams and Laos formally maintained communist regimes in spite of anti-communist revolutions in Eastern Europe, yet they began to open their economies to market mechanisms. Cambodian membership also signaled the end of the dramatic and horrible history of this pleasant South East Asian country and marked the success of ASEAN as a factor of regional stability. The membership of Burma (now Myanmar) in 1997 remained controversial in light of the continuous military dictatorship in the home country of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aun San Suu Kuyi.³¹

31 See C.L. Gates/M. Tran (ed.), *ASEAN Enlargement: Impact and Implications*, Singapore: Seng Lee Press, 2001.

In economic terms, ASEAN pursues co-operation in “common interest areas” as the Bangkok Declaration – the founding document of ASEAN – has stated the main objective of the group. Over four decades of its existence, ASEAN has grown into the largest free trade area in the world with its population of 539 million people, yet remained the smallest one in terms of actual gross domestic product (659 billion Euro). Although ASEAN has expanded its means of co-operation since its foundation, it has fallen short of realizing a single Market so far. Intra-regional trade has risen to more than 22 percent during the 1990s, underlining growing complementarity of production in ASEAN. Yet, this figure is small compared with the EU’s internal trade of more than 50 percent. Other Asian countries, foremost Japan, Korea and China, constitute ASEAN’s main trading partners, accounting for 50 percent of its export market and providing the region with 60 percent of its imports. ASEAN’s share of world trade has grown from 4,2 percent of imports and 4.9 percent in exports (in 1980) to 6.7 percent in imports and 8.3 percent in exports (in 2002). The EU’s share of exports from ASEAN was 3.9 percent in 2002 while the EU’s import share from ASEAN amounted to 6.3 percent. Intra-regional investment is still limited in ASEAN although it has more than during the 1990s from 12 billion US-dollars to 26 billion US-dollars.

Given the degree of tension among the original founding members of ASEAN in the time of de-colonization (Singapore was excluded from Malaysia, Indonesia initiated a policy of “Konfrontasi” against Malaysia, the Philippines tried to oppose the very creation of Malaysia) and notwithstanding internal conflicts in the region ever since (dictatorships in the Philippines and in Indonesia, ethnic conflicts in Malaysia, Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in Indonesia and the Philippines, military rule in Myanmar, communist rule in Vietnam and Laos, post-conflict instability in Cambodia and economic crisis in Thailand, Indonesia and most of the other countries of ASEAN), the success of ASEAN is undeniable. It has reached

out beyond the original intention of maximizing economic benefits and has begun to impact regional security and issues of conflict resolution.³²

During the 1980s and 1990s, ASEAN was able to exert pressure on Vietnam in order to resolve the long-standing Cambodia conflict with the rehabilitation of complete national sovereignty and subsequent accession of both Vietnam and Cambodia to ASEAN.³³ The Cambodia policy of ASEAN has to be seen in the larger context of ASEAN's increasing ambition to project itself as provider of stability and security in the region. In the absence of other regional schemes for security in Asia-Pacific, the "ASEAN Regional Forum" (ARF) attests to ASEAN's ambition and "pivotal role" in this field.³⁴ Founded in 1994, ARF remains to this day the only security forum or mechanism in Asia. Since the end of the Cold War, various ASEAN political leaders challenged the taboo of non-intervention in domestic affairs of member countries. After debates in ASEAN whether the community should favor "intervention" or "flexible engagement" in the face of new regional crises, ASEAN agreed upon the formula "enhanced interaction".³⁵ The conflict in East Timor (1999-2002) did not see any substantial ASEAN involvement. Difficulties in dealing with the military dictatorship in Myanmar have demonstrated the limits of ASEAN's negotiation capacities in the absence of supranational mechanisms. ASEAN's strategy remains limited to quiet representations and attempts to "mediate

32 See May T. Yeung et.al.(eds.) *Regional Trading Blocs in the Global Economy. The EU and ASEAN*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar 1999.

33 See Harald David, *Die ASEAN zwischen Konflikt, Kooperation und Integration*, Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde 2003, pp. 54 ff.

34 Mya Than/Daljit Singh, *Regional Integration: The Case of ASEAN*, in: Christopher Clapham et.al.(eds.), *Regional Integration in Southern Africa. Comparative International Perspectives*, Pretoria: The South African Institute of International Affairs 2001, p. 170; Dirk Nabers, *Das ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)*, in: Hanns W.Maull/Dirk Nabers, *Multilateralismus in Ostasien-Pazifik. Probleme und Perspektiven im neuen Jahrhundert*, Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde 2001, pp. 89 ff.

35 See Derek McDougall, *Humanitarian Intervention and Peacekeeping as Issues for Asia-Pacific Security*, in: James J. Hentz/Morten Boas (eds.) *New and Critical Security and Regionalism. Beyond the Nation-States*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2003, p. 43.

or mitigate strained bilateral relations between members".³⁶ ASEAN does not impose sanctions for the poor conduct of any of its member states.

