# Chapter 5
# Interregionalism: A Security Studies Perspective

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## 5.1 Introduction

Throughout the Cold War, attention to interregional dynamics has been limited both in International Relations and in the security studies literature. Although this might seem surprising in the light of the subsequent proliferation of regional forums and interregional relations, this is easily understandable looking at the reality of the Cold War. In fact, regions and their interaction played no significant role in Cold War times—the period in which security (or strategic) studies flourished as an International Relations sub-discipline. The world after 1945 was regarded, depicted and performed as bipolar: the two superpowers were the main actors in the security game and the rest of the world was broadly divided into the spheres of influence of the two. States belonged to the core areas of interest of the two superpowers (as was the case for Europe) or to the periphery. The latter was an arena for great power competition and little attention was paid to stability, development and peace in these areas (Ayoob 1995). States that were peripheral but relevant—for economic or geopolitical reasons—could obtain advantages from their superpower but could never aspire to modify their calculus of costs and benefits in international politics or significantly influence their security concerns. Within such a frozen

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geopolitical context, it was hard for regional powers to think globally and create alliances on an interregional level. Some did try to foster intra-regional cohesion and unity—frequently even as a result of a feeling of insecurity caused by the West (Niva 1999: 148–149)—but with modest results (Nasser's pan-Arab rhetoric, the short-lived unity between Egypt and Syria in 1958–1961). As remarked by Diehl and Lepgold (2003), the Cold War period defined most regional conflicts in terms of superpower interests: when the superpowers got involved, the effect was as much to exacerbate as to mitigate (potential) regional conflicts.

In this context, the logic of bipolarism implied that attention was directed predominantly to the relationship between the two superpowers. As a consequence, in International Relations and security studies, regions were not treated as significant actors in their own right. Furthermore, attention to third states was limited to their behaviour *vis-à-vis* the two superpowers, as either bandwagoning, balancing, or non-aligning (see also Calleya 2000: 235)—as in the case of attention devoted to the non-aligned movement and the Group of 77 (G77), both of which emerged in the 1960s.

The end of the Cold War led to the redefinition of regional dynamics, the emergence of regional powers and new regional organisations. An example of the first tendency is the fragmentation of the former Soviet Union into at least two macro-regions (Central Asia and Southern Caucasus) and a series of regions (Central Europe, Central–Eastern Europe, the Baltic area) with their own peculiarities and dynamics. A redefined regionalisation has occurred also in other areas of the world; one example is the Middle East, whose particular dynamics have spread towards Central Asia and the Indian Ocean. With respect to the second tendency, the end of the Cold War, together with the globalisation that then also became more evident, created opportunities for new regional powers with global aspirations to emerge, such as Brazil, India, China and South Africa. Finally, globalisation acted upon existing and potential regional groupings, pushing them to strengthen their integration in order to cope with global economic and social dynamics. This led to the formation of new organisations—such as the Asian–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)—and the radical restructuring of existing bodies—such as the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Regional organisations dealing with security issues also rose in number.[1] However, perhaps the most interesting phenomenon is the fact that a number of interregional forums have started to pursue a joint security agenda—it is the case of the Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM) (Gilson 2005: 323), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) (Rolfe 2008: 105) and the Africa–Europe process (Olsen 2006: 204). Although these initiatives have

[1] A number of regional organisations that were created during the Cold War dealt with security issues—for instance the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)—but more recently their number has increased.

not yet led to the signing of detailed security cooperation agreements, they resulted in the adoption of joint protocols in key areas such as conflict prevention and management (as in the case of the 1995 ARF Concept Paper) and which at times extended to other issues including terrorism and demining, as in the 2000 Cairo Plan of Action that was signed as part of the Africa–Europe process. Security issues have also been discussed by a number of other interregional bodies, such as APEC, although often 'as much by accident as by design' (Rolfe 2008: 105).

The European Union (EU) partnership with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) has historically focused on humanitarian issues and trade, but it has also dealt with security, as in the cooperation in 'the war on terror' (Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2006: 119). Interregionalism has also played a functional role in helping manage global change, as relations between Europe and East Asia show: since 9/11, interregional relations have also aimed at tackling trans-border threats (Gilson 2005: 73).

Seen from an interregional perspective, the international system does not only include regional relations among states (e.g. ASEAN, the Southern Common Market–MERCOSUR), but also interregional relations among groups of states (EU–ASEAN; EU–African Union–AU), hybrid and transregional relations between regions and states (ASEM) and bilateral inter-state relations (United States (US)–China; US–Russia).

