Towards Open Regionalism in South East Europe presents a series of interlinked reflections on the possibilities and problems of emergent forms of regional cooperation in South East Europe (SEE). Taking diverse themes such as: the economy, crime, borders, culture, and civil society, authors explore some of the facets of “open regionalism”, consisting of multi-actor, multi-level and multi-scalar processes producing a complex geometry of interlocking networks.

The book situates “new regionalism” in SEE in the historical context of the legacies of Yugoslavia and the wars of the Yugoslav succession. Contemporary processes of Europeanisation in relation to SEE are also examined as complex, contingent and radically unfinished. The book seeks to move beyond the constraints of objectivist notions of regionalism as consisting of sets of relations between sovereign nation states, to address complex constructions of meaning and place.

About the Editors:
Towards Open Regionalism in South East Europe is edited by Paul Stubbs, researcher based at the Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia; and Christophe Solioz currently Secretary General of the Center for European Integration Strategies (CEIS).

The Authors:
Giorgio Andrian | Dimitar Bechev | Bojan Bilić | Fabrizio Coticchia | Ana Dević | Eric Gordy | Claudia Rose | Christophe Solioz | Francesco Strazzari | Paul Stubbs | Nada Švob-Đokić
Southeast European Integration Perspectives

Edited by

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

Christophe Solioz,
Secretary-General of the Center for
European Integration Strategies
Towards Open Regionalism in South East Europe
Sponsored by the City of Geneva


Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de .

ISBN 978-3-8329-6597-6

1. Auflage 2012

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically those of translation, reprinting, re-use of illustrations, broadcasting, reproduction by photocopying machine or similar means, and storage in data banks. Under § 54 of the German Copyright Law where copies are made for other than private use a fee is payable to »Verwertungsgesellschaft Wort«, Munich.
# Contents

Maps, Figures and Tables 7
Acknowledgements 9
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms 11

*Christophe Solioz and Paul Stubbs*
Regionalisms in South East Europe and Beyond 15

*Bojan Bilić*
Contentious Socialists: Precursors of Anti-War Engagement 49

*Dimitar Bechev*
Dynamics and Achievements of Regional Cooperation 71

*Claudia Rose*
Challenges and Opportunities of Regional Economic Integration 89

*Nada Švob-Dokić*
Cultural Networks and Imagined Regionalism 117

*Eric Gordy*
Hard Lines and Soft Borders 133

*Francesco Strazzari and Fabrizio Coticchia*
The Phantom Menace: Transnational Organised Crime 147

*Giorgio Andrian*
Where *Nature Meets Politics*: The Dinaric Arc Initiative 175

*Ana Đević*
Fringe Antinationalisms: Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony in Cinema 191

Bibliography 211
Contributors 221
Regionalisms in South East Europe and Beyond

Introduction¹

This book as a whole, and this chapter in particular, seeks to situate South East Europe (SEE) in the context of a new and open regionalism which addresses the variable geometries of multi-scalar networks and flows which produce and reproduce social constructions of place. Questioning taken-for-granted geographical notions of space, authors address the tensions of nation-state-region-building practices in the context of multiple histories of antagonism and co-operation. This volume addresses also the tensions inherent in the development of emerging forms of governance of contested regional spaces, in the shadow of the disciplinarity practices of the European Union (EU), and in conditions in which regional-national-local subjects may resist full enrolment into dominant narratives.

The importance of an analytical, political and normative shift from South East Europe as constructed in its double “otherness”, not yet Central Europe and not at all Western Europe, is key to this project. The authors resist clumsy binaries between seeing South East Europe as, on the one hand, fully fixed in a peripheral and marginal position, and, on the other hand, as a true subject free to choose its own destiny. The focus needs to shift from assessing labels such as core and periphery, subject and object, as inherently true or false and, instead, towards exploring the multiple political meanings and impacts of these labels in practice. A nested set of geo-political spaces never fully absorbed into the so-called Eastern bloc during the Cold War, and with a complex and contested set of relationships to multiple modernities, can never be understood in terms of a single, linear, narrative.

