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BOOK REVIEW: AFRICAN (MICRO) REGIONALISM – SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

Ján Marko*

PIKNEROVÁ, L.: *Africký (mikro) regionalismus – jihoafrická zkušenost. (African (Micro) Regionalism – South African Experience)*. Brno: Barriser & Principal, 2013. 175 p. ISBN 978-80-7485-014-1.

African issues in scientific discourse of international relations are generally marginalised, unless sad exceptions such as civil wars, epidemics of diseases or droughts and famine. Any kinds of efforts to bring up various African themes into public or scientific discourse should be, therefore, welcome. One of these rare efforts is a new book by **Linda Piknerová**, which focuses its attention on matters of regionalism in African conditions.

Regionalism, integration or cooperation are central terms of reviewed book, which is divided into four chapters, that follow three levels of analysis – pan-regional, regional and micro-regional forms of international integration. Regionalism as theoretical framework is a subject of the first chapter. At first, the author offers us a brief overview of most important thoughts on integration from historical perspective. Hence, it is no surprising that works of **Immanuel Kant**, **Richard Coudehnove-Kalergi**, **Norman Angell**, **David Mitrany**, **Johan Galtung**, **Joseph Nye**, **Robert Keohane** or **Ernst Haas** are analysed here.

Further, the short history of waves of international integration and regional cooperation practice is introduced, providing examples from all around the world. Historical excursion into examples of institutionalised international cooperation brings us to different terminological and theoretical issues. For example, the distinction between regionalism and regionalisation, understanding of terms such as inter-regionalism, trans-regionalism or sub-regionalism, or differences between "*old regionalism*" and "*new regionalism*" are explained comprehensibly. The "*old regionalism*" may be characterised as state-centric,

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i.e. international cooperation is executed by states and international organisations. The agenda of cooperation is clearly defined in sectors like economics or security with high tendency toward protectionism. To the contrary, "new regionalism" is generally more complex. Its complexity is based on acknowledgment of different actors, not just states, but also non-state actors. Consequently, the subjects of cooperation also includes wide spectrum of themes and sectors, which are usually interlinked. The final distinction between "old" and "new regionalism" is its orientation towards liberalisation and globalisation. Hence, "new regionalism" is able to overcome the practical and terminological problem of regionalisation and regionalism, essentially describing whether the cooperation is established on the bottom-up principle (regionalism) or on the top-down principle (regionalisation).

Second chapter focuses attention on African regional projects and processes on pan-regional level. At the beginning it describes different conditions and manners in which African colonies were managed and organised. Naturally, the French, English or Portugal colonial rule were expressed and manifested in different ways, what has been reflected in various conditions in each colonial territory. After the World War II, in the context of widely accepted principle of self-determination among international community, the process of decolonisation had begun across many African countries. The emergence of high amount of new states on African continent has been associated with many severe problems, which interfered later with integration or regionalisation efforts. Amongst the most serious problems that pose obstacles to practice of integration the author includes the phenomenon of multiple membership, the existence of weak and failing states, significant inner fragmentation of continent in several respects or underdeveloped infrastructure. Further, the problems of incidence of transmissible diseases, low labour mobility, and dominance of some states in regional organisations, lack of leadership and insufficient diversification of African economies represent also significant threats to development of African international cooperation and integration.

Of course, there were not just obstacles to regionalisation, but unifying forces were present as well. We consider the conception of Pan-Africanism as one of the most important ideological impulses towards international cooperation across Africa. **William Edward Burghardt Du Bois** and **Henry Sylvester Williams** were the chief promoters of the ideas of Pan-Africanism. Another ideological movement that promoted common values of Africans by

literature and culture was Negritude. Some of the ideas presented by the above-mentioned movements have contributed to creation of the Organisation of African Unity, which later transformed into current African Union. OAU and AU represent, in spite of all problems and complications that arose during their establishment and operation, the common efforts to create pan-regional international cooperation. When we talk about pan-regional cooperation, we have to mention the New Partnership for African Development, which is a political document that calls for fulfilment of comprehensive objectives of development.

