STRATEGY

Regionalism and community
Australia's options in the Asia–Pacific

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Executive Director's introduction

Asia's geostrategic environment is changing, and we must expect new ordering mechanisms to arise—new power relationships, new security partnerships and new patterns of regional security cooperation. Across the region, a debate has quickened about the likely shape of security 'architecture' in coming years. Australia has been an important contributor to that debate: Kevin Rudd's proposal for a new 'Asia Pacific Community' has been a focus of Australian diplomatic effort over the past two years, and Prime Minister Gillard made her first overseas visit to lead Australia's inaugural participation in the Asia–Europe Meeting in Brussels. But constructing a new architecture in the Asia–Pacific region is difficult work.

Some months ago, ASPI commissioned Associate Professor Philomena Murray from the University of Melbourne to write a paper for us on this subject. Philomena has deep experience in the area of comparative regionalism, and we wanted to explore the lessons that other regions' experiences might have for us here in Asia. Most analysts assert that Asia is a 'special case'. Philomena agrees, but she also argues that the processes of building 'regions' are often similar, even though specific institutions are not.

Australia now faces the task of trying to move the debate beyond the focus of the past couple of years, and this report contains some useful ideas for doing just that—in particular, by de-emphasising the 'institutional' aspects of the Rudd proposal.

I thank Philo for her time and effort. And I also thank those ASPI individuals involved with the paper, on both the research and the publication sides of the house.

Peter Abigail
Executive Director

Photo opposite: China Pavilion and Expo Axis at Expo 2010 Shanghai. © Lo Mak / Redlink / Corbis

Executive summary

Debates about the appropriate role of multilateral structures in the emerging multipolar Asian region have become more robust in recent years, reflecting the growing importance of a range of transnational challenges to regional politico-security agendas, and the shifting great power stances and balances in the Asia–Pacific region. Australia sees a broad debate about regional communities, architectures and institutions as both timely and necessary. The Australian Government is keen to enhance stability during a difficult geopolitical transformation, and thus keen to strengthen patterns of regional security cooperation through a variety of means.

Since 2008, Australia has pursued a new institutional structure for regional cooperation, based on a regional architecture that would include security cooperation alongside economic and political cooperation. There's potential for Australia to further develop this notion, but major restructuring in the current architecture probably won't come about quickly. The region is characterised by great diversity—of security arrangements, economic groupings, great-power relationships, political regimes, hard and soft power asymmetries, and competitive regional institutions. Overcoming that hurdle requires the building of a sense of shared identity and interest—a 'community'— much more than it requires new institutions.

So in one sense—its title—the Rudd initiative for an 'Asia Pacific Community' was correct: it proposed the growth of a regional community, initially over a ten-year and later over a twenty-year period. However, it wanted to develop that sense of community through greater institutionalisation. And because it was focused on an institutional solution, the proposal never derived much benefit from the lessons of comparative regionalism. This paper argues that a study of comparative regionalism doesn't yield many lessons about institution building that are readily applicable to an Asian setting that is characterised by high levels of diversity. But comparative regional analysis *does* yield other lessons, in particular the notion that good regionalism depends on good relationship-building. That, in turn, depends on reconciliation and trust building.

The key message of comparative regionalism for Asia is that focusing exclusively on 'architecture' can be a distraction, and far from useful. Community building is more important than architecture building. Australian policy should aim to 'build a region' rather than 'build a building', as it were. Any desire for a regional body that addresses serious structural and decision-making problems—and it's recognised that these are crucial—has to start by addressing the lack of mutual trust among some of the region's most important players. And that's where the Rudd proposal arguably went astray: it confused the concept of community with the concept of architecture, and pressed for a 'building' that would replace existing structures.

A combination of leadership, consensus building and conciliatory activities—an approach that complements high-level summitry with lower level coalition building—will serve Australia's strategic interests better than bold gambits for architectural redesign. Australia now needs to articulate more clearly, and to discuss with its interlocutors, what it seeks in a security community and the related culture and norms of interaction within the Asia–Pacific region.

When issues of architecture do arise, Australia should advocate sound design principles for institution building in Asia—and be willing to accept architectural incrementalism as one option alongside possible demolition and reconstruction. Institutions that reflect a growing level of security cooperation can help the process forward. But the lack of a shared regional vision—or narrative of regional belonging—makes it all the more pressing to clarify the role that a new regional architecture might play in codifying such a common geopolitical vision and in harnessing the region's substantial reserves of economic and political power to achieve it.

In the wake of the Rudd proposal, Australian diplomatic effort needs a new focus. This *Strategy* paper argues that Australia could enhance its regionalist credentials with activism, expertise and successful policy development. It advances five interlinked strategies for consideration. The first strategy advances a case for Australia to position itself as an agent of change in the Asia–Pacific region. The second strategy proposes that Australia take on the role of mediator, advancing relationship building. The third strategy seeks to exploit Australia's soft power assets—its influence and educational strengths—to strengthen regional relationships over the longer term. The fourth strategy is to promote sound design principles in new proposals for architectural renovation. The final strategy is that Australia should work towards building an enhanced regional consensus about the leadership, membership, mandate and sustainability of emerging regional structures.

Over the longer term, if we were to pursue those strategies, we would find ourselves much better placed than we are now to shape both regional cooperation and architecture.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

> We need to actively shape our regional future, and lay the foundations for dealing with future challenges. We need to continue to foster regional habits of cooperation (Rudd 2010).

The study of regional architectures—including Asia's—has gathered momentum in recent years. Debates about the appropriate role of multilateral structures in the emerging multipolar Asian region have become more intense, reflecting the growing importance of a range of transnational issues to regional politico-security agendas, and the shifting great-power stances and balances in the Asia–Pacific. The US–China relationship is at the heart of many of those issues. At the same time, members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been seeking to deepen their patterns of regional cooperation, creating a charter (ASEAN 2008) with a legal personality and an increasingly institutionalised structure. Japan, which has long sought to 'soften' its own strategic role in the region by acting through multilateral channels, seems to be reinvigorating its efforts in that regard, and the Hatoyama (2009) proposal for a new East Asian Community is proof of those efforts. The growing role of India as a regional economic power is exemplified by its participation in the G20. Russia seeks a more active role as a regional player in Asia than hitherto. Tectonic shifts in the global strategic environment and global financial system create new pressures on states and regions alike.

Australia sees the growing debate about regional architectures as especially timely—and necessary. The Rudd Government, in particular, was keen to contribute to a new regional architectural design, which it believed important to enhancing stability during a difficult geopolitical transformation (Rudd 2008a). It wished to extend the ASEAN concept of 'neighbourhood' to the broader region by proposing a new institution that would further a spirit of security cooperation in difficult times. Further, the current condition of Asian multilateralism—a set of 'tangled webs' (Tow 2008) of overlapping, multilayered structures—

suggests that a reshaping of the existing order might indeed be timely. But Australian leaders are aware that such a new design configuration won't be simple: those different webs also attest to the importance of differing constituencies (with differing priorities) within the region, each concerned about whether architectural redesign might reduce the importance of its own preferred structure. All of the players have specific notions of their own region and how to deal with its security challenges—as well as economic and political issues.

Especially since 2008, Australia has pursued the notion of a new regional architecture—one that would include security cooperation alongside economic and political cooperation and seek to influence and shape the power balances in the region. But such a notion needs to take on board the tremendous diversity of the Asia–Pacific region: its different webs of security cooperation and alliances, its large economic groupings, its unique constellation of great powers, its specific arrangements of hard and soft security, and its competitive regional institutions, often with shifting cores of membership.

Australia sees the growing debate about regional architectures as especially timely—and necessary.

The growing policy debate has been paralleled by a debate among academics, in particular over the extent to which regional institutions and processes are distinctive and idiosyncratic. Some scholars argue that regions are distinctive and that the Asian versions of regionalism have little in common with what some see as the 'intrusive regionalism' of the European Union (EU) (Acharya and Johnston 2007a). They suggest that 'the more insecure the regimes, the less intrusive are their regional institutions', and that 'democratic' regimes, such as the EU and the Organization of American States, are more likely than 'nondemocratic' regimes, such as ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), to accept intrusive design features (Acharya and Johnston 2007b:261–2). But what's true of politics isn't true of economics: Asian economic regionalism is often regarded as 'open' in its orientation, as distinct from the EU's 'closed regionalism'. And, of course, not all regional organisations are equally comparable across a range of indices (De Lombaerde et al 2010)—there are comparative challenges related to capacity, sovereignty, membership and the range of tasks of different regional organisations (Fawcett 2004:441).

The academic debate raises three central questions: are differing examples of regionalism comparable? can one region benefit from the experiences of another? are there core design principles that are essential to regional community building? Many parts of the world have regional groupings—with (to varying degrees) common or shared objectives, shared policies, regional identities and transnational bodies of collaboration. Those groupings include ASEAN, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the African Union.

Asia itself has a number of regional groupings and alliance relationships. And it's a region in flux, caught up in a process of dynamic and rapid change—a moving target for anyone proposing new forms of regional ordering. The ambitions and objectives of Asian decision-makers are changing, as is the scope of their regional bodies' activities. Asia encompasses almost every type of state. In terms of economic production, it's the fastest

growing region in the world. Many of its countries are among the world's greatest economic competitors. All the world's major religions can be found there, and so can half of the world's population.

So, what can we learn about options for better regional ordering by looking at the experiences of other regions? Is every region distinctive? Is every instance of regional architecture a unique case study? Or are there universal principles of regional architectural design? Alternatively, are some principles shared—albeit not universally—and common to one set of regions but not to another? What is it that makes a region? And what makes the members of a region work together over time, to promote and sustain their shared interests?

In the academic literature, there's a flourishing debate on many of those questions. Academics don't agree on what constitutes a regional 'architecture'. Like 'regionalism' and 'integration', the term doesn't have a precise definition, although it's used regularly in the lexicons of both policy communities and scholarly communities (Tow and Taylor 2010). Some use it to talk about the broader web of agreements among states; others, to talk specifically about institutions. Even within the latter group there are disputes about how institutions are to be defined—potentially as norms, practices, or legal bodies. Some argue that regionalism can be merely an architecture of norms. Others assert that regionalism only merits the name when it's binding on its constituent states. Similarly, scholars differ on the merits of a unified or differentiated architecture. For example, does there need to be a distinctive security architecture or body in Asia? Does it matter if it has different membership from the region's economic bodies?

