

What the Analysis of 136 Studies from 1960 to 2020 Tells Us About Comparative Regionalism Studies

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ABSTRACT

In recent years (from the late 1990s to 2020), the number of studies comparing regional integration processes around the world has increased significantly. However, the number of papers aiming to group and analyse these studies in order to determine the main trends in the field is still very limited. We attempt to fill this gap by analysing 136 studies (journal articles, book chapters, institutional reports, working papers, research centre publications and university papers such as dissertations and theses) from 1960 to 2020. In this article, we identify the main terms used in comparative regionalism studies and their evolution. We present the historical development of the field and identify the main organisations that are often compared in these studies. We also present the main points of comparison and the methods used in these studies, and discuss the case of the European integration model in comparative regionalism studies (the n=1 problem). This work creates and analyses one of the largest databases available on comparative regionalism studies. It can therefore facilitate the work of students and researchers interested in comparative regionalism and contribute to the development of this field of research.

JEL Classification: F15; R1; F02.

Keywords: Comparative regionalism, comparative regional integration, regionalism, regional economic integration, corpus, Cortext Manager.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, the terms ‘comparative regionalism’ and ‘comparative regional integration’ have been increasingly used in the literature. In the broadest sense, these two terms are usually used as

synonyms, but comparative regional integration may involve a more institutional dimension.² There is no consensus on a common definition of the term comparative regionalism because 'if the field of comparative regionalism exists, its boundaries are certainly permeable—just as is its subject' (Sbragia 2008 p 33). Further, 'the ideas and literature that constitute comparative regionalism come from and have been enriched by contributions from many regions, including Latin America, Asia, North America, the Middle East, Africa and of course Europe.' (Acharya 2012 p 12). In general, however, it can be said that comparative regionalism is an academic field of research concerned with the analysis and comparison of regional integration processes across the world from various perspectives (economic, political, security, etc.). Different theoretical and analytical frameworks and various empirical tools and techniques are used to help researchers better understand regional integration processes through a comparative analysis approach.

Comparative regionalism studies gained prominence in the literature in the late 1990s, especially with the emergence and development of new forms of regionalism, such as informal and multidimensional regionalism. However, despite the growing interest in the field of comparative regionalism and the rapid expansion of comparative regionalism studies in recent years (from the late 1990s to 2020), the number of academic works that attempt to consolidate and analyse these different studies remains very limited. For this reason, this article aims to make a modest contribution to recent efforts to develop and strengthen this field of research.

The aim of this article is to take stock of comparative regionalism studies from 1960 to 2020 in order to answer the following questions: What are the main terms used in these studies and how have they evolved over time? What is the historical development of comparative regionalism studies? Which organisations are frequently compared in these studies, and what is the current status of the European Union (EU) as a comparator? What are the main points of comparison often considered in comparative regionalism studies? And what methods and tools are used by researchers in these studies?

The methodology of this article can be summarised in three points: (I) the compilation of a large corpus of comparative regionalism studies (136 studies from 1960 to 2020) and the analysis of the corpus with two complementary methods: (II) using the Cortext Manager software and (III) using an analytical reading sheet. The article is divided into five sections. Section 1 contains the introduction, Section 2 contains the literature review, Section 3 presents and explains the methodology used to conduct this study, Section 4 presents the main findings of this study and Section 5 concludes this work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, we shall first explain the development of regionalism in three points: old regionalism, new regionalism and comparative regionalism. Secondly, we shall then discuss the current development of comparative

regionalism: the advantages of studying regional integration processes using a comparative approach, the development of the conceptual, theoretical and methodological framework used in comparative regionalism studies, the issue of the European integration model in comparative regionalism studies, and the future of comparative regionalism.

Old regionalism, or the first wave of regionalism, refers to the first regional initiatives that emerged after the end of the World War II. During this period, marked by the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947 and the significant liberalisation of world trade, a new trend in favour of regional integration was observed worldwide and the debate on regionalism began to gain prominence in the academic literature (Burfisher *et al* 2004). In the field of international relations, old regionalism is defined as a theory of cooperative hegemony and a planned integration of national economies between two or more states, with the aim of strengthening regional political cooperation and avoiding wars between the states concerned as a result of the high degree of interdependence between them.

This first wave of regionalism, which focused on nation states, first appeared in Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 and the European Economic Community in 1957, before spreading to the developing world. At that time, the most influential theories – in the context of European integration – were federalism, neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism. In the 1960s and 1970s, the debate on regionalism focused on the European experience, which was considered ‘the model’ to follow. Nevertheless, some neofunctionalism authors such as Ernst Haas, Amitai Etzioni and Joseph Nye were already engaged in a comparative approach to regionalism. However, these first comparative studies failed to progress because of the low level of integration outside Europe (Söderbaum 2009).

The new regionalism refers to a phenomenon that began in Europe with the adoption of the 1985 White Paper on the Internal Market and the Single European Act, which triggered a new dynamic process of European integration. This marked the beginning of the new regionalism at the global level, with an explosion in the number of free trade agreements (De Lombaerde *et al* 2010a). At the same time, long-standing regional organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) underwent significant changes (Börzel 2016).

This new wave of regionalism was a global, multidimensional phenomenon, involving more spontaneous processes that emerged from below and in accordance with the specificities and problems of each region (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998). It is also characterised by the involvement of a growing number of actors (state and non-state) operating at the regional level and in several interdependent fields such as security, development, trade, environment and culture (De Lombaerde *et al* 2010b). Researchers interested in regionalism outside Europe tend to use the theoretical analytical frameworks of international

relations (IR) and international political economy (IPE) to study the new regionalism (Warleigh and Rosamond 2006). The main approaches used in this framework include neorealism, liberal institutionalism, neoliberal institutionalism and the new regionalism approach.

In recent years (2000–2020), a considerable number of authors have studied regionalism from a historical, theoretical and methodological point of view. They emphasised the need to go beyond the new regionalism toward ‘comparative regionalism’ in order to better understand current regionalism (see Warleigh-Lack 2008; Söderbaum 2008; Sbragia 2008; Laursen 2010; Acharya 2012; De Lombaerde and Söderbaum 2013; Söderbaum 2015; Börzel and Risse 2016). Most of these authors focus on a number of new features in current regionalism that are not related to the creation of new regional organisations (a new wave of regionalism), but rather to the widening, deepening and broadening of current regionalism. This requires - in their view - the use of a comparative approach to regional processes in the study of current regionalism. One of the main characteristics of current regionalism is the theoretical and methodological dialogue that has emerged in recent years. In contrast, new regionalism was characterised by fragmentation and lack of dialogue between regionalism specialists.

The advantages of the comparative approach in the study of regionalism are also highlighted by a growing number of authors. Warleigh and Rosamond (2006) noted that comparative regionalism studies are essential for understanding differences between regional integration projects and therefore can ‘enable scholars (and by extension policy-makers) to see both how the various regional integration projects could usefully learn from each other, and also how the international political economy is impacting upon governance in different parts of the globe (Warleigh and Rosamond 2006 p 3)’. Söderbaum (2009) explains that the use of comparative analysis in the study of regionalism ‘can help guard against ethnocentric bias and culture-bound interpretations that can arise when a specialization is over-contextualized or the area of study is too isolated’ (Söderbaum 2009 p 491). Moreover, the use of a comparative approach in the study of regionalism makes it possible to compare the different forms and components of regionalism at the regional, global and multi-dimensional levels. It also allows scholars to compare certain aspects of regionalism (e.g. trade blocs, regional security, etc.). However, there are also limitations and drawbacks to consider. In fact, ‘comparison’ as a scientific method of analysis is not self-evident and has to be constructed by the researcher(s) who decide which regions to compare, the objectives of the comparison and the criteria to use in the comparison. ‘The comparative method is ultimately based on the same logic as “the experimental method”, it is reasonable that it should be used with care in the social sciences’ (Söderbaum 2008 p 17).

On a conceptual, theoretical and methodological level, the growing number of academic works on comparative regionalism and the establishment of several institutions and research centres specialising in comparative regionalism

studies (e.g. the United Nations University Institute for Comparative Studies of Regional Integration UNU-CRIS) have strengthened the foundations of comparative regionalism in recent years. Söderbaum (2015) explained that: 'Today's regionalism is characterized by a changing intellectual landscape of regionalism, with increased dialogue between theoretical approaches but also the increasing acceptance that a multitude of scientific standpoints and perspectives are necessary and plausible. (...) From a methodological point of view, it can be argued that the consolidation of comparative regionalism constitutes one of the core characteristics of the current phase of regionalism; perhaps its most important' (Söderbaum 2015 p 21).

The conceptual problem is one of the major obstacles facing scholars in the field of comparative regionalism. The terms 'region', 'regional cooperation', 'regional integration', 'regionalism', and 'regionalisation', are defined very differently in the academic literature. One of the reasons for this problem is the fact that 'the phenomenon under study (...) is a moving target' (De Lombaerde 2011 p 32). The term 'region' was first used to describe a space between the national and the local within a given state. This type of region is called a subnational or micro-region. The term 'region' can also refer to macro-regions, which are larger territorial units or subsystems that lie between the state level and the global system level. A macro-region is 'a limited number of states linked together by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence' (Nye 1968 xii).

The large majority of studies in the field of comparative regionalism have conventionally been concerned with macro-regions rather than micro-regions' (De Lombaerde *et al* 2010 p 738). And today, 'Most scholars engaged in the contemporary debate agree that there are no natural or "scientific" regions, and that definitions of a region vary according to the particular problem or question under investigation' (Söderbaum 2009 p 478). The term 'regional cooperation' can be defined as 'an open-ended process, whereby individual states (or possibly other actors) within a given geographical area act together for mutual benefit, and in order to solve common tasks, in certain fields' (Söderbaum 2008 p 3), whereas the term 'regional integration' 'refers to a deeper process, whereby the previously autonomous units are merged into a whole' (Söderbaum 2008 p 3). The term 'regionalism' represents the policy and project, whereby state and non-state actors cooperate and coordinate strategy within a particular region or as a type of world order. It is usually associated with a formal programme, and often leads to institution building. And the term 'regionalisation' refers to 'the process of cooperation, integration, cohesion and identity creating a regional space' (Söderbaum 2009 p 479).

Definitions and the selection of concepts are important in the field of comparative regionalism, as the first step to conduct a comparative regionalism study. 'The choice of the definition (and therefore, the phenomenon to be studied) has implications for the identification of the relevant comparators in comparative research' (De Lombaerde *et al* 2010 p 12). It is also necessary to

develop a theoretical framework and a set of empirical tools and techniques. 'The theoretical framework explains the purpose of the comparison and suggests how variables intervene and how they are interconnected. The empirical tools and techniques allows us to test the theoretical hypotheses using empirical data' (De Lombaerde 2011 p 38). A number of authors have developed theoretical models that can be used in comparative regionalism studies (see Mattli 1999; Warleigh-Lack 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2015; Laursen 2010; Hameiri 2013; Fioramonti and Mattheis 2016). In terms of methodology, quantitative and qualitative methods can both be used in comparative regionalism studies.