In fact, ASEAN hardly knows any form of institutionalization. It has been suggested that ASEAN member states relate intuitively to a common identity of their region.³⁷ As much as this is debatable in light of the enormous religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of South East Asia, the limited degree of institutional structures remains obvious. The Treaty on Friendship and Co-operation in South East Asia of 1976 introduced elements of arbitration that remain largely on paper. An ASEAN Secretariat was established in Jakarta, thus demonstrating at least the first seeds of supranational potential. The possibility of an ASEAN Parliament has been considered and some analysts compare the ongoing coordination activity among ASEAN countries to the unwritten constitution of Great Britain.³⁸

In the early 21st century, more than sixty structures of regional co-operation have been identified in Asia. Formal or informal co-operation is dominant. Continent wide schemes do not exist. Processes with a continental dimension such as ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation) are components of trans-continental free trade areas rather than ambitions toward supranational integration.³⁹ They are responses to globalization and expressions of multilateralism, but they fall short of generating authentic regional integration schemes. While APEC was founded by 12 countries in 1989 at the initiative of Australia and has grown into a membership of 24 countries around Asia-Pacific,

36 Ibid., p.177.

37 Amitav Acharya, *The Quest for Identity. International Relations of South East Asia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000.

38 See also Peter Wichmann, *Die politischen Perspektiven der ASEAN. Subregionale Integration oder supranationale Kooperation*, Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde 1996.

39 See Antonio Ortiz Mena, *Regional Integration in the Americas and the Pacific Rim*, La Jolla: California Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies 1997; Brian Bridges, *Europe and the Challenge of the Asia-Pacific*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar 1999; Suthipand Chirathivat/Franz Knipping/Poul Henrik Lassen/Chia Siow Yue (eds.), *Asia-Europe on the Eve of the 21st Century*, Bangkok: Saksopha Press 2001; Tran Van Hoa/Charles Harvie (eds.), *New Asian Regionalism. Responses to globalisation and crises*, Basingstoke: Macmillan 2003.

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ASEM (the Asia-Europe Meeting) is an informal process of dialogue and co-operation between the EU member states and ten Asian countries (Brunei, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). The fact that not all ASEAN members participate is as indicative for missing political cohesion as it is for the purely economic approach of ASEM. While APEC was founded with the intention to develop into an OECD-like system for Asia-Pacific (including the Pacific countries of Latin America), ASEM – representing 1.9 billion people – was largely conceived as a support mechanism for developing global free trade regimes in the context of WTO.⁴⁰

9. The “Gulf Cooperation Council” (GCC) was founded in 1981 as a defensive measure of the conservative Gulf monarchies against the threat of a spill over of the Islamic revolution in Iran. Cooperation between Bahrain (with a history of tensions between its Sunni and Shiite populations), Kuwait (which also has a Shiite minority), Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has developed considerably. It is poised to transform into regional integration for a population of 28 million with the implementation of a common currency for the Gulf countries targeted for 2010.

The “Gulf Cooperation Council” can rely on many commonalities other regional integration schemes fall short of: Its member states speak the same language, practice the same religion – although with notable variants –, have comparable social structures and roughly the same structure and standard of economic development. Finally they have similar systems of governments. This might however develop into the biggest obstacle for comprehensive integration as a new wave of transformation and democratization is sweeping through the region. At the same time, the most conservative Arab state, Saudi Arabia, is increasingly exposed to threats from terrorists blaming its regime for being hypocritical and too close to the United States. The dominating role of Saudi Arabia in the “Gulf Cooperation Council” has always been a matter of concern as the smaller Gulf States

40 See K.S. Nathan, *The European Union, United States and ASEAN. Challenges and Prospects for Co-operative Engagement in the 21st Century*, London: ASEAN Academic Press 2002.

seem to be more interested in thorough integration than their big Western neighbor.

At the time of independence of the smaller Gulf States – Kuwait gained independence from Great Britain in 1961 – it seemed possible that all of them might replace British suzerainty with a joint system of statehood. After prolonged negotiations, in 1975 only the seven Trucial Sheikhdoms of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras al Khaimah, Fujairah and Umm al Quwain agreed to form the United Arab Emirates, while Bahrain and Qatar opted for independent statehood. The Sultanate of Oman gradually opened up during the 1970s. In 1976 Oman hosted a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Oman to discuss a coordinated regional security and defense policy. The effort ended without any conclusion all participants were able to agree upon. It took the threat of a spill over of the Islamic Revolution in Iran of early 1979 to speed up the thrust for cooperation and integration in the Gulf – as a protective measure against one of the potential participants in any logical cooperation around the Arab/Persian Gulf.

After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, the situation looked increasingly dangerous for stability and legitimacy in the Gulf region. Worsening relations between Iran and Iraq, leading into their protracted war between 1980 and 1988, forced the remaining Gulf States to act. At the initiative of Kuwait, they signed the founding Charter of the “Gulf Cooperation Council” in May 1981. The Charter refers to the “ultimate aim of unity” (Article 4) and an eventual con-federal union emanating from the GCC framework.

