
THE INFLUENCE OF REGIONAL POLARITY
ON
REGIONAL COOPERATION

Master Thesis ||

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Explaining the Effects of Polarity on Regional Cooperation in Mercosur, The League of Arab States and ASEAN

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes how variations in regional polarity influence the processes of regional cooperation. A small N-analysis has been made on Mercosur, the League of Arab States and ASEAN. These organizations are the most institutionalized forms of cooperation in three distinctive regions: Southern-America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. The configuration of polarity is determined by the distribution of material capabilities amongst states. Therefore, the more symmetrical the distribution the larger the amount of regional powers present within the region. Theory asserts that as the amount of regional powers increases, prospects for regional cooperation decrease. Indeed, the findings show that a regional bipolar configuration is more prone to cooperation than a multipolar setting. The case of unipolarity in ASEAN has limited generalizability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

Regional cooperation amongst states has become an important part of the research agenda in international relations (Mansfield & Solingen, 2010; Pentland, 1975;). Much research, however, tends to focus on the European Union as a region and as European Studies have become an independent department in many universities, there are relatively few studies conducted on ‘other’ regions (Hurrell, 1995:333). Therefore, this thesis aims at contributing to the literature by making a (modest) comparison amongst the three most important organizations in the Middle East, Latin America and Southeast Asia: the League of Arab States, Mercosur and ASEAN. Member states have an important influence on the degree of cooperation within these regional institutions. The role of Brazil and Argentina in Latin-America, for example, has been crucial for the regional institutions’ creation and its further development. It is therefore interesting and important to understand how variations in regional polarity influence the processes of regional cooperation. The central research question of this thesis is therefore:

“To what extent does regional polarity influence regional cooperation?”

The distribution of material capabilities amongst states determines polarity. Polarity on an international level has been at the heart of International Relations studies, mostly within the framework of *neorealist* and *neoliberal institutionalist* debates (Wohlforth, 1999; Waltz, 1964; Axelrod & Keohane, 1985). The bulk of this research has focused on the behavior of states in a global context. Regionalism and strengthened regional arrangements, however, have become important in the debates about the nature of the post-Cold war international order, despite a global configuration of unipolarity (Hurrell, 1995:331). Regional activities can lead to economic or political integration and the new “wave of regionalism” is characterized by blurred boundaries. The central argument is that the configuration type of regional polarity influences regional cooperation. The more regional powers there are, the lesser the degree of cooperation within that region. On the other hand, the less regional powers there are, the higher the degree of cooperation within that region. This thesis aims at analyzing the three institutional arrangements (League of Arab States, Mercosur and ASEAN) as regional configurations of polarity. In doing so, it is important to analyze how regionally powerful states influence cooperation. This will contribute to our understanding of the region as a whole and it may serve as an explanatory framework for ongoing issues in these regions.

Four sub questions will be used to narrow and guide the research question. The questions can be divided into two categories. First, the determination of what types of polarities exist and have existed within these regions. Second, how polarity within a certain period has influenced cooperative issues, such as regional trade agreements or joint military projects. Therefore, the following subquestions have been formulated.

1. What types of polarity are present in the regions of the League of Arab States, Mercosur and ASEAN?

This question aims at analyzing the material distributions amongst the member states. These are the economic and political powers of the member states of these organizations. By comparing member states we can conclude which polarity configuration has been dominant in the regions by determining their relative power position.

2. How does bipolarity influence regional cooperation in the case of Mercosur?

The second sub question aims at explaining the influence of Brazil and Argentina, as the two regional powers, on cooperation within Mercosur.

3. How does multipolarity influence regional cooperation in the case of the League of Arab States?

The third sub question focuses on how the absence of a regional hegemon (multipolarity) has influenced cooperation in the case of the League of Arab States. One may argue that Israel has been the regional hegemon, but in this case Israel is not a member of the League of Arab States and thus it will be excluded from the analysis. In that regard, we could argue that the Middle East region has been characterized by a configuration of multipolarity since the League's inception.

4. How does unipolarity influence regional cooperation in the case of ASEAN?

The last question aims at explaining the influence of Indonesia on cooperation in the case of ASEAN. In short, these questions will outline how regional polarity has influenced regional cooperation in the cases of Mercosur, the League of Arab States and ASEAN. First, by analyzing what type of polarity has been dominated throughout the organization's existence. Second, by analyzing the agreements that have been enforced by the member-states of these institutions.

1.2 SOCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

As argued before, the scholarly literature on comparative regional studies and the influence of regional powers on regional cooperation is not extensive. There is a gap in the literature concerning explanatory factors of cooperation in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. The analysis in this thesis will therefore be of much relevance in understanding the dynamics of cooperation within these three regions. Not only in the sense that these changes will influence ‘global politics’, but these regions have for decades been plagued by conflicts, underdevelopment and political instability.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF STUDY

This study is structured in the following order. The second chapter outlines the competing scholarly explanations regarding the process of regional cooperation. It also deals with their various strengths and weaknesses. The third chapter is the theoretical framework in which a theoretical answer will be given to the research question. In the fourth chapter will be outlined the research design and operationalization of variables as well as the research methods that will be employed. The fifth chapter is the analysis section on the configuration of polarity and how this has influenced cooperation in the case of Mercosur, the League of Arab States and ASEAN. Chapter eight will conclude the findings and briefly outline the limitations of the study.

2. EXPLAINING REGIONAL COOPERATION

This chapter provides an overview of the academic debates concerned with the phenomenon of regional cooperation. The literature is organized around various competing explanations. It also deals with the strength and weaknesses of these studies. The chapter is outlined in the following order: an overview of systemic level theories will be given first. Thereafter an overview of theories that explain the role of domestic politics. The next section will outline the economic interdependence approach. The last section will examine the hegemonic stability theory.

2.1 SYSTEMIC LEVEL

The first theoretical explanation for regional cooperation deals with the systemic level. Systemic theories explain the behavior of great powers and their quest for relative and absolute gains based on systemic configurations. The systemic structure can take three distinctive forms: unipolarity, bipolarity and multipolarity. The strategies and interests of great powers differs as a consequence of variations of polarity. Thus, variations in polarity will have different impacts on the process of regional cooperation.

The structural realist approach to international relations is characterized by the assumption that the structure of the international system is anarchical (Waltz, 2000:5). Changes occur at the unit level when the number of great powers changes. Thus, the number of great powers affects the stability of the international system, its durability and the degree to which alliances are made (Waltz, 2000:6). The stability of the international system is reflected in the degree to which major powers are prevented from war. Structural realism has three layers of explanatory factors to explain state behavior (Jorgensen, 2010:84):

1. Anarchy.
2. Functional differentiation of units.
3. Changing configurations of polarity.

In the case of regional cooperation, the structural realist approach focuses on dynamics of rival regionalism and the balancing games amongst different regional actors. Institutions in this regard would be subordinated to national purposes and states determine their fate, as they serve the state's national interests. The role of regional powers is essential in understanding why regional cooperation is pursued. The case of NATO is used as an example of how the most powerful state, the USA, subordinates the organization's existence and interests to that

of its own. According to realist approaches alliances are part of international politics in the sense that they are formed to counter a specific threat. Therefore, once the threat has disappeared the alliance is likely to 'dissolve' (Jorgensen, 2010:92). The alliance is based on utility calculations and ideational commitments may enforce it. An alliance plays an important role in making or preserving balances of power (ibid, p.92).

The balance of power theory builds on the premise of anarchy, self-help and the security dilemma (Jorgensen, 2010:89). As anarchy poses an ultimate threat to the very existence of a state, it must ensure its survival by balancing power against its competitors to bring the international distribution of power into balance (Waltz, 2000:28). The balance of power is a balance of all the capabilities that states choose to use in pursuing their goals (Jorgensen, 2010:p.90). States can balance by forming alliances or coalitions with others. The opposing element of balancing is bandwagoning, whereby the state is not strong enough to balance and as a consequence must 'bandwagon' as this is more beneficial to its very existence (ibid, p.90). Unbalanced power is a potential danger to others and thus states will try to balance against it (Waltz, 2000:28).

There are, however, more specific theories that deal with cooperation. Gowa (1989:1245), for example, argues that a bipolar system has a clear advantage over a multipolar system in regards to the possible emergence of a free-trade area. As opening borders for trade also poses a threat to the national security, the costs of member-states exiting an alliance dims the prospects for free trade. Thus, the structure of the international system determines the formation of alliances. Variations in polarity cause different logics of patterns in alliance formation and alliance politics (Jorgensen, 2010:92). The behavior of states within alliances is characterized by free-riding, chain-ganging, buck-passing, defection and entrapment. According to many (neo)realist scholars, the international system is currently characterized by unipolarity (Waltz, 2000; Jervis, 2009; Ikenberry, Mastanduno, Wohlforth, 2009). They do not agree, however, on whether this is a stable or unstable configuration of the international system and which potential superpowers are on the rise (Waltz, 2000; Wohlforth, 1999). The weakness of systemic theories is their disregard of domestic structures. Norms, ideas and quest on identity are therefore not analyzed.

2.2 DOMESTIC POLITICS

The second theoretical approach that explains regional cooperation deals with the influence of domestic politics. How are preferences and national interests constructed? In case of relative and absolute gains, how are they determined? Furthermore, ratification of internationally

agreed terms is essential to enforce cooperation. Therefore, how many veto points exist within a domestic structure? The case of the League of Nations, where the US Congress rejected ratification, is a clear example of how cooperation can fail due to domestic factors. Putnam in *Diplomacy and Domestic Politics* (1988) outlines a conceptual framework of the two level game played by governments on international and national level. International policies can only be agreed upon in case a powerful minority within each government favors on domestic grounds the policy demanded internationally (Putnam, 1988:428). There are furthermore four prominent theories which emphasize different dimensions of domestic politics (Milner, 1992:494): pluralist, elite, institutional and Marxist theories. Pluralist theories deal with the preferences of interest groups and the dynamics of party systems. Elite theories argue that the background, beliefs and ideas of political elite shape international bargaining. Institutional theories put emphasize on domestic decision-making structures. Therefore, the structure of the political system (presidential, parliamentary, unicameral or bicameral system) determines negotiations on an international level. Marxist theories deal with the effect of capital on national interests in short and long terms. Domestic capital may require international cooperation to accumulate national or private capital stocks. Systemic theories have been dominant in explaining cooperation, but domestic theories are essential in expanding our understanding of international cooperation according to Milner (1992:496). The domestic theoretical approach, although highlighting the domestic factors that influence the process of regional cooperation, leaves not much space for analyzing systemic influences or those of networks of regional interdependence.

