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Regional Disintegration: Causes, Consequences and Contradictions

Desintegración regional: Causas, consecuencias y contradicciones

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Regional integration is a complex and multifaceted topic that has garnered significant attention from researchers and policymakers. Regional integration refers to the process by which countries in a given region come together and become more cohesive and interconnected economically and/or politically.[1] This process can take many different forms, such as the formation of trade blocs, the establishment of security alliances, or the creation of economic unions. Regional integration has often been conceptualised as a gradual process with institutional, legal and political milestones that mark consecutive steps in the creation of regional sovereignty.

The concept of integration may be ambiguous, however.[2] In the early days of the regional integration literature, Deutsch et al. theorised 'integration' in

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1. Philippe De Lombaerde, ed., *Assessment and Measurement of Regional Integration* (London: Routledge, 2006).
2. For an overview, see Philippe De Lombaerde and Fredrik Söderbaum, "Reading the Intellectual History of Regionalism", in *Regionalism. Volume I: Classical Regional Integration (1945-1970)*, ed. Philippe de Lombaerde and Fredrik Söderbaum (London: Sage, 2013).

the context of security communities as referring to a *de facto* process of increasing interdependence, accompanied (or not) by political practices and/or institution-building.[3] Although neo-functionalists were also very much aware of the *de facto/de jure* dichotomy, they placed regional institutions more at the centre of the debates. As a consequence, they narrowed the definition into a European-style process of gradual political unification, echoed in the economic and social spheres, even if the broader ambition remained a 'general' theory of regional integration (i.e. a theory valid beyond the European case). Haas radically defined integration as a process of "political unification of nations through non-coercive efforts",[4] thereby deliberately narrowing the scope of the research programme.

More recently, i.e. with the so-called new regionalism approach and its posterior developments, there is again a tendency to broaden the conceptual scope of the research agenda on integration. The aim is to include a variety of expressions of regions and regionalism worldwide, on the one hand, and a variety of actors, on the other. The term regional integration is sometimes still reserved for European-style integration processes with a supra-national institutional component, and therefore distinct from (de facto) regionalization and regionalism understood as diverse political projects of region-building. Another avenue is to interpret regional integration as a broader concept, with *de facto* features, as well as institutional features. In this article, we adopt the latter (broader) definition.

When looking at the regional integration literature broadly defined, one can observe that, until recently, relatively little theoretical work had been devoted to the opposite dynamic of regional 'disintegration'. As Zielonka reviews in his article "Disintegration Theory: International Implications of Europe's Crisis", it can be pointed out that we have numerous books on European integration, but hardly any on disintegration.[5] The bias of the literature can be explained by a notion of integration as an institutional continuity, rather than

3. Karl Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, US: Princeton University Press, 1957).
4. Ernst Haas, "The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing", *International Organization* 24, n.° 4 (1970): 607-10, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300017495.
5. Jan Zielonka, "Disintegration Theory: International Implications of Europe's Crisis", *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 13, n.° 1 (2012), https://bit.ly/41B3InN.

thinking of institutional change as a possibility.[6] Having said this, and in spite of sometimes mechanical theorising about unidirectional and ever-deepening processes, there has also been an awareness in the scholarship that regional integration projects do not always 'deliver'. Immediately after the initial impulses in the 1960s and 1970s, critical voices emerged, referring to failures or crises of regional integration processes. After an overview of experiences in different parts of the world in the mid-1980s, Stakhovitch concluded that there was no single experience where regional integration could be found a complete success, and only very few showed satisfactory results.[7] The questionable contribution of regional integration to economic development was also echoed in other studies, often pointing to policy implementation failures as a crucial factor.[8] More recently, analysts of the Latin American and European integration processes have explicitly stated that such processes necessarily need to be considered reversible.[9]

Regional disintegration refers to the breakdown or dissolution of established regional economic and political arrangements. This can occur for a variety of reasons, including changes in the global political landscape, shifts in economic conditions, or the emergence of new actors and interests. Three dimensions can be distinguished: sectoral disintegration (reduction in specific existing regional policies); vertical disintegration (reduction in regional authority); horizontal disintegration (reduction in the number of member states).[10] Disintegration can occur in different dimensions: economic disintegration (divergence of economic indicators and dissociation), political disintegration (membership withdrawal) and social disintegration (reduction of