Regionalism and international cooperation on regional level is subject of second chapter. Regionalism on this level of analysis was put into practice in two main forms. First, there were established traditional regional international organisations (e.g. ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD, and EAC). Secondly, there were efforts to implement the cooperation on the basis of federation (e.g. Senegambia, Tanzania). However, subjects of analysis here are institutional forms of cooperation between states; therefore, international organisations of various regions of Africa are introduced in this chapter. According to a plan of African Economic Community, eight pillar organisations were identified due to relatively high quantity of regional subjects across the continent: Arab Maghreb Union, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Community of Sahel-Saharan States, East African Community, Economic Community of Central African States, Economic Community of West African States, Intergovernmental Authority on Development and Southern African Development Community.

These and other regional projects are explained on the basis of geographical affiliation of the organisation between Northern, Eastern, West, Central and Southern Africa. As the most successful organisations, although by no means without problems or complications, we consider SADC and ECOWAS. Both organisations developed cooperation between its Member States across wide range of issues, but economics and security remain still the priority. Another common feature of SADC and ECOWAS is the existence of a regional power inside the regional organisations (i.e. Nigeria in SADC and South Africa in ECOWAS). This common feature, as author states, has considerable consequences for the operation of the organisations in question.

In the last chapter we reach the bottom analytical level – the micro-regional forms of international cooperation. Generally micro-regionalism is realised through projects of local character, that is common for two or more states and relates for example to administration of watercourses or infrastructural projects.

The practical examples throughout the Africa include Lake Chad Basin Project, Niger Basin Authority, Nile Basin Authority and many others.

From the theoretical perspective, author distinguishes three main forms of micro-regional cooperation, which are: Development Corridor; Spatial Development Initiative; and Industrial Development Zone. Division of labour, respectively the functional differentiation can be described as follows: „IDZ's are concrete, geographically small areas lying in close proximity of selected cities, individual IDZ's are mutually connected through development corridors, around which are constructed spatially demanding SDI's.“ (p. 110)

As the name of the publication implies, the core analysis of micro-regionalism is exemplified by the case of Southern Africa. Maputo Development Corridor, SDI Platinum, SDI Phalaborowa and Lubombo and many others are thoroughly examined in the last chapter.

The conclusions of the author are generally positive, though the realistic critique appears. Pan-regional, regional as well as micro-regional cooperation projects across the African continent are attempts that should be welcomed. However, every level of cooperation meets its own set of problem and challenges that should be addressed too.

Reviewed publication *African (micro) regionalism – south African experience* with respect to higher stated terms and issues is designed for wide group of Czech and Slovak readership, which includes students, experts and researchers in field such as International Relations, international economy, international integration and cooperation or African studies, practitioners and employees of ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of economy or various international governmental as well as non-governmental organisations and other specialised workplaces.

Vocational contribution of presented publication consists mainly of its primacy, since it is the first publication in Czech and Slovak environment devoted to problems of African regionalism and international cooperation. Another contribution lies in its complexity and comprehensive content. *African (micro) regionalism – South African experience* is a publication focused on processes of regional cooperation on different levels of analysis, but nevertheless it encompasses wide spectrum of issues, which are explained and exemplified by the local and regional facts and contexts.

Linda Piknerová works as an assistant lecturer at the Department of Political Science and International Relations of Faculty of Philosophy and Arts of University of West Bohemia. In her research she focuses on themes and issues

concerning Africa, particularly South Africa as a region. Many scientific articles and chapters in scientific monographs are evidence of her long-term orientation towards African problematic. **Linda Pikenerová** participates also in the activities of the Centre of African Studies based in Pilsen. The aim of the CAS is to raise the awareness of different African affairs among expert community by the means of research activities.