2.3 ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE

The third theoretical approach explains the process of regional cooperation as a response to the problems created by regional interdependence (Hurrell, 1995:348). Increasing levels of interdependence create increased demands for international cooperation. Keohane and Axelrod argue (1985:226) that cooperation occurs as states adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of other states. Whether cooperation is a success or a failure is dependent upon three dimensions: mutuality of interests (payoff structure), the shadow of the future, and the number of players. According to Cohn (2011:209) regionalism has emerged as a significant force with the creation of a number of regional trade agreements. Economists describe regional trade agreements as a process of integration that consists of five stages: free trade area, customs union, common market, economic union and a political union. The weakness of this approach is to be found in its assumption that economics are perceived as the

autonomous forces affecting regional cooperation. The primacy of politics, however, does influence cooperation.

2.4 HEGEMONIC STABILITY

The hegemonic stability theory is an important theory in explaining the causes of cooperation within the international political economy tradition. The international economic and monetary system is according to Kindleberger (1973:11) unstable. It therefore needs leadership to manage the world economy (Kindleberger, 1986:289; Jorgensen, 2010:142). A hegemon is thus a precondition for the functioning of an integrated economy and international cooperation. Britain and the United States have taken this role on themselves during the 19th and 20th century. Periods in which a hegemon is not present or not willing to pay the price are unstable and cause instability in the economic system. The argument is thus that asymmetries in actors' influence contribute to the process of cooperation.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the competing explanations on the process of regional cooperation. There is a clear distinction between systemic, domestic, and economic approaches. All shed light on different characteristics of cooperation, yet also have their weaknesses.

3. A SYSTEMIC UNDERSTANDING OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

This chapter aims to build a theoretical framework that will function as the logical underpinning of the research question. An outline on how polarity affects regional cooperation will be given. Thereafter, how variations in polarity affect stability in the international system and thereby the possibility for and the degree of cooperation. The last section is the central hypothesis deduced from the theoretical framework.

3.1 HOW DOES POLARITY INFLUENCE COOPERATION?

The international system is characterized by anarchy and it is therefore a self-help system. The state of nature among states is a state of war (Waltz, 1979:102). As each state can decide for itself whether it shall use force, war can possibly break out at any time. Cooperation is therefore related to the condition of insecurity, as gains may be distributed unequally, and states are uncertain of the other's future intentions and actions. The prospects of cooperation, as states are concerned with their survival in the international system, are as following (Waltz, 1979:105): States worry about the division of possible gains that may favor others more than themselves, but also on becoming dependent on others through strong cooperative relationships and exchanges of goods and services. Relying on others for the production and consumption of goods undermines a state's degree of self-sufficiency. The balance of power theory builds on assumptions about the interests and motives of state, and therefore explains the general patterns of behavior expected in given conditions (Waltz, 1979:122). Variations of structure affect unit behavior. In other words, the number of great powers affects the behavior of states. Systemic theory deals with broader political and economic structures within which regional structures are embedded (Hurrell, 1995:340). It has therefore two explanatory levels: constraints of anarchical international system and the importance of power political competition. In neorealist perspectives' regionalism is regarded as alliance formations as a response to external challenges. No differences are made between economic and political dimensions of cooperation as they both serve the same function. The relationship between acquiring economic wealth and political power are all related to a state's relative gains in contrast to other states. The success of sub regional cooperation is dependent upon the policies of major powers that are acting unilaterally. However, regionalism is used in a wider sense to describe processes of regional cooperation. The second explanatory layer is related to the role of hegemony in regional cooperation. There are four different roles for hegemony to act as powerful incentives to regionalism and the creation of regional institutions (Hurrell,

1995:342). First, sub regional institutions can develop as a response to the existence of actual or potential hegemonic powers. The case of ASEAN is explained as an example of the counterbalancing process to the increasing power of external parties. Second, regional institutions can serve as an attempt to restrict the free exercise of hegemonic power. The role of the European Union, for example, to “temper” Germany’s power position within Europe. Third, the tendency of weaker states to seek regional accommodation with the local hegemon in the hope of receiving special awards. There are several conditions in which this process is most likely to occur. First of all, when the distribution of power capabilities is very unequal. Also, when smaller states are in close geographic proximity (vulnerability). Lastly, when there is a possibility of gaining material benefits from cooperation with the hegemon. Fourth, the hegemon takes an active role in the creation and construction of regional institutions. Solingen (2008:265) provides an overview of the assumptions and hypotheses derived from the neorealist approach to the study of international institutions. The institutional genesis is explained by the underlying international power configuration. Its design is created as an arena and tool for states and as such international institutions are states’ agents. They serve no independent utility functions. The outcomes and effects of institutions are the result of hegemonic designs and powerful states. Regional cooperation is in neorealist perspective determined by the structure of the international political system and policies of major states. In the following, an overview will be presented of how variations in polarity influence regional cooperation.

3.2 UNIPOLARITY, BIPOLARITY, AND MULTIPOLARITY

UNIPOLARITY

Polarity influences stability and thereby the degree to which cooperation is possible. The hegemonic stability theory builds on the premise that there is economic instability if there is no leading power to manage the world economy (Jorgensen, 2010:142). A hegemon is the dominant power within the international system that is willing to pay the costs of being a hegemon. Systemic stability is not guaranteed by means of balances of power, but by the willingness of a hegemon to pay the price of leadership for the functioning of a highly integrated world economy. Therefore, according to the theory of hegemonic stability cooperation is possible, only if a hegemon is willing to pay the price.

Wohlforth (1999:7) argues that a unipolar world is the most stable configuration of the international system. He builds on the assumption that the USA currently enjoys an

unprecedented position on all the components of power: military, economic and geopolitical. There is no rivalry over leadership and therefore unipolarity is most prone to peace and durable. Alliances are not structural as they are difficult to coordinate and counter hegemonic alliances are difficult to achieve (Wohlforth, 1999:29). Regional cooperation requires translating aggregate economic potential into concrete capabilities to be a counter pole. This is difficult for the regional hegemon, as it will initiate regional distrust over its aspirations (ibid, p.36).

BIPOLARITY

A bipolar world is the most stable configuration according to Waltz (1964:886) as there are no peripheries, because of a bipolar balance. Secondly, there is an increased intensity of competition. Thirdly, the constant pressure of the 'other' power gives no need for action in crises. Lastly, the presence of preponderant power enables the two sides to absorb within the bipolar world the revolutionary changes that occur on political, economic or military level. In short, the inflexibility of a bipolar world promotes greater stability. Thus, cooperation is possible to the degree that the two great powers perceive it as in their own national interest to cooperate.

MULTIPOLARITY

A multipolar configuration creates a high degree of security interdependence within an alliance (Christensen & Snyder, 1990:140). As the number of powers increases, so does a possible alliance formation, thereby creating uncertainty in the system. The result is hyperactive balancing behavior by states (ibid, p.141). This process is defined as chain-ganging. The great powers will drag the less powerful states into their conflicts and areas of cooperation. Buck passing is another characteristic of the behavior of great powers in a multipolar configuration. The basic assumption is that states are free-riding, as they believe other parties may eventually solve an issue. There is no space for buck passing in a bipolar world, as there is no other power to pass on to. Neither is there a possibility of chain gang, since the great powers do not need great alliances for their survival. In short, a security dilemma of buck-passing and chain-ganging rises in a multipolar configuration. Multipolarity is therefore an unstable configuration with a lot of uncertainty for states. Cooperation is therefore limited in a configuration of multipolarity.

3.3. HYPOTHESIS

The aim of the research is to understand how variations in regional polarity influence regional cooperation. The theories state that polarity does influence cooperation. The dependent variable is therefore “*regional cooperation*” and the independent variable is “*regional polarity*”.

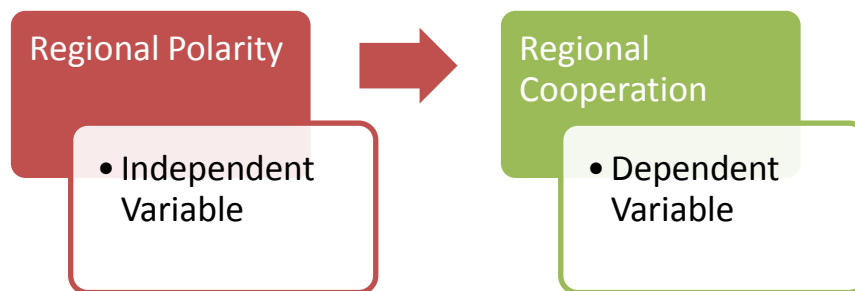


Fig. 1 *Causal Model Independent and Dependent Variable*

The central hypothesis that will be tested in this thesis is:

H1: The greater the number of regional polarity, the less likely regional cooperation is.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined a theoretical framework which asserts that the configuration of polarity does affect the process of regional cooperation. A unipolar world is regarded as the most likely condition to enhance cooperation. An increase in the amount of regional powers will limit the possibilities for cooperation. The central hypothesis of this research is therefore that the greater the number of regional polarity, the less likely regional cooperation is.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter will outline the operationalization of the dependent and independent variable. It furthermore deals with how data will be collected and which methods are to be employed. Also discussed will be the limitations of the methodology.

4.1 OPERATIONALIZATION

Mansfield and Solingen (2010:146) provide an overview of the studies on regionalism and regionalization, and the various definitions attached to it by scholars. The definition lacks consensus and therefore the most comprehensive definition is policy coordination and cooperation through formal institutions (Mansfield & Solingen, 2010:146; Milner, 1992:467). Scholars tend to divide the process of regional cooperation into regionalism and regionalization, whereas the latter defines the economic dimension of the process and the first the political.

