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February 2022

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The World of Overlapping Regions:

Explaining Exclusionary Regionalism from a Social Psychology Perspective

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The world is full of overlapping and nested regionalism. Why? This paper answers this question from the perspective of countries that aspire to leadership. We pay special attention to membership, which is a concept intrinsically linked to leadership via the key factor of "exclusion," because the exclusion of rivals is necessary for a state to become a leader. Our main claim is that the creation of a *regional* group is a convenient and effective way to exclude rivals; hence regionalism proliferates. Borrowing ideas from the social psychology literature on the leadership aspirations of individuals, this paper first develops theories of exclusionary regionalism, which explain countries' effort to organize regional groups from which more powerful states are excluded. The underlying rationale is that, just like people called "dominance-oriented leaders" by social psychologists, countries value the prestige of leading a group, even a very small regional group. The paper then presents a world map of exclusionary regional groups, drawing a sharp contrast with Buzan's map of regional security complexes and Katzenstein's worldview in which regionalism in Europe and Asia is not necessarily exclusionary, and the reasons for such disagreements are discussed. The paper finally brings the perspective of followers into the theoretical setting, given that they are in a position to choose their leader. A potential leader's regionalism projects should be supported so that the country can secure its position as the actual regional leader.

Keywords: Regionalism, Membership, Leadership, Exclusion, Institution-building

The World of Overlapping Regions:

Explaining Exclusionary Regionalism from a Social Psychology Perspective

1. Introduction

The world is full of overlapping and nested regionalism, but why is this so? Despite some discussions on the desirability and consequences of this situation (Busch 2007; Alter and Meunier 2009; Arel-Bundock 2017), this important question of "why?" has been largely left unaddressed (Panke and Stapel 2018a). Some political scientists may argue that small regionalism should be pursued on top of large regionalism because deeper integration can be achieved by only a limited number of like-minded states (Downs et al. 1998). However, such a theoretical account is counterfactual; small regionalism led by a small state is often less liberal-minded than large regionalism led by the US, insofar as the world of overlapping regions is concerned. Some economists may argue that regionalism proliferates as a reaction to regionalism elsewhere (the so-called "domino effect"), but such explanations cannot give us a comprehensive understanding of why overlapping and nested regionalism is pursued (Baldwin 1993; Baier and Bergstrand 2014; Baldwin and Jaimovich 2012).[1]

This paper offers a parsimonious explanation for the proliferation of overlapping and nested regionalism from the perspective of states that aspire to the leading position, borrowing ideas from the social psychology literature on dominance-minded leaders in a group. We argue that states prefer to be the leader in a group, even in a small group. States that aspire to the leading position often embark on regionalism because the creation of a *regional* group is a convenient and effective way to exclude rivals and to hold the leading position. Even a small(er) state can be a leader in a small(er) regional group. Hence, various sizes of exclusionary regionalism pursued by states of various sizes co-exist in an overlapping and nested manner.

The fact that regionalism is overlapping and nested and that regionalism is exclusionary can be regarded as different sides of the same coin. Because regionalism projects are exclusionary, they accumulate. Through a theoretical lens enhanced by social psychology, this study views the world consisting of overlapping regions in an innovative but theoretically informed manner. Note that the exclusionary and overlapping/nested regionalism is not a phenomenon that emerged only after the decline of US hegemony (for post-hegemonic exclusionary regionalism, see Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012; Malamud 2012). Nor is it a phenomenon that can be observed in only particular parts of the world (see Weiffen et al. 2013 for Latin America; Panke and Staple 2018b for Europe; Hartmen 2018 for Africa; Yao 2016 for the Asia-Pacific region). This paper reveals a constant force that induces exclusionary regionalism all over the world.

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[1] Baldwin (1993) argues that there should be a domino effect of participation in an existing regional trade agreement (RTA), which implies that regionalism is "open". In this case, regionalism projects expand in terms of membership, rather than proliferating in number. Baier et al. (2014) argue that the formation of an RTA between State A and B would lead to the formation of an RTA between State C and D. This leads to the proliferation of RTAs, but does not explain why RTAs (or regionalism) are overlapping or nested. Baldwin and Jaimovich (2012) argue that when State A signs an RTA with State B, then State C that competes with State A in the State B market tries to form an RTA with State B if it cannot join the RTA between State A and B through accession. With this theory, it is possible to explain overlapping RTAs, but not nested RTAs.

Exclusionary regionalism refers to regionalism that has exclusionary characteristics in terms of membership. This means that, from among various institutional variables, we put a special focus on one variable, namely, membership. First and foremost, membership is the essence of regionalism. The distinguishing characteristic of international institutions that exhibit regionalism is the limitation of membership (Hurrell 1995; Hettne 2005). Second, membership is not just one of many institutional variables. Indeed, it is usually the (original) members that design other institutional variables such as function, scope, and decision-making procedures. Membership often comes first for international cooperation, and this is especially true for regionalism. Third, conceptually speaking, membership and leadership are two inter-related variables of regionalism that are linked via "exclusion" because the control of membership and the exclusion of rivals is essential for states to hold the leading position in a group. Hence, membership, leadership, and exclusion are intrinsically linked concepts that are useful in explaining regionalism.