This change caught International Relations and security studies largely unaware. Regionalism was revised and reinterpreted so as to provide conceptual tools to deal with the changed scenario (Hettne and Inotai 1994). New studies on the relationship between and among regions emerged. However, security studies was only partially touched by this conceptual development. The discipline has attempted to study security dynamics at the regional level and has paid little attention to interregional dynamics though the main approaches dealing with a regional dimension of security—security communities (Deutsch et al. 1957; Adler and Barnett 1998), regional security complex theory (Buzan and Wæver 2003) and regional orders (Lake and Morgan 1997)—all have the potential to contribute to the analysis of security dynamics *between* regions. The same applies to a more recent approach, that of multilateral security governance (Kirchner and Sperling 2007; Krahmann 2005; Christou et al. 2010). This is the reason that these approaches will constitute the bulk of this chapter. Here it is argued that they are all relevant for understanding interregional security dynamics and that they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, this chapter argues in favour of more cross-fertilisation in the effort to develop a research agenda on interregionalism in security studies. While not fully complementary, these approaches present features that shed light on under-explored aspects of security dynamics that lead to regionalism and interregional relations. This is particularly true if we understand interregionalism to encompass but also go beyond region-to-region relations and to include transregional relations, as well as hybrid situations involving regions and states; geographic regions and constructed regions (e.g. EU–ACP); and regional powers representing entire regions (e.g. India, Brazil, South Africa) (Dent 2003; Hänggi 2006).

In what follows, the chapter will illustrate the role of regions in security studies over time. It will then review the aforementioned four approaches to regional

security with a view to understanding their contribution to the analysis of regional and interregional security dynamics. Finally, it will propose a way to develop more attention to interregional dynamics.

## 5.2 Traditional Security Studies and the Constructivist Turn

The literature on security studies developed largely in the Cold War period, when the attention of scholars was primarily devoted to the relationship between the two blocs or, more precisely, to that between the two superpowers. It is in fact through the analysis of nuclear deterrence between the two blocs that security studies developed as an independent field both in the academia and in the world of think tanks (McSweeney 1999; Walt 1991). During the 'golden age of security studies' (Paret 1986), attention was focused on tangible and military threats. The debate within the discipline revolved around the analysis of deterrence, war and the way in which, according to different scholars, the security of the state could be better guaranteed—as in the case of offensive *versus* defensive realism (Snyder 1991). Therefore, security was conceived as an objectively identifiable state of affairs that was related to the states' relative invulnerability to military threats. In mainstream security studies, there was little space for cognitive factors and for non-state actors (for an exception, see Jervis 1976).

It was the liberal tradition of thought in international relations that opened interest in non-state actors and non-military threats. Building on the founding work of philosophers like Immanuel Kant, liberal international relations thinkers have focused on the conditions conducive to peace, particularly the factors that could lead states to develop non-conflictual relations. This theoretical context allowed for the emergence of an analysis of regional groupings in their security dimension. Here the seminal work of Karl Deutsch et al. (1957) on security communities is a case in point.

A real turn in security studies took place in the 1980s and 1990s, when the concept of security came to be applied to several areas (from the economy to the environment) and referents (from the individual to society). This broadened both the understanding of security and the potential levels of analysis, which started to include individuals, groups and even humanity. Moreover, the reflectivist turn in International Relations brought attention to the subjective and inter-subjective dimensions of security: security increasingly came to be seen as a socially constructed phenomenon (see Buzan 1983; Buzan et al. 1998; Krause and Williams 1996; Lipshutz 1995). The constructivist studies of security and the so-called 'critical security studies school' have devoted much more attention than previously to non-state actors and to a non-objectivistic understanding of security. This has also led to the development of approaches that look at the social construction of security and insecurity at the regional level. Moreover, these approaches share with the literature on new regionalism a constructivist perspective and attention to non-material factors (Hettne and Inotai 1994). So far, though, the links between these branches of literature are not explicit.

Moreover, while constructivists were developing new approaches within security studies, traditional realist approaches were undergoing major revisions. Authors like Barry Buzan—founding father of the constructivist school of security studies known as 'the Copenhagen school'—also enriched the realist tradition by looking at regional security dynamics and underlining the existence of specific *regional security complexes.* Others worked around the idea of *regional security orders*, still drawing from a traditional realist school. Finally, *multilateral security governance* is a recent branch of literature that deals specifically with an understanding of security that includes regional and interregional dimensions. Among the vast literature of security studies, these approaches are those offering the most fruitful avenues for cross-fertilisation with studies of regionalism and interregionalism. In what follows, the chapter deals with how each of these security approaches interacts with interregionalism, by pointing at their strengths and weaknesses and finally putting forward an alternative reading based on some of the elements of these approaches.

