ATLANTIC FUTURE

SCIENTIFIC PAPER

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Sub-Saharan Africa and the EU

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ABSTRACT

Europe and Africa are both experiencing deep transformations that affect their integration paths and interregional relationship. However, contemporary regionalism in Africa and Europe cannot be understood by looking only at governmental integration in the framework of continental organizations such as the European Union and the African Union. Interregional dynamics also need to be analyzed through additional levels and forms of interaction within the two continents. State actors apart, various types of non-state actors play an increasingly important role in these processes, both within and outside existing regional and interregional arrangements. Based on these assumptions, the paper aims at mapping relevant trends of regionalism and interregionalism in and between Europe and (Southern-, West- and East-) Africa, by looking at the historical evolution and in light of recent developments. The analysis will go beyond institutionalized regionalism and interregionalism by addressing and comparing informal patterns of integration at regional and transnational levels in the three sectors of trade; security; and environment.

The paper concludes that the EU and AU present many commonalties in terms of institutional architecture. Nevertheless, if we look at the reality of their achievements in terms of development and implementation of policies in the three fields analyzed above – trade, environment and security – it must be recognized that the two organizations evolve at different pace the AU lagging behind. Moreover, the integration process in the two regions is confronted with different challenges. While the EU acts in a relatively stable and peaceful context, the AU has to address several development problems. In terms of the interregional relations between the two, the EU has heavily influenced the development of regionalism in Africa through teaching and support. The EU is very dominant in all three regions and the relationship between the EU and SADC, EAC and ECOWAS respectively is fundamentally characterized by the former influencing regional policy of, and providing funds and capacity building to, the latter.

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1. Introduction

Europe and Africa are both experiencing deep transformations that affect their integration paths and interregional relationship.

In the last two decades, the Europe Union (EU) has been characterized by phases of progressive deepening and widening of the integration process and prolonged stalemates. The reforming fatigue that resulted from the adoption and implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, accompanied by the economic and financial crisis erupted in 2008, have questioned the validity and sustainability of the European model and opened new avenues for alternative forms of integration.

Today's Sub-Saharan Africa is still marked by enduring instability in Somalia, governance and electoral crises in Central African countries, disease outbreak and epidemics in West Africa and terrorist threats from the Sahel region to the Horn. At the same time, it is characterized by positive developments such as efforts at fostering continental and regional integration through the African Union (AU) and African Regional Inter-Governmental Organizations (RIGOs). At the economic level Sub-Saharan Africa has also experienced some marginal improvements. From the end of the 1990s till the current global financial and economic crisis, economic growth began to recover, rising and staying above population growth. However, the sustainability of this economic development is challenged by factors such as external instability, domestic conflicts, inflexible production systems, unequal distribution of wealth.

Contemporary regionalism in Africa and Europe cannot be understood by looking only at governmental integration in the framework of continental organizations such as the European Union and the African Union. Interregional dynamics also need to be analyzed through additional levels and forms of interaction within the two continents. State actors apart, various types of non-state actors play an increasingly important role in these processes, both within and outside existing regional and interregional arrangements.

Furthermore, the partnership between EU and Africa is increasingly influenced by an evolving international environment, including development co-operation, institutionalized by the Paris Declaration and other international frameworks, as well as recent developments in the Atlantic space.

Importantly, the institutional agendas and strategies assigned to regional and interregional institutions have broadened to include social, politico-strategic and other concerns besides traditional economic integration. Although trade still dominates the regional and interregional agendas, some new issues have caught the attention of regional policy-makers, such as environment, security, poverty reduction and HIV/AIDS.

Based on the assumptions outlined above, the paper aims at mapping relevant trends of regionalism and interregionalism in and between Europe and Africa, by looking at the historical evolution and in light of recent developments. The analysis will go beyond institutionalized regionalism and interregionalism by addressing and comparing informal patterns of integration at regional and transnational levels. Except for the (formal and informal) continental regional integration processes more or less linked to the EU and AU, focus is put on other regional actors developed in connection with specific sub-regional areas in Africa. It will be articulated in the three sectors of trade; security; and environment with a view to identify relevant conclusions on the current status of African-European interregionalism.

2. Conceptualizing Regionalism in Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa

The equation between regionalism and "European integration theory" (Weiner and Diez 2004) has been contested on the ground that the model of European integration, based on conditions such as industrial economy and liberal politics, "is not readily transferable to other regional contexts" (Haas 1961: 378). In this paper, the authors reject the paradigmatic approach that tends to judge the achievements of other integration projects on the basis of the European example. At the same time, the analysis contests the assumption that "Euroexceptionalism" (Achaya 2012: 11), namely the uniqueness or sui generis character of the European integration represented by the European Union (EU), should be considered as an impeding factor for a comparative regional integration study that takes into consideration the EU and other forms of regionalism. Following the approach suggested by Luk Van Langenhove, we adopt "a perspective that, on the one hand, allows us to consider regions of all kinds (wherever they are located) without being 'eurocentric', but with the possibility of understanding the EU as a special case" (Van Langenhove 2012: 24).

In particular, we make use of Glyn Morgan's distinction between the project, the process and the product of integration (Morgan 2005: 4) and evaluate regionalism in Europe and Africa along these lines. Therefore, the scope of this paper is to identify (1) the main determinants in the origin (the project) and evolution (the process) of regionalism in Europe and Africa with a view to compare their characteristics and (2) the current outcome (the product) of the integration processes in both regions on the basis of their products, namely political institutions, policies and practices.

In order to assess the product of integration processes in Europe and Africa, the analysis takes into consideration different sectors of integration, in particular: (1) trade; (2) security; and (3) environment. The same sectors will be used to evaluate the development and status of interregionalism between Europe and Africa.

This analysis does not neglect the traditional approaches to regionalism, "which stressed formal structures and intergovernmental interactions" (Acharya 2012: 8), but their scope is enlarged so as to include the basic features of new regionalism, in particular through the attention devoted to the role of non-state actors and informal processes of interactions.

As for formal structures and intergovernmental interactions, our study focuses on the European Union as the most prominent and comprehensive regional organization on the European side. On the African side, we identify in the African Union, the continental organization that replaced the Organization for the African Unity (OAU) in 2000, as the most inclusive and articulated regional initiative. However, African regionalism is founded on a number of African Regional Inter-Governmental Organizations (RIGOs) that overlap and interact with the AU and the EU in different ways. For purpose of delimitation, this paper concentrates on the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

3. Origins and evolution of regionalism in Europe and Africa

In Europe, regional integration has been originally promoted through the creation of a common market in the key area of the coal, iron and steel industry, marked by the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), with a view to

alleviate concerns that Germany's heavy industry could harm European reconstruction efforts. It later evolved in the creation of a common market within the European Economic Community (EEC), meaning the removal of trade barriers between Member States, the setting up of joint external barriers and the establishment of a common trade policy. The political and strategic purpose behind this project was to create ever stronger ties among European nations as a means to secure peace and lay the ground for future integration in other sectors, including the political and defence ones. The origins of the African integration process at continental level can be traced back to the decolonization movement in the 1960s and the idea of Pan-Africanism. Some consider this process as "multi-dimensional, encompassing racial, economic and political unity, rather than reflecting a purely political or strategic purpose" (Acharya 2012: 5). However, the impact of political and strategic considerations should not be underestimated in the analysis of the formal intergovernmental institutions that took up these ideas in the African continent. The establishment of the African Union was largely driven by the dominating view that a divided and marginalized Africa is not able to respond to the challenge of globalization and the complex threats of wars, civil conflicts, terrorist activities, disease, economic crisis, poverty and underdevelopment (Francis 2006).

Both the integration projects in Europe and Africa were influenced by intra-regional dynamics of power, interests and identity, which can be identified primarily with the promotion of the reconciliation process among nations in the aftermath of the Second World War for Europe and the advancement of decolonization for Africa. However, both regionalization experiments cannot be properly understood if they are not put in the context of the outer world (Hurrell 2007: 130). The bipolar confrontation of the Cold War and the active support of the United States represented crucial driving forces for the inception of the European integration project. Interestingly, many of the promoters of Pan-Africanism were not from Africa itself (Acharya 2012: 4). In the African case, the consolidation of the integration process was originally seen as a way out of the external interference of former colonial powers and in more recent years actively promoted in a number of ways (through political, institutional, financial and technical support) by external actors (with the European Union and European countries at the forefront).

