

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2016 · 15 marks

How does the regionalism shape the world politics?
Explain with examples.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 regionalism = condition + process → **Inis Claude**: world too wide for world government → region is where the answers lie → since the 1990s, regions “objects → subjects” / **R2** new regionalism, post-Cold War second coming → region stops being the arena of world politics, becomes an actor in it → three arenas: power, peace, trade

Body flow

pooled sovereignty → bloc weight no single member has → EU (third-largest economy, CETA, Iran deal, 27 members) → ASEAN's ten small states leading EAS + RCEP → collective bargaining → multipolarity → peace function → ECSC makes war “materially impossible” → **Fisher**: “Balkans of Asia” → zone of peace, no war since 1967 → trade function → NAFTA makes North America see itself as a region → trade diversion → **Bhagwati**'s question: building blocks or stumbling blocks?

Counter-view

sovereignty backlash → Brexit + US exit from TPP → **Helen Thompson**: “regionalism is out, sovereignty back in” → SAARC stalls, intra-regional trade below 5% → but integration continued despite both exits

Conclusion routes

R1 answer **Bhagwati** → building blocks, not stumbling blocks / **R2** regionalism does not replace the global order → it supplies the level where competition and regulation are reconciled, in a world not ready for global authority

Regionalism is a condition of shared affinity and a process that organises it. Inis Claude placed in the region the answers a world too wide for world government cannot give.

Fredrik Soderbaum and Bjorn Hettne states that since the 1990s regions "have changed from objects to subjects". They redistribute power, keep peace and reorganise trade.

Pooled sovereignty gives blocs weight no member holds alone. The EU, third-largest economy, struck CETA with Canada for its 27 members & held a common line on the Iran nuclear deal. ASEAN's 10 states lead the East Asia Summit and RCEP.

The coal & steel community tied French & German industry together, making war "materially impossible"; ASEAN turned what C.A. Fishen called the "Balkans of Asia" into a zone of peace, with no war between members since 1967.

Trade blocs redraw the world economy. NAFTA made North America see itself as a region. But blocs divert trade & J.N. Bhagwati ask whether they are "building blocs" or "stumbling blocs" for WTO-led multilateralism.

Brexit & US exit from the Trans-Pacific Partnership led Helen Thompson to hold that "regionalism is out, sovereignty back in". SAARC, its intra-regional trade below 5%, shows a bloc can stall. But integration continued despite both exits.

Regionalism does not replace the global order; it supplies the level where competition & regulation are reconciled; a building block in a world not ready for global authority.