## 5.3 Security Communities

The concept of security community was developed as early as 1957 and later revisited in constructivist terms. The term refers to an area in which states do not feel threatened by other states and conditions typical of international politics, such as the security dilemma, no longer occur. In Karl Deutsch's words, a community of states is a pluralistic security community within which there are dependable expectations of peaceful change, that is, when states neither expect nor consider using organised violence to solve their disputes (Deutsch et al. 1957: 5). Reciprocal expectations of peaceful settlement of disputes are therefore what make a community a security community.[2] Deutsch regarded the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the countries therein—a transregional area—as a security community. More recently the concept has been revised in constructivist terms by Adler and Barnett (1998), who brought attention to a concept that during the Cold War had been overshadowed by attention to deterrence. The authors in Adler and Barnett's volume (1998) speculated on the existence of a security community in several regions, from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) area to the Gulf, Western Europe and Southeast Asia. Later on, the preferred areas of application have been the EU (Lucarelli 2002), the enlarged NATO (Adler 2008) and ASEAN (Acharya 2001; Emmerson 2005).

The literature on (pluralistic) security communities lists three main characteristics of such a community: (i) shared identities, values and meanings; (ii) many-sided, direct relations between the units; and (iii) diffuse reciprocity (Adler and Barnett 1998: 31). These characteristics create a region in which the probability of war is reduced to the minimum. Historically, the security community *par excellence*, the

[2] In other words, not all 'communities' are 'security' communities as Deutsch assessed in his founding work; see Adler and Barnett (1998).

transatlantic security community, coincided with an area of democratic peace. Shared identities, values and meanings were constructed around a common understanding of the relationship between, on the one hand, the development of liberal democratic institutions and norms (plus economic interdependence and common institutions) and, on the other, peace. This pluralistic security community becomes an 'amalgamated' security community, when there is a formal fusion of previously independent units into a single, wider unit and the creation of a common form of government (Deutsch et al. 1957: 6).[3] The historical case that comes closest to an amalgamated security community is the European Union.

Even in the context of a pluralistic security community—one in which the units (states) each maintain an independent government—various degrees of closeness are possible. Adler and Barnett (1998) have reinterpreted the concept by extrapolating and underlining three main features: (i) the degree of intensity of a security community; (ii) the degree of maturity; and (iii) the degree of trust.

Firstly, these two authors have distinguished between 'loosely-coupled' and 'tightly-coupled' security communities. The former is 'a transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change […] [by virtue of] their shared structure of meanings and identity' (Adler and Barnett 1998: 30). Tightly coupled security communities go beyond the minimal definitional properties of a security community in that they (i) have a 'mutual aid' society; and (ii) 'possess a system of rule that lies somewhere between a sovereign state and a regional, centralised government' (Adler and Barnett 1998: 30). However, in both cases stable peace is due to the existence of a transnational community in which: core identities, values and meanings are shared; many-sided and direct relations occur and reciprocity is practised (either for long-term interest or out of a sense of obligation and responsibility). Some authors have noticed how NATO and the EU can be considered examples of loosely and tightly coupled security communities respectively (Rieker 2000: 16).

Secondly, security communities can be looked at also with respect to their 'maturity'. Mature security communities have accomplished all three phases of the creation of such a community (Adler and Barnett 1998: 56–57). In the case of a security community in which reciprocal expectations of peaceful change depend on the successful diffusion of democratic norms and values, the degree of maturity depends on the extent to which this democratisation has provided the type of institutional, societal and cultural guarantees that make an area of democratic peace work. Lucarelli (2002) maintained that what matters most in the creation of closer links between the members of a democratic security community is not the degree of technical implementation of democratic institutions and procedures (fair and free elections, rule of law, respect of

[3] Deutsch's conditions for a security community to be 'amalgamated' included: (i) similar values (political ideologies but also economic and religious values); (ii) the formation of a common sense of 'us'; (iii) similar lifestyles; (iv) a group of leading actors (so as to prevent the logic of the balance of power prevailing); (v) high economic growth; (vi) positive expectations with respect to the advantages of integration; (vii) intensive transactions and communication; (viii) widening of the leading elites; (ix) stable links among the elites of different states; and (x) high geographical mobility of the population (Deutsch et al. 1957: 6).

human rights and minority rights legislation), but the degree of interaction that states and societies undertake by virtue of the democratisation process.

