Harmony through Holistic Engagement:
An Emic Model of Greater East Asian Regionalism

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This study applies grounded theory to develop an emic substantive theory of regional integration in Greater East Asia. The role of norms and policies is explored through discursive content analysis of a wide theoretical sample of official elite policy statements dealing with regionalism and related policy areas. A resulting model of regional integration titled "Harmony through Holistic Engagement" is then discussed in relation to the etic consensus on the phenomenon. The study concludes that the etic consensus on the nature of regional integration in Greater East Asia greatly differs from the results of an emic approach and thus reflects a normative consensus rather than a descriptive reality.

Introduction

The present study aims to develop an emic theory of Greater East Asian Regionalism. This is achieved through a particular type of discursive analysis, namely, grounded theory. Government documents and other primary sources such as speeches were coded and analyzed in order to develop a substantive theory of regionalism in East Asia. The following sub-sections provide a more in depth overview of the methodology for this section of the study as well as a more detailed description of the sample used.

Greater East Asia has been defined in a variety of ways throughout history (Eades and Cooper 2010, Heidhues 2000). It should be noted that the concept of Asia itself is a European invention which was later on adopted and internalized by Asians themselves (Saaler and Szpilman 2011). Nevertheless, up to this day there are myriad definitions of what Asia is (Hui 2011). Even if we eliminate abstract orientalist definitions equating Asia with a European idea of the exotic, we would still find ourselves with hundreds of possible definitions (Said 1978). In

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terms of geographical reach, definitions range from confining Greater East Asia to the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and East Asia proper (Japan, North and South Korea, Mongolia, China, and Taiwan), to broader definitions including all littoral countries on both sides of the Pacific Ocean (Eades and Cooper 2010). For the purpose of the present study, Greater East Asia will be defined as the ten ASEAN members plus East Timor, China, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, and Mongolia. The reason for the adoption of this restricted definition is that a broader definition would make the concept so ambiguous that it would verge on meaninglessness. In addition to that, East Asian countries themselves tend to define their region in this way (Ichihara 2009, Komori 2009, Hui 2011, Mohamad and Ishihara 1995). Moreover, regional integration efforts such as ASEAN + 3 and the East Asian Summit tend to limit participation to the previously mentioned countries (Weitz 2011, Narine 1997, Rolfe 2008).

Defined in this way, Greater East Asia includes the second and third largest economies in the world (China and Japan), some of poorest countries such as Laos and Cambodia, and is home to important trade routes such as the Strait of Malacca. Therefore, Greater East Asia is a dynamic and clearly important region from both economic and security perspectives. Moreover, academic interest in the region suffered a severe downturn at the end of the Vietnam War and has suddenly seen a sharp upsurge due to a variety of reasons but most importantly because of China's resurgence as a world power.

The Importance of Greater East Asia: While one of the most obvious reasons for studying Greater East Asia is the previously mentioned fact that the second and third largest economies are located in the region, there are other important reasons for paying more careful attention to regional developments. Greater East Asia is important due to economic, political, and cultural reasons. For instance, Asia is one of the few regions showing consistent economic growth after the 2008 financial crisis, it is home to the world's last Stalinist State as well as to one of the youngest democracies, and regional universities are quickly rising through the rankings (Clapp 2010, Feigenblatt 2012, Kaplan and Denmark 2011, Evans 2011, Ichihara 2009).

Grounded Theory

One of the few qualitative research methods with the clear aim of theory development is Grounded Theory (Willis 2007). While grounded theory is now a broad subfield in qualitative studies and many varieties can be found in the literature, the approach originated from the seminal work of Glaser and Strauss in the field of nursing and the sociology of medicine (Glaser and Strauss 2009b, a, 2010). The original intent of grounded theory was to provide an ordered approach to inductive theory development to bridge the gap between classical grand theories and deductive studies testing those theories (Glaser and Strauss 2009b, a, 2010). Glaser and Strauss observed that quantitative studies tended to focus on testing prominent theories while new theories and classical theories were largely detached from the data they aimed to explain (Glaser and Strauss 2009b). Thus, they developed grounded theory as a way to develop theory "from the ground up" based on the data itself but through a more flexible approach than allowed by quantitative approaches. This approach to theory development focuses on concepts directly derived from the data rather than on hypotheses derived from grand theories.

Grounded theory gradually branched out into different approaches influenced by an array of philosophical positions. The original approach posited by Glaser and Strauss tended to be closer to the traditional positivist epistemological position favoring detached observation and

limited interpretation of data in order to avoid the possibility of bias (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Grounded theory was subject to the ebb and flow of philosophical influences in the Social Sciences such as the rise of post-positivism and constructivism. The present study adopts a middle ground between the original positivism of Glaser and Strauss and the extreme relativism of Foucault (Glaser and Strauss 2009b, Foucault 1980). Constructivism as applied by Strauss and Corbin most closely resembles the approach applied in the present study (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Corbin and Strauss collaborated on several research projects in the latter half of Strauss' prolific career. Moreover, Corbin continued to develop this later work and to tune it as a constructivist approach to research. This constructivist version of grounded theory still maintains the existence of an objective reality as an ontological perspective but rejects the possibility of capturing that reality without the interpretation of the researcher (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Thus, constructivism posits that reality has to be interpreted by researchers, and that the resulting rendering of reality will be influenced by the personal and professional characteristics of the researcher. This has a very important influence on the way coding is undertaken as well as on the assertion that there is more than one correct way to interpret data.

