

Theoretical Approach: The Situation-Structural Model as an Analytical Tool to Explain Regionalism

The phenomenon of new regionalism in the South can be neither analysed nor sufficiently explained without looking beyond the selected region under observation. This is the logical implication of an increasingly interdependent and globalising world that feeds back to political thinking as well as theorising international relations. In view of the above, the author develops a theoretical approach to the analysis of regionalism that builds on the situation-structural model (Zürn 1992, 1993) to the study of international cooperation. The applied theoretical model is innovative insofar as it takes the external dimension and the impact of extra-regional actors on regionalism explicitly into account. In this respect, the term external, synonymous to extra-regional, shall refer to a relation to any actor (country or organisation) that is not part of a group that has been previously defined as a (geographically or politically) confined region (cf. Zimmerling 1991: 57).

2.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Any political science analysis that seeks to gain profound knowledge of regional cooperation, regionalism and the emergence, design and effectiveness of regional integration organisations demands an adequate theoretical approach and a clear definition of the underlying terms and concepts. However, the many years of studying global regionalism by a countless number of professionals have “blessed” the academic literature of this field of research with nearly as many concepts and an array

of specialist terms. This chapter's primary purpose is to introduce central concepts and terms that are important for understanding this book's object of research. This includes a clarification of important notions by clear definitions as well as a delineation of conceptual ideas. Moreover, this chapter provides the theoretical framework for the analysis, which is of key importance in order to explain the logic of regional integration from a political science perspective as well as to better understand the empirical observation.

In a nutshell, this study adopts a constraint rationalist theory to explore the conditions under which regional cooperation takes place and becomes successful. It seeks to explain why and in which way international institutions—here, regional institutions—are established or, to put it differently, constructed by states. Cooperation problems in a regional setting of complex interdependence are assumed to be the decisive factors that lead to the emergence of institutionalised regional cooperation and global regionalism. This phenomenon will be analysed and explained by applying an extended situation-structural model that takes the possible impact of extra-regional actors on regional cooperation problems explicitly into account.

2.1.1 Conceptualisation of Regions and Regionalism

Generally speaking, a region is a spatial area that shares a certain set of common characteristics by which it can be distinguished from other areas. A glance at the scientific literature reveals that concepts of regions and regionalism are neither consistent nor fixed with regard to their meaning. This is because they are used in a different manner in different disciplines. In geography, for example, most definitions of a region generally accentuate geographical proximity but can also put a focus on common natural features such as climate, topography or vegetation (Cahnman 1944). In sociology, in contrast, a region is an area where a certain socio-cultural homogeneity exists that manifests, for example, in terms of a common social class, occupation, ethnicity, language, customs or religion (Cox 1969).

In political science in general and in the field of international relations in particular, regions are often understood as macro-regions, that is intergovernmental or supranational subsystems within the international system, whose constituents are states that are geographically close and share some degree of interdependence (Hettne 2005: 544; Nye 1968b:

VII). Thus, geographical proximity is still an important factor because without this limitation “the term “regionalism” becomes diffuse and unmanageable” (Hurrell 1995: 333). Following these views, regionalism shall be understood as planned, multilateral, and state-led organisation of interdependence within a confined regional space that manifests in various, multidimensional or specific regional projects and accompanying formal institutions (Bach 2003: 22; Breslin and Higgot 2000: 344; Stein 1993: 316).

Although a number of theoretical approaches and scholars might possibly challenge this rather reductionist and allegedly abridged perception of regionalism for good reasons (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003), a state-centric approach will be applied in this book because it favours the analysis of structural features and causal relations on the macro level. Furthermore, to presume that the states remain the central actors in international relations is not least a major guiding principle of virtually all mainstream theories in this field of research.

Some scholars have a dyadic understanding of regionalism (Bhalla and Bhalla 1997: 21; Ravenhill 2008; Warleigh-Lack 2008). They subdivide the phenomenon according to empirical observations as well as theoretical explanatory models into the two categories of so-called “old” and “new” regionalism.

Old regionalism is a phenomenon of the Cold War period. It is strongly institution- or government-driven and puts an emphasis on issues related to planned development, security and intra-regional trade. This is sometimes referred to as inward-oriented regionalism (Hettne 1999: 7–8). Regional integration organisations that belong to the so-called old regionalism aim particularly for import substitution and trade discrimination against the rest of the world. They generally do not overlap and their members are part of either the Global South or North (Bhalla and Bhalla 1997: 21).

New regionalism, in contrast, is a phenomenon of the post-Cold War world and the age of globalisation. It is strongly market-driven and puts an emphasis on regional trade liberalisation, export promotion, investment and non-discrimination against the rest of the world. That is why it is sometimes referred to as outward-oriented or open regionalism (Hettne 1999: 7–8). Regional integration organisations of this type do sometimes comprise members from the Global South and North and their constituents do often belong to more than one regional integration

organisation. This is said to lead to the frequent overlapping of two or more organisations that count as new regionalisms (Bhalla and Bhalla 1997: 21).

This book recognises some differences between both categories but does not adopt the idea of a clear-cut distinction or antagonism (Hettne and Söderbaum 2008: 62) between the old and new regionalism. Instead, it suggests a rather universal and timeless theoretical approach towards explaining regional cooperation and the emergence of regionalism. This shall become clear in the following sections of this chapter.

The term “regionalism” should not be confused with the terms “regional cooperation” or “regional integration”. Regional cooperation may occur in all fields of politics when countries’ actions “are brought in conformity with one another through a process of policy coordination” (Keohane 1984: 51) in order to achieve a common goal for mutual benefits. Regional cooperation is often issue-centred and does not necessarily have to be accompanied by the creation of common formal institutions.¹ Therefore, joining and leaving such loose cooperation arrangements do not involve high costs, which means that loyalty to the cooperating partners can be rather limited.

Regional integration is generally considered to have a more binding character compared with regional cooperation because it implies the establishment of formal institutions and demands a (partial) surrender of states’ sovereignty rights. This is highlighted by Haas’s definition of “political integration” which he understands as a “process whereby political actors in several distinct national setting are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states” (Haas 1958: 16). Such a new centre—for example, a regional integration organisation—goes beyond more or less committing regional cooperation initiatives (such as a common Declaration of Intention or Memorandum of Understanding) because it always gains a certain legitimate capacity to act on its own. Defective action and exit from (or entry into) such institutional arrangements become comparably difficult and costly for any member involved.

For practical reasons, however, the terms “regional integration” and “regionalism” shall be applied rather synonymously in the course of this book although the notion “regional integration” can *strictu sensu* refer to a static as well as a dynamic state of affairs—depending on the context (Bach 2003: 22; Hurrell 1995: 334).

2.1.2 *The Nexus of Regionalism and Cooperation Theory*

Regionalism shall be understood as a cluster of various, multidimensional regional cooperation projects bounded by a territorial dimension confined by its member states. This lean conception has the advantage of making the phenomenon of regionalism tangible for basic theories of rational action and (international) cooperation. With respect to international relations theories, this understanding of regionalism fares well with the theory-driven debate on the emergence and functioning of non-hierarchical international/regional regimes (Gehring 1996: 232; Gehring and Oberthür 1997: 17). The conceptual characteristics of regionalism—according to this book’s definition—and international regimes match very closely and have a common theoretical background. This is most obvious if one takes the central meaning of institutions into account: Regionalism can be subdivided into a multitude of issue-specific institutionalised regional cooperation projects, whereas international regimes can be understood as issue-specific cooperative agreements among a specific number of countries within a region (Gehring and Oberthür 1997: 15; Hasenclever et al. 1997: 57; Stein 1982: 317).

Following this understanding, a regional integration organisation represents not only the individual member states as a group but also the embracing superstructure of all issue-specific institutionalised regional cooperation projects that are part of the organisation. The strongly integrated and highly differentiated EU serves as a good example for this understanding of regionalism because it can be interpreted as a multi-layered system of nested international cooperation projects with respective institutions under the umbrella of a common organisational superstructure (Gehring 1994: 216; 2002; Hoffmann 1982: 33–35; Moravcsik 1998: 15).

Deepening regional integration is a continual process whereby the member countries of a regional integration project/organisation increasingly create, enhance and modify common regional institutions in order to better realise absolute cooperative gains. The dynamics of regional integration are reflected accordingly in the number, array and sequence of consecutive regional cooperation projects and their related institutional manifestation (e.g. common regulations, protocols and institutional bodies or physical achievements). Therefore, positive dynamics imply a growing horizontal and vertical expansion and consolidation of regional institutions whereas negative dynamics imply a standstill and

tendencies of institutional disintegration. Critics may argue that this conceptualisation of dynamics is too static. However, this idea follows Andrew Moravcsik, who understood the dynamics of regional integration as a series of interlinked “grand” bargains; and he demonstrated the appropriateness of his concept in the case of the European integration (Moravcsik 1998). The logic behind this conceptualisation of dynamics does make sense because the impact of an existing institution may lead to a new situation in international relations and trigger states’ demand to engage in further cooperation and establish related follow-up institutions.

Since regionalism is conceptualised as a cluster of various issue-specific or multidimensional institutionalised regional cooperation projects, it must be emphasised that regionalism should not be confined to a single, isolated issue area.² In this current era of neoliberalism and economisation, however, this statement is often challenged: With the economic paradigm dominating global practice and thought at the present time, it is particularly the followers of economic and politico-economic approaches to the study of international relations who often misleadingly equate regionalism with plain regional market integration (Mansfield and Milner 1999: 592; Winters 1999: 8). However, this view on regionalism, with its focus on the economic sphere and a narrowly defined economic logic of international and regional interaction, is too simplistic (Hurrell 1995: 337). In fact, it does not provide satisfactory explanatory power for other important issue areas beyond the realm of the economy and thus falls short to explain why regional security cooperation has often been the nucleus of many regionalisms (e.g. ASEAN, AU, EU or SADC).

From an epistemological point of view, inherent to this work’s understanding of regionalism is a constraint rational-choice approach to international relations. This perception allows an application of game and cooperation theory as a starting point for the analysis of the emergence, design and effectiveness of institutionalised regional cooperation and therefore follows the neo-institutionalist school of thought in a broader sense. Although this procedure is surely not the most comprehensive way to interpret and explain reality in every detail, the proposed theoretical approach is best suited for this book’s analysis because it allows an illustration and modelling of (problem) structures, causalities and development trends on an abstract macro level by means of reduction in complexity (Keohane 1982: 329–331).

2.1.3 *Complex Interdependence and the Demand for Institutionalised Regional Cooperation*

According to the (neo)realist school of thought, the international system is structured by anarchy and characterised by the absence of any hierarchic order or global coercive mechanism. A norm-setting and rule-enforcing institutional arrangement—for example, a *Weltstaat* (world state)—does not exist. Against this background of insecurity, states are basically well advised to pursue their interests without consideration for third parties in order to maximise their individual welfare, accumulate gains and thus ultimately safeguard their survival. In view of these underlying assumptions, egoistic action becomes rational action and it is the relative gains that finally count for every actor and make a difference to its competitors (Grieco 1997; Waltz 1979). However, anarchy in the international system does not necessarily imply the threatening, cooperation-averse and eventually war-torn scenario that has been bluntly exemplified by Thomas Hobbes in his opus *Leviathan*. In contrast to (neo) realism, cooperation theory and rational institutionalism argue that egoistic, utility-maximising actors are principally enticed to cooperate under conditions of anarchy if they face specific situations where a strategy of cooperation is mutually beneficial and leads to absolute gains (Axelrod and Keohane 1993; Keohane 1982; Oye 1985; Taylor 1987).

