

## FOREWORD

Interregionalism —institutionalized relations between world regions— has become an important feature in international relations and one that has attracted the attention of scholars and practitioners alike. It is generally viewed as a separate layer of international institution-building within a multilayered system of global governance, situated between the regional and global levels.

There is hardly any country today that is not part of the diverse network of interregional arrangements either as a member of a regional institution or group, or as an individual state. The latter form —institutional relations between regional organizations or groups and individual states in other world regions— is a borderline case and therefore called “quasi-interregionalism”. This hybrid form appears to be the exception rather than the rule of interregionalism, and it is therefore no surprise that scholarly engagement with the phenomenon of quasi-interregionalism is still rather marginal.

This book breaks new ground by systematically exploring quasi-interregionalism as a conscious foreign policy strategy of an individual state, in this case Mexico. The single-case study on Mexico is comprehensively embedded in the concept of interregionalism with a special emphasis on quasi-interregionalism.

It departs from the empirical observation that regionalism in Latin America is currently in crisis which makes Mexico’s dependence on regional integration in North America even more asymmetrical. This results in the need for Mexico to further diversify its foreign relations by way of expanding and intensifying its relations with other world regions, especially Europe, but also Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The author identifies five regional organisations as potential targets for Mexico’s quasi-interregional diversification strategy (the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, and the African Union), he systematically assesses the ability and willingness of these regional organisations to enter into quasi-interregional relationships with states from other world regions and, on this basis, he persuasively develops potential options for Mexico.

It becomes clear that pursuing a quasi-interregional strategy cannot serve as a panacea for Mexico's foreign policy challenges, but as a useful addition to Mexico's foreign policy toolbox and one that could eventually allow Mexico to promote regionalism in Latin America, albeit in an indirect way.

In conclusion, this book makes a significant contribution to the study of interregionalism in international relations, substantially enhances and broadens our understanding of the phenomenon of quasi-interregionalism, and its insightful and illuminating single-case study lays strong foundations for future comparative research on quasi-interregionalism as a foreign policy strategy.

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