

Christophe Solioz

# Thinking the Balkans Out of the Box

EU Integration and Regional Cooperation –  
Challenges, Models, Lessons



Nomos



## **Southeast European Integration Perspectives**

Edited by

**Wolfgang Petritsch,**

former High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina  
and Special Envoy of the EU for Kosovo

**Christophe Solioz,**

Philosophy professor at the Collège de Genève

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	7
<i>List of Maps and Tables</i>	9
<i>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	11
<b>Bridging the Gap</b>	17
<i>Rethinking Integration and Regional Cooperation Together</i>	17
<i>Theoretical Framework</i>	21
<i>Organisation of the Book</i>	26
<b>Part 1. The EU Integration Process</b>	31
1.1. Outside, Inside and Between	33
<i>In the Age of Flex Lives</i>	33
<i>The Lost Momentum</i>	35
<i>Imbalance Between the Technical and Political Levels</i>	39
<i>From Lisbon Onwards</i>	43
<i>What Should be Done Need not Wait</i>	45
1.2. Breaking the Chains of Weariness	49
<i>The EU: With Divides or Flexibility?</i>	49
<i>A New EU in a New World Order</i>	53
<i>Enlargement: Wider or/and Deeper?</i>	56
<i>Enlargement: Who, When and How</i>	58
<b>Part 2. SEE in a Broader Framework</b>	65
2.1. See Regional Levels in Europe	67
<i>Conceptualizing Region and Regionalism</i>	67
<i>Europe's Multiple Regional Groupings</i>	78
<i>Euro-regions in the Framework of the Council of Europe</i>	84
<i>Territorial Cooperation in the Framework of the EU</i>	90

Contents

2.2.	SEE Region-ness “Under Construction”	105
	<i>SEE: from State-Building to Region-ness</i>	105
	<i>Multiple Regionalisms in South East Europe</i>	112
	<i>Region-ness in Wider Europe</i>	121
2.3.	SEE the Bigger Picture	133
	<i>The Necessity of a Comprehensive Framework</i>	135
	<i>Structural Challenges in SEE</i>	142
	<i>Going Regional</i>	151
	<b>Part 3. Thinking, Venturing Beyond</b>	157
	Conclusion. Rethinking the New World Order	159
	<i>A New Copernican Revolution</i>	160
	<i>Visualising the New World Order</i>	163
	<i>Another BRIC(k) in The Wall</i>	168
	<i>The China Dream</i>	170
	<i>Rethinking Regionalism Away from “Western Values”?</i>	172
	<i>Learning from Athens</i>	174
	<i>Bibliography</i>	177

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Geneva, 28 August 2017

# List of Tables and Maps

## Tables

1. Modernisation process and the three modern revolutions	22
2. Old, new and comparative regionalism	23
3. SEE countries on the road to Brussels	42
4. Two waves of regionalism	72
5. Territorial cooperation in the framework of the CoE	79
6. Territorial cooperation in the framework of the EU	80
7. Taxonomy identifying six conceptual frames of regionalism	81
8. Overview on Interreg (1988–2020)	90
9. The three strands of Interreg	92
10. Interreg V 2014–2020	93
11. Scales and territories of regional cooperation	94
12. General levels of region-ness	98
13. SP and RCC at a glance	115
14. RCC's partnerships with regional initiatives in key areas	117
15. Institutions and networks targeting the region-level	138

## Maps

1. Europe of variety	78
2. Cooperation forums and cross-border working communities	83
3. Cross-border cooperation programmes 2014–2020	96
4. Regional performance groups (2016)	97
5. SEE transnational cooperation in the framework of Interreg IVB	100
6. IPA II cross-border programme (2014–2020)	103
7. ENP Cross-borders programmes (2014–2020)	123
8. Transnational cooperation programmes involving SEE	136
9. Tabula Regionum Europae	137



## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEBR	Association of European Border Regions
AER	Assembly of European Regions
AFSJ	Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
AI	Adriatic-Ionian Initiative
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
BRESCE	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
BRICSAM	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Mexico
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BTTC	Brics Think Tank Council
CADSES	Central European, Adriatic, Danubian, South-Eastern European Space
CAP	Center for Applied Policy Research
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Democratisation and Stabilisation
CBC	cross-border cooperation
CBR	cross-border regions
CCSI	Centre de Contacts Suisses-Immigrés, Geneva
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CEI	Central European Initiative
CEIS	Center for European Integration Strategies, Geneva
CiO	chairmanship-in-office
CLRAE	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CoE	Council of Europe
COMECOM	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSDP	Common Security and Defense policy
CSO	civil society organisation
DAI	Dinaric Arc Initiative

*List of Abbreviations and Acronyms*

EEA	European Economic Area
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECNC	European Centre for Nature Conservation
EFB	European Balkan Fund
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERICarts	European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research
ERGEG	European Regulators' Group for electricity and gas
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI	European Stability Initiative
ESS	European Security Strategy
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina
EULEX	European Union Rule-of-Law Mission in Kosovo
EUPM	European Union Police Mission in Bosnia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations
FDI	foreign direct investment
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FTA	free trade agreement
GAMA	Citizens' Action for Peace
GDP	gross domestic product
GFAP	General Framework Agreement for Peace
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
hCa	Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Community
IBM	integrated border management
ICAN	International Contemporary Arts Network
ICESS	International Conference on Education and Social Science
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

IUCN	International Union for Conservation Union
IDP	internally displaced person
IETM	International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts
IFI	International financial institution
ILECUs	International Law Enforcement Coordination Units
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	Institute for International Relations, Zagreb
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JHAE	JHA external dimension
KFOR	NATO-led Kosovo Force
MANS	Network for the Affirmation of the NGO Sector
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MedPO	Mediterranean Program Office of WWF
MERCOSUR	Common Southern Market
MFF	Motovun International Film Festival
MLG	multi-level governance
MMA	monitoring, mentoring and advising
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
ND	Northern Dimension
NDEP	Northern Dimension environmental Partnership
NIS	Newly Independent States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NUNS	Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NRA	New Regionalism Approach
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSI	Open Society Institute

*List of Abbreviations and Acronyms*

PED	EULEX Police Executive Department
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies
PISG	provisional institutions of self-government
PJC	Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PROSECO	Public Prosecutors' Network
RBA	Region Building Approach
RCA	revealed comparative advantages
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
R&D	research and development
REC	Regional Environmental Centre
RECOM	Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes and Other Gross Violations of Human Rights Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia
RoK-FOR	Regions of Knowledge for Forestry
ROSTE	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Technology
RTA	regional trading agreement
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAM	South Africa and Mexico
Sap	Stabilisation and Association Process
SECI	Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
SEDM	Southeast European Defence Ministerial
SEE	South East Europe/European
SEEBRIG	South Eastern Europe Brigade
SEECF	South East European Cooperation Process
SEEI	Southeast European Initiative
SEER	South East Europe revue – Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe
SEEPAG	Southeast European Prosecutors Advisory Group
SELEC	Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre
SDC1	Swiss Development Cooperation
SCCA	Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SIPA	State Investigation and Protection Agency
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SP	Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
SPAI	Stability Pact Anti-corruption Initiative
SPOC	Stability Pact Initiative against Organised Crime

SSR	Security sector reform
SWFs	Sovereign wealth funds
TFC/CBC	Transfrontier / cross-border cooperation
UCTE	Coordination of the Transmission of Electricity
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UJDI	Association for the Yugoslav Democratic Initiative
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UPS	United Power Systems
VG	Visegrád Group
WISC	World International Studies Committee
wiiw	Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies
WOA	World Order Approach
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
WWII	World War II





# Bridging the Gap

## *Rethinking Integration and Regional Cooperation Together*

EU Integration and the enlargement processes are widely perceived as an unprecedented success story. Nevertheless, after the 2004 “big bang”, which brought in ten new members, followed by the 2007 membership of Romania and Bulgaria, enthusiasm for enlargement, and, where many were concerned, even for Europe as such, largely vanished.

Despite the rhetoric and the many conferences with their (self-) reassuring statements and promises, accession prospects seem unambiguously bleak for South East Europe (SEE) countries. The enthusiasm and political will have evaporated, and, most crucially, the EU policy and strategies have failed to acknowledge the emerging new world order.

