

Mutual Capacity Building. Interregional Security

Cooperation of the European Union

Friedrich Plank, MA

Lecturer and Research Fellow, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz

Abstract

The European Union (EU) is confronted with various security challenges which include not only violent regional conflicts, failed states, international terrorism or the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) but also energy security, migration as well as organized crime. In response, the EU has strengthened its profile in foreign and security policy significantly during the last decades. One important feature of dealing with these challenges is the cooperation of the EU with other regional groups which increasingly focuses on security issues. Examples offer a wide range of security dimensions including military, economic and civil measures. Since most of the research on interregional relations disregards security as a major corner stone of region-to-region interactions, this paper takes a closer look on interregional security cooperation. It develops a framework for examining the EU ties with other regional groups in the field of security and provides a first overview of dimensions and extent of interregional security cooperation. The findings suggest, that actorhood, capability to implement mechanisms of conflict settlement, military capacities as well as asymmetry in the relations are major factors to consider in the study of interregional security relations.

Keywords: EU foreign policy, regionalism, interregionalism, security

1. Introduction

One of the main developments in international relations is the spread of regional entities in particular during the 1990s. While there is a growing literature on this new regionalism, research mostly concentrates on an economic perspective including the “[...] assumption that economic factors are the main drivers behind the new regionalism” (Bailes and Cottey 2006, 198). This perspective misses the fact, that the development of Regional Organizations (ROs) and regional ties are strongly driven by security concerns. Regional arrangements do not only contribute to security within the region or the territory of the RO but also extent stability to their neighbourhoods and the international system.

Consequently, ROs as well as other regional actors are increasingly concerned with security challenges (Swanström 2005, 71–74). The most prominent example is the European Union (EU), which has strengthened its profile in foreign and security policy significantly during the last decades. While the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) initially concentrated on stabilizing the EU’s neighbourhood, new threats and challenges emerged with the Balkan wars and especially after 9/11 and the Madrid bombings in 2004 (Alecu de Flers and Regelsberger 2005, 318). Generally, the EU is confronted with various security challenges in recent years. These include not only violent regional conflicts, failed states, international terrorism or the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) but also energy security, migration as well as organized crime. One important feature of dealing with these challenges is the development of interregional relations¹ between the EU and other regions which increasingly focuses on security issues. “Today the EU has relations with virtually every country and most regions in the world. The EU has become a force in international affairs, especially in trade, development cooperation [...] and, to an increasing extent, also in security policies” (Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2005, 250).

Additionally, the fact that so few scholars focus on interregional security relations is astonishing, since other developments contribute to increasing interregional security cooperation. While defence budgets as well as the willingness of the European population to deploy missions abroad are declining, not to speak of a common stance in EU-foreign policy, the “Ertüchtigung” of regional actors, in words of German chancellor Angela Merkel, seems

¹ Taking into account the work of Robles who criticizes that scholars of interregionalism take interregional levels for granted (2008, 7), I clarify my understanding of interregionalism here. It refers to a processes characterized by the widening and deepening of interactions between regions (Roloff 2006, 18–20). In the following I will use the terms interregionalism, interregional ties, -fora, -relations, -interactions and region-to-region relations interchangeably.

an appropriate way of security policy. The empowerment of regional actors involves primarily ROs and their interregional interactions. Interregionalism helps to realize commonly agreed goals, for instance in the framework of CFSP of the EU, especially for maintaining peace and security (Reiterer 2006, 232).

Cooperation with regional entities in the provision of security seems of increasing interest. This raises a number of issues ranging from the implementation of a policy of “Ertüchtigung”, the meaningfulness, responsibility and sustainability of these actions as well as the question how effective mechanisms may be. Additionally, it is of significant importance, in how far the EU and its counterparts have sufficient capabilities and how regions and areas of conflict are affected by external interregional cooperation. Is it interregional security governance where local ownership comes into play?

Schulz, Söderbaum and Öjendal conclude that there is a need for future research not only on (regional) security. Moreover, further studies in the field of inter-regionalism should “[a]nalyze systematically the achievements as well as negative effects of regional conflict resolution, regional interventions and peace-keeping operations in concrete cases as well as within a comparative framework” (2001, 272). Obviously, there is need for studies investigating the linkage between regional cooperation and conflicts (Swanström 2005, 77). For instance, the EU as well as the African Union (AU) describe mechanisms for the settlement of violent conflict as central goal of their security strategies. This study therefore sheds light on security cooperation between the European Union and other regions. It introduces a conceptual framework for studying interregional security cooperation comparatively and gives a first overview of security agendas of interregional fora.

The paper is divided into four sections. I begin with discussing the concepts of regionalism, interregionalism and interregional security, follow up with the framework, give an overview of the interregional security ties of the EU and the fields which are addressed within the interactions and conclude with a discussion of the findings and a specification for future areas of research.

2. State of the art

Assessing interregional security cooperation draws on various concepts and literature. These include research on regionalism which joins interregionalism “at the hip” (Doidge 2007). I

therefore give a short overview of the terms regionalism and interregionalism before I conclude with concepts of interregional security.

