

Mapping the Trajectory of Regionalism: Insights from Eurasian Geo-Strategic Landscape



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Abstract: *This paper explores the historical evolution of regionalism and its conceptualization in the context of international relations. The text describes three phases of regionalism: early regionalism, characterized by pre-modern exchanges based on symbolic kinship bonds; old regionalism, primarily manifested as security and economic integration organizations following World War II as a response to the anarchic nation-state system; and new regionalism, developed in the late 1980s and intensified following the end of the Cold War, as a result of globalization and the emergence of various regional groups such as NAFTA, the European Union, APEC. Asia illustrates the Westphalian state model and serves as a pivotal region in the new-regionalism era in the context of the current global transition. There is an emphasis in the text that civilizational and cultural differences between countries in the region do not present destabilizing factors. It is the Sino-Pak-Russian Axis that is seen as an indicator of the emerging new-regionalism, especially in President Xi's One Belt One Road initiative. As a guiding principle of this new-regionalism, the concept of "Harmony under Heaven" is referenced, in contrast to the traditional Russian geopolitics based on the integration of the Heartland and Northeast Eurasia. This study examines both the historical trajectory and current manifestations of regionalism, particularly in the context of Asia's dynamic geopolitical environment and, by extension, Central Asia as well.*

Keywords: Regionalism, Eurasia, Central Asia, Globalization, Integration

1. Introduction

The pattern and structure of relations among distinct political communities are characterizing in many different ways. At one extreme there are a continuous struggle, war, conquests, slaughter, and enslavement: a sole form of the contact between these communities. At other extreme individual societies retained their distinction which is based on religion, language, and cultural norms. Throughout history, at different times and places, different forms of interactions have emerged between these extremes poles. The ranges of these interactions evolved from isolated communities to empires, from city-states to modern Westphalian states. As opposed

to the balance of power and power struggle the world political order also consequent from the emerging of international society. Such societies had a common culture that encompassing ethical, linguistic, and religious grounds and tied by communication and mutual understanding.

The international society cannot be fully understood without a larger context of international relations. The larger context has many perspectives each of which has its own approaches. The economic structure of the world may be interpreted as the history of the development of capitalism. An emphasis on the power relatives between the states may see the world through the prism of a balance of power.

Yet, there are many factors involved such as economic, cultural, and political, which have always played an important role in the determination of the norms, rules, and institutions which contour the relations among the states.

The idea of regionalism is a historical fact. There have been various regionalisms thorough-out the history. The trans-local political, social, cultural and economic integration has taken place throughout the ages. The term regionalism became part of the lexicon of international relations at the end of World War II. The regions matter and the contemporary era of global politics has a distinct regional flavor.

2. Region

The idea of “region” originates from the Latin word “regio” means direction, and to rule or to command (C.Jonsson, 2000).The region can be defined as a group of states located in the same geographic space. For scholars, a region indicates more than just physical proximity (Edward D. Mansfield, 2010). Russett defines region on geographic proximity, shared political institution and political attitude, cultural and social homogeneity, and economic interdependence (B.Russett, 1967). For Deutsch, a region is determined by the political values, economic transactions, and communication among a group of countries (KW Deutsch, 1957).

The scholars of international relations have agreed that regions cannot be defined scientifically. A region is defined by the problem under investigation. So, for the scholars' regions are socially constructed phenomena and therefore politically contested. The study of contemporary global politics emphasis: how actors perceive the idea of region and region-ness in international relations. Region-ness is the degree that differentiates the subsystem from the global International system. Based on region-ness there are no ‘natural’ or ‘given’ regions. In International Relations, the term “region” is defined as a group of neighboring and cooperating states having some linguistic, ethnic, cultural, historical, economic, and social links.

A region is one of the important phenomena in the study of regionalism. A region is certainly an involved geographical dimension. A region is differentiating a particular area in various respects making it a distinct entity. A region is a unit of political-geography and an aspect of geo-politics, geo-strategy, and geo-economics. It is also called the subsystem of the global political system (Marwat, 2017).Historically; the region denotes a space and has been evolved between the national and local within a specific state, and called micro-region. The larger territorial units between the state and global levels are referred to as macro-regions. Studies of International affairs deals with macro-region, while micro-regions are concerned with domestic politics. In contemporary international relations, micro-regions and macro-regions are blended which give rise to a debate about the relationship between macro and micro regionalism in the context of globalization (M.Perkmann, 2002). According to Joseph Nye, the classical definition of macro-region is ‘a limited number of states linked together by a geographical relationship and by a degree mutual interdependence’ (Nye, 1971).