4.1.1 DEPENDENT VARIABLE – REGIONAL COOPERATION

The dependent variable is regional cooperation. Cooperation generally takes place across two dimensions (Hurrell, 1995:331). The micro-organizational economic cooperation and the macro-regional political organization concerned with controlling conflict and security issues. More precisely, the dependent variable in this thesis focuses only on the micro and macro regional cooperation that has taken place within the framework of Mercosur, the League of Arab States and ASEAN. The concept of regional cooperation can therefore be divided into two dimensions: economic and political cooperation. Economic cooperation will be analyzed on four different variables (Cohn, 2011:209):

A. Free trade area.

This variable will measure whether the region has established a free trade area amongst its member-states. The World Trade Organization's databank on Regional Trade Agreements will be used. This databank has a list of all the regional trade agreements that are in force. A free trade agreement can therefore either be in force or not in force.

B. Customs union.

The same mechanisms are at work within a customs union as in a free trade area, but there is in addition a common external tariff for third parties (non-members).

C. Common market.

A common market is characterized by the previous two arrangements and a free mobility of factors of production such as labor and capital. The European Union is a clear example of a common market.

D. Economic union.

An economic union has the same characteristics as a common market, but in addition it harmonizes many policies of the member-states. Furthermore, a full economic union also includes a monetary union and a common currency as in the case of the eurozone.

E. Political union.

A political union is the last stage of regional cooperation in which sovereign states transfer their political executive powers to a supranational institution that will harmonize their foreign and defense policies. None of the world's existing regional organizations has yet established a full political union. However, what is of importance here is whether member-states have been able to undertake steps towards the creation of a political union. Have the member-states of ASEAN for example agreed on cooperation within a of security and defense framework? Hence, the process of regional cooperation is more in-depth when policy is coordinated and agreed upon ranking lower on the scale. For example, in case regional organization A has established an economic union, it has reached a higher degree of cooperation than regional organization B which has only set up a free trade area.

4.1.2 INDEPENDENT VARIABLE – REGIONAL POLARITY

Polarity and its effect on the international system remains at the core of IR debates (Waltz, 1964; Wohlforth, 1999; Layne, 1993). But how is polarity defined and how can we 'measure' which configurations of polarity are present within the regional institutions of Mercosur, the League of Arab States, and ASEAN? According to Waltz (1979:131) military power is no longer the sole determinant of power. Economic capabilities and the presence of resources and commodities determine power as well. Power must therefore be measured on different scales:

- I. Size of population and territory.
- II. Resource endowment.
- III. Economic capabilities.
- IV. Military strength.
- V. Political stability and competence.

Polarity within the region will be determined by contrasting the relative power positions of a region's member-states against one another. All this together leads to the following table where the concept will be translated into variables and lastly into indicators that will be used to measure. The first four variables will be measured by determining whether such a stage of regional cooperation is present. For example, has Mercosur established a free movement of labor and/or capital? Regional polarity will be measured by a descriptive quantitative analysis on the abovementioned indicators. Member-states will be compared across one another to determine what type of polarity is present in the region. There are several ways in which the economic capabilities of countries can be measured. Many comparative studies on polarity use GDP as an indicator (Ikenberry, Mastanduno, Wohlforth, 2009; Wohlforth, 1999; Waltz, 1964). Therefore, this research will continue to use this indicator, but it will in addition use trade as percentage of GDP as an indicator to analyze possible economic interdependencies. Military expenditures is measured as a percentage of GDP.

CONCEPT	VARIABLES	INDICATORS
<u>Regional Cooperation</u>		
(1-4) = Economic cooperation (5-6) = Political cooperation	1. Free Trade Area	Yes/No
	2. Customs Union	Yes/No
	3. Common Market	Yes/No
	4. Economic Union	Yes/No
	5. Security Policy	Yes/No
	6. Military Cooperation	Yes/No
<u>Regional Polarity</u>		
(7-9) = All the same indicators	7. Unipolarity	Size Population & Territory
	8. Bipolarity	Economic capabilities
	9. Multipolarity	Military Expenditures

4.1.3 ALTERNATIVE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

IV 2. Domestic

The independent variable domestic politics will focus in this research on the institutional structure of the domestic decision-making system. Most scholars argue that regional agreements are more easily formed among states with similar political and economic institutions (Mansfield & Solingen, 2010:150). The success of regional trade agreements in Asia, however, has been attributed to the heterogeneity of their political institutions. The overall argument is that democracies are more likely to enter regional arrangements, such as preferential or free trade agreements (Mansfield & Solingen, 2010:151). Therefore, whether member-states are democracies will be used as an indicator.

IV 3. Economic Interdependency

The third independent variable is economic interdependency. The assumption is that regional interdependence on economic level domestically creates demands for regional cooperation. The necessity to import commodities, such as oil, is an example of an economic interdependence. Therefore, trade import as a percentage of GDP will be used as an indicator.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The research strategy to be employed is that of the multiple case study (Gerring, 2004:341). This fits due to variations in the independent variable (unipolarity, bipolarity and multipolarity). The time period that will be analyzed is the period between the establishment of the international organization and 2011/2012, depending on the available data. In the case of ASEAN this would be the period of 1967-2011. In the case of Mercosur the period of 1991-2012. In the case of the League of Arab States this would be the period of 1945-2012. The aim of this research is to test the analytical generalization of theories on regional polarity and their influences on regional cooperation. In other words, theoretical model will be tested in a small-N analysis. Primary and secondary data will therefore be used as sources. These include the World Trade Organization's database on Regional Trade Agreements, the World Bank's World Development Indicators dataset, and also various reports from the different institutions on the conducted policies.

4.3 CASE SELECTION

For this thesis I will be analyzing the cases of Mercosur, the League of Arab States, and ASEAN. There are several reasons why these cases are worth analyzing. The regions are

characterized by variations in regional polarity. Configuration of polarity in Mercosur, for example, is a clear case of bipolarity. The case of the League of Arab States is that of multipolarity. By comparing these three regions we can analyze the influence of regional polarity on regional cooperation and explain how exactly the amount of regional powers influences the degree of cooperation. Moreover, these cases are the most comprehensive institutionalized forms of cooperation amongst sovereign states in the three regions.

MERCOSUR

The origins of Mercosur can be traced back to the mutual approach by Brazil and Argentine in the late 1970s (Gomez-Mera, 2008:287). When democratic revolts took place, so did regional cooperation amongst the two rivals become institutionalized as both parties signed the Argentine-Brazilian Integration Act. Member-states have established a free trade area, and there are plans to further increase cooperation by creating a common market.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

On the 22nd of March 1945, six countries in the Middle East voluntarily signed a pact to intensify the relationship between their member states through political, cultural and economic cooperation (Yale Law School, 2008). These member states were ought to be those countries, where a majority of the people either speak Arabic or Arab is used as an official language. The original idea was conceived by the British during the Second World War to organize and promote resistance against the Axis (BBC News, 2011). The main objective of the League of Arab States has been to strengthen the ties amongst its members, while respecting their sovereignty to support and promote a unified Arab nationalism and a common position among Arab states on various issues (Yale Law School, 2008).

ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has been established on August 8, 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand (ASEAN, 2012). The member-states were Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The organization consists currently of 10 members in total with the aim and purpose of:

- I. Accelerating economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region.
- II. Promoting regional peace and security.
- III. Promoting active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest.

4.4 LIMITATIONS OF METHODOLOGY

This research has some methodological limits that need to be addressed. The case study approach is less applicable for theoretical generalizations, and causal mechanisms are in general difficult to verify in social sciences (Gerring, 2004; Gerring, 2010). Moreover, the short time frame limits the scope of the research. Furthermore, interviews have not taken place with the corresponding embassies in the Hague due to non-response. The application of methodological triangulation to increase reliability and validity of measurements has therefore been limited to two distinctive sources: primary and secondary data.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the research design by first of all operationalizing the concepts of regional polarity and regional cooperation. Cooperation has been defined as policy coordination and cooperation through formal institutions. Polarity is the distribution of material capabilities amongst states. Also outlined is how data will be collected via various primary and secondary sources, and which cases have been selected. The last section discussed the limitations of the methodology. These include the limited time frame, and the difficulty of verifying causal mechanisms.

5. WHAT TYPES OF POLARITY ARE PRESENT IN MERCOSUR, THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES, AND ASEAN?

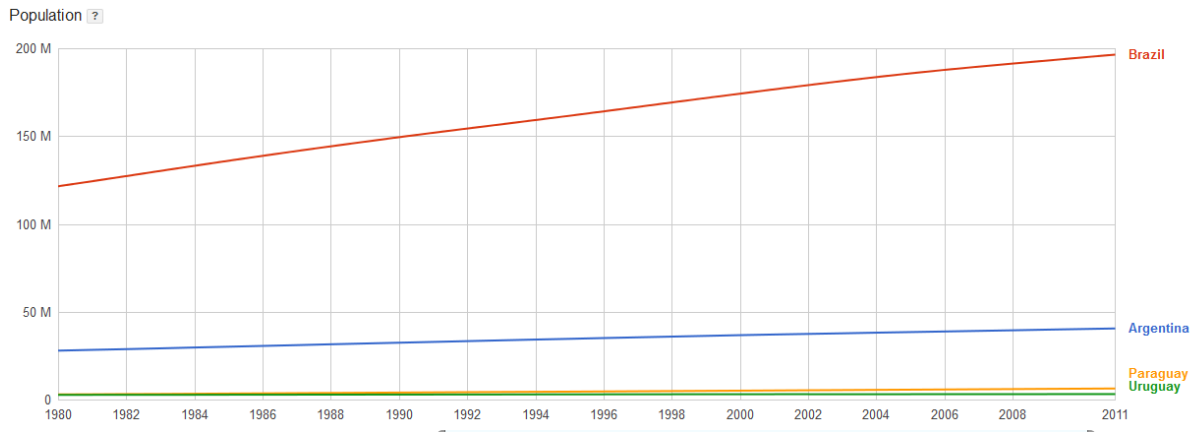
This chapter analyzes the distribution of material capabilities amongst the member-states of the three regional organizations. The relative power positions of member-states vis-à-vis determines the configuration of polarity. The last section will discuss the findings on which configuration of polarity is and has been present amongst the member-states.