New Regionalism

Although studies should treat interregionalism as a distinct phenomenon, it is strongly related to regionalism. With regard to the latter, research identifies three waves of regionalism. While the first one emerged post First World War and had a clear protectionist nature (Tavares 2004, 8), the second wave of the development of ROs in the 1950s and 60s strongly focused on economic issues. These two waves, subsumed under *Old Regionalism*, can be described as shaped by the bipolar character of the cold-war context (Hettne 1999, 7–8). The third wave of regionalism, which is highly relevant in terms of a post hegemonic character, emerged after the end of the Cold War (Telò 2007, 3–4). This *New Regionalism* differs from the first waves in the multipolar world order it is taking shape in, its proponents which include states but also increasingly other (non-state) actors, the open-oriented character in terms of economic integration and its comprehensiveness, including not only economic issues but also environment, democracy, social policy and security (Hettne 1999, 7–8). While *Old Regionalism* concentrated on states, recent regionalism includes a wide range of actors, including local as well as global agents (Tavares 2004, 10).

Within the field of regionalism, two other terms also describe phenomena of integrating spaces: Regionalization and region. The latter can be defined broadly “[...] as a limited number of states linked by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence” (Nye 1968, vii). Quite obviously, regions ought to be typified by geographical proximity (Tavares 2004, 4). Nevertheless, defining regions has yielded to only few clear conclusions (Hurrell 1995, 38). The cohesiveness of the actors involved, focusing on social, economic, political or organizational aspects drew a lot of attention.² Others add ideational, spatial and cultural interconnections (Paul 2012, 4). Moreover, from a social constructivist perspective, regions strongly depend on the perceptions and interpretations of political and social actors. Regions are socially constructed and hence confronted with political contest (Hurrell 1995, 38–39; Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2005, 259). Shared norms, identities, practices and institutions contribute to regional cooperation, boundaries of regions are permanent open to change (Rüland 2010, 1272).

² Examples include the work of Russett (1975), Cantori and Spiegel (1969) or Väyrynen (1984). For an overview of the debate in the late 1960s and early 1970s see the study of Thompson (1973).

Regionalization as another important term describes processes leading to the deepening of economic, political and social interactions, whereas regionalism refers to politically intended inter-relations which are characterized by active implementation (Roloff 2001, 18). For others “[r]egionalization refers to the growth of societal integration within a region and to the often undirected processes of social and economic interaction” (Hurrell 1995, 39). From another perspective, regionalism is assumed to be state-led and a top-down attempt to define regional identity, whereas regionalization is to be regarded as bottom-up process which does not necessarily involve the regional identities and is frequently driven by the effects of political and economic interdependence (Gilson 2002, 3). Regionalism is not only directed at regionalization but also involves interregional cooperation (Roloff 2001, 20). In fact, interregional relations and regionalism are “joined at the hip” (Doidge 2007).

The Concept of Interregionalism

“Inter-regionalism refers to the empirical concept that explains the network of inter-regional arrangements that currently permeate the international system especially since the end of the Cold War” (Haastrup 2009, 288). The study on interregionalism is a relatively young field and emerged in the early 1990s. The edited volume of Edwards and Regelsberger (1990) represents an important building block on the path to the study of region-to-region relations.

There exist various attempts to define interregionalism. While some scholars provide rather simple definitions, others develop more detailed categorizations. Hänggi gives a short definition of interregionalism as institutionalized interregional relations (2006, 43). Others describe it as a process characterized by the widening and deepening of interactions between regions which is politically intended and actively implemented. More precisely, this includes political, economic and societal interactions (Roloff 2006, 18–20). Reiterer refers to interregionalism as an arrangement between two regions, either contractual or de facto (Reiterer 2006, 223). From another perspective it is defined as institutions or organizations promoting dialogue and cooperation between countries in different regions (Chen 2005, 364). As it is rightly noted, interregionalism is not governmental by definition (Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2005, 258). Non-state-actors from the private sector and the civil society, more exact transnational actors, are involved in interregional relations. Thus, interregional interactions are not state-led in general. Due to the complexity of the phenomenon, scholars of inter-regionalism include different types, degrees or forms of

regional cooperation to their frameworks. In his actor-centred typology, Heiner Hänggi identifies three forms of external relations of ROs: (1) relations with ROs in other regions; (2) relations with third states in other regions and (3) direct or indirect involvement in other interregional mechanisms. For Hänggi, the external relations of ROs with counterparts constitute the prototype of interregional relations whereas he locates ties between ROs and third states as border cases of interregionalism (2006, 34). The third type, the involvement in other interregional mechanisms, comprises three types. Firstly, relationships between a RO and a more or less coordinated group of states in another region, secondly, relationships between such groups of states in two different regions as well as relationships among states, groups of states and ROs from two or more regions (2006, 38–39). In summary, Hänggi identifies three forms of inter-regionalism:

<i>Type</i>	<i>Region A</i>	<i>Region B</i>	<i>Form of interregionalism</i>	
1	Regional organization/regional group ^a	Third country	Quasi-interregional relations	} Interregional relations (in the wider sense)
2	Regional organization	Regional organization	} Interregional relations (in the narrow sense)	
3	Regional organization	Regional group		
4	Regional group	Regional group		
5	Group of states from more than the two core regions		Megaregional relations	