One of the major issues in comparative regionalism, that scholars and students have to deal with it, is 'the "euro-centric" bias of most regionalism theories and the often misplaced tendency to use the European integration experience as a comparator for other regions' (De Lombaerde *et al* 2010b p 13). In fact, even in recent comparative regionalism studies, the EU is still frequently used as the reference or main comparator to analyse regionalism in other regions of the world. This represents an obstacle to a better understanding of regionalism in developing countries. Compared to the EU, other modes of regionalism are usually characterised as 'loose and informal' (Asia) or 'weak' (Africa). Murray (2010) highlighted this problem by explaining that: 'No other region in the world is seen as, first, a model, second, a yardstick, third, an integration exporter, and fourth, as a norms exporter. These four characteristics suggest that the EU constitutes an exception within comparative regionalism' (Murray 2010 p 310). To overcome this problem, De Lombaerde *et al* (2010b), explained that 'A more advanced debate about comparative regionalism will not be reached through simply celebrating differences from European integration theory and practice, but rather in going beyond dominant interpretations of European integration, and drawing more broadly upon alternative theories that draw attention to aspects of European integration that are more comparable to other regions.' (De Lombaerde *et al* 2010b p 17).

With the development and strengthening of the theoretical and methodological foundations of comparative regionalism in recent years, the field has been confirmed as an established area of research or, as Acharya (2012) argues 'A field whose time has come'. Söderbaum (2015) explained that today, we are witnessing 'an increasing creativity in the way regions are compared across time and space.', and that the next step in the development of the field will be 'to deepen the comparative element of regionalism without becoming trapped in either parochialism or a false universalism (usually Eurocentrism).' (Söderbaum 2015 p 22).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 *Identified List of Regional Organisations*

The first step in this work on comparative regionalism studies was to create a list of the main regional integration processes in the world. A regional integration

process can be defined as the process whereby two or more nation-states agree to cooperate and work closely together to achieve certain common goals (economic, political, security, etc.). This includes almost all regional integration organisations. In order to identify the main regional integration processes in the world, we consulted various references and official websites. (Appendix 1)

3.2 Creating a Thematic Corpus

A corpus is a 'collection of texts grouped on the basis of working hypotheses in order to analyse them' (Mayaffre 2002 p 1). Building and analysing a corpus to answer specific research questions is an increasingly common scientific approach in the humanities and social sciences (Garric and Longhi 2012 pp 3-5). The use of such a method is essential to our work on comparative regionalism studies. Therefore, our second step was to create a thematic corpus on comparative regionalism.

3.2.1 Period and Search Engines

Initial critical research on the topic revealed that the first comparative studies date back to the early 1960s. As a result, and to build a sufficiently broad and representative corpus, our target period was 1960 to 2020. In addition, we used only academic search engines to create our corpus, such as Google Scholar, Microsoft Academic, Gate Search, Academia, HAL-SHS, Cairn, EconPapers, and Crossref.

3.2.2 Languages of Research and Keywords

With the aim of building a sufficiently large and representative corpus, two research languages were considered in the creation of our corpus - English and French. This allowed us to consider a larger number of studies, especially by considering studies in English, which is the dominant scientific language. The inclusion of research published in French allowed the corpus to be expanded further, although it should be noted that this does have the potential to introduce some bias towards studies of particular geographies, however, no evidence of this was detected. Similarly, one of the limitations of this work is that studies in Spanish and Chinese were not considered (this should be taken into account in future work on this topic by considering international collaboration). Two lists of keywords were used in this work. The first list is the list of 39 ongoing regional integration processes in the world identified in Step 1. The second list contains terms used frequently to describe comparison: comparative study, comparative analysis, comparative regionalism, and comparative regional integration. Once these two lists were identified, more than 1,000 different combinations of these keywords in English and French were used in academic search engines. Below is an example of these different combinations.

Figure 1: Example of Keyword Combinations Used in the Search

Acronyms / Names	Acronyms / Names	Terms	EX: Final Combinations
- NAFTA - Pacific alliance - ACS - ALBA - CAN - CARICOM - Mercosur - SICA - ECOWAS - ASEAN EU ... etc.	+ - NAFTA - Pacific alliance - ACS - ALBA CAN - CARICOM - Mercosur - SICA - ECOWAS - ASEAN - EU ... etc.	+ Comparative study - Comparative analysis - Comparative regionalism - Comparative regional integration	= - EU + CAN + Comparative study - EU + ECOWAS + Comparative regionalism -NAFTA + ASEAN + Comparative analysis ... etc.

More than 500 studies were identified using these keyword combinations in academic search engines.

3.2.3 Selection Criteria

To guarantee the scientific quality of the studies that make up our corpus, selection was necessary to remove duplicates (documents downloaded twice), delete press articles or non-academic publications, and eliminate studies that are not comparing at least two regional organisations (e.g. studies that are only comparing countries within a single area, such as NAFTA). Of 500 downloaded documents, this sorting led us to retain only 136 studies, including journal articles, book chapters, institutional reports, working papers, publications of research centres, and academic works (e.g. theses and dissertations), which represent a large thematic corpus of more than 6,000 pages. This corpus was then analysed by two complementary methods.

3.3 Analysing the Corpus using Cortext Manager

We used Cortext Manager software, one of the high-performance software recently developed for corpus analysis in the social sciences, using digital analysis tools and distributional and relational qualitative data. The software was developed in 2008 by the Institute for Research and Innovation in Society and further developed between 2010 and 2014 by the INRA-SenS Laboratory at the University of Paris-Est Marne La Vallée and then by the Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory at the University of Paris-Est. It provides more than 30 tools. In this work, we used two tools of Cortext Manager to analyse our corpus: ‘terms extraction’ and ‘network mapping’.

In order to obtain more relevant results, we performed two preparatory actions on our corpus before using the software: (I) First, we used only the title, keywords and abstract of each document. This step is highly recommended when applying the software to a large corpus, as it allows us to obtain more relevant results. (II) Second, we translated the titles, keywords, and abstracts of all French documents in our corpus (14/136) only when an English version of the study was not already available, since the software does not support multilingual analysis. Once these two preparatory tasks were completed, we entered our corpus into the software.

3.3.1 Terms Extraction and Network Mapping

Terms extraction allows the user to identify automatically the most relevant terms from a given corpus. The user can choose the maximum number of requested relevant terms (top 5, 10, 100, etc.). The method used by the software to identify the most relevant terms of the corpus consists in calculating the frequency (C value) that measures the unithood of the multi-terms stem as proposed by Frantzi *et al* (2000). The software then identifies the most relevant terms in the corpus through a compromise between their specificity and their frequency in the texts. In this work, we used this tool to identify the 20 most relevant terms in our corpus. Network Mapping allows different types of analysis and visualisation of the corpus. The maps proposed by the software show homogeneous or heterogeneous nodes that can be connected according to different types of proximity measurements. We used this tool to map the historical network of the 20 most relevant terms identified with the corpus, considering their historical evolution. The result of this first set of analyses is presented in Section 4.

3.4 Analyzing the Corpus Using an Analytical Reading Sheet

The second series of analyses consists of creating an analytical reading sheet of the 136 documents to complete our first series of analyses using Cortext Manager and answer all of our research questions (what organisations are frequently compared in these studies, and what are the main points of comparison often considered in comparative regionalism studies? etc.). Each study was read, analysed, and classified in a large table with the following sections: I) Document number II) Author(s)/Year of publication III) Title of document IV) Organisations compared in the study V) Type of document VI) Research question(s) and method(s) used in the study VII) Origin of document/country VIII) Topic(s) IX Summary/main result(s) of the study and personal comments (Appendix 2).

4. FINDINGS

Terms Used in Comparative Studies and Their Evolution

A 'term' is a lexical unit with a specific meaning in a given domain. Simple terms consisting of one word are distinguished from complex terms consisting

of more than one word (Humbley 2006 p 590-591). Terms extraction tools aim to identify all terms contained in a corpus. The result of the extraction is a list of candidate terms. We used Cortext Manager's term extraction tool to identify the top 20 terms in our corpus. The parameters chosen in the software for this extraction were the following:

- Textual Fields: Text
- Minimum Frequency: 3
- List length: 100
- Language: EN
- Monograms are forbidden
- Maximum length: 3
- Grammatical criterion: Noun phrase
- Sample Size: 50

The analysis of our corpus led to an initial list of 50 terms. Manual sorting was required to remove the least relevant terms from the list, taking into account frequency and the distinct number of documents (e.g. 'twentieth century'; 'number of countries' and 'recent years') Ultimately, only 20 terms were retained from the 50 candidate terms. The term 'regional integration' is on the list, followed by 'regional institutions' and the term 'economic integration'. The list also includes the terms 'comparative analysis'; 'comparative regionalism' and 'comparative approach'.

Based on these preliminary results, we can distinguish two groups of terms; first, terms referring to a scientific sub-discipline, method, etc: regional integration; regional institutions; economic integration; regional cooperation; comparative analysis; trade integration; security cooperation; regional governance; comparative regionalism; integration initiatives; comparative approach. Second, there are terms related to geographic areas: Latin American; East Asia; Latin America; South Asia; EU model; West Africa; Southern Africa; Southeast Asia; Asia Pacific.

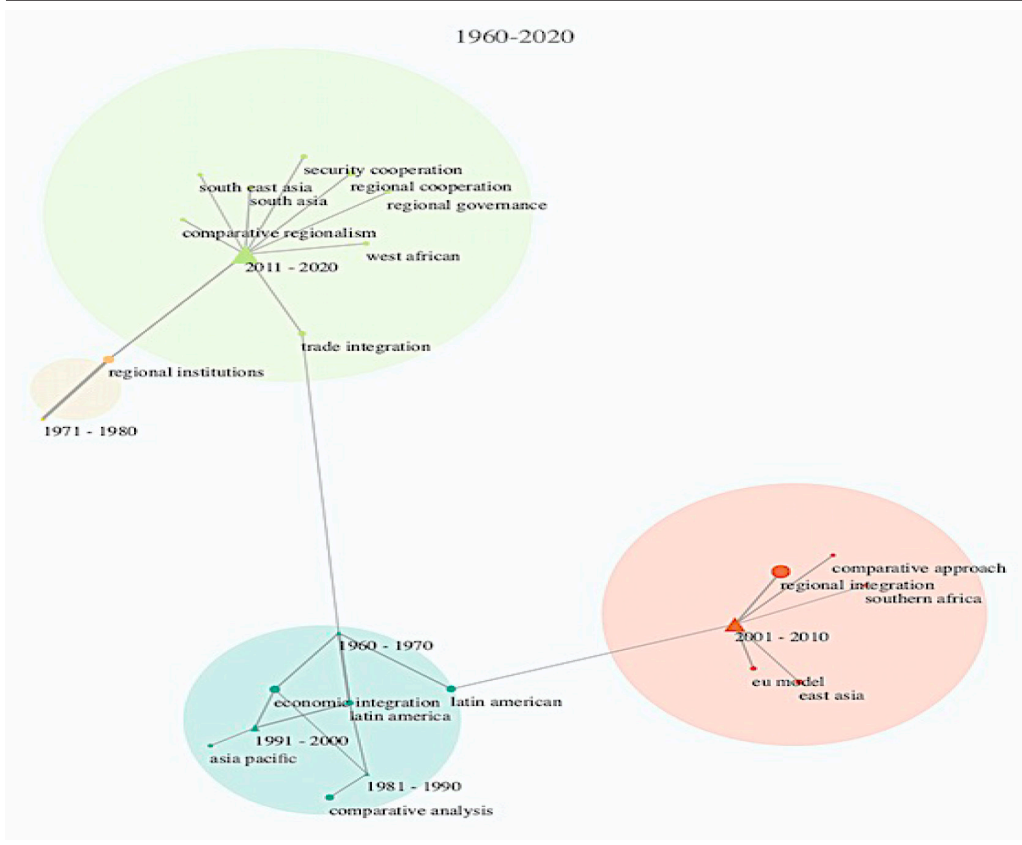
For a better understanding of these results, we used Cortext Manager's network mapping tool to perform proximity and temporal analyses and visualise the results. For this purpose, six time periods were defined in the software: Period 1: 1960-1970; Period 2: 1971-1980; Period 3: 1981-1990; Period 4: 1991-2000; Period 5: 2001-2010; and Period 6: 2011-2020. We also integrated the publication years of each document into the software by using the "list indexer" tool so that the software could also perform temporal analyses. The following figure shows the results obtained.