But really has nothing changed in the last two decades?

- On the one hand, no: Slovenia (May 2004) and Croatia (July 2013) have become full-fledged EU member-states.
- But on the other, yes: the other SEE countries remain in the EU’s waiting room.

Resistances to rethinking and renewing European strategies for South East Europe can be traced back to the first EU–Western Balkans Summit, held in November 2000 in Zagreb. After the second EU–Western Balkans Summit organised in the framework of the Thessaloniki European Council (June 2003), the Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP) identified that progress regarding South East Europe had reached a stumbling block and called therefore for a “determined rethinking and a renewal of European strategies for South Eastern Europe”.<sup>1</sup>

It is important, however, to include another dimension: further completing the EU integration process would certainly be a way to renew the pan-European dynamic and thus also to reconnect with and renew “early regionalism” (see below). As we will discuss, a pan-European vision sets the bilateral and multilateral issues, as well as regional integration and cooperation, in a coherent and significant framework for an efficient development of economic, political and cultural cooperation (see Chapter 2.3). Additionally, a pan-regional approach such as this represents a bold vision

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1 Centrum für angewandte Politikforschung, *The Next Europe: Southeastern Europe after Thessaloniki* (Munich: CAP, 2003), p. 1.

for South East Europe, and also for Europe as a whole. Fredrik Söderbaum recalls the main features of pan-regional movements:

Pan-regional movements were usually motivated by a mixture of geopolitical, socio-economic, cultural (sometimes even racial) and, to some extent, functional beliefs and goals. They were multidimensional and reflected shared ideas and goals of political and intersocietal unity rather than intergovernmental regionalism in a more narrow sense.<sup>2</sup>

It would be a mistake to think “early regionalism” is outdated. Today’s Organisation of American States (OAS) can be traced back to the 1889–90 regional cooperation in the Americas. It is the oldest still working organisation of this kind in the world. Thus, albeit rebranded, pan-regional movements may become relevant in the new world order (see Part 3).

Encompassing the years 2000 through to 2017, the first aim of this book is to focus on two intertwined processes: the EU integration and the regional cooperation in their relation to SEE. Obviously, the nexus between both is as complex as it is manifold. It is thus crucial to envision a framework that encompasses the multi-layered structure of regional cooperation and EU integration.

The following key issues will be discussed throughout this volume:

- ⇒ in the view of the EU, “regional cooperation” is a key to, and a formal conditionality for, EU integration;
- ⇒ both, in SEE, are more top-down than ground-up driven processes;<sup>3</sup>
- ⇒ both are widely perceived in SEE as exogenous products (push factor), and so there is an obvious lack of regional “joint ownership”;
- ⇒ both encompass a set of dimensions: politics, economics, security and culture;
- ⇒ both refer to different scalar processes and strategies active at different levels;
- ⇒ but they differ inasmuch as EU-integration specifically addresses the state-level while regional cooperation processes may involve provinces and regions (micro-regions), and/or states, and/or various (part of) states (macro-regions).

These are some of the typical issues broadly discussed, but most of the

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2 Fredrik Söderbaum, *Rethinking Regionalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016), p. 20.

3 For an effective ground-up approach, see the volume (focusing on the Scandinavian countries) edited by Herald Baldersheim, Ave Vergard Haug and Morten Øgaard, *The Rise of The Networking Region* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011).

scholars tend to split what I consider to be intrinsically linked. The gap between the EU and regionalism studies, as well as between their respective scholars, may partly explain this.

Furthermore, while in South East Europe, “integration” is almost exclusively related to the European Union accession process, the term ought instead to be understood in a much broader sense, as a process that establishes, confirms and deepens the EU membership. Here “territorial cooperation”, intended as partnerships established between the regional or local authorities of one state and the equivalent authorities in one or more other states, plays a key role in the perspective of a qualitative integration strategy. The New Regionalism Approach (NRA) — developed from the mid-1980s on, notably by the seminal work of Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum — offers an adapted conceptual framework in its advocacy of a multi-layered and comprehensive understanding of regionalism, which is not bound to the Westphalian state-centred approach. The NRA, further developed in the framework of the “comparative regionalism”, highlights a multi-dimensional and pluralistic type of regionalism, as well as new institution designs and the active role of non-state actors.

