A Political Economy of African Regionalisms
An Overview of Asymmetrical Development

Wil Hout and M.A. Mohamed Salih, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands

This book analyses the main factors influencing the political economy of Africa’s asymmetrical regionalism, focusing on regional and sub-regional trade, investment, movement of people, goods and services. It pays particular attention to the way in which regional and sub-regional dynamics are impacted by extra-regional relations, such with the EU, US, China and India. Because African regionalism is influenced not only by economic processes, peace and security are also analysed as important factors shaping both regional and sub-regional relations and dynamics.

‘...this work brings a new and substantive analysis of the issues on African regionalism.’
– Akiko Yanai, The Developing Economies

‘Hout and Salih have provided a tour d’horizon of African regionalisms – a project that has dominated many of the discussions at continental and sub-regional level. As Africa enters a new chapter in its continental integration, the African Continental Free Trade Area, and as the AU aims to silence the guns, this academic work provides an essential analysis of the specificities and challenges of African regionalism and the multiple asymmetries that have come to define it and impact on its effectiveness. Critically, this analysis eschews a European-determined framework of regionalism. Hout and Salih have painted a holistic picture of the successes and weaknesses of the regional integration project, providing a pragmatic, yet not cynical perspective, of the road that still needs to be traversed.’
– Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa

‘This excellent book by Wil Hout and M.A. Mohamed Salih bridges the gap in African literature on regional integration and the asymmetric relations it is characterized by. Thus, this is an invaluable book for researchers, students and policy makers in the continent that are concerned with regional integration and African development.’
– Alemayehu Geda, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, University of London, UK and African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Kenya

‘Africa’s Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which have the potential to be building blocks for continental integration and to facilitate Africa’s peaceful transformation, are still a work in progress. Employing an empirically-grounded comparative approach, this book provides an authoritative analysis of the internal and external drivers and hindrances to the development of Africa’s RECs. The book is an essential read for scholars and students of regionalism as well as for policy makers.’
– Kidane Mengisteab, Pennsylvania State University, US

‘The authors of this book have lived up to their promise of offering the reader a well-argued overview of the theoretical and policy implications of the development of African regional asymmetries. This book is a must read for senior management and staff of the AU, RECs and other regional institutions, as well as academics and professionals working on regionalism in Africa and other developing countries.’
– From the Foreword by Abdalla Hamdok, Prime Minister, Republic of the Sudan and Former President of the African Union Commission