Table 1: List of Top 20 Corpus Terms

<i>Stem</i>	<i>Main Form</i>	<i>Forms</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Distinct Number of Documents</i>
Integr Region	Regional Integration	regional integration & initiatives & market integration regional & integration process	170	77
Institut Region	Regional Institutions	regional institutions & regional organisations & regional organisation	57	22
Econom Integr	Economic Integration	economic integration	54	26
American Latin	Latin American	Latin American & South America	44	20
Cooper Region	Regional Cooperation	regional cooperation & regional economic cooperation	36	22
Analysi Compar	Comparative Analysis	comparative analysis & conduct & comparative study	35	30
Asia East	East Asia	East Asia	33	14
America Latin	Latin America	Latin America	33	19
Integr Trade	Trade Integration	trade integration & integration and trade & regional trade	29	21
Asia South	South Asia	South Asia	24	11
EU Model	EU Model	EU model & EU as a model & EU a model & comparing EU & EU experience & experience of the EU	23	18
Cooper Secur	Security Cooperation	security cooperation & security governance & conflict management	22	11
African West	West African	West African	19	14
Govern Region	Regional Governance	regional governance	10	6
Africa Southern	Southern Africa	southern Africa	10	6
Compar Region	Comparative Regionalism	comparative regionalism & comparative regionalisation & comparing regions	8	6
Asia East South	Southeast Asia	Southeast Asia & Southeast Asian	8	5
Initi Integr	Integration Initiatives	integration initiatives & integration initiative	6	4
Approach Compar	Comparative Approach	comparative approach	5	5
Asia Pacif	Asia Pacific	Asia Pacific & Pacific Asia	3	3

Note: Author, using *Cortex Manager*, based on a corpus of 136 documents.

Figure 2: Network Mapping (List of Top 20 Terms)



Note: Author, using Cortext Manager, based on a corpus of 136 documents.

We can see that four clusters have been identified:

- **Cluster 1:** For periods 1, 3 and 4 (1960–1970; 1981–1990; and 1991–2000), grouping the terms: regional integration, Latin American, Latin America, Asia Pacific, and comparative analysis.
- **Cluster 2:** For period 2 (1971–1980) with the term: regional institutions.
- **Cluster 3:** For period 5 (2001–2010) grouping the terms: comparative approach, regional integration, Southern Africa, EU model, and East Asia.
- **Cluster 4:** For period 6 (2011–2020) grouping the terms: security cooperation, Southeast Asia, South Asia, West African, trade integration, comparative regionalism, regional cooperation, and regional governance.

To interpret these results, we first combined the two small clusters representing the first four periods (1960-2000) into one, given the smaller number of studies in these time periods (one of these two clusters captured only one term, which

is less significant for our analysis). We then grouped the terms of each cluster (the final three clusters selected) into a single table and separated the terms referring to geographical areas from the other terms.

<i>Periods</i>	<i>Clusters 1 and 2 1960–2000</i>	<i>Cluster 3 2001–2010</i>	<i>Cluster 4 2011–2020</i>
Terms referring to a scientific subdiscipline, method, etc.	Economic integration; Comparative analysis; Regional Institutions.	Comparative approach; Regional integration.	Security cooperation; Trade integration; Comparative regionalism; Regional cooperation; Regional governance.
Terms related to geographic areas	Latin American; Latin America; Asia Pacific.	Southern Africa; EU model; East Asia.	Southeast Asia; South Asia; West African.

Note: Author, using Cortext Manager, based on a corpus of 136 documents.

In the table above we can see how the terms used in comparative regionalism studies have evolved over time. Early studies focused more on Latin America and used more often the terms ‘comparative analysis’ or ‘economic integration’. This can be explained by the fact that these studies focused on analysing and comparing one of the first regional integration initiatives, the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), founded in the 1960s, with other regional integration initiatives around the world, such as the European Union. To describe their approach, the authors used the term ‘comparative analysis’, a neutral term that can explain the main objective of their study. The term ‘economic integration’ can refer to the sub-discipline under study. In fact, one of the main goals of the first regional integration initiatives was to promote economic integration. This may explain the choice of this term in early comparative regionalism studies.

Between 2001 and 2010, comparative regionalism studies began to focus more on the analysis of regionalism in other regions of the world such as Southern Africa and East Asia (e.g. the Southern African Development Community, SADC; and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN and the ASEAN+3). In these comparative studies, the EU was often used as a comparator, which might explain why the term ‘EU model’ appears in the list as one of the most frequently used terms during this period. In addition, the terms ‘regional integration’ and ‘comparative approach’ were frequently used by authors to describe their work or approach during this period.

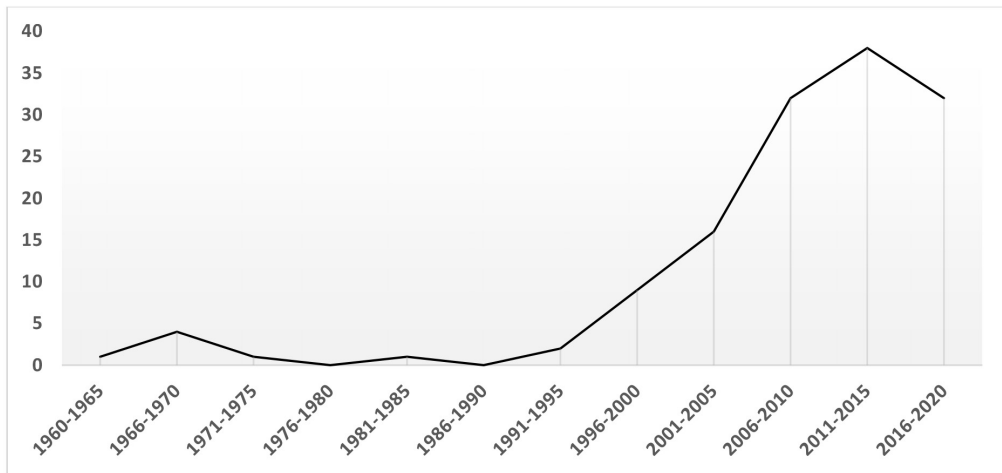
Between 2011 and 2020, comparative regionalism studies started to cover almost all regional integration organisations in the world in different areas

such as South Asia, Southeast Asia and West Africa (e.g. the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, SAARC; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN; and the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, etc.). With the emergence of the new regionalism, regional integration has become a global, multidimensional phenomenon involving an increasing number of actors (state and non-state). As a result, authors in the field of comparative regionalism have started to include different aspects of the regional integration process such as security, development, trade, environment, culture, etc. in their analyses/comparisons. This may explain why terms such as ‘security cooperation’, ‘regional governance’ and ‘regional cooperation’ appeared in our list of most frequently used terms in comparative regionalism studies during this period. Moreover, the term ‘comparative regionalism’, which can qualify these types of studies, began to be used as one of the most important terms that can describe authors’ method and purpose of study.

Historical Development of Comparative Regionalism Studies

Using our analytical reading sheet (Appendix 2), we were able to draw a curve representing the historical development of studies in the field of comparative regionalism (based on the analysis of the 136 studies that make up our corpus).

Figure 3: Development of Comparative Regionalism Studies from 1960 to 2020.



Note: Author, based on an analysis of 136 studies.

The first comparative regionalism studies date from the 1960s and 1970s with the pioneering work of Haas and Schmitter (1964), who compared the European Union and the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA); Etzioni (1965), who compared the European Economic Community (EEC), the United Arab Republic (UAR), and the Federation of the West Indies and the Nordic Council;

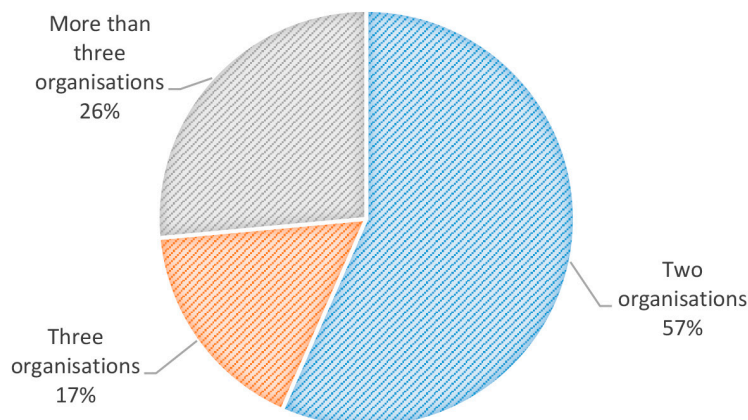
Haas (1966) and Dell (1966), who compared the EU with LAFTA; and Nye (1970), who compared the EEC with the Central American Common Market, LAFTA, the Common Market of East Africa, and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. However, these early studies were extremely sparse and usually limited to comparing the European integration experience with other regional integration initiatives, especially in Latin America and Africa.

It was not until the 1990s that the number of comparative studies began to increase exponentially. One feature of this new wave of studies was that the European experience was no longer considered as the unique reference for comparison. These more recent studies included the work of Aggarwal (1995) and Reynolds (1997), comparing NAFTA and APEC, and the work of Testas (1998) comparing ASEAN with UMA. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of comparative regionalism studies exploded. Nearly all regional integration organisations were the subject of at least one comparative study with other regional organisations.

Main Organisations Studied in Comparative Regionalism

Slightly more than half of the studies analysed in this work compared two organisations (77/136), while the others (59/136) compared more than two organisations (23 of them compared three organisations).

Figure 4: Number of Organisations Compared by Study



Note: Author, based on an analysis of 136 studies.

The most frequently studied pairs in comparative regionalism studies were EU/ASEAN, compared 11 times, ASEAN/SAARC seven times, EU/NAFTA six times, AU/ASEAN four times and EU/AU four times. Thus also, some regional organisations are studied much more intensively than others.

