

REGIONAL COOPERATION, INTERREGIONALISM AND GOVERNANCE IN THE ATLANTIC

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Previous chapters of this book have pointed out that a combination of global challenges and factors such as the internationalisation of production, the improvement of communication technologies, increased human mobility, the risks of financial instability, the dangers of climate change and the transnationalisation of organised crime demand coordinated responses at different levels. And yet the institutions which should be able to provide such a global response are lacking. Even though the United Nations plays a leading role in the creation of a global agenda, in practice the world is fragmented into multiple spaces for dialogue and cooperation but also for competition (Goerg 2014). We are living in a multipolar world where complex interdependences, power shifts and the competition of ideas interact (Grevi 2009; Kupchan 2013; ESPAS 2015), and tensions are exacerbated by the problems of accommodating the emerging powers within the post-World War II traditional governance structures (Vaquer, Tarragona and Morillas 2015). In this scenario, the current framework of interregional relations in the Atlantic is also unequal and fragmented, challenging the idea of the Atlantic Space as a unit of study. Large asymmetries exist between the various regionalist processes, regional institutional structures differ and there are even disparities in the concept of "region", as it is used in different geopolitical areas. Notwithstanding this, we can observe some convergence of trends in its translation into practice.

Among them, the growing role of non-state actors in international affairs (Khanna 2011; Cerny 2010) has translated into a variety of government-led initiatives that are directed to establishing close interregional links. The convergence of non-state actors' input into international cooperation and the evolution of less institutionalised and more flexible forms of trans-governmental governance have paved the way for an expansion of trade and security agreements in fields such as development cooperation, culture,

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science and social affairs. In these sectors, non-state actors play an important enabling role in fostering ties at the interregional level and beyond. By studying the trajectories of different regional and interregional initiatives and their scope we will analyse how the dynamics evolve and what the implications are for the future development of intermediate institutions for the governance of the Atlantic Space. The comprehensive assessment of regionalism and interregionalism allows for a better understanding of the complex network of Atlantic governance as well as of the convergences and divergences occurring in this space.

Mapping the variable geometry of regionalism and the rise of geopolitical spaces in the Atlantic

Regionalisms across the Atlantic Space

Most projects to form regions across national borders (i.e. regionalisms) in the Atlantic Space have evolved within continental boundaries. Territorial contingency and proximity have determined the shape of most projects, and only a few organisations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), have cut across the Atlantic Ocean. Thus, different types and logics of region-building have emerged within Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe.

Regionalism in Africa unfolds between pan-African ideals of uniting the continent in an anti-colonial legacy on one side and the role of the European Union (EU) as the main funder on the other side. Both the strong normative stance of exclusion and the influence of an external actor are unparalleled among the other regionalisms across the Atlantic. Most regionalisms have materialised in regional organisations with their own centralised but powerless bureaucracies. The African Union (AU) represents the continental framework that aims to coordinate the most relevant pan-African sub-regional projects, the Regional Economic Communities (REC). At the same time some imperial regional constructs such as the South Africa-dominated Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the French legacy of the African Financial Community (CFA) persist.

Regionalism in Latin America is chiefly characterised by a proliferation of regional organisations along internal political and economic rather than geographic divides. Regional projects thus accumulate and they represent a break-away from previous or competing projects. The recent Pacific Alliance represents liberal economic policies and an alignment with the United States of America (US), thus contrasting with the more structured Common Market of the South (Mercosur), while the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) is designed to foster regional hegemony at the expense of North American influence. Regional organisations tend to be shallow, with most policymaking concentrated in national ministries.

Regionalism in North America has been dominated by trade agreements and securitisation accompanied by little institutionalisation. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been the only major organisation founded and it has not faced internal competition. However, differentiation has occurred in terms of an antagonism between US-led pan-Americanism and a North-South divide of the Americas. NAFTA was

conceived as a core agreement to expand throughout the whole Western Hemisphere into a “Free Trade Area of the Americas” (FTAA), but it faced resistance in South America, thus limiting its outreach into parts of Central America.

Europe is home to the most sophisticated institutionalisation of regionalism in the Atlantic. Since overcoming the antagonism with the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) the EU has established itself as the dominant actor of integration on the continent. The EU is not only an exceptional regionalism due to its strong supranational elements but also in terms of being the only regional actor in the Atlantic that has developed a notable presence and influence in the other regions.

The evolution of contemporary regionalisms across the Atlantic Space – synchronisation and fragmentation

For most of the 20th century, regionalisms in the Atlantic Space have been chiefly shaped by domestic factors, albeit with reference to the external framework. The driving forces after World War II included the peace-building process in Europe under the aegis of the US, the quest for economic autonomy and favourable terms for trade in Latin America, and the attempts at convergence between the newly created states in post-colonial Africa. As a result, most regionalisms of the Cold War period were characterised by a focus on clearly confined projects, such as industrialisation policies, the pooling of resources or mediation between conflicting states. Although there was a recurrent exchange of ideas between regional projects, such as developmental regional policies from Latin America to Africa, most regionalisms maintained their inward-oriented outlook.

