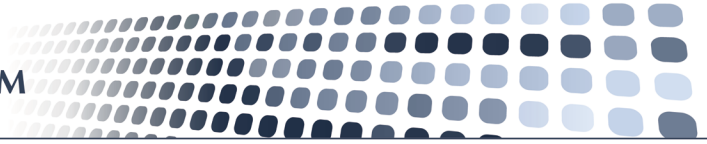


ISSN: 2036-5438

The Indian and Chinese policies towards Africa: a veritable challenge to EU-led interregionalism?

by Emanuele Pollio

Perspectives on Federalism, Vol. 2, issue 2, 2010

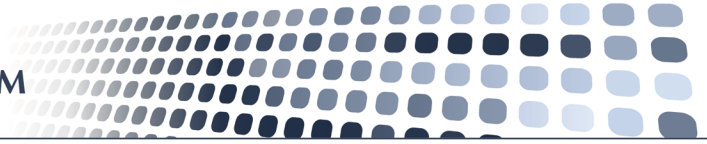


Abstract

This paper aims to analyze comparatively EU's, China's and India's diverging designs for the governance of Africa. The paper addresses one fundamental research question: to what extent do the Chinese and Indian competing African policies constrain the European interregional strategy towards Africa? Building on Heiner Haenggi's categorization, the paper investigates the extent to which the emergence of new paradigms of interregionalism (promoted by India and China) might impact on the re-defined EU-Africa interregional development partnerships. The paper submits that the EU's, India's and China's respective regional and interregional policies are generating a competitive "politics of interregionalism" in the African context, where the EU is seeking to perform as a credible "normative power". In a systemic perspective, the EU is undoubtedly called to face the challenge rising from alternative models of interregional cooperation.

Key-words:

Interregionalism, European Union, India, China, Africa, development cooperation, conditionality, "normative power"

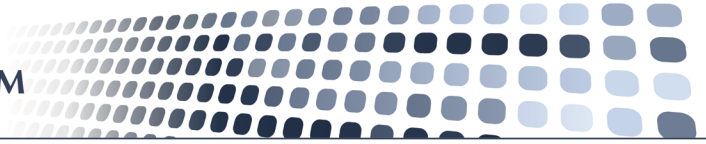


1. Introduction

The emergence of “new regionalism” in the changing post-Cold War international system has set the stage for the establishment of a veritable “global politics of interregionalism” (Farrel, 2005). As target of multiple interregional policies, the African context provides, in an analytical perspective, the most illuminating case-study to uncover both the conceptual significance and the empirical limits to the European conception of interregionalism as a paradigm to foster a “regionalized multilateral” global governance. Indeed, this paper aims to analyze EU’s, China’s and India’s diverging designs for the governance of Africa. The paper addresses one fundamental research question: to what extent do the Chinese and Indian competing African policies constrain the European interregional strategies towards Africa?

With respect to the notion of “interregionalism”, a concise terminological and theoretical account is indispensable. Interregionalism is addressed by this paper not merely as a trade-based but as a multidimensional phenomenon occurring in a post-hegemonic international systemic outlook. Unlike pre-Cold War regionalism, which has been shaped by the US “liberal hegemonic” attitude according to the “open regionalism doctrine” (Bergsten, 1997) post-Cold War interregionalism constitutes an innovative paradigm of international relational patterns. In Mario Telò’s words, although regionalism and interregionalism have historically taken different forms¹, “the current globalization process entails a broader and deeper, even if highly differentiated new type of regionalism” (Farrel, 2005).

In order to scrutinize the different conceptions of interregional cooperation behind the EU’s, China’s and India’s African policies, the paper builds on Heiner Haenggi’s distinction between 1) “deep” or “pure interregionalism”, characterized by the relations between “deeply integrated regional groupings”; 2) “transregionalism”, characterized by region-to-region interactions both at the governmental level and at the level of the civil society; 3) “soft” or “quasi-interregionalism”, including hybrid sets of relations between weakly institutionalized regional groupings and single Great Powers (Haenggi, 2000).

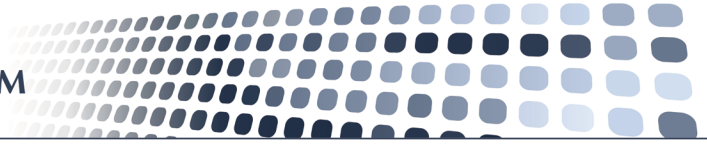


Thus, the paper will scrutinize the EU's, China's and India's respective interregional projects in an analytical continuum between "soft (inter)-regionalism", close to the Asian model of development cooperation, and "deep (inter)-regionalism", embodied in the EU "governance externalization" strategy towards Africa. Thus, the paper tackles interregionalism both as a structural political post-Cold War phenomenon and as a "conceptual frame for the comparison" of the European, Chinese and Indian policies towards Africa. In a theoretical perspective, this paper assumes that international actors' respective interregional policies are driven by both internal and extra-regional factors. In particular, the EU, being a multilateral entity internally, is keen, in the absence of structural constraints, to "externalize" its internal "binding multilateral" model in dealing with other regions; in a similar fashion, China and India, as nation-states attached to a more traditional conception of sovereignty, conceive interregionalism through an instrumentalist rather than "existentialist" perspective.