The incentive for international cooperation emanates first and foremost from the structure of the international system and its inherent collective action (or cooperation) problems. The latter refer to recurrent constellations of interests where actors' individual rationality entails strategies and actions that may “lead to a strictly Pareto-inferior outcome, that is, an outcome which is strictly less preferred by every individual than at least one other outcome” (Taylor 1987: 19). In international relations, cooperation problems are principally based on a structural phenomenon called international interdependence—which can be described as “mutual dependence” (Keohane and Nye 1977: 7).

Cooperation problems in international relations are based on patterns of complex interdependence between various actors in various specific issue areas of international politics.³ Generally speaking, “interdependence in world politics refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries” (Keohane and Nye 1977: 7). This understanding implies that policies, actions, and policy outcomes of one individual state are not isolated

events in international relations but rather are interlinked and, to a certain extent, a function of the strategies and actions of its counterparts (Keohane and Nye 1987: 730–731, 737–740; Stein 1982: 301). In fact, one actor's egoistic and unilateral policies and actions in a certain issue area almost inevitably produce externalities for all other actors involved. Therefore, an interdependent relationship can bear costly effects insofar as it principally restricts the respective actors' autonomy—at least as long as joint gains are not generated from a state of interdependence by means of policy coordination and collective action (Keohane and Nye 1977: 8).

The concept of complex interdependence extends the notion of interdependence for three reasons: It emphasises the plurality of (possibly interdependent) issues and the absence of hierarchies among issues in international politics. In contrast to (neo)realist thinking, a primacy of power, security or force is not presupposed. Furthermore, the concept assumes that states will refrain from the use of military force towards each other for asserting their interests under such conditions of complex interdependence because they are easily vulnerable due to the circumstance of a multifaceted mutual dependency (Keohane and Nye 1977: 21). Therefore, complex interdependence implies, in particular, that interdependence is multi-layered and occurs in virtually every policy field of international politics such as trade, infrastructure, climate, environment or security. For this reason, security-related cooperation problems⁴ in international relations, for example, are based primarily on security interdependence while economic cooperation problems are based on economic interdependence (Wallander and Keohane 1999; Zürn 1992).

Against a background of complex interdependence, actors' demand for coordination or cooperation accrues not only from the actors' perception of an existent and recurrent cooperation problem but particularly from their cost-benefit calculations concerning possible solutions thereof. Any rational-egoist actor's preference⁵ will be in favour of a cooperative strategy if the (expected) absolute gains of such action surpass the related costs and pay-offs of unilateral strategies and an uncoordinated status quo. In this respect, cooperation may not only create a collective good but help actors to achieve individually Pareto-superior outcomes while any unconstrained individual strategy of action would lead instead to Pareto-suboptimal results (Zürn 1987: 9–10). Stein systematised this logic and highlights two general situations under which rational-egoistic actors have strong incentives to cooperate: firstly, "dilemmas of common

interest” where any resolution requires the involved actors’ active engagement and the commitment for collaboration and collective action; secondly, “dilemmas of common aversion” where actors seek to avoid an undesired outcome by means of coordination (Stein 1982: 316).

Once a dilemma of common aversion is resolved through coordination, the solution is expected to be rather stable and even self-enforcing as long as rules are specified and all actors act accordingly. However, once a collective good has been created by a sufficient number of actors following a cooperative strategy of action, the actors’ demand to sustain the cooperative arrangement by sticking to the same collective strategy of action could always be challenged by the incentive of “free-riding”. The latter implies following a unilateral, non-cooperative strategy of action in order to maximise individual benefits to the disadvantage of the collective. Rational-egoistic actors’ enticement to become free-riders is based on simple cost-benefit calculations because the most attractive option is always to consume the benefits of a collective good without bearing the costs for it (Gehring 1994: 214–215; Krasner 1982: 194–196). Therefore, an initial demand for cooperation does not necessarily guarantee a lasting collective solution. It is the actors’ mixed motives and their latent tendency to free-ride that ultimately are responsible for the “dilemmas of cooperation” which occur in many situations where social interaction takes place—for example, in international relations and world politics (Axelrod and Keohane 1993; Taylor 1987).

Therefore, the nature of complex interdependence among actors does ultimately produce every cooperation problem and specifies its structural characteristics. With regard to the latter, this has a decisive effect on the actors’ actual predisposition in terms of demand for a particular institutional solution. The nature of the pattern of interdependence among actors significantly shapes an actor’s strength of demand to cooperate and brings the necessary institutions into being. Hence, any actor’s demand for an institutional solution to an existing cooperation problem depends on two central factors:

Firstly, the demand for institutions depends to a varying extent on the structural character of the underlying cooperation problem (Young 1982: 288). With reference to the terminology and taxonomy of game theory, it will be zero in situations of harmony and increasingly strong in situations resembling mixed-motive games such as coordination games (with distributive conflict) or dilemmas of common interests (Rittberger 1990: 360–361; Zürn 1987: 6, 36, 44–45). According to Keohane and

others, the most common cooperation problems in international relations resemble mixed-motive games (i.e. a situation in which actors' interests are to some extent in conflict and at the same time partly converging) such as prisoner's dilemmas (Hasenclever et al. 1997: 46; Stein 1982: 308).

Examples include issues of climate and marine protection, trade liberalisation, and nuclear arms control. The issue area of security is no exception since security-related collective action problems are called security dilemmas (Herz 1950; Jervis 1978; Wagner 1983: 337). The latter are reminiscent of a classic prisoner's dilemma where states face a constant military threat—or at least security risks—due to mutual uncertainty and lack of information about the military capabilities and intentions of their counterparts (Wallander and Keohane 1999: 25–29). Despite these, other types of cooperation problems in international relations do exist and may correspond to coordination situations or assurance games such as problems of international standardisation or problems involving coordinated action against an external threat or attack (Oye 1985; Stein 1982).

Secondly, increasing levels of interdependence among actors generate increasing demand for cooperation and institution-building for plain structural reasons (Hurrell 1995: 350; Keohane and Nye 1977; Young 1982: 287). This is because the cooperation problems increasingly emerge in parallel to a growing number of connecting factors among actors. Likewise, the degree of intensity of an interdependent relation affects the demand for cooperation insofar as a strong level of mutual interdependence generally implies—*ceteris paribus*—the prospect of higher cooperation gains compared with what can be expected under similar conditions with a low level of mutual interdependence (Young 1969: 741–743). With a view to international relations, these theoretical assumptions are easy to understand with regard to infrastructure connections and trade relations. For example, in regions with predominantly developing countries and therefore a rather low level of intra-regional economic interdependence, demand for regional economic cooperation will be generally weaker than in regions characterised by a strong level of intra-regional economic interdependence. For structural reasons, one can therefore expect to see more institutions emerging under conditions similar to the first scenario than under conditions similar to the second. However, the strength of interdependence among actors—this must be pointed out—may principally vary not only from region to region in

geographic terms but also from one policy area to another—even within the same region (Young 1969: 727).

Different structures of cooperation problems imply demand for different institutional solutions. Correspondingly, there will be a variance in the institutional design and the degree of formality of the regulative institutions coming into being. The reason for this is that the nature of a cooperation problem specifies appropriate demands towards an adequate institutional solution that best meets the involved actors' requirements in assuring mutual cooperation and facilitating the generation of cooperation gains.

Informal or rather weakly formalised institutions are expected to materialise in situations reminiscent of (recurrent) coordination games with distributive effects. This is because institutionalised cooperation may develop quite “automatically” after a short period of time through repeated interaction on the condition that actors apply reciprocal strategies of tit-for-tat (Axelrod 1987). A cooperative solution, once it is found, will be self-enforcing under these conditions and the problem of cheating hardly exists. For these reasons, institutions in the form of coordination regimes are generally less formalised since the need for strong compliance mechanisms that ensure cooperative behaviour is low. Instead they provide an arena that facilitates the resolving of conflicts of interests (e.g. concerning the distribution of cooperative gains) and finding of a corresponding solution (Hasenclever et al. 1997: 48–49).

Comparably stronger and more formalised institutions are likely to emerge in situations resembling (recurrent) dilemmas of common interest. Rational actors facing a prisoner's dilemma situation, for example, have the dominant strategy to defect, even though this would lead to Pareto-inefficient outcomes. Even under iterated conditions, strategies of reciprocity, and constant pay-off structures, the chance for a spontaneous cooperative solution is rather low because cheating and unilateral free-riding remain tempting options for all actors at any time (Oye 1985: 12–13). In order to achieve a Pareto-superior solution and put absolute cooperative gains for all actors into effect, dilemma-type situations require concrete and formalised ex-ante institutions in the form of collaborative regimes. Rational actors anticipate this necessity and frame their demands in this respect according to their cost-benefit calculations (Gehring 1994: 214–215; Hasenclever et al. 1997: 48–49).

In summary, demand for institutionalised cooperation depends, in principle, on two factors: firstly, on the degree of interdependence

among actors; secondly—and more decisively—on the specific structure of the underlying cooperation problem. For this reason, the degree of formalisation and the specific functions of different cooperative institutions are manifold.

2.1.4 The Added Value of Institutions as Catalysts for Cooperation

International and regional cooperation does not come about by itself. It has become clear that it is in particular dilemmas of common interest where cooperation is difficult to achieve because actors have incentives to free-ride. Here, institutions come into play because they can make a difference:

According to rational institutionalism and regime theory, international institutions may act as catalysts of international cooperation—provided a recurrence of the respective cooperation problem (Keohane 1984; Krasner 1982; Scharpf 2000; Stein 1982). This is because they reduce the incentives for free-riding and instead make a different strategy of action (here, a cooperative strategy) more rational for the actors involved. In a nutshell, institutions facilitate, consolidate, ensure and—at best—advance and deepen cooperation among rational-egoistic actors under circumstances where unilateral, unconstrained action otherwise would not provide for individually and collectively improved pay-offs (i.e. mutually beneficial outcomes) (Hasenclever et al. 1997: 32–36).

The added value of institutions seems clear in regard to this enumeration above, but how do they achieve this difficult task? Generally speaking, institutions provide a variety of different mechanisms that nevertheless have a similar effect: facilitate and stabilise cooperation by creating circumstances that make actors more secure and comfortable to respond to each other in a cooperative manner for the sake of reaping mutual benefits. In the context of our international system that is characterised by the absence of a global hierarchical authority and the periodical occurrence of (potential) interstate conflict, institutions help to remove mutual mistrust and uncertainty among states, stabilise mutual expectations and reduce transaction costs (Keohane 1988: 386).