This *Strategy* paper doesn't seek to resolve all those debates. It seeks, in a more straightforward manner, to examine the conditions that help make a region function—and become sustainable over time—in the interests of its members or constituent states. It examines the objectives of regional bodies, the roles of distinctive regional bodies and how they interact. It develops a comparative framework to understand Asian regional architectures. In the context of recent proposals for an Asia Pacific Community (APC), it develops recommendations for consideration by Australian policymakers. It presents the case that building a region is more important than building an architecture. This is proffered in the knowledge that regionalism doesn't take place in a vacuum. While a region's progress 'is informed by geographical, political, economic, strategic and cultural concerns that are region-specific', those concerns are also contextualised by 'norms, trends, values and practices that relate to different regional and global settings' (Fawcett 2004:429).

Chapter 2 analyses the key themes in the policy and scholarly debates on an Asia–Pacific regional architecture. Chapter 3 then examines the 'special case of Asia'. Chapter 4 examines comparative regionalism, drawing out some patterns and pointers.

The paper presents some reflections on the future of Asia–Pacific regionalism and Australian policy on regional architecture, and is grounded on the premise that it's in Australia's interests to promote a stable regional order during an era of geopolitical transition. Enhancing regional architecture must—over time—form one of the strands of that effort, but can only be part of a much broader policy framework. It's in our interest to develop closer economic, political and security ties with the region.[1] The paper argues that there's considerable scope for Australia to develop a role as an agent of change and mediation.

Chapter 5 concludes with five key strategies for consideration by the Australian Government—strategies that flow from the argument that 'building the region' offers the greatest long-term gains for Australian interests.

Chapter 2

DEBATES ON AN ASIA–PACIFIC REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The study of Asian and Asia–Pacific regionalism has received considerable attention in recent years, in policymaking communities, in scholarly debate and in the discourses of civil society groups, with some key developments over the past decade. There have been two recent proposals from Australia and Japan regarding the development of a new Asian or Asia–Pacific architecture (Rudd 2008ab, Hatoyama 2009), both the initiatives of prime ministers who have since fallen from power.

The Rudd policy proposal, the Hatoyama series of speeches and the ensuing policy and scholarly debates are notable for the fact that they seek an overarching regional architecture for the 'region'—although advocates differ as to whether that region is actually East Asia or the Asia–Pacific.[2] They're noteworthy because the debate on regional architecture focuses more explicitly on security and institutional structures than on economic regionalism. The primary objective of most regional organisations has tended to be economic cooperation, even when it's been motivated by a broader security imperative or a desire for stability or peace in the region. The recent proposals focus on architectural design and potential institutional structures. Indeed, institutions have suddenly been at the centre of discussions, although architecture has traditionally been the point of reference in Asia–Pacific regionalism.

In the Australian context, the proposal for an Asia Pacific Community (later renamed by the Rudd Government as an Asia Pacific community, with a lower-case emphasis on 'community') has led to considerable policy and academic deliberation in the region and beyond. The term 'community' is challenging. For many scholars of Asian regionalism, the term is typically understood in the notion of a 'security community', for some epitomised in ASEAN, for others in the webs of mostly bilateral alliances in the region. Security communities are defined by

exceptionally close patterns of cooperation and understanding between their members—so much so that no member fears assault or coercion by a fellow member. There are arguments about whether any such multilateral community now exists in Asia, even at a nascent level, and scholars have identified a range of research challenges in testing for the existence of a security community in the region, how it might have developed, and the extent to which institutions matter in nurturing such a community (Garofano 2002:519).

For years, there's been a recognition by most Asian states of the evolving and expanding concepts of security—to include environmental degradation, the risk of a nuclear accident, drug trafficking, piracy, illegal immigration and other matters—but no agreement about the motivating forces that underpinned shifting patterns of security cooperation. As one observer concluded in 2002:

> [S]uch stability as exists appears to be the result of traditional concerns for power and security, and leaders do not seem yet to have much faith in institutions or in moving toward a security community. (Garofano 2002:521)

The relative weightings between soft and hard security probably haven't shifted much in the intervening years—if anything, the level of strategic competition across Asia may have intensified rather than diminished.

In a world of competing powers and rising economic giants, regional approaches to interstate cooperation appear to offer pathways to address—and perhaps solve—transnational problems and international challenges.

Still, the signing of the ASEAN Charter appears to signal a new phase of positive engagement in Southeast Asian regional cooperation. In addition, the election of US President Obama encouraged speculation about a more multipolar moment—or multipartner context—in international politics than in recent years. Visits by both President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Asia appear to signal that the time is ripe to examine the role of the US in regional security and multilateral forums.

Clinton spoke recently of the US commitment to the ARF, serious multilateral institutions and key bilateral partnerships—and her belief in ASEAN as an 'important success story' that the US supports. She added:

> we need to decide, as Asia–Pacific nations, which will be the defining regional institutions. So although we respect and will work with the organizations that countries themselves have created, some of recent vintage, it's important that we do a better job of trying to define which organizations will best protect and promote our collective future. (Clinton 2010)

She noted that different countries in the region face different challenges, with varying progress, both political and economic, adding that regional cooperation 'must account for these diverse challenges and create more opportunities for broad-based prosperity and political progress'.

The latest wave of interest in regionalism is at least partly issue-driven, and reflects the 'securitisation' of an increasingly broad range of topics. In a world of competing powers and rising economic giants, regional approaches to interstate cooperation appear to offer pathways to address—and perhaps solve—transnational problems and international challenges. Terrorism, climate change, haze, transnational crime, corruption, migration, trade protectionism and natural disasters all constitute challenges that require innovative solutions and a rethinking of traditional conceptions of power, influence and even sovereignty. Opportunities in education, exchanges of research and development, technological developments and even improved security relationships all appear to be more positive aspects of greater interdependence and interrelationships among nations, and within and across regions.

The practical challenges of those transnational issues have underpinned increasing levels of international cooperation in recent years. Transnational, regional cooperation is recognised as a means to confront security issues such as terrorism and soft security problems, including people smuggling, organised crime, human trafficking and pandemics. Regionalism increasingly forms part of the mindset of the elites of the Asia–Pacific region and beyond— not just as an optional aspect of national policymaking but as a necessary instrument to cope with the challenges of the 21st century.

But it isn't just the newer, 'softer' policy issues that have inspired the renewal of interest in regional architecture. The rise of an increasingly confident and assertive China has made that country the subject of concern about its future strategic and economic role both regionally, including its relationship with ASEAN and the other Asian subregions, and on a global level. One observer notes that, as 'China's power grows, its relationships with the US and Japan will change, and that will change the way Asia works' (White 2009).

Recent proposals for an Asian or Asia–Pacific architecture

Rudd's Asia Pacific Community (APC) concept

On 4 June 2008, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd first presented his vision of an Asia Pacific Community as 'a regional institution which spans the entire Asia–Pacific region' and 'which is able to engage in the full spectrum of dialogue, cooperation and action on economic and political matters and future challenges related to security' (Rudd 2008a). He specifically included the US, Japan, China, India and Indonesia within his definition of the region. And he outlined 'the purpose' of the APC as being 'to encourage the development of a genuine and comprehensive sense of community whose habitual operating principle is cooperation'. He stated that the EU did not represent 'an identikit model' of what we would seek to develop in the Asia–Pacific region, but added that he was keen to capture the 'spirit' of European integration in the Asian hemisphere.

In his second key speech on this issue, on 12 August 2008, Rudd outlined ASEAN's significant achievement in 'building a sense of regional identity, a sense of community, and a sense of neighbourhood' in Southeast Asia, and argued that ASEAN's 'habits of cooperation' had crafted 'a sense of genuine community' (Rudd 2008b). He proposed a 'regional discussion about the sort of regional architecture we want to see in the next 20 years' and saw the contributors to that conversation as including the US, China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, India and others. In what was seen at the time as a response to criticisms following his original speech in June, Rudd spelt out what the APC was not: it was not an economic union, a monetary union, a political union, or at that stage a customs

union. But clearly, the APC still had a strong 'institutional' bent: the wider region, Rudd observed, needed to learn from ASEAN's success 'how to build the institutions, habits and practices of cooperation across the policy spectrum'.

As the keynote speaker at the International Institute for Strategic Studies Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in May 2009, Rudd seized the opportunity to rehearse his proposal before a gathering of prominent Asian leaders. Again, his speech paid appropriate homage to the achievements of ASEAN, but he continued to set before Asia his original choice: a choice between building a regional architecture by further institutionalisation, or passivity:

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

As earlier, the APC was presented as a means to build a stronger sense of community:

> Just as ASEAN built a strong measure of strategic congruence within Southeast Asia between many countries of different political systems and, at times, with active hostilities towards one another, so also could an APC over time build up a sharper sense of security community across our wider region. (Rudd 2009a)

When addressing a group of Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEOs in Singapore on 14 November 2009, Rudd again described his APC proposal as one that sought:

> to bring together in a single institution over time the economies and countries of our region ... together with an agenda that covers the political, security and economic space, to encourage the habits of cooperation, the habits which underpin security cooperation, the habits which underpin a common sense of community in our region. (Rudd 2009b)

By the time Rudd spoke in December 2009 to the Sydney conference that he'd called to discuss the proposal, the proposed 'Community', capitalised in earlier speeches, had definitely softened into the lower-case 'community' (APc). But he certainly hadn't abandoned his emphasis on institutions: indeed, he portrayed that conversation as a 'regional discussion on institution building', and proceeded to offer his views on a set of underlying principles.

In a fuller explanation of his own proposal, he said that an APc 'must engage' all key countries that make up the region; 'should include' all the major powers (including the US); and 'should also embrace' the region's core grouping, ASEAN. (It wasn't entirely clear what the different verbs—engage, include, embrace—signified.) The APc must, he said, have an agenda that allowed it to address 'all of the major questions that affect our region', must foster the 'instinct for cooperation', and must meet at leaders' level. He accepted that an APc might evolve from the existing institutions rather than emerge as another addition to an already cluttered landscape. That evolutionary 'glide path', said Rudd, would offer a third option, alongside the earlier options of doing nothing or building an entirely new institution (Rudd 2009c).

The Rudd proposal developed somewhat over time, but at its core it depicted a choice—institutionalisation or passivity—that some critics perceived as a false one. And it presented the APC as a mechanism for *growing* a security community rather than as a mechanism *reflecting* one. The third option, which came very late in the day, finessed how institutionalisation might be achieved, but still emphasised an institutional solution to Asia's security future. It also combined (and confused) a set of concepts that would have been better kept distinct and separate—the concepts of architecture, institutionalisation, community and neighbourhood. Interestingly, the proposal emphasised an institution, but that institution was supposed to be a mechanism for cultivating something even more important—a sense of community.

Japan's East Asia Community proposal

The Hatoyama proposal for an Asian community has been the other recent initiative under discussion in policy circles. The proposal developed a concept of an Asian family—and in particular the Hatoyama family tradition (the then Japanese Prime Minister's grandfather was also a prime minister) of emphasis on *yu-ai* or 'fraternity', whereby Japan is 'to become a "bridge" for the world, between the Orient and the Occident' (Hatoyama 2009). The proposal was also important because it appeared to exclude the US.

