

The European Union, regionalism, and world order: five scenarios

Mario Telò

Mario Telò : Professeur de Relations Internationales et Vice-Président de l'Institut d'études européennes de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles

Résumé :

This paper addresses the changing interplay between regional and global governance, with reference to five possible scenarios in the future shift of the international system. A 'new multilateralism' represents the only possible global framework consistent with an expanding and pluridimensional regional governance system. Furthermore, the weaknesses and contradictions of the alternative scenarios make a multilayered, more robust and legitimate multilateral governance more realistic.

1. An obsolete research agenda?

Is the regionalist and interregionalist agenda now obsolete, fit only to cope with the world of the 1990s? Is it an agenda typical of the 'liberal peace' illusions of the 1990s, now outdated in the 21st century?

In answering these questions, we should first address methodology; we will pursue a multidisciplinary research agenda through combining International Relations (IR) theory and European Union (EU) studies, global history, and synchronic analysis of the international system.

This methodology implies a shift away from systemic analysis towards a focus on single great powers, and I'm aware that the role of the systemic theory of international relations in my toolbox may appear quite provocative. However, the critical debate between H. Bull and M. Kaplan (influenced by D. Easton and T. Parsons) is over, with R. O. Keohane and S. Hoffmann on the one hand, and I. Wallerstein and R. Gilpin on the other, convincingly demonstrating that systemic theories can be meaningfully combined with historical research and with concrete comparative studies.

Openness in IR theories is a necessary first step, but is not enough on its own. There is also a need to focus on the external variables in EU integration studies, a clear break with decades of previously inward looking practice. Studying the international context was almost entirely irrelevant in the pioneering (inward looking) era of European integration studies, when the bipolar system framed the small, functionalist, Catholic European Community (EC). However the process of deepening (Treaties of 1957, 1987) and enlarging the European Community (in 1973, 1980 and 1986) already entailed relevant international implications. E. Haas, J. Nye and others since the 1960s have examined the regional cooperation from a comparatist perspective.

Even the then underdeveloped EC played an international role, for instance after the 1969 Hague summit and the fledging initiative by Willy Brandt and Georges Pompidou (East-West and North-South relations). The most important European contribution to global governance was the good

example coming from the very heart of the continent: the reconciliation between Germany and France. The most important German philosopher of the 20th century J. Habermas argues that it is impossible to overestimate the Franco-German reconciliation.

What about the link between EU studies, globalization, and IR studies? After 1989, a new era opened for Europe in the global context. This explains the explosion of studies focused on the interplay between the EU and the rest of the world during the two last decades: the end of the USSR and of the reciprocal East-West nuclear threat, the Maastricht Treaty (1992), and the enhanced role of EU interaction with globalization (impact studies and International Political Economy (IPE) research about the EU imprint on the global environment).

The new transitional global context of this period offered the EU an opportunity to enhance its role within the post-Cold War international system in its state of flux: in just a few years the EU was able to grow up as a second global power thanks to the strength of its internal market, competition policy, single currency, external trade and development policies, network of association (hub and spokes), and incipient Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

The global economic and political system could also be analyzed as 'external variables' by considering regional entities and, notably, the EU. Reciprocally, research is exploring the bottom-up imprint of the EU and regional entities on both the local and global system.

The scale of the obstacles met both by the EU, and more generally by regions operating within the current model of globalization, has been compared with the mythical toil of Sisyphus. Stanley Hoffmann's 1995 book¹ first suggested this metaphor as pertinent to the European integration process (concluding with a problematic chapter: 'Goodbye to a united Europe?'). More recently, in 2009, the Albert Camus revival² reframed the EU as a novel global player twenty years after 1989/91: a regional entity in a very challenging multipolar world.

The EU is a regional entity, influencing global governance by its very existence in what is historically a highly controversial geographic space. The same applies for Asean, Mercosur and other regional groupings, whose main achievement is conflict prevention within previously hot regions. Furthermore, though the EU is both a global player and an unprecedented power, it is not a post-Westphalian and postmodern island; it has to co-exist with Westphalian logic within Europe, and particularly within other 'security complexes'³.

The EU now has to cope with the challenge of combining two kinds of interplay with the surrounding world and the global context: firstly, adjusting to a partially globalized but still largely Westphalian world; and secondly, shaping the conflicting globalization and continuous shift of global power, through both bottom-up influence and a large array of policies.

