East Asia and the Indian subcontinent

The first East Asia Summit: potential challenges to greater regional cooperation

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Contents

List of figures

Glossary of major institutions

APEC   Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam – est. 1989.

ARF   ASEAN Regional Forum
The ten ASEAN members, plus Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, the European Union (represented by its presidency), India, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, North Korea, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Russia, South Korea, Timor-Leste, and the United States – est. 1994.

ASEAN   Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – est. 1967.

ASEAN+3   ASEAN Plus Three
The ten ASEAN members, plus China, Japan, and South Korea – est. 1997.
(sometimes abbreviated to APT)

ASEM   Asia-Europe Meeting
A relatively informal annual meeting between the European Union presidency, the ASEAN countries, and China, Japan, and South Korea – est. 1996.

EAEG   East Asian Economic Grouping
Unsuccessful predecessor to ASEAN+3 and EAS, proposed by Mahathir Mohamad in 1990 but rejected by US and Japan.

EAC   East Asian Community
The ultimate goal of ASEAN+3 and the EAS, according to its proponents, is the creation of a Community in which the states of East Asia are closely integrated. This goal has never been clearly defined and most observers consider it a long way from fruition, but the EAS was created with the explicit intent of moving towards it.

EAS   East Asia Summit
The ten ASEAN members, plus Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, and Russia as an observer – est. 2005.
(sometimes written as East Asian Summit)

Introduction

The first East Asia Summit

In a conference room of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on 14 December 2005, seventeen heads of government from throughout the Eastern Hemisphere held a three-hour meeting, the first ever East Asia Summit (EAS). Although the meeting was short and led to only two concrete decisions – one to continue to meet regularly, and another to increase aid to prevent avian flu – it was hailed by most participants as a success, with some observers describing it as "the cusp of a new era" (Desker 2005). Yet its critics point to its similarities with other, arguably unsuccessful discussion forums like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and claim that it will be "just another Asian talkfest" (Colebatch 2005).

This dissertation examines these conflicting viewpoints to determine whether or not the Summit will be able to bring about closer regional cooperation in the long term. There is already an extensive literature on regionalism in East Asia (examples include Acharya 2000; Tran and Harvie 2003; Kim 2004; and Pempel 2005), and the first chapter reviews some of this material in order to build a theoretical framework with which to assess the EAS. In building such a framework, it is necessary to recognise the unique context in which East Asian regional bodies have developed, and so the first chapter begins by describing the history of regionalism in East Asia, to locate evidence for a unique East Asian style of regionalism. This style emphasises the importance of dialogue and incremental progress towards closer integration, and similar ideas have been employed in studying bodies such as ASEAN+3 (e.g. Stubbs 2002) and APEC (e.g. Ravenhill 2001), but not yet the East Asia Summit. Hence, this dissertation takes a step beyond the existing literature, in

that it takes existing theories and applies them to a new example, the EAS. In doing so, it becomes possible to construct a workable understanding of the Summit's early development, in a timely manner for the second meeting in December 2006.

The task of applying theory is handled in the second chapter, which shifts focus to the EAS itself and uses the first chapter's theoretical framework to assess the biggest challenges faced by the Summit. Although it is less than a year old, the EAS has already generated intense debate in the media and among academic policy institutes, and this debate has highlighted a series of problems that the Summit may have to overcome in order to successfully foster greater cooperation. The second chapter examines the most prominent of these problems, and demonstrates that the majority of critical arguments against the EAS are incorrect.

The overall technique, then, is to first lay down some theoretical underpinnings, drawn from the established scholarly literature, in order to understand East Asian regionalism in its own context (rather than the European context that many Western observers inadvertently use). This understanding is then applied to the first EAS in order to assess the most frequently cited hurdles to its success. The assessment draws upon media reports and analyses published by policy institutes, supported by factual material from government documents (which sometimes also indicate government objectives). Hence, the goal of this dissertation is to shed some light on the future prospects of the Summit, based on whether it will follow in the footsteps of other successful regional bodies, or become mired in the problems raised by its critics.

The background of the East Asia Summit is complex, and despite its short history as a meeting, the ideas behind it actually date back many years. The Summit's current form was originally conceived as a forum for the heads of state or government of the ten nations of ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – together with China, Japan, and South Korea (i.e. the states of Northeast Asia). However, after the 2004 decision to actually go ahead

with the Summit, its membership was extended to include India, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as Russia acting as an observer (For details of organisations and their acronyms, see page iv). Critics (such as Pillai 2006) latched on to this change, among other perceived problems, with some using it to argue that the EAS was doomed from the start.

On closer analysis, though, this assessment is inaccurate. As chapter 1 will explain, East Asian regionalism is a gradualist process, so it is impossible for the Summit to immediately introduce extensive measures for close integration. Nonetheless, it is true that the EAS fulfils the need for an institutionalised body with regular meetings that is (at least mostly) exclusive to the nations of East Asia. While the ten Southeast Asian states are extensively connected with each other through frequent ASEAN meetings, the Northeast Asian states do not have such a high level of multilateral interaction, and the two groups are connected to each other only in much larger groupings (such as APEC) or much less formal groupings (such as ASEAN+3).

In addition, while the EAS does face a number of substantive and difficult challenges – foremost among them the need to keep the leaders of its two largest economies, China and Japan, on good terms – these challenges are not likely to be insurmountable. As will be discussed later, ASEAN has been placed as its "driving force", so the EAS will follow standard ASEAN procedures of negotiating whereby agreement is sought behind closed doors and then publicly announced as a united position, thus mitigating the concerns of individual members and reducing the chance of conflict. Thus, as long as the participating leaders can be convinced of their common interests and of the need to act together, it is reasonable to expect that the EAS will successfully bring about an increase in regional cooperation. In this context, however, 'successful' change does not refer to the creation of an Asian version of the European Union. Rather, success or failure must be considered in terms of East Asia's unique style of regionalism – a style that will be elucidated in the first chapter.

Chapter 1

Understanding regionalism in an East Asian context

Since the East Asia Summit is an example of regionalism, the objective of this chapter is to map out the practice of regionalism in East Asia, in order to construct a framework for understanding the EAS in the context of the many multilateral groupings in the region. Hence, this chapter begins with a brief historical overview of East Asian regionalism, upon which the later discussion is based. Section 1.2 adopts a constructivist viewpoint and reviews some examples of regional integration literature to locate a set of principles with which to measure the likelihood of success or failure of new East Asian institutions, such as the EAS. This reveals that traditional regional integration theory, which is based on the European experience, does not apply to East Asia. Rather, East Asian regionalism has its own style, and the section that follows examines some examples of it from the Summit's short history. This is compared with some of the scholarly debate that the EAS generated to provide a foundation for making sense of its longer-term prospects in chapter 2.

For the purposes of this discussion, the European notion of regionalism mentioned above can be defined as the creation of formal institutions and enforcement mechanisms to bind together states that are diverse, but not extremely so. Theories based on this generally assume the existence of economies at approximately the same level of development (as Western Europe was in the 1950s) and that one or two states (e.g. France and Germany) will be strong enough to assert leadership over the others. In Europe, these conditions promptly led to the creation of a community – a concept which implies a degree of legalistic structure and some syn-

chronisation between domestic policies (Katzenstein 1997, p. 21). This is a lesser step than union, which Europe achieved in the 1990s, but something resembling it has been identified by several East Asian leaders as a desirable goal for their region (see Huisken 2005).

Another necessary definition is that of regionalism, which refers to any kind of collaboration or contact (typically formal but sometimes informal) between several international political actors, typically the governments of states (Gamble and Payne 1996, p. 2; Hettne 2005, p. 554). Generally, regionalism is only held to occur among governments in the same 'region', i.e. in the same geographical area, but a more important indicator of a region is clear patterns of interaction or shared consciousness between its members (Buzan 1998, pp. 69–70). This notion of linkages and shared identity forms the core idea in a wide range of definitions of regionalism (Rumley 2005, p. 3), but it is often used in different ways by different scholars when creating theory using experiences from different parts of the world.

In particular, regionalism in the eastern half of Asia has long been carried out differently to regionalism in the rest of the world, and these differences are explored in this chapter. East Asian regionalism places greater prominence on dialogue than on policy decisions and often emphasises connectedness over geography (so-called 'open regionalism') when determining memberships. Because of this, the most common theoretical approach to regionalism, based on criteria formulated from the European experience, is likely to be of little value. This chapter will therefore argue that these Euro-centric considerations of regionalism are inadequate, and that instead a uniquely East Asian perspective is needed to understand phenomena like the East Asia Summit.

1.1 A brief history of Asian regionalism

In East Asia – which in this dissertation refers to the states of Southeast Asia (i.e. the members of ASEAN) plus those of Northeast Asia (i.e. Greater China, Ja-

pan, and the two Koreas) – regionalism has only a short history, with most of its noteworthy organisations having been established in the last decade and a half. There was very little sign of regionalism in the East Asian area during the Cold War – those organisations that did exist were largely weak and generally did little to promote cooperative action (Pempel 2005, p. 7–10), leading many writers to describe the region as "under-institutionalised" (Simon 2006). Since the end of the Cold War, however, there has been a dramatic growth in meetings, summits, and institutions for cooperation in Asia (see Figure 1).

