

Theorising Comparative Regionalisation: Intradisciplinarity and the Study of Regions in Europe, Asia and the Asia-Pacific

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Introduction: Contemporary Regionalisation and the Problem of Developing Theory

This chapter investigates the theoretical challenges involved in the comparative study of regionalisation, with particular attention devoted to a comparison of the EU, APEC and ASEAN. Regionalisation is understood as 'an explicit, but not necessarily formally institutionalised, process of adapting participant state norms, policy-making processes, policy styles, policy content, political opportunity structures, economy and identity to both align with and shape a new collective set of priorities, norms and interests at regional level, which may itself then evolve, dissolve or reach stasis' (Warleigh-Lack 2006: 758).

With both integration theory (Rosamond 2000; Wiener and Diez 2004) and the new regionalism approach, or NRA (Söderbaum and Shaw 2003; Hettne, n.d.) undergoing processes of explicit re-evaluation and change, the opportunity for mutual learning and cross-fertilisation between scholars of regionalisation presents itself. No matter how long ago they began, all present-day processes of regionalisation in the contemporary global political economy can be understood as products of member state (or 'member economy') adaptations to globalisation, with particular dynamics dictated by the interplay of national interests, culture, norms and geopolitical context. However, this opportunity cannot be seized without an explicit process of dialogue, mutual learning and commitment to adaptation of pre-existing conceptual frameworks. Such a process is by no means straightforward – I discuss some of the problems to be addressed if it is to be undertaken successfully below – but it is necessary if we are to respond adequately to the calls for meaningful comparative study of contemporary global regions by scholars such as Hettne (2003) and Laursen (2003).

This contribution of this chapter is to analyse three contemporary regionalisation processes through the lens of a new, explicitly intradisciplinary¹ conceptual framework. The EU, APEC and ASEAN are selected for comparative study not just because of their geographical salience to the present volume, but also because of their very differences. Hettne's non-hierarchical scale of 'region-ness' shows that regionalisation is a dynamic process, but also that various modes of regionalisation can be discerned, and hence attempts to deepen our comprehension of contemporary regionalisation must be grounded in an appreciation that regionalisation can be undertaken in different ways (Hettne 2002). The EU, beginning life as the European Coal and Steel Community, has evolved into a transnational polity of remarkable proportions, with common citizenship rights and a currency of its own. ASEAN, similarly a product of 'first wave' regionalism, is a much less densely institutionalised region now embedded in a network of extra-regional bodies largely of its own creation. APEC is perhaps best understood as a case of 'transregionalism' (Hettne 2005: 279), i.e. an explicit attempt to create a regional

association while bringing together states and economies from several different continents. Thus, by studying these entities comparatively we may get closer to the essence of what are common features and problems of ‘new regionalism’, and what are idiosyncrasies of a given region. This in turn will allow us to reformulate our theoretical models.

In some ways, this chapter is therefore ambitious. It draws on several different literatures and makes a contribution to the process of finding a solution to a difficult theoretical problem – although it is now common to agree that regions should be studied comparatively, explicit means to do this are lacking and currently in gestation². However, the chapter is also limited in that it compares only three regionalisation processes, and also in its objective, which is not to elaborate a new theory of regionalisation but rather to help sort the wheat from the chaff as part of an ongoing, and probably long-haul, process of hypothesis-refinement and data-gathering. The structure of the chapter is as follows. In the next section, I briefly set out what I think are the main legacies of both EU studies/integration theory and new regionalism studies/the NRA and the potential this generates for the project of comparative theory-building in regionalisation studies. Thereafter, I address in more detail the barriers and problems in the process of constructing an encompassing conceptual framework for regionalisation studies. Subsequently, I set out such a framework and discuss four hypotheses to be tested through comparative study. I then proceed to test this framework against the literature on the EU, APEC and ASEAN before concluding with reflections upon what this process implies for both the recasting of the framework and the study of the three regions.

Regionalism Studies Old and New –Legacies and Potential for Comparison

Although space restrictions rule out a major review of the literature here (see Warleigh 2004b, Warleigh 2006, Warleigh-Lack 2006, on which this section draws), it is worth reprising the main achievements and legacies of scholarship in the two fields with regard to the comparative study of regionalism because it is against this background that the following section of the chapter has particular meaning.

However, it is necessary to recall that the comparative use of EU studies and new regionalism work requires open confrontation of salient facts in the historiography of both fields of enquiry. First, the failure of neofunctionalism to develop as a theory of regional integration in light of both its own internal difficulties and the failure of many ‘first wave’ regional projects downgraded IR scholars’ views of both the EU and EU studies/integration theory. It also made EU scholars wary of engaging in comparative study with other global regions, out of both apprehensions regarding the difficulty and feasibility of such work and, less helpfully, from a wagon-circle mentality: if IR scholars thought the EU was of no/little interest, EU scholars could respond by elevating the novel elements of the EU to a claim of its *sui generis* character and enjoy pointing out where orthodox IR simply failed to grasp the EU accurately – which, to be fair, it often did³. Much EU theoretical scholarship between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s can be seen in this light⁴. However, this intellectual *démarche* also coloured the dominant EU studies view of theory and theory-generation in other ways, making it rather parochial (the curse of the ‘N=1’ problem) and, by omission as much as by commission, reinforcing the neofunctionalist notion (Haas 1961) that if other regions were to be worthwhile they would have to follow the EU ‘model’⁵. As a result, and also following on from the political line taken by politicians involved in setting up regions elsewhere that the

EU was not a suitable model, many scholars of new regionalism have argued that EU studies and integration theory have no utility for them.