The shaping of global governance by example alone has proved to be an inadequate sole measure, as demonstrated by many commentators from A. Kojève, to Habermas and J. Delors. The classic idea of 'peace by good domestic governance' appears overly optimistic, considering both the remaining legacies of the Second World War and of the Cold War, and the potential future consequences of economic and political controversies.

While examining the increasing pressure of external variables we should carefully consider systemic factors, not by a deterministic approach, but rather by focusing on the room for maneuver – even if only tiny – for bottom-up (non-systemic), proactive contributions to global governance in the years

to come.

Within the context of the current heterogeneous international system, the EU and regional entities have little choice but to come to terms with the non-European parts of the world. As such, regional entities are essentially compelled to adjust to the Westphalian behavior of old and new powers.

2. A heterogeneous global system: alternative scenarios

Conversations about multipolarity have been almost trivialized by the emergence of China, India and Brazil, along with the revival of Russia and the consolidation of the sole remaining superpower, the United States (US). The true problem herein is the *kind* of multipolarity that is about to emerge, given the heterogeneity of the already mentioned powers, combined with the survival of Japan and the politicization of multiple regional entities starting with the EU. Let's look at the theoretical debate about the various scenarios within the international system through the last five decades, since the concept of 'system' was first applied to international relations.

Morton Kaplan mentions six possible international systems: 1) the historically evident Westphalian balance of power; 2) the flexible bipolar world of his time; 3) the eventual rigid bipolarism which subsequently emerged; 4) the possible proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (balancing and threatening each other); 5) the universalist system anticipated by I. Kant two centuries ago and repeatedly evidenced throughout human history; and finally, 6) the hierarchical global system based on one (democratic or authoritarian) single superpower⁴.

The most relevant Italian political philosopher of the 20th century, Norberto Bobbio mentions four scenarios in his 1991 book⁵: unipolar (or imperial), multipolar, anarchical, and universalist; whereas James Rosenau⁶ focuses on the bifurcation between a decentralized governance system (without government) and a hierarchical security system. In contrast, Björn Hettne, the main theoretician of 'new regionalism' addresses the existence of four international systems: unipolar, multipolar, plurilateralist (US-led), and multilateralist/ multiregional⁷.

'Multipolarity' is no more than an empirical description: what *kind* of multipolar structure could govern the emerging world system? Twenty years after the 1991 break down of the bipolar world, five main tendencies are emerging within the international system, although these tendencies are not yet consistent and stable scenarios. Each one presents both evidence and counter-evidence, and in some cases the models interplay and combine with each other. Only the last scenario is consistent with the current regional groupings and their process of strengthening multilateral cooperation. This may appear a pessimistic forecast regarding the ability of regionalism to impact upon global governance, but the multiple contradictions and internal weakness of the four other scenarios could make the fifth scenario less unrealistic. These scenarios are:

- The 'back to the future' scenario, which is a new global version of the classical European balance of power.
- The alliance of the US and China to form of a kind of 'G2': could the multipolar world be led by a duopoly?
- A new (post-Obama) unipolar trend based on a new US-led hegemonic stability.
- The scenario of a 'global fragmentation' forecasted by several economists, and political and social scientists.

- Finally, a pluralist multilateral world could emerge, including varying and conflicting approaches to multilateral cooperation: instrumental multilateralism, mini-lateralism and a European kind of multilateralism. Could the multipolarity be framed by a post-hegemonic, multilevel, pluralist multilateral cooperation?

3. Towards a new global version of the classical European balance of power

Empirical fact confirms the revival of 19th century-styled power politics in the form of the ‘imperial logics’ of traditional power politics⁸. Examples of this include the Georgian War of 2008 and the 2010 Russian strategy paper (‘NATO as the first threat’); the new Indian Security paper (‘Two fronts confrontation’, 2009); the Indian policy in Southern and Southeast Asia (Myanmar); the Chinese policies towards Tibet, Taiwan, Google, and the Nobel Peace Prize, all based on a rigid vision of the Westphalian principle of non-interference.

However, let’s first focus on the extensive evidence of heterogeneity between the main world powers, as well as of asymmetries in terms of demography, military and economics. Table 1 and Table 2 clearly illustrate the significant defense budget and nuclear weapons imbalances among the 10 biggest global powers.

Table 1: Regarding the top military spenders in 2008 (SIPRI Report 2009)

NB [] = SIPRI estimate 2009. The spending figures are in current US dollars. The 10 biggest spenders in 2008 are the same as in 2007, although some rankings have changed. In particular, in 2008 China was for the first time the world’s second highest military spender and France narrowly overtook the UK.