The invention and reinvention of “South East Europe”, as “the Balkans”, “the Western Balkans”, “former Yugoslavia”, and so on, tells us much about continued struggles to create meanings which escape, however fleetingly, from orientalism and colonialism. The narratives of “returning to Europe”, “convergence”, “widening and deepening”, now seem somewhat tarnished and ambiguous in the face of new sets of power relations in which

¹ This chapter is a revised and updated version of Christophe Solioz and Paul Stubbs, “Emergent Regional Co-operation in South East Europe: Towards ‘Open Regionalism’?” Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, 9 (2009) 1–2, pp. 1–16.
some parts of Europe, allied with other global actors, impose new sets of discipli- 
nary practices, reworking ideas of core and periphery, “old” and “new” Europe, revealing the paradoxes of “Euro-Atlantic integration”.

The way in which the book moves through geo-politics, border prac-
tices, cultural production, organised crime, economic and trade relations, never content with top-down institutional narratives as the “full picture”, is suggestive of the importance of multi-voiced, multi-disciplinary explora-
tions of the paradoxes and contradictions of new regionalism. This introductory chapter sets the scene for the chapters which follow. It addresses theoretical and conceptual approaches to new regionalism and region-making which questions some of the taken-for-granted orthodoxies of realist conceptions of international relations which, all too quickly, lead to a dangerous essentialism. It, then, addresses the implications of moving from a nation-building to a region-building lens in South East Europe, and the complexities of so-called “regional ownership” as a response to the imposed agendas of those outside. The importance of a myriad of small-scale projects and programmes is reinforced through an exploration of the flourishing of cross border co-operation schemes in a wider European context. Finally, the chapter contains a brief introduction to the themes of the remainder of the book.

Redefining Regions, Regionalism, and Regionalisation

Traditionally, regions have been viewed as a particular level in the architec-
ture of international relations, with the concept applied typically to a limited number of nation states linked together by a geographical relationship and a degree of mutual interdependence. Reliant on an objectivist spatial ontology in which geographical relationships, nation-state forms and, indeed, measures of mutual interdependence are essentialised categories, the traditional view spawned a set of supposedly technical scientific exercises in which, on the basis of ever more complex typologies and models, classifications of which regions were “real” and which were not could be developed and agreed. The concept of “regions” is further complicated, of course, by the fact that it can also refer to sub-nation-state units and, indeed, to intrastate regions composed of parts of neighbouring nation-states. Similar issues of essentialism remain here. Both kinds of regions matter, of course, insofar as they are translated into specific practices resulting in recognised territorial boundaries, revealed in maps, and specific institutional structures with set competencies enshrined in laws, rule books, and codified procedures.

However, regions and ways of thinking about regions are changing rapidly, with much less emphasis on the “what” in terms of their definition, and much more emphasis on the “how” in terms of processes of region-

---

making. It has become commonplace to assert that “there are no ‘natural’ re-

gions: definitions of a ‘region’ vary according to the particular problem or

question under investigation”.³ The “spatial turn” in contemporary social sci-

cence is underpinned by the axiom that regions are socially and politically

constructed and subject to diverse and contested meanings. Regions are thus

seen rather more as flexible constructs, contingent on social practices, and

made up of more or less dense and interlocking “social networks” of col-

laboration and interaction, as well as of conflict and contestation.⁴ Regions,

like nation-states, then, are “imagined communities” consisting of complex,

overlapping and, not unusually, competing identities, identifications and vi-

sions, both constituted by, and constitutive of, power relations.⁵ Regions are

never merely arbitrarily invented: they do bear the traces of historical lega-

cies, but are also redefined and reconstituted by a wide range of diverse and

various practices or “narratives”. These “rarely produce a coherent or even

compatible story”.⁶

The social scientific task becomes one of drawing out the agendas and

interests that may invoke particular regional narratives and which seek to

translate them “into actions of region-building”.⁷ Louise Fawcett, seeking to

grasp “the newer and expanding domains of regional action”, distinguishes

between “regionalism” as a policy or project of cooperation and coordination,

and “regionalisation” as a project and process involving “a concentration of

activity at regional level” that may both “proceed and flow from region-

alism”.⁸ Working in the space between objectivist and constructivist ac-

counts, Fawcett does not make clear when processes become sufficiently

concentrated to become a regional project. In addition, the framework she

provides is in danger of seeing the regional level as somehow prior to these

processes. Nevertheless, Fawcett’s concepts are useful in directing attention

to the active politics of region-making, in which “regions are invented by po-


544.

