Regional Economic Communities and Integration in Southern Africa

Networks of Civil Society Organizations and Alternative Regionalism

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This book is dedicated to all engaged ordinary citizens, survivors of state-centric modes of governance in Africa and around the world

Foreword

Scholarly analysis of contemporary regionalism leaves many gaps, as too much emphasis has been put on states and markets as the sole main actors. The literature has demonstrated how rationalist schools of thought proclaim the alliance between the mainstream state-led and market-driven approaches as one mode of building regions. Consequently, the importance of non-state actors in region-building projects and their capability to promote alternative regionalism have been minimised. However, with the emerging of new players and a shift from bipolar to multipolar centres of regional decisions in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War in 1989, the expansion of the focus of analysis in new regionalism came to the fore with the inclusion of non-state actors. New regionalism became conceptualised as an impetus to governance through civil society associations, strengthened by the capacity of non-state actors to deliver and drive policy in a way that is more attuned with the needs of the communities, compared to state-led development strategies. Consequently, civil society networks became crucial and active agents in the development processes in most of RECs and other transnational organisations. Despite the explosion of new regionalism throughout the world, the role of civil society and how they interact within various institutional settings remain ignored by scholars and by most government elites and policymakers. More than that, those few academics working on

the new regionalism paradigm, who did include non-state actors in their conceptual analysis, failed to expand extensively enough on how non-state actors can stand in their own right in the process of region formation, with equal standing as other partners, without necessarily being accompanied by state and market. Alongside influencing policy in state-led settings, it has been evidenced that cross-border citizen associations may exercise citizenship and intellectual endeavours, among other things, as patterns of informal participation in political projects to form regions.

Against this backdrop, this book contributes to the existing literature on contemporary regionalism debates in several ways. Firstly, by expanding the focus of analysis to include non-state actors. The SADC People's Summit, the Civil Society Forum, Gender Links Forum and the Alternative Mining Indaba, among others, have been consummate examples of how ordinary citizens across the Southern African region are also important active actors capable of mobilising themselves through both citizenship exercises and intellectual endeavours, in order to influence and/or shape the regional order for an alternative. Scholars focusing on the intensification of civil society influence in global governance agree that non-state actors become capable of filling a democratic deficit that has long plagued international institutions. This book establishes how Southern African civil society networks have chosen to fight, at different fronts of advocacy, against the democratic deficit manifested throughout the exclusion and restriction of civic spaces featuring the state-centric mode of SADC governance.

Secondly, this book on the networks of civil society organisations and alternative regionalism in Southern Africa not only does theoretically contribute to the study of contemporary regionalism by expanding the focus of analysis to include non-state actors, but also attempts to demonstrate empirically how regions can be constructed by non-state actors themselves outside the state-centric paradigm. Non-state actors across the Southern African region prefer to network among themselves within self-organised platforms where they are allowed to build coalitions and express themselves freely, sharing opportunities and lived experiences useful for their well-being. The intention is clearly to provide an important understanding of different kinds of strategies, norms and rules developed by

civil society associations within two distinct institutional settings of interaction. The book proves that Southern African civil society networks have managed to build the SADC region from below in a way that is centred around and driven by cross-border ordinary citizens themselves. They did so also through their parallel activities, namely building solidarity and coalition by sharing best practices and aspirations among regional citizenry, use of capacity-building training and media platforms to enhance the popular critical consciousness, just to name a few. At the same time, these civil society entities connecting the existing SADC state-centred status quo across the region contest in a meaningful manner, through contestation and internalised norms, participation in self-regulated cluster meetings during the SADC People's Summit and calling for full operationalisation of Article 23 of the SADC Treaty for alternative agendas. The book shows how the procedural mechanisms developed by non-state actor associations are effective in building regions in their own right, beyond the state-centric paradigm, and demonstrates how regionalism can be viewed as an unconventional socio-political phenomenon that can also be promoted by non-state actors. In short: there is a possibility to build regions through unconventional mechanisms, developed outside of the mainstream.