Additionally, we have to consider that many regional cooperation initiatives involve at the state level countries (or regions belonging to states) that are not yet EU member-states and are also non-EU countries. Accordingly, regional cooperation programmes had been developed from the mid-2000s on in the respective frameworks of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (2006) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (2007). Regional cooperation thus developed specific programmes treating in a different way both “internal borders” — separating adjoining territories of (forthcoming) member states — and “external borders” — delimiting member states from non-EU countries. The former anticipate and accompany the accession process of incoming EU member-states, while the latter play a substantial role in “managing” the new “East–West” divide.

Nothing is really new here. Since its early stages, regional cooperation and integration had been largely related to reconstruction and reconciliation as illustrated by the following milestones that belong to the “old regionalism” era (see Table 2, p. 23): the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, of the Common Market in 1957, of the German–Dutch Euregio and of the European Economic Community (Treaty of Rome) in 1958, of the Regio Basiliensis and of the Franco–German reconciliation (Elysée–Treaty) in 1963.

The key element in the next stage — which corresponds to the “new regionalism” phase initiated by the White Paper on internal markets (1985), the Single European Act (1986), and the fall of the Berlin Wall

(1989) — was the EU's regional policy reform in 1998: the European commission assigned a key role to regional, more specifically to cross-border, cooperation in the task of European integration. Accordingly, the community initiative Interreg (see Chapter 2.1) was introduced in 1990 and became instrumental both in economic growth and territorial cohesion. After the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon, territorial cohesion became a strategic goal of EU regional policy, and regional cooperation became an integral part of EU integration policy. Thus, integration also becomes effective in the framework of the comprehensive territorial cooperation policy that encompasses a set of three strands or schemes: first, Cross-border cooperation (local cooperation between neighbouring regions separated by a frontier); second, Transnational cooperation (cooperation over large areas); and, third, inter-regional cooperation (pan-European networked cooperation) (see Tables 8 and 9, p. 90 and p. 92).

Obviously, the geopolitical upheaval in 1989 intensified and deepened the linkage between integration and regional cooperation. Euroregions, created in the early 1990s, spanned and linked East and West territories, contributing notably to speeding up the path of Central and Eastern European countries towards accession. Meanwhile, the regional cooperation schemes also play a security role in "Wider Europe". In the view of then President of the European commission Romano Prodi, they constitute "a ring of friends surrounding the union".<sup>4</sup> They are thus tools for a "soft power" management of EU's external borders. In the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), they were supposed to replace the Cold War order, ensuring democratic stability on the EU periphery. Nowadays, of course, in a very different geopolitical context, the ENP is taking on new dimensions.<sup>5</sup>

The focus on the above-mentioned linkage must nevertheless not overshadow the main differences. While the interstate level and bilateral relations matter in the framework of European integration, for the most part local and regional stakeholders are involved in regional cooperation. Of course, their respective goals have a different magnitude: compare the "ever closer union among the peoples of Europe" (Schuman Declaration,

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4 Romano Prodi, "A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as the key to stability" (Brussels, 5-6 December 2002). Speech at the Sixth ECSA-World Conference available at: <europa.eu> (Accessed on 16 April 2017).

5 See the volume edited by Sieglinde Gstöhl, *The European Neighbourhood Policy in a Comparative Perspective* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); and our discussion in the Chapter 2.1 and Part 3. Note that the special cases of Norway and Switzerland are, as result of their geographical location and particular relationship with the EU, integrated into the Interreg programmes.