This assumption, which challenges the realist paradigm implying the absolute separation between internal and external policy-making structures, confirms the intrinsically "intermestic" nature of interregionalism. Nevertheless, some basic realistic elements, such as the importance attributed to territoriality and geopolitical reasoning, are kept in this paper as essential analytical lenses.

The paper will be structured as follows. Paragraph 1 will analyze the evolution of the European view of interregionalism as a structural element of the EU's development cooperation policy, with specific reference to the EU-Africa relationship. Paragraph 2 will outline the interregional cooperative patterns behind India's and China's engagement in the African context. The conclusions will elaborate on what the African case-study can tell us in general about the emerging "global politics of interregionalism", as well as about the feasibility of the EU-led project to foster "a better global governance through interregional cooperation".

The current sources of incoherence, which the EU is called to face in the implementation of its renewed African policy, might suggest a negative generalized trend for the EU-backed interregional paradigm. In this sense, the African context might definitively test the extent to which the EU-led version of interregionalism might shape a "regionalized multilateral" global outlook or whether EU-backed interregionalism is



destined to dissolve into an incoherent mix of bilateralism and region-to-region institutional cooperative arrangements.

2. EU-led interregionalism and its impact on the EU-Africa relationship

2.1. The concept of EU-led interregionalism: normative bases and structural implications

The worldwide promotion of regional integration and region-to-region cooperation as a paradigm of “civilized” inter-state governance has consistently characterized the EU’s “structural foreign policy”¹¹. As Mario Telò has pointed out (Telò, 2007)¹¹¹, the most relevant pattern of the EU’s external projection, which might account for the “civilian” character of the European power at the global stage, precisely resides in the European commitment to interregionalism. EU-led interregionalism has resulted in a consolidated worldwide network of formally institutionalized interregional cooperation frameworks.

Since the 1970’s interregional cooperation has been a privileged tool of European external relations. Shaped by globalization and by the “new regional” phenomenon in the 1990’s, EU-led interregionalism has grown up to become a policy objective per se, linked to the European commitment to establish an “effective multilateral” global governance and perform as a viable interlocutor vis-à-vis the United Nations. Thus, the promotion of interregional multidimensional agreements by the EU is naturally associated with the very soul of the EU intra-regional system of governance (P. Magnette and K. Nicolaidis, 2009). In Regelsberger and De Flers’ words, “the logic of interregional cooperation derives from the successful European model, which has transformed the relations between formerly warring parties into some sort of a cooperative structure where divergent interests are tackled and resolved by negotiations” (De Flers and E. Regelsberger, 2005).

Being characterized by a legally-binding multilateral mode of governance at the intra-regional level, the EU has an intrinsic interest in providing effective support to potentially cooperative regional groupings. In fact, in the European case the linkage between internal multilateralism and interregionalism is so strong, that Aggarwal and



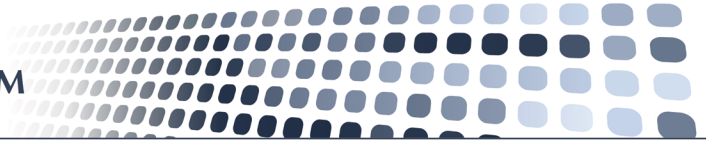
Fogarty have defined the EU as the “patron saint of interregionalism in international economic relations” (Aggarwal- Fogarty, 2005).

As a European *trait distinctif* in the conduct of development cooperation policy, the promotion of regional and interregional cooperation is driven by the principle of “functional differentiation”. As far as the European administrative practice is concerned, the European Commission has managed to focus on a policy domain where it can exploit a comparative advantage over EU nation states’ diplomacies. In a public rational choice perspective, the Commission enjoys a comparative advantage over national diplomacies on the economic, political and social aspects of regional integration. Thus, instead of acting in state-like terms, the Commission highlights its own value-added linked to the external projection of the European “binding multilateral regional governance”.

Thus, since the 1970’s, the European Commission has supported the creation and consolidation of regional groupings, notably in the framework the EEC-driven development cooperation policy (Bartels, 2007). The European support to regional cooperation, as part of a distinctive European approach to the promotion of regional stability and economic development, has traditionally encompassed a wide geographical scope. In the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), the EC support to the Southern and Western African sub-regionalization processes provided the bases for the consolidation of SADC and ECOWAS, which are considered as the two most tangible results of the European regionalist approach.