The end of the Cold War triggered the creation of new regionalisms across the Atlantic Space. Major projects that were to play a crucial role in shaping the regional configurations, such as NAFTA or Mercosur, were set up in the early 1990s. Other key regionalisms such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the EU emerged as new organisations, representing important changes from their predecessors – the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and the European Communities (EC). As opposed to the more inward-oriented previous regional projects, the emergence of this new generation of regionalisms was primarily influenced by three changes in the global order. Firstly, the liberal economic paradigm established itself as a dominant prescriptive guideline, thus paving the way for regionalism as a vehicle for free trade agreements (FTA). Secondly, the democratic political paradigm also established itself as a guiding principle, forming an understanding of regionalism as a framework to support and stabilise democratic transitions. Thirdly, the end of global bipolarity between the US and the Soviet Union offered new options for regions to be formed, while for Latin America and Africa the fear of marginalisation could be countered by region-building.

While there was a sense of synchrony in the Atlantic Space about the beginning of a new wave of regionalism after the Cold War, the subsequent evolution of the various projects has been characterised by fragmentation. Latin America and the Arab World have become arenas of contesting regionalisms and aspiring regional leaders. No clear pattern of regionalism has emerged, as both the underlying norms and the delineations are being

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negotiated. Africa is still in a process of reconfiguration with several sub-regions that are constantly changing shape and outlook. Competition is less evident than in the Latin American case but the widespread phenomenon of overlapping membership and external funding has hampered a process of consolidation. By contrast, Europe and the North Atlantic have dominant, consolidated and expanding regionalisms. The EU and NATO have extended their reach far beyond their own region and face no internal competing project, except the possibility of a return to nationalism. North America has a consolidated project whose functional and territorial expansion has been stalled due to resistance in South America and a lack of institutional identity. The negotiations of trade agreements with the Asia-Pacific region and with Europe have not fostered a common position, thus further reducing the capacity of NAFTA to become a regional actor.

The spreading of region-building ideas across the Atlantic

Regionalisms in the Atlantic Space draw their set-ups and objectives from various sources of ideas. An important source is internal and stems from the accumulated experiences with region-building in the past, including failed attempts at integration and institutional memory. Many contemporary regional organisations can be traced back to previous projects, either as a continuation or a rupture. And yet, across the Atlantic, the main source of institutional elements as well as geographical expansion is the European Union. Many other projects such as the African Union (AU) or the Andean Community (CAN) make direct references to the EU and adapt elements of its *modus operandi* or at least of its symbolism, including regional parliaments and courts. The EU also functions as an anti-model when it is perceived as an undesired form of integration. NAFTA and Mercosur have rejected supranational logics and a centralised bureaucracy.

The main ideas for functional objectives chiefly stem from a liberal economic paradigm and the global institutions representing them, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). With few exceptions, such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), Atlantic regionalisms are generally designed to facilitate free trade and investment between their members and, in most cases, also with third parties through external agreements. Implementation, however, varies greatly between actual common markets such as the EU and SACU, on one side, and liberal schemes that primarily exist on paper as in most African REC, on the other. By contrast, the liberal idea of free movement of labour and of people is not readily taken up as an objective of regionalism and has only been implemented in a few projects such as the EU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The same is valid for common currencies, which are only found in the eurozone and the euro-dependent CFA Franc (*Franc de la Communauté Financière d’Afrique*), even if notable parts of Latin America and Africa are effectively dollarised.

The main sources of ideas to effectively define the boundaries of a region in the Atlantic Space have often been based on identity foundations. The influence of “pan-” movements is still relevant in contemporary regionalisms in Africa and Latin America, while the legal identity of the *acquis communautaire* has provided the foundation for the EU.

