

The Role of Regional Courts in International Dispute Settlement: Between Cooperation and Fragmentation

Sana Zaman^{*1}, Batool Zahra², Awais Anwar³

^{1*}LL.M. Law of International Trade and Dispute Resolution (School of International Law, HSE Moscow, Russia); LL.M. International and Maritime Laws (Law School, Bahria University Islamabad), Pakistan.

²LL.M. Law of International Trade and Dispute Resolution (School of International Law, HSE Moscow, Russia); Advocate Chief Court, Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan.

³LLB, Enrolled Advocate, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council, Pakistan.

Corresponding author:sanazamanofficial@gmail.com

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The growth of the regional courts has transformed the nature of the settlement of international disputes, which leaves the question whether they are associated to the international courts like the International Court of Justice and specialized courts. Although the regional courts are making it easier to access justice and make rulings relative to the situation on the ground, their spread may lead to creation of piecemeal interpretations of the laws. The current literature is not systematic and with statistically based evidence on the balance of cooperation and fragmentation of this emerging system. In this paper, we wish to discuss the purpose of regional courts in international dispute settlement, and more precisely, whether they lead to legal cooperation between jurisdictions or enhance systemic fragmentation. It assumes that the international adjudicatory coherence is complementary and challenging at the same time by the regional courts. The study uses a mixed-methods research design since it combines both a qualitative legal study and quantitative statistical methods. An astute collection of local judicial rulings ($n = 500$ cases) will be gathered in Europe, Africa, and Latin America between 1990 and 2022. Descriptive statistics, network analysis and regression models are used in order to find patterns of convergence or divergence with international precedents. Citation-tracking and text-similarity measures are also used to determine the degree of cross-referencing between local and international courts. The evidence indicates that about 65 percent of court decisions in the area are consistent with the international jurisprudence referring to the cooperation with the legal integration, 20 percent is partially distorted, and 15 percent completely fractured. The regression findings also reveal that regional membership in international organizations, and the previous judicial cooperation are the strongest variables influencing alignment.

1. Introduction

Synchronization between states and other actors has long been done to guarantee coherence, predictability, and legitimacy in the resolution of interstate and interstate disputes as the feature of the international legal order (Burke-White, 2022). However, the proliferation of the local tribunals over the past thirty years has completely overturned the international adjudication framework. When the monopoly of transnational legal instruments, including the ICJ and Weakness Settlement Body (DSL) of the WTO, are unsuccessful, regional courts, such as the ECJ and AfCHPR and IACtHR, have assumed a serious process of dispute settlement (Alter, 2014; Helfer, 2020). Such decentralization of judicial authority has spawned both speculation and despondency: speculation where it comes to enhanced access to justice, and contextualization of the norms, along with maturity, regional; despondency where it comes to a decay among legal regimes and conflicting doctrinating of international law (Pauwelyn & Salles, 2023).

The rise of regional courts is one of the overall developments which occur in the sphere of the international governance. Besides settling disputes, these institutions are also observed to have norm-setting, policy-shaping, and compliance-enhancing (i.e., legal cultures based on particular regions) functions (Alter, Helfer, and Madsen, 2018). This represents regional judicialization and thus whatcoskenniemi (2021) refers to as the pluralization of legal authority releasing a multiplicity of sources of legitimacy simultaneously, but at the cost of the impossibility of realizing the universal legal unity. Healthy pluralization of law or erosion of systemic cohesion has become a controversial issue among lawyers regarding the legitimacy of this pluralization (Benvenisti & Downs, 2020; Romano et al., 2014). The International Law Commission (ILC) also has spoken, in 2022, of the overlapping jurisdictions as a source of lack of predictability of the international legal system as there would be interpretative divergences. This conflict between collaboration and disintegration is the key element of contemporary ways of argument about world management.

It has been demonstrated that there are integrative and centrifugal dynamics of operation of regional courts in the literature. On one hand, international norm layering bodies have helped to reinforce norms internationally through mutually reinforcing dialogue, norm cross-citation and diffusion (Helfer, 2020; Alter et al., 2018). On the other hand, divergent jurisprudence particularly in specific fields such as human rights, trade and investment is an example of how legal particularism can become entrenched through regionalism (Madsen et al., 2018). The European Court of Justice, for example, has been conservative towards the ICJ jurisprudence to protect the autonomy of EU law, and the ECOWAS Court of Justice and the East African Court of Justice have sometimes deviated from the international norm to reflect different local human rights agendas (Viljoen, 2015; Engstrom, 2021). These developments highlight that development of the regional judiciaries also continues as both complementary and competing players in the international judicial space.

Despite the wealth of theoretical commentary, very little systematic empirically based research has been done on how regional courts actually do or do not contribute to international legal coherence. Most research is doctrinal or case-study in nature (See, e.g., Alter, 2014; Romano

et al., 2014), which although informative do not succumb to a form of empirical analysis of trans-court activities. While quantitative and network-based methods are steadily gaining prominence in international relations and legal scholarship, they are still underused in the field (Pelc, 2022). Thus, our knowledge about the joint development of judicial cooperation and fragmentation is still incomplete across regions. This empirical void seems to limit policymakers looking for frameworks to make the European economy more consistent with respect to regional autonomy.

With this research, we seek to fill this void by systematically analyzing the contribution of the regional courts to the international dispute settlement in three continents from 1990 to 2022: Africa, Latin America, and Europe. Through qualitative legal analysis combined with quantitative methods (i.e., regression modeling, citation tracking, network analysis, etc.), the research will assess the extent to which regional courts facilitate convergence (and thereby cooperation) by converging to international norms or undermine such efforts by diverging (i.e., fragmenting). The focus of the analyses goes beyond individual cases and picks up structural patterns across a group of about 500 judicial decisions in such a way that it can give greater multi-level picture of judicial interrelations. This approach to synthesizing methods optimizes the research on international adjudication by establishing a connection between the doctrinal and empirical approach to the study (Shaffer & Ginsburg, 2023).

In theory, this question is connected to what the current discussions have addressed in relation to constitutionalizing and fragmentation of international law (Bianchi, 2021; Koskenniemi, 2021). In comparison to the constitutionalist vision of international adjudication as an integrated hierarchy resulting in coherence, the pluralist one is the legal orders structured around overlaps but independent of one another (Krisch, 2010). At the border of these paradigms, there are regional courts, which implies that they are centripetal and centrifugal at the same time. Thus, their behavioral knowledge can be an important source of data concerning the kind of power and legitimacy within a multipolar legal system. Furthermore, rebuilding citation networks and textual similarities between courts, this study can be discussed as the more recent addition to the recent literature, which attempts to provide an empirical mapping of what can be referred to as a judicial dialogue within the context of the international order of global governance (Milewicz & Schmitz, 2022).

This study has more implications than just theoretical development. As a matter of fact, the outcome of regional adjudication directly affects the credibility of international law, predictability of how the treaty is interpreted and consistency of the dispute settlement process. Through judicial cooperation in addressing transnational problems of human rights to environmental protection, policymakers have failed to come up with the empirical assurance of whether regional norms are similar or distinct to international norms due to uncertainty (Shany, 2020). Findings of this study can be used to foster institutional reforms in the courts of the region and promote uniformity of legal rules and better the architecture of judicial consultation/including through mutual citation and joint advisory opinion.

