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Awkward States and Regional Organisations:
The UK and Australia Compared

Baogang He[1], Philomena Murray[2] and Alex Warleigh-Lack[3]

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[1] Chair in International Studies, Deakin University, Melbourne.
[2] Jean Monnet Chair *ad personam*, School of Social and Political Sciences, The University of Melbourne. Also Research Associate, UNU-CRIS; Visiting Professor, College of Europe; Research Associate, IIIS, Trinity College Dublin; Adjunct Senior Fellow, NCRE, University of Canterbury.
[3] Currently Professor of Politics and International Relations, Brunel University; from 1 October 2011, Professor of EU Politics, University of Surrey; also Associate Fellow, UNU-CRIS, Bruges.

1. INTRODUCTION – AWKWARD PARTNERS AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION[4]

Since the late 1980s, the comparative study of regional integration has undergone a renaissance, largely as a result of the revived processes of regionalism outside the European continent. Originally undertaken largely outside EU studies, or with the EU and its academic literature constructed as an Other by scholars of the 'new regionalism', a recent rapprochement has generated the grounds for cross-fertilisation and a shared research agenda in which both sets of scholars are considered capable of contributing to an ongoing process of research (Acharya and Johnston 2008; Murray 2010a; Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond 2010; Robinson and Warleigh-Lack 2011).

This cooperation across scholarly frontiers is intended to generate theoretical and methodological innovation, and does not expect regions to be fully comparable with each other across every factor, variable or time period (Warleigh-Lack and Van Langenhove 2010). However, it also has more policy-relevant dimensions, since a process of comparison – or perhaps *learning* (Robinson 2011) – can provide insights into how comparable states facing similar dilemmas regarding regional integration might find ways of resolving or transcending them. Situations previously considered unique and perhaps intractable if considered through the lens of an area specialism may now appear more capable of solution, or at least more capable of consideration from a fresh perspective.

One such comparison is the role of the UK and Australia in their respective contexts of regional integration. Although these processes themselves are rather different – the European Union (EU), ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) processes occupy rather different places on the scale of region-ness (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000)[5] – the issues confronted by the two states in becoming fully part of their respective regions are, prima facie, strikingly similar. Both can seek to play a leading role regionally but are often considered outside

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[4] The terminology is of course Stephen George's (George 1998).George does not define 'awkwardness' in his book, and, although we follow his lead in this paper by relying on a jargon-free definition, we suggest that awkwardness is a mixture of obstructiveness and maladroitness, of not having a clear role in their region.

[5] The EU, on this typology, is best considered as a *region-state*; ASEAN could be considered a *regional community*; and APEC fits most squarely with the *regional complex* category.

the mainstream, and thus with no sustained leadership capacity, by other states in their respective regions.

The present paper is the first stage in a broader project which seeks to explore the possibilities for regional leadership by the UK and Australia. Its purpose is to assess and compare the ways in which the two states are 'awkward partners' in their respective regions, seeking to draw on the secondary literature to facilitate a first cut at comparison and to generate hypotheses about how the states might overcome their awkwardness, which will in turn be explored in subsequent empirical work. To carry out the comparison, we focus on how both material and ideational factors contribute to the awkwardness of the two states. As material factors, we count institutional and policy preferences, economic objectives, security concerns and domestic politics; as ideational factors, we count identity, socialisation, and vision. In this paper, 'identity' refers to whether or not the UK and Australia consider themselves to be fully part of their region; 'socialisation' refers *both* to whether their partners initially considered them as such, *and* to whether they have come to do so over time; and 'vision' refers to how Australia and the UK would like their respective regions to develop.

The hypotheses we explore in this paper are set out below:

H1: The UK and Australia are comparable as 'awkward partners' in their respective regions.

H2: For both the UK and Australia, their status as 'awkward partners' is ultimately a matter of their partners' perceptions, rather than a set of specific objectively-measurable conditions.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the next section, we explore the ways in which the UK has been an 'awkward partner' in European integration, generating a provisional understanding of the mix of factors at play in the causes and perception of this condition. Because of space restrictions, this can only be an overview rather than an in-depth review of the literature. In section three, we do the same regarding Australia and

regionalism in its region, within the same practical constraints. In section four, we compare and assess the findings, and also generate hypotheses regarding how the UK and Australia might overcome their awkwardness and move closer to the centre of their respective regions.

2. AWKWARD ALBION: THE UK AND THE EU

Despite the fact that other member states of the EU can be just as obstinate in negotiations or problematic for the mainstream in terms of their policy preferences, the UK is generally considered the paradigm case of an 'awkward partner' in the European integration process. And yet, to date the UK has never rejected either an EU treaty or EU membership in a referendum. Similarly, it has a reputation as a reliable implementer of EU legislation, with a better track record in this regard than most other member states (Armstrong and Bulmer 2003).The perception of British 'awkwardness' has also persisted despite the fact that, in day-to-day EU operations, the UK is often a dextrous player of diplomatic games, with officials able to smooth feathers that have been ruffled by their political masters (Wall 2008). In what follows we explore the material and ideational factors which allowed this diagnosis to arise and persist.

Material factors
Institutions and policies
The UK has always been out of step with the European mainstream on the matter of the kind of institutions that are required for the integration process, and also on many of the policies to be produced by this system. The construction by London of an intended rival to the then-prospective European Economic Community – EFTA, the European Free Trade Association – in 1959 clearly showed British reluctance to allow supranational institutions to develop at regional level. EFTA was, in fact, deliberately designed as a means to allow free trade in industrialised goods, but with no preference for European partners over those in the Commonwealth, and with no 'flanking policies' such as the Common Agricultural Policy (Young 1999). This preference for free trade over other areas of cooperation, and also a general reluctance to include a wide range of policy areas

in the EU's remit, has been a constant feature of British policy towards the EU (Carey and Geddes 2010). Furthermore, the UK has also generally been sceptical of institutional deepening and increases in the EU budget, preferring to concentrate on policy substance instead (Wall 2008) – a preference which always has at least the potential to clash with the Treaty commitment to 'ever closer union'. In terms of institutions and policies, therefore, the UK has not been a driver of integration within the EU.

Moreover, Britain's failure to join the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) in 1952, despite the invitation to do so, meant that the EU institutions and policies which grew from this root did not reflect British preferences (George 1998). Thus, once the UK finally joined the then-European Economic Community in 1973, it was difficult for UK officials and politicians to operate effectively in the EU system: coming from political and legal traditions that are still outside the continental mainstream (Armstrong and Bulmer 2003), British officials and politicians often found the EU processes and institutions frustrating (Wall 2008). The resultant iterated attempts to renegotiate the terms of membership and core policy settlements such as CAP meant that the UK demonstrated different policy priorities from those already established, right from the outset (Weigall and Stirk 1992).