The Atlantic divide and the role of regional powers

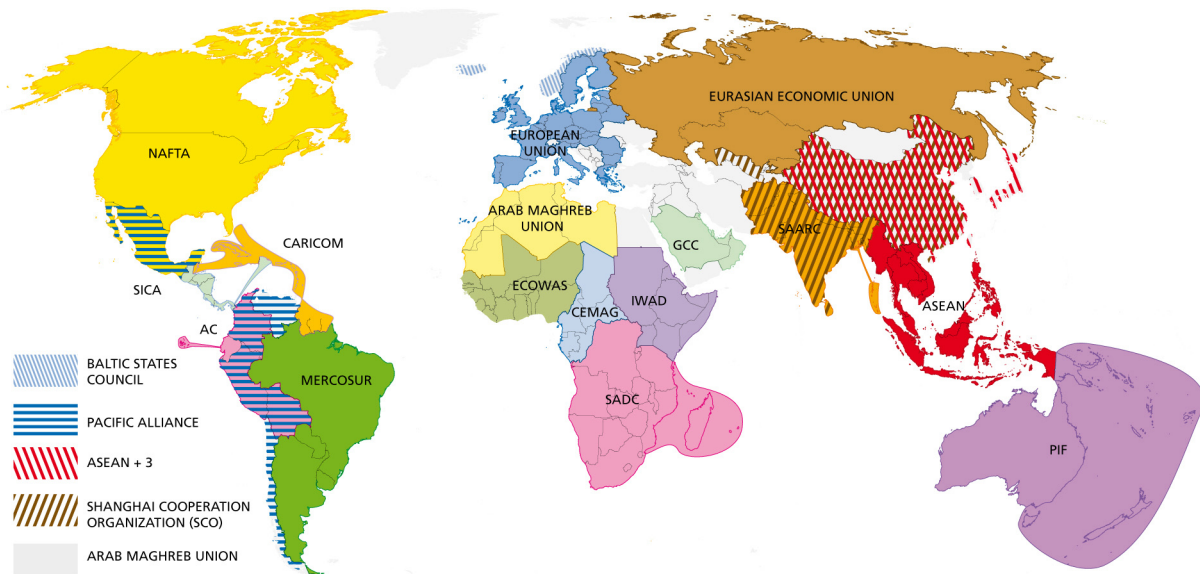
The major division of regionalism in the Atlantic Space remains along the North-South axis. Several projects to bridge this gap, such as the FTAA or the Union for the Mediterranean have failed to generate integrative momentum. The Organisation of American States (OAS) has increasingly been challenged by the Unasur project, which is composed only of South American states and aims to monopolise regional security governance, and more recently by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), grouping 33 American states together without the US and Canada. While convergence has occurred between Western countries under NATO, the antagonism between projects in the Atlantic North and South has increased. Mercosur and NAFTA have further diverged and so have the two Atlantic Ocean-centred alliances – NATO and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS). Meanwhile, the EU's trade negotiations with Mercosur or via Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) groupings have faced a rocky path. Countries with the potential to overcome the North-South divides, such as Mexico, Egypt and Turkey, have acted more as buffer states than as bridge states.

By contrast, the emergence of regional powers such as Brazil, South Africa and Nigeria is closely interwoven with their membership of regional projects. Regionalisms such as Mercosur, Unasur, SADC, ECOWAS and the AU have been instrumental to their leadership and their global visibility. These countries' approaches to establishing appropriate regionalisms have not been uniform, ranging from stepping up as paymaster in order to establish hegemony to more tacit cooperative strategies. Even though the presence of a regional power has triggered opposition from smaller members, regions without clear leaders, such as Central Africa, have struggled even more to come up with active projects. However, as regional powers have increasingly been perceived as global powers, they have shifted more attention to forums such as the G-20 or the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). In combination with the recurrent volatility of their economies, this shifting interest makes it difficult to sustain their role as constant, active leaders, given the fact that they have generally been opposed to autonomous or even supranational regional bodies.

Interregional dynamics across the shores of the Atlantic

Interregional relations in the Atlantic Space reflect the above-described extremely diverse experiences and approaches to regional cooperation. Traditionally, the study of interregionalism has been focused on the relationship between formally constituted regional blocs. Nevertheless, interregionalism includes a variety of political interactions, formal institutional relations, material transactions and cultural exchanges between the parties (Garzón 2015). Hänggi proposed classifying three types of interregional relations. The first is the traditional or *pure interregionalism*, i.e. relations between regional institutionalised groupings. A second category is (*intergovernmental*) *transregionalism*, where states participate in interregional relations but in an individual capacity. Finally, *hybrid regionalism* includes relations between regional groupings and single powers, e.g.

Figure 1. Selected regional integration organizations



Source: *Atlas of the World*, Wikimedia Commons; organizations' websites.