The distinct approaches towards the definition of the region led to the difference between regional cooperation and regional integration. Regional cooperation is an open-ended process in which within a geographical area different states act together for mutual benefit. Whereas regional integration is a deeper process in which independent international units are merged into a whole (Nye, 1971).

3. Regionalism

Regionalism is a historical fact. It is one of the important characteristics in the field of regionalism that regionalism is various meanings in different spaces and times. There are always different opinions in academics about the meaning of regionalism, its cause and effect, and compare and contrast. The 21st century is all about connectivity and regional integrations. Regionalism, like a world order, represents the project and policy within a particular region in which state and non-state actors cooperate and coordinate their strategies.

Regionalism refers to the geopolitical and geo-economic cooperation among the regional states within the geopolitical unit. It also refers to the organized economic and political corporation amongst regional states with geographically adjacent regions (Marwat, 2017). The regionalism established on a formal platform and commonly leads to institution building. The core of regionalism is the coordination and harmonization of economic and political policies between the different entities in the region. Coordination is concern regarding political issues while harmonization addresses economic matters between the states. The process based on which integration, cooperation, cohesion, and identity creating a regional space refers to regionalization. The regionalization process can be defined in term of 'regionness', that is, the process which determines the potential of geographic region to transforming from passive object to an emerging integrating region. Regionness can also be understood in analogy with 'nationness' and 'stateness' (Hettne, 1993). Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum explain three levels of regionness, based on which regional coherence of a particular region can be determined. As the region is a social contract and changes according to the global transformation. The first stage is determined the potential, while the actual process of regionalization starting from the second stage, the outcome of actual regional formation shows in the third stage. The region is always in making. The outcome can be certain.

The pre-regional stage also referred to as the pre-regional zone or proto-region. In this stage a potential region makes up a social and geographical unit, natural physical barriers have delimited it and highlighted by environmental and ecological characteristics. In this early phase the relationship between human groups based on symbolic kinship bonds, lacking trust and cooperation, and the region becomes a security complex. Therefore regionness can best be described as anarchic, and security guarantee provided by balance of power only.

The second stage in the process of regionalization is a very spontaneous and induced process. It is the intergovernmental

regional integration in the fields of security, cultural, economic, and politics. This multidimensionality led to an organized region and a formal region emerged. The formal region could be defined by regional integration, its unique identity, or its organizational membership.

The final stage is the outcome of the process of regionalization. In this level, the regions transcending boundaries and became legitimate, capable, and institutionalize actor, acting as a distinct identity, have a structure for decision-making and integrated civil society. Along with formal, an in-formal form of regionalization like shared cultural, traditions, and inherent regional civil society also plays an important role in this stage. The influence of the regional sphere is not confined to the market only and mechanisms for social security and regional balance have emerged. The states pooled sovereignty voluntarily for the integrated community and supranational security. However, power and authority are decentralized to the local level (Björn Hettne F. S., 1998).

Some political scientists stated that regionalism is a purely political process led by mutual cooperation and policy synchronization between the states, while regionalization is an economic process in which mutual trade in the region rapidly grows as compared to the rest of the world (Haggard, 1993) (A. Gamble, 1996).

History has received muted attention to regionalism and most scholars claim that regionalism is a post-World War II phenomenon, which ignores many historical regionalizations (Soderbaum, 2015). Although there have been three different types of regionalisms i.e., an early regionalism, followed by the old and the new regionalisms, also distinguished as three waves of regionalism.

3.1. Early Regionalism

Regionalism is a very old phenomenon and can be traced very far back in history. Early regionalism was a pre-modern exchange system between the isolated communities. In these communities, disorganized interaction was based on trade and migration only, due to environmental and geographical hurdles. So, it

had a very small impact on daily social life. In early regionalism, the most important way of interaction was migratory patterns, on the bases of which new regional spaces or units were created. By the time being these units became political units. Cross interaction between these political units can be traced back in history as seen in geographically confined kingdoms, empires leagues, pacts, unions, and confederations (Söderbaum, 2008). When Political units entered into mutual cooperation and alliance system they became political regions. In human political history, political regions had played a dominant role in the pre-Westphalia era. Although it was very difficult to differentiate between a 'state' and a 'region' during this period due to its decentralized political order. Empires emerged in different forms mainly in decentralized consisting of small units and spaces to kingdoms. They fought each other, interact with each other, and destroyed each other (Chase-Dunn, 1997). The most lasting empire was Chinese (221BC-1912AD). India and Ancient Egypt were also prominent empires but were unstable. As the empire of Alexander the Great, empire of Japan, the modern empires of Mussolini and Hitler were short-lived.