The oldest example of this growth is APEC, which was established just as the Cold War was ending in 1989. Although it spans the Pacific (see Figure 2, p. 10) and its meetings officially focus on trade, APEC involves many of the same countries as summits created by ASEAN, and often deals with similar issues. APEC was praised in its early years for its rapid progress towards agreements for trade liberalisation (e.g. Bergsten 1994), but has since fallen somewhat out of favour among scholars (e.g. Rumley 2005, Gyngell & Cook 2005) with its strongest remaining supporters being the individuals involved in APEC meetings (e.g. Choi 2006).

APEC aside, the bulk of East Asia's post-Cold War expansion of regionalism has centred on ASEAN, which has undergone such drastic change that it now earns acclaim as the most noteworthy example of regionalism among developing nations (e.g. Öjendal 2004, p. 520). ASEAN dates from the 1960s but did not reach its current level of activity until 1992, when the Singapore Declaration institutionalised its leaders' summits and created a free trade area which now facilitates a total of US$45 billion in intra-regional trade (ASEAN Secretariat 2003). During the late 1990s, ASEAN was expanded to include Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia (thus covering all of Southeast Asia), and it spawned a range of new institutions – most notably the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 1996, and ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN+3) in 1997.

The ARF was created as a response to the external pressures of the post-Cold War security environment, with ASEAN at its centre, but was criticised from the

start for a lack of concrete action (see Garofano 2002, p. 502). However, Leifer (1996) recognised at an early stage the value of ARF's incremental, consensus-based method of building security cooperation over a broad region, in spite of the inherent slowness and fragility of this model. This process of incremental confidence building has created an inclusive framework that is already showing an ability to address sensitive issues (Fukushima 2003, p. 87).

ASEAN's second major attempt at institution-building was a result of preparations for the first Asia-Europe Meeting, at which ASEAN members join with China, Japan, and South Korea to meet European Union representatives (Stubbs 2002, p. 442). Although the impact of the meeting itself was limited, it was crucial in helping to create a sense of connectedness between the Northeast and Southeast of Asia. In particular, the meeting's focus on economic issues highlighted the cross-border links that had developed between the ASEAN members and the Northeast Asian states. This contributed to the growth of a shared identity among East Asian states, which spurred the development of closer regional ties (Acharya 2000, pp. 163–169). By 1997, ASEAN had already established 'dialogue' relationships with China, Japan, and South Korea, so little effort was required to coordinate these separate meetings into one – the first ASEAN+3 summit.

Shortly before the first ASEAN+3 meeting, there was a sudden drop in the value of the Thai baht that caused widespread investor panic, leading to the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The effects of this crisis are traced out by Harris (2000), who points out that the 1997 turmoil highlighted weaknesses in Asia's multilateral institutions at the time. Indeed, Asian regional institutions did little overall to mitigate the effects of the crisis, prompting various calls for reform (such as Wesley 1999). In the longer term, however, the crisis helped strengthen ASEAN+3 and other institutions – partly because it spurred leaders into addressing the flaws in East Asian regional arrangements, but primarily because the rapid spread of what was initially a domestic problem highlighted the way in which the region's economies are interconnected. This encouraged countries in the region to identify with each other where they previously would not do so. Indeed, most commentators agree that the
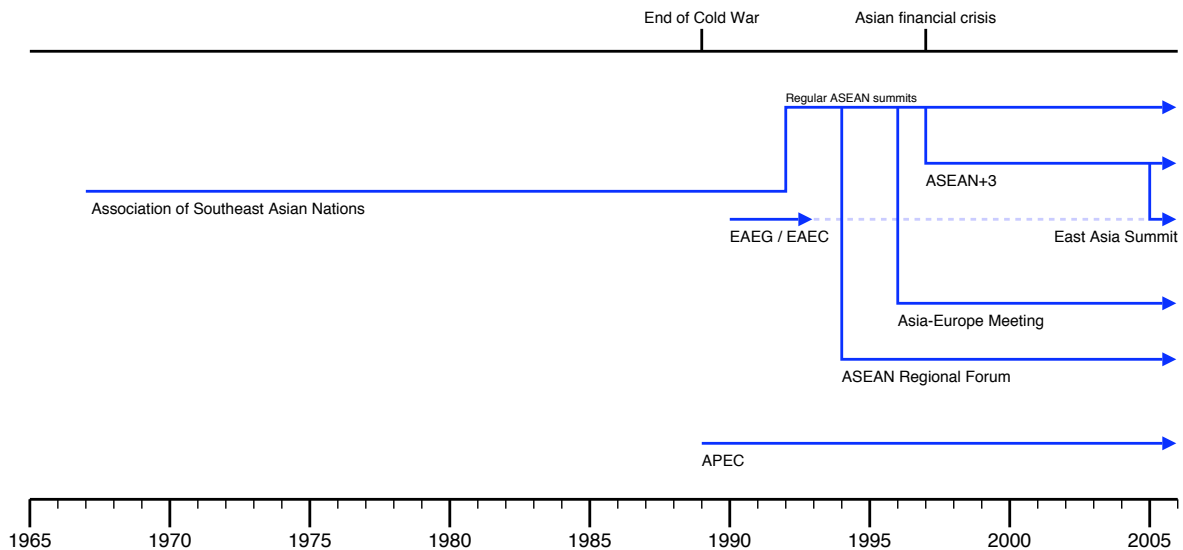
Figure 1. Timeline of selected East Asian regional organisations.

crisis was the single most important contributing factor to the growth of East Asian regionalism in the following years, due to the sense of togetherness created by both the rapid region-wide effects and the cooperative solutions that emerged (Webber 2001, p. 357).

Thus, in the aftermath of the crisis, there was a substantial increase in the degree of shared identity in East Asia (and particularly Southeast Asia). This explains why the EAS did not come into existence earlier than it did, even though the idea of an pan-Asian trade group dates back to the 1960s (Dutta 1992, p. 5), and serious integration proposals first emerged in the 1980s (Linder 1986, p. 115). The most famous such proposal came in 1990, when Malaysia's then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad announced a plan for an East Asian Economic Group (EAEG) that would link the Southeast Asian states with Japan for strengthened economic ties and the promotion of free trade (Low 1991, p. 375). The United States disapproved of Mahathir's plan, as did Japan (largely due to American pressure), which made it difficult for him to muster support among his counterparts in other Asian nations (Terada 2003, pp. 256–261). The US pushed for the further development of APEC instead, which ultimately took over the economic cooperation role initially envisaged by Mahathir.

After the 1997 crisis, however, the idea that East Asia might represent a coherent group (rather than a loose assemblage of smaller regions) had become firmly entrenched, with the crisis highlighting how Japan, South Korea and China were not insulated from events in Thailand and the Philippines. This made it much more difficult to reject the idea of establishing a multilateral institution that spanned the region, encouraging many regional leaders to seriously entertain the idea. Coupled with support from ASEAN as a group, this provided sufficient impetus for ASEAN+3 to be formed and to conduct regular meetings. Over time, the sense of identity shared by East Asian states continued to develop and grow, prompting a decision at the 1998 ASEAN+3 summit meeting to appoint an East Asia Vision Group of "eminent persons" to study the possibilities for greater integration among the countries of East Asia, and recommend methods for bringing it about (Tay 2005).