According to Keohane (1984: 85–109, 1988, 1998), Zürn (1992: 140–150) and others (Hurrell 1995: 350; Oye 1985: 11, 20–22), these objectives can be achieved because international institutions:

- Generate and enhance a “shadow of the future” (i.e. enhance the actors’ willingness to follow strategies of reciprocity, perpetuate the political relationship between them over time and stabilise their mutual expectations with regard to future behaviour)
- Promote transparency and systematic monitoring
- Reduce information costs or provide information (e.g. through monitoring)
- Promote cooperative behaviour and reputation (e.g. by institutionalising interaction, providing an arena for exchange and discussion, and by defining standards that allow the measurement and review of compliance and performance)
- Identify or discourage (or both) defection and free-riding (e.g. with the help of monitoring or sanctioning mechanisms or both)
- Encourage actors’ commitment to cooperation and “lock-in” cooperation agreements (with monitoring mechanisms and by, for example, increasing costs of non-compliance, defection and free-riding)
- Foster cross-linking various political issues (this implies that actors’ positive experiences of cooperating in one policy area may lead to cooperation in another, somehow related issue area; additionally, issue linkage implies that failing to comply in one issue could have negative/costly effects with regard to cooperation in a related policy area).

International institutions make lasting international cooperation possible because they lead to a change in actors’ behaviour and provide—once established—concrete instructions on behaviour/action by means of regulative mechanisms (codified in their inherent norms, principles and rules) that consolidate and foster cooperation (Krasner 1976; Stein 1982: 317). This understanding corresponds to the book’s earlier conceptualisation of regionalism where similarities to international regimes (on a regional level) have been outlined.

However, one could ask whether these general assumptions also count for the policy field of “security”. Do international institutions make any sense or difference in this issue area of so-called “high politics”? The answer is yes they do! All of the abovementioned assumptions and functions concerning international institutions remain valid with respect to the policy area of security. This fact needs an emphasis because mainstream integration theories (in particular, those related to the political economy school of thought) often seem to neglect this “inconvenient”

issue area. Followers of (neo)realism even hold the view that lasting international cooperation is rather improbable in this issue area of security since conditions of an international self-help system prevail. They assume that cooperation among states may occur only in form of short-term ad hoc alliances or as a result of hegemonic coercion (Gilpin 1987; Kindleberger 1981).

In contrast to the latter, followers of cooperation theory and rational institutionalism postulate that security problems based on mutual threat or external risk likewise can be interpreted as collective action or coordination problems that generate common interests, demand collective action or coordination efforts and can be solved with the help of institutions (Buzan and Wæver 2003; Morgan 1997). In the language of game theory, situations like the first are reminiscent of a classic security dilemma. The latter is a dilemma of common interest where all actors prefer a peaceful coexistence but have the dominant strategy to follow at least a policy of deterrence. The second situation resembles a dilemma of common aversion where all actors seek to avoid to be left alone acting against a common threat since they derive the greatest benefit from the mutual assurance to take joint action (Wallander et al. 1999: 6–8; Zürn 1992: 174–184).

Analogous to the added value of international institutions, security arrangements and security management institutions can reduce uncertainty and mutual threat by providing transparency, information or monitoring mechanisms (Jervis 1982; Rittberger and Zürn 1990: 52). They help to extend the “shadow of the future”, control risk, offer an arena for communication and consultations, facilitate policy coordination (e.g. against an external threat), and ideally promote and reward cooperative behaviour among its members. Thus, security institutions operate principally in the same way as any other institutions and likewise can help to achieve Pareto-superior outcomes for all actors involved (Rittberger and Zürn 1991; Wallander and Keohane 1999: 21–23). Needless to say, these general assumptions on the added value of international security institutions apply to the regional level as well.

In sum and with reference to all issue areas of international politics, institutions—and in particular their inherent codified norms, principles and rules—alleviate more Pareto-efficient cooperation and help participating states to achieve gains from collective action. They facilitate integration because they can act as a “tracking system” for further and deeper steps of cooperation and “lock-in” cooperation arrangements

over time by assuring the participants' credible commitment (Keohane 1984; Moravcsik 1998). In their capacity as catalysts of interaction and mutually beneficial regional cooperation, the regulative and "civilising" elements of international institutions increase collective and country-specific absolute welfare and foster a stable and peaceful international environment. Thus, on condition of their effectiveness, international and regional institutions ideally contribute to sustainable development in a broader sense (Rittberger 1990: 360–361; Zürn 1987: 6, 36, 44–45).

2.2 THE SITUATION-STRUCTURAL MODEL

The theoretical approach of this book builds on rational institutionalism and cooperation and game theory. Its main purpose is to scientifically analyse and elaborate the emergence, design and effectiveness of regionalism by taking potential external influence explicitly into account. However, Keohane argues that "rationalistic theories of institutions need to be historically contextualized" (Keohane 1988: 393) because plain rationalist analyses fall short in clarifying and explaining the (concomitants of) occurrence, appearance, configuration and functioning of non-hierarchical international and regional institutions thoroughly.

Against this background, Zürn's situation-structural model (Zürn 1987, 1992, 1993) shall serve as the guiding theoretical framework for this work's analysis of regionalism. An important reason to select Zürn's approach relates to the fact that situation-structuralists address the issue of cooperation problems and institutionalised international cooperation regardless (!) of certain predefined policy areas or an exclusive geographical setting. Accordingly, situation structuralists assume that whether actors create international institutions and what the nature of the respective institutional solutions will be depend only on the specific situational structure and situational context of an international cooperation problem (Hasenclever et al. 1997: 53). Since the situation-structural model does not have narrow self-imposed restrictions, notably with regard to geographical settings and policy areas, it best serves to analyse global regionalism because the scope conditions and explanatory power of this theoretical approach are comprehensive and universal.

In order to gain valid research findings, it is important to accurately model the situation structure of the real-world cooperation problem under investigation according to game theory terminology—and this is best done in the form of a matrix. With regard to the field of

international relations, this can be challenging because one has to strictly avoid ex-post modelling on the grounds of the observed outcomes. According to Zürn, the procedure on how to properly model a real-world situation structure is as follows:

In a first step, a clear-cut issue area for analysis (e.g. a particular cooperation problem with distinct “boundaries”) has to be selected. Secondly, the most important actors involved (e.g. a certain group of states) have to be identified. Thirdly, the central behavioural options perceived by these actors (for themselves) have to be worked out and the actors’ ordinal preferences have to be determined. This shall be done with the help of recognised qualitative and quantitative research methods and this includes gathering empirical evidence and also explicitly reflecting on the historical background of the specific conflicting situation and the participating actors (Rittberger 1993: 12; Zürn 1992: 151). With respect to determining the structure of a real-world situation on the basis of exogenous information, it is important to deduce the actors’ preferences independently of their actual behaviour. In order to avoid ex-post modelling and circular reasoning, preferences must never be traced back to the actors’ observed action (Rittberger and Zürn 1990: 38–39; Zürn 1993: 65–66).

With this technical procedure on how to abstract a complex pattern of interaction and how to model the situation structure of a real-world cooperation problem in the field of international relations in mind, the next steps are to explain the emergence, institutional design and effectiveness of institutionalised regional cooperation and provide details on the logic of regional integration.

2.2.1 Regionalism Under Primarily Regional Conditions: Internal Line of the Argument

This subchapter focuses on the analysis and explanation of regionalism under primarily regional conditions. This specification on “regional conditions” actually shall not be understood as a restriction, because it is entirely in accordance with the standards of situation structuralism where a chosen issue area shall be constrained by “clear enough boundaries so that it can be modelled being distinct from other interaction patterns” (Zürn 1993: 65). For this reason, this chapter explains the common logic of “classic” situation structuralism on how to analyse and explain

institutionalised regional cooperation which I call the “internal line of the argument” because of its focus on the regional setting.

2.2.1.1 Problematic Situations and the Demand for Institutionalised Regional Cooperation

In order to explain the demand for institutionalised regional cooperation, it is first necessary to identify the underlying cause of this demand. According to situation-structuralists, demand for institutionalised regional cooperation can be traced back to patterns of interaction and the inherent structure of a situation. A (recurrent) cooperation problem or, to be more precise, problematic situation⁶ on the ground of complex interdependence in international relations provides the basic incentives for states to engage in mutual cooperation and establish regulative institutions (Taylor 1987: 19; Zürn 1987, 1992, 1993). This is the fundamental prerequisite and sine qua non for any demand and subsequent emergence of institutionalised regional cooperation. A problematic situation in regional relations is therefore the independent variable with regard to the rise of regionalism.

Against the background of the aforementioned basic assumptions of game and cooperation theory (Axelrod 1987; Oye 1985; Stein 1982), problematic situations can be modelled and illustrated by means of different types of games (Zürn 1993: 69–70). The situation-structural approach distinguishes four ideal types of problematic situations on the basis of their situation structure:

- Coordination situations without distributional conflict (“assurance” game)
- Coordination situations with distributional conflict (“battle of the sexes” game)
- Collaboration situations (dilemma situations; “prisoner’s dilemma game”)
- Suasion situations (“Rambo” game).⁷

The classification above has a meaning for theorising the formation and development of regionalism. This is because different types of situation structures imply different degrees of propensity to the emergence of international cooperation and the formation of common regulative institutions (Rittberger and Zürn 1990; Zürn 1992, 1993).

In accordance with the ordinal order of the list, cooperation is comparably easy to achieve in problematic situations corresponding to coordination games without distributional conflict (assurance games) and slightly more difficult to accomplish in those reminiscent of coordination games with distributional conflict (battle of the sexes games). This is because rational utility-maximising actors in such problematic situations tend to identify a mutually beneficial cooperative solution rather quickly and have thereafter no incentives to unilaterally defect from cooperation once a tangible solution has been recognised and consolidated.

In contrast, cooperation is more difficult to achieve in situation structures resembling the dilemma type and is most difficult to accomplish in so-called “Rambo” games. This is because these latter types of collective action problems have no salient solutions, and rational utility-maximising actors are unlikely to follow a cooperative strategy *ab initio*. Moreover, they always have strong incentives to free-ride. In the case of Rambo-type situations, one actor reaches the individually optimal outcome only by following a strategy of defection (Rittberger 1993: 15).

Hence, it depends in principle on the character and structure of an underlying problematic situation—i.e. the type of game—as to what degree a realisation of international cooperation is likely and how strong the need and demand for regulative institutions will be (Zürn 1993: 69–70). Institutionalised regional cooperation with its specific design and inherent set of rules at its core—i.e. regionalism in the sense of the states’ codified response to a specific problematic situation in international relations—is therefore the *explanandum* and constitutes the dependent variable in the course of this analysis.

In addition, the situation-structural model assumes that intervening context variables can affect situation structures and have an influence on the solvability of a cooperation problem. Recurring to the ordinal list above (this time in reversed order), each of these four different types of problematic situations is, to a different degree, prone to intervening context variables regarding the formation of an institutionalised solution. Context variables are assumed to be most relevant and influential in problematic situations corresponding to Rambo games and (to a lesser degree) dilemma games. In contrast, they have principally less relevance in problematic situations corresponding to coordination problems with distributional conflict (battle of the sexes games) and only rather little relevance in the case of coordination problems without distributional

conflict (assurance games). The reason for the different situations' different degrees of conduciveness to the influence of intervening context variables resides basically in their inherent structural pattern and thus in their different degrees of propensity to international cooperation (as explained before). Therefore, the relevance of intervening context variables for achieving cooperation and an institutionalised solution increases in parallel with a problematic situation's "level of difficulty" in terms of solvability (Zürn 1992: 168–220, 1993: 69–70).