Economics

Economic policy considerations have also been important in shaping perceptions of UK awkwardness. As mentioned above, the UK has persistently advocated a free-trade, economically liberal Europe. This advocacy has not been without success – the UK under Thatcher was a key contributor to the creation of the Single European Market (Bache and Jordan 2006a, Wall 2008) – but it has often placed the UK at odds with other member states, whose preferences are, or at least have been, for other varieties of capitalism. A key issue here has been the so-called European Social Model, about which even Labour governments have been sceptical (Geddes 2002); British governments have repeatedly resisted transfer of social policy to the EU on grounds of both national sovereignty and ideological difference as, in sum, they have favoured a more market-driven approach to employment and welfare issues than their continental counterparts. The UK's refusal to join the Euro, and its persistent insistence that taxation policy remain

almost entirely a national competence, are further important indicators of difference from much of the EU mainstream.[6]

Perhaps the most notorious example of British disruptiveness was the row about the contribution to the EU budget by the UK. The budget rebate discussions began under the premiership of James Callaghan, and were pursued with vigour to their conclusion by his successor Margaret Thatcher (George 1998). The negotiations were long-lasting and often acrimonious, with the UK insisting it paid more into the EU coffers than was appropriate given its relative wealth levels, and others insisting that the terms of accession – as had been renegotiated in a way not seen before or since to facilitate the 1975 referendum on whether the UK should remain a member state - should be honoured. Although the UK's aim was never to receive back through means such as regional development funds every penny that it paid in (Wall 2008), the impression that is sought such *juste retour* was widespread and long-lasting.[7]

Security

Security calculations were certainly part of the UK's choice to seek membership of the then-EEC, but this was a negative choice taken for fear of being left behind by a potential US-USSR-Western Europe triangle of Great Powers, rather than a step taken out of positive conviction that the integration process should produce an independent security capacity (Young 1999). The changing relationship with the Commonwealth had altered British perceptions of its foreign policy choices. In particular, it was feared that if Britain remained outside the integration process, it could become less valuable to the US as a security partner and ally (George 1998). Thus, the changed security calculus that emerged after the Suez Crisis was crucial for the UK's accession attempts; without it, resistance from the Treasury (which preferred to maintain trade ties with the Commonwealth, and which was less concerned with security matters) might never have been overcome by the Foreign Office, which had become convinced that participation in

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[6] Again it should be noted that the UK is not alone on these matters; Ireland is just as determined to retain its own taxation policy competence, and both Denmark and Sweden continue outside the Euro through political choice.
[7] It also had a significant impact on popular opinion in the UK, on which there is more below.

European integration was necessary for UK security as well as for economic growth (Weigall and Stirk 1992).

However, the security calculation taken in the late 1950s set the tone for subsequent British views about the EU's role in providing security. Persistently Atlanticist in its orientation, the UK has continued to promote strong ties to NATO and to Washington. Thus, despite its recent and acknowledged role as a leader in the development of the European Security and Defence Policy, the UK has continued to ensure that this policy keeps the EU as part of the Atlantic alliance instead of developing in a more Gaullist direction. This has been considered as a demonstration of 'awkwardness' by at least some of the other member states, but by no means by all of them (Wall 2008).[8]

Domestic Politics

The domestic context of British policy towards European integration is often held up as a core source of London's 'awkwardness', and also as an explanation for the latter's persistence and what came to be labelled as Euroscepticism. Over time, the UK has become thoroughly Europeanised as a polity, in its politics (patterns of interest representation, the impact on party politics and political parties), and in many of its policies (Bache and Jordan 2006b). There has even been a 'quiet revolution' in the way that central government works in Britain, deliberately undertaken as a means to help the UK shape EU policy more effectively (Bulmer and Burch 2006: 37). However, this does not equate to a British political context which would be favourable to deeper European integration, or in which political leaders consider that it is worth the risk to argue persistently in favour of deeper European integration – even if they wished to.

The first way in which this can be seen is in the impact of public opinion. For example, Tony Blair, who is often considered the most pro-European Prime Minister since Edward Heath, who took the UK into the EEC (Young 1999), calculated that it was electorally too risky to point out the political importance of EU matters to the general

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[8] For instance, Germany has often been more Atlanticist than France. Other member states have seen UK involvement and policy preferences as helpful, and even as necessary to balance the power of France. For insight into this during the early days of European integration, see Parsons 2006; for discussion of a more recent period, see Janning 2005.

public (James and Oppermann 2009); this allowed the default popular perception that the EU is a persistent but ultimately inconsequential irritant, rather than a matter of great importance, to be maintained.[9] The consequence was British failure to join the Euro, a factor which contributed to Blair's limits as a potential EU leader (Wall 2008).

Indeed, a failure to be clear about what was at stake in European integration has been a common feature of British politics ever since accession, perhaps with the exception of Margaret Thatcher's premiership (Young 1999).[10] Costs, not benefits, of the EU, came to be a default position regarding membership. An omission to argue the positive case for British involvement with the integration process, and the repeated decision to present the UK and its leaders as successful slayers of Euro-dragons, that is as a bulwark against otherwise irresistible and rapacious EU forces, have been constant features of British public diplomacy about the EU ever since the accession campaign in 1972 (George 1998). As a result, public opinion continues to oppose the need for deeper European integration; the presentational triumph constructed by Prime Minister Wilson in the early history of UK membership set the tone for his successors, but was an entirely Pyrrhic victory from the perspective of those seeking publicly to advocate a closer British participation in – and sense of ownership over - the integration process.

The second way in which domestic politics places constraints on UK performance in the EU is linked to the internal politics of political parties and also to the wishes of powerful non-party actors, such as the popular press. Of course, this is not entirely separate from public opinion, but it is expressed in a different way, i.e. institutionally. Divisions within political parties can restrict a Prime Minister's room for manoeuvre. For instance, as Prime Minister 1990-7, John Major had infamous difficulty in maintaining party coherence over the EU issue, and this was particularly difficult given the small size of his government's majority in the House of Commons after 1992; although this did not prevent British signature of the Treaty on European Union, it did shape the UK's negotiating position and wish-list considerably, and meant that the UK had to insist on

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[9] In the past, this state of affairs has prevented the EU being considered a significant issue by voters at UK general elections; despite widespread popular Euroscepticism, the Conservative Party did not reap the rewards of a heavily anti-EU election campaign in 2001 (Geddes 2002).