Lastly, the book empirically contributes to the literature of alternative regionalisms with different kinds of institutional arrangements developed by civil society networks and how they have shaped their interactions in regionalisms. These institutional typologies can be useful as a point of reference to other similar studies in relation to unconventional institutions, developed by non-state actors for the construction of alternatives at both national and regional levels of society. The authors show that regional civil society networks interacting in SADC-created spaces exhibit different institutional arrangements compared to those in self-organised networks. The differences between these kinds of strategies, norms and rules developed by Southern African civil society networks—SADC-CNGO and SAPSN respectively—included *cooperative* versus *contesting* engagement strategies, *complementing* instead of *detracting from* the state-centric order, *compliance to* instead of *ownership of* the agenda, *constrictive* instead of *expansive* norms, *elitist alliance* instead of *grassroots solidarity*,

and *white-collar bureaucracy* versus an *authentic grassroots approach*. More than that, a descriptive typology revealed that within SADC-created spaces, reformist civil society networks exhibit elitist collaboration and informal bargaining strategies, compliant norms and dependent rules, while, within self-organised civic spaces, ever-evolving civil society networks devise combined confrontational and grassroots solidarity-building strategies, contesting and mobilising norms and emancipatory grassroots rules. Given the remarkable difference between the kinds of strategies, norms and rules they have devised, this book demonstrates how regional civil society networks interact within three spaces in order to build alternative regionalisms: SADC-created spaces, intermediate spaces created by reformist civil society groupings and self-organised spaces created by ever-evolving civil society networks. In conclusion: if well-structured, informal institutions can function just like formal institutions and achieve the same objectives at all levels of society.

This is crucial, at a time when we are faced with the limits of power centralisation and the globalisation of the economy. A new regionalism—participatory and inclusive—can certainly offer a better response to the needs of local citizens. It will have a natural predisposition in maintaining/creating well-being for people and protecting the environment when designing policies for the production and distribution of food, energy and goods, for the provision of social and health services, for the management of the local resources and for the creation of good-quality employment and sustainable development in general.

Rome, Italy
31 July 2020

Lorenzo Fioramonti

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Pretoria, South Africa
31 July 2020

Leon Mwamba Tshimpaka
Christopher Changwe Nshimbi
Inocent Moyo

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Abbreviations

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AIDC	Alternative Information and Development Centre
ANSA	Alternatives to Neo-liberalism in Southern Africa
APF	Anti-Privatisation Forum
ASCCI	Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BOCONGO	Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CBTA	Cross-Border Traders Association
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CEEAC	Communauté economique des Etat de L'Afrique Centrale
CEN-SAD	Communauté des Etats Sahelo-Sahariens
CNONGD	National Council of Development NGOs of Congo
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CRNSA	Child Rights Network of Southern Africa
CSF	Civil Society Forum
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DIE	German Development Institute
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EACSOF	East African Civil Society Organisations' Forum
EASWN	East African Sustainability Watch Network

ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EISA	Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa
EJN	Economic Justice Network
ELS	Employment and Labour Sector
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FCES	Foro Consultivo Económico-Social
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FLS	Frontline States
FOCCISA	Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa
FTA	Free Trade Area
FTAA	Free Trade Area of America
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GO-NGO	Government-Organised NGO
HAS	Hemispheric Social Alliance
ICBT	Informal Cross-Border Trade
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IPE	International Political Economy
IR	International Relations
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
MISA	Media Institute for Southern Africa
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWENGO	Mweleko wa Non-Governmental Organisation
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAPSAR+	Network of African People Living with HIV/AIDS in the Southern African Region
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NRA	New Regionalism Approach
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
OSISA	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
RCSN	Regional Civil Society Network
REC	Regional Economic Community
RIGO	Regional Intergovernmental Organisation

RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
RO	Regional Organisation
RPO	Regional Poverty Observatory
SACAU	Southern African Confederation of Agriculture Unions
SAGPA	Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance
SACBTA	Southern African Cross Border Traders Association
SACCAR	Southern African Centre for Cooperation in Agricultural Research
SACSN	Southern African Civil Society Networks
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SADC-CNGO	SADC Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
SADC-PF	SADC Parliamentary Forum
SARDC	Southern African Research and Documentation Centre
SAFAIDS	Southern African AIDS Service Organisation
SAFOD	Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled
SALA	SADC Lawyers Association
SAMA	Southern Africa Miners Association
SANASO	Southern African Network of AIDS Service Organisation
SAPSN	Southern African People's Solidarity Network
SAT	South African Trust
SATUCC	Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council
SAYM	Southern African Youth Movement
SEATINI	Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute
SEG	SADC Employers Group
SNC	SADC National Committee
SNCP	SADC National Contact Point
TEIA	Teia National Forum of Mozambican NGOs
TRALAC	Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa
UN	United Nations
UNAC	União Nacional de Camponeses
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WACSOF	West African Civil Society Forum
WILSA	Women in Law in Southern Africa
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZIMCODD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development