Table 2: Regarding deployed warheads (2009)

All estimates are approximate North Korea conducted nuclear test explosions in October 2006 and May 2009. It is not publicly known whether it has built nuclear weapons.

Are similar poles about to emerge? Russia is a declining nuclear power and ‘Energy superpower’⁹. Is India really comparable to a global ‘pole’, or is it both an emerging economic giant and a local isolated power? Brazil is oscillating between regional cooperation and national ambitions; however, it is an example of a successful Non Proliferation Treaty over the last twenty years. What kind of rising power is China?

In summary, and as many researchers have already concluded¹⁰, the current multipolarity does not directly relate to the 19th century multipolar balance of power: the key issues here are heterogeneity and asymmetry of powers.

The import of complex interdependence is also worth mentioning here, along with the legacy of the development of international organizations over the last 65 years. The impact of economic and other complex interdependence, increasing since WW2 and including the role of the West within the wider global network must be recognized by realists: between 1900 and 2000 the number of intergovernmental organizations grew up from 37 to over 400. These organizations are building a framework for communication, information, and dialog, with a spillover effect of spreading a rule-based governance of many global issues.

4. An emerging duopoly?

According to several observers and the media, multipolarity and regional players are increasingly compelled to submit to global governance led by the alliance between US and China. H. Kissinger declared that the one between US and China is the most important international relationship of the 21st century.

Is there empirical evidence of such a duopoly? There is no doubt that a mutual understanding between the relatively declining superpower and the emerging superpower would seem natural; the 800 billion US dollar debt to China fosters a mutual and common interest, a kind of 'diffuse reciprocity' between both powers. Additionally, several top meetings at global level (including the G20 in Pittsburgh and the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen, both in 2009) show a relatively high record of convergence in global governance stance by the two nations.

However, many circumstances play in the opposite direction, oscillating the mutual relationship towards tension and conflict: a hierarchical 'global duopoly' is not rational in terms of cost-benefits analysis. Such a structure would actually imply high costs for both US (through the negative feedback of marginalizing EU and Japan) and for China (first at a regional level in Southeast and Northeast Asia, and at global level in its relationship with the developing countries, given the ideological image of China as a representative of the world's poorest countries). China would also risk looking like a junior partner of US (echoing the F.D. Roosevelt project of '3 policemen', 1943-44).

No expert in international politics could forget the weight of several conflicting issues (including tensions around Taiwan, Tibet, Human rights, Yuan, and the Nobel prize awarded to Liu Xiaobo in 2010) leading towards bilateral conflicts. The US agenda is consistently faced with the old trilemma: to pick either the option in favor of realism (trade and economic cooperation); the ideological Jimmy Carter approach in favor of defense of human rights; or even to the hard anti-China containment agenda (revived by R. Kagan-Mc Cain in 2008). These oscillations are essential background in understanding the US-China relationship in the coming decade. For this reason the 'Frankfurter allgemeine'¹¹ argument that 'a permanent G2 is still a joke' sounds more like a realistic than superficial forecast of a coming duopoly.

5. A revival of the US unipolar and unilateral tendencies?

We have already provided some empirical evidence of the absolute advantage enjoyed by the US (see Figure 1) in terms of the consolidated US military supremacy: the US spends more in this area than the next ten national powers combined, and is unlikely to reduce its military budget following the 2010 midterm elections which resulted in a Republican majority in the House of representatives. Furthermore, compared with the EU and Japan, the US shows signs of greater economic strength, with a relatively quicker recovery from the current global economic and financial crisis.

According to a wide ranging body of literature (including authors from a variety of ideological standpoints) the 'US unilateralism' or special mission, is not parenthesized by G.W. Bush's term of office: even if marginal under the current Obama administration, deep historical roots and various long-term tendencies exist in the US for reviving the imperial mode on a regular basis, and by various means.

However, an even larger body of literature emphasizes the limits of US power (J. Nye) and even the US decline (R. Keohane, F. Zacharia and I. Wallerstein among others). Is this literature obsolete? Or, on the contrary, are the various writings on US hegemony and/or US Empire totally outdated, given the disappointing performances of the last decade both in terms of economic and military power?