Theoretical sampling

One unique characteristic of grounded theory is the way samples are chosen. It should be noted that in grounded theory sampling is not based on the subjects of a population but rather on concepts (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Thus, concepts and categories guide sampling. According to Corbin and Strauss, a general topic, research question, an area of interest, or literature can lead to research data. In grounded theory, any text can be considered data, such as interviews, government documents, videos, and memoranda, inter alia. Therefore, the researcher starts with a set of texts that deal with a topic broadly defined. Based on the concepts that are identified in that initial cache of texts, the researcher collects more texts that can provide more information regarding the concepts that were deemed important based on either the literature review or the early analysis of texts. Moreover, the texts that are collected need not be representative of any population since the focus of the research is on concepts rather than subjects. The purpose of theoretical sampling is to develop concepts into categories which are then described in terms of their properties and dimensions and linked to either a model or a substantive theory. As Strauss and Corbin explain "in looking for areas to sample, the analyst determines what data will provide answers to questions and help to fill in information about categories" (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 150). Thus, sampling is driven by theory development. Sampling continues until the most important concepts and categories are fully developed and explained at which point they are considered to be saturated.

In the present study the researcher started data analysis with a cache of approximately one hundred primary sources including but not limited to governmental documents produced by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Asia Pacific Cooperation Forum, the individual members of ASEAN, the Republic of South Korea, The People's Republic of China, the Empire of Japan, as well as speeches and memoirs written by prominent regional leaders such as Lee Kuan Yew, Shintaro Ishihara, Mahathir Mohamad, King Rama IX of Thailand, the Sultan of Brunei, and ThaksinShinawatra, inter alia. Furthermore, at least one speech by the head of state of each regional country was included in the sample. The cache included treaties, press releases, position papers, covenants, charters, official speeches, reports, and white papers. All of the papers had the common characteristic of dealing with regionalism in Greater East Asia defined as

the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in addition to South Korea, Japan, and China. In terms of years, the documents range from 1979 to 2012 with more than ninety percent of them dating from 2011-2012. The initial coding and analysis of the sample resulted in an expansion of the sample to two hundred and thirty primary sources with similar characteristics to the initial sample. It is important to note that while the resulting sample includes at least ten primary sources from each country it does not aim to represent, nor is it representative of, the region in the statistical sense of the word. The resulting sample is strictly a theoretical sample gathered based on the general topic of regional integration in Greater East Asia and in later stages around the core category of Harmony through Holistic Engagement. A final characteristic of the sample that should be mentioned is that it is one hundred percent documentary and does not include any direct observation, videos, or interviews. While this is considered to be a limitation in certain qualitative approaches, according to Strauss and Corbin "this is the equivalent of a collection of interviews or field notes" for the purpose of grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 155).

Coding

Coding is probably one of the most difficult aspects of grounded theory. The difficulty of coding in this qualitative approach emanates from the lack of clear guidelines resembling the algorithmic instructions prevalent in quantitative approaches. Thus, coding in grounded theory is both a "science and an art" (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Further complicating the process is the fact that coding is an integral aspect of data analysis in grounded theory contrary to the more limited role played by coding of variables in other [?] qualitative research. Codes in grounded theory represent concepts and thus act as symbols for something else. In-vivo codes use the language found in the texts themselves such as "dialogue" when it is found in several government documents to refer to the constant communication between governments undertaken in order to reach consensus regarding an issue of common concern. Other codes can be labeled using words taken from the literature on the subject or by any other terms approximating the desired meaning. It is clear from the previous overview of the basic process of assigning codes to concepts that the process is flexible and that two equally qualified investigators/researchers may assign different codes to the same ideas. Moreover, codes can vary in terms of abstraction and specificity. Codes are grouped into categories and are linked through a process called axial coding. Categories tend to be broader than codes and are expected to include the basic characteristics and properties of all of the codes encompassed by them. Therefore, categories serve as the initial stages of model development.

Substantive theory

As mentioned in the previous section about coding, analysis begins with the early stages of open coding of texts. Grouping ideas into concepts which are then represented by codes involves a interpretation process that aims to extract the essence of the ideas contained in the texts. Categories encompass several concepts and thus imply a relationship between them. Nevertheless many grounded theory studies stop at this point and simply present categories which then become themes as the final output of the study. While developing themes and describing them is a valuable undertaking, grounded theory provides a method to go several steps further to develop a model, a substantive theory, or even a formal theory. The key technique is axial coding which

involves connecting and linking concepts and describing their relationships to each other. This is done in a characteristically flexible manner by developing the properties of each category and then developing the properties of the relationship through theoretical sampling. Diagrams are used to graphically represent the emerging relationships which ultimately become a model of a particular phenomenon. If analysis is left at this point, the model describes the relationship of categories in a very limited and circumscribed situation. Further theoretical sampling and the constant comparative method can transform a model into a substantive theory. The constant comparative method involves the testing of the model with the data until no further properties or dimensions arise (Corbin and Strauss 2008, Glaser and Strauss 2009b, a, 2010). Most importantly the model is expected to explain the relationship between all of the categories encountered in the sample collected theoretically for a particular phenomenon. Thus, the model becomes a well integrated explanatory theory about a substantive issue. It should be noted that at this point the theory is only valid for the phenomenon in question under the circumstances and conditions described in the original research problem. For example, in the case of Corbin's study of Vietnam Veterans, her study focused on the experiences of Vietnam Veterans during the war (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Therefore, the resulting substantive theory explains the experiences of Vietnam Veterans but cannot be extrapolated to the experiences of all veterans in other wars. It would be possible to take a substantive theory one step further to develop a formal theory but this would involve several studies of the same phenomenon under different conditions.