Thirdly, Adler and Barnett's analysis stresses the notion of trust, of which the expectation of absence of conflicts is the most evident manifestation. In the reformulation of Adler and Barnett, trust is seen as the basis of community building, a quality determined by a series of factors: *the existence of political and economic interactions* (the reference is to Simmel's analysis of the role of 'exchanges' among individuals as the backbone of societal structure); *institutions* (facilitating communication and exchanges, showing other possible areas of cooperation, establishing norms, guaranteeing peace and favouring a sense of belonging to a region); and *social learning* (which is a collective process of learning by doing that enhances trust and shapes identities) (Adler and Barnett 1998: 416–422). Security communities are also assumed to develop around cores of strength, to be understood either as states that use sticks and carrots or states that project a sense of purpose. The overall aim of the authors is to contrast the realist assumption of anarchy as the permanent feature of the international setting, pointing instead to a combination of factors—force, exchange based on self-interest and normative integration—whose relative weight varies over time but whose combination assures stability to the international system. The literature on security communities represents an important contribution to the analysis of security between the domestic, the inter-state and the regional levels. The unexplored element, as far as the topic of this book is concerned, is the analysis of interregional relations.

From this perspective, NATO may be regarded as a transregional security community in that it encompasses two geographic regions. However, if we conceive a region not in (exclusively) geographical terms but as an imagined area with which states and organisations within it identify, then NATO is probably one of the best examples of a region that has been created by means of identity and security-building as well as through practices of self-restraint (Adler 2008). The transatlantic area has the characteristic of being both an interregional context (North America–Europe), a case of transregionalism (due to the transnational links between Western societies) and an imagined region in its own right (the transatlantic region). In security terms it is above all a region in itself.

In the case of the Asia–Pacific, it is open to discussion whether it is or may be becoming a security community. Ikenberry and Tsuchiyama (2002: 88) suggested that the Asia–Pacific system, which at present is best described as a 'concert system', could evolve into a pluralistic security community, even though this evolution was 'still at an early stage' (see also Acharya 2001).

In the case of the Mediterranean, it has been suggested that it may develop into an interregional security community. William Zartman recently argued that 'much can be done' for the creation of a 'Mediterranean security community', starting from the development of trust among members through a number of confidence-building measures such as 'advance notice of troop movements' that would later result in 'open borders, transportation links and military meetings' (Zartman 2010: 35). On the other hand, Sven Biscop has argued that Europe and its southern neighbourhood currently represent a security complex as defined by Buzan, which in the

long-term might evolve into a 'Euro–Mediterranean' security community, such that security cooperation would complement all other areas of the existing partnership (Biscop 2004). Others have argued that the EU has purposely attempted to forge a Euro–Mediterranean security community. In Adler and Crawford's view, the three-fold purpose of the Barcelona process—community, region-building and creating a security partnership—was intended to lead to the emergence of a Mediterranean pluralistic security community (Adler and Crawford 2006: 4). A more realistic and less ambitious 'regional security partnership' idea has been proposed by Fulvio Attinà, who suggests that mutual expectations of peaceful relations may constrain state behaviour even though they fall short of becoming institutionalised (Attinà 2004). However, if a security community were to develop in the Mediterranean, what type would it be? In purely ideal terms, there are two possibilities: the creation of two security regions that enjoy peaceful relations (an interregional security community) or the gradual emergence of a new enlarged security community. In the case of Euro–Mediterranean relations, the line between regionalism and interregionalism is particularly blurred. Given the clear-cut nature of the EU as a region and its efforts to push for the creation of a Mediterranean region on principle (the EU considers regions a welcome development in international politics and one potentially conducive to more prosperous and peaceful relations) and because of interests (dealing with regional blocs facilitates trade and security agreements).

In general, various obstacles stand in the way of the creation of interregional security communities. The major one is the cultural and political heterogeneity within these forums—that is, the absence of 'shared norms and linked systems' (Ikenberry and Tsuchiyama 2002: 88). In this regard, it is unclear whether the debate within interregional studies on the role of interregional forums in spurring 'collective identity-building' can be extended to the prospect of creating effective security communities across regions. At present, the only substantial evidence on the role of interregionalism in collective identity-building concerns the strengthening of identities *within* regions—and not *across* regions—as a consequence of interregional interactions (cf. Rüland 2006: 308–310; also see Rüland's and Hettne's contributions in this volume). It would be interesting to speculate upon the conditions under which interregional forums evolve into forms of interregional security communities. It would also be interesting to study whether and how interregional (and transregional) relations may develop into 'arenas of persuasion' that can generate 'a partial change in preferences and interests' (Katzenstein and Okawara 2001/2002: 181) and thus transform existing regions into imagined regions that share their security perception.