⁴ “A social network consists of a series of direct and indirect ties from one actor to a collec-
tion of others, whether the central actor is an individual person or an aggregation of indi-
viduals (e.g. a formal organisation). A network tie is defined as a relation or social bond
between two interacting actors.” Michael Davern, “Social Networks and Economic Soci-

⁵ See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of

⁶ Arnoud Lagendijk, “Regionalization in Europe: Stories, Institutions and Boundaries,” in
Henk Van Houtom, Olivier Kramsch and Wolfgang Zierhoffer (eds.), Bordering Space

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Louise Fawcett, “Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism,”
International Affairs, 80 (2004) 3, pp. 432–3. Most theorists chair this viewpoint except
the architects of the world order approach (WOA) who view regionalism as a states-led
project, whereas regionalisation is seen as a societal process. See Andrew Gamble and
Anthony Payne, “The World Order Approach,” in Fredrik Söderbaum and Timothy M.
Shaw (eds.), Theories of New Regionalism: A Palgrave Reader (Basingstoke: Palgrave,
2003), pp. 43–62.
political actors as a political programme”. Hettne uses the term “new regionalism” to refer to the more recent “wave” or “generation” of regionalisms emerging around the time of the first stirrings of the shift away from a bipolar Cold War world and Westphalian order to a world based on multipolarity (see Table 1).

Table 1: Two waves of regionalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Old” regionalism</th>
<th>“New” regionalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Result of bipolar, Cold War international system</td>
<td>Feature of multi-polar, globalized international system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent upon superpower patronage</td>
<td>Dependent on participant state preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically protectionist</td>
<td>Economically open (neoliberal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function-specific</td>
<td>Multi-purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composed of states with (previously) complete state sovereignty</td>
<td>Composed of “porous” states with complex interactions between state and non-state actors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Hettne and Söderbaum, aiming to foster a more coherent theoretical construct, further developed a “New Regionalism Theory” (NRT) centred on the core concept of regionness viewed as a “process that leads to patterns of cooperation, integration, complementarity and convergence within a particular cross-national geographical space”. This shift from a “territorially bounded system of geo-economic blocs” to more freely chosen, open-ended, and innovative forms of cooperation across boundaries is viewed here as “open re-

gionalism”, characterized by multidimensionality, complexity, and fluidity. Heterogeneous state and non-state actors coalesce in often transient, rather informal, multi-actor coalitions, and act in multiple arenas in this context.

New regionalism is, in many ways, a regionalism of networks and network power, producing, reconfiguring, and contesting “particular differentiations, orderings and hierarchies among geographical scales”. At their simplest, networks are merely “interconnected nodes” and “open structures” in which “the power of flows takes precedence over the flows of power”, capable of integrating new nodes “as long as they share the same (...) performance goals”. What these “performance goals” might be, of course, take us onto a normative terrain. This is important to acknowledge, in part at least, because one iteration of “open regionalism”, which we do not share, sees it as a necessary expansion, and training ground, for wider liberalisation and globalisation.

In Castells’ conceptualisation, the nation-state is neither prior nor primary; rather, it is itself a set of nested networks, such that “multiple power claims and regulatory regimes co-exist (...), and their interrelation is a matter of continuous negotiation”. The multiplication of sites of the generation of strategies means that what have previously been seen as taken-for-granted “aspects of statehood” within a Westphalian model, such as sovereignty and the monopoly of violence, become much more unstable and mediated in new regionalism, with patterns of diffusion and recombination operating at different speeds, with variable reach and taking diverse forms.

tiers” in which boundaries between what is supposedly “internal” or domestic and what is “external” or international become blurred. New hybrid forms based on complex linkages emerge, constituting a new “intermestic sphere” of processes that “disrupt and re-make the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of states”; not merely crossing borders, but transforming them.

New regionalism is marked by a “crowded playground” in terms of a proliferation of actors both constituting of and constituted by a regional scale. Clearly, one part of this is the rather dramatic expansion of what has been termed “non-state actors” who may be not-for-profit, for profit or, indeed, blur the line between the two. Diverse actors form regionalised networks, partnerships, alliances, and coalitions that can involve shifting and multiple agency, with the rise of what Wedel has termed “transactorship” in “flex nets” that have a “chameleon-like, multipurpose character” explicitly playing at the edge of, and therefore blurring, distinctions between formal and informal, public and private, state and non-state, international and domestic and, indeed, legal and illegal.