The goal of the present study is limited to developing a tentative substantive theory of Greater East Asian integration. This means that coding was undertaken at the meso and macro levels rather than at the micro level in order to focus on region-wide concepts and categories. Following Strauss and Corbin's recommendation to apply micro-level coding only at the very early stages of the study in order to guide further theoretical sampling, the present study focused on overarching concepts and categories that resonated with the broad sample of government documents dealing with regional integration in Greater East Asia (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 101-103). In order to make clear the process through which the resulting substantive theory was developed, the following section explains in detail the way the data was analyzed for the present study as well as the categories and concepts that emerged from the process.

Analysis

As explained in previous sections of the present study, analysis and coding are inextricably intertwined in grounded theory. Analysis begins at the same time as data collection and open coding. For the present study, concepts began to proliferate in the first ten documents that were reviewed and coded. It is important to note that what was later to be identified as the core category or guiding concept for the study emerged from some of those early documents and continued to resonate with virtually all other documents that were reviewed.[2] Coding beyond the first eighty documents started to yield fewer new concepts and categories but did increase the number of properties and dimensions of the previously identified categories thus enriching them.

Three important concepts that were identified early on in the process were "peace", "stability", and "prosperity" (2012b, 2012h, 2012j, Bolkiah 2011b, Boupha 2012, Hee-yong 2007a, b,

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[2] In order to make the coding and analysis process more transparent for the reader, at least one quote will be supplied to show an instance of the concept in the sample and other occurrences of the concept will be added as citations.

KLN 2012a, MFA 2012b, Minh 2011, MOFA 2011i, 2012c, g, p, r, s, a, n, MOFAT 2012b, d, Thammavong 2012a, b, Vinh 2012). The three were given in-vivo code due to the high frequency of the labels in the sample as well as the level of fit between the ideas and their symbolic representation. Further coding revealed an important relationship between the three as well as a certain centrality of the three in terms of all subsequently identified concepts. Harmony was used as a category that includes "stability", "prosperity", and "peace". As the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs clearly states, the goal is to achieve "peace, stability, and prosperity in the region" (KLN 2012a, para 1). At this point the properties and dimensions of the three categories under the core concept of Harmony were not fully developed but served to guide further theoretical sampling.

Further coding revealed another highly frequent concept, namely "engagement" (Aquino 2012, KLN 2012a, MFA 2012j, MOFA 2011e, 2012f). This in-vivo code is particularly abstract and encompasses several other important procedural concepts that emerged from the analysis of the theoretical sample. The importance of the concept of "engagement" becomes clear when the Singaporean government asserts the need to "continue to deepen its engagement and strengthen its cooperation with its external partners to maintain peace, stability and prosperity in the region" (MFA 2012e, para 1). The previous passage clearly shows how engagement involves action that can be described through the properties of "depth" and "strength" and that it leads to peace, stability, and prosperity, namely harmony in the region.

Several concepts that emerged from open-coding are related to the broader theme of "engagement" such as "understanding", "community", "dialogue", and "integration". All of the previously mentioned codes are in-vivo codes and appeared very often in the theoretical sample used for the present study. Axial coding reveals an important relationship between the theme of engagement and "understanding", "dialogue", and "integration". "Understanding" can be considered a goal or desirable outcome of "engagement". Thus, in this case understanding is a desired state and engagement is a set of processes that may lead to increased understanding (2011a, 2011b, 2012b, 2012i, Billah 2012, Hee-yong 2007b, MFA 2012m, i, MOFA 2012g, f, MOFAT 2012a, b, d). The link between engagement and understanding was made clear by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in its position paper regarding Human Rights in the ASEAN region (MOFA 2012f). By linking greater engagement to increased understanding regarding the meaning of Human Rights, the Ministry is implying a cause and effect relationship between the two. In this case, engagement becomes the possible cause of greater understanding from the point of view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the largest member of ASEAN.

Another concept that arose in relation to "understanding" was "consensus". As another in-vivo code the meaning of the concept may not aligned to its traditional dictionary definition. In terms of the present study the meaning of consensus that arose from the data was as a property of "understanding" (2012j, Billah 2012, MOFA 2011e, 2012q, s). In other words, regional actors consider "consensus" to be the highest level of "understanding" attainable. This connection was made clear by Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee of Brunei in his address to the United Nations 67th Assembly (Billah 2012). The Prince mentions the importance of consensus as the modus operandi of ASEAN which according to him should serve as a model to other regions.

Another important property or subcategory of "engagement" is "dialogue". While the commonly accepted meaning of dialogue is similar to having a conversation or an exchange of views, regional actors view dialogue as a much broader process involving both explicit and implicit communication (2012c, 2012l, 2012g, Bolkiah 2011b, Bolkiah 2011c, KLN 2012a, MFA 2012l, b, c, i, h, k, Minh 2011, MOFA 2011b, i, 2012c, g, q, p, r, f, MOFAT 2008a, 2011b,

2012d, h, Thammavong 2012a, Vinh 2012). Thus, dialogue is viewed as a long term communication process conducted through a vast array of means, formal,and informal, leading to a shared understanding of an issue or to consensus. The aforementioned view of dialogue as a flexible process is clearly articulated by the Deputy Prime Ministry Pham QuangVinh of Vietnam in his perceived need to "continue promoting dialogues on building and sharing regional norms of conduct" (Vinh 2012).

