



**REGIONALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH  
AFRICA (MENA), 1990-2012: AN EVALUATIVE  
STUDY**

**BY**

**BENDEBKA RAMZI**

**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of requirement for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Muslim World Issues)**

**Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and  
Human Sciences  
International Islamic University Malaysia**

**SEPTEMBER 2016**

## ABSTRACT

Regional experiences have certain assumptions in common and have been framed within a common globalist perspective. Nevertheless, each regional cooperation process has its own distinctive features. This diversity reflects the differential local characteristics of regionalism which need to be included in any discussion about the subject. The case of the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) stands out clearly in this context. This study has addressed three major research questions. Firstly, what are the main features of regionalism?; secondly, what is the role of Islam in reshaping MENA's regional cooperation?; thirdly, why has regional cooperation among countries in MENA taken the form that it has and what are the main factors in this process? The objectives are to investigate and examine the features of new regionalism with regard to (MENA), to examine the role of Islam in shaping MENA regional cooperation and to determine and analyse, the factors that influence cooperation in the MENA region. This study uses new regionalism (NR) as its theoretical framework. This theory has the following features: 1) geographical proximity; 2) trade liberalisation; 3) economic interdependence; 4) non-discrimination; 5) unilateral reform; and 6) religion values. This study also explains the main factors contributing to regionalism in the MENA region including: 1) colonialism; 2) conflicts; 3) system of governance; and 4) identity. The study found that: despite some positive signs of regionalism, MENA suffers from poor regionalism. It is characterised by slow trade liberalisation, weak regional import-export process, vague unilateral reform, and the absence of religious values. On the other hand, the dependence of MENA in political processes and economic development; conflicts, weak governance; and the suffering in promoting a collective identity has continued to preserve the MENA region as an under-developed, less integrated and poorly cohesive as a regional unit.

## ملخص البحث ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

الخبرات الإقليمية لديها بعض الافتراضات المشتركة وهي مؤطرة ضمن منظور العولمة المشترك. ومع ذلك، فإن لكل عملية تعاون إقليمي سمات ومميزات خاصة بها. هذا التنوع يعكس الخصائص المحلية التفضيلية للإقليمية التي يتعين إدراجها في أي مناقشة حول هذا الموضوع. حالة (MENA) تبرز بشكل واضح في هذا السياق. وقد عالجت هذه الدراسة ثلاثة أسئلة بحثية رئيسية. ما الملامح الرئيسية للإقليمية؟ ما دور الإسلام في تشكيل التعاون الإقليمي لها؟ لماذا التعاون الإقليمي بين البلدان في المنطقة يتخذ الشكل الذي عليه الآن وما العوامل الرئيسية في هذه العملية؟ تتمثل الأهداف في تحقيق ودراسة ملامح الإقليمية الجديدة فيما يتعلق بمنطقة (MENA)، دراسة دور الإسلام في تشكيل التعاون الإقليمي في MENA وتحديد وتحليل، العوامل التي تعرقل عملية التكامل في منطقة الشرق الأوسط. للقيام بذلك، فقد اعتمدت الدراسة على نظرية الإقليمية الجديدة (NewRegionalism). تبدأ الدراسة بشرح نظرية الإقليمية الجديدة بما في ذلك الملامح الرئيسية التي تتشكل منها، ومن ثم فإنه يفحص الخصائص التالية في منطقة الشرق الأوسط: 1 التقارب الجغرافي 2 التحرر التجاري 3 الترابط الاقتصادي 4 مبدأ عدم التمييز 5 الإصلاح من جانب واحد 6 و القيم الدينية. أيضا، شرحت هذه الدراسة العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر أو تساهم في الإقليمية. العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر في الإقليمية في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا هي: 1 الاستعمار 2 الصراعات 3 طريقة الحكم في المنطقة 4 والهوية. يمكن تلخيص نتائج البحث على النحو الآتي: على الرغم من بعض الإشارات الإيجابية للإقليمية في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا، مثل التقارب الجغرافي، و ممارسة مبدأ عدم التمييز، فإنّ منطقة الشرق الأوسط يشوبها سوء التعاون الإقليمي. بحيث تتميز المنطقة ببطء التحرر التجاري، وضعف عملية الاستيراد والتصدير إقليمياً، وغموض عملية الإصلاح من جانب الدولة، بالإضافة إلى غياب القيم الدينية الباعثة على التعاون. من ناحية أخرى، فإنّ تبعية MENA للخارج في العمليات السياسية والتنمية الاقتصادية، إضافة إلى الصراعات، والحكم الضعيف. والمعاناة في تعزيز الهوية الجماعية، كلّ ذلك قد حافظ على تحلّف الإقليمية وجمودها، وجعل من المنطقة توصف بالأقل اندماجا وتعاوناً.