This problem of auto-definitions and exclusions will in all likelihood restrict the number of scholars in both fields who are willing to engage in experimentation across sub-field boundaries. Thus, in order to facilitate such endeavour, it is necessary to spell out what its key advantages might be.

Perhaps the main use of EU studies for scholars of new regionalism is its potential to act as a repository of scholarship from a variety of perspectives, including interdisciplinary work, with failures and ultimately unsuccessful avenues of enquiry as well as major achievements. Thus, EU studies (and even integration theory, which has become extremely diverse and far less centred on a neofunctionalist-intergovernmentalist spectrum) should be understood as a broad church, with an enormous literature in which scholars of other global regions can glean both cautionary tales as well as ideas for more rewarding research of their own.

Within the rubric of that general claim, various particular illustrations can be made. EU studies can show how a region can be both intergovernmental and supranational at the same time – the ‘either/or’ dichotomy is not valid because different policy issues can have different decision rules, and ‘intergovernmental’ decisions can have ‘supranational’ consequences. It is therefore not a contradiction to see a region as a polity while emphasising that it exists because states have constructed it and remain in the driving seat, as any number of studies of EU decision-making reveal. EU studies can show how a region can be part of the deliberate transformation of its member states, and how global polity-formation means IR scholars in general, and new regionalist scholars in particular, can usefully ask different kinds of questions and undertake new kinds of empirical enquiry that trace the policy chain from start to finish rather than assuming that the moment and process of agreement is all that is necessary to study. This will help new regionalism scholars appreciate the potential complexity of their subject. Moreover, EU scholarship shows the potential for drawing on comparative politics as well as IR in regionalisation studies, meaning new questions about the nature and impact of the regional political systems can be asked (e.g. effectiveness, legitimacy, impact on national systems and policies). These questions need to be asked in appropriate ways, but if they are pertinent to the nascent global polity (Wæver 2004) it makes no sense to rule them out in regional entities which are best understood as part of the global transformation process (Hettne 2005).

The utility of new regionalist work for EU studies scholars can also be demonstrated. New regionalist studies show the links between the region and the global context, emphasising that the two are coexistent and at least to some extent co-constitutive in a manner which EU studies has generally forgotten (with the exception, perhaps, of studies of EU external policy). As a result, new regionalist scholars demonstrate the utility of drawing on a wider range of literatures than is the norm in EU studies, particularly international/global political economy. New regionalism studies also, and consequently, help to understand the differences between first and second wave regionalism – an issue often ignored in EU studies, which tends to treat the last two decades of change in the EU polity as if they were without parallel elsewhere and almost entirely shaped by member state domestic politics and the manipulations of EU-level institutions/business groups. Such insights could have a major impact in understanding why

and how EU governance styles or norms change, e.g. the radical, if not always billed as such, adaptations of the 'Community Method' in a neoliberal era in favour of soft law and policy.

From the perspective of theory-building, new regional studies increases the range of cases available, liberating EU scholars from the 'N=1' problem and adding a fresh range of comparators in EU studies - other regions in the global political economy, not the federal nation states chosen for comparison for normative as much as objective reasons in the immediate post-Maastricht era. As a result, new regionalism studies equally demonstrate the need for awareness of context: just as EU studies can help IR scholars think about how to study decision-making in the global polity, new regional scholars can help EU studies scholars differentiate between the general and the EU-specific in terms of the regionalisation process.

Thus, and in sum, the legacy of previous scholarship in regionalisation studies is the need to emphasise contingency and reflexive approaches to theory-making, coupled with the injunction to avoid the erection of unnecessary barriers to comparative study of regionalisation processes even if these are sometimes unintended consequences of prior decisions. Both the EU and the new regionalism studies communities can benefit from an overt process of cross-fertilisation, even though it will obviously always be useful to have work which focuses on particular regions in depth: after all, comparative politics builds on work by country specialists and cannot by definition replace them. Comparative study is not an attempt to impose uniformity, but rather 'the search to uncover such general principles and practices as exist...undertaken in the knowledge that divergence between systems and contexts can be practically significant and heuristically important' (Warleigh 2004b: 305). In the next section of the chapter I discuss the mechanics of how such a process might be undertaken.

Comparative Regionalisation Studies - Towards Intradisciplinary

When seeking to elaborate forms of synthesis, scholars have to address a range of issues regarding the viability and need for such endeavours (Warleigh 2004b: 301-9). Some scholars can be fundamentally opposed to the suggestion: why try to synthesise and develop a new conceptual framework beyond paradigm barriers? Others can prefer other means of addressing the problem: for example, why not just try running different perspectives on the same issue, in parallel, as part of an emphasis on problem-centred research? This can certainly alert scholars to different methods, evidence and ways of interpreting it, and thereby improve our reflexivity as individuals, and may be more practical given the difficulties of establishing new research agendas and the commitment of resources required of any individual seeking to master new ranges of literature. However, I maintain that such is not the optimal way forward in the present situation, even if it may be what we end up with, because it risks not harnessing any insights that are generated in particular cases or projects for use in the study of the wider research problem. As it now seems clear that there are few theoretically salient differences between regionalisms 'old' and 'new' - Hettne (2003) argues that there are only three theoretically salient differences here: the need to focus on a broad range of actors, including both institutional and non-institutional kinds; the need to integrate globalisation/the global political economy specifically into the analysis; the need for a multi-disciplinary/multi-dimensional perspective - this may be a time for boldness rather than caution. It is also a

moment to champion methodological pluralism – although quantitative research is, *a priori*, useful, scholars also need to emphasise the qualitative tools of enquiry, in order not to screen out too many salient variables (e.g. normative issues or those of performance/impact) or over-emphasise those that can be ‘measured’ in quantitative terms (Van Langenhove 2006; Best 2006).