As far as the African context is concerned, the promotion of region-to-region cooperation and “regional integration assistance policy” found a driving force in the political discourse of the 1990’s. Indeed, the deepening of the European integration process through the Maastricht Treaty and the institutionalisation of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) seemed to reinforce the European international role in the promotion of pluralist democracy, human rights and good governance through regional integration.

To sum up, the European “ideal type” of interregional cooperation is based on what Haenggi defines as “region-to-region” cooperation, or “pure interregionalism”. As a matter of fact, the EU has clearly emphasized a policy preference for the institutional strengthening of African sub-regional integration cooperative frameworks. In a global perspective, the EU sees region-to-region cooperation as an instrument to promote a more



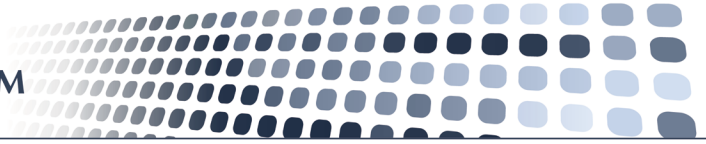
balanced and pluralistic world order, based on the development of a “regionalized multilateralism^{IV}”.

A central element of the EU’s African policy, interregionalism appears as “a stepping stone to push global governance, because it aims towards interest adjustments, common policies and multilateral cooperation” (Westphal, 2005). To this regard, the extent to which the EU does effectively promote African sub-regional integration processes does constitute a decisive test for the overall viability of the EU conceptions of interregionalism. Thus, the political reality of the EU-Africa relationship is worth scrutinizing in order to anticipate the main structural elements which will emerge from the EU-China-India comparative analysis.

2.2. From Lomé to Cotonou: the EU’s interregional cooperation with Africa

As suggested above, the European “existentialist” conception of interregionalism has profoundly characterized the EU’s policy approach towards Africa. Since the outset of the ECC development cooperation policy, the Commission did literally “create” its technical counterpart through the establishment of the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific). A relatively technical and politically heterogeneous regional grouping at the beginning, the ACP gradually evolved into a set of distinct sub-regional integration frameworks, which the EU consistently supported through the successive Lomé Treaties. In order to back the consolidation of Africa sub-regional organizations, the ECC made political use of non-reciprocal trade preferential treatment (which was seen as controversial by the non-ACP GATT members) and technical and financial cooperation funds under the European Development Fund.

The interregional character of the “Lomé model” gradually acquired a substantial political dimension. Far from being a merely financial renegotiation of the Lomé IV Treaty, Lomé IV bis, signed in 1994, represented a turning point in the European conception of interregionalism. Previously expressed in the Lomé III Annex I Joint Declaration on art.4, the European concern with the respect of good governance and of human rights created the rationale for art. 5 of Lomé IV, further amended in Lomé IV bis, and better known as “conditionality clauses”.

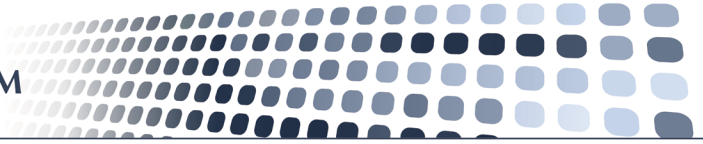


Founded on the principle of regionalization, the Cotonou Agreement foresees the division of ACP countries into six sub-regional groupings as partners of newly negotiated WTO-compatible trade and economic agreements. According to the principle of differentiation, the regional performance in terms of human rights and good governance becomes an innovative criterion for the allocation of financial resources. As Dieter Frisch has put it, “the regional performance criterion, linked to a badly defined concept of “good governance”, introduced in the eyes of the ACP countries, an element of uncertainty into the predictability of aid, [...] in so weakening the principle of joint management of aid” (Frisch, 2008). Such reservations, shared by the ACP governmental actors, seemed to be reinforced by the EU unilateral scrutiny of good governance indicators.

Linked to the concern for WTO conformity, the European trade policy towards Africa made increasingly clear the EU’s categorical commitment to trade liberalisation and macroeconomic stability. The envisaged abolition of preferential and non-reciprocal agreements, which constituted the economic basis of the Lomé model, has been criticized^V as an underhand way to introduce “regionalist conditionality” in the EU development cooperation policy. Moreover, the significant role attributed by the Lomé model to civil society and non-state actors, which established the concept of “decentralized cooperation”, further eroded the central governmental elites’ control of development aid, thus enhancing the scepticism of traditional governmental actors during the negotiations (Carbone, 2005).

