Chapter 1

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE
FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The point of focus of this chapter is the growing importance of regions in international relations. The chapter adopts an institutional social constructivist approach, wherein international regions are considered the political constructs of states. After a discussion of both the advantages and the shortcomings of the complementary concepts of ‘regional integration’ and ‘regional cooperation,’ the chapter then argues that the concept of ‘regional governance’ is the most adequate term for capturing the variations in regionalism. Regional governance is a sufficiently broad and flexible concept that it can be satisfactorily used to grasp the variable interaction patterns between different regional organizations. Since most regions feature more than just one regional organization, these institutions will often overlap with regard to their mandates and/or membership – which can lead to either conflict or cooperation. With the objective in mind of systematizing the study of the interaction patterns between regional organizations, the chapter develops an analytical scheme and a taxonomy to differentiate between various types of regional governance – synergistic, cooperative, conflictive and segmented.

1. REGIONS AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Regions and regionalism have by now become important features of world politics, specifically in a multipolar international system wherein the West is only one region of a ‘decentred globalism’ (Buzan, 2011) constituted of several regional cores (or ‘regional worlds’; Acharya, 2014, 79-105). In this context, it is important to understand how regions

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are politically organized and governed, because both the concept of ‘region’ and the institutional architecture of a given region are closely interlinked. As Herz indicates, ‘the term “region” in fact originates from the idea of rule, as in regere, command, and we shall be looking into regions as the locus for the production of norms, public policy, and dispute mechanisms as a result of the choices by governing elites in the countries that form the region’ (2014: 237).

While regions are porous social entities (Katzenstein, 2005) open to external influence through processes of norm diffusion or through the foreign policies of great powers, local actors meanwhile can use regional organizations to create rules – with a view to protecting their autonomy from dominance or abuse by more powerful actors (Acharya, 2011). Regional organizations can make a region less porous by functioning as filters between the region and the international system (including global governance structures). The creation of regional organizations constitutes and consolidates a region, inasmuch as these institutions give the region an identity (or ‘actorness’). One might label this approach ‘institutional social constructivism,’ wherein international regions are seen as the political constructions of nation-states (Powers & Goertz, 2011: 2388).

A regional organization can be defined ‘as an international organization composed of three or more geographically proximate states having a continuous institutional framework’ (Marks et al., 2014: 7). Regional organizations delimit the region as a subsystem within the overarching international one, and serve to structure the relations between states within the region. From this perspective, regional organizations have two specific functions: they manage regional externalities (which could be related to trade, security or other issue areas) and/or articulate the common interests of the region to actors situated outside of it. The same institutions can alternatively also be used either as instruments of regional cooperation or as ones of discrimination and exclusion vis-à-vis other states.

There have been two waves of regionalism in the post-World War II period thus far (Goltermann et al., 2012; Mansfield & Milner, 1999). The more recent one of these started in the 1990s, and has been characterized by a proliferation of regional and sub-regional organizations. Most regions feature more than one regional organization. Often, these are complementary and perform different functions. Some are sub-organizations of other or broader regional organizations. However, regional organizations can also overlap (for Africa, see De Lombaerde, 2011: 37; Genna & De Lombaerde, 2010: 591–592; for Latin America, Malamud, 2013; Malamud & Gardini, 2012; Weiffen et al., 2013) with regard to mandates and membership (see Weiffen et al., 2013). The proliferation and overlapping of regional organizations is frequently described with, and symbolized by, the metaphor of a spaghetti

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1 As former Brazilian foreign minister Celso Amorim once claimed, with regard to the creation of the Union of South American Nations (the acronym for it in Spanish/Portuguese is UNASUR/Unasul), ‘Unasul [UNASUR] has given South America a face’ (2010: 229–230).

2 ‘Regions are not defined by geography per se, but through the decisions of state leaders to create institutions within a limited geographical area, typically contiguous states, to deal with a variety of economic, social, and political problems’ (Powers & Goertz, 2011: 2388).