The elaboration of a new, synthesised and intradisciplinary conceptual framework would aid the intellectual coherence of investigations of regionalisation, and also help ensure the comparability of research both when in train and when completed by paying serious attention to multiple cases and methodological/epistemological clarity and contingency. There is no reason why different conceptual frameworks could not be generated and used/tested in parallel, hence what is attempted below is to be understood as an offering to the debate rather than a quest to establish intellectual hegemony. However, establishing a viable comparative framework must be a medium-term goal, to be achieved through a process of elaboration, critique and refinement. Newell’s (2001) prescriptions for interdisciplinary work can usefully be adapted to intradisciplinary work here, as they are fundamentally guidelines for bringing together in a shared understanding or project scholars with different perspectives, guiding assumptions and approaches that are shaped not just by personal conviction but by norms generated by particular scholarly communities. To establish a common research agenda, scholars must explicitly seek not only to identify different perspectives but to integrate them into a shared understanding and framework for analysis. In turn, this means going through an elaborate and sequential process of integration⁶. The framework presented in the next section of the chapter is an attempt to help just such a process of EU studies – new regionalism collaboration.

A Framework for Comparative Regionalisation Studies: Variables and Hypotheses⁷

Building on the definition of ‘regionalisation’ set out at the start of this chapter, I submit that there are four main independent variables which require exploration. Each of these has, in turn, a range of research questions which, when answered, will help generate a robust understanding of the independent variable to which they relate. In turn, analysis of the four independent variables is designed to generate useful insights about the dependent equivalent – i.e. regionalisation. In what follows, I set out and briefly discuss these four independent variables and set out a hypothesis to accompany each in turn.

The four principal independent variables are:

- *Genesis* (why and how the regionalisation process began)
- *Functionality* (how the process works)
- *Socialisation* (affective factors)
- *Impact* (the effect on component states and third countries)

The first independent variable asks why states join, and continue participating in, a regionalisation process. What are the stated objectives of the latter? How is inclusion/exclusion of membership determined and defined? Investigating these issues will allow scholars to identify similarity or otherwise the teleology of regionalisation processes, and establish the links between this and the region’s membership and identity. It also allows

scholars to study whether, and if so, why, the stated objectives of a region may change (a key question in the shift from ‘old’ to ‘new’ regionalism for both the EU and ASEAN).

Hypothesis 1: states take part in regionalisation because they perceive a specific common interest in managing economic and/security consequences of globalisation (or post-World War Two recovery, depending upon the date of establishment) that is not shared with states outside the region.

The second independent variable investigates how a region functions once it is established. Who is involved in decision-making, and what is their relative influence? Does this vary according to issue area or type? What range of issues does the region address, and does this change over time? If so, why? What are the decision rules? Is the region designed to eradicate, or coexist with, bilateral relations between its members? What implementation capacity does the region have, and how favourably do members consider its performance? This set of questions helps elucidate the internal workings and power distribution of a region, whether internal or external pressures have greater catalysing powers on its activities, and whether the system is responsive to member state/economy desires for reform (if such exist).

Hypothesis 2: regionalisation is a stop-go process dominated by member governments and dictated by their interests, with a tendency towards informal decision-making.

The third independent variable investigates whether the region has any impact on the ideational and normative contexts of its component parts, at both elite and mass levels. Does popular support grow or decrease over time? Do senses of cross-border trust and solidarity develop? If so, why? Is there any regionalisation of political identity, and if so does this impact upon political behaviour? Studying this set of questions allows scholars to establish the links between political identity and legitimacy, and also to establish whether and how regions shape or are shaped by affective factors⁸.

Hypothesis 3: policy-learning and joint problem-solving are more apparent than regionalised identities at either mass or elite level.

The fourth independent variable investigates the products and outputs of the regionalisation process. To separate it from variable three, the focus here is on material rather than ideational outcomes, such as its impact on the domestic political economy, policies and structures of its members or on the global political economy. Has the region impacted on third countries, and if so, how? Has the region impacted on the way its component states relate to each other (power balances, partnerships) and on their ability to influence the external environment?

Hypothesis 4: regionalisation empowers the member states collectively vis-à-vis third countries and has significant structural impacts on its component states.

In order to test the validity of the hypotheses, and the utility of the comparative framework itself, the next and penultimate section of the chapter applies it to a study of the three selected regions: the EU, ASEAN and APEC.

The EU, ASEAN and APEC in Comparative Perspective

In the following paragraphs I draw on both my own previous work in EU studies and on published literature by ASEAN and APEC scholars. The contents of this section should be considered my synthesis of these literatures⁹. I take each hypothesis in turn and test it against the literature.

Genesis

The EU owes its origins to the need for post-1945 economic and political reconstruction. Although it drew to some extent on ideals of cooperation or federalism, the main drivers behind the formation of the EU were the need of the Western European states, not least Germany, to re-establish themselves as viable entities by peaceful means, and the wish of the US to facilitate this as part of its quest for a revised world economic order and containment of communism. Thus, security concerns both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ were vital, with the US as the capitalist superpower providing encouragement, financial aid (the Marshall Plan), and the necessary security guarantee (NATO) – while ensuring it also thereby retained a great deal of influence over the integration process’ evolution. This situation was echoed in the later shift from the ‘European Community’ to the ‘European Union’ after the collapse of the Soviet Union, although the relative weight of domestic (i.e. Franco-German) and external (i.e. US) pressures had perhaps been revised at that stage. The objectives of the EU, while nebulously defined as ‘ever closer union’, clearly aimed at integration of a broader range of issues than the initial collaboration in coal and steel production. Although it still remains difficult to integrate foreign and defence policies –despite recent developments in this regard such as EU missions to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda – it was inherent in the design of what is now the EU that the initial range of competences it enjoyed would expand, as indeed they have. Participation in the integration process was theoretically available to any European state which chose to sign up, but has actually always been a matter of high politics: the Cold War prevented accession by states in Central and Eastern Europe, and the absence of liberal democracy prevented early accession by Greece, Spain and Portugal. There has always been a wilful conflation of ‘EU identity’ and ‘European identity’ by elite actors seeking to deepen European integration, making it hard to assess any identity that the EU may have had as a discrete entity. However, even at its inception the core of what are now the de facto membership criteria of the EU – namely that a state must be considered ‘European’ by its peers, be a functioning liberal democracy and have a working market economy – were discernible.