6. Ben Rosamond, "Theorising the EU in Crisis: De-Europeanisation as Disintegration", *Global Discourse* 9, n.° 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1332/204378918X1545393450591.
7. Alexandre Stakhovitch, "Unas y otras integraciones", in *Unas y otras integraciones*, ed. Víctor Urquidi and Gustavo Vega (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991).
8. Maurice Schiff and Alan Winters, *Regional Integration and Development* (Washington DC: World Bank / Oxford University Press, 2003); World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects 2005: Trade, Regionalism, Development* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2004); Philippe De Lombaerde, Antoni Estevadeordal and Kati Suominen, *Governing Regional Integration for Development: Monitoring Experiences, Methods and Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2008).
9. María Victoria Álvarez and Hugo Ramos, "Reflexiones teóricas y enseñanzas sobre integración regional: Diálogos entre la Unión Europea y el Mercosur", in *La integración regional latinoamericana y europea en el siglo XXI: Marco para la reflexión sobre su presente y futuro*, ed. Fernanda Caballero, Rita Giacalone and Edgar Vieira (Bogotá: UCC Ediciones, 2019), 189.
10. Douglas Webber, "Trends in European Political (Dis)Integration: An Analysis of Postfunctionalist and Other Explanations", *Journal of European Public Policy* 26, n.° 8 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1576760.

cross-border interactions and identities).[11] These processes can overlap and even produce ambiguous results, which include the merger or absorption of regional organisations or the replacement with new organisations.[12] Disintegration weakens the authority of a regional organisation, not least due to less compliance and less allocated resources, but it does not necessarily result in a re-nationalisation of the region as its only outcome.[13]

Over the past several decades, there have been a number of notable cases of regional disintegration,[14] including the end of the Warsaw Pact[15] the withdrawal of Venezuela from the Andean Community (CAN) and the Group of Three (G3),[16] the break-up of the Union of South American States (UNASUR)[17] and the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom.[18] Although regional organisations are infrequently dissolved,[19] international organisations suffer in terms of vitality, meaning that they enter 'zombie' state where they continue to exist without notable institutional activity.[20] Increasing empirical evidence about the erosion of integration projects has sparked intense debates and discussions among scholars and policymakers about the causes and consequences of regional disintegration, and have raised important questions about the

11. Annegret Eppler, Lisa Anders and Thomas Tuntschew, "Europe's Political, Social, and Economic (Dis-) Integration: Revisiting the Elephant in Times of Crises", *Political Science Series* 143 (2016), https://bit.ly/3YfNs91.
12. Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, "Death of International Organizations: The Organizational Ecology of Intergovernmental Organizations, 1815-2015", *The Review of International Organizations* 15, n.° 2 (2020), https://bit.ly/41yj5gV.
13. Hans Vollaard, "Explaining European Disintegration", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52, n.° 5 (2014), https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12132.
14. Cheryl Shanks, Harold Jacobson and Jeffrey Kaplan, "Inertia and Change in the Constellation of International Governmental Organizations, 1981-1992", *International Organization* 50, n.° 4 (1996), https://doi.org/10.1017/S002081830003352X.
15. Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne, eds. *A cardboard castle?: An inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005).
16. Carlos Malamud, "La salida venezolana de la Comunidad Andina de Naciones y sus repercusiones sobre la integración regional (1.ª parte)", *Real Instituto Elcano*, working paper, May 10th 2006.
17. Detlef Nolte, "From UNASUR to PROSUR: Institutional Challenges to Consolidate Regional Cooperation", in *Regional and International Cooperation in South America After COVID,* ed. Melisa Deciancio and Cintia Quiliconi (New York: Routledge, 2022).
18. Ben Rosamond, "European Integration and the Politics of Economic Ideas: Economics, Economists and Market Contestation in the Brexit Debate", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 58, n.° 5 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13029.
19. Evgeny Vinokurov and Alexander Libman, *Re-Evaluating Regional Organizations: Behind the Smokescreen of Official Mandates* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2018).
20. Julia Gray, "Life, Death, or Zombie?: The Vitality of International Organizations", *International Studies Quarterly* 62, n.° 1 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqx086.

future of regional integration processes. As a consequence, an increasing share of the regionalism literature is engaged with the impact that different types of economic, political and security crises have on regional integration.