5.1 POLARITY CONFIGURATION IN MERCOSUR

The economic and political situation of the Latin American countries has been relatively unstable during the second half of the 20th century. After authoritarian regimes had been replaced by democratic systems, prospects for Latin American integration became institutionalized and decades of mutual distrust were overcome (Kaltenthaler & Mora, 2010:73). Brazil and Argentina's bilateral efforts led to the creation of the Southern Common Market (Mercosur). Prior to this, the two countries signed the Declaration of Iguazú, whereby they decided to build confidence by cooperating in the field of nuclear policy as part of a broad process of bilateral integration (IAEA, 1990). The Treaty of Asunción formally enacted Mercosur on 26 March 1991 (Kaltenthaler & Mora, 2010:75). Its purpose was to establish a common market, common external tariffs and no internal tariffs. But what configuration of regional polarity was present amongst these four member-states? The systemic structure is characterized by the distribution of material capabilities amongst units. For this research, a focus will be placed on the concept of power. Power will be measured on the following indicators: the size of population & territory, resource endowment, economic capabilities, military expenditures, and political stability and competence. Data used are from the World Development Indicators of the World Bank.

A. Size Population

The population size of Paraguay and Uruguay have remained rather constant in the period of 1980-2011. The population size in Brazil and Argentina, however, has grown steadily from 121 million to 197 million and from 28 million to 41 million people. Brazil's population has been approximately four times larger than that of Argentina throughout the period of 1980-2011.



B. Size Territory

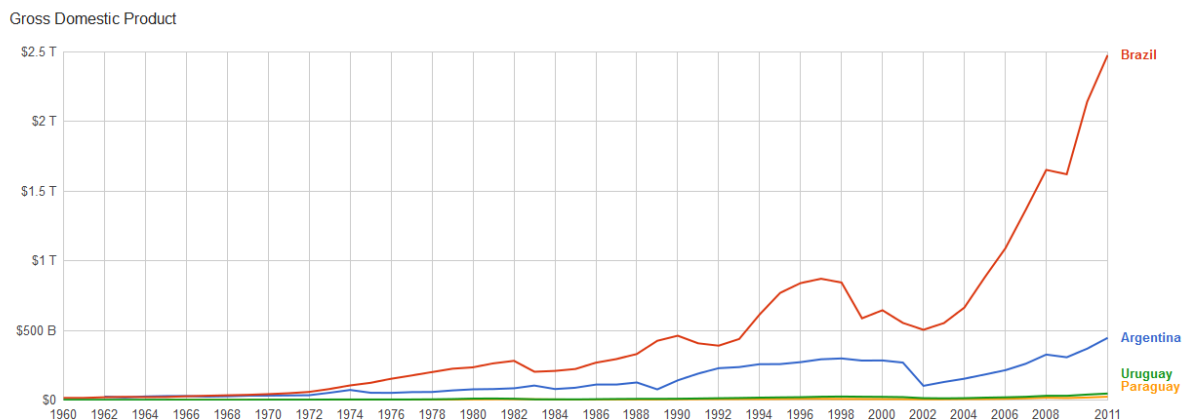
The size of the territories (land sq km) of the four countries has been as following:

<i>Member-state</i>	Argentina	Brazil	Paraguay	Uruguay
<i>Size Territory (sq km)</i>	2,74 million	8,45million	0,397 million	0,175 million

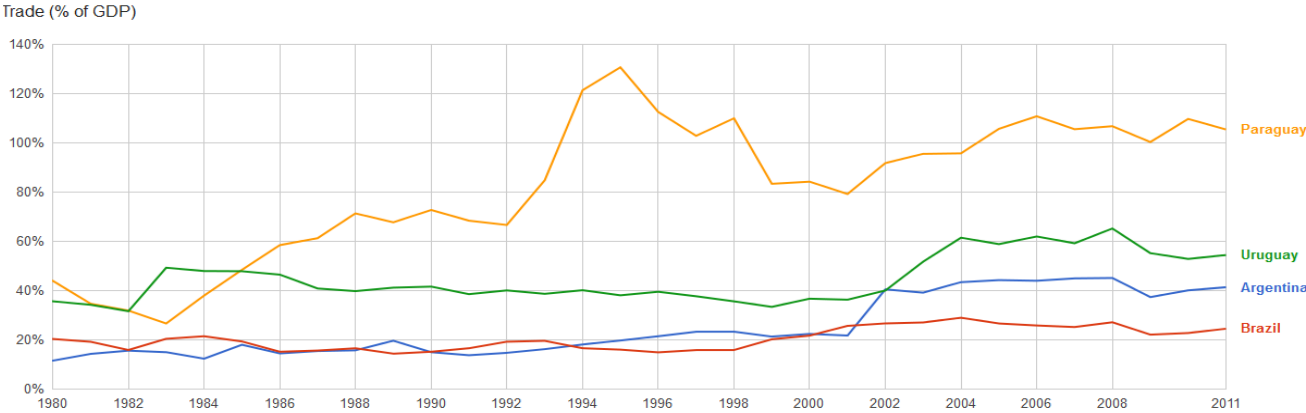
Brazil is one of the largest countries in the world and its land area is more than three times larger than that of Argentina. Paraguay and Uruguay are strategically situated between the two larger states.

C. Economic capabilities

The growth of Uruguay and Paraguay's GDP is negligible. The economy of Brazil and Argentina, however, fluctuate strongly. Brazil has witnessed major growth rates since 2002, while Argentina had to deal with an economic downturn from 1999 onwards. Brazil's economy is five and a half times larger than that of Argentina in 2011, but during the period when Mercosur was established this number amounted only three times.

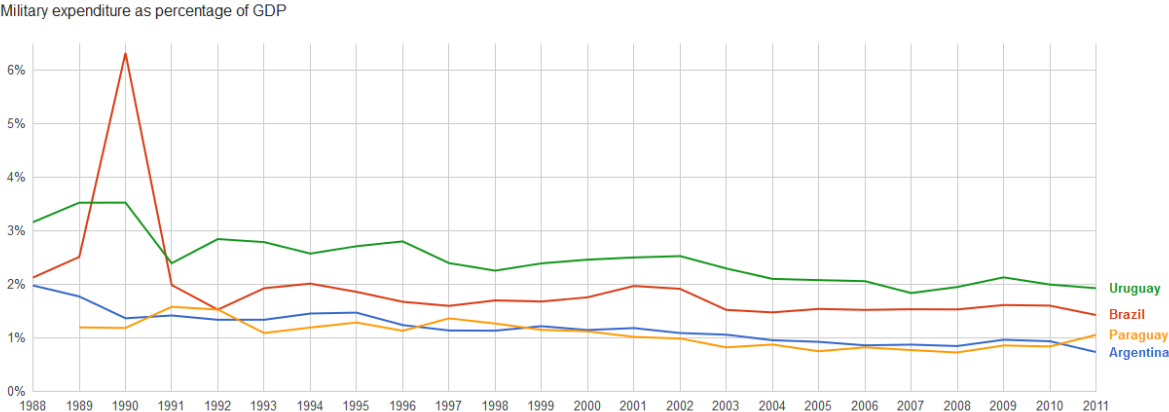


Trade is the sum of exports and imports of goods and services measured as a share of gross domestic product (The World Bank, 2013a). Data show that Paraguay and Uruguay have been relatively the largest depending nations on trade within Mercosur.



Military Expenditures

There is a decreasing tendency on military expenditure as percentage of GDP. There is limited data available on Argentina, but we can conclude that military expenditure for Brazil and Argentina exceed in absolute terms far above those of Uruguay and Paraguay, when their national economies are taken into consideration in absolute terms.



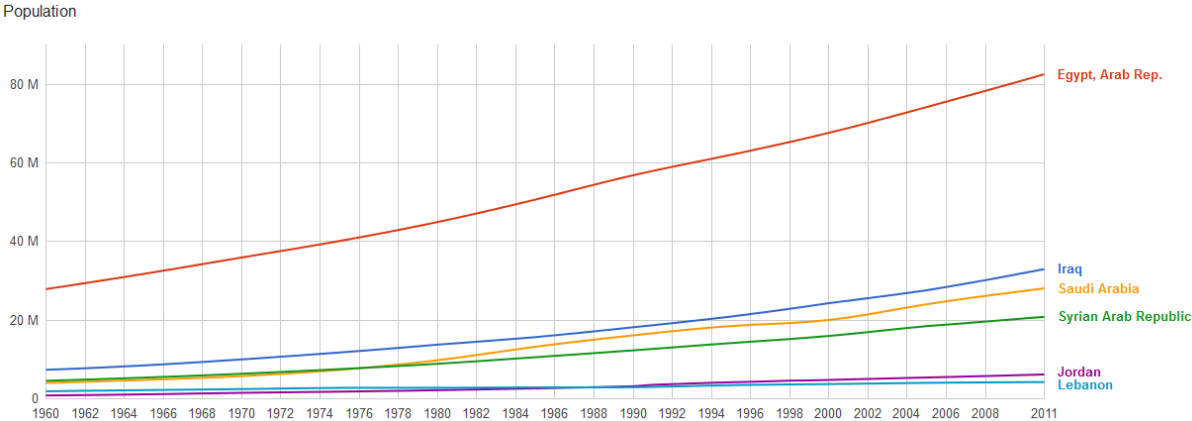
5.2 POLARITY CONFIGURATION IN THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

Determining the configuration of polarity amongst the member-states of the League of Arab States is more difficult than in the case of Mercosur. There are three reasons for this. The League of Arab States has increased in membership from five to twenty-two member-states from the period 1945-2012. However, the degree to which these new members have substantially challenged the distribution of material capabilities and thus changed the balances

of power is contestable. Somalia, Mauritania, Comoros, and Djibouti are smaller states and have very limited capabilities. Secondly, the region is relatively politically instable reflected by the numerous domestic and regional conflicts that have occurred among or within the member-states of the Arab League (UCDP, 2013). The Arab Spring is the latest of these events with the ongoing civil war in Syria, and the tradition from authoritarian to democratic administrations in several other member-states such as Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia. Lastly, some states have witnessed enormous economic developments in the last decades. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar are now economic powerhouses in the region. The League’s region has as such witnessed dynamic developments on regional and domestic level. Yet, polarity will be determined by only analyzing the distribution of material capabilities amongst the initial member-states which are most likely regional power candidates.

