Karl Haushofer's Concept of "Pan-Regions" and Its Projection onto the Future Structure of the World Economy: From Economic Fragmentation to Macro-Regional Organization

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Abstract

The intensification of geopolitical competition, the proliferation of trade restrictions, sanctions regimes, industrial policies, and strategies aimed at reducing external dependence are changing the spatial organization of the world economy. Globalization is not coming to a complete halt; however, its former model, based on the primacy of economic efficiency and the cross-border optimization of production chains, is increasingly supplemented by the logic of security, technological sovereignty, and the political reliability of partners. Against this background, a comparison between contemporary processes of geoeconomic fragmentation and Karl Haushofer's concept of "pan-regions" is of scholarly interest.

The purpose of this narrative review is to reconstruct the content of the pan-regional concept, identify its economic components, and assess the possibility of its limited application to interpreting the emerging macro-regional structure of the world economy. It is shown that Haushofer viewed a large space not simply as a territory, but as a combination of a political center, a resource periphery, transport communications, and a cultural-political idea. At the same time, his constructions were connected with interwar German geopolitics, a hierarchical understanding of the international order, and ideas of spatial redistribution. They therefore cannot be mechanically transferred to contemporary integration associations.

Contemporary macro-regionalization differs from the classical pan-regional model in that global production networks are preserved and transnational corporations, digital platforms, international institutions, and intermediary states play a major role. The emerging order will most likely take the form not of a system of fully closed autarkic blocs, but of a multi-level configuration of overlapping regional spaces. Critical production chains, financial infrastructure, energy flows, and technological standards will be concentrated within them, while part of global trade will continue to operate on a multilateral basis. Haushofer's concept retains analytical value not as a forecast or normative project, but as a historical model of the transition from a universal world market to politically structured large economic spaces.

Keywords: Karl Haushofer; pan-regions; geopolitics; geoeconomic fragmentation; macro-regionalization; world economy; regional integration; economic blocs; strategic autonomy;

1. Introduction

The world economy has entered a period in which the efficiency of the international division of labor is increasingly assessed alongside the criteria of political security, resilience, and technological control. After several decades of accelerated trade liberalization, states have begun to make more active use of tariffs, export restrictions, investment screening, subsidies for domestic industry, sanctions, and local-content requirements. As a result, economic ties increasingly depend not only on the cost of resources and logistics, but also on the geopolitical proximity of states [17–20].

These changes do not signify the immediate end of globalization. Despite the expansion of bilateral and regional agreements, a substantial share of world merchandise trade still takes place under most-favored-nation treatment within the multilateral trading system. At the same time, the World Trade Organization has recorded a widening gap between trade within politically aligned groups of states and trade between competing blocs [20]. Thus, the contemporary world economy combines continued global interdependence with increasing geopolitical segmentation.

The changes are particularly visible in strategically important sectors: semiconductors, energy, telecommunications equipment, artificial intelligence, critical minerals, the defense industry, and payment infrastructure. States seek to reduce dependence on potential rivals, create reserve production capacity, relocate supplies to politically friendly jurisdictions, and establish control over key nodes of international networks. In political and expert discourse, these processes are described using the concepts of decoupling, de-risking, friend-shoring, near-shoring, strategic autonomy, and geoeconomic fragmentation [12, 17–19].

The theory of "weaponized interdependence" shows that global economic networks are not neutral spaces. States that control the central nodes of financial, information, and technological systems can use them for surveillance, access restriction, and pressure on other participants [12]. Awareness of such risks encourages the creation of alternative payment mechanisms, regional logistics routes, proprietary technological standards, and parallel production chains.

The International Monetary Fund defines geoeconomic fragmentation as a change in international trade, investment, technological, and financial ties driven by political and strategic factors. IMF studies show that economic interaction between geopolitically distant states is becoming more vulnerable, while some trade and investment flows are being redirected through neutral intermediary states [17–19]. The emergence of such "connector" countries currently mitigates the consequences of fragmentation, but does not necessarily eliminate the original dependence on competing centers of power.

From a historical perspective, this kind of spatial restructuring brings renewed attention to the relationship between the global market and large regional economic spaces. One of the best-known, although highly controversial, attempts to present the international order as a system of large spatial associations was the concept of "pan-ideas" and "pan-regions" developed by the German geopolitician Karl Haushofer. It was set out most systematically in Geopolitik der Pan-Ideen, published in 1931 [1].

Haushofer viewed pan-ideas as political-spatial projects capable of transcending the borders of individual nation-states and organizing extensive parts of the world around major cultural, political, and economic centers [1]. He focused on Pan-Americanism, Pan-Europeanism, Pan-Asianism, Pan-Islamism, and other transnational movements. He regarded them as signs of a transition from a fragmented world of nation-states to larger territorial-political formations.

Popular literature often attributes to Haushofer a completed plan for dividing the world into four strictly defined blocs: Pan-America under the leadership of the United States, Eurafrica led by Germany, a Eurasian space under Russian leadership, and an East Asian region led by Japan. This interpretation, however, oversimplifies his approach. The 1931 work was more a comparative study of different pan-ideas, their territorial potential, and their capacity for political mobilization than a detailed economic blueprint for the final division of the world [1, 7, 9]. The very concept of the pan-region acquired a more rigid and schematic interpretation in the later reception of German geopolitics.

Contemporary studies of intellectual history show that Haushofer addressed pan-ideas not only in relation to Europe. The Pacific Ocean, East Asia, India, monsoon Asia, and the formation of Indo-Pacific interconnections occupied a prominent place in his work [2, 9]. His geopolitical picture of the world was shaped by his experience in Japan and by his observation of the growing power of non-European states.

The economic dimension of Haushofer's concept rested on the assumption that the resilience of a large political space required a combination of industrial, agricultural, raw-material, and transport resources. An individual state, particularly one located in Central Europe and constrained by a limited resource base, was regarded as an insufficiently autonomous unit. A large space was expected to provide access to food, raw materials, markets, sea routes, and strategic communications [1–3].

This understanding bears certain superficial similarities to contemporary discussions of supply-chain regionalization, energy security, and critical infrastructure. The European Union seeks to strengthen strategic autonomy; the United States is building production and technological chains with its allies; China is developing infrastructure and trade links across Eurasia; Southeast Asian states are deepening regional cooperation; and the BRICS countries are expanding mechanisms of economic interaction. The existence of such trends, however, does not mean that Haushofer's ideas are being directly realized.

The fundamental difference is that contemporary macro-regions are being created within the framework of international law, economic interdependence, the sovereign equality of states, and institutionalized negotiations. Even asymmetrical integration associations are not identical to a hierarchical space organized around the unconditional dominance of a single state. Contemporary regional institutions vary in their degree of supranationality, while their members retain the ability to interact simultaneously with several economic centers [13–16].