Military primacy is a completely different concept from 'hegemonic stability'. The concept of post-hegemonic world system appears increasingly relevant when considering four different schools of IR thought. According to the liberal (Ch. Kindleberger; R. Keohane)¹² understanding of hegemonic stability, the US is unable, already since several decades, of providing the world with 'international common goods', as the monetary stability based on the dollar. The Canadian school (A. Gramsci, R. Cox and S. Gill)¹³ holds that hegemony only exists provided that military and material strength are combined with the capacity to build/consolidate consensus by soft power and social alliances, whereas the current global situation shows uncertainties and instability. According to the neorealist school of IPE, notably R. Gilpin's understanding, each hegemonic power has a life cycle, including dramatic change: after the emergence comes the challenge, and finally the decline¹⁴. Finally, G. Ruggie's understanding outlines that the hegemonic stability after 1944 was backed by the US. The current decline of the universal appeal of such values provokes the weakening of US hegemony¹⁵.

6. A fragmented globalized world?

An extensive, various and pluralist body of literature focuses on several kinds of fragmentation, with a common thread of a tendency towards 'non polarity'. This can be summarized as follows:

- In the political realm not only the think tanks near to the G.W. Bush administration stressed, over many years, the tendencies towards a proliferation of WMD, failing States, and informal terrorist networks.
- Cultural sociologists are drawing attention not only to emergent civilizational macro-cleavages¹⁶, but increasingly to sub-national and ethnocentric fragmentation of political entities, religious fundamentalisms etc.
- A very different economic literature is focusing on the fragmentation of international trade and economic life towards increasing protectionism and bilateralism (a kind of 'spaghetti bowl' according to J. Bhagwati¹⁷).

There is something that rings true in these critical approaches to globalization ideologies and globalism. Firstly, these various academic streams are right in criticizing both the optimism of the liberal peace assumed in the 1990s, and the naïve US led bipartisan idea (as expounded by G. Bush Senior and B. Clinton) of a universally beneficial economic globalization bringing convergence at world level. Hyperglobalists and new-medievalists during the 1990s were wrong to argue for the end of the state, of any political regulation, and of cultural difference as a consequence of economic determinism and booming global economic ties. Even the forecast of a 'governance without government'¹⁸ now appears fundamentally outdated. 'Open regionalism', notably in case of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) formed part of this atmosphere.

Secondly, the globalist illusions of the G.W. Bush era dramatically collapsed in Iraq. Unipolarism/unilateralism failed not only in coping with political fragmentation, but also in implementing its

international agenda of globalist policy towards regime change. The need to confront several tendencies towards fragmentation means the EU is facing numerous dilemmas: whether to consolidate military and technological supremacy, or look for comprehensive and collective security policies? Continue to champion the primacy of Western values and norms, or adjust to the emerging relativism? Furthermore, how should the EU consider the relevance of the regional dimension of multiple issues and challenges: is regionalization part of the fragmentation, or conversely part of the solution towards new multilevel governance? Should the West and the EU within it only focus on strategic partnerships with individual great powers, or use apparent regional fragmentation and emergent regionalism as a resource in developing a more decentralized and legitimate global governance?

Is new regionalism part of the problem or part of the solution? After five years of comparative research on regionalization and globalization, the 'GARNET' network of excellence¹⁹ came to two general conclusions, the first being that the world will be characterized by more regional cooperation in the 21st century than in the 20th. Conflict prevention, trade, economic and political cooperation, convergence towards the regional average, and a feeling of common belonging are driving forces in the increase of multidimensional regional cooperation in every continent. The second conclusion was that regional cooperation will follow alternative routes according to local geographic, historical, economic and political backgrounds, and to various endogenous factors.

The literature distinguishes between 'regioness', 'regionalization' and 'regionalism'. By regioness we mean the *longue durée* dimension of multidimensional relations within a given region. History, culture, civilization, trade ties, imperial backgrounds play a role by defining 'regioness', a diachronic concept, while 'regionalization' is a part of globalization as a synchronic concept, mainly based on trade, technology and economic links. No policy dimension characterizes regioness and regionalization, whereas the concept of 'regionalism' is precisely focusing on the proactive role of the political dimension, including policy coordination among participating governments concerning various policy fields, within regional arrangements, regimes and organizations. One more difference: only regionalism may be the background of 'interregional relations'; that is of multidimensional relations between regional entities belonging to different continents (for example: ASEM with East Asia, 'Rio process' with Latin America, 'Barcelona process' and the 'union pour la Méditerranée', with the Southern rim of the Mediterranean), beyond the spontaneous 'transregional' ties which may exist since centuries and without any policy dimension. Last but not least, why to underline the difference between 'regionalism' and 'new regionalism' like us and B. Hettne do since 2001? For the very simple reason that the history of the 20th century entails three alternative ideal type of regionalism: the imperialist regionalism set for example by Germany and Japan in their respective region during the period between the 1930s and 1940s; secondly, the regional cooperation regimes set during the decades of the US hegemonic stability after WW2; third a post-hegemonic new regionalism, emerged in every continent after the decline of the US and the break down of the URSS, mainly underpinned by bottom-up, endogenous, economic, social, cultural and political driving forces.