At first sight, the expectation that interregionalism could evolve into something approximating collective identity-building appears too ambitious. Because of the inherent cultural barriers in cross-regional cooperation that stem from the very defining of regions as cultural or identitarian blocs, it is more realistic to expect interregionalism to result in concurrence on a limited set of values or norms—such as the management of illegal immigration and organised crime—rather than in generating new political communities. This outcome would seem closer to what Robert Jervis (1982) defined as 'security regimes', where 'norm compliance does

not provide evidence of community building' (Collins 2007: 203). Gorm Rye Olsen, for instance, argued that the Africa–Europe process constitutes an incipient form of 'African security regime' bound together by 'more or less identical interests in promoting security on the continent' and by the fact that 'the two actors are in frequent contact and […] in basic agreement about the norms and principles which are to guide future security interventions in Africa' (Olsen 2009: 20).

Focusing on the potential mismatch between norm compliance in specific security-related issue areas and community-building could also help explain the development of what is sometimes defined as an 'incipient' (Blair and Hanley 2001: 10) or 'emerging' (Adler and Greve 2009: 62) security community in Southeast Asia and in the Pacific region, centred on the ARF. In this region, and especially within ASEAN, we observe that most nations 'share dependable expectations that conflict will not come from external aggression by a fellow member state' (Blair and Hanley 2001: 10). However, both the persistence of 'balancing practices' in the region (Adler and Greve 2009: 76), the presence of 'hostile relations' even between ASEAN members such as Singapore and Malaysia (Adler and Greve 2009: 76) and the 'operational feebleness' of the ARF (Aggarwal and Koo 2009: 12) seem to be 'inconsistent with security community practices' (Adler and Greve 2009: 76). Nevertheless, this framework has produced some interesting but limited shared security initiatives, such as the agreement in 2002 between ASEAN and China on a 'Code of conduct in the South China Sea', and since its 2003 summit in Phnom Penh ARF has often been credited with making 'active efforts' (Bradford 2008: 482) to improve cooperation in tackling piracy.

## 5.4 Regional Security Complexes

An apparently similar concept to the previous one, that of the regional security complex, was developed in the early 1980s by Barry Buzan and refined by him and other colleagues after the end of the Cold War (Buzan 1983; Buzan and Wæver 2003). A regional security complex is a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot be tackled individually. Its members have interrelated security relations and each member's action has consequences for the others (Buzan and Wæver 2003). All states are tied up in a system of security interdependence (the anarchic setting), which cluster regionally in what they term security complexes. In other terms, security complexes 'are about the relative intensity of interstate security relations that lead to distinctive regional patterns shaped by both the distribution of power and historical relations of amity and enmity' (Buzan et al. 1998: 11–12). They embody durable patterns of amity and enmity. Hence security complexes are, by definition, a product of the anarchic international system and could be thought of as 'miniature anarchies' (Buzan et al. 1998: 13), durable but not permanent features of the system. Regional security complexes are held together by common threat perceptions and security concerns but with no guarantee of having created a stable and long-lasting peaceful

regime. Theoretically, the regional level of analysis challenges the dual obsession with national and global security and, at the regional level, national and global securities interact.

A strong tenet of this theory is that threats travel more easily over short rather than long distances. That is why Buzan acknowledges that its applicability is limited in the economic and environmental sector, while a regionalising logic possesses a strong explanatory value in the military-political and societal context.

Regional security complex theory links the national, regional and international levels of security. The authors operate a blend of materialist (notion of bounded territoriality, distribution of power) and constructivist (securitisation theory) ideas generating a bottom-up vision within which security complexes arise from the expression of security needs by the potential constituent units. Securitisation processes—that is extreme politicisation and transformation into a security issue of low relevance political issues by policymakers in order to justify their security measures to counter these external or domestic challenges—are intertwined in the logic behind the emergence of regional security complexes. Indeed, alongside structural variables such as the distribution of power—i.e. balance of power and geographic closeness—the only cognitive factor acknowledged as motivating regional security complexes are threat perceptions. Common perceptions of what constitutes a threat to one's security become a push factor in the regionalising process.