Thus, in a qualitative perspective, the interregional policy of the EU has clearly moved beyond “old regional”, group-to-group dialogue gravitating around the EC, and now features a multiplication of formal cooperative frameworks, covering highly differentiated topics. Even though the EU-ASEAN and the EU-MERCOSUR arrangements still represent the most genuine EU-driven interregional frameworks (Haenggi, 2000), interregional associations and arrangements are developing towards African sub-regions, as exemplified by the support the EU recently gave to the regionalization of the Southern Africa (SADC) and West Africa (ECOWAS).

Nevertheless, the existence of tensions and asymmetrical trends in the EU’s African policies appears as an incontrovertible political reality. The inclusion of political dialogue in the last generation of “global agreements” strongly testifies the EU’s commitment to influence, as a “normative power” (Manner, 2008), the development of the post-Cold War international system. However, in a more concrete perspective, one should highlight the

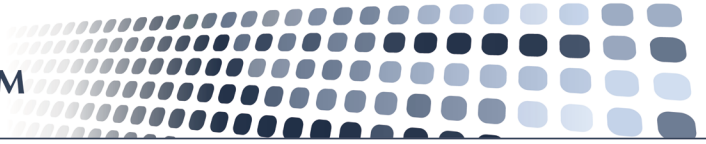


extent to which “human rights clauses” and political dialogue are at best “proceduralized” in a relatively technical and neutral approach, and at worst sacrificed in name of political stability or hidden national interests.

As a matter of fact, several factors seriously damage the consolidation of genuine interregional institutions and the multidimensionality of EU interregional policy towards Africa, namely: a) agricultural protectionism, b) security and migration concerns, and c) human rights disputes vis-à-vis African governments, notably after the controversial “Darfur question”. What is more, as Leonard Bartels has pointed out, the contradictory use of top-down regional integration assistance instruments, namely in the framework of the European-driven negotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), has paradoxically weakened existing African regional organizations (Bartels, 2007). By artificially imposing six sub-regional groupings, instead of favoring a bottom-up approach trying to exploit already existing potential sub-regional organizations, the EU has in effect endangered several fragile new regional African constructions, whose pivotal states unilaterally decided to withdraw from region-to-region negotiation, preferring the EU-granted GSP or EBA treatment (Bilal, Rampa, 2006).

Finally, there is increasingly widespread skepticism about the capacity of the EU to build a truly autonomous and independent “model” of interregional cooperation, aside from cultural and political pressures by the US. The inclusion of the IMF-dictated “good governance” paradigm and the concern with WTO conformity in the last generation of EU-ACP Partnership Agreements (“Cotonou Agreement”) is often mentioned as a proof of a certain European “dependence” on the presumptive *Pax Americana* or Washington consensus. As the voting patterns in the key UN forums show (Gowan, Brantner, 2007), the EU is suffering an erosion of its international influence and credibility, which fundamentally undermines the effectiveness of its development cooperation policy.

In addition to the mentioned sources of incoherence and inconsistency, the existence of alternative models of “developmental interregionalism” and “south-south interregional cooperation” seems to constitute the main challenge to EU-led interregionalism towards Africa. This is why closer attention to the systemic implications of the emerging Indian and Chinese African policies might represent a better guide to understand the empirical limits to the EU-Africa interregional cooperation.



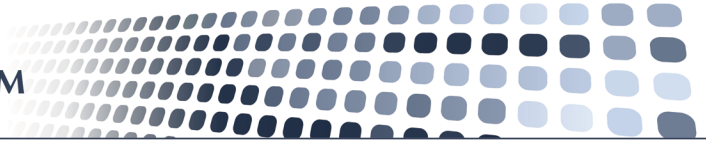
3. China's and India's policy towards Africa as alternative paradigms of interregionalism

3.1. Challenging the EU's material power: China-led "neo-mercantilist" interregionalism as a case of non-normative development cooperation policy

The People's Republic of China has emerged during the last decade as a major international actor in the African context. Consistently with the economic *rationale* that shapes Beijing's African policy, China has built on a peculiar form of interregional cooperation, doing away with conditionality. Primarily concerned by trade issues, by undertaking business, by the exploitation of raw material sources and with preferences in governmental procurements for infrastructures and service delivering, China claims to promote a "no-strings attached" policy, with the partial exception of the "one-China clause"^{VI}. As Benjamin Burton has pointed out, "China, far from promoting norms of 'international solidarity', actually employs *a contrario*, a mercantilist framework towards Africa. This reflects the desire to cater for its growing demand for natural resources, and its refusal to intervene in domestic affairs" (Barton, 2009).

When elaborating the notion of "Beijing Consensus", Joshua Cooper Ramo did specifically refer to an alternative model of socio-economic development, in opposition to the Washington Consensus^{VII}. Beyond its mere economic and social character, the notion of "Beijing Consensus" can be transposed to a more political dimension, in direct correlation to the emerging "global politics of interregionalism": according to the political principles of the "Beijing Consensus" (i.e. self-determination, non-interference in nation states' internal affairs and neutrality with respect to internal political regimes), China is gradually forging an alternative model of interregional cooperation.

