

such as civil society organisations, parliaments, or private companies with a view to discuss their roles as norm entrepreneurs and contributors to international problem solving. The debate has just begun.

At the very end just a few technical observations on the editing of this volume: Unfortunately, no background information on the authors is provided. And sometimes more attention to detail should have been given: The *Constitutive Act of the African Union* was adopted in 2000 (and not in 2001, back page), the presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire were held in October and November 2010 (and not in 2011, p. 8), to give but two examples.

Notes

- 1 W. Brown/S. Harman (eds.), *African Agency in International Politics*, London 2013.
- 2 P. Bischoff, *African Foreign Policies: Selecting Signifiers to Explain Agency*, London 2020; A. Aloa, *A New Narrative for Africa: Voice and Agency*, London 2020; K. P. Coleman/T. K. Tiekou, *African Actors in International Security: Shaping Contemporary Norms*, Boulder CO 2018.
- 3 A. Ylönen, *On State, Marginalization, and Origins of Rebellion: The Formation of Insurgencies in Southern Sudan*, Trenton NJ 2016.
- 4 At least in this case, this is quite far from the dynamics unfolding after Laurent Gbagbo tried to clinch to power: The AU engaged in preventive diplomacy early on and the AU Peace and Security Council got seized with the matter far earlier than implied in this chapter. The authors' understanding of the operations of the Continental Early Warning Systems is fairly limited, to put it mildly. The important study commissioned by the AU Panel of the Wise on electoral violence (2010) is not referenced. Some of the other references are incomplete or simply wrong. Many of the relevant sources have not been consulted.

Paul J. Kohlenberg / Nadine Godehardt (eds.): *The Multidimensionality of Regions in World Politics* (= Routledge Series on Global Order Studies), London/New York: Routledge, 2021, xii + 228 pp.

Reviewed by
Ulf Engel, Leipzig

Since the end of the Cold War, the role of regions in global politics has been significantly changing. For many nation-state actors in the Global South, regions promised to be a sovereignty-boosting device that would help deal with accelerated globalisation processes, while at the same time emerging global players such as China, but also the recovering Russian Federation, pursue regional projects to create new meta-geographies. Regions are not a given, and they take multiple forms. This is the general theme of a timely edited collection on *The Multidimensionality of Regions in World Politics*. The volume is published in the Routledge Series on Global Order Studies which, so far, has focused much on Europe only. Clearly, this collection literally extends the boundaries of this series. It is located at the intersection of what the editors perceive as “political geography” and “critical” international relations.

The two editors bring an interesting set of perspectives to the table. Nadine Godehardt is a research fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (or Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP), a Berlin-based think tank which is funded by the Federal Chancellery.

She did her Master's in political science and sinology at Tübingen University and her PhD in political science at Hamburg University. Paul J. Kohlenberg holds postgraduate degrees from Oxford University (Modern Chinese Studies) and Warwick University (Development Law & Human Rights), respectively. In May 2018, he defended his PhD thesis on "Institutional Logics in an Authoritarian State. Why The Chinese Communist Party's Command Mechanisms Have Remained Unaffected by Legal Reforms" at Humboldt University Berlin, Germany – which somewhat must have prepared him for his current position as representative of the German political party foundation Heinrich Boell Stiftung in Beijing, China. This volume is one of the products of a collaborative research effort on "Which region? The politics of the UN Security Council (UNSC) P5 in international security crisis". It was jointly run by the Center for Security Studies (CSS), ETH Zurich (with Andreas Wenger, Stephen Aris, and Aglaya Snetkov in the lead), the Department of Geography and Environment at the University of Geneva (UNIGE, Juliet Fall), and the two editors who were both at SWP at this time. The volume on the Multidimensionality of Regions is structured into three parts and ten chapters. The editors assemble an illustrious group of contributors from fairly different epistemological backgrounds. The first part on the historicity of regions offers two perspectives: The geographer Anssi Paasi (University of Oulu, Finland) reflects on the development of bounded spaces to relational social constructs, thereby introducing a constructivist, relational understanding of space which is at the heart of the spatial turn in the hu-

manities and social sciences. In the same section, Karoline Postel-Vinay (Centre d'études et de recherches internationales, Sciences Po), Paris) juxtaposes "regional-ity" and "globality" to conclude that historically they are representing two sides of a single narrative.

In the second part of the volume, four chapters discuss how "regions" are being reconfigured through processes of bordering/ordering, security discourses and modes of crisis. First, Matthias Albert (Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University) contextualises regions in "the system of world politics". Second, similarly inspired by Luhmannian thinking, Jan Busse (University of the Federal Forces, Munich) discusses the Ottoman space in world society. Third, referring to the recent European Union interventions in West Africa, Elisa Lopez Lucia (Université Libre de Bruxelles) reflects on the "remaking" of this world region. And finally, Pinar Bilgin (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Bilkent University) dissects the persistence of the "Middle East" as a geographical security intervention.

In the third part of the collection, another four chapters are focusing on the construction of meta-geographies. First, Juliet J. Fall and Carinne Domingos (both UNIGE, Geneva) look at how the Ukraine has been discussed at the UN Security Council 2014–2018. Second, the geographers Klaus Dodds (Royal Holloway University London) and Chih Yuan Woon (National University of Singapore) review arctic regionalism. Third, Stephen Aris and Aglaya Snetkov (CSS at ETH Zurich) revisit the "Eurasia" meta-geography in Russian state discourse. This is followed by a discourse-theoretical chapter by the editors on Chi-

na's global connectivity, or its own meta-geography in-the-making.

In their conclusions, the editors discuss the relative importance "of multiple forms of globality in their relationship to regional constructs" (p. 215) vis-à-vis a state-centred international system and the co-constitution of different forms of regionalism. They highlight the interdisciplinary synergies flowing from their collaboration and as expressed in this volume. Looking at Karoline Postel-Vinay's contribution on how regions "always" have been part of global order, the editors emphasize the dynamic factors in this relationship. Finally, they develop an argument on how "time" relates to the changing nature of regional-global dynamics. These observations clearly sketch the parameters of a future research agenda.

It could be productive to interrogate further the claimed co-constitutive relationship between regions and globality. Historically, regions preceded the emergence of what global historians call the global condition, i.e., a state of worldwide connectedness which has only emerged in the last third of the nineteenth century. If considering the historicity of regions in this light, different perspectives on the global and notions of processes of globalisation are possible. They relate to how exactly the dialectic processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation which are at the heart of "globalisation" are explained. How should one account for the agency involved in these processes? And how can one frame more precisely what the editors call "regions as rhetorical devices" (p. 5), or the spatial semantics of regionalism? Often this is simply a question of which disciplines are brought into a dialogue, for

instance which kind of new political geography or critical political geography, which kind of global history, which kind of critical international studies, and which kind of critical area studies. Against this background, regions can be conceived as spatial formats (i.e., models, visions, blueprints) which may develop into material spatial orders. They are actively negotiated and contested by specific spatial entrepreneurs. And in this context the term "region" itself serves as a floating signifier that allows for easy intersubjective communication. It can be loaded with different meanings by different spatial entrepreneurs and under different historical circumstances. This is basically what the volume demonstrates through different cases studies. Yet, the broader historical narrative still needs to be developed through more systematic comparative research settings. In this sense, the bracket of "multidimensionality" is descriptive, and not yet explanatory. In any case this volume clearly demonstrates the potential of interdisciplinary dialogue on "global order", especially when challenging and decentering the epistemological foundations of mainstream international relations – a sub-discipline of political science which has put up considerable resistance to the innovations coming from the spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences.

N.B. A section on the contributors' background would have come in handy.