The pre-Westphalia political order of Europe was extremely decentralized due to feudalism. According to the Westphalian logic, empires were transformed into nation-states. Unlike the empires which are multicultural polity entities, the nation-state has 'national culture' and integrated economically, politically, and socially. The Westphalian political order was anarchical in nature, in which state became the highest authority, and in order to the survivor, states must rely on self-help. This led to a balance of power and alliance system. The economy became subordinated to state and the state enjoyed absolute power over it. In order to obtain an absolute power state must have a strong economy and it led to mercantilism. In the era of classical mercantilism, the state's economy became the political economy of state

formations (List, 1909). With the industrial revolution, agrarian economies started to focus on the strength of Industries. So, for the states in Europe, it was beneficial to participate in the international division of labor (List, 1909). In order to manage the trade, the Zollverein (1834-1919), the German Customs Union, is a major example in Europe. It includes all states within the Prussian Kingdom and had also agreements with the non-allies. Europe became the leader of the regional system (Watson, 1992).

For the accumulation of wealth, major European powers became colonial powers. These colonial powers influenced regionalism and the regional building in Europe as well in their peripheries. The colonial powers were regionally organized, and the other hand anti-colonial struggle also adopted a regional form. To counter the colonial supremacy pan-continental movements have emerged. These movements were regional in nature and have geo-economic, geopolitical, and social and cultural motives. According to Acharya, these pan-regional movements were reflected multidimensional ideas of inter-societal and political unity (Acharya, 2012). The pan-regionalism varies to different regions but all of them give important understandings to the present and past trajectories of regionalism (Fawcett, 2015).

In the context of regionalism, there were hundreds of plans for the unification of Europe since the treaty of Westphalia. In the seventeenth century, various nationalities had outlined the European League. Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher argued for the federation based government in Europe on the principles of international law. French scholar Victor Hugo was in favor of the United States of Europe which must value the rights of man and should base on democracy. World War I shattered such hopes. Conversely, after the war, new plans for integration were drafted (Christer Jonsson, 2000). The formation of the European Communities after the Second World War was due to these integration plans.