According to Zürn and the game theory literature, a number of potential context variables may become relevant and exert influence on the formation of institutionalised cooperation (Zürn 1993: 70). However, the factor "power" is generally seen as the most pivotal context variable—not least since power is a recognised key aspect in the international relations field of research (Keohane and Nye 1977; Martin 1992: 783–786; Stein 1993: 319; Zürn 1993: 70). For this reason, the factor "power" shall gain focal attention in this book and serve as the decisive context variable with regard to the theoretical framework and empirical analysis. Therefore, aspects of power distribution between states are carefully scrutinised in the course of the analysis.

2.2.1.2 Regional Power Distribution and Its Impact on the Establishment and Design of Regional Institutions

Keeping its meaning as the most important context variable in mind, the factor power not only has strong influence on the occurrence of international cooperation but has a significant impact on the nature of an institutional solution—in other words, its institutional design. However, what exactly is "power" and how can it be conceptualised for this theoretical framework? Freely adapted from Max Weber, power can be defined as "the ability of an actor to get others to do something they otherwise would not do (and at an acceptable cost to the actor)" (Keohane and Nye 2001: 10). Other scholars determine power as "go-it-alone power" in the sense of freedom to act without constraints (Gruber 2000). Classic international relations theories determine a state's power position in the international arena by the strength of its capabilities in relation to other countries (i.e. by the nature of the relative power distribution among all actors) (Grieco 1988; Morgenthau 1948; Waltz 1979).

This book conceptualises power in a slightly different way and supplements the assumptions of (neo)realist thinking. Owing to the theoretical

framework's orientation on structure and interdependence, this work follows Keohane and Nye's argument and idea of power. Both do not say that "classic" power resources are totally obsolete, but emphasise the close relation of patterns of interdependence and potential power resources in a given issue area. They argue that "it is *asymmetries* in interdependence [...] that are most likely to provide sources of influence for actors in their dealings with one another" (Keohane and Nye 2001: 268). According to this understanding, power implies not only control over (power) resources and actors but control over events and outcomes (Keohane and Nye 1977; Young 1969: 747).

This line of argument points out that a state's relative power does not primarily rest on its absolute power in classic terms of military or economic capacity. Instead, a country's power is situationally determined by its overall and particularly issue-specific power position on the basis of asymmetric interdependence. This aspect must be kept in mind with regard to modelling situation structures and the operationalisation of power as a (potentially) intervening context variable.

Now that we have clarified the nature and origin of power, the question remains how the factor "power" can actually exert an impact on the design of regional institutions. In contrast to spontaneous orders, regionalism belongs to the class of negotiated orders which are "characterized by conscious efforts to agree on their major provisions, explicit consent on the part of individual participants, and formal expression of the results" (Young 1982: 283). In order to understand their process of formation, it is necessary to have a closer look at the preceding interaction—and possibly bargaining—of the involved actors (Young 1982: 282–284).

Assuming that all rational utility-maximising actors have the common interest of obtaining absolute gains from mutually beneficial collective action and cooperation in problematic situations, they nevertheless have divergent and egoistic preferences with regard to the distribution of the contingent costs and assets as well as in respect to the particulars of relevant control and sanctioning mechanisms. These subordinate conflicts on relative gains have been described as "second-order problems" and resemble coordination games with distributional conflict according to game theory modelling (Krasner 1991; Zangl 1994: 284–287). In any case, the involved actors will have to address and solve the issue of second-order problems before any effective international or regional cooperation will take place (Snidal 1985: 934–935).

In order to achieve the individually best outcome, actors engage consequently in negotiations over the institutional embedding and design of a common cooperation project. This is an important as well as conflict-ridden endeavour because the cooperation project's regulative institutions with their inherent principles, norms and rules set the actors' rights and responsibilities. This includes to determine the involved actors' cost-benefit ratio (i.e. their relative gains and individual pay-offs). Hence, every individual actor has strong incentives to pass the costs of an institutionalised solution as much as possible to the others (Zangl 1994: 285).

Although sophisticated arguments may also play a non-negligible role (Gehring 1994: 216), international negotiations on such second-order problems among egoistic, utility-maximising actors are characterised in the first place by bargaining. According to intergovernmental bargaining theory, a country's bargaining power position can be similarly deduced as state power (i.e. from the character of overall—and particularly issue area specific—interdependence between the actors involved). A structure of asymmetric interdependence determines the relative bargaining power of the negotiators because it implies an actor's dependency on a certain outcome and indicates its plausibility of a "threat of non-agreement" based on the availability of attractive unilateral policy alternatives and exit options (Gehring 1995: 207–211; Hirschmann 1945: 16; Keohane and Nye 2001: 9–10, 268–270).

An actor's weak issue-specific bargaining position is rooted in its limited exit options and strong dependence on the cooperative agreement in negotiation. This implies a strong need for a cooperative solution, high cooperative benefits, and lack of attractive unilateral policy alternatives. On the contrary, a strong or superior bargaining position derives from an actor's independence (or at least indifference) to the negotiated cooperative agreement. This implies less need for the cooperative solution, less meaning of the enclosed benefits, or an existence of attractive unilateral policy alternatives—including alternative coalitions—and therefore an availability of plausible exit options (Keohane and Nye 2001: 9–11; Moravcsik 1998: 60–67).

In inter-state bargaining on the regional level, those states that are dependent on their counterparts in a certain issue area and do not have credible exit options at their disposal are likely to find themselves in a comparably weak position during negotiations, particularly if they are not able to plausibly post a threat with an alternative coalition formation.

In contrast, states in a central position—that is, those on which others are dependent—occupy a stronger power position and thus represent essential cornerstones for the occurrence and success of a cooperative arrangement and its institutional framing. On the regional level, such key countries are in a position to foster or inhibit the process of regional integration and may predicate their engagement and participation in regional cooperation projects on their weaker regional partners' willingness to compromise and make concessions (Gehring 1994: 216; 1995: 207–211; Moravcsik 1998: 64–65).

If inter-state negotiations on regional cooperation problems are successful and result in a mutually acceptable agreement, the negotiation outcomes need to be institutionalised in order to obtain a binding character and ensure credible commitment of the involved participants (Gehring and Oberthür 1997: 16). The nature of the institutional enshrinement—that is, the institutionalised regional cooperation project—then will reflect not only the constellation of the participating states' underlying preferences but most prominently the relative power positions of the involved negotiators. This logic has been proven correct with regard to the process of European integration in general and specific regional cooperation projects in Europe, for example the Treaty of Amsterdam, in particular (Moravcsik 1998; Moravcsik and Nicolaïdis 1999: 73–75).

With the factor “power” being the most meaningful context variable, hegemonic actors such as regional great powers play, for plain structural reasons, a pivotal role with regard to the emergence, design and effectiveness of regionalism (Keohane 1988: 387; Zürn 1993: 70). This central assumption is in line with a great deal of scientific literature that offers alternative explanations for regionalism but likewise highlights the crucial meaning of regional powers for successful regional integration (Buzan and Wæver 2003; Mattli 1999; Schirm 2002).

2.2.1.3 Performance and Effectiveness of Regional Institutions

Regional institutions facilitate and stabilise cooperation by various means. In particular, this includes reducing mutual uncertainty (e.g. through the provision of information or reduction of information costs), enhancing the “shadow of the future” (i.e. perpetuating the political relationship), avoiding defection of participating actors (e.g. through monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms), and fostering their commitment and reputation (Oye 1985: 11, 20–22). By these means,

institutions facilitate more Pareto-efficient cooperation, avoid collectively suboptimal outcomes, and allow participating actors to siphon off cooperation gains (Rittberger 1990: 360–361; Zürn 1987: 6, 36, 44–45).

However, these aspects are rather general and vague in character. In order to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of regional institutions, which in other words means the impact or success of regionalism (Underdal 1992: 227–229), a clear framework is necessary. The academic literature dealing with “regime effectiveness” and the fundamental question of whether regimes matter at all provides a good starting point for this task (Krasner 1982: 189–194; Mayer et al. 1993: 421; Raustiala 2000; Young 1992). Reference to these approaches is reasonable since the conceptual similarities of international regimes and this work’s understanding of regionalism are indeed distinctive.

In order for a regime (or, in this case, an institutionalised regional cooperation project) to become effective, at least two conditions must be fulfilled in advance: implementation and compliance. This is because simply signing and ratifying an international agreement concerning regional cooperation does not mean that it will become effective (Müller 1993: 44–46; Underdal 1998: 6).

Implementation, defined as “measures that governments take to translate international accords into domestic law and policy” (Underdal 1998: 26), is the first and most necessary step for such cooperative arrangements to become functional and take any effect. However, appropriate implementation does not guarantee effectiveness, because paper doesn’t blush and norms or rules may not be enforced in some cases for a variety of reasons (Zürn 1997: 54–56).

Compliance is the second necessary condition and shall be understood as “matter of whether and to what degree countries do in fact adhere to the provision of the accord” (Underdal 1992: 26). Compliance, however, should not be seen in binary terms as either “compliant” or “non-compliant,” because it can be a complex matter if an accord’s obligations are comprehensive, manifold and complex as well. For these reasons, compliance shall instead be understood in terms of a relative degree. This has the conceptual advantages insofar as an actor can be regarded as “compliant” even if 100% fulfilment of obligations cannot be ascertained (yet) (Chayes and Handler Cayes 1993; Young 1992: 162).

Provided that satisfactory (degrees of) implementation and compliance are present, a regional cooperation project’s provisions may eventually show performance and effectiveness. While the academic literature

distinguishes a variety of possible regime consequences and types of effectiveness (Kohler-Koch 1989: 44–49; Mayer et al. 1993: 424), this book adapts a simplified and very feasible approach to the so-called “problem of effectiveness”. Following Oran Young, an institution—or a regime—is first and foremost regarded as effective “to the extent that its operation impels actors to behave differently than they would if the institution did not exist or if some other institutional arrangements were put in its place” (Young 1992: 161). However, this notion emphasises only the aspect of actors’ change in behaviour. Effectiveness therefore shall be understood as “problem solving effectiveness” (Downs 2000: 34) with the degree of goal attainment determining the performance and success of an institution (Downs et al. 1996). According to Young, goal-oriented effectiveness is “a measure of the extent to which a regime’s (stated or unstated) goals are attained over time” (Young 1994: 144). These views imply a non-dichotomous and rather elastic concept of institutional effectiveness—corresponding to the understanding of compliance—which is understood in terms of relative improvement with respect to a certain reference point (Underdal 1992: 231; Young 1992: 162). Thus, institutional performance and effectiveness do not imply that a cooperation problem is totally solved by the involved institutions, but rather that actors change their behaviour according to the institutional provisions as well as that a certain degree of goal attainment can be observed (Kohler-Koch 1989: 46–47).