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Regional Integration, Networks of Civil Society Organisations and Alternative Regionalism in Southern Africa: An Introduction

Introduction

The origins of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) can be traced to a group of countries called the Frontline States (FLS) (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland (now Eswatini), Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) whose objective was to end colonial rule in the Southern African region. In 1980 the FLS was transformed into the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). The SADCC aimed at assisting those countries in the region which were still fighting colonial and white minority rule and also sought to reduce its member states' economic dependence on apartheid South Africa (Odhiambo et al. 2016; Schoeman 2013; Söderbaum 1996). The implication of this is that SADCC relied on a "project-based approach with each member state taking responsibility for a particular sector focused attention on the coordination of members' development initiatives rather than on formulating a regional economic development strategy" (Schoeman 2002: 4).

To the role of FLS and SADCC in the struggle against colonialism and the apartheid regime can be added that of the regional civil society

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networks, including trade unions like the Southern Africa Coordination Council (SATUCC) and faith-based organisations like the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA) (Asante 1997; Thompson 2009). Although mixed views exist on the church's role, faith-based organisation (FBO) of churches like the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, spoke out against injustices during colonial rule, helped raise black intellectual currents and consciousness among subjugated peoples, and were important in cultural and political processes of decolonisation in Southern and other parts of Africa (Forster 2019). The view does, of course, also exist that the church or missionaries were actually agents of Africa's colonisation (Falola 2002). Trade unions across Southern Africa, and in Africa in general too, not only collaborated with political parties but also autonomously played a critical role in the liberation movements and struggle for political independence (Sambureni 1996; Sandbrook and Cohen 1975; Beckman et al. 2010). Their engagement with the state continued in the post-independence period and extends from the 1990s to date in the struggle for democracy, which most Southern African countries have instituted. The changing global order and power relations like the end of the Cold War, the dethronement of the apartheid regime in South Africa and the rise of the neoliberal economic paradigm influenced the transformation of SADCC into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992. Differently stated, the attention or significance was regional integration and positioning the region to respond to the fierce offensive of economic globalisation (Schoeman 2002). Therefore, the Declaration and Treaty of SADC (1992)[1] aims at regional integration in order to achieve economic development, peace, security, economic growth; alleviate poverty; improve people's standards of living; and support those who are socially disadvantaged.

[1] The 16 member states include Angola, Botswana, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland (now Eswatini), the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Conventional Regionalism and Regional Economic Integration: Adoption in Southern Africa

In pursuit of its objectives, the SADC follows the rationalist and state-centric paradigm of regionalism. That paradigm defines conventional forms of regionalism pursued in regions of the global north such as Europe. A couple of points are noteworthy, and will be engaged further with later in this book, about the state-centric paradigm of regionalism in relation to the SADC region. Firstly, the perspective held by the member states fits well into the ideal conceptualisation that regionalism is and should be a *state- or states-led* project that seeks to reorganise certain regional spaces in ways that are politically and economically defined (Payne and Gamble 1996). That is, the respective member states are, together, not only responsible but also in charge of the process of regional integration. They, therefore, formulate policies to promote integration and actively drive and oversee the integration of the region.

Secondly, the regionalism thus espoused places emphasis on economic aspects of integration. Not only so, the process of integration is held to follow a well-defined path and pattern in which capital, labour, goods and services increasingly freely flow across the borders of member states. That path and pattern of the integration is best depicted in Balassa's (1961) model of regional economic integration. In his characterisation of economic integration, Balassa argued that it could assume various forms. Briefly, he presented regional integration as progressing from a free trade area (FTA), to a customs union (CU), to a common market, economic union, and finally, total integration. Thirdly, it is also worth emphasising that SADC members assumed the pursuit of this form of integration concurrently or in the aftermath of adopting neoliberal economic policies. This came about with the adoption of economic and structural adjustment policies in the 1990s imposed by international financial institutions, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Thus, economic integration premised on neoliberal economic theory informs the kind of regionalism that the SADC pursues. It informs

the objectives that the SADC or its member states seek to achieve as outlined in the Declaration and Treaty of the SADC.