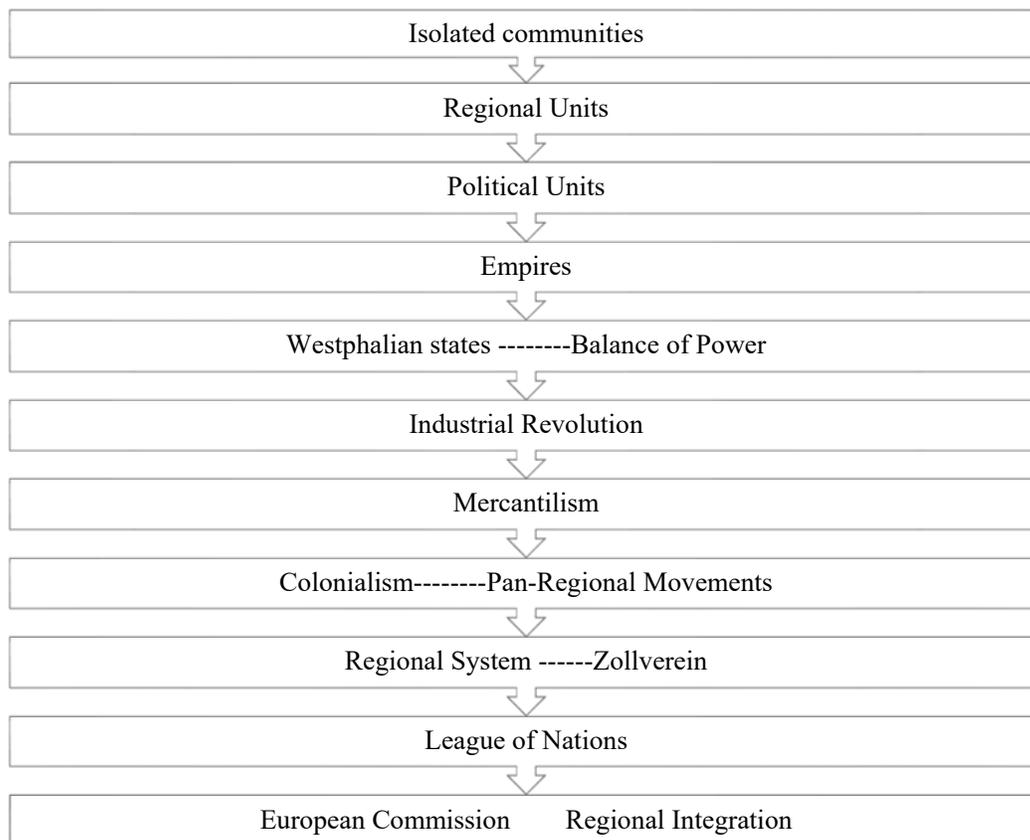


Figure 1: Evolution of Early Regionalism

3.2. Old regionalism

Old regionalism sometimes also known as comprehensive and voluntary regionalism is a post-World War II phenomenon. In the late 1940s, it emerged in Western Europe and it was mainly European centric regional integration (Söderbaum, 2008). Old regionalism was confined to geography and based on state regionalization. Old regionalism was an introverted and often inward-oriented and very exclusive for its membership and integration. The historical context for regionalism is dominated by the bipolar Cold war structure. The old regionalism was very specific with respect to its contents and objectives, and generally focuses on security alliances and free trade agreements. And it was directly or indirectly imposed, from outside and above, according to the Cold war structure, and often called ‘hegemonic regionalism’.

The inexplicable experience of the two World Wars and inter-war fascism led Europe to the old regionalism. For the European states, regional

integration is the alternative to the problems created by the anarchic order of the Westphalian nation-state. After many rounds of discussion and for the achievement of peace and stability, European Coal and Steel Community come into existence. As ambitions for regional integration were lasting, so through the Treaty of Rome in 1958 European Atomic Energy Community and European Economic Community were merged into the European Commission.

The focal point of the early debate in regionalism was Europe centric. Until and unless the comparative elements grew stronger in the field, Europe was always considered a single case. Scholars like Schmitter, Ernst Hass, and Sydney Dell have studied the integration process in Latin American (Ernst Hass, 1964) (Del, 1966). Joseph Nye illustrated the African integration process and drawn a comparison between the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of American States (Nye, 1968). The United Arab Republic, the European Economic Community, and the Nordic Association were compared by Amitai Etzioni

(Etzioni, 1965).

In the developing world, regionalism's debate was interrelated to colonialism and anti-colonialism. It has also linked to the pursuit of the developments mainly economic developments in the new-independent states. In Europe, states were seeking industrial and economic developments through regional integration while in developing states like Latin America, Africa, and Asia: developments were sought through import substitution and protectionism.

Due to the 1930s depression and trade issues, the states of Latin America were extremely underdeveloped. In 1948, for the industrializations and economic growth, the states adopted the regional protectionism and intra-state trade through the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (UNECLA) (Prebisch, 1959). With time being the integration process shifted its focus away from the political unification, to the economic integration for the state-formation. In 1960, inclusive and continental type of regionalism was created in the name of the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA). But, despite an intensive discussion and debate on old regionalism; there were little economic and integrative impacts on Latin America. And, this is why; old regionalism was never implemented in Latin America on a large scale.

In Africa, after the independence regional integration was formulated in the framework of the Organization of African Unity (1963), currently African Union (2002). These states wanted to create a common platform of regional integration which must decrease their dependence on the colonial powers and other nations. So, in the past regionalization in Africa was based on Pan-African ideologies of self-reliance, import-substitutions, and protectionism for their developing economies (Soderbaum, 2015). In 1980, the Southern African Development Coordinator Conference (SADCC), now the Southern African Development Community (SADC-1992), was established to integrate economies and to work against external dependence. Due to political rivalries among the states, the integration plans

were not prevalent fully. So, just like in the developing world, old regionalism in the continent of Africa was not in harmony with the context of the international world order and with the international political economy.

In Asia, there was no consent about the fundamental nature of the Asian regions. The dimensions of regionalism such as security, politics, economics, and identity determined the definition of the regionalism in Asia. The Asian continent has been divided into many regions, including Southeast Asia, South Asia, Northeast Asia, Central Asia and Middle East. Most literature on old regionalism has focused on East Asia, that is, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia (Söderbaum, 2008). In 1967, a sustainable regional organization was established in the name of ASEAN. The primary aim of the ASEAN was nation and state building, and also to thwart the threat of communism. The impacts of this regional integration were very small, but sincere attempts were made for mutual trade and joint industrial ventures.

