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Rethinking Britain's Role in a Differentiated Europe After Brexit –

A Comparative Regionalism Perspective

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Abstract

Once outside the EU, the UK will have to develop a new relationship with its former partners in the EU and other pan-European bodies such as NATO, and this will require the UK to re-evaluate its sense of its global and regional importance. We argue in particular that the comparative literature on 'awkward' states in regional integration/regionalism, as well as that on middle powers in international relations, can help understand the ways in which the UK's likely future relations with its continental neighbours can be approached and understood. In this article we focus on future UK-EU relations, drawing on Alex Warleigh-Lack's typology of regionalisation processes to develop maximalist and minimalist understandings of how the UK -EU relationship of the future could be structured. We then draw on the literature on middle powers, as well as that devoted to three other 'awkward' states in their respective regions, namely Australia, Japan, and Norway, to illustrate how these relationships have worked in practice, and thus how the UK could seek to structure its future regional role.

KEY WORDS: Brexit, European integration, awkward states, middle power, comparative regional integration, comparative regionalism.

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1: INTRODUCTION – BREXIT, AWKWARD STATES AND COMPARATIVE REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The UK has been the paradigm case of an ‘awkward partner’ in regional integration (George 1990), with awkwardness understood as ‘an uncomfortable state of affairs in which a state strives to participate in a region but lacks full belonging in and commitment to the goals of the latter’ (Murray *et al.*, 2014, p. 280). Such awkwardness encompasses both obstructiveness and maladroitness, and hence both deliberate and inadvertent problem-generation. It is also a social condition, the function of the perceptions and judgement of third state actors (leaders and officials) about the state in question, as much as an objective or material condition, and is capable of evolution over time, as shown by an analysis of the UK’s EU-related elite discourse since the 2016 referendum (O’Toole, 2018).

Thus, it may seem counter-intuitive to argue that Brexit will increase the complexity of Europe’s differentiation process: when the UK leaves the EU, the latter will be shedding the state with the most opt-outs from EU policy. However, European integration is not limited to the EU; just as in other continents, the regional integration of Europe is a dynamic and complex matrix of institutions and processes, with notable continental roles for both the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Council of Europe that are sometimes exercised in competition with the EU. Although each has a different membership, they have overlapping constituent states and some are content to be members of one, such as the Council of Europe, rather than another, such as the EU, due to domestic concerns about sovereignty. There is a habit of cooperation and a long experience of socialisation in each of these groups. **Thus** comparative regionalism encompasses different forms and processes of regional integration and the same point can be made of parts of the world beyond Europe, such as the Asia Pacific. The UK will remain a member of both NATO and the Council of Europe. Moreover, London will seek to negotiate a new relationship with its EU partner states after Brexit, and much room for manoeuvre - as well as contestation - has been left in this regard (European Council 2018). Indeed, the UK’s role in NATO, whose agreement is required for certain EU security and defence measures to get under way, and the Belfast Agreement that entrenched the peace process on the island of Ireland, suggest that there is ample scope for the UK to find new ways to be awkward, or, as we suggest, to seek an alternative role as a *middle power*.

In this article, we argue that the comparative regionalism literature on types of global region, and the relationship between Australia, Japan, and Norway and their respective regions, offers useful insights for discussion of the UK's ongoing role in European integration. Europe is not the only region in the world to experience differentiation and awkward partners (Murray *et al.*, 2014; Warleigh-Lack, 2015, Stegmann McCallion and Brianson, 2017). As a former member state of the EU the UK will find that its past tools of 'awkwardness management', such as a commitment to the Single Market and proving that it was a sound implementer of EU legislation, will only be available if it chooses to negotiate a relationship with the EU that permits this, e.g. through European Economic Area (EEA) membership. The UK has also relied heavily upon opt-outs from EU policy underpinned by participation in complex EU diplomatic processes (Adler-Nissen, 2014), which will no longer be available once it leaves the EU – meaning new tools are required. Indeed, Brexit has reduced the UK's 'network capital' (Naurin and Lindahl, 2010) with both the EU-27 and third countries.

To secure its objectives, then, the UK will need to refresh and recalibrate its approach by developing a sound understanding of the changed power relations between the EU as a bloc of 27 states and itself as a third country, albeit with both parties themselves part of a wider regional integration matrix. In this contribution, we argue that the literature on both middle powers and comparative regionalism, as well as the emerging one on awkward states in global regions, can help begin such a process. We consider that awkward states have potential to be middle powers if they adopt an appropriate strategy.