Measuring the concrete performance and effectiveness of an institution is a difficult task (Underdal 1992: 229–230). However, it is possible to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of institutionalised cooperation by measuring the difference between the actual outcomes with reference to the situation that would prevail in the absence of the relevant institutional solution to the problematic situation (Keohane 1988: 380). This contra-factual method sets the non-existence of the institutional arrangement as a reference point against which the actual achievements and relative improvements are compared. Hence, measuring effectiveness shall happen on a strictly ordinal level even if numerical values contribute to the evaluation (Underdal 1992: 230, 235–237).

Coming back to regionalism, the measurable effects of regional institutions are likely to correspond to the strength of interdependence between the participating states in a confined issue area. If a low level of mutual interdependence precedes the establishment of a regulative regional institution in a certain problematic situation, the institutional

effects and gains from regional cooperation are likewise assumed to be relatively low—at least in comparison with a similar regional institution that has been established on the basis of the same problematic situation but, in contrast, against a background of a pattern of comparably stronger intra-regional interdependence.

2.2.1.4 Assumptions and Hypotheses According to the Internal Line of the Argument

According to the situation-structural model, the likelihood for institutionalised regional cooperation (and accordingly the chance for successful regionalism) depends first and foremost on the structure of the underlying problematic situation and, to a lesser degree, on patterns of intra-regional interdependence and the presence of a regional power. Irrespective of whether the geographic location is in the generally more developed Global North or in the comparably less developed South, the emergence of regionalism and the shape of its related institutional frameworks will *ceteris paribus* principally follow the same logic in both hemispheres (i.e. worldwide). Institutions are expected to provide cooperative solutions in the same way on all continents for prevailing collective action problems.

Therefore, in regard to the insights from the situation-structural model, the major assumptions on regionalism according to the internal line of the argument unfold as follows:

- Institutionalised regional cooperation is, on an ordinal scale, most likely to occur if the underlying structure of the genuine regional problematic situation corresponds to a coordination game without distributional conflict (“assurance” game) and likely to happen if it resembles a coordination game with distributional effects (“battle of the sexes” game). Institutionalised regional cooperation is more difficult to achieve in problematic situations corresponding to a dilemma game (“prisoner’s dilemma”) and least likely if the underlying situation structure resembles a suasion game (“Rambo” game).
- Strong degrees of intra-regional interdependence in the issue areas cause a strong demand for a cooperative solution as, in contrast, weak intra-regional interdependence implies less demand for institutionalised cooperation.
- Patterns of asymmetric interdependence among interacting states on a regional level entail an uneven relative power distribution.

Those countries in a superior power position—i.e. a regional power on which others are dependent—play a key role and are able to most significantly influence the emergence, institutional design and success (in terms of effectiveness) of regionalism.

- If a regional problematic situation and corresponding demand for mutually beneficial institutionalised regional cooperation on the basis of interdependence do exist, regionalism is likely to show good degrees of performance, effectiveness and success.

Against the background of the situation-structural model and the abovementioned assumptions, the following central hypotheses on regionalism under regional conditions according to the internal line of the argument can be deduced:

- The more the underlying structure of a regional problematic situation corresponds to a dilemma game or even coordination game, the more likely the emergence and success (in terms of effectiveness) of regionalism. The more it resembles a suasion game, the less likely the emergence and success of regionalism.
- The stronger the degree of intra-regional interdependence and the more pronounced the presence of a state in a regional power position, the greater the latter's influence on the institutional design and the more likely the emergence and success (in terms of effectiveness) of regionalism.

2.2.2 Regionalism Against the Background of Strong Extra-Regional Relations: External Line of the Argument

One could argue that, according to the aforementioned assumptions and hypotheses, the process of regional integration in the Global South follows basically the same logic as it does in the more developed Northern Hemisphere (e.g. in Europe or North America). While this is *ceteris paribus* principally true, such a presumption would neglect distinct structural conditions to which regions and many countries in the South—e.g. in Southern Africa—are exposed. It is a proven fact that—in many issue areas, particularly in the economy—states and regional organisations in the Southern Hemisphere show strong and asymmetric extra-regional⁸ relations to third, external actors. This is the most obvious difference between developed and economically strongly interdependent countries

in the North (whereupon most mainstream regional integration theories have been tailored and unfold good explanatory power) and between developing, economically less interdependent and comparably more “extra-dependent” countries in the South (Axline 1977: 101; Nye 1965: 883).

Regarding the important issue area of the economy, this asymmetry can be demonstrated not only by the direction and quantity of trade and investment flows but also with regard to foreign aid, structural adjustment and donors’ funding. For plain structural reasons, this kind of economic disequilibrium distinguishes the (economic) situation in the Southern Hemisphere from the one in North—if one dares to generalise (Krapohl and Fink 2013; Krapohl and Muntschick 2009).

A similar pattern can be observed in the issue area of security with regard to military and security interdependence. All risks and threats to national security have the common feature that states are interdependent so that any unit can cause negative security externalities that affect others. Security interdependence—sometimes referred to as military interdependence (Nye 2008)—is based primarily on (reciprocal) perceptions of rivalry, threat and fear that are intensified by uncertainty (Buzan 1992: 170). Against this background, states and organisations in the Northern Hemisphere, particularly Western great powers, are far more powerful than their southern counterparts when it comes to military capabilities and defence spending. The relational aspect of this asymmetry becomes even clearer if one considers the unidirectional military aid flows, presence and strongholds of external forces in several southern regions (Crocker 1974; Gregory 2000; Keohane 1990: 38).

Be it a legacy of colonialism or not, this shadow structure of asymmetric extra-regional interdependence—in a way, a structural background variable—cannot be argued away. It has a significant impact on the emergence, dynamics, design and effectiveness of regionalism and regional integration organisations that for the most part are composed of developing countries (Young 1969; Zimmerling 1991: Chaps. 3–5). From a theoretical perspective, this is because such a pattern of asymmetric extra-regional interdependence between regional and extra-regional actors implies an unequal power relationship. This connection—according to the logic of power and interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1977)—has already been highlighted and explained earlier with reference to a confined regional level.

In order to take the factor of external influence to the analysis of regionalism theoretically into account, this important structural aspect shall be conceptualised as an additional intervening context variable.

In doing so, the “classic” situation-structural approach is extended by an extra-regional dimension and thereby enriched by a second logic, which shall be called the “external line of the argument”. Thus, any aspects of extra-regional interdependence and potential external influence shall be taken into account with regard to modelling the situation structure of a real-world problematic situation. If present, this factor is assumed to take significant effect on the structure of a problematic situation, the level of second-order problem negotiations, and the nature and effectiveness of an institutional solution. Hence, the following additional assumptions on regionalism unfold.

2.2.2.1 External Impact on the Structure of Regional Problematic Situations and the Demand for Institutionalised Regional Cooperation

A background pattern of strong and asymmetric extra-regional interdependence between regional and external actors may have an impact on the structure inherent to a genuine regional problematic situation. This is because it can affect the allocation of pay-offs related to the array of “choices” available to the actors (i.e. their policy options) in two directions: by raising the attractiveness and gains of a strategy of either defection or cooperation.

Firstly, patterns of strong and asymmetric extra-regional interdependence can cause a problematic situation’s underlying structure to shift towards a more cooperation-averse situation and consequently impede the solvability of a prima facie entirely regional collective action problem. A genuine dilemma-type situation, for example, can accordingly be transformed into a situation structure corresponding to a “Rambo” game in which those actors who have more attractive extra-regional alternatives at their disposal become the uncooperative “Rambos” on a regional level. In game theory terms, it is then an extra-regional option that provides (at least for one regional actor) the highest pay-offs but implies a strategy of defection with regard to the collective regional good (Axline 1994: 26; Hansen 1969: 269–270).

In practice, such a situation can arise if regional actors prefer to cooperate with comparably more promising external parties on the basis of strong relationships instead of engaging in (perhaps mutually exclusive)

cooperation projects within their less promising region (Muntschick, 2012). The stumbling process of European security integration gives an example of this destructive logic: For plain structural reasons, the EU's efforts to form a deeper common European Security and Defence Policy will probably not become successful as long as selected EU member states, which are also members of NATO, regard defence cooperation with extra-regional partners (e.g. with the USA within the framework of NATO) as more beneficial compared with an intensified engagement in a (competing) regional institution on the EU level (Howorth 2007: Chap. 5).

Secondly, patterns of strong and asymmetric extra-regional interdependence can also become supportive to the formation of regional cooperation projects. This is if external parties assist regional actors to overcome collective action problems and provide incentives for an institutional solution on a regional level by, for example, providing side payments,⁹ increasing absolute cooperative pay-offs, reducing costs of implementation, control and compliance and improving institutional functionality (Axline 1994: 24–25; Burns and Buckley 1974; Nye 1965: 883). By these means, a genuine dilemma-type or even “Rambo”-type situation can be alleviated into a situation that is more conducive to cooperation, e.g. a coordination game with distributive conflict, in which the external inflows constitute the essence of the collective good (common pool resource) that is subject to distribution by means of coordination (Martin 1992: 774–777; Rittberger 1990: 360).

In practice, such a situation can arise if external actors make a provision of financial or logistical resources conditional on regional cooperation efforts or the existence of regional institutions. With regard to the economic issue area, this could, for example, stimulate economic block-building among developing countries that aim to gain better inflows of foreign direct investments (FDI) or donor funding by means of regional integration (Kennes 1999: 38–39; Schirm 2002; Winters 1999). A similar logic exists with regard to the issue area of security since an extra-regional threat by a hostile external state can be conducive to the formation of a regional security institution—for example, a defence alliance—among a group of weaker countries. In extreme cases, it could even be that regional actors become enticed to cooperate only because the expected cooperation gains are largely fuelled from the outside (Muntschick 2012).

The successful process of early European integration gives a good example of this supportive logic: The United States fuelled regional cooperation among former enemies in Western Europe with significant amounts of money that they channelled through their European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan). This measure provided incentives for regional cooperation and paved the way for further European cooperation projects—and not the least for the EU as we know it today (Behrmann 2008; Hitchcock 2010).

In view of these two scenarios, it becomes clear that, in principle, external influence may unfold an ambivalent impact on any process of regional integration. Whether this more often has an interfering or supportive effect remains a question that demands further empirical research. One could possibly argue that for structural reasons external impact is more likely to unfold an interfering rather than a supportive effect on regional integration. This is because it is not obvious that rational extra-regional actors (who are perceived to be rational utility-maximising actors) bear the costs for the regional integration efforts of third countries or an organisation for simply altruistic reasons.

Be that as it may, a problematic situation that offers potentially fruitful chances for mutually beneficial cooperation needs to be pre-existing on the regional level in any case as a necessary condition in order for external impact to unfold its supportive or interfering impact.