The original African continental organization, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) established in 1963, suffered from poor performance and limited results which led in 2002 to the launch of a brand new organization, the African Union, based on both the UN and EU models. The constitutions of the AU has also marked a shift from the logic of non-interference in the internal affairs of its Member States to a stance of non-indifference, marked by the right to intervene in a Member State "in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" (Constitutive Act of the African Union 2000: Art. 4) and the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanisms in 2003 in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Both the EU and the AU have undertaken new tasks and progressively covered new issue areas, even if priorities and approaches can vary considerably. In the case of the European Union, Member States decided to grant exclusive competences (only the EU can act) in the fields of customs union, competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market, monetary policy for the Member States whose currency is the euro, conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy, common commercial policy and the conclusion of international agreements (Art. 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU). In the areas of shared competence, Member States can act only if the EU has decided not to: internal market, some aspects of social policy, economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and fisheries, environment, consumer protection, transport, trans-European networks, energy, area of

freedom, security and justice, common safety concerns in some public health matters, research, technological development and space, development cooperation and humanitarian aid (Art. 4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU). Finally, the Treaty on European Union (TEU) also gives the EU competence to define and implement a common foreign and security policy, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy. The AU remains an intergovernmental organization, even if supranational aspirations can be traced in various aspects of its framework. They can be found in the nature of some institutions such as the AU Commission and in the declared right of intervention mentioned above. Moreover, its objectives include, among others, to accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent; to promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples; to achieve peace and security in Africa; to coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (Constitutive Act of the AU 2000: Art. 3). Nevertheless, little progress in this direction can be detected since its creation.

The role of non-state actors became progressively important in both Europe and Africa, even if with different timing and significance, and triggered the development of informal processes of interactions with EU and AU institutions. An example can be drawn from the articulation of civil society participation in the implementation of the Joint Africa-European Union Strategy (JAES), which is the main framework of continent-to-continent interaction between EU and AU since 2007. The organizations acknowledge that "the Joint Strategy should be co-owned by European and African non-institutional actors" and they are willing to make it a "permanent platform for information, participation and mobilization of a broad spectrum of civil society actors (European Union and African Union 2007:22). Beyond a shared commitment to embed civil society in the implementation of policies and commitments, EU and AU have chosen different approaches. On the EU side, civil society's participation was structured around an EU Civil Society Organization (CSO) Steering Group, a self-selected group that was established following a request by EU institutions and gathered a broad array of non-state actors and network (Silvestre 2009). Such an informal system had the advantage to avoid bureaucratic and lengthy procedures, but at the same time it has serious difficulties in providing continuity due to turn-over in its members and a lack of resources (Miranda 2012:68). On the African side, the AU Constitutive Act contains a formal commitment to base the Union on a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society (AU Constitutive Act 2000: Art. 4). Social groups, professional groups, non-governmental organizations, community-based and cultural organizations, as well as African diaspora organizations are included in the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), an AU advisory body created in 2008. The ECOSOCC, through the African Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) of the African Union Commission, represented the only channel for the involvement of the African civil society in the Strategy (Miranda 2012:69). It seems that such a degree of formalization impeded the transparent and effective participation of CSOs in AU policy processes and beyond (Miranda 2012:71).

African regionalism also presents a specific feature that characterized it in comparison with other regionalization projects, namely the establishment of sub-regional organizations in Southern-, East and Western Africa, among other sub-regions, which presents a significant level of integration in different fields and are the building blocks of the continental process of integration led by the AU.

In terms of Southern Africa, the level of integration has historically been high in a number of areas, such as transport, migrant labour, mining and trade, due to British and Portuguese colonialism and later South African domination under the apartheid era (Odén 2001). The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC)

was born in 1980, partly to reduce Member States dependence on apartheid South Africa through functional co-operation in various sectors (Oosthuizen 2006). Later, the leaders of the region decided to formalise SADCC and eventually signed the SADC Treaty in 1992. With the establishment of SADC, with headquarter in Gaborone, Botswana, the focus shifted from the co-ordination of, mostly, national affairs to regional integration. From 2001 and onwards SADC embarked on a major restructuring process to make the organization more efficient. An amended SADC Treaty was signed on the 14 August 2001, resulting in some new institutions (ibid). The new Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) became the main socioeconomic development programme. The regional agenda has broadened to include, besides the traditional areas of economic integration based on trade, also security, environment and social issues such as HIV/AIDS (le Pere and Tjönneland 2005).

Regional integration in Southern Africa has historically been the preserve of States and governing elites, and popular participation in regional integration frameworks has been very weak (Tsie 2001; Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010). To a large extent the pursuit of regional integration in SADC has centred on Member States exerting their specific national interests and they seem reluctant to transfer policy-making to the regional level (le Pere and Tjönneland 2005). Decision-making power is centralized in the Heads of State and Government at the SADC Summit (Matlosa and Lotshwao 2010: 46). The unwillingness of members to share sovereignty and promote regional citizenship from above fundamentally affects the relationship with civil society. Despite frequent proclamations of the need to involve civil society in regional integration (Blaauw 2007: 207), civil society is in practice deliberately marginalized in SADC-led regionalism, apart from some business-oriented organizations, CSOs are increasingly involved in some social sectors (Godsäter 2013a). Furthermore, SADC is largely driven by the neo-liberal logic emphasizing regional economic integration which is market-driven (Söderbaum 2004). Despite designing some corrective measures to mitigate the negative consequences of regional integration for poor people (Kanyenze et al 2006), in reality the main focus is on trade (TRALAC 2012).

The current regionalization in East Africa dates back to the colonial time when colonial merchant capitalism created various trading networks throughout the region. After WW2, government regulation attempted to bring East Africa together under one central authority; the East African High Commission, which minimized the role of local, unofficial groups of native Africans. This laid the foundation for top-down regional integration (Ochwada 2013). Upon independence in the 60-ies, the new East African States had inherited already existing interstate integration arrangements that mainly focused on commerce and trade. The first Treaty for East African Co-operation led to the establishment of the first EAC in 1967, with headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania (Adar 2014: 230). However, due to the domination of Kenya in political and economic integration, as well as personality/ideological differences between the leaders, the EAC disintegrated in 1977 (Adar 2014, Ochwada 2013). In the 80s, the political leaders of the region established new contacts and re-examined the policies they had put in place in the late 60s (Ochwada 2013; see also Matambalya 2012), leading to a new Treaty and revival of EAC In 1999. Burundi and Rwanda became full members in 2006 (Adar 2014).

Regardless of the focus on trade, the EAC provides a comprehensive regional framework for governing regional affairs, such as peace, security and development, and also environmental concerns (Adar 2014: 232). The new Treaty also opened up for participation of non-state actors in the regionalization process. Furthermore, the EAC Secretariat has granted Observer Status to members of civil society and the business community in the region by allowing them to have representatives in selected meetings

and committees (Alusa 2013: 75). However, in practice, state actors dominate the regional processes and have showed little consideration of civil society and individual citizens (Ochwada 2013: 60). Only a handful of organizations have been granted Observer Status and those organizations that have made it to EAC meetings experience a number of monitoring challenges (Alusa 2013: 75). EAC is inherently state-centric and denies the role of ordinary citizens in regional integration. Also, EAC-led regional governance is linked to a predominately commercial, market-oriented agenda and by consequence the political leadership is somehow blind to social development and the needs of local communities in the region (Kimani 2007).

The colonial roots of regionalism in West Africa can be found in the geographical break-up between French and British colonies (Gandois 2014). The French empire promoted horizontal integration between the colonies and, on the other hand, the British administrative systems provided little space for regional integration (Söderbaum 2001). Hence, it was the Francophone States that took a lead in the (formal) integration of the region after independence in the 60s, forming Communauté Economique de l'Afrique Oest (CEAO) in 1974. At the same time, Nigeria, a former British colony, contested Francophone integration promoting a more inclusive RIGO, the ECOWAS, which was eventually created in 1975 through the ECOWAS Treaty. Principles related to trade enhancement through elimination of obstacles to free trade dominated the treaty. The treaty was revised in 1993, which changed the organization institutionally and gave it a more explicit security and democracy mandate. Despite the creation of ECOWAS, the Francophone-Anglophone tensions persisted throughout the 90-ies. A number of Francophone States embarked on a more serious strategy of economic integration, linked to France (Hartmann 2013).