Two years later, the ASEAN+3 leaders appointed an East Asia Study Group of senior officials from countries in the region to identify methods for implementing these recommendations. The EASG report led to a series of (mostly informal) discussions about how the planned new 'East Asian Community' should be brought about. One of the report's key recommendations was that the ASEAN+3 meeting be allowed to evolve into an 'East Asian Summit', consisting of the same members but with tighter integration on a wider range of issues (EASG 2002, p. 50). Although this was initially intended as a long-term goal, at the 2004 ASEAN summit the topic of East Asian Community sparked extensive discussion, and this led Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi to offer to host an East Asia Summit alongside the 2005 ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur (Masaki 2005). Recognising the benefits of closer integration for their own economies, most of the key ASEAN members supported this plan, leading to the inaugural meeting on December 14 (Zuraidah 2004).
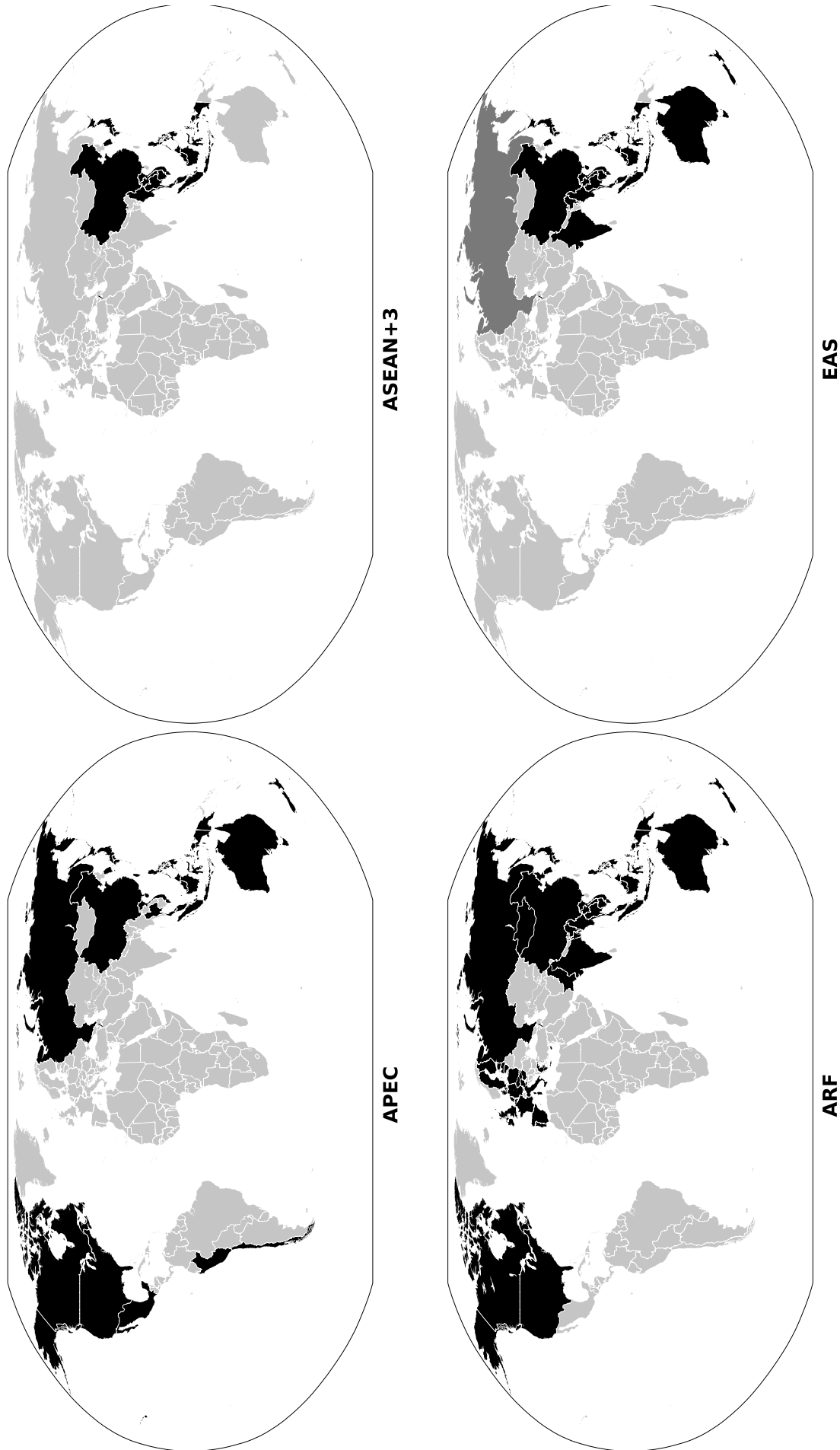
Figure 2. Membership maps for major regional organisations in East Asia.

1.2 Theoretical approaches to regionalism

To construct a more detailed understanding of the EAS and the integration opportunities it provides, the discussion must be framed within existing approaches to international relations. The most common such approach is realism, which assumes that states are the only unit of international politics and that state interests are centred on military strength. However, war between states in Southeast Asia is extremely unlikely, because ASEAN has successfully promoted diplomatic solutions to end hostilities between several of its members (Kivimäki 2001, pp. 8–11). In addition, most realist theories assume that national interests are defined by states and are generally unchanging over time, which ignores the fact that the actions of states are decided by its (human) leaders. Factors that influence the beliefs and opinions of those individuals – such as exchanging ideas with other leaders – may have major effects upon state action. For these reasons, realism is inadequate for constructing an understanding of the East Asia Summit and the regional processes that created it.

The main alternative to realism in contemporary theory is constructivism, as developed by Alexander Wendt and Peter Katzenstein (among others), which is based on analysing the ideas and beliefs that inform each leader's decisions in order to understand those decisions, and does not focus upon states as the sole unit of analysis. From this foundation, constructivism makes it possible to examine how collective identities might be formed through the sharing and exchange of ideas (Wendt 1994, pp. 388–391) and how these process contribute to regional relationships. This makes constructivism much more inclusive than most other international relations theory, in that a constructivist approach allows for examination of both the individual factors and shared norms behind particular decisions (Katzenstein 1997, p. 11). It also points to the importance of processes of socialisation, which is the essence of East Asian regionalism and will be discussed further in the following section – accordingly, this dissertation adopts constructivism as its overarching model.

There are also a number of more specific theoretical explanations for regionalism itself that can act as a framework for deciding whether a given institution will be successful. These explanations – the literature of regional integration – were (until recently) based heavily on the work of the early functionalists, such as Haas (1958) and Mitrany (1966), who discussed the European experience almost exclusively. As a result, much of the international relations theory about regionalism is heavily Eurocentric, based on assumptions such as the existence of modern industrial economies or incremental gains from each step of integration (Axline 1994, p. 181), neither of which are universally present in East Asia.

A frequently-cited example of this kind of writing comes from Mattli (1999), who attempts to study regionalism in Europe (alongside other regions) over several time periods to produce criteria for why some institutions succeed and others fail. One of Mattli's suggestions is that integration cannot proceed without a state in a region willing to lead the task of driving integration forward (i.e. a leader to 'supply' integration). He also argues that integration can be encouraged by economic differences among a region's member states (thus creating 'demand' for closer links), because leaders will feel unable to maintain power unless they cooperate (Mattli 1999, pp. 41–67). These ideas are built upon by Webber (2001), who derives two major prerequisites for successful regional integration in East Asia: the level of cross-border exchange among countries in a region, and the presence of states willing to lead the task of building institutions.

In actual use, though, Mattli's (and Webber's) criteria paint an overly negative picture – such as when applied to ASEAN, which is widely regarded as the most successful regional body in Asia (Narine 1998, p. 195). Prior to 1990, ASEAN members had insignificant levels of trade with each other, and the group's leadership for building regionalism was inconsistent. ASEAN should therefore be incapable of reaching its goals of avoiding conflict and fostering cooperation (Mattli 1999, p. 165). This is clearly false – as discussed earlier, ASEAN is imperfect but has successfully created a sense of regional unity and managed conflicts such as the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia in the 1980s (Goh 2003, p. 118).

However, this analysis does reveal some of the features that *are* needed in a theoretical framework for assessing East Asian regionalism. For example, Mattli's discussion suggests that there must already be some degree of contact between states if a new organisation is to have any chance of success. This is reflected in the East Asian experience, where APEC enjoyed early success with a membership that had existing connections, but encountered difficulty later as its membership was expanded to include countries with little prior involvement in the region (Ravenhill 2001, p. 207–208). Similarly, although Mattli wrongly insists that one or two strong countries are needed to lead a regional integration project, it is true that without organisation and coordination any attempt at regionalism will fail. Even if it does not come from a single powerful state, regional integration needs a focus and a clear direction, and it is reasonable to argue that threats to an organisation's ability to maintain focus will be damaging to the organisation itself. Thus, the criteria for successful regional cooperation in East Asia can be conceptualised in terms of the twin requirements of clear vision and direction, and some form of prior contact (even if it is not the economic closeness that Mattli demands).

1.3 An East Asian 'style' of regionalism?

If an organisation meets these criteria, the 'success' that can be expected is not the same as the binding decisions that are common in regional institutions among the wealthier nations of Europe and North America (Katzenstein 1997, p. 5). Rather, the common theme throughout new East Asian regional meetings since the end of the Cold War is that they have encouraged attendees to build a rapport and to openly discuss matters of concern – in other words, they have fostered socialisation. Thus, understanding socialisation is of critical importance to properly understanding the conduct of regionalism in East Asia (Acharya 2000, p. 10). This is especially the case for some of the younger East Asian regional bodies, which have not yet created any significant policy decisions but have been able to bring about increased socialisation.

Socialisation, in this context, refers to the process by which regional leaders gradually familiarise themselves with each other's practices and beliefs, so as to build trust between them and encourage them to think in terms of shared interests rather than exclusive individual needs (Johnston 2003, pp. 114–117). Over time, this will reduce the risk of one country interpreting the actions of another as a threat, because socialised leaders will generally trust that the reasons behind other states' actions are not malicious, even in cases where they are caught by surprise (Johnston 2003, pp. 123–130). Thus, in the long term, socialisation can be described as a process for building peace and regional stability by strengthening relationships and sharing ideas among leaders of different countries (see Ravenhill 2001, p. 39).

One of the most common criticisms of regional bodies in East Asia is that they have few achievements and reach those achievements only very slowly, and one of the most common responses to this is to argue that before East Asian institutions can introduce binding decisions or impose rules and enforcement mechanisms, they must first encourage regional leaders to trust each other (see Severino 2001; Tan and Emmers 2005, p. 11). In other words, it is common to argue that the first (and so far most important) step in regionalism is to encourage socialisation. If this is true, then it is crucial to examine the East Asia Summit looking for signs of socialisation (or for factors that might impede socialisation), in order to gauge whether or not it will have a base of trust upon which to build later integration.