3 This definition is based on other ones articulated by different authors, such as Haftel (2013: 394) and Power & Goertz (2011: 2396–2397).

4 The discussion of ‘overlapping regions’ (Genna & De Lombaerde, 2010: 591–592) should be qualified on the basis of an analysis of whether competing regional organizations really do construct different regions. However, states may be members of multiple regions (Powers & Goertz, 2011: 2389).
bowl. Spaghetti is, as such, dished up in African, Asian, Latin American and even European bowls.

Because of this proliferation and overlapping of regional organizations, it makes no sense to look at regional organizations in isolation. To do so would mean ‘neglecting the specific properties of an institutional architecture (that is, how different regional organizations are assembled together) and the impact that these properties have on regional order’ (Hofmann & Mérand, 2012: 133–134). In the end, the whole architecture – that is, the combination and interaction of different regional organizations – is more important than its constituent parts – that is, individual regional organizations – are. Focusing on one isolated regional organization might lead to inaccurate conclusions being made about the current state of regional integration. Therefore it makes more sense to discuss the entire regional architecture, rather than to investigate only separated out individual regional organizations. In this vein Van Langenhove persuasively argues in favour of widening the research agenda on regional integration, with the objective of directing attention towards the study of intraregional processes because ‘unlike states regions and regional arrangements can overlap. This has consequences for regional integration as several of such processes may occur simultaneously in a given geographic area’ (2012: 26).

How, though, should the analysis of this regional architecture and the processes of intraregional interaction between different regional organizations be ideally conducted? Are there different patterns of interaction occurring, and what are the factors that structure the regional architecture? These are some of the key questions that now require our much closer attention.

2. REGIONAL COOPERATION AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Regionalism is generally accepted as being an overarching concept referring to, respectively, ‘the formation of interstate associations or groupings on the basis of regions; and in the doctrinal sense, the advocacy of such formations’ (Nye, 1968: vii), ‘the policies and practices of state-based permanent organizations with membership confined to a limited geographical area’ (Fawcett 2013: 4), ‘the policy and project, whereby state and non-state actors cooperate and coordinate strategy within a particular region or as a type of world order’ (Söderbaum, 2009: 479) or ‘a state-led project to organize a region along particular political and economic lines’ (Phillips & Prieto, 2011: 117). While there is a basic consensus on the concept of regionalism, there is, however, much less consensus on how to conceptualize different forms of regionalism. Most authors will agree that regional integration is a narrower sub-category of regionalism, one that is principally based on the European post-World War II experience. Börzel (2013), for example, differentiates between regional cooperation and regional integration. She contends that regional integration ‘involves the setting up of supranational institutions to which political authority is delegated to make collective binding decision,’ whereas regional cooperation refers to ‘the joint exercise of state-based political authority in intergovernmental institutions to solve collective action problems related to economic, political or security issues’ (2013: 508). Although Börzel (2013) argues strongly in favour of clearly differentiating between regional cooperation and regional integration, one might also conceptualize regional integration as a special type or subset – albeit ‘not the most
successful, or even the most frequent’ (Malamud, 2013: 2) – of regional cooperation. Börzel (2013), however, perceives regional (intergovernmental) integration and regional (supranational) cooperation as two opposite ends of a continuum of regionalism.

However, regional integration can also be defined in a more encompassing and flexible way. The concept might be ‘used as synonymous for regionalism and/or regionalization’ (De Lombaerde, 2011: 38) or defined as ‘a historical process of increased levels of interaction between political units (subnational, national, or transnational), provided by actors sharing common ideas, setting objectives and defining methods to achieve them, and by doing so contributing to building a region’ (Dabène, 2009: 215). Van Langenhove, meanwhile, conceptualizes regional integration as ‘the formation of supranational spaces of cooperation between states’ (2012: 18). Later he differentiates between the three major types of action that lead to regional integration: ‘removing economic obstacles towards integration; building adequate institutions or regulations that favour the delivery of regional public goods; and, presenting the integrated region as a unit with some level of sovereignty’ (2012: 21). This can lead to three different major varieties of regional integration: ‘a single market; a provider of services and policies; and, an international actor with a certain degree of actorness in global affairs’ (Van Langenhove, 2012: 28).