The scholarship on regionalism in the Global South has been more accustomed to volatile membership in regional organisations. For instant, an integral research strand on South American integration is to identify the failures of defunct regional organisations. Among the identified causes, ideological polarisation between the member-states and institutional shortcomings figure prominently.[21]

The recent rise in interest in theorising disintegration is thus particularly noteworthy in European Studies, where some have even argued that differentiated disintegration should be considered as a subfield in its own right, as a new field of research that can be studied from different branches, such as sociology, anthropology, economics and law.[22] Although disintegration is not a new process for Europe as evidenced by the case of Algeria leaving the European Economic Community in 1976, the European integration process has been confronted in recent years with several crises that have put into question the future of further integration. The historical decision of the UK to leave the Union has spurred debates about the narrative of an 'ever-closer union', including downsizing of the Eurozone, the rise of sub-regional alliances such as the Visegrad Group and the success of populist and nationalist parties. While more exits from the EU are unlikely, the challenge of selective policy or institutional disintegration persists.[23] Accordingly, the scholarship in European Studies has issued numerous calls to develop a new research agenda focusing on theoretical frameworks.[24] For instance, the spill-over effect of neo-functionalism can be mirrored by spill-backs to structure causes of

21. Detlef Nolte and Víctor Mijares, "UNASUR: An Eclectic Analytical Perspective of its Disintegration", *Colombia Internacional* 111 (2022), https://doi.org/10.7440/colombiaint111.2022.04.
22. Benjamin Leruth, Stefan Gänzle and Jarle Trondal, "Exploring Differentiated Disintegration in a Post-Brexit European Union", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 57, n.° 5 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12869.
23. Vollaard, "Explaining European Disintegration".
24. Tomasz Grosse, "Assumptions of the Theory of Regional Disintegration: Suggestions for Further Research", *Przegląd Europejski* 42, n.° 4 (2016), http://dx.doi.org/https%3A//doi.org/10.31338/1641-2478pe.4.16.1; Agnieszka Cianciara, "Does Differentiation Lead to Disintegration?: Insights from Theories of European Integration and Comparative Regionalism", *Yearbook of Polish European Studies* 18 (2015), https://bit.ly/3y4xvYp; Erik Jones, "Towards a Theory of Disintegration", *Journal of European Public Policy* 25, n.° 3 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1411381.

disintegration, ranging from deliberate to coerced disintegration.[25] In addition, post-functionalism explores how the politicisation of European integration may have contributed to an erosion of a permissive consensus theory,[26] while governance scholars have delved into approaches of flexible integration and variable geometry.[27]

One key reason why states may choose to leave regional organizations is a change in the global political landscape. The formation of regional organisations is often driven by a common threat or shared set of interests. However, when these threats or interests change, states may no longer see the benefits of maintaining their membership in the organization. For example, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War led to a significant shift in the global political landscape, and many states chose to leave regional organisations that were no longer aligned with their national interests. Confronted with a multi-polar world and a recalibration of international relations countries adopt a path of differentiated disintegration in a post-liberal order, which entails the reduction of a member's adherence to the integrated legal rules, norm and policies.[28] Key aspects are centralisation, policy scope and membership. Internal disintegration refers to a state remaining a member of the organisation but leaving specific policies, while external disintegration implies leaving the organisation but continuing to participate in some of the organisation's policies.[29] In this issue, Zane Sime's article "The Potential of EU Connectivity Through Missions and Smart Specialisation" explores the conditions under which interdependence becomes perceived as a vulnerability, thus fuelling actions to disintegrate and increase autonomy.