Table 1. Forms of interregionalism according to Hänggi (2006, 41)

Interregional relations with ROs and Regional groups build the narrow sense of inter-regionalism. In common with links between groups of states which Hänggi refers to as megaregional relations, ties between regional actors and third countries described as quasi-interregional relations, constitute interregional relations in the wider sense (2006, 41). A constructivist perspective “[...] implies, for instance, that, even if there is no formal regional organisation or grouping to relate to, it can still be fruitful to refer to a ‘region’ and, in consequence, one can also speak of interregionalism in this way.” (Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2005, 259). Hence, interregionalism can also be referred to in a broad sense.

In contrast, Rüländ distinguishes between two types of interregional interactions, bilateral interregionalism and transregionalism (2002, 3). The latter is characterized by a more diffuse membership which may also include member states from more than two regions and is not necessarily consistent with the ROs. Furthermore, membership is not limited to states, as non-state actors are also actively engaged in transregional interactions (Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2005, 258). These transregional fora may develop their own organizational structures. Rüländ defines bilateral interregionalism as group-to-group dialogue which

includes more or less regular meetings. In specific policy fields – he mentions trade and investment, environment, crime prevention and narcotics trafficking – these meetings concentrate on cooperation and the exchange of information. Based on ministerial, ambassadorial or expert level, bilateral interregional interactions tend to be low institutionalized. Both partners rely on their own organizational infrastructures (Rüland 2002, 3). In later work Rüland adds another type: hybrid interregionalism (2010, 1272). Taking into account the work of Hänggi, hybrid interregionalism includes inter-continental forums and strategic partnerships.

The distinction between interregionalism and transregionalism is also applied by other studies. Dent for instance defines transregionalism as the establishment of spaces between and across regions. Constituent agents which involve organisations, communities as well as individuals operate in these spaces and develop close ties with each other (2003, 224). In his broad understanding of interregionalism, Hettne relates to transregionalism as relations among regions in a more general sense, whereas hybrid interregionalism describes the interactions between a RO and a state (2007, 107–109).

Interregional relations between ROs are often referred to as “pure interregionalism”. It develops between two clearly identifiable regions with an institutional framework (Van Langenhove, Abass, and Baert 2012, 19). However, it only captures a part of interregional relations, since actors with a low institutionalized framework are also engaged in partnerships between regions. Other typologies of interregional interactions strongly follow the frameworks described. For Chen interregionalism can take at least three forms. In his framework, inter-group relations take place between regional groups. Biregional interactions are established if countries from both distinct regions set up a cooperation forum. Finally, transregional relations are developed, while states from two or more regions implement a mega-regional identity (2005, 164). Other more elusive concepts add terms such as ‘imagined interregionalism’ (Holland 2006), which describes asymmetric power relations, ‘hemispheric interregionalism’ (Schirm 2006) or ‘interregionalism without regions’ (Rüland and Bechle 2010).

As well, studies on interregionalism use different theoretical approaches and functions of region-to-region dialogue. Realist assumptions are increasingly challenged by an institutionalist and constructivist understanding of these interactions. Most of the functions related to region-to-region relations rest on empirical evidence and are not theoretically

deduced (Rüland 2002, 7). Rüland distinguishes seven functions of interregional fora: Balancing and bandwagoning, institution-building, rationalizing, agenda-setting and -controlling, identity-building, stabilizing and development, of which the first three are especially relevant for global governance (2010, 1276). Since there is no strong empirical evidence for interregional fora to carry out a stabilizing and developing function, I will follow the conception of Doidge and identify only five functions, not involving stabilizing and development (2011, 51). These are strongly connected to a theoretical approach based on international relations theory. Balancing and bandwagoning are related to balance of power concepts of the realist approach to international relations. Two elements of balancing are determinable. A self-focused balancing helps states to maximize their room for manoeuvre in an anarchic international system as evidence from Latin American relations to Asia shows (Faust 2004, 749). Moreover, externally-oriented balancing involves interregional ties as a mechanism for constraining other actors (Doidge 2011, 35–36). One example often mentioned is the EU cooperation with ASEM as a response to US engagement within the region. Just as regionalism interregionalism responds to challenges of globalization and the competition with other regions. In terms of security, this might also involve balancing against security threats (Walt 1985; Walt 1987).