The regional agenda looks as a long-lasting one: contrary to past instances, new regional cooperation among neighboring states currently provides both regional and global governance with some relevant benefits. These include ensuring conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction; providing regional financial stability and welfare; limiting distributive problems, addressing the challenge of knowledge society; enhancing compliance to global rules

(e.g. regional implementation of WTO provisions and, in the EU, Common Agricultural Policy reform); defending the reputation of the UN; and fostering inter-organizational and supranational coordination (e.g. through inter-regional arrangements, exporting governance expertise in setting convergent standards and managing national diversities).

In general conclusion of the previous four chapters, the currently observed multipolarity is an unprecedented one: heterogeneous, asymmetrical, interdependent, partially fragmented, but based on emergent regional cooperation. The many contradictions, obstacles and problems barring the four aforementioned tendencies from prevailing within the current heterogeneous global system are making the chances of a fifth scenario more realistic than expected.

7. A plural and various multilateral cooperation

At the beginning of the 21st century, following the shortcomings of US unilateralism, no power or player is positioning itself against multilateral cooperation. As a result, we are witnessing the emergence of new understanding of multilateralism.

The US-centered multilateral approach is oscillating between its traditional systemic understanding (UN and Bretton Woods economic institutions) and kind of 'minilateralism', that is to say a functional concept of single-issue cooperation among a limited number of 'willing' partners; the most obvious example being the famous coalition against Saddam Hussein (2nd Iraqi war, 2002-04). There are many other examples from various fields: anti-terrorism ('Proliferation Security Initiative', 2003); environmental protection ('Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate', 2004); the fight against natural disaster and support of humanitarian aid (Indian Ocean tsunami, 2004); and finally democracy export ('Regional Democracy Caucus'). The huge difference between these two understandings is the role of values; they are essential in the first model and instrumental to power politics in the second.

China has explicitly asserted its commitment to multilateral cooperation over the last decade in two ways. Firstly, and in opposition to imperialism and colonialism, as a kind of defensive approach to a hierarchical world; and secondly through a multilevel commitment to regional and global cooperation. What kind of multilateral cooperation does China want? The common thread that runs through both approaches is an emphasis on national sovereignty as a pillar of multilateral cooperation, entailing non-interference in the domestic affairs of participant States.

According to many observers²⁰ Chinese foreign policy can be seen to combine the defense of national interests with multilateral cooperation. Examples of this include global multilateralism (WTO, Olympic Games, etc) combined with a process of (partial) Asianization of regional multilateralism in East Asia: Shanghai Cooperation Organization; six-party talks about the Korean peninsula; Asian Regional Forum (ARF); Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus 1 (Asean+1): free trade area before 2010; Asean+3: Asian fund, monetary cooperation; Asean+6 and East Asia summits: 'East Asia Community'; and two inter-regional relationships with EU and US, respectively the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and APEC.

In both models outlined above, the US and China accept regional as well as global multilateral cooperation. However, in both cases regional multilateralism appears instrumental. Instrumental multilateralism defines the US approach (examples include the International Criminal Court (ICC), and Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty): 'the US power enables it to engage in a careful weighting

of the costs and benefits of multilateral cooperation and to be selective about the terms of its engagement with I. O. (International Organizations) according to policy goals'²¹.

The EU is very much committed to a multilevel and multidimensional understanding of multilateralism. The first decade following the end of the Cold War witnessed the explosion of the multilevel understanding of multilateralism which typifies the EU at civilian and interregional level. The years between 2002 and 2007 have seen the political implications of EU's multilateralism in opposition to the US's unilateralism, and the resultant transatlantic rift. However, the idea of 'efficient multilateralism' (typical of the EU security paper, or 'Solana paper'²²) is controversial because 'minilateralism' is more efficient than universal cooperation, potentially contradicting the EU's commitments to the UN, and the Bretton Woods universal institutions. A second circumstance casting doubt on the EU's multilateralist ideology is the defense of an over-representation by European states within the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and several other global entities. Efficiency should not be opposed to legitimate representation, notably of the emergent countries.