In contrast to economic liberalization and trade agendas, which have dominated the discussion about regional integration in the past, some authors have recently started to introduce the concept of ‘positive integration’ (see, for example, Sanahuja 2012a). This they do as a new sub-category of regional integration based on political consensus building, the promotion of regional interdependencies and on an increase in cooperation on non-trade issues (for example, energy, infrastructure, finance and regional security). The concept of positive integration is strongly related to that of ‘regionalism’ (at least as used by some authors), and is compatible with different regional projects covering different issue areas in different regions.

The discussion and positions summarized above indicate a certain disaffection with the narrow definition of regional integration posited by scholars thus far. However there are still good arguments to be made in favour of a clear-cut differentiation between regional integration and regional cooperation. One might accept the stringent definitions of regional integration given by Malamud & Schmitter (2011) and Börzel (2013), as well as the strict differentiation between regional cooperation and regional integration – because supranational institutions produce a transnational polity (Schmitter & Kim 2008) and transform the logics of politics in the corresponding regional space (in the direction of some form of multi-level governance). As a consequence of that narrow definition of regional integration, though, the analysis of regionalism outside of Europe would have to drop the concept and instead work with that of regional cooperation.

Moreover, while accepting regional (intergovernmental) integration and regional (supranational) cooperation as two opposite ends of a continuum of regionalism, one might ask whether too much emphasis is being placed on only one end of the continuum (that is, regional integration). This is especially pertinent given that there is only one flawless example

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5 ‘I will use “regionalism” in this article to mean a set of policies by one or more states designed to promote the emergence of a cohesive regional unit, which dominates the pattern of relations between the states of that region and the rest of the world, and which forms the organizing basis for policy within the region across a range of issues’ (Hurrell, 1992: 123).
of this category: the European Union. On the other hand, the terrain between these opposite poles hitherto remains largely unexplored. Moreover, it seems that the terrain between regional cooperation and regional integration is more populated than the regional integration corral is.

Hence, one may ask whether there is now a need for a different concept (or concepts) to replace those of regional integration and regional cooperation in the comparative analysis of regionalism. Any such concept should capture the formation of supranational spaces of cooperation, the actoriness of a region with regard to parties situated outside of it, the pooling of sovereignty without the necessity of building supranational institutions, the provision of regional public goods and the existence of overlapping regional organizations and competing regional projects. What, then, are the possible alternative concepts to regional integration and regional cooperation that can be used to chart the field of regionalism and to classify different forms of regional interaction? One option would be ‘regional architecture,’ a term that is often used but seldom defined. More recently, regional architecture has been described as ‘a reasonably coherent network of regional organizations, institutions, bilateral and multilateral arrangements, dialogue forums and other relevant mechanisms that work collectively for regional prosperity, peace and stability’ (Weixing Hu 2009: 14). One could also adapt the concept of ‘global governance architecture’ – which has been defined as ‘the overarching system of public and private institutions that are valid or active in a given issue area of world politics’ (Biermann et al., 2009: 15) – to the regional level. While the first definition makes no reference to rule setting and rule enforcing in a territorial (regional) space, the second refers to governance architecture ‘as the meta-level of governance’ and is focused on a particular issue area (Biermann et al., 2009: 15f.). If we accept that regions are social and political constructs, and that regional organizations perform regulatory functions within the corresponding region, then the regulations and political institutions that construct the territorial space of a region should be at the core of any concept that distinguishes between different varieties of regionalism.

