

The Thesis of Merging The Regions: An Approach to The Concept of The Regional Security Complex

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Abstract

The increasing importance of the regional approach has proposed to us the term of the integration of regions. Hence, the great powers such as the United States of America in light of the spread of global power and regional expansion began to integrate two regions as a means of geopolitical expansion. Furthermore, the USA began to integrate between the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean to confront Eurasian Russia, Belt and Road Initiative and Iranian Umm Al-Qura Project. Moreover, the USA employs the Turkish neo-Ottoman project as tools for redeployment and renewal of hegemony. It shows that meaning that the United States of America started looking for soft areas in the region to maintain geopolitical control. Accordingly, the study at hand was divided into two sections: the first deals with the concept of merging regions, while the second one deals with the region security complex.

Keywords: Region approach, region security complex, polarity, unipolarity.

INTRODUCTION

The regional approach began to occupy great importance in international relations since the beginning of the nineties of the 20th century. The changes that took place in the world or the transformation of the world around these changes made the regional framework as the influential and the normative generator of international events. This can be evidenced as the international liquidity experienced by the international system after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the adaptation of The United States of America with the unipolar idea in all its implications.

Such unipolarity made the events produced by the behavioral exchange transactions in the regions highly influential in the nature of the view of the international system. It means that the main engine, instead of being a total normative, became a partial normative. Thus, the general engine of international relations after the cold war became the regions. On the

other hand, what has increased the importance of the regional approach is the idea that what the state sees as a national or private interest can only be achieved through regionalism in foreign policy. Therefore, the thinking of each party becomes focused on the other in the regional environment and that national and international stability is part of regional stability. Also, the characteristics of the problems facing international actors, foremost of which is the regional tendency to various challenges, so that the local problem does not remain confined to the national borders of the state and that the prosperity and stability of a particular state is closely linked and mutually dependent on the situation of neighboring countries (Mosbah, 2017). Within this framework, the study was divided into two sections, the first deals with the concept of merging regions, while the second deals with the region security complex (RSC).

I. Merging regions

The process of overlapping between concepts requires addressing each concept separately, for the word “merging” in the language means (to merge) i.e., to enter into something and to become firmly rooted in it (Al-Shobaki, 2015). Furthermore, the linguistic base of the verb integrating goes back to the features of the social sciences. The etymological origin of the term (integration) to the ancient Latin language, i.e., “integrate”, meaning that it is the formation of a group or a whole (Maliki et al., 2014).

It also means the joining of a group of units to each other in an association that loses its independence and is replaced by a new unit (Al-Mubaidin, 2014). That is, the combination of two or more units to create one local unit. The disappearance of the first institution (Al Mubaidin, 2019). In economic sciences, merging is often translated by integration, although there is a difference in meaning and content between integration and merging. Merging means the formation of a unified entity merging between two or more parties, while integration means that two phenomena complement each other (Ahmed, 2020). In political sciences, the term merging means the ability of an individual to become a member of the national unity group (Mosbah, 2017).

Furthermore, it means the merging of political actors or political units such as individuals, groups or states in relation to their political behavior. It is a relationship in which a modification occurs in the political behavior of the parts, units or states involved in this relationship. In light of this definition, merging may be the control of any inhabitants of geographical areas within the integration relationship, or it may be the scope of different aspects of the behavior to which the integration relationship applies, (Ghali & Khairy 2005). For political integration, there are two conditions (Maliki et al., 2014):

- 1- The states' will and quest for integration and adaptation, that is, the voluntary expression of their integration.
- 2- The state's ability to integrate.

Furthermore, the international integration means the unanimity of two or more members of the international community to be a new

member and to convince them of the need to shift their allegiances towards a new center, as this creates new institutions that will have authority over the political units that already exist (Muhammad, 2014) However, the process of international integration is very rare; it collides with many legal difficulties that impede its completion, or even make it almost impossible. These difficulties are due to) Al Shukraji & Mohsen, 2015 (

- 1- The absence of unified rules governing the process of international merging, and accordingly it is necessary to refer back to the rules of laws conflict in private international law to determine the legal system that governs the process of international merging.
- 2- International integration cannot initially take place, unless the same principle of integration is accepted in all laws.
- 3- Most contemporary national legislations include obstacles that prevent the completion of the process of international integration.