We structure the article as follows. In the next section, we set out our scenarios for thinking about Britain's post-Brexit role in European integration – two conceptual models drawn from the comparative regionalism literature, each of which is capable of both maximalist and minimalist versions. The third section focuses on these scenarios, drawing also on the literature on Australia, Norway, and Japan as middle powers and awkward states in their respective regions.¹ The fourth section concludes.

THE UK AND EUROPE AFTER BREXIT: A TYPOLOGY AND TWO SCENARIOS

The comparative regionalism literature has a contested relationship with that on EU studies, although in recent years there have been active attempts to build bridges between the two (see *inter alia* Söderbaum, 2013; Warleigh-Lack *et al.*, 2011). One of the products of such

dialogue has been the creation of typologies of regional integration (or ‘regionalism’ in most non-EU studies scholarship) that allow the EU to be seen in comparison with other global regions instead of, or as well as, the federal states more usually used as comparators in EU studies. Because this helps ground our subsequent discussion of states that could serve as templates or examples to the UK in its post-Brexit regional context, we now draw on one such typology.

Warleigh-Lack (2006, p. 758) defined regionalisation as “an explicit [...] process of adapting participant state norms, policy-making processes, policy styles, policy content, political opportunity structures, economies and identity [...] to both align with and shape a new collective set of priorities, norms, and interests at regional level’. He further proposed a fivefold typology of regionalisation:

1. ‘Structured regionalisation’, such as the EU, is defined as complex and multi-issue, with deep collective institutions as well as informal decision-making. In this kind of region, substantial amounts of power have been delegated to the new centre, and repatriation of such power is costly;
2. ‘Dominance regionalisation’, such as the North American Free Trade Area, is created by a regional hegemon as an alternative to a global regime in order to counter threats to its power by third states or regions. Such regions have a narrow focus, although they can run deep, and usually emphasise trade;
3. ‘Security regionalisation’, such as NATO, focuses self-evidently on security, although this can be of both, or either, military and economic kinds. It can be geographically close or far-flung;
4. ; ‘Network regionalisation’, such as the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN), is driven by a shared regional identity, and used by states in the region to counter, or prepare for insertion into, global structures or processes. Such regions tend to rely on intergovernmental and informal decision-making;
5. ‘Conjoined regionalisation’, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), is a strategic partnership between global regions or between such a region and a third country or countries, for the sake of mutual economic or strategic advantage, and based on minimal formal institutions.

We focus on ‘security regionalisation’ and ‘conjoined regionalisation’ as the points on Warleigh-Lack’s spectrum that could apply to the post-Brexit context, since leaving the EU takes Britain out of an example of ‘structured regionalisation’, and ‘dominance regionalisation’ requires the existence of tightly-bound organisation under the hegemony of one state – a situation that does not apply in European integration. ‘Network regionalisation’ relies on a strong shared identity across a region - and this does not apply to the UK in its European context. In Table 1 we envisage a maximalist and minimalist version of the remaining types of region, to incorporate ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ forms of Brexit respectively.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

In security regionalisation, the key question is whether and how the UK could reach and maintain comprehensive agreements with the EU27 regarding ongoing cooperation in both economic and hard security terms. In principle, the maximalist version of this relationship could have little substantive change from the present arrangements, except that London would contribute less to the EU budget, sit outside the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies, leave the EU’s decision-making institutions, and new sectoral limits would constrain the jurisdiction in the UK of the EU Court of Justice (CJEU). British awkwardness here could centre on divergence of threat perception or worldview, a possible reluctance to commit resources (including personnel), and unwillingness to perceive the positive implications of mutual dependence with European partners for national policy or strategic choices.

In the minimalist version of this scenario, the UK would have a bespoke, cross-sectoral trade relationship that nonetheless falls short of the EEA in scope. Awkwardness from the UK here would centre on the wish to pursue independent, or divergent, policies in other sectors of the economy which undermine the integrity of this trade agreement. Britain would have security relationships with its erstwhile partners mainly via NATO, albeit with possible *ad hoc* participation in EU security measures undertaken by mutual agreement, perhaps in the form of a Framework Partnership Agreement on Crisis Management (Murray *et al.*, 2017).