2.2.2.2 External Influence on Regional Power Distribution and the Establishment and Design of Regional Institutions

External influence is not confined to affect only the structural level of genuine regional cooperation problems. Moreover, a pattern of strong and asymmetric extra-regional interdependence between external actors on the one hand and regional parties on the other hand has the potential to impact the latter's relative power positions with regard to inter-state bargaining on a regional level. Making reference to the aforementioned line of the argument concerning asymmetric interdependence and the distribution of relative (bargaining) power, a similar logic applies with respect to a relationship between regional and external actors. This can be transmitted to the distribution of (bargaining) power in a certain regional issue area. Hence, patterns of strong and asymmetric interdependence can principally alter the conditions of interaction for regional actors on the problem-solving level during inter-state negotiations.

Strong extra-regional relations can improve a state's bargaining power position on regional issues on a regional level because it may imply that additional alternative policy strategies, alternative coalitions and plausible exit options beyond the scope of the region could be available (Moravcsik 1993: 499–503). For states privileged by this kind of extra-regional relation, this external dimension extends the scope of action significantly. This is because states with a wide range of external connections are less dependent on issues related to their own region, that is region-specific cooperation problems and the negotiation and solution thereof (Moravcsik 1997: 523; Sebenius 1983: 301–314).

However, this kind of regional actors' externally boosted bargaining power is rather unstable since it is determined by the behaviour of their extra-regional counterparts which remains out of their own control. Therefore, this kind of enhanced bargaining power may fade as soon as external actors decide to make the relevant extra-regional policy alternatives, exit options or related incentives by unilateral means less promising, impracticable or unavailable for their dependent counterparts on a regional level.

Accordingly, a strong and asymmetric relationship to extra-regional actors does not only hold the abovementioned advantages for regional actors who engage in inter-state negotiations on a regional level. Moreover, a structural pattern of strong and unidirectional asymmetry puts extra-regional actors in a position to potentially exert measures of coercion or persuasion. The potential impact of external actors on genuine regional issues becomes even stronger if this influence directly permeates to the level of regional second-order problems. In practice, such external influence materialises if regional actors take positions in regional inter-state negotiations that are strongly motivated by external actors' input and their means of pressuring or enticing (Axline 1977: 90–91; 1994: 23–26).

Therefore, the external impact on a regional actor's bargaining power can be principally of an ambivalent character. Since strong and asymmetric relations to external actors in most cases imply an availability of additional, possibly attractive, options and policy alternatives for regional actors, it can be assumed that this feature has primarily a negative impact for the emergence, dynamics and success of regionalism in the South, not least because extra-regional actors can eventually be in a position to make regional actors design a regional cooperation project according to their own external intentions.

In sum, the creation of common regional institutions and the institutional choice in the South are, in principle, more likely to be (in) directly influenced by external actors compared with other regional integration projects where member states are less dependent on “outsiders” (Harbeson 1994: 292). Thus, institutions not only may function in an inward-oriented manner for “locking-in” agreements and committing their members to a certain policy but are more likely to have an additionally outward-oriented purpose with respect to fulfilling the expectations of external patrons (Mattli 1999: 58–59; Schirm 2002: 20–23).

As a consequence, the nature and design of these institutions are more likely to show an “external fingerprint” compared with similar institutions in the North. This is not surprising because if extra-regional actors pay the “regional piper” they can expect to call the tune. It may also imply that institutions in the South are more likely to be intergovernmental in character. This is because the involved regional actors are principally more prone to follow policies involving cooperation with extra-regional actors instead of focussing on their own region. Therefore, they may be less enthusiastic about “chaining” themselves with inflexible, strictly binding or even supranational institutions. Such a phenomenon of state behaviour was not uncommon during the early stages of European integration as well.

2.2.2.3 External Influence on the Performance and Effectiveness of Regional Institutions

Strong and asymmetric extra-regional interdependence between regional and external actors may have an impact on the operability and effectiveness of regional institutions. External impact not only can transform the inherent structure of problematic situations and thus influence the likelihood of an institutional solution a priori but also can undermine or support the performance and effectiveness of an already-existing institution at a later stage (Young 1992: 185–189).

Externally induced damage to an existing institution’s performance and effectiveness happens if regional actors defect from their commitment to implement or comply with the regulative framework of a regional cooperation because of extra-regional incentives. This can be the case if regional cooperative gains diminish or fail to materialise because of an availability of more attractive—or mutually incompatible—alternative options that are based on extra-regional relations. While members of regional institutions who let their commitment

slide or finally opt out for the sake of extra-regional cooperation are directly responsible for institutional malfunction and ineffectiveness, it is nevertheless the structural pattern of strong relations to external actors that causes this effect and therefore indirectly exerts influence.

On the other hand, external support to existing regional institutions may enhance the institutions' functionality and have a catalytic impact on their performance and effectiveness. This is the case if dedicated external actors foster regional cooperation by raising incentives or lowering the costs of establishing and maintaining the necessary institutional framework of the regional cooperation projects. Possible measures include the external provision of additional information, logistical support to enhance institutional capacity and other forms of side payments directly affecting the operability of the institutions (Young 1992: 189; Zimmerling 1991: 212–240). Be it for altruism or *realpolitik*, external actors' support to the institutional framework of regional cooperation projects will not only enhance the overall effectiveness but most likely also increase the regional actors' commitment as well (Kennes 1999: 37–39; Sebenius 1983: 308–313). This is because the resulting pay-offs strengthen the participants' preferences for regional cooperation and the beneficiaries are more likely to obey the institutions' provisions in order to keep the external source of support bubbling. Under such circumstances, regionalism is likely to flourish.

However, for those regional institutions that are primarily fuelled externally, an end of this external support may cause institutional breakdown if benefits are not yet self-generated effectively and independently. Thus, external influence on the performance and effectiveness of regionalism is not always a stabilising factor since the supportive impact cannot be taken for granted and might be unstable over time.

2.2.2.4 *Assumptions and Hypotheses According to the External Line of the Argument*

It is a given fact that numerous states in the South—particularly developing countries—exhibit patterns of strong and asymmetric extra-regional interdependence to external actors in a variety of important policy areas (particularly in the field of the economy). Provided that such an asymmetric relationship exists, external actors are for plain structural reasons in a position to (in)directly exert influence on regional matters concerning the establishment, institutional design and effectiveness of such regionalisms. Hence, even the “success” of regionalism in the South

could strongly depend on external actors' policies and actions that are beyond the region's own scope.

If these structural patterns of strong and asymmetric extra-regional interdependence and the related impact of external actors as intervening variables are taken explicitly into account, the following major assumptions on regionalism according to the external line of the argument unfold:

- Patterns of strong and asymmetric extra-regional interdependence between states on a regional level and extra-regional actors entail an uneven relative power distribution. If external actors are in the superior power position vis-à-vis regional actors, they are able to exert influence on the emergence, institutional design and success (in terms of effectiveness) of regionalism.
- This kind of external influence may:
- Disturb and interfere with regionalism if it transforms the inherent structure of a genuine regional problematic situation towards a more cooperation-averse situation, provides regional actors in negotiations on regional second-order problems with attractive alternative exit options, or undermines the capacity of regional institutions to achieve effectiveness.
- Facilitate regionalism if it alters the inherent structure of a genuine regional problematic situation towards a more cooperation-conducive situation, constrains the availability or practicability of potentially attractive alternative exit options for regional actors in negotiations on regional second-order problems, or supports the capacity of regional institutions to achieve effectiveness.
- If a pattern of strong and asymmetric interdependence prevails on a regional level in parallel to one between regional and external actors, the influence on regionalism is contested between the involved regional and external powers.

In theory, external influence on regionalism can be principally ambivalent in character: it can have interfering and supportive effects on regional cooperation efforts on a regional level. However, for plain structural reasons, a negative impact of external actors on regionalism is probably more likely to occur. This is because an altruistic, cooperation-supportive behaviour cannot be assumed to be the dominant strategy of action for those external actors who become involved in third actors' regional issues

(Muntschick 2013c). Hence, extra-regional support to regionalisms may materialise under certain conditions—somewhat like “manna from the sky”—but may likewise unexpectedly cease for reasons beyond the region’s own control.

In accordance with the extended situation-structural model and the additional assumptions, the following central hypotheses on regionalism and external impact, according to the external line of the argument, can be deduced:

- The stronger the degree of asymmetric extra-regional interdependence between states on a regional level and extra-regional actors, the more likely that the underlying pattern of a genuine regional problematic situation will be prone to external influence and will transform into a more cooperation-averse situation structure.
- The stronger the degree of asymmetric extra-regional interdependence and the more distinct the presence of an extra-regional actor in a power position vis-à-vis the region, the greater the possibility of external influence on the design of regional institutions and therefore the less likely—and also less stable—the emergence and success (in terms of effectiveness) of regionalism.

2.3 ALTERNATIVE ASSUMPTION: REGIONALISM AS A RESULT OF ISOMORPHISM AND SYMBOLISM

The aforementioned theoretical framework basically attributes institutionalised regional cooperation and the emergence of new regionalisms to functional pressures and specific problematic situations in international relations (Keohane 1984; Zürn 1992, 1993). However, some constructivist strands of the academic literature challenge this rationalist line of argument quite fundamentally. Some scholars argue that institutions are not necessarily a result of cost-benefit calculations and strategic choices made by rational actors. Instead, institution-building could be rooted in a “non-functional” *rationale* with states constructing and configuring institutions seemingly not for the purpose of solving collective action problems (e.g. DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Martin and Simmons 1998; Meyer and Rowan 1977).

Making reference to regionalism, some doubts may arise with regard to the applicability and explanatory power of plainly rationalist arguments (Robson 1993). According to some scholars (e.g. Börzel and

Risse 2009a, b; Farell 2007; Jetschke and Lenz 2011), cooperation theory, mainstream institutionalism and plain functionalist forms of reasoning fall too short in explaining the puzzle why regional integration organisations have been mushrooming in the aforementioned developing regions despite disadvantageous preconditions. Fuelled by prima facie empirical evidence, some existing regional integration organisations of the new regionalism—particularly in the Southern Hemisphere—seem to show insufficient degrees of operability, functionality and effectiveness (cf. Gray 2012; Söderbaum 2007). Critics argue that such apparently dysfunctional and inefficient examples of regionalism are not likely to be based on actual underlying regional cooperation problems. As parts of the relevant literature reveals, this (first) impression sometimes culminates in the assumption that the new regionalisms in the South—especially the ones in sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Asche 2009; Proff 2000)—are no more than delusions and *Scheinriesen*¹⁰ with façade institutions (Hansen 1969: 262; Mattli 1999: 66; Yang and Gupta 2005).