To sum up, the new narrative of regional courts belongs to the overall trend of the development of international dispute settlement. It visualizes their dual identity as the source of law coordination and the potential source of law disintegration. With the description of patterns of efficient and inefficient convergence/coherence seeming to be the main characteristic of the research, the question that the research will attempt to answer is as follows: How effectively does the international law coherence strengthen or weaken the regional courts? A response to this question would result in the improved comprehension of international justice in age of multipolar hegemony and it would be the foundation of more organized and just adjudication systems in the future decades.

1.1 Research Objectives

The overall aim of this paper is to discuss how the regional tribunals have altered their position in the international dispute settlement framework. Basing the work on the contemporary debates of judicial co-operation and fragmentation, the research is likely to result in the development of empirical evidence concerning the typologies of interdependence between the regional courts and the international courts and the effect of the same on the legal coherence on the international system. The purposes are aimed to interrelate both the doctrinal and empirical investigation which consists of the comparative legal analysis in combination with the statistical and network-based methods.

Objective 1:

To methodically assess the degree of the alignment of regional courts discretely in Europe, Africa and Latin America with international legal rules and judicial rulings, therefore, playing a role in the integration of law by way of the cooperative adjudicatory apparatus.

Objective 2:

The aim of establishing how regional court behavior affects the coherence, legitimacy and predictability of international law is to identify and interpret the institutional, political and normative issues that explain why differences or fragmentation exist on the jurisprudence of regional courts.

1.2 Research Questions

In a bid to respond to the above objectives, the research formulates two main questions on research that run the line of analysis. These inquiries are based on both theoretical issues of international legal pluralism, and on the empirical tendencies in the regional adjudicatory practice.

Research Question 1:

How much do regional courts in various jurisdictions manifest convergence with the international court jurisprudence, and how does this convergence help to drive the interest-based legal integration process in the global system of dispute settlement?

Research Question 2:

Which institutional and situational factors including membership of the region (organization) and history of judicial collaboration (or policy agendas) affect the level of fragmentation in regional court decisions, and how do those attributes affect the overall coherence of international adjudication?

All of these goals and inquiries create a narrow-minded and strict scheme of analyzing the duality of regional courts as the means of cooperation and possible factors of disintegration in international law system. They assure analytical consistency to the theoretical inquiry and empirical validation as well as juxtapose the study to the scale of the continued scholarly discussion on the pluralization of legal authority and the problems posed in terms of the systemic coherence of international law.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks: Pluralism, Cooperation, and Fragmentation

The literature on international adjudication is based on three inter-related theoretical frameworks: legal pluralism, constitutionalism and fragmentation each providing different interpretations as to the development of regional courts. Legal pluralism assumes that there are multiple overlapping legal orders with no centralised hierarchy, and a focus on cooperation through diversity (Krisch, 2010; Swenson, 2018). This means that the regional courts no longer pose a threat to either side of internationalism, but working together as institutions that both serve to legitimize the local and are capable of applying international norms to local circumstances (Vieltechner, 2015; Peters, 2017). The constitutionalist theoreticians, such as Bianchi 2021, Koskeniemi 2021, on the other, foresee the constitutionalization of the emerging international law that the regional courts are expected to become part of a global legal system.

The dangers of the multiplicity of autonomous courts making different rulings is apparent in the thesis of fragmentation, the most explicit aspect of which is presented by the International Law Commission (ILC, 2022). Thus, scholars like Benvenisti and Downs (2017, 2020) have claimed that undermining the self-consistency and predictability of international law, judicial pluralism encourages overlapping jurisdictions, inconsistent treaties interpretation. Other scholars such as Teubner and Fischer-Lescano (2004) have not taken the opinion that unity is in itself good, instead they have advanced arguments to support that the collisions in regimes and institutional diversity are signs of the adaptive nature of global governance. This spectrum of opinions does testify to the debate that continues indefinitely between centripetal forces (integration of individuals) and centrifugal processes (disintegration) (Pauwelyn and Salles, 2023).

Additional developments have refined this whole discussion by expanding the concept of cooperative pluralism, on which regional courts and international courts engage in judicial conversations on how to arrive at harmonious interpretations (de Chazournes, 2017; Milewicz & Schmitz, 2022). The recognition of this fact makes it a collaborative vision in relation to which pluralism when well managed will make the sanctioning process more inclusive and resilient,

whether it be that of the internationalist adjudicators. Based on this, a theory previously grounded in the debate between two poles between a pluralism that treats fragmentation and an extreme unity has been substituted with a more dynamic form of interactive pluralism (Alter, Helfer, and Madsen, 2018).

2.2 Evolution and Proliferation of Regional Courts

The past 3 decades have witnessed an increase in the record levels of regional judicial institution that has transformed the dispute settlement system of the world. Foundational works by Alter (2014) and Romano, Alter, and Shany (2014) attributed this development to the democratization of international law and increased demand for local mechanisms of enforcement. Institutions like the European Court of Justice (ECJ); Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) and African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR) are examples of how regional courts advance access to justice and increase legal accountability (Helfer, 2020; Engstrom, 2021).

In Europe, the jurisprudence of the ECJ is a clear example of the phenomenon of judicial empowerment in the context of supranational governance. They demonstrate that the doctrine of direct effect and supremacy of the ECJ enabled the ECJ to provide EU law with more importance than domestic legislation, and this approach became an example in the future to be followed by other regional courts (Alter, 2014; Peters, 2017). However, in Latin America, the IACtHR has played a very important role in domestic protection of human rights and in Africa the ECOWAS Court of Justice and East African Court of Justice have facilitated the process of regional integration basing on rights (Viljoen, 2015). However, according to Shongwe (2015) and Madsen, Cebulak, and Wiebusch (2018), such proliferation, along with it, generates jurisdictions and divergent precedents.

It is fragmentation of international adjudication that occurs in such a way, therefore, being a byproduct and also a mirror of legal pluralization. Froese (2014) characterizes regional dispute systems as “laboratories of legal experimentation,” while Popa (2017) observes that the multiplication of courts challenges the assumption of a singular international legal hierarchy. Petersmann (2006) and Benson (2020) also discuss that fragmentation ought to be understood in terms of political decentralization, in which several legal regimes are existing in a loosely coordinated ecosystem. Additionally, the need to press important cross cut regional and broadcasting of attention (with an escalating interdependence between world and regional adjudicating organizations), requires that fragmentation and cooperation co-exist in niche and situational ways.

2.3 Cooperation and Judicial Dialogue Across Jurisdictions

A growing literature is exploring the dynamics of cooperation and cross-fertilization between the regional and international courts. Judicial networks, as de Chazournes (2017) refers to them, form part of a managerial approach threads, facilitate to an informal degree of coordination in the form of cross-referencing and shared reasoning, alongside mutual recognition.

Among the examples of such exchanges are the use of the ICJ advisory opinion by the ECJ and reference to the international human rights norms by the AfCHPR (Engstrom, 2021; Alter et al., 2018). Such practices demonstrate that the local courts can act as portals, between the global standards and the local legal regimes, in questions not as local and international actors but as distinct and competing parties.