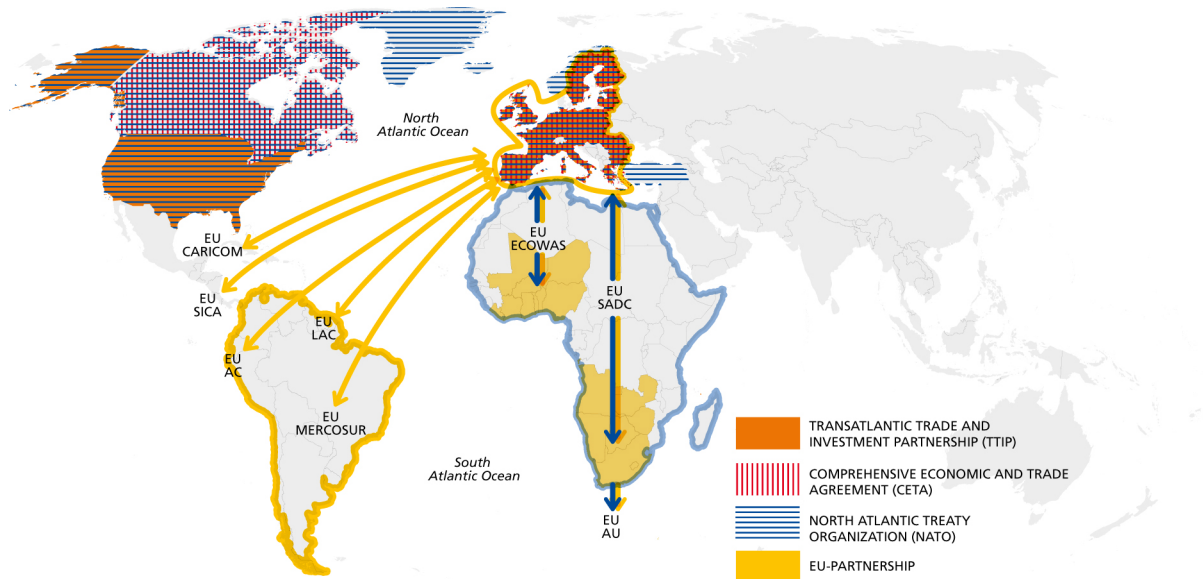
the EU political dialogue with emerging powers (Hänggi 2000). Alongside these categories, we can introduce a wider notion that emerged in the 1970s as an attempt to overcome the state-centred approach, including the analysis of the sprawling links and initiatives in transnational civil society and business (Keohane and Nye 1974). Alongside the expansion of people-to-people contacts, *transnational networks* have become a common feature of international governance (Keohane and Nye 1974; Slaughter 2004).

This multidimensional model of interregionalism, which is characterised by the coexistence of multilevel diplomacy and institutional structures, is known as “complex interregionalism” (Hardacre and Smith 2009). This concept, created to explain the paradigm of relations between the EU and other regions can also be used to analyse the interregional relations across the Atlantic. In this chapter we will review the state of interregional relations and assess the connections between governmental and other platforms in different policy areas.

Drawing the new interregional dynamics in the Atlantic Space

The growing trans-regionalisation of the interdependencies (Valladão 2015) enhanced the emergence of a large number of interregional initiatives in the Atlantic that no longer respond to the traditional North-North and North-South patterns. Interregionalism appears as an intermediate response to the current global governance institutions being challenged from several fronts: some argue that traditional institutions are ineffective because they are prone to blockage by diverse actors and factors (Hale, Held and Young 2013); others question the bias towards maintaining the status quo that favours the traditional powers as the main obstacle to better cooperation (Amorim 2010). Out of these divergent positions, two trends converge: traditional powers promote initiatives

Figure 2. EU's transatlantic partnerships (pure regionalism)



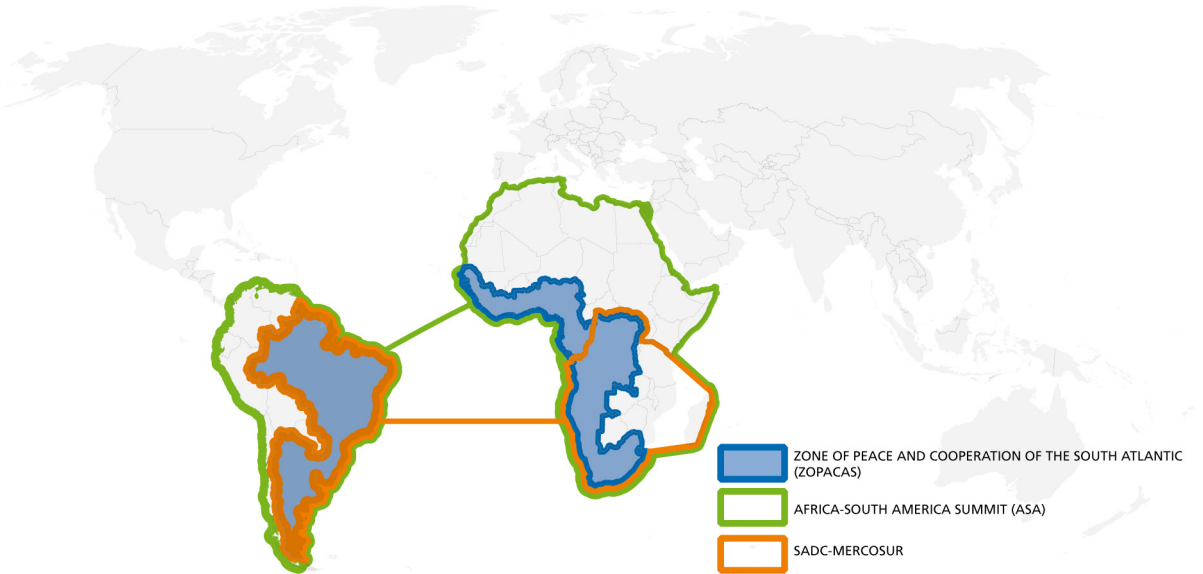
Source: Elaborated by CIDOB using data from the authors' research.

that aim to maintain their influence by adapting to new forms of multilateralism, while emerging powers promote contesting partnership initiatives meant to increase their autonomy and diversify interdependencies. These two strategies are shaping the transformation of interregional initiatives and are supporting the resurgence of South-South cooperation led by regional powers such as Brazil, South Africa and other middle-income countries (Goerg 2014).