ASEAN’s creation results from a remarkably similar rationale, although the original member states were emerging from colonialism rather than defeat in World War Two and the US played a less economically generous role. Setting up ASEAN was seen as a means to cement and ensure the independence of the member states, legitimise their various domestic regimes in the face of domestic upheaval/unrest and, notably, the perception of a communist threat both internally and from neighbouring states. Although the new regional entity was aimed at creating a social community rather than a military alliance or economic bloc, it had a clear security function in its aim to preserve both new states and individual regimes, by reducing dependence on both the US and former colonial masters, and by containing any potential aggression by Indonesia – while also allowing that state a peaceful leadership role. ASEAN’s objective was to reinforce its member states domestically and vis-à-vis third countries through cooperation in a limited number of issue areas where states agreed this would add value. The association’s identity and mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion have always been norm-driven rather than drawing on historically-rooted senses of mutuality, centring on adhesion to the so-called ‘ASEAN Way’¹⁰, with geopolitics instead of more principled criteria determining the scope of membership. As with the EU, security concerns have also played a key role in

causing ASEAN's recent institutional creativity and enlargement to ten formal members, as expressed in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Plus Three (APT) initiatives.

APEC's origins lie in a drive for economic security. Bringing together member economies over a vast geographical range, APEC was established as a result of different but complementary concerns regarding the consequences of globalisation and regionalism elsewhere (particularly in the EU). The US, long active by various mechanisms in both East Asian and Asia-Pacific politics, sought a means of exploiting new opportunities for the use of soft power for security purposes in the post-1989 world, and also wanted both bargaining chips for WTO negotiations with the EU and further opportunities for economic growth in expanding markets; the smaller economies of the region sought an insurance policy regarding access to the US market in particular, and global markets in general. Although various states claim leadership of the process, Australia played a key 'frontman' role, with Japanese and US diplomacy active behind the scenes. The necessary policy focus was provided by acceptance of the neoliberal economic agenda, prepared in advance by the Eminent Persons Group of mainly non-state actors (albeit with often very close connections to their respective governments and a handily-shared set of beliefs with the proponents of the Washington Consensus).

Thus, hypothesis 1 appears largely valid in its essentials, but nonetheless in need of refinement. Regionalisation projects both 'old' and 'new' are begun and adapted primarily for reasons of security, and the particular understanding of the initial participant states regarding what security constitutes and requires has a significant impact on the remit of the regionalisation process/organisation. However, it is necessary to amend the hypothesis to take into more explicit account the role of the US in launching, shaping or constraining regionalisation projects in which it may be only a silent partner. Moreover, economic security concerns (as well as methods) are much more apparent in the cases of the EU and APEC than in the ASEAN case. In the EU and ASEAN cases, the very viability of member states is a more apparent motivating factor than in the APEC case, perhaps as a function of their establishment in earlier decades. Shared identity does not appear to be a strong driver of regionalisation: such processes may be initiated with the hope of deepening such awareness (as is arguably the case for ASEAN and the EU), but they do not result from a drive to harness perceived shared identities of any but the loosest kind. This has an impact on mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion, with initial sets of member states in each case decided more as functions of utility, interest (in the EU case at least, since rather more than six states were invited to launch the process), and the bounds of the geopolitically possible than by perceptions of a closed group of states who alone share particular concerns, values or identity.

Functionality

The EU operates a complex array of decision-making procedures, with a sharing of powers between the EU institutions, and between the EU and national institutions, that differs according to policy issue and also according to the EU's stage of evolution. The basic trend, however, is towards greater supranationalisation of policy-making, with increasing numbers of policy issues decided upon at EU level, and with the EU institutions – particularly the EP – given increasing powers over formal legislation. In some areas of policy, the member states have given up their veto rights, and agreed a system of qualified majority voting. The European Central Bank has sole charge of monetary policy for states which have adopted the

euro. EC law is commonly held to be without parallel, and has certainly done much to make the EU a rule-based polity in which national law is often inferior to its EC equivalent¹¹. Decision-making results from processes of network-creation and contestation which can empower civil society actors as well as the weaker EU bodies. However, three important caveats apply to this picture of supranationalism. First, the member states retain for themselves the ability to set the EU's overall agenda and agree new Treaties, via the creation of the European Council (an intergovernmental body which was not part of the initial institutional settlement). Second, the member states remain the most powerful decision-makers in the day-to-day running of the EU, with certain areas of policy kept firmly at national level (e.g. tax), and others decided at EU level, but intergovernmentally (e.g. foreign and security policy). Third, the EU increasingly uses 'soft law' as a means of making decisions, with the effect that in many cases an ostensible shift away from national sovereignty is just that – ostensible.