State sovereignty and weak political will have posed great limits on how much ECOWAS is able to achieve in the trade and security areas (Piccolino and Minou 2014). ECOWAS is often used as a political forum for state leaders to advance their national agendas (Hartmann 2013: 10). Nevertheless, ECOWAS has made some provisions for the collaboration with civil society on a regional level. The revised Treaty of 1993 calls for ECOWAS to cooperate with regional non-governmental organisation in order to encourage popular involvement in regional co-operation (Gandois 2013: 200). In 1994 ECOWAS became the first RIGO to grant observer status to CSOs at its meetings and in 1996 the Forum of Associations Recognised by ECOWAS (FARE) was created by ECOWAS to coordinate CSO activities and act as a link between the CSOs and the Secretariat. In 2003, a Civil Society Unit in the Secretariat was created. In principle, most CSOs have adopted a partnership strategy because they are mainly concerned with implementing various ECOWAS instruments (Iheduru 2014). However, the relationship between ECOWAS and civil society is still not without challenges. There is potential friction as ECOWAS officials tend to see West African civil society as natural allies, and expects that they will have a similar understanding of major political and security issues in the region. In reality, they sometimes disagree on approaches towards regional issues. (Olonisakin 2009: 111).

4. Outcome of regionalism in Europe and Africa: trade, security and environment

4.1 Trade

4.1.1. Regional trade integration in Europe
As outlined above, the process of market integration laid the ground of European regionalism: a cornerstone of this process was the adoption and implementation of a major legislative programme, the Single Market Programme, resulting in the elimination

of non-trade barriers by 1 January 1993. The next major steps were the creation of an Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in 1999 and the introduction of euro coins and bills in 2002 (European Commission 2007).

Today, the EU represents the world's largest single market with about 500 million consumers, equipped with transparent rules and regulations and a secure legal investment framework.

The integration of the goods and services market is still progressing 20 years after the launch of the Single Market. Approximately three-quarters of the trade in goods within the EU are covered by harmonized regulations, while the level of integration in the service sector continues to be significantly lower. Member States have shown an enduring resistance to complete the Single Market, especially in certain areas such as energy, the service sector – including financial services – the digital industries and telecoms markets, and defence. However, some recent initiatives undertaken by the EU institutions, such as the 2013 European Commission Roadmap to strengthen the internal market and support the competitiveness of the defence and security industries, the Banking Union and current plans for an Energy Union, are aimed at boosting integration in these sectors by overcoming key national resistances.

Intra-EU market represented around 17% of EU GDP in 1999 and close to 22% in 2011 (European Commission 2012). This positive general trend in terms of integration hides contrasting situations among Member States. While the evolution of intra-EU imports and exports to GDP ratios in the period 1999-2011 has been positive in some Member States, negative trends or stagnation can be seen in others (European Commission 2012).

Moreover, intra-EU saw a sharp downward trajectory in the last four years (Bruegel, 2014). Some commentators have underlined that this trend implies that global trading partners have become and are becoming more important, thus showing the failure of the EU integration process, and particularly of the EMU, to achieve the key objective to boost trade within its borders (ibidem). At the same time, Member States who increased their integration in the global economy are also those who have demonstrated the highest integration dynamics within the EU (ibidem).

4.1.2. Regional trade integration in Africa

Support for economic integration on a sub-regional and ultimately continental basis in Africa is strong among the continent's external partners and African elites (Draper 2012: 67). Many initiatives have been undertaken by the African Union in this direction, with a view to implement a Continental Free Trade Agreement by 2017 and a continental common market by 2028 (Tumuhimbise 2013: 13). Some progress has already been realized, but these objectives are far from being reached.

The level of intra-African trade has increased in real terms from $32 billion in 2000 to $54 billion in 2011 (UNCTAD 2013: 22). At the same time, the increase in the level of intra-African trade has been accompanied by a decrease in its share of total African trade from 19.3% in 1995 to 11.3% in 2011, due to the fact that African trade with the rest of the world grew by 12% annually during this period, much faster than intra-African trade, which registered a growth of 8.2% annually (ibid: 24). This share is relatively low if compared with other regions of the world: the average share of intra-African trade between 2007 and 2011 was about 11%, compared to 21% for Latin America and the Caribbean and 70% for Europe.

Among the factors that inhibit an expansion in intra-African trade are the weal supply response to regional market opportunities and lack of export competitiveness. Firms in most African countries find it difficult to produce competitively, as they face high production costs due to poor access to production factors such as electricity, credit, skilled labour and other inputs (ibid: 61). Moreover, transaction costs, namely transport and insurance costs, are very high (UNCTAD 2009), and the continent has the highest costs for transporting goods in the world. Intra-African trade is also faced with relatively high non-tariff barriers in the form of price controls, product standards, discriminatory foreign exchange allocation imposition of quotas and so on (UNCTAD 2013: 61).

Peter Draper suggests to abandon the model offered by the EU for economic integration in the African continent, which is not appropriate to regional capacities and in some cases may do more harm than good, and to adopt limited regional economic integration agenda based on: the establishment of free trade areas; trade facilitation; and provisions of regional public goods, especially network services infrastructures (Draper 2012: 78). For the time being, the AU has launched a number of initiatives, including the adoption in January 2012 of an Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) and a Framework for Fast Tracking the Establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) (African Union 2012: 5-17).

It must be underlined that substantial economic activity in poor countries is not captured by official statistics and suffers from poorly designed policy on the basis of the assumption that informal economy is unproductive (Bauer 2000). As pointed out by UNCTAD, the consensus view that intra-African trade is very low is based on a comparison of the share of regional trade in total Africa trade to those of other continents, based on available official data (UNCTAD Africa Report 2013). Although there are no systematic statistics on informal cross-border trade (ICBT) in Africa, it is estimated that it represents 43% of official GDP, thus being almost equivalent to the formal sector (OECD 2009). Among the explanatory factors, there are existing price disparities between formally and informally traded goods and transaction costs arising from compliance with regulatory requirements; obstruction of formal entry or exit of certain goods; a high degree of corruption and the requirement of facilitation payments along official border posts due to low law enforcement (ibidem). Finally, other significant factors are the degree of availability of certain good, the quality of roads and transport infrastructures and the existence of trust-based networks (i.e. linked to clan or ethnicity groups) among traders (ibidem). The high share of informal trade, coupled with the insufficient or incorrect data, compounds the difficulty for governments, regional organizations and external partners in addressing trade barriers in sub-Saharan Africa.

4.1.3. Regional trade integration in Southern-, East- and West Africa

Starting with Southern Africa, the private sector is seen as the driving force behind regional development and one pivotal role of SADC is to facilitate regional trade through various liberalization schemes (Matlosa 2006: 7-8). The SADC Trade Protocol was signed in 1996, calling for a removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers. Later, RISDP set time-bound targets for the trade-driven regional integration but so far, only the Free Trade Area has been achieved. Significant challenges have emerged in the trade integration process, for example related to the reduction of trade barriers, which contributed to the failure to launch the SADC Customs Union in 2010 (TRALAC 2012). Therefore, intra-SADC's export share of the total exports declined from 11% in 2000 to 9,5% in 2006. Also, about 70% of total intra-SADC trade involves South Africa (Chigwada and Pamacheche 2012: 98-102), signifying a highly asymmetrical trade pattern. Due to the neo-liberal dominance, SADC tends to ignore the informal

dimension of trade, despite its 40% share of total trade in the region, due to its perceived illegal character and the consequent perspective that it should not be facilitated (SARDC 2008). The SADC has lately shown a growing interest in the ICBT-sector and started to open up for interaction with relevant CSOs, for example the newly-established Southern Africa Cross Border Traders Association (SACBTA), which seeks to lobby SADC for recognition of the needs of informal crossborder traders. Despite this, SADC mainly works with business organizations such as the Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry, dealing with the movement of goods, productivity and investment; and regional think tanks such as Trades Centre, assisting SADC in policy-making related to trade facilitation, at the expense of engagement with CSOs advocating for social rights and trade justice (Godsäter 2013a).