Conjoined regionalisation, on the other hand, would see the UK focus on the economic aspects of a future relationship with the EU, leaving the hard security aspect of the relationship undeveloped other than via bilateral links identical to those it has with other NATO states. The UK could place additional emphasis on alliances with other states such as those in the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United

States) – as is featuring increasingly in UK discussions with Australia, for example. The maximalist form of this conjoined economic regional relationship would comprise a limited number of sectoral economic deals with the EU-27, perhaps including regarding the role of the City. The UK would be awkward in this context by isolating key aspects of the British economy from the agreement, preferring to pursue divergent policies in the hope of competitive advantage. There may even be a perception of the UK decision to remain outside of the Eurozone as constituting a gain, as a justification for being better off outside the EU. The UK's decision not to participate in Economic and Monetary Union is part of a pattern of being in the EU yet not fully subscribing to some of its policies. Certainly, there is a perception within the ASEAN that the Eurozone was a bridge too far in regional integration, when viewed comparatively (Allison-Reumann and Murray, 2017). The minimalist version of this scenario would see the UK falling back on World Trade Organization rules to trade with the EU27 entirely as a third country. In this situation, British awkwardness would be primarily in the form of a Brexit negotiation failure, and subsequent privileging of deeper trade relationships and agreements with states outside the EU and EEA.

3: COPING WITH AWKWARDNESS AS A MIDDLE POWER– BRITANNIA IN THE COMPARATIVE REGIONALISM LABORATORY

Having sketched out these 'ideal types' of the post-Brexit role for the UK in European integration, we now proceed to discuss how three other 'awkward' states (Australia, Japan, and Norway) have fared in their respective regions as an exercise.² Because a recognition of their 'middle power' status is crucial to the self-understandings of these three states, we locate our discussion in this section in an outline of this literature. Beeson (2011, p. 54) defines middle powers as 'a diverse group of states that are neither 'great' nor failing, but which occupy a conceptual territory between these extremes, and which are taken to have broadly similar material attributes'. The UK may not immediately accept such a self-understanding; certainly in the 2016 referendum, as well as the subsequent political and media discussion, the UK was categorised as a 'great power' cutting off its shackles and returning to its manifest destiny as a global leader (O'Toole, 2018). Yet, the fact is that despite its role as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and its nuclear weapons, the UK will find itself the junior partner in discussions with the EU over their future relations, and that similar power dynamics characterise trade negotiations with states

such as China, Japan, and the US. If only implicitly, UK elites will need to acknowledge that the price of exit from the EU is a reduction in London's capacity to influence events beyond the UK's borders, and that the country has become a middle power – what .

Patience (2014a; 2014b; 2018) identify three kinds of middle powers: dependent middle powers (such as Australia and Japan); regional middle powers **such as Australia in the Pacific Island Forum**; and middle powers as global citizens (such as Norway). Of particular interest to our discussion are dependent middle powers, as these states are not perceived as partners but could potentially be rivals with external loyalties and alliances with great powers such as the United States (US) . Both Australia and Japan understand that they can hold power by virtue of being a member of their region, for instance *qua* member state of the ASEAN Regional Forum and all the major economic and security regional bodies in the Asia Pacific.

Unlike the UK, Australia joins regional bodies, such as the East Asia Summit, with enthusiasm. It actively seeks leadership in APEC, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit, and although it retains a form of awkwardness in its region because of ideational differences (typically around liberal democracy) and the perceptions by some of its partners that it is not truly Asian in identity, Australia, like Japan, is an effective participant in organised bodies and institutions at the regional level (Wilkins, 2017; see also Behringer, 2005).

A further strand of the middle power literature focuses on the forerunner or activist state, in which cases activism becomes a specific diplomatic instrument (Ravenhill, 1998). Jakobson (2009) has examined three factors that contribute to the reputation of a nation as a forerunner state: persistent activism to promote an issue on the international stage; expertise and knowledge; and successful national policies in a germane area. Jakobson determined the success of an activist state's initiative by a range of metrics: first, in aiming to move the discussion or integration processes forward; second, in appealing to fundamental norms and values shared by its partner states in order to maximise the initiative's attractiveness; and, third, in facilitating consensus generation and coalition building (Murray, 2010). Examples of Australia's activist credentials include deepening relations with Asia; opposing apartheid in South Africa; disarmament initiatives; founding the Cairns groups of agricultural exporting countries and the creation of the G20 (Ungerer, 2007). A helpful insight is an observation made by former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans (with Grant):

By definition, middle powers are not powerful enough in most circumstances to impose their will, but they may be persuasive enough to have like-minded others see their point of view, and to act accordingly (Evans and Grant, 344).