The EU is capable of expansion in terms of policy scope and membership, taking on new competences as a result of recalculated cost-benefit analyses by the member states – albeit often with the help of policy entrepreneurship at supranational level. EU reforms and competence change are largely reactive (responses to external challenges such as enhanced economic competition, or changed geopolitical circumstances such as '1989'). That said, the EU's main and impressive competences are in economic, environmental and agricultural policies, not hard security. They are also accompanied by a unique emphasis on redistribution between member states in the form of a 'cohesion policy' which aims to compensate from the EU budget areas of member states that are left behind by the formation of the internal market. Strategic leadership (when it exists) has tended to come from the Franco-German axis, although the Commission has played a key role at certain moments (notably during the early and mid-1980s), and the European Court of Justice has, sporadically, shaped the integration process in significant ways too. In day-to-day policy-making, leadership can come from a range of sources, including not only the various member states but also the EU institutions and, indirectly, from interest groups. The EU seeks to make itself the sole means whereby member states deal with each other on issues in which it has competence, but must in fact coexist with both opt-outs from even major policies (e.g. Denmark, Sweden and the UK choose not to adopt the common EU currency) and a host of multi- and bilateral arrangements which sometimes constitute rival policy regimes (e.g. the common travel area between the UK and Ireland, when both states opt-out of the EU's Schengen programme of personal freedom of movement) and sometimes substitute for them (e.g. the St Malo initiative on defence cooperation between France and the UK). The EU seeks to replicate its norms through processes of enlargement to neighbouring third countries and development aid, and has achieved this to a significant extent – particularly through the 'Europeanisation' (the restructuring of national laws, policies and structures in keeping with EU decisions) of most of the European continent.

ASEAN functions in a manner based on the 'ASEAN Way', with norms of informality and non-interference being given primacy. It has managed to create a successful external policy, notably via the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum and ASEAN Plus Three projects, in which ASEAN has managed to export not just its influence but its norms. However, a quiet process of reformulating (or at least revising the application) of the ASEAN Way has been ongoing for some time, and core norms are being revised in order to meet the

challenges of increased interdependence between member states, and also the increased diversity of the ASEAN members since enlargement to Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam – a process which itself betokens a degree of elasticity and evolutionary potential. This diversity has been not only values-based (the ‘CMLV states’ are all in transition from communism), but also economic, with talk of a multi-tier ASEAN as commonplace as calls for a more active sense of solidarity between member states in order to foster economic development in the CMLV countries. Institution-making has occurred, thanks to the institutionalisation of the ASEAN summit, and the upgrading of the ASEAN secretariat and General Secretary (even if member states retain the lion’s share of administrative power at national level). Institutional deepening has also occurred since the 1997 crisis, as has a broadening of the range of issues with which ASEAN engages. That said, decision-making remains almost entirely in the hands of the member states, with consensus decision-making the universal rule. Non-state actors have a small, but emerging role as co-shapers of the agenda in certain of the new policy issues addressed by ASEAN, via Track Two measures which blur the governmental/non-governmental distinction somewhat. Both the deepening and the widening of the ASEAN agenda are best understood as crisis-response measures, part of the association’s quest for continued relevance in a post-Cold War context of increasing interdependence and common new policy challenges (e.g. environmental policy). This has been particularly evident in ‘new’ security issues such as the environment and migration, but it has also taken place in economic cooperation, with the agreement to form an ASEAN Free Trade Area and, in Vision 2020, an ambitious programme of cooperation across a wide range of issue areas. If realised, this ambition would transform ASEAN into an economic and political community in all but name. However, doubts about ASEAN’s ability to deliver Vision 2020 persist, not least because the historical leader of the association – Indonesia – is unable to provide a useful steer, and the leadership vacuum can only partially be filled by Chinese and Japanese contributions to ASEAN’s successful creation of other regional networks, the ARF and APT. Moreover, a plethora of bilateral arrangements between ASEAN member states exists; this state of affairs has been considered a key part of what distinguishes the ‘ASEAN Way’ from ‘Western’ forms of multilateralism.

APEC, by way of contrast, has an almost purely economic agenda, and a neoliberal one based on trade liberalisation to boot. However, it does have the ability to diversify its agenda; the failure to promote liberalisation in the face of opposition from many of the Asian governments (particularly Japan) has seen it develop a concern with economic and technical cooperation, for instance, and it has also reached into social issues such as gender equality. Moreover, APEC is capable of enlargement – albeit with a rationale that has been criticised for lacking clarity and logic. APEC has also pledged itself to deepening its economic cooperation programme, with the 1994 Bogor Declaration constituting a commitment to develop a trade barrier-free zone by 2020. APEC has at least some concern with internal development policy; this is not redistributive, but does entail both technical assistance measures and giving temporary derogations to member governments unable to keep pace with those in the vanguard (e.g. the Bogor Declaration requires the more developed economies to abolish barriers to trade by 2010). Opt-outs from policy for objecting states are sometimes necessary in order for the majority to make progress on that issue (e.g. opt-outs for Japan over liberalisation of forestry and fisheries), and APEC has long accepted the idea of multi-speed cooperation as a model (e.g. the Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalisation programme, or EVSL).

The smooth working of APEC depends on bilateral relations between its key states, with the functioning of the grouping dependent on the value attached to it by its most important members at any given time – particularly the US. The decision rule is consensus, with Asian member governments resisting the attempts for further institutionalisation (beyond the agreement to formalise meetings between heads of member governments as summits) by the US and Australia. APEC's relationship with the WTO has also been key; at times, the latter has been a useful device for the resolution of problems incapable of solution within APEC, but at other times this has had negative impacts on the calculations of key member governments regarding APEC's utility. Member governments retain all formal power, and there is no independent APEC secretariat. However, the initial APEC agenda was set to a great extent by non-governmental actors (the Eminent Persons Group), and such actors can still have an impact indirectly, i.e. via their access to domestic decision-making. With the US reluctant to make sacrifices or pay regular attention to APEC, leadership is provided by Japan and Australia. This, however, can be a source of tension in the bloc, as Canberra and Tokyo are often considered to be proxies for Washington. The 1997 financial crisis has had a major impact on APEC, but not a transformative one; instead, it has fostered a flurry of new bilateral relations, and a shift by its Asian members towards cooperation in ASEAN/ASEAN Plus networks, as a function of new calculations about the desirability of neoliberalism and the dependability of the US.