Socialisation is such an important concept because it is the only practical way for a regional body to handle the extraordinary diversity that characterises East Asia (Kim 2004, p. 54). There are almost no measures on which all of the states of East Asia are similar, with economic growth, systems of government, religion, ethnic composition, and quality of infrastructure all represented at different extremes by different countries in the region. While Europe is also diverse – particularly in language, culture, and religion – few areas in Europe exhibit the enormous disparities of economic growth that can be seen in East Asia, where (for example) prosperous Singapore is barely a thousand kilometres from poverty-stricken Cambodia. Although it is easy to overstate the case for exceptionalism, it is nonetheless true

that East Asian regional bodies must deal with a higher level of diversity than similar bodies in most other parts of the world.

In addition, post-Cold War regionalism in East Asia differs from Europe in that new Asian regional organisations operate differently – with little attention paid to rule-based decisions and a strong emphasis on state sovereignty. Although sovereignty is frequently prominent in discussions between governments in Europe or at the United Nations, it generally does not prescribe the course of debate to the extent that it does in East Asia (Toon 2004, p. 226; Ravenhill 2001, p. 98). Thus, where European integration has brought about new bureaucracies, such as the strengthened European Commission after the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht, fears of loss of sovereignty mean that both new and old institutions in East Asia continue to survive with small secretariats (or none at all). Most meetings are held amongst leaders at a relatively high level and generally feature discussion of issues in broad terms, in contrast to the negotiations of specific policies and enforcement mechanisms that are characteristic of the European Union. Where European nations have, over time, agreed to cede portions of their sovereignty to a supranational body (facilitating discussions about the specific mechanisms of that cession), most East Asian leaders fiercely defend sovereignty at all times and insist that no regional activity be allowed to constrain it. The Southeast Asian nations explicitly state this idea in their doctrine known as the 'ASEAN Way'.

The ASEAN Way encompasses a number of broad principles related to state behaviour and diplomatic procedure, all of which stem from a preference for preserving sovereignty through the slow formation of consensus (Beeson 2002, p. 188). As states, ASEAN members are expected to respect the sovereignty of all others, and must therefore not intervene in the internal affairs of other states; they must also renounce violence and insist that all conflicts be resolved peacefully (Acharya 2000, p. 128). As participants at meetings, ASEAN members must follow the principles of *musyawarah* (consultation) and *mufakat* (consensus) – meaning decisions cannot be made without speaking to all participants and obtaining their agreement (Loke 2005, p. 16). To achieve this, ASEAN meetings rely heavily on in-

formal contact behind closed doors, only announcing decisions after consensus is reached. This allows members to present a façade of unity and prevents the public airing of strong disagreements, which is considered embarrassing in many East Asian cultures.

Even from these brief summaries, the presence of so many differences suggests that there is such a thing as 'East Asian regionalism', with several attributes that cannot be found together anywhere else in the world. A careful examination of the conduct of regional interactions between governments in East Asia highlights how different the activities that make up East Asian regionalism are from the binding decisions of law that characterise regionalism within the EU. Hence, Euro-centric models of regionalism will inevitably be of limited use when applied to East Asia, and instead it is essential to accommodate the sovereignty-bound, confidence-building consultations that are part of the ASEAN Way, mindful of the diversity of economic and political systems in the region.

1.4 Socialisation in the Summit's first year

To observe the principles of socialisation and East Asian regionalism in practice, the first year of the East Asia Summit provides numerous cases. For instance, at the 2006 mid-year EAS meeting of trade ministers (held alongside the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences), the Japanese delegation proposed a free trade area encompassing all current EAS members (Ting 2006). The proposal was met with cautious in-principle agreement, rather than enthusiastic acceptance, indicating the difficulty that will face any attempt at bringing the Summit's economies closer together as a collective. However, the mere fact that the proposal was made – and by the Japanese – indicates that East Asian regionalism as a whole, and the EAS in particular, has made significant strides in creating a greater sense of closeness among trade ministers in the region. As discussed earlier, a key component of Mahathir's EAEG proposal in 1990 was a broad trade liberalisation agenda, which was a major cause of the American government's disapproval of the idea – and, there-

fore, the lack of Japanese support. By contrast, in 2006 the Japanese government is actively promoting a policy that they previously rejected. Aside from the precedent provided by ASEAN's various free trade agreements (see Figure 3), the most probable cause for this is increased socialisation, with Japan becoming more integrated into the nascent 'network' of regional institutions (i.e. the web-like structure of socialising linkages; see Katzenstein 1997, pp. 35–38).

A second example of the East Asian style in the EAS takes the form of states discussing non-traditional 'human security' issues such as avian influenza. At the East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July 2006, it was decided that the EAS could seek cooperation in five 'key areas' – energy, finance, education, disaster relief and management of pandemics (MOFA Thailand 2006) – all but one of which are exactly this kind of non-traditional political/security issue. Indeed, it is on this front that the EAS has made the most progress so far: a declaration at the first Summit on the prevention and mitigation of avian flu. As is typical in East Asian regionalism, the bird flu declaration (ASEAN Secretariat 2005b) does not place restrictions on the Summit's participants and does not explicitly commit any resources. Rather, it follows the standard ASEAN Way template of 'agree first, decide details later'; it is therefore only a small step in comparison to the declaration on cooperative action from the 2005 APEC summit (Park 2005), which led to a ministerial meeting on bird flu in May 2006. However, the mere existence of a declaration on bird flu at the first meeting indicates that the EAS is a step forward from ASEAN+3, in that the first ASEAN+3 meeting did not produce any tangible responses to the pressing issue of the day, the 1997 financial crisis (see Hew and Anthony 2000, pp. 25–26).

In recognition of this progress, the leaders who attended the first Summit were unanimous in praising its success. Some of the post-Summit analysis reflects this, pointing to the significant role that the EAS will be able to play in future as a forum for confidence building and dialogue (see Desker 2005, Kuppuswamy 2005). However, a great many sources are more sceptical of the socialisation that has occurred at the EAS so far, pointing to the broad disagreements leading up to the
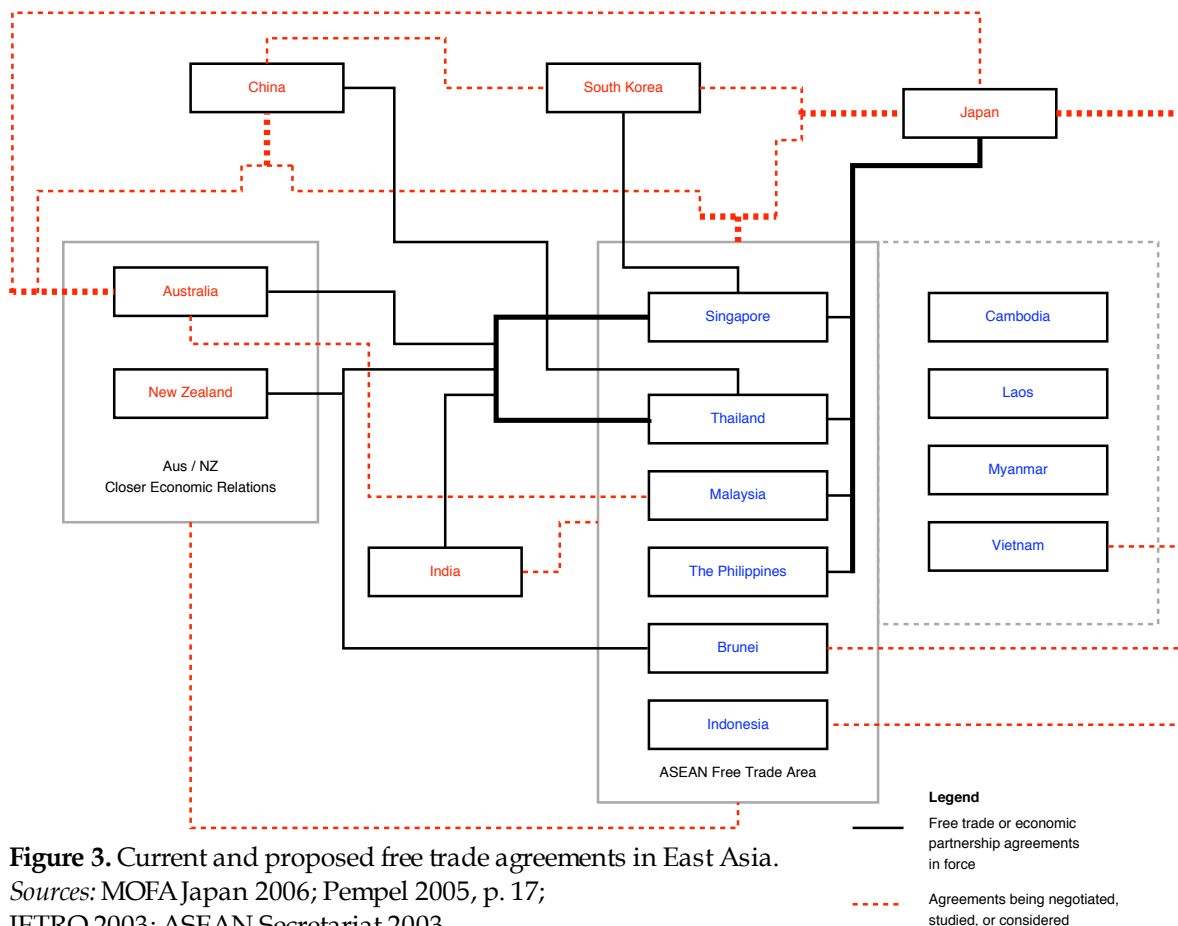
Figure 3. Current and proposed free trade agreements in East Asia.
Sources: MOFA Japan 2006; Pempel 2005, p. 17;
JETRO 2003; ASEAN Secretariat 2003.