The Big Three

There are no data on the member-states’ population size during the League’s inception. The World Bank’s data on population size traces back to 1960. What can be determined is that Egypt’s population size has always outranked the other member-states. Iraq and Saudi Arabia have also constantly ranked second and third.



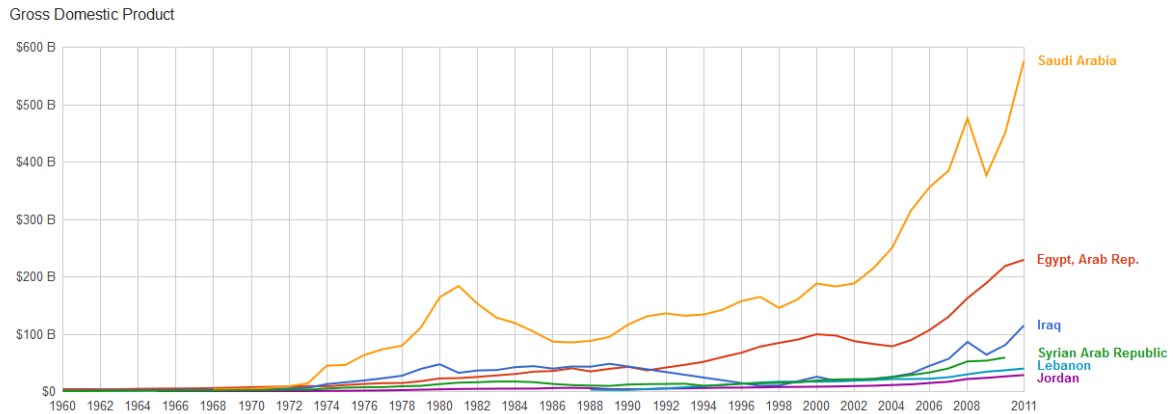
Land area (sq million km)

The three largest countries are Saudi-Arabia, Egypt and Iraq. Saudi-Arabia is more than two times the size of Egypt. However, most of this land is desert area.

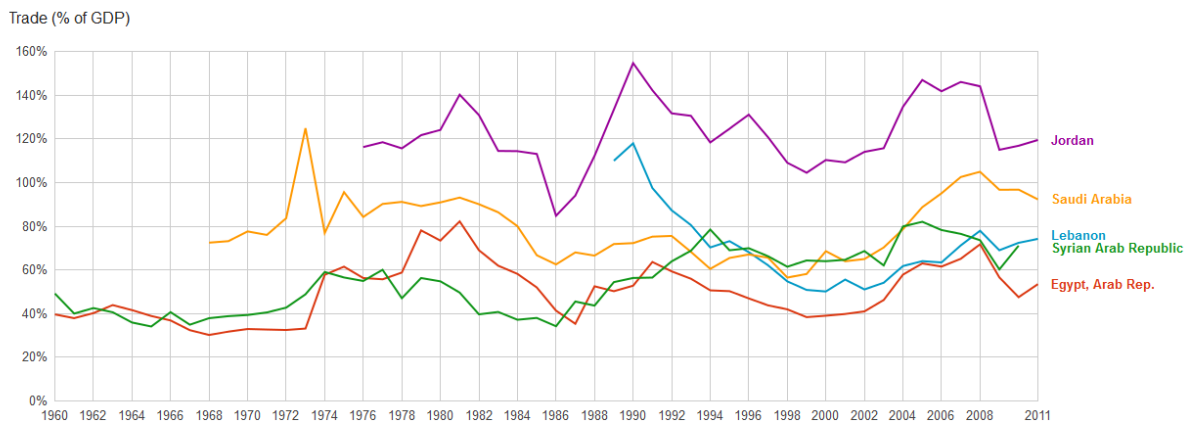
Member-state	Egypt	Iraq	Saudi Arabia
Size Territory	0,995	0,437	2.15

Economic capabilities

The three largest economies are also those of Saudi-Arabia, Egypt and Iraq. Especially in the post-2000 decade has there been a significant growth of the national economies.



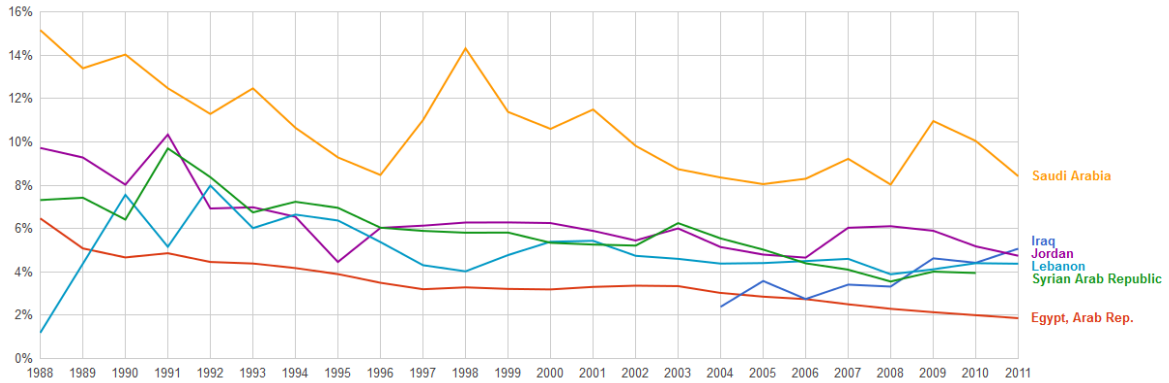
Trade as a percentage of GDP has fluctuated sharply, as far as data shows. Saudi Arabia ranks high, but this is most likely due to the large oil industry. Egypt has a much smaller oil industry than the other states (CIA World Factbook, 2013).



Military Expenditures

Military spending has been relatively high amongst the member-states of the League of Arab States. However, there are many outliers and data do not exist in the case of Iraq during Saddam's reign.

Military expenditure as percentage of GDP



CONCLUSION

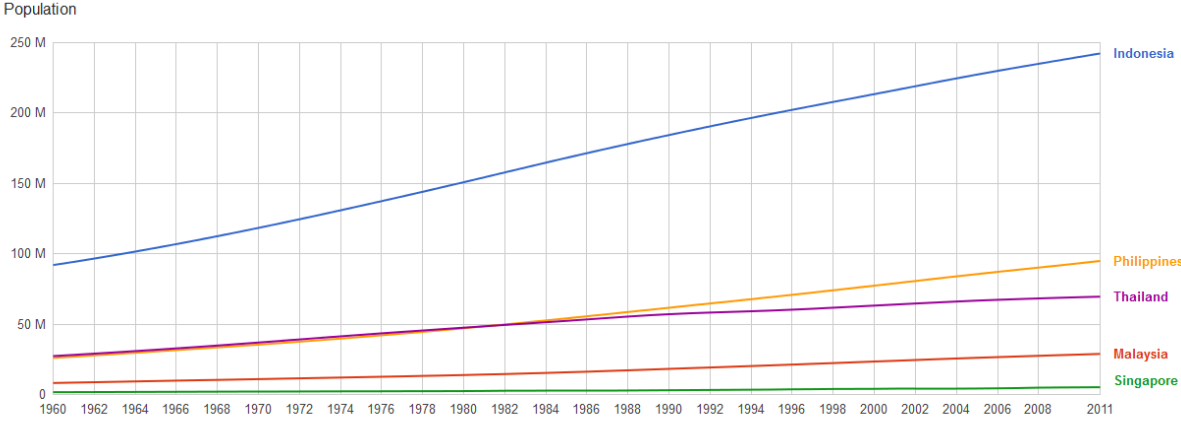
The World Bank data shows that three states have a privileged position as regional powers within the League of Arab States. Saudi-Arabia, Iraq and Egypt have all three large populations and territories, the largest economies and have spend most on military expenditures. Therefore, we can conclude that the configuration of polarity amongst the member-states of the League of Arab States has been that of multipolarity. There are three relatively smaller powers aside the big three. These are the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain. Their positions on an economical level are the strongest within the region. Qatar's GDP per capita is for example the highest in the world. UAE's GDP per capita is more than sixteen times higher than that of Egypt. Polarity in this region is two dimensional: economic and political. Classical indicators of power (population, size territory, military expenditures) rank high for the big three, but they fall far behind the smaller three on an economic level.

5.3 POLARITY CONFIGURATION IN ASEAN

Determining the configuration of polarity in ASEAN is also a case more difficult than that of Mercosur for two main reasons. New member-states have joined the Association from 1992 onwards. Moreover, Japan and China are not members of the Association while having a significant influence on the dynamics of cooperation in the region. However, polarity configuration will be determined by comparing the distribution of material capabilities amongst the original member-states in the period of 1960-2011.

Size population

The population size of Indonesia has been the largest compared to the other four states: relatively three times the size of Malaysia.



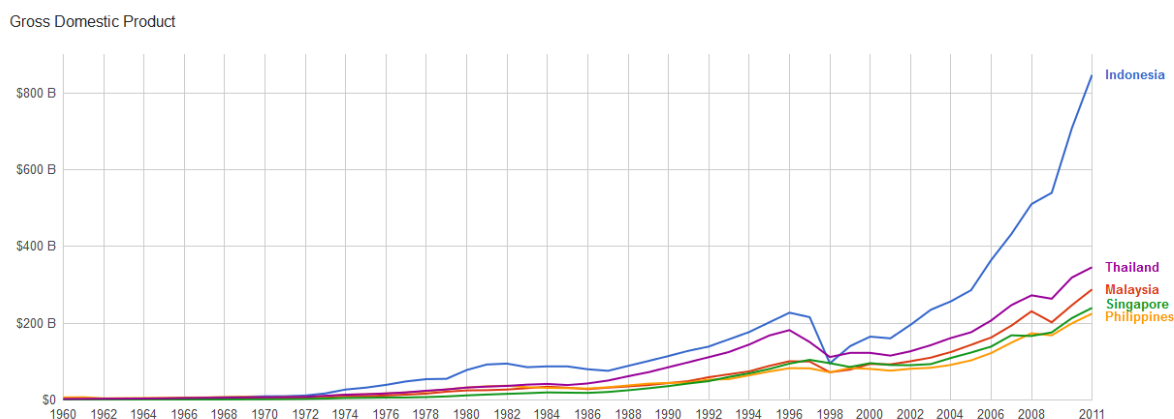
Land area (sq million km)

The largest member-state is Indonesia spanning a land area of 1,8 million sq km. Indonesia is three and a half times the size of the second largest member-state. Singapore is one of the smallest states in the world spanning a land area of only 700 sq km.