According to this line of the argument, the emergence, dynamics and design of at least some of the recent regionalisms are therefore possibly the result of a non-functional logic and different kinds of causal mechanisms. In the research field on regionalism, the most elaborated alternative explanatory approaches make reference to the rich body of literature on diffusion.¹¹

Theoretical models based on international policy diffusion have become central research topics in political science in general and more particularly for the study of regionalism (e.g. Börzel 2011; Börzel and Risse 2009b; Farell 2007; Jetschke and Lenz 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to take these alternative explanations to the analysis of regionalism into consideration. Within the framework of this study, this shall materialise by formulating a rival assumption that is based on the core arguments proposed by the relevant literature on diffusion, institutional isomorphism and symbolism. The theoretical foundations for the argument above are as follows:

According to early sociological literature on diffusion, it is principally possible to adopt all kinds of (social) practices and (cognitive) institutions independently from functional pressure. Instead, the plain desire to gain legitimacy can be a major driving force for any form of institutionalisation or, more precisely, institution-building. This can culminate in actors taking practices and institutions for granted as appropriate without critically questioning their purpose and without further searching for or

testing alternatives (Scott 1995: 108–109). A similar logic can apply with respect to the creation of formal structures and institutions. Under these circumstances, formal institutions could have priority objectives that aim not on satisfying concrete functional demands but instead on proving the involved actors' adequate handling of an issue and appropriateness of action, in particular for the purpose of gaining legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Hence, social practices and institutions as well as even formal structures and institutions may simply diffuse because of their symbolic properties and the related surplus value (Gilardi 2008: 82–87).

Transferring this line of thought to the field of international relations, world polity theorists assume that a sort of global culture has devolved in an increasingly interdependent international system in recent decades. Inherent to this global culture, which had diffused transnationally from the West to the rest of the world after the end of the Second World War, is a growing global consensus on what is appropriate with respect to international actors, goals and policy means (Meyer et al. 1997; Simmons et al. 2006: 787–789). With nation-states and their societies apparently more and more integrating into a global system and a world society, established and “appropriate” worldwide models—such as regional organisations along with their institutional frameworks—represent benchmarks for other countries that are prone to take these as examples and align their practices, policies and actions accordingly (Boli and Thomas 1997: 172–173; Meyer et al. 1997: 157–162; Münch 2008).

Institutional isomorphism produces a similar argument. Stemming from observations that organisations in a given field often become increasingly similar over time, DiMaggio and Powell argue that under conditions of general uncertainty, insufficient organisational legitimacy and resource dependency, organisations generally tend to model and adapt to their allegedly more legitimate or successful counterparts in the same respective field. Isomorphic change in the first place affects the organisations' (formal) structures with the similarity becoming the more pronounced the greater the (financial) dependence of an organisation on another (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 150–156; Meyer et al. 1997: 152–154).

The mechanisms of international policy diffusion, which provide plausible accounts of how an international actor's policies and practices are affected by another international actor, can be subdivided into a plethora of categories. According to the literature on diffusion, the central mechanisms are coercion, competition, learning and emulation (Gilardi 2008:

79, 90; Simmons et al. 2006: 789–801). Institutional isomorphism occurs through similar mechanisms which can be of a coercive, normative or mimetic nature (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 150–154).

The diffusion mechanisms of emulation and mimicry shall be the focus of attention in this book, not least since part of the literature on regionalism more or less openly suspects that several of the recent regionalisms are rather dysfunctional, ineffective and little more than institutional paper tigers. Moreover, a delimitation to emulation is justified because some observers report that many of these regional integration organisations apparently show a strong degree of institutional homology with similar formal structures—but allegedly for non-functional purposes (e.g. Börzel and Risse 2009b; Jetschke and Lenz 2011; Meyer et al. 1997: 152). Therefore, emulation and mimicry mechanisms are best suited to corroborate the book’s theoretical approach and key arguments for an alternative, non-rationalist explanation of regionalism on the ground of international diffusion.

The diffusion mechanism “emulation” functions by logic of appropriateness where actors in a given context adopt strategies and behaviours of their peers which they have regarded as adequate and best practices, notwithstanding their actual practicability or effectiveness. In a political context, this implies that governments may adopt policies or create institutions that are not intended to solve actual cooperation problems but rather established by plain activism and for purely symbolic reasons (Gilardi 2008: 98–99; Simmons et al. 2006: 799–801). This latter form of emulation is called symbolic imitation. It is a strategy whereby governments adopt policies or practices primarily in order to gain recognition and legitimacy by the added ceremonial value. In this context, an institution’s symbolic pay-offs are much more important than its actual outputs (Braun and Gilardi 2006: 311–313; Meyer and Rowan 1977: 349). Correspondingly, mimetic isomorphism describes a process in which organisations are simply modelled on supposedly more legitimate and successful organisations. This behaviour of institutional “copy-and-paste” is rather a reaction to uncertainty with symbolic properties than a true response to concrete functional pressure (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 151–152; Meyer et al. 1997: 158).

Against this background, symbols can be of crucial importance for political institutions because they contribute to the construction of their (social) reality and visualise their existence and relevance. This is because symbols epitomise fundamental ideas and guiding principles and

therefore convey an institution's coherence, integrated profile and corresponding capacity for action. An immaculate symbolic representation may help to disguise a lack in concreteness, rationality, functionality and efficiency of an organisation's structures and practices (Göhler 1997: 24, 31, 48–52; Jetschke and Liese 1999: 295). Therefore, the additional value of symbols not only compensates for a potential deficit of institutions but also may contribute to enhance its stability, power, legitimacy and (international) recognition. Moreover, a shiny reputation adds to an institution's attractiveness regarding, for example, the inflow of financial resources from third actors. For aid-dependent developing countries, this could be an incentive to create symbolic or façade institutions which “operate” on only a surface level to the outside world (Blatter 2001: 32–34; Simmons et al. 2006: 800).

Altogether, this line of argument provides a potential alternative explanation to the emergence, design and effectiveness of (international) institutions in general and regional integration organisations in particular. The central ideas of isomorphism and symbolism constitute this work's alternative assumption for explaining the recent new regionalisms as they represent a substantiated theoretical approach that to some degree competes with rationalist cooperation theory. Accordingly, the alternative assumption shall read as follows:

- If an institutionalised regional cooperation project does not show any intended, evaluable institutional effects, it is likely that the observed manifestation of regionalism is not based on a concrete problematic situation but is merely the result of isomorphism and symbolic imitation with (façade) institutions that have been created to serve non-functional purposes.

In the recent examples of the new regionalisms in the international arena, this alternative assumption implies that regional integration organisations with apparently dysfunctional institutions are likely to be the result of diffusion mechanisms, such as emulation and especially mimicry, or plain symbolism. According to some authors, these rather symbolic regionalisms prevail most notably in the South (cf. Gray 2012; Herbst 2007: 137–141; Terlinden 2004).

The EU seems to play an outstanding and important role in this context. According to a rich body of literature, the EU is the most important and influential agent of international and inter-regional diffusion.

This relates not only to certain ideas, norms and policies but also to the diffusion of global regionalism. In this respect, Europe has always been a promoter of regional integration in other parts of the globe because the EU is seen as the world's exemplary, most elaborated and most successful regional integration organisation (Börzel and Risse 2009a, b; de Lombaerde and Schulz 2009). Nonetheless, a more recent work of this strand of research has also pointed to the limits of external Europeanisation (Börzel 2010).

Against the background of the aforementioned central assumptions on theories of international diffusion, institutional isomorphism and symbolism, the alternative hypothesis of this work is as follows:

- The lesser the degree of observable and measurable institutional effectiveness of a specific regional cooperation project or a regional integration organisation, the more likely that it represents a dysfunctional façade institution and is an example of institutional isomorphism, emulation and symbolic imitation.

2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The book's analysis of the SADC, guided by the research questions, represents a theory-driven case study that uses a variety of profound research methods and techniques based on empirical social science. Together with its underlying research design, this guarantees a solid analysis, valid results and sound explanations.

The selection of the SADC as the case of analysis has been motivated by the fact that it represents one of the most prominent and simply best examples of the new regionalism in the Global South. This is because the organisation (i) is well recognised on an international level, (ii) is generally considered to be functioning, stable and even dynamic, (ii) has reached a considerable breadth and depth of regional integration in terms of scope, but (iii) received little academic attention from political science so far and therefore is still under-researched.

Strictly speaking, this book comprises a single-case study in which the SADC is "the case" and unit of observation. According to Yin, single-case studies are in general "the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed [...] and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (Yin 2003: 1). This is because single-case studies offer sufficient space for documenting

processes and investigating complex (social) situations and units that may consist of multiple variables of potential importance for understanding empirical observations and causal relations. Therefore, case studies prove highly valuable if an in-depth scientific examination, rich description and comprehensive analysis of a complex yet unexplored phenomenon are the tasks to do (de Lombaerde et al. 2010: 30–31; Odell 2001: 169–171).

Simply analysing the SADC as a single case, however, could raise a few problems from a methodological point of view: this relates, for example, to an insufficient number of observations on the dependent variable, random case selection, the risk of case selection bias, a questionable validity and generalisability of research results, or the infeasibility of hypothesis generation (George and Bennett 2005: 22–34; Keman 2008: 68–71).

A viable solution to avoid this $n = 1$ problem is to generate more observations on the dependent variable. On that account, this study increases the number of cases insofar as the analysis of regionalism in the SADC is divided into five sub-cases according to the method of the most crucial/critical case design (Levy 2008: 12–13; Przeworski and Teune 1982; Yin 2003). Crucial/critical cases represent exemplarily a larger whole and have in this regard “strategic importance in relation to the general problem” (Flyvbjerg 2006: 229) and research object under observation. Applying the method of crucial/critical case design avoids not only random case selection but also selection bias (King et al. 1994: 128–138).

Subdividing research on a single case of regionalism by means of probing hypotheses on a number of sub-cases of different issue areas not only leads to more reliable analytical results but also has already proven successful in terms of theory-building. Moravcsik’s book on European integration is an outstanding example in this respect. He avoided the obvious $n = 1$ problem by disaggregating his analysis of regionalism in Europe into different issue areas at different points in time. Accordingly, he selected five “grand bargains” that became subjects for testing his hypotheses on (European) regional integration, which finally led to generalisations, theory-building and the birth of liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik 1998).

Following this method of crucial/critical case design (Levy 2008: 12–13; Przeworski and Teune 1982; Yin 2003), this work employs an analytical segregation of the SADC into crucial sub-cases in order to generate general conclusions on regionalism in the SADC as a whole. This procedure is conclusive because it corresponds to the book’s

understanding of regionalism as a cluster of various, multidimensional regional cooperation projects bounded by a territorial dimension confined by its member states. Accordingly, it is the different issue areas and various regional cooperation projects under the umbrella of the SADC as an organisation that represent the universe of (sub-)cases.

In line with the above understanding, the universe of (sub-)cases within the SADC in terms of policy areas comprises politics, defence and security, economic development, disaster risk management, infrastructure, agriculture and food security, natural resources, meteorology and climate, health social and human development as well as poverty eradication and policy dialogue—according to the organisation’s statement on regional intergation themes. Additional, cross-cutting areas of cooperation include also gender, science and technology, information and communication, environment and sustainable development, private sector, statistics and diseases.¹²

Above all, the SADC Protocols represent the “core areas” where substantial and institutionalised regional integration actually should take place in the SADC. This is because they are legally binding documents that commit member states to specific cooperation objectives and concrete procedures codified in all its particularities. Examples include the Protocol on Trade, the Protocol on Mining, the Protocol on Health, the Protocol against Corruption and the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.¹³ It is therefore the array of protocols and the policy areas they address which constitute the universe of (sub-)cases where institutionalised regional cooperation in the SADC may actually take place.