The new South-South interregional forums and “strategic partnerships” have promoted the establishment of more or less institutionalised cooperation mechanisms and networks of public and private actors and have further resulted in triangular North-South-South cooperation. The heterogeneity of actors involved, from super-powers to the least developed countries, including traditional powers, emerging and middle-income countries, makes the Atlantic a hotbed for innovative initiatives. These are not only the result of “top-down” approaches, but also integrate diverse consultation mechanisms with social partners, parliamentarians and a large number of actors (Gardini and Ayuso 2015).

The interest in interregionalism has been reflected in the increasing number of high-level summits, surrounded by parallel meetings, at different governmental levels and in various civil society forums. Although their proliferation has been criticised because of the lack of tangible results (Whitehead and Baraona de Brito 2005; Malamud and Gardini 2015), summits remain a fundamental instrument for political impetus. Another significant trend in current interregionalism is the interplay between the multiple overlapping regionalist initiatives of different nature (Malamud and Gardini 2015; Grabendorff 2013). Economic integration initiatives are subsumed in other bodies of political integration, which leads to multiple memberships by states. This results in overlapping instruments of interregional cooperation, makes stable partners difficult to identify and weakens regional identities. This plethora of regional

Figure 3. Selected transatlantic South-South partnerships



Source: Elaborated by CIDOB using data from the authors' research.

actors makes it difficult for the EU to design interregional strategies (Grabendorff 2013). This has been less problematic for other actors, such as the US or Brazil, which have more flexible regional approaches and are more likely to prioritise bilateral relations.

Multidimensional interregional Atlantic spaces: a tentative approach

This section offers a non-exhaustive approach to different interregional cooperation levels based on the four previously defined categories: pure interregionalism; intergovernmental regionalism; hybrid interregionalism and transnational networks in the case studies analysed by the Atlantic Future project¹.

North Atlantic interregionalism

Interregional relations in the North Atlantic do not fit the definitions of pure interregionalism. Alcaro and Reilly (2015) argue that interregional relations in this space evolve in two dimensions: state-to-region contacts (hybrid regionalism) and bi-continental intergovernmental relations (intergovernmental transregionalism). The former would be exemplified by the bilateral strategic partnerships between the EU and the United States and Canada, and the high-profile trade negotiations currently underway on an ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US or the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) that has already been signed between Canada and the EU.

In the second category, the main path is characterised by relations within NATO. Alcaro and Reilly (ibid.) argue that the North Atlantic exists as the Western region rather than an interregional space. These

1. North America and the EU; the EU and sub-Saharan Africa; the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean; Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa; the Arab region and Latin America; North America and Africa.

authors say that the North Atlantic Space is not seen as a security issue by policymakers and security expert communities in the EU or the US and that the economies of the US and EU are deeply mutually penetrated. They also point out that the decision-making in the space is still sovereign on both sides of the North Atlantic but the leader-followers dynamic between the US and its EU allies often results in the appearance of joint decision-making. A strong interrelationship exists between public and private operators, with some institutionalised channels such as the EU-US Transatlantic Economic Council². Cooperation between the EU and the US is taken forward via constant dialogue at various levels, from the annual summits between the EU and US leaders to technical work at expert levels. This people-to-people contact contributes to the establishment of relatively homogeneous epistemic communities.

EU-sub-Saharan Africa interregionalism

Although the EU's focus on promoting regional integration in Africa stems from the 1990s, the first attempts date back to the 1960s (Garelli 2012). Pirozzi and Godsäter (2015) found that the EU has greatly influenced regionalism in Africa through education and support. The EU has promoted pure interregionalism, e.g. by funding and supporting capacity building of the AU in the field of peace and security (African Peace Facility Training). The EU-Africa partnership framework was established at the first Africa-EU summit in Cairo in 2000. The EU also provides funding and capacity building for the SADC, the East African Community (EAC) and ECOWAS. The focus of the support and capacity building was primarily to promote economic integration, but a considerable part of the funds have been allocated to security issues through, for example, ECOWAS.