Additionally, interregionalism by definition requires the building of institutions. The importance of these institutional building derives from the institutionalist emphasis on the role of institutions in the settlement of conflict through cooperation as well as legalizing effects. Interregionalism reinforces the institutionalization of international politics and strengthens regional integration by “regionalism through interregionalism” (Hänggi 2003). Generally, external actors have a strong influence on the development of Regional Organizations,³ a phenomenon which has been called “extra-regional echoing” (Zimmerling 1991, 154–155). Moreover, “[...] interregionalism is seen as a means for overcoming the difficulties inherent within global multilateral negotiations (rationalizing)” (Doidge 2011, 38). Interregional fora can contribute to a bottom-up process in which issues are negotiated at the regional level first and subsequently transferred to the global level. Agenda-setting refers to the actor’s capability to shape discourses within multilateral institutions. Interregionalist relations thus contribute to concerted positions on issues of strategic, substantial or ideational relevance for the actors (Rüland 2010, 1277). From an

³ Joseph S. Nye distinguishes between two types of factors: Passive and active ones. Of particular relevance are active external factors which involve deliberate decisions to help or hinder regional integration (1968, 414–415).

institutionalist perspective, a focus on cooperation and coordination handles matters in a world of complex interdependences best, whereas identity formation as the fifth common function of interregionalism usually takes place within the region and not in interregional interactions (Song 2007, 68). In contrast, constructivists argue, that experiences and previous interactions result in cooperation, including interregional ties. When regions interact, they socialize and form collective identities by engaging with an external other. As interregionalism identifies and regularizes interactions between regions, it facilitates the construction of others and “[...] increases the extent to which actors share a common fate” (Wendt 1994, 389). Identity building of a regional forum is most likely to occur when confronted with external influence. It is thus dependant on the identity and interest of the interregional partner (Doidge 2011, 47).

From an EU point of view, three major areas of foreign policy issues can be identified: Economic cooperation, international development cooperation and security including *Conflict Resolution* (Hettne 2010, 32). Mainstream approaches to the study of regions partially miss to investigate deeply on the phenomenon. “Research in this field has been generally restricted to the ‘quantity’ of regionalism, rather than its ‘quality’” (Fioramonti 2014, 15). This is also the case for studies on interregionalism. Only some exceptions take interregional security cooperation into account (Alecú de Flers and Regelsberger 2005; Haastrup 2009; Santini, Lucarelli, and Pinfari 2014), though this area of EU foreign policy is of growing importance.

Interregional security

As mentioned above, there exists a great body of studies on interregional relations with the EU at the centre of attention. Scholars have mostly focused on EU-Asia relations since interregionalism seems to be most developed here (Acharya 1992; Aggarwal and Morrison 1998; Yeo 2000; Dent 2003; Chen 2005; Gilson 2005; Reiterer 2006; Song 2007; Zhang 2008; Robles 2008; Haacke 2009; Doidge 2011; Lai 2012; Murray and Moxon-Browne 2013). Some also pay attention to relations with Central Asia (Allison 2004; Bailes, Baranovsky, and Dunay 2007). Fewer studies are interested in EU relations with North America (Aggarwal and Fogarty 2005), Central America (Selleslaghs 2014) and Latin America (Faust 2004; Santander 2005; Santander 2014). Of particular interest is that only some studies take a closer look on interregional ties between the European Union and African counterparts (Weiland 2006; Kingah 2006; Farrell 2005; Haastrup 2009). The critics made out of interregionalism being a

euro-centric concept are partially supported, since remarkably little research focuses on interregional ties without the EU as a party involved (Aggarwal and Kwei 2006; Low 2006). While a few studies have begun to disaggregate their analyses on interregional interactions,⁴ most of them disregard the influence of security issues on cooperative fora. The current debate mostly concentrates on an economic dimension. In contrast to what is widely assumed, the concept does not only refer to economy but also includes security inter-relations (Roloff 2001, 21).

Generally, the EU aims at tackling security challenges by 'effective multilateralism' under the authority of the United Nations (UN) (Bailes 2008, 118). Increasingly, operations involve ROs and interregional ties. These missions and engagements include not only military measures but to a higher share operations which have a clear civilian character. In this context, the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003 can serve as a starting point. It highlights five areas of security threats: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), prevention of regional conflicts, state failure and organized crime (European Security Strategy 2003, 3–4). In these areas, the actions of the EU, when considered as a security actor, are the most important rather "[...] than a preconceived idea of what security ought to be" (Haastrup 2009, 286). Defined as "[...] an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct" (Ruggie 1993, 11), 'effective multilateralism' raises the question, in how far the EU can act as a multilateral actor. In the understanding of Ruggie, the European Union itself is a multilateral institution. In contrast to this state centred definition, it is argued, that there exists a distinction between multilateralism, which describes a principle of how an institution works, and the term multilateral actor being about the actual procedures (Haastrup 2009, 287). In general, we can distinguish between unilateral, bilateral and finally multilateral strategies. The European Union highly notes its multilateral ambition in facing security challenges. As it is stated in the ESS,

"[f]or the European Union, the strength and effectiveness of the OSCE and the Council of Europe has a particular significance. Other regional organisations such as ASEAN, MERCOSUR and the African Union make an important contribution to a more orderly world" (2003, 9).

⁴ See for instance the study of Gilson, who mentions trans-border threats and challenges (2005, 321) or the work of Santini, Lucarelli and Pinfari, who elaborate on concepts for linking interregionalism and security studies (2014).

When it comes to meet security challenges in a rapidly changing world, one header of a European answer in the ESS refers to effective multilateralism: “In a world of global threats, global markets and global media, our security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system” (European Security Strategy 2003, 9). With regard to these multilateral ambitions, there exist different concepts for the evaluation of how the EU deals with security.