According to institutionalist approaches, multilateral commitments are becoming increasingly relevant to participant States in spite of these differences and shortcomings. Such commitments imply respect for rules and procedures, potentially including an incipient respect for the rule of law, and particularly if regional and global rules are combined within a multilateral, multilevel network - international, as well as national purposes and strategies now matter.

According to J. Ruggie and R. O. Keohane multilateralism excludes coercion and hierarchies, and entails three main principles: a general principle of conduct; diffuse reciprocity, which demands more than a mutual recognition between legally independent territorial entities, but also a readiness for social exchange where it is possible 'to yield a rough equivalence of benefits in the aggregate and over time'²³; and finally inclusiveness and openness.

Despite the growing EU and emergent multilateral commitment of China, India, Brazil, South Africa and the US, Ruggie does pay little attention to the territorial dimensions of multilateral global governance (that is to its multilayered nature), or the enhanced relevance of the level of regional cooperation. A new definition therefore needs to be proposed: multilevel²⁴ multilateralism is a form of collective transnational action and co-operation amongst states, regarding global governance and world politics. It implies generalized principles of conduct and diffuse reciprocity, and includes several degrees and types of institutionalization, from arrangements and regimes to public spheres and established organizations.

This neo-multilateral tendency works in every continent, even if often combined and subordinated to other tendencies. It often meets obstacles and shortcomings, for example where environmental governance is concerned. Why has so little been achieved in limiting climate change, from Kyoto to Bali (2007), from Copenhagen (2009) to Cancun (2010) and Durban (2011)? One reason, according to the traditional multilateral cooperation is that: a) mutual benefits must be obtained by the majority of players; b) timing matters: the benefits are expected to come on time, quickly enough to motivate government decisions; and c) domestic constraints play a relevant role: costs in internal government legitimacy must not outweigh expected benefits and thereby threaten government stability. In working towards environmental protection and limiting climate change, domestic costs are concentrated in the short term, while benefits will mature in the longer term, and arguably no current government likes to undertake work for the next government.

Only the principle of diffuse reciprocity may serve to change both the time perception (through enhanced trust), and allow understanding both issue-linkages and deepening social cooperation within multilateral negotiation²⁵.

8. The role of the EU

The Post-Cold-War world is a post-hegemonic one, where multilevel, pluralist multilateral cooperation emerges as a shared tool of global and regional governance. Post-hegemonic means that no power, including the EU, is any longer able to restore 'hegemonic stability'. Whatever the purposes of some (French?) leaders may be, the EU is unable to become a hegemonic superpower. The role of the EU is relevant in institutionalizing international and transnational life in a broad understanding and through a variety of approaches. The emerging multilateral network will be heterogeneous: the EU will foster sovereignty-pooling multilateral institutions, in dialectic relationship with sovereignty-enhancing understandings typical of China, India and other countries. Experimenting with EU modes of governance at various levels could also be part of the EU contribution.

Deepening and broadening the multilateral agenda (by spreading out the idea of diffuse reciprocity) in areas such as sustainable development, welfare, knowledge society, environment, development and the fight against poverty will be easier than in other areas where immediate and specific reciprocity matters more, such as security.

Increasing efficiency is not the only challenge of the new multilateralism that deserves special attention. Beyond the 2003 'Solana paper', the EU must now move towards a new grand strategy for a grand global bargaining, where the issue of legitimacy forms a second challenge²⁶. No doubt that legitimacy is also improved by efficiency, providing the citizens with benefits; but other forms of legitimacy matter as well: support of the epistemic community, accountability, and mobilization of public opinion around big global issues.

Two further issues should be highlighted in the influence of the EU on external governance. Firstly, the EU is no longer asserting its experience as a model of regional integration: varieties of regional pathways are instead increasingly accepted even beyond the limits of the scientific community. However, the EU is not a counter-model: the scientific community can hardly accept the Hurrell's concluding chapter that all we have learned is that the EU integration process has nothing to do with regional cooperation elsewhere²⁷. The EU is a reference for regional cooperation in other continents, particularly with reference to its sophisticated institutional construction. Additionally, its internal multilateral institutionalized way of life at regional level, and its experience of standard-setting provides inputs for multilateral cooperation at regional and global levels. This means replacing the Eurocentric notion of 'normative power' as the mode of governance with enhanced communication with other states' and entities' expectations: the EU is a sophisticated multilateral entity rather than a state in the making.