Another important category that emerged under the umbrella of "engagement" was "integration". This was also an in-vivo code that appeared with high frequency in the sample of government documents (2012b, 2012h, 2012g, Kittikhoun 2012, MFA 2012c, d, a, MOFA 2011i, j, 2012p, MOFAT 2007b, 2011a, Thammavong 2012a, Vinh 2012, Erll 2010, Moon 2011, Vernygora, Chaban, and Yi 2012, Bhattacharyay 2010, JICA 2007, Severino 2007). "Integration" appears to be inextricably linked to two other important concepts that emerged from the sample, namely "cooperation" and "competition". The two latter concepts can be considered to be important properties of the former. It is important to note how regional actors view integration as a process rather than as a static state. (2011a, ASEAN 2012a, MOFA 2012b, MOFAT 2011b, 2012h, 2012i, 2012j, 2012k, 2012n, 2012l, 2012a, 2012g, Boupha 2012, Hee-yong 2007a, b, Kittikhoun 2012, KLN 2012a, MFA 2012l, b, c, a, i, h, k, j, Minh 2011, MOFA 2011d, h, i, j, 2012c, e, g, q, p, r, s, t, o, h, a, l, n, i, m, f, MOFAT 2007a, b, 2008a, b, 2011c, 2012b, d, e, h, Thammavong 2012a, b, Vinh 2012). The importance of cooperation as an integral process in order to achieve greater integration is clearly voiced in Malaysia's official foreign policy statement regarding ASEAN in which it states the need to "further strengthen cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States' relevant sectoral bodies" so as to "adapt itself to a changing regional landscapes and future challenges" (KLN 2012a, para 5-6). Therefore, it is clear that cooperation is important is an important aspect of "engagement" which in turn leads to harmony, namely a state of peace, prosperity, and stability. Moreover, the previous relationship is mediated by the category of "integration" which involves cooperation but also competition.

One important concept that was not found in-vivo but was rather put together as a combination of ideas in the data is competition. This concept was particularly frequent in discussions about border disputes, trade, foreign direct investment, and tourism (2011c, 2011d, 2012b, 2012c, 2012h, 2012i, 2012k, 2012l, 2012a, 2012g, Billah 2012, Bolkiah 2011a, b, Boupha 2012, Hee-yong 2007a, b, Kittikhoun 2012, KLN 2012a, c, b, MFA 2012f, n, l, m, b, c, d, h, j, Minh 2011, MOFA 2007, 2011a, b, d, f, h, i, j, e, 2012c, e, g, k, q, p, r, s, t, d, h, a, l, n, i, f, MOFAT 2007a, b, 2008a, b, 2011c, d, a, 2012a, c, b, d, e, f, g, h, Shinawatra 2012, Thammavong 2012a, b, Vinh 2012). Nevertheless, the emphasis in the data was found to be on the proper means to pursue competition. Thus, competition was simply considered to be the other extreme of a continuum ranging between perfect cooperation and competition. Therefore, rather than a dichotomy between competition and cooperation the two were considered to be part of the same integration process. In terms of the nature of the process orchestrating cooperation and competition, the concept of "alignment" arose from the data (Bolkiah 2011b, Boupha 2012, MOFA 2007, 2012f). By alignment the data shows that regional actors consider the sharing of information in order to coordinate their actions so as to promote peace, stability, and prosperity for the members of the community. Moreover, the concept of alignment alludes to the understanding of regional actors of the need for flexible engagement through dialogue which in turn assumes that actors understand the previously mentioned norms. This in turn links to the important category of "community".

"Community" is a central in-vivo category that has strong links to all of the previously discussed concepts and categories (Acharya 2001, MFA 2012c, MOFA 2011i, 2012r, 2012b, 2012g, Billah 2012, Bolkiah 2011a, b, Boupha 2012, Hee-yong 2007a, b, Kittikhoun 2012, KLN 2012a, c, b, MFA 2012b, i, h, Minh 2011, MOFA 2011d, e, 2012c, e, g, q, p, s, t, o, h, b, n, m, MOFAT 2011c, d, 2012a, d, MOFTA 2012b, c, Shinawatra 2012, Thammavong 2012a, b, Vinh 2012). In terms of properties it includes "location", "norms", and "membership". At the center of the category of "community" is the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) and its related organizations such as the ASEAN Plus Three, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the East Asian Summit (2011d, 2012f, 2012e, 2012m, 2012g, Acharya 2001, ASEAN 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a, b, 2007a, b, 2012a, g, b, h, f, d, e, c, Caroll 2011, Kao 2011, KLN 2012a, b, MFA 2012n, b, Minh 2011, MOFA 2011a, b, c, d, f, g, i, j, e, 2012c, e, g, k, q, p, r, t, f, MOFAT 2007a, b, c, 2008a, b, 2011c, d, e, a, 2012e, f, g, h, PRC 2011a, Thammavong 2012a). Thus, one important property of "community" is ASEAN centrality. Moreover, the property of membership is centered around the definition of membership established by ASEAN Plus Three, wherein the "community" includes the ten ASEAN members plus the Republic of Korea, the Empire of Japan, and the People's Republic of China. As the Singaporean Foreign Affairs Ministry explains "the ASEAN +3 framework was formed to create a more cohesive grouping between ASEAN and its partners China, Japan, and the ROK" (MFA 2012b, para 6). This leads to the property of "location" which circumscribes the scope of the "community" to Greater East Asia. The concept of "norms" involves all of the previously described categories under the important theme of "engagement" (Vinh 2012).