3. VARIATIONS IN REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

This chapter argues that the concept of regional governance is the most adequate term for capturing the variations in regionalism and in regional projects. This idea is not new; ‘regional governance’ is a term frequently used in textbooks (Herz, 2014), but it is often not clearly defined or conceptualized. How is regional governance best defined then? Schimmelfennig defines it as ‘a regional space of political order and regulation’ (2006: 154). Söderbaum, meanwhile, draws on Rosenau (1997), and thus defines regional governance ‘as spheres of authority at the regional level of human activity which amount to systems of rule – formal and informal, public or private – in which goals are pursued through the exercise of control’ (2004: 422). Powers & Goertz for their part refer to ‘the creation of institutional governance in regional space’ (2011: 2397). Although Fawcett & Serrano (2005) do not provide a clear-cut definition themselves, they do appear to adhere to a dynamic concept of
regional governance\(^6\) that refers to a process of setting and creating rules that are then enforced by the institutions existing within a given geographical space.\(^7\)

Riggilozzi (2012) uses the concept of regional governance in the sense of models of governance that manifest a different logic of the ideal structuring of a region with regard to the institutionalization of norms and practices in support of a regional community. Jayasuriya also makes reference to ‘regional governance projects’ (2004: 21–22). His encompassing definition fixes the parameter that regional governance projects should be composed of four core elements: (1) a stable set of international economic strategies; (2) a distinctive set of governance structures that enable regional economic governance; (3) a set of normative or ideational constructs that not only make possible a given set of regional governance structures but also make possible the very definition of the region; and, (4) a convergence of domestic coalitions and political economy structures that facilitate the coherent construction of regional projects. In another article, and without the strong economic component of his earlier definition, Jayasuriya defines regional governance more broadly as ‘the management of the conflicts created through growing interdependencies within a specific – albeit ideologically-constructed – geographical region through the creation of institutional forums, policy instruments and networks of private and public actors (2009: 321).\(^8\) He further adds that ‘regional governance encompasses those institutions, instruments and mechanisms that allocate power, influence material stakes and shape the ideological representation of the region itself’ (2009: 321).

To summarize, regional governance refers to international institutions/organizations and normative/ideational constructs – as well as to the processes that create these institutions and norms in the first place.\(^9\) Regional governance is essentially, but not exclusively, based on intergovernmental regional organizations. It is not restricted to a single organization, but rather refers to the entire set of relevant regional organizations and their patterns of interaction. One may define regional governance as the overall configuration of the (intergovernmental) regional organizations that frame the regional discourse of member states and generate the norms and rules for the region in different policy areas, thereby contributing to the solution of collective problems and/or to the realization of common benefits. Thus regional governance as well as regions are best analysed from the perspective of ‘institution construction’ (Power & Goertz, 2011: 2403).

The concept of regional governance is broad and flexible enough that it can be used as a way to adequately grasp the variable interaction patterns between regional organizations, which can alternate between conflict and cooperation. This chapter will develop an analytical

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\(^6\) ‘The real game of governance lies in defining the rules before playing them’ (Serrano, 2005: 19). A dynamic concept of regional governance makes sense also because a concept of the region based on regional organizations is itself quite dynamic (Powers & Goertz, 2011: 2402).

\(^7\) Adler and Greve define governance as an ‘order-creating mechanism’, and security governance ‘as a system of rule conceived by individual and corporate actors aiming at coordinating, managing and regulating their collective existence in response to threats to their physical and ontological security. […] Mechanisms of security governance are a more or less clearly delineated set of rules, norms, practices and institutions that coordinate security relations between actors in the international system’ (2009: 64–65).

\(^8\) Komori (2009), in his concept of a ‘multi-layered’ form of regional governance, also includes non-state actors – even though national governments remain the dominant actors.