Several key terms are defined in the following. A region is a social construct between the national and global levels that make references to territorial locations and to geographical (or normative[2]) contiguity (Börzel and Risse 2016). Regionalism refers to the state-led process of building and sustaining regional institutions among at least three states (ibid). Although leadership is a complex concept that can refer to behavior or position (Young 1991), in the present paper it refers to the leading position in a (regional) institution, rather than to leadership behavior during institution building. The leading position in an institution is fungible and it can be converted into leadership behaviors inside the institution. A state that has primacy in terms of capacity vis-à-vis other group members holds the leading position in the group (see Section 3 for further details). Although "nested regionalism" and "overlapping regionalism" can be conceptually differentiated (Alter and Meunier 2006), this paper uses "overlapping and nested" regionalism to refer to the situation in which the members of a small regionalism project are largely (though not necessarily perfectly[3]) a subset of the members of a large regionalism project.[4]

The paper is structured as follows. The next section examines world maps drawn by Barry Buzan and Peter Katzenstein, and considers how and why they are different from the world map presented in this study. We then delve into the social psychology literature, which provides the micro foundation of our new theories on exclusionary regionalism. Recent work in experimental psychology has shown that the behaviors of individual leaders who ostracize capable group members are similar to the behaviors of states that aspire to regional leadership in an exclusive manner. Borrowing ideas from social psychology, the fourth section develops our theories of exclusionary regionalism that explain a potential leader's efforts to pursue a regional group by excluding rival states. The fifth section presents new world maps of overlapping and nested exclusionary regional groups that actually exist around the world. The final section concludes the paper.

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[2] This study mainly deals with region(alism) associated with geographic contiguity. Regionalism associated with normative contiguity (such as cultural and ethnic contiguity) may not be fully explained from the perspective of exclusion. The room to manipulate membership of regionalism based on normative contiguity is more limited than geographic contiguity. Hence, compared with geographic contiguity, normative contiguity is less convenient for achieving convenient membership. Arab regionalism and Latin American regionalism are examples here. Note, however, that some regionalism associated with normative contiguity such as the Turkic Council established by Turkey that excludes Russia can be understood in line with the proposed theories.

[3] When a small regionalism project is a perfect subset of a large regionalism project, the situation can be regarded as nested in a narrow sense, like Russian dolls (Alter and Meunier 2006).

[4] Therefore, the relation between two regionalism projects that merely have some common members is not the principal concern of this study. The relation between South America and the South Atlantic falls under this category because neither is the subset of the other in even a rough sense.

2. Existing Maps

Two influential world maps of regionalism have been widely cited: *Regions and Powers* by Buzan and Wæver (2003) and *A World of Regions* by Katzenstein (2005). Regions included in these two maps are different from those in our world map presented in this study. As will be detailed in Section 4, regions included in our map have two distinctive features. First, regions are overlapping and nested. Many regional groups are proposed by various states, and they are overlapping and nested with each other, in the same way as annual growth rings of trees. Second, regions are exclusionary. In this section, we will try to identify possible reasons for these differences.

Buzan and Wæver (2003) developed the theory of regional security complexes (RSCs), which has been extremely influential in regionalism studies. An RSC is a group of countries that have significant security interactions. Countries' actions and motivations in international security are regional in character. Hence, there are distinct and stable patterns of security interactions among nearby states, providing the basis of RSCs (Figure 1). Note that RSCs describe the status of actual or potential interactions of military forces, rather than the formation of security alliances. There are several RSCs around the world, such as the North American RSC, the South American RCS, the European RSC, and the East Asian RSC.

The map by Buzan and Wæver has two important features. First, regions or RSCs do not overlap. While some countries act as insulators (buffers), not covered by any RSC, no country is included in multiple RSCs. Second, the US is part of the North American RSC, but not other RSCs. Of course, the US influence is significant even in Asia and Europe. However, it is not a part of the (East) Asian and European RSCs. In contrast, regional groups proposed in this study are often overlapping and nested. How can we explain these differences? These are mainly due to the emphasis placed on international security. In contrast to the present study, Buzan and Wæver emphasize the security perspective in understanding regionalism. The mobilization of military forces is costly, and thus security interactions are often significant in only a geographically confined space, which does not allow RSCs to overlap. Deploying military forces to the other side of the globe is costly even for the US. Hence, the US is a part of only the North American RSC. However, the US can be more influential in non-security fields such as economic cooperation. Hence, in our map, the US is a member of multiple instances of very large regionalism (e.g., Asia-Pacific regionalism and North Atlantic regionalism).

Katzenstein (2005) views the world as consisting of regionalism, using "the American imperium" as a key concept. In his view, regionalism in Europe and Asia closely interacts with an American imperium that combines territorial and non-territorial power. European regionalism and Asian regionalism have core states of Germany and Japan, respectively, that have acted as supporters of American power and goals. With or without membership, the US is the key actor in European and Asian regionalism. In short, the US is part of European and Asian regionalism, rather than outside of it. European and Asian regionalism cannot be exclusionary of the US presence.

The critical difference between Katzenstein (2005) and this study is the US presence in Asian and European regionalism. Katzenstein emphasizes the role of the US in developing Asian and European regionalism because his analysis of European and Asia regionalism is from the American (imperium) perspective. In contrast, the present study aims to focus on the exclusion of the US from regionalism, including that in Europe and Asia. This study analyzes regionalism from the perspective of the states that can be a leader in a regional group if the US is excluded.

The two arguments are not necessarily inconsistent, and two forces coexist, namely, developing regionalism with the US and doing so without the US. In short, *A World of Regions* provides the narrative of regionalism (in Europe and Asia) from the US perspective, while this study offers an alternative narrative from states that are strong in the region but not as strong as the US.