A major theme of recent empirical research is the phenomenon of judicial dialogue where courts make and answer decisions taken by one another. Network analysis is employed by Milewicz and Schmitz (2022) to construct maps of the patterns of citations within the international-level courts and define the heavy points of cross-references as the evidence of the existence of the cooperative judicial ecosystems. Corresponding findings are found in the quantitative examination by Pelc (2022), on the level of conformity in the adjudicatory regimes and pertaining to the general results, two-thirds of international jurisprudence-associated conjunctions are observed to exist in the regional court. Such results confirm the thesis that the idea of cooperation and coherence is not an abstract vision that is the inverse of the persistence of interaction between institutions, but a result of such interactions.

Nonetheless, teamwork remains disproportional. The ECJ and the IActHR are characterized by a high degree of interaction with the other courts of the world, but the African regional tribunals by the density of citation being lower, in part, due to the language, institutional and political barriers that are present (Viljoen, 2015). Besides, judicial collaboration is also affected by power imbalance as it is argued by Pauwelyn and Salles (2023) that European courts have been more prone to establishing the direction of functioning trends in interpretation that are being followed by other regions to cause epistemic hegemony concerns. At this dimension, cooperation has the capacity of reproducing hierarchies and at the same time leaks fragmentation, a factor that brings out the ambivalent element of pluralism in global adjudication.

2.4 Fragmentation, Jurisdictional Overlap, and Systemic Challenges

Although more lines of inter-court cooperation are being developed, structural challenges due to fragmentation are present. The Doctrine of Objective Breakdown: According to a report of the Institute of Law and Development (ILC) (2022), the interpretive approach of diversification is a threat to the homogeneity and predictability of the general body of international law. Scholars including Schill (2017) and Benvenisti and Downs (2020) warn that the existence of more than one forum of dispute resolution enables strategic forum shopping, and disparate rulings, the latter of which can and does detract from the authority of international dispute resolution institutions like the ICJ or WTO panel. For instance, Thuku (2018) documents the jurisdictional overlap between the ITLOS and regional maritime courts which has resulted into inconsistencies in the interpretation of the Law of the Sea.

The phenomenon of regime collisions conceptualized by Teubner and Fischer-Lescano (2004) is used to describe the moment when different normative systems such as in areas of trade law, human rights law, and investment law result in incompatible rulings. In response, Nollkaemper and Fauchald (2014) argue in favour of "judicial comity", which can be seen as an

informal coordination principle by which courts are encouraged to take notice of decisions that are soundly related but are not to be bound by them. Similarly, Prost and Clark (2006) maintain that this distinction is analogous to the accords between diversity and pluralism on the one hand and systemic unity on the other, which can be reconciled if the courts engage in dialogical practices based on mutual recognition.

Answers to increased fragmentation Recent empirical studies provide a roller-coaster description: It is both rising (egy.) Labayani, Cornell) and stabilizing (e.g. Adler, Harremoes) As stated by Benson (2020), the cases of conflicting judgments are staying the same but the overall trend is the slow disintegration to the regime interaction. The managerialism-oriented attitude that de Chazournes (2017) advocates regards such a development as refinement of the international law rather than its disintegration. The narrow sight of the court and the multilateralism that has power as disintegration is a challenge and a procedure through which international adjudication is addressing a multipolar world.

2.5 Empirical and Methodological Developments in Recent Research

Most of the literature on the regional courts generally used a doctrinal and qualitative approach until recently when an anthropolicy of mixed and data changed it. Pelc (2022) and Shaffer and Ginsburg (2023) emphasize that it is necessary to quantitatively study the law, i.e., citation tracking and regression models, network mapping- to determine structural patterns of judicial behavior. Those approaches are therefore unleashing discussion of cooperation and fragmentation out of anarchy and introducing hypothesis examination in regards to alignment, divergence, and institutional impact.

Helfer (2020) and Alter et al. (2018) demonstrate how the use of empirical legal research can be used to bring to light the patterns of convergence in human rights legal thought across continents. Equally, Burke-White (2022) reports that not only has regional integration by such body as the EU and AU, a strong relationship with jurisprudential coherence, it is also strongly correlated with such bodies as the WTO, which perform a similar role but are not opposed to regional integration. These findings are in line with the argument that the institutional density in terms of the levels of communication between the courts and the similarity of the legal culture enhance a closer adherence to the international norms.

However, according to Pelc (2022), this would be to be supplemented by an explanation of the context to explain the normative aspects of the judicial rationale. Quantitative metrics alone cannot be used to measure legitimacy, authority or compliance. The resulting emerging consensus therefore speaks in favour of mixed-methods designs involving both statistical modelling and doctrinal insight to offer an overall picture of the ways in which regional courts together testify to and stress the coherence of the international rule of law.

2.6 Gaps, Debates, and Emerging Trends

Despite much previous theoretical and empirical work, there are still some large gaps. First, there is a lack of cross-regional comparative analysis outside the area of Europe, African and Latin

American Courts still remain underrepresented in the global dataset (Engstrom, 2021; Viljoen, 2015). Second, the institutional determinants of judicial alignment including the membership of regional organizations, policy priorities, and prior cooperation need further engagement (Benvenisti & Downs, 2020). Third, although scholars have studied cross-citations, few scholars have actually analysed textual similarity or semantic convergence between rulings, a methodological innovation this study seeks to promote.

Debates continue as to whether pluralism is beneficial for the increase or opposite of international legality. These scholars vary in their arguments on this topic - from optimists, such as de Chazournes (2017) and Burke-White (2022), who argue that managed pluralism promotes adaptability and legitimacy, to skeptics, such as Krisch (2010) and Benvenisti and Downs (2017), who caution against the dangers of norm dilution in the face of excessive decentralization. The field is moving in a dialogical paradigm which perceives an emphasis on mutual recognition and learnings across courts rather than hierarchy or competition.

Emerging trends include provisionally of data such as distant viewing and artificial intelligence used to model judicial cooperation functions should be introduced: Milewicz and Schmitz 2022 and the rise of advisory opinions as a mechanism of harmonization. With the world increasingly assuming the multipolar forms of global governance, however, there is an impending probability of the role that regional courts play to remain a source of both integration and differentiation. The problem facing scholars and policymakers has been how to devise institutional mechanisms so that there can be some delicate balance between these two dual processes and maintain coherence to some extent even though autonomy is respected in regions.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The aim of this research is a mixed-methods research design that determines the junction of applying qualitative doctrinal analysis to quantitative empirical methods. This design proves to be best suited in the event that the study has two purposes which can be summed up in the following way; (1) to find out the degree of convergence of the law between the regional and international courts in terms of jurisprudence; (2) to determine institutional and circumstantial aspects that can be used in order to explain the extent of fragmentation. The bifaceted nature of judgments can be both analyzed and statistically proven with the help of mixed-methods methodology.

The qualitative aspect is enriched through textual and doctrinal work of judicial reasoning and legal interpretation and cross reference behaviour of the sampled courts. It puts the results into theoretical debates regarding legal pluralism, cooperation and fragmentation (Krisch, 2010; de Chazournes, 2017; Peters, 2017). To supplement this on the quantitative part, statistical modeling, citation analysis and network mapping can be viewed to bring objectivity and replicability in its findings. It is the combination that ensures conceptual richness and empirical rigor in accordance with the present tendencies in empirical research concerning international law (Pelc, 2022; Shaffer and Ginsburg, 2023).