Another important category that falls under "community" is "amicable relationships" which in turn has the following properties: the presence of "dispute settlement mechanisms", "mutually beneficial relationships (win-win)", and "greater understanding" (2012h, MOFA 2012i). The category of "understanding" was discussed in an earlier section of this discussion but it reappears as an important property of amicable relationships which in turn describe the nature of the concept of "community". This raises an important point and that is that categories are not mutually exclusive and one concept can belong to more than one category at the same time. While surprising this is natural due to the grounded nature of the concept on the data. It should be noted that people tend to connect certain properties to more than one object/concept. For example, a chair can be described as useful while a table can also be described by using the same property. "Amicable relationships" have several dimensions according to the data, such as scope, "depth", endurance, and dynamism.

The dimension of "dynamism" was also found in relation to the category of "engagement" but was renamed "flexible" due to the more inclusive nature of the term for a higher level abstraction such as "engagement'. Moreover, regional actors consider "flexibility" to be the most important dimension of "engagement" and the key to its success. (KLN 2012a) This is interesting because it differs from the literature on the subject which bemoans the lack of formal institutionalization of the region in question (Calder and Ye 2010, Dent 2009, Ravenhill 2001). The previous example of axial coding raises some pivotal links between several concepts which include categories, properties, and dimensions, showing how regional actors perceive the concepts as part of an integrated whole rather than as separate domains. Taking this concept of "integrated whole: and merging it with the dimension of "flexibility" a new property arises and is coded as "holism".

"Holism" is not an in-vivo code but is strongly grounded in the data as it encompasses the main ideas behind "flexibility" and "integrated whole", aptly describing the central category of

"engagement". This new code was explored through further theoretical sampling resulting in a strong support for its existence as an important concept describing the way regional actors perceive their engagement to be. This concept and its importance will be elaborated further in the section dealing with findings but for now it will suffice to state that it was later found to be at the core of a tentative grounded model of Greater East Asian regionalism.

Returning to the category of "cooperation" it should be noted that it was found to be linked to other important concepts such as "alignment" and "coordination". Once this important concept was coded further theoretical sampling was needed in order to develop its properties and dimensions. The expanded sampling and consequent data analysis resulting in the identification of the following properties: "health", "finance", "security", "trade", "agriculture" and "development" (2011a, 2011c, 2012b, 2012h, 2012n, 2012d, 2012g, Billah 2012, Bolkiah 2011a, b, Boupha 2012, Kittikhoun 2012, KLN 2012a, MFA 2012o, l, b, c, a, i, k, Minh 2011, MOFA 2011a, h, i, 2012c, g, p, s, d, o, h, b, n, i, MOFAT 2007a, b, 2008a, 2011c, b, 2012d, h, MOFTA 2012c, Shinawatra 2012, Thammavong 2012a, b, Vinh 2012). Some of the previously mentioned properties have a higher level of abstraction than others, such as "development" compared to "health". The reason for this is that "development" can at times include all of the others while at the same time usually pertaining to "aid". This is another instance of the complex nature of axial coding and tracing the relationships between concepts. In this case "development" appears at two different level of abstraction and the data support this dual meaning of the concept. Nevertheless, the previously mentioned properties of cooperation displayed very similar dimensions, namely "strength", "intensity", "depth", and "scope" (2012b, Vinh 2012). Adding further complexity to this emic perspective on "cooperation" is role of "integration" in facilitating the previously mentioned cooperation. This intriguing relationship was explored further by expanding the sample and the result of this was an addition of "integration" as a property of "community".

Another important property of "community" and "integration" that arose late in the coding process is "connectivity". This concept includes both increasing "people to people" contact between members of the "community" as well as improving communication through better "infrastructure" and "English language proficiency" (2012b, Kittikhoun 2012, MFA 2012b, d, a, Minh 2011, MOFA 2011a, 2012g, q, p, s, i, MOFAT 2012d, Shinawatra 2012, Thammavong 2012a, b, Vinh 2012). Therefore, three properties of "connectivity" include "physical infrastructure", "people to people" exchanges, and "institutional communication". While this study did not conduct extensive micro-coding due to the high level of abstraction involved in the research topic, several interesting examples of "connectivity" were identified. A large proportion of regional actors mentioned the expansion of roads as an important aspect of "connectivity" while an almost equally large proportion focused on information technology as a way to foster greater "connectivity" (Kittikhoun 2012, Thammavong 2012b). Moreover, the concept of "connectivity" was closely related to "understanding" and regional actors perceived it as an important way to foster deeper integration through "holistic engagement".

In terms of the concept of "security", regional actors view it in a "comprehensive" way which transcends traditional security and includes "food security", financial security, and terrorism, and disaster prevention (2012b, 2012j, 2012g, Boupha 2012, Hee-yong 2007a, b, Kittikhoun 2012, MFA 2012b, d, j, MOFA 2011d, 2012p, m, MOFAT 2007c, 2011a, 2012d, MOFTA 2012a, Thammavong 2012a). Therefore "security" has a complex meaning for regional actors which link to two properties, namely "preventive" and "emergency response". Moreover, the data show that "prevention" and "emergency response" are not viewed as mutually exclusive properties but rather as two extremes of a single continuum. Due to this, several regional actors such as the

governments of Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei emphasize the need for "aid" that deals with both issues as the same time (2011d, MOFA 2012l, b). One example of this is "capacity building" which aims to strengthen the "capacities" of the recipient country in order to increase "resiliency" and local "capacities" in several security areas. The economic realm was also perceived to be related to "security" by regional actors which is understandable due to the shared regional experience of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. Financial flight, inflation, and generalized economic instability became very real threats to the security of the region and had important political repercussions as attested by the downfall of long-time Indonesian strongman, Suharto. The securitization of finance and trade raise the level of importance of regional economic integration and put it on par to traditional security cooperation and confidence building measures.