Other forms of comprehensive interregionalism, such as the relations between the EU and the ACP countries with the Cotonou Agreement and the European Development Fund (EDF), can be classified in the category of intergovernmental transregionalism. The relationship between the African Peace Security Council (PSC), composed of five sub-regional institutions, with the European PSC can be placed in the same category. On the other hand, hybrid regionalism is present within the EU-South Africa partnership and the bilateral relations of the EU member states with African regional organisations.

The role of non-state actors has progressively grown. An example is civil society participation in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), the main framework of continent-to-continent interaction between the EU and the AU since 2007 (Pirozzi and Godsäter 2015). The JAES determines that it "should be co-owned by European and African non-institutional actors" and functions as a "permanent platform for information, participation and mobilisation of a broad spectrum of civil society actors" (EU and AU 2007). Other examples are: the Europe Africa Policy Research Network, the EU-Africa Economic and Social Stakeholders' Network, and the Africa-EU Intercontinental Civil Society Forum. These are valuable settings for information-sharing and policy coordination but they suffer from high turnover of participants and a lack of predictable resources (Pirozzi and Godsäter 2015).

2. For more information, see <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rt/eu/tec/>. Retrieved November 24, 2015.

EU-Latin America interregionalism

Historically, the interregional dynamics in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have been propelled by the EU and have essentially reflected its priorities and vision, including incentives and specific policies that favour deeper regional integration. The EU has established several sub-regional mechanisms of political dialogue, economic relations and development cooperation due to the variety of sub-regional integration schemes in LAC. The EU has developed a pure interregionalist relationship with Mercosur, the Andean Community (CAN), the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). In the early 21st century, a third generation of LAC regionalism emerged (Sanahuja 2013; Malamud 2010) and drew a complex map of overlapping regional institutions to which the EU agenda was forced to adapt. The creation of CELAC in 2011 provided an institutional framework for working with all LAC countries and to an extent overcame regional complexities and sub-regional fragmentation (Schäfer 2013). So, the pre-existing EU-Rio Group Dialogue and EU-LAC summits have changed from intergovernmental transregionalism to a kind of pure interregionalism. But, institutional asymmetries and overlapping regional initiatives, such as the recently created Unasur and Pacific Alliance, mean a balanced relationship is still difficult.

Also supported by the EU, civil society has been more directly involved in interregional mechanisms than in LAC regional cooperation schemes (Gardini and Ayuso 2015). One example of this is the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), which was created in 2006 to enhance the democratic dimension of the bi-regional strategic association³. Another is the creation in 2010 of an EU-LAC knowledge area by promoting networks of science, research, innovation and technology as a key priority. Alongside this, it was decided to establish the EU-LAC Foundation to engage the business, academic and social sectors and civil society representatives from both regions in order to improve mutual understanding, create platforms for dialogue and proposals and support interregional networks. These transnational networks are now the most dynamic drivers of EU-LAC interregional relations and a path for convergence between homologous communities.

Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa

Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa had rarely been a priority for each other. However, in the last two decades, there have been increasing political efforts to strengthen ties on a region-to-region basis (Mattheis 2015). This has been facilitated by the emergence of regional projects following a similar logic, more specifically, the SADC and Mercosur. Between these two organisations, we find pure interregionalism initiated thanks to the rapprochement between Brazil and South Africa. Both countries shared the idea of exploring possibilities for mutual agreements and the negotiations were then transformed into a Mercosur-SACU issue. When the WTO Doha Round stalled, the South-South negotiations became a priority and a preferential trade agreement was agreed and signed in 2004 but not ratified. A new agreement was signed in 2008, not pushed for in response to a demand from economic actors but rather as a political instrument for South-South cooperation

3. For more information, see http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/eurolat/menu_en.htm

(Nutenko 2006). For both groupings it was the first agreement to be signed with another regional bloc.

The Africa-South America Summit (ASA) initiated in 2006 represents intergovernmental transregionalism between the countries of both regions as a whole. It was preceded by the Brazil-Africa Forum, a form of hybrid interregionalism. However, after several meetings the interest in this format seems to have dropped, as the last summits have been postponed and the number of participants has decreased due to the rise of similar competing events (Mattheis 2015). Another example of this category is the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (ZOPACAS) created in 1986 to establish the South Atlantic as a demilitarised space free of foreign military bases, internal aggression and nuclear weapons. Brazil promoted the initiative with the aim of excluding the traditional powers from the South Atlantic (Gamba-Stonehouse 1989). With the end of the Cold War, priorities shifted to ecological issues, organised crime and maritime security. However, due to its weak institutionalisation, ZOPACAS is dependent on other actors to implement the agenda. Civil society ties play a marginal role in the dominant forms of interregionalism; some of the longer-standing connections, such as those between trade unions or more recently through social forums, have not produced a counter-project to the state-led forms of interregionalism (Mattheis 2015).