1950) with the practical solutions to border problems. Accordingly, the tools vary: unique Community law versus different national legal frameworks. Finally, both are evolving in a different way: while strengthening of the institutions and spatial expansion are the hallmarks of EU integration, singularity and diversity characterise regional cooperation. And last but not least, they have quite a diverse visibility: respectively high versus low.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Methodologically speaking, I refer to three distinct and heterogeneous, yet nonetheless interconnected, areas — in which I have been active over the last thirty years. These draw on: first, a narrative corpus (administrative documents, review reports, non-papers); second, forums of discussion (seminars, conferences, etc.) and, third, publication networks (thematic reviews, Internet forums, informal networks). By comparing the dynamism, flexibility and interconnectivity between the above-mentioned areas in the fields, on the one hand, of architecture and urbanism and, on the other hand, of integration and regionalism, we may observe that the latter are less permeable and flexible, specifically in SEE. For the former, meanwhile, plasticity and porosity characterise these areas, along with the consented flow of information, projects, practitioners and scholars, with the same persons being subsequently or simultaneously active in various areas.<sup>6</sup>

For the French urbanist Ascher, this corresponds to a global trend, a new phase of society that he identifies as the “hypertext society”: After the classical, community-based society and the industrial, Fordist-Keynesian-based society, the hypertext society characterises a third revolution (see Table 1, p. 22). The hypertext metaphor reflects a layered organisation of society, an  $n$ -dimension space, where people belong simultaneously to different layers and shift with ever greater ease from one to another. Indeed, people belong simultaneously to different layers of society, and shift more and more readily from one to another. Nowadays, social links might weaken, but they are considerably enhanced: social relations, which are indeed more fragile, are more numerous and more subject to change.<sup>7</sup>

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6 As for urbanism, an excellent insight is provided by Alain Bourdin and Joël Idt (eds.), *L'urbanisme des modèles* (La Tour d'Aigues: Editions de l'Aube, 2016).

7 See François Ascher, *Les nouveaux principes de l'urbanisme* (La Tour d'Aigues: Editions de l'Aube, 2010), pp. 43–51.

Table 1: Modernisation process and the three modern revolutions

	<b>Community</b>	<b>Industrial society</b>	<b>Hypertext society</b>
Social ties	few not diversified stable strong	more diversified scalable becoming specific	many highly diversified direct, fragile specific
Solidarity	mechanic	organic	commutative
Social territory	autarkic close locally driven	integrated national-based	open multiple shifting local and global real and virtual
Paradigm	belief tradition destiny authority	universal reason functionality representative democracy	complexity uncertainty flexibility self-governance
Action	repetitive	rational	reflexive
Regulation	custom chief	state laws	subsidiarity partnership public opinion
Economics	agriculture	industrial	cognitive
Culture	local	socio-professional	hybrid
Urbanism	town	industrial city	metapolis
Institutions	parish canton nation-state	central administration welfare state alliances treaties	countries regions welfare state international organisations NGO

Source: François Ascher, *Les nouveaux principes de l'urbanisme* (La Tour d'Aigues: Editions de l'Aube, 2010), p. 66–67. Adapted and translated by the author.

Table 2: Old, new and comparative regionalism

	<b>Old regionalism</b>	<b>New regionalism</b>	<b>Comparative regionalism</b>
Context	Post–World War II and Cold War (Europe)  Bipolarity but also post-colonialism provided context (developing world)	Post–Cold War  Globalization and neoliberalism  Unstable multilateralism  Transformation of the nation-state	Multipolar and multiplex world order  War on terror  Financial crises  Rise of BRICS and emerging powers
Linkage	Regional integration beyond the nation-state (Europe) Development and nation-building (developing world)	Regionalism seen as resisting, taming or advancing economic globalization	Regional governance part of multi-layered global governance
Sectors Actors Forms	Sector specific  Formal and states-led regionalism through regional organizations	Multi-sectorial or specialized  State vs. non-state actors  Regionalism vs. regionalization	State and non-state actors grouped in formal and informal forms of organization in growing number of sectors
Epistemology	Dominance of positivism, rationalism and materialism	Rationalism vs. constructivism  Epistemological conflict	Epistemological pluralism  Emerging dialogues
Methodology	Europe-focused Rigid comparison	Regional specialisation vs. false universalism  Comparison as parallel case studies	Increasing comparison  Emergence of non-Eurocentric comparative regionalism

Source: adapted by the author from Fredrik Söderbaum, “Early, Old, New and Comparative Regionalism,” *KFG Working Paper*, (2015) 64, p. 23.