So far, we got acquainted with the concept of integration, now we must address what is meant by the region in order to give a clear picture of the concept of the regions' integration. Region refers to a part of the earth's surface that is distinguished in one way or another from other parts (Abdel Aal, 2007). Likely, a region includes the surface of the state's land and what is beneath in depths and above the atmospheric layers (Al-Kilani, 1999). The region is called a so because it is shaped by the regions (Maluf, 1986). Region is an integrated unit that includes different parts, even if they are interconnected, and it is a unit within a framework of diversity (Al-Azzawi, 2020).

The criteria that construct the term region differ. Some scholar relied on the geographical factor. So, they see that the region as is a group of geographically contiguous countries that interact politically with each other, whether the interaction is cooperative or hostile. whether the interaction is cooperative or hostile, and in the manner that each affects the foreign policies of other countries and their foreign policy choices.

The importance of the geographical factor is enhanced due to the current developments in

the international system, and the priority that the economic factor enjoys in these developments, which are heading towards strengthening the global tendency in the foreign policies of the great powers, including the United States of America and Japan. Thus, the economic factor has not affected the regional tendency in light of the geographical reality.

The United States, while leading a unipolar regime, tended to strengthen its regional relations with Canada and Mexico to establish a free exchange area between them within the framework of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It means that the relations that exist between several countries within a specific regional framework are often more important for specific interests with those that are based with countries outside the region) Al-Hadithi, 1998(.

Moreover, there are those who relied on the security factor in defining the region as a means to provide security for those who are inside from abroad permanent dangers (Delaney, 2008). The region is defined legally as the area in which the system of rules formulated by a political authority is applied. There are four accepted theories. In legal studies to understand the relationship between the state and its territory; these theories view the region according to its chronological order in which it appeared, either as an element of the constituent elements of the state or a place of its authority or just a material limit to the work of the rulers, or as a justification for the jurisdiction of the state authority (Seifan, 2004).

Accordingly, the link of the state to a particular region was the most important factor in the states' self-perception of other states that are linked to other regions. Thus, this led to the concept of "we"; this distinction between regions led to the concepts of "peace and war" considering that the region is a home of peace and what is beyond is the abode of war. The German geographer Ratzel is considered the first who express the idea of territories in international politics. Political region is perceived as an artificial territorial unit that came as a result of the efforts made by the population in order to establish a political unit of distinct importance from the geographical region (Badawi, 1972) by formulating the seven

laws around the idea of inevitability and vital space (Badawy, 1986). The seven laws are according to Razal (2017) are:

1. The territory of the state grows with the growth of the state's own civilization.
2. The growth of the state is a subsequent process of the various manifestations of population growth.
3. The state continues to grow until it reaches the stage of annexation by adding smaller units to its regions.
4. The borders of any state are the living organ that encapsulates it and protects it. Borders do not only show the integrity of states, but also their stages of development.
5. The state, in its growth, seeks to absorb the territories of political value.
6. The first motives for expansion come to the primitive state from outside.
7. The general tendency for expansion and annexation moves from one country to another and then increases and intensifies.

According to the above-mentioned discussion, it can be induced that the region is a multi-evidence concept, but there is a consensus in dividing the regions into two main groups (Khamis 1991):

- 1- The first group is the formal regions: they are the homogeneous regions in one of the natural or human phenomena such as the industrial, climatic or terrain regions...and so on.
- 2- The second group: functional or central regions: they are either at the level of a city or village or at the level of states or parts of states.