Broadly speaking, regional security complexes and security communities share some features but there are many more that differentiate them. While complexes and communities partly share the same rationale—namely building a regional security system in order to enhance their peace and prosperity and counter potential external threats—the conditions that urge their development differ. The motivation for the formation of regional security complexes is the shared perception of an external threat. By contrast, the motivation for the formation of a security community is the gradual transformation of relations between those involved, even without a common perception of threat. While in the first case, threat perception is the causal factor, in the second, the transformation of threat perception is the *result* of the formation of a security community. Moreover, if it is the anarchic international system that determines states' behaviour in the development of regional security complexes, in the emergence of security communities it is sub-system units that play a more autonomous role. The security community is then embodied in relations based upon trust and reciprocity, which are preconditions for spill-overs from one policy area to another. A community is further favoured by the existence of an ideological element that spurs integration and which facilitates cooperation. In regional security complexes: spill-overs are much more difficult to bring about: since the complex evolves from systemic factors and lacks an ideological component.

Intuitively, the most intriguing question raised by the development of interregional forums is whether such forums, which by definition transcend territorially-bounded regional groupings, substantially transform or challenge regional security complex theory. However, answering this question is harder than it may seem. In particular, the failure of interregional forums to generate substantial cooperation over security issues confirms one of the assumptions of regional security complex

theory; it gives the regional level prominence over both the global and national in analysing both the emergence of security dilemmas and the prospect of developing security cooperation.

Regional security complexes can interact and this is then a case of interregionalism with an important security dimension. Sometimes an important role in relations *between* security complexes relations is played by 'insulators'. In Buzan's theory, the world includes regional security complexes, insulators and global level powers. An insulator is a state that cannot create links and hence join the regional security complex. Turkey is—or at least has been until 2010–2011—a good example of an (assertive) insulator that is suspended between two regional security complexes, that of Europe and that of the Middle East. If one looks at different sectors of the regional security complex, such as the societal and the economic, it becomes clear that Turkey is torn between competing urges. To simplify, while the Turkish economic sector mainly looks to the West, its societal sector is increasingly identifying with the East. Being an insulator, or a *status quo* country, allows Turkey to balance its competing domestic and external dynamics. What this example shows is that the interaction between different regional security complexes can lead to hybrid forms of transregionalism, if not interregionalism *per se*.

## 5.5 Regional Orders

Some of the key limitations or contradictions of the early formulations of the theory of regional security complexes have been addressed by Lake and Morgan's 'regional orders' framework (Lake and Morgan 1997). Their hegemonic-hierarchic approach shares the anarchic assumption of the regional security complex approach but pays closer attention to the international order. This approach looks like a contemporary version of traditional realist understandings of security, albeit more comprehensive in terms of variables and constellations of power. According to Lake and Morgan, regional orders emerge in order to fill power vacuums left by the structure of the international order. Unlike a regional security complex, geographic proximity is not a necessary condition for belonging to a regional order, as demonstrated by the role of the US in the Middle Eastern security complex.

In Lake and Morgan's formulation, regional orders are the mode of conflict management in regional security complexes. They include balance of power, security concerts, collective security and pluralistic communities to integration (Lake and Morgan 1997: 11–12). If one power dominates over the other members (unipolarity), the system will tend to be stable and limit interference by external parties. The legitimacy of regional hegemony is granted by the provision of public goods (public order) in exchange for which subordinate states grant their loyalty as well as parts of their sovereign prerogatives.

If, at the other end of the *continuum*, a multipolar structure is in place, there will be a higher risk of conflict but third parties will stay out of the game. If, finally, the system is bipolar, both risks—of internal conflict and of external

intervention—will be run. Either way, Lake stresses, any international to regional distribution of power will be characterised by hierarchy (Lake 2009). Lake distinguishes between the nature of the international system—which remains anarchic—and the relations between its constituent states, which are hierarchical. Authority is thus a social construct, a sort of contractual relation by which a dominant party guarantees social order in exchange for legitimacy and some form of concessions of sovereignty. The degree of authority may range from the condition of Westphalian states, in which state A exercises no authority over state B, through spheres of influence and then protectorates and, ultimately, absolute hierarchy. The first end of the spectrum corresponds to the description of the anarchic international system, characterised by diplomacy, whereas the other end corresponds to an Empire.

In his work on Arab–Israeli relations David Pervin (1997) argues that the intervention of external powers has significantly altered the equation in the Middle East and rendered the regional system far from autonomous. This weakens the explanatory power of realist approaches, which consider anarchy and the lack of peaceful regional dynamics to be inevitable features of international life. However, Pervin detects mixed elements that could lead to the emergence of regional order in the Middle East: increased cooperation, continuing competition and ambivalence in Israeli–Arab relations. He argues that the possibility of a regional concert forming, especially in the face of the threat posed by Iran, should not be discarded.