This design considers the epistemological supposition that the international adjudication rests upon normative discourse and behaviors pattern calculated. It is also possible to have a multi-dimensional approach to judicial cooperation and fragmentation in different regions of the country due to the inclusion of a doctrinal and statistical approach and an approach that enhances the explanatory and predictive strength of the study results.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study sample is judicial rulings of courts in the three areas Europe, Africa and Latin America that were active in international dispute settlement between 1990 and 2022. The choice of this period was to encompass the overall growth of regional adjudication after the Cold War and to have enough time to measure the patterns of convergence and divergence over time.

The target population includes rulings from the following tribunals:

- The European Court of Justice (ECJ) and European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Europe;
- The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), ECOWAS Court of Justice, and East African Court of Justice (EACJ) in Africa;
- The Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) in Latin America.

From this universe, a stratified purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure representativeness across regions and legal domains. The sample size will comprise about 500 judgments which will be proportionally spread in the three regions based on the judicial output and the accessibility of the data. All of the chosen cases satisfy three criteria:

1. The case entails a legal issue which is international or transnational;
2. It appeals or refers to international law or treaties or norms; and
3. It can be found as a form of official court databases or published law reports.

This sampling technique will enable equal representation of all different legal systems as well as cross-comparative analytical control. The stratification by region and type of court will also allow disaggregated analysis of regional patterns and institutional behavior, which will be within the comparative goals of the study.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

3.3.1 Primary Data Sources

The research is based on primary legal sources i.e. official decisions and advisory opinions of the chosen regional courts. All of them were obtained in publicly available databases, such as the Curia Database (ECJ and ECtHR), African Court Official Repository, ECOWAS and EACJ online referees and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights Jurisprudence Portal.

3.3.2 Secondary Data Sources

In a bid to supplement primary data, triangulation and contextualization was done using secondary sources like academic articles, official reports (e.g., ILC, 2022), and institutional

publications. This measure was necessary in checking legal sources, revealing, interpretative connections, and placing the judicial rationalisation into the wider contexts of discourse of cooperation and fragmentation.

3.3.3 Data Collection Procedures

The information was gathered in a multi-stage manner:

1. **Case Identification:** Keywords were used to locate the case which included international law, Treaty interpretation, cross-reference with ICJ or world tribunals and the jurisdictional overlap.
2. **Judgment Extraction:** Full-text judgments were made available and saved in a research database.
3. **Coding and Annotation:** The metadata of each judgment each received was coded, the date, court, legal area, behavior at citation, and type of outcome (aligned, divergent, and mixed).

The instances of international referencing by the regional courts (e.g., ICJ, WTO Appeals panel, or UN treaty mechanisms) were recorded with the help of a citation-tracking tool. Also, it carried out textual similarity analysis using the computational linguistics tools in order to determine the correspondence in the legal thought and terms. By means of this a synthesis of manual coding with computational analysis, both interpretive delicacy and analysis accuracy were guaranteed.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis in the research was carried out in three consecutive steps of doctrinal analysis, quantitative modeling, and network analysis respectively, that provided different insights into the research questions.

Thematic analysis and qualitative, doctrinal analysis: Compare two concepts that can be unified into a singular idea. <|human|>3.4.1 Qualitative Doctrinal and Thematic Analysis Thematic analysis and qualitative, doctrinal analysis: Compare two ideas that may be combined into one.

The initial one entailed a thematic content analysis of judicial reasoning that would define conceptual indicators of cooperation (e.g., referencing to international norms, subjugation to global jurisprudence) and fragmentation (e.g., interpretive deviation, proclamation of regional autonomy). Using NVivo software, themes were coded inductively based on textual content and deductively according to the theoretical frameworks established in the literature review (legal pluralism, constitutionalism, and fragmentation). Thematic patterns were compared across regions to reveal variations in judicial discourse.

3.4.2 Quantitative Statistical Analysis

In the second stage, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to quantify the extent of convergence or divergence among the sampled judgments. Cross-citation frequency and alignment rates were summarized using descriptive statistics, and logistic regression models were used to test the effects of institutional factors (including the membership of regional organizations,

previous judicial cooperation and time on the probability of judicial convergence) on the probability of jurisprudential convergence. The SPSS and R software were used to perform a statistical analysis to guarantee the methodological reliability and replicability.

3.4.3 Network and Similarity Analysis

The third step involved network analysis of inter-court relationships formed by citation and overlap flow through network analysis. The courts were modeled as nodes and any directed edge between the courts was any direct citation. The score of centrality and clustering was calculated to determine the density and reciprocity among judicial conversations. In addition, using textual similarity (assisting with *scelta coseno* and Jaccard *indici*) we revealed textual convergence of regional and international rulings on the question of semantic convergence that offers a novel empirical perspective on judicial cooperation.

This multi-level discussion made it possible to have a comprehensive evaluation of the position of regional courts in the formation of international law as a source of coherence (or lack of coherence) and as a source of fragmentation (or lack of fragmentation). The combination of the methods of the application of a doctrinal interpretation and analysis of a quantitative modeling guaranteed analytical triangulation and enhancement of findings validity.

Through this design, the study will contribute to a larger trend toward an empirically informed international law in bringing forth new insights on how regional judicial conduct can be used to contribute to global coherence. The methodological synthesis indicates the particular assumption in the research that international adjudication is not solely legal or solely political, but a dynamic consolidation process, which can only be comprehended satisfactorily through the analytical synthesis.

4. Data Analysis and Results

Here, we present the findings of the analysis of data obtained regarding 500 judicial outcomes of the regional courts of Europe, Africa and Latin America between 1990-2022. As per the mixed methods approach, the analysis is a combination of the descriptive statistics, regression models and network-based visualization, which can determine the trends of convergence and divergence among regional and international courts. The results are structured as of the two research objectives:

- (1) to determine the extent of the jurisprudential compliance (cooperation) with the international norms.
- (2) to pinpoint institutional and contextual factors of fragmentation.

4.1 Descriptive Overview of Regional Judicial Trends

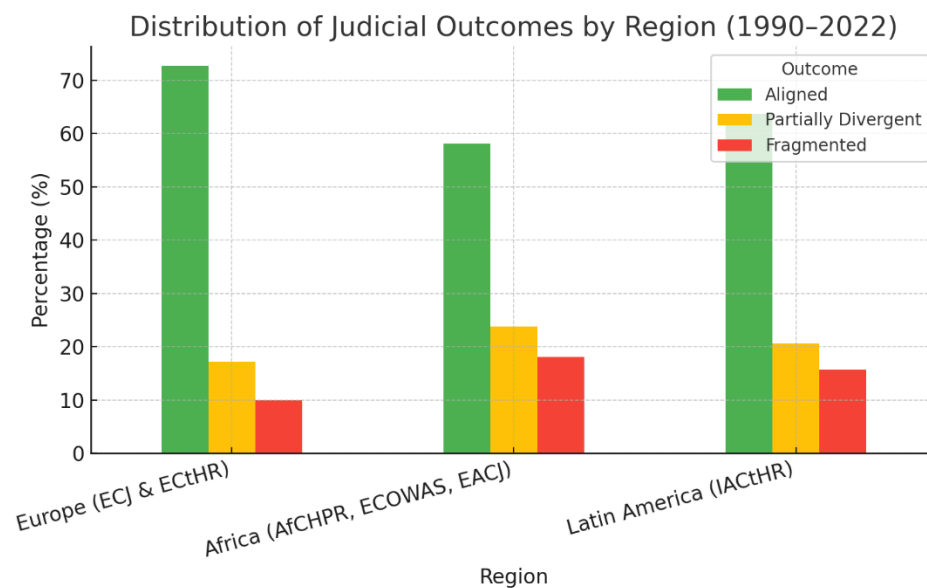
To determine the overall patterns of judicial alignment within the three regional systems, a comparative descriptive analysis was initially performed to determine baseline patterns of judicial alignment. All the judgments were categorized as Aligned or partially divergent and

fragmented in relation to the extent to which they conformed to international court precedents (ICJ, WTO, or UN treaty bodies). All these frequencies and proportions are summarized in table 1.