Moreover, the global economy of the twenty-first century is networked rather than exclusively territorial. Digital platforms, financial settlements, cloud services, intellectual property, standards, and data may be controlled from one state, used in another, and serve production in a third. A contemporary large economic space is therefore defined not only by territorial continuity, but also by control over infrastructure nodes, technological ecosystems, and regulatory regimes [12].

The research problem lies in defining the limits within which the historical concept of pan-regions can be applied to the analysis of the contemporary world economy. On the one hand, Haushofer's idea draws attention to the long-term trend toward the enlargement of the spatial units of international competition. On the other hand, its uncritical use may lead to geographical determinism, the justification of spheres of influence, and disregard for the autonomy of states located between major centers of power.

In this article, the concept of pan-regions is considered neither as a normative model of the future world order nor as an exact forecast. It is used as a historical and theoretical framework for analyzing how economic fragmentation may evolve into macro-regional organization. A macro-region is understood as a large cross-border space characterized by heightened intensity of trade, investment, infrastructure connectivity, regulatory coordination, and political interaction.

The aim of the study is to determine which elements of Haushofer's concept can be applied to interpreting contemporary geoeconomic transformation and which should be rejected because of their historical, ideological, and methodological limitations.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives are addressed:

1. to reconstruct the intellectual sources and core content of the concept of pan-ideas;
2. to identify the economic elements of the large-space model;
3. to compare pan-regions with the theories of old and new regionalism;
4. to analyze contemporary processes of trade, investment, and technological fragmentation;
5. to assess the probable characteristics of the future macro-regional world economy;
6. to identify the risks of macro-regionalization evolving into a system of closed and conflicting economic blocs.

The central hypothesis of the article is that the world economy is moving not toward complete disintegration into isolated autarkic pan-regions, but toward a hybrid system. In this system, several large economic and technological spaces will possess their own production chains, financial infrastructure, and regulatory standards, while retaining a substantial volume of mutual trade and interaction through multilateral institutions and intermediary states.

2. Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted in Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, Google Scholar, and the electronic catalogs of academic libraries. Official publications of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development were additionally used to analyze current economic processes.

The main body of contemporary literature covered publications from January 2019 to July 2026. Earlier sources were included to reconstruct classical geopolitics, the concept of pan-ideas, the development of regionalism theory, and historical periods of economic fragmentation.

The search used the following terms and combinations: "Karl Haushofer", "Geopolitik der Pan-Ideen", "pan-regions", "pan-ideas", "German geopolitics", "large spaces", "Grossraum", "geoeconomic fragmentation", "economic blocs", "macro-regionalization", "new regionalism", "regional economic integration", "global value chains", "friend-shoring", "strategic autonomy", "weaponized interdependence", "trade fragmentation", and "multipolar world economy".

The analysis included:

1. primary works by K. Haushofer and other representatives of classical geopolitics;
2. studies on the history of the German school of geopolitics;
3. monographs and articles on the theory of regionalism;

4. studies in international political economy;
5. econometric studies of geopolitical fragmentation;
6. official reports by international economic organizations;
7. studies of global value chains, sanctions, technological competition, and industrial policy.

Publications were excluded from detailed consideration if they reproduced simplified or conspiratorial interpretations of Haushofer's views without reference to primary sources, equated any contemporary regional association with a pan-region, or consisted predominantly of journalistic assessments lacking historical or economic substantiation.

This study is a narrative interdisciplinary review. It is not a systematic review or meta-analysis. The studies were compared according to their theoretical approach, understanding of the region, assessment of the role of the state, and interpretation of the relationship between globalization and spatial fragmentation.

The principle of historical contextualization was applied in the analysis of Haushofer's concept. His categories were considered in relation to the international environment of the interwar period, revisionism toward the Versailles system, the crisis of the European state order, and the development of the German school of geopolitics [1, 3, 7].

When comparing the concept with the contemporary world economy, the principle of limited analogy was used. The existence of superficial similarities between a pan-region and a contemporary integration association was not regarded as evidence of their historical or institutional identity.

3. Intellectual Origins and Content of the Pan-Regional Concept

3.1. From Political Geography to the Geopolitics of Large Spaces

The concept of pan-regions emerged at the intersection of political geography, the organic theory of the state, military-strategic analysis, and reactions to changes in the international order after the First World War. Haushofer did not create his doctrine from scratch. He drew on the ideas of Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellén, Halford Mackinder, and other authors who linked political power to territory, resources, population, and communications [4–6].

Ratzel regarded the state as a spatially developing entity and attached particular importance to the relationship between political organization and territory [6]. Kjellén elaborated the organic metaphor of the state and introduced the term "geopolitics", defining it as the study of the state as a geographical organism [5]. Haushofer adopted these propositions but shifted the focus from the individual state to larger spaces capable of competing on a global scale [1, 3].

Mackinder's work on the "geographical pivot of history" exerted an important influence. Mackinder argued that the development of railways altered the balance between maritime and continental power, increasing the strategic importance of inner Eurasia [4]. For Haushofer, this thesis was important because it demonstrated that technological development could transform the political value of space.

Haushofer's approach, however, was not a mechanical continuation of Mackinder's ideas. He devoted considerable attention not only to continental Eurasia, but also to the Pacific Ocean, Japan, China, India, and the area between the Indian and Pacific Oceans [2, 9]. His works combined continental and maritime perspectives, and large spaces were assessed in terms of access to coastlines, sea routes, and transport "breakthroughs".

The principal historical context in which German geopolitics developed was the mismatch between Germany's economic potential and its postwar territorial-political position. Representatives of this school viewed the borders created by the Versailles system as artificial and as obstacles to the state's full development. Geopolitics was expected not only to describe space, but also to shape political ideas about its possible transformation [3, 7].

It is at this point that the fundamental problem of Haushofer's legacy becomes apparent. Analytical study of territorial connectivity was combined with a revisionist political program. Space was understood not as a neutral environment for interaction among sovereign societies, but as an object of struggle, redistribution, and organization by stronger states [7, 8].

For a long time, historiography portrayed Haushofer almost as the direct author of National Socialist foreign-policy strategy. Later studies showed that this causal relationship was more complex. His ideas did indeed overlap with expansionist and revisionist positions, but Haushofer's influence on the practical decisions of the Third Reich leadership should not be presented as linear or comprehensive [7].

This clarification does not make his concept politically neutral. Territorial determinism, a hierarchical understanding of the international order, and the category of Lebensraum created an intellectual environment in which expansion could be presented as a natural requirement of the state. Contemporary use of pan-regional ideas therefore requires the separation of spatial-economic observations from their normative and ideological components.

3.2. The Pan-Idea as a Mechanism of Spatial Mobilization

In Geopolitik der Pan-Ideen, Haushofer examined political ideas that sought to unite peoples and territories across existing state borders [1]. The prefix "pan-" indicated an aspiration to encompass an integral cultural, continental, or civilizational space.

