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THE EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD: THE CASE OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Abstract

In the absence of the cold war environment, the emphasis on "political security" has decreased and this has led to a concomitant increase in the direction of "economic security". This trend is highlighted by the development of regional economic groupings and their increasing interaction with each other. Common prospects and problems that these organizations face are important in understanding the dynamic evolution of these groups.

1. Introduction

This article focuses on the emergence of regional organisations in the developing world using the case of South-East Asia in general and the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries in particular as the illustration of this phenomenon. In this light three organisations (in order of importance and institutionalization) are relevant to the analysis. These are ASEAN itself, APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation) and finally the idea of the EAEC (East-Asia Economic Caucus) which has emerged in more recent times. Despite the role of advanced industrialised societies such as Australia and the USA in organisations like APEC for instance, the main focus is on the developing economies of this particular region. In assessing the history and emergence of these groups the emphasis will not only be on the problems and prospects that they face but also the argument will be made that the concept of "economic security" and co-operation will play a much larger role in the future of this region than traditional notions of security in the absence of the cold-war scenario.

2. The Economic Role of ASEAN

The case for ASEAN being concerned with regional economic co-operation is a mixed one. To a large extent such goals were only pursued in the belief that it would enhance conditions of political security.

With its formation in the 1960's in the context of the cold war, ASEAN on the surface appeared united in one aspect only, that was in its political opposition to Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia. Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia and Brunei have all pursued this with a common end; to remove Vietnam's influence and threat in the area.¹ And it has always been debatable whether ASEAN really had

an important economic role to play in the region. For instance when ASEAN was formed in 1967, the political circumstances to some extent dictated its functions. The prevalent strife in the region placed political considerations before economic ones. The initial aim was to contain Indonesia for instance which had been pursuing a policy of "confrontation" and was perceived of as a problem which threatened Malaysia. A second motivating force was to prevent any communist insurgencies that were threatening South-East Asia and therefore the Vietnam-Cambodia issue became the centre of controversy and attraction in the following years. ASEAN in this perspective was operating within the context of the prevalent cold war scenario which dominated global relations.

ASEAN, however did and does have an economic function and role. When it was formed in 1967 it provided a base for academics which could be used to test various theories of economic integration. Despite the underlying political aims previously mentioned the first objective discussed in the Declaration of 1967 was to "accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region."² But it was not until 1973, or six years after its formation that trade and commercial representatives of the various governments began to meet and discuss economics and in fact it was only in 1975 that labour ministers from ASEAN began holding meetings.

There is some descriptive material on ASEAN economic functions which has appeared in the form of UN reports as guidelines providing ASEAN with required technical assistance. These had a fairly short life-span however; initiated in 1968 the final report appeared in 1972. Several proposals were suggested for closer co-operation amongst the states involved: achieving a balance in different economic areas; expansion of trade, exchange of products and allocation of package deal products were prerequisites. Arndt and Garnaut (1979) saw the main aim as follows:

improvement in economic performance and increased rates of growth of national economies (come) principally from exploiting the advantages of large scale production and the advantages presented by the fact that different geographical areas have different and potentially complementary endowments of raw materials, skills and other resources.³

Crucial to this concept is the practical implication that as trade increases so in turn it becomes necessary to ensure more specialisation in production, and the development of even larger markets. In order to attain more co-operation in the economic field the UN team proposed three methods. Selective trade liberalization (taking it

1 See the *Economist* (October 1990) which argues there is little purpose in the organisations existence: "To put it crudely, the associations history suggests that its members have no common purpose other than to resist Vietnams expansion; and that if peace were to come to Cambodia, the association would not have a future." Several scholars have also suggested that ASEAN's *raison d'être* lies in the political sphere; see Stuart Drummond, "ASEAN: National Policies versus Economic Co-operation", *The Round Table* No. 295 (1985) p. 263.

2 As one author points out "it is clear from the political background of ASEAN's formation that the peaceful resolution of existing conflicts and the creation of political stability were the overriding concerns" at the time. See Hans Christoph Rieger (1989). "Regional Economic Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific Region" in *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature* Vol. 3, No. 2, September 1989, pp. 5 — 33.

3 See H. W. Arndt and R. Garnaut, "ASEAN and the Industrialisation of East Asia" in *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol. 17, no. 3 (1979). pp. 191 — 212.

item by item), industrial complementary agreements which could be dealt with by private sector representatives attached to particular industries within ASEAN states and finally allocating large industrial projects to ASEAN countries in a package deal.

More specifically, in the immediate and long term ASEAN shares a common interest with APEC in making the GATT system work. Several members of ASEAN are worried about the consequences of failure in the Uruguay Round and GATT. In March, 1991, Singapore's Prime Minister, Goh Chock Tong specifically argued that it was in ASEAN interests to see free trade and GATT work but if this was not the case "and others are forming trading arrangements, if GATT talks fail and Japan-US talks break down, then there is no choice but for us to look after our own interests by following what others do".⁴ In the same conference speech he also proffered the view that economic co-operation would proceed regardless of whatever regional security arrangements were agreed on in future implying that economic stability and co-operation is a prerequisite for security.