Latin America and North Africa

Despite the lack of priority given by each to other regions, relations and exchange have grown constantly over the last 10-12 years, in parallel to a progressive institutionalisation of high-level political dialogue. The starting point can be identified in December 2003, when the Brazilian president was invited to visit the Arab League headquarters, where he expressed his intention to create permanent interregional dialogue. The first South America-Arab Countries (ASPA) summit was in Brasilia in July 2005, with the attendance of representatives of all countries from both Unasur and the Arab League and officials from the Andean Community (CAN), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). Hence, it can be conceptualised as closer to intergovernmental transregionalism than a form of pure regionalism. In parallel, other sectoral encounters have been made in the fields of environmental and health cooperation.

Civil society was engaged in the creation of ASPA's Businessmen Forum, with more than 600 participants from the private sector. It was strengthened with the creation of the Council on Arab World Relations with Latin America and the Caribbean (CARLAC) in 2012 to enhance the relations between both regions and consolidate links through the participation and inclusion of private actors. Two Arab-Latin America relation centres were created in each region to involve companies, civil society, governments, media and the academic world in key issues. The observer status of sub-regional organisations at ASPA summits has led to the negotiation of free trade agreements (FTA) between Mercosur and Arab countries. FTAs were signed with Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, along with framework agreements with Morocco, Jordan, Syria and Tunisia, introducing hybrid interregionalism to the relationship. The rapprochement

contributed to the diversification of trade links consolidating regional actorness and greater autonomy of the actors involved, but the current political destabilisation affecting the Arab world has left the bi-regional relationship on standby.

North America and Africa

Given the lack of North American regional organisations engaged in trans-continental relationships, the United States and Canada have developed their relations with sub-Saharan Africa on a separate hybrid interregional basis, but with increasing importance over the past decade (Kotsopoulos and Goerg 2015). In 2006, the US opened its diplomatic mission to the AU, but it was only in 2010, when the annual US-AU High-Level Meeting was launched, that the partnership was formalised. In 2012, US strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa, and therefore its engagement with African partners, was centred around four main pillars: strengthening democratic institutions; spurring economic growth, trade and investment; advancing peace and security, and promoting development. However, the US mission lacks the resources to propose and implement continent-wide strategies and programming. Cooperation with Africa's Regional Economic Communities is not a US strategic goal but is presented as a horizontal approach under the "Spur Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment" and "Advance Peace and Security" pillars (White House 2012). In recent years, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has given a more prominent role to regional organisations in its strategic planning, considering that regional integration will further economic development and stability in Africa, as well as attempting to better integrate USAID and the State Department while more effectively harnessing American resources and cooperating with allies. USAID signed an Assistance Agreement for Comprehensive Regional Development with the EAC and development cooperation agreements with the ECOWAS Commission. However, USAID seems to first identify issues and policy areas and then find the appropriate partners in line with the project-based approach of the organisation (Kotsopoulos and Goerg 2015).

Canada's relationship with Africa has been more focused on development assistance than on trade or investment (Black 2004). Traditionally, Canada's multilateral relations with Africa were channelled through the Commonwealth, the UN and the *Francophonie*, though this has changed in recent years. Canadian multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding targets a wide range of organisations, but the vast majority goes to global institutions, rather than regional organisations. However, one area of Canadian ODA programming where substantial funds do go towards regional entities is under the category of International Financial Institution (IFI) support, such as the African Development Bank. The former has become an important conduit for Canadian funding aimed at larger regional initiatives such as the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In 2015 there is only one direct funding agreement between the AU and Canada focussing on support for institutions, capacity building and communication of the AU Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. Canada also supports the AU's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Assessing the EU's normative power in promoting regional integration in the Atlantic

The EU has been perceived as the world's most advanced regional integration project, and indeed it sees itself as a governance model for other countries and regions in the world. Exporting regionalism abroad and promoting interregional relations constitute an important element of the EU's foreign policy identity and are at the centre of its soft power (Smith 2008; Soler i Lecha and Viilup 2014). Regionalist models can be diffused around the world through regional competition, teaching and support, and conditionality, according to the three categories identified by Hurrell (2007), to which Pirozzi and Godsäter later added partnership (2015).

The European integration project's own success story in achieving lasting peace, stability and prosperity has been the backbone of its normative power and fundamental to its capacity to inspire regional integration beyond its borders. The EU's achievements in economic integration have served, if not as models, then at least as catalysts for numerous other attempts at regional cooperation across the world (Isbell and Nolan Garcia 2015). The EU seeks to "actively promote the development of (intra) regional economic and political cooperation, the building of issue-related regimes, and the creation of joint institutions for consultation and decision-making in its neighbourhood and beyond" (Börzel and Risse 2009). The EU's approach is based on the conviction that regionalism constitutes not only the best means to ensure security, stability and prosperity in the EU itself but also beyond its borders (Börzel and Risse 2009; Magen 2006). This approach is not only about preserving the EU's trade power but also diffusing the ideas, principles and practices that it considers its own (Damro 2010; Manners 2009). In addition, the EU is also heavily involved in supporting regional intergovernmental organisations, which coincides with the element of teaching proposed by Hurrell's typology.