EAS and the disagreements that continue to plague the countries involved. This is sometimes the result of theoretical bias, such as the fundamentally realist perspective used by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2005) in pointing to the lack of substantive decision-making from the first meeting, which misses the fact that the Summit was successful in strengthening dialogue.

Similarly, Mohan Malik (2005) argues that "multilateralism is a multi-player game" yet relations among the biggest powers at the EAS – particularly Japan, China, and India – lack the friendly and cooperative character needed for strong integration. Yet this can only be rectified with further contact and socialisation, even if the absence of friendliness makes dialogue harder to establish. Hence, the problems Malik identifies are not actually an issue for the EAS itself but for the later, still-nebulous goal of an East Asian Community. Similarly, the absence of decisive action from the first Summit can only change once leaders are socialised enough to trust each other in taking cooperative action. Therefore the most signific-

ant problems for the EAS will be those that threaten or impede its ability to foster socialisation; most other problems will become less relevant over time as further dialogue is built up.

1.5 Conclusion: how to assess the EAS?

This reasoning confirms the observation made earlier, that socialisation is the single most important element of the process of East Asian regionalism. Other concerns, such as acrimony between states or a lack of substantive decision-making, are secondary to the need to foster dialogue and build trust. This emphasis is expressed in the ASEAN Way and in the conduct of all major regional meetings in East Asia, and forms the heart of the unique style in which East Asian regionalism is carried out. Hence, when analysing the potential of the EAS to bring about greater cooperation over time, the discussion must be framed in terms that recognise this uniqueness. In the same way, the interactions that take place as part of the Summit process should first be measured in terms of their progress towards greater socialisation, and only secondarily in terms of how effectively they bring about European-style legalistic integration.

Therefore, when assessing the East Asia Summit, the most valuable approach will be to make a constructivist analysis of its processes of socialisation, rather than trying to employ realism or the rigid institutionalist principles that apply in the Western world. Applying this method suggests that the EAS is already making positive moves in the direction of closer cooperation on shared political issues. Yet this optimism must be tempered with a recognition of the many challenges and difficulties that lie ahead for the architects of East Asian integration. Although the EAS *could* coalesce into a giant free-trade pact, or guarantee peace and stability by allowing disputes to be handled diplomatically, whether or not it *will* achieve these aims is a topic of some debate. Various commentators have raised a number of obstacles that potentially threaten its unity – and these challenges are the focus of chapter 2.

Chapter 2

Assessing possible hurdles to the EAS's success

Ever since the idea was first proposed, the East Asia Summit has drawn criticism of its ability to bring about meaningful cooperation in the region. This chapter will examine some of those criticisms in order to gain an insight into whether or not the EAS will be able to promote closer cooperation in East Asia. This will be done within the framework set up in the first chapter – understanding East Asian regionalism as a process of socialisation which, to be successful, needs states to have existing contact and enough shared interests to create a clear direction for co-operation. Within this context, for instance, it is not a crucial issue that there are massive disparities of wealth between different EAS participants (as raised by Dillon 2005 and Frost and Rann 2006), because such disparities do not directly impede the process of socialisation.

The first of the more substantial issues to be addressed was raised not by scholars, but by some of the diplomats at the EAS themselves. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration from the first Summit makes it clear that ASEAN is the "driving force" (ASEAN Secretariat 2005a) behind the new body, yet non-ASEAN participants were not so eager to have a sub-regional grouping of relatively weak states at the centre of such a broad new institution (at least not without a better idea of the group's plans). As one Indian diplomat said to journalists, "to state that ASEAN is in the driver's seat ... the passengers have a right to know where they are going" (quoted in Malik 2005). Hence there is some concern that the central role played by

ASEAN may be detrimental to the Summit's broader goals of regional unity, an idea which is explored in this chapter's first section.

The next section assesses concerns over the role of China within the EAS, both on its own and in relation to Japan. Several observers (e.g. Kerin and Shanahan 2005; Terada 2006; Pomonti 2005) have raised fears that the Chinese leadership will try to take a primary role in the creation of an East Asian Community, dominating the affairs of its surrounding countries. In relation to Japan, some writers discuss the "bitter struggle for supremacy" between the two countries (Malik 2006, p. 207), while others point to the animosity created at the first Summit by former Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Upon closer inspection, these problems are very real, and could threaten the process of socialisation – but since the recent change of leadership in Japan bilateral relations have improved substantially, with both states much more willing to talk to each other.

Section 2.3 considers questions about which countries should be included or excluded from the Summit process. Almost every article written about the EAS since early 2005 has touched on this issue, with extensive attention focussed on the apparent limitation of not including the United States (e.g. Dittmer 2006, pp. 6–7). Much of the discussion takes the American point of view, with arguments that US interests would best be served by taking a more active role towards the EAS (Dillon 2005, Romberg 2005), often accompanied by concerns about Chinese dominance. In terms of the Summit's success, however, it emerges that the precise membership mix is less important than preserving a 'core' (comprised of the ASEAN+3 states) that is closely connected and shares common interests.

Another popularly-perceived concern (raised by IISS 2005, Frost and Rann 2006, and Earl 2005, among others) is that the EAS will have difficulty integrating into the existing 'network' of regional institutions, given that much of its role is already within the ambit of other summits. This concern originates in a belief that where an issue is already being handled by a regional body, the EAS will not be able to tackle it as well; for instance, Huisken (2005) argues that the greatest unre-

solved issue after the first Summit was "how the EAS would mesh with the existing ASEAN+3 process". Thus, section 2.4 addresses the question of how the new institution will coexist with the other major regional institutions in East Asia. This turns out to not be a significant issue, because within the processes of East Asian regionalism, the same issue can be addressed at different meetings as long as there is common ground between the participants. In addition, the agenda of the EAS has only minor overlap with most other regional meetings, and it is a much more focussed agenda than, for example, that of APEC.

Finally, section 2.5 raises a challenge to the EAS that has not emerged in the literature – the lack of involvement from the non-state sector (i.e. business groups, activists, think-tanks, etc.). Most of the other regional institutions in East Asia, such as APEC and the ARF, provide some means by which business advisory groups or policy researchers can make recommendations (i.e. 'track II' diplomacy), but there have been no signs so far that a similar inclusiveness will occur at the EAS. Although not a critical omission, many of the issues that the Summit will address (according to the stated goals of participating leaders) are well understood by non-government organisations or business groups, and excluding them may limit the ability of the EAS to implement any decisions it makes.

2.1 The role of ASEAN

Throughout the entire EAS process, the influence of ASEAN is unmistakable. It was ASEAN leaders, not leaders from the other participating states, who initially suggested an East Asia Summit, and it was they who created it using their own ASEAN+3 process as a framework. In addition, the first EAS meeting was held as part of the 11th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, and a decision was made to hold future meetings alongside future annual ASEAN summits. All of the leaders who participated in the first EAS were travelling to Kuala Lumpur anyway to engage in dialogue with the ASEAN countries directly, and when they did take part in the EAS they largely followed procedures laid down by ASEAN.

ASEAN occupies such an important role at the core of the EAS primarily because of the difficulty of getting the disparate states of East Asia to join together in a single institution. The largest economies in the region, China and Japan, have long-term suspicions dating from the Second World War and earlier, and until the 1990s there were a range of bitter inter-state disagreements in Southeast Asia. In this climate, and considering that ASEAN is the only regional body to have successfully survived these long-term disputes, it is inevitable that further regional institution building will be kick-started by ASEAN. Nonetheless, there are several potential disadvantages to ASEAN's dominant position at the centre of the EAS process.

Issue focus

The most noteworthy disadvantage is that ASEAN's centrality creates a sense that the issues most important to the EAS will be those that affect the entire region, including Southeast Asia, while concerns exclusive to the non-ASEAN countries will not hold the same primacy. In other words, the Summit may ignore smaller, more localised issues even if they are of vital importance – issues such as the ongoing tension on the Korean peninsula, perhaps the most pressing security problem in East Asia today (Dittmer 2006, p. 4). Since ASEAN does not cover the peninsula and does not have any substantive links with North Korea, it will be difficult for the EAS to address this issue in any significant way.

Despite this difficulty, there are nonetheless few other occasions on which the countries of Northeast Asia are brought together in any kind of multilateral organisation (Goodby 2005). Hence, the EAS is likely to succeed in the sense of providing some improvement on the current situation, regardless of its ability to tackle any particular issue. In addition, the centrality of ASEAN is important due to the smaller group's role as a mediator; aside from organisations that service regions larger than East Asia, such as the United Nations, and a small number of single-issue forums, the only regional cooperation in which the governments of Northeast Asia

participate is that which is organised by ASEAN. Hence, although the EAS is imperfect as a discussion body for the Northeast Asian states, there is so far no available alternative.