Flexibility is thus a key argument in “neo urbanism” as conceptualized by Ascher.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the process of standardisation shifts, in the “neo urbanism” approach, from being a means of mass-production and spatial expansion (as conceived in the framework of a neoliberal functional, bureaucratic and static approach), to being a means of change and combination. Flexible and highly reactive projects, involving a wide range of “drivers for change” constantly involved in reflexion and negotiation, increase joint ownership, reinvigorate local democracy, foster “communitative solidarity” — in that they relate people and organisations that belong to a multiplicity of interconnected networks (this matters particularly in the context of a new world order, see our discussion pp. 174–175) — and, last but not least, open new ways of thinking politics.

A closer look at Ascher’s approach highpoints similarities structuring neo-urbanism and comparative regionalism: both can be defined as open, multidimensional and collaborative systems; for both, the changing world order context matters. Ascher’s emphasised social mutations imply significant changes in the conception, production and administration of territories. The same applies to regionalism. As Björn Hettne put it: “A new world order thus implies a new type of regionalism”.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Ascher’s distinction between community, industrial and hypertext society (see Table 1, p. 22) fits for the most part with the distinction between four subsequent phases in the development of regionalism: early, old, new and comparative regionalism.

It makes sense to briefly mention how the three key differences between “old” and “new” regionalism were seen and formulated when the New Regionalism Approach was first formulated by Hettne (1994):

- (1) Whereas the old regionalism was formed in a bipolar Cold War context, the new is taking shape in a more multipolar world order.
- (2) Whereas the old regionalism was created from outside and from “above” (i.e., by the superpowers), the new is a more spontaneous process from within and “from below” (in the sense that the constituent states themselves are the main actors).
- (3) Whereas the old regionalism was specific with regard to objectives, the new is a more comprehensive, multidimensional process.<sup>10</sup>

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8 Ascher, instead of using the concept of “new urbanism”, introduced the concept of “neo-urbanism”. As for the discussion of the ten new principles of urbanism, see Ascher, *Les nouveaux principes de l’urbanisme*, pp. 95–120.

9 Björn Hettne, “The New Regionalism: Implication for Development and Peace,” in Björn Hettne and András Inotai, *The New Regionalism: Implications for Global Devloepment and Internationl Security* (Helsinki: UNU/WIDER, 1994), p 4.

10 Björn Hettne, “The New Regionalism”, pp. 1–3.

Following Fredrik Söderbaum's synthesis, Table 2 (p. 23) traces the intellectual roots and main characteristics of three types of regionalism — first outlining the context and polity content (links between national, regional and global governance; and sectors, actors and forms of organisation) and, second, focusing on the modes of knowledge production and methodology.<sup>11</sup>

This framework, insisting on the influence of the political context and of different theoretical standpoints, should be handled in a smooth way. First, the various phases are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Thus, whenever possible, they should be interconnected. For example:

The inclusion of the section on early regionalism serves to draw attention to the deep roots of and diverse trajectories of regionalism preceding the era of old regionalism. Among other things, early regionalism underlines the interaction rather than the competition between regionalist and statist ideas, and at least in some respects this resembles more recent debates about multilayered global governance.<sup>12</sup>

Second, the same complementary approach should apply to the richness of theorizing regionalism. There are of course many ways to consider regions and regionalism. Considering various theories is indispensable as they provide a useful toolbox for a critical analysis of different regional schemes and are instrumental in overcoming the binary conceptualisations (state versus non-state actors, formal versus informal regionalisms, etc.). Often their differences refer to different aspects of regionalism, as Söderbaum has highlighted:

For instance, structural analysis may be more plausible when the research focus is put on the role of regions in world-order transformation, whereas, a stronger emphasis on agency is necessary for a better explanation of agencies and micro-processes on the ground.<sup>13</sup>

Considering the emerging regional architecture of world politics, Amitav Acharya provides another interesting illustration of complementarity in the framework of the discussion on how regions respond to powers in the new world order. Acharya calls

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11 See Söderbaum, *Rethinking Regionalism*, pp. 16–35; and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Early, Old, New and Comparative Regionalism,” *KFG Working Paper*, (2015) 64.