In East Africa, similar to the process of regional integration in Southern Africa, the core elements of the resurrected EAC are the adoption of a trade regime and cooperation in trade liberalization, manifested in the sequence of Customs Union; Common Market; Monetary Union; and Political Federation (Nixdorf 2013). The EAC States have indeed been implementing a Customs Union since 2005 but the Common Market is not yet in full bloom. The problem is that the Member States are not moving forward with policy harmonization, reluctant to phase out barriers to trade. In fact, intra-regional exports are higher compared with SADC but still only 19%. Also, due to the different levels of development among the EAC-States, deeper integration might increase the intra-regional inequalities instead of promoting equitable growth (Matambalya 2012). At the same time as formal trade between EAC-partners has not expanded significantly, ICBT is on the rise. However, the trade integration facilities at borders, albeit still dysfunctional, such as easing customs procedures and tax reduction for products produced within the community, are not very accessible for small-scale traders. In practice, little is done by the EAC to facilitate ICBT, despite being a considerable trade potential in the region (Nixdorf 2013).

As is the case of the previous sub-regions, regional trade integration in West Africa also follows the neo-liberal, sequential (read European) model of integration. The challenges for doing this are also similar. Being hesitant to transfer sovereignty to the regional level, Member States have never seriously considered harmonizing their economic policies (Hartmann 2013). Ambitious objectives linked to free movements of persons and goods, the progressive harmonization of customs barriers and a single monetary zone have not materialised. Consequently, the amount of intra-regional trade is still insignificant and makes up only 11% of total exports. Economic relations to third States are more important and the main trade partner for ECOWAS is the EU (Igue 2011). In terms of ICBT, the volume is significant, even if the role of the informal sector in cross-border trade in the regions development is controversial (Goura 2011). For example, it is claimed that ICBT contributes to the suffocation of local formal business. Most countries continue to disregard the informal aspects of trade. By consequence, there is no incentive to inform informal traders about regional trade schemes, which results in a situation where traders lacks knowledge about policies guiding cross-border trading (Olabisi Yusuff 2014).

4.2   Security

4.2.1   Regional security integration in Europe
After the failing attempt to establish a European Defence Community in 1950s, the EU has defined its own specific framework for action in the fields of security and defence through the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as a part of its Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. The first phase of security integration was characterised by basic institution building, the creation of fundamental structures as well as the definition and implementation of

civilian and military capability headline goals. The adoption of the European Security Strategy in December 2003 represented a key step towards identification of the main challenges and threats the EU must be able to face to be a credible actor in a changed international environment. Simultaneously, since the launch of its operative phase in 2003, a number of different ESDP deployments have been initiated, among which many have already been successfully completed. So far 22 civilian missions, 9 military operations and one civilian-military action have been conducted by the EU. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on the 1st of December 2009 has opened new perspectives for the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Among the most innovative provisions, we can name: the nomination of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice President of the Commission in change with External Action, who is also the Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Council; the creation of an European External Action Service; the establishment of Permanent Structured Cooperation in the area of defence, through which willing and able EU Member States would work together to improve their military capabilities; the improvement of the European Parliament's role in the field of security and defence.

Despite the EU's relatively nascent history in the field of defence and security policy, a particular demand directed explicitly towards the EU for more civilian and military security commitment has been emerging, both at the regional and at the global level. Two reasons for the attractiveness of operational ESDP/CSDP has been the comparatively high political credibility and impartiality of European institutions and representatives and the breadth of the political, economic and operative instruments at its disposal. However, recent setbacks at the decision-making level have significantly undermined the EU's credibility as a regional and global security actor (the divisions on the intervention in Iraq in 2003, the split over the Kosovo's recognition in 2008 or the vote on Libya in 2011, the inability to play a strong role in response to the recent conflicts in Syria, Ukraine and Libya to name just a few). The unanimity rule, together with the lack of an integrated headquarters in Brussels to plan and conduct missions abroad and uneven financial mechanisms for military operations, continues to impact negatively on the ability of the EU to guarantee effective and timely action in crisis scenarios.

Looking at the role played by non-governmental actors in this field, it is worth noting that the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC), a key body responsible for peace and security matters in the EU Council, invites to its meetings experts from CSOs in order to have opinions from the ground on specific countries and regions on an ad hoc basis. CSOs contributes to EU activities in peace and security in the sectors of early warning (through the EU open-source intelligence platforms such as Tariqa 3), training (such as the Europe's New Training Initiative for Civilian Crisis Management (ENTRi) funded by the European Commission since 2011) and mediation (the European Resources for Mediation Support (ERMES) facilitates EU support to third parties engaged in inclusive peace mediation and dialogue processes). Nevertheless, despite positive examples and formal commitments on the engagement of civil society actors, security and defence matters in the EU are still monopolized by institutional stakeholders.

4.2.2. Regional security integration in Africa

The concept of providing "African solutions to African problems" underlines the identity dimension of security issues in Africa (Makinda and Okumu, 2008). This approach is perceived as part of the "African renaissance" during the twenty-first century, which refers to the revival and renewal of the continent through the maximum use of its resources, and the imperative for Africa to assume responsibility for its own future

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(Francis 2006). However, it also derives from external factors, such as the progressive disengagement of external actors from Africa during the 1990s (Ba 2006). As a result, the AU has progressively securitized the pan-African project, both through the deployment of a number of AU peacekeeping missions and by the ongoing establishment of a new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The APSA envisages cooperation on prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa between the AU and five sub-regional entities (ECOWAS, SADC, EAC, CEN-SAD and AMU) and is designed to include both an institutional structure (the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and a Panel of the Wise (PoW)) and an operational arm (a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the African Stand-by Force (ASF)), as well as a Peace Fund.

The CEWS shall consist of a Situation Room located at the AU Commission in Addis Ababa and responsible for data collection and analysis on the basis of an early warning indicators. The Situation Room has been established, but its daily use is still challenged by the lack of reliable network infrastructure and its coordination with regional units, which shall collect and process data, is still insufficient..

The PoW is composed of five highly respected African personalities, one from each geographic African region, who made outstanding contribution to the cause of peace, security and development on the continent. The PoW's mandate is focused on conflict prevention and it is designed to both provide advice and undertake action. For the time being, the Panel has not succeeded in translating its intentions into effective mediation actions. Positive developments are that PoW has recently established Mediation Guidelines with AU and sub-regional organizations and a review of the Continental Conflict Prevention Framework. However, the relationship between the Panel of the Wise and the mediation mechanisms developed by some RIGOs remain unclear and in some instances, the positions taken by AU and RIGOs were distant or even contradictory, such in the cases of recent crises in Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire.

The ASF should be composed by stand-by multidisciplinary contingents (civilian, military and police) to be rapidly deployed at appropriate notice. Through the ASF, the AU should be able to conduct observation and monitoring missions and classical PSOs, but also interventions in Member States in case of grave circumstances, preventive deployment and peacebuilding. AU, ECOWAS, ECCAS and SADC have made substantive progress. However, operational capacity remains limited vis-à-vis raising demand and expectations. ASF still suffers from resource deficiencies in terms of staffing and logistics; scarce absorption capacity of external founding; lack of synergy between continental and regional structures; imbalances between and within regional arrangements.

The Peace Fund has been created with the view to provide the necessary financial resources for peace support operations and other operational activities. However, only a small percentage of the already limited AU budget is allocated to the Peace Fund. Moreover, a number of AU Member States have difficulties in honouring their financial obligations, jeopardizing efforts to make AU institutions work effectively and maintaining them heavily dependent on external funding (Pirozzi 2009:16).

In terms of interaction between AU institutions and non-governmental actors, the AU Peace and Security Council adopted in December 2008 the so-called Livingston Formula, according to which it may call upon CSOs to organize and undertake activities in the areas of peace and security (African Union 2008). Unfortunately, such activities have not been implemented on a regular basis. As regards the operationalization of APSA, CSOs provide training on specific security issues (the African Peace Support Trainers' Association (APSTA) is active since 2002) and

mediation techniques (such as in the case of the AU Mediation Support Capacity project) (Miranda, Pirozzi and Schaefer 2012:11). However, as on the EU side, civil society still plays a marginal role in decision-making on peace and security issues.