The “Gulf Cooperation Council” consists of the Supreme Council as its highest authority, representing the six heads of state of the member states. When necessary, the Supreme Council can constitute itself as Dispute Settlement Board. In the Council, where each country has a single vote, unanimity is required to achieve decisions and approve common policies. The Chairmanship in the Supreme Council rotates every year. Below the Supreme Council, the GCC consists of the Ministerial Council, the forum for the Foreign Ministers of the six member states. This is the working policy

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group of the GCC, supported by other GCC ministerial and expert committees. The Secretariat in Riyadh administrates the GCC and initiates studies reviewing the potential for integration projects. Within the general framework of the Arab world, the GCC has always been perceived as “ a force of moderation, conciliation and mediation.”⁴¹ It has been involved in mediating the conflicts between the Sultanate of Oman and the then People’s Republic of Yemen. After the unification of the two Yemenite states in 1990, forming the Arab Republic of Yemen, efforts of gradual approximation of Yemen to the GCC have been pursued on the level of expert and technical cooperation, leading to a cooperation agreement with Yemen in 1998. The issue of Yemenite membership in the “Gulf Cooperation Council” remains unresolved, not the least because of the regime difference between conservative Arab monarchies and the rather socialist Arab Republic. Nevertheless, the issue of possible Yemenite membership has been discussed as much as the prospects of possible Iranian and Iraqi membership, depending on the outcome of the aggravated tensions in both countries and thus within the broader region.

The strategic and defensive rationale behind the creation of the “Gulf Cooperation Council” led to a speedy spill over into the economic sphere. This was more than logical given the rapid modernization of the Gulf region since the 1970s, based on its oil exports. GCC cooperation soon echoed the need of the oil-producing countries of the Gulf to jointly embark on a strategy of economic diversification in order to strengthen their independence from oil and gas revenues. The member states of the “Gulf Cooperation Council” hold 45 per cent of the world’s oil reserves and supply 20 per cent of the global production of crude oil. Based on estimates as to the duration of oil and gas reserves, only Kuwait and Qatar might be able to completely rely on oil and gas income for their future. Diversification of the economy has therefore been identified as a crucial challenge for Gulf

41 John Christie, *History and Development of the Gulf Cooperation Council: A Brief Overview*, in: John A. Sandwick (ed.), *The Gulf Cooperation Council. Moderation and Stability in an Interdependent World*, Boulder: Westview Press 1987, p. 14.

Cooperation countries in order to make their cooperation sustainable.⁴²

The focus shifted from strategic concern about the possible spread of the Islamic revolution in the 1980s to economic considerations leading to joint efforts in implementing diversification and a customs union with a common currency during the 1990s. A new geo-strategic dimension arose in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent debate about the stability of Saudi Arabia and the need for the democratic transformation of the Greater Middle East. While some of the smaller Gulf countries embarked on a cautious but steady path towards constitutional monarchy with elements of popular democracy – with local elections in Qatar, elections in Kuwait, new consultative and constitutional elements in Bahrain and Oman – the difference between the smaller Gulf states and the overwhelming size and impact of Saudi Arabia for the region became even more visible. The extremely conservative Wahabi regime of Saudi Arabia no longer garnered the same respect for Saudi Arabia's leadership among the other members of the "Gulf Cooperation Council".

Integrating the non-oil economy has been one of the priorities of the GCC. Common investment in petrochemical, industrial and livestock projects has taken place. Policies for saving energy, separate passport controls for GCC nationals at the airports in the region, an increase in regional communication and transportation schemes, freedom of capital and freedom of labor have been realized in the GCC. The necessary steps to advance from a free-trade area without internal custom revenues into a common market and ultimately a monetary union have been supported ever since the establishment of a uniform external tariff system in 1983. The dramatic fall of oil prices during the second half of the 1980s and the deepening economic cri-

42 See Ursula Braun, *Der Kooperationsrat am Golf: Eine neue Kraft? Regionale Integration als Stabilitätsfaktor*, Baden-Baden: Nomos 1986; Emile A. Nakhleh, *The Gulf Cooperation Council. Policies, Problems and Prospects*, Westport/London: Praeger 1986; Erik R. Peterson, *The Gulf Cooperation Council. Search for Unity in a Dynamic Region*, Boulder: Westview 1988; R.K.Ramazani, *The Gulf Cooperation Council. Record and Analysis*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 1988; Hassan Al-Alkim, *The GCC States in an Unstable World. Foreign Policy Dilemmas of Small States*, London: Saqi Books 1994.

sis coupled with a sharp increase in population growth have challenged the rental economies in the Gulf. All GCC countries remain committed to implementing a common currency by 2010 despite the clouds hanging over the region since the outbreak of Islamic terrorism and the geopolitical tensions in the Greater Middle East since 2001, coinciding with severe generational changes across the region.⁴³

10. One of the least functional regional integration schemes covers South Asia with India as its centerpiece. From its foundation in 1985, the “South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation” (SAARC) has suffered from the dominating power of the largest democracy in the world and from the unwillingness of its member states to take up controversial issues. The India-Pakistan controversy has been one of the most dangerous regional conflicts in the world for decades. It has therefore come as a surprise to many that SAARC did not break down altogether over the contentious issues related to this conflict. Instead, it has continued a quiet path to consolidated institutionalization with a Secretariat based in Katmandu. Being itself at the center of violent political controversies since the late 1990s, Nepal has not been able to put visible weight behind the role that the SAARC Secretariat could possibly play. SAARC continues to exist with the membership of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives. It is the most impossible combination of countries and political regimes, socio-economic realities and ethnic composition, religious and linguistic diversity the world could possibly offer. And yet, the geographical factor has outnumbered all possible reservations against the very idea of a South Asian form of regional co-operation and possibly integration.