Table 3: Frequency of Comparisons with Other Organisations

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>No. of Studies</i>
European Union (EU)	77
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	61
Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)	34
Southern African Development Community (SADC)	30
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (becomes in 2018 the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement [USMCA])	25
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	25
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)	16
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)	13
Andean Community (CAN)	12
African Union (AU)	11
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	11
West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)	8
Central American Integration System (SICA)	7
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	7
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	7
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	6
Latin American Integration Association (LAIA)	6
Union of the Arab Maghreb (AMU)	6
East African Community (EAC)	6
Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)	6
Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)	3
Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)	3
Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)	3
Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)	3
League of Arab States (LAS)	3
The Organization of American States (OAS)	2
The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)	2
European Free Trade Association (EFTA)	2
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)	2
Pacific Alliance	1
Association of Caribbean States (ACS)	1
The Union of South American Nations (USAN)	1
Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)	1
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	1
Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IORA)	1
Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)	0
International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)	0
Economic and Monetary Union–euro area–(EMU)	0
Eurasian Economic Union (UEEA)	0
Organisations in Africa	120
Organisations in the Americas	100
Organisations in Asia	84
Organisations in Europe	79
Intercontinental Organisations	20

Note: Author, based on an analysis of 136 studies.

EU, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, SADC, NAFTA, ECOWAS, SAARC, APEC, CAN, AU, and COMESA are the most frequently studied organisations in the field of comparative regionalism. The other organisations are only occasionally or rarely studied.

European Union, the most frequently included case in comparative regionalism studies

Almost all processes (39) of regional integration identified in this work have been compared at least once with the EU or have been included in a study in which the EU was used as the main comparator.

Table 4: How Often the EU Has Been Used for Comparison with Other Regional Integration Processes

	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	37
	Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)	23
	North American Free Trade (NAFTA) (becomes the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement [USMCA] in 2018.	19
	Southern African Development Community (SADC)	12
	Andean Community (CAN)	10
	Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	9
	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)	9
	Central American Integration System (SICA)	8
	African Union (AU)	7
	Latin American Integration Association (LAIA)	7
	Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	6
	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)	5
	West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)	5
UE	Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)	3
	Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)	3
	League of Arab States (LAS)	3
	The Union of South American Nations (USAN)	3
	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	2
	Union of the Arab Maghreb (AMU)	2
	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)	2
	The Organization of American States (OAS)	2
	The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)	2
	European Free Trade Association (EFTA)	2
	Pacific Alliance	2
	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	1
	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)	1
	Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	1

Note: Author, based on an analysis of 136 studies.

Despite the growing number of comparative regionalism studies since the 1990s that aim to go beyond the European model in their studies, the analysis

of the 136 studies (as a whole) shows that the EU is still the most frequently included case in comparative regionalism studies. ASEAN, MERCOSUR, NAFTA, SADC and CAN are the regional organisations most often compared to the EU in these studies. In fact, the use of the European integration model as the main comparator in comparative regionalism studies is one of the main problems in the field. Söderbaum (2009 p 481) explained that 'The treatment of European integration as the primary case or "model" of regional integration still dominates many of the more recent studies of regionalism and regional integration, which is an important part of 'the problem of comparison' within this research area'.

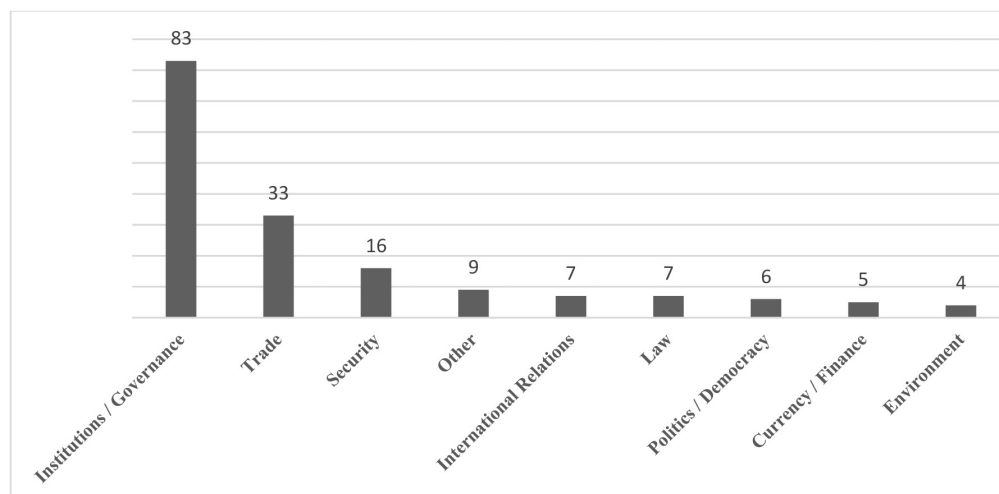
According to Börzel and Risse (2009 p 23) one of the main reasons for this situation is the strong willingness of the EU to promote its integration model within a broader framework of an EU global governance agenda, which they believe can justify the place of this integration model in comparative regionalism studies, and they stated that '(...) the EU has developed a quite sophisticated tool box that is systematically uses to diffuse its script, mostly relying on political dialogue and assistance.'. Recently, numerous authors have pointed out the limitations of the European model in explaining other regional integration processes in the world (the n=1 problem, which refers to the comparability of the European case). And, they argue that it is now time to go beyond the systematic use of the European model to analyse and compare other regional integration processes and to adopt a broader comparative approach that takes into account the specificities of each regional integration process.

What Is Compared in Comparative Regionalism Studies?

To answer this question, we conducted a thorough analysis of each document in our corpus to identify the main points of comparison used by the author(s) in each study to compare the organisations under study. The analysis revealed that there are nine main points of comparison (nine categories) that can be distinguished in comparative regionalism studies: institutions/governance, trade, security, international relations, law, politics/democracy, environment, money/finance, and other marginal points of comparison.

Figure 5 shows that among the nine categories identified, the three main points of comparison in the field of comparative regionalism are institutions/governance, trade and security. The common features of each of the nine categories are explained in the following sections and illustrated with examples from the studies.

Figure 5: Number of Studies by Category



Note: Author, based on an analysis of 136 studies. Most of the studies analysed in this work (109/136 studies) focused on one main point of comparison and could therefore be placed in one of the nine categories. However, some studies are multithematic and analyse and compare several aspects of regionalism at the same time. These studies were classified into several categories (Appendix 2).

Category 1: Institutions/Governance

Comparison between regional institutions and/or regional governance is one of the most important points of comparison in comparative regionalism studies. The comparison can take several forms, such as comparing the institutional structures, the institutional development of the compared organisations or their degree of institutionalisation. We can mention here the work of Peter and Adamu (2016), who compared the institutional structures of the AU and the EU and found that there are some similarities between the two organisations at the institutional level and concluded that despite these similarities, the AU will not have a similar experience to the EU for various reasons.

Poli (2014), compared ASEAN and the EU from an institutional perspective to find out why ASEAN reproduces certain aspects of the European model without significant supranational institutionalisation; and concluded that the lack of decision-making power of the main ASEAN institutions is mainly arising from the fact that the organisation lacks a supranational identity. Lenz (2012), who compared the institutional development of MERCOSUR and SADC with that of the EU, showed that the experience of European integration played an important role in the construction of these two processes. Shahi (2011), who compared practises in the institutional frameworks of SAARC and the EU and identified the main differences between these two regional experiences, concluded that the expansion of many other integration projects, such as

NAFTA, ECOWAS, SADC, MERCOSUR and ASEAN, will enable the development of new foundations for the theory of regionalism.

We can also mention Babarinde (2007), who compared the institutional structures of the AU with those of the EU, and found that the institutional structure of the AU is remarkably close to that of the EU and that the architects of the AU were guided by the EU model. He concluded his comparative study by stating that the AU should find its own course and pace in order to succeed in its integration process.

In this category, there are also studies that compare issues of regional governance (governance of regional institutions). The most important examples are the work of Nolte (2016), who compared the forms of possible regional governance in the EU and the AU and proposed an analytical scheme to distinguish the different types of regional governance; and the work of Wunderlich (2012), who compared the role of the EU and ASEAN as international actors within multilateral organisations, specifically within the UN. In this type of study, the focus is more on the analysis and comparison of regional governance.

Category 2: Trade

Regional trade is the second most important point of comparison in comparative regionalism studies. More than 33 of the 136 studies analysed in this work included trade issues in the comparison. The comparison of regional trade can take different forms depending on the research questions and the objectives of the study, but in general we can distinguish at least four points of comparison in the trade category: I) The comparison of free trade agreements (FTAs); II) The analysis and comparison of regional trade flows and interregional trade; III) The analysis and comparison of regional trade relations and the impact of FTAs on the creation/consolidation of these relations; IV) And the analysis and comparison of the impact of a free trade agreement on a specific sector (e.g., trade in services and the industrial sector).

For the first point (comparison of FTAs), we can mention here the work of Maurer (2016), which compares the similarities and differences between the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the EU's preferential trade agreements, or the work of Walters *et al* (2016), which analyses the impact of the establishment of the Tripartite Free Trade Area on COMESA, EAS and SADC. Also Ebaidalla and Yahia (2015) attempted to evaluate the success of the SADC regional trade agreement by comparing it with the ASEAN and MERCOSUR trade agreements.

For the second point (the analysis and comparison of trade flows and interregional trade), there are many examples, but we can mention here the work of Widodo (2010), who looked at the issue of trade creation/diversion and evaluated and compared export performance in the EU, NAFTA, ASEAN and Northeast Asia; and the work of Testas (1998) who compares interregional trade and trade intensity in the EU and AMU. A good example of the third point

(regional trade relations and the impact of FTAs) is the work of Bilal (2007) on the impact of the EU's trade relations on the institutional development of its trading partners, including African Regional Economic Communities, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the AU. Finally, this category also includes work that has analysed and compared the impact of FTAs on a specific sector, such as the work of Hamanaka (2013), which compared regional trade in services in Asia with other regions, and the work of Langhammer (1999), which compared trade liberalisation in the industrial sector in the EU and APEC.

Category 3: Security

In recent years, many regional economic integration organisations have created new institutional structures or legal frameworks for cooperation in addressing regional security challenges, peacekeeping and conflict management. 16 of the 136 studies examined in this paper address these issues or at least include them in their comparison of regional organisations. We can mention here the work of Söderbaum and Hettne (2016) on regional security in Africa, which analyses conflict management in Africa and compares it with other regional organisations, including the EU, ASEAN and MERCOSUR. The work of Adetula *et al* (2016) analyses and compares the role of ECOWAS and IGAD in peacekeeping and regional security; whilst the work of Kefale (2015) assesses the lessons that IGAD can learn from ASEAN's experience in managing regional security. We can also mention the work of Haacke and Williams (2009) on ASEAN, AU and SCO and how these regional agreements contribute to resolving security issues and managing security threats beyond their borders.

Category 4: International Relations

Some studies analyse and compare issues of international relations and how a regional organisation or a free trade area can have a positive or negative impact on building or strengthening international relations between member countries, or between member countries and non-member countries. As examples, we can mention the work of Camroux (2008) on the future of EU-ASEAN relations; and the work of Mattheis and Wunderlich (2017) on the impact of ASEAN/EU and MERCOSUR/EU relations on ASEAN/EU/MERCOSUR interregional relations. Also the work of Oelsner and Vion (2011), on MERCOSUR and the EU, addresses the issue of international friendship in the context of regional integration.

Category 5: Law

Studies in this category focused on legal issues, such as comparing the influence of judicial procedures on regional integration in NAFTA and MERCOSUR (Krapohl *et al* 2009), comparing the role of regional supranational courts in promoting integration in SADC, EU and CAN (Fanenbruck and Meißner 2015), or the judicial cooperation in criminal matters between member countries of ECCAS, COMESA and SADC (Kahombo 2010).