Problems/Limits to ASEAN's Role

Part of the problem with the regional group's economic role is that it has appeared to be more interested in security and security related issues rather than the economic side of things. And to some extent this may explain why there developed other regional groupings like APEC to fill in the "gap".

There are real shortcomings to the economic progress of ASEAN economic. As noted many of these countries are not very compatible in these terms and despite forming 6% of the world's population, ASEAN has only 1.5% in terms of its share of world gross national product. Its leaders have been more recently referring to these types of problem. At a recent international conference in Bali on the role of ASEAN and the world economy, Goh Chock Tong, the new Prime Minister of Singapore referred to the weakness of ASEAN's economic ventures. The ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangement which was criticised on the grounds that despite there being 15,752 items on the preferential trading list, intra-regional trade under this scheme still amounted to less than 1% of total ASEAN trade. Furthermore the items of greatest interest to traders were not accorded preferential tariffs and many of the items were not even produced or manufactured in the ASEAN member countries. It appeared that ASEAN economic regionalism in many respects was not really suited to intra-regional co-operation so much as it was to the development of favourable economic relationships with external trading partners. As one author notes:

ASEAN regionalism is stronger in its external relations than in intra-ASEAN co-operation. Thus, ASEAN economic regionalism takes the form of a joint effort in securing a larger external market and better terms for exports rather than in establishing a customs union or a free trade area vis-a-vis the non-ASEAN countries.⁵

⁴ He was of course referring to worries about the apparent formation of trade blocs in Europe and North America and making the point that ASEAN might be forced to consider similar measures in response. See *Straits Times* Tuesday, March 5th, 1991.

⁵ See Narongchai Akrasanee, "Issues in ASEAN Economic Regionalism" in Karl D. Jackson and M. Hadi Soesastro, Eds., *ASEAN Security and Economic Development* (Berkeley: University of California, 1984). p. 72.

Secondly the problems with the ASEAN industrial projects where each ASEAN country established a large scale project to serve the ASEAN market fell under the same philosophy as the previous list. The Singapore PM gave the example of how under this set-up (when he was Minister for trade and industry) that bureaucrats and Government Ministers who had no personal capital at stake would negotiate for hours to reach a consensus over which country should have what project. And in part the lack of co-operation at the economic level hindered the effectiveness of these. ASEAN economic minister meetings were held only once every six months and because of this it took 2 — 3 years to simply agree on a major project. In Goh Chock Tong's view neither ventures were delivering tangible benefits or increasing the competitiveness of ASEAN;

To me, economic co-operation is more permanent and effective if it results in the greater co-operation of the participating nations than in merely increasing intra-regional trade or getting a few investments which would not come unless they receive some financial incentives or protection.⁶

In this view ASEAN has failed in its economic role in these areas precisely because it is not market driven and therefore lacks the competitive edge. The growth triangle on the other hand; Singapore-Johore-Riau islands was much more amenable to market forces and as such in this view successful.

3. APEC and Economic Security

In this section the concentration will be on the development of mechanisms designed to reduce internal and external vulnerabilities that have been adopted by APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation), a relatively new regional grouping, but one that may have significant economic impact on a global scale.

The Evolution of the APEC "Idea"

The idea of Asia-Pacific economic co-operation has various origins and stimuli throughout its period of conception. James Schubert for instance detected at least three phases in the growth of international organisations in Asia that are relevant to understanding the evolution of APEC.⁷ Pacific organisations sponsored by Japan were perhaps the most idealistic and relied on external versions such as the EEC and EFTA (European Free Trade Association). Kiyoshi Kojima's Pacific Area Free Trade Association (PAFTA) was conceptualised around the emulation of successful European integration but was discarded with the development of ASEAN.

⁶ See the *Straits Times* (Singapore) (5/3/91).

⁷ See James Schubert, "Toward a 'Working Peace System' in Asia: Organizational Growth and State Participation in Asian Regionalism", in *International Organization* Vol. 32, no. 2 (1978), pp. 425 — 62. Initially it was India that supplied the impetus in Asia and in specific it was aimed at developing countries in the 1950s. In the early 1960s Japan had a brief role in organizing the Pacific and finally towards the latter end of the decade South-East Asian nations assumed more of a profile particularly with the formation of ASEAN. For other work that deals with this process see M. Hadi Soesastro, "Institutional aspects of ASEAN-Pacific Economic Co-operation" in *ASEAN and Pacific Economic Co-operation* (Bangkok: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 1983).