Hatoyama spoke of the challenge of building an East Asian community, not an Asia–Pacific one:

> Today, there is no way that Japan can develop without deeply involving itself in Asia and the Pacific region. Reducing the region's security risks and sharing each other's economic dynamism based on the principle of 'open regionalism' will result in tremendous benefits not only for Japan but also for the region and the international community.

> Given the historical circumstances arising from its mistaken actions in the past, Japan has hesitated to play a proactive role in this region. It is my hope that the new Japan can overcome this history and become a 'bridge' among the countries of Asia.

> I look forward to an East Asian community taking shape as an extension of the accumulated cooperation built up step by step among partners who have the capacity to work together, starting with fields in which we can cooperate—Free Trade Agreements, finance, currency, energy, environment, disaster relief and more. Of course, Rome was not built in a day, so let us seek to move forward steadily on this, even if at a moderate pace. (Hatoyama 2009)

The exclusion of the US from the Hatoyama proposal was a major design defect for Australia. In hard-power terms, the regional security system in East Asia is built on a 'hub and spokes' system of alliances that the US has concluded with states in the region. The US–Japan alliance is an essential 'spoke': all 'East Asian countries have formulated their security policies with the Japan–US alliance as a given. If the future of the Japan–US alliance were to come more under question, security in East Asia would become unstable' (Shirashi 2009). Establishing an East Asia Community of the kind envisaged by Hatoyama would raise questions about the US's future role in the region, and risk dislocating the 'Asian community' from its own core security network. Furthermore, the proposal raises the question of whether the Democratic Party of Japan government sees a distinctively regional role for Japan in East Asia—a role that mightn't always be in alignment with its alliance.

But the Hatoyama proposal didn't carry the baggage of institutionalisation that the Rudd proposal did: it foresaw a more gradual realisation of an East Asian Community as an accumulation of practical cooperative ventures. And Hatoyama made no bones about the proposal being Japan's attempt to articulate its own claim for regional belonging.

A way forward

When Australia embarks again on a program to strengthen regional cooperation in the Asia–Pacific region, it would do well to bear in mind the lessons of the past two years. We face some key challenges in placing the issue of regional security architecture on the discussion table. Some regional countries still see Australia as an 'outsider', for at least two reasons—it isn't necessarily regarded as Asian, and it's perceived as being closely aligned with the US. Arguably, geopolitical shifts may have sharpened such perceptions, because regional countries can see the design of a new regional architecture as a competitive venture and not simply a cooperative one.

There's no regional consensus on who should lead the effort towards effective reform, but if we want to lead in this area, we should find ways to strengthen our 'community' credentials, rather than our architectural ones. It's those community credentials that would strengthen Australia's claim to 'belong' in Asia. And they might also leave us better placed to argue that 'community' rather than 'architecture' is the way forward in the broader context of Asian security cooperation.

THE 'SPECIAL CASE' OF ASIA EXAMINED

Both the Rudd and the Hatoyama proposals accelerated a debate over regional architecture. Arguments that supported the Rudd proposal included the perception that current regional bodies were passive, weak and fragmented, and that there were low general levels of satisfaction with existing cooperative mechanisms (He 2009:5). On the other hand, other scholars argued that Asian regional bodies were 'a pastiche of history, commercial ties, political compromises, shared security challenges, strategic rivalry, and public relations', which had produced 'a model appropriate to Asia's unique anatomy and fluid environment' (Frost 2008:131). The arguments came to turn on one key point: whether or not Asia was a 'special case'.

Many scholars of Asia, and in particular of East Asian or Asia–Pacific architecture ... agree that the current architecture isn't working satisfactorily.

Despite efforts to develop regionalism in East Asia (and especially Southeast Asia), some critics see an 'East Asian organization gap' that makes it difficult for East Asians to convert their rising economic influence into geopolitical power. That, in turn, renders it difficult for East Asians to respond to common challenges (Calder and Fukuyama 2008:1–2). But that 'organization gap' might just reflect deeper differences. In truth, it remains a serious challenge for East Asians to share a common geopolitical vision to which they might harness their economic power. The lack of such a vision—or narrative of regional belonging—renders particularly challenging the need to define the

role that regional architecture could play in developing a common geopolitical agenda and in harnessing the region's economic power to the achievement of that agenda.

Many scholars of Asia, and in particular of East Asian or Asia–Pacific architecture (these terms aren't always distinguished), agree that the current architecture isn't working satisfactorily. There's dissatisfaction with ASEAN and with ASEAN+3 (China, South Korea and Japan). Although some argue in favour of ASEAN as a 'serious regional player' (Ong 2007), others point to the divisions within the group over Burma/Myanmar and the lack of a hegemonic power within ASEAN, in order to argue the case for a more modest assessment of the association's capacities. True, there's considerable debate about the leadership role of Indonesia within and even beyond ASEAN (see, for example, Sukma 2009). Yet ASEAN's role as a key regional player is weakened by the fact that its partners in ASEAN+3 are potential geopolitical rivals wielding steadily greater regional influence.

Further, there's a sense that the ARF isn't sufficiently active to be a genuine security driver in the region. Australia, like most other ARF members, doesn't really look to the ARF as a vehicle for organising regional security. A large part of the reason is that what analysts call 'regional security' isn't a common set of concerns for all actors—indeed, a key reason why there's no common view of a 'security' architecture is that the states of the region don't always share common strategic interests.

However, it's important to recall that regionalism has been in evidence in Southeast Asia for many years, and especially since ASEAN was founded in 1967. The key achievements of ASEAN are regarded as enduring peace and stability in the region; the creation of a single market and production base, with an increasingly freer flow of goods, services, investment, businesses, professionals, skilled labour and capital; and, arguably, some normative concepts of Asian regionalism (Acharya 2007). Some believe that ASEAN has been crucial in enabling China, Japan and India to engage in peaceful dialogue.

Not all of those claims are entirely self-evident. Clearly, Southeast Asian security is underpinned by a much wider range of factors than ASEAN's confidence building. And there's a measure of scepticism about the level of strategic comfort among China, Japan and India that might be implied by their dialogue activities. Some analysts argue that it's the growing leadership of Japan and China that's led to greater integration in the Asia–Pacific region, with China leading in free trade and Japan leading in monetary and financial stability (Hidetaka 2005).

Still, one reason that ASEAN is regarded as the core of regional cooperation is that significant tensions exist in the relationships between the dominant Northeast Asian powers—China, Japan and South Korea—to the extent that ASEAN+3 is sometimes referred to as 'ASEAN+1+1+1'. While achievements are significant, there's continuing debate about the areas in which regional integration hasn't been entirely successful, and about the best way forward. This paper suggests that further development of the existing attempts at reconciliation could usefully provide both reconciliation moments and formalising moments for the establishment of more structured cooperation, supported by increased people-to-people cooperation and educational influence and exchanges.

Many analysts of Asian regionalism focus on the Asian experience as distinctive, and so have not tended to perceive regionalism beyond that focus. East Asian regionalism has been defined as the experience of ASEAN, of ASEAN+3, of the East Asia Summit (EAS), or even in the context of the Asia–Pacific region. As Table 1 indicates, there's a complex 'architecture' in place in East Asia and in the Asia–Pacific region, but few parts of it are especially effective.

Table 1: Asian regional architectures

Participation in Asian bodies	ASEAN	ASEAN+3	ASEAN+6	East Asia Summit	Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)	G20	ASEAN Regional Forum
Indonesia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Brunei	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Malaysia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Philippines	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Singapore	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Thailand	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Vietnam	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Cambodia	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y
Lao PDR	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y
Myanmar	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y
Japan		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
China		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rep. Korea		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Australia			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
United States				Invited	Y	Y	Y
New Zealand				Y	Y		Y
India			Y	Y		Y	Y
Canada					Y	Y	Y
Mexico					Y	Y	
Russia				Invited	Y	Y	Y
Chile					Y		
PNG					Y		
Peru					Y		
Taiwan					Y		
Hong Kong					Y		

Which architecture?

Some analysts argue that 'a strong case can be made that the Asian region is simply not conducive to the application of the architectural metaphor, and even that architecture in any genuine sense of the term is, for the foreseeable future, unlikely to emerge in this part of the world' (Ayson and Taylor 2009:193–4). The emphasis of those analysts is, rather, on relationship—that is, the importance of the relationship that develops among states in Asia and not the institution that brings states together. From that perspective, the most important *institutions* of regional politics aren't formal organisations, but the rules and regular patterns of behaviour among major actors, as well as nations' political will to work together. This means, for example, that the original, informal, bargain to establish an ASEAN Charter is more important than the charter itself (Ayson and Taylor 2009:193–4).

There's a persuasive argument in favour of concentrating on the residents rather than on the buildings when thinking about future regional approaches. Such a concentration might involve tearing down rather than erecting walls and buildings, and employing more relationship specialists and fewer architects (Ayson and Taylor 2009:196). This point highlights the implicit tensions between architecture and community. If effective

regionalism depends on good relationship-building, which in turn depends on reconciliation and trust building, then any desire for a regional body that addresses serious structural and decision-making problems has to address the lack of mutual trust among some of the players. The desire among some actors to bring about some form of reconciliation gesture is worthy of exploration. For example, this year's centenary of the Japanese annexation of Korea provides one such reconciliation moment, and an impetus to find others.

But leaders in Asia aren't simply debating the real meaning of regional 'architecture'. The meaning of the term also seems to vary across regions. An important difference between Asian and European regionalism, for example, is that Asian policymakers and many Asianist scholars tend not to examine formal institutions, while Europeanists regard them as an essential and necessary foundation of the European integration process. Asianists tend to use the term 'architecture' in preference to the negative, often EU-focused, connotations that the term 'institution' has in some cases in the region.

What renders the Asian region a 'special' case is the fact that it's so diverse in religion, statehood, nation-state development, economic development, and the institutional development of individual governance structures.

What renders the Asian region a 'special' case is the fact that it's so diverse in religion, statehood, nation-state development, economic development, and the institutional development of individual governance structures. There's no commitment to supranationalism or to institutionalism. There remains a pattern of normative consensus and a respect for the integrity of the nation-state. Nationalism remains an important principle of the nation-states of Asia, albeit in different manifestations.

The reasons for regions' different rates and types of progress and objectives may lie in a number of factors as varied as the reluctance to yield national sovereignty, asymmetrical commitments to regional integration, political orientation, economic interests, and leadership rivalry or leadership deficits. Still, regions typically share a desire for stability and greater intraregional cooperation. Many analysts argue—correctly—that Asia must find its own trajectory to increased cooperation.