In his interpretation, a pan-idea was not limited to an international organization or a trade agreement. It was expected to combine:

1. a conception of a common territory;
2. a cultural or civilizational identity;
3. a political objective;
4. economic complementarity;
5. a capacity for external mobilization;
6. the presence of a center capable of organizing the space.

Haushofer analyzed Pan-Americanism, Pan-Europeanism, Pan-Asianism, Pan-Islamism, and other projects. He noted that such ideas could exhibit different degrees of institutional development. Some existed primarily in intellectual and cultural discourse, whereas others acquired diplomatic, economic, or military-political expression [1].

Haushofer regarded Pan-Americanism as the most successful pan-idea because the Monroe Doctrine, the economic influence of the United States, and the political asymmetry of the Western Hemisphere created a material foundation for a large space. The Pan-American idea combined formal recognition of state sovereignty with the actual predominance of a single center.

This combination of formal diversity and structural hierarchy later became one of the key features of the pan-regional model. A pan-region did not necessarily imply the legal incorporation of all territories into a single state. Control could be exercised through economic dependence, transport infrastructure, political leadership, and restrictions on the intervention of external powers.

In this sense, the pan-region differed both from the nation-state and from the classical colonial empire. It represented an intermediate spatial form: formally composed of several political units, yet organized around a dominant center.

Related issues were later developed by Carl Schmitt in his concept of an international-law "large space" from which intervention by external powers was prohibited [10]. Despite differences between the two authors, both constructions reflected the crisis of the universalist international order and the desire to replace it with a system of spatially delimited spheres of political predominance.

Contemporary regional organizations are likewise formed around ideas of shared territory, historical ties, and economic interests. However, new regionalism theory emphasizes that a region is not a predetermined geographical object. It is created through political, economic, social, and institutional processes [14].

Hettne and Söderbaum proposed the concept of "regionness", describing the gradual transformation of a geographical space into a politically and institutionally connected system [14]. This approach partially overlaps with Haushofer's observation regarding the role of a unifying idea, but differs in rejecting the assumption that dominance by a single state is inevitable.

3.3. The Economic Foundation of a Pan-Region

Haushofer did not develop a formalized economic theory of pan-regions. His works contain no trade models, calculations of comparative advantage, or systematic study of common-market institutions. Nevertheless, the economic component occupied an important place in his spatial constructions [1–3].

A large space was assumed to require a sufficient resource and production base in order to reduce dependence on the outside world. The industrial center needed access to food, raw materials, energy, and markets, while peripheral territories were expected to receive technology, capital, infrastructure, and organizational guidance.

In later interpretations of pan-regions, this logic was often represented as a meridional union of the industrial North and the resource-rich South. Such a structure was expected to provide relative economic self-sufficiency. The term "self-sufficiency", however, did not mean a complete cessation of external trade. Rather, it referred to the ability of the space to remain viable under blockade, conflict, or disruption of external ties.

The economic model of the pan-region included four principal elements.

The first element was an industrial and technological center. It concentrated capital, administrative structures, scientific knowledge, and military power. The center determined the overall strategy of the space.

The second element was the resource periphery. Its importance was determined by the availability of food, mineral resources, energy resources, and unoccupied territory.

The third element was transport connectivity. Railways, sea routes, canals, and overland corridors transformed geographically adjacent territories into a functionally unified space.

The fourth element was a political-cultural idea. Without it, economic complementarity alone could not ensure a durable association. The pan-idea was expected to legitimize the leadership of the center and reduce resistance to spatial integration.

Thus, a pan-region can be described as a hierarchical political-economic system in which resources, production, and communications are organized around the strategic interests of a leading power.

Contemporary regionalism theory uses different categories, but likewise emphasizes the role of economic interdependence, institutions, and the distribution of power. Mansfield and Milner showed that regional economic institutions are formed not only because of market efficiency, but also under the influence of political interests and international competition [13].

Unlike the pan-regional scheme, contemporary regional integration may be built around a complex balance among several states. The European Union has supranational institutions; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is based on intergovernmental consensus; trade agreements in North America do not create a common political center; and Eurasian integration projects combine economic and political objectives.

The economic foundation of a pan-region therefore cannot be equated with any free-trade area. The key distinction is the extent to which economic ties are subordinated to a single geopolitical strategy.

3.4. Pan-Regions and the Problem of Autarky

The idea of relative autarky was closely connected with the experience of wars, blockades, and the crisis of world trade in the first half of the twentieth century. Economic dependence was perceived as a strategic vulnerability. A state or large space unable to provide itself with critical resources could become an object of economic pressure.

In this respect, Haushofer's logic has certain parallels with contemporary resilience strategies. States are once again accumulating stocks of critical materials, subsidizing domestic production, restricting technology exports, and diversifying suppliers.

The difference in the scale and nature of interdependence, however, remains fundamental. Contemporary high-technology goods are produced through supply chains involving dozens of countries. Complete regional autarky in the semiconductor, aviation, pharmaceutical, or digital industries would entail enormous costs and, in many cases, lead to technological backwardness.

Studies of geoeconomic fragmentation show that dividing the world economy into competing blocs may reduce trade, diminish investment efficiency, and erode the benefits of international diversification [17–19]. The consequences would be unevenly distributed: small and resource-dependent economies lacking a sufficiently large domestic market may be especially vulnerable.

The more likely trajectory is therefore not complete autarky, but selective regionalization. States will seek to localize, or relocate to friendly jurisdictions, only the most critical elements of the economy while continuing to use the global market in less sensitive sectors.

This approach may be described as "strategic sufficiency". It differs from autarky in that it does not require complete self-provision, but does presuppose alternative suppliers, reserve capacity, and politically controlled access to critical infrastructure.

3.5. The Canonical Map of Pan-Regions and Its Conditional Nature

In academic and educational literature, Haushofer's concept is often presented through a map of several large spaces. These usually include:

1. the Pan-American space;
2. German-centered Eurafrica;
3. the Russian-Eurasian space;
4. the East Asian or Pan-Asian region led by Japan.

This scheme conveys the general logic of large-space thinking well, but it should not be regarded as an immutable and fully elaborated map of the future world.

First, Haushofer's views changed under the influence of the international environment. Second, his categories partially overlapped. Pan-Asian, Pan-Pacific, and Indo-Pacific ideas did not always form a single space with unambiguous boundaries [1, 2, 9].

Third, the different pan-ideas displayed unequal levels of political maturity. Pan-Americanism rested on already existing interstate mechanisms and the considerable influence of the United States. The Pan-European movement remained politically heterogeneous. Pan-Asianism brought together anti-colonial, cultural, and imperial projects that could conflict with one another.

A contemporary study of the intellectual origins of the Indo-Pacific region shows that Haushofer viewed South, East, and Southeast Asia as an interconnected space; however, his constructions combined an anti-Western critique of colonialism with recognition of Japan's special organizing role [9].