\(^9\) This conceptualization of governance is congruent with Keohane & Nye’s own definition: ‘By governance, we mean the processes and institutions, both formal and informal, that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group’ (2000: 12).
scheme and a taxonomy to differentiate between various types of regional governance. The analytical approach taken draws some of its orientation and concepts from the literature on regime complexes and institutional interplay (Alter & Meunier, 2009; Gehring & Faude, 2013; Gómez-Mera, 2015), as well as from the more recent work on the interactions of international organizations (Biermann, 2008; Brosig 2010, 2011, 2014). While most of the literature on institutional interplay (within regions or between international organizations) has a positive bias, due to it looking for some kind of cooperation pattern or division of labour and focusing on the relative autonomy of regimes and international organizations (with regard to the participating states), this chapter also takes into account the interests of the states behind these institutions — and thus possible conflicts of interest that exist between different regional organizations and their member states.

Adler & Greve (2009) attribute the ‘temporal/evolutionary overlap’ of regional organizations (in their case, regional security organizations) primarily to history and the endurance of institutions created in the past. However there is also an alternative, or at least complementary, explanation for this. Regional organizations either survive or are newly created because they serve the conflicting interests of different state actors (Hurrell, 1998). The “balance of practice” within regions may be as important as the balance of (material) power, or balance of interests' (Adler & Greve, 2009: 82). From this perspective, regions, which are socially and politically constructed, are areas open to contestation (Riggiorozzi & Tussie, 2012: 6). Alluding to the title of Alexander Wendt’s famous work, Riggiorozzi and Tussie write that the ‘region is what actors make of it’ (2012: 3). This chapter shares the view of these authors that one should take seriously the statements, declarations and proposals of actors involved in regional projects. Regional powers (see Nolte, 2010, 2011) and their regional projects represent important drivers behind the creation of new regional (intergovernmental) organizations. However, as the experience of Asia demonstrates, minor powers can also initiate and create regional organizations as part of their strategy for hedging and binding major regional powers (Goh, 2013; Acharya, 2014).

This chapter departs, though, from the assumption that ‘the state continues to play the predominant role in most regional arrangements’ (Fawcett, 2004: 433), especially in contexts with weak supranational regional institutions — as is the case in most regions lying outside of Europe. So an analysis of regional governance has to take into account: regional hierarchies with regard to status and power resources (major, secondary and minor powers); the values and norms promoted by different state actors; these actors’ regional projects; and, the relationship between both regional powers and minor powers and the corresponding regional organizations (Nolte, 2011). The structure of regional governance may respond to strategies of dominance or institutional binding, especially from the perspective of secondary powers (Flemes & Wehner, 2015).

Moreover, regional organizations do not all have the same weight or importance vis-à-vis regional governance. Young (1996), for example, developed the interesting idea to differentiate between unidirectional or reciprocal overlaps, and between symmetrical and asymmetrical ones too. The degree of centrality of a regional organization within a regional governance complex is also of importance. Centrality refers ‘to the power, influence, and prestige of an organization’ (Biermann, 2008: 170). From this perspective, regional organizations are in a process of positioning themselves in relation to other organizations. Central regional organizations are institutions that are highly valued and closely integrated by most major players within a socially constructed region. As such, these are the pivotal
organizations in regional governance, because they overlap in membership with many other (minor) regional ones and because they generally have a mandate that covers several important policy areas. These central organizations are usually multi-functional or multi-purpose ones. This quality is of special importance, because it means that these central bodies have the capability to build bridges between different regional organizations.

It is possible to differentiate between centrifugal and centripetal elements, between forces of integration and forces of disintegration, and between bridging and dividing factors in regional governance. What are centrifugal forces, though? The creation of new regional organizations and their proliferation are centrifugal elements; they increase the risk of fragmentation and competition over membership and mandates. Organizations with overlapping mandates but without overlapping membership (direct or indirect, via associated membership) carry with them a higher risk of conflict. There is also a higher risk of conflict when major powers support different organizations. Additionally, there is a higher risk factor when the member states of different regional organizations adhere to divergent core values. In the case that regional organizations have the capacity to exercise a genuine and autonomous authority in the making of international law, conflict over core values may lead to a normative fragmentation of the regional legal order (Prost & Clark 2006).