Cold-war bipolar structure and the rivalry between the United States and USSR led to the emergence of the security pacts, for instance, Rio Pact (1947); NATO-1949 (North Atlantic Treaty Organization); Warsaw Pact (1949); ANZUS-1951(Australia-New Zealand- United States Pact) SEATO-1955 (South East Asian Treaty Organization); Baghdad Pact or CENTO-1955(Central Treaty Organization). These security alliances were indicators of the Cold-war old regionalisms.

<p><u>Europe and USSR</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COMECON (1948-1991) 2. NATO (1949-) 3. Council of Europe (1949-) 4. ECSC (1952-2002) 5. WEU(1954-2001) 6. WARSAW (1955-1991) 7. EEC (1958-1992) <p><u>Africa</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OAU (1964-2001) <p><u>Middle East</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. League of Arab States (1945-) 	<p><u>Latin America</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RIO Pact(1947-) 2. OAS(1948-) 3. Central American Common Market (1961-) 4. LAFTA(1969-1980) 5. Andean Community (1969-) 6. CARICOM(1973-) <p><u>West and East Asia</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CENTO (1955-1979) 2. SEATO(1954-1975) 3. ASEAN(1967-)
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Figure 2 Regional Organizations of Old Regionalism

3.3. New Regionalism

Unlike the old regionalism the contemporary regionalism demands more flexible and multidimensional definitions, which must be beyond geography and states. Contemporary Regional Integration is shaped by the dynamic nature of global politics and the intensification of globalization. The process of regionalization is characterized by the involvement of state actors as well as non-state actors, resulting in pluralism and multiplicity of contemporary regionalism.

In the international system, the new trend has emerged towards the changed context and content of regionalism. The new regionalism is a dynamic process, that emerged in mid-1980s (Björn Hettne, 1998). And, it is related to the new structural transformation in the global politics. The most important of these transformations are: the change of bipolar world order to the multipolar structure; declination in the hegemony of America and its positive attitude towards open regionalism; the emergence of new blocks in the global political economy; the restructuring of old economies like the capitalization of Russian economy, sinicization of Chinese economy; the decline in Westphalian nation state system and the emergence of the political, social, and economic interdependence led to new form of integrations between states and non-state actors; globalization of trade, finance and technology has led to a New International Division of Labor (NIDL); the persistent uncertainties over the

stability of mutual trade and the increasing importance of non-tariff barriers to trade; and the rising of neoliberal attitude in the developing economies (Louise Fawcett, 1995) (Andrew Gamble, 1996) (Björn Hettne A. I., 1998) (Jaime de Melo, 1993) (Barbara Stallings, 1995).

The new regionalism is a multidimensional and worldwide phenomenon and covers more areas in international global politics. The diversity and scope of the new regionalism has grown considerably in last few decade. The new regionalism is an extroverted, inclusive, multidimensional, spontaneous and dynamic process; often emerge from within the region and from below, implying transformation from heterogeneity to homogeneity of a particular region with regard to various dimensions, like economic policies, security, culture, and political regimes, and according to the peculiarities and problems. Sometimes new regionalism is often refers as open regionalism, due to its non-discrimination and non-exclusiveness. It always contributes to multilateralism and global liberalization and always opens to new membership of trading blocks, that's why it is called open regionalism. Professor Sir John Crawford coined the term open regionalism in Pacific Community Seminar held in 1980, in Australia (Marwat, 2017).

New regionalism is the rejection of the old regionalism, in terms of practice and theory. Most countries are members of more than one regional organization. This surge in regional

integration can be explained in many ways.

- i. The significance of the Cold war's perceptions and attributions has removed with the end of bipolarity. The United States, a dominant power, and champion of the liberal order are no longer hostile or antithetical towards the regional integration and cooperation.
- ii. Economic regionalization has increased by the promotion and adaptation of export growth policies. With this approach new regionalism comes into existence in the South.
- iii. The falling in the Westphalian system and the declining the importance of territorial borders, and increase in the globalization of economy boost the process of new regionalization.
- iv. The deepening and widening in the integration of Europe along with the appearance of many regional free trade areas global politics.
- v. The emergence of civil society and its increasing influence in inter and intra-state politics.
- vi. New regionalism with greater external links extending to more regions worldwide.
- vii. In the context of globalization, the new regionalism took shape in a multipolar order.
- viii. Regional Trade Agreements (RTS), an important and major feature of the new regionalism increasing since the early 1990s (Pomfret, 2007).
- ix. Currently, the multidimensional liberalization of trade among the industrial states regarding the manufactured goods is completed than old regionalism (Ethier, 1998).
- x. To join the integrative trading system the developing countries have abandoned the anti-market, protectionists and autocratic policies of the old regionalism.
- xi. Direct investment has been surging and far more prominent in new regionalism than old

regionalism (Ethier, 1998).