Secondly, interests matter. There is much evidence of the EU interest in enhancing global convergence and cooperation: in order to avoid a race to the bottom where social and environmental standards are concerned, the EU is active in exporting its high standards to other regions, and at a global level. Its unique network of various international associations, bilateral and interregional agreements, and strategic partnerships could help by providing enhanced convergence in regime-building, etc.

However, to become a more credible and reliable multilateralist player the EU needs to strengthen five internal institutional coherences and consistencies. First and foremost, the Lisbon treaty may be of great help in making the institutions more coherent, through enhancing horizontal coherence between policies and the previous three pillars (Community pillar, CFSP and JHA). Secondly, strengthening vertical consistency between states and EU, as well as internal loyalty (provided the political will exists within individual states). Thirdly, combining bilateral and multilateral relations within a new global strategy of external relations (replacing the Solana paper of 2003). Fourthly, coherence between the 'multilateralist discourse' and the European states' overrepresentation within international organizations such as the IMF. Finally, by making internal and external policies more consistent some progresses could be achieved at governance level²⁸. The years 2010- 2011 have shown how big the EU's challenges are by be recognized as a relevant political actor: the negative vote by the UN general assembly (September 2010) regarding the proactive role of the High representative for foreign affairs was after hard negotiations revised in May 2011; the image of laboratory for financial stability provided by the Euro-zone in 2008-9 was reversed in 2011 when the Euro stability became the main concern of the global financial governance (look at the growing IMF commitment for European countries). Short, the distinctive feature of the EU between federal state and intergovernmental regime makes it difficult for the EU to play a role of driving force for new multilateral governance. A marginalization of the EU within the new multipolar order, making only a contingent and fragmented and instrumental multilateral practice possible, has not to be excluded. However, in 2011, the EU is keeping its role of a leading workshop for sophisticated institutional solutions at regional level, which can provide inputs for regional and global governance abroad.

As both a set of intergovernmental regimes and a political system in the making, the EU's global message is the connection between external influence and internal legitimacy and accountability. It will be crucial to answer bottom-up expectations of the EU to act as a shield supporting the citizens against the dark side of globalization (French and Dutch referenda of 2005), without shifting towards protectionist and inward looking policies. More attention should be paid than in the past to the sensitive balance between enlargement to new member states, deepening integration, and internal consensus. As a proactive input, the democratic role of citizens and an open perspective in shaping globalization towards peace and cooperation could become a new driving force of EU's further integration (after that the founding European Communities narrative about 'peace between previous enemies' proved a declining appeal by the younger generations).

In summary, the EU's concept of a binding, value oriented, post-hegemonic, multilevel-multilateral cooperation will not easily prevail; however implementation on a regional scale could maintain relevance at a global level. The EU could couple such an approach with a consistent assertion of this agenda within a dialectical and open global context as the best way to cope with common challenges, as well as looking for enhanced convergence with other regional and global players.

Conclusion

External variables will prove pivotal in the future shift: what about the trend of regional entities from mere state-centric regimes to complex, transnational entities? Could these regional entities grow up as potential civilian players, combining internal convergence and democratization with a gradual redistribution of global power? What about the competing strategies of singles states and regional entities in the controversial reform of the global network (UN, WTO, IMF) towards

enhanced legitimacy and efficiency? What about the future of interregionalism? It is an accepted fact that regionalism fostered interregional relations, that is to say multidimensional relations between two regions belonging to different continents²⁹.

Interregional relations within the post-Cold War global governance have been considered during the 1990s and early 2000s as a kind of 'identity-marker' for the EU (in terms of a region to region relationship as strengthening both regional integration processes). However, its interplay with the great powers of the current heterogeneous international system makes the EU subject to divergent influences, variously perceived by EU's national players and common institutions. Notably the illusion of a kind of bilateral Woody Allen's kind of 'Zelig effect' thanks to 'strategic partnerships' with major global powers could, on the one hand, weaken previous interregional multidimensional arrangements, and on the other, disappoint in terms of classical power relations (Libya crisis, 2011).

Many are stronger than one, and if Sisyphus had had a little help then perhaps the myth would have ended differently. Similarly, by their convergent action EU member states could perhaps change the current anarchical world structure towards a more legitimate and efficient bottom-up multilateral cooperation. Conversely, if the Sisyphian EU attempts to appear a single, state-like entity, it risks another literary comparison: that of Lafontaine's tale of the frog who was not very much successful in his endeavor to become a bull.

