

*The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms Series*

# **THE RELEVANCE OF REGIONS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD**

**BRIDGING THE SOCIAL SCIENCES—  
HUMANITIES GAP**

Edited by

Galia Press-Barnathan, Ruth Fine and

Arie M. Kacowicz



# The Relevance of Regions in a Globalized World

This volume provides a unique open inter-disciplinary dialogue across the Humanities and Social Sciences to further our understanding of the phenomenon of regions and regionalism in a globalized world both at the theoretical and empirical levels.

What comprises a region? What are the different regional dynamic processes that take place? What is the relationship between the regional and the global? What role does identity building play? Bringing together scholars from various disciplines within and across the Social Sciences and the Humanities to reflect on these questions, the book explores how regions are imagined, constructed, understood, and explained in different academic disciplines. Each chapter addresses these common questions and uses its own disciplinary lenses to answer them. In addition, the volume offers interesting reflections on the academic borders constructed in the study of regions, thus demonstrating the importance of obtaining insights from both social scientists and humanities scholars in order to better understand the relevance of regions in a complex and globalized world.

An important work for scholars and postgraduate students in many fields, including political science, international relations, sociology, economics, geography, history, and literature, as well as for those interested in regionalism and area studies.

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**Edited by Galia Press-Barnathan,  
Ruth Fine and Arie M. Kacowicz**

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# Preface

This book stemmed from the International Conference organized on 14–16 December 2015, by the European Forum at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU). The Conference included twenty-six papers, three roundtables, and six panels all dealing with the topic of the relevance of regions and area studies in a globalized world. The Conference was co-organized by the editors of this volume, Galia Press-Barnathan, Arie M. Kacowicz, and Ruth Fine, as an initiative of the latter, as the former Director of the European Forum. The aim was to promote an inter-disciplinary dialogue across the Humanities and Social Sciences over the relevance of regions and area studies for a better understanding of regionalism, trans-regional processes, and globalization.

The Conference was a meeting place for international scholars to engage in an intellectual fruitful reflection about the dynamics of regionalism and area studies, alongside globalization, nationalism, and post-nationalism in our contemporary world. It was particularly fascinating to assess the role of Europe as a model for regionalism and area studies, in juxtaposition to other regions of the world. By bringing together the expertise and collaboration of several Research Institutes and Centers at the Hebrew University (such as the European Forum; the Harry S Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace; the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations; the Liwerant Center for the Study of Latin American and Spain; the Frieberg Center for East-Asian Studies; the Halbert Center for Canadian Studies; and the Nehemia Levtzion Center for Islamic Studies), as well as the cooperation with the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, the Henry Jackson School for International Studies at Brown University, and the KFG Research College “The Transformative Power of Europe” at the Freie Universität Berlin, we were able to create a unique unprecedented academic synergy among scholars from various disciplines and empirical backgrounds, bringing together researchers with rather diverse theoretical and epistemological perspectives for a productive and challenging dialogue.

The place of regions in general in the academic curriculum at the HU, in Israel and in general, has been a constant source of thought and preoccupation for the co-organizers of the Conference and editors of this book. We soon discovered that this interest and preoccupation were shared by many of our colleagues of different Faculties and disciplines, as well as of other universities. Hence the initiative

of the Conference and of this book, which we believe is a pioneer venture in the academic milieu.

It could be claimed that the history of the body of knowledge that we call *area studies* goes back to the beginnings of the European imperial expansion, but area studies only came on the scene systematically with the division of the world into national states that covered and almost completed the globe after 1945. It was believed that intellectual assumptions and academic practices in area studies depended on the power of national states to define territories marked by distinct boundaries of culture and history. Hence, national states have been understood as the primary institutional base for area studies, and consequently some of the main critiques to the field include its possible links with imperialism, Orientalism, and the much-questioned notion of nation-state. Already for decades, social and political movements inside national territories have challenged the legitimacy of existing states, political and economic developments have changed state boundaries, and globalization has undermined the power of states to organize separate economies and cultural systems. Moreover, it is not unusual to hear the claim that national interests justified funding for area studies in the universities, although it is apparent that mostly the academic interest arose from the need to understand national identities and cultural diversity.