He envisaged a role that could not cover all aspects of international leadership, opting rather to suggest that middle powers could engage in ‘niche diplomacy’, which consists of ‘concentrating resources in specific areas best able to generate returns worth having, rather than trying to cover the field’ (Cooper *et al.*, 1993, p. 25; see also Behringer, 2005).

It bears remembering that underlying each version of the scenarios sketched in Section 2 is an unequal and asymmetrical future partnership between the UK and the EU, in which the UK has far more to gain from an ongoing mutually-beneficial arrangement than has the EU. Although as set out in the maximalist version of our security regionalisation scenario there may be some fuzzy boundaries e.g. around participation in Europol, the UK will no longer be a peer in EU decision-making, but a *demandeur*; no longer an insider but an outsider.

Moreover, Brexit problematises relations between the UK and the EEA states; again, in the maximalist version of the security regionalisation model, these relations can be managed, but of course the UK’s remaining within the EEA (and at the same time outside of the EU) requires the assent of not only the EU-27 but of all the EEA states too. The UK’s future successful management of its awkwardness will thus require an obvious but essential first step: it will have to *wish* to do this, and be prepared to make compromises and concessions for this purpose. This step is in fact difficult, because it requires the abandonment of one near-constant in the UK’s relationship with the EU in particular and European integration in general, namely its domestic framing of relevant narratives as centred on costs, difficulties, and battles, rather than on more pragmatic narratives that also feature the benefits and gains of engagement with European integration. Brexit may become a historic (although hard to achieve) turning point in this regard, given that it changes the status quo ante and can be used discursively to frame a new UK-EU relationship that is better suited to the circumstances and needs of both parties. Such constructive approaches are a feature of how other awkward states manage their regional roles (see below).

A second factor of general applicability to awkward states in regional integration is their liminality, which can be geographical, cultural, or strategic – or indeed any combination

of the three. In the UK case, this refers to the sense that Europe is 'elsewhere', and that the state itself is fully part of no single region. Again, the key to successful management of this ambiguity is overt acknowledgement of the difficulties it can create, while seeking to minimise their impact on the region and/or offset them. In the UK's case, Brexit appears to put an end to London's role as Washington's 'special' friend in the EU, but an alternative could be constructed if close enough relations with the EU27, as well as the US, are maintained even while EU defence and security integration deepens. Liminality in a comparative regionalism context does not therefore have to denote isolation of an awkward state with strong adherence to sovereignty.

A third general factor of pertinence here is the need for awkward states to keep close diplomatic ties with their regional neighbours, and remain up-to-date with the workings and agendas of regional bodies in which they do not take part. Here we observe the value of examining these states in their regional relationships, often forging alliances with other states that are like-minded middle powers. In the UK case, this would mean maintaining excellent relations not only with key member states of the EU, but also with the EU institutions themselves, since there is often a knowledge gap between what national government departments do, and what current thinking in the relevant policy areas is in Brussels. In other words, Brexit requires, in all likelihood, repurposing, and not closing down, the current Permanent Representation of the UK to the EU - unless the outcome of Brexit negotiations is in keeping with the minimalist conjoined regionalisation scenario.

Norway is a case study for the maximalist security regionalisation option, in view of its EEA membership and relations with Nordic states that approximate those of the UK with Ireland.³ The Nordic states have each tailored their relationship with the EU in a manner that suits their own awkwardness and identity – yet states such as Norway are also activist middle powers. Like the UK, Norway has twice voted on EU membership, opting not to join at all. Gänzle and Henökl (2017) note that Norway has had a close link with the EU since 1994, actively participating in a large number of EU policies and programs and effectively forging a close partnership that has in itself become increasingly 'awkward'. Although Norway does not have to pay EU tariffs for access to the Single Market, or deal with EU quotas, it is obliged to pay into the Union budget for this privilege. It is also obliged to deal with the EU as a single unit relating to customs and legal requirements. It complies with most EU policies. It does not actively participate in EU law-making and has no vote – or veto - in EU institutions (Lægreid et al., 2004).