Category 6: Politics/Democracy

Issues related to democracy, human rights and political legitimacy are the main points of comparison in this category. For example, Mace and Dansereau (2013) compared the effectiveness of democratic standards adopted by ASEAN and MERCOSUR. Compton (2013) compared the development of human rights and democracy in SADC and ASEAN. Mace and Dansereau (2013) compared the democratic standards adopted by MERCOSUR and ASEAN. Van der Vleuten and Hoffmann (2010) compared, in the case of the EU, MERCOSUR and SADC, the impact of non-interference by member countries on the image of the regional organisation when a member country violates democratic values, and the conditions under which these regional organisations intervene to defend democratic principles. Matsushita (2000) examined the combination of democracy and regionalism in Latin America in the 1980s and the region's prospects for democracy by comparing NAFTA and MERCOSUR.

Category 7: Environment

Some studies compare environmental measures and policies in regional integration areas. For example, König (2013) compared environmental policies in the Andean Community (CAN) and MERCOSUR. Stevis and Mumme (2000) compared the differences between NAFTA and EU environmental policies, procedural rules, and differences and similarities between the two areas.

Category 8: Money/Finance

Studies in this category deal with issues of monetary and financial integration, such as I) The comparison of regional currency areas and monetary and financial cooperation between member countries, II) The comparison of foreign direct investment flows, and III) the comparison of the coordination and harmonisation of monetary and fiscal policies in the compared regions. As examples, we can mention the work of Cobham and Robson (1994) on monetary integration in Africa, who examined possible monetary integration strategies in Africa and compared ECOWAS, CEAO, BEAC, CEMAC and UMOA with the EEC. The work of Capannelli and Filippini (2009) compared the processes of economic integration of the EU with the countries of East Asia and emphasised the issue of monetary integration; and the work of Camroux (2008), who compared the EU with ASEAN countries and examined the importance of European FDI in Southeast Asia.

Category 9: Other Points of Comparison

This category contains a number of comparative regionalism studies that compare a variety of topics related to regional integration, such as the comparison of health cooperation frameworks in the EU and ASEAN (Lamy and Phua 2012), the comparison of regional common agricultural policies in the case of the EU, WAEMU and ECOWAS (Balié and Fouilleux 2005), and the comparison of regional freight transport systems in the case of the EU and NAFTA (Rodrigue and Notteboom 2010).

Table 5: Main points of comparison in comparative regionalism studies

	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Points of comparison</i>
The main three categories	Institutions/Governance	Institutional structures; institutional development; degree of institutionalisation, forms of regional governance, etc.
	Trade	Free Trade Agreements (FTAs); regional trade flows and interregional trade; regional trade relations; impact of FTAs on the creation/consolidation of regional trade relations; impact of an FTA on a specific sector (e.g., trade in services and the industrial sector); etc.
	Security	Legal framework/institutions for cooperation in addressing regional security challenges; conflict management; role in peacekeeping and regional security; contribution to security resolution and management; etc.
Others categories	International Relations	Impact of a regional organisation or free trade area on building or strengthening international relations between member countries or between member countries and non-member countries, etc.
	Law	Legal issues (the influence of judicial procedures on regional integration; the role of regional supranational courts in promoting integration; judicial cooperation in criminal matters; etc).
	Politics/Democracy	Issues related to democracy, human rights and political legitimacy (effectiveness of adopted democratic standards; evolution of human rights and democracy; impact of non-interference by member countries on the image of the regional organisation when a member country violates democratic values; the way regional organisations intervene to defend democratic principles; etc.).
	Environment	Environmental measures and policies in regional integration areas, etc.
	Money/Finance	Issues of monetary and financial integration (regional currency areas and monetary and financial cooperation between member countries; foreign direct investment flows; coordination and harmonisation of monetary and fiscal policies; possible monetary integration strategies; etc.).
	Other Points of Comparison	Health cooperation frameworks; regional common agricultural policies; regional freight transport systems; etc.

Note: Author, based on an analysis of 136 studies.

Methods and Theoretical Frameworks Used in Comparative Regionalism Studies

In general, it can be said that all the studies analysed in this work adopt a comparative approach to the analysis of the regional organisations studied and aim to provide answers to a wide range of research questions (economic, political, legal, etc.). However, the analytical framework chosen in these studies as well as the methods used (qualitative and/or quantitative methods) differ from one study to another. It should also be noted that in some of the studies analysed, the theoretical analytical framework used is not always explicitly

mentioned and the methods used are not always explicitly stated (this required further analysis of these studies to identify the frameworks and methods used in comparative regionalism studies). The main trends that can be identified in these studies are presented and explained below.

European Integration Theories, International Political Economy (IPE) Theories, International Relations Theories, and Comparative Regionalism Approaches

The first comparative regionalism studies (1960s to 1980s) used the theoretical framework of European integration (federalism, neo-functionalism, intergovernmentalism, etc.) to study and compare regionalism in other regions of the world. Most of these studies were conducted by neo-functionalist researchers, and many of them were aware of their 'Eurocentrism'. In fact, at that time, the European example of regional integration was seen as a teleological model for the other regions of the world, and therefore researchers considered that these regions should try to draw as much inspiration as possible from the European example to succeed.

In more recent years (since the 1990s) and with the emergence of new regionalism, researchers interested in regionalism outside Europe tend to use the IPE theoretical framework of analysis (neorealism, liberal institutionalism, neoliberal institutionalism, the new regionalism, etc.) to study new regionalism. Ogbeidi (2010), in comparing the EU and ECOWAS, noted that international political economy scholars had started studying comparative integration efforts. Oyeranmi (2014 p 1) who compares the AU to the EU, explained that 'Scholars of international political economy have made remarkable inroad into the study of comparative integration endeavors across the globe'.

The number of comparative regionalism studies using the IPE theoretical analytical framework has increased significantly over the last two decades. One of the reasons for this is the ability of IPE theories to include national and international, economic, and political aspects in the analysis, which is very important when studying a multidimensional phenomenon such as regionalism.³ The theoretical framework of international relations (realism, liberalism, etc.) is also used in some studies to analyse and compare international relations in regional organisations.

Some recent studies (from the 2000s onwards) define themselves as being part of a new comparative regionalism approach. Mottaghi and Khoy (2016 p 118) who compared OIC and ASEAN, have explained this new approach. They consider that 'Regionalism in comparative Perspective is a framework process for understanding of advancement in regional integration.' Thus 'comparative analysis of regionalism is a methodology for obtaining knowledge within realm of area studies, public policy, international relations, trade and business also conflict resolutions which utilizing those means enable it for study of regions.' Langenhove (2012) who compared the EU, SADC, ASEAN and ASEAN +3, identifies three main cognitive approaches to understanding and studying regions: (1) as projects; (2) process; and (3) regionalisation products. He argues

that 'In order to advance the research agenda of comparative regionalism, scholars need to 'unpack' regions along several conceptual dimensions. This includes seeing regions as economic areas, public goods spaces as well as actors in the international arena' (Langenhove 2012 p 16). Also, some researchers proposed and used theoretical models, that can be then reused in other comparative regionalism studies (see Laursen 2010; Fioramonti and Mattheis 2016).

Statistical Analysis and Gravity Models

Statistical analysis is a simple method widely used in comparative studies of regional integration processes. This analysis can take different forms depending on the type of data analysed and the research questions of the author. For example, it can take the form of an analysis of a statistical overview of EU-ASEAN trade to show the importance of European direct investment in Southeast Asia (Camroux 2008), or a statistical analysis of the main economic indicators between the EU and ASEAN (Poli 2014a). The methods used in this analysis can range from a simple comparative analysis of two statistical datasets to a more sophisticated analysis using specialised software.

Gravity models are also among the tools widely used in comparative regionalism studies, as they allow scholars to analyse and compare the impact of free trade agreements on interregional trade. Many comparative studies analysed in this work use these quantitative tools when analysing and comparing FTAs. As examples, we can mention here, the work of Walters *et al* (2016) who used a global Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model to analyse the impact of the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement (TFTA) between COMESA, EAC and SADC on the South African economy; and Nguenkwe *et al* (2015) which compared the impact of trade facilitation on intra-regional trade between ECOWAS and ECCAS, by assessing the importance of economic infrastructures and the customs environment using a gravity model for the period 2006 to 2012.

Ebaidalla and Yahia (2015) compared the performance of intra-SADC trade integration success with the ASEAN and MERCOSUR trade blocs. A gravity approach was used to estimate the coefficients of ASEAN and MERCOSUR models which were then used as a benchmark to project the potential trade for SADC members. Darku and Appau (2015), analysing and comparing the four largest Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) in sub-Saharan Africa COMESA, SADC, ECCAS and ECOWAS using gravity models, found that the dynamic form of the balance of the gravity equation is the most appropriate model for estimating the effect of FTAs on intra-African trade.

CONCLUSIONS

Comparative regionalism is an important emerging and developing field of research that focuses on the study and comparison of regional integration processes globally, in order to answer various research questions in different

fields (economics, politics, law, etc.), using different theoretical frameworks and different quantitative and qualitative methods. Given the rapid development of this field of research in recent years, we thought it was time to provide an overview of these different studies in order to identify and assess the main trends in the field and contribute to the current development and consolidation of the field.

In recent years (2000-2020), the number of studies on comparative regionalism has increased considerably, and the term 'comparative regionalism' is used more and more frequently in these studies. The most frequently compared organisations are the EU, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, SADC, NAFTA, ECOWAS, SAARC, APEC, CAN, AU and COMESA. Although there has been a significant increase in the number of studies that seek to go beyond the European model in their comparisons, the European integration model remains the most frequently considered case in comparative regionalism studies. The three main categories of comparison in this field are, first, the comparison of institutional structures or institutional development of the compared organisations or their degree of institutionalisation, as well as the comparison of regional forms of governance, etc; second, the comparison of free trade agreements (FTAs), regional trade flows and interregional trade, regional trade relations, impact of FTAs on the creation/consolidation of regional trade relations, etc; and third, the comparison of legal frameworks/institutions for cooperation in addressing regional security challenges, regional conflict management, role in peacekeeping and regional security, and contribution to security resolution and management, etc.

The analytical framework chosen in these studies, as well as the methods used (qualitative and/or quantitative methods), differs from one study to another. The main theoretical framework and approaches used in these studies are: European integration theories, international political economy theories, international relations theories and comparative regionalism approaches. The main quantitative tools are statistical analysis and gravity models.

At the end of this work, it is important to highlight the following points:

- I) In recent decades, comparative research in the humanities and social sciences has developed considerably. Comparison is a fundamental operation of scientific reasoning, well known in several scientific disciplines (comparative law, comparative politics, comparative linguistics, etc.) and has recently been extended to the field of regionalism, especially through the rapid growth of comparative regionalism studies.
- II) A comparative study is not self-evident, but has to be constructed by the researcher(s), which means that some methodological precautions have to be taken into account before a comparison is made.⁴
- III) A number of the comparative regionalism studies examined in this work do not take the time to clarify the key concepts or determine and explain the theoretical framework and methodology used in the study, which is a

- fundamental step in conducting a good comparative study in the field of comparative regionalism (which regions to be compared? why? and how?)
- IV) Moreover, the choice of regions to be compared must be justified by the research questions and the objectives of the study in question. Therefore, the inclusion of the EU in a comparative study is not in itself a problem (if it is justified by the research questions and objectives of the author(s) of the study), but considering it as the only model or reference for analysing and comparing other regions in the world is strongly criticised by a number of researchers in the field.
- V) Furthermore, the development of the comparative element of regionalism remains an important point to be developed in order to broaden this field of research.