[10] Indeed, Hugo Young bluntly calls the persistent presentation of the EU by Prime Ministers since Wilson as being in British interests but with no capacity to impact upon the British way of life (or perhaps to require compromises) 'a lie' (Young 1999: 129).

opt-outs from policies such as the single currency and social policy (Wall 2008). The more recent governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown shaped their EU policies in order to respond, in part, to pressure from newspapers, thereby ensuring that their opponents in Parliament had no opportunity to outflank them from a Eurosceptic position (James and Oppermann 2009).

Ideational factors

Identity

British policy towards European integration has been coloured since the outset by narratives of the cultural separateness, difference and even superiority that Britons and the UK enjoy vis-à-vis the rest of the continent (Young 1999). However contestable these notions may be, and however dated or inaccurate their premises, they continue to shape British perspectives about the EU.[11] Reinforced by political and legal traditions which are, as stated above, different from the continental mainstream (Armstrong and Bulmer 2003), these perceptions are reflected in popular assumptions that the so-called 'special relationship' with the US is more important than that with the EU, as well as being more culturally appropriate or intuitive (George 1998: 14- 15).[12] British people, in the main, do not feel European, trust EU institutions or consider the EU a worthy subject of interest (Geddes 2002). Indeed, for many Britons EU membership is something to be regretted, even if it is necessary – a sign of Britain's decline from Great Power status, rather than, as in many other member states, a way to ensure peace and prosperity (Young 1999). [13]

Socialisation

Such British perspectives did not, of course, go un-noticed by the other member states, and contributed to early perceptions of UK awkwardness (Young 1999). Nonetheless, over time, it might have been expected that this situation could be managed

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[11] Weigall and Stirk (1992: 140) trace these ideas back to the period 1945-60, in which Britain evinced 'a popular distrust of the Continent conditioned by insularity…and complacency about the future'.
[12] This is so at elite as well as popular level, as demonstrated by the career and writings of Margaret Thatcher (see Wall 2008).
[13] For many Australians, too, the UK's accession to the EU was also a matter for regret, due to the end of imperial preference under the Ottawa Agreement for Australian agricultural goods to have access to the British market – leading to an intense opposition in Australia to the CAP. (Spenceley and Welsh, 1998; Murray, 2005)

effectively. That said, elite-level socialisation of British actors into the EU must confront several practical problems, such as the principles and bases of EU policies, which may differ from those to which the UK is used or would like; for Weigall and Stirk, for example, British opposition to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was not just centred on the UK's economic interests, but also on ideas about what good, workable policy in the sector required (Weigall and Stirk 1992: 141-2). Sir Stephen Wall (2008), however, relates how these and similar differences can be reduced in their potential for conflict over time, either as EU policy changes or as Britain becomes more used to the EU's policy requirements –even if it continues to oppose their core rationale, as in the case of CAP.

Similarly, getting used to EU ways of working – socialisation into established practices – has happened over time for many, if not most, UK EU officials as well as UK officials in the domestic departments and Members of the European Parliament. Indeed, British MEP Peter Kirk was surprised to find that adaptation – and change - were required to the practices of the European Parliament when the UK joined in 1973, when he commented:

> One of the things I have discovered....is that this place is virtually run by five men...the leaders of the five main political groups" (Pridham, 1979, p. 5).

Nonetheless, it is a cliché, but with reason, to observe that British negotiating practice in EU discussions can reflect the tradition that terminology and ideas matter, and thus should be defined clearly, whereas other state actors may be more willing to abide by the spirit of the policy. From this there may still arise perceptions of 'awkwardness' (George 1998: 21).

Furthermore, at elite *political* level, socialisation can be limited when the UK and EU ways of working are considered. This was perhaps particularly the case with Margaret Thatcher, whose style, based on the confrontational approach of Westminster politics, was notoriously abrasive (Wall 2008); outright and overt opposition to an EU policy may gain less than subtle manoeuvring behind the scenes (George 1998). Subsequent leaders have been less forthright, but Tony Blair's 'honeymoon period' within the European Council was cut short by his tendency to lecture other leaders about

the Third Way (Young 1999), and Gordon Brown displayed a similar lack of finesse in his refusal to attend the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon with the other member state leaders.[14]

Most UK actors continue, in addition, to resist socialisation into the mainstream view of what the EU is ultimately *for*. British policy and actors have frequently under-estimated the importance which other member states attach to the EU as a principle or project which is in and of itself normatively good (Wall 2008). This has led to tactical and strategic miscalculations, but also evinces a lack of socialisation of a profound kind; although the EU of 2011 is far more diverse than that of 1973, and the present generation of EU leaders appear more pragmatic than their forebears, this perceptual difference combines with non-participation in the Euro to leave the UK on the margins of much EU policy and politics. The present UK coalition government reflects such thinking; behind such foibles as the EU Bill is a worldview that is decidedly Atlanticist, and even Eurosceptic (Beech 2011).

Vision

Related to matters of identity and socialisation is 'the vision thing' – what kind of EU does the UK want, and how well does this mesh with the desires of other member states? Traditionally, the UK has shied away from what it considers grandiose schemes for the EU's future, and with few exceptions has not set out specific proposals for a new EU policy or a new direction for the Union.[15] Indeed, some commentators maintain that London has been much better and more consistent at setting out what it does *not* want than what it actively seeks from and for the EU (Armstrong and Bulmer 2003: 389), or at frustrating other member states' projects by developing alternative, minimalist variants as counter-proposals.[16] That said, elements of a British Euro-vision of a kind can be discerned: an intergovernmental, Atlanticist project, open to enlargement: this has not

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[14] George (1998: 96-7) points out that such discourtesy has a long history in the UK, with British ministers in the 1960s and 1970s repeatedly keeping their counterparts waiting at Council of Ministers meetings, or even attending constituency meetings instead.

[15] An exception is the proposal for the single market, on which the UK worked assiduously and related to which it even produced a vision document. See Wall 2008.

[16] Stephen George (1998: 259-64) relates the UK scheme to frustrate the development of differentiated integration in Europe by proposing an 'à la carte' variant instead of the 'hard core' model.

resonated fully with many of the original member states, but is more attractive to many of those which joined in the 2004-7 accession process.