Figure 1: Regional Security Complexes
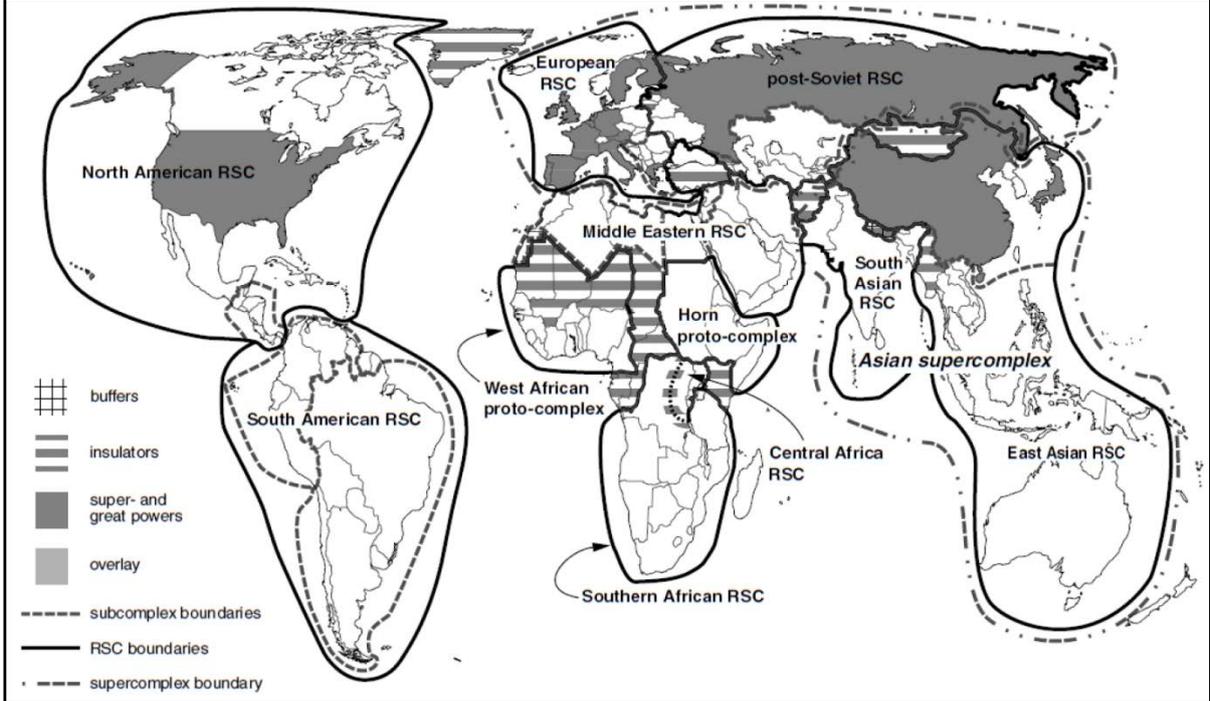
3. Social Psychology Theories on Leadership Aspirations and Exclusionary Groups

International relation theorists have argued that they should borrow more ideas from psychology in developing international relations theories (Stein 2017). This section introduces the social psychology literature on human behaviors related to leadership aspirations. In particular, theories on the leader's behavior in group activities provides the micro foundation of our proposed theories, which are introduced in the next section.

The classic psychological study of human motivation by Maslow (1943) gives us a good starting point of our discussions. He argued that there are five types of needs that motivate human behaviors: physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Table 1). Among them, the third and fourth needs are useful in understanding people's behaviors in association with groups. Note that there can be some friction between two needs; for example, strong needs for self-esteem and for the esteem of others may conflict, ruining group harmony and hence one's place in the group.

Table 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Types of Needs	Descriptions
1. Physiological needs	Body needs related with homeostasis and appetite
2. Safety needs	Needs to avoid dangers
3. Belongingness needs	Needs to have a place in a group
4. Esteem needs	Needs for self-esteem and esteem of others
5. Self-actualization needs	Desire for self-fulfillment

Source: Maslow (1943)

The relation between self-esteem and selection of a group or institution has been studied by educational psychologists. They have developed a theory called the big-fish-little-pond effect. Students of equal ability (absolute level) have lower academic self-concept when attending schools where the average ability levels of classmates is high and higher academic self-concept when attending schools where the school average ability is low (Marsh et al. 2008). Put simply, the best student in a small school will have higher academic self-concept than an average student in a big school when the two students are equally qualified. This implies that students may choose to attend a relatively "small" school rather than a "big" school. While this theory is interesting, there is an obstacle to directly applying it to the formation of regional groups in international relations. Specifically, the membership configuration of groups is a given in the big-fish-little-pond theory—the fellow students who attend a school are a given, and a student cannot exclude students of higher ability. Nevertheless, educational psychologists' argument that that big fish in a little pond is better than a little fish in a big pond is noteworthy.

The significance of relative position in a group has also been emphasized by primatologists who study animal behavior. The behaviors of animals are relatively straightforward, and the struggle for the leadership position in a group is more explicit. In particular, in the world of chimpanzees, social hierarchy within their group is critically important. Primatologists observe that chimpanzees at the top of the hierarchy often behave aggressively toward rivals (Nishida and Hosaka 1996) One pitfall, however, is that the motivation behind such behaviors is not perfectly clear; it could be argued that a chimpanzee excludes rivals for the sake of group performance or cohesion, rather than for the sake of self-interest including esteem.

By conducting carefully designed experiments, experimental psychologists have begun to identify people's behaviors in groups as well as motivations behind them. Maner and Mead (2010) conducted interesting experiments examining the behavior of a student assigned to be a group leader responsible for helping the group attain important goals. They found that some leaders use their power to steer their group toward desired outcomes, but others use their power to maintain their leadership status. When the leader is dominance-oriented, maintaining the leading position is often given priority over group performance (ibid). It was reported that some leaders even tried to weaken group cohesion and cause dysfunction in group activities, despite its negative impact on group performance. Psychologists called this the "divide and conquer" strategy, which is a familiar term to international relations theorists. This choice of terminology is only natural, given that the leader's ultimate goal is to continue to hold the leadership position or status (Case and Maner 2014).

This problem becomes especially prominent when a group has a very capable member, perhaps more capable than the leader. The point here is that a capable rival can be threatening to the group leader because the rival may someday deprive the leader of the leading position (Van Vugt et al. 2008). Several methods can be used by a dominance-oriented leader to secure and maintain the leadership position in the presence of capable rivals. One method is to disparage the rivals to ruin their moral authority. However, this strategy is sometimes risky because such behavior can also ruin the leader's own reputation (Georgesen and Harris 2006). A more straightforward method to achieve the same goal is the marginalization of rivals. By conducting experimental group activities among university students, Maner and Mead (2010) found that dominance-oriented leaders attempt to ostracize a very capable group member, even though this results in lower group performance. This means that when group members can be selected by an assigned leader, the leader would not welcome overly capable group members. In short, potential rivals become targets of ostracism or exclusion when a group is formed by an insecure leader.