Yet there are different normative elements and tensions between European and East Asian regionalism: the EU's normative foundation is democracy, human rights, individual liberty, the reduction of national sovereignty, and the creation of regional organisations that are able to override national governments, while the normative foundation of Asian regionalism is nationalist doctrine, statist power and Asian culture or values (He 2004:107). Nationalism is the driving force behind East Asian regionalism, and states are generally unwilling to surrender some sovereignty to regional organisations in order to make them more effective. East Asian commitment to sovereignty is thus an important impediment to the development of an organisation to tackle common intraregional issues (He 2004:122).

Which Asia?

Building a shared normative foundation for Asian regionalism is, of course, also difficult due to a lack of agreement about where the 'region' starts and finishes.

In fact, competing conceptions of regional normative order exist within the diverse range of states that make up the broader Asia–Pacific region, creating different expectations and visions of how the East Asia/Pacific region should evolve. Those conceptions include:

- an Asia–Pacific regionalism, centred on the Pacific Ocean, advocating open regionalism associated with the value of human rights, democracy, individualism and free trade
- a pan-Asianism, centred on the Asian continent, advocating closed regionalism to Asian states and associated with Asian values and culture (He 2004).

This presents a formidable challenge for scholars and policymakers, as there are at least two strands of analysis of regional architecture in terms of nomenclature—East Asian and Asia–Pacific. Those two distinct ideas about Asian regionalism make it difficult to find an appropriate form for the architecture of Asian regionalism. The ideas are manifest in two different orders: first, a trans-Pacific economy linking the countries of the Pacific Rim through closer economic integration; and, second, an East Asia political community (Gyngell 2007:5). Issues that policymakers need to address relate to whether those two competing concepts can be brought closer together. If they can't, there's little chance of there being the same membership of security architecture bodies (or a body) and of an economically integrated region.

But even if they can, daunting challenges are likely to remain—because it's certainly possible that as many differences exist among the countries of East Asia and among the countries of the Asia–Pacific region as a whole. So far, those inclined to argue for placing the emphasis at the Asian end of the Asia–Pacific spectrum tend to treat East Asia as one cohesive political and strategic unit, which it isn't. We ought to accept that there are probably several 'Asias' involved. Further, a large part of the reconciliation effort will have to be devoted to healing rifts within Asia.

This paper accepts that Asia remains distinctive—that there's no specific extraregional model that would immediately suit Asian or Asia–Pacific regionalism. But the lessons of comparative regionalism aren't simply ones that assume the simple transposition of one region's values and institutions onto another. Different regions are interesting precisely because of the different ways that they build their communities, and the differing patterns of cooperation that emerge over time. Asia's 'special' circumstances mean simply that the region (however it is defined) will need to find its own path to community building and cooperation. Rudd regarded the *habit of cooperation* as important. Although this is a term that was used by Ralf Dahrendorf (1989) regarding practices of collaboration among European member states, habits of cooperation will be distinctively Asian in any regional community building in Asia.

Chapter 4

COMPARATIVE REGIONALISM—DESIGN PRINCIPLES

A given region and its experiences of 'regionalism' are often not directly comparable to other regions and their experiences, although some scholars have examined regions such as ASEAN and Mercosur comparatively in a broader context (for example, Lenz 2008). It isn't just regional structures that are different; the regions themselves are quite dissimilar. For example, Europe's defining characteristic is its apparent relative homogeneity in religion, race and historical experiences, so the EU's structure and membership are characterised by democratic systems and the rule of law; a relatively high level of economic and social development; a common economic ideology (capitalism); and, finally, in stark contrast with East Asian regional entities, by supranational institutions and a pooling of sovereignty among its twenty-seven member states.

East Asia and its regional bodies are highly heterogeneous in race, ethnicity, religion and historical experiences, including experiences of colonialism.

In contradistinction to that structure and architecture, East Asia and its regional bodies are highly heterogeneous in race, ethnicity, religion and historical experiences, including experiences of colonialism. While democracy is evident in some parts of the region, it exists in conjunction with authoritarianism and communism, and there's no common economic ideology. Levels of development and living standards also vary considerably. The principle of sovereignty is central in East Asia—there are no supranational institutions.

Reluctance to embrace comparative regionalism typically arises from many sources. Some scholars regard the Asian architecture as imbued with highly specific security norms. Others simply believe that the EU is so 'advanced' in its experience and achievement of regional integration that it can't provide a sensible base of comparison for Asia's more open, flexible arrangements. It's been suggested that the 'policy induced' regional cooperation that's taken place in the EU is based on specific factors, including history and geography, which are not replicated elsewhere (Okagaki 2009). Consequently, regional cooperation in Asia shouldn't be based on an EU model or any other model; rather, it must be understood in the context of specific Asian factors, including serious problems of policy coordination, the US preference for bilateral arrangements, competing national interests and the driving force of economic transactions.

… regional cooperation in Asia shouldn't be based on an EU model or any other model; rather, it must be understood in the context of specific Asian factors …

Yet comparison is essential in order to gain a more discerning understanding of regionalism in Asia. One expert sees the advantages of a comparative approach as allowing 'us to understand and rethink the incentives for, and constraints on, regional integrative processes'; revealing the dynamics that underpin regional processes; and highlighting what he calls 'another crucial, but oddly neglected variable in regional phenomena—the role of the dominant or hegemonic power of the era' (Beeson 2005:969). The recent calls for a new architecture in the region mean that scholars and policymakers are interested in all three factors—and the last not least. Regional countries know that a period of hegemonic adjustment looms in Asia—not hegemonic transition, perhaps, but certainly adjustment. China is increasingly dominating the minds of policymakers in the region, including in Australia. And Australia, like other nations in the region, is also concerned about clarifying the role of the external hegemon, the US.

An overview of regional experiences

The desire for peace and stability is the basis for the creation of many regional bodies. One of the EU's fundamental achievements and core legitimating values is the development of a 'peace community', which entailed reconciliation between former enemies. That reconciliation has sustained the success and durability of the entire integration project, which is seen as an 'ongoing and open historical project' (Gardner Feldman 1999:66–7). The centrality of reconciliation between France and Germany to US postwar policy is worth recalling. The EU's promotion of itself as a security community, because war between its members is not possible, has arguably set up the EU as 'the greatest confidence-building measure in the history of Europe' (Gardner Feldman 1999). The support of the NATO alliance to that security community is, of course, central.

The EU is characterised by an institutional approach to region building and community building. This has entailed a political community, a security community with the assistance of the US, and an economic community, with binding legislation. It has also involved considerable debate about values, norms and identity. The EU experience encompasses the

creation of the single market, a customs union, a common agricultural policy, the sharing of competencies between the EU bodies (largely based in Brussels) and, more recently, the idea of a European citizenship and European identity. The most important characteristic of the EU is its marked redefinition of sovereignty, in which sovereignty isn't vested solely in the state, but is pooled or shared by its twenty-seven member states.

The difference between the Asia–Pacific architecture, however it's defined, and the EU is the very distinctive approach taken by each to the importance of sovereignty. This means that the EU has characteristics that are commonly defined as supranational, denoting competences above the nation state that are vested in some EU institutions, in which the twenty-seven member states participate in all decisions. This is in stark contrast with ASEAN.

The difference between the Asia–Pacific architecture, however it's defined, and the EU is the very distinctive approach taken by each to the importance of sovereignty.

The African Union, created in July 2001, is based on founding objectives of continent-wide cooperation, making war unlikely, and designing a framework to participate in the international market and in international negotiations (Tieku 2004). The principal objectives of the union are greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples; defence of its member states' sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence; an acceleration of political and socioeconomic integration; the promotion and defence of common African positions; the encouragement of international cooperation; the promotion of peace, security, and stability; and the promotion of democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance. Further, it aims to promote and protect human rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; to establish the necessary conditions to play a rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations; to promote sustainable development and integration of African economies; to raise living standards; to coordinate and harmonise policies with regional economic communities; to promote research, especially in science and technology; and to work with international partners to eradicate preventable diseases and promote good health on the continent (African Union 2010).

Like Mercosur, and unlike Asian regional bodies, the African Union is heavily institutionalised (Bouzas and Soltz 2001; Tieku 2004). Unlike Mercosur and ASEAN, it is committed to intervene in another state in cases of crimes, war crimes and crimes against humanity (Tieku 2004:250). In its security role, it aims to protect the security of the continent. And it has progressively been drawn into a series of interventions and peacekeeping missions across Africa, most recently in Somalia and Darfur.

Mercosur began as an economic agreement between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in 1991. That core group essentially makes up the eastern flank of the South American continent. It has since expanded its membership to include Venezuela and accorded associate membership status to Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. And it has 'deepened': a Mercosur 'parliament' was established after a presidential summit in December 2004, although that body is mainly a forum for discussion of issues and is

limited to recommending policies to national governments. Despite Mercosur's institutional framework, it hasn't achieved economic integration—indeed, arguments about specific regional trade issues are relatively common among its members. Moreover, its critics typically argue that its institutionalism is insufficient to guarantee deeper integration among its constituent states (Pena and Rozemberg 2005). A key debate within Mercosur relates to the need for institutional reform in order to achieve its economic, political and normative objectives (Caetano 2009).

Education, people movement and youth exchanges

Advanced regional integration has been proven to involve both economic and non-economic interlinkages. Asia is characterised by a relatively high degree of open regionalism in an economic sense, and so the relevance of the EU in this context may be limited. But there are other examples of connections, linkages and the creation of a sense of common community or neighbourhood that may well be worth considering in relation to Asia. In other words, there's scope for a broader view of what European regional cooperation actually is. The EU's single market is based on four freedoms—freedoms of movement of goods, services, capital and labour—largely achieved since 1993. In addition, the movement of youth, especially students, has been significant. The EU's Erasmus Programme[3] has led to more than two million student exchanges, and there are also extensive university-to-university and interschool exchanges across European borders. Students have the opportunity to study for part of their undergraduate degree in another country, and can tap into scholarships for Masters programs and PhD support. Academics can access the opportunity for mobility—often with financial support—and transnational research projects under Erasmus, Jean Monnet and Framework Programme funding.

These types of interlinkages require relatively little institutionalisation. The benefits in mutual understanding, transnational student movement and comparative research agendas have been considerable. Given a reluctance to develop binding institutions in Asia in the EU mould, student (and scholar) exchanges, already a feature in parts of Asia, might be worthy of considerable investment. Australia could well support and encourage this, including financially, and promote it as a reconciliation event, as discussed in Chapter 5.

… Asia is certainly not alone in confronting problems of regional definition—indeed, such problems are typical in regional organisations.

Defining regions

A region is defined in a number of ways. Geography—proximity, essentially defined as shared borders, or shared occupation of a discrete landmass or island chain—provides one basis for a region's understanding of itself as a region, but isn't the sole basis.