South Asia has a total population of 1.3 billion people. More than 500 million of them live in extreme poverty, representing 44 per cent of the poorest of the poor in the world who have to live on less than one dollar per day. South Asia does not account for more than 2 percent of global GDP and 2.2. percent of the external trade of the European Union is conducted with the region. India is the most important economic factor of the region, re-

43 See Ugo Fasano (ed.), *Monetary Union Among Member Countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council*, Washington D.C.: International Monetary Fund 2003.

ceiving 0.4 percent of foreign direct investment stemming from the EU. SAARC was founded – as its Charter says – with the aim of “promoting the well-being of the populations of South Asia and improving their standard of living; this includes speeding up economic growth, social progress and cultural development; reinforcing links between the countries of this area and, lastly, promoting mutual collaboration and assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields”. The ambitions of SAARC stand in sharp contrast to the real power of the integration scheme. From the beginning, decision-making in SAARC was reduced to unanimity. The consultative nature of the process of co-operation was based on the agreement not to deal with controversial issues among the states involved. Given the conflicts in the region – most notably between Pakistan and India, but also those troubling Sri Lanka and Nepal – this founding principle left SAARC practically impotent from its very beginning.⁴⁴ With the improvement of political relations between India and Pakistan in the early years of the 21st century, new impulses for strengthened integration were proposed by leaders of both countries.

In light of the conflicting interests on the South Asian subcontinent, it is surprising that SAARC came into being at all. Its founding intention, driven by India’s diplomacy, was geared towards broadening the scope for non-aggression and the non-use of force between India and Pakistan. In 1988, during the early days of SAARC, India and Pakistan concluded three agreements prohibiting attacks against nuclear installations and facilities and promoting cultural co-operation and the avoidance of double taxation, thus demonstrating the almost bizarre combination of issues driving the agenda of the subcontinent, as SAARC’s first Secretary General admits.⁴⁵ So far, there is enormous resistance in SAARC to revise the original Charter and the working mechanisms of its bodies that include a Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries, Technical Committees and Committees of Economic Co-operation. Some observers argue that SAARC has induced

44 See Abul Kalam, *Subregionalism in Asia. ASEAN and SAARC Experiences*, New Delhi: UBS Publishers 2001.

45 Kant K. Bhargava, *EU-SAARC: Comparisons and Prospects for Cooperation*, ZEI Discussion Paper C15, Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies 1998, p. 7 ff.

a certain dynamic of intensified co-operation among civil society in the region that could eventually also spurn a political reassessment of the parameters of regional integration.⁴⁶

Up until today, the disputes between India and Pakistan with their highly explosive dimension of proliferation of nuclear arms have prevented SAARC from developing its possible potential. Efforts to create an Indian Ocean Rim Economic Growth Area have been curtailed by these disputes. In addition, Sri Lanka's efforts to join ASEAN were refused. Instability of some of the democratic regimes in SAARC, most notably in Bangladesh, the struggle with authoritarianism (Maldives), the rule of military dictatorship (most notably in Pakistan) and ethnically induced civil war (Sri Lanka) have contributed to a rather negative image of SAARC. Initiatives to generate specific South Asian mechanisms of conflict management have failed so far, leaving South Asia as "one of the last regions to wake up to the challenge of the new regionalism".⁴⁷ Conflict resolution in South Asia, such as the India-Bangladesh scheme to regulate the supply of Ganges waters or the search for solutions to the civil war in Sri Lanka took place outside the SAARC mechanism. In order to make sense and have an impact, regional cooperation and integration in South Asia require more cohesion regarding the nature of political regimes and a visible increase in economic complementarity. Unless these fundamental preconditions are achieved, every effort to promote cooperation and trust in the Indian subcontinent will remain subject to fragile political circumstances. It must however be added that the very existence of the "South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation" is a recognition of the potential that might be developed further in the course of the 21st century. In fact, it might turn out to be the only path to overcome the socio-economic pressure in the region that is mounting notwithstanding the emergence of a middle class. It might be this very middle

46 See Fahimul Quadir, *Civil Society and Informal Regionalism in South Asia. The Prospects for Peace and Human Security in the Twenty-First Century*, in: James J. Hentz/Morten Boas (eds.), *New and Critical Security and Regionalism. Beyond the Nation-State*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2003, p 113 ff.

47 Bjoern Hettne, *Security Regionalism in Europe and South Asia*, in: James J. Hentz/Morten Boas (eds.), *New and Critical Security and Regionalism. Beyond the Nation-State*, op.cit.,p. 159.

class that will promote reforms toward both political and economic complementarity in South Asia as a precondition for viable and sustainable regional integration. Still, the path is long and the hope blurred by uncertainties such as lingering Islamic radicalism in Pakistan that overshadows the transformation from military dictatorship to democracy. For the time being, this poses a new threat to stable regional integration based on democracy and integrated market economies.