A pan-region should therefore not be understood as an objectively existing geographical unit. Its boundaries were determined by a political project and by an interpretation of which territories ought to be united around a particular center.

It is precisely this feature that makes the concept useful for analyzing contemporary macro-regionalization. Contemporary economic regions likewise do not fully coincide with continents. Mexico is geographically part of Latin America but is closely integrated into North American production. Turkey interacts with European, Middle Eastern, and Eurasian spaces. Central Asian states are simultaneously embedded in Chinese, Russian, European, and South Asian economic ties.

Future macro-regions will therefore be defined not only by geographical proximity. Transport corridors, energy networks, digital infrastructure, currency settlements, investment flows, and technological standards will also be important.

3.6. The Hierarchy of Center and Periphery

One of the most problematic features of the pan-regional concept is its hierarchical nature. Although the pan-idea could employ the language of cultural commonality and mutual benefit, it in fact presupposed the existence of a state capable of organizing the space.

Economic complementarity in such a model did not preclude an unequal distribution of benefits. The industrial center controlled technology, finance, and strategic decisions, while the periphery specialized in supplying raw materials and food.

Such a structure could reproduce colonial relations without formal colonial administration. For this reason, the pan-region should be analyzed not only as a system of integration, but also as a mechanism of spatial dependence.

Contemporary macro-regions are also characterized by asymmetry. The largest economies determine technical standards, conditions of market access, investment rules, and directions of infrastructure development. Participants nevertheless possess various mechanisms for influencing the center: institutional representation, the ability to choose alternative partners, coalition politics, and the use of competition among major powers.

Intermediary states play a particularly important role. IMF studies show that some countries that do not fully align with a single geopolitical bloc expand trade with both sides and redirect commodity and investment flows through their territories [18]. This distinguishes the contemporary situation from the rigid pan-regional model, in which the space was assumed to be more closed and disciplined.

The possibility of multiple affiliations is becoming one of the most important characteristics of the emerging order. A state may participate in one free-trade agreement, use the financial infrastructure of another center, receive investment from a third, and maintain military-political ties with a fourth.

Future macro-regionalization will therefore most likely have a networked and overlapping structure. It does not fully correspond to Haushofer's conception of territorially delimited spheres.

3.7. Methodological Value and Limitations of the Concept

The pan-regional concept retains analytical value for several reasons.

First, it draws attention to the possible mismatch between the political borders of states and the actual scale of economic competition. In strategically important sectors, competition occurs not only between individual national economies, but also between broader production and technological ecosystems.

Second, Haushofer emphasized that political resilience depends on the combination of resources, production, and communications. Contemporary supply-chain crises confirm that control over transport routes and critical components remains an element of economic power.

Third, the pan-regional approach shows that economic space is created not only by the market. Political ideas, identity, and perceptions of threats can redirect trade and investment flows even when this reduces short-term efficiency.

Fourth, the concept makes it possible to analyze regionalization as a potentially hierarchical process. Integration may be accompanied not only by mutual benefit, but also by the consolidation of the periphery's dependence on the center.

At the same time, the concept has significant limitations.

Above all, it is characterized by geographical determinism. Political decisions were often presented as a direct consequence of spatial location, resource endowment, and demographic pressure. This approach underestimates the role of institutions, public choice, and international law [8].

In addition, Haushofer considered large spaces primarily from the perspective of great-power competition. The interests of small and medium-sized states were secondary. Their territory could be perceived as an element of another state's spatial project.

The concept was also formulated before the digital revolution, the development of global value chains, and the transformation of financial and information networks into independent sources of power. Contemporary economic space cannot be explained by territorial continuity alone.

Finally, the historical connection between German geopolitics, revisionism, and expansionism requires a strict distinction between descriptive and normative analysis. The assertion that macro-regions are emerging must not become a justification for dividing the world into exclusive spheres of influence.

The concept of pan-regions should therefore be used as a critical historical model. It helps reveal the spatial logic of economic fragmentation, but must be adjusted to account for networked interdependence, international institutions, and the agency of states that are not great powers.

4. From Classical Regionalism to the Macro-Regional Organization of the World Economy

4.1. Economic Integration as an Alternative to a Closed Pan-Region

Classical economic integration theory developed around the analysis of trade agreements, customs unions, and common markets. Unlike Haushofer's geopolitical approach, it viewed regional association primarily in terms of removing barriers between states and increasing the efficiency of resource allocation [21, 22].

J. Viner showed that the creation of a customs union can simultaneously produce trade creation and trade diversion. In the first case, more expensive domestic products are replaced by cheaper imports from a partner country. In the second, imports from the most efficient external producer are displaced by more expensive goods from a member of the regional agreement because of a discriminatory tariff [22].

B. Balassa described a sequence of deepening integration: a free-trade area, a customs union, a common market, an economic union, and the most complete form of economic integration [21]. This sequence presupposes gradual institutionalization rather than the spatial subordination of the periphery to a political center.

Classical regionalism differs fundamentally from the pan-regional model in its source of legitimacy. In economic integration theory, states voluntarily coordinate rules in order to obtain mutual benefits. In Haushofer's model, a large space is organized by a leading power possessing political, industrial, and military-strategic superiority [1, 3].

Economic integration does not, however, eliminate asymmetry. The largest markets have greater bargaining power, can disseminate their technical standards, and determine the conditions of access to financial infrastructure. The actual structure of a regional association may therefore be more hierarchical than its founding documents suggest.

4.2. Old and New Regionalism

Postwar "old regionalism" was associated with the formation of relatively formalized interstate associations. European integration developed through the creation of common institutions, legally binding obligations, and the gradual expansion of supranational competences.

In other parts of the world, regional projects more often retained an intergovernmental character. Their participants limited the transfer of sovereign powers and preferred coordination in selected areas.

The new wave of regionalism, which intensified from the late 1980s through the 1990s, developed under conditions of global trade liberalization. It did not oppose the region to the global market, but used regional agreements to incorporate states into international production networks [13, 23–25].

A. Hurrell associated the revival of regionalism with changes in the structure of the international system, the domestic political interests of states, and the development of regional identity [23]. B. Hettne and F. Söderbaum emphasized that a region is created through social and political interaction, gradually acquiring economic interconnectedness, institutional stability, and the capacity to act as an independent entity [14].

New regionalism is characterized by a multiplicity of participants. Alongside states, companies, banks, cities, infrastructure operators, digital platforms, and nongovernmental organizations contribute to the formation of regional space [24, 25].

A contemporary macro-region therefore cannot be reduced to an agreement between governments. It is formed through the superimposition of several structures:

1. trade agreements;
2. cross-border production chains;
3. transport and energy corridors;
4. financial systems;
5. digital infrastructure;
6. security mechanisms;
7. cultural and educational ties.

The numerous regional trade agreements currently in force are recorded in the World Trade Organization's specialized database [46]. This multilayered structure substantially distinguishes contemporary macro-regionalization from the territorially simplified map of pan-regions.