Thus, the UK's awkwardness can be seen as a mixture of material and ideational factors, and also as an ongoing but malleable feature of the UK-EU relationship. Britain is not always 'awkward', and can, as with the single market or ESDP, even be in the EU vanguard, but it is often considered to punch below its weight in EU politics. British politicians rarely indicate dissatisfaction with this situation, although Tony Blair made an attempt to take the UK closer to the mainstream in EU politics, realising that to do so would require him to be considered more favourably by other Heads of State and Government (HOGS) than his predecessors. Continental Europeans often wish it were different (Wall 2008). Cause and effect in British awkwardness are difficult to disentangle, but perhaps lie above all in a sense of cultural, economic and political distinctiveness, and a sense that Britain does not really need European integration for anything other than trade - expressed in policy terms as Atlanticism and in a preference for minimal political integration. We now proceed to discuss Australia's role within its regional integration context.

3. AWKWARD AUSTRALIA

Unlike the UK, Australia has been a facilitator and a driver of regional integration in the Asia Pacific. Australia has played a key role in moving APEC towards the creative formula that allowed for the inclusion of the three Chinese entities (China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) in the organization from 1991. APEC has come to symbolize Australia's regional vision. It is an Australian initiative based on trade and investment liberalization, business facilitation, and economic and technical cooperation. As well as being the originator of APEC, Australia has had a reputation as an honest broker, bringing together broad coalitions (e.g. APEC and the Cairns Group). Australia has been a promoter and supporter of peace-building in the region (e.g. in East Timor and the Solomon Islands) and an active participant in the ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asia Summit.

Despite Australia's attempts to punch above its weight in regional forums and to become more entrenched in its region in terms of its trade and investment links, it is still not regarded as a full member or as quite fitting into – or belonging in- the region. Australia has experienced difficulties with engaging in Asia-Pacific regional integration. Using Stephen George's term (1998), Australia is an 'awkward partner' in the Asian context, and, in the words of Higgott and Nossal (1997), has experienced the 'liminality' of being neither here nor there, as somehow being on the margins of the region.

Material factors

Power Relations

An examination of the role of Australia in the Asia Pacific must be contextualised with regard to power politics in the Asia Pacific.The US has played a significant role in influencing and even defining the politics of regionalism in Asia (Katzenstein, 2005; Higgott, 2007; He, 2011a&b), although with a very different set of objectives of strategic and economic objectives than was evident in its support for European integration. It is reluctant to develop a deep security architecture and even economic regionalism in the Asia-Pacific. Middle and smaller nation-states often resist the regionalization initiatives of great powers, however, for fear that they might be used to enhance the domination of that power. Often it is the middle powers that have driven regionalization in Asia simply because it enhances their status and influence in the region in relation to greater powers – or because it is part of a vision for reconciliation and effective governance (Murray, 2010b). ASEAN is the result of middle power-driven regionalization; the force of path-dependence renders ASEAN, in its own context, powerful. When then Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd proposed an Asia-Pacific Community (APC) that effectively sidelined ASEAN, this was resisted by the organization's members and resulted in few concrete achievements (He, 2011a&b; Murray, 2010b).

In general terms, it can be argued that East Asians pursue regionalism under conditions that will not undermine US domination. Asian regionalism, it is felt, must 'supplement' the US position, not go against it. While ASEAN has not sought to exclude the United States from the region, it has developed normative and social mechanisms in

which the United States plays follower (and peer among a number of external 'dialogue partners') rather than leader. This is the case with the ASEAN Regional Forum[17] and the East Asian Summit[18], for example. While the idea of an East Asian Community, such as that proposed in 2009 by then Japanese Prime minister Hatoyama, does not include US participation, neither does it lend itself to Chinese dominance.

The Australian idea of regionalism has been constrained by Australia's position in relation to the great powers in the region – namely the US and China. Australia largely lacks the resources and capacity to shape regional norms – even when it has visions in its ideational toolkit. In the context of a balance between great powers being a precondition of effective regionalism, Australia is arguably caught between greater powers in the region. It favours Asia Pacificism, which is a concept that includes the US in the region, but in doing so it has created a problem for developing closer relations with China. In short, the structure of international relations, regional hierarchy, and power relations in Asia impacted the way in which the APC proposal was initiated and received. As White (2009) points out, a new set of relations between the major powers needs to be established before Rudd's APC can be achieved. Let us now examine the Rudd proposal for a new type of 'institution.

Institutions and policies

On 4 June 2008, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd first presented his vision of an Asia Pacific Community as 'a regional institution which spans the entire Asia–Pacific region'. He proposed an institution 'which is able to engage in the full spectrum of dialogue, cooperation and action on economic and political matters and future challenges related to security' (Rudd 2008a). He specifically included the US, Japan, China, India and Indonesia within his definition of the region – but not ASEAN as a regional grouping, which is surprising given Australia's close cooperation with ASEAN since its

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[17] The ARF consists of the 10 ASEAN member states (Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam); the 10 ASEAN dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, China, the EU, India, Japan, New Zealand, ROK, Russia and the United States), one ASEAN observer (Papua New Guinea) and the DPRK, Mongolia, Pakistan, East Timor, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
[18] The EAS consists of the ten ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam), Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. The US and Russia will formally join in 2011.

creation. The purpose of the APC was 'to encourage the development of a genuine and comprehensive sense of community whose habitual operating principle is cooperation'. In referring to the EU, he was clear that the EU did not represent 'an identikit model' of 'what we would seek to develop' in the Asia–Pacific region, but added that he was keen to capture the 'spirit' of European integration in the Asian hemisphere.

In a speech two months later, on 12 August 2008, Rudd addressed the role of ASEAN, regarding its significant achievement in 'building a sense of regional identity, a sense of community, and a sense of neighbourhood' in Southeast Asia. He argued that ASEAN's 'habits of cooperation' had crafted 'a sense of genuine community' (Rudd 2008b). What was required, for Rudd, was a 'regional discussion about the sort of regional architecture we want to see in the next 20 years'. Contributors to that regional discussion were to be the US, China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, India and others. In what was seen at the time as a response to criticisms following his original speech in June, Rudd explained what the proposed APC was not: it was not an economic union, a monetary union, a political union, or at this stage a customs union. But clearly, the APC still had a strong 'institutional' bent: the wider region, Rudd observed, needed to learn from ASEAN's success 'how to build the institutions, habits and practices of cooperation across the policy spectrum' (Murray, 2010b). The focus in this proposal was on institutions rather than on policies. He continued to set before Asian interlocutors his original choice: a choice between building a regional architecture by further institutionalisation, or passivity:

> The choice is whether to seek actively to shape the future of our wider region … by building the regional architecture we need for the future … or whether instead we will adopt a passive approach, where we simply wait to see what evolves … Do we sit by and allow relations between states to be buffeted by economic and strategic shifts and shocks or do we seek to build institutions to provide anchorages of stability able to withstand the strategic stresses … when they inevitably arise? … Will we seek a framework of shaping the institutions of common security for our region, or will we allow traditional inter-state tensions to evolve and … escalate? (Rudd 2009a).