Nevertheless, in our present world, we are witnessing processes that turn the need to reconsider the regional and area studies as a serious matter, such as a possible new version of the Cold War or the policies, both national and regional/international, that react to massive migratory displacements. Boundaries and differences seem to be still very relevant, even when they are shifting and in constant flux. The world's non-European languages and literatures are not dying out; the opposite is the case. National states continue to produce currencies, protect national economies, and sponsor and strengthen national languages and cultures. At the same time, regions are a permanent feature of our present world culture, even and especially when challenged.

Area and regional studies differ in their dominant approaches and institutional frameworks. As Szanton (2004, 4) rightly notes, "the individual Area Studies fields are neither internally homogeneous, nor are they similar to each other. Indeed, examined up close, they are strikingly distinctive in their political, institutional, and intellectual histories, and in their relationships with the disciplines." Moreover, such important differences of approach regarding area studies influence the organization of the academic curricula and study programs.

Stemming from these and many other considerations, we suggested two major fields of discussion for the Conference, and subsequently for the edited volume:

- 1 *The multiple empirical dimensions of regions, regionalism, and trans-regional entanglements*: The empirical phenomenon of regions and regionalism across different disciplines (i.e., political science, international relations, economics, history, sociology, cultural studies, communications); different issue-areas (i.e., ideology and religion; migration and refugees; borders, peace, and security; norms and identity; economics and development); and



inter-relations between different regions (i.e., North America, Latin America, Europe, East Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa), and across time. Of particular interest were the importance of area expertise for explaining and understanding new trans-regional phenomena (such as diasporas), or inter-regional interdependencies brought about by processes of globalization.

- 2 *The ontology, epistemology, and methodology of studying regions*: Based on the empirical discussions of regions and regionalism, this theme reflected and illuminated issues not often discussed in the academic study of regions and regionalism. In other words, we emphasized different ontological and epistemological perspectives about how to think about regions and trans-regional processes and how to study them. In particular, we wanted to explore differences (but also commonalities) in the academic perspectives among scholars from the Humanities and scholars from the Social Sciences, looking for forms of cooperation, diffusion, and cross-fertilization across different scholarly areas and disciplines.

The discussions developed on the basis of those fields were thought-provoking and inspiring. At the conclusion of the Conference we were convinced of the need to continue the reflection on the relevance of regions through a dialogue between the Social Sciences and the Humanities, and that a book platform for this purpose was required. From the array of twenty-six papers that were presented in the December Conference, we selected ten chapters, and commissioned two more (Hartmann and Sela), aiming to cover many of the regions of the world. This selection was based on the focus of interest of the papers and their authors, as well as their relevance for the more specific goals of the book.

Undoubtedly, the discussion on comparative regionalism has intensified again in recent years (see Boerzel and Risse 2016), and this book intends to be an important contribution to this renewed discussion. Different regions are represented in the book: Southeast and East Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. It should be of interest for scholars from area studies, geography, international relations, history, and cultural studies as well. Individual chapters are relevant to other disciplines as well (e.g., IPE and security studies in International Relations, or literature). Mostly, the book aims to bridge the gap between Social Sciences and Humanities approaches in the study of regions.

The present volume aims to contribute to our understanding of regionalism by offering different and sometimes new perspectives and multiple methodologies, with an emphasis upon qualitative studies, textual, literary, and hermeneutic analysis, historical methods, and quantitative (statistics) ones. Furthermore, the chapters adopt different definitions and approaches of regions, drawing distinctions between area studies and regional studies. Consequently, the book speaks to a range of different disciplines and subject areas. It is very broad, while at the same time it has a specific focus on regions.