The Chinese model of interregionalism finds its privileged target in the African context, where China-led interregionalism can be easily seen as an alternative to EU-led interregionalism. Unlike its European counterpart, Beijing conceives interregionalism in an "instrumentalist" rather than "existentialist" perspective. Instead of exporting the model of "binding multilateral (inter-)regional cooperation", China does not consider the promotion



of African sub-regional economic integration as a foreign policy objective *per se*. This is why the Chinese interregional design for the governance of Africa is based on a conception which can be defined “soft interregionalism”, characterized, according to Haenggi’s typology (Haenggi, 2000), by a hybrid mix of bilateralism and bi-regionalism as well as by the absence of human rights and good governance conditionality.

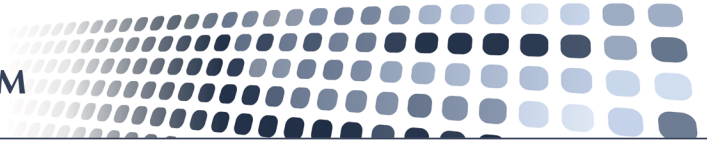
Not by coincidence, the Chinese commitment in the African continent seems to intensify as the United States and the European Union requirements on human rights and good governance reinforce the African temptation to diversify its outside partners. As Dieter Frisch has put it, “it is becoming increasingly difficult to insist on an element as essential for development cooperation such as good governance, when other partners such as China are offering financial support and bringing in investments with no such considerations” (Frisch, 2008).

The rejection by the Chinese public banks and financial institutions of the World Bank-endorsed Equator Principles opened the path to a consistent Chinese penetration in states hit by multilateral sanction regimes. Emblematic in this sense are the cases of Sudan, whose Darfur policy is constantly sheltered by the Chinese obstructionism in the UN Security Council^{VIII}, Nigeria, and Angola, where China has become the first outside trade and economic partner^{IX}.

Summed up in the 2006 Paper on African Policy, the Chinese interregional cooperative framework will “offer African countries economic assistance with *no political conditions* attached and take positive measures to increase economic benefit of the China-aid projects in Africa^X” [emphasis added]. Respectful of national sovereignty, which has always constituted a primary African concern, such a pragmatic Chinese development cooperation approach clearly undermines the EU political dialogue requirements, by focusing on merely economic and informal requirements.

Ample empirical evidence seems to support the view of China’s approach towards Africa as a kind of non-normative interregionalism: in contrast with the European approach to build up group-to-group dialogue in order to promote new regional cooperation, China operates quite differently, by selecting its African partner on the basis of mere economic needs.

Moreover, China does not stress its guiding role, as in the Washington Consensus-based EU-led interregionalism, but conceives itself as an economic partner, very focused

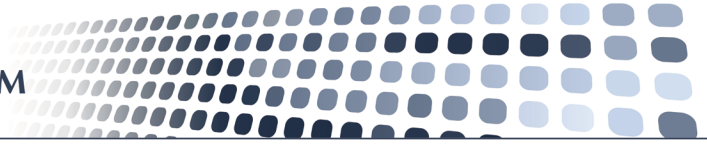


on the partnership of equal South-South cooperation. As a matter of fact, it is not in China's foreign policy interest to promote the principle of interference in the domestic affairs. In spite of the European efforts to set up a comprehensively universal "human rights policy", China wishes fully to respect national sovereignty as a fundamental principle of the international order. This is exactly what China has traditionally done in the main international *fora*, in order to protect its own freedom of maneuver.

The non-normative and non-structural nature of the Chinese interregionalism becomes even more evident in relation to the African Union (AU) issue. While the EU attempts to push through regional integration in Africa, by consolidating the AU, China does not consider any African regional and sub-regional organization as a strategic partner in itself. In Barton's words, "the EU's attempt to shape the AU on its design is sufficient proof of its normative power usage in Africa, whereas China prefers bilateral interaction, which is logical for a country unfamiliar with regional organizations" (Barton, 2009).

However, the growing interest of China in regional and interregional cooperation, displayed through the participation in many regional fora, such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), ASEAN+3, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), might encourage China to consider the promotion of African regionalization processes as a foreign policy option in the foreseeable future. The 2006 China-African Summit might represent a turning point in the institutional configuration of Sino-African relations, representing as it does a flexible combination of bi-regionalism and bilateralism.

To sum up, the Chinese policy towards Africa is based on a model of "soft interregionalism", which combines the political principles of the "Beijing Consensus" with a preference for mixed bilateral and bi-regional cooperation frameworks. The extent to which China-led interregionalism might constitute a genuine alternative to the European development cooperation policy is worth considering from a systemic perspective, in the light of the contribution of another emerging international actor, India.