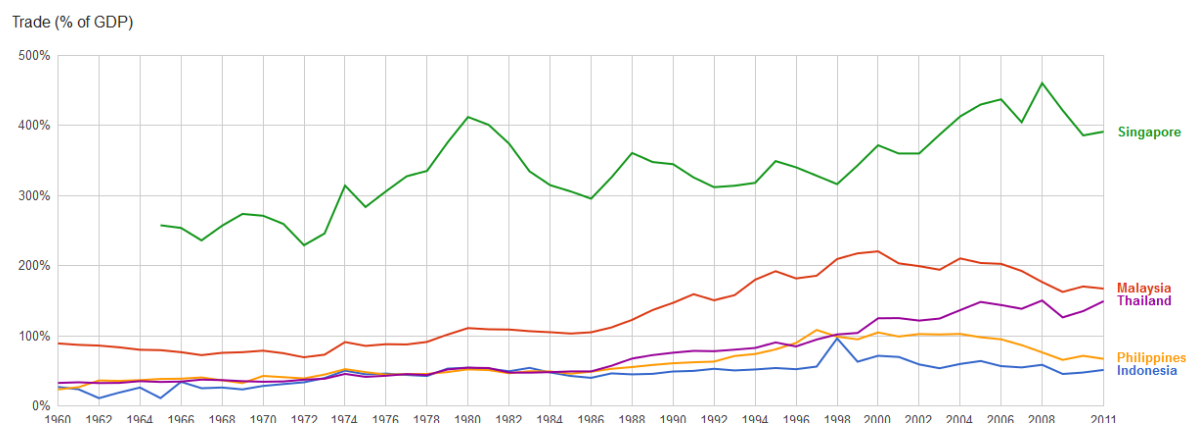
Member-state	Indonesia	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand
Land area	1,8	0,328	0,298	0,0007	0,510

Economic capabilities

The size of the national economies of the member-states is marginal prior to 1970. Two periods of significant growth can be outlined. First, the period between 1987-1996. The second period is that after the Asian crisis from 1999-2008 where annual growth increased significantly. The decrease of economic growth between these two periods is a result of the Asian economic crisis. Noteworthy is the size of Singapore’s national economy which is currently larger than that of the Philippines.

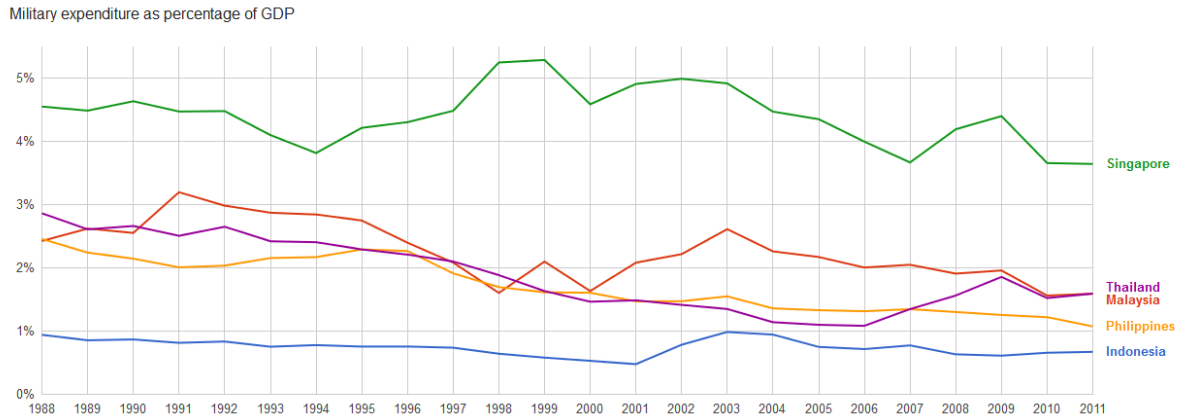


Singapore has by far been the largest trading nation within ASEAN in relative terms. Its geographical proximity near the trading routes and small land area are the main driving forces behind this. Data shows that the amount of trade has overall increased in relative and absolute terms. A major contributing factor is the creation of the free trade area.



Military Expenditures

Data on military expenditure goes only back to 1988. There are, however, some clear conclusions that can be drawn. Singapore has spent in relative terms most on military expenditures. Indonesia ranks remarkably lowest during the whole period. There is a general decrease on military spending amongst the member-states of ASEAN.



5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has analyzed what configuration of polarity have been present in the case of Mercosur, the League of Arab States and Mercosur. Taking the data into consideration we can conclude that the case of Mercosur is a clear case of bipolarity with two regional powers: Argentina and Brazil. However, it is also arguable that more recently there is a transformation from bi to unipolarity since the distribution of material capabilities is asymmetrically shifting towards Brazil.

The case of the League of Arab States is a case of multipolarity with three regional powers: Egypt, Iraq, and Saudi-Arabia. These have been defined as the “big three”, but data also show that the role of the three “smaller” states (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar) need to be taken into consideration. Their major economic achievements have translated in political power, as is exemplified in the case of Syria where Qatar has been one of the largest funders of the anti-government belligerents.

The case of ASEAN has been determined as unipolarity as the distribution of material capabilities is highly asymmetrical in favor of Indonesia. Yet, the influence of regional major powers China and Japan on cooperation within ASEAN needs to be taken into consideration.

Regional Cooperation	Mercosur	League of Arab States	ASEAN
Regional Polarity	<i>Bipolarity</i>	<i>Multipolarity</i>	<i>Unipolarity</i>

6. HOW DOES BIPOLARITY INFLUENCE REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE CASE OF MERCOSUR?

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will analyze to what extent cooperation has taken place amongst the four member-states of Mercosur in a regional bipolar configuration. The first section will provide a brief introduction to Mercosur. Thereafter, an overview will be given of the arrangements member-states have agreed upon. The last section will analyze the degree to which the independent variables have influenced regional cooperation.

6.2 COOPERATION

Mercosur is a regional organization that has formally been established in 1991. It had four member-states at that time: Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay. Its two most powerful members, Brazil and Argentina, share a long history of bilateral efforts of cooperation tracing back to the 1900s (Gardini, 2005:405). Only by the end of the 20th century did they succeed in institutionalizing cooperation. All other bilateral efforts proved to be a failure. Direct negotiations between Brazil and Argentina on cooperation and integration took place from 1980 onwards after a long period of mutual distrust (Gardini, 2005:406; O'Keefe, 2005:199). The first stage of cooperation took place in the field of technology, taxation, and health. During this period both countries were under the rule of authoritarian regimes. The foremost important dimension of cooperation took place in nuclear field, as a nuclear arms race had almost destabilized the continent in the 1970s (O'Keefe, 2005:200). Both countries, however, underwent a transitional period from authoritarian to democratic administrations in the 80s. As a consequence, bilateral relations improved and cooperation increased. Brazilian president Mello and Argentine's president Menem signed the Act of Buenos Aires in 1990. The Act called for the creation of a common market by 1995. If Paraguay and Uruguay would not take part in the improved relationship and plans for economic integration, they would lose the two largest markets across their borders and within the Latin American continent. This resulted in the Treaty of Asuncion, which was adopted unanimously by the four legislative powers (O'Keefe, 2005:203). Mercosur came officially into existence with the Treaty of Asunción in 1991. Negotiations on Mercosur, however, started in 1985 between Argentina's president Raul Alfonsín and Brazil's president Jose Sarney (Kaltenthaler & Mora, 2002:74). The only significant agreement agreed upon by the two countries during these negotiations was a vision

for the future (Gardini, 2007:806). The diplomatic negotiations were largely conducted without a set agenda and in very informal ways according to Gardini (2005:406). The first achievement was the declaration of a common nuclear policy under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, whereby development of nuclear activities was no longer to be regarded as a threat for the other party (IAEA, 2013). Brazilian and Argentine scientists were permitted to visit nuclear installations and exchange information. The Argentine-Brazilian Permanent Committee on Nuclear Affairs was established to propose further steps necessary to implement bilateral safeguard systems (IAEA, 2013). In the words of the Argentine President: *“the countries should continue to make decisive steps such as this one towards the creation of a safe, stable and prosperous zone in this part of the world.”* The new climate of mutual confidence resonates in other official meetings and statements (Gardini, 2005:406). With the Treaty of Asunción, the signatories decided to establish a common market by 31 December 1994 (SICE, 2013). Why did they decide to actually create a common market? There are three explanations (Gardini, 2005:417). First, Argentinian goods would have a preferential access to the large Brazilian market. For Brazil, on the other hand, Argentine’s lower custom duty level served as a compromise. Lastly, trading blocks were characterizing the world trade system and from a political point of view would both countries’ position be strengthened vis-à-vis third parties (Mansfield & Solingen, 2010; Gardini, 2005). The Treaty is therefore based on four fundamental principles:

- I. The free movement of goods, services and factors of production between countries. The elimination of customs duties and non-tariff restrictions.
- II. The establishment of a common external tariff and the adoption of a common trade policy in relation to Third States.
- III. The co-ordination of macroeconomic and sectoral policies between the States in areas such as foreign trade, agriculture and industry.
- IV. The commitment of States to harmonize their legislation to strengthen the integration process.