In the European case, for example, there's a set of rules for joining the EU, based on what are known as the Copenhagen criteria. The conditions of democracy and the rule of law and a functioning market economy are at the base, followed by thirty-one chapters of a

legal, administrative and institutional patrimony, known as the *acquis communautaire*. 'European-ness' is defined by those tests just as much as it's defined by geographical borders. Similarly, it might be said that the objectives of the African Union help define what it means to be 'African'. Mercosur was initially set up as a small club, despite shared membership with neighbours in a pre-existing larger organisation, the Organization of American States.

In the case of Asia, the definition of 'region' depends in part on the sector or the policy under discussion—APEC and ASEAN are the major economic entities, while the ARF might be the most important multilateral regional security body. In the case of political cooperation, the list encompasses ASEAN+3 and the EAS. All are important regional entities, and the list of putative or maturing regional bodies under discussion now includes the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. It also comprehends the notion of ASEAN+8—ASEAN and Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the US. But Asia is certainly not alone in confronting problems of regional definition—indeed, such problems are typical in regional organisations. Here, as elsewhere, geography is unlikely to provide the final definition. Shared interests, frequently portrayed under the more acceptable rubric of shared values, are at least as important.

Table 2 provides some comparators between ASEAN, the EU and Mercosur. Table 3 shows comparative aspects of regional integration.

Table 2: Common features of comparative regionalism			
Features	**ASEAN**	**EU**	**Mercosur**
Interdependence & global/transnational challenges	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intergovernmentalism	Principal focus	A focus	Principal focus
Multispeed/variable geometry	ASEAN Charter, options to opt out	Eurozone, options to opt out in treaties	Options to opt out (especially on common external tariffs), compliance problems
Economic community	Aim for 2015	Largely achieved	1991
Agreements with other regions and countries	Yes, Treaty of Amity and FTAs	Extensive	With EU and some FTAs (limited)
Intraregional trade	Limited, growing 25%	Extensive 64%	Limited 17.45%
Dialogues, summits, ministerial meetings	Increasing, formalised in ASEAN Charter	Extensive	Increasing
Committee of permanent representatives system	Established under ASEAN Charter	Established	Established (2003)
Legal personality	Established under ASEAN Charter	Established under Lisbon Treaty	Established under Protocol of Ouro Preto (1994)

FTA = free trade agreement.

Table 3: Comparative aspects of regional integration			
Features	ASEAN	EU	Mercosur
Democracy, rule of law	Elements in ASEAN Charter	Yes	Yes
Common religious traditions	No	Yes	Yes
Ideology	Capitalist, communist	Capitalist, liberal	Capitalist, communist—no formally Marxist/communist governments. Current ascendancy of democratic left.
Single market	No	Yes	In part
Consensus	Yes, informal	Yes, formal	Yes, formal
Sovereignty	Not shared	Shared	Not shared
Security community	Disputed	Disputed/yes	No
Norms in common	Few	Yes	Yes
Institutions	Few	Yes	Yes (but weak)
Free trade area	AFTA	EU	No—official internal FTA within Mercosur, but some sectors excluded
Economic community	2015	1993	1991
Neighbourhood relations	ASEAN+3	European Neighbourhood Policy	Associate members, agreements with CAN, forms central part of UNASUR
Development levels	Huge disparities	Few disparities	Disparities
Economic & social development levels	Low to mid	Mid to high	Low to mid
Reconciliation	Limited	Yes	Yes
Deregulation	Limited	Yes	Yes—partial
Regulation	Limited	Yes	Limited
Pre-regulation	No	Yes	No
Institutional capacity	Limited	Yes	Yes, limited
Functional cooperation	Yes	Yes	Yes (with lapses)
Neofunctional cooperation	Limited	Yes	Limited
US support	No	Yes	No
Supranational institutions	No	Yes	No
Intergovernmentalism	Yes	Yes, with supranationalism	Yes
Binding legislation	No	Yes	Community laws must be internalised by each state; in practice many are not.

AFTA = ASEAN Free Trade Area; CAN = Andean Community; FTA = free trade agreement; UNASUR = Union of South American Nations.

Integration levels

There's scholarly agreement that the processes of regionalism in Europe and Asia have occurred for different reasons, in different ways and historical contexts and with different outcomes. First, regional cooperation in Europe has been driven by peace imperatives and by policy imperatives as a result of Europe's specific history and geography (Capannelli 2009, Okagaki 2009, Nair 2008). In contrast, Asian regional cooperation has been driven by

markets (Capannelli 2009, Hidetaka 2007, Okagaki 2009). One analyst argues that the European experience illustrates that business associations could exert pressure on national governments for its realisation, a key factor contributing to successful regionalism (Hidetaka 2007:243), unlike in Asia at present.

Second, European integration is seen as 'internally' oriented while Asian integration is seen as 'externally' oriented, focused on the external sphere and the need to remain open to global markets (Capannelli 2009). This has been regarded as the difference between closed and open regionalism. One reason proffered for this is Asia's lack of shared values or identity, which were crucial in the creation of the EU.

Third, there are greater economic, social and political disparities in Asia than in Europe, as well as differences of religion, development levels, and democratic structures and norms (Capannelli 2009, Murray 2008a). In this regard, Asia and Europe have 'regionally specific, systematically different patterns of politics and policies' (Katzenstein 2007:396). Moreover, while regionalism in Europe arose from a failure of nationalism, the two processes, regionalism and nationalism, have long 'enjoyed a symbiotic relationship' in Asia (Acharya 2007:373). The role of the nation-state differs considerably in the two regions, as is evident in the focus on the importance of sovereignty in all key analyses of Asian regionalism. The importance of sovereignty is epitomised by the principle of non-interference in other ASEAN states, for example, and the principle and practice of consensus as a fundamental norm in ASEAN and ASEAN+3.

Capannelli (2009) is not alone in suggesting that Asia needs to find its own path to increased integration. Some scholars of Asian regionalism have suggested that Asia can draw on, or learn from, the European experience in a number of ways. They suggest that Asian policy elites might consider governance principles such as European-style consensus and subsidiarity; efforts to deal with transborder issues; institutions to enhance compliance; measures to effectively use regional institutions to deal with security issues; means to engage civil society in consultation about regional integration; and ways to develop regional integration in the 'backyard' of major regional powers (Capannelli 2009, Morada 2008, White 2009).

But most of those suggestions will be hard to reconfigure to the Asian environment (Murray 2010a). Hardest of all would be reconfiguring European 'formalism' to fit the Asian context. As one expert has observed:

> Regional cooperation in Europe is extensive in scope and intensive in formal institutions and legal norms. Formal treaties or negotiations precede increased interaction in Europe—making regionalism in Europe politics-led or policy-induced. Asian regionalism, in contrast, has been driven by informal interaction and the growth of economic transactions (through the operation of multinational corporations and Chinese networks) without policy coordination or state-based negotiation. (Okagaki 2009)

True, some existing proposals for developments in Asian regionalism stress further formalisation of existing structures. There is, first, the suggestion for an 'ASEAN Community' that would incorporate security, economic and sociocultural forums (Morada 2008), evident in the report of the ASEAN Eminent Persons Group and the 2008 ASEAN Charter. Second, there are recent calls for increased cooperation on security issues, to promote peace, stability and security within the region (Rolfe 2008:109). The Rudd proposal goes so far as to identify the need for a more structured regional security architecture. ASEAN

could be the means to shape the 'emerging regional security architecture' (Desker 2008:70). One specialist on Europe and Asia sees ASEAN's role as that of creating opportunities for enhanced cooperation between Japan and China and to 'serve as the binding force for institution-building' (Yeo 2006:269), but is one of the few analysts to refer to the role of institutions in her analysis. In Asia, the broader structural question tends to turn on how to advance regionalism in a region where formalism doesn't have the same degree of centrality that it has in Europe.

Design principles

The development of any set of principles of regional design needs to clearly distinguish between principles and functions. Much of the recent scholarly debate is concerned with which body requires reform and which body is most important within the existing architecture—and whether a new entity might be necessary and desirable. Much of the debate also focuses on which countries should be members of which body. Those are important issues, and some of the debate is discussed in this paper, but the answers should be informed by some set of guiding principles. It's important to examine principles of regional design and debates on how the existing regional architectures might develop and adjust to new and long-term challenges. The transnational challenges of a global and regional nature enumerated earlier in this paper give rise to a desire for a new way of thinking. The existing problems relating to coordination, membership overlaps and gaps, and sovereignty also need to be addressed in a future Asian or Asia–Pacific regionalism. Table 4 summarises the drivers of the design of regionalism in three regional bodies.

Table 4: Design drivers of integration/regionalism			
Drivers of integration, regionalism	**ASEAN, East Asia**	**EU**	**Mercosur**
External support	No	Yes—US	Yes—EU
Crisis at origins	Cold War in Southeast Asia	World War II	No (redemocratisation following military rule)
Crisis leading to increased integration	Asian financial crisis 1997–98	End of Cold War	Financial crises
Stalling of multilateralism	Increased FTAs	FTA approach	FTAs
Reconciliation	Stabilised to an extent in ASEAN, not in ASEAN+3	Stabilised in EU	Stabilised
Leadership	Limited	Yes, sometimes disputed	Dominated by Argentina and Brazil
Political will of elites	Limited	Yes	Limited

FTA = free trade agreement.

Functions

According to a late eminent scholar, important functions for an effective regional body are: first, that it be a collective forum for regional leaders to address the full range of critical regional and global issues that affect them; second, that it 'strengthen and deal effectively with the consequences of economic integration', especially trade and investment; third, that it address issues of political change and security; and, fourth, that it 'provide a basis for educating the public and leaders about the region' (Soesastro 2009). He proposed that existing institutions such as APEC and the ARF should be fundamentally reformed rather than replaced, and he recommended the creation of a new heads-of-government meeting

or Asia Summit, with membership limited to the ten Asia–Pacific members of the G20 (Australia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russia and the US).

Determining leadership and membership, which are two important challenges, remain essential principles that need to be resolved in any architectural design. The number of countries is not as important as the regional body's objectives, which need to be sustainable over time and to present distinct advantages to all participating states. There's also an argument to be made that, despite reforms and reconfigurations of global economic forums, such as Asian representation at the International Monetary Fund and G20, Asia is under pressure to create its own regional institutions, such as the Chiang Mai Initiative and the East Asian Free Trade Area (Rathus 2009:1).[4]

Four elements have been advanced as necessary for an effective regional architecture in Asia. These are that the architecture:

- must be able to facilitate trade and investment (as in APEC)
- must help build an East Asian community (limited to ASEAN+3, with ASEAN at its core)
- must promote regional security (in a narrower group, with smaller membership)
- must permit heads of government to discuss common problems, with a broad but limited membership (Gyngell 2007:7–9).