Although Norway contributes to the EU budget there are substantial benefits that accrue from this that the UK might also desire beyond integration into the Single European Market, such as cooperation in ‘research and development, education, social policy, the environment, consumer protection, tourism and culture’ (Gänzle and Henökl, 2017). A Norwegian option would mean that the UK would not need to rescind all EU-derived legislation since 1973, as much of it would remain intact. The Norwegian approach of ‘pragmatic participation’, which is framed as ‘cooperation in low politics, not the high politics of sovereignty’ which nevertheless are ‘often not about maximising one’s own interests, but rather... about finding (collective) solutions that are acceptable’ (Sitter and Sverdrup, 2017; our parenthesis) may well provide a useful template for the UK. It would suit the UK’s pragmatic and incrementalistic approach to its public policymaking in the past.

Norway’s capacity to exert leadership by setting an example may also appeal to the UK if it seeks evidence of ongoing global importance. Characterised by ‘international good citizenship’, which is the same term used to characterise Australia, Norway has been of greater global salience than might be expected for a state with no claim to superpower status: ‘[a] number of distinctive and influential policies relating to engagement with the UN, peaceful conflict resolution, disarmament, development, the environment and human rights [...] have given Norway greater influence than the size of its population or economy would suggest’ (Langmore and Egeland, 2011, p. 2).

For a case study of the minimalist security regionalisation option, we select Japan, whose difficult relations with ASEAN and other Asian states is evinced through its keen commitment to participation in the ‘ASEAN Plus’ initiatives such as ‘ASEAN Plus Three’ (with China and South Korea), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS) as well as its membership of APEC. Like the UK, Japan considers the US as a major ally. For Japan, the US has long been a security guarantor in the Asia Pacific region, despite recent turbulences under the Trump presidency. Like the case of the UK in Europe, some partners in the Asia Pacific have not regarded Japan as belonging in the region, due to the role it played in World War II, and particularly in Korea and China, thereby questioning Japan’s regional identity (Lawson and Tannaka, 2011; Morris-Suzuki, 2014). Significant tensions remain and are often heightened in these relations. This suggests that a middle power

can indeed also be an awkward state in its regional belonging, which might be instructive for the UK case post-Brexit.

The UK could learn from Australia and Norway as they both actively engage in some regional bodies as discussed above. They seek membership of these bodies and perceive this relationship to be a benefit and not a cost to the state. They may seek to be mediators in international affairs, within a regional group or individually. The UK may need to learn to be a middle power that can seek opportunities for regional leadership, with an interest in shedding its awkward label for the sake of mutual regional interests being met. There is also scope for middle powers, even if awkward, with specific concerns to engage in minilateralism or niche diplomacy in security, e.g. in seeking to cooperate in non-traditional security while confronting great power rivalry in the Asia Pacific as well as developing common stances on changing geopolitics with President Trump and changes to global governance, such as in climate change or in the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative .

Japan has sought to confront its liminality through post-war reparation payments and generous development assistance to the region, and also support for Asian states in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis. It was an active proponent of the Chiang Mai initiative on currency swaps and of the 'ASEAN Plus Three' process. It has proposed initiatives for a regional body (minus the US) such as that advanced by then Prime Minister Hatoyama whereby Japan sought 'to become a "bridge" for the world, between the Orient and the Occident' (Hatoyama, 2009). He spoke of 'an East Asian community[...] built up step by step among partners who have the capacity to work together, starting with fields in which we can cooperate—Free Trade Agreements, finance, currency, energy, environment, disaster relief and more' (Hatoyama, 2009). Despite a perception of their awkwardness in the region, and a difficulty with embracing 'the apparent advantages of regionalization', Japan and Australia were 'the prime movers behind the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum' (Beeson and Hidetaka, 2007, pp. 228-230).

Australia is a case study for the maximalist conjoined regionalisation option in terms of its relations with ASEAN states and regional bodies such as the ARF and EAS (East Asia Summit), and its support for ASEAN regionalism. It seeks to be actively involved in all regional bodies of the Asia Pacific and was a leader of the APEC initiative. Yet it too struggles to be recognised as a leader or partner in the region due to its close relationship with the US since the end of World War II. Its ties with the UK also remain close, giving it two

significant extra-regional partners in a way which does not always help its aspirations towards regional belonging in Asia.

There are considerable ideational and material differences between Australia and its region (Murray *et al.*, 2014) yet its participation in APEC, ASEAN Dialogues, the East Asia Summit and other bodies points to a clear commitment to engage in both security and economic regional integration. It has also signed major free trade agreements with China, Japan, South Korea and the US. It perceives itself as a key player in its region and a joiner of all major security forums. Although an awkward partner in the region, it seeks nevertheless to play a role as a middle power (Patience, 2014a; 2018; Wood, 2016), realising that ‘middle powers [...] can do little to influence the larger geopolitical structures [...] but they can make material and ideational choices that have a powerful impact on their own welfare and help to legitimate the extant international order’ (Beeson 2011, p. 567).