12 Söderbaum, *Rethinking Regionalism*, p. 30.

13 Söderbaum, *Ibidem*. In the same book, Chapter 3 “Learning from Theory” reviews the main theories and competing approaches to regionalism (pp. 36–61).

for balancing the top-down and powercentric analytical prism [...] with an agency-oriented perspective that acknowledges local resistance to, and socialization of, powerful actors and attests to the endogenous construction of regions.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, despite my affection for complementarity, my reflections are clearly rooted in reflectivists<sup>15</sup> and in constructivist scholarship — focusing on how social interaction influences region-building — as well as in the comparative regionalism inasmuch it implies a stronger emphasis on the political dimensions. Taken together, they provide in my view a deeper understanding of regionalism and region-building, and, last but not least, deliver tailored concepts for understanding the emerging reality of a new world order (see Part 3).

### *Organisation of the Book*

The volume is structured as follows. Part 1 focuses on the EU integration process. Chapter 1 reviews the tortuous path to EU membership being experienced by countries from South East Europe,<sup>16</sup> and insists on the necessity both of consolidating the achievements of previous integrations and of grappling with the implications of the “truly new” European project in which it is engaged. Accordingly, a “new strategic thinking” is needed.

The first chapter goes on to set out how momentum was lost in the 2000s and the factors which explain “enlargement fatigue” and the EU’s “period of reflection”. The gloomy mood has led to a gap between achievements in technical terms and the political will required to respond, as well as a deepening of the demands placed on the countries of South East Europe.

The conclusion calls for a “member state-building strategy” based on delivering a more promising prospect of EU membership accompanied by specific strategies to address issues of development and growth, within the framework of a regional cohesion programme favouring social inclusion.

Chapter 2 highlights how the post-1945 system has run its course and how a new world order is about to emerge.<sup>17</sup> Disarray is being nurtured in

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14 Amitav Acharya, “The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics,” *World Politics*, 59 (2007) 4, p. 630.

15 “Reflectivists” refers to various theories, such as critical theory, post-structuralism, post-modernism and new regionalism approaches.

16 Based on Christophe Solioz, “The Long and Winding Road,” *SEER*, 13 (2010) 3, pp. 299–311.

17 Based on Christophe Solioz, “The EU: Breaking the Chains of Weariness,” *SEER*,

particular by an increasingly multiplex world order, by the tricky “mission impossible” of intervening and protecting, by the never-ending “war on terror”, by the recurrent financial crises, and by the rise of the BRICS (thus Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and other emerging powers that question stability. This new and rather explosive background does not signal the end of the EU, but provides evidence that its core features must be redesigned and reach out to broad popular support. A long-term vision and strategy to cope with the challenges of the twenty-first century is now urgently needed — key issues that are further discussed in the conclusive part of the chapter and in Part 3.

To state the obvious, in this new context the EU enlargement must assume a new profile. First, the over-emphasised trade-off between widening and deepening must be deconstructed. Second, enlargement needs to be a planned political goal, and not a confused mixture of technical criteria which become harder and harder to meet. Third, the “regatta principle”, which is counterproductive and short on results, should be replaced by a redesigned “caravan approach”. Fourth, a conditionality package should be prioritised and, as for previous candidates, proactive handling of exemptive differentiation and transitional arrangements should be introduced. Last but not least, the EU must accept that open questions will be resolved only within the framework of the EU, and will thus require an “integration follow-up” mechanism targeting these issues.

Part 2 of the volume focuses on regionalisms in South East Europe. The first two chapters are based on joint work, as part of an intense collaboration with Paul Stubbs.<sup>18</sup> Until now, regional cooperation in SEE has been largely ascribed by outside forces, perceived merely as a condition of the EU integration process, and approached solely from a state-based view-point as an inter-state construct. Regional cooperation must be redesigned in the framework of “comparative regionalism”: it must be achieved more from within, encompassing multi-actor, multi-level and multi-scalar processes that form a complex geometry of interlocking networks, with variable reach and multiple nodal points.

Viewing South East Europe through a lens of “comparative regiona-

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17 (2014) 2, pp. 153–165. The paper was first presented in Rome on 8 October 2014 at the international conference “The Western Balkans: The Futures of Integration” organised by the NATO Defense College Foundation, in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Balkan Trust for Democracy.