Despite those lofty objectives, the promised regional development projects by SADC in the Southern Africa region have been criticised as not being inclusive because ordinary citizens are side-lined in decision-making processes. All this confirms that the SADC is a state-led regional institution. Being a strictly intergovernmental organisation with the preservation of state sovereignty at its heart (Godsäter 2015), SADC allows for limited opportunities for engagement of non-state actors and only via certain mechanisms. Like other top-down and controlled processes, SADC has tended to side-line its citizens in the crafting and implementation of policies and regional developmental projects (Godsäter 2013; Söderbaum 2007). There is also an increasingly growing disdain and suspicion of civil society among SADC member states, which has triggered the creation of self-organised avenues of participation by organisations in civil society as an alternative for the inclusion of non-state actors (Moyo et al. 2007).

The point we are making here is that, after the political liberation of Southern Africa, the role played by civil society organisations has been ignored by political elites. Instigated by the end of apartheid and the democratic transition in South Africa, a desire to move on from solidarity politics towards economic development emerged among the SADC founding members. This has created a site for the marginalisation of civil society and the critical role that civil society organisations could play in regional integration drives, projects and programmes.

We locate this book in this critical disjuncture and argue that relegating civil society organisations in the SADC regional integration project not only misses the very idea of integration but also loses out on the significant contribution that the neglected actors can make to successful integration. SADC has indeed been criticised by many for being one of the major African regional economic communities (RECs) least open to civil society (Odhiambo et al. 2016). This is due to its established state-driven regional integration model. It is also despite its established joint space of a regional governance system. Steered by its top-down system of regional integration, SADC has failed to deliver on its promises with regard to fully engaging in constant dialogue with civil society in

decision-making processes as stipulated in article 23 of its treaty (SADC 1992; SADC-CNGO 2012; Söderbaum 2007).

In contrast, civil society organisations have received limited attention by scholars of regional integration despite their critical role in strengthening the legitimacy of regional governance (Fioramonti 2012; Scholte 2015). Apart from influencing policy in formal settings, transnational civil society may informally participate in regional integration through self-sustaining socio-economic activities, and intellectual endeavours, and so on (Rhodes-Kubiak 2015: 50). Cross-border interactions between non-state actors have led scholars of transnational relations to call for an expansion of the traditional, state-bounded notions of civil society to account for a transnational public sphere (Guidry et al. 2000). The limited research on civil society organisations in relation to regional integration in the SADC is such that the mode of regional integration has been traditionally analysed through a top-down lens, with emphasis on the role of government elites, including their associates, technocrats or markets, but at the expense of the general citizenry (Fioramonti 2015).

Inclusive Regionalism: The Critical Place of Civil Society in Southern African Integration

In this book we amplify the point that regional integration can and should be viewed as a socio-political reality, which can also be promoted by non-state actors. Regional civil society networks have self-organising capabilities through which they form regional alliances that can function just like formal processes driven by state actors and technocrats. In this regard, this book follows the growing debate in contemporary regionalism discourses on whether civil society has been, more often than not, intentionally side-lined in region-building processes (Fioramonti 2015). From Europe, to Africa, Asia and Latin America, civil society has largely been on the receiving end of region-building processes (Fioramonti 2013). Civil society has been occasionally invited through once-off forms of participation in state-established avenues where the scope is limited and defined in advance by elites, instead of through day-to-day coexistence and continual negotiation (Gaventa 2010; Gaventa and Mayo

2009). Despite rhetorical references to the importance of civic participation, regional integration has largely developed without the citizens. These practices have not allowed ordinary citizens to fully participate in region-building decisions and have subsequently forced them to claim participation from the regional institution. At the same time, these citizens develop their own institutions of interaction outside of the mainstream, which is traditionally dominated by technocrats and lobbyists, for alternative regionalisms like what is happening among Southern African civil society networks.

However, there seems to be a lack of clarity around the regional way in which non-state actors go about conducting their business and achieve their goals. Or how they interact with organisations that are formal or self-organised networks. This is despite the proliferation of transboundary civil society organisations and their interaction within formal and informal forms of regionalism. We examine this point in this book, through the deployment of New Institutionalism and the New Regionalism Approach (NRA).

Therefore, the overarching aim of this book is to develop a typology of the kinds of strategies, norms and rules developed by regional civil society networks when interacting within both networks outside of the mainstream—i.e. horizontal networks—and with the formal regional bodies like SADC, in order to understand their differences. This raises three critical questions, to which this book responds and these are: what are the kinds of strategies, norms and rules developed by Southern African civil society groups when they interact within horizontal networks and with the SADC?; what are the differences between institutional arrangements in terms of strategies, norms and rules developed by Southern African regional civil society networks during their interaction within formal and self-organised regionalism?; and, is there a typology of how civil society networks interact in regionalism in relation to the respective kinds of strategies, norms and rules they employ?