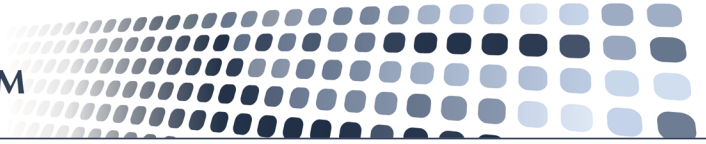
3.2. Challenging the EU's normative power: the emerging Indian paradigm of "South-South interregionalism"

Historically bound by the normative basis of its anti-colonial and anti-racist "third-world" foreign policy, India still conceives itself as a bridge between developed and developing countries. The pivotal position of its alignment in international economic institutions and its historic ties with Eastern and Southern African countries (especially South Africa), do constitute the main source of a genuine Indian "soft power". Nonetheless, Indian growing activism on the African continent seems to exhibit a gradual adaptation to the changing post-Cold War international environment..

Due to its past commitment to a genuine "non-aligned" foreign policy, India has gradually accumulated much influence in African political circles, especially in countries where the European normative power has displayed little effects in the medium-term (i.e. South Africa and SADC countries). By emphasizing economic growth over political conditionality, India is promoting norms in its development policy towards Africa, in a different way to that favoured by the EU. India sees economic growth as an instrument of national emancipation, which can and should be combined with a significant degree of economic and political liberties.

Looking at Ian Manners definition of "normative power" (Manners, 2002; Manners 2008), it is easy to find in the Indian commitment to African development a normative design, which shapes an alternative model of interregionalism in opposition to both EU-led and China-led interregionalism. Unlike the European Union, India enjoys a relatively high degree of legitimacy, due to its anti-colonial and "south-south" rhetorical stances. Unlike China, India can successfully claim to support a value-based interregional model, founded on democracy and political liberties.

Far from the European "existentialist" connotation of regional cooperation, the Indian instrumentalist interpretation of interregionalism aims at increasing India's bargaining power within multilateral fora. India takes an instrumental view of its own hybrid interregional relations (close to Haenggi's categorization of "hybrid interregionalism") both in the economic and trade field, such as at the WTO, and in the security sphere, such as at the UN. As a "bridge between developed and developing countries", India also enhances its negotiating power thanks to its pivotal position.



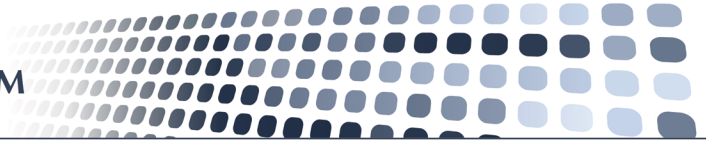
Paradigmatically, through the WTO G20 bargaining power, India, together with Brazil and China, successfully sidestepped the EU-US agenda during the Doha Development Round.

With specific reference to the African context, India-led interregional policy is based on the promotion of regional cooperation between African developing countries, not as an objective by itself, but as a mean to achieve economic and social development in accordance with a liberal-democratic political order. Coherently with the hybrid interpretation of its interregional relational patterns, and with its attachment to the classical notion of nation states' sovereignty, India builds on a differentiated network of bi-regional and bilateral relations, South Africa being the cornerstone of India's African policy.

At the interregional level, IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) does clearly constitute the main institutional reference of India-backed South-South interregionalism. Built on the India-South Africa "special relationship" (which is constantly nourished through a common normative background, and more empirically, by a considerable Indian community based in south-eastern South Africa), IBSA appears both as a value-based and as an increasingly unified bloc in international multilateral negotiations. As officially stated by the Indian government, "India, Brazil and South Africa share common economic and political history and have stood together in different multilateral fora on more than one occasion for the cause of developing world^{XI}".

Another cornerstone of the Indian African policy consists in the support of African regional economic cooperation institutional frameworks, as in the case of the NEPAD initiative. India's objectives with regard to this newly established interregional policy have remained the same over the years, i.e., the "creation and consolidation of strong economic bonds among countries of the South and the use of India's relative economic strength for development of these countries on a mutually beneficial basis" (Beeri, 2003).

At the bilateral level, India has engaged single African partners economically through technical assistance, training and trade programs. As Ruchita Beeri has put it, over the past four decades, India has provided "more than US \$2 billion in technical assistance to the countries of the South and most of it has gone to Africa" (Beeri 2003). Since 1994, the government has run a program for cooperation with select African countries for the development of small-scale industries (SSI). The countries involved are Nigeria, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana and Ethiopia. A small-scale industry

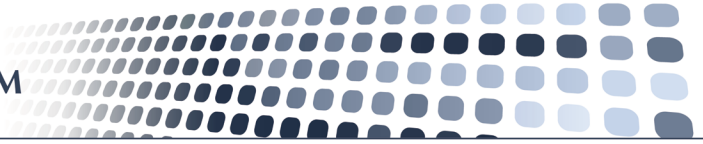


development project is also under execution in Zimbabwe. In Senegal, Mali and South Africa, Indian officials have been involved in significant technical and training projects. The normative foundation of the Indian bilateral aspect of interregionalism seems to favour economic development as a precondition to social and political liberties. This is why the Indian engagement in the African continent does not follow a strictly recognizable territorial or geographical logic, but rather follows a norm-based logic.