Thus, hypothesis 2 appears to be water-tight. In all the regions studied, development has been uneven, and although their policy scope can be both broadened and deepened, this tends to take considerable time and require a significant external shock as a catalyst for extensive reform. Member governments retain core decision-making powers in each of the regions, even if civil society and other non-state actors can be more influential than appears the case at first blush. This is true even of the EU, whose experiments in supranational decision-making are both significant (indeed, world-historically so) and limited. Moreover, in each of the regions studied, there is a tendency to rely on multi-speed approaches to common policy, and even opt-outs; informal decision-making is used as much as possible. Again, even in the EU case, the complex sharing of powers between the legislative institutions leads to a reliance upon informal politics; moreover, in the last decade, most of the EU's key new ventures have been decided upon intergovernmentally and/or via the kinds of soft policy common in other international organisations such as the OECD – a tendency only partially counteracted by the authoritative decisions of the European Central Bank and European Court of Justice.

Socialisation

The EU has had a clear socialisation impact on its member states. Although there are chicken-and-egg issues to consider – would the EU ever have begun had its original states not wanted to commit to peaceful coexistence? – there is no doubt that the EU is, in part, a security community and has fundamentally altered the ways in which its member states can even conceive of dealing with each other in terms of defence and security issues. The inter-locking of the EU and member state levels of governance means that the EU has had two further important socialisation effects: on actor behaviour and world views. Thus, the ways in which elite actors consider it legitimate or useful to approach policy issues of an everyday kind has also become ever more 'Europeanised'. The Copenhagen Criteria and conditionality measures set out values and norms to which aspirant member states and those seeking aid from the EU

must conform; although these norms may seem commonplace in the West today – they are essentially about liberal democracy – that very banality is in part a result of the EU and its conscious shaping of state norms. The EU has a Charter of Fundamental Rights that is on the verge of becoming binding law, and has also had an important impact on citizens' sense of political and legal opportunity structures.

However, the socialisation effect of the EU must also be admitted to have clear limits, particularly regarding the growth of shared values on a wider range of issues than the desirability of liberal democracy. After fifty years, there is only limited convergence around an EU norm on, say, abortion or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, with national cultures and legislation on this kind of issue differing widely under a context of supposedly liberal EU norms. It must also be acknowledged that ideas of pan-European solidarity crash to smithereens when it comes to EU budget politics, where the emphasis is on *juste retour* (fair return on contributions) rather than redistribution. Similarly, the views of the member states remain very different regarding the future of the EU, and in some policy areas it has been possible to make progress only by granting recalcitrant states an opt-out. EU states are socialised when they find it useful, and not when they don't. Citizens, as opposed to states, are socialised to a degree, and enjoy a unique legal status as both EU and national citizens. Freedom of movement rights have altered citizens' conceptions of their travel and work possibilities, but this appears to produce at best utilitarian calculations of the value/merit of the EU rather than new senses of European identity: the EU's 'Eurobarometer' survey regularly shows that many citizens consider themselves both national and European, but this figure is smaller than those who do not, and hardly any consider themselves primarily or entirely European rather than national citizens. Enlargement to Central and Eastern European (CEEC) states in 2004 and 2007 has proved very controversial, and in the short-term at least has produced more questions about the viability of a European identity than positive answers¹². Similarly, popular engagement with the EU is actually falling (if voter turn-out for the European Parliament elections is any guide), and the notorious crisis of EU legitimacy which has haunted it since the early 1990s is by no means over.

ASEAN's socialisation impact is in many ways impressive. Its coherence and durability reflect member state socialisation into a new identity and set of norms which were at best latent before its inception. This is beginning to bite more deeply into the domestic structures and norms of member states, with, for example, conditionality placed on Cambodia's membership and shifts towards a more active policy to aid less developed member states since the CLMV states' accessions. Since its inception, new states have joined the organisation and adopted its norms (often as part of the transition from communism). Moreover, ASEAN has succeeded in exporting its norms to other networks of which it is the core (e.g. APT, ARF), giving it some ability to socialise even non-member states. On the minus side, however, ASEAN has not succeeded in establishing a common South East Asian political culture, and member states remain clearly divided on certain key issues, such as human rights (Thailand, Philippines are at one [liberal] extreme, while Myanmar is at the other). The CLMV enlargement has diluted member states' sense of 'we-ness' even though it has prompted calls for a more active development policy. Moreover, on the back of the 1997 crisis, such ASEAN identity as exists is increasingly in competition with, and may be losing out to, a rising sense of 'East Asian-ness' which extends beyond ASEAN states to China, Japan and South Korea.

APEC's socialisation effect was, at elite level, initially strong, as the bloc partially owes its existence to an explicit subordination of 'Asian values' to neoliberalism. Moreover, the institutionalisation of APEC summits and the perceived utility of their conclusions has generated a sense in which actors were socialised into a new forum, and an in many ways artificial region began to embed itself. However, later socialisation processes are not good auguries for the success of the bloc – since the financial crisis of 1997 and the unhelpful stance struck by the US at that time, they have fostered not a sense of Asia-Pacific commonality, but rather a sense of difference/Asian-ness in its Asian members. The role of Australia and New Zealand in the bloc is very controversial, with many Asians considering these states to be culturally beyond the bounds of meaningful cooperation¹³. The initial acceptance of neoliberalism has also been seriously questioned, not least by Japan. APEC has enlarged on six occasions, but has not had an impact on the fundamental calculations, norms and interests of its member economies – particularly the USA. The attempt to devise an 'Asia-Pacific Way' has not yet been successful, revealing more differences than commonalities. Hence, APEC cannot be held to have generated a meaningful new sense of Asia-Pacific identity, particularly at popular level.