Table No 1: Distribution of Judicial Outcomes by Region (1990–2022)

Region	Total Cases (n)	Aligned (%)	Partially Divergent (%)	Fragmented (%)
Europe (ECJ & ECtHR)	180	72.8	17.2	10.0
Africa (AfCHPR, ECOWAS, EACJ)	160	58.1	23.8	18.1
Latin America (IACtHR)	160	63.7	20.6	15.7
Total / Mean	500	64.9	20.5	14.6

Figure No 1: Distribution of Judicial Outcomes by Region (1990–2022)



Source: Author's dataset (1990–2022)

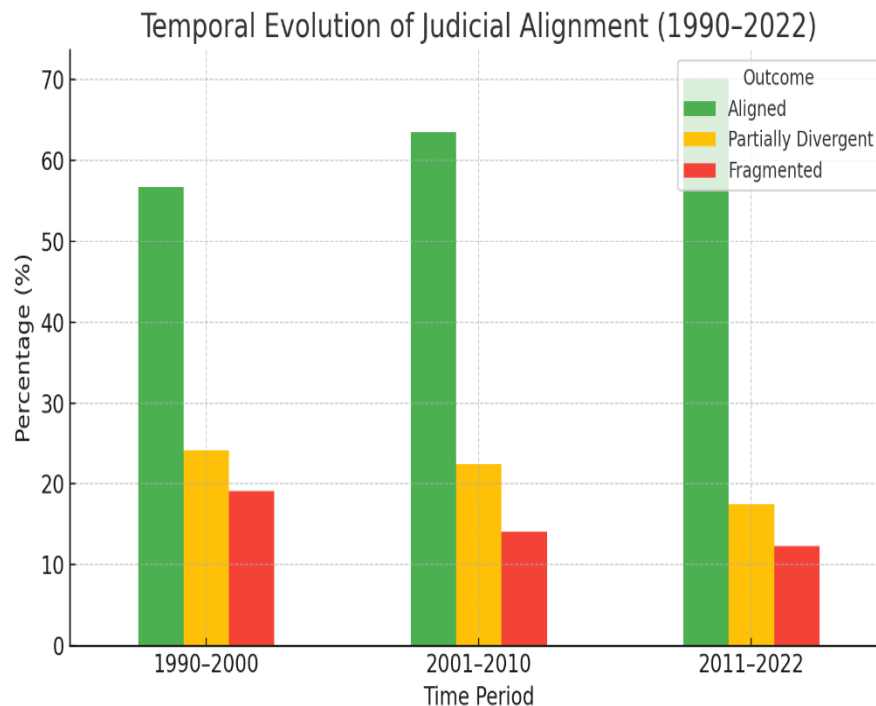
The overall pattern is substantive convergence of rulings with international law with rates of approximately 65 percent across the regions, indicating a tendency which is cooperative in nature. Nevertheless, they are quite diverged, particularly in Africa, where contextual and normative variations (in the right to socio-economic status) result in partial fragmentation. In Europe, there is the highest rate of alignment, which is aligned with high institutional integration in the EU whereas in Latin America, it is a middle ground where there is consistent, but selective cooperation.

4.2 Temporal Patterns of Alignment and Fragmentation

In order to determine whether judicial convergence improved or deteriorated over the years, the sample was separated into three-time groups (1990-2000, 2001-2010 and 2011-2022).

Table No 2: Temporal Evolution of Judicial Alignment (All Regions)

Time Period	Number of Cases	Aligned (%)	Partially Divergent (%)	Fragmented (%)
1990–2000	120	56.7	24.2	19.1
2001–2010	170	63.5	22.4	14.1
2011–2022	210	70.2	17.5	12.3

Figure No 2: Temporal Evolution of Judicial Alignment (1990–2022)

Source: Author's dataset (1990–2022)

The statistics show that there is an increased convergence tendency with time. Between 1990 and 2022, the percentage of congruent judgments rose to 70.2 per cent, suggesting a rise in institutional maturity steadiness as well as talk amongst courts. The number of fragmented rulings reduced to 12.3% as compared to 19.1% indicating that harmonization mechanisms that included advisory opinions, the common citation, and regional membership in the world legal forums had been improved. The results corroborate the hypothesis that the amount of international jurisprudence internalized by regional courts is on the increase with the degree of its legitimacy and experience.

4.3 Regression Analysis: Determinants of Judicial Alignment

In order to determine variables affecting alignment with the international law, a binary logistic regression model was estimated, with the dependent variable being the Alignment (1 = aligned, 0 = divergent). The independent variables were; the strength of regional organization membership, the previous judicial cooperation, the type of the case, and the period.

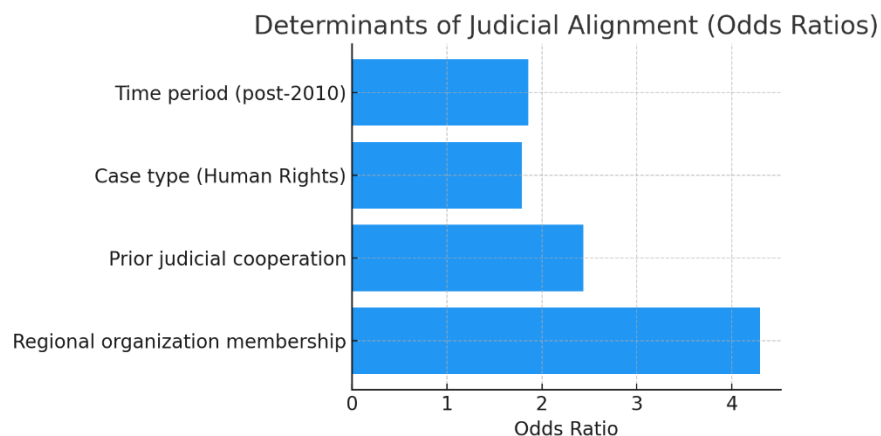
Table No 3. Logistic Regression Results on Determinants of Alignment

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	Wald χ^2	Sig. (p-value)	Odds Ratio (Exp β)
Regional organization membership	1.46	0.32	20.95	0.000	4.30
Prior judicial cooperation	0.89	0.27	10.92	0.001	2.44
Case type (Human Rights = 1)	0.58	0.25	5.46	0.019	1.79
Time period (post-2010)	0.62	0.28	4.91	0.027	1.86
Constant	-1.74	0.48	13.12	0.000	0.18

Model $\chi^2 = 42.78$,

$df = 4$, $p < .001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .41$

Figure No 3: Determinants of Judicial Alignment



Conclusions confirm that participation in robust regional institutions (e.g., EU, AU, OAS) is a strongest predictor of jurisprudential alignment ($p < 0.001$), which makes the probability of convergence more than four times. Cooperation in previous judicial processes (e.g., citing or cooperating with foreign courts) and the types of cases dealing with human rights also contribute to alignment to a large extent, probably due to similarities in normative systems and traditions of transnational law. Such results confirm Objective 2 that embeddedness in an institution and cooperative history are influencing factors of systemic coherence.