This approach was part of Australian middle power activism that has been a hallmark of the Australian Labor Party for some decades. It was evident in the APEC

proposals and in the engagement with regional bodies in the Asia Pacific. In fact, despite its being an outlier for many Asian interlocutors in terms of identity, it has attempted to be a driving force in regional architecture debates. It is not, however, the only middle power in the region, especially in East Asian regionalism.

Asian regionalism has thus far been middle power-driven. For example, ASEAN has centred upon the small and medium powers and drawn the great powers into a framework of voluntary restraint. ASEAN creatively used the tension between China and Japan to develop the ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and South Korea) model, later on by inviting India, Australia, and New Zealand to balance the influence of China. Achayra has argued that weaker actors acquire a voice through regionalism that they would otherwise lack if they were unilateral or aligned with major powers (Acharya, 2005) – a perception that is shared by many EU member states, in fact. The view of some ASEAN countries that the APC would undermine and reduce their power and influence led them to reject the Australian proposal for APC.

In the process of regional institution building, Australia has had to confront the issue of authoritarian states participating in Asia Pacific regionalism. Such a challenge did not exist for the UK within the EU. Australia faces an awkward situation that hampers Canberra's ability to develop a pragmatic approach towards regional development in Asia. On the one hand, Australia must not let the issue of democracy hijack efforts to enhance regionalism, but on the other hand it cannot get around the issue of democracy and human rights when dealing with China. Here we come to the challenge of China, the most powerful authoritarian state in the world. China has adopted unorthodox policy-making strategies in developing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The exclusion of China from any economic regionalism in Asia is impossible; and the place of China must be considered in any regional architecture. However, region-building will be unsuccessful if China stresses the advantages of its political system and Australia insists on promoting democracy. Here we observe that region-building and institution-building are bound up with ideational factors for Australia in its regional context.

Economics

Political economy is the foundation of the regionalization process for many regions. Global economic development and transactions across the Asia Pacific underpin the US idea of Pacificism. The fact that East Asia's economic engagement with the US is deeper than it is within the region itself underlines the Asian tendency towards open or porous regionalism. In relation to trade, globalization is the most important trend for China and, indeed, all of Asia, while for Europe it is regionalization that is more important. Intraregional trade is very high within the EU (65%+) but not within ASEAN (24%), so Europeans' major trading partners are in fact each other. This is not the case for ASEAN or for ASEAN Plus Three. A more open and globalized economy exists in Asia, and Australia regards itself as a key player in this economy, as a primary products exporter to the region, especially of minerals to China. While the Euro can be regarded as potentially undermining the US dollar, it came about due to a European political determination to create a single currency. This is not the case, in light of US opposition to an equivalent to the Euro in Asia, such as has been proposed by Japan.

Australia is fully cognisant of the fact that, unlike the EU in which the former Soviet Union was excluded, the exclusion of China in any Asian economic regionalism is impossible; and the place of China must be considered in any regional architecture.

From a political economy perspective it is noteworthy that China's important trading partners are EU and the US and not the rest of Asia, despite burgeoning trade with both Australia and ASEAN. China is a key trading partner for both the US and the EU. Unlike for Australia, whose current Foreign Minister Rudd continues to seek a combination of economic, political and security architectures in an Asia Pacific Community, contemporary Chinese ideas of regionalism are primarily economic-centered, because economic performance is vital both to its long term strategic target and to its internal social stability (Wang, 2011). It is unlikely that China would promote an internally closed economic regionalism, such as the EU; China favours the idea of 'porous' or 'open' regionalism. Equally the substantial growth in India's trade with East and Southeast Asia has driven India's approach to open regionalism (Jain, 2011).

Australia finds itself in a distinctive position in the Asia Pacific region. It has been a part of the English-speaking world and has developed and maintained relations mainly with the United Kingdom. Yet those ties have diminished within the last two decades, as Australia has become more embedded in economic relations with its Asian neighbours, it is also the case that the relationship with the UK has less importance as Australia now engages increasingly with the EU as well as in bilateral relations with EU member states. The end of the Cold War 'marked the emergence of a more fluid environment in the Asia-Pacific' (Mediansky, 1997), and thus 'a gradual shift in the orientation of Australia's external policy, from a global to a regional approach' (Thayer, 1997). Australia's main trade partners are China, the EU, Japan and South Korea.

Security

While Australia is heavily dependent upon China and other Asian countries for its trade and economic growth, it relies on the US for its security. Unlike the UK, that has not faced a difficult choice, Australia has recently been obliged to consider a dichotomous choice that has been framed by some observers (e.g. White, 2011) as a choice between China (its major economic market) and the US (its security provider). This consideration has complicated Australian visions of regionalism. Kevin Rudd's APC proposal comprehends the idea of a security community. Rudd has argued, for example, that 'Australia would welcome the evolution of the Six Party Talks into a wider regional body to discuss confidence and security building measures in North East Asia and beyond' (Rudd, 2008a). However, in the military and security realms, the relationship between China and the other two states is generally adversarial. The US and Australia are clearly friends with a loyal alliance, but it remains unclear as to whether China is their friend or enemy. Security dilemmas can perpetuate splits in the politics of Asian regionalism, in an arguably more stark manner than the UK preference for Atlanticism over Gaullism in foreign and security policy within the EU. Further, close economic relations between China and Australia overlap with security concerns, as Australia and the US must consider the security implications of China's growing economic influence over Australia and China's influence on security threats in the region, such as the South China Sea.

Australia's close security alliance with the US, when combined with its vital trading relationship with China, places Australia in a unique position in between the two powers. Geoffrey Garrett, of the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, sees the economic realm as offering the best potential for Australia to play a constructive role in smoothing relations between China and the US.[19] This mediator role as a middle power is a feature of some analysts' perspectives within Australia. For realists, the major foreign policy challenge for Australia is how to coordinate the security relationship with the United States and the economic relationship with China. Australia must act to fulfil its alliance responsibilities to the US while also avoiding antagonising China – a difficult choice for a middle power that aspires to be a key regional player in leadership in new regional architecture, a major provider of exports to the Chinese market and a key partner of the US.