- xii. The political stability that flourished in many states through the process of democratization and liberalization provided a foundation for regional integration (Louise Fawcett, 1995).

Margaret Karns and Karen Mingst have identified two major driving force of new regionalism, that is, political and economic (Margaret Karns, 2005). They mentioned four political factors led to new regionalism. The first and the most important factor are shared identity and common perceptions of like-minded states of being part of the integrative definable region. The second factor is the internal and external threats. The common threat will create a sense of collectiveness among the state in a particular region. The third is the stability or instability in the domestic's politics. The types of regimes will affect the integration process. The last political factor is the role of leadership. Energetic leadership and effective secretariat also thrive in the process of integration. Margaret Karns and Karen Mingst argued that for the effectiveness of the political factors, economic factors are complementary. Due to integration, states would benefit from a larger market. The big market attracts foreign direct investment in the region. In a conflict, integrated states act as whole for their benefits.

Convincingly, in the post-cold war scenario after capitalism, the successful spread of the regionalism emerged as a second major phenomenon. The European Union becomes an effective ntegrative body in global politics. International regionalism was spreading and widening across the globe and beyond Europe as an important example of the new regionalism. Söderbaum (Söderbaum, 2008) observed that the reemergence, expansion and revitalization of integration process can be visible in other parts of the world as well. For example, in North America the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAPTA) was developed; in South Asia, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established; ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations-1967) established in East Asia; Andean Pact or Central American Common Market

(CACM) was made in Central America; In Africa, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was framed; in the Middle East the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), and Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC) was formed; APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation-1989), and more recently Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Number	Old Regionalism	New Regionalism
I.	a post-World War II phenomenon	A post-Cold war Phenomenon
II.	Confined to geography	Beyond the geography
III.	Introverted and exclusive	Extroverted and inclusive
IV.	Imposed from outside and above	Often emerge from within the region and from below
V.	Rigid form	Flexible form
VI.	In the context of bipolarity	In the context of multi-polarity
VII.	Eurocentric	Global-centric
VIII.	focuses on security alliances and free trade agreements	Multidimensional process
IX.	Confined and ended in 1970s	Spreading and widening
X.	Referred as closed regionalism	Referred as open regionalism
XI.	Involvement of states only	Involvement of states as well as non-state actors
XII.	Static process	Dynamic process
XIII.	Often called 'hegemonic regionalism'	often called 'anti-hegemonic regionalism'
XIV.	Based on protectionists policies	Based on to free trade

Figure 3: Differentiation between Old Regionalism and New Regionalism

<p>Europe</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 CSCE(1975-) 2. CIS(1991-) 3. EU(1992-) <p>Africa</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SADC (1992-) 2. COMES(1994-) 3. AU(2002-) <p>Middle East</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gulf Cooperation Council (1981-) 	<p>Latin America</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Mercosur (1991-) 2 FTAA(1993-) 3 NAFTA(1994-) <p>Asia-Pacific</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 APEC(1989-) 2 ARF (1994-) 3 SCO
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Figure 4: Regional Organizations of New Regionalism

4. Eurasian Strategic Environment

The twenty-first century is the century of

Eurasia (Macaes, 2019). A new awareness has emerged, based on the perception that after

centuries of Western philosophic, literary, scientific, and industrial dominance—political and economic axis are shifting from the West to the East. We are living in a transition period where political and economic axis of the world is shifting towards the east (Macaes, 2019, p. 1).

The future of world politics depends on the control of Eurasia geo-politically, geo-economically and geo-strategically (Brzezinski, 1997). In the coming years Eurasia will be the chessboard on which the New Great Game will be played between the great powers. The perception is that the US and other great powers in combination with regional powers will create and maintain new-rivalries and new-integrations to dominate the Eurasian region as a sphere of influence.