As the previous definitions of the basic concepts, we become familiar to move on to identify the concept of merging the regions (the whole). It is one of the most important solutions that countries resort to through their policies and strategies in facing crises that work to involve the international community. Countries resort to regions margining to face the problems that suffer from, especially problems with international influence like terrorism (Kitabat,

2014). The most important justifications for merging regions according to Mosbah (2017) are as followings:

- 1- Broad elite spreads across the societies of the region. It urges and supports every step towards achieving the regional functional process and contributes to bringing regional and international goals closer together.
- 2- Individual countries are unable to solve their security and non-security problems.
- 3- Countries are unable to overcome differences over interests and mitigate the interest among them, except through a process of integration that facilitates the processes of dialogue and negotiation between them and corrects misperceptions
- 4- There is an international consensus that local problems do not remain confined in the national borders of the state, and the well-being of a particular state is closely and mutually dependent on the status of a group of states, whether they are neighboring or linked with interests.

Therefore, the integration of the regions means the presence of a group of international parties involved in defining the features of the regions and their management (Al-Qusair 2017). Integrating regions is a collective form of decision-making (Evans & Newnham, 2004). It also refers to the agreement between a group of countries to make decisions related to their common security in joint planning, implementation and leadership. These processes usually appear in time of crises and common threats. Thus, integrating regions aims to achieve cooperation, peace, security and common interest. Al-Ali (2017) mentioned three models of security integration in the regions. They are:

- 1- Alliances is one of the most important and oldest forms of security integration; it is designed to serve defensive and offensive purposes to face common threats.
- 2- Collective security stems from the principle that an attack on a state is nothing but an attack on the international community. Collective security is linked in one way or another to the theory of international integration. It seeks to create an international authority that is higher than the subsidiary authorities and is able to

maintain peace. However, the end of the Cold War confirmed the weakness of this system.

- 3- Security system is group of countries which a credible agreement between them which states that that the members of this community will settle disputes.

Therefore, it becomes obvious to us that the proposal of merging regions means a situation in which the security issues of countries and crises are linked with each other so that a crisis cannot be dealt with individually by the state without the involvement of the international community. It is also perceived as the association of a group of countries based on choosing the cooperation formula in the security aspect in different ways. It makes the level of its interactions represent a single security system.

2. Region security complexes

Since 1979, the time when Waltz published his book, *Theory of International Politics*, the system approach has become the most dominant unit of analysis in international relations. However, in some cases the system level not able to explain the causes that led to some events. Therefore, Copenhagen School as the realist school sees the level of the system to suffers from three weaknesses in security studies. Initially, it exaggerates the importance of polarity and security issues, and therefore it overlooks issues with regional implications. Secondly, the neo-realism often focuses on military security in the state and ignores the social construction of the regions and security) Soltani et al., 2014 (.

On the other hand, the Copenhagen School is considered the most distinguished in contribution to the formulation of societal security. It relies on a basic analysis tool represented in the securitization of conflicts within the state and international conflicts (Thanoun, 2019). Furthermore, such level of analysis was employed by Barry Buzan and Leifer in formulating the concept of security complex. It signifies that a group of countries whose primary security interests are linked to each other (Burgess, 2021), closely enough that their national guarantees cannot realistically be considered in isolation from each other (Koch

& Stivachtis, 2019). It is also known as the group of units in which major operations are located. Securitization and non-securitization, or both, are so interrelated that security problems cannot be reasonably analyzed apart from one another (Mosbah, 2012).

Hence, understanding of security and non-securitization is a decisive factor in identifying the RSC. This importance comes from the role played by such regionally interconnected processes. It makes the RSC a framework of sever complexity. In this way, the security complex becomes, a group of units that add or remove the security character from security issues in a coherent manner so that their security forms cannot be analyzed or resolved separately from each other (Humaid & Abbas, 2019).

The RSC is based on a set of security relations that emerge from the general framework of relations due to their relative importance with other relations (economic, cultural, etc.), their internal characteristic (national security) and the relative weakness of external security interactions with neighboring countries. Accordingly, the existing security complex limits can be defined according to the criterion of relative equivalence, security perceptions and security interactions. The relative equality can explain why the collection of certain types or quantities of weapons in the region.