Regionalism is a multidimensional phenomenon that interests researchers from different academic disciplines. Today, regionalism has become an undeniable reality in the international economic architecture (as of 1 March 2022, 354 free trade agreements were in force⁵ and more than 30 regional integration organisations were active⁶). Comparative regionalism studies allow researchers from different fields to study and analyse the different aspects of regionalism from a comparative perspective.

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ENDNOTES

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2. The United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) prefers the term 'comparative regional integration' in its publications, but the term 'comparative regionalism' is much broader and, therefore, more appropriate in the context of this paper.

3. See: Söderbaum 2005.

4. See: De Lombaerde 2011 and De Lombaerde *et al* 2010a.

5. World Trade Organisation data.

6. See Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Table 1: List of major regional integration processes in the world

<i>Acronym</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Creation date</i>	<i>Countries members</i>
In the Americas			
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement (which becomes in 2018 the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA))	1994	Canada; Mexico; and the United States.
-	Pacific alliance	2011	Chile; Colombia; Peru; and Mexico.
ACS	Association of Caribbean States	1994	Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Grenada; Guatemala; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Jamaica; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; St. Lucia; St. Kitts and Nevis; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Salvador; Suriname; Trinidad and Tobago; Venezuela.
ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America	2005	Antigua and Barbuda; Bolivia; Cuba; Dominica; Grenada; Nicaragua; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Venezuela.
CAN	Andean community	1969	Bolivia; Colombia; Ecuador and Peru.
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	1973	Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; Montserrat; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Suriname; and Trinidad and Tobago.
MERCOSUR	<i>Southern Common Market</i>	1991	Argentina; Brazil; Paraguay; Uruguay; and Venezuela.
SICA	Central American Integration System.	1993	Guatemala; El Salvador; Honduras; Nicaragua; Costa Rica; Panama; and Belize.
USAN	The Union of South American Nations.	2004	Colombia; Ecuador; Peru; Bolivia; Argentina; Brazil; Paraguay; Uruguay; Venezuela; Chile; Guyana; Suriname.
OEA / OAS	The Organization of American States.	1948	Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Bolivia; Brazil; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominica; Ecuador; Grenada; Guatemala; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Jamaica; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Dominican Republic; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; El Salvador; Suriname; Trinidad and Tobago; and Uruguay.
ALADI / LAIA	Latin American Integration Association	1980	Mexico; Ecuador; Colombia; Venezuela; Peru; Chile; Brazil; Bolivia; Paraguay; Uruguay; Argentina; Cuba; and Panama.
CELAC	The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States	2010	Argentina; Bolivia; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Guatemala; Honduras; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Uruguay; and Venezuela.
SELA	Latin American and Caribbean economic system	1975	Argentina; Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; Bolivia; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Grenada; Guatemala; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Jamaica; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Salvador; Suriname; Trinidad and Tobago; Uruguay; and Venezuela.
In Asia			
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	1967	Cambodia; Myanmar; Laos; Vietnam; Brunei; Thailand; Singapore; Philippines; Malaysia; and Indonesia.
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.	1983	Sri Lanka; Nepal; India; Bangladesh; Pakistan; Maldives; Bhutan; and Afghanistan.
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council	1981	Saudi Arabia; Oman; Kuwait; Bahrain; United Arab Emirates; and Qatar.
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation	1997	Bangladesh; India; Burma; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Bhutan; and Nepal.
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization	1964	Iran; Kazakhstan; Azerbaijan; Afghanistan; Uzbekistan; Turkmenistan; Tajikistan; Pakistan; Turkey; and Kyrgyzstan.

In Africa			
At the continental level			
AU	African Union	2002	All African countries (55 countries)
At the regional level (The 8 RECs)			
AMU	Union of the Arab Maghreb	1989	Algeria; Libya; Morocco; Tunisia; and Mauritania.
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	1975	Gambia; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Ghana; Benin; Ivory Coast; Liberia; Mali; Niger; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Togo; Burkina Faso; Nigeria; and Cape Verde.
CAE / EAC	East African Community	2001	Burundi; Kenya; Uganda; Rwanda; South Sudan; and Tanzania.
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development	1996	Djibouti; Ethiopia; Kenya; Somalia; Sudan; South Sudan; and Uganda.
SADC	Southern African Development Community	1992	South Africa; Angola; Botswana; Comoros; Lesotho; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Democratic Republic of Congo; Seychelles; Eswatini; Tanzania; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	1994	Burundi; Comoros; Democratic Republic of Congo; Djibouti; Egypt; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Eswatini; Kenya; Libya; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Rwanda; Seychelles; Somalia; Sudan; Tunisia; Uganda; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States	1983	Angola; Burundi; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Republic of Congo; Democratic Republic of Congo; Gabon; Equatorial Guinea; Rwanda; Chad; and Sao Tome and Principe.
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States	1998	Burkina Faso; Libya; Mali; Niger; Sudan; Chad; Central African Republic; Eritrea; Djibouti; Gambia; Senegal; Egypt; Morocco; Nigeria; Somalia; Tunisia; Benin; Togo; Ivory Coast; Guinea-Bissau; Liberia; Ghana; Sierra Leone; Comoros; Guinea; Kenya; Sao Tome and Principe; Mauritania; and Cape Verde.
Other regional organisations in Africa			
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa	1994	Cameroon; Central African Republic; Republic of Congo; Gabon; Equatorial Guinea; and Chad.
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union	1994	Benin; Burkina Faso; Ivory Coast; Guinea-Bissau; Mali; Niger; Senegal; and Togo.
ICGLR	<i>International Conference on The Great Lakes Region</i>	2008	Angola; Burundi; Central African Republic; Republic of Congo; Democratic Republic of Congo; Kenya; Uganda; Rwanda; Republic of South Sudan; Sudan; Tanzania; and Zambia.
In Europe			
EU	European Union	1958 (Treaty of Rome), 1993 (Treaty of Maastricht)	Germany; Austria; Belgium ; Bulgaria; Cyprus; Croatia; Denmark; Spain; Estonia; Finland; France; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy ; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Romania; UK; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; and Czechia.
EFTA	European Free Trade Association	1960	Iceland; Liechtenstein; Norway; and Switzerland.
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union	1999	Germany; Austria; Belgium; Cyprus; Spain; Estonia; Finland; France; Greece; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Netherlands; Portugal; Slovakia; and Slovenia.
Intercontinental organisations			
LAS	League of Arab States	1945	Algeria; Saudi Arabia; Bahrain; Comoros; Djibouti; Egypt; United Arab Emirates; Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Libya; Morocco; Mauritania; Oman; Palestine; Qatar; Somalia; Sudan; Syria; Tunisia; and Yemen.
CIS	<i>Commonwealth of Independent States</i>	1991	Russia; Belarus; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Moldova; Uzbekistan; and Tajikistan.
UEEA	Eurasian Economic Union	2014	Russia; Belarus; Armenia; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; and Serbia.
IOR-ARC	Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation	1997	Australia; Maldives; Bangladesh; Yemen; Comoros; India; Indonesia; Iran; Kenya; Madagascar; Malaysia; Mauritius; Mozambique; Oman; Seychelles; Singapore; Somalia; South Africa; Sri Lanka; Tanzania; Thailand; and United Arab Emirates.
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation SCO	2001	China; Uzbekistan; Russia; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; India; and Pakistan.
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation	1989	Singapore; New Zealand; Japan; United States; Canada; Australia; Philippines; Malaysia; Indonesia; South Korea; Brunei; Vietnam; Peru; Papua New Guinea; Taiwan; China; Russia; Chile; Mexico; Hong Kong; and Thailand.

Note: based on official documents and publications (official websites of these various organisations; recent WTO publications on the main free trade agreements in the world; data on official government websites, etc.)

Appendix 2: List of studies analysed in this paper, by category, and the organisations compared in each study, from newest to oldest
(Reduced version of the original table)

Number	Author(s) / Year	Title	Compared organisations	Categories
1	La mise à jour automatique des citations est désactivée. Pour voir la bibliographie, cliquez sur Actualiser dans l'onglet Zotero.	« Trade performance of RIOs : A comparative analysis of ASEAN and ECOWAS »	ASEAN; ECOWAS.	Trade
2	(Aimsiranun 2020)	« Comparative study on the legal framework on general differentiated integration mechanisms in the European Union, APEC, and ASEAN. »	EU; APEC; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance; Law.
3	(Devadason and Mubarik 2020)	« ASEAN and the EU: An Assessment of Interregional Trade Potentials »	EU; ASEAN.	Trade
4	(Gaens <i>et al</i> 2020)	« Differentiation in ASEAN, ECOWAS and MERCOSUR: A Comparative Analysis »	ASEAN; ECOWAS; MERCOSUR.	Institutions / Governance
5	(Sudan 2020)	« Regional Institutions in Europe and Southeast Asia: Lessons for Economic Integration in South Asia. »	EU; ASEAN; et SAARC	Institutions / Governance
6	(Chenchen 2020)	« Regional Integration: From the European Experience to Southeast Asia »	EU; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
7	(Ariyasajakorn <i>et al</i> 2020)	« Evolution of ASEAN Financial Integration in the Comparative Perspective »	EU; ASEAN.	Currency / Finance
8	(Piccolino 2020)	« Looking like a regional organization? The European model of regional integration and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). »	EU; WAEMU.	Institutions / Governance
9	(Glas and Balogun 2020)	« Norms in practice: people-centric governance in ASEAN and ECOWAS »	ASEAN; ECOWAS.	Institutions / Governance
10	(Malamud 2020)	« Mercosur and the European Union : comparative regionalism and interregionalism »	EU; MERCOSUR.	Institutions / Governance
11	(Papageorgiou and Melo 2020)	« Regional responses to COVID-19: A comparative analysis of EU and ASEAN policies to counter the pandemic »	EU; ASEAN.	Other category
12	(Ramanzini Júnior and Luciano 2020)	« Regionalism in the Global South: Mercosur and ECOWAS in trade and democracy protection »	ECOWAS; MERCOSUR.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
13	(Biswal 2019)	« Effectiveness of regionalism in South Asia: A comparative study between SAARC and BIMSTEC»	SAARC; BIMSTEC.	Institutions / Governance
14	(Karim 2019)	« Same Principles but Different Outcomes of SAARC and ASEAN: Searching Gap »	SAARC; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
15	(Moutou-Nkounkou 2019)	« A comparative study of two processes of regional economic integration in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of ECCAS and ECOWAS » (In French)	ECOWAS; ECCAS.	Institutions / Governance; Trade; Security.
16	(Shintaro 2019)	« Inter-regionalism in the developing world: comparison with extra-, cross-, trans-, and pan-regionalism »	ASEAN; SAARC; BIMSTEC; IORA; SACU; MERCOSUR; SADC.	Institutions / Governance
17	(Bhattacharjee 2018)	« SAARC vs BIMSTEC: The Search for the Ideal Platform for Regional Cooperation. »	SAARC; BIMSTEC.	Institutions / Governance
18	(Oyeranmi 2014)	« European Union and African Union: A Study of Regionalism for Global Integration and Development. »	EU; AU.	Institutions / Governance
19	(Santander 2017)	« A comparative look at African and Latin American regionalism. » (In French)	EU; CELAC.	Institutions / Governance