Socialisation and procedure

A second, more subtle form of ASEAN's influence over the EAS relates to the processes of socialisation and confidence-building that the Summit encourages, as part of the conduct of East Asian regionalism. Due to its role in organising and hosting the EAS, the institutional practices of ASEAN permeate through to the EAS; even timetabling the EAS after other ASEAN gatherings prompts the participants into following the same procedures for the EAS as they did for earlier meetings (Tan and Emmers 2005, p. 9). As a result, the EAS closely follows the principles of the 'ASEAN Way' – of consultation and consensus, and emphasising non-interference in the internal affairs of participating states.

Because one of the main outcomes of East Asian regionalism is socialisation (as discussed in chapter 1), ASEAN's centrality will have a substantial effect upon the outcomes of the EAS – the kinds of socialisation that occur at the EAS will largely mirror those that occur at ASEAN meetings. This implies that the ASEAN countries will remain more than just 'ordinary' members for many years to come, and that progress at the EAS will consist of confidence-building and the creation of trust rather than the explicit making of decisions – 'talking' rather than 'doing' – in much the same way as the other regional bodies created by ASEAN. Thus, the development of the EAS is likely to closely resemble the manner in which ASEAN developed, except on a somewhat larger scale.

In addition, ASEAN has started showing signs that it will alter the gradualist processes that it has used so far. In 2003, work started on an ASEAN Charter to give ASEAN legal embodiment, and after the financial crisis of 1997 several younger ASEAN leaders suggested reforms that would reject ASEAN's principles of non-interference and insistence on consensus. Although these reforms were not imple-

mented, it was older ASEAN leaders who rejected them, suggesting that when the new generation of leaders takes over in ASEAN's member countries, changes to ASEAN's processes will become possible (Wesley 1999, pp. 70–71), and this will likely have flow-on effects for the EAS.

2.2 China's dominance and conflict with Japan

Despite the central role that ASEAN occupies within the East Asia Summit, the largest amount of news media attention during the lead-up to the first EAS was directed at just one participant, China. Prior to December 14, many reports suggested that China would dominate at the new meeting and would use it to further its own geopolitical interests (e.g. Kerin and Shanahan 2005). Afterwards, several observers commented on the rift between China and Japan (and, to a lesser extent, South Korea and Japan) that was clearly present at the EAS (e.g. Kwan 2005).

Some theorists, such as Webber (2001), argue that successful regional integration needs one powerful state to drive the integration process forward, and throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, Japan was frequently described as being able to play this role. Since the mid-1990s, however, it has become far more common for China to be mentioned in discussions of East Asian regional leadership. This is underscored by China's status as the fastest-growing economy in the region, with 2004 per-capita GDP growth of 9.5% (ADB 2006, p. 312; IMF 2006, p. 50). That said, Japan remains the largest economy in Asia and its greatest investor, having spent over US $8 billion in the region in 2004 (Lim 2003, p. 22; MoF Japan 2005). Thus, China and Japan are often characterised as jostling for primacy at the regional level (see, e.g., Malik 2006, EWC 2006).

Yet Japanese officials have repeatedly couched their discussions of the EAS in terms of regional openness and East Asian countries working together, rather than being led by Japan (see *Asahi Shimbun*, 22 December 2004). As well as being a reflection of latent concerns about Japanese imperialism, this relatively soft approach

makes it difficult for Japan to establish any kind of hegemony or dominance over other states in the region. In addition, many of ASEAN's actions in setting up the EAS have been aimed at constraining China – for example, while ASEAN members agreed to China's request to maintain a primary role for the ASEAN+3 (in which China holds a stronger position than in the EAS), they rejected the Chinese proposal to host the second EAS in Beijing (Malik 2006, p. 210). The net result of these moves has been to keep the smaller Southeast Asian nations in control of the EAS, while not completely frustrating China; this tactic mitigates the chance that Chinese leadership will abandon or try to undermine the EAS, while still blocking any moves to assert dominance. Combined with the fact that it continues to face a range of domestic problems (from extreme inequality to dramatic environmental degradation), it is unlikely that China will be able to hold on to a permanent position of hegemony in the EAS, even if it can be attained in the first place.

The Yasukuni dispute

Separate from its leadership aspirations, China is also in the midst of a conflict with Japan that stems from the perceived refusal on Japan's part to fully acknowledge historical crimes. For example, Chinese leaders at the EAS (along with their counterparts in South Korea) objected to the visits by former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial to thousands of fallen soldiers that includes the remains of several convicted war criminals (*BBC News Online*, 15 August 2006). Taken as a whole, this conflict is solely a war of words and therefore does not involve any military force, nor does it pose any direct threat to the continued conduct of business between the two countries. Yet it has slowed the progress of socialisation – at the December 2005 ASEAN summit (of which the EAS was a component), China and South Korea refused to conduct the trilateral talks with Japan that they had held as part of the ASEAN+3 process since 1999 (*BBC News Online*, 9 December 2005).

As with problems related to the ASEAN Way (see section 2.1), generational change offers the most promising solution. With Koizumi having been recently re-

placed by Shinzo Abe, there is a chance that the new Prime Minister will calm Chinese concerns simply by not visiting Yasukuni (Toy 2006). Abe has already shown that he is serious about improving ties with China by making his first overseas visit as PM to Beijing (rather than Washington), and the Chinese leadership have indicated that they are happy to ignore problems created by the previous PM in order to strengthen the bilateral relationship *(BBC News Online*, 8 October 2006).

Even if the rift is not healed by Abe immediately, the Summit could still contribute to each country's leader eventually putting the matter behind them, because it promotes socialisation that might (in the long term) allow bridges of trust to be built over it. The EAS is one of the very few opportunities that the Chinese and Japanese leaders have to meet on a regular, institutionalised basis; only APEC offers another institutionalised event which both the Chinese head of government and his Japanese counterpart are obliged to attend (and APEC has its own problems; see section 2.4). This is beneficial for Sino-Japanese relations overall, because it means that a certain level of contact and dialogue between the two leaders is guaranteed.

2.3 Who is part of East Asia?

The other issue that was very heavily discussed in the news media during the lead-up to the East Asia Summit was the question of who to include or exclude from the Summit. Leaders from Singapore and Japan frequently commented on the need to keep the EAS process open and to welcome any state with interests in the region, while Chinese and some Malaysian leaders pressed for a more exclusive group of states that are geographically East Asian (Huisken 2005; Simon 2006). Ultimately, neither side was entirely successful, with the final composition of the first Summit including several states outside of the geographic East Asian area, while retaining a distinct focus upon its thirteen original members.

In the opinions of several participants, those thirteen members formed the 'core' of the Summit's membership, and were an uncontroversial group reflective of the original EAS plan (see Earl 2005; *The Straits Times*, 15 December 2005). Alongside the 'core', however, stands a 'periphery' comprised of India, Australia, and New Zealand, who were all invited some time after the original proposal for an EAS was laid out, and Russia, which held only observer status. Additionally, the United States was controversially not invited, but would have been a peripheral state had it attended. The bulk of the disagreement surrounding these members arises in arguments that they are not suitable for a regional body that is intended to result in an East Asian Community – in other words, that they do not share the essential 'Asianness' of the other members. Yet in terms of the theory discussed in chapter 1, the presence of additional members will only be a major problem if they lack existing connections with the other members, or if they are liable to draw the Summit's focus away from its most important concerns.

The four 'peripheral' members

Using this framework, the fact that the Indian government is working hard to build closer links with East Asia, expressed most clearly in its "Look East" policy, suggests that it will complement the EAS as an additional member rather than harm it (Kuppuswamy 2006). India was originally invited in the hope of balancing China (Terada 2006, p. 8) – yet despite their similar population, India's GDP remains one-third the size of China's and contributes to only 5% of global growth (Kota 2006). However, India's desire for closer ties will encourage it to support the existing direction of the EAS rather than undermine that direction to further its own goals. Similarly, Russia is also anxious to deepen links with the eastern half of Asia (Torbakov 2005), so it is likely to endorse the summit goals laid down by ASEAN. However, on the second condition for effective regionalism, Russia currently has only minor linkages to the East Asian countries – and in recognition of this, its desire to become a full member has been delayed by at least two years (*Times of India*, 20 May 2006).

In the case of Australia, the sharpest criticism came from Malaysia's former Prime Minister Mahathir for being "not really East, nor … Asian" (*The Age*, 7 December 2005), only to be followed by conciliatory remarks from current foreign minister Syed Hamid Albar (*Kyodo News*, 8 December 2005). Such criticism ignores the very real links Australia has with the region – as the first external state to formally consult with ASEAN in 1974, and as an A$55 billion trading partner (Downer 2005; EAU 2006, p. 72). In addition, the presence of Australia (and New Zealand) may prove beneficial in the long term, because in many EAS issue areas – such as energy supply, education, and the management of bird flu – both countries can offer a great deal to East Asian nations that generally have lower per-capita incomes and less developed science and technology sectors.