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

The thesis of Bendebka Ramzi has been approved by the following:

---

Abdul Rashid Moten  
Supervisor

---

El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam  
Internal Examiner

---

Mohamad Azzuddin Mohd Sani  
External Examiner 1

---

Mohamad Abu Bakar  
External Examiner 2

---

Mohammad Naqib Ishan Jan  
Chairman

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Bendebka Ramzi

Signature.....

Date .....

**COPYRIGHT**

**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF  
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**REGIONALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
(MENA), 1990-2012: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY**

I declare that the copyright holder of this dissertation are jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2016 Bendebka Ramzi and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieved system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Student

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

## **DEDICATION**

*This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

All praise be to Allah (S.W.T.) for enabling me to complete this study. I am thankful to Him for the health and energy that He gave me throughout my academic endeavours. Peace and blessings be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.S), his family and all his companions. In undertaking this study I am indebted to many distinguished people and institutions from whom I benefited directly or indirectly. First of all I would like to express my sincere and deepest appreciation and thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Abdul Rashid Moten, for his help in this study. His guidance, encouragements, comments and suggestions were instrumental in completing this thesis. I thank the personnel of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) library for the services they provided in undertaking this research. Finally, I wish to extend my gratitude to my beloved parents, and my beloved wife, brothers and sisters, for their love, patience, understanding and invaluable and continuous support. My family was deprived of my personal help and attention for the three years of my study. Insha Allah, they will find consolation and reward in the completion of this work. Lastly, I owe my sincere gratitude to all those who helped me during my study at IIUM especially Dr. Nacer Youcef and my cloed friend Dr. Amar Fettane.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Abstract in Arabic .....	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration .....	v
Copyright .....	vi
Dedication .....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
List of Tables .....	xiii
List of Figures .....	xv
List of Maps .....	xvi

<b>CHAPTER ONE: REGIONALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: A FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.3 Research Questions.....	3
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	3
1.5 Objectives of the Study.....	5
1.6 Literature Review .....	5
1.6.1 Disagreement on the Concept of Regionalism.....	6
1.6.2 Importance of Regionalism.....	7
1.6.3 Regional Cooperation in MENA.....	8
1.6.4 Ideology and Regionalism in MENA.....	10
1.6.5 Forces and Factors Shaping Regionalism in MENA .....	11
1.7 Theoretical Framework.....	18
1.7.1 New Regionalism Theory .....	19
1.7.2 Features of New Regionalism .....	20
1.7.2.1 Geographical Proximity.....	21
1.7.2.2 Trade Liberalisation.....	22
1.7.2.3 Economic Interdependence.....	22
1.7.2.4 Non-discrimination.....	23
1.7.2.5 Unilateral Reform .....	24
1.7.2.6 Islam, Cooperation, and Unity in MENA.....	24
1.7.3 Factors Contributing to Regionalism .....	28
1.7.3.1 Colonialism.....	31
1.7.3.2 Conflict .....	32
1.7.3.3 Governance.....	33
1.7.3.4 Identity Issues .....	34
1.8 Methodology.....	36
1.9 Organisation of the Study .....	38
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>40</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	40
2.2 The MENA Region: A General Overview .....	41