Eurasia is thus the chessboard in the context of struggle for the global primacy that continues to be played. The focal-point and the center of gravity of the chessboard is Central Asia. For Central Asian natural resources are an alternative to the chaos of the Middle East and the American failures in Afghanistan and Iraq. The New Great Game is about how to dominate and influence the *Historical Pivot* i.e., Central Asia geo-politically, geo-economically and geo-strategically. And this will determine the hegemonic hierarchical structure of the Heartland, and by extension of the *World Island*. Meanwhile, the geo-economic, geo-strategic and technological competition between the great powers remains. The struggle continues and it will be decades before the dust finally settles in the context of multi-polarity, as opposed to the American uni-polarity.

The shift of focus is from America to China. Therefore, an integration is emerging to reshape Eurasia, especially Asia. In this case, Central Asia is the center of gravity and the Chinese pivot to the Heartland is expanding geo-economically and geo-politically to the West, whereas, Russia turns East to continue to control the pivot area strategically, as opposed to the Chinese economic and trade inroads in Central Asia. Chinese have the resources and patience to play the long-game to win Eastern Hemisphere as a sphere of influence

Historically, Asian orders were hierarchical and empires ensured their writ and trade by ensuring the alignment of the smaller political units. Nevertheless, the modern-day Asia is complex and diverse. Every country has its own dynamics, as opposed to a perceptual commonality. The colonial and the post-colonial Asian experience in World Orders was an imposition by the Anglo-Saxon and Soviet hegemonies. The process of transition from one hegemony to another was often violent. Still, the Westphalian principles started to prevail in Asia after a decade of decolonization. In the process, Asian countries are asserting national identities and interests. Asia is the best model of Westphalian states as “people are organizing themselves as sovereign states and their states as regional groupings” (Kissinger, 2015, p. 178). Asian countries despite their bitter colonial experience have internalized the concepts of nation-state e.g., national interests, but continuing to make historical claims. The Westphalian anarchy resulted in Balance of Power and alliances regionally and globally. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) too is a response to the anarchy. The Asian integration is a dazzling array of multilateral groupings and bilateral mechanisms (Kissinger, 2015, p. 172). These groupings are partly based on geography.

The significance of any region originates from the notion as to how it contributes to the potential shaping of the World Order e.g., Central Asia. For any regionalism is a political, strategic and an economic grouping between different countries in a region for bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation. It has multiple dimensions and interpretations. Today, a new form of regional and trans-regional integration is taking-place between Central Asia and the surrounding regions e.g., the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and by extension the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The Sino-Pak-Russian Axis is an indicator of the declared and the rising new-regionalism.

The Chinese historical world order was a universal hierarchical order and China considered itself the sovereign government of the world, and its Emperor was the sovereign

head of “All Under Heaven” (Kissinger, 2015, p. 213). Deng Xiaoping in the recent past in 1979 transformed China dramatically by claiming the non-ideological foreign policy and economic and structural reforms. These were followed by his successors changing the course of China. More lately, China for the Eurasian integration brought to the table a definite political and economic model for the Eurasian integration. The processes of Chinese led new-regionalism are progressing. And for connecting the different regions of Asia and Europe, Chinese have reestablished the historical image of the Silk Road. The BRI is the geo-economic and geo-political map for the Eurasian integration. In 2013, President Xi of China announced One Belt One Road (OBOR) for the integration of Eurasia via a network of highways, high speed rails, pipelines, ports and optic fibers. The relationship with the other societies has, “Harmony Under Heaven”, as an idea leading the new-regionalism. Historically, the foreign policy of China sought to beguile and entice its adversaries more often than it attempted to defeat them by force of arm (Kissinger, 2015, p. 214). In Asia’s geopolitics, the Axis of China and Pakistan plays a significant role. China is Pakistan’s most trusted ally and an economic hope as well as a trusted military partner (Small, 2015). Pakistan is the gateway to China’s BRI and is helping China against the militancy of Eastern Turkistan Movement (ETM). The challenges faced by China-Pakistan Axis in the perception of writer include: the US presence in Afghanistan, rise of India, terrorism, the new-regionalism, economic-situation and the future of Asia.