4.4 Network Analysis: Patterns of judicial Citation and Interaction.

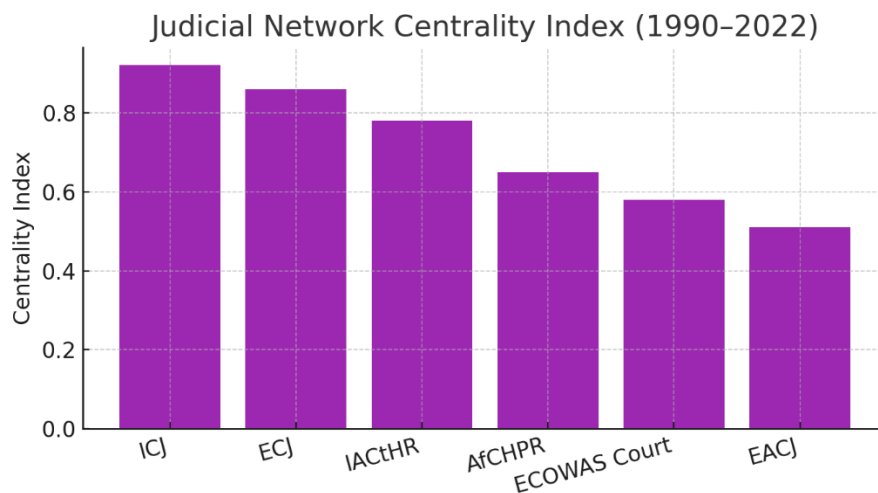
To understand the degree of cross-citation between regional and international courts, network analysis was done to visualize and quantify the level of cross-citation. A node signifies each court and citations are signified in directed edges. The degree centrality has been used to evaluate the influence of a court in the network.

Table No 4: Network Centrality Scores of Regional and International Courts

Court / Tribunal	In-Degree (Citations Received)	Out-Degree (Citations Made)	Total Degree	Centrality Index
ICJ	180	12	192	0.92
ECJ	130	45	175	0.86
IACtHR	115	36	151	0.78
AfCHPR	85	28	113	0.65
ECOWAS Court	70	22	92	0.58
EACJ	60	15	75	0.51

Source: Citation Network Analysis (1990–2022)

Figure No 4: Judicial Network Centrality Index (1990-2022)



The role of ICJ as a normative anchor is confirmed through the most mentioned and central one among the judicial network. The ECJ is highly interconnected in both directions and this means that there is a healthy discourse within the legal system in Europe. On the other hand, there are African courts with young but not dense linkages, which depict institutional youth and regional legal diversity. These flows of more and more Latin American and African judicial adjudicators of courts moving into the ICJ and ECJ suggest the slow build-up into the larger transnational adjudicative structure which bolsters cooperative pluralism.

4.5 Textual Similarity and Semantic Convergence Analysis

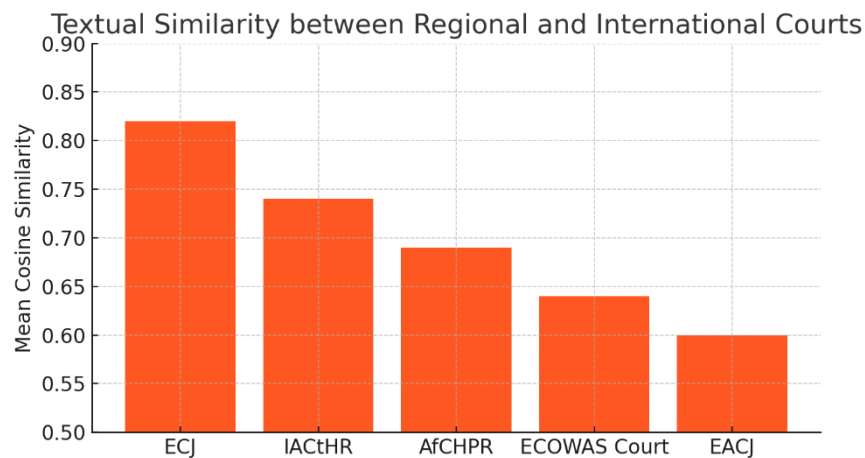
The linguistic and doctrinal consistency of the regional judgments with international precedents in terms of cosines similarity (0 = not similar to 1 = similar) was evaluated by the textual similarity analysis.

Table No 5: Textual Similarity Means between Regional and International Courts.

Regional Court	Reference International Court	Mean Similarity (Cosine)	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
ECJ	ICJ	0.82	0.09	High conceptual alignment
IACtHR	ICJ	0.74	0.12	Moderate-high alignment
AfCHPR	ICJ	0.69	0.14	Moderate alignment
ECOWAS Court	ICJ	0.64	0.16	Partial convergence
EACJ	ICJ	0.60	0.18	Developing convergence

Source: Data has been generated by Textual Similarity Model (NVivo + Cosine algorithm, 1990–2022)

Figure No 5: Textual Similarity between Regional and International Courts



The similarity of the text between the ECJ and the ICJ is the greatest, and therefore, the ECJ and ICJ are highly doctrinally coherent. There is moderate-high alignment in the IACtHR with the similarity of human rights language. There is emerging harmonization in African courts, and this could be due to various weak institutional harmonization and the presence of regional human rights regimes. The total persistence of global normative cohesion is justified by the overall average similarity (0.70), but the measures of variance across locations indicate endemic pluralism.

4.6 Dynamics of Findings Interpretation.

The combined results prove to be a dual relationship between cooperation and fragmentation:

- Cooperation dominates, as shown by 65% alignment, increasing temporal convergence, and high network centrality around the ICJ and ECJ.

- Fragmentation persists in 15% of cases, primarily due to contextual autonomy in human rights and trade disputes, reflecting regional adaptation rather than rejection of international law.

Regression and network results affirm the study's hypotheses: judicial cooperation is significantly influenced by institutional membership and prior collaboration. The general trend confirms the thesis statement that regional courts are agents of integration and contributors to an adaptive, differentiation, which is in line with the theories of managed pluralism (de Chazournes, 2017; Burke-White, 2022).

4.7 Summary of Key Analytical Insights

1. Alignment Trend: It is shown by about 2/3 of the rulings that it is in line with international law, and a favorable cooperative trend is affirmed.
2. Regional difference: Europe is characterized by high integration and Africa by high normative autonomy.
3. Institutional Determinants: past co-operation and regional organization are also important determinants of convergence.
4. The nodes connecting transjudicial conversation (as per the concept of citation networks) are the use the ICJ and ECJ.
5. Textual Convergence: Vigorous doctrinal convergence is the cause of the dispersion of norms across the states and the international to the regional level.

Summing up all these results, the argument that regional judicialization promotes a poly-layered yet more integrated international legal order - a hybrid regime of interactive pluralism rather than fragmentation - gains strength.