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25. Zoe Lefkofridi and Philippe Schmitter, "Transcending or Descending?: European Integration in Times of Crisis", *European Political Science Review* 7, n.° 1 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773914000046.
26. Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus", *British Journal of Political Science* 39, n.° 1 (2009), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000409; Katharina Holzinger and Frank Schimmelfennig, "Differentiated Integration in the European Union: Many Concepts, Sparse Theory, Few Data", *Journal of European Public Policy* 19, n.° 2 (2012), https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2012.641747.
27. Berthold Rittberger, Dirk Leuffen and Frank Schimmelfennig, "Differentiated Integration of Core State Powers: Beyond the Regulatory Polity", in: *The European Integration of Core State Powers*, ed. Philipp Genschel and Markus Jachtenfuchs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
28. Stefan Gänzle, "Differentiated (Dis)Integration in Europe and Beyond: Historical and Comparative Perspectives", in *Differentiated Integration and Disintegration in a Post-Brexit Era*, ed. Stefan Gänzle, Benjamin Leruth and Jarle Trondal (London: Routledge, 2019).
29. Frank Schimmelfennig, "Brexit: Differentiated Disintegration in the European Union", *Journal of European Public Policy* 25, n.° 8 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2018.1467954.

Another reason why states may choose to leave regional organisations is a shift in economic conditions. The formation of regional organisations often involves significant economic integration, with member states agreeing to open their markets to one another and to pursue common trade policies. However, when economic conditions change, states may no longer see the benefits of maintaining these economic arrangements. For example, the economic downturn following the global financial crisis in 2008 led many states to reassess the costs and benefits of their membership in regional organisations, and some chose to leave in order to pursue more independent economic policies. However, economic disintegration is distinct from a country simply leaving an integration group, as a multitude of actors and entanglement are involved.[30] In this context, regional organisations can only remain relevant if they prove to be resilient. The institutional design is key to survive exogenous shocks.[31] In this issue, Yessenia Briones Molina's article "An integration that does not integrate, a look at the energy experience at UNASUR" analyses the failures in the field of energy integration in South America and points to institutional shortcomings and organisational overlaps to explain why integration could not be maintained as economic conditions changed.

In the economic realm, debates on the economic costs and benefits of regional integration schemes have been on the agenda for a long time. Alleged poor benefits or even net costs of membership are used as arguments in favour of disintegration scenarios as witnessed in the case of Brexit. The UK but also other members such as The Netherlands have routinely argued that costs and benefits of EU membership are not in balance for them. This has led to further refinement of the methodologies to calculate actual cost and benefits of regional memberships. Such estimations should go beyond simple calculations of visible financial flows between a member state and the regional organisation, in the form of assessed membership contributions, customs duties or subsidies,[32] even if these lend themselves more easily

30. Arkadiusz Kowalski, "Theoretical Aspects of Regional Disintegration and Its Consequences for International Competitiveness", in *Brexit and the Consequences for International Competitiveness*, ed. Arkadiusz Kowalski (London: Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2018).
31. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, "Death of International Organizations"; Julia Gray, "Life, Death, Inertia, Change: The Hidden Lives of International Organizations", *Ethics & International Affairs* 34, n.° 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679420000052.
32. Marta Pilati and Fabian Zuleeg, "The Benefits of EU Membership Are Not Measured by Net Operating Balances", *European Parliament*, February 2020, https://bit.ly/3y3C4Cb; Netherlands Court of Audit, *Focus on the Netherlands' Net Payment Position: The Netherlands' Contributions to and Receipts from the EU* (The Hague: Algemene Rekenkamer, 2020).

to political communication purposes. More sophisticated estimations of the effects of creating common markets, precisely stimulated by Brexit, have suggested considerable benefits of membership. For the European case, a long-term average GDP increase by 8-9% were found by in't Veld,[33] which was higher than what was originally estimated in the Cecchini report (4-6,5%).[34] In 't Veld's numbers could even be underestimations as they do not fully reflect the effects of further perfectioning the common market and the effects of production factor mobility. Stronger trade effects are also reported by Mayer, Vicard and Zignago[35] and Felbermayer et al.[36] These trade (and investment) effects are further significantly boosted by monetary integration among Eurozone countries.[37] As there seems to be converging views on the economic effects, disintegration dynamics cannot primarily be attributed to rational cost-benefit calculations but instead to more complex sets of factors, as illustrated by Brexit, CAN or UNASUR.