The free trade area in the Southern Common Market has been fully implemented in 2006 (WTO, 2013a). Although there is no consensus on the welfare effects of regional trade agreements, it is worth analyzing whether trade has increased as a result of the FTA (Mansfield & Solingen, 2010:149). In the period of 1991 and 1995, Brazil’s export to the Mercosur’s member-states grew at an annual rate of 37 percent (Kaltenthaler & Mora, 2010:76). Intra-Mercosur trade increased by 26 percent. By the end of 1998, intra-Mercosur

trade had quadrupled compared to the same figure in 1990 (O'Keefe, 2005:204). Mercosur's trade with third parties had increased as well. Yet, after a period of significant growth and economic integration, both countries faced a severe economic crisis from 1999 onwards. As a result of the economic malaise trade stagnated and GDP's shrank (The World Bank; O'Keefe, 2005:204). However, cooperation via Mercosur remained high on the agenda for Brazil and Argentina. The election of Lula in Brazil and Kirchner boosted cooperation as both emphasized the importance of Mercosur in restoring economic growth and stability (O'Keefe, 2005:204). The Inter-American Development Bank report of 2006 shows that intra-Mercosur trade has grown profoundly for four consecutive years from that period onwards (Inter-American Development Bank, 2013). Exports within the region increased with 21 percent..

We can therefore conclude that intra-Mercosur trade has increased profoundly as a result of the opening of the borders and tariff eliminations. From 1994 onwards, cooperation increased on different policy levels, such as environmental protection, military cooperation and drug trafficking (Kaltenthaler & Mora, 2010:77). Kaltenthaler and Mora (2010:81) argue that the primary motive for Brazil and Argentina to cooperate was a century past of mutual distrust and conflict. The security dilemma needed to be reduced in order to strengthen the democratic transition and domestic economy by creating economic interdependency to enhance cooperation.

REGIONAL POLARITY

The configuration of polarity within Mercosur has been that of bipolarity from its inception onwards. Although Brazil's economy is now 5,5 times the size of Argentina's economy, the gap between the two countries was not that high when negotiations took place in the 80s. In the bipolar configuration only two regional powers had to find agreement on matters of cooperation.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Brazil and Argentina were in a transition period from military authoritarian administration to that of democratic when entering negotiations. More precisely, Brazil's military rule ended more than a year after Argentina returned to a system of democratic rule (Gardini, 2005:410). The political will was present despite differences in regime types. The first elected democratic cabinet of 1985 faced less constraints, and strengthened bilateral cooperation by proposing several steps to be undertaken by the two states. Thus, similar regime types were not essential during the beginning stages of bilateral talks. However, the implementation of negotiations

and a further strengthening of cooperation took only place under Brazil's first democratic administration in 1985 (Gardini, 2005:417). Regime type has therefore not been a decisive factor for cooperation in the case of Mercosur, but has become an essential criterion for membership and a further consolidation of democratic institutions and norms in the 90s.

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE

Trade as percentage of GDP fluctuated around 15 % for Argentina during the period of negotiations and around 17 % for Brazil (The World Bank, 2013). Economic interdependency has not been high amongst the two member-states. They share a long standing rivalry prior to the transition to democratic administrations. Cooperation on economic level has therefore always been limited. However, both countries have a relatively large market and are key economic players in Latin-America. It is therefore of much interest for Argentinean companies to have access to the growing large Brazilian market. Another factor contributing to the process of cooperation is the rise of regional trading blocs.

6.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has analyzed the process of regional cooperation in a bipolar configuration in the case of Mercosur. Brazil and Argentina have entered negotiations in the 80s, despite a longstanding rivalry, and laid important fundamentals for future developments. We can therefore conclude, that cooperation has been relatively successful in the bipolar configuration within Mercosur. Regional cooperation can take place in the presence of two regional powers.

7. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES MULTIPOLARITY INFLUENCE REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE CASE OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES?

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the extent to which a multipolar configuration has influenced the process of regional cooperation in the League of Arab States in the period of 1945-2012. An overview of the cooperation will be provided in the first section. The next section discusses what the role has been of the independent variables. The findings will be concluded in the last section.

7.2 COOPERATION

“Jami’at ad-Duwal al-‘Arabiyya” is the official name of the international organization, which is referred to in the English spoken world as the League of Arab States. The League operates in the world of international politics since 1945. The founding members were Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi-Arabia. The primary task of the League is: [T]o draw closer relations among the member-states and co-ordinate their political activities with the aim of realizing a close collaboration between them, to safeguard their independency and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countrie[s] (Yale Law School, 2013a). The Middle East is a unique case in its own. Political stability in the region has been challenged on numerous occasions with the latest affair being the ongoing transitions of the political regimes as a result of the Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war (BBC, 2013b). The League’s inception was based on a desire for Arab unity and independency from colonial rule (Pogany, 1989:42). There has been, however, from the beginning onwards little support for transferring power from states to the League by forming an executive body on supranational level. In the negotiations that took place before the League’s official establishment, delegates shared the view of the need for a loose, regional organization, with little concessions to supranationality (Pogany, 1989:44). The Alexandria Protocol became the official treaty upon which the League of Arab States had been established. This protocol did not highlight the earlier ideas of a pan-unified Arab region, but reflected a process of cooperation on an intergovernmental level. The decisions of the main body of the League, the Council, would only be binding to those states who voted in favor. As such, cooperation took place in a venue that left many options open for those states wishing to defer. The fact that Palestine had not been endorsed as a member-state, while being taking part in the negotiations, and Iraqi’s boycott of the Council Meeting in March 1949

reflects the early division present in the League. It was therefore widely assumed that the League might collapse from its internal discords in its early stages (Seabury, 1949:639). This is highlighted by the Iraqi Foreign Minister's call for revising the League statutes to temper the Secretary-General's authority and emphasize on the need for strengthening bilateral alliances. Yet, the League 'survived' and its first Treaty agreed upon by the member-states was the *Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation* in 1950 (Yale Law School, 2013b). Article 5 of the Treaty called for the establishment of a permanent military commission to draw up plans of joint defense and implementation. It was designed to further strengthen the League's system of collective security (Pogany, 1989:56) This Treaty, however, has neither been implemented nor enforced. It has been undermined when Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, Iraq invaded Kuwait and Saudi-Arabia supported the U.S. intervention against Iraq in 1990. Dakhllallah (2012:392) argues therefore that the League's member-states make up one of the most economically and politically fragmented regions in the world. According to Tripp (in Dakhllallah, 2012:393) security cooperation has remained at a minimal level despite being the driving force behind all regional initiatives. The second historical event was the Arab Petroleum Congress in 1959 (Stevens, 1959). Its goal was to achieve a new deal in economic affairs in the oil industry. This required an active and constructive participation by the member-states through education and negotiation (Stevens, 1959:275). It was the first major meeting on economic level to discuss the potential of member-states to improve their positions in negotiations with foreign oil companies. Hence, its aim was to formulate a general Arab oil policy (Ghanem, 1986:21). Egypt as a regional power pledged for the establishment of an organization, with its headquarters in Cairo, for the oil producing states under the framework of the League. However, political rivalry between Iraq and Egypt hindered the prospects for cooperation according to Ghanem (1986:27). It was the main goal of the Iraqi administration to not subject the oil industry under the League's authority. This difference can be explained by the fact that Egypt was not one of the major oil producing states, yet pursued having influence in this field as a regional power. Iraq on the other hand tried to undermine Egypt's influence by cutting oil prices unilaterally and thereafter inviting oil producing countries Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, and Venezuela before the second Arab Petroleum Congress would take place (Ghanem, 1986:28). Saudi-Arabia, however, pursued its own interest by claiming to build a common view for the oil producing countries. Thus, the presence of multiple regional powers within the League of Arab States had hindered prospects for cooperation as the number of actors increased possibility of dyads. The third major step towards economic cooperation was made in 1997.

The Greater Arab Free Trade Area had been agreed upon by member-states of the Arab League in 1997, but not all member-states are signatory to the Treaty and tariffs still exist. The wealthier member-states of the League have in fact shown to be more successful in achieving their economic objectives via bilateral agreements. Examples are the EU and USA's agreements with Jordan, Qatar and the UAE (WTO, 2013b). As such, the latter stages of economic cooperation have not been achieved by the member-states. There is no customs union, neither a common market nor an economic union. Cooperation on a political level has been stubborn as well. The Treaty of Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation has not been implemented. It has in fact been violated by the member-states and as such the League has failed to achieve a common security framework in large-scale regional disputes and internal crises (Dakhlallah, 2010:411). Lindholm Schulz and Schulz (2005:187) argue that the League has failed in its overall attempts at regional cooperation. The League's failure is two folded (Nye, 1971; Lindholm Schulz and Schulz, 2005). It first of all failed preventing and managing conflicts that occurred within the territories of its member-states. In fact, in the case of the Gulf War, Saudi-Arabia supported the Iraqi invasion. Prior to this, Iraq breached Kuwait's sovereignty by invading the country. Nye's comparative analysis (197:160) shows the League's failure of conflict resolution compared to other regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States and Organization of African Unity. The League has therefore failed achieving substantial cooperation on political, economic or military level compared to the case of Mercosur.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

The previous section has outlined the instability of the region, but this also applies to the political systems. The rivaling regional powers have to a large extent had non-democratic administrations in the post-World War 2 era (Salamey & Pearson, 2012; King, 2007). Saudi-Arabia is currently still ruled under an authoritarian regime since it gained independence in 1932. Mansfield and Solingen (2010:150) argue that democracies are more likely to cooperate and establish preferential trade agreements. The findings in the case of the League of Arab States with authoritarian regimes support this claim.

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE

Networks of economic interdependence have been marginal amongst the member-states of the Arab League. The region is endowed with the largest oil reserves in the world. Iraq and Saudi-Arabia have for example been the largest oil producing states in the world for the last

decades (CIA, 2013). It is therefore arguable that limited interdependence has also provided limited incentives for cooperation.

7.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has analyzed the process of regional cooperation in the League of Arab States in the period of 1945-2012. Two major treaties have been of much importance to the League's policy output: the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation and the Greater Arab Free Trade Area. The configuration of polarity amongst the member-states of the Arab League has been that of multipolarity. There are three regional powers: Egypt, Iraq and Saudi-Arabia who all have a profound influence on cooperation. Gowa (1989:1245) has argued how a bipolar configuration has an advantage over a multipolar configuration in respect to the opening of markets, as there are less credible exit threats and stronger incentives to engage in altruism. Furthermore, an increase in the number of actors leads to an increase in possible dyads, decrease of share of attention to other major powers and an increase in threats to security (Deutsch & Singer, 1964). From a hegemonic stability approach, the League has failed due to the absence of a hegemon willing to take the costs to manage the economy. Thus we can conclude that cooperation amongst member-states has been only limitedly possible in the multipolar configuration of the Arab League. The League of Arab States is therefore not a stable and cohesive example of regional cooperation.