One important concept that arose from the data in relation to both economic security and the concept of integration is the Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA) (MFA 2012b). CEPEA is at the planning stages but represents the shared goal of ASEAN members, Japan, South Korea, and China in terms of economic integration and trade. The East Asian Summit and the ASEAN Plus Three openly strive towards the creation of a region-wide free trade area that also includes greater "connectivity", freer financial flows, and a fully integrated supply-chain and production base. This is a very lofty goal for a region with few formal institutions and a very diverse membership with different development levels and political systems; however, regional actors seem to have a long term and gradual view in terms of achieving this goal. Aiming for a CEPEA is in and of itself considered to be a short term success since it attests to the achievement of a higher level of mutual understanding as well as providing an issue to continue their approach of "holistic engagement". Thus, the case of the CEPEA shows how for regional actors the process is as or even more important than the outcome.

Returning to the concept of "economic integration" it is clear that based on the data, regional actors aim for a gradual sectoral approach allowing for variation among members depending on their developmental level and political circumstances (MFA 2012a, MOFA 2011j, MOFAT 2007b, Thammavong 2012a, Vinh 2012). Another important property of economic integration is that it aims to be non-exclusivist or as several regional actors call it, an "open regionalism" (MOFA 2005, Moon 2011). The meaning of "open regionalism" for regional actors is that while their aim is to foster greater integration among their regional community, this should be accompanied by continued engagement with the global economy. An example of this is the ASEAN European Meeting (ASEM) which brings together ASEAN and the members of the European Union in order to discuss issues of mutual concern (2012b, 2012c, 2012i, 2012k, Boupha 2012, Douangdy 2012, MFA 2012l, Minh 2011, Sein 2012, Thammavong 2012a). It should be noted that "engagement" with other regions and extra-regional actors is conducted in a similarly flexible fashion as between members since regional actors have as an important goal to "socialize" other international actors to understand and eventually follow Greater East Asia's modus operandi based on "holistic engagement".

It is clear from the previous discussion that regional actors view Greater East Asia as a flexible and open community that aims to increase connectivity both with members as well as with extra regional partners. Several regional actors expressed the importance of maintaining this new regional integration as openly as possible in order to eventually move towards a globalism (Hee-yong 2007a, b, KLN 2012b, MFA 2012f, g, a, i, h, MOFA 2002, 2005, 2012q, p, a, l, b, n, j, f, MOFAT 2011d, 2012d, Moon 2011, Shozaki 2006, Thammavong 2012b). As Prince haji Al-MuhtadeeBilla, Crown Prince of Brunei Darussalam eloquently states: "twenty-first century regionalism" "will be like some regions today that operate from a basis of consensus, rather than

compromise and confrontation" and this involves adjusting like ASEAN which "is an association of neighbors who have deliberately chosen to "adjust" their region's previous identity" (Billah 2012, para 8). The previous quote shows how regional actors value the approach of ASEAN and related organizations to international relations and how those relations are viewed as a process of "adjustment" and possibly "alignment" to each other needs and challenges.

The analysis process revealed other codes such as minor properties of particular types of aid as well as their dimensions; however, due to the level of analysis of the research topic they were not pursued further since expanding them would not contribute to model development. Moreover, all of the previously mentioned categories and properties were developed until they were saturated for the purposes of developing substantive theory and they were tested against the data through the constant comparative method. Therefore, the categories and concepts that were explained in the preceding paragraphs apply to the entire theoretical sample which, as mentioned in earlier sections, covers a vast array of countries and regional actors. The advantage of this is that the categories are considered to be important for the entire Greater East Asia Region while the drawback is that due to the scope of the topic more detailed concepts which do not pass the constant comparative method test against all the sample had to be abandoned.

The following section explains the formal findings of the present study and describes the tentative grounded substantive theory that arose from data analysis. Since the purpose of the next section is to explain the resulting theory, it involves a higher level of abstraction that the section preceding it. The emphasis is on relationships between categories and concepts and on how they explain the way regional actors perceive that their region functions.

Findings

One of the strengths of grounded theory is the flexibility it provides in terms of the intended outcome of the research project (Corbin and Strauss 2008, Hachtmann 2012). Depending on the goals of the research project the themes, categories, and concepts can be used to provide a holistic description of a phenomenon, to develop a model, or even to construct a full substantive theory. As stated in early sections of this chapter, one of the goals of this study is to develop a tentative grounded theory of Greater East Asian Regionalism. This means that grounded theory was used to go one step beyond description while at the same time avoiding overreaching to formal theory development.