Domestic Politics

When then Prime Minister Paul Keating termed Australia an 'Asian' country, emphasizing the double identities of Australia, it also came at a cost – there has been a backlash from sections of Australian society to the idea of Australia having an Asian identity, as evidenced by the rise of the One Nation Party. The idea of an 'Asianization' of Australia is considered to be both dangerous and divisive, although it is politically safe to emphasize the need for an increase in Asian literacy levels in Australia - and to phrase it as a 'national skill' issue, not an identity issue (Rudd, 1995). Unlike Europeanisation, the term Asianisation does not have common acceptance as identity politics or as a political or administrative or policy process – and so is starkly in contrast with the EU. Keating lost the argument when he stressed that Australia must become a part of Asia. One fundamental flaw of the idea of an Asianization of Australia is that it fails to deal with normative issues. In the process of any Asianization, however that might be defined, Australia definitely does not want to sacrifice its democracy. Australians would reject Asianization completely if it were to be regarded as Asian immigrants bringing with them more crime, various forms of corruption, and the increased house price pushed by Asian

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[19] Geoffrey Garrett, 'The Challenge of Chimerica,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 October 2009.

business immigrants. Asianization is to be accepted if Asia is to a certain degree 'Australianized', that is, if Australian democracy and clean government spread to Asia.[20]

Taking a lesson from Keating, Rudd has avoided the question of Australian identity and adopted a strategy of silence on this sensitive issue. Rudd's APC proposal failed to discuss the fundamental issue of Australian identity at home and at aboard.

Ideational Factors

Identity

Most Australians believe that there is no need for Australia to change its cultural tradition and adopt cultural features common to Asia for the sake of promoting regionalism. Australians do not need to be a part of Asia culturally in order to remain engaged with Asia. There are sufficient reasons for Australia to maintain its allegiance to Western culture. Most Australians are quite complacent – and unreflective - about their culture and identity. Australia is not seen – in Australia at least - as needing an Asian identity to fully participate in the region. Nevertheless, the APC proposal experienced cultural resistance from Asia. There is a perception of Australia as a not being Asian country but a White country, belonging to an English-speaking world and a middle power player within the global North. Australia was largely seen in the past as a 'branch office of the British Empire' in the past and still, for many East Asian interlocutors, regarded as a deputy-sheriff of the US Empire in Asia. Indeed the strongest force that has shaped the idea of an Asian region, Asian identity, and Asian unity was Western imperialism. Through the British Empire, Australia historically established a colonial connection with Asia; that is, Australia is thus sometimes seen as a colonial power by Asians

This results in an awkward situation. Australia is viewed by some Asians as behaving like a strange outsider: how can Australia lack a sense of being part of an Asian community but advocate strongly in favour of an Asia Pacific Community? Australia is part of Asia in some ways - geographically and economically, for example - but does not seem to fully belong to Asia. Australia acknowledges some of its Asian culture, but its interest is more in economic interaction rather than in Asian values. It is, arguably, more Pacific – in the sense of being allied with the US - than Asian. Former Prime Minister of

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[20] This argument is being more fully developed by one of us separately (He).

Malaysia Mahathir once remarked that Australia is not a part of Asia. While many Asian leaders and intellectuals do not say this openly, they do take this for granted. Australia is not a part of the popular culture phenomenon in Asian society. With its own sports codes like the Australian Football League and cricket taking precedence, Australia does not participate in the Asian Games, although the Australian soccer team is now part of the Asian Football Federation and competes in the Asian Cup soccer tournament.

So Australia is dealing with important challenges in placing the issue of regional security architecture on the discussion table, as Rudd still attempts to do. Some regional countries still regard Australia as an 'outsider', for at least two reasons - it is not necessarily regarded as Asian, and it is perceived as being closely aligned with the US. Arguably, geopolitical shifts may have sharpened such perceptions, because regional countries can see the design of a new regional architecture as a competitive venture and not simply a cooperative one (Murray, 2010b).

Asian regional identity is still in the process of being constructed. There is no regional narrative of belonging. In the ideational battle over different versions of regionalism, culture and identity are often used against Australia. Some Asian countries do not perceive the design of a new regional architecture as a cooperative venture, but, rather, as a competitive one. Some view Australia as a potential rival and not an ally. In this regard, as Mahathir said, 'If you want to become Asian, you should say we are Asian because we have an Asian culture, an Asian mentality' (cited in Milner 1997: 39). In this context, Australian efforts to be more embedded in the Asian region arguably face cultural barriers abroad – perhaps like Turkey did when it faced resistance from EU member countries and people (Wesley, 1997). Indeed, Rudd's proposal for the APC is seen by some as if Turkey was proposing a grand vision for the European Union. While just how many Asian countries and people hold such a view needs to be investigated empirically, the question itself highlights the importance of the cognitive and normative elements of regionalism.

It is also problematic that Australians, in general, do not think that Australia should be, or is, a part of Asia. There is no shared narrative of identity-construction in Asia of

an Asian identiy. Some members of Australian society even feel insulted if it is deemed a part of Asia; they are proud of being identified with British descendents and as a part of Western culture generally. In 1993 Graeme Campbell, Member of Parliament for Kalgoorlie, asserted: 'it needs to be stressed again and again that Australia is not a part of Asia. It is a separate and distinct nation-continent. We are unique and should be proud of our uniqueness.' [21]

In summary, Australia faces a dilemma in being able to develop a fully integrated approach toward Asian regionalism. It is difficult for Australia to become a part of Asia in cultural terms. If it fails to engage Asia in substantive cultural terms, it lacks *cultural* legitimacy for a greater role in Asia. Its political legitimacy is not strong, given its different governance norms from those of most of its neighbours. If Australia moves away from the West and toward Asia, this poses ideational and identity problems – and potentially alienates Australians as well as the US. There is little evidence that, even if Australia's political elites shared a consensual view of Asian identity, which they do not, the Australian public would be ready to accept the necessity of identity change for a greater role in the process of Asian regionalism. Indeed, this concept of identity change has not been explored to any perceivable extent. It could well be argued that Australian nation-building now must take on a regional outlook, and it must successfully integrate its national identity into a broader regional identity, but, apart from identification with the need to maintain healthy exports to the region, especially China, there is little evidence of interest in this.