Eurasia

11. The “Commonwealth of Independent States” (CIS) is the product of post-Soviet geopolitical developments in Eurasia. It can be questioned whether or not CIS should be considered a regional integration scheme at all. Its purpose – taming the demise of Soviet power and organizing Russia’s new regional base as a global power – is of secondary importance compared with regional integration efforts. When the CIS was founded on December 8, 1991, the founding document, signed by Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus, stated that the Soviet Union had disappeared as subject of international law and geopolitical realities. On December 21, 1991, CIS was enlarged, with not only Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, but also Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan joining. The CIS committed itself to comply with responsibilities stemming from international treaties signed by the Soviet Union and committed itself to the common control of nuclear weapons. It stated its support for human rights, the protection of national minorities and respect for the territorial integrity of its member states. Georgia joined the CIS in 1993.

The “Commonwealth of Independent States” (CIS) does not carry any supranational competencies. Insofar as it is fundamentally different from the European Union. On the other hand, it is rooted in the long common history of former Soviet republics with their specific form of state-controlled industrialization and an integrated market. This market has broken down as a consequence of the demise of the Soviet Union and its economic imperatives. Yet, traditional mentality prevails in a post-Soviet transformation that began in 1991 and had not ended by the time the CIS celebrated its 10th anniversary jubilee in Moscow in November 2001.

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The founding Charter of the “Commonwealth of Independent States” of January 22, 2003 declared sovereign equality among its member states and recognized each of them as a sovereign member of the international state system. With the signing of the Treaty on Economic Union in September 1993, the CIS embarked on the path of stronger integration, as if by then the European Union was perceived as a distant role model.⁴⁸

The Treaty on the establishment of an Economic Union is based on the goal of transforming the interaction of economic relations among CIS member states. It states the principles of free movement of goods, capital, services and workers, thus recalling the original goals of a Single Market under the provisions of the European Economic Community. It elaborates on concerted money and credit policies as well as, tax, customs and foreign economic policies. It outlines mechanisms that favor direct production links among CIS countries and a rapprochement of the methods of management of economic affairs. CIS has addressed issues as diverse as transport corridors in its vast territory and common health protection-methods. The proliferation of drugs originating in Afghanistan, for example, has been a concern for the CIS. By remembering the 15th anniversary of the Chernobyl atomic power plant catastrophe in 2001 and by coordinating activities commemorating the “Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945” (elsewhere known as World War II), CIS member states invoked a common culture of memory. Unresolved post-Soviet conflicts in Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabach and Abkhazia were as much on the CIS agenda as issues of inter-state TV and radio broadcasting, “in the interest of enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation between CIS member states”.⁴⁹ In 2003, for the first time a single budget of the CIS was adopted. The full implementation of a free-trade zone, transforming into a single economic sphere by 2010, had priority during CIS meetings in the early years of the 21st century. Even official

48 See Wolfgang Leonhardt, *Spiel mit dem Feuer. Russlands schmerzhafter Weg zur Demokratie*, Bergisch-Gladbach: Lübbe 1996, pp. 146 ff.; Marina Strezhneva, *Social Culture and Regional Governance. Comparison of the European Union and post-Soviet Experiences*, Commack: Nova Scotia Publishers 1999.

49 See www.cis.minsk.by/english/meet_cis.htm, p. 3.

documents stated that some member states were falling behind the early implementation of measures agreed upon by all CIS member states.

The need for more efficient foreign policy measures was another perennial issue for CIS. The conduct of joint anti-terrorist actions in all CIS countries echoed not only the change in the global arena since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the US, but also the ongoing bitter conflicts in the Northern Caucasus region. The existence of a CIS Commission on Human Rights did not help change the direction these conflicts took so far. CIS peacekeeping was developed early on and the first experiences with CIS peacekeeping missions were made in Tajikistan and in Abkhazia.⁵⁰

CIS structures remain intergovernmental well into the second decade of their existence. The Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government, including various ministerial councils, and Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, a Council of joint Border Troops Commanders and the Secretariat of the CIS are the most important bodies. The Secretariat of the “Commonwealth of Independent States” is based in Minsk, the capitol of Belarus. Although its functions were widened over time, like all CIS organs it lacks cohesive orders of competencies. Most important however is the uncertainty about the very concept on which CIS is based. While some countries still consider CIS as a mild “divorce” from Russia and a means to protect their fragile sovereignty, Russia considers the CIS as an instrument to project her ambitions of power throughout the post-Soviet sphere. The three Baltic republics Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined both the European Union and NATO in 2004, the only former Soviet republics with a definitely new geopolitical orientation. The future of all the other twelve former Soviet republic remains as unsettled as CIS itself.