4.2.3. Regional security integration in West Africa

Among the African RIGOs, ECOWAS is probably the most advanced in terms of integration in the field of security and defence. Civil wars in States such as Liberia and Sierra Leone have prompted ECOWAS to develop a security architecture. The Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was created 1990 in order to intervene in military conflicts before they spread to the rest of the region. It did manage to stop the violence in the Liberian civil war (Söderbaum 2001) and 'maintained a semblance of order in other war-raved countries' (Olonisakin 2009: 106). In 1999, the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security formed the core of a more comprehensive peace and security architecture, including human security (Gandois 2013: 197). Furthermore, in 2008 ECOWAS introduced the Conflict Prevention Framework (CPF), addressing the structural causes of conflict, and in 2010 ECOWAS was the first RIGO to set up a functioning regional brigade (Gandois 2013). Another success of ECOWAS is its engagement in the resolution of political crises in the region (Igue 2011; Piccolino and Minous 2014).

Civil society interaction with ECOWAS is notable in the field of peace and security (Gandois 2013) and CSOs have made a great impact on the broadening of the security paradigm. Important regional actors are Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP). These, and other, CSOs play a key role in ECOWAS, for example in the implementation of the Early-Warning System and the Small-Arms Control Program as well as developing the CPF (Olonisakin 2009). It should be mentioned that CSOs such as CDD and WANEP originally contested the traditional state-centric view of security, but were later drawn into the ECOWAS agenda (Iheduru 2014). This raises serious questions about the independence of regional CSOs and ECOWAS tolerance for more critical voices.'

4.3. Environment

4.3.1. Regional environment integration in Europe

Environmental policy is a central area of the European integration process since the 1970s, when the first Environmental Action Programme was agreed by the EEC. Since then, an impressive body of environmental legislation (over 200 pieces) has been developed in the EU framework. The protection of the environment has become a common policy objective embedded in the 1986 Single European Act and upgraded in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, climate change policy remains a shared competence between the Union, primarily the European Commission with its Directorate-Generals (DGs) on Environment and Climate Action, and its Member States (European Commission 2013).

The environmental policy of the EU has been formulated in a series of EU Environmental Action Programmes, the last of which (the sixth) was in force until year 2012. On March 2010, the European Commission inaugurated the Europe 2020 Strategy, which integrate environmental protection issues in the overarching EU development strategy. Among the priorities of the Strategy, there is a strong

commitment on resource efficiency and biodiversity protection. In 2007, the EU unilaterally committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 20% below 1990 levels by 2020. In the Strategy, there is an openness to further increase its target to 30% by 2020, Other objectives include low carbon emissions, creating new green technologies, raising the share of renewable energy sources to 20% measured in terms of actual final consumption and increasing energy efficiency by 20%.

The main challenge remains implementation. In particular over the last two decades, the EU has put a lot of effort into developing effective domestic policies in climate change and global environmental governance in general. The Europe 2020 Strategy proposes stricter reviews and controls of the national reform programmes, with a view to ensuring that they have been aligning themselves with the Strategy (Papadaki 2012).

Both the decision-making and the implementation process of EU legislation in the field of environment is influenced by non-governmental actors, in particular environmental NGOs, industries and citizens exercising their participatory rights. DG Environment at the European Commission can be described as one of the most open DGs for external interests (Cruce 2011:9). Other points of entrance are the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), in particular those in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), which have regular contacts with interests groups and, also due to the lack of resources, rely on the expertise of NGOs in this field (Cruce 2011:10). Environmental NGOs have worked in the past both through public campaign, for example the big joint campaign on the EU Climate Package between Climate Action Network Europe (CAN Europe), Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and WWF, and traditional lobbying (Cruce 2011:11).

4.3.2. Regional environment integration in Africa

On the African side, some efforts have been undertaken to boost regional cooperation at continental level in the field of environment, but there are still many challenges to overcome for a unified framework. To this end, an Action Plan for the Environment Initiative has been established in 2003 in the framework of NEPAD as the guiding document for AU/NEPAD's activities in the fields of environment and climate change. The overall objective of the Action Plan is to improving environmental conditions in Africa as a pre-condition for economic growth and poverty eradication, building Africa's capacity to implement regional and international environmental agreements and to effectively addressing African environmental challenges (Action Plan for the Environment Initiative 2003). It comprises six programme areas (combating land degradation, drought and desertification; conserving Africa's wetlands; addressing invasive alien species; protecting marine, coastal and freshwater resources; combating climate change; and trans-boundary management of natural resources) and three cross-cutting issues (health and environment, poverty and environment and transfer of technology) (ibidem).

A crucial role in its implementation is played by African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN). Established in 1985 to strengthen cooperation between African governments in order to halt the degradation of Africa's environment and satisfy the food and energy needs of the continent's people, it has been recently revitalized in conjunction with NEPAD. It is expected that AMCEN would ultimately become a Specialized Technical Committee (STC) of the African Union Commission. Its tasks include promoting awareness and consensus on global and regional environmental issues; developing common positions to guide African representatives in international environmental negotiations; reviewing and monitoring environmental programmes at

the regional, sub-regional and national levels; and building African capacity in the field of environmental management.

In the last 20 years, the number of CSOs participating in environment and development issues in Africa has grown considerably and started to engage more actively (UNEP, nd.). They have successfully negotiated a place in the AU and NEPAD and played an important role in the development of AU protocols on critical issues such as biosafety, genetic resources and the rights of women (ibidem). They vary considerably in scope and scale: of particular importance has been the development of networks, including different types of CSOs, sometimes in partnership with business, governments and multilateral organizations, like the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and the African Stockpile Programme (ibidem).

4.3.3. Regional environment integration in East Africa

Even though regional environmental governance in Africa is generally rather fragmented, there are nevertheless signs of growing inter-state co-operation at the sub-regional level on issues such as biodiversity and climate change (Compagnon, Florémont and Lamaud 2011). EAC is the most important example of this. During the past ten years or so, a number of initiatives have been taken by East African States to regionally manage common environmental challenges, in particular on the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB). EAC has adopted a number of legal instruments and regional institutions, programmes and projects dealing with the management of natural resources in the LVB. For example, in 2003 the Summit signed the Protocol for Sustainable Development of the Lake Victoria Basin, enacting regional legislation on environment and natural resource management. Consequently, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission became operational in 2004, providing policy guidance in relation to promoting sustainable use of the lake resources and coordinating development activities in the area (Kimani 2007). The most important regional project under the LVBC is the so-called Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP), with a holistic approach towards the environmental management of the LVB (Okurut and Othero 2012). The second phase (LVEMP II) was launched in 2005 with focus on the collaborative management of trans-boundary natural resourcesand had an explicit objective of feeding into the overall regional integration agenda (Delputte and Söderbaum 2012). Another major player in regional environmental governance in East Africa is the Lake Victoria Fishery Organization (LVFO), a technical regional organisation under the EAC responsible for coordinating and managing fisheries resources of Lake Victoria (Godsäter 2013b). LVEMP and LVFO are considered to have contributed enormously to EACs knowledge of the LVB environment as well poverty reduction around the lake (Okurut and Othero 2012). Lastly, it should be mentioned that EAC recently adopted a Climate Change Policy, which addresses the adverse impacts of climate change in the region, (EAC 2011).

The LVBC and LVFO work closely with the regional private sector and civil society, which have great interest in the development of the LVB. However, it should be noted that the various regional institutions within EAC have shown collaborative interest only for those sections within civil society that remain compliant with their business, providing service and policy advice. Two important examples are Osienala Friends of Lake Victoria and East African Communities' Organization for Management of Lake Victoria Resources (ECOVIC). The fact that other, more critically inclined CSOs such as the East African Sustainability Watch Network (EASWN) are relatively excluded seriously compromises the legitimacy of EAC (Godsäter 2013b).