The importance of brokerage, mediation, and translation is intensified in such liminal encounters, with new forms of regionalised authority formed in the spaces between traditional career employment patterns. Hence, for instance, the non-governmental organisation (NGO) activist who becomes a politician, and then an international civil servant, and subsequently or even simultaneously a freelance consultant or advisor, while maintaining an affiliation with a number of research institutes, is operating in precisely the spaces of network power in this way, rendering even supposedly clear distinctions between “top-down” and “bottom-up” regionalisation increasingly irrelevant. The social scientific task is to untangle, then, the ways in which diverse actors engage in practices of “verticality and encompassment” in order to render specific forms of authority, regulation, and routines spatialised and territorialised without making “unwarranted assumptions” about which actors have particular “spatial reach”.

Processes of new regionalism construct and reconfigure subjectivities and identities while also, crucially, continually creating and re-creating policy

---

26 “Liminality” is used here as “those times or places that are outside of ordinary structures with which we organize our lives,” Jacqueline Urla, “New Perspectives in Anthropology and Modern Literature,” Sub-Stance, (1977) 22, pp. 97–106.
and political domains and practices. This includes those that may be labelled, for example, creative and artistic, activist, civic, sporting, criminal, and trading and business relations, as well as in terms of multilateral political and technical initiatives. Indeed, these labels are taken as the starting point for the chapters which follow, each of which addresses how these are mapped and framed in terms of political, economic, social, and cultural practices. Lendvai writes of the ways in which new regionalism involves the reconfiguring, re-framing, and recoupling of domestic policy domains, creating assemblages of innovative policy fields in which “meanings, discourses, ideas, policy tools and objectives” are transformed, often subtly.29

Constructivist theories can be in danger of downplaying power relations and, hence, becoming apologists for idealistic conceptions of consensual regionalisms in which cooperation evolves naturally from a growing, rational, realization of common interests. On the contrary, the chapters which follow show the importance of being sensitive to network power relations which, though they differ from traditional hierarchical conceptions, have real effects. In addition, historical patterns and legacies continue to play a role, sometimes ignored in the suggestion of a paradigm shift from old to new regionalisms. Continued division of the world into “core”, “intermediate”, and “peripheral” regions in terms of the degree of economic dynamism or stagnation, political stability or turbulence, and degree of proneness to war, and in terms of a social Darwinist conception of their “ability to cope with global transformation”, though a profoundly ahistorical construction, does at least point to the centrality of power relations.

Many theorists of the new regionalism approach tend to suggest that hegemonic regionalisms, in which (so-called “great”) powers, near or far, offer protection — albeit often at a price — to members of regional alliances, are a thing of the past and that power and hegemony is far more dispersed nowadays. At the same time, however, more radical and post-colonialist critics would disagree.

28 It can be argued that some forms of illegality are not merely rational but also a means of reading dominant power relations and participating in and authentically particular regulatory codes (see Janet Roitman, “The Garrison entrepôt: Governing in the Chad basin,” in Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier (eds.), Global assemblages: Technology, Politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p. 432). In this sense, people-smugglers and drug traffickers, criminals in organized crime rings, and so on, may be networked region-builders every bit as much as their formally legal counterparts. Indeed, quasi-legal power networks (Christophe Soliiz, Turning Points in Post-War Bosnia (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2nd ed. 2007), chapter 2), in situations of ambiguity over power relations, may be a rather privileged site of such practices, able to move flexibly between legality and illegality through connections with business and political elites.


Using a lens of empire and coloniality based on an understanding of “prior imaginings of world space”31 shatters the “presentist realism” of much contemporary globalisation thinking.32 Borocz focuses on “the specific histories of colonialism and empire, with their deeply coded (...) patterns of inequality, hierarchy, exclusion and power” 33 reflected in new modes of governance in the EU. This alerts us to the important, albeit rather more complex and fragmented, nature of relations of interdependency and of exclusion of supposedly dissimilar “others” — termed “othering” in the post-structuralist literature — that may be present in processes of regionalisation. We would see new regionalisms, such as the EU, as replete with paradoxes of power, and tensions between solidarity and exclusion,34 between securitization and mobility, between neoliberal and more socially oriented forms of capitalism, and between managing and enabling citizens.