4.3. Global Value Chains and "Twenty-First-Century Regionalism"

R. Baldwin defined contemporary trade as an integrated combination of trade in goods, investment, services, technology, and managerial knowledge. Twenty-first-century regional agreements regulate not only tariffs, but also investment protection, intellectual property, technical standards, competition, digital trade, and the activities of state-owned enterprises [26].

This change is connected with global value chains. The production of a final good is distributed across several states, and intermediate components may cross borders multiple times. Participation in such a chain depends not only on the availability of resources, but also on logistics quality, workforce skills, investment protection, and the compatibility of technical rules [27, 30, 31].

The World Bank notes that global value chains have contributed to productivity growth and enabled developing states to participate in international production without having to create every stage of the technological process independently [27].

In the pan-regional model, the industrial center was expected to organize the resource and agricultural periphery. In contemporary chains, the hierarchy is more complex. One state may control research and design, another component production, a third assembly, a fourth software, and a fifth financing and distribution.

Control over a chain does not necessarily coincide with the physical volume of production. The largest share of value added may be concentrated among the owners of technologies, trademarks, digital platforms, and standards.

As a result, the territorial category of the center is supplemented by the concept of a network center. A state may have a limited resource base but retain influence through control over currency settlements, software, intellectual property, or the production of unique equipment [12, 32–34].

4.4. The Macro-Region as a Political-Economic Ecosystem

On the basis of contemporary regionalism theories, a macro-region may be defined as a large cross-border political-economic ecosystem within which economic ties are particularly dense and are supported by institutional, infrastructural, and strategic mechanisms.

A macro-region does not necessarily have a single parliament, currency, or customs tariff. Its formation requires only a stable combination of several features:

1. the presence of one or more large markets;
2. developed internal trade and production cooperation;
3. transport and digital connectivity;
4. mechanisms for coordinating economic policy;
5. a common system of standards or mutual recognition of rules;
6. a shared perception of external risks and dependencies;
7. the capacity to protect critical infrastructure.

Unlike a pan-region, a contemporary macro-regional system may be polycentric. In East Asia, economic influence is distributed among China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the largest ASEAN economies. In Europe, supranational institutions limit the ability of any one state to determine the policy of the entire association unilaterally.

Macro-regions may also overlap. A participant in one trade agreement may simultaneously belong to another financial, infrastructural, or military-political system. This creates a complex structure of multiple affiliations.

Characteristic	Pan-region in classical geopolitics	Contemporary macro-region
Primary unit	Large territorial space	Cross-border economic and institutional ecosystem
Organizing actor	Dominant power	States, regional institutions, companies, and infrastructure operators
Spatial structure	Predominantly contiguous territory	Territorial and network connections
Economic objective	Relative self-sufficiency	Resilience, competitiveness, and dependency management
Center–periphery relations	Hierarchical leadership	Varying degrees of institutional and market asymmetry
Role of external trade	Secondary to bloc autonomy	Retained as an essential element of development
Mechanism of association	Pan-idea, geopolitical leadership, and resource complementarity	Agreements, value chains, infrastructure, and common standards
Attitude toward sovereignty	Restricted autonomy of the periphery	Formal preservation of state sovereignty
Boundaries	Relatively rigid spheres of influence	Overlapping and shifting contours
Principal risk	Expansionism and dominance of the center	Unequal distribution of benefits, dependence, and discrimination against external participants

Table 1. Comparison of Karl Haushofer's Pan-Region and the Contemporary Economic Macro-Region

5. Geoeconomic Fragmentation as a Precondition for Macro-Regionalization

5.1. From Interdependence to Vulnerability Management

After the end of the Cold War, international economic policy was based on the assumption that expanding interdependence increased overall efficiency and reduced the probability of major conflicts. States transferred a substantial share of production to the most competitive foreign suppliers, while companies optimized chains in terms of cost, timing, and quality.

The crises of the twenty-first century demonstrated that economic efficiency is not identical to resilience. The global financial crisis, the pandemic, disruptions in maritime shipping, sanctions, and technological restrictions exposed the dependence of certain industries on a small number of suppliers and transport routes.

The concept of "weaponized interdependence" explains why a central position in international networks can be used for political pressure. States that control key nodes gain the ability to collect information, restrict transactions, and exclude unwanted participants [12].

Contemporary industrial policy is therefore increasingly aimed not at eliminating interdependence completely, but at reducing one-sided risks. Measures include diversification, the creation of reserve capacity, the localization of critical technologies, and the development of relations with politically reliable partners [32–34].

5.2. Trade Fragmentation

A World Trade Organization study based on monthly data for 2016–2024 found that trade had become more sensitive to geopolitical distance. After the outbreak of the military conflict in Ukraine, trade between the notional Eastern and Western blocs grew approximately 4% more slowly than trade within the blocs. At the same time, the authors did not find an equally pronounced general shift toward trading exclusively with geographically close countries [35].

This means that political proximity may in some cases be more important than physical distance. Production may be relocated not to a neighboring country, but to a more distant jurisdiction perceived as a reliable partner.

The data, however, do not confirm that world trade has already been divided into closed blocs. Global trade flows remain substantial, and many companies continue to operate simultaneously across several political spaces.

According to a preliminary UNCTAD estimate, world trade exceeded USD 35 trillion in 2025. At the same time, signs of friend-shoring and near-shoring intensified, while faster trade growth within East Asia and among developing economies indicated a change in the spatial structure of economic ties [40, 41].

Fragmentation therefore manifests itself not as a uniform contraction of trade, but as its redirection. Some flows disappear, others emerge through new suppliers, and still others pass through intermediary states.

5.3. Investment Fragmentation

Foreign direct investment is particularly sensitive to long-term political risks. The construction of a factory, data center, or energy facility entails a multi-year presence in the host country. Investors therefore assess the likelihood of sanctions, export restrictions, nationalization, and loss of access to technology.

At the same time, empirical evidence does not confirm a universal breakdown of investment ties. A study by J. Tan showed that the geopolitical fragmentation of direct investment has so far been concentrated mainly in strategic sectors: computer manufacturing, information and communication services, transport, and professional and technical activities [36].

This is consistent with a model of selective fragmentation. States do not seek to halt capital movements completely, but strengthen oversight of investments capable of creating security-related and critical-technology dependencies.

Intermediate jurisdictions are becoming especially important. Formally, an investment may be routed through a third country even though the ultimate owner and the host economy belong to different geopolitical groups. Statistics on immediate investors therefore do not always reflect the actual structure of control.

5.4. Financial Networks and Currency Areas

Financial fragmentation is developing more slowly than trade fragmentation because the international monetary system is characterized by substantial inertia. A dominant currency is supported by deep financial markets, liquidity, confidence in institutions, and widespread use in trade contracts.