5. Comparing regionalism in Europe and Africa

As outlined above, EU and AU presents many commonalties in terms of institutional architecture. Moreover, as recognized by the 2007 Joint Africa–EU Strategy, the two organizations also share principles and strategic objectives (Joint Africa-EU Strategy 2007). Nevertheless, if we look at the reality of their achievements in terms of development and implementation of policies in the three fields analyzed above – trade, environment and security – striking differences emerge. It must be recognized that the two organizations evolved at different pace, being the AU a much younger organization than the EU. Moreover, the integration process in the two regions is confronted with dif-ferent challenges: while the EU acts in a relatively stable and peaceful context, the AU has to ad-dress problems ranging from extreme poverty, endemic war, serious health issues such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and ebola, poor state governance and severe radicalization phenomena.

In the field of trade, the EU stands as the largest market and most integrated region in the world thanks to the realization of the single market and the EMU. Both these projects have been recently challenged and put into question: while some Member States oppose the completion of the single market in sectors such as financial services, defence and energy, the economic and financial crisis erupted in 2008 has shown the fragility of the EMU and the stability of the euro. Africa has estab-lished the ambitious goals of establishing Continental Free Trade Agreement by 2017 and a conti-nental common market by 2028, but these objectives are far from being reached. The low level of intra-African trade accounts for a failure of past attempt to realize market integration in the conti-nent and the estimations about a percentage of informal trade being almost equivalent to the formal sector row against the aspirations of policy-makers to demolish trade barriers in sub-Saharan Africa. While many experts question the validity of the market integration model for the African continent, it continues to be regarded by most African leaders as the solution for a progressive integration of Africa in the world economy. The EU is also quite advanced in the regulation of environmental is-sues and develop an impressive amount of legislation to address climate change, both at domestic level in its Member States and through the setting of international standards. The AU has shown some activism in this field lately, especially through the establishment of the AU/NEPAD Action Plan for the Environment Initiative and the identification of key actors in its implementation. In the field of security, the EU remains anchored to the inter-governmental logic and the unanimity rule in the decision-making process, which resulted in a non-linear process of integration and the partial realization of the aspirations of the Treaties to develop a truly common security and defence policy. The AU has set ambitious goals for the resolution of crises and conflicts on the continent through dedicated structures, a continental force to conduct peace support operations, as well as adequate and predictable financial resources. Nevertheless, its ability to cope with security challenges in the region is still hampered by human resource deficiencies; scarce absorption capacity of external founding and persisting imbalances between continental and regional structures.

The role of informal processes of integration – such as in the case of trans-boundary informal trade – and civil society participation – which are more substantial in fields such as environment and less developed in sectors like security and defence – allow to identify significant margins of improvement for African regionalism. The main challenge lies on the capacity of continental institutions to address governance issues at national level and build a conducive environment for commitment and participation in the integration project.

There are many common denominators between regionalism in the three African sub-regions of this study. First of all, regional integration is essentially based on economic, trade related premises, with the aim of increasing intra-regional trade among the members of the respective organizations. Hence, trade liberalization schemes and monetary convergence have been on center stage in the creation of various regional governance mechanisms. It should be mentioned that this enthusiasm only concerns formal trade. ICBT, regardless of its scope, is generally looked at with suspicion and the link between poverty reduction and informal trade is not acknowledged. However, with its increasing focus on regional security, West Africa deviates slightly from this picture. ECOWAS and its Member States have worked hard to put in place advanced regional security architecture and have been reasonably successful in hindering internal conflicts from spilling over to other countries. The political leaders have slowly developed a regional understanding of peace and security agreeing that stability in the region can only occur if resources and peacebuilding efforts are pooled. In terms of the environment, it is generally of low relevance in regional governance, but EAC stands out in this regards. EAC has developed a rather sophisticated regional framework in the environmental field, to a large extent geographically linked to the LVB. The political leaders have gradually come to the conclusion that managing the lake resources must be done in a collaborative fashion.

Secondly, regional integration is a slow process in all three regions, of which one manifestation is the low level of intra-region trade, ranging from 9,5% in Southern Africa to 19% in East Africa. The Member States are, to a large extent, hesitant to give up part of their sovereignty to the regional level, making it very hard to harmonize trade-related policies, but also concerning security. Such state-centrism is linked to, thirdly, a general suspicion towards the role of civil society in regional integration, despite grand declarations stating the opposite. In the trade field are CSOs exceptionally excluded, for example in terms of SADC. In the security area, and to some extent also in the environmental field, CSOs are more included. On the whole, however, regionalism is highly top-down giving little space for popular involvement.

6.   Interregionalism between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa

The relations between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa seem to cover almost the full spectrum of possible definitions of interregionalism systematized by Francis Beart et al. (Beart, Scaramagli and Söderbaum 2014: 4-6). In this paper, we use the following categories to exemplified interregionalism between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa: (1) pure interregionalism, which develops between two clearly identifiable regional organizations within an institutional framework; (2) interregional relations between one regional organization and a regional group; (3) transregionalism, which refers to transantional (non-state) relations, including transnational networks of corporate production or of NGOs; (4) quasi-interregionalism, which is used to describe relations between a regional organization/regional group and a third country in another region.

6.1   Pure interregionalism

The European Community has already started to watch Africa while it took its first steps on the path of integration, as witnessed by the Schumann Declaration of 9 May 1950, which stated, if "[...] will be able to count on the strengthening of resources, Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks: the development of the African continent". The concept of a Euro-African partnership has evolved over time:

the initial approach of a mainly institutional type, based on the donor-recipient logic of the Yaoundé I (1963, 1969) and Lomé (1975, 1979, 1984, 1990) Conventions, has gradually evolved into a more balanced partnership to be pursued in the field of development cooperation (Cotonou Convention, 2000).

In the last 15 years, the creation of the African Union produced an increasing interaction with the EU, which has been modelled on a comprehensive ''continent-to-continent'' dialogue. In 2000, the Cairo EU-Africa Summit set in motion a structured political dialogue, which was reinforced by the 2005 EU Strategy for Africa, the first attempt to establish a single framework for continental engagement. These first steps were mainly characterized by unilateral European efforts to design a credible approach to African development and security challenges, without the effective involvement of African actors. This severely undermined the pursuit of a frank and cooperative political dialogue, reaffirming a traditional and unequal donor-recipient relationship and fuelling African mistrust of proposed actions. To overcome these problems, the new Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) was adopted at the Lisbon Summit in December 2007, guided by the principles of ownership and joint responsibility and aimed at taking the Africa-EU relationship to a more ambitious strategic level, with a strengthened political partnership and enhanced cooperation in all fields. The JAES can be considered the capstone doctrine of European Union-Africa relations, consolidated in about fifty years of trade and development cooperation. At the same time, it is characterized by an enhanced focus on political aspects of Africa-EU relations, with a special attention to regional instability, crises and conflicts.

The two Action Plans, adopted for 2008-2010 and 2011-2013 in order to operationalize the JAES, as well as a Roadmap adopted for 2014-2016, took stock of this evolution and identified priorities for cooperation, the first of which is peace and security. AU-EU relations on peace and security matters take place in different frameworks and at various levels, including Africa-EU summits held every three years; joint meetings between the EU PSC and the AU PSC and Africa-EU Defence Ministers meetings; annual Commission-to-Commission meetings between the European Commission and the AU Commission; contacts and meetings between ad hoc delegations from the European Parliament and the Pan-African Parliament. Moreover, a Joint Expert Group on Peace and Security involving AU and EU representatives has been created, but it had little impact on the implementation of the partnership due to lack of expertise and resources. An Implementation Team on Peace and Security has also been established by the EU, with a view to gather together all the relevant actors involved in the Africa-EU Partnership, both in the Commission and in the EEAS. A dedicated intergovernmental working group dealing with Africa (COAFR) is tasked with preparatory work for PSC opinions. This sort of EU Architecture for Peace and Security in Africa (EU APSA) has also been affected by the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. In terms of political dialogue, a crucial role is assigned to the HR/VP and the Managing Director for Africa in the framework of the EEAS, especially toward the Chairman of the AU Commission and with the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security. The role of the EU Delegation in Addis Ababa has also been reinforced in the new system by appointing a double-hatted Head of Delegation/Special Representative for the AU, by enhancing its autonomy in managing and disbursing funds, and by creating a specific section in the Delegation dealing with peace and security issues. At the operational level, the EU has committed relevant financial and technical resources to help the AU in the process of developing a CEWS and sustains the development of AU mediation capacities, especially through its support to the PoW. Moreover, the EU channelled its support to AU civilian and military missions mainly through the African Peace Facility, a financial instrument that allocates €300 million to African Peace Support Operations (PSOs) and capacity-building for the period 2008-2013. In terms of capacity-building, the EU's support is directed mainly towards the operationalization of the ASF, which

should be composed by stand-by multidisciplinary contingents (civilian, military and police) to be rapidly deployed at appropriate notice.