We hope that this volume will be a significant contribution to the advancement of the debate on the regional and area studies in the academic milieu and in

general, creating a unique unprecedented academic synergy among scholars from various disciplines and empirical backgrounds towards a productive dialogue. We firmly believe that this is important both for the understanding of the geopolitical changes in our present times but also to enhance the academic development of the universities structure and curricula.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the partners and sponsors of the December 2015 Conference: the Munk School of Global Studies at University of Toronto and the German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD, the Haifa Center for German and European Studies at the University of Haifa, and at the HU: The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, The Harry S Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, The Louis Frieberg Center for East-Asian Studies, and The Halbert Centre for Canadian Studies. Finally, we want to convey our gratitude to the Administrative Director of the European Forum, Elisheva Moatti, for her wonderful work in the organization of the Conference, and to all the participants for their important and stimulating contributions that were the basis for the present book, including Christian Baden, Ayelet Banai, Jacques Bertrand, Louise Bethlehem, Michal Biran, Emmanuelle Blanc, Tanja Boerzel, Tomer Broude, Naomi Chazan, Asher Cohen, Michal Daliot-Bul, Tal Dingott-Alkopher, Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann, Carlos Escudé, James Green, Yoram Z. Haftel, Lior Herman, Dirk Horder, Steven Kaplan, Claudia Kedar, Exequiel Lacovsky, Bruce Maddy-Weitzmann, Edward D. Mansfield, Benjamin Miller, Mor Mitrani, David Newman, Ton Nijhuis, Nissim Otmazgin, Anton Pelinka, Yuri Pines, Norrin Ripsman, Thomas Risse, Luis Roniger, Michael Roessner, Rehav Rubin, Eli Salzberger, Frank Schimmelfennig, Avraham Sela, Fredrik Soderbaum, Etel Solingen, Keren Tennenboim-Weinblatt, Christian Thauer, Alfred Tovias, Daniel F. Wajner, Martina Weisz, and Henry Yu.

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# Abbreviations

ACP	Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific
AD	Antidumping
AL	Arab League
ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas
ANC	African National Congress
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APSA	The African Peace and Security Architecture
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATLAS	<i>Agrupación de Trabajadores Latinoamericanos Sindicalistas</i>
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CAN	Community of Andean Nations
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement/Area
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CET	Common External Tariff
CFTA	(African) Continental Free Trade Area
CLCS	UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPA	Cordilleran People's Alliance (Philippines)
CU	Customs Union
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
ESCC	European Steel and Coal Community
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Area
FTAA	Free Trade Area in the Americas

GAFTA	Greater Arab Free Trade Area
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HU	Hebrew University of Jerusalem
IFPI	International Federation of the Phonographic Industry
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPE	International Political Economy
IPRA	Indigenous People's Rights Act (Philippines)
IR	International Relations
IS	Islamic State
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
LAIA	Latin American Integration Association
LDC	Least Developed Country
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the South
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (Japan)
MFN	Most Favored Nation
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front (Philippines)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRU	Mano River Union
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NPA	New People's Army (Philippines)
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PRI	<i>Partido Revolucionario Institucional</i> (Mexico)
PSC	Peace and Security Council (in African Union)
PTA	Preferential Trade Agreement
REC	Regional Economic Community
REO	Regional Economic Organization
RSC	Regional Security Complex
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SS	Social Sciences
SS-H	Social Sciences-Humanities (gap)
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
UMOA	Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

xx *Abbreviations*

UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission on Africa
U.S.	United States
VIIT	Vertical Intra-Industry Trade
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WGIP	Working Group on Indigenous Populations
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	World War Two

# 1 Regions in a globalized world

## Bridging the Social Sciences–Humanities gap

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### **The study of regions in the Social Sciences and in the Humanities**

Traditionally, *area studies* have been a prominent field in the Humanities, with reference to the study of different regions and cultures throughout the world. In the Social Sciences, specifically in the fields of American Political Science and International Relations, there has been a policy-driven interest in the study of regions during the Cold War era and in the wake of the Cold War and the struggle for regional influence among the United States, the former Soviet Union (a resurgent Russia), and a rising China. The renewed interest in regions and regionalism has developed since the end of the Cold War, as the traditional intrusive overlay of great power competition between the Soviet Union/Russia and the United States has diminished, and as regional economic cooperation frameworks such as the EU, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, and NAFTA have become more prominent. Scholars studying war and peace focus more on regional security complexes than on the overall international system (e.g., Buzan and Wæver 2003; Miller, Chapter 5 in this volume). Similarly, scholars studying the international political economy (IPE) have also been paying greater attention to the regional level, with a dramatic rise in the literature on regional economic organizations (REOs) (see Haftel and Wajner, Chapter 3; Hartmann, Chapter 4, this volume). This literature has followed the empirical growth of such institutions and of various regional economic arrangements, like Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) (see Mansfield, Chapter 2, this volume). The discussion of such regional economic organizations has been often framed in the context of broader processes of economic globalization and their impact on the regional level.