Although still a work in process, the creation of EU strategic partnerships with emerging countries and regions is part of the EU's way to reposition itself in the international arena. In the Atlantic Space, the EU has five bilateral strategic partnerships (with the United States, Canada, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa) and two regional strategic partnerships, with the AU and the CELAC. A strategic partnership should contribute to stability and good governance. In Latin America the bilateral strategy with Brazil and Mexico competes with the bi-regional strategy and sub-regional strategies that run with different patterns depending on each regional process. For its part, the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy has the objective of raising the relationship to the level of "partnership among equals" but there is still a gap between the ambition and the concrete results achieved (Pirozzi and Godsäter 2015).

A number of factors and challenges are currently affecting the EU's capacity to inspire and promote its ideas, values and practices. It is facing a multifaceted crisis at home (institutional, economic and political) as well as serious challenges on its external borders. The more the EU's own model is perceived to be in trouble in terms of integration, legitimacy and effectiveness, its capacity to promote regionalism and interregional relations is undermined.

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Although the 2008 economic and financial crisis originated outside the EU, its effects have been particularly severe on the EU's economy and have also brought to the light serious structural defects in the European construction. On the one hand, the power and decision-making has shifted from Brussels-based communitarian institutions to national capitals and big member states (particularly Berlin, as Germany has emerged as the regional hegemon). On the other hand, the economic and financial crisis has brought about unprecedented integration – particularly among the member states participating in the eurozone – which even seems to be leading towards a kind of a federalised union (Viilup 2012). EU member states are far from sharing a single view of how far the integration should be left to proceed. The UK has gone as far as initiating the renegotiation of the terms of its membership and is set to hold a referendum on whether it should remain within the bloc. Fuelled by the widespread perception that the EU and public institutions failed to deliver for the public good during the crisis, public distrust of these bodies has increasingly put the legitimacy of EU-level decision-making at risk.

The EU is also failing to effectively address serious challenges on its external borders (instability in North Africa, war in Ukraine, the migration crisis resulting from instability in its neighbourhood). Krastev and Leonard (2014) write that since the occupation of Crimea in March 2014, the Europeans have had to admit that the post-Cold War European order has dissolved. The 13 November 2015 Paris terrorist attacks caused fear and insecurity throughout the EU. It is feared that the massacre will further disrupt European integration, liberalisation and democracy⁴. The enlargement policy has been the most successful tool of the EU's transformative power. The current freezing of the enlargement of the European Union for the foreseeable future by the Juncker Commission will certainly serve to undermine the EU's power to inspire change (Soler i Lecha and Viilup 2014). There is no shortage of examples of how the decline of the EU's model has affected EU attempts to export regionalism and foster interregionalism. The EU's major democratisation and stabilisation project for its neighbourhood – the European Neighbourhood Policy – is on the rocks. So are other, major region-to-region links such as an FTA with Mercosur and economic partnerships with the APC countries. In addition, sluggish progress is being made in the negotiations of the biggest economic integration project in the Atlantic – the TTIP with the US.

Closing remarks

Atlantic geopolitics is currently dominated by pluralism rather than unity. Emerging economies and groups of states in the South Atlantic are developing strategies that challenge the traditional Western powers and new regional and interregional initiatives of varied nature and composition proliferate. Established North-South cooperation maintains an important place in this reconfiguration but contestation has become an equally defining element. At the same time, much of this contestation has exhibited a volatile character that depends chiefly on the financial and ideational investment of regional leaders and on the perception of a common external other. As stimulus for change, common identity and functional demand are weaker than a shared adversary or competitor, and so, when it relies on these factors, the reshaping of the Atlantic's regional order is limited.

4. For more information, see <http://www.gmfus.org/blog/2015/11/16/after-paris-western-unity-ever-more-difficult-ever-more-essential>

Its institutionalised forms of regional and interregional projects may have limitations, but the experiences in the Atlantic Space provide case studies that mean it can be considered a laboratory of multilateralism at global level. The Atlantic Space can be observed as a global geopolitical space that provides useful experiences for regional and global governance at large (Alessandri 2015). Firstly, positive integration factors such as identity, ideology, transfers and entanglement have provided a more durable basis for region-building than external actors, be they funders or perceived opponents. Secondly, regions are constantly in flux, expanding or contracting, both in their membership and in their objectives. Geographical boundaries increasingly succumb to political, economic or social ideas of desired cohesion. Thirdly, interregionalism often tends to be highly asymmetrical due the high variety of regional institutionalisation, actorness and outreach. As a consequence, the linkages tend to be driven unilaterally and can produce structures of dependence and mimicry.

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