Socialisation

Australia experiences a number of socialisation challenges in its role in the region. It is not accepted as being Asian in terms of identity. It does not share values relating to democracy and governance with many of its regional neighbours. Indeed, it has more in common with the EU in this regard, as seen in the Partnership Framework between the EU and Australia. Yet, at the elite level. Australia has forged deep

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[21] See 'Resistance to Asianisation', http://www.ironbarkresources.com/asia/asia114.htm (Accessed on 8 November 2009).

relationships with most of the leaders in Asia. Indeed, a clear leadership strategy could seek to further exploit Australia's soft power assets - its influence and educational strengths - to strengthen regional relationships over the longer term. It could also profitably use its diplomatic experience and experienced diplomatic service to provide advice and to recall to always consult with partners in ASEAN and beyond regarding initatives such as the APC one.

Many of Asia's leaders were educated by Australians or in Australia. The networks of those leaders - politicians, bureaucrats, educators, business leaders, NGO activists - have been drawn on over many years but could usefully be consolidated further in order to exert influence on key decisions relating to the region. This form of soft power or normative influence could be exercised further throughout the region with considerable skill by Australian policymakers, diplomats, trade and aid representatives and academics. Australia has not always been coherent and comprehensive in drawing on its extensive networks in government, academia and the media, and so improving opportunities for mutual socialisation. The habits of cooperation mentioned by Rudd could be developed in these contexts. There are opportunities for the exercise of more public diplomacy by Australia enhancing educational exchange, higher education networks and collaboration, cultural exchange and business education programmes. The strengths of the Australian education and training systems can be profitably and fruitfully harnessed to extensive collaboration across universities, institutes of technology, conservatories and schools.

The report to the Australian Government in 2008 on harnessing educational cooperation within the EAS for regional competitiveness and community building presents a number of cooperative strategies in education, encompassing schools, technical and vocational education and training, and higher education (McKenzie *et al* 2008).[22] Here Australia has a potential leadership role that can be further developed.

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[22] The report recommends cooperation among governments, institutions, staff and students, and intergovernmental international educational cooperation of five types: people exchange; information exchange; facilitation of trade in educational services; regulatory reform; and development partnerships. It recommends the building or strengthening of communities among the peoples of the East Asia Summit countries in multilateral cooperation. This relates to increasing the mobility of students, teachers and researchers; the appreciation of history and heritage transnationally; learning of languages; benchmarking; regulatory reform of tertiary education systems; and 'a well resourced coordinating group or secretariat

Australia is in a position where it needs to articulate more clearly—and with its interlocutors—what it hopes to achieve by a more active program of mediation and education across the region. Part of that would entail explaining what it seeks in a security community and the related culture and norms of interaction within the Asia–Pacific region.

That is no small task: there's no 'common language' of Asia or the Asia–Pacific for the discourse on security, region, region building and architecture; there are competing languages, just as there are competing visions. Also, there is a lack of trust among the interlocutors – not just between and Australia and partners. Moreover, there are different dialects that often separate the region's defence, foreign policy, intelligence and wider security communities. There is also a set of dialects on economic regionalism and on the many aspects of political, cultural and socio-cultural cooperation. Breaking down the different languages and dialects can only be done over time, and by the steady growth of intraregional cooperation across a broad swathe of areas.

Vision

Australia holds a vision of Asia-Pacificism which acknowledges the important role of the US (the Pacific element), but avoids the sensitive question of Australia's identity in the region. This gives rise to another awkward situation in which Australia prefers to promote this US-oriented Asia-Pacificism despite being geographically part of Asia, and therefore inevitably confronts the question of how to deal with the various persistent indigenous ideas of Asianism.

'Asia-Pacific' and 'East Asia' are the two core terms around which different regional identities are constructed. Conceptualized as 'Pacificism' and 'Asianism', they offer different ideas of regional order and vary in scope, boundaries, and directions (Wesley, 2009). The idea of Pacific-centric regionalism was invented and promoted by the US and adopted by Australia. Originally the idea of the Pacific Rim was geological, and then began to be used in the security context in the 1960s. Pacific-centric regionalism came

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able to maintain momentum, support national personnel, disseminate good practice and develop plans' (McKenzie et al 2008:i–viii)

into being in the mid-1970s, driven by American capitalism and it was adopted in Australia and New Zealand in the later 1970s (Leon, 1995; Connery, 1995). It was later materialized in the form of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation - APEC.

Australia is geographically located both in the Asia and the Pacific. It has to build regional groups with Asia and America. This is a difficult fate for Australia. It is the reason why the Rudd government favours the idea of an Asia Pacific community that engages both America and and Asia, led by an Australian initiative. Defining the region in Pacific terms has a dual effect: whilst the United States remains engaged, the Asian economies are taken advantage of. Its aim to form a large community rules out the difficult question of having to choose between Asia and the US because all are a part of an Asia-Pacific community. This thus avoids the need for Australia to choose between its strategic and security concerns on the one hand, and its trade ones, on the other.

Nevertheless, most Asians implicitly hold a continental notion of regionalism despite different versions of Pacificism have been held by many leaders and scholars in Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, and Singapore. In the early 19th century, Japan, India, and China developed different versions of Pan-Asianism (He, 2004). In the 1980s and 1990s, Mahathir's East Asian Economic Caucus idea offered an Asian version of the regional project that explicitly excluded the United States (Hook, 1996). In 19997 Kim Dae-jung proposed and established the East Asia Vision Group and built a foundation for the ASEAN Plus Three (Hundt and Kim 2011). Hatoyama's proposal of an East Asian Community in 2009 was geographically narrowed down to include Japan, China, South Korea, and members of ASEAN – and exclude the US. In all cases Asia is defined as a continental, geographic vicinity, with cultural specificity. For most Asians, this notion of an East Asian Community is indigenous, growing from Asia and advocated by Asians. It has historical origins and is supported by some contemporary cultural and economic dynamism (He 2011b).

It is worthy of note that both the Rudd and the Hatoyama proposals accelerated a debate over regional architecture. Arguments that supported the Rudd proposal included the perception that current regional bodies were passive, weak and fragmented, and that

there were low general levels of satisfaction with existing cooperative mechanisms (He 2011). On the other hand, other scholars argued that Asian regional bodies were 'a pastiche of history, commercial ties, political compromises, shared security challenges, strategic rivalry, and public relations', which had produced 'a model appropriate to Asia's unique anatomy and fluid environment' (Frost 2008:131). The arguments came to turn on one key point: whether or not Asia was a 'special case'. It is precisely this issue of comparing Asia or choosing to regard it as a special case that prompts the need to discus comparative regional integration studies and approaches.