Then, what is the reaction of the party who has been marginalized, excluded, or ostracized? Experimental social psychology studies have not fully discussed this point partly because the experiments were designed to observe the behaviors of leaders in certain group activities, not those of the marginalized or excluded parties. In other words, how the ostracized parties behave in subsequent stages, including the formation of their own group, is beyond the scope of previous social psychology experiments. Nevertheless, the basic human needs of Maslow (1943) can give us some rough ideas: the excluded party needs to satisfy belongingness needs (and esteem needs). When the excluded parties are weak, a group consisting of these weak excluded parties might be an option to satisfy the belongingness needs. However, when an excluded party is strong, it may try to create and lead a new group or join and lead the existing groups to satisfy not only belongingness but also esteem needs.

4. Theories of Exclusionary Regionalism

Our proposed theories on exclusionary regionalism include the perspective of only states that aspire to leadership in regionalism, omitting followers. Followers are certainly important in understanding international institutions including regionalism (Schirm 2010), and they are likely to affect both out-group and in-group competition between states that aspire to leadership in various ways, depending on their characteristics: (i) devoted followers (followers that make a commitment regarding which regionalism to support), and (ii) opportunistic followers (followers that do not make a firm commitment regarding which regionalism to support). How various followers impact the competition between larger states in forming regionalism is an important topic for future research (for a preliminary analysis, see the Appendix).

Competition regarding regionalism between states that aspire to leadership can take two forms: (i) out-group competition and (ii) in-group competition. Out-group competition is competition between groups led by different states. In-group competition is competition between states within a group. Two states could compete indirectly through two regional groups that they respectively sponsor or they could compete directly within one regional group.

Our proposed theories are derived on the basis of three assumptions. First, we assume that regional boundaries are not given. This means that the boundaries are a social construct (Harris 2000, 498; Wendt 1994). Second, we assume that the leading position in a regional group is beneficial overall. The leading position brings not only material benefits but also non-material benefits such as status. Just like a hegemon that establishes global institutions for the sake of status (Kindleberger 1973), states attempt to form regional institutions for status. In recent international relations studies that consider status to be essential, emphasis is often placed on the "ranking" of states, based on the idea that having a seat in the "great power club" is critical in gaining status (Buzan 2004; Paul and Shankar 2014). Analogously to this, the present study assumes that having the chairperson's seat, even in a small (regional) club, is helpful for gaining status. Third, we assume that the largest state in terms of material capacity holds the leading position in a group. We exclude the possibility that smaller states hold the leading position in regionalism. While accurately measuring power is difficult, as long as we agree on a rough idea about which countries are more powerful than others, we can apply the proposed theories to the real world (see Table 2).

There are four theories regarding regionalism pursued by various states: (i) downward theory, (ii) upward theory, (iii) counter-downward theory and (iv) counter-upward theory. As summarized in Table 2, these four theories concern the policies conducted by large/small states that generate either out-group or in-group competition. Figure 2 is useful for grasping the rough ideas of each theory. Note that in Figure 2, the distribution of power is scattered, which means that there are no nearby states that are roughly equal in terms of power.

Table 23: Four Theories

| Competition Size of States	Out-group	In-group
Small(er) states	Downward theory	Counter-upward theory
Large(er) states	Upward theory	Counter-downward theory

Downward Theory: A small state creates a small regional group in which it can hold the leading position, excluding larger states. In this manner, smaller and smaller regionalism is pursued and a party that excludes rivals becomes the party that is excluded by smaller states. As shown in Figure 2, this theory predicts that State B and C create regional groups whose boundaries are roughly Y and Z, excluding State A and B, respectively.

Upward Theory: A larger state that was excluded from a small regional group led by a smaller state creates a regional group that includes itself as leader, the members of the small exclusionary group, and others, but still excludes larger states. In this manner, larger and larger regionalism is pursued. As shown in Figure 2, this theory predicts that once State C and B create regional groups whose boundaries are roughly Z and Y, respectively, the excluded State B and A create larger regional groups whose boundaries are roughly Y and X, respectively.

Counter-downward Theory: Excluded large states try to induce dysfunction in or join exclusionary regionalism. As shown in Figure 2, this theory predicts that when faced with regionalism Z led by State C, State B tries to induce dysfunction in or join regionalism Z.

Counter-upward Theory: As members of large regionalism led by large states, small states try to induce dysfunction from the inside. As shown in Figure 2, this theory predicts that, when faced with regionalism Y led by State B, State C tries to induce dysfunction in regionalism Y.