One attempt to devise a concept which is less state-centred is useful for the study of interregional security cooperation: Multilevel security governance. (Santini, Lucarelli, and Pinfari 2014, 83; see also Lucarelli, Langenhove, and Wouters 2013). In particular, it includes other (non-state) actors. Of significant importance is the concept of security governance which has been particularly developed by Kirchner and Sperling (Kirchner 2006; Sperling 2009; Kirchner and Sperling 2007; Kirchner and Dominguez 2013). 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). The concept seems promising for the study of interregionalism since it supplements regionalism and provides a ‘division of labor’ in case when the main RO of the region fails to maintain security (Santini, Lucarelli, and Pinfari 2014, 83–84). This includes examples of region-to-region relations which mutually address security threats such as the joined support of security sector reform in West Africa by the EU and ECOWAS or the troika meetings of the EU, IGAD and ECOWAS (see Santini, Lucarelli, and Pinfari 2014, 84). Security challenges addressed by interregional relations initially include the five threats identified by the ESS. Additionally, some more are identified in the implementation report of the ESS. Energy security as well as climate change are issues the EU engages in through multilateral means including interregional interactions (Zwolski 2012, 70).

The literature on EU-multilateralism often concentrates on different policy areas such as economics, humanitarian aid or development within organizations such as the WTO, UN, G8, or the WHO (see for instance Drieskens and Van Schaik 2014). Security issues are mostly absent from these debates (Haastrup 2009, 287). As mentioned in the ESS as well as in the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy (2008) interregional dialogues are major parts to attain the commonly agreed goals of peace and security.

3. A framework for the study of interregional security cooperation

The study on interregionalism is a growing research field which does not only involve domestic politics but also international relations. Partly, the concept is perceived to be normative “good”, especially when considering the functions of interregional fora. In contrast, they can be also seen from a critical perspective. In his study on ASEM, Robles criticizes studies on interregionalism in Asia. Nevertheless, his critique can also be applied to research on interregionalism as a whole. In particular Robles concentrates on theoretical approaches to interregional relations, which “[...] contradict the basic assumptions of the theory [...] fail to address fundamental objections to these theories or [...] fail to provide convincing empirical evidence that supports their theoretical claims” (2008, 11). While his critique on theoretical approaches to interregionalism – Rüländ mentions for instance the applicability of regime-theory to interregional fora (2014, 20) – is in parts right, at least some of the interregional relations we can find develop “[...] relatively enduring social relations among the participants” (Robles 2008, 11). This is especially true from a security studies perspective. Additionally, Robles develops a rather rigid understanding of international relations theories, when he states, that “[...] most realists do not accept regions as important international actors” (2008, 11). At this point, the debate on the actorness of Regional Organizations and within interregionalism comes into mind. This is also important when addressing other critics of the concept.

Some others consider interregionalism as a European-centred approach which is strongly related to the promotion of Europe as a particular kind of power (Giacalone 2007, 3; Camroux 2011, 201). In particular, in his study on EU-ASEAN relations, Camroux criticizes, that many studies do not consider the asymmetry in relations between ROs. He comes to the conclusion, that interregionalism is largely linked to the normative goal of the European Union to project power in a global context (2011, 212). The critique of Camroux notwithstanding, an involvement of the EU when studying interregional ties is fruitful due to two reasons, especially when considering security cooperation: Firstly, including cases of interregionalism which involved the EU allows for a deeper investigation on the phenomenon.

Of course there exist interregional fora without participation of the EU, but “[...] all these schemes have in common that their agenda concentrates on economic issues, but those schemes which include the EU member states usually follow a three-way approach that also

includes political dialogue and cooperation in other fields such as socio-cultural and development cooperation” (Hänggi 2000, 6–7). This three-way approach also refers to security issues. In terms of security, European interregional relations constitute important cases of region-to-region interactions.

Secondly, not only concerning the agenda of interregional relations, the EU has developed a high capability to act in foreign policy, e.g. when considering the promotion of security. Generally, studies on interregionalism concentrate on two major themes: what functions interregional fora perform and to what extent the partners have developed actorness qualities. With regard to the critique of Robles, actor capability plays a major role. The latter involves studies from the concept of actorness in the field of interregional relations since – as Mathew Doidge pointed out (2007, 235; 2011, 175; 2014, 52) – interregional interactions strongly depend on the actor capability of the regional partners. That is why interregionalism concentrates on European ties with other regions, since the EU possesses high actorness. Interregional relations affect the identity of the European Union as a global actor. Partially, they can be explained “[...] by a self–image that leads it to ‘give’ the EU to a world “hungry for its presence”” (Söderbaum, Stalgren, and Van Langenhove 2005, 371). Obviously, relations between the European Union, which has developed supranational decision-making, and other regions are asymmetric in term of actorness. Above all, this is the case when examining the interregional relations between the EU and African as well as Latin American regional entities. With regard to the importance of actorness for the study of interregional security relations, my framework concentrates on EU interactions with other regions, since they share asymmetries in terms of actor capability and capacities to engage in the field of security. This is especially required when assessing interregional security cooperation comparatively, which is claimed by many researchers within the field. As it is rightly stressed by recent research, there is a need for theory-driven comparative studies (Doidge 2014, 49; Rüländ 2014, 31; Baert, Scaramagli, and Söderbaum 2014, 174). My conceptual framework for evaluating interregional security cooperation comparatively thus only rests on a European perspective. As is already noted, “[...] nothing would be gained by excluding cases of interregionalism that involved the EU; the problem is not EU interregionalism *per se*” (Baert, Scaramagli, and Söderbaum 2014, 174).