Other forms of pure interregionalism can be found in the EU's relations with ECOWAS, SADC and EAC.The cooperation between EU and ECOWAS dates back to the 70s, the former trying to support development and integration in West Africa. However, originally the EEC was significantly conditioned by France, resulting in most regional funds going to the Francophone regional cooperation in terms of CEAO. The trend of supporting regional integration among the French-speaking countries continued throughout the 90s, at the same time as a more all-encompassing regional process evolved in West Africa with the development of ECOWAS, which called the increasing attention of the EU. Hence, the 9th and 10th EDF have marked a break with previous EU support to regional integration in West Africa, targeting West Africa as a whole. From being neglected, ECOWAS has gradually become the most important regional counterpart to the EU, attracting the majority of donor funds (Piccolino and Minou 2014). Traditionally, the EU has focused on economic integration and support to trade, which attracts the bulk of EDF-funds but has increasingly targeted ECOWAS conflict management activities. Even though 70% of the money deployed in the last EDF goes to deepening regional integration, improving competitiveness and European Partnership Agreements (EPAs), with the objective to support the establishment of a common market and the creation of the custom union in order to facilitate trade with and within West Africa, regional security, stability and peace building has become a strong sector (EU 2008a). With regards to the EPA between EU and West African states, an agreement seems to have been signed as of January 2014. However, West African states fall under three different trade regimes vis-à-vis the EU, resulting in fragmentation of West African trade relations with the EU. This can negatively affect regional, ECOWAS-led integration in West Africa (Piccolino and Minou 2014). Similarly, European aid has historically spurred the development of a multitude of overlapping and sometimes competing RIGOs (ibid).

In terms of the security aspect of ECOWAS, since 1995 the EU has acknowledged ECOWAS as an important regional security organization dealing with conflicts and developments in the region. Joint declarations and statements have created an image of partnership between EU and ECOWAS in the security field. Ministerial EU-ECOWAS meetings have been held annually or biannually since 2000 (Nivet 2006). Funding through the EDF has increasingly been channeled to ECOWAS conflict management. Interestingly here, the EU policy and discursive influence on ECOWAS as mainly taken place in the economic integration area, which agenda remains deeply shaped by the EU, understanding economic integration as a linear process modeled along EU experience. However, in the security area, it is more uncertain to what extent the EU has been influential of the evolving security agenda of ECOWAS. Some scholars, for example Lucia (2012) believes that the EU is more or less exporting its political values and security norms in its relationship with ECOWAS. Other scholars, such as Piccolino and Minou, want to nuance the EU direct influence arguing that "to the extent that regional integration has contributed to conflict transformation in West Africa, this process has been driven mainly by West Africans themselves" (2014: 24).

As for interregional relations between the EU and SADC, according to one scholar, "[…] the EUs economic hegemony over the region, entrenched through massive financial assistance, has effectively locked SADC into Brussels' sphere of influence" (Qobo 2012:251). In fact, the EU contributes with 25% of total funding to SADC in 2008 (Buzdugan 2013). In the 10th EDF, through the EU-SADC Regional Strategy Paper and Regional Indicative Programme 2008-2013, 80% is earmarked for assistance to regional economic integration (EU 2008b). The EU seeks to influence the path of regionalism in SADC towards a customs and monetary union, in line with conventional

neo-liberal discourse of trade liberalization and macroeconomic convergence, seeing itself as the model for regional integrating (Buzdugan 2013). Asymmetrical aid relations between SADC, the EU and other donors have been institutionalized over the years, especially after 2001 when SADC embarked on a major restructuring process. As one component of this process, in 2003 the SADC created a Joint SADC-ICP Task Force (JTF), which intends to coordinate donors and their counterparts within the Secretariat (ibid). The EC is responsible for trade and institutional development on the JTF (Tjönneland 2008). Through the JTF, donors participate in budget programming and joint project planning with SADC and have direct input on policy and strategy (Buzdugan 2013). One idea behind restructuring SADC has been to increase SADC ownership of regional integration through better coordination and alignment. There are worrying signs of the opposite (Tjönneland 2008: 25). Regarding trade, the EU is SADC's largest trading partner. The value of SADC exports to the EU account for 30% of total exports and the equivalent value for imported goods from the EU is 29%. Up until now, in trading with EU under the Lomé Conventions, the SADC States enjoyed preferential non-reciprocal access to the EU-market. Through the EPA-negotiations with SADC members, the EU seems to further "lock in neoliberalism" regionalism in Southern Africa through promoting trade liberalization and open regionalism (Hurt 2012: 507). Furthermore, the EPA-negotiations have severely hampered regional integration in Southern Africa in terms of dividing the SADC-Member States into four separate negotiating blocks, creating their own separate trade paths with Europe, showing once more the strong EU influence over regional integration in Southern Africa (Qobo 2012: 260).

Looking at EU-EAC negotiation, from the 80s the EU has evolved as a major funder of regional integration and development in East Africa under the EDF, but the majority of projects were originally implemented by national States and non-state actors. With the 9th EDF, coinciding with the rebirth of the EAC, funding has been transformed from national projects into support for the regional integration efforts as well as the EPA process (EU 2008b). Up until today, facilitating commercial integration, besides EPAs, has dominated EU's promotion of regionalism (Theron and Ntasano 2014). The Regional Indicative Programme for East and Southern African and the Indian Ocean, in which EU's support for East African regionalism is situated, highlights two focal areas: economic integration and political cooperation. Focusing on formal trade, the former received the lion's share of the funding in the last EDF, 85%, compared with 10% for regional political activities and 5% for non-focal areas (EU 2008b). EAC's market-oriented type of regionalism seems to adopt EU's neo-functional approach without questioning the applicability of the European model in a post-colonial East African context, which is problematic (Bachmann and Sidaway 2010).

Of all external trading partners, the EU is the most important one for EAC (de Zamaróczy 2012). Since 2003, the EAC has been engaged in EPA-negotiations with the EU to replace the previous non-reciprocal trade preferences between the two regions with new trading arrangements which should not only foster interregional free trade but also regional integration and development (Marinov 2013). From 2007, the EAC EPA group has been comprised of the five members of EAC and is the only EPA-grouping in Africa which corresponds with a regional organization. A full EPA has not yet been concluded partly due to the fact that the EAC has demanded binding commitment from the EU on development assistance in order to put in place development safety nets to support the required economic adjustments (Lorenz-Carl 2013). In fact, the EAC "…has managed to develop a position towards the EU that lies beyond a simple stereotype of a weak negotiation party from the South" (ibid: 70).

Even though the main priority for EUs support to East African regionalism is regional economic co-operation, one dimension of this is natural resources and environment.

The Indicative Programme aims to "support the region to improve land and water resources management" (EU 2008b: 45). Consequently, the EAC may receive resources for environment-related activities allocated to regional economic integration. However, the total amount of 10th EDF resources allocated to environmental activities is very modest in comparison with the overall financial envelope (Durán and Morgera 2012). Anyway, from 2000 the EU has supported a series of regional projects that deal with environmental degradation and enhanced food production in the LVB (Delputte and Söderbaum 2012). One specific intervention was the funding of bridging phase activities between LVEMP I and II (Okurut and Othero 2012). However, by comparison to other donors the EU is not a prominent funder in the environment field in East Africa (ibid). There are signs that the EU wants to play a more significant role in the environmental field in the future. In the 11th EDF 2014-2020 regional natural resource management no longer falls under the support to regional economic integration but constitutes a separate focal area.