Among the bases of concert are recognition of the potentially high costs of war, a dispersal of power (all being vulnerable to international sanctions), compatible views of the international order, acceptance of the *status quo* and a high level of transparency.

One advantage of Lake and Morgan's revision of the regional security complex theory is that, by de-territorialising regional security complexes—or by including non-regional actors as external hegemons within a specific regional order—it enables transatlantic relations also to be regarded as a form of interregionalism (*sui generis*). This avoids the problem of considering transatlantic relations to be regional while European–Russian relations are regarded as interregional.

However, this comes at a cost. As noted by Buzan and Wæver (2003: 81), Lake and Morgan's approach 'generates a regional security complex for each security problem', removing almost entirely the geographic and/or material element from the analysis of regional security. Indeed, defining a regional security complex as 'the states affected by at least one transborder but local externality' (Lake 1997: 46) focuses on the locality of the *security threat* and not necessarily on the political actors involved. This risks depriving regional or interregional security studies of their own defining element—the focus on how states or organisations act—both unilaterally and in concert and both within and across regions—in response to specific security problems. Lake and Morgan's framework is therefore more useful for understanding hybrid interregionalism (particularly region-to-state and regional power-to-regional power) than for analysing traditional region-to-region interregionalism.

## 5.6 Multilateralism and Security Governance

The attempt to devise less state-centred and more regional thinking about multilateralism, security and governance has given rise to an array of understandings of multilevel and multilateral security governance. This way of thinking has gained ground since the mid-1990s thanks to the recognition that security is a multilevel phenomenon; that sub-systems can cooperate and are not competing blocks; and that regional security is a new reality.

The concept of multilevel governance was introduced by Hooghe and Marks (2001) to capture evolutions in the study of the EU, which was no longer being viewed as a process of integration but as a political system in its own right. Multilevel security governance points to a system in which states are still the main actors but other actors—global, regional, local and transnational—play a key role as well.

The notion of multilevel governance has also been useful for rethinking what multilateralism is in an international environment in which states and global international organisations are no longer the only actors. An implicit or explicit reference to multilevel governance is present in several contributions to the analysis of global governance. For instance, Slaughter (2004), and Forman and Segaar (2006) have coined the term new multilateralism to refer to a multivariate network of actors and global governance issues. Adler (2006) has written of communitarian multilateralism to refer to a 'community of practice' involving regional organisations and global institutions. Telò (2006) and Ortega (2007) have examined multilevel multilateralism and referred to regional entities as 'multilateral workshops' that help reform multilateralism. Lucarelli et al. (2012) have analysed the role of the EU in the system of multilateral security governance.

Krahmann (2005), Sperling (2009) and Kirchner (2007) have developed the concept of security governance, which in turn has spawned a significant body of literature (see Christou et al. 2010). In Kirchner's words, security governance is an 'intentional system of rules that involves the coordination, management and regulation of issues by multiple and separate authorities, interventions by both public and private actors, formal and informal arrangements and purposefully directed towards particular policy outcomes' (Kirchner 2007: 3). On the whole, the body of literature on security governance is rich and promising. However, it suffers from certain shortcomings and is also somewhat fragmented. In the first place, the literature tends to be more descriptive than theoretical or analytical and it has tended to downplay the security dimension. Moreover, it has been biased in favour of focusing on the European context. A valuable exception to this is the work of James Sperling, who envisages different systems of security governance depending on internal features, external relationships, and the strength of the security dilemma (Sperling 2009).

The concept of security governance seems to be particularly promising for analysing the role of interregionalism in reframing security cooperation. Firstly, the notion that global governance involves actors at all levels from the national, through the interregional and all the way up to the global levels provides a conceptual

framework for locating processes that are unlikely to *replace* the identity-building processes of regionalism but that could *supplement* them by creating a degree of norm convergence across regions.