In spite of the abovementioned *caveats*, India disposes of an attractive image among its main African partners, which constitutes a valuable source of normative power. India is likely to reinforce its 21st century role as the new centre providing technologic resources, financial aid and preferential commerce to a developing Africa in order to increase its normative influence in terms of market standards. Economically, the Indian commitment to interregionalism implies working closely with the African Union on the NEPAD initiative, as well as reinforcing the potentially multidimensional character of IBSA. Diplomatically, India looks at ways and means to garner support in order to promote its strategic interest. India's role in UN peacekeeping in Africa, much appreciated by the local population, has been a clear example of the increasingly proactive attitude of India in African political and security issues.

Thus a new paradigm of normative-based “equal interregional partnership” is emerging through Indian activism in Africa, which might engender the conditions for a competitive relationship between the EU's, China's and India's interregional projects towards the African continent.

On the one hand, the Chinese model of interregional cooperation seems to erode the European material capabilities to perform as “normative power” in the African continent: by offering alternative and non-conditional sources of financial aid and economic cooperation, Beijing does challenge the relative influence of the EU. On the other hand, India-led interregionalism, relying on South Africa as *pivot* of the Indian influence on the African continent, does represent a challenge to the EU in terms of value-based interregional cooperation and democratic legitimacy. In a structural perspective, ample empirical evidence leads us to suggest that India's and China's African policies might significantly constrain EU-led interregionalism towards Africa.



4. Conclusions: the Indian and Chinese challenge to EU-led interregionalism: is Europe “losing” Africa?

The paper has aimed at showing the characteristics of the diverging EU, India and China regional and interregional patterns towards Africa, as well as their implications for the “global politics of interregionalism”. The problematic concerns overshadowing the triangular EU-India-China relationship with Africa have been addressed according to Haenggi’s analytical classification; building on a realist declination of the “new regionalist” approach, the paper has investigated the extent to which the emergence of new paradigms of interregionalism (i.e. promoted by India and China) might impact on the re-defined European interregional policy.

The paper submits that the EU’s, India’s and China’s respective regional and interregional policies are generating a competitive “global politics of interregionalism”, where the EU is engaged to perform as a credible “normative power”. In a systemic perspective, the EU is undoubtedly called upon to face the challenge rising from alternative models of interregional cooperation. In this sense, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty does not necessarily constitute an adequate response in terms of coherence and consistency of the EU’s commitment to interregionalism as a way to foster a global governance paradigm change. The strategic void affecting the EU’s influence in the African context should be filled by a renewed strategic effort moving beyond the 2000 EU-Africa Strategy.

As a generalizable trend, the African case study might suggest a negative implication on interregionalism as a long-term relational pattern fostered to reform the current global governance outlook. Nevertheless, interregionalism has so far represented an effective instrument to enhance the European “actorness” at the international stage. It has benefited all newly established regional groupings and assured visibility to European development cooperation policy towards Africa. Despite the political difficulties, particularly in terms of coherence within the EU and between the *plethora* of the regional groupings involved, interregionalism has overall proven a productive model of cooperation for all actors involved (both at the governmental and at the non-governmental level).

In contrast with the Chinese and Indian interregional policies, less regulated and less solid in their historical evolution, the EU’s commitment to interregional cooperation



encompasses a rich variety of treaty-based relations. Moreover, the non-state nature of the EU and its consensus-based political system guarantee a certain degree of continuity and credibility in its collectively-negotiated interregional trade and security commitments. This is why the emergence of India and China interregional policies towards Africa does not necessarily undermine the conceptual significance of European-led interregionalism, which continues to represent a policy of *longue durée*, not an accidental tendency of the post-Cold War international system. Moreover, rather than a rollback, European-led interregionalism is likely to envisage an underpinning of the current interregional trends, were the WTO Doha Round to falter.

Thus, the most relevant question is not *whether* interregionalism can continue to shape the post-Cold War international system transition, but *which kind* of interregional model has the best chances to shape the future global trends, notably in case of a competitive dynamic between the EU, India and China (and eventually US) interregional patterns. The main concern about the European-promoted interregional project does not come from the conceptual solidity of interregionalism *per se*, but from the comparative advantages that India and China might enjoy in cooperating with developing countries. In order to preserve its influence on the emerging regional actors in the African continent, the EU is challenged, on the one hand, to strengthen its internal institutionalization, thus continuing to embody the most successful model of deeply-institutionalized regional polity. More decisively, the EU is called to be more focused on the “structural” implications of interregionalism as a way to provide an effective international system change (eventually based on “regionalized multilateralism”), rather than privileging short-term economic-centered factors.