South East Europe: from State-building to Regionness

There is a complex relationship between state-building and region-building in South East Europe (SEE), overlain by contested historical claims in which contemporary understandings of a nation-state are superimposed on older territorial concepts. In some senses, the creation of nation-states in South East Europe in the beginning of the twentieth century and the establishment of perceived “ethnicised” frontiers based on the principle of national self-determination was extremely difficult, as mobility over the new borders of peoples who lived for centuries in multinational empires had to be contained.35 Seeing the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) as one of the last empires in Europe is also relevant, since the reassertion of nationalisms, the bloody conflicts and the fragmentation into smaller states and mini-states in which competing claims continue to be asserted, coincided with the fall of the Berlin wall and the beginning of the transition paradigm. A large federal state, Yugoslavia, close to joining a Western European “core”

by the 1980s, was thus quickly consigned to peripheral status and the successor states are only now — provided they adopt desirable forms of regional cooperation — beginning to be treated as part of an emergent intermediate region or subregion.

The European Union was a somewhat low-key player in the region during the wars of the Yugoslav succession, a time in which supposedly non-political humanitarianism substituted for any kind of constructive political intervention. Integration for states judged capable of “rejoining Europe” (Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania, and later Croatia) produced new contradictions and, indeed, divisions between a European inside and a not quite European outside. To avoid a rigid binary, the European Union began, through the Stabilisation and Association process (SAp), to adopt a political approach to the region, at least in narrative terms. In this process, the qualities of the new states in terms of their internally evolving political and economic structures were tied, in complex and sometimes contradictory ways, to emerging regional cooperation. The challenges which this presents are discussed further in the chapter by Dimitar Bechev in this book.

Beginning in the late 1990s, a new wave of regional cooperation emerged, largely engineered from outside and approached as a kind of peace-building project. According to this linear approach, cooperation first had to be established through the promotion of cross-border activities such as transport, trade, production and tourism; second, this cooperation process was supposed to guarantee security and stability, and, thus, third, lead to political integration. Regional cooperation was, primarily, based on standards and norms set by outside actors such as the EU and NATO, and, to a lesser extent, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. In the region’s first post-war decade, the EU integration process and NATO membership, termed Euro-Atlantic integration, taken on a country-by-country basis, was the main incentive to reform. Hence, South East Europe was an emergent subregional space, largely ascribed by outside forces rather than achieved from within. Indeed, regional cooperation is frequently put forward by these forces, and often accepted by politicians in the region, as a conditionality making possible the ultimately supposedly more important goals of EU accession and NATO membership rather than as an end in itself.

The establishment of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe launched in Sarajevo in July 1999 is both a key moment in this phase and a turning point in terms of the possibility of new forms of regionalism. Established as a coordinating body “aimed at strengthening the efforts of the countries of South Eastern Europe in fostering peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity”, the Pact conceived, in part at least,

---

as a mechanism for pressuring change in Serbia, excluded until the change in regime, can in retrospect be seen as a hybrid operating somewhere between a traditional interstate body and a new networked governance organization. In one sense, the Pact held to a very clear definition of interstate politics with its external supervisors, both nation-states and supranational bodies, its constituent nation-states, and its observers in the near neighbourhood. At the same time, the establishment of three working tables\(^{38}\) and numerous initiatives allowed for new forms of cooperation to develop between technocratic policy makers from nation-states in the region. In addition, some of its architects, particularly German greens and social democrats, were committed to a network politics in which policy entrepreneurs could work within a space that was deliberately conceived as a “black box” and act as policy entrepreneurs, allowing for new ways of approaching emerging issues.