Like Soesastro, Gyngell sees the need for both broad and narrow membership of regional entities, depending on whether they are economic or security entities. It's notable that the Rudd proposal of June 2008 encompassed security, economic and political imperatives in a single community. Gyngell suggests that a single institution couldn't cover the four elements outlined above, but he doesn't argue that there's a need to develop new institutions— 'No single forum can meet all these needs, not least because a different membership is required in each case.'

The need to differentiate objectives, leadership, membership and economic, political and security architecture remains pressing and needs to be examined by the Australian Government.

Lessons from comparative regionalism

A study of different regions shows a set of key indicators of architectural design that are relatively common in regional bodies:

- a process of reconciliation between key members
- the affirmation of a shared set of democratic principles or core values
- the acceptance of a specific policy agenda for closer cooperation
- a shared regional understanding of the power dynamics within the region.

All four indicators have been fundamental concerns of much of the recent Asian regionalism literature and are areas of fruitful comparative analysis (Murray 2010a).

First, many scholars agree that the achievement of historical reconciliation is the most important objective of regionalism. Some argue that there can't be any effective regional entity if interstate reconciliation isn't tackled. This is particularly the case in ASEAN+3, where

there are longstanding and bitter memories between all three of the +3. A recent report even suggested that:

> Until the central questions of Korea and Taiwan are resolved, not to mention a welter of difficult bilateral and multilateral territorial disputes— and until China and Japan come to terms with each other in a manner similar to that of the Franco-German reconciliation— there is no basis for cooperative or collective security in the Asia Pacific. Calls for an Asian equivalent of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the like have fallen on deaf ears for this very reason. (Feigenbaum and Manning 2009:18)

Some scholars draw on the EU's experience of reconciliation, in which an achievement of peace and stability has been a *sine qua non* for the success of the organisation and its predecessors, to argue for the importance of this indicator. There may be opportunities for Australia to use its middle power and intermediary skills to help soothe historical tensions between Japan and China and between Japan and Korea, but the problem is a delicate one and not easily resolved. This is explored later in the paper.

A second key point is the role of democracy both as a binding principle and as a commitment. Such a commitment is relatively common in most regional organisations, and Australia's democratic heritage means it cannot easily disown the importance of democratic governance. But would it make sense to push for a body within which a democratic type of domestic regime would be a core criterion for membership? Democracy isn't a universal principle in the Asia–Pacific or in the East Asian region; nor is it at the basis of any regional body in Asia, although there are elements of it in the ASEAN Charter. But if the region can't cohere around democratic principles, what norms and values would be central? Can Asia–Pacific countries really just cohere around pragmatic cooperation? Can 'Asian values' provide the normative structure underpinning the broader structure?

A third issue is where to position regional integration in policy terms. Some Asianists argue that a functionally based policy approach is the most appropriate means to commence, as cooperation on specific sectors and economic functions is relatively achievable. Others argue in favour of a more extensive approach, and some even suggest pathways for Northeast Asia similar to those taken in the early years of the European Community (Schmitter and Kim 2008). There's a serious problem with the latter approach, as it tends to be somewhat prescriptive and often Eurocentric, drawing on EU examples.

... China's power appears to be growing, as US influence is arguably on the wane in the region.

A fourth issue is the need to examine the understandings of power and of power dynamics within the region. Scholars are aware of the role of Franco-German reconciliation—and equally aware of the role of the US as a supporter of western European integration and as a security guarantor through NATO since the 1950s. The role of the US's hub-and-spokes approach in the Asia–Pacific and the distinctive approaches it took to the construction of regional bodies in Southeast Asia and Europe warrant serious comparative examination.

A further aspect of comparisons of power, relating to the EU and Asia, is that the US, a traditional security guarantor in both Asia and Europe, is still the dominant security hard power in Asia and the core security anchor in the region, but its dominance of the power spectrum seems to be declining. China is increasingly a potential hard power. Moreover, China's power appears to be growing, as US influence is arguably on the wane in the region. This will be a key issue for Asian regionalism. Cooperative structures must complement power dynamics, and they are frankly going to be harder to build in regions where those dynamics are towards greater rivalry and competition.

So we've seen that there may well be lessons from comparative regionalism for the East Asian and Asia–Pacific regions. Yet the key lesson is that it's important to build a region and not institutions first, based on the development of a concept of community. Community building is essential to region building. The most important component of all is trust, and trust must be based on a firm commitment to reconciliation.

Regions often develop a sense of community, a sense of identity and shared norms. They develop a shared narrative over time. Chapter 5 explores the role of Australia in contributing to a shared sense of community in the region.

Chapter 5

AUSTRALIAN POLICY ON REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE—OPTIONS

By mid-July 2010, then Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith was talking up the prospects for achieving 'a very good practical outcome' for Kevin Rudd's proposal for an Asia Pacific community. Essentially, he argued, the admission of the US and Russia into either the EAS, or a new group, ASEAN+8, 'would meet the purpose of the Asia Pacific community proposal which prime minister Rudd initiated some time ago' (Sharp 2010). That optimism seemed at odds with the approach of Prime Minister Gillard a week earlier, when she expressed her belief that it was 'unlikely' that Australia could succeed in its goals for the APC.

Regardless of how the government chooses to move on with or from the Rudd proposal (and Foreign Minister Rudd will be a key determinant of that), this chapter aims to set out a longer term program for building a stronger Asia–Pacific community. It does so by outlining a set of five interlinked strategies that apply the key message of the preceding chapters: that good regionalism depends on good relationship-building, which in turn depends on reconciliation and trust building. The key message of comparative regionalism for Asia is that focusing exclusively on 'architecture' can be a distraction, as community building is more important than architecture building. Australian policy should aim to 'build a region' rather than 'build a building', as it were.

Strategy 1: Position Australia as an agent of change

Previous theories of foreign policy behaviour have occasionally emphasised the importance of activism as a specific diplomatic instrument; for example, the middle-power approach turned on just such an emphasis (Ravenhill 1998). A more recent study in the international relations literature (Jakobson 2009) has examined three factors that contribute to the reputation of a nation as a 'forerunner state': persistent activism to promote an issue on the international stage; expertise and knowledge; and successful national policies.

It determined the success of an activist initiative by a range of metrics: first, in aiming to move the discussion or integration processes forward; second, in appealing to fundamental norms and values shared by its partner states in order to maximise the initiative's attractiveness; and, third, in facilitating consensus building and coalition building.

In the case of the Asia Pacific Community initiative, clearly the Australian Government sought to advance the discussion in a very concrete way. But so far the initiative hasn't appealed to fundamental norms and values shared by its partner states in order to maximise its appeal and make it difficult to reject, although there's still scope for that to be developed. And consensus and coalition building was an exercise essentially conducted after rather than before the proposal's launch, in the visit by Richard Woolcott to Asian leaders in the aftermath of the proposal and in the holding of the December 2009 conference. On two of Jakobson's three tests, Australia didn't really behave like a genuine 'forerunner' state. If we want to regain our position in that regard, we have some reputational repair work to do.

Australia has previously enjoyed a strong reputation for activism, as the originator of APEC, as a supporter of peace and peace building in the region (for example, in East Timor and the Solomon Islands) and as a key contributor of development assistance through AusAID. We also have a solid reputation for expertise and knowledge, too, with excellent knowledge of Asian polities and economics and with the potential to develop soft power educational inputs and outcomes. We're strongly enmeshed in the region through agreements such as the free trade agreement with ASEAN and a solid diplomatic presence. Australia's knowledge and expertise are also in evidence in its educational programs, its university campuses in Asia and the large number of Asian students in Australia.

Australia can build on its reputation as an honest broker, bringing together broad coalitions (as it did in APEC and the Cairns Group), drawing on informal and formal discussions.

Australia can build on its reputation as an honest broker, bringing together broad coalitions (as it did in APEC and the Cairns Group), drawing on informal and formal discussions. The building of a broad coalition of states in favour of a more comprehensive Asia–Pacific architecture will be a key challenge for the government. Drawing on its extensive contacts within government and among government officials in Asia will prove fundamental to its interests. The major states or powers in a region needn't be the only initiators and decision makers (Jakobson 2009:97). Australia has the opportunity to present proposals subtly, to build coalitions broadly, to engender discussions informally and to nurture common understandings of norms and values. We will need to recognise where those common norms don't yet exist, and to accept that they can't be rushed into existence, but the development of a culture and a habit of cooperation must rest on such efforts.

There are some obvious challenges for Australia's persuasive diplomacy. We have different values and a different society from many of our neighbours in Asia. Our political institutions and political culture are democratic. Our civil society is distinctively Western and is in contrast to that of many of our neighbours. We have different foreign policy goals and different economic interests, in some cases, from our neighbours. Therefore, it's important to

emphasise the importance of trust and the regularity of meetings, as those build confidence in interlocutors.

Australia, ASEAN's first dialogue partner, concluded the ASEAN – Australia – New Zealand Free Trade Agreement on 27 February 2009 and has existing networks through the ARF, the EAS, the ASEAN–Australia Post Ministerial Conference, the ASEAN Economic Ministers–Closer Economic Relations Consultations, the ASEAN–Australia Forum, and the ASEAN–Australia Development Cooperation Program Joint Planning Committee. Government strategy must address the challenges of how Australia can prepare for different outcomes and scenarios, contribute to the debates and to architectural design, and help to determine who else might support the process (the US, China, India, the EU). Australia must actively support the process of building a region through reconciliation, trust building and community building, seeking to build on existing dialogues, habits of cooperation and established alliances.

A combination of leadership, support, consensus building and conciliatory activities will be in Australia's interests.

A combination of leadership, support, consensus building and conciliatory activities will be in Australia's interests. This would include, for example, supporting the Australian Ambassador to ASEAN in her role of enhancing Australia's 'ability to work closely with ASEAN to address key regional issues and promote regional prosperity and stability' (Smith 2008) and actively encouraging her in seeking support for Australian interests in the region, in particular in liaising with the newly appointed members of the ASEAN Committee of Permanent Representatives and seeking to meet with them as a committee.

Summitry plays an important role in bilateral, multilateral and regional political engagement. Meetings at head-of-government level are an important symbol of engagement, and can be of particular value when other forms of interaction are constricted or absent. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, for example, illustrates that high-level summitry is an important component of regional cooperation, especially when it brings together strategic rivals with limited opportunities for security cooperation. Yet some argue, rightly, that in most regional organisations 'these gatherings achieve little—and that is precisely why it is time for a new, more functional approach to Asian architecture' (Feigenbaum and Manning 2009). Both beyond and below this level, there's a need to influence coalition building and often shifting alliances. There's a need to monitor the role of each state in negotiations, the desire—and capacities—of governments to play active roles, and the bilateral relationships that form part of the interlinking web of engagement in the Asian region.