There exist different criteria for actor capability. The term, introduced by Sjørstedt as “[...] a measure of the autonomous unit’s capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to

other actors in the international system”(1977, 16) , has social constructivist roots, since it recognizes how social processes influence the actors’ identities and actions. They engage in complex processes of social interaction (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 13; Huigens and Niemann 2011, 634). There exist various concepts of actorness ranging from Sjørstedts criteria which mainly focus on internal characteristics, to the three factors opportunity, presence and capability conceptualized by Bretherton and Vogler (2006, 24). The latter are also used for the study of interregionalism (Doidge 2011, 20–21). Of particular relevance is the work of Jupille and Caporaso who develop four inter-related criteria of actor capability: recognition, authority, autonomy and cohesion (1998, 215). Recognition, understood as the minimum condition for an entity to be worth an investigation, refers to the acceptance of an actor in global politics and can be either *de jure* or *de facto*. The second criterion, authority, strongly refers to the principal-agent model. A legal authority or competence to act is given, when “[...] principals empower agents to act in their interests” (Jupille and Caporaso 1998, 216). Accordingly, the authority of an interregional party is delegated by the respective member states. Autonomy implies institutionalized distinctiveness of the entity which has developed independent institutions. As a last component, Jupille and Caporaso assume a minimal level of cohesion as decisive for actor capability (1998, 219).

As mentioned above, some criteria which highly shape interregional ties can be identified:

With regard to the definition of interregionalism as institutionalized relations, it is not only important in how far there exist agreements, accords or arrangements between interregional partners but also to what extent these are actively implemented.

Another major criterion is how broad interregional dialogues are defined. Referring to the work of Hänggi, interregional ties are interpreted in a narrow or broad sense. While quasi-interregional relations and megaregional relations describe a wide sense, RO to RO dialogues as well as relations between ROs and regional groups or group-to-group approaches define a narrow sense of interregionalism. These interactions can be either contractual or *de facto* (Reiterer 2006, 223). In line with common research, I narrow interregional relations to at least region-to-region interactions. More precisely the partners have to consist of three or more states linked by an institutional character.

I define interregional security cooperation as as a process characterized by the widening and deepening of interactions between regions which is politically intended and actively

implemented (Roloff 2006, 18–20). More precisely, the interaction focuses on security issues with the aim to strengthen the reduction of security threats of both partners.

Additionally, the partners must possess sufficient actorness. In respect to actor capability it is worth to note, that actorness does not equal effectiveness (Thomas 2012, 471–472; Huigens and Niemann 2011, 635; Groen and Niemann 2012, 3). I assume, that the concept is best described by the four factors developed by Jupille and Caporaso: recognition, authority, autonomy and cohesion (1998, 215). In terms of security relations and their impact on facing security challenges, the concept of actorness develops further relevance. The capability of a regional entity to act is strongly influenced by the expectations it is confronted with. “Regional actorness is therefore, at least to a large extent, driven by the perceived need to respond to crises” (Wunderlich 2012, 664). With regard to issues of hard politics, this involves primarily mechanisms of how to settle conflicts. In these mechanisms actor capability is highly relevant (Whitman and Wolff 2012, 18).