18 See Christophe Solioz and Paul Stubbs, “Regionalisms in South East Europe and Beyond,” in Paul Stubbs and Christophe Solioz (eds.), *Towards Open Regionalism in South East Europe* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, Southeast European Integration Perspectives vol. 6, 2012), pp. 11–48.

lism” prefigures a framework in which SEE, in its variable geometry, is seen as a key part of pan-European space. The time is clearly ripe for analysis which addresses regional cooperation as more than mere EU conditionality, necessitating a move away from an exclusive focus on interstate and donor-driven processes. In “networked regionalisation”, tensions between political, technocratic, and civic claims and approaches to governance do not disappear but, rather, are reconfigured in interesting and innovative ways at various scales.

With a multiplication of nodes, an increasingly complex geometry of regionalisation and, above all, a thickening of networks, “comparative regionalism” provides a welcome multidisciplinary approach that captures a complex and rapidly evolving landscape. As neo-urbanism, “comparative regionalism” attempts to address the tensions and possibilities in the spaces between global, regional, national and local processes; between regional conditionalities and sub-regional “joint ownership”; and, above all, between dominant politics and everyday realities, resistances and recalcitrance.

The last chapter of Part 2 focuses on the pan-European dimension and views South Eastern Europe resolutely in a broader, pan-European perspective, examining the different stages of the European integration process, also taking into account the transformational achievements of the particular countries of the region.<sup>19</sup> It shows that, since the mid-2000s, regional cooperation in SEE is both a key issue and at a crossroads.

Avoiding the short-term horizon, this chapter encompasses diverse regional cooperation approaches, notably the pan-regional movements belonging to the “early regionalism”, and others, shaped by the current diverse and contradictory world order, belonging to the “comparative regionalism” paradigm. The chapter illustrates how some regional initiatives, like the 1961 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), may well have been initiated in the era of “old regionalism” (1950s–1970s) but were later renewed during the “new regionalism” period (late 1980s–1990s), often with expanded membership and adapted tasks.

Taking the challenges of our disruptive era into account, “Thinking, Venturing Beyond” (Part 3) moves resolutely beyond the Balkans and Europe to consider integration and territorial processes in a much broader perspective that, on the one hand, reloads neglected policy analyses and,

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19 Based on “Rethinking Southeastern Europe through a Pan-European Perspective,” *SEER*, 10 (2007) 2, pp. 67–80; later re-published in Wolfgang Petritsch and Christophe Solioz (eds.), *Regional Cooperation in South East Europe and Beyond: Challenges and Prospects* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2008), pp. 159–184.

on the other, calls for new ones. Already, in previous turning points in modern history, we can acknowledge as Hannah Arendt suggests in her essay “Understanding and Politics”:

the great change took place within a political framework whose foundations were no longer secure and therefore overtook a society which, although it was still able to understand and to judge, could no longer give an account of its categories of understanding and standards of judgment when they were seriously challenged.<sup>20</sup>

Nowadays, in a world that stands at a crossroads, about to enter a new era, we similarly experiencing the loss of the capacity for political action, the loss of the quest for meaning and the need for understanding. As Arendt highlights, “within the framework of preconceived categories [...] events in the sense of something irrevocably new can never happen”.<sup>21</sup> We are attempting here to consider the emerging new world order in the way Arendt reflected on “event” and “action”, conceived not as an execution of laws or an application of rules or any other managing activity, but instead as “the beginning of something new whose outcome is unpredictable”.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, understanding becomes the other side of action:

namely, that form of cognition, distinct from many others, by which acting men (and not men who are engaged in contemplating some progressive or doomed course of history) eventually can come to terms with what irrevocably happened and be reconciled with what unavoidably exists.<sup>23</sup>

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20 Hannah Arendt, “Understanding and Politics,” *Essays in Understanding 1930–54* (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), p. 316; essay originally published in *Partisan Review*, 20 (1953) 4, pp. 377–392.

21 Arendt, “Understanding and Politics”, pp. 319–320.

22 Last Draft of an unpublished lecture, originally delivered to the American Political Science Association in 1954, published as Hannah Arendt, “Concern with Politics in Recent European Philosophical Thought,” *Essays in Understanding 1930–1954* (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), p. 429.

23 Arendt, “Understanding and Politics”, pp. 321–322.