Indeed, it could be argued that the spaces between these three frames — interstate diplomacy, technocratic policymaking, and networked policy entrepreneurship — was filled by personalities whose precise role, as activists, advisors, consultants, lobbyists, political figures, or technocrats, was either ambiguous or fluid, and in any case, less their main claim to authority than their charisma and key contacts. To an extent, this was formalised in the increasing importance of key “intemistic” think tanks\(^{39}\) explicitly operating in the spaces between formal politics, technocracy, and informal connections, including the European Stability Initiative (ESI) and the International Crisis Group (ICG). In some ways, the fact that “the process initiated with the Stability Pact ... raised great expectations for a new policy of the ‘international community’ and especially the EU, in dealing with the political conflicts and the transformation process in SEE countries”\(^{40}\) and, at the same time, South East European NGOs felt excluded from much of its workings,\(^{41}\) is a testament to the difficulties of reconciling these levels and approaches, as well as to the difficulty of promoting “open regionalism” at that time.

The Stability Pact was also something of a turning point in terms of defining and naming the region, rendering the use of the term “South East Europe” central to its operations, explicitly targeting Albania, Bosnia and Her-

---

38 There were three Working Tables, which operated under the Regional Table: Working Co-operation and Development; Working Table III: Security Issues (with two Sub-Tables: Table I: Democratisation and Human Rights; Working Table II: Economic Reconstruction, Security and Defence, and Justice and Home Affairs).

39 On think tanks in general and, more specifically in transition contexts, see Diane Stone “Think tanks, global lesson-drawing and networking social policy ideas,” Global Social Policy, 1 (2001) 3, pp. 338–60. On their role in Central and South East Europe, see Ivan Krastev, The Liberal Estate: Reflections on the Politics of Think Tanks in Central and Eastern Europe (Sofia: Centre for Liberal Studies, 2000).


zegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro together), and subsequently Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, as well as Moldova and also Greece, Turkey and Slovenia, while implicitly referring to an inclusive regional approach. From 1998, onwards, the term “Western Balkans” emerged as something of a Brussels neologism referring to the countries that once belonged to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (minus Slovenia, plus Albania) and which are included in the EU’s SAP. From an EU perspective, the Western Balkans countries are divided into candidates and potential candidates. In this way, the South East European region was divided into several distinctive groupings based on external judgements on the nature of the state-building process and level of compliance with the norms set by the EU. As Bechev has argued, the EU “shaped through its institutional practices of controlled inclusion the collective politico-geographical identities of the states in South East Europe after the late 1990s”.

The symbolic linkage between nation-building and state-building is illustrated by the International Commission on the Balkans’ 2005 report, The Balkans in Europe’s Future. The Commission, itself a clear example of the importance of reworking old conceptions of policy advice in a new context, suggests that the EU only has the capacity to absorb “reasonably functioning and legitimate states”, adding caustically that “after Croatia, there are no more of these left in the region”. Bechev has further suggested that the EU’s “carrot and stick” conditionality would not have had the impact it had without its “ideational power as a promoter of certain normative notions of appropriate state behaviour.” In a sense, the argument points to the need for the message to be absorbed by political elites in each nation-state and the complexities as a result of the fact that political and institutional arrangements remain unsettled and, in the case of both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, still have a direct external supervisory presence in terms of the Office of the High Representative and the EU Rule of Law Mission. His concern that, at times, the Stability Pact and the SAP process have failed to deliver expected carrots on time is important. Indeed, Bechev is surely correct to point to the contradictory nature of the balancing act between bilateralism and regionalisation. He is also right to point out how the downfall of Milošević in October 1999 and the post-Tudman election defeat of the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) in January 2000 were crucial in changing the equation. The key point, however, is that the main EU strategy at the time was predominantly state- and interstate-oriented.

---

45 Betchev, “Carrots, Sticks and Norms,” p. 36.
In this period, there were many other parallel regionalisation processes underway, not least in terms of the linkages between NGOs and civil society organizations, particularly around human rights, gender, peace, development, and ecology. A part of the linkage between ecology and peace is told in Giorgio Andrian’s chapter in this book, focusing in some detail on the “Dinaric Arc Initiative”. A major catalyst for regional linkages was George Soros’ Open Society Institute (OSI). OSI was a key player at the interface of the complex linkages between civil society, states, and “emergent forms of transnational authority”.