These observations highlight the fact that apart from the (relatively slim) risk of diluting the core group, there is little risk that the peripheral members will impede the progress of the EAS. Each of them already has relatively strong, or strengthening, links to the ASEAN countries (indeed, this was laid down as a precondition of membership), and it is unlikely that any of them will distract the Summit's focus away from issues that primarily relate to East Asia. In other words, the presence of New Zealand or of India (for instance) does not directly affect the ability of South Korea and Singapore to engage in dialogue and strengthen relationships, because the latter will still be able to take advantage of the readily available means of communication with other core members.

The United States

Of the countries that did not attend the EAS, the United States has generated by far the most discussion (e.g. Romberg 2005, Simon 2006). All of the plans so far for East Asian integration and community, dating back to Mahathir's EAEG, have excluded the US on the belief that it was not really a part of East Asia and that it already had its own regional community, defined by the North American Free Trade Agreement (see Aggarwal and Koo 2005, p. 210). Yet no other actor outside of the East Asian region has as much impact upon the region as the US; its military

continues to be the main guarantor of traditional state security, and the American market continues to be Asia's largest export destination, accounting for approximately 20% of the exports of EAS participants (ASEAN Secretariat 2004, p. 71; WTO 2005, p. 40).

The greatest risk from not including the US at the Summit is that it might shun the new body in the same way that it rejected the original EAEG in the early 1990s. The US stance towards these developments proved to be a fatal blow, primarily because the Japanese government was unwilling to participate in anything that was so heavily disliked by its most important ally (Low 1991, p. 377). However, the current Japanese leadership has shown that it is more willing to define policy on its own terms, even to the point of offending its largest trading partner through war shrine visits. Thus, it is less likely now that American influence will lead to a Japanese withdrawal from the EAS.

In addition, several US allies are present at the EAS, most notably the Philippines and Australia. The Philippines, for example, has significantly increased its American links since the September 11 attacks, albeit not to the exclusion of its activities in ASEAN or links with China (Banlaoi 2002, p. 307). The presence of such close supporters at the EAS should assuage American concerns that the Summit will make decisions contrary to US foreign policy (see Dillon 2005). Thus, although American interests will be well-served by keeping watch over the EAS, the US does not have reason to deliberately hinder the EAS as a result of its omission.

2.4 The EAS and other regional institutions

Apart from questions of membership, the most-discussed issue in academic writing since the first East Asia Summit has been how the Summit will interact with the many other multilateral bodies in East Asia (e.g. Cossa 2005; Romberg 2005). Although this is a wide-ranging concern, it is most significant in respect of the three largest institutions in the region; most of the smaller bodies will

easily be able to integrate with or cooperate alongside the EAS. Both ASEAN itself and its dialogue processes, for example, are smaller and more insular than the EAS, while the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Six-Party Talks on North Korea have significantly different membership, different areas of concern, and different objectives. Ignoring these bodies leaves the ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and ASEAN+3. None of these are quite like the EAS – in particular, each is narrower either in membership or in issue focus – but at various times the EAS has been compared to all three (e.g. IISS 2005; Miller 2006, p. 44).

Economic cooperation, including the United States : APEC

No regional institution in Asia has as much in common with the EAS as APEC, and hence many writers have described the pair as likely to clash (e.g. Choi 2006, pp. 18–19). APEC's membership (which, at 21 economies, is both large and diverse) does not cover East Asia as completely as the EAS, but it does include all of the major economic players in the region (see Figure 2, p. 10). Citing these membership differences after the December 2005 EAS, Australian Prime Minister Howard declared the Summit a success but claimed that it would inevitably play a lesser role in the Asia-Pacific region than APEC (Earl 2005). However, APEC has much more serious membership problems than the EAS, and these dominated debate at its meetings until a ten-year moratorium on new members was introduced in 1997 (Woo 2004).

APEC has a seventeen-year history of encouraging economic cooperation separate from the oft-stalled negotiations of the World Trade Organisation, but it is also frequently criticised for being ineffective (see Ravenhill 2001, p. 188), primarily because of its inability to maintain a clear focus in the face of a large and highly disparate membership (Xu 2003, p. 2). APEC cannot make any strong claim to being regionally-based, since its interests have been split by attempts to include all nations on the Pacific Rim. Malaysia and Chile, for example, do not have a great deal in common economically, and only 1.6% of Asia's exports go to South America

(WTO 2005, p. 40). This has left APEC struggling to find direction, and in some cases led to it being burdened with a wide range of policy measures that are not clearly related to each other.

In addition, APEC enjoys a lower level of support from the Chinese government than most other regional institutions, because it includes Taiwan as a separate entity (being a gathering of 'economies' rather than countries). Although forced to accept it as a condition of membership, Chinese delegates have indicated that they consider this situation highly unsatisfactory (Ravenhill 2001, p. 113). Combined with the fact that APEC is so emphatically oriented to economic concerns, this makes it near-impossible for APEC to diversify its issue focus in the foreseeable future.

Thus, APEC and the EAS should not be perceived as incompatible, even though APEC may succeed at drawing attention away from the EAS on certain (economic) issues. APEC's ability to introduce solutions to significant problems is heavily constrained by a unique lack of focus; even if the EAS were to encounter a similar difficulty, it would not be as severe because its primary members are much more closely interconnected. Together with the conflict between its "Western" and "Asian" members, and the reluctance of China to closely follow its resolutions, this makes it likely that APEC will remain a primarily economic body whose greatest strength, and greatest weakness, is its large size. By contrast to the EAS, it will lack both sufficient focus and sufficient decision-making ability to cause any major interference with the newer institution.

Building an East Asian Community: ASEAN+3

After it was decided that the East Asia Summit would involve states that were not geographically part of East Asia, the Chinese leadership announced that while it still supported the goal of an East Asian Community, it would prefer to see this realised through the ASEAN+3 process rather than the EAS (Earl 2005). Consequently, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration from the first EAS states only that the

new institution will "contribute" to the development of a broader Community, which some observers interpret as a downgrading of the EAS's status before it has even started (e.g. Cossa 2005). By contrast, ASEAN+3 was accorded prestige from its first meeting, having emerged in the midst of the 1997 financial crisis. In the aftermath of the crisis, ASEAN+3 launched the Chiang Mai initiative – perhaps the best defence currently in place against another crisis – which has established ASEAN+3's credentials as a mechanism for financial cooperation.

In its early years, ASEAN+3 was hailed as the final realisation of Mahathir's original East Asian Economic Group proposal (Beeson 2002, p. 197). It soon became clear, though, that the meeting was only the first step in forging the bonds needed to create a trade bloc. Tasked with finding the next step, the East Asia Vision Group recommended ASEAN+3 be formalised into an East Asia Summit, but when the latter developed its own different membership structure, some members expressed dismay and insisted that ASEAN+3 take a more important role. However, the intent of the Study Group in proposing an EAS was to construct a stronger institutional architecture around ASEAN+3, in recognition of the largely ad-hoc and informal process that ASEAN+3 meetings follow. ASEAN+3 lacks recognition as an independent institution; observers often use the term 'ASEAN+3' as the name of a meeting, but it is rare to see '*the* ASEAN+3' described as an agent in its own right as is common for the United Nations or the European Union.

Hence, ASEAN+3 currently lacks the depth needed to place it at the forefront of any attempt to bring greater integration to the East Asian region. Although the EAS is brand new and lacks this depth as well, ASEAN+3 has an existing agenda whereas the EAS is being developed from scratch. Thus, it will be easier to develop the EAS into a body with institutionalised economic and political linkages, akin to the European Community. ASEAN+3 is therefore not a significant competitor to the EAS; if anything, it simply complements the EAS by reinforcing the process of socialisation among its core members.

Security cooperation: ASEAN Regional Forum

Of the regional organisations that link all of the states of East Asia together, the one that is most likely to neatly complement the EAS is the ASEAN Regional Forum, the broader security offshoot of ASEAN. ARF involves all of the EAS countries along with the United States, the European Union, and other regional players (including Pakistan and Mongolia). Unlike the EAS, which discusses a range of issues with political, regional security, or economic significance, the ARF is focussed on security, and its meetings therefore feature foreign ministers (and occasionally defence officials) rather than heads of government. This makes it inherently different to the EAS, and ensures that even when ARF tackles similar issues to the EAS, it will do so in a significantly different way.

Despite extensive discussion over twelve years, the ARF has so far only been able to make progress in the first of its three planned phases – confidence building, preventive diplomacy, and conflict resolution (Fukushima 2003, pp. 84–85). For example, ARF has successfully encouraged most states in the region to publish white papers and budgets for their defence forces, but has not yet achieved progress on major territorial disputes (Garofano 2002, p. 519). Even when limited to confidence-building, however, the ARF is entirely compatible with the EAS goals of encouraging dialogue and building trust, because these goals are helped by any additional contact and dialogue between leaders. Indeed, confidence-building outside of the EAS, among a similar set of states, should facilitate the confidence-building and socialisation processes inside the EAS.