2.2.1 The Production of Oil .....	44
2.3 Mena in the Modern Era .....	47
2.3.1 The Ottoman Period .....	48
2.3.1.1 The Establishment and the Extension of the Ottomans .....	49
2.3.1.2 Government and Provinces during the Ottoman Period .....	51
2.3.1.3 The Decline of the Ottomans .....	53
2.3.2 The Colonial Period .....	55
2.4 The Dynamics of Alliances and Cooperation in MENA .....	59
2.4.1 Territorial Independence .....	59
2.4.2 Arab-Nationalism .....	60
2.4.3 Phases of the Cold War in MENA .....	64
2.5 Conclusion .....	66

### **CHAPTER THREE: THE FEATURES OF NEW REGIONALISM:**

<b>ANALYSING THE MENA REGION .....</b>	<b>68</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	68
3.2 The Features of MENA Regionalism: A Discussion .....	70
3.3 Geographical Proximity .....	76
3.3.1 The Geography of the MENA Region .....	76
3.3.2 Geographical Proximity and Regional Cooperation in the MENA Region .....	79
3.4 Trade Liberalisation .....	82
3.4.1 Cooperation and Trade Liberalisation in MENA .....	86
3.4.2 Tariffs and Direct Foreign Investment as a Measure of Trade Liberalisation .....	87
3.4.2.1 Tariffs in the MENA Region .....	88
3.4.2.2 Foreign Direct Investment in the MENA Region .....	90
3.5 Economic Interdependence .....	93
3.5.1 Import and Export between MENA Countries .....	94
3.5.1.1 Import among MENA Economies .....	94
3.5.1.2 Export among MENA Economies .....	96
3.5.2 Dependence of MENA countries on Developed and Developing Economies .....	98
3.6 Non-Discrimination .....	101
3.6.1 The Implementation of Non-Discrimination in the MENA Region .....	102
3.7 Unilateral Reform .....	105
3.7.1 Economic Reform in MENA Countries .....	105
3.7.2 Stages of Development in MENA Economies .....	106
3.8 Islamic Principles .....	109
3.8.1 Muslims Majority as a Motive for Regional Cooperation in MENA .....	109
3.8.2 Measuring the Islamic Principles of MENA Region .....	111
3.9 Integration Achievement Score For MENA Regionalism .....	113
3.10 Conclusion .....	117

### **CHAPTER FOUR: FORCES AFFECTING REGIONALISM IN MENA:**

<b>COLONIALISM AND CONFLICTS .....</b>	<b>120</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	120

4.2 The Impacts of Colonialism on MENA Regionalism .....	120
4.2.1 Colonial Legacy in the MENA Region.....	121
4.2.1.1 Boundary Claims .....	121
4.2.1.2 Colonial Dependence versus Regional Interdependence .....	125
4.2.2 Inequality and Rigidities in the Distribution of Wealth and Social Rights.....	127
4.2.2.1 Distribution of Wealth.....	128
4.2.2.2 Situation of Social Rights .....	129
4.2.3 The Continuity of Exploitation and Dominance.....	130
4.2.3.1 Decolonisation and Trade Liberalisation in MENA.....	131
4.2.3.2 Unilateral Reforms in the Post-Colonial Era.....	133
4.2.4 The Impact of Colonialism on Islam.....	136
4.3 Regional Conflicts in MENA .....	139
4.3.1 Political Instability .....	140
4.3.1.1 Absence of Unilateral Reform toward Peace and Stability .....	140
4.3.1.2 From One Nation to Disunity and Conflicts.....	147
4.3.2 Praetorian Societies and Discrimination.....	149
4.3.3 Permanent Conflicts and Underdevelopment .....	150
4.3.3.1 Geographical Issue .....	150
4.3.3.2 Military Expenditure Destabilising Trade Investments and Development.....	152
4.3.4 Proliferation of Conflicts .....	153
4.3.4.1 Spillover Effects of Conflict in Neighbouring Countries .....	154
4.3.4.2 Conflict Interdependence versus Economic Interdependence .....	158
4.4 Conclusion .....	162