Stone’s account understands OSI’s legitimacy as based on a “circular process between the knowledge it produces and the audiences that help legitimize and institutionally consolidate that knowledge”. Noting its importance as an agent of “norm advocacy and policy transfer” throughout post-communist Eastern Europe, Stone’s essay prefigures an account of the specific role of OSI in South East Europe, helping to construct alternative personalities as legitimate figures at the time when formal politics was dominated by authoritarian nationalism, promoting regional networking and, hence, engaged in region-building, legitimating an explicitly anti-nationalist regional civil society as a “driver of globalisation”.

Noting the “elite” nature of associational life promoted by OSI is important, but the complexities of the relationship of these elites to state forms per se and to particular conjunctural state forms is also crucial, not least since it could be argued that in Serbia, at least, the Open Society grouping was a state elite in waiting. OSI helped to construct a region and, in a sense, prefigured the complex relationships between politicised, technical, expertised, and interest-based networking. Its construction of a regional agenda of cross-border projects in the areas of anti-corruption, education, public health, media, illegal labour migration, and minority issues, can be seen as a clear example of parallel intrastate civil society networking. While Stone is clearly correct in detecting a recent “global turn” in OSI thinking and networking, the earlier “regional turn”, including explicit involvement with the Stability Pact and other regional instruments and mechanisms, is of immense importance.

The OSI was inextricably linked to other significant networks, including, for example, the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly (hCa), which had its linkages in the European Nuclear Disarmament movement and which forged links with independent intellectuals, many of whom had been founders of the Association for Yugoslav Democratic initiatives. Bojan Bišić takes up the story of these initiatives, and their antecedents in earlier social movements, in

---

47 Stone, Transnational Philanthropy, Policy Transfer Networks, p. 5.
48 Stone, Transnational Philanthropy, Policy Transfer Networks, p. 12.
his chapter in this book. The emerging anti-war networks and civilian parliaments which he addresses worked alongside human rights initiatives. Many were linked to the OSI network — sometimes on principle but also, sometimes, on the basis of material interest. With a few notable exceptions traceable to particular personalities, such as the OSCE’s democratization unit support for regional networking amongst local citizens’ initiatives neither the SAP nor the Stability Pact ever developed ways of promoting the advocacy of this kind of civic regionalism, at best working with a small number of elite networks which it could be stated that they had been instrumental in establishing or, at least, enabling to survive, including local Helsinki Committees and the Igman Initiative.\(^{50}\) The complexities of these processes are beyond the scope of this article, other than in terms of the symbolic importance of civic regionalism\(^{51}\) and, at the same time, its relegation to a kind of inferior, parallel, status compared with interstate regionalism at the time.

\textit{A Thousand Flowers Bloom: Regionalisms in South East Europe}

Bechev’s contrast between the grand themes of multilateralism, which have not met expectations, and what he terms “more flexible schemes” operating at a “less than regional level”\(^{52}\) captures the shift towards a more open regionalism in the last few years. It is the recent proliferation and multifaceted nature of schemes and the ensuing possibilities of thickening network power through a multiplication of nodes and, above all, a more complex geometry — so that cooperation in a single region is not all or nothing — that marks the key elements of this shift towards a new, more fluid, regionalism. In addition, structures have emerged that offer the possibility, if not yet the reality, of regional ownership and the diminution, if not the eradication, of external power hegemony. The diversity of linkages holds the possibility of a clear move away from exclusively intrastate regionalism towards more open, expansive, and flexible geometries focusing on interlocking zones where diverse actors can realise common interests. Part of this frames the chapter by Nada Švob-Dokić which addresses emerging forms of cultural collaboration.

Three key shifts are crucial in this regard. First, the fact that the renewed Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) 2006 — which originates from the initial CEFTA agreement signed in 1992 by the Visegrád Group (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) — no longer includes any country belonging to Central Europe, but only South East European countries, is symbolic of an escape from the Balkans and identification


\(^{51}\) Though primarily applied to sub-national regionalism, “civic regionalism” that is “based on participatory, inclusive and partnership modes of governance” (Andrew E G Jonas and Stephanie Pincetl, “Rescaling Regions in the State: The New Regionalism in California,” \textit{Political Geography}, 25 (2006) 5, p. 482) can also be applied to transnational processes.