6.2. Interregional relations between one regional organization and a regional group

Interregionalism between one regional organization and a regional group can observed in the trade relationship between the EU and ACP countries. This relationship was originally based upon the principle of preferential treatment, which was incompatible with WTO rules, and in particular with the rule on equal treatment for all members (Rudloff & Weinhardt 2011:1). Thus, in the 2000 Cotonou Agreement the two parties decided to negotiate new WTO-compatible trade arrangements (Cotonou Agreement 2000: Art. 36.1). As WTO provides for an exception to the equal treatment rule only for free trade areas, the EU and ACP countries engaged in negotiations of EPAs, which include the establishment of free trade areas between the EU and ACP groups.

EPAs differ from conventional free trade agreements because they focus on fostering economic development, including the provision of financial and technical assistance from the EU to ACP partners. Compared to previous EU-ACP agreements, EPAs commit the EU to open its market also to a number of agricultural products that were previously excluded from the free trade arrangements. Most importantly, previous arrangements were non-reciprocal agreements, thus ACP countries enjoyed free access to the EU market, but they could maintain high tariffs on imports from the EU. On the contrary, under EPAs ACP countries are also required to lower such tariffs (Rudloff & Weinhardt 2011:2).

As of October 2014, EPAs had been concluded with 49 ACP countries (ECDPM 2014:1). Among the most recent ones, in February 2014 an EPA has been concluded with the West Africa group. The agreement brings together 16 countries and two regional organizations: ECOWAS and UEMOA(European Commission, Overview of EPA negotiations). The ACP countries that have not concluded or ratified an EPA before October 2014 now fall under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which is a less favourable trade regime. However, those which are classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) fall under the Everything but Arms Initiative, which provides for full duty-free access to the market (the same as EPAs) (ECDPM 2014:5). The fact that nearly half of ACP countries (and most African countries) are classified as LDCs, and thus already enjoy complete duty-free access to the EU market, has acted against the rapid conclusion of EPAs (Rudloff & Weinhardt 2011:3).

Moreover, the idea that free trade is the best way to promote development, which seems to be the idea at the basis of EPAs, has often been questioned. It has been argued that the priority to promote development has been sidelined and the main aim

has been merely those of reaching an agreement that was compatible with WTO rules (Makhan 2009:146). There is also an asymmetric dependency between the two parties: the EU represents 30% of ACP's trade, while ACP countries account for only 3% of EU's trade (Rudloff & Weinhardt 2011:1). Finally, some claim that, instead of promoting regional integration, EPAs could hinder it. The problem is that, even if the 7 EPA groups were based upon existing ACP regional groupings, only ECOWAS and EAC (among all African regional economic communities) negotiated with all their members (for instance, the SADC EPA groups negotiated with only 7 out of 15 SADC members) (ECDPM 2014:4).

6.3. Transregionalism

Notable examples of transantional (non-state) relations are: the Europe Africa Policy Research Network, a network of African and European research institutes aiming to pooling and fostering policy research capacities, dialogue, information and partnership on issues relating to EU-Africa relations; the EU-Africa Economic and Social Stakeholders' Network, which brought together Representatives of employers, workers, farmers, consumers and players in the social economy and cooperatives from the two continents at the eve of the latest Africa-EU Summit in 2014 with a view to lay the foundations for regular and structured cooperation; the Africa-EU Intercontinental Civil Society Forum, which met in 2010 and 2013 in order to provide input from civil society for reform of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy. These fora are valuable settings for information-sharing and policy coordination among non-governmental actors alongside and beyond EU-Africa institutional cooperation. However, they suffer for the ad-hocism of meetings, high turnover of participants and lack of predictable resources, which hampered their effective impact in the creation of a sustainable interregional framework.

6.4. Quasi interregionalism

There are a number of examples of this specific interregional pattern in EU-sub-Saharan African relations, including among others the EU-South Africa relations in the field of trade. Since 1999, these relations have been regulated by a Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement (TDCA), which included a free trade area. In 2007, the EU and South Africa entered into a Strategic Partnership, which symbolizes the recognition by the EU of the important role played by South Africa at regional and international level. Since then, South African and EU's representatives have held regular summits and ministerial meetings. Another example of quasi-interregionalism is the security co-operation between France and ECOWAS. Since the end of the 90-s, France has actively supported and collaborated with ECOWAS in terms of conflict prevention and peace-building in West Africa. Some examples are provision of capacity-building support; training peacekeepers; undertaking joint training exercises; seconding military liaison officers; and jointly undertaking peacekeeping operations, such as the civil war in the Ivory Coast from 2002 and onwards (Chafer and Stoddard 2014).

7. Assessing EU-Africa interregionalism: a partnership among equals?

Andrew Hurrell (Hurrell 2007: 132) identifies three ways in which regionalist models come to be diffused around the world:

through regional competition
through teaching and support
and through conditionality.

An additional category that is particularly relevant in EU-sub-Saharan African relations is partnership.

The EU has heavily influenced the development of regionalism in Africa through teaching and support. For example, the EU has committed relevant financial and technical resources to help the AU in the process of developing its capacity in the field of peace and security, in particular through the African Peace Facility. Conditionality is at the heart of the EU-ACP relations. The EU has included political conditionality clauses in most of its international agreements since 1995, when the Lomé IV Convention has defined human rights, democracy and the rule of law as 'essential elements' of cooperation (Del Biondo, 2011:380). This means that, when partner countries do not respect such essential elements, the EU can suspend the agreement. The typical example of conditionality clause in agreements with ACP countries is now Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement (European Parliament, 2009:3). Such article have been invoked by the EU especially in cases of *coups d'état* or flawed elections (Del Biondo, 2011:381). Moreover, the Cotonou Agreement has extended conditionality, through Article 97, to good governance and corruption. Finally, EPAs contain clauses which allow for measures to be adopted according to Articles 96 and 97 of the Cotonou Agreement (European Parliament, 2009:3). Criticism raised towards conditionality clauses has to do both with their effectiveness (Faust, 2013:1) and the EU's consistency in implementing them (Del Biondo, 2011:390). Finally, the 2007 JAES has the declared objective to take the Africa-EU relationship to a more ambitious strategic level by establishing a "partnership among equals" and enhancing cooperation on jointly identified priorities. However, it seems that this principle is still struggling between rhetoric and facts.

In terms of EU-RIGOs relations, the EU is very dominant in all three regions and fits the teaching and support category above well. The relationship between the EU and SADC, EAC and ECOWAS respectively is fundamentally characterized by the former influencing regional policy of, and providing funds and capacity building to, the latter. Being the most important donor for the above RIGOs, having a strong impact on policy-making, the EU more or less exports the European model of sequential economic integration. In terms of regional integration in Southern Arica, it is evident that donors, of which the EU is most prominent, coordinate and lay the policy foundation for many facets of SADC-led integration. Regional security in West Africa, being more internally grown, is an exception. It seems as if the many similarities between the EU and ECOWAS understanding of conflict prevention which stems from shared norms among peacebuilding practitioners. Furthermore, in terms of EUs support to regional integration in all three regions, the commercial, market-oriented approach towards regional integration is explicit in the Indicative plans for Eastern and Southern Africa and Western Africa. The bulk of the EDF funds go to this area in comparison with, for example, social issues. Of course, this has a strong discursive impact on the (neo-liberal) view of regional integration on behalf of regional policy-makers. This is further strengthened through the EPA-negotiations which are used to 'lock in' liberalization

and macroeconomic policies within states, particularly in Southern Africa. However, it should be noted that some funds within the field of regional economic integration is deployed to activities related to environmental and climate change and it also seems like the EU will put more emphasis on regional natural resource management in the new EDF. In terms of ECOWAS, a decent share of the EDF funds is allocated to regional peace and security even if regional economic integration still dominates the funding portfolio. This means that EUs regional integration model, applied to Southern-, East- and West Africa, is not so biased towards economic integration as you might think.

Other forms of interregionalism, including the relations between the EU and African countries in the ACP group, and quasi interregionalism, in which regional organizations in Europe or Africa establish institutionalized partnerships with one States in the other continent, such as in the case of EU-South Africa and ECOWAS-France relations represent a relevant feature of interregional dynamics between EU and sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, an emerging transregionalism is gradually involving civil society actors from the business and NGO sectors in both Europe and Africa, which is still in the process to acquire the necessary capability to influence institutional constituencies.

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