New Institutionalism and the New Regionalism Approach: Viable Applications for Successful Integration in Southern Africa

We, here, argue that New Institutionalism and the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) constitute notions and approaches that explain a very functional form of regionalism that Southern Africa greatly needs, if regional integration is to succeed. As we demonstrate in this book, our suggestion can at least be gleaned from how the approaches/notions explain and apply to the manner in which networks of civil society organisations in Southern Africa successfully establish an alternative form of regionalism to the state-led initiative. Our motivation in making these suggestions is to contribute to the application of solutions that will lead to the success of the SADC integration project.

Institutions are sets of norms, rules and procedures that enable and constrain actor behaviour with some predictability over time, and may also constitute the actors' identities and preferences (March and Olsen 1984; Charles Plott in Ostrom 1986; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Hall and Taylor 1996;). March and Olsen (1984) conceptualise institutions in such a way that the institutions tend to have a "logic of appropriateness" that influences behaviour rather than a "logic of consequentiality" that could also shape individual action. March and Olsen use firemen to illustrate the fact that they willingly enter blazing buildings because they have accepted that role as a function of occupational choice and training in the fire service. Institutions are mechanisms for adjusting behaviour in a situation that requires coordination among two or more agents or groups of individuals (Hurwicz 1994). Hall and Taylor (1996) define institutions, from a historical institutionalist point of view, as formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organisational structure of the polity. In practice, however, historical institutionalists tend to narrow organisations down to institutions, rules and customs proclaimed by formal organisations. New Institutionalism posits that institutions evolve in very different ways which shape the behaviour of agents or individual members and produce change through rules, norms and other frameworks (Lecours 2005).

In this view, institutions are not only material and formal structures—bureaucracies—as seen by Old Institutionalism, but ideational/normative and informal structures as cognitive scripts, norms and values (Hall and Taylor 1996). New Institutionalism gained prominence in International Relations/International Political Economy (IR/IPE) in the wake of dissatisfaction with the theoretical and conceptual understanding of informal organisations within international organisations, arising from Old Institutionalism placing emphasise on states, without stressing their interactions with other institutions like civil society organisations (Peters 1999; Hall and Taylor 1996; Lowndes 2001; Ostrom 2005). Old Institutionalists' views are understandable if one considered the fact that the study of regionalism in IR/IPE continues to be dominated by rationalist, materialist or structuralist theories. These focus, firstly, on states and technocrats as the most important actors in regionalisation and, secondly, on formal inter-state frameworks and market-led processes of regional integration (Mansfield and Milner 1997; Hettne and Söderbaum 1998). This implies that the realist approach to non-state actors in general, and civil society networks in particular, has been to dismiss them as marginal in world politics. Taking the centrality of the state as a premise, realist thinkers have argued that transnational organisations matter only at the fringes of world politics (Mearsheimer 1994/1995). Again, this makes the point we made earlier about the manner in which SADC member states approach regionalism, coupled with the influence of neoliberalism in the way they conduct economic management.

In view of the limitations that we hinted at in the foregoing associated with approaching regionalism from a state-centric perspective, this book utilises New Institutionalism as a lens through which to examine the strategies, norms and rules that civil society networks develop in order to build alternative regionalism. They develop the alternative because the states exclude or, in some instances, very minimally involve them in the formal processes of regional integration and regionalism. Through the new institutionalist lens, this book therefore undertakes a cross-sectional comparison of institutional arrangements in collective-choice situations. It does so in order to gauge differences in the kinds of strategies, norms and rules that civil society groupings develop in organisational settings. In this context, we operationalise strategies as practices and operating

procedures that describe the behaviour of civil society networks in their interactions (Ostrom 2005); norms, as routines or collective representations of acceptable group conduct bound by some common purpose to achieve outcomes (Jackson 1965); and rules, as a set of instructions for creating an action situation in a particular environment (Allen 2005; Black 1962) or shared understanding by civil society networks about enforced prescriptions concerning what actions or outcomes are required, prohibited or permitted (Ostrom 1980). New Institutionalism provides an appropriate and meaningful theoretical perspective for the comprehensive study of institutions, the way they interact and the effects they have on society (March and Olsen 1984).