As opposed to the above, the Russian geopolitics by definition are the geopolitics of the Heartland i.e., the land-based geopolitics, the geopolitics of Land (Dugin, 2000, p. 2). Traditionally, the Russian foreign policy revolved around one major goal i.e., the integration of the Heartland, the strengthening of its influence in the zone of Northeast Eurasia (Dugin, 2015, p. 6). Today, the philosophy of Russian foreign policy has three main principles: to protect the sovereignty of Russia, Russia first patriotism and Russian nationalism, and to partner with anyone that

wants relations with Russia. (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2016)

The Russian Eurasian ambitions remain and after the Soviet disintegration Russia is again back on the world stage, especially in the Eurasian Heartland i.e., Central Asia (Dugin, 2015). Historically, the Russian foreign policy traded space for time in the face of strategic weakness, and reasserted by acquiring the lost space when time was geo-politically favorable e.g., the annexation of Crimea, Russian military intervention in Syria and its come-back in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The idea at the heart of new-regionalism is the reconciliation between the erstwhile regional Cold-War adversaries e.g., the forging of new strategic partnership between Pakistan and Russia in the greater context of SCO and BRI.

During the Cold War Pakistan was in the US camp, as opposed to the former Union of the Soviet Republics (USSR) and India. However, 9/11 was a turning point in the strategic altering of the Eurasian strategic environment. Since then a new-regionalism is at the heart of an emerging Eurasian pegging-order. China is Pakistan’s strategic partner, whereas, both Pakistan and Russia are forging a new strategic enterprise (Sahi, 2017). The new-regionalism between China, Pakistan and Russia is an emerging axis that has already changed the strategic dynamics of Eurasia. It is challenging the status-quo and pushing the world into multi-polarity.

The Chinese and Russian national security documents recognize their mutual relationship as a comprehensive strategic partnership. Beijing and Moscow are drawing closer together to meet what each see as an American threat. Russia and China seek to create advantages in the great-power competition by securing themselves against the technologies that make modern states borderless e.g., cyber-space. On the other hand, Russia is back in Afghanistan as Pakistan’s strategic partner. The Russian-Pakistani perceptions are that America is the source of instability in Eurasia and that Pak-Russian military cooperation is to counter this instability. Central Asia has emerged as a pivot to the Eurasian Heartland. All the great powers

and Multinational Corporations (MNCs) are present in Eurasia, particularly in the sub-region of Central Asia. The ongoing New Cold War and the New Great Game is the struggle to win Eurasia as a sphere of influence. It is a game of confronting some, while cooperating with others e.g, the Power of Siberia (Trakimavičius, 2019).

The new swing of pendulum is going to lead to a world where no one will be dominated. This is the new-regionalism signaling a fused and composite world, especially Eurasia. New-Regionalism in Eurasian strategic environment involves geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic realignments. The center of gravity is the control of trade routes, pipelines, corridors and natural resources, especially the oil and gas. In American perception, Central Asia can serve its interests by providing an alternative to the chaos of Middle East, and decline of America. The American pivot to Asia-Pacific is meant to encircle rising China, contain the revanchist Russia and an aggressive Iran, and keep Pakistan under check. The main worry of Beijing and Moscow is the American presence in Afghanistan. Yet, the new-regionalism is shaping a new Eurasia. The New-World of multi-polarity is reshaping Eurasia. An emerging Balance of Power is Beijing-Moscow-Islamabad Axis vs. Washington-Tokyo-New Delhi Axis. Asia is challenging for America, because, Asians pursue national interest. The use of force too is part of Asian reality. The Asian strategic environment has an element of uncertainty. For the rivalries, historical grievances, energy insecurities, struggles for military supremacy, rising military budgets, terrorist groups in the region, Islamic radicalism, and the refuge crisis are among the major tests and trials of the Asian countries.

New-regionalism has been significantly altered by the resolution of the Afghanistan issue. The complexities surrounding the American presence in Afghanistan have diminished since the Afghan peace process was successfully concluded. As a result of the numerous changing factors in the region, Afghanistan has become more stable and integrated within the context of the new regional order. Since the Afghan conflict has come to an end, the uncertainty

surrounding the future has dissipated, allowing for a more optimistic outlook. Afghanistan is able to seamlessly integrate into the new regional framework due to the absence of a lingering conflict.

According to Forbes, the recent lists reflect a shift in the global economic environment in contrast to the previous scenario. China's 70th anniversary of the Communist Revolution demonstrated its hard power, which strengthened its global position. A total of 129 Chinese companies are now included in the Fortune-500 list, compared to 121 American companies. According to the Forbes Top-10 list of October 2019, Chinese banks dominated the list, occupying the top four spots. China's rise as a global economic power is underscored by this shift.

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