2.5 The non-state sector

The most notable difference between the EAS and the ARF is that the latter features participation from the non-state sector (primarily policy think-tanks) through its "Track II" process, while the former ignores the general world-wide trend of regional bodies allowing such participation. Similarly, APEC features the influential

APEC Business Advisory Council and study groups for academics (Goodings 2003, p. 216). Indeed, there is nothing in the East Asian style of regionalism that should inherently exclude the views of non-state groups – ASEAN, for example, has had links with chambers of commerce for over twenty years, and many of its economic policies in the 1990s were first suggested in a 1986 report by business groups (GoF 1986).

Although not strictly a 'challenge' to the EAS, in that the Summit process will not be any less able to continue if there are no changes, the absence of the non-government sector may well limit the Summit's legitimacy and render it less effective at implementing decisions (Tan and Emmers 2005, p. 14). APEC's links with business groups have, in some cases, provided extensive help with the implementation of decisions made at its annual meetings (Mullen 2003, p. 212), and the EAS might be slowed down if it does not employ similar help. Particularly in 'soft' issue areas such as human trafficking and forest fires, governments can try to construct and enact policy responses on their own, but doing so will be significantly less efficient than employing the existing knowledge and experience of non-government groups. Therefore, to ensure that the EAS can make and carry out decisions in the long term, the organisers and participants of the EAS should consider including non-state actors – particularly business groups and policy institutes, but also activists and social movements – into the Summit process.

However, this sentiment must be moderated by recognising that within many of the states in the EAS, non-state actors do not play any political role within the domestic sphere, and it is hardly reasonable to expect such governments to start respecting NGOs (for example) at an international level when they do not do so at home. Apart from the clearly authoritarian states, several of the Southeast Asian quasi-democracies do not have domestic social movements with a strong political voice. That said, social movements are not the only part of the non-state sector, and even those countries that most dislike Western-style NGOs might not be critical of business groups or an academic think tank. Thus, space should be created within the EAS process to accommodate such groups.

2.6 Conclusion: assessing challenges to the EAS

In terms of the concepts of socialisation from chapter 1, it is possible to be cautiously optimistic about the EAS. Given that it has already engendered agreement among its members on several issues, its future prospects are distinctly positive. East Asian regionalism requires that the participating states have some degree of prior connection with each other, and that there be a shared set of values and interests so the organisation can establish and maintain a clear focus on its assigned issue area. The EAS features both – and none of the popularly-perceived hurdles to the Summit's success are likely to interfere with those existing relationships or shared values. For example, the centrality of ASEAN may make some members nervous, but will help the EAS keep a clear sense of direction and ensure adequate contact between leaders (some of whom would rarely meet each other otherwise). Similarly, that sense of direction will remain unaffected by the Summit's relationship with other East Asian regional bodies; instead, the other organisations will complement it by further strengthening region-wide socialisation.

Most questions of membership are also non-issues because they relate either to existing members who are sufficiently well-integrated into the region to not cause problems, or to potential members (the US and Russia) that are better left out and will not cause any harm by their omission. This leaves only the problem created by China's conflict with Japan, which *does* potentially threaten the Summit's sense of direction. Yet that issue is limited in its impact by the potential for other EAS members (led by ASEAN) to carry on regardless, and by the fact that the EAS provides the best external forum to bring the two countries together for talks no matter what the state of their bilateral relationship. Therefore, none of the popularly-perceived threats to the EAS are severe enough to stop the process of socialisation, although it may occasionally be slowed down by them.

Conclusion

Not an Asian Union, but not a worthless talk–fest

Given the difficulty of commenting on the future of a brand-new institution (short of wild speculation), any conclusions about the East Asia Summit at this stage must be seen as limited in scope, with the constant caveat that many factors might change. Yet from the analysis of the Summit's greatest problems in the previous chapter, there is significant evidence to suggest that cautious optimism is warranted when asking how successful the EAS will be at fostering closer regional cooperation. Although the problems that face the EAS will prevent the immediate formation of a political union, they are not so large as to restrict the EAS from achieving any positive outcomes.

Having dispensed with the Eurocentric conception of regionalism in chapter 1, the way in which the EAS fits within the existing pattern of regionalism in East Asia is now discernible. The EAS inherits many of its conceptual and procedural foundations from ASEAN, since it is a product of the latter body. Its differences from other regional bodies are also clear – a membership that is large but not as large as ARF or APEC, which should grant it a more specific focus for issues under consideration, and a series of discussions that primarily involve national leaders rather than ministers or lower-level officials. From these observations, it is possible to identify clues as to how the EAS will evolve and what direction it will take.

For example, the new entity's early development is very likely to follow a similarpath to that of other bodies created by ASEAN. Hence, it can safely be assumed that the EAS will not tackle issues that cause its members to feel that their sovereignty is threatened in any way, because it does not abandon the 'ASEAN Way' and the slow, consensual style of East Asian regionalism (rather, it reinforces these conventions). Given that ASEAN has established itself as the Summit's "driving force", and that there are only small and limited suggestions that the Southeast Asian emphasis on sovereignty might eventually be relaxed, it is likely the EAS will avoid such issues for some time to come.

Notwithstanding the concerns raised by some observers about the EAS's membership, it can also be concluded that the composition of the Summit mostly meets the principles laid down in section 1.2 as determinants of successful East Asian cooperation. Considering the EAS in terms of broader processes of socialisation, there is enough of a sense of direction to keep the dialogue process going for at least the first few years, and the membership consists solely of countries that have existing links at the business or civil society levels (due largely to ASEAN's decision to only allow in states that already had substantial relations with it). Thus, if it is the case that successful regionalism in East Asia depends on shared values and existing state-to-state linkages, the EAS has a reasonable chance of success.

In the wider context of political theory, this conclusion is significant because it provides an additional data point against which to assess general arguments about East Asian regionalism. There are few other writers who have taken the concept of socialisation (and other features of East Asian regionalism) and used them to measure this particular new organisation, so the present study offers a new example of such analysis. Because the EAS largely mirrors the underlying basis of ASEAN and the ARF, the arguments here do not differ substantially from arguments in much of the writing about those bodies. In other words, this dissertation has taken an existing body of theory and confirmed that it can adequately be used to explain a new case, the East Asia Summit.

It should also be noted that the EAS advances a number of important goals and plugs several major gaps in the emerging 'network' of regional institutions. For instance, the EAS provides a crucial point of contact between the leaders of Japan and China, as well as the best opportunity (apart from the far less formal ASEAN+3 meetings) for the thirteen states of East Asia to engage in dialogue and confidence-building directly with each other. In addition, the Summit provides a strong opportunity to move towards the liberalisation of trade across the region (offering a recovery from the failures of APEC), and also provides an additional chance for non-traditional security issues – such as the environment, disease, and financial stability – to be discussed at an East Asian regional level.

There are already several other mechanisms for states in the region to discuss security issues of this type, but they are either limited in scope (such as APEC) or do not involve state leaders (such as the ARF). Thus, combining the discussion from chapters 1 and 2, the EAS is useful in that it provides an additional instance of high-level dialogue about these problems, increasing the amount of socialisation that takes place and therefore increasing the likelihood that leaders will trust each other enough to commence collective action. Compared to the way that similar issues are dealt with in Europe (where directives can be issued to member states demanding concrete action), this is a relatively weak process, but it is the best that can currently be done within the context of East Asia. This is not likely to change until regional leaders become willing to reduce their heavy emphasis on state sovereignty – which, in turn, will not happen until extensive trust has been established between leaders, so that they are willing to share control over potentially sensitive policy areas.

If such cooperation can be achieved, then the initial rationale for creating the Summit, an East Asian Community, may be possible after all. The creation of a Community depends not only on the degree of trust and socialisation among leaders, but on the extent to which regional economies are able to link with and complement each other, as well as the degree of agreement that can be reached on pursuing shared interests across all levels of government (rather than just the

highest executives). There must be a long history of region-wide trade, extensive cultural understandings, and stronger people-to-people links if those factors are to have any hope of being established. An understanding of the EAS in terms of existing theories of East Asian regionalism can explain how likely such a high level of integration will be – but given the current regional political environment, that probability does not appear to be very high.

For this reason, the most optimistic assessments of the EAS – that it will lead to an Asian answer to the European Union – are almost certainly false, or at least premature. If the EAS does bring about Community (which itself is a lesser goal than union), it will not be for a great many years, after sufficient trust has been established to wear down both long-term animosities and the unrelenting insistence on state sovereignty by regional leaders. By the same token, it is both premature and an exaggeration to declare the Summit a failure, as several observers have done, because it is too early to say whether the Summit will be successful in building that requisite level of trust. Even if it cannot build a very high level of trust, the EAS can still offer a great deal to the states of East Asia – such as a forum for diplomatically addressing grievances, and a framework for pursuing trade liberalisation and economic integration. Thus, although a realist perspective might insist that the EAS is a futile exercise in the face of uncertain state objectives, or a Eurocentric model of regionalism might describe it as simply a "talkfest" devoid of binding decisions, both perspectives are incorrect. The most appropriate description of the EAS lies somewhere between the extremes – emphasising that while it is too early to tell for sure, the Summit shows far too many positive signs to doubt that it will bring about increased political and economic cooperation.

27 October 2006 – 13 116 words

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