## **CHAPTER FIVE: THE EFFECTS OF GOVERNANCE AND IDENTITY**

<b>ISSUE ON MENA.....</b>	<b>163</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	163
5.1.1 Regime Types in the MENA Region .....	164
5.2 Image of Governance in the MENA Region .....	166
5.2.1 Political Dimension.....	168
5.2.1.1 Political Exploitation of Territorial Issues.....	168
5.2.1.2 Territory and State Instability.....	169
5.2.1.3 Political Will and the Issue of Interdependence .....	171
5.2.1.4 Aid Discrimination Represents Political Discrimination .....	173
5.2.2 Economic Dimension.....	174
5.2.2.1 Governance Minimising Trade Liberalisation's Benefits in MENA.....	175
5.2.2.2 Governance in MENA has Led to Economic failures .....	177
5.2.3 Social Dimension .....	179
5.2.3.1 Governance and Failures in Political and Social Reforms .....	179
5.2.3.2 Confrontation of the People's Will.....	184

5.3 Identity and Regionalism in MENA.....	185
5.3.1 Geographical Region Identity.....	186
5.3.1.1 Territory as a Component of Identity.....	186
5.3.1.2 Nationalism versus Regional Interdependence.....	188
5.3.2 National Identity.....	189
5.3.2.1 Trade Liberalisation and Identity.....	189
5.3.2.2 Discrimination based on Identity.....	190
5.3.2.3 From National Identity to Identity Fragmentation.....	193
5.3.2.4 Identity and Reforms.....	194
5.3.3 Religious Identity.....	196
5.3.3.1 Nationalism, Arabism, and the Islamic Identity.....	196
5.3.3.2 Deployment of Religious Identities for Political Ends.....	201
5.4 Conclusion.....	207
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>209</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	209
6.2 New Regionalism Theory and the MENA Region.....	209
6.2.1 The Features of New Regionalism.....	210
6.2.2 The Role of Islam in Shaping MENA`s Regionalism.....	215
6.2.3 Factors Contributing to Regionalism in MENA.....	216
6.3 Conclusion.....	220
6.4 Recommendations.....	220
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>222</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Basic Indicators for the Middle East and North Africa Region (2012)	42
Table 2.2	Proven Oil Reserves in MENA (2012)	45
Table 2.3	Onset and end of colonial domination in MENA	56
Table 3.1	The Main Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations in MENA Region	81
Table 3.2	MENA Countries in the WTO	85
Table 3.3	Tariff rate, Applied, Weighted Mean, of all Products (2000 to 2012)	89
Table 3.4	Annual Foreign Direct Investment Flows (1990-2012) (USD, Millions)	91
Table 3.5	Merchandise Imports from MENA (2000-2012)	95
Table 3.6	Merchandise Exports from MENA (2000-2012) (in percent)	97
Table 3.7	Intra- and Inter-Regional Merchandise Trade (2012)	98
Table 3.8	MENA Import from Developed and Developing Economies (1995-2012)	100
Table 3.9	MENA Export from Developed and Developing Economies (1995-2012)	101
Table 3.10	Basic Economic Differences in MENA States (2012)	103
Table 3.11	Income Group of MENA Economies (2012)	104
Table 3.12	Stages of Development in MENA Economies	108
Table 3.13	The IslamicityIndex of MENA countries(2010)	112
Table 3.14	Integration Achievement Score (coding system)	116
Table 3.15	The Level of Regional Cooperation in MENA Region	117
Table 4.1	The Number of European Settlers (North Africa)	129
Table 4.2	MENA`s Performance in the Global Peace Index (GPI) (2012)	141
Table 4.3	MENA States Fragility Classification Index (2012)	144

Table 4.4	Military Expenditure in MENA (% of GDP) (1990 to 2012)	156
Table 5.1	Types of Regimes in the MENA region	165
Table 5.2	Freedom in the MENA Region, 2012	181
Table 5.3	Education, Health and Workforce in MENA region (2012)	182
Table 5.4	Distribution of Shia in MENA Region	203