This interest joined and further advanced an earlier line of research that had developed since the 1950s, examining the processes of regional integration, with a particular focus upon the European case. European integration, often perceived as *sui generis*, has become a phenomenon that received an increasingly sophisticated treatment from a comparative perspective, as scholars considered the conditions under which different elements of regional cooperation and integration could travel to other regions; for instance, from Europe to Latin America, or from Europe to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The research program of comparative

regionalism has tried to deal with these conditions more explicitly in recent times (e.g., Boerzel and Risse 2016). Since the early 1990s, to the existing positivist, rationalist literature exploring security and economic dynamics of regions we could add a new body of literature, following the rise of Constructivist and critical theories in the field of International Relations. This new literature shifted its focus to issues related to the social construction of regions and of regional identity (e.g., Acharya 2009 and 2012; Acharya and Johnston 2009). Furthermore, a second recent body of literature – the so-called “New Regionalism” approach – urged the need to move away from a study of regions focused on states and high politics in the direction of studying non-state actors and interactions that are a central component of regional dynamics (see Hettne and Söderbaum 1998; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003). This new approach, still nested in the Social Sciences, suggests the need for a greater understanding of the peculiarities of different regional contexts, more often found among regional, area-studies specialists. In a parallel fashion, the Humanities have also experienced by the turn of the century a declining reference to political or geopolitical regions, favoring instead Constructivist or relativistic perspectives, based on categories such as memory, identity, and ethnicity.

Despite this growing research, the exploration of regions and of regional processes is far from being complete. We are witnessing political and socio-economic processes that suggest the urgent need to reconsider the relevance of regional and area studies as a crucial matter, such as the refugee crisis in Europe, the dramatic British decision to leave the European Union (‘Brexit’), and the Catalan demands for secession from Spain. Boundaries and national differences still seem to matter in our age of globalization, even when they are shifting and being constantly challenged and under pressure. Far from disappearing, the world’s non-European languages and literatures are flourishing. National states continue to defend their currencies, protect private property, develop capital accumulation, and sponsor their national languages and cultures. At the same time, regions are a permanent component of our present world culture and world politics, even when they are dynamically evolving and constantly challenged. In sum, in our complex world we witness the simultaneous and parallel dynamic forces of globalization, nationalism, and regionalism. These forces might overlap and compete with each other, so in order to make sense of the world we have to address their complex dynamics and linkages (see Kacowicz 1999).

Whatever interactions existed between the Social Sciences’ literature on regions and regionalism with its heavy emphasis upon comparative analysis and theory-driven research, and the literature from the Humanities, with its particular focus on specific regions and states, the academic research focused for many years on what was known as *area studies*. Area studies emerged in the highly political context of the early years of the Cold War, driven by the decision-makers’ conviction that in order to ‘win’ different regions in the global competition, it was necessary to understand them from within, exploring their history, culture, and language. At that time, scholars and practitioners believed that intellectual assumptions and academic practices in area studies depended first and foremost on the power of national states to define the contours of culture and history. Hence, traditionally

national states have provided the primary institutional basis for the development of area studies. Consequently, the field has been criticized on the grounds of promoting imperialism, orientalism, and the questioned notion of the paramountcy of nation-states. Moreover, area studies had led to the proliferation of 'area experts,' scholars who adopted largely the research tools of the Humanities, but whose findings also served explicit political purposes. As academic dynamics developed, clear fault lines and inherent rivalries emerged between these 'area experts,' stressing the unique characteristics of a given state or region they were studying, and theory-driven scholars seeking to apply their general social science tools to explore broader patterns and similarity across regions (see the exchange between Robert Bates and Chalmers Johnson 1997 in this context).