Nevertheless, geopolitical proximity is beginning to affect the allocation of portfolio investment. Investment funds direct a smaller share of assets to states that are politically distant from their country of origin [38].

Analysis of international payments indicates that geopolitical proximity may encourage the use of the euro and the yuan in certain groups of developing economies, although the overall effect remains limited. The dollar retains its central position, while the transition to alternative currencies is constrained by network effects and the scale of dollar-based financial infrastructure [39].

The future monetary system is therefore unlikely to be characterized by the rapid emergence of several completely isolated currency blocs. A multilayered structure is more realistic: the dollar will continue to play a global role, while regional currencies will expand their use in mutual trade and selected financial instruments.

5.5. Loss of the Benefits of International Diversification

The regionalization of financial ties may reduce opportunities for risk sharing. If states invest only in political allies whose economic cycles are closely synchronized, a downturn affects a large share of assets simultaneously.

Modeling by T. Okuda and T. Tsuruga shows that restricting transactions to countries with geopolitically close partners may lead to a substantial loss of the benefits of international financial diversification [37].

A similar problem arises in trade. Relocating all critical production within a single region reduces dependence on political rivals, but increases exposure to regional natural disasters, energy crises, and economic downturns.

Resilience therefore requires not merely shortening the geographical length of chains, but a balanced combination of diversification, redundancy, and the ability to switch rapidly between suppliers.

5.6. Intermediary States

One of the most important differences between contemporary fragmentation and the classical pan-regional model is the growing role of intermediary states. They maintain economic ties with competing centers and become platforms for trade, investment, logistics, and production.

A study by G. Gopinath and co-authors showed that such countries partially sustain interaction between geopolitical blocs. However, an increase in trade through an intermediary does not always represent genuine diversification: ultimate dependence on the original producer or technology may remain [18].

Potential advantages for an intermediary state include investment inflows, expanded production, and greater geopolitical significance. Risks include secondary sanctions, dependence on transit, and pressure from competing centers.

Their existence makes a system of completely delimited pan-regions unlikely. Economic bridges will remain between large spaces, allowing goods, capital, technologies, and data to move across them.

6. Emerging Macro-Regional Spaces

6.1. The North American Production Space

North America displays the characteristics of a relatively mature macro-region. The United States, Canada, and Mexico are linked by the USMCA, cross-border production cooperation, and developed transport infrastructure.

The automotive industry, agriculture, energy, electronics, and medical-product manufacturing are particularly closely integrated. Components may cross borders repeatedly before the final product is completed.

The friend-shoring strategy increases the importance of Mexico and Canada as partners in building resilient chains. Official U.S. policy links resilience with cooperation on semiconductors, batteries, critical minerals, and pharmaceutical components [43, 44].

North America is not, however, an autarkic space. Its industry remains dependent on Asian electronic components, global commodity markets, and international financial flows.

Its similarity to a pan-region lies in the presence of a dominant economic center and meridional complementarity. The difference lies in the contractual nature of integration and the preservation of considerable autonomy by Canada and Mexico.

6.2. The European Union and the Regulatory Macro-Region Model

The European Union represents the most institutionalized form of contemporary macro-regionalization. It combines a common market, a customs union, supranational regulation, and, for most participants, a single currency.

The EU's influence extends beyond its formal borders. Companies wishing to operate in the European market must comply with requirements concerning product safety, data protection, competition, and environmental regulation.

The concept of open strategic autonomy reflects an attempt to combine continued international trade with a reduction in critical dependencies. The European strategy emphasizes the need for diversified and resilient chains while rejecting complete economic closure [42].

The principal limitations of the European macro-region arise from differences among the interests of member states, dependence on external energy resources and technologies, and the complexity of collective decision-making.

The European experience shows that a macro-region can be organized not only through the hegemony of a single state, but also through legal institutions. At the same time, the economic and political weight of participants remains unequal.

6.3. East Asia

East Asia is one of the most integrated production spaces, but it has comparatively weak political centralization. China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the ASEAN states are connected through production chains in electronics, automotive manufacturing, mechanical engineering, and the chemical industry.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership entered into force in 2022 and brought together the ASEAN states with China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and New Zealand [45].

RCEP promotes the harmonization of rules of origin and facilitates the use of components from different member states. This strengthens regional value chains without creating a supranational political center.

The East Asian structure does not correspond to Haushofer's conception of Japan's exclusive leadership. The contemporary region is polycentric and characterized by competition among different economic and strategic projects.

The U.S. presence in the security and technology spheres further prevents East Asia from becoming a closed China-centered space. Many states in the region seek to maintain economic cooperation with China while simultaneously developing relations with the United States, Europe, and India.

6.4. Eurasian Infrastructure Spaces

Eurasia includes several overlapping integration projects. They are based on transport corridors, energy networks, trade agreements, and interaction among major continental states.

Unlike the European Union, Eurasia does not form a single economic and legal space. National strategies, the Eurasian Economic Union, Chinese infrastructure initiatives, Central Asian regional organizations, and ties with Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia coexist within it.

Continental connectivity resembles certain elements of the geopolitical ideas of Haushofer and Mackinder. Contemporary Eurasia, however, has no single political center, and its states use competition among external partners to expand their own autonomy.

Railways, pipelines, Caspian Sea ports, and overland routes between East Asia and Europe play a key role. Their significance depends not only on distance, but also on border procedures, sanctions regimes, insurance costs, and political stability.

6.5. BRICS and Global South Cooperation

BRICS is not a classical regional association because its members are located in different parts of the world. Nevertheless, it reflects the trend toward the formation of interregional mechanisms aimed at strengthening the role of developing powers in the world economy.

The 2024 Kazan Declaration emphasized the reform of global governance, the expansion of settlements in national currencies, and the development of financial cooperation among members [47].

BRICS does not constitute a single trade or currency bloc. Significant differences remain among its members in economic structure, foreign-policy interests, and relations with Western states.

Its importance lies more in developing parallel financing mechanisms and coordinating positions than in forming a territorially coherent pan-region.

This shows that future macro-regionalization may take not only a continental, but also a networked interregional form.

6.6. African Continental Integration

The African Continental Free Trade Area is intended to overcome the fragmentation of national markets and increase intraregional trade. Its potential significance lies in creating the scale required for industrial development and negotiations with external partners [48].

Formal tariff reductions alone are insufficient, however. Transport infrastructure, simplified customs procedures, reliable energy supply, and access to financing are also required.

For African states, macro-regionalization may function not as a mechanism of subordination to an external center, but as a means of reducing dependence on raw-material exports and strengthening their collective bargaining position.

At the same time, there is a high probability of competition among external powers for access to critical minerals, infrastructure, and growing consumer markets. The outcome will therefore depend on the ability of African institutions to determine the terms of cooperation independently.

6.7. Latin America

Latin America possesses cultural and geographical coherence, but remains institutionally fragmented. The region includes MERCOSUR, the Pacific Alliance, the Central American Integration System, and numerous bilateral agreements.