CIS has surely contributed to the post-Soviet stabilization in the region. Its contributions to peacekeeping were noteworthy. Yet, it did not help in finding solutions to the worst ongoing ethnic rivalries and conflicts in the Northern Caucasus. CIS has supported the development of a common eco-

50 See Lena Jonson/Clive Archer (ed.), *Peacekeeping and the Role of Russia in Eurasia*, Boulder: Westview 1996; Yuri K. Nazarkin, *Peace-Keeping Operation in the CIS*, in: www.ieis.lu/books/future_role_of_russia/nazarkin.pdf.

conomic sphere in Eurasia, but it did not contribute to the stabilization of processes heading toward rule of law and democratic governance in a post-Soviet environment in which “democratization is a promise rather than a reality”.⁵¹ Foremost, the CIS member states have not concluded the ultimate goal of their endeavor. This shortcoming is related to the ongoing search for a new identity in post-Soviet Eurasia. While concepts of “Eurasianism” have rekindled since the end of the Soviet Union, others – most notably in the Ukraine, Russia, Georgia and – to a lesser degree – in Belarus, Moldova and Armenia – have favored a closer relationship with Europe, including the possibility of EU membership.⁵²

All in all, for the first one and half decades of its existence, CIS has remained weak and rather without authority as it has not been able to transform itself into the nucleus of a substantially supranational mechanism. While inter-state borders among CIS member states did not remain impermeable, new visa regimes were established between CIS member states, making the freedom of movement more difficult than during the time of the Soviet Union. As the quest for strengthened national sovereignty conflicted with the potential of regional cooperation and integration, it remained unclear whether or not the “Commonwealth of Independent States” – its name also contradicting the enormous economic depression and social decline in the region – was heading toward a new form of regional integration in Eurasia. It might retain a post-imperial function of state-building, at the end more comparable to failed post-colonial efforts of this kind in the Caribbean or in Africa than to the European Union’s experience with integration.

III. Europe and the Rest: Comparing notes

None of the non-European integration efforts has yet experienced a breakthrough toward supranationality equivalent to the European experience. In

51 Marina Strezhneva, *Social Culture and Regional Governance. Comparison of the European Union and Post-Soviet Experiences*, op.cit., p. 25.

52 For instance Dmitri Trenin, *The End of Eurasia. Russia on the Border between Geopolitics and Globalization*, Moscow: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2001.

order to do justice to the limited success of regional integration outside Europe, it is imperative to recall the time-line of the global proliferation of regional integration. Hardly any of the efforts outside Europe already has a history worth making final judgments, particularly in regard to its degree of long-term success or failure.

- The “Mercado Comun Centro Americano” MCCA was founded in 1960 and re-founded as “Central American System for Regional Integration” SICAM in 1993;
- The “Organization of African Unity”, OAU was founded in 1963 and re-founded as “African Union” in 2001;
- The “Association of South East Asian Nations”, ASEAN was founded in 1967;
- The “Pacto Andino” was founded in 1969 and re-founded as “Comunidad Andina de Naciones” in 1997;
- The “Caribbean Community” was founded in 1973 and re-founded in 2001;
- The “Economic Community of West African States”, ECOWAS was founded in 1975;
- The “South African Development Cooperation Council” was founded in 1980 and re-founded as “South African Development Community” in 1992;
- The “Gulf Cooperation Council” was founded in 1981;
- The “South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation” SAARC was founded in 1985;
- The “Mercado del Sur”, MERCOSUR was founded in 1991;
- The “Commonwealth of Independent States”, CIS was founded in 1991.

The life span of these schemes of regional cooperation and integration is too short to draw final conclusions concerning their relevance and long-term impact. Looking back to the history of five decades of European inte-

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gration, it would have been unhistorical to judge the European Union's ultimate fate by the stage of development of the European Economic Community in 1970, prior to even fully realizing its primary goal of customs union. Nobody can envisage the state of regional integration-formation in Central America by 2020, in the Gulf by 2030, in ASEAN by 2040 or in Africa by 2050. Yet, comparative remarks can be made already in the first decade of the 21st century. They must have two different focuses. On the one hand, one can ask as to how far key features that explain the success of European integration can be found elsewhere, and if only in embryonic form. On the other hand, the current state of regional cooperation and integration outside Europe can be compared taking into consideration the goals of each effort and the challenges each of the efforts has so far encountered.

Ten preliminary conclusions can be drawn that invite further research on comparative global regionalism.

1. There is no universally applicable theory of integration. No law of politics explains inevitable patterns toward regional integration. Contingent combinations of motives, context, goals, interests and potentials define every individual integration process. Evidently, it is not necessary to begin the path toward integration with supranational elements in order to make it possible to eventually reach this stage of integration. With the Pillar Structure of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union has shown that intergovernmental cooperation can plant the seed for later supranational integration. The journey in one or the other of the discussed integration schemes might take the same course. To pool sovereignty over time must not mean to begin with a pooling of sovereignty. One can get there at a later stage. The fact that none of the non-European integration schemes has begun with supranational elements does not justify the conclusion that they will never reach that stage which clearly distinguishes cooperative regional integration from economic and/or political integration, gradually binding the fate of partner states and societies together.

2. The assumption that regional integration continues according to consistent patterns of "spill-over" must not necessarily be true either. The non-European experience with integration suggests that functional integration

takes place notwithstanding the original purpose and orientation of integration schemes. It can, in fact, reach out into a new policy field, depending on political circumstances in a region and the challenge as defined by regional political leaders (ASEAN, MERCOSUR, SAARC, ECOWAS, GCC, AU). Non-European integration experience also suggests that renewed and intensified integration must not necessarily complete a chosen path along the model of European integration. It can leave some integration processes “unfinished” while embarking on a new set of integration policies. Non-European experience also testifies that integration can fail completely and lead to the dissolution of a seemingly well-established effort (such as in the East African Community). Non-European experience supports the European experience that processes of “deepening” integration efforts from the logic of economic integration to the sphere of foreign policy and security are not mutually exclusive with means to “widen” the integration community in order to achieve regional membership cohesion (ASEAN, CARICOM, SADC)