Thus, hypothesis 3 appears to be solid in its implication that regionalised identities are difficult to generate and sustain. Even the EU, with its armoury of supranational institutions, finds this problematic despite certain notable successes. APEC identity has fallen foul of geo-economics, although its initial success implies that future geopolitical trends of a suitable type might reverse the trend. ASEAN identity proved initially strong, but, as in the EU case, has been strained by enlargement to states with different political histories, political cultures, and economic development levels. The hypothesis also seems valid in its assertion that regions are fundamentally about joint problem-solving rather than giving expression to pre-existing senses of identity that had been constrained by either the creation of artificial nation-states or geopolitics. However, the hypothesis appears weaker in its suggestion that policy-learning will be more common than a shared identity. Arguably each of the regions studied here began life, in part, as an attempt to engineer a new identity, even if this was not necessarily intended to replace those of its member states. In the APEC case, this original act of creation has had a greater impact than policy-learning, because it established the frame for the bloc and, in its failure to resonate post-1997, it has restricted the scope for policy learning between members. In the ASEAN case, policy learning as opposed to socialisation of general norms is a recent development, with the not always officially heralded adaptations of the ASEAN Way permitting this. The EU is replete with examples of policy learning at both macro (or normative) and meso (or day-to-day politics) levels – this is the essence of Europeanisation and EU 'soft policy' - and this does appear to be a more salient feature of the EU than the shaping of a new identity. However, this part of the hypothesis does not appear to 'travel' well beyond the EU.

Impact

The EU has had a massive impact on the structures and policies of its member states. Through various means – EC law, de facto constitutionalisation of the Treaties, explicit agreement by the member governments – it has transformed the meaning of national sovereignty within its borders. Major structural and policy adjustments to conform with EU policy or systemic needs have been undertaken, and in some areas of policy member states have effectively abandoned their national sovereignty, e.g. competition policy, monetary policy for euro-zone

states. As a security community, the EU has had a major impact on the relations between its member states, and has coupled this with major successes in economic integration such as the internal market. Through its economic power, the EU is a major player in world trade politics, and is also, increasingly, a major actor in non-trade aspects of diplomacy. Thus, although it is easy to point to failures and incompleteness in some of the EU's achievements – for instance, the 'single market' does not apply to services – there is no doubting the structural and material impact of the Union both domestically and abroad.

ASEAN has had limited impact on the structures of its member states, mostly centred on its progress towards constituting a security community, with little impact on trade patterns between its member states. However, it has begun to deepen its capacity for such impact in recent years, with the revisions to the 'ASEAN Way' and the shift towards addressing a broader range of issues (e.g. tariff reduction) than in the past. ASEAN has gained a degree of institutional depth and thus has the capacity to make greater impacts than it has so far been able to achieve, lending at least some credibility to the Vision 2020 strategy. That said, ASEAN's primary impact to date, however, may be in its capacity to reinforce its member states as a collective in other forums, such as APEC or the ARF. It has also had an impact on the foreign policies of the regional powers beyond its membership, Japan and China.

APEC has had a marginal impact on the economic development of its members, given the 1997 crisis and its aftermath. Indeed, the direction of influence is more the reverse, with member economy domestic politics impacting negatively on APEC's development capacity and state decisions to join APEC or use it largely determined as a function of other, higher-priority goals (e.g. China's accession can be seen as part of its bid to balance Japan and gain credibility for its WTO membership case). APEC has taken on competence in a greater range of policy areas than it initially enjoyed, but has not developed the capacity to generate meaningful obligations on its members in these areas of policy either, not least because of its norm of voluntarism. That said, APEC summits have developed at least the sporadic capacity to shape national policy content, and APEC decisions have been used to justify national policy content in some cases (Australia).

Thus, hypothesis four appears to hold valid in its first part. In all cases studied here, the region is a means of strengthening its members against third countries, even if in the case of APEC this is a capacity that can be used only sporadically. The second part of the hypothesis is more problematic, however. The EU's domestic material impact is incontestable, as is perhaps to be expected from an organisation with such advanced supranational institutions. ASEAN's domestic impact is less obvious, but growing, particularly via its insertion into the APT process. However, the APEC case asks searching questions about the domestic impact of regional associations/blocs, and in particular the role of shared norms/identity and non-voluntary approaches to policy delivery as necessary background conditions. In this case, ASEAN may provide interesting lessons.

Conclusions: Assessing the Framework

In this chapter I have discussed some of the principal epistemological issues to be addressed by scholars trying to take up the challenge of theoretically-informed comparative study of contemporary regionalisation in the global political economy. I argued that the most suitable way to do this was via the elaboration of a conceptual framework, to be treated as work in

progress, which could be tested and refined. In the latter part of this chapter I sought to do just this by comparing the EU, ASEAN and APEC.

Clearly, a full testing of the framework requires application to a wider range of cases – not least to regions in North and Latin/South America, and Africa. It would also benefit from drawing on original empirical work rather than solely upon secondary, if excellently executed, literature. This points to the limits of the ‘lone scholar’ model of research, and also to the need for a long-term programme of study.