The economic ties of some states are directed primarily toward North America, while others interact closely with China, the European Union, or neighboring economies.

7. Projecting the Pan-Regional Concept onto the Future Structure of the World Economy

7.1. The Probability of Closed Economic Blocs Emerging

A complete division of the world into several self-sufficient blocs remains unlikely. The contemporary technology-based economy is too complex for every region to reproduce efficiently all the necessary resources, components, and knowledge.

Even the largest centers depend on external suppliers:

1. semiconductor production requires equipment and materials from several states;
2. the energy transition depends on geographically dispersed critical minerals;
3. pharmaceutical chains include research, active ingredients, and manufacturing in different jurisdictions;
4. the digital economy relies on global undersea cables, satellites, and data centers.

Breaking these ties would require a long period, enormous subsidies, and a loss of productivity.

The most likely outcome is therefore not bloc autarky, but the macro-regional concentration of critical functions. Ordinary consumer goods will continue to circulate globally, while strategic industries will increasingly be organized within trusted groups of partners.

7.2. Sectoral Rather Than Universal Fragmentation

The future structure of the world economy will differ across industries. Fragmentation is most likely where an economic product simultaneously has military, informational, or infrastructural significance.

These sectors include:

1. semiconductors;
2. artificial intelligence;
3. telecommunications equipment;
4. space technologies;
5. critical minerals;
6. energy infrastructure;
7. payment systems;
8. biotechnology.

In trade in agricultural goods, clothing, tourism, and many services, preserving a global market will be more advantageous than costly duplication of production.

Empirical data on direct investment already demonstrate the predominantly sectoral nature of fragmentation [36]. Consequently, the economic map of the future will consist of several overlapping This demonstrates the limitations of the continental approach. Geographical belonging to Latin America does not mean that all countries are included in a single production macro-region.

Under conditions of fragmentation, individual states may benefit from relocated production and demand for raw materials. However, an extreme scenario in which the world is divided into blocs may reduce access to markets and technologies [49].

systems rather than a single universal boundary between blocs.

7.3. Regionalization of Standards

Technical and legal standards will become one of the principal instruments of macro-regional organization. They determine product compatibility, data processing, requirements for artificial intelligence, environmental characteristics, and access to digital platforms.

Standards may perform a function similar to customs borders. A company that does not comply with the rules of a particular macro-region formally retains the right to trade, but is effectively unable to enter its market.

Several regulatory ecosystems are likely to emerge in the future. Agreements on compatibility, mutual recognition, and data transfer will operate between them.

Competition among standards may stimulate innovation, but it also increases costs for companies compelled to produce different versions of their products for different markets.

7.4. Currency Multilayering

The world monetary system will probably become more multilayered, but not fully multipolar. The dollar will retain its central importance because of the scale of U.S. financial markets and the accumulated infrastructure.

At the same time, the use of national and regional currencies in bilateral trade will expand. Regional development banks, digital payment systems, and agreements between central banks will provide alternative settlement channels [39, 47].

Such a structure does not imply the emergence of a single currency for each macro-region. Functional specialization is possible: one currency may be used for commodity contracts, another for financing, and a third for mutual trade among neighboring countries.

7.5. The Role of Infrastructure Corridors

Transport infrastructure will determine the real rather than formal boundaries of macro-regions. A port, railway, or energy network creates stable directions for the movement of goods and capital.

Corridors both connect and structure space. A state that controls a narrow maritime passage, transit route, or distribution center gains additional political influence.

Infrastructure dependence may, however, be mutual. A transit state needs cargo flows, while a large economy needs a stable route.

Unlike the pan-regional model, future infrastructure will form not only closed territories, but also connections between different macro-regions.

7.6. Middle Powers and Multiple Affiliations

Middle powers can limit a rigid division of the world economy. They lack the resources to create an independent global bloc, but can choose among several partners.

India, Turkey, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, South Africa, and other states participate in various forms of cooperation while avoiding complete economic alignment with a single center.

Their strategy may include:

1. obtaining technology from one partner;
2. exporting raw materials to another;
3. participating in the infrastructure project of a third;
4. maintaining financial ties with global markets.

Multiple affiliations create room for autonomy, but require complex balancing. The expansion of secondary sanctions and demands to make technological choices may constrain such a strategy.

7.7. A Hybrid Model of the Future Order

The most likely model of the world economy includes three levels.

The first level is global. It preserves the multilateral trading system, world commodity markets, international financial flows, and global environmental issues.

The second level is macro-regional. Production chains, industrial policy, infrastructure, and regulatory standards are concentrated at this level.

The third level is national. States retain control over social policy, the budget, domestic regulation, and strategic sectors.

Macro-regionalization will not replace globalization, but will alter its structure. The World Trade Organization defines the desirable alternative to fragmentation as "re-globalization": expanding participation in trade while simultaneously increasing resilience and diversification [28].

Scenario	Key characteristics	Likely advantages	Main risks	Correspondence to the pan-regional model
Continuation of globalization	Preservation of universal rules and global chains	Efficiency and broad market access	Vulnerability to network pressure and crises	Low
Selective fragmentation	Restrictions in strategic sectors while preserving other trade	Combination of resilience and efficiency	Higher costs and technological discrimination	Moderate
Macro-regional globalization	Concentration of chains within large spaces connected by global trade	Resilience and institutional coordination	Center–periphery asymmetry	High in spatial logic
Rigid economic blocs	Restricted trade between competing groups	Control over critical resources	Lower growth, conflicts, and shortages	Closest
Networked multipolarity	Overlapping associations and intermediary states	Flexibility and diversification	Regulatory complexity and instability	Low in form, moderate in scale