The emergence of new actors and interests can also lead states to leave regional organisations. The formation of regional organisations often involves the coalescence of a group of states around a common set of goals and interests. However, when new members enter the scene with different interests and priorities, the existing regional organisation may no longer be able to accommodate these interests. In such cases, some states may choose to leave the organisation in order to pursue their own interests more effectively. This dynamic has also been triggered through changes within member states When a state's preferences diverge from the average preferences of the other states, it is more likely to disintegrate. Additionally, when a leading state leaves an organisation, it may generate a contagion effect, causing other states to follow in its

33. Jan in 't Veld, "Quantifying the Economic Effects of the Single Market in a Structural Macromodel", *European Economy*, discussion papers 094, February 2019.
34. Paolo Cecchini, Michael Catinat and Alexis Jacquemin, *The European Challenge 1992: The Benefits of a Single Market* (Aldershot, UK: Wildwood House, 1988).
35. Thierry Mayer, Vincent Vicard and Soledad Zignago, "The Cost of Non-Europe, Revisited", *Banque de France*, working paper 673, April 2018.
36. Gabriel Felbermayer, Jasmin Gröschl and Inga Heiland, "Undoing Europe in a New Quantitative Trade Model", *IFO Institute*, working paper 250, January 2018.
37. Theo Eicher and Christian Henn, "One Money, One Market: A Revised Benchmark", *Review of International Economics* 19, n.° 3 (2011), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9396.2011.00956.x; Reuven Glick and Andrew Rose, "Currency Unions and Trade: A Post-EMU Reassessment", *European Economic Review* 87 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2016.03.010; José de Sousa and Julie Lochard, "Does the Single Currency Affect Foreign Direct Investment?", *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 113, n.° 3 (2011), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9442.2011.01656.x.

footsteps.[38] In particular, populist and nationalist governments can significantly jeopardize multilateral cooperation. In this issue, Damiano Scotton's article "South American Regional Integration: From Adolescence to Maturity" identifies the obstacles related to political will that thwart regional integration initiatives.

At the same time, disintegration in one regional format can be the trigger for more integration in another one. Disintegration is not linear, meaning that it does not simply lead to a breakdown of the integration process but is part of a complex multi-faceted process. For instance, Greenland sought greater sovereignty and independence from the European integration process in 1985 but was keen to maintain close ties and formal agreements, especially for economic reasons, which did not jeopardise the overall integration project.[39]

Disintegration is thus not necessarily a failure but implies a shift of integration in a different setting following internal tensions or a perceived lack of progress of the regional integration process.[40] And even if a specific phenomenon is specified as disintegrative this does not essentially mean a general system-wide consequence, giving the example that Brexit is disintegrative but the long-term consequences may be the opposite.[41] Conversely, in the Caucasus, the promotion of regional integration projects by two external actors (Russia and the EU) with different objectives and intentions has produced a region which is more divided and less open to regional cooperation.[42] In another instance, as a consequence of the unilateral tendencies under the populist government of Donald Trump, integration within NATO has been questioned.[43] Therefore, European countries revisited transatlantic security