Nonetheless, the framework has provided a useful means to marshal information regarding each of the regions under the microscope, and thereby to set them in comparative context. Although individual readers will judge for themselves whether this has altered their perceptions of any of the regions concerned, from the perspective of theory building and designing future research it has proved beneficial in demonstrating the utility of the independent variables that were selected, and also in generating suggestions for refinement of the hypotheses in future work. It has also demonstrated that the EU can usefully be chosen as a comparator in such studies, and that there are more similarities between the regions studied here than first meets the eye.

By way of conclusion, it seems appropriate to re-state the four hypotheses of the framework as they now stand after its first testing.

Hypothesis 1: states take part in regionalisation projects because they perceive a common interest in managing the security consequences of globalisation and see this as a means to address the priorities of the USA.

Hypothesis 2: regionalisation is a stop-go process dominated by member governments and dictated by their interests, with a tendency towards informal decision-making.

Hypothesis 3: joint problem-solving by member governments is a more frequent outcome of regionalisation than regionalised identity.

Hypothesis 4: regionalisation empowers member governments vis-à-vis third countries, with norms of non-voluntarism required for a significant structural impact on member states/economies.

Hypothesis 2 is unchanged, but all the others have been modified. Hypothesis 1 upgrades the importance of the US in the establishment of regionalisation processes, but whether this is a positive (providing support) or negative (providing impetus for regionalisation in opposition to Washington) role is both a matter for empirical enquiry and likely to vary¹⁴. Hypothesis 3 no longer focuses on policy learning, which instead will be added to the list of issues to investigate under the ‘socialisation’ independent variable. Hypothesis 4 refines its predecessor by suggesting that the key catalyst for domestic impact is non-voluntarism as a governance norm in the region. This should not be mistaken for a focus on deep institutionalism; the ASEAN case offers potential for both conditionality and limited institutional depth to coexist, and the EU shows how deep institutionalism often belies implementation gaps and problems in the absence of member state acceptance of ostensibly binding obligations. The Sisyphean task goes on!

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Endnotes

¹ I devised the term 'intradisciplinarity' to express 'the need of scholars of a given discipline to ensure they engage with work undertaken in all pertinent subfields of their subject...a conscious effort by scholars to learn what they can from – and teach what they can to – other scholars in their own discipline' (Warleigh 2004b: 303). It is intended as a complement to interdisciplinarity, but above all as a means to overcome the Balkanisation of disciplines into ever more numerous separate sub-fields.

² This task is being undertaken by various scholars, from a range of perspectives. For an important contribution to the debate, see the essays in De Lombaerde 2006.

³ Good examples are the failure to grasp the nature of EC law and the implications of various landmark rulings by the European Court of Justice, and the ability of the EU institutions to exert independent authority in EU decision-making.

⁴ For example, multi-level governance was consciously elaborated as a riposte to liberal intergovernmentalism (Marks, Hooghe and Blank 1996).

⁵ It may actually be the case that to deal effectively with complex contemporary political issues, regions will have to develop stronger formal institutions than originally envisaged (Tay et al, 2004). However, even if this argument becomes generally accepted, it is point about the required structures of a regional entity, not necessarily a point about how such phenomena should be studied.

⁶ Newell (2001:15) argues that this involves the following stages. First, *conflict-identification*, whereby different perspectives on a given research problem are compared. Next, *evaluation*, where each perspective is applied to the phenomenon in question, and tested for accuracy/comprehensives/strengths/weaknesses. Subsequently, a stage of *resolution* is undertaken, in order to bridge the various differences and gaps identified in the evaluation stage. Following on from this comes the *elaboration* of a new, shared perspective and vocabulary, which is used to generate a new shared understanding of the problem/issue. This understanding is in turn used to *generate a model, framework or set of hypotheses* which are then *tested* and, if necessary, revised.

⁷ For a broader discussion of these variables and hypotheses than space allows here, see Warleigh-Lack 2006 – on which this section draws. In that article I review other contributions to understanding the key variables to study, and also develop a typology of regionalisation.

⁸ This provides a certain overlap with the evaluation element of the second variable. Indeed the four variables set out here are distinguished for analytical purposes only; the empirical world is likely to demonstrate several feedback loops and inter-linkages.

⁹ For an introduction to the EU, see Warleigh 2004a. For excellent overviews of the state of the art in EU studies, see Bourne and Cini 2006 and Jørgensen, Pollack and Rosamond 2007. The ASEAN and APEC studies works consulted are listed in the reference section.

¹⁰ This has been defined by Acharya (1997) as a unique process relying on consensus, discretion, informality, non-confrontation and expediency – a deliberate contrast with 'Western' emphasis on bargaining and formal institutions.

¹¹ Technically it is correct to speak of 'EC law' rather than 'EU law', since the EC has no legal personality of its own and the European Court of Justice has competence only in matters of the European Community pillar of the Union. However, this technical distinction is often belied in practice, and would have been rendered obsolete had the Constitutional Treaty been ratified.

¹² Nationals of the CEECs have justifiably resented restrictions on their freedom of movement rights, considering themselves to have been offered second-class EU citizenship; many nationals of the pre-existing member states find the idea of belonging together in a political community, as opposed to trading, with, citizens of states with which they are often entirely unfamiliar very problematic. Of course, this is quite capable of

change over time, and the precedent set by EU enlargements to Greece, Spain and Portugal is favourable in this regard.

¹³ It is interesting to note that at least one expert on the international relations of the Asia-Pacific deliberately and explicitly omits Australia from his recent book on that subject (Yahuda 2004), although it should also be noted that other members of APEC are also excluded from his definition.

¹⁴ I am happy to concur with Katzenstein's argument that the US' own involvement in regionalisation processes is a function of its strategy to create an imperium (Katzenstein 2005).