8. HOW DOES UNIPOLARITY INFLUENCE REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE CASE OF ASEAN?

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will analyze the extent to which a unipolar configuration has influenced the process of cooperation amongst the member-states of Asean in the period of 1967-2012. An overview of cooperation will be presented first. The next section will discuss what the role has been of the independent variables. The findings will be concluded in the last part.

8.2 COOPERATION

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was established in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand (ASEAN, 2013). The ASEAN declaration was a short document containing five articles. Its main aim was to promote regional peace and stability and to enhance cooperation in the economic, cultural, technical and other fields. Security has been a central feature since ASEAN's establishment according to Rolls (2012:127). The inter-state conflict between Malaysia and Indonesia was the main drive behind ASEAN's existence, as both sides perceived creating a wider framework of regional cooperation a necessity. Its primary task was therefore to create an environment in which competition would be limited to ensure each state's survival (Rolls, 2012:128). Ganesan (1995:782) argues that Indonesia's quest to acquire a hegemonic status in maritime Southeast Asia was one of the main motives.

The first Treaty agreed upon was the *Kuala Lumpur Declaration - Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality*. The member-states declared to exert efforts to free the region from any form or manner of interference by outside Powers (National University of Singapore, 2009). The *ASEAN Concord and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* outlines how disputes should be settled within an ASEAN framework. The latter Treaty outlined the principles upon which regional order should be maintained (Rolls, 2012:128). The member-states have furthermore agreed to create a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in their region to prevent a nuclear arms race. Cooperation in the military field has taken place between member-states, but also with third parties (Philippines-US). However, when Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1978 there was little that the organization could do except using diplomatic resources. The member-states therefore decided to develop new security strategies by 1991 to manage the changing environment (Rolls, 2012:129). The member-states did not only deal with security issues, but also economic ones. As a result of the exclusive position with the EU

and NAFTA, member-states decided to establish a free trade area (Cohn, 2011:237): AFTA. The ASEAN Free Trade Area was planned to be in force by 2002. Brunei had meanwhile become a member-state and in the years that followed, four more member-states joined the organization until 1999: Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. The AFTA was the first political attempt within the region to form a free trade agreement that consisted of more than two parties. Its goals were three folded (Cohn, 2011:237): to increase intra-ASEAN trade, to have a stronger bargaining position vis-à-vis third parties, and to attract more foreign investment by creating a larger market. Yet, not all tariffs have been eliminated by 2011. Other features of economic cooperation are the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services, and the ASEAN Investment Area (Austria, 2012:142). The first agreement was aimed at accelerating the integration of eight goods sectors, and three services sector. The latter aims at establishing a more competitive investment area among the member-states' economies (Austria, 2012:145). The logic underpinning the ASEAN Investment Area is the promotion of the region as a regional market to attract investors and to encourage them to think in regional terms. This agreement was merged with the ASEAN Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investments in the ACIA: ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement. The organization has furthermore established regional free trade agreements with Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, India and the Republic of Korea (World Trade Organization, 2013). What is the outcome of cooperation on this level? Intra-ASEAN trade has become three times larger in 2007 than in 1995 (Austria, 2012:146). This forms a quarter of the region's total trade numbers. The next goal to strengthen cooperation is, according to Austria, the creation of an economic union (2012:154).

There are, however, diverging views on what has been achieved so far. Jones and Smith (2007:149) argue that ASEAN has not evolved much from its inception onwards. It has remained an association of states created to maintain regional order in an environment of heterogeneous weak post-colonial states. As such, there has been a strong opposition towards any tendency of supranational policies. There have been only four summits in the period of 1967-1992 (Jones and Smith, 2007:156). The Association has furthermore not made progress in three important areas: economic integration, anti terrorism cooperation, relations with China. Katsumata (2008:182) on the other hand perceives the limited progress a consequence of the Association's new areas for cooperation. ASEAN is therefore not insignificant, but in a developing process towards progress.

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE

Economic cooperation has been relatively problematic amongst ASEAN's member-states according to Ganes (1995:798). There are two reasons for this. First, the major trading partners of ASEAN are the EU, Japan and the USA. Second, the economic policies of some member-states have been protectionist limiting prospects for agreements on economic cooperation.

8.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has analyzed the extent to which cooperation has taken place in a unipolar configuration among the member-states of ASEAN. Agreements have been signed on economic and political level. However, the greatest achievement has been that of the creation of a free trade area. Although economic cooperation might gradually evolve as in the case of Mercosur, there is currently no evidence that such a development is in the making. The systemic structure of unipolarity is limitedly applicable in the case of ASEAN. Indonesia, although a regional power, has not developed its capabilities as to exert significant influence on other member-states to achieve its goals. It is arguable that the case of ASEAN is best to be analyzed in light of broader systemic structures. Pacific great powers such as China and Japan have more profound influence on how cooperation will develop than member-states themselves (Katsuma, Jones and Smith, 2008; Roy, 2005; Ganesan, 1995). The creation of ASEAN forums such as ASEAN +3, where non-members can exert significant influence on the process of cooperation, is therefore a logical consequence.

9. CONCLUSION & LIMITATIONS

The central question of this research is to what extent regional polarity influences regional cooperation. From a theoretical point of view, the more rivaling regional powers present, the less likely it is that cooperation will occur amongst states. In other words, as the number of regional powers increases, the likelihood and possibilities of regional cooperation will decrease. The cases that have been researched in this study are the regional institutions of Mercosur, the League of Arab States and Asean. The first part of the analysis has analyzed what type of polarity has been present amongst the member-states of these organizations using data from the World Bank. These were in the following order: bipolarity, multipolarity, and unipolarity. The case of Mercosur, bipolarity, has witnessed several important stages of regional cooperation. The opening of markets to a free trade area, the establishment of a customs union and more recently, the inclusion of Venezuela as a member in 2011. Furthermore, member-states have agreed in 2008 to integrate the Andean Community and Mercosur in an overarching institution: UNASUR. Also agreed upon has been the creation of a Bank of South and the South American Parliament. Bipolarity has to a large extent influenced the process of cooperation in Mercosur. Argentina and Brazil were the main driving forces behind negotiations and the creation of institutions. Uruguay and Paraguay's membership and influence is negligible, yet not neglected.

Cooperation in the case of the League of Arab States has been relatively limited compared to Mercosur, despite having been established decades earlier. A free trade area has not yet been enforced, while bilateral trade agreements with third parties have been. Although a Treaty on Joint Defense has been agreed upon, its implementation has proven to be complicated. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi Armed Forces is an example highlighting this notion. Therefore, multipolarity has to a large extent influenced the process of cooperation in the League of Arab States. Rivaling powers Egypt, Iraq and Saudi-Arabia disagreed on many occasions. For example, in the negotiations prior to the League's creation, where the vision of a pan-Arab union was replaced by ensuring states' sovereignty in cooperative issues. As a consequence, cooperation has been limited and the prospects are uncertain. The ongoing civil war in Syria, and the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes, as a result of the Arab Spring, are two important determinants.

Cooperation in the case of ASEAN has been relatively limited in the period of 1967-1992. There were only four summits during this period and no major economic or political treaties were agreed upon. In the post-Cold War era, however, member-states have established a free trade area and trade has increased significantly. However, political cooperation has been limited and there is no institutional framework for collective security. Nor have further stages of economic cooperation been achieved. The case of ASEAN, however, is a distinctive one. Indonesia is the regional power, but its influence is limited compared to that of China and Japan which are not members of the Association. Indonesia's material capabilities show major potential for becoming a regional hegemon with determining influence, but it has not yet achieved this status. Unipolarity has therefore limitedly influenced the process of cooperation in the case of ASEAN. We can thus conclude that regional polarity does influence to a large extent the process of regional cooperation. The more regional powers, the less likely that cooperation will occur. Thus, the central hypothesis of this research is accepted.

LIMITATIONS

There are, however, several limitations to this research. First, the fact that by analyzing the regions as categorical vacuums, we might fail to take the contextual factors into consideration which influence the process of cooperation within the three organizations. For example, what the role of Israel has been in the Middle East. Second, data on cooperation within these three institutions is limited available. If present, they are mostly presented from a Eurocentric or Anglo-American centric perspective: "how does Mercosur challenge America's influence on Latin-America?" Therefore, two implications are made for future research. First, more scholarly work needs to be conducted on regional cooperation in 'other' regions. Second, it is important to analyze the relationship between member-states and non-member states to explain to what extent non-members influence the process of regional cooperation. A better understanding of processes of regional cooperation is essential as power asymmetries on a global scale are becoming more symmetrically distributed. Polarity will therefore remain a central concept in the study of international relations.

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11. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
EU	European Union
FTA	Free Trade Area
GAFTA	Greater Free Trade Area
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
LOA	League of Arab States
PTA	Preferential Trade Area
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organization
WB	World Bank

Membership Expansion Mercosur



Fig.1 Membership expansion Mercosur

Membership Expansion League of Arabic States

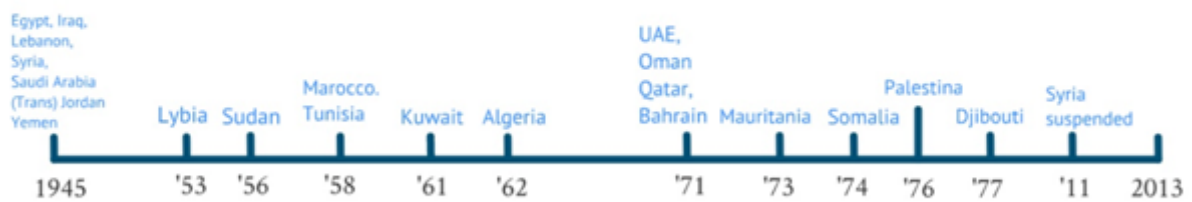


Fig. 2 Membership expansion League of Arab States

Membership Expansion ASEAN



Fig.3 Membership expansion ASEAN