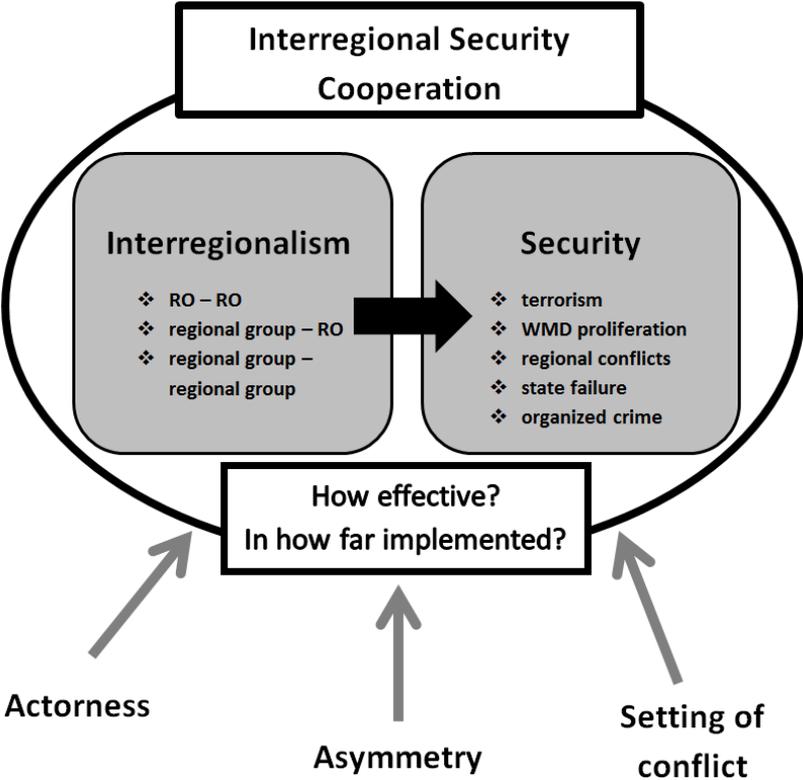


Table 2. A framework for the study of interregional security cooperation

In summary, my framework for the study of interregional security cooperation covers all empirical cases of institutionalized interactions between the EU and at least regional groups, which cover security issues. It is about the security threats mentioned in the ESS. Of significant relevance for the research question is the degree of actorness the interregional

partners possess. Moreover, it is important in how far the interregional partners are institutionalized, particularly with regard to the implementation of joint actions in the field of security. An effective resolution of conflicts as well as reduction of threats by interregional security cooperation strongly benefits from high actor capability and deep institutionalized relations, but also from a mix of intervention-measures. Moreover, interregional security cooperation is affected significantly by the setting of the conflict(s) a security threat is identified with as well as asymmetrical relations between the regions. The type of actors involved, the intensity of the conflict, the capability of the region or state to exercise power as well as various other conflict related factors are highly relevant for security cooperation between regions. With regard to the asymmetry in interregional ties, it is of particular relevance how asymmetrical relations affect cooperation in security issues. Interregional asymmetry is strongly related to the actor capability of the actors involved but also includes capabilities of the regional fora such as conflict prevention and resolution capacities as well as military operational capacities.

Two questions are strongly related to interregional security cooperation, especially with regard to the concept of an “Ertüchtigung” of regional actors: In how far region-to-region ties are effective in reducing security threats and to what extent the interregional arrangements are implemented and do not merely pay lip service. In general, effectiveness is often defined as goal attainment of the actor (see for instance Groen and Niemann 2012, 4; Van Schaik 2013, 9; Niemann and Bretherton 2013, 267). In line with that, effectiveness in this study means the extent to which interregional partners reach the main goals of their positions, i.e. the issues mentioned in the European Security Strategy (ESS) or within the interregional agreements. In how far the reduction of security threats is effectively implemented strongly refers to an outside or output dimension of security policy. Effectiveness does not equal actorness but draws on a certain capacity of the actors to behave actively and deliberately (Groen and Niemann 2012, 4). While the coherence of a regional entity seems to be of significant importance for acting effectively, an inter-relation between increased coherence and effectiveness has not (yet) been proved. Increased coherence can also be perceived with third party resistance and lead to a common policy of the lowest common denominator (Niemann and Bretherton 2013, 267–268).

Notwithstanding the fact, that developing a framework is one first important step towards a comprehensive evaluation of the phenomenon of addressing security interregionally, it is

also interesting, what issues the cooperation focuses on. The next part of this study will thus give a short overview of region-to-region cooperation in this field.

4. Addressing security challenges interregionally

As described above, the security challenges mentioned in the European Security Strategy are important building blocks when examining region-to-region security cooperation. Nevertheless, relations also take additional fields into account. These include for instance energy security, migration or climate change. The EU interacts with various ROs and regional groups. Coincidentally, not every interaction addresses all fields of security. The EU has relationships with the 18 regional groups which concentrate on different security areas as shown in the colored bars in table 3.