4. COMPARISONS AND HYPOTHESES.

There have been many efforts since the 1950s to develop the institutional structure, identity, policies and visions of the European integration process. This has encountered many challenges. Leadership in these challenges has not been provided by the UK. It has maintained a certain element of isolation – and isolationism – especially on political and federalist-style endeavours. Yet it is a firm implementer of EU policies at the domestic level. It is awkward yet compliant in legislation. It is out of step with some political endgoals yet a full participant in EU decisions, in a process of integration that is firmly embedded in the domestic arena. At the some time, it has no narrative of belonging to 'Europe" and 'Europe' remains an alien concept for many British peoples.

In Asia, Australia seeks to belong to an Asian and an Asia Pacific identity, despite some domestic opposition and opposition by some Asian partners, especially within ASEAN. Unlike the EU, there is in East Asia (and especially Southeast Asia) what some critics see an 'East Asian organization gap' that makes it difficult for East Asians to convert their rising economic influence into geopolitical power and identity. That, in turn, renders it difficult for East Asians to respond to common challenges (Calder and Fukuyama 2008:1–2). It remains a serious challenge for East Asians to share a common geopolitical vision to which they might harness their economic power. The lack of such a vision - or narrative of regional belonging - renders particularly challenging the need to define the role that regional architecture could play in developing a common geopolitical agenda and in harnessing the region's economic power to the achievement of that agenda. Comparative perspectives may well assist to understand some of these challenges. The

recent Australian perspective is to offer leadership in architectural design – but that is not widely accepted or welcomed by Asian interlocutors. Despite current disaffection with Asian regional bodies, the Australian proposal is not regarded as a frontrunner in solutions to the problems of a diversification of regional bodies with overlapping membership and different sectoral interests. Australia, unlike the UK, seeks to be a regional leader, but faces problems in being accepted as such. It is close to the US, as it the UK. It is not part of an embedded and institutionalised regional community, unlike the UK, a longtime member of the EU.

In terms of institutions and policies, the UK has not been a driver of integration within the EU. In comparison, Australia has been a driver of regional architectures in the Asia Pacific. The changing relationship with the Commonwealth had altered British perceptions of its foreign policy choices. So too it significantly altered Australian foreign policy choices and trading orientations (Benvenuti, 2008). In the case of Australia, it re-oriented its trade towards Asia as early as the 1950s and deepened its trade engagement with the Asia Pacific after the British accession to the EEC in 1973 (Benvenuti, 2008; Murray, 2005). Whilst the British default position has been that of Euroscepticism and a perception of the costs of integration, in Australia there has been a turn towards Asia especially over the last two decades, based on market access in Asia and the desire to be an active leader in regional architectural design.

Both the UK and Australia have a special relationship with the US – based on different ideational factors and security concerns, it is true, yet each regards the US as a partner, or in the case of Australia, as a 'great and powerful friend'. Although the UK has traditionally shied away from visions for the EU's future, Australia has not been shy to propose and seek to be a leader in Asia Pacific plans – such as APEC and the Rudd 2008 proposal for an Asia Pacific Community.

In an ideational context, much depends on the *desire* by the state – the UK or Australia – to play an activist role, whether as a visionary, activist state (such as Australia in APEC) or a reformist, or as a proponent of only one set of policies (such as the Single Market in the case of the UK). Much also depends on the perceived *capacity* of the state to play a leading role – and here we find that external perceptions of the capacity, as well as willingness, to engage on regional or integration issues reflect the past history of the

state in finding allies and collaborators on regional or integration initiatives. This depends on whether the state is regarded as belonging to the region – and here we find similarities regarding a sense that both Australia and the UK are regarded as not fully belonging and as being out of step or awkward in their respective regions.

Finally, similarities of interests do matter. The UK is a member state of a group of 27 countries with common goals and objectives, despite many crises and problems. The Australian case is of an outsider or outlier in its region. It confronts the fact that in many ways the Asian region is a 'special' case – it is so diverse in religion, statehood, nation-state development, economic development, and the institutional development of individual governance structures. There is no commitment to supranationalism or to institutionalism. There remains a pattern of normative consensus and a respect for the integrity of the nation-state. Nationalism remains an important principle of the nation-states of Asia, albeit in different manifestations. Most importantly, democratic norms form the backbone of the Australian polity – and this is not the case for most of its neighbours in the region.

Our initial hypotheses were, firstly, that the UK and Australia are comparable as 'awkward partners' in their respective regions and, secondly, that, for both the UK and Australia, their status as 'awkward partners' is ultimately a matter of their partners' perceptions rather than an objective and unchangeable condition. Regarding the first hypothesies, we find, with our preliminary research as part of a larger project, that the UK and Australia are comparable as 'awkward partners' in their respective regions as they face ideational challenges and a lack of acceptance by their partners in regionalism or integration. This is due to certain isolationist experiences, both geographic and historical and to the relationship with the US. Secondly, we find that their status as 'awkward partners' is largely a matter of their partners' perceptions rather than an objective and unchangeable condition. We need however to add a third hypothesis – that belonging in and to a region requires a firm commitment to a narrative and an identity. In the case of Australia in Asia, there is no regional narrative and there is no regional identity. In the case of the UK in the EU, there is little evidence in the contemporary context of a shared narrative or identity – and the current shared narrative is that of crisis. So ideational issues relating to belonging need to be further explored. So too does the

challenge that Australia faces regarding its democratic governance structure which is out of step in much of Asia, despite considerable democratisation in some Asian states, and so Australia's awkwardness is that of a democratic state where many of its regional neighbours are not. This is not an unchangeable condition as there are processes of democraticisation, as we have noted. But perception is a two-way street – and Australia remains committed to democracy and is aware that its closest relationships with democratic states are with the US, New Zealand and the countries of the EU. Its engagement in Asia remains firmly motivated by economic interests and security concerns, despite Kevin Rudd's efforts to broaden this debate to encompass a more comprehensive concept of community and regional belonging.

Normative differences, largely but not exclusively related to democracy, therefore create the need to develop a fourth hypothesis – that there are comparative but very different normative elements and tensions between European and East Asian regionalism: the EU's normative foundation is democracy, human rights, individual liberty, the reduction of national sovereignty, and the creation of regional organisations that are able to override national governments, while the normative foundation of Asian regionalism is nationalist doctrine, statist power and Asian culture or values (He 2004:107; Murray, 2010b). Nationalism is the driving force behind East Asian regionalism, and states are generally unwilling to surrender some sovereignty to regional organisations in order to make them more effective. An East Asian commitment to sovereignty is thus arguably an important impediment to the development of an organisation to tackle common intraregional issues (He 2004:122) – and Australia must accept this reality just as the UK has accepted that the EU structure is a useful means to tack common transnational problems and to develop economic interests.

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