20	(Mattheis and Wunderlich 2017)	« Regional actorness and interregional relations: ASEAN, the EU and Mercosur. »	EU; ASEAN; MERCOSUR.	Institutions / Governance; International Relations.
21	(Peter and Adamu 2016)	« comparative analysis of african union (au) and european union (eu) : challenges and prospects »	EU; AU.	Institutions / Governance
22	(Walters <i>et al</i> 2016)	« The Impact of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Agreement on the South African Economy. »	COMESA; EAC; SADC.	Trade
23	(Tahir Ashraf and Akhir 2016)	« SAARC as a tool of regionalism in South Asia : Lessons from ASEAN. »	ASEAN; SAARC.	Institutions / Governance
24	(González-Sánchez 2016)	« Regional Governance From a Comparative Perspective. »	EU; AU.	Institutions / Governance
25	(Söderbaum and Hettne 2016)	« Regional security in a global perspective. »	EU; AU; ASEAN; ECOWAS; IGAD; NAFTA; SADC; MERCOSUR.	Security
26	(Adetula <i>et al</i> 2016)	« Regional economic communities and peacebuilding in Africa: the experiences of ECOWAS and IGAD »	ECOWAS; IGAD.	Security
27	(Valladão 2016)	« Europe and Latin America: Differing routes for regional integration. »	EU; ALADI; SICA; CARICOM; CAN; UNASUR; MERCOSUR; Pacific Alliance ; CELAC; ALBA.	Institutions / Governance
28	(Maurer 2016)	« Comparing EU and EFTA trade agreements: drivers, actors, benefits, and costs »	EU; EFTA.	Trade
29	(Mottaghi and Khoy 2016)	« Comparative Regionalism, Economic Integration and Security Settlement; Case study: OIC and ASEAN »	OCI; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
30	(Ntara 2016)	« African Trading Blocs and Economic Growth: A Critical Review of the Literature »	ECOWAS; COMESA; SADC; CEN-SAD; ECCAS; IGAD; AMU; SACU; WAEMU; CEMAC.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
31	(Eder 2016)	« The Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples' of Our America – People's Trade Treaty (ALBA- TCP1) as a Model for an Alternative EU Trade Agenda? »	EU; ALBA.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
32	(See-Ampai 2016)	« A Comparative Study of ASEAN Community and European Union on SME Development Towards Internationalisation »	EU; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
33	(Mehdi 2015)	« Imitation of the European Union model in other regional contexts. » In French	EU; NAFTA; UNECLAC; ASEAN ; SADC; MERCOSUR; CEMAC; WAEMU.	Institutions / Governance
34	(Asfa and Ahmed 2015)	« Prospects of Regionalism: Comparative Analysis of SAARC and ASEAN. »	SAARC; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
35	(Kefale 2015)	« Regional organizations and security governance: a comparative assessment of IGAD and ASEAN. »	ASEAN; IGAD.	Security
36	(Fanenbruck and Meißner 2015)	« Supranational Courts as Engines for Regional Integration?: A Comparative Study of the Southern African Development Community Tribunal, the European Union Court of Justice, and the Andean Court of Justice. »	SADC; EU; CAN.	Law
37	(Tripathi 2015)	« European Union and ASEAN: A Comparison. »	EU; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
38	(Nguenkwe <i>et al</i> 2015)	« Intra-regional trade facilitation: A comparative analysis between ECCAS and ECOWAS. »	ECOWAS; ECCAS.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
39	(Ebaidalla and Yahia 2015)	« Assessing the Success of SADC Regional Trade Integration: a Comparative Analysis with ASEAN and MERCOSUR Trade Blocs »	SADC; ASEAN; MERCOSUR.	Trade
40	(Darku and Appau 2015)	« Analysing Sub-Saharan Africa trade patterns in the presence of regional trade agreements-the case of COMESA, SADC, ECCAS and ECOWAS »	COMESA; SADC; ECCAS; ECOWAS.	Trade

41	(Shumiye 2014)	« A Comparative Study of Trade Performance between Intergovernmental Authority on Development And Other African Union Recognized Economic Communities. »	IGAD; AMU; CEN-SAD; COMESA; EAC; ECCAS; ECOWAS; SADC.	Trade
42	(Riedel and Slany 2014)	« The Trade Potential of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite: A Comparative Analysis »	COMESA; EAC; SADC.	Trade
43	(Afesorgbor and Van Bergeijk 2014)	« Measuring multi-membership in economic integration and its trade-impact. A comparative study of ECOWAS and SADC »	ECOWAS; SADC.	Trade
44	(Poli 2014)	« Is the European Model Relevant for ASEAN ? »	EU; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
45	(Kirchner and Dominguez 2014)	« Security governance in a comparative regional perspective. »	AU; ECOWAS; SADC; ASEAN (the ASEAN Regional Forum ARF); SCO; CSTO; EU; NATO; OSCE; OAS; UNASUR; CAN; MERCOSUR; CARICOM.	Security
46	(Mina 2014)	« The European Union as an integration model for Latin America and the Caribbean reality or wishful thinking? »	EU; MERCOSUR; ASC; SICA; CAN; ALBA; UNASUR; CELAC; the Pacific Alliance.	Institutions / Governance
47	(Saurombe 2013)	« The European union as a model for regional integration in the northern African development community : a selective institutional comparative analysis »	EU; SADC.	Institutions / Governance
48	(Compton Jr 2013)	« Comparative regional integration in SADC and ASEAN Democracy and governance issues in historical and socio-economic context »	SADC; ASEAN.	Politics / Democracy
49	(Siddika 2013)	« An overview of SAARC and ASEAN »	SAARC; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
50	(König 2013)	« The Environment in the Andean Community and Mercosur »	CAN; MERCOSUR.	Environment
51	(Mace and Dansereau 2013)	« Effective democratic standards? A comparative study of the pro-democracy interventions of MERCOSUR and ASEAN and their impact on their respective democratic legitimacy » In French	ASEAN; MERCOSUR.	Politics / Democracy
52	(Thu and Anh 2013)	« ASEAN and EU economic integration: a comparative analysis »	EU; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
53	(Wang 2013)	« Comparative Regionalisation: EU Model and East Asia's Practice for Regional Integration. »	EU; APEC; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
54	(Weiffen <i>et al</i> 2013)	« Overlapping regional security institutions in South America: The case of OAS and UNASUR. »	UNASUR ; OAS.	Security
55	(Bahmane 2013)	« Regional Economic Communities in Africa. »	COMESA; EAC; SADC; IGAD; ECOWAS; ECCAS; AMU; CEN-SAD; SACU; IOC; WAEMU; MRU; CEMAC; GLFC.	Institutions / Governance
56	(Wunderlich 2012)	« Comparing regional organisations in global multilateral institutions: ASEAN, the EU and the UN. »	EU ; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance; International Relations.
57	(Langenhove 2012)	« Why We Need to 'Unpack' Regions to Compare Them More Effectively »	EU; SADC; ASEAN; ASEAN + 3.	Institutions / Governance
58	(Minja 2012)	« Security Architecture in Sub-Saharan Africa and Collective Security Challenges: The EAC and SADC in Comparative Perspective. »	EAC; SADC.	Institutions / Governance; Security.
59	(Lenz 2012)	« Spurred emulation: The EU and regional integration in Mercosur and SADC. »	EU; MERCOSUR; SADC.	Institutions / Governance
60	(Lamy and Phua 2012)	« Southeast Asian cooperation in health: a comparative perspective on regional health governance in ASEAN and the EU. »	EU; ASEAN.	Other category

61	(Doris 2012)	« Regionalism: Lessons the SADC may learn from OHADA. »	SADC; OHADA.	Law
62	(Shahi 2011)	« Regionalism and Regional Cooperation: A Comparative Study of SAARC and EU »	SAARC; EU.	Institutions / Governance
63	(Moissonnier and Khan 2011)	« Comparing the incomparable. The European Union as a model of regional integration in the Middle East? »	EU; Arab League; OIC; OPEC; GCC.	Institutions / Governance
64	(Rahman 2011)	« 'Same but Different?': Comparing the ASEAN and SAARC Frameworks »	SAARC; ASEAN.	Trade; Security.
65	(Loder <i>et al</i> 2011)	« East Asian regionalism and the European experience Differences in leadership, possible lessons »	EU; ASEAN; ASEAN + 3.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
66	(Majid 2011)	« Performance Of Saarc As A Regional Organization In Comparison With Asean And Eco »	SAARC; ASEAN; ECO.	Institutions / Governance
67	(Afesorgbor and van Bergeijk 2011)	« Multi-membership and the effectiveness of regional trade agreements in western and southern Africa: A comparative study of ECOWAS and SADC »	ECOWAS; SADC.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
68	(Oelsner and Vion 2011)	« Friends in the region: A comparative study on friendship building in regional integration. »	EU; MERCOSUR.	International Relations
69	(Nkada 2011)	« Free movement of persons: reflections on the experience of CEMAC and ECOWAS. »	CEMAC; ECOWAS.	Institutions / Governance; Law.
70	(Kaminska and Visser 2011)	« The emergence of industrial relations in regional trade blocks—a comparative analysis. »	EU; NAFTA; MERCOSUR; ECOWAS; SADC; ASEAN.	Other category
71	(De Lombaerde <i>et al</i> 2010)	« Mercosur Compared. »	MERCOSUR; EU; NAFTA; ASEAN; SADC; CACM (now SICA); CAN; APEC; ECOWAS; SICA; and CARICOM.	Institutions / Governance; Environment; Security; Currency / Finance; Other category.
72	(Kahombo 2010)	« Judicial cooperation in criminal matters based on the ECCAS, COMESA and SADC Treaties. »	ECCAS; COMESA; SADC.	Law
73	(Murray 2010)	« Comparative regional integration in the EU and East Asia: Moving beyond integration snobbery »	EU ; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
74	(Rodrigue and Notteboom 2010)	« Comparative North American and European Gateway Logistics: The Regionalism of Freight Distribution »	EU; NAFTA.	Other category
75	(Ogbeidi 2010)	« Comparative integration : A brief analysis of the European Union (EU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) »	EU; ECOWAS.	Institutions / Governance
76	(Widodo 2010)	« Market Dynamics in the EU, NAFTA, North East Asia and ASEAN: the Method of Constant Market Shares (CMS) Analysis »	EU; NAFTA; ASEAN; Northeast Asia.	Trade
77	(Malamud 2010)	« Latin American regionalism and EU studies »	CACM (now SICA); LAFTA (now ALADI Latin American Integration Association in 1980); the Andean Pact (now CAN); CARICOM; Mercosur; EU.	Institutions / Governance
78	(van der Vleuten and Hoffmann 2010)	« Explaining the enforcement of democracy by regional organizations: Comparing EU, Mercosur and SADC »	EU; MERCOSUR; SADC.	Politics / Democracy
79	(Yeo 2010)	« Institutional regionalism versus networked regionalism: Europe and Asia compared »	EU; ASEAN; ASEEAN +3.	Institutions / Governance
80	(Laursen 2009)	« Institutional vs. Leadership Requirements for Regional Integration: The European Union, MERCOSUR and Other Integration Schemes Compared. »	MERCOSUR, compared with: EU; AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Agreement); NAFTA; APEC.	Institutions / Governance