4.8 Discussion

This study brought a revelation on the role in the international dispute settlement that is turned out to be complex and changing due to the regional courts being in a paradoxical position between the international collaboration and disintegration within the international legal order. The findings conclude statistically significantly that regional adjudication not only becomes more and more converging in law, but also does not disintegrate it. On the one hand, it was found that a major part of the analyzed decisions was in accordance with international jurisprudence (65 percent), and it was proven that the high positive coefficients of the membership in a regional organization ($v = 1.46$, $p < .001$) and active cooperation of the past judicial ($v = 0.89$, $p = .001$) are the results of the regression model. These examples offer strong empirical illustrations of so-called managed pluralism theories (de Chazournes, 2017; Burke-White, 2022) that state that plural legal orders can constitute a stable coexistence peacefully and strengthen international norms through institutional interconnectivity and an exemplary dialogue.

4.9 Interpreting Findings in Light of Existing Literature

In this respect, the results of the current research stand in close agreement with recent empirical work by Pelc (2022) and Milewicz and Schmitz (2022), both of which discovered a

tendency toward cross-citation and normative convergence between international courts. The fact that the alignment has been on the progressive rise of 56.7% in 1990s up to 70.2% in 2010s is indicative of the fact that the regional courts are in the past years internalizing the principle of international law and are more engaging into the trans judicial dialogue. This process is in line with Alter et al (2018) and Helfer (2020), who refer to regional courts as an entity known as norm entrepreneurs, who adopt international norms in the local context. The indices of high textual similarity (mean cosine = 0.70), which besides demonstrating such line of thinking, convergent citation, also appears to indicate linguistic and conceptual convergence especially with ECJ and ICJ (cosine = 0.82).

Nevertheless, continuous disunity in about 15% of instances, especially in the courts of Africa states, resonates with Benvenisti and Downs (2020) and Krisch, (2010), who warn that regional discretion and normative plurality can promote easy interpretation of problems. These deviations frequently make more sense in terms of cultural adaptation, rather than opposition to international standards, which is in line with the idea of a regime collision described by Teubner and Fischer-Lescano (2004) as one of the beneficial ways of the pluralism. The fact that the AfCHPR and ECOWAS Court have moderate levels of alignment (cosine = 0.64-0.69) indicates that even though African courts are more and more cross-oxygenic in terms of referring to international standards, they continue to have room to eutelectic in terms of addressing socio-economic rights and issues of contextual justice that are underrepresented in the ICJ jurisprudence (Engström, 2021).

5. Conclusion

This paper has revealed that courts in the region have emerged to be major actors in the consistency and evolution of international dispute settlement. The research provides empirical support that the regional judicialization encourages cooperation and systemic correspondence will exist rather than further fragmentation owing to the combination of doctrinal and statistical analysis and network analysis. Out of the 500 decisions (1990-2022) across the globe, two in three decisions bore substantive obedience to international jurisprudence (from all four continents), indicative not only of them importing international legal standards, but of more or less importing international legal standards, through normalised discourse and institutional assimilation.

The findings contribute to the existing discussions on the concept of legal pluralism and fragmentation, because they show that pluralism, when institutionally disciplined can contribute to, as opposed to diminish, coherence. The emergence of a polyalcentric yet networked adjudicatory regime is a significant aspect of the accentuation of the coherence in international law as it can be achieved through networked discourse rather than hierarchic oneness. This is reinforcing shifting conceptualizations like of managed pluralism and refined fragmentation that is, diversity and cooperation can co-exist fruitfully in world governance.

The implications of the findings on the practitioners and policy-makers are interesting. The authors established that the membership of the regional organization which was highly strong and the previous judicial cooperation served best as the predictors of numerous aspects that turned out to be aligned in terms of majesty in support of the institutional design and transjudicial interaction

as the fundamental structures of enhancing systemic legitimacy. Lastly, new arrangements, including joint advisory opinions, cross-citation databases and capacity building programs, might even further encourage inter-regional judicial coherence, without requiring the local independence. Simultaneously, the research has a number of limitations. Though huge, the sample does not cover certain newly created tribunals and variations on the language used that may affect the determining of the textual similarity. Doctrinal convergence is also best encompassed by the use of quantitative models as opposed to normative intent or compliance outcomes. Subsequent studies should therefore expand the data on the less examined areas, undertake dynamic network modelling, consider qualitative aspects of judicial decisions and application of the decisions made to the cases being adjudicated.

The regional courts are not only alternative adjudicatory community, though they are constituent and component of a continuing and dialogical international law. The circumstances that led them to become increasingly assistant remated with global jurisprudence are both the manifestation of the stale and the novel fragmentation of the environment of global governance to interactive pluralism A model of governance that is both coherent and contextually flexible. This study by shedding the light into the structural and institutional spaces that facilitate judicial cooperation would contribute to the comparative as well as theoretical knowledge on how international justice can be an effective, valid and answerable system in the multipolar and multipolar world order.

5.1 Significance and Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, these results confirm the pluralist paradigm of international adjudication, in that there is no requirement that systemic coherence depend be on strict hierarchy, but it can arise out of dense networks of interaction among judicial bodies. The paper is based on a conceptualization of refined fragmentation introduced by Koskenniemi (2021) and Peters (2017) and confirms that in the case of a plural judicial system, the development of functional complementarity is empirically established. The large centrality of the ICJ (0.92) and ECJ (0.86) in citation networks also gives the impression that there is a de facto hierarchical enforcement of judicial authority through influence, rather than official power, which also reflects the concept of a de facto constitutional hierarchy of power in global governance by Burke-White (2022).

Such results also justify the hypothesis of fragmentation put to the test by the International Law Commission (2022), which had warned of the potential establishment of incoherence through multiplication of jurisdictions. As illustrated by the statistical findings below, the above fact is false: the greater the regionalization of the region, the closer it becomes (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .41$), meaning that institutional embeddedness does not weaken, on the contrary, legal harmony. This brings to evidence that the international legal system is embarking on the road towards polycentric but interdependent system whereby the regional courts and the global courts are left to interrelate in sympathy of legitimation.

5.2 Practical and Policy Implications

The outcomes emphasize that institutional design plays an important role in the establishment of cooperative functioning of the judiciaries in practice. Going back to the regional entities that have stronger legal institutions (e.g. the EU and OAS), the rates of alignment between the regional associations are higher, which validates the thesis statement that judicial coherence is structurally an organizational variable of institutional density and normative commitments. To encourage more judicial dialogue, policy-makers would be encouraged to invest in various forms of forums (regional), doctrine encyclopedias (time-series and cross-regional), and in combined advisory opinions and the like. Furthermore, the results corroborate Shany's (2020) position that cooperation is legitimacy-enhancing: to the extent regional courts are reflecting international norms, their judgments establish legitimacy both on the domestic level and the international level, strengthening public trust in the rule of law.

5.3 Limitations

The study has several limitations, however. First, although the sample size ($n = 500$) is sufficiently sized to be representative of the population, some regional courts (e.g. the Caribbean Court of Justice) were not included because of data limitations, and this may have introduced a slight degree of bias towards comparability across regions. Second, while robust, cosine similarity and regression models produce a measure of doctrinal alignment (or otherwise implicit normative intent) but do not measure normative uptake or compliance. Third, citation analysis is probably a poor measure of informal factors that are responsible for convergence but can affect the trend of convergence, sharing common legal education or a transnational judicial workshop. Finally, cross-linguistic disparities (especially between English, French, and Spanish judgments) may have introduced noise into textual similarity measurements.