Face-to-face contact entails meetings with ASEAN leaders, with the ASEAN Secretary-General and ASEAN Secretariat, and with the recently appointed ambassadors in the new ASEAN Committee of Permanent Representatives. It involves the seeking of allies, and the use of all opportunities for *en marge* meetings with Asian counterparts and with EAS partners. It includes the maintenance of a visible presence at all regional meetings and showing a willingness to present compromise texts.

Moreover, Australia can further develop its links with its Asian partners within the World Trade Organization, the UN and the Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM). Following Australia's third application to join ASEM in October 2008 (the previous applications were made in 1996 and 1998), the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting in May 2009 welcomed Australia's (and Russia's) membership and participation at the ASEM meeting in Brussels in October 2010.[5] ASEM was formed as a cooperation forum for East Asian and European countries, to strengthen dialogue and interaction between the two regions. The inaugural ASEM Summit was held in Bangkok in 1996 and since then the meeting of heads of state or government has been organised every two years, alternately in Asia and Europe. Membership of ASEM is now forty-eight (EU twenty-seven, ASEAN ten, China, South Korea, Japan, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Australia, Russia, New Zealand, the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Commission).

Australia has been working with the Asian participants of the ASEMs since the beginning of preparatory meetings and dialogues relating to the ASEM Summit on 4–5 October 2010 in Brussels. Indeed, Prime Minister Gillard led the Australian delegation to that summit—an important signal of the new government's commitment to interregional, and not just intraregional, dialogue.

While strategically it makes sense for Australia to be aligned with the Asian participants in ASEM, we might also, quietly, act as a mediator between Asian and European interlocutors, given our membership of the Western European and Others Group[6] of the UN, our past record of cooperation with Europeans in a number of multilateral forums over many years, and the recent Australia–EU Partnership Framework agreement. Australia can effectuate compromises and key decisions as a mediator (Murray 2010b).

Australia isn't the most important country in the Asian region—China is.

Strategy 2: Be the mediator, advancing relationship building

Australia can seek to be an agent of change in at least two ways—in seeking to grow more robust patterns of regional cooperation and in seeking to play a key role to soothe fraught relationships. We may be in a position to contribute to reconciliation as a facilitator of a 'reconciliation event'. We have some credibility in that field, as the Rudd Government issued a public apology to Aborigines. Although the Rudd speech of 4 June 2008 was not a reconciliation event as defined by Gardner Feldman (1999:69)—with pragmatic and moral motivations, designed to make war unthinkable and to spur economic growth—its recognition of such events is a reflection of the Australian policy community's thinking about those events.[7] Australia could have a role to play seeking to help resolve historical differences and to bring about reconciliation in Chinese, Korean and Japanese relations.

Mediation doesn't mean moderation, except in relation to the mediator's own interests and ambitions. It's important for the Australian Government to be moderate about Australia's role, while working assiduously behind the scenes as the mediator and the proposer of both

compromise and bold solutions—but not necessarily outlining what both the problem and solution are in the initial stages.

Australia can play a key intermediary role in the ARF. For Australia, democracy makes a difference, markets are crucial, stability matters, and security alliances carry weight. Australia isn't the most important country in the Asian region—China is. We aren't the security guarantor for most of the countries of the region—the US is. We're not the core member of any regional group in Asia. We're not an indispensable partner for initiatives in the region in the way that, for example, France and Germany have been in Europe. Our economic origins, societal development and civil society differ substantially from those of our neighbours. So what have we to offer?

Australia ... can seek to be an agent of dialogue between countries with histories of tensions and conflict.

Australia can offer to be an intermediary in disputes. Australia isn't an Asian country, and suggestions that it is don't receive favourable reactions within Asia, but it can seek to be an agent of dialogue between countries with histories of tensions and conflict. It can be a middle power in the region by seeking support for its initiatives before presenting them to an audience that mightn't be expecting them. Or perhaps this intermediary role could be a function that a new structure could offer—the option of access to a mediator, so that one country isn't obliged to take on that function.

The idea of a mediator could be welcomed by partners in the region, which have some crisis-management experience. For example, five ASEAN countries (Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Singapore) and the EU participated in an interregional collaboration in the Aceh Monitoring Mission, a civilian crisis-monitoring mission, after a peace settlement was brokered by Martti Ahtisaari.[8]

White (2009) suggests that the new Asian order will need to be negotiated between the most powerful states in the region and that 'Australia will never play more than a modest role in all this.' That role could well be in the form of, first, helping to bring about reconciliation or, second, helping to promote the emergence of the new Asian order. Citing the European case, Weisbrode (2009) has argued that there's no fixed reason why Asia's contending powers can't 'bury the enmities of the past under layers of institutional co-operation', and then cooperate on issues ranging from trade to disaster relief.

But layers of institutions don't necessarily provide any new solutions to Asia's challenges— Asian regional bodies already function. The enmities of the past have to be buried under layers of mediation and reconciliation—not more institutions. Australia needs to decide whether it can help to do that or not. If it can't, it should stand aside and support those who can.

Strategy 3: Develop soft power influence and educational strengths

Many of Asia's leaders were educated by Australians or in Australia. The networks of those leaders—politicians, bureaucrats, educators, business leaders, NGO activists—could usefully

be consolidated further in order to exert influence on key decisions relating to the region. This form of soft power or normative influence could be exercised further throughout the region with considerable skill by Australian policymakers, diplomats, trade and aid representatives and academics. Australia can usefully draw on its extensive networks in government, academia and the media in a more coherent manner, as they provide insights about the countries of the region.

Public diplomacy by Australia using educational exchange, higher education networks and collaboration, cultural exchange and business education programs could be enhanced. The strengths of the Australian education and training systems can be profitably and fruitfully harnessed to extensive collaboration across universities, institutes of technology, conservatories and schools.

It would be useful to engage with partners in both Asia and Europe through ASEM and especially the Asia–Europe Foundation. The EU has extensive cultural and educational cooperation systems established with Asia (Wiessala 2007:297), including engagement by the United Kingdom with potential future leaders of China. And the EU aims to have the largest and most successful knowledge-based economy in the world under its 2020 Strategy. The British Council and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) are also testimony to the success of varying approaches to establishing a cultural presence in Asia (Wiessala 2007:298). The Australian Government is interested in projects through the Australian International Cultural Council, the key cultural diplomacy body, and aims to promote Australia overseas through the arts and culture with China and Korea in 2010–11 (Moorhouse 2010).[9]

Such a strategy is simply a direct application of soft power. Joseph Nye has described such power as follows:

> If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow. If it can establish international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to change. If it can support institutions that make other states wish to channel or limit their activities in ways the dominant state prefers, it may be spared the costly exercise of coercive or hard (traditional) power. (Nye 1990:167)

Educational and cultural exchanges could be developed. For example, the EU has a number of student and staff mobility programs and student exchanges, the importance of which goes far beyond the value of bilateral educational and scholarly exchanges and gaining a familiarity with educational establishments in other countries. They can also be a clear and unequivocal example of trust and reconciliation.

The Franco-German Friendship Treaty of 1963 led to some eight million student exchanges as a means of bringing about reconciliation and building trust (Krotz 2002). The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO 2010) has an annual operating budget of €20.5 million, consisting of equal contributions from the German and French governments. This is an example of community building that doesn't rely on institutions but on the architecture of personal trust and mutual benefit. The treaty has led to the creation of projects for the development of a shared history of France and Germany, which may have some pertinence for Korea, Japan and China.

Exchanges in education (university, school and vocational education and training, lifelong learning and apprenticeships), in business, across the public service and among civil society

groups are useful examples that can bring about a sense of community without too much institutionalisation. They can contribute to what Karl Deutsch (1957) called transactionalism in developing networks of communication, and what Ernst Haas called the development of a political community. Acharya and Johnston (2007a:4) show that the core aspect of Deutsch's transactionalist approach was community building, with a 'security community' (a group of states that have developed long-term expectations of peaceful change and have ruled out the use of force among them). Haas's (1964, 1968) idea of public servants working together for a common objective has consequences for any plan for a regional architecture.

The Australian Government can draw on its own experience and on regional EAS strengths in educational cooperation in East Asia. The 2008 report on harnessing educational cooperation within the EAS for regional competitiveness and community building presents a number of cooperative strategies in education, encompassing schools, technical and vocational education and training, and higher education (McKenzie et al 2008). The report recommends cooperation among governments, institutions, staff and students, and intergovernmental international educational cooperation of five types: people exchange; information exchange; facilitation of trade in educational services; regulatory reform; and development partnerships. It recommends the building or strengthening of communities among the peoples of the EAS countries in multilateral cooperation. This relates to increasing the mobility of students, teachers and researchers; the appreciation of history and heritage transnationally; learning of languages; benchmarking; regulatory reform of tertiary education systems; and 'a well-resourced coordinating group or secretariat able to maintain momentum, support national personnel, disseminate good practice and develop plans' (McKenzie et al 2008:i–viii). Here Australia has a potential leadership role that can be further developed.

This third strategy (like the second) looks beyond parts of Australia's traditional security culture, so Australia needs to articulate more clearly—and with its interlocutors—what it hopes to achieve by a more active program of mediation and education across the region. Part of that would entail explaining what it seeks in a security community and the related culture and norms of interaction within the Asia–Pacific region.

That's no small task: there's no 'common language' of Asia or the Asia–Pacific for the discourse on security, region, region building and architecture; there are competing languages, just as there are competing visions; and there's typically a lack of trust among the interlocutors. Moreover, there are different dialects that often separate the region's defence, foreign policy, intelligence and wider security communities. There's also a set of dialects on economic regionalism and on the many aspects of political, cultural and sociocultural cooperation. Breaking down the different languages and dialects can only be done over time, and by the steady growth of intraregional cooperation across a broad swathe of areas.

Strategy 4: Promote sound design principles

Even if Australia diligently pursues the options for community building outlined above, it's inevitable that issues of architecture and institutions will return to the agenda at some point. Australia should advocate sound design principles for institution building in Asia—and be willing to accept architectural incrementalism as one option, alongside demolition and reconstruction. Principles of good design must underpin decisions about an appropriate architecture. Any sound design must take into account the local environment, the plan for the building, the materials to hand and, above all, the requirements of the residents. Such

a design may well need to include the possibility of extensions to make the building larger over time. In Asia, the local environment is characterised by growing nationalism, relatively open economic regionalism and an aversion to sovereignty pooling. The 'construction site' is marred by the presence of several other constructions already in place. Further, some residents are hesitant about identifying their requirements for any new structure.

Australia may need to accept a design that suits the environment, minimises the dislocation of existing structures and maximises residents' satisfaction. Australia is keen that a new construction does more than discuss increased economic integration. The shifting pattern of economic strength—with China's growing influence in trade—is generating not only economic uncertainty (and the desire for free trade agreements) but also important security concerns in the region. Those security concerns currently overshadow political concerns.