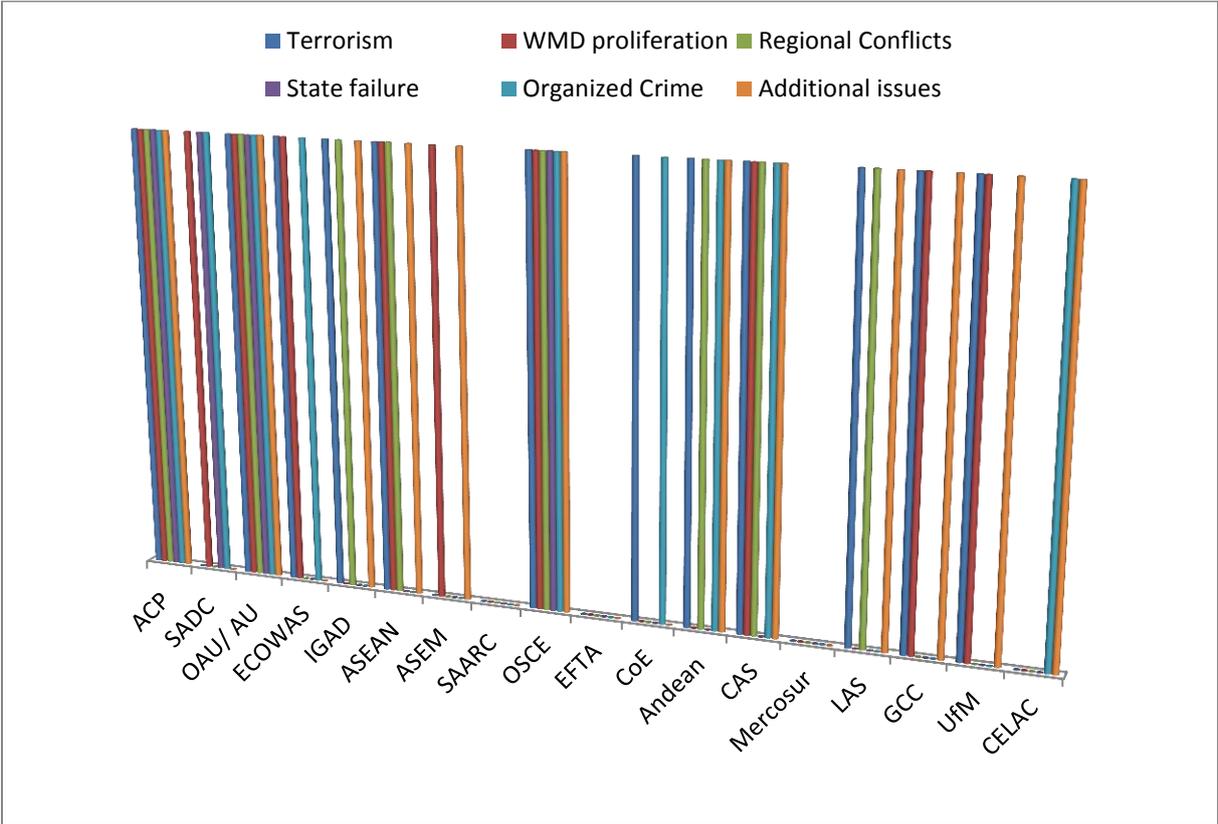


Table 3. Fields of EU interregional security cooperation with other regional groups

A look in the agreements, joint declarations, summit declarations and action plans of the interregional fora displays, in how far the interactions provide for the security challenges mentioned in the ESS. In order to identify interregional relations of the EU, I used data from the studies of de Flers and Regelsberger (2005, 325–328) and Santander (2007). In summary, most of the interregional relations adress only some of ESS-challenges. The interactions with the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, the African Union (AU), the Organization

for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and with the Central American States (CAS) include a wide range of security fields. This is not surprising given the close relationships and the long period of interaction. Most of the interregional fora include cooperation in the fight against terrorism, while only a few address risks of state failure. Likewise, the prevention, management and resolution of regional conflicts plays a major role in EU interregional security cooperation. The settlement of regional conflicts as well as the fight against terrorism are obviously of high relevance for security cooperation. With regard to recent threats, e.g. the spread of violent intrastate conflict since the 1990s and the fact, that terrorism was put at the top of the agenda since 9/11, this is not surprising. Interregional fora include cooperation for instance in information sharing on terrorist groups as well as capacity building in the management of violent conflicts. The latter involves a policy of “Ertüchtigung”, e.g. capacity building (for own purposes), for the AU in particular. With regard to intervening factors of region-to-region cooperation, capacity building, especially in Africa, seems a clear objective of EU relations with other regions.

The assumption, that the actor capability, the coherence of the region group as well as its capacity to act are major factors when examining interregional security cooperation, is strongly supported, since regional groups which are less integrated concentrate on few security challenges in their relations to the European Union. This refers to relations with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Mercosur and the groups in the Middle East, the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Some additional issues contribute to interregional security cooperation. The arrangements provide for various challenges including energy security, particularly in relations to regions with relevant energy resources such as the GCC, LAS, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) or Andean. Others address migration as well as challenges related to climate change.

5. Conclusion

The cooperation between EU and ASEAN in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts for former fighters in the Aceh peace process, joint support of security sector reform in West Africa by the EU and ECOWAS and the cooperation with the AU in reconciliation and redevelopment in Somalia as well as EU support for institutional and military backup for its African counterpart as examples of implemented region-to-region

cooperation in the security sector clearly show, that interregional relations are not only scraps of paper. For assessing interregional security cooperation it is essential to include the asymmetry in the relations, the degree of actorness the parties possess and to evaluate, how effective and in how far implemented the relationship is. As the examples of EU-AU cooperation show, the weaker side in terms of integration and capacities can benefit from the stronger side. In contrast, interregional relations can also be a one-sided affair (Kingah 2006, 69). It is of particular relevance, in how far security cooperation is implemented and to what extent the described asymmetry affects the effective management of security threats. Since this paper gives only an overview of interregional ties which include security policy, it is necessary to gain an understanding of the implementation of the various interregional arrangements. Future research in the field should thus examine to what extent provisions are materialized in effective procedures and practices. Moreover, the field of interregionalism needs more comparative analysis. This is even more the case for the low researched field of interregional security cooperation. The developed framework as a first step towards an examination thus contributes to a deeper understanding of interregionalism as an important feature of European foreign policy.

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