



# **Building Regions: The Regionalization of the World Order (The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms Series)**

*By Luk Van Langenhove*

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Regions. How they emerge and how they are dramatically changing the appearance of the present 'world of states' and its related forms of governance from local to global levels is analysed in this monograph. But what are regions? Regions can be small or huge. They can be part of a single state, be composed out of different states or stretched out across borders. They can be important recognized economic, social or cultural entities or they can be largely ignored by the people who live on a region's territory. They can be well-defined with clear cut boundaries as is the case in so-called 'constitutional regions' or they can be fuzzy as for instance in cross-border regions. In sum, they are not a natural kind and defining regions is not a simple task. Luk Van Langenhove advances the concept of region building as an alternative to the construction of regions with three issues of region building being explored: - Why are regions built in a world of states? - How do region building processes take place? - How are regions transforming the present world order? Crossing disciplinary boundaries, this book is an exercise in theorizing regions and brings together under one conceptual framework, different processes and concepts such as regional integration, devolution, federalism, and separatism and refines the social constructionist view on regions

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#### **Review**

'Luk Van Langenhove puts forward an innovative theory drawn from social constructivism to explain one of the most significant developments in contemporary international relations - the regionalization of world order. In doing so, he has produced an important comparative study that will be of interest to students of regionalism in all parts of the world.' John Ravenhill, Australian National University, Australia 'This is an impressive attempt to develop what Van Langenhove calls a "social constructionist" theory of regions built on discursive, realist and functionalist perspectives. What gives this book its innovative product differentiation in a crowded field is that the author places regional integration and regional devolution under one theoretical umbrella. Building Regions is an original exercise in theorizing regions.' Richard Higgott, University of Warwick, UK 'Van Langenhove provides us with a timely and challenging contribution to the debate on how and why sovereign states create different forms of regional governance. In doing so he illustrates the importance of the European integration experience as a response to the forces of globalization and the shift to multipolarity that are currently changing the world. Building Regions is a highly recommendable read for all those who want to better understand the complex interactions between sovereign states, supranational regional organizations and subnational regions in our 21st century world.' Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council 'The strength of this volume lies in its challenge to state centric conceptualisations of the international system and its disaggregation of the region along the interesting axes (i.e. as rational systems with statehood features performing intentional acts which are reciprocated and generative of identity [pp. 81-8]). This return to a comprehensive view of regions' domain coverage fits in with recent trends.' Political Studies Review

#### **About the Author**

Dr. Luk Van Langenhove is Director of the Comparative Regional Integration Studies Institute of the United Nations University (UNU-CRIS,), Belgium

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