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	The Main Factors that Influence Regionalism	31
Figure 1.2	Conflict Cycle in the MENA Region	33
Figure 2.1	Distribution of Proven Oil Reserves in (2012)	46
Figure 2.2	Number of MENA Colonies for Each Colonial Power	58
Figure 4.1	Number of MENA Countries Fragility under Each Category	145
Figure 4.2	Regional Defence Expenditure as % of GDP (2002-2011)	155
Figure 4.3	Potential Channels of Economic Impact from Conflicts in Neighbouring Countries	161
Figure 5.1	Problems that lead to Weak Interdependence	172
Figure 5.2	Regional Performance on the Human Capital Index (2012)	183
Figure 5.3	Supporting for Sharia as Law of State (2012)	184
Figure 5.4	The Arabic Nationalism Components	198
Figure 5.5	The Preferable Components of Arab Nationalism (El-Jabiri)	200

## LIST OF MAPS

Map 2.1	The Ottoman Caliphate 1451-1566	50
Map 3.1	Middle East and North Africa Region: A Geographical Proximity	77
Map 3.2	Distribution of Muslim Population in MENA	110
Map 4.1	The Borders of the MENA Region in the Pre-Colonial Era	122
Map 4.2	MENA Divided Between Colonizers in 1914	124
Map 4.3	The Defence Spending In the MENA Region (2012)	153
Map 5.1	Sunni and Shiah in the Middle East and North Africa	205

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **REGIONALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: A FRAMEWORK**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Since the end of World War II in 1945, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)<sup>1</sup> region has experienced several phases of development ranging from the independence of its states from British and French colonialism, through the Cold War, Arabism and cooperation to disunity after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and other sub-regional problems like terrorism and dictatorship. Furthermore, the region has witnessed two of the most controversial wars in recent years: the US led Gulf War in 1991 and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Strategically, the location of MENA has attracted the attention of the world's great powers, with attendant consequences for uncertainty and dislocation. Even though Middle East and North African governments have made some efforts in regional cooperation, as in the creation of some regional organisations, to succeed they may require greater effort as well as strategies aimed at building strong cooperation. In short, regionalism in the (MENA) is influenced by many external and internal factors. The aim of this research is, firstly, to determine and analyse the main features of regionalism with reference to MENA, and secondly, to find out the challenges to cooperation among members of MENA.

---

<sup>1</sup>Four expressions are used for the region: MENA, WANA, Near East, and Arab World. None of these terms really describe the region in this study except MENA. The term "MENA" admits many definitions. Throughout this study, reference to the MENA corresponds to the operational definition of the region. MENA can be defined as a zone stretching from Morocco to Iran, and from Turkey to Sudan. This definition includes twenty two countries; twenty of the Arab League (including West Bank and Gaza), Turkey, and Iran.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This research examines the factors that influence regionalism in MENA and the role of Islam in shaping MENA's regional cooperation. There are not many studies which provide a comprehensive, yet accessible guide to analysing regionalism in MENA. Ajami (1991), Halliday (1996), Aarts (1999), Hinnebusch (2003), Edwards (2006) and Fawcett (2009) have restricted their analyses to the impact of the West on the cooperation among members of the region. Although external forces have shaped and continue to shape the development of the region's politics, economics and societies (Fawcett, 2009), there are other factors, especially internal factors that need to be considered in order to comprehend MENA's regionalism. In doing so, it is necessary to analyse the features of regionalism first, and then to apply these features on MENA to ascertain the main factors that influence regional cooperation.

Despite the many studies that have been conducted on regionalism in MENA, there are several that explain and explore the role of religion as a characteristic of regionalism in MENA. Reflecting on the legacy of 50 years of academic study of the region, James Bill observes, "Middle Eastern political processes defy observation, discourage generalisation and resist explanation" (Bill, 1996, p. 156). Halliday (1996) mentions that the common assumption among scholars is that MENA is an exceptional case, quite different from other regions in the world yet incomprehensible to outsiders. However, this study attempts to provide a comprehensive and understandable framework that combines both a common characteristic of the new regionalism of MENA based up, as well as the religious characteristic as an exception to the MENA region.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study, therefore, attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main features of regionalism?
2. What is the role of Islam in shaping MENA's regional cooperation?
3. What are the factors that influence regional cooperation among countries in MENA?