(A) it affects the perception of the threat to the countries of this region, and why is the same matter viewed with less interest by these countries if this happens in region B, for example, the characteristics of the armament dynamics in the Middle East, Africa and sub-Saharan Africa are mainly different, however, there is no threat due to the imbalance between the two regions (Rabeh, 2018).

The RSC theory is based on a set of principles, represented by the following) Boumlek & Tigza, 2021):

- 1- RSC is the main component of international security.
- 2- The degree of mutual security dependence between the parties to the regional area increases, due to the geographical, historical and cultural factors.

- 3- It is not possible universalize the idea of security complex, because complexes are more vulnerable to be penetrated.
- 4- The geographical factor is one of the most important factors that constructs the security complex, because geographical proximity tends to generate security interaction between neighbors more than interaction between countries located outside the region. This idea was emphasized by "Walt" as neighborhood is effective for security; threats are transmitted in an easier and faster way in short distances (Buzan et al., 2003). The main variables of the RSC theory are:

I. Friendship and Enmity

The factors which control the dynamics of interaction in RSC are usually determined in the historical friendship and enmity relations and the geographical cohesion. It creates a state of security interdependence, whether it is towards a state of stability or instability. Regional security relations are often greatly affected in competition and historical cooperation or friendship and enmity between regional parties such as the Pakistani and Indian relations in South Asia and the Turkish-Greek relationship in Southern Europe. Nor does the security complex theory neglect the cultural relations between Western and Islamic civilization. These interactions include a mixture of the influence of the chaotic structure of the international system, the balance of power, and the geographical proximity of regional parties. It helps to revive the mutual influence of different security aspects from one environment to another, whether they are in their stable or turbulent form.

The security analysis for friendship and enmity variable is carried out at the regional level, then its impact extends to the global and local levels. Assuming that the regional level of the friendship and enmity pattern sorts the options and determines the content of the security objectives of each party, and then unpacks them at the local or global level (Mosbah, 2012).

2. Geographical Convergence

The second independent variable affecting security dynamics. It produces transnational security dynamics. Hence, security and

insecurity are fundamentally linked to geographical convergence. The presence of a group of geographically close parties constitutes the concept of the convergent region, which in turn constitutes the RSC. It is characterized by the existence of more intense security relations than those existing between geographically remote countries (Mahfouz, 2017). Geographical frontier is the primary factor that makes antagonistic neighboring parties engage in security competition processes, arms race, balance of power, self-help and other security dynamics. This happened when a state of suspicion governs the relations of neighboring countries (Boumlek & Tigza, 2021).

3. Interdependence: The other independent variable in the analysis of the RSC theory of international security relations is security interdependence, which is also affected by the principle of geographical proximity on the one hand, and the presence of strong political units that form the heart of the RSC on the other hand. Assuming that these units have great capabilities that can direct towards activating regional security interactions, even though the great powers often work to transcend regional borders (China, for example) to increase their global influence or because of the increasing needs that the region cannot accommodate.

However, most of the regional complex parties remain restricted by the regional borders and link their security to the nearby neighbors. They may find themselves closed by the regional security dynamics and obligations due to their limited military and political capabilities and therefore will enhance rather than override the regional security order. The great powers, on which the neo-realists have focused their analysis, tend to abandon regional constraints while the smaller powers tend to strengthen them. Still, what is methodologically important for region complex security theory is that there are few great powers in the world, while the minor powers constitute the great majority in the international system.

As long as this is the case, the regional analysis of security relations is the most important in interpreting and understanding the pattern of contemporary international politics. Being an independent variable, security interdependence

works to produce regional security dynamics, whether in the negative or positive direction. Assuming that the RSC cannot be launched on any grouping of states unless they have extensive security relations, responding frequently to security cues sent from each other to each other. The interdependence to the new functional theory supporters is the existence of functional relationships between a group of parties. Therefore, each party produces a job and receives a need, and its indication is that any defect in the local environment of a particular party directly affects the environments of the other parties. Security interdependence in RSC theory is an expanded field, so that the relations of mutual security influence, whether positive actions (security coordination, stability) or negative (preparing for war, expanding military expenditures, increasing influence at the expense of others (Mohamed, 2020).