In order to achieve the previously mentioned goal, the initial results of axial coding were depicted in diagram form so as to trace the most important relationships between categories related to the general topic of regionalism in Greater East Asia. Harmony was identified to be the core-category bringing together all of the other categories and concepts. As explained in the previous section, regional actors view harmony as the presence of peace, stability, and prosperity. The properties of prosperity include food security, education, technology, and health (2012b, Boupha 2012, Douangdy 2012, Jiechi 2012, KLN 2012a, MFA 2012l, e, MOFAT 2008a, 2012b, PRC 2011b, Sisoulith 2012, Thammavong 2012a, b). Stability refers to both social and economic homeostasis. It should be noted the regional actors have a very conservative view of stability in that they highly value the protection of the status quo and view sudden change in a very negative way. Therefore, for regional actors a lack of sudden change is valuable in and of itself. This is understandable if one remembers the damage caused by the 1997 Asian Financial crisis and how it affected the livelihoods of millions of people in the region.

Peace is another important property of Harmony and it includes the lack of overt conflict. The emphasis is on the lack of observable conflict since regional actors lack a dichotomous view of competition versus cooperation, as explained in the previous section. Thus, the property of peace describes harmony and clearly shows that a lack of overt conflict is highly valued by regional actors which is then complemented by the presence of prosperity all in an atmosphere of stability.
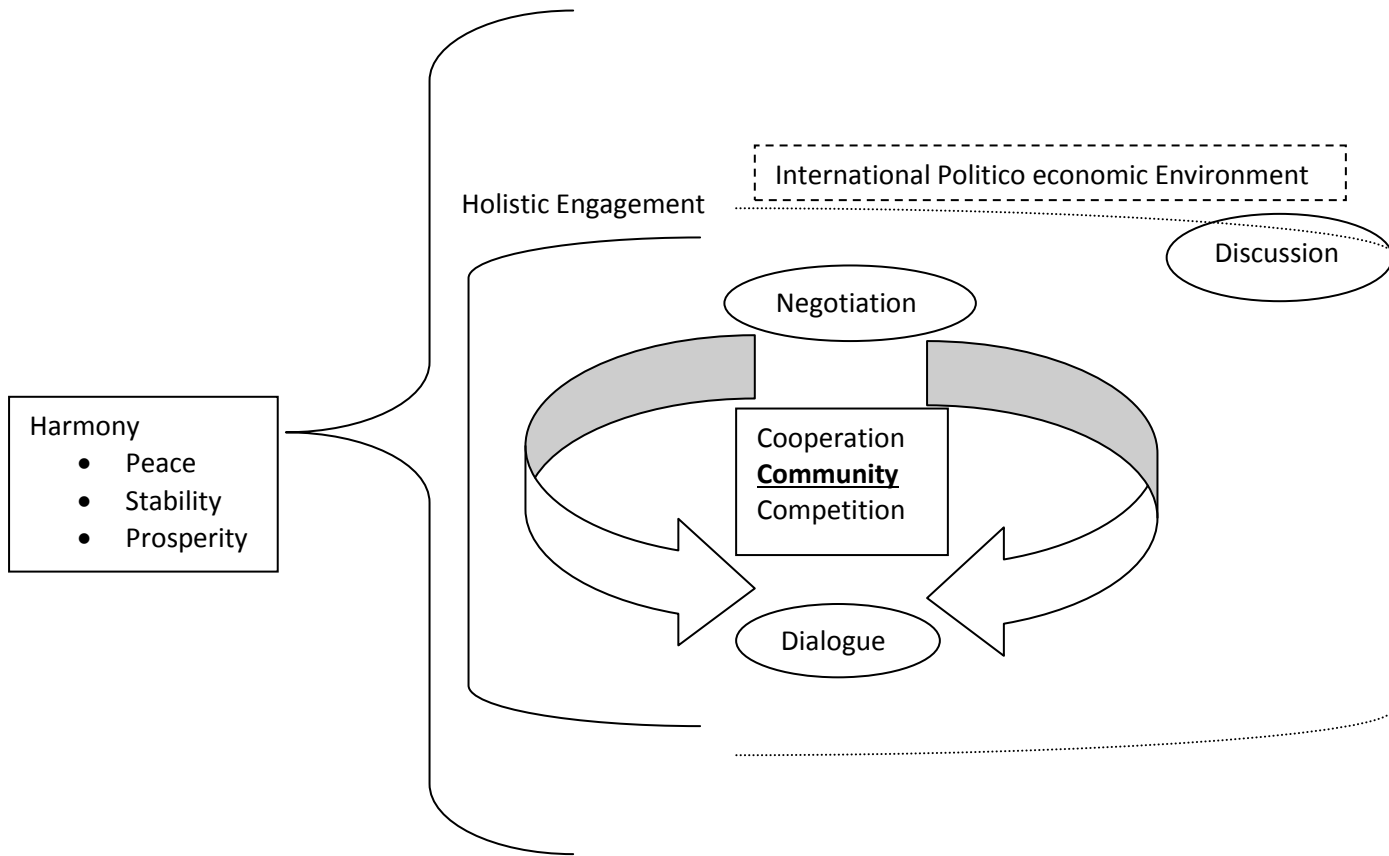

Figure 1. Harmony through Holistic Engagement: A Grounded Substantive Theory of Greater East Asian Regionalism.

Figure 1 provides a pictorial depiction of the model and consequent substantive theory that emerged from the analysis explained in the previous section of the paper. The emerging model was tested against new data acquired through further theoretical sampling and modified or expanded through the constant comparative method of analysis. The resulting model shows a high level of abstraction due to the generalized coding that was conducted as well as the need to develop a model that explains the relationships between important categories extracted from a

sample of more than two hundred and thirty primary sources released by thirteen countries and more than twenty private eminent persons of political significance.