Notes

- 1 HOFFMANN (S.), *The European Sisyphus: Essays on Europe 1964-1964*, New York, Westview Press, 1995.
 - 2 CAMUS (A.), *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, Paris, Gallimard, 1942.
 - 3 BUZAN (B.), *Regions and Powers*, Cambridge, Cambridge university press, 2003.
 - 4 KAPLAN (M.), *System and Process International Politics*, New York, Wiley and sons, 1957.
 - 5 BOBBIO (N.), *Il futuro della democrazia*, Torino, Einaudi, 1991.
 - 6 COX (R.) (ed.), *The New Realism*, Tokyo, UN Publisher, 1997 (including a chapter by J.ROSENAU).
 - 7 HETTNE (B.), 'Regionalism and World Order', in FARRELL (M.), HETTNE (B.) and VAN LANGENHOVE (L.) (ed.), *Global Politics of Regionalism*, England, Pluto Press, p. 269-286.
 - 8 For example see: MEARSHEIMER (J.), *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, W. Norton & Company, 2001.
 - 9 LANE (D.) and GAMBLE (A.) (ed.), *The European Union and World Politics*, London, Palgrave, 2009.
 - 10 Among others see SANTANDER (S.) (ed.), *L'essor de nouvelles puissances: vers un système multipolaire?*, Paris, Paris, 2009.
 - 11 Frankfurter allgemeine Zeitung, February 2010, <http://www.faz.net/s/homepage.html>.
 - 12 KINDLEBERGER (C.), *The World in Depression 1929-39*, Berkeley, University of California, 1973; KEOHANE (R.O.), *After Hegemony. Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984.
 - 13 COX (R.), 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', in KRASNER (S.) (ed.), *International regimes*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983; COX (R.), 'Hegemony and International Relations, An Essay in Method', *Millennium*, vol. 12, n° 2, 1983, p. 162-175.
 - 14 GILPIN (R.), *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981;
-



GILPIN (R.), *Global Political Economy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001.

15 RUGGIE (J.G.) (ed.), *Multilateralism Matters. The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993; RUGGIE (J.G.), *Constructing the World Polity. Essays in International Institutionalization*, New York, Routledge, coll. 'The new international relations series', 1998.

16 HUNTINGTON (S.P.), 'The Clash of the Civilization?', *Foreign Affairs*, summer 1993.

17 BHAGWATI (J.), 'U.S. Trade Policy: The Infatuation with Free Trade Agreements', in BHAGWATI (J.) and KRUEGER (A.O.), *The Dangerous Drift to Preferential Trade Agreements*, AEI Press, 1995.

18 ROSENAU (J.N.) and CZEMPIEL (K.O.) (ed.), *Governance without Government? Order and Change in World politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

19 It comprised 42 leading research centres and universities from the EU working on *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: The Role of the EU*, see <http://www.garnet-eu.org/>

20 CHEN (Z.), 'The China's Foreign Policy Evolution', in TELÒ (M.) (ed), *State and Multilateralism*, Berlin, Springer, 2011 (forthcoming), among others.

21 FOOT (R.), MACFARLANE (N.) and MASTANDUNO (M.), *US Hegemony and International Organizations*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2003.

22 EUROPEAN COUNCIL, *European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World*, Brussels, 12 December 2003.

23 RUGGIE (J.), *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 571.

24 By multilevel we mean transnational, regional, interregional, and global; linking inside and outside.

25 BARNETT (M.) and DUVAL (R.) (ed.), *Power in Global Governance*, Cambridge University press, 2005, notably the article by KAPSTEIN (E. B.), 'Power fairness and the global economy', p. 80-101

26 GNESOTTO (N.), *L'Europe a-t-elle un avenir stratégique*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2011; BINDI (F.) (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, Brookings Institution, Washington, 2010.

27 FAWCETT (L.) and HURRELL (A.) (ed.), *Regionalism in World Politics*, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 309-329.

28 See EUROPEAN COUNCIL, *European Council Declaration*, December 2007; EUROPEAN COUNCIL, *European Council Declaration*, September 2010; EUROPEAN COMMISSION, *Europe in the World — Some Practical Proposals for Greater Coherence, Effectiveness and Visibility*, Commission Communication, COM (2006) 278 final, June 2006.

29 Let's mention four examples: ACP started in the sixties, 'ASEM' (started in 2006), 'Rio process' (started in 1999), 'Barcelona Process and Union pour la Méditerranée' (1996 and 2008 respectively).

PDF généré automatiquement le 2020-06-25 04:31:05

Url de l'article : <https://popups.uliege.be:443/1374-3864/index.php?id=1090>