Penetration: It is one of the independent variables in the regional security complex. It includes the penetration of the great powers into the regional security complex in order to support their regional allies and protect their interests by setting security arrangements in partnership with the regional powers within the security compound, but the penetration process does not occur except with motives stemming from within the region not outside it. One or more regional parties create opportunities or demands for the intervention of external forces represented in threatening the balance of power, controlling interests, increasing influence at the expense of others. Moreover, the hegemonic motive of a particular party grows to control the region as a whole or an attempt to control vital sites of the economic system. All these interactions serve as stimuli for external superpowers to interfere in regional security complex, as is the case with the United States of America on the Korean Peninsula, Europe and other parts of the world (Mosbah, 2017).

Power: the principle of power is considered the most influential variable in regional dynamics, because it immediately affects the regional environment of states. If the parties forming the RSC are able to achieve a rapprochement in power among the parties, it produces what is known as the feature of the balance of power

that contributes significantly to achieving stability in the region of the region. The essence of stability within the RSC achieves a balance not only in interests, but also in strength (Boumlek & Tigza, 2021).

Based on the foregoing, Buzan sees that the regional security complex is centered on the concept of chaos, which represents a mirror reflecting the image of the international system in its total form, and its borders are indicated by an organized chain of mutual security. on the other hand, the regional security complex is a modern phenomenon that indicates fragmentation and liberation of external influences on general characteristics of the regions) Rabeh, 2018(. Furthermore, the security complex expresses the state endeavor to discuss the security perceptions of the environment it deals with. In addition, these challenges arise on the possibility of applying the elements of power in facing the challenges adapting with them and building policy to ward off risks and threats emanating from its regional environment. From this point of view, the core structure of regional security complex is based four variables (Humaid & Abbas, 2019).

- 1- Boundaries: They distinguish the regional security complex from its surroundings, as the border variable constitutes a decisive variable in the formation of the security complex according to the same approach. Thus, border security and stability contribute to a large extent in the foundation of the security complex.
- 2- Structure Anarchy: It means that the regional security complex must consist of two independent units or more.
- 3- Polarity: It covers the distribution of forces between units.
- 4- Social construction: It determines the patterns of friendship and hostility between units.

CONCLUSION

The international relations literature used to search for a specific standard to measure the phenomena of international relations; because the international relations is confined between a binary that academics and strategic analysts are accustomed to classifying between international and regional. However, the general trend due to

bipolarity and dominance of the two poles over the international system made the international framework is much higher than the regional framework, and consequently, the idea of the academics has weakened the idea of searching for what is regional.

However, the dissolution of the former Soviet Union made the world realize that it neglected a major approach of international relations and did not give it a primary role, i.e., the regional approach

The international changes especially that befell the world and which made the regional framework as an influential or generating element of international events. Evidence is the fluidity that the international system experienced after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the United States of America adapted the idea of unipolarity with all its implications. This made the events pursued by the behavioral exchange equations in the regions very influential in the nature of the international system.

Thus, the partial criteria became the general engine of international relations in days bipolarity. However, after the dominance of unipolarity, the regions became influential in the aspirations of the major powers and the formulation of international roles; there has become what is known as the distance in their behavior.

Hence, the increasing importance of the regional approach has given us what can be called the proposal of regional integration, especially that the great powers (such as the United States of America) in light of the spread of global power and regional expansion have started to work on merging two regions as a means of geopolitical expansion. They have begun to integrate between the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean to confront Eurasian Russia, the Chinese Belt and Road Project and the Iranian Umm al-Qura Project. They also employ the Turkish neo-Ottoman project as tools for redeployment and renewal of hegemony, meaning that the United States of America started looking for soft areas in the region to perpetuate geopolitical control.

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