Figure 2: Illustration of Theory
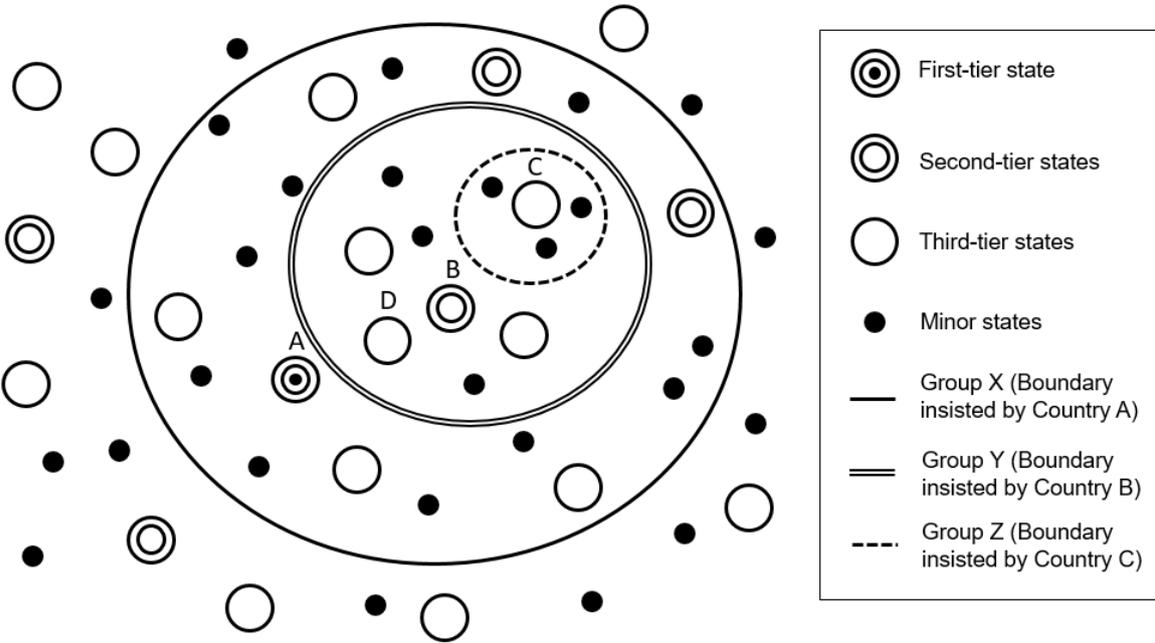
Downward Theory: State B/C creates a regional group whose boundary is roughly Y/Z, excluding State A/A and B.

Upward Theory: Once State C/B creates a regional group whose boundary is roughly Z/Y, the excluded State B/A creates a larger regional group whose boundary is roughly Y/X.

Counter-downward Theory: Facing regionalism Z led by State C, State B tries to dysfunction or join regionalism Z.

Counter-upward Theory: Facing regionalism Y led by State B, State C tries to dysfunction regionalism Y.

The logic of inference in the downward theory is straightforward. If the leading position in a regional group is beneficial, which countries are *not* welcomed by the state that is attempting to create it? Naturally, more powerful states that would deprive the leader of its position are not welcome. The logic of inference in the upward theory is also intuitive. It would be wrong to expect that powerful states that are excluded from exclusionary regionalism simply accept such a situation. An excluded powerful state puts forward a counterproposal and leads a new larger regional group including itself as the leader and the members of the smaller group.[5]

Conceptually, the downward and upward forces to induce smaller and larger regionalism can be separated. However, in reality, the two are combined and often reinforce each other. This is because the desire to exclude and the desire not to be excluded co-exist. As a result, states of various sizes try to establish various sizes of regionalism overlapping and nested with each other, and smaller regionalism and larger regionalism often develop in tandem.

Faced with large regionalism pursued by large states, small states have some countermeasures that can also be theorized, and the same is true for large states faced with small regionalism pursued by small states. Both small and large states can take countermeasures to worsen their rivals' regionalism. While small states cannot deprive a high-tier state of the leading position (Assumption 3), they can cause dysfunction in the larger regionalism led by the larger state from the inside. Larger states excluded from smaller regionalism led by smaller states can also try to "engage" with the smaller regionalism, rather than remaining a mere external party. Through engagement, they can negatively affect the evolution of smaller regionalism. They may try join the exclusionary regionalism; in this way, exclusionary regionalism can be co-opted, leading to the creation of larger regionalism at the same time. As a result of such participation, the leader of the exclusionary group is deprived of the leading position by an *insider*, namely, the more powerful entrant (Assumption 3).

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[5] This is also in line with social phycology. Leaders sometimes decide to seek proximity to an in-group power threat so that it can be closely monitored, rather than excluding it (Mead and Maner 2012).

5. The World of Exclusionary Regionalism

Now, readers are invited on an around-the-world trip to see the overlapping and nested exclusionary regionalism that can be found worldwide, in line with the theoretical predictions made in the previous sections. The aim is to make the discussion as general as possible, meaning that emphasis is placed on the overall development of regionalism such as the creation of overarching regional bodies or regional forums (e.g., regional summits), rather than on regionalism in specific issue areas. The authors of the works cited may have some specific issue areas in mind, but the idea here is to present a world map of overlapping and nested exclusionary regional groups.

Illustrative (but not exhaustive) examples of the exclusionary regional groups around the world are drawn in two maps: (i) the world close to the US and (ii) the world far from the US (Figure 3). This division is helpful because regionalism often develops as an attempt to exclude more powerful states, especially the hegemonic power (the US), from a regional group. In the world close to the US, regionalism is likely to be prominent because it is led by countries that are keen to exclude the hegemon in order to hold the leading position. Regionalism in North Atlantic/Europe, Asia-Pacific/Asia, and the Americas/South America are illustrative examples. Whether to include or exclude the US is the main question of regionalism in these places. However, regionalism can be found far from the US as well. In these places, the exclusion of the US is not the primary concern. This, however, does not mean that the regionalism far from the US is not exclusionary. Parties other than the hegemon (the US) become the target of exclusion in these regionalism projects.

Table 34: Size of States in Each Region

Size of states / Regions	Larger states > Smaller states
Americas	US > Brazil
North Atlantic	US > France > Italy / Sweden
Asia Pacific	US > China/Japan > Indonesia > Thailand > Vietnam
Oceania	Australia > Fiji
Eurasia	Russia > Uzbekistan
Africa	Nigeria > Senegal Nigeria ≒ Egypt ≒ South Africa
Middle East	Turkey ≒ Iran ≒ Saudi Arabia