^IIn particular, Telò distinguishes between Germany and Japan pre-Second World War “malevolent regionalism”, the American-led post-Second World War hegemonic regionalism, and the current post-hegemonic regionalism., M. Telò 2007).

^{II} On the specific notion of the “EU structural foreign policy”, see Hill, Smith, 2008.

^{III} M. Telò, 2007

^{IV} Bjorn Hettne defines the same concept as “multi-regionalism” (Hettne, 2005).

^V See, in particular, the paradigmatic case of South Africa.

^{VI} Through the “one-China-clause”, China’s African partners are required to accept the “one-China doctrine”, which implies the non-simultaneous recognition of the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan at the international stage.



^{VII}J. Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus*, United Kingdom Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2004.

^{VIII} China's obstructionism in the UN Security Council posed the basis for the dilution of the 1706 Resolution, which imposed sanctions to Omar El Bashir Sudanese regime.

^{IX} See <http://www.china.org.cn>

^X People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Chinese African Policy*, 2006, see <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t230615.htm>.

^{XI} S. P. Mukherjee, Indian External Affairs Minister, Speech at the Academic Forum, "IBSA Partnership For Shared Prosperity & Inclusive Globalization" at <http://meaindia.nic.in>, 2007.

References

- Aggarwal, Vinod and Fogarty, Edward K. "The Limits of Interregionalism: The EU and North America", in *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 2005
- Barton, Benjamin "EU-China, Africa Trichotomy: the normative power concept on the African continent", in *EU-China Observer*, College of Europe, Bruges, Issue 3, 2009, p. 14
- Bartels, Leonard "The Trade and Development Policy of the European Union", *European Journal of International Law*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2007, pp. 715-756
- Bergsten, Fred "Open Regionalism", in *The World Economy* Volume 20, 1997, pp. 545-565
- Beeri, Rachid "India's Africa Policy in the Post-Cold War Era: An Assessment", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 27, No. 2, Apr-Jun 2003
- Carbone, Maurizio, The role of civil society in the Cotonou Agreement, in B. Oulafemi and F. Gerrit (eds), 2005 p. 193
- Cooper Ramo, Joshua, *The Beijing Consensus*, United Kingdom Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2004
- De Flers Nicole Alecu and Regelsberger Elfriede, "The EU and inter-regional cooperation" in Hill, Christofer and Smith, Michael, 2005 pp. 317-342
- Farrel, Mary "The Global Politics of Regionalism: an introduction", in Farrel, Mary Hettne, Bjorn and Van Lagenhove, Luk (eds.), *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice*, Pluto Press, London, 2005, pp. 1-21,
- Frisch, Dieter *The European Union's Development Policy*, Brussels, ECDPM, 2008, p. 29.
- Gowan, Richard and F. Brantner, *A global force for human rights? An audit of European power at the UN*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2007
- Haenggi, Heiner "Interregionalism: empirical and theoretical perspectives", Center Applied Policy Research
[http://www.ipw.unisg.ch/org/ipw/web.nsf/SysWebRessources/h%C3%A4nggi/\\$FILE/Haenggi.pdf](http://www.ipw.unisg.ch/org/ipw/web.nsf/SysWebRessources/h%C3%A4nggi/$FILE/Haenggi.pdf), 2000
- Hettne, Bjorn, "Regionalism and World Order", in M. Farrel, B. Hettne, L. Van Lagenhove (eds.), *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice*, Pluto Press, London, 2005, pp. 269-285
- Hill, Christofer and Smith, Michael, *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004
- Keukeleire, Stephan & MacNaughtan, James, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008
- Maignette, Paul and Nicolaidis, Kalypso, "The influence of the European democracy", in M. Telò, *The European Union and Global Governance*, Routledge, London, 2009.
- Manners, Ian "The Normative Power of the European Union in a Globalised World", in Laïdi. Zaki (ed.), *EU Foreign Policy in a Globalized World: Normative Power and Social Preferences*, Routledge, London, 2008, pp. 23-37
- Manners, Ian "European normative power: a contradiction in terms?", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 40 number 2, 2002, pp. 235-258
- Telò, Mario (ed.), *European Union and new regionalism : regional actors and global governance in a post-hegemonic era*, Ashgate, Burlington, 200
- Westphal, Karin, "Biregionalism: Projecting a New Pattern of Governance? EU's relations with Latin America", in Grabbendorf Wolf and Seidelmann Reimund (eds) 2005.