And, what are the bridging elements? Cross-cutting membership is a centripetal element. It might help to avoid open conflict between organizations as a result of them sharing the same membership base. In this way, norms can be diffused from one organization to another and then emulated. The categories of ‘associated member’ or ‘observer status’ might be of importance in this regard, because non-members or organizations that are not full members are nevertheless still connected to a given organization – and thus exposed to its norms. The chances for cooperation are higher in those cases where one central organization that includes all – or nearly all – states (especially the major ones) in a region exists. Central organizations can help to build bridges when different institutions are in conflict; they can either constitute a forum of interaction or mediate for otherwise unconnected states/organizations.

To create a typology of regional governance, this chapter adapts an interesting research approach originally developed for the analysis of global climate governance (Biermann et al., 2009). Given the fragmentation within this type of governance, the authors created an analytical scheme to capture the possible effects of that fissuring. They employed three criteria (or analytical dimensions) to differentiate between degrees of fragmentation, which can be adapted for the analysis of regional governance complexes too: (1) institutional integration and the degree of overlap between decision-making systems (in our case, regional organizations); (2) the existence and degree of norm conflict (in our case, between regional organizations); and, (3) the types of actor constellation, which in the case of regional governance refers particularly to the interests and regional projects of national governments (and especially of major regional powers). Just as Biermann et al. (2009) differentiate between three different kinds of fragmentation (synergistic, cooperative and conflictive), this

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10 One should also take a closer look at the type of organizations involved in overlapping. Different kinds of organizational nature may lead to different patterns of conflict and/or cooperation. Various authors differentiate between programmatic and operational organizations (Rittberger & Zangl, 2006; Prost & Clark, 2006), and place international/regional organizations with these respective functions on the two opposite poles of a continuum. Between purely operational organizations, conflicts may arise over the implementation of norms. Programmatic organizations may also disagree over the content of norms (for example with regard to democracy clauses), and in the case of regional organizations over comprehensive regional projects.
chapter adapts these categories to distinguish between the different patterns of interaction occurring between regional organizations and state actors within a region. This is done in order to classify different types of regional governance – synergistic, cooperative, conflictive and segmented. The chapter adds in the last category as there might be fragmentation without cooperation, or there might alternatively be conflict that ultimately results in the creation of a new (sub-)region or regions. Regional governance is not static, as it can oscillate between these different sub-types. There might be also variations within the sub-types, as for example with cooperative regional governance – with elements of conflict – or with conflictive regional governance co-existing with elements of cooperation.

Table 1. Types of Regional Governance

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<tr>
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<th>Synergistic</th>
<th>Cooperative</th>
<th>Conflictive</th>
<th>Segmented</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional integration</strong></td>
<td>Central regional organization and other regional organizations are closely integrated.</td>
<td>Central regional organization and other regional organizations are loosely integrated.</td>
<td>Central regional organization and other regional organizations are in part loosely integrated, in part in competition over membership and mandates.</td>
<td>Different, largely unrelated, regional organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Norm conflicts</strong></td>
<td>Core norms of regional organizations are integrated.</td>
<td>Core norms are not in conflict.</td>
<td>Core norms are in conflict.</td>
<td>Core norms may or may not be in conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actor (state) constellations</strong></td>
<td>All relevant actors (governments) support the same organizations, including the central regional organization and the regional project related to this organization. Some minor actors might still be outside of the central organization but cooperate closely with it.</td>
<td>Not all major actors support the same regional organizations, but they do cooperate with and support the central regional organization and the regional project related to this organization.</td>
<td>Major actors support different regional organizations and promote different regional projects.</td>
<td>Major actors support different regional organizations and promote different regional projects.</td>
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Source: Adapted from Biermann et al. (2009) and further developed by the authors of this chapter.
In the case of synergistic regional governance, a central regional organization and other regional ones are closely integrated with each other. There is a consensus with regard to the core norms maintained by the central organization, which are not contested by other regional organizations. All relevant actors (governments) support the same organizations, including the central regional organization and the regional project related to this organization. Some minor state actors might still be outside of the central organization, but nevertheless cooperate closely with it.