38. Inken von Borzyskowski and Felicity Vabulas, "Hello, Goodbye: When Do States Withdraw from International Organizations?", *The Review of International Organizations* 14, n.° 2 (2019), https://bit.ly/3ZxlvKB.
39. Ulrik Gad, "Greenland: A Post-Danish Sovereign Nation State in the Making", *Cooperation and Conflict* 49, n.° 1 (2014), https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836713514151.
40 Stefan Gänzle and Jens Uwe Wunderlich, "Differentiated (Dis)Integration beyond Europe: A Comparative Regionalism Approach", in *The Routledge Handbook of Differentiation in the European Union*, ed. Benjamin Leruth, Stefan Gänzle and Jarle Trondal (London: Routledge, 2022).
41. Rosamond, "Theorising the EU in Crisis".
42. Giulia Prelz Oltramonti, "When External Drivers of Regional Integration Turn into Actors of Regional Disintegration: Regionalism and Interregionalism in the South Caucasus", in *The Unintended Consequences of Interregionalism*, ed. Elisa Lopez-Lucia and Frank Mattheis (London: Routledge, 2020).
43. Harold Hongju Koh, "Trump Change: Unilateralism and the 'Disruption Myth'", *Yale Journal of International Law* 44, n.° 96 (2019), https://bit.ly/41FL51R.

cooperation and invested in their own strategic autonomy.[44] The transatlantic cooperation had been fundamental in the European integration process, reflected in the reliance on NATO and the US for security guarantees. France has tried to spur further integration in such matters in order to gain autonomy over this transatlantic implicit cooperation, but with limited success.[45] Only with the election of former president Donald Trump, was Europe confronted with the United States becoming a less reliable and supportive partner for multilateral and transatlantic cooperation. In this issue, Gökhan Tekir's article "France-led Security Balancing against NATO" provides insights into the disintegration of transatlantic cooperation and reflects upon the role of France in advancing European integration under the banner of strategic autonomy to reduce dependency on NATO and the United States.

In this context of reconfiguring European security regionalism, another instance of formal disintegration is worth mentioning: in 2011, the Western European Union (WEU) ceased to exist. This was a very rare case of dissolution of a regional organisation, although not following a conflict among member states but on a consensual basis. The reason for this operation was the gradual transfer of functions of the WEU to the EU in the context of its new European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and the crucial adoption of a solidarity clause among EU member countries in the Treaty of Lisbon. Disintegration of one regional project can thus be the direct consequence of deeper integration of another one, underlining the importance of entanglements between regionalisms.[46]

Finally, regional disintegration is not only an outcome of political, social and economic processes. It is the cause of new developments within the region and also globally, including significant unintended consequences on the ac-

44. Lisbeth Aggestam and Adrian Hyde-Price, "Double Trouble: Trump, Transatlantic Relations and European Strategic Autonomy", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 57 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12948.
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46. Frank Mattheis and Uwe Wunderlich, "Regional Actorness and Interregional Relations: ASEAN, the EU and Mercosur", *Journal of European Integration* 39, n.° 6 (2017), https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2017.1333503.

tors themselves.[47] In this issue, Sean O' Dubhghaill and Sven van Kerckhoven's article "Brexit, Englixit?" Disintegration and how taking back control means giving up control" examines one specific unintended consequence of Brexit in terms of the linguistic policies and practices within the EU, as English ceased to be the first official language among its members. Conversely, Susannah Dibble's article "Sinn Féin in the European Union: The Evolution of Self-Determination Policy after Brexit" analyses the unintended consequences of Brexit within the UK. The UK referendum not only caused economic, social and political disruptions for relations between the EU and the UK, but also within the UK, not least because the voting patterns in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland differed from that in England. The reactions of Sinn Féin, a republican party from Northern Ireland, to Brexit reflect how unintended consequences play out internally.

With this special issue, we aim to provide insights into the current state of the art on regional disintegration, examining key theoretical frameworks and conceptual approaches. We also seek to contribute to the repositioning of the EU within the study of regionalism[48] as disintegration constitutes a universal phenomenon. The case studies in this issue of regional disintegration examine in-depth the causes and consequences of specific examples of regional breakdown. They provide valuable insights into the dynamics of regional disintegration and help us to better understand the potential implications of such events for the concerned region and the broader global political and economic system. Overall, this special issue aims to serve as a valuable resource for anyone interested in the current state of the art on regional disintegration.

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47. Elisa Lopez-Lucia and Frank Mattheis, eds., *The Unintended Consequences of Interregionalism: Effects on Regional Actors, Societies and Structures* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2021).
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