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Determining and analysing the features of regionalism in MENA, the role of religion (Islam) as a characteristic of regionalism as well as the main factors (external and internal) that influence cooperation in the MENA region are significant for several reasons. Firstly, changes in global economy such as increasing globalisation, expansion of trade and the increased participation of several countries from the third world into the world markets, have all created new economic pressures on MENA region to engage in economic cooperation. Therefore, it is important to shed new light on contemporary regionalism to relate the study of the MENA region to broader trends and changes in the world, and also to distinguish new regionalism from the old one. The old regionalism is generally associated with the emergence of the EU in the aftermath of the Second World War (Mansfield and Milner, 1999; Beeson, 2004). One of the crucial issues of the post Second World War politics was the role of regionalism in the international system. The goal of the division of international systems into subsystems was to control the interstate conflicts (Fawcett and Hurrell, 1995; Higgott, Achaya, 2002). Currently, there is a new wave of regional integration with its roots in the mid-1980s, and which has been characterised by substantial qualitative, quantitative and formal changes in regional integration (Hettne; 1997, 2002). Thus,

presenting the standard features of regionalism in MENA leads to bringing together the different institutions, contemporary ideas and discussions under the label of regional cooperation, in attempting to sort out common features of regionalism. Moreover, as religion has its importance in the MENA region, it will be considered as a characteristic in this research.

Secondly, most studies have focused primarily on the interests of the outside players and how those players are achieving their goals in the MENA region. This study however, does not concentrate only on external factors; it also reflects and places emphasis on the importance of domestic factors and, more importantly, on how external and internal factors, influence regional cooperation outcomes as well as influence domestic configurations of some MENA countries.

Finally, most academic discussions on regionalism focus on analysing a specific regional arrangement (Fawcett & Hurrell, 1995) such as the Arab League (AL), Arab Maghreb Union (Union du Maghreb Arabe (UMA)), or the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In addition, studies have been conducted based on analysing specific MENA states. For example, Ismael and Jacqueline (2011) focused on major governments in MENA such as Turkey, Iran and Syria, while others have focused on other MENA countries (Ayoob, 1981; Kipper & Saunders, 1991; Owen, 1992; Halliday, 1996; Vatikiotis, 1997; Zuhur, 2005). In this study, despite the fact that the states of MENA vary in their nature, the region will be studied as a unit and as one bloc. Also, there is a need to study regionalism comprehensively by linking together different institutions and ideas influencing regional cooperation.

## **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of this study is to find the main characteristics of new regionalism which would cause the region to become a cohesive unit. The second is to determine and analyse, through systematic analysis, the factors that influence cooperation in the MENA region. More specific objectives include:

1. To apply the features of new regionalism on the MENA region. This study provides a detailed explanation of the main features of regionalism in MENA. It evaluates the level of cooperation that can promote better understanding of current MENA regionalism.
2. To determine the role of Islam in cooperation as a characteristic in MENA. Although regional experiences have certain assumptions in common, Islam needs to be included in this study as a distinctive feature of the MENA region.
3. To determine and analyse the factors that influence regionalism in MENA. A systematic attempt is necessary to address the impact of important factors on cooperation in MENA. Analysing the factors can help in detecting the progress or the obstacles facing cooperation in MENA. Hopefully, this analysis may help researchers to address more comprehensive recommendations that can be beneficial for MENA member governments.

## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is a wealth of literature on the Middle East and North Africa as well as on regional integration that describes an array of activities, especially on state-led efforts to develop different aspects cooperation in the region. This literature can be discussed

under the following headings: disagreement on the concept of regionalism, the importance of regionalism, regional cooperation in MENA, ideology and regionalism in MENA, and forces and factors shaping regionalism in MENA.