Cooperative regional governance is defined as a regional architecture that includes a central regional organization that is at least loosely connected with other regional ones. The core norms supported by the central institution are not contested. It is not necessary that all major actors support the same regional organizations, but only that they cooperate with and support the central regional organization and the regional project related to it. Thus overlapping membership (including associated members) – as an element of norm diffusion and consensus building – is combined with a tendency to divide tasks between existing organizations. Cooperative regional governance is compatible with – or characterized by – a ‘variable geometry’ and ‘institutional elasticity’ (concepts taken from Hofmann & Mérand, 2012) with regard to the membership and mandates of the different regional organizations.

Conflictive regional governance is characterized by a constellation wherein the central regional organization(s) (the status of the central organization can be challenged) and other regional organizations are loosely integrated with each other. In part they compete with regard to membership and mandates. The core norms represented by these central organizations are contested, and there might exist also norm conflicts between other regional ones – which is related to the fact that that the major state actors involved support different regional organizations and promote different regional projects.

In the case of segmented regional governance, the major state actors support different regional organizations and promote different regional projects within a (macro) region. Consequently, a variety of – largely unrelated – regional organizations simultaneously co-exist. Their core norms may or may not be in conflict. As a result, in extreme circumstances a region might become divided into several clearly demarcated sub-regions or a new region might even emerge as the outcome of a splitting off.

Based on this approach the EU represents synergic regional governance, South America features cooperative regional governance, Latin America upholds cooperative regional governance with a tendency to segmentation while the Americas constitute a form of conflictive regional governance marked by elements of both cooperation and segmentation. Based on a cursory overview of the literature, in Africa and Asia meanwhile a cooperative type of regional governance seems to predominate. However, this initial perception still has to be corroborated by a more thorough comparative analysis of different world regions. The prevalence of a cooperative type of regional governance might explain why the organizational entanglement in different world regions that is depicted by the metaphor of the spaghetti bowl has apparently not created major problems for regional governance.
CONCLUSION

Given that regions have become increasingly more important in international politics, it is crucial to understand how regions are politically organized and governed. The chapter adopted an institutional social constructivist approach wherein regions are taken to be the political constructs of states. States create regional organizations, and by these means build and consolidate a region. Due to the proliferation and overlapping of regional organizations, it was argued that it makes no sense to look at regional organizations in isolation from each other. The whole architecture of a region – that is, the combination and interaction of different regional organizations – is more important than its atomized constituent parts are (that is, individual regional organizations).

The discussion about the prevailing concepts used for the analysis of the institutional architecture of regions revealed certain shortfalls, specifically with regard to a narrow definition of regional integration (as differentiated from regional cooperation). While there are good arguments to be made in favour of crafting a clear-cut distinction between regional integration and regional cooperation, this chapter argues that in any case the concept of regional governance is ultimately a more adequate term by which to capture the variations in regionalism and in regional projects. Regional governance has been defined as the overall configuration of the (intergovernmental) regional organizations that frame the regional discourse of the member states and generate the norms and rules for the region in different policy areas, thereby contributing to the solution of collective problems and/or to the realization of common benefits.

The chapter demonstrated that regional governance is a valid concept for analysing and comparing the institutional architecture of regions. It is broad and flexible enough that it can be used to grasp the variable interaction patterns between regional organizations and state actors within a given region. Based on three analytical dimensions that refer to forces of integration and forces of disintegration, to bridging and dividing factors, the chapter elaborated a taxonomy by which to differentiate between four sub-types of regional governance: synergistic, cooperative, conflictive and segmented. The concept of regional governance and the different sub-types thereof might usefully be further elaborated upon in future, and also applied to the comparative study of regionalism. Based on the taxonomy developed in this chapter, one might thus seek to explore why different types of regional governance have emerged and how they are evolving or have evolved.

REFERENCES