The resulting model shows that the core relationship can be found between the goal of achieving a harmonious Greater East Asia and the process of "engagement". As explained in the analysis section of this paper, the category "engagement" was qualified by the adjective "holistic" in other to capture the flexible and comprehensive view of the process held by regional actors. This is shown in the diagram by a large bracket directly on the right of the core-category of harmony. In order to show the widespread perception of the importance of the international environment on regional "harmony", a dotted box was added to the model at the right hand top of the diagram. Thus, holistic engagement takes place in an environment influenced by international socio-economic and political factors. Regional actors are keenly aware of the need to adapt to the international environment and showed a clear understanding of how their welfare depended on achieving a holistic engagement with both extra and intra-regional partners.

At the core of the resulting model is the concept of "community" which, as explained in the analysis section, is defined as the members of ASEAN plus South Korea, Japan, and mainland China. Thus, the concept of "community" includes an ASEAN core and alludes to the sharing of the norms of that organization. Mediating the relationship between the category of "community" and the broader process of "flexible" engagement are the twin processes of competition and cooperation. Regional actors view the two as different poles defining necessary interaction between community members. Thus, in their view competition is not necessarily bad as long as it is pursued according to the accepted norms of the community.

Since interaction requires and involves communication, the diagram shows three important types of communication emphasized by regional actors, namely dialogue, discussions, and negotiations. While the three aforementioned communication types share many similarities, regional actors perceive them differently. Negotiation tends to be viewed as having clearer goals, one of them being reaching some kind of agreement. On the other hand, discussions tend to be less focused than negotiations and have the purpose of increasing understanding about the parties' positions, ideas, and concerns. Dialogue transcends both negotiation and discussions and is not conducted with any particular issue or goal in mind other than strengthening the relationship between parties through an increase in mutual understanding and trust. It is important to note that regional actors do not view them as mutually exclusive but rather as three styles of communication leading to a more holistic engagement between the members of the community. Thus, dialogue has a pivotal role in this model because it is considered to be the core mechanism of socialization in the Greater East Asian community by regional actors. In other words, engaging in dialogue with other members is considered to be both a prerequisite for membership as well as a characteristic of membership.

Now that the core characteristics of the model have been explained, one factor that is missing is behavior or action. Engagement involves communication and learning but what about implementation and action? The omission of a separate category for implementation and action is deliberate. One interesting finding from this study is that actors view integration as an increase in the alignment of their individual behavior rather than as an increase in centralized joint action. Therefore, joint policy action is achieved through holistic engagement by the coordination of the actions of individual members. Holistic engagement also brings to the fore another important dimension, timeframe. Regional actors have a cyclical view of time and therefore since engagement is both the beginning and the end of regional integration, then timeframes tend to be equally flexible. At this point it is important to remember the concept of "alignment". This coordina-

tion must benefit and be attuned to both the needs and capabilities of all members meaning that rather than establishing a clear and rigid time table to achieve a set number of goals, both the timeframe and the goals are established through a combination of constantly changing environmental and local factors and needs. This flexibility is considered to be the strength of Greater East Asian regionalism as it allows for better fit between action and environment than more rigid approaches. A metaphor included in one of the memos prepared during the research process clearly describes the way regional actors perceive the alignment process as dancing salsa or meringue. Contrary to ballet or other dancing styles that require all the moves to be carefully choreographed in advance, salsa and meringue requires the combination of a set of learned dance moves according to the music, the expressive needs of the dancing couple, and their capabilities. Thus, salsa dancers have to communicate with each other constantly while dancing and have to modify their moves depending on the music as well as space constraints on the dance floor. The more often a couple dances together, the better they will become at reading each other's moves and adjusting their own in order to achieve the best joint results. Therefore, each dance is not a finished product but rather a way to learn more about each other in order to improve the overall relationship in the future. To the researcher, this captures the basic nature of "alignment" in terms of Greater East Asian regionalism.

Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal some interesting characteristics of Greater East Asian regionalism. First of all, there is a clear emphasis on process rather than on content. Moreover, the process is flexible and in a constant state of flux. Another important characteristic is that Greater East Asian regionalism is open in the sense that regional actors clearly perceive the region's wellbeing to be intimately connected with that of the rest of the world.

The emphasis on process rather than content is surprising at the international level yet parallels findings at the individual and group levels. Social Psychologist Richard Nisbett has conducted extensive research about the differences between Asian and Western thinking patterns and worldviews (Nisbett 2003). His results mirror the findings of this study in that Asian participants were found to hold a more holistic view of the world and to value process over content. Moreover, Asian participants held a predominantly cyclical view of time. While the two studies were conducted at very different levels and under different conditions, the findings complement each other and hint at the important role played by culture even in terms of regional integration at the macro level.

Finally, the limitations of the present emic section of the study should be noted. Grounded theory is based on the ideas and beliefs held by local participants, in this case regional leaders and intellectuals, which means that its goal is not to reach a universalistic objective model of how a system works but rather a model of how local participants perceive the system. Due to the previously mentioned orientation of grounded theory, certain concepts which are important in the literature in terms of regional integration such as Human Rights, enforcement mechanisms, and formal regimes, are not found in the resulting substantive theory. This means that the resulting substantive theory is obviously biased from the point of local participants. Nevertheless, grounded theory serves the purpose of the present study by providing an emic perspective on Greater East Asian regionalism to complement the literature on regionalism which tends to rely on etic approaches.

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