81	(Molano Cruz 2009)	« Contemporary Regional Integration: A Figure of Multidimensional Cooperation. »	EU; ECLAC; LAFTA; CEMAC; CEAO; ECOWAS; ASEAN; APEC; ASEAN + 3; CARICOM; SICA; NAFTA; and Mercosur.	Institutions / Governance
82	(Capannelli and Filippini 2009)	« East Asian and European economic integration: a comparative analysis. »	EU; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance; Trade; Currency / Finance.
83	(Haacke and Williams 2009)	« Regional Arrangements and Security Challenges: a comparative analysis. »	ASEAN; AU; SCO.	Security
84	(Börzel and Risse 2009)	« The Rise of (Inter-) Regionalism: The EU as a Model of Regional Integration. »	EU; ASEAN; SARC; SAARC; CARICOM; CAN; MERCOSUR; ASEP; IEDDH; ACP; EUROMED; NATO; CEI; CEFTA; AII; SIECP; TACIS.	Institutions / Governance
85	(Wulf and Debiel 2009)	« Conflict early warning and response mechanisms: Tools for enhancing the effectiveness of regional organisations? A comparative study of the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, ASEAN/ARF and PIF. »	AU; ECOWAS; IGAD; ARF (ASEAN); PIF.	Security
86	(Krapohl and Fink 2009)	« Interdependence vs. dependence: a network analysis of regional integration projects in Africa, America, Asia and Europe. »	EU; NAFTA; ASEAN; MERCOSUR; SADC.	Institutions / Governance; International Relations.
87	(Krapohl <i>et al</i> 2009)	« Judicial integration in the Americas? A comparison of dispute settlement in NAFTA and MERCOSUR. »	NAFTA; MERCOSUR.	Law
88	(Gandois 2009)	« The emergence of regional security organisations. A comparative study on ECOWAS and SADC. »	ECOWAS; SADC.	Institutions / Governance; Security; Politics / Democracy.
89	(Sridharan 2008)	« Regional Organisations and Conflict Management: comparing ASEAN and SAARC. »	ASEAN; SAARC.	Security
90	(Camroux 2008)	« The European Union and ASEAN: Two to Tango. »	EU; ASEAN.	International Relations; Currency / Finance.
91	(Jayanthakumaran and Lee 2008)	« The complementarities of multilateralism, and regionalism and income convergence ASEAN and SAARC. »	SAARC; ASEAN.	Trade; Other category.
92	(Fritz 2008)	« ALBA vs ALCA Towards a new path for regional integration? » In French	ALBA; ALCA.	Trade
93	(Vaz 2007)	« Forging a social agenda within Regionalism: the Cases of Mercosur and the FTAA in a Comparative Approach.»	MERCOSUR; FTAA.	Other category
94	(Soko 2007)	« The political economy of regional integration in Southern Africa. »	SADC; SACU.	Institutions / Governance
95	(Babarinde 2007)	« The EU as a Model for the African Union: the Limits of Imitation. »	EU; AU.	Institutions / Governance
96	(Haacke and Williams 2007)	« Comparing Regional Arrangements: The Significance of Security Cultures »	Au; ASEAN.	Security
97	(Houngbedji 2007)	« New Regionalism in the Developing World: Comparative Study between ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and UEMOA Common Market »	ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA); WAEMU Common Market Regimes.	Trade
98	(Sánchez 2006)	« A Comparison of EU-NAFTA Integration Regimes: From a Trade Bloc to an Institutional Development Model »	EU; NAFTA.	Institutions / Governance
99	(Duina 2006)	« Varieties of regional integration: the EU, NAFTA and Mercosur. »	EU; NAFTA; MERCOSUR.	Law; Other category.
100	(Monyoncho 2005)	« The political economy of regionalism: Regional integration arrangements and Africa's development. COMESA in a comparative context. »	COMESA; EU; NAFTA; MERCOSUR; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance

101	(Kirchner 2006)	« The European Union as a Model for Regional Integration: The Muslim World and Beyond ».	EU; GCC; AMU.	Institutions / Governance
102	(Nicet-Chenaf 2006)	« Analysis of intra- and inter-bloc trade of MERCOSUR countries vis-à-vis NAFTA, the ANDEAN Pact and the EU15: an analysis in terms of creation/diversion of traffic. » In French	EU15; MERCOSUR; Andean Pact (now CAN); APEC.	Trade
103	(Beeson 2005)	« Rethinking regionalism: Europe and East Asia in comparative historical perspective. »	EU; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
104	(Balié and Fouilleux 2005)	« A comparative approach to the issues and processes of regionalisation of agricultural policies in Europe and Africa. » In French	EU; WAEMU; ECOWAS.	Other category
105	(Berkofsky 2005)	« Comparing EU and Asian Integration Processes- The EU a role model for Asia? »	EU; ASEAN; SAARC.	Institutions / Governance
106	(d'Arcy 2005)	« Mercosur's political outlook: comparison with the European Union » In French	MERCOSUR; EU.	Politics / Democracy
107	(Di Filippo 2005)	« Two Types of Regional Integration Processes. »	EU; MERCOSUR; FTAA.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
108	(Jakobeit <i>et al</i> 2005)	« SADC/EAC/COMESA and EPA Negotiations: Trade Policy Options to Overcome the Problem of Multiple Membership. »	SADC; COMESA; EAC.	Institutions / Governance
109	(Pascha 2004)	« Economic Integration in East Asia and Europe: A Comparison. »	EU; ASEAN; ASEAN +3; APEC.	Institutions / Governance
110	(Brunet-Jailly 2004)	« Comparing local cross-border relations under the EU and NAFTA. »	NAFTA; EU.	International Relations
111	(Malamud 2004)	« Regional integration in Latin America: comparative theories and institutions »	EU; NAFTA; ASEAN; MERCOSUR; CAN; CACM (now SICA)	Institutions / Governance
112	(Duina 2004)	« Regional market building as a social process: an analysis of cognitive strategies in NAFTA, the European Union and Mercosur. »	EU; NAFTA; MERCOSUR.	Institutions / Governance
113	(Chanona 2003a)	« A Comparative Perspective between the European Union and NAFTA »	EU; NAFTA.	Institutions / Governance
114	(Chanona 2003b)	« Is there a comparative perspective between the European Union and NAFTA ? »	EU; NAFTA.	Institutions / Governance
115	(Feng and Genna 2003)	« Regional integration and domestic institutional homogeneity: A comparative analysis of regional integration in the Americas, Pacific Asia and Western Europe. »	Andean Pact (now CAN); ASEAN; CACM (now SICA); EU.	Institutions / Governance
116	(Bachand 2001)	« Comparative study of investment agreements and treaties in the Americas: is there an alternative to the NAFTA model? » In French	NAFTA Compared to MERCOSUR, and also to other bilateral agreements (Canada-Chile; Mexico-Costa Rica; Chile-Mexico ..)	Trade
117	(Schulz <i>et al</i> 2001)	« Key issues in the new regionalism: Comparisons from Asia, Africa and the Middle East »	EU; ASEAN; ECOWAS; SADC; GCC; APEC; COMESA; AMU; WAEMU; League of Arab States; IOC; Indian Ocean Edge Trade Bloc (IORTB).	Institutions / Governance; Security
118	(Gastambide 2001)	« CAN and MERCOSUR: Assessment and outlook » In French	CAN; MERCOSUR.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
119	(Matsushita 2000)	« The First Integrated Wave of Regionalism and Democratization in the Americas: A Comparison of NAFTA and MERCOSUR. »	NAFTA; MERCOSUR.	Politics / Democracy
120	(Stavis and Mumme 2000)	« Rules and politics in international integration: Environmental regulation in NAFTA and the EU »	NAFTA; EU.	Environment

121	(Cobley 2000)	« Comparative Experiences With Regionalism: Southern Africa and the Caribbean »	CARICOM; SACU; SADC; COMESA.	Institutions / Governance
122	(Pizarro 1999)	« Comparative Analysis of regionalism in Latin America and Asia-Pacific »	NAFTA; FTAA; APEC; ASEAN.	Institutions / Governance
123	(Langhammer 1999)	« Regional integration APEC style: lessons from regional integration EU style. »	EU; APEC.	Trade
124	(Bhargava 1998)	« EU - SAARC: Comparisons and Prospects of Cooperation »	EU; SAARC.	Trade
125	(Testas 1998)	« The significance of trade integration among developing countries: A comparison between ASEAN and AMU. »	ASEAN; AMU.	Trade
126	(Goto and Hamada 1997)	« EU, NAFTA, and Asian Responses: A perspective from the Calculus of Participation. »	UE; NAFTA; EAEC; APEC.	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
127	(Reynolds 1997)	« Open Regionalism: Lessons from Latin America for East Asia. »	APEC; NAFTA.	Trade
128	(Aggarwal 1995)	« Comparing regional cooperation efforts in the Asia-Pacific and North America. »	APEC; NAFTA.	Institutions / Governance
129	(Cobham and Robson 1994)	« Monetary integration in Africa: a deliberately European perspective »	ECOWAS; CEMAC; UDEAC (now WAEMU); CEAO; BEAC Compared to EEC (EU).	Currency / Finance
130	(Brada and Mendez 1985)	« Economic integration among developed, developing and centrally planned economies: A comparative analysis. »	CACM (became SICA) ; EFTA ; CEE (UE) ; LAFTA (became ALADI Latin American Integration Association in 1980); the Andean Pact (became CAN); CMEA.	Environment
131	(Weaver 1972)	Nye, J, « Controlling Conflicts: OAS, OAU, Arab League » in « Peace in parts: Integration and conflict in regional organization »	EU; Arab League; OAS; OAU (became African Union (AU) in 2002).	Institutions / Governance; Security.
132	(Nye 1970)	« Comparing common markets: A revised neo-functionalism model »	EEC (EU); CACM (became SICA); LAFTA (became ALADI in 1980); Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA); Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA); Central American Common Market (CACM); (UDEAC).	Institutions / Governance
133	(Dell 1966)	« A Latin American common market? »	EU; LAFTA (became ALADI in 1980).	Institutions / Governance; Trade.
134	(Haas 1966)	« The uniting of Europe and the uniting of Latin America »	EU; LAFTA (became ALADI in 1980).	Institutions / Governance
135	(Etzioni 1965)	« Political unification: A comparative study of leaders and forces »	EU; EEC (EU); United Arab Republic (UAR); Federation of the West Indies; Nordic Council.	Institutions / Governance; International Relations.
136	(Haas and Schmitter 1964)	« Economics and differential patterns of integration: Projections about unity in Latin America »	EU; LAFTA (became ALADI in 1980).	Institutions / Governance.

Note: Based on the analysis of 136 studies. We have translated the French documents titles into English (14 titles).
The bibliography provides the original titles.

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