Figure 3: Overlaps of Exclusionary Regionalism

Map 1: The World Close to the US
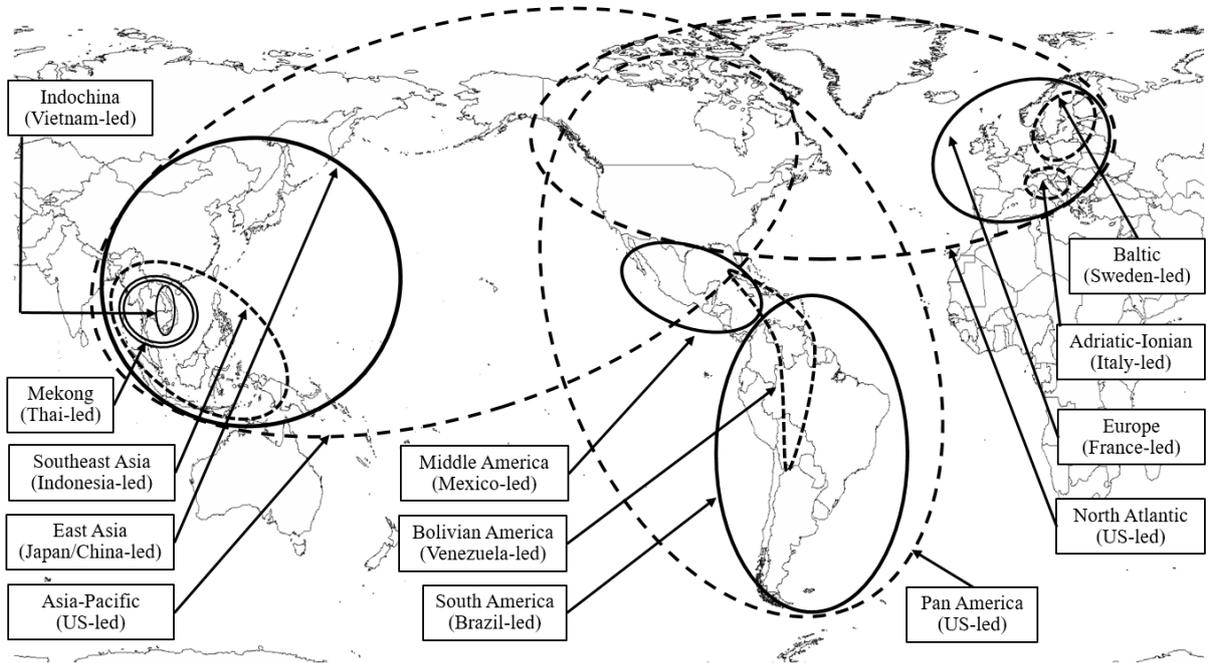
Map 2: World Far from the US
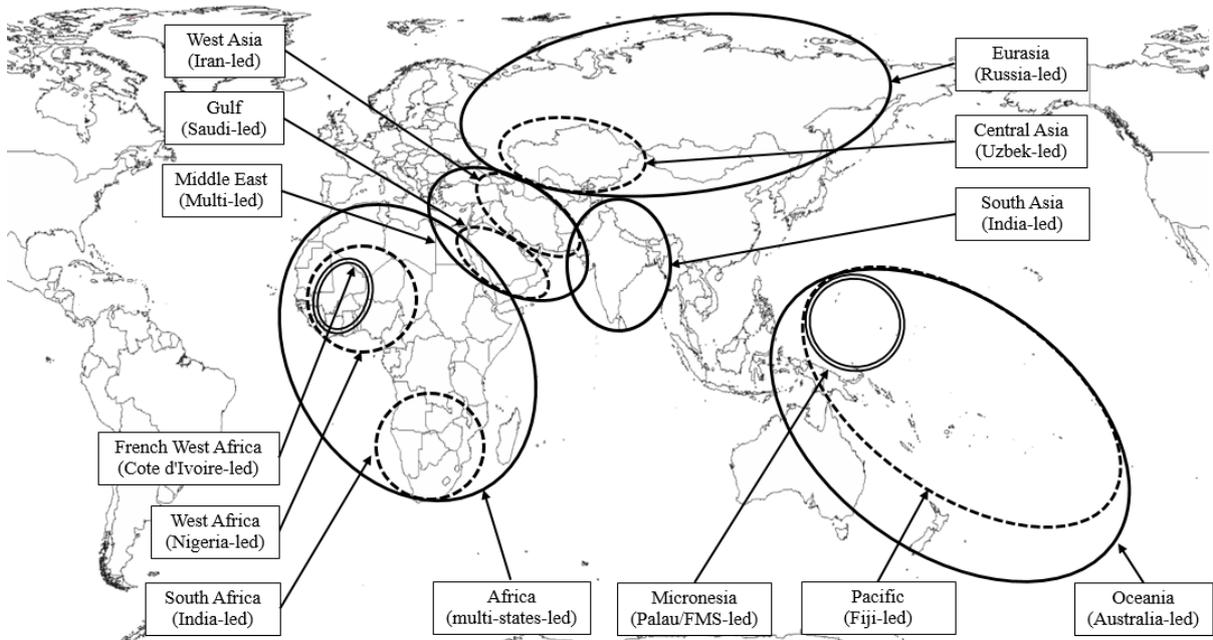
5.1. The World Close to the US

The Americas

The US has been interested in Pan-Americanism for a century. Before becoming a hegemon, the US pursued Pan-American regionalism to exclude European influence from the Americas in line with the Monroe Doctrine (Dennet 1941). Even after the Second World War, the hegemonic US maintained its interest in Pan-American cooperation, including the establishment of the Inter-American Development Bank in 1959, headquartered in Washington, DC. Pan-American regionalism has gained renewed significance following the rise of South American regionalism led by Brazil in the early 1990s. The Summit of the Americas, first held in Miami in December 1994, is an illustrative example.

Brazil is a second-tier state, which can be a leader provided that the US is excluded (Malamud 2012). In South American regionalism, Brazil can hold a dominant leading position. The South American Summit, which was first held in 2000 in Brasilia, is an illustrative example. Further, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was established in 2004 under Brazilian leadership. By establishing the South American Summit and UNASUR, Brazil's endeavored to exclude the US from regional affairs (Weiffen et al. 2013)

Meanwhile, Venezuela (which can be regarded as a third-tier state) and Brazil compete for the role of regional powers, and both of them pursue projects of South American integration as part of their respective strategies to expanding their political influence (Weiffen et al. 2013). An early example is the establishment of the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), headquartered in Caracas, in 1970. In the contemporary context, Venezuela under Chavez was a supporter of UNASUR, which excluded the US, but also established the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA[6]) in 2004 along such a line Venezuela can be a big fish in a small region as long as the US and Brazil are excluded (Muhr 2013).