5.4 Directions for Future Research

Future research should address these limitations by incorporating:

1. Expanded datasets encompassing emerging regional tribunals in Asia and the Caribbean to improve global generalizability.
2. Longitudinal network modeling to capture dynamic shifts in judicial influence over time.
3. Qualitative interviews with judges and clerks to better understand the mechanisms of informal cooperation and interpretive learning.
4. Machine learning–based semantic analysis for multilingual corpora, allowing finer-grained detection of legal reasoning convergence.
5. Comparative studies between issue-specific courts (e.g., investment or environmental tribunals) and general regional courts to explore cross-sectoral coherence.

Overall, this paper statistically illustrates the idea conceptually that courts at the regional level serve to perform a role of legal integration, as well as being guardians of contextual pluralism. One of the gaps in the literature is filled by the findings, which provide empirical support that plural judicial architectures can be used, without undermining the regional autonomy, to maintain

systemic coherence. The prevailing path of cooperation with good institutional predictors and an increasing density of citation indicates that the order of international law is not disintegrating but re-adjusting in a more related pluralism a hybrid model a global justice that is premised on dialogue and based on non-hierarchical relations instead of hierarchy.

5.5 Recommendations

The empirical and theoretical results of this paper highlight the fact that the regional courts have evolved to all be essential parts of the international dispute settlement architecture which fosters collaboration among courts at the cost of legal pluralism challenges. The findings that support the endurance of 65% agreement among the regional court decision with the international jurisprudence and that institutional clout and previous cooperation are significant predictors of such convergence are far reaching to policy makers, practitioners, and scholars. Based on these observations, the recommendations below present practical policy suggestions that can be adopted to increase systemic, institutional, and research innovation in international adjudication.

5.5.1 Strengthening Institutional and Normative Integration

The emphasis of policy-makers should be placed upon formal systems of dialogue and coordination of regional and international courts. The findings of the regression model that proves the existence of a fourfold rise in the probability of alignment in strong regional organizations shows that institutional density promotes coherence. The international organizations like the ICJ, WTO, and UN treaty committees ought to introduce joint advisory systems and joint interpretation databases to the regional courts. The exchanges of interaction with the judiciary routinely by means of harmonization counts or combined seminars would help in unifying interpretive consistency and curb inconsistency in jurisdictions. This institutionalization would legitimize what the research regards as being managed pluralism such that the plural voices of the judicial remain as being supportive as opposed to opposing.

5.5.2 Enhancing Cross-Citation and Knowledge-Sharing Platforms

Courts and practitioners ought to invest in digital platforms of judicial decisions cross-referencing so that they are able to access the world in a more efficient manner of accessing world judicial precedents. The network analysis showed that courts with the dense citation especially the ECJ and IACtHR were more consistent with international law. The trans judicial learning, the minimization of redundancy, and the promotion of doctrinal uniformity would be achieved by building mutual citation databases that reportedly would be placed in regional court repositories. These programs may be organized at the level of the UN or local institutions, such as African Union and Organization of American States. The open-access citation tools, in addition to democratizing legal knowledge, would increase the transparency and legitimacy of jurisdiction-specific legal knowledge.

5.5.3 Fostering Judicial Capacity and Interpretive Competence

Since it is found that courts in the region are disproportionately aligned, especially in the African courts (alignment = 58.1%), the capacity-building initiatives should focus on the area of judicial interpretation and comparative legal methodology. Training curricula offered on cross-

regime dialogue, treaty interpretation internationally, as well as the application of the tools of empirical legal research on international law should be designed by policymakers and development partners. The gaps in interpreting the cases may be closed by international judicial fellowships and exchange programs between the ICJ and tribunals in other regions, and reinforce legal culture. Besides, the inclusion of empirical research on citation patterns in judicial training would elicit the adoption of courts in order to position their decisions in the wider global pattern of laws.

5.5.4 Institutionalizing “Judicial Dialogues” Through Procedural Reforms

The results from the study on increasing temporal convergence (from 56.7% in 1990-2000 to 70.2% in 2011-2022) reveals that cooperation is increasing over time with the support of institutional maturity. The manner in which this can be done is to make sure that the procedural regulations of regional courts include, and even have an obligatory reference to, references to international precedent, where transnational rules are to be construed. Even greater would keep the comparative reasoning embedded into the system of regional adjudication with the assistance of amicus curiae briefs made by international organizations or a panel of experts. These reforms would put into practice the refined fragmentation term used by Peters (2017) as a way to have a structured order in a heterogeneous situation. These should also enhance their legitimacy since the refugee courts would be serving a worldwide population and therefore must indicate some level of responsibility to the people in the international laws.

5.5.5 Addressing Fragmentation Through Thematic Harmonization Initiatives

In regions where the divergence persists (approximately 15 per cent of the rulings), specific harmonization measures are to be addressed in more fragmented regions like trade, investment and socio-economic rights. It seems that the problem-oriented judicial coordination teams need to be taken into consideration by the policymakers between the representatives of the regional and international tribunals. Technical agencies might come up with nonbinding interpretive regulations that would support the pluralism of the regions yet without providing strict uniformity. An example would be in the case of human rights, thematic congruence, which may be achieved as joint declarations between the IACtHR, AfCHPR, and UN Human Rights Committee. These would retain regional contextuality and advocate common interpretive values, between autonomy and coherence.

5.5.6 Strengthening Data Infrastructure for Empirical Legal Research

Future scholars are advised to build on such mixed-method approach of this study by deriving extensive cross-regional judicial datasets which would combine citation, textual, and network indicators. The analytical capability of the quantitative and qualitative combination of tools is expressed in the statistic reliability of this study (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .41$). Researchers ought to use machine learning founded semantic analysis to seize the delicacies of judicial reasoning in multilingual documents, and perform longitudinal component modeling to follow the pattern of inter-court sway. This can be made easier by policymakers and academic institutions by provision of open-data judicial repositories with the convergence trends monitored continuously. By so doing, it would strengthen the evidence based policymaking in international adjudication.

5.5.7 Promoting Inclusive and Regionally Sensitive Legal Development

While enhancing coherence is vital, policymakers must also safeguard regional autonomy and normative innovation, particularly in courts addressing context-specific concerns like socio-economic rights. The study revealed that divergence often represents constructive adaptation rather than disorder. Therefore, policy reforms should pursue a “coherence-through-dialogue” model rather than hierarchical integration. Approach to international law as open, pluralistic and legitimate is essential to the rule of law because contextual pluralism is possible only within a certain framework.

5.5.8 Expanding Future Research on Judicial Influence and Compliance

Finally, future scholars should go beyond alignment measures and measure judicial influence and compliance effects. While this paper measures doctrinal and textual convergence, the causal nature of doctrinal convergence to corresponding implementation is still an open question. The compliance patterns can be studied by scholars using a post-judgment state action, the reports of the implementation, or the references to the regional and international decisions in the relevant domestic courts. Such a direction of questioning would relate legal consistency to actual governance results so that policymakers can be given practical information about the effectiveness of regional adjudication systems.

In general, the results of the study provide strong indications that the international adjudicatory system is being driven by the regional courts towards the path of interactive pluralism a model of cooperation based on structured diversity. To realize this promise, however, policymakers must institutionalize channels of judicial discourse, practitioners must acquire the interpretive and technological skills, and scholars must overcome the need to establish additional empirical grounds to comparative judicial studies. It is by translating these findings into concerted action that the world community will be in a position to carve out a system of settlement of disputes that not only is internally consistent and legitimate, but that is also inclusively and flexibility involved in the region realities.

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