With those imperatives in mind, Australia should advance a structure that is *inclusive* rather than exclusive, but that includes the current and expected great powers of the Asia–Pacific region (the US, China, Japan—and perhaps India).

The structure must be clearly *sustainable* over the long term, with the capacity to be active in engagement in its region and multilateral talks. It should offer regular, multilevel engagement opportunities for regional policymakers, up to and including heads of governments, while not neglecting the officials' level and civil society groups.

The 'architecture' should be sufficiently *flexible* to allow it to play a role in international crises—mediation or civilian crisis management, for example—although not a role in the direct application of force in a strategic contest between its members. It must sit alongside a broader pattern of increasing 'community' engagement across the region—including educational and cultural soft power instruments.

Australia doesn't need to participate in every Asian regional forum or grouping.

Australia could profitably show that it recognises that regionalism in Asia has always progressed incrementally. It has in Europe, too, but in Europe there were also institutions, binding legislation and a legal base for all decisions. That doesn't look like a feasible pattern for Asia or the Asia–Pacific, as region building is more important than institutions or architecture building for those regions. It seems likely that the construction site will remain cluttered with already existing structures for years to come. At some point, it will be important to clarify the role of Asia–Pacific architectures across distinctive if overlapping policy sectors and concerns. Doing that won't be easy if regional countries can't agree on which 'region' (Asia or the Asia–Pacific region) they're trying to build.

Australia doesn't need to participate in every Asian regional forum or grouping. Feigenbaum and Manning (2009:11) suggest that 'Washington does not need to sit in every room or join every conversation to pursue its core interests in Asia.' Despite the fact that Australia is very engaged in the Asia–Pacific, it's possible that Canberra, too, doesn't need to sit in every room or join every conversation. For example, our claims for membership in the Six Party Talks

concerning North Korea's nuclear program would have been relatively weak. Sometimes our interests are served by letting others take responsibility for a problem.

We've seen that the normative foundation of Asian regionalism is threefold: nationalist doctrine, statist power, and Asian culture or values. The Australian Government may need to consider its position seriously if it's trying to swim upstream against those currents. It needs to consider whether it is, in the end, more concerned about security architecture than it is about norms of behaviour in regionalism.

A key difference between Asia and Europe is the core place of democracy. The EU is at its foundation a political community based on democracy. All of its members are democratic countries. Its political objectives are very different from those of ASEAN, and there are few political objectives evident in ASEAN+3. An interesting parallel case to look at might be the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe, which is separate from and older than the EU. It has forty-seven member states, not all of which are fully democratic, but considerable collaboration and dialogue take place at local, microregional (below the member state) and parliamentary levels. Its primary aim is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the whole of the continent, ensuring respect for its fundamental values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Finally, where possible, it would be advisable to build on Asia's incrementalist structures and alliances, as they're difficult to unravel or break down. There's no need to assume that every architecture has to be created from scratch—it may be that umbrella and ground-level initiatives already in place simply need to be harnessed.

Strategy 5: Build an enhanced regional consensus on the leadership, membership, mandate and long-term and discernible sustainability of emerging structures

The recent discussion about Rudd's proposal for an Asia Pacific Community has been revealing. It's highlighted deep divisions across regional countries about a wide range of core issues, including how we define the region, who might plausibly be seen as regional leaders, who might form the membership for a new institution, and what that institution might be asked to do.

Future bids for a strengthened regional security architecture in the Asia–Pacific region seem likely to run into exactly the same problems, so Australia could usefully embark on a longer term dialogue about those issues with a broad range of Asian players. We shouldn't aim to push a specific proposal, but attempt to clear some 'underbrush', as it were, from the thicket of regional (mis)understandings. Perhaps the undergrowth, in places, is genuinely impenetrable, but it's better to know that in advance than to find out when a new proposal is in play.

This strategy is closely related to the need for reconciliation and trust. It also requires consensus about structural factors. Australia could help to facilitate and, as appropriate, lead those discussions. First, the aims, mandate and gains of membership of a regional body must be clearly discernible to all states creating or wishing to join the structure. Second, the leaders of a regional entity must be in agreement about the objectives and benefits. Third, the norms and interests need to be discernible and of benefit. Fourth, the architecture that's devised or strengthened must be achievable and sustainable in the medium and long term.

The practices, norms, agreements and networks of alliances all need to be clearly articulated and linked.

There is, of course, one final set of expectations about any new institution that Australia would have a powerful strategic interest in clarifying. Both for our own security, and for the security of a range of other Asian countries, we must make it clear that we see new regional mechanisms for security cooperation existing alongside the existing bilateral alliances between the US and its regional allies, and not as substitutes for those alliances. The current security arrangements remain more important than regional bodies in the hierarchy of interests of many Asian states. Although many would welcome the US's involvement in a regional architecture, Washington's allies in Asia would not believe they had derived a net benefit from gaining an institution but losing an alliance.

… we must make it clear that we see new regional mechanisms for security cooperation existing alongside the existing bilateral alliances between the US and its regional allies, and not as substitutes for those alliances.

Proposals and ideas from analysts, especially over the past two years, require more examination by the policy community in Australia, whether they deal with an economic pillar, such as a revitalised APEC with a strong ASEAN+3, or a transformed EAS, supported by the ARF, as a political and security pillar (Soesastro 2008).

The appointment of Kevin Rudd as Foreign Minister signals that the idea of contributing to a stronger Asia–Pacific community will probably re-emerge as a major foreign policy objective of the Gillard Government. It will no doubt include the US as a pivotal actor, as signalled by the recent renewed emphasis of Rudd and Secretary of State Clinton on, for example, US membership of the EAS. Questions will remain about any restructuring of the community concept and the role of the existing regional bodies, as this paper has illustrated, and about the role of non-Asian actors. Two further important questions remain unanswered: what will be the relationship between the EAS and other parts of the regional architecture? and to what extent will the EAS be able to play a 'community nurturing' role in the absence of supportive reconciliation gestures and closer society-to-society linkages?

The government has recently demonstrated its commitment to the Asia–Pacific region with Prime Minister Gillard attending three important high-level forums—the ASEM, the EAS and the inaugural ASEAN–Australia Leaders' Summit. A statement released on 20 September stated that ASEAN's decision to expand membership of the EAS to include the US and Russia 'advances Australia's interest in creating strengthened regional arrangements to better address regional economic, political and security challenges'.[10]

The effective construction of a regional community should lead to habits of cooperation that reflect specific objectives in an Asian or Asia–Pacific context. Australia seeks to provide leadership in the promotion of a regional architecture that's more institutionalised than past arrangements. Its efforts have led to criticism, as we've seen, but they've also drawn attention to the serious challenges relating to stability, trust, change and interstate cooperation in the Asia–Pacific region.

Concluding comments

The Australian policy and scholarly communities' understanding of the processes of region building is extensive, but it might be worth elaborating a sound narrative of region building in Asia in order to reflect on how far the region (however defined) has come. This will facilitate an understanding of how and when processes matter. An examination of the norms of region building is then required—especially as there are differing norms relating to the role of the state and of democracy across the region.

The Australian Government is keen to develop a concept of community based on new institutions, but it should be more interested in developing such a concept on the basis of trust and community building. The need for reconciliation events, educational collaboration and some solid commitment to a security community has become crucial.

Australia stands to benefit from the building of trust and community while seeking to foster a relationship-building strategy in the Asia–Pacific region. Building a region—not building an architecture—is what matters.

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Endnotes

1   Former Foreign Minister Stephen Smith (2008) stated:

    The Asia Pacific community initiative encourages a debate about where we want to be in 2020, as world economic and political influence continues its inexorable shift to Asia. The challenges we face are substantial: shifts in the distribution of strategic, economic and military influence within the international system; climate change and the increasing scarcity of natural resources including fresh water, arable land and energy supplies; the power of non-state actors, transnational criminal groups and terrorists; weapons proliferation, including the risk of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists; health pandemics, and their potentially catastrophic impact on human lives, trade flows and the movement of people; and poverty and inequalities in the distribution of wealth due to the varying rates of adaptation to economic globalisation.

2   The terms 'Asia', 'East Asia' and 'Asia–Pacific' are used in a number of proposals and discussions, and at times appear to be interchangeable in some discussions. This *Strategy* paper attempts to clarify the focus of discussion when it uses these terms.

3   European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students.

4   The G-20 consists of the finance ministers and central bank governors of 19 countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the US. The twentieth member is the European Union.

5   See the Chair's statement of the 9th Foreign Ministers Meeting, Hanoi, 25–26 May 2009, http://www.aseminfoboard.org/Calendar/MinisterialMeetings/?id=228.

6   The Western European and Other Group includes Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta,

Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The US is not a member of the group, but regularly attends meetings and is considered a member for electoral purposes.

7   The long peace in much of Europe has been strengthened by stable institutional structures, the habit of cooperation, economic cooperation and the creation of a single market. It has also been given a firm foundation on a legal basis and through the creation of institutions above the state and binding legislation.

8   http://www.aceh-mm.org/.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

APc   Asia Pacific community

APC   Asia Pacific Community

APEC   Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation

ARF   ASEAN Regional Forum

ASEAN   Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ASEM   Asia–Europe Meeting

EAS   East Asia Summit

EU   European Union

Mercosur   Common Market of the South

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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Some previous ASPI publications

Regionalism and community
Australia's options in the Asia–Pacific

Australia has been an important contributor over the years to the debate over regional security architecture. Kevin Rudd's proposal for an Asia Pacific Community was simply the latest in a string of policy initiatives. So where to from here? The invitation to the US and Russia to join the East Asia Summit may have temporarily quelled discussion, but the issue is bound to return to policymakers' agendas in the not too distant future. Should Australia press its case for further architectural renovation?

In this paper, Associate Professor Philomena Murray from the University of Melbourne argues that we can draw lessons for Asia's future from the academic discipline of comparative regionalism. Most analysts assert that Asia is a 'special case', and that it makes little sense to look outside the region for guidance through difficult times. Asia is special. But we ought to be open-minded about other regions' experiences: the processes of building regions are often similar, even if the specific institutions are not.

In particular, it makes sense for Australia to invest more time in building a 'community' in Asia, and to focus less on the search for one overarching institution intended to solve all problems. Nurturing a community takes time, and the willingness of regional states to follow a path of reconciliation and consensus-building. In this paper, Philomena Murray sketches a five-point program for the future of Australian policy—a program intended to re-position Australia as a 'forerunner state' in Asia, to strengthen its role as a regional mediator, to exploit its soft power strengths of influence and education, to promote good principles of design for future architectural proposals, and to enhance the regional consensus over the key parameters of emerging regional structures.