Table 2. Possible Scenarios for the Transformation of the World Economy

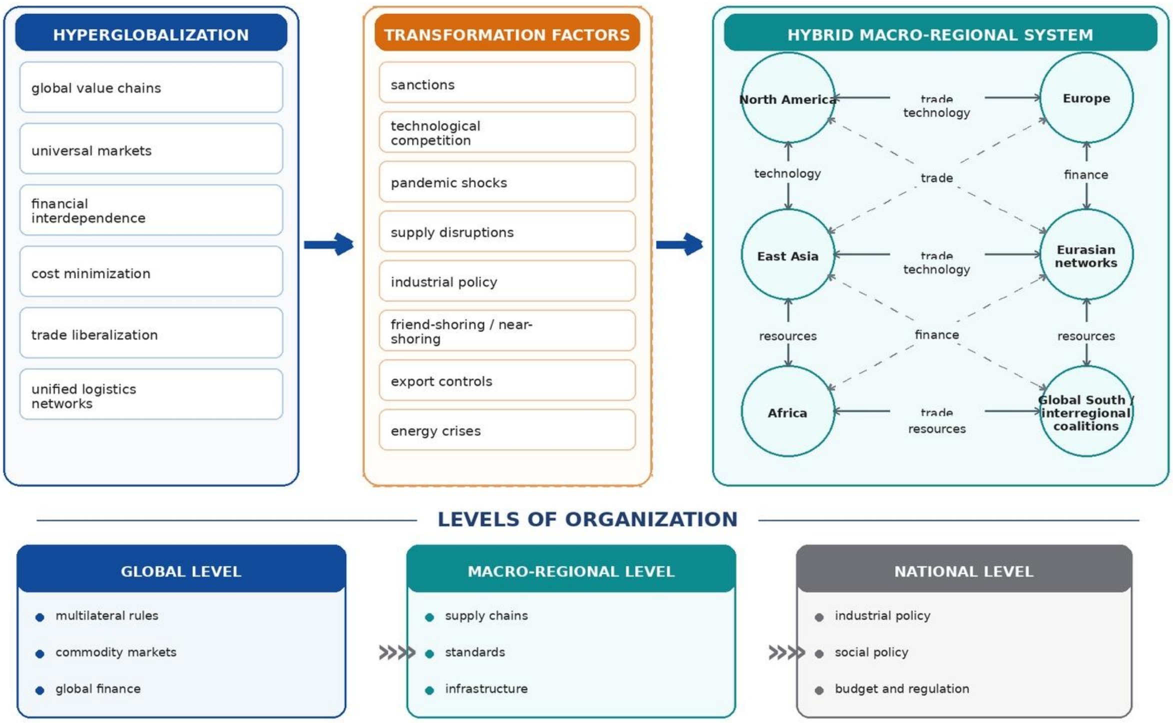

Figure 1. Transformation of the World Economy from Global Interdependence to Macro-Regional Organization

8. Limitations and Controversial Issues

8.1. The Risk of Anachronism

Haushofer's concept was formulated in a completely different technological, legal, and political environment. The interwar world was characterized by colonial empires, economic blockades, and the limited institutionalization of world trade.

Contemporary regional associations operate within the framework of international law, global corporations, and digital networks. Directly identifying the EU, RCEP, or BRICS with pan-regions is therefore methodologically incorrect.

It is legitimate to compare their spatial logic, but not to regard contemporary institutions as the realization of Haushofer's political project.

8.2. Uncertainty of Macro-Regional Boundaries

The boundaries of contemporary economic space cannot be drawn solely on a map. States may belong to several production and financial systems.

Even within a single region, industries may be oriented toward different partners. Energy may be linked to neighboring states, electronics to East Asia, and the financial sector to the United States and Europe.

Any map of macro-regions is therefore a simplification. Network analysis of trade, investment, technology, and infrastructure may provide a more accurate method.

8.3. Contradictory Empirical Evidence

Studies identify signs of friend-shoring and declining trade between geopolitically distant countries [35]. At the same time, the global economy has not completely disintegrated, and investment fragmentation remains predominantly sectoral [36].

The dynamics are also unstable. In some periods, companies increase regionalization; in others, they expand the number of suppliers from different parts of the world.

Current trends should therefore not be presented as an irreversible transition to pan-regions. The final structure will depend on political decisions and the ability of international institutions to adapt.

8.4. Publication and Conceptual Bias

Research on geoeconomic fragmentation often focuses on relations between the United States and China. This may lead to the underestimation of intraregional processes in Africa, Latin America, and South Asia.

The terms de-risking, decoupling, friend-shoring, and near-shoring are used inconsistently. Some authors understand them as state policies, while others use them to describe actual changes in trade flows.

Operationalization is required: which specific indicators make it possible to conclude that a macro-region has formed?

8.5. The Normative Danger of Spheres of Influence

Pan-regional terminology may create the impression that small states naturally belong to the sphere of influence of a major power. This approach contradicts the principle of sovereign choice.

Economic geography creates constraints and opportunities, but does not predetermine political affiliation. States can modify infrastructure, diversify partners, and participate in several associations.

An analytical model must not become a normative justification for the dominance of the center over the periphery.

8.6. The Economic Costs of Fragmentation

Regionalization may increase resilience to one type of risk while simultaneously creating others. Duplication of production capacity raises product costs, while restricted access to technology slows innovation.

The consequences may be particularly severe for small developing countries that lack a sufficiently large market for independent production and depend on exports of a limited number of goods.

Geoeconomic fragmentation also reduces the benefits of international financial diversification and may intensify synchronized regional crises [37].

9. Prospects for Further Research

Further study of macro-regionalization requires a combination of historical, economic, and network analysis.

The first direction is the construction of multidimensional maps. Trade flows, investment, currency settlements, digital infrastructure, and political alliances should be analyzed separately and then combined.

The second direction is the study of sectoral heterogeneity. The boundaries of macro-regions in semiconductors may differ substantially from those in energy, food, or financial services.

The third direction concerns intermediary states. It is necessary to determine whether they create genuine diversification or merely conceal the persistence of earlier dependencies.

The fourth direction is a quantitative assessment of the trade-off between resilience and efficiency. The costs of localizing production should be compared with the expected damage from a possible disruption of supplies.

The fifth direction is the study of benefit distribution within a macro-region. Formal growth in trade may coexist with the concentration of technology and profits in the center.

The sixth direction concerns the compatibility of standards. The future of the global economy depends on whether competing regulatory systems can maintain technical interfaces and mutual recognition.

The seventh direction is a historical comparison of contemporary fragmentation with interwar economic blocs and the Cold War period. Such a comparison must account for differences in the depth of contemporary interdependence.

Finally, it is necessary to analyze whether multilateral institutions can ensure interaction among macro-regions. Their task may change: instead of fully harmonizing rules, they may prevent extreme forms of discrimination and support the compatibility of several regional systems.

10. Conclusion

Karl Haushofer's concept of pan-regions reflected an attempt to explain the transition from a system of nation-states to large spatial formations combining an industrial center, a resource periphery, communications, and a political idea.

Its limited analytical value remains relevant to the contemporary world economy. The intensification of industrial policy, technological restrictions, and friend-shoring strategies does indeed promote the concentration of certain production chains within large economic spaces.

Contemporary macro-regionalization, however, differs fundamentally from the pan-regional model. It develops under conditions of global value chains, international law, digital networks, and the multiple affiliations of states. Macro-regions will overlap and remain mutually dependent.

The most probable outcome is a hybrid order combining global markets, macro-regional production and regulatory systems, and national economic policies. Fragmentation will be predominantly sectoral, affecting strategic technologies, infrastructure, and finance.

The principal danger lies not in the development of regional cooperation itself, but in its transformation into a system of closed spheres of influence. Such a transformation could increase costs, entrench the dependence of the periphery, and intensify international conflicts.

Haushofer's concept should therefore be used not as a blueprint for the future world order, but as a critical warning. It helps explain the spatial logic of economic power while also demonstrating the risks of the hierarchical organization of large regions.

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