North Atlantic

Turning to Europe, the US is the key promoter of North Atlantic cooperation. As the title of Deutsch's book *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* suggests, the North Atlantic can be regarded as a region (Deutsch 1969). While an emphasis is often placed on security cooperation such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the North Atlantic has been a platform for economic or trade communities and regionalism as well (Hoffmann 1963, Scheingold 1971).

In post-war Europe, France was a first-tier state, surpassing divided Germany. European Economic Community (EEC) started in 1958 with the original members of France, West Germany, Italy, and the three Benelux states. European regionalism is a method employed mainly by France to exclude the US, and to a lesser extent, the UK. The inclusion of the UK and the US in "European" regionalism would have led to an American- or British-dominated regionalism project (Beloff 1963, 15). France preferred a group of countries dominated by France's power and prestige (ibid, 41). European regionalism and North Atlantic regionalism competed, and France's choice was clearly the former (Asmus 2005, 95).

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[6] ALBA started with Venezuela and Cuba. Nicaragua and Bolivia joined in 2006/ 2007. Six countries in the Caribbean also joined. However, after the death of Chavez and the decline of Venezuela, ALBA lost its momentum.

In Europe, the exclusionary aspect of regionalism policies by second-tier states is less visible. This is because EU integration is solid and sub-regional cooperation must be pursued in line with the overarching framework of the EU. Nevertheless, some sub-regionalism under the EU can be understood as leadership aspirations held by a country that cannot play the leading role in the EU. For example, under Italian leadership, the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative was launched in 2000, which eventually developed as the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) (Belloni 2019). The Baltic Sea region can also be interpreted as an integration project in which Sweden can play an important role (Bengtsson 2016); the secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States is located in Stockholm, Sweden.

Asia-Pacific

The number of layers of regionalism is very significant in Asia. There are at least three structural reasons in addition to Asia's cultural background (Hamashita 1997[7]). First, there are many countries in Asia. Hence, the scope to create "unique" groups is relatively large. Second, the size of Asian countries varies significantly. There are several "tiers" of countries in Asia. Third, unlike Europe, Asia does not have an overarching institution under which sub-regional cooperation is pursued in an integrated way (see above).

Historically, the US holds the view that it is located in the Pacific region, which includes many parts of Asia, as former state secretary George Shultz clearly stated (Shultz 1983). In the 1990s, the region began to be called the Asia-Pacific, but the fundamental regionalism policy of the US remained the same. Whenever Asian regionalism is pursued without US participation, the US makes a counterproposal of Asia-Pacific regionalism including itself. For example, when Japan proposed the Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) in the 1990s, the US blocked the proposal (Rapkin 2001). Bergsten (1998) argued that an Asia-Pacific Monetary Fund, but not the AMF, is welcome.

Japan was a first-tier state that previously tried and China is a first-tier state that continues to try to exclude the US from leadership in regional groups. Until around 2000, Japan could be the leader in regional groups as long as the US was excluded. As argued by Higgott and Stubbs (1995), East Asia regionalism without the US, which was supposed to be led by Japan, and Asia-Pacific regionalism with the US, which was supposed to be led by the US were in fierce competition in the 1990s. After around 2000, China became the leader, provided that the US was absent. As many have pointed out, China is pursuing various types of Asia-only regionalism projects that exclude the US (He 2015). The Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), successfully established by China without US membership, is a good example (Hamanaka 2016).

Indonesia is a typical third-tier state in Asia. In fact, Indonesia also has a self-centered view of the region. It has regarded itself as a "big brother" among Southeast Asian countries (Morrison and Suhrke 1978). Emmers (2005) argues that Indonesia has pursued its regional hegemony benevolently after Suharto's anti-Malaysia policy in the 1960s. So long as the US, Japan, and China are excluded, Indonesia can be a leader in a small group. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was established in 1967, is a vehicle to achieve such a goal of Indonesia. Established in 1976, the ASEAN Secretariat is located in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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[7] Hamashita (1997) discusses why regionalism overlaps in Asia by examining historical cases of regionalism, including the tributary system organized by Chinese dynasties.

There are even states of fourth-tier or lower in Asia. Historically, Thailand has had a self-centered view of regional politics. On the one hand, it sent tribute to China; on the other, it requested tribute from Cambodia and Laos. Such a regionalist policy continues today in contemporary Thai foreign policy. Thai's attempt to establish the so-called "Baht Economic Zone" is an example of this in the 1980s-1990s (Das 1993). While its regionalism policy became inactive during and after the financial crisis of 1997-1998, Thailand started to pursue small-scale regionalism emphasizing political cooperation and economic development, after its economic recovery. Thailand could be the dominant power in such a Thai-defined region, which is often called the Mekong (Poowin). Further, Thailand could be a target of exclusion in regionalism pursued by fifth-tier countries like Vietnam. In fact, a regional summit among Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos was established in 1999, excluding Thailand (Nguyan 2012).

5.2. The World Far from the US

Africa

In Africa, there is no first-tier power comparable to Brazil or China, for example. Countries like Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa have roughly equal status in Africa. At the continent level, there is not a single dominant power and thus there should be compromise with co-leadership among them.

These second-tier states can be a single dominant power in smaller regionalism. For example, it is often argued that Nigeria is an undisputed leader in West African regionalism. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), headquartered in Abuja, Nigeria, is an illustrative example (Hulse 2016). Similarly, South Africa is leading the Southern African Development Community (SADC). However, compared with Nigeria and South Africa, countries like Kenya cannot be clearly assigned to the second tier. Kenya can be dominant in a group if the membership is limited to its immediate neighbors (Tanzania and Uganda), with a good example being the East African Community (EAC), whose history dates back to the 1960s (Ramchandani 1975).