\(^{52}\) Bechev, “Carrots, Sticks and Norms,” p. 29.
with Central Europe as a first step on the road to a broader European space. While the Energy Community can also be viewed in a similar way, here the linkage with EU interests and the *acquis* is more explicit.\(^{53}\) While both relate to issues that are of everyday importance, of course, the workings of CEFTA and, even more so, the Energy Community, rarely impinge on any but a very select, technical, public. The continued examination of, and progress in, visa liberalisation for South East Europe both in relation to the EU and within the regional space itself may, on the other hand, have a wider resonance.\(^{54}\)

Second, the transition from the Stability Pact to the Regional Co-operation Council (RCC), with its staffing from the region and its main offices located in Sarajevo, is an explicit attempt to work towards new institutional structures underpinned by real “regional ownership”. Though external donors remain involved, a more explicit attempt to root funding in the countries of the region, including Moldova, Bulgaria, and Romania, has emerged. The RCC took on some of the priorities of the Stability Pact and continued to support some of the networks that have emerged. At the same time, the paradox of the Regional Co-operation Council is that, in conditions where it might be most needed, it is likely to be at least effective and yet, conversely, in conditions where its job is easier, it has much less of a niche and has to work particularly hard to add value. Under a largely technical-bureaucratic leadership, and in a context of declining core funding, the RCC has struggled for legitimacy, credibility, influence, and direction. The combination of project-driven initiatives, linkage to rather small-scale investment facilities, and the signing of rather weak technical agreements which are its main ‘achievements’, show this gap most acutely. Recent attempts to reinvigorate the RCC’s work through a link with the Central European Initiative (CEI) intended to support the strengthening of the RCC Secretariat as the driver of regional projects generation, coordination and monitoring, seems likely to continue the disconnect between those within, believing in the RCC’s mandate and mission, and those outside, largely ignoring it as a spent force.

Thirdly, and potentially most importantly, an array of cross-border and interregional cooperation initiatives, mainly led by the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU),\(^{55}\) while themselves having a longer history, hold out a real opportunity for tracing and consolidating a new trend towards “open regionalism”. These regional networks, promoted by the implementation of European regional policy, increased significantly in the

---


\(^{54}\) See European Stability Initiative (ESI), *The White List Project: EU policies on Visa-free travel for the Western Balkans, Background paper* (Berlin: ESI, 8 November 2008).

\(^{55}\) On the respective CoE and EU similarities and differences, see the comprehensive presentation and comparison drafted by Rafał Sadowski published as: Council of Europe, *Similarities and Differences of Instruments and Policies of the Council of Europe and The European Union in the Field of Transfrontiers Co-operation* (Strasbourg: CoE, 2005).
They symbolize a shift away from post-conflict reconstruction and state-building processes towards region-building strategies, with more mainstream EU instruments and mechanisms beginning to operate alongside, and perhaps even prevailing over, specific mechanisms that focus on conditionalities at the state level. The wide range of cross-border cooperation (CBC; see Map 1) and interregional activities have the potential to “soften” the borders between EU member states and adjacent non-member states, encompassing different scales, actors, and levels within a kind of multilevel polity. While the on the ground realities of any particular initiative may be problematic, it is their sheer number, variable geometry, and innovative structures that matter. Eric Gordy’s chapter addresses aspects of this, focused rather more on the ways in which people’s everyday lives and habitual practices continue to confound the intentions of certain political elites to create hard borders.

Case study: Euroregions and cross-border co-operation

The Council of Europe contributed since the late 1950s to the emergence of “Euroregions”, which later became an instrument for cross-border cooperation in Europe related to the creation of an emergent networked European polity. Euroregions may be seen as territorial partnership institutions and cooperation network initiatives, encompassing public policy coordination and institution building leading to a spatial reconfiguration of social processes and governance institutions (“re-scaling”). Numbering over one hundred, although only about one-third of them are truly operational, Euroregions exhibit a variety of forms, constituting a set of interlocking networks of exchange more than a new level of governance.

CoE programmes in South East Europe have focused on decentralisation, the development of innovative forms of local democracy, and increased citizen participation. They have also contributed to cross-border dialogue and cooperation, encouraging the setting-up of Euroregions and similar forms of subregional cooperation, such as, for example, the Local Democracy agencies based on twinning — an initiative set-up in 1993 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE) as the follow-up of a transnational civic network.

---


57 Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) comprises contiguous subnational units from two or more nation-states.