Secondly, the development of interregional security agendas could provide another opportunity for generating a 'division of labour' in global governance. This would be relevant where the main regional organisations failed to take the lead in maintaining security in their areas of competence as they had been expected to according to Article 52 of the United Nations (UN) Charter. Today, especially in conflict mediation and resolution, we are seeing a proliferation of forms of inter-regionalism that bypass the regional level. Instead, interregional forums are now being composed by sub-regional local organisations and regional extra-mural actors as the first level in the international 'division of labour' for addressing local crises and wars. For instance, the troika meetings between the EU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) do not replace the parallel bi-regional dialogue between the EU and the AU but support two sub-regional organisations that are engaged in conflict resolution. They represent an attempt to generate, through interregionalism, the combination of legitimacy and effective funding procedures that regional organisations such as the OAU/AU failed to achieve. The EU, for example, worked closely with ECOWAS and the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in elaborating a 'Framework of Action for Peace and Security' to support security sector reform in West Africa (Ebo 2007: 169). The EU has also developed close working relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and this is marked by annual joint council/ministerial meetings between EU and GCC foreign ministers. Close cooperation with the GCC again reflects the weakness of the regional organisation that should formally operate as natural partner for the EU in the region—in this case, the Arab League. However, as opposed to the bilateral cooperation between the EU and the African sub-regional bodies, the EU–GCC cooperation framework has yet to result in a shared security agenda.

The potential problems of this proliferation of levels of governance and of the sub-regional, regional and interregional forums that are involved in tackling security issues are many. Behind the belief that multilevel multilateralism may benefit global politics is the assumption that the actors involved will coordinate effectively and intervene on issues that pertain to their own level. This sometimes happens, as is the case when interregional forums focus on 'naturally' interregional issues such as migration. However, as first argued by Haas (1983: 216), the idea of generating effective division of labour across multilateral organisations is somewhat optimistic. As the troika meetings between EU and African sub-regional organisations demonstrate, interregional forums often emerge not because their level is the most appropriate for dealing with specific issues but rather to compensate for the failure of other, more appropriate multilateral forums to do so (examples include weak regional organisations such as the OAU or the Arab League). In the absence of effective coordination across forums, multilevel multilateralism could increase the chance of forum shopping both by states and by sub-state actors (see Crocker et al. 2001), thus reducing rather than increasing the chances of success. Therefore, the

idea of multilevel governance of security is theoretically and practically important for framing interregional security cooperation but only as long as it is not used to justify institutional proliferation.

## 5.7 Where to Go from Here?

As we have seen, attention to regions and interregional relations in the security studies literature has been limited. The state has long been considered to be the main referent and actor of security and the latter has been considered a close relative of 'defence'. The analysis of regional dynamics has been captured by a few approaches that have explored two main dynamics. On the one hand, analysis has focused on the process of formation of a region characterised by a low probability of internal war because of: (i) a process of community-building practices (security communities approach); (ii) a common perception of (external) threat (security complexes approach); or (iii) pressures of the international system (regional orders approach). On the other hand, there has been analysis of regional responses to security challenges that cannot be dealt with at the level of the state but require interaction between different levels of governance.

These approaches are not incompatible. A region may not be characterised by geographic continuity but may form around a shared perception that a security challenge can only be handled by coordinating efforts at a regional level. This allows for interaction between different actors and levels of governance within that region. The characteristics of the international system, in terms of both polarity and ideological homogeneity (Aron 1962), will influence the way groupings form around a particular security challenge. The creation of a regional entity for jointly responding to a security threat will in turn affect the definition of the security challenge and the collective responses. The intra-regional reflection on the security challenge and the legitimacy of tools to be employed (such as torture in the war against terrorism) touch on basic values that may or may not be shared by members of the region and this will influence its cohesiveness or 'we-ness'. Therefore, while the shared perception of a common security challenge may prompt the formation of a new regional grouping, this process will in turn prompt redefinition of the security challenge and of the region itself. Multilateral security governance at the regional level is thus not only a policy process undertaken by various actors within a security region but is also a process through which actors in a region redefine their collective identity.

Research using this theoretical framework would begin with the security challenge around which a group (of state and other actors) has formed in the belief that a coordinated, joint response is necessary. The analysis would then proceed to identify the main actors involved and the interaction between them within the region both in terms of discourse and policy practices. Focus would be on identifying the regional definition of the problem and its solutions and on internal reflections concerning legitimate tools for redress. The core of the study would be on securitisation

and de-securitisation (at the level of individual states as well as of the region) and on intra-regional debate and its transformation. A further dimension of research would concern the relationship between regions on the specific issue area—how interaction between regions affects the construction of the region under study. Enmity and amity as well as comparisons are relevant.

This way of exploring the relationship between regions and security challenges comes close to the literature on new regionalism and the notion of region found in it. This notion stresses norm convergence as well as processes of identity formation. The proposed approach could help fill a gap in the literature by addressing the lack of attention to regions in security studies and the lack of communication between security studies and the literature on new regionalism.

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