The NRA conceptualises regionalism as a multidimensional process, which occurs in many sectors and on different levels simultaneously, and is driven by a variety of regionalising actors, broadly grouped in terms of states, markets and civil society (Söderbaum 2007). One basic assumption is that not only economic, but also social, cultural and environmental regional networks and projects are anticipated to develop more quickly than formal state-driven regionalist projects (Godsäter and Söderbaum 2011). This book utilises the NRA in order to illustrate the strategies, norms and rules developed by cross-border non-state actors from an unconventional point of view. This is because NRA allows for the examination of regionalism as an unconventional social and political phenomenon, which can be promoted also by non-state actors (Hettne and Inotai 1994; Palmer 1991). In other words, NRA is used in this book to link the promotion of regional integration by non-state actors through bottom-up initiatives in Southern Africa. This is achieved by developing a typology of strategies, norms and rules which regional civil society networks adopt within both horizontal and vertical forms and levels of interaction in the SADC region. Based on a critical analysis of these strategies, norms and rules of alternative forms of or self-organised regionalism, the book projects the reality of alternative regionalism which is driven by ordinary people or civil society.

In this way, the book thus expands the study of regionalism, and makes a significant and innovative contribution to the literature and studies of regionalism, as it brings a new perspective on issues that are absent from the literature on the subject. This is important to reiterate because, despite

the explosion of new regionalism throughout the world, the role of civil society in regionalism remains neglected by political elites, academics and policy-makers. The study of regional integration globally, in Africa and, more specifically, in Southern Africa has been dominated by rationalist schools of thought praising the mainstream state-led and market-driven approach as the sole mode of regional cooperation. Such research on regionalism has focused on Europe, North America and the Asia-Pacific region, with Europe remaining an intellectual laboratory (Engel et al. 2017), or so it is claimed. In this regard, the importance of non-state actors in region-building projects and their capability to promote alternative regionalism have been minimised. Focusing on the increase of civil society influence in global governance, scholars increasingly agree that the latter fill a democratic deficit that has long plagued international institutions (Fogarty 2013; Godsäter 2015; Jönsson and Tallberg 2010; Scholte 2011; Tallberg et al. 2013). Some empirical studies have also demonstrated that civil society is not only likely to build regionalism from below, but can also lead to meaningful contestations of existing regionalism paradigms and contribute to reshaping regions in line with alternative agendas (Fioramonti 2013; Godsäter 2014). The outside-led and top-down regionalism has become debatable because ordinary citizens have become second best in promoting integration (Söderbaum 2007).

Although some forms of civil society engagement can strengthen the regional status quo and only produce marginal adjustments in terms of participation and openness, other forms of action exhibit a fundamental counterhegemonic character to the prevailing forms of state-led regionalism. For example, transnational activist organisations, such as Amnesty International, play a significant role in spreading and advancing the norms of human rights. Similarly, various environmental groups, such as Greenpeace, campaign to change norms in order to end the nuclear arms race and climate distortion (Keck and Sikkink 1998). According to Botto (2015), civil society actors in Latin America have built transnational networks, the Southern Cone Coordination of Union Federations (CCSCS), through innovative practices for regional involvement. Botto argues that these civic engagements seek to challenge the free trade area (FTA) agreement in that region. She further points out that civil society in that part of the world advances alternatives to the dominant models of regional

integration within the Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), among others. Botto underscores the fact that civil society is creating an identity that goes beyond particularity and sectorial interests (Botto 2015).

Civil Society Organisations: A Contextualisation and Conceptualisation for the SADC Region

Civil society exists in the respective member states of the SADC. However, the extent to which civil society exercises freedom in each of these states and the level to which civil society organisations operate and are tolerated by the states vary. That discussion is, however, beyond the scope of this book. We focus instead on networks of civil society organisations that, though established within respective and some member states of the SADC, operate at the level of the region parallel to the regional organisations. In this regard, we use the term "regional civil society networks" (RCSNs) to refer to self-organised advocacy groups that undertake voluntary collective action across state borders in pursuit of what they deem to be the wider public interest (Edwards 2009; Florini 2000). RCSNs constitute important new avenues that promote collaboration and collective action around common agendas for the interest of non-state actors across state borders. Just like RCSNs, global civil society refers to a kind of social counterforce to state control, in which citizens organise themselves and their interests across national boundaries (Edwards 2011). The World Social Forum (WSF) and World Women's Forums in general are both examples of global civil society, which actively influence international dynamics (Neubert 2014; Walk and Boehme 2002). For example, the WSF creates avenues of mobilisation for global citizenry awareness to contest the decisions of seven (states which are) leaders of the World