There are also third-tier states in Africa, such as Senegal and Ivory Coast. With direct and indirect support from France, regionalism among French-speaking West African states is often pursued without the participation of Nigeria (Lopez-Lucia 2020). In such small regionalism, even Senegal and Ivory Coast can be leaders.

Middle East

The Middle East also does not have a single dominant power. Countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia are powerful but cannot single-handedly dominate the region. Countries such as Turkey, which might be regarded as a European power, and Egypt, which might be regarded as an African power, can also wield influence in the Middle East. When it embarked on regionalism in the 1980s, Saudi Arabia did not need to exclude the distant US. Moreover, one could argue that Saudi Arabia formed a regional group combining states that were politically close to the US. However, even the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has some exclusionary elements. With its relatively close relations with the US, the GCC actually excluded Iran from regional activities (Ramazani 1992).

Central Asia

Regarding regionalism involving Central Asian states, it is interesting to note that the primary concern is the exclusion not of the distant US, but of nearby Russia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there have been many regionalism projects led by external parties to offset the power vacuum.[8] In 1991, Russia immediately created the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to maintain its influence in Central Asia. There were also indigenous efforts to foster regionalism without external parties, though these were weak. Uzbekistan regarded itself as a leader in regionalism among Central Asian states only, whereas Kazakhstan is the promoter of Eurasian regionalism involving Russia as well (Laruelle and Peyrouse 2012).

Oceania

Although it is debatable whether Australia is an internal or external party, it has been leading regionalism in the Oceania/Pacific region. Established in 1999, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is an inter-governmental organization that includes Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island states.[9] Note that Australia has regarded the Pacific as its sphere of influence, and has made some efforts to diminish the US influence. In fact, even the PIF has some exclusionary elements, though Australia's attempt to exclude or dilute the US influence in the region is often conducted in a nuanced and subtle way (Paskal 2021).

Fiji has advocated "the Pacific Way" (Lawson 2017) and is not entirely happy about the Australian dominance in the PIF (Tavola 2015). Fiji can lead a group of island states, provided that Australia is absent. Good examples of this are the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) group (Manoa 2015) and the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), in both of which the role of Australia is diminished (Lawson 2017).

Very small states such as Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia can be a leader in very small regionalism. The Micronesian Chief Executives Summit (MCES) established in 2003 is an example of such very small regionalism led by a very small state (Lawson 2016). The recent withdrawal of Micronesian states from the PIF can also be understood along this line.

Indian Subcontinent

The Indian subcontinent is an illustrative example of the world very far from the US. Because the subcontinent is sufficiently far from the US, there is no need for India to make a conscious effort to exclude the US to pursue regionalism in the subcontinent. Moreover, because India is the uncontested leader in the Indian "sub-region", its desire to exclude rival states is not large. Nonetheless, there is an argument that India and China cooperate in developing regional institutions to keep rival powers "at bay" (Rüland and Michael 2019). At the same time, China's membership in the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been supported by Pakistan and other member states, but India continues to be reluctant to accept China, which would deprive India of its hegemonic status in the SAARC (Kizilbash 1989).

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[8] With states in Central Asia (and the Caucuses), Turkey established Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 1992 and China established the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001, though both of these include Russia.
[9] The South Pacific Forum (SPF) was established in 1971 and changed to the PIF in 1999.

6. Conclusion and Future Research Agenda

This paper introduced theories of exclusionary regionalism from the perspective of countries that aspire to leadership. Our theories of exclusionary regionalism explain countries' efforts to organize regional groups from which more powerful states are excluded. Countries make deliberate efforts to organize groups in which they can be the leader because of the prestige associated with leadership status. Our main claim is that the creation of a regional group is a convenient and effective way to exclude rivals. Relatively large regionalism pursued by a relatively strong country competes with relatively small regionalism pursued by a relatively weak country (out-group competition). Such exclusionary behavior of states is analogous to individuals who hold onto the leadership position by ostracizing capable group members for the sake of prestige, as demonstrated in social psychology studies. As a result, the world is full of exclusionary regionalism or, more precisely, efforts to organize regional groups. These groups are significantly overlapping and nested, as a result of pursuing regionalism in an exclusionary manner.

The theories of exclusionary regionalism introduced in this paper provide new insights into regionalism from the perspective of potential leaders, a perspective that has largely been neglected in literature to date. Membership politics is the essence of regionalism. Exclusion, rather than inclusion, is the key to understanding regionalism.

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Appendix: Types of Followers

	Out-group	In-group
Devoted Followers	Devoted followers choose whether to support State A-led large regionalism or State B-led small regionalism, and their support has an impact on determining the winner of out-group competition. *Example. Chile prefers large regionalism led by the US over South American regionalism led by Brazil. It applied for NAFTA membership (unsuccessfully), signed the US-Chile FTA, and joined the TPP.*	Devoted followers not only commit to which regionalism to support (say, State A-led regionalism), but also try to cause dysfunction in the regionalism it did not choose (say, State B-led regionalism) from the inside. *Example. There is no obvious example because this is a risky policy (followers trying to cause dysfunction in State B-led regionalism may be punished by State B).*
Opportunistic Followers	Opportunistic followers let multiple regionalism projects (State A-led and State B-led) both co-exist and compete with each other. For such projects, out-group competition becomes fierce and State A and B behave benevolently to win the support of followers. *Example. Singapore shows strong interest in Asia-Pacific regionalism led by the US, such as the original TPP, while maintaining a strong association with regionalism led by China such as AIIB.*	Opportunistic followers let large states (State A and B) compete with each other inside one regional framework (larger regionalism). In such a framework, in-group competition becomes fierce and no single state can dominate regionalism alone. *Example. ASEAN invites all powerful neighbors, including both the US, China, and Japan, to the ARF. No state can dominate the ARF because of the presence of these rivals.*