Taking this into consideration and employing an analytical segregation of the SADC in accordance with the method of the most crucial/critical case design (Przeworski and Teune 1982; Yin 2003), this work’s analysis is based on the following sub-case selection: Firstly, there is no doubt that the economy, security and infrastructure account for the most important and crucial policy areas of regional integration in the SADC. Secondly, the most important and critical regional cooperation projects in these three issue areas are (i) the SADC Free Trade Area and the scheduled SADC Customs Union (issue area of the economy), (ii) the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security as well as the SADC Standby Force (issue area of security) and (iii) the Southern African Power Pool (issue area of infrastructure). With these five sub-cases standing for the SADC’s most important policy areas of regional cooperation and

therefore representing regionalism in the SADC as a whole, the $n = 1$ problem of a single-case study is solved.

What justifies this selection? The *rationale* for these choices stems from research conducted by area studies experts, assessments of political scientists from Southern African institutes, statements of SADC officials and not least the organisation's self-perception according to agendas and official documents. The variance of the selected cases appears to be even greater with regard to the independent and context variables because one can expect different degrees of issue-specific extra-regional interdependence in the selected policy areas. This approximates the applied research design to a most different case design and therefore contributes to the validity and generalisability of the analysis's empirical results and theoretical implications (Przeworski and Teune 1982). Following the idea that the general often lies in the particular, one can expect that regional integration in the SADC's other, non-crucial policy areas follows a similar pattern and (functional) logic as explained in view of the organisation's three central issue areas (economy, security and infrastructure).

In order to avoid the drawing of hasty generalisations from a small number of cases by simply demonstrating supporting evidence for a theoretical argument, this book has proposed a set of testable hypotheses derived from two competing schools of thought (rational institutionalism and the situation-structural model versus isomorphism and symbolism). Using alternative theories and competing explanations prevents circular reasoning on the case and will enhance the objectivity and reliability of the whole case study analysis (King et al. 1994: 35–38). Probing competing hypotheses obliges the analyst to carefully weigh up the evidence in order to be in the position to make an informed decision in favour of a certain explanation.

The exploration of this book's research questions and the analysis of regionalism in the SADC adhere to the research principles mentioned above and follow the concept of a plausibility probe (Eckstein 1975: 108–113; George and Bennett 2005: 75). A plausibility probe of an innovative "candidate-theory" (Eckstein 1975: 108) helps to figure out its validity and "service potential" without having to undertake a large-scale analysis with a great number of multifaceted cases. For these reasons, this book's analysis refrains from explicit and strict hypothesis-testing in the narrow sense.

However, this case study analysis not only is theory-driven but also seeks to elaborate a (middle-range) theory on regionalism and

extra-regional influence. For this purpose, this work's overall positivist research is also inspired by the concept of "analytic narratives". This concept "combines analytic tools that are commonly employed in economics and political science with the narrative form, which is more commonly employed in history" (Bates et al. 1998: 10). Analytic narratives aim to go to the bottom of things by paying careful attention to descriptive and qualitative materials, grasping the complexity of situations, context and other empirical evidence that narratives in a broader sense may offer. Besides the empirical in-depth exploration of cases, analytic narratives are at the same time parsimonious and analytic insofar as they "extract explicit and formal lines of reasoning" (Bates et al. 1998: 10) and apply rational choice and game theory to model the puzzle, situation or process under observation. This method of theory-guided modelling facilitates the explanation of outcomes (e.g. the establishment of a regional institution) very well because it captures the "essence of a story", focusses on central actors and helps to identify the relevant causal mechanisms (Bates et al. 1998: 8–13). Conducting case study research according to this concept probably best corresponds to the theoretical approach applied in this book. This is because Zürn had emphasised that a situation-structural analysis of international cooperation requires prior modelling and reconstruction of the relevant problematic situation in international relations with reference to context and the historical setting (Zürn 1992: 115).

Careful process tracing is the guiding principle for the empirical part of this research. Making use of this method generates detailed knowledge on the relations between the independent variable and the observable implications. This helps to reveal fundamental causal mechanisms and rule out potentially intervening but ultimately meaningless factors (George and Bennett 2005: Chap. 10; Levy 2008). Where process tracing seems difficult or unsatisfactory because of, for example, a lack of available information, empirical key results will be controlled for counterfactuals in order to strengthen their validity (George and Bennett 2005: 117–120). Such a method is particularly useful to determine institutional outcomes, performance and effectiveness in terms of pre-post comparison (i.e. before the establishment of an institution and thereafter).

The empirical analysis and knowledge collection are conducted mainly with the help of qualitative research methods. Content analysis of primary sources and (official) documents gets first priority. As they provide the most reliable evidence, such "hard" sources are best suited to

support any empirical findings and the arguments based upon them. Field research at the SADC Headquarters, particularly in the organisation's library and archive, was very fruitful for this purpose.

Numerous semi-structured, explorative and systematising expert interviews have been conducted for gathering additional information and eventually complement the content analysis of documents (Bogner and Menz 2005: 36–38). Besides interviewing officials from the SADC and the EU, the author has chosen to interview foreign consultants to the SADC Secretariat; experts of relevant research institutes in Belgium (e.g. European Centre for Development Policy Management), Botswana (e.g. Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis), Namibia (e.g. Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit) and South Africa (e.g. South African Institute for International Affairs, Institute for Global Dialogue and Institute for Security Studies); experts of development agencies (e.g. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) and well-reputed experts from Southern Africa's academia for this purpose.

Apart from evaluating the content analysis of primary sources, the author evaluated newspaper articles and consulted numerous secondary sources for the empirical research. During the research process, the author considered more than 600 secondary sources, of which a quintessence of almost 500 secondary sources became useful to complement and cross-check the information collected from primary sources or expert interviews. For their exceptional and exclusive informational content as well as their topicality, the most valuable books and articles on the SADC were generally found and published in the Southern African region.

Where applicable and available, quantitative data is used to complement empirical information gathered by qualitative methods. A technique of triangulation (Flick 2007: 44–54; Yin 2003: 14) provides an opportunity to make use of relevant indicators and is very suitable to strengthen depictions of structural characteristics, patterns of interdependence and measurement of effectiveness (de Lombaerde and van Langenhove 2006; Tavares and Schulz 2006). For the purpose of collecting adequate and up-to-date quantitative data, the author consulted, among other things, the World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS) database, the Trade & Policy Strategies (TIPS) SADC Trade Database, the Regional Integration Knowledge System (RIKS), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), and other country-specific or institutional databases. However, research has proven that

quantitative data in the SADC context is often less reliable, fragmentary or even simply unavailable compared with data from regions in the North, such as Europe and the EU.

Procedural Steps of Analysis and Operationalisation

The procedural steps of analysing regionalism in the SADC follow a similar pattern and can be divided into the three analytical stages detailed below:

Firstly, the regional cooperation problem in a given policy area is identified and modelled to its specific situational structure at the time the involved actors intended to initialise cooperative action. In this context, the actors' preferences and potential demand for institutionalised regional cooperation are determined. Furthermore, patterns of intra- and extra-regional interdependence as well as the involved actors' power positions are worked out in detail in order to model the underlying problematic situation. In this regard, the potential influence of extra-regional actors on the genuine structure of regional cooperation problems is explicitly taken into consideration.

Secondly, the analysis addresses inter-state negotiations leading to the particular institutional outcomes (i.e. the cooperative arrangement with its specific institutional design) in order to identify and explain the involved actors' degrees of assertiveness and influence. Moreover, the inter-state negotiations and the character of the resulting institutional arrangements will be critically scrutinised in order to determine potential influence by extra-regional actors.

Thirdly, the performance and effectiveness of the observed institutionalised regional cooperation projects will be evaluated. These assessments of institutional goal attainment not only allow substantiated issue-specific and general statements on the functionality, capacity and cooperation gains of regionalism in the SADC but also elaborate on reproaches of institutional isomorphism and symbolism. This allows one to determine the veracity and success of regionalism.

In summary, arguing in an explanatory manner by probing the plausibility of hypotheses is a good method to answer the research questions of this study in a scientific and convincing way. It is no coincidence that the proposed mode of analysis is reminiscent of international regime analysis. Given the book's understanding of regionalism, this approach adapts best to the theoretical framework and is the optimal strategy to analyse the emergence, institutional design and effectiveness of regional integration in the SADC.

NOTES

1. There is no uniform definition of the term institution. In this book, institutions shall be understood as “related complexes of rules and norms, identifiable in space and time” (Keohane 1988: 383).
2. An issue area can be defined as “sets of issues that are in fact dealt with in common negotiations and by the same, or closely coordinated, bureaucracies, as opposed to issues that are dealt with separately and in uncoordinated fashion” (Keohane 1984: 61).
3. This argument implies that strong or rising levels of interdependence, notably economic interdependence, do not per se lead to increasing cooperation or lasting peace in international relations. Such assumptions of some economists not only are too simplistic but also have been proven wrong by history: Germany and Britain were best trading partners before World War I, just as the US and Japan were before World War II (Jervis 1978: 177; Keohane 1990: 38).
4. Security cooperation problems in international relations relate to “security complexes”. The latter is “a group of states whose primary security concerns are sufficiently closely linked that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another” (Buzan 1992: 169).
5. Preferences shall be understood as individual and self-centred policy options that reflect the actors’ utility-maximising calculations on absolute pay-offs against the background of “issue-specific patterns of substantive interdependence” (Moravcsik 1998: 61). In principle, preferences for (alternative) policy options can be ranked on an ordinal scale according to their pay-offs (Schimmelfennig 2001: 53).
6. A problematic situation shall be defined as a “collective action problem [...] where rational individual action can lead to strictly Pareto-inferior outcome, that is, an outcome which is strictly less preferred by every individual than at least one other outcome” (Taylor 1987: 19). To put it more simply, a problematic situation constitutes an issue area, may trigger demand for processing a cooperative solution and implies a significant position difference among the involved actors. Sometimes, a problematic situation is also referred to as a conflict situation (Rittberger and Zürn 1990: 38).
7. In a situation (or “Rambo” game), either one actor has a dominant strategy to cooperate, which the other can exploit, or one actor has a dominant strategy to defect while the other must cooperate in order to avoid an even worse outcome (Hasenclever et al. 1997: 51).
8. Extra-regional shall refer to a relation with any actor (country or organisation) that is not part of a group that has been previously defined as a region.

9. So-called “external seed money” from external sources (mostly donors) has been identified as an important catalyst for regional institution-building in a number of observed cases (Berg and Horall 2008: 183–184).
10. Means “illusory giant”; Michael Ende explained this phenomenon very well and in the most fanciful manner (cf. Ende 2004: Chap. 17).
11. Generally speaking, diffusion can be conceived as a consequence of interdependence and a process through which ideas are spread across dimensions of time and space (Gilardi 2013). International policy diffusion occurs “when government policy decisions in a given country are systematically conditioned by prior policies made in other countries” (Simmons et al. 2006: 787).
12. Reference made to the SADC’s web pages: <http://www.sadc.int/themes> and <http://www.sadc.int/issues> (05/05/2017).
13. Reference made to the SADC’s web pages: <http://www.sadc.int/documents-publications/protocols/> (05/05/2017).

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