3. Non-European states are basically copying the traditional European notion of state-centered sovereignty (the “Westphalian state system”). As much as European states have encountered the limits of this concept and have embarked on the long process to overcome its constraints and flaws, most non-European states – with the United States as a certain exception – encountered the limits of their capacity as single states. In fact, they all contributed to our understanding of sovereignty as “organized hypocrisy” – which contains also a lesson for the United States.⁵³ Most non-European states concluded the need and usefulness of transnational cooperation and eventual supranational integration as the best possible answer to the limits of the Westphalian model. Motives remain mixed and approaches mostly inconclusive, and yet a general experience is evident in non-European efforts toward regional integration: The search for answers to specific economic, political or security challenges is increasingly geared toward regional responses. Formal pooling of sovereignty might come last, but the trend away from rigid state-centered solutions in order to meet the chal-

53 See Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999.

allenges individual states are encountering is obvious in all non-European schemes of regional integration building.

4. The most important conclusion from the non-European experience with integration building relates to the link between common political systems – and most notably: between common democratic systems – and advanced integration heading toward the possibility of shared sovereignty. The European experience underlines the conditions necessary to embark on the path for viable democratic transnational cooperation and supranational integration. Countries are inclined to bind their fate together only if they recognize the political system of their partners as equivalent to their own (GCC, MERCOSUR, SICAM). Dictatorships or authoritarian regimes might formally get together with democracies in an intergovernmental organization out of specifically defined common interests, but they will barely tolerate interference into their domestic affairs (ASEAN, SAARC, AU). As this is inevitably the ultimate consequence of pooled sovereignty, they remain reluctant to move from rhetorical integration to real integration. The more the partner countries of a regional integration scheme achieve regime cohesion among themselves, based on democratic governance and rule of law, the more likely it is that the integration process in a particular region can advance toward a better realization of its ambition and potential. Only cohesion between state sovereignty and popular sovereignty can pave the way to transnational trust and supranational pooling of sovereignties, affecting both state systems and the rights of people. As long as bilateral conflicts nurture mistrust in a region that is also divided by different political regimes, progress toward viable integration is unlikely (SAARC, ASEAN, SADC). Yet, the seeds of certain integration potential can already be planted, thus recognizing and awakening a growing regional awareness of its desirability and necessity.

5. The European experience with Franco-German partnership advancing the integration process while at the same time overcoming historical resentments and balancing ongoing structural differences between the two countries has been studied in non-European integration schemes. In the rare cases it was applied – and if even indirectly – it generated effects comparable to the European example of Franco-German cooperation (Argentina-

Brazil, Thailand-Vietnam). Widely spread in non-European regions is either the presence of one dominating regional power or the absence of a clearly and “naturally” defined “lead couple” (Saudi-Arabia, India, Nigeria, South Africa, Russia). Often it is therefore not obvious which countries could play the joint role of a locomotive for regional integration. In the absence of this possibility, regional integration remains largely reactive to challenges the whole region can recognize as common concern. The strong inclination toward excessively consensual decision making, which is typical in these cases of regional integration, is not supportive of efficient and speedy decision-making.

6. The pattern of regional integration in a non-European setting does not suggest particular clarity as far as the choice for priorities is concerned. In some cases, defense considerations have generated integration schemes that nevertheless were immediately embarking on economic measures to give substance to the regional perspective (GCC, ASEAN). In other cases, unfinished economic integration has not prevented the partners of a regional integration scheme from starting joint foreign and security policy considerations with their distinct logic and ramification (ASEAN, SAARC, ECOWAS, SADC, MERCOSUR). The weaker national political or economic sovereignty is, the weaker the inclination is – or the ability – to advance toward pooled sovereignty on the regional level. Strengthened national confidence, coupled with the recognition of the limits of state-capacity, can support integration efforts. Strong sovereignty in non-European developing countries – as rare as it exists – has not been automatically supportive of the notion of shared or pooled sovereignty with other partners, all the more if their domestic political system is different or even antagonistic (India, Russia).

7. The discourse about the relationship between integration and identity has not been limited to Europe. Also outside Europe, geographic proximity and traditional patterns of commerce have been identified as “cultural” elements favoring the logic of integration. Obvious cultural cohesion has been invoked in some cases of non-European regional integration, but it is astonishing that this invocation has not yet generated stronger integrative bonds (Latin America, GCC). More surprising however is the realization that

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enormous cultural differences do not necessarily impede the emergence of regional integration mechanisms (SAARC, ASEAN, CIS). Moreover, they can even transcend into an argument favoring regional consciousness, based on geographic proximity and cultural pluralism. Given their own inclination to define culture exclusively, some Europeans might believe that such multi-cultural circumstances are unfavorable to cooperation. Yet reality elsewhere proves such European perceptions wrong.

8. Most non-European integration efforts – as was the case in Europe – encountered substantial threats of failure, phases of stagnation, detours and obstacles that enforced a change of direction (SICAM, CAN, AU). As in Europe, a refocused and ultimately even stronger approach toward regional integration was usually driven by external challenge and pressure. Integration processes seem to depend somewhat on external pressure. It almost seems as if they can hope for “a second chance” whenever they exhaust their original internal commitment.