However, with the end of the Cold War, two important trends emerged. First, funding for area studies has declined, both for research and in the universities' curricula (see Katzenstein 2001). Second, the gap between social science research on regions and area studies' approaches has narrowed. Nowadays, a new brand of social scientists and area specialist scholars combine both the mastering of political science and of international relations theories with a broad scholarly knowledge of a particular region of the world. They use both Social Sciences methods and an expertise in the language and culture of the region they are studying, so they are particularly sensitive to its regional peculiarities.

While social science researchers on regions have interacted over the years with area studies' specialists, they have ignored, or were even oblivious, of a diverse and rich body of literature that explores regions and their dynamics across various disciplines in the Humanities. This includes, for example, historical research that deals with pre-Westphalian or even pre-colonial regional and global realities; and research in the field of cultural studies, literature and arts. Conversely, these various explorations of regions and regional phenomena from the Humanities' perspectives and disciplines have been equally oblivious to important advances in the study of regions in the Social Sciences.

Hence, as editors and scholars coming from across this scholarly gap (two of us teach international relations with regional expertise on East Asia and Latin America, respectively, and one of us Iberian and Latin American literature), we believe that there is a growing need to find intellectual bridges across this divide. An open inter-disciplinary dialogue across the Humanities and Social Sciences over the relevance of regions and area studies will further our understanding of regionalism, trans-regional processes, and globalization, both at the theoretical and empirical levels. This is particularly relevant in our post-Cold War, complex, and even chaotic world.

### *The virtues of dialogue*

Despite fundamental ontological, epistemological, and methodological differences between scholars in the Social Sciences and in the Humanities, there is much to be gained from an enhanced dialogue across disciplines, if we want to explain and understand the phenomena of regions and regional processes in the



contemporary world. The different jargon, as well as the different research drive and framing of research dealing with regional phenomena across the scholarly divide often mask important similarities in terms of questions, answers, and possible insights. Most scholars who study regions tend to view them not as primordial, but rather as socially constructed and dynamic, evolving rather than fixed. This is in itself already a starting point for dialogue.

Given the emphasis on the role of theoretical tools in explaining regional dynamics and the quest for finding recurrent patterns, social scientists are perhaps more explicit than scholars in the Humanities in their attempt to identify the various mechanisms that lead to the construction and reconstruction of regions. For instance, they focus on economic interdependence (Deutsch et al. 1957; Haas 1958), strategic interdependence (Buzan and Wæver 2003), or shared identities and the notion of a regional ‘cognitive prior’ and norm localization (Acharya 2009 and 2012), in order to explore how different types of interaction shape regions across the globe. Thus, regions receive meaning and significance in terms of economic interactions, geopolitics, movement of people, identity matters, and cultural exchanges and interchanges, whereas all of these can be studied from different disciplinary perspectives, both in the Social Sciences and in the Humanities.

In this sense, it remains essential to transcend the area studies’ focus in order to explore the research that deals with regions and regional dynamics from broader disciplinary perspectives from within the world of the Humanities – including history, cultural studies, religious studies, language, music, art, and literature. These areas are not familiar to most social scientists, nor do they necessarily engage each other as well, as disciplinary divides exist also *within* the Social Sciences and *within* the Humanities. We should follow here the wise advice of Sil and Katzenstein (2010), who coined the term “analytical eclecticism” to suggest that research that is driven by an empirical puzzle should be open to explore and combine different analytical and methodological approaches. This is clearly the case for those scholars trying to make sense of regions, and this is also the attitude we adopt as editors of this volume.

Beyond this rationale, increased dialogue across the disciplines can also serve to challenge, and therefore advance various theoretical arguments, and to examine the validity of the hypotheses and assumptions behind them. For instance, while most of the Social Science literature on regionalism has focused on the modern state system, scholars from the Humanities exploring regional processes clearly demonstrate that much was going on in terms of region building and regional processes well before the introduction of the modern nation-state. Thus, this type of research may be of great value for the ability of social scientists to explain and to understand the current and future evolution of regions, as intensified (but uneven) globalization is leading to the undermining of the Westphalian state as the primary building bloc in the construction and maintenance of regions. Similarly, economic trends challenge the centrality of the state, both from below and from above. We also find sub-national and trans-national political and ideational challenges to the nation-state, either in a political form (e.g., the demand of Catalans and Scots for independence), or