Accordingly, most middle powers participate in regional engagement in their own region, and possess some components of activist states. This section further demonstrated that an analysis of middle powers is best complemented by utilising the concept of awkward states (Patience, 2014)a. Comparative regionalism provides a context for both conceptual development and for empirical studies across economic, political, security and socio-cultural comparisons. It also provides useful markers for the examination of both ideational and material factors in comparing these states within and across regions. These could be further expanded in the context of post-Brexit differentiation in Europe.

4. CONCLUSION: THE REGIONAL ROLE OF THE UK AFTER BREXIT

This symposium article has sought to show the value of engaging with the comparative regionalism and middle power literatures to understand how the UK can manage its role in European integration after Brexit. The UK’s decision to leave the EU has not been emulated by other states in the Union. However, there are other states that have left their respective regional bodies for a number of reasons (Gänzle, forthcoming); some of them have found their way back again, such as Morocco re-joining the African Union in 2017. There are thus precedents in the comparative regionalism literature for whatever relationship is negotiated between London and Brussels during and after the Brexit talks to be temporary; it may even be that Britain **rejoins** the EU. The context of ‘differentiated disintegration’ (Leruth *et al.*, 2019) thus remains pertinent.

British awkwardness in Europe can in principle be mitigated by following similar strategies to those identified in Section 3 above. Taken together with an appreciation of the new power dynamics of the post-Brexit context and a sincere, if partial, invocation of the relevant shared norms, the UK is quite capable of minimising the negative consequences of Brexit for its regional engagement beyond the unavoidable disruption of the Brexit process and negotiations. There may be some cause for optimism here in that formal exit from the EU finally puts to bed the sense that British grandeur and autonomy was lost in 1973 – that it encountered in the EU only, or mostly, continental intransigence and a plethora of costs.

We maintain, however, that the successful management of its regional awkwardness will require the UK to recognise its middle power status and act accordingly. The UK could choose to play a role in Europe as a pragmatic participant, like Norway, or as a dependent middle power, as Australia has been characterised, or have a restrained regional role, with few leadership ambitions, while contributing its soft power as Japan does through development assistance. If the UK wishes to be a regional middle power, in a broad EEA configuration, it would need to deal with the consequences of its past low levels of elite socialisation within the EU and to develop a new socialisation strategy based on pragmatic coalition-building or alliance-formation along policy lines with at least some selected allies within the EU as part of that EEA.

With Brexit, the UK is stepping out of the EU but not yet stepping *in* to a clear new form of international and regional engagement. It is a period of state-rebuilding, in terms of institutions and laws, and a period of polity-rebuilding, in terms of both norms and ideational perspectives, with potentially wide-ranging impacts on the structure of the UK itself should Northern Ireland vote to unify with the Republic of Ireland or should Scotland vote for independence. There may well be attempts at societal rebuilding too, in the aftermath of some years of acrimony related to the referendum (O'Toole, 2018). But alongside all this rethinking, we argue, must sit a clear-eyed decision about the UK's new role in Europe, and in order to generate this both scholars and policy-makers could do worse than study the role of middle states in various regional integration/regionalism projects around the globe.

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Table 1: A Typology of the UK's Post-Brexit Role in European Integration

Type of Region	Maximalist version	Minimalist version
<i>Security regionalisation</i>	UK collaborates in EU policing, defence and security policies as well as NATO; UK accedes to EFTA and the EEA.	UK participates only in NATO; no cross-sectoral economic agreement with EU.
<i>Conjoined regionalisation</i>	Bespoke UK-EU trade deal or Association Agreement	Small number of sectoral economic relationships only.

ENDNOTES

¹ Section 3 illustrates the suitability of our case study selection. However, it is worth clarifying here that we selected Norway rather than the other EEA states that are not in the EU – Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland – because unlike the first two it is not a small state, and unlike Switzerland it has a relationship with the EU that the latter is in principle willing to replicate with the UK should London drop its relevant ‘red lines’ about single market membership and freedom of movement of citizens.

² We accept that other states could be useful to examine in this way – Switzerland and Turkey could be instructive cases from the European context. However, we explicitly want to show the benefit of examining non-European cases, and include Norway because it has played such a key role in the public debate about models for the UK-EU relationship.