### **1.6.1 Disagreement on the Concept of Regionalism**

Extensive scholarly interest in regionalism has yet to generate a widely-accepted definition of this term (Mistry, 1995; Mansfield & Milner, 1999). As a result, the concept of new regionalism is used differently by different authors. For instance, new regionalism can be defined as a multi-dimensional process of regional integration that includes economic, political, social and cultural aspects (Hettne, 1995).

According to Hettne (1995), regional integration is a package rather than a single policy, concerned with either economics or other aspects. Regionalism may also mean a complex process of change involving state as well as non-state actors, occurring at global, regional and national levels. It is not easy to state which level is dominant because actors and processes interact at different levels and their relative importance differs in time and space (Soderbaun, 2001).

Economic integration is basically concerned with efficiency in resource use with particular reference to the spatial aspect (Robson, 1980; Koester, 1986; Snorrason, 2012). Necessary conditions for its fullest attainment include the freedom of movement of goods and of factors of production, and an absence of discrimination amongst the members of the group (Robson, 1987). Thus, Economic integration is a means, not an end. In practice, most economic groupings are established or advocated partly for political and security reasons whose importance as a factor in understanding the actual progress of economic integration can scarcely be over rated (Price, 1955; Tabb, 1999). Anderson and Blachhurst (1993) describe regional economic integration

as a process of reducing the economic significance of national political boundaries within a geographic area. Both authors agree that Europe is the most popular area of integration.

### **1.6.2 Importance of Regionalism**

According to Windsor and Getz (1999), there are five major consequences of regional economic and political integration: 1) increased market size and reduced resource-mobility barriers leading to 2) greater competition and efficiency, 3) organisational evolution toward larger and more global multinational enterprises (MNEs), 4) supranational institutional development and 5) increased demands for sub-national devolution. While the typical MNE scale and scope are both increasing, the nation state's role will come from both supranational institutionalisation and sub-national devolution developments.

De Lombaerde, Soderbaum, Van Langenhove and Baert (2010) agree that regional integration across national boundaries may tend to accelerate both universalisation and particularisation. They conclude their study by showing that regionalisation would not slow globalisation over the long run but that it will materially affect distribution of benefits and costs among participants, the competitiveness of individual economies and national welfares.

Also, the reasons behind regional integration and trade arrangements vary. In the case of developing countries, for example, regional integration is established in order to improve access of their exports to the markets of developed countries (WTO, 1996; Matthews, 2003). Developing countries are very dependent on the exports of primary commodities. However, with the tendency in the price of primary commodities to decline, the expansion of export volumes does not lead to a

concomitant increase in export earnings. Regional trading arrangements among developing countries are therefore proposed as another avenue for development. Larger production for the regional market would enable the exploitation of economies of scale and lower costs of production, and establish the competitive value of the goods in the world market (Agarwal, 2004; Toviias, 2008).

According to Gonsalves (2006), even though regional integration has succeeded in practice, it has failed in the major objective of establishing regional super-states. The European Union with its common market, the Euro-zone and so many other Europe-wide competencies cannot be undone. There are now few hurdles for trade, investment, flow of people, energy and resources. Governments and international organisations are constantly trying to facilitate a world without barriers (UN, 1987; WTO, 2014). Opposition comes from within the member states as enterprises, trade unions, other political and pressure groups refuse to accept the merger into a single political entity (Shuqing, 2013). Gonsalves (2006) also views that, even though Europe is a better example of regional integration, it will never be able to accept the idea of a federal constitution or a single foreign policy. This is because the power of the nation state is the main actor in international relations. Other regional groupings have also found invisible barriers that cannot be breached.

### **1.6.3 Regional Cooperation in MENA**

While numerous regional blocks exist all over the world, the geographic areas of MENA have been slow and unsuccessful in joint efforts for economic cooperation among themselves. Limited arrangements for regional integration have been attempted in the past by a number of countries from the region. However, they generally fail to accomplish concrete results (Kalaycioglu, 1996).