9. In Europe as elsewhere, processes of regional integration generate multi-lateral and, moreover, multi-vertical realities – both formal and informal – that impact on the member states of an integration scheme as much as they impact the path of the integration process itself. In Europe, it took several decades before EU member states began to thoroughly experience the impact of integration: Since the 1990s, most of them have begun to increasingly view integration as an intrusion into their domestic political structures. Non-European experiences with integration will most likely go through similar stages. In the end, this mechanism could turn out to be more important than a formal transfer of sovereignty. In fact, it would equal a non-overt, informal transfer of sovereignty. It could lead to pooled sovereignty not by choice, but by implication.

10. The effects of regional integration on the global state system and on political theory are only gradually emerging. The European experiment has generated a political form *sui generis*, followed by a notion of sovereignty *sui generis*, a notion of multi-level democracy and governance *sui generis*, multiple identities and an intuitively multilateral orientation in global af-

fairs.⁵⁴ Whether or not these trends will repeat themselves in the context of other regions remains to be seen. The more solidified non-European regional integration becomes, the more it will contribute to the evolution of a multi-polar world order, based on the roles of regions and continents with the United States, and in a different setting Australia and New Zealand, as the only undisputed examples of countries operating primarily on their own. This trend will also impact our understanding of political theory, most notably about norms of democratic governance, concepts of pooled sovereignty and notions of multiple identities.

The evolution of regional integration has become a global reality. Even Pacific Island countries have begun to consider the benefits of regional cooperation, and potentially of integration. The Pacific's independent "Forum Island Countries" (FIC) group with 14 member states has been evolving lately – not the least driven by prospects of a Pacific regional economic partnership agreement with the EU by 2008.⁵⁵

Interesting, but perhaps not surprising is the absence of efforts of regional integration-building in those two regions of the world that are at the heart of the most troubling world conflicts and embody the most critical zones of strategic insecurity in the world: the Greater Middle East and North East Asia. Both regions echo the mechanisms of outdated European power struggles (North East Asia) and unresolved issues of democratic nation- and state-building (Greater Middle East). Both regions are dominated by a "balance of suspicion", rooted in long-standing conflicts. In spite of North East Asia's share of 25 per cent of the global economy, the region lacks a strategic equilibrium based on a common system of cooperative security or on an interdependence-oriented system of economic integration. The Greater Middle East has been "discovered" as a region in the aftermath of the geo-strategic implications of Islamic terrorism and the fear of a proliferation of weapons of mass destruction linked to their brutal intentions. This regional concept has been framed in response to the absence of de-

54 See Ludger Kühnhardt, *Constituting Europe. Identity, Institution-Building and the Search for a Global Role*, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2003, pp. 225 ff.

55 See Martin Holland, *The European Union and the Third World*, Houndmills: Palgrave 2002.

mocracy and pluralism in the region between “Marrakech and Bangladesh”.⁵⁶ As in North East Asia, neither democratic regime cohesion nor shared understanding or interest in the potential benefits of regional cooperation and subsequent integration as a path of overcoming regional insecurity and political antagonisms exists yet in the Greater Middle East.

Instead, balance of mistrust governs the Greater Middle East and North East Asia to this day. And yet, also these parts of the world are increasingly perceived as regions at least. Analysts have begun to discuss elements of comparison between the geo-strategic stalemate in North East Asia and the European integration experience.⁵⁷ The search to apply EU experiences with integration to a post-conflict Middle East has also generated remarkable proposals while the world is still torn by the ongoing and seemingly irresolvable conflict.⁵⁸

The global proliferation of regional integration has spread the seeds of this process to all corners of the globe. Its ultimate result will not be judged merely by the growth in power of any of these integration schemes, although this will always be an important category for the realistic study of world order. The value of regional integration has to be judged in itself through the prism of the people and countries involved. No matter what the impact of regional integration on global power equations will be, both the people and countries involved own, shape and determine each particular the integration process and its effects. It is also in this regard that European integration experience – a Union of states and a Union of citizens – has

56 Ronald D. Asmus/Kenneth M. Pollack, *The New Transatlantic Project*, in: *Policy Review*, October 2002, available under: policyreview.org/OCT02/asmus.html; Ludger Kühnhardt, *System-Opening and Cooperative Transformation of the Greater Middle East. A New Transatlantic Project and a Joint Euro-Atlantic-Arab Task*, EUROMESCO Papers No. 26, Lisbon: Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission 2003; Thomas Scheffler, “Fertile Crescent”, “Orient”, “Middle East”: The Changing Mental Maps of Southwest Asia, in: *European Review of History*, No. 10-2/2003, pp. 253 ff.

57 See Christopher M. Dent/ David W.F. Huang (eds.), *Northeast Asian Regionalism. Learning from the European Experience*, London: Routledge 2002.

58 See Amichai Magen/Shlomo Shpiro, *Towards a Comprehensive Security Approach in the Middle East. Lessons from the European Experience in Justice and Home Affairs Cooperation*, Tel Aviv: The Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research 2003.

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served and will continue to serve as a precedent for other regions around the globe.

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