In the 1970's the emphasis shifted from integration of regional economies towards containing or ameliorating the negative political spillover effect which resulted from growing economic interdependence. It was first and foremost an "economic security" measure which political factors such as the American withdrawal from Vietnam had induced. Australia entered the debate actively at this stage forming a study group with Japan; the ideas stimulated in this forum led to the Organization for Pacific Trade and Development (OPTAD) which was to be consciously modelled on the OECD and given somewhat restricted responsibilities in a similar manner to the latter organization. Its purpose was intentionally modest:

It would attempt to improve intergovernmental economic relations and intentionally not attempt to replace them or in any sense become a supranational Government. Nor would such an organization ... try to evolve into a common market.⁸

OPTAD was characterised by a lack of cohesion and lack of central purpose. Trade appeared important for instance, foreign direct investment, energy, resources and links with the Soviet bloc also were placed on the agenda which served as terms for consultation but were hardly a solid base for the establishment of a fully fledged intergovernmental organization. OPTAD's evolution can be effectively characterised as the "underdevelopment" of Pacific organization.⁹

The initial impetus for APEC came from the Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke when he suggested the idea at a speech in Seoul, South Korea in January 1989 when visiting President Roh Tae Woo. Some precedents for this "new" version were available. The Pacific Economic Co-operation Conference had been initiated in 1980 as the result of various academic and political initiatives. Hawke, however, was convinced of the need for a more formal intergovernmental vehicle for co-operation which could allow the region as a whole to co-ordinate an approach to GATT and increase the liberalisation of trade in the area.¹⁰ And in part such moves were initially believed to be a reaction to the anticipation of European integration (particularly in the event of the programme for 1992) and in addition the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the US.

8 See Lawrence B. Krause, *Pacific Economic Co-operation: Suggestions for Action* (Petaling Jaya: Heinemann Educational Books 1981), p. 136. Interestingly enough the pattern for the future of APEC is also being conceived along the lines of the OECD. The Paris based group does bring together top policy makers and allows Governments to discuss problems and compare views but ultimately it's role is that of a high powered think-tank. It cannot play the role of the EEC for instance; although it has a capacity for political persuasion, in the final analysis it lacks institutional bite. If APEC develops along these lines then it will fail to become a supra-national organization and that at present would appear to suit many other members of ASEAN.

9 See Miles Kahler, "Organizing the Pacific" in Robert Scalapino et al., *Pacific-Asian Economic Policies and Regional Interdependence* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), pp. 329 — 351. Kahler discusses the obvious reticence of governments to set up a formal vehicle of co-operation in an intergovernmental body. All that remained in the wake of OPTAD he argued was the "6 plus 5" dialogue between ASEAN and the industrialised countries of the Pacific (instituted in 1984).

10 See James Cotton, "APEC: Australia hosts another Pacific acronym" in *The Pacific Review* Vol. 3, No. 2, (1990), pp. 171 — 173. Cotton argues that the need for this kind of group had also been forwarded by the then US Secretary of State, George Schultz and the Japanese PM Yasuhiro Nakasone in 1988. For more on this see the article by Kumao Kaneko, "A new Pacific initiative; strengthening the PECC process" in *Japan Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 2 (1988), p. 85.

The first meeting of the group which comprised ministers from 12 Pacific states (the US, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and the six countries in ASEAN) met between 5 — 7 November 1989 in Canberra, Australia. The atmosphere was one of political caution and some suspicion. ASEAN Governments on the whole were lukewarm to the scheme, in part because the focus seemed likely to be on Japan and its prospects of holding a leadership position. As the initiative came from a non-ASEAN state, suspicion of Australia's motive were also clear. Membership criteria were also in question; the concept embraced many nations and economies from the Pacific Rim which could be extended from India to Chile and the Soviet Union to Vanuatu as one author pointed out; in such an event this entity could have been "so large as to be unwieldy, and would accordingly become defined not for what was included and common but for what was excluded."¹¹ ASEAN made their choices early for instance blocking the invitations to Hong Kong, China and Taiwan. This organisation wanted to be the model for activities concerning co-operation and were against any new organisation like APEC reducing the activities or status of ASEAN.¹²

As it turned out the meeting of this regional grouping (of no small importance considering they produce more than half of gross world products and account for 38% of world exports) produced little more than rhetoric and a vague conclusion that the Asian and Pacific countries should press their case at the Uruguayan Round of GATT talks at the end of 1990.¹³ If the evolution of APEC appeared slow it was not for lack of bureaucratic officialdom: 300 officials and 25 Ministers met in Canberra. For the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Solomon, it was a "milestone in Pacific Basin co-operation" and an "idea whose time had come."¹⁴

Problems and Constraints in the Development of APEC

At this point we will deal with the major obstacles and problems that APEC faced in the context of four major constraints which serve to illustrate the difficulty of dealing with a concept like "economic security" and "vulnerability". These constraints are not mutually exclusive and often overlap in form and content; they are membership, the role of ASEAN, the weakness in institutional development and the divergence in terms of views within ASEAN and between members of ASEAN and the rest of the actors involved.

11 See James Cotton, "APEC: Australia hosts another Pacific Acronym" *Pacific Review* Vol. 3, no. 2 (1990). pp.171 — 173.

12 See Marjorie L. Suriyamongkol (1988). *Politics of ASEAN Economic Co-operation* (Singapore: Oxford University Press), which discusses in general how ASEAN economic programmes have produced fairly insubstantial results. For a review of the main literature on ASEAN economic co-operation see Hans Christoph Rieger, "Regional-Economic Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific Region", *Asia-Pacific Economic Literature* Vol. 3, no. 2 (September 1989), pp. 5 — 33.

13 See the *Economist* (11/11/89).

14 See the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (16/11/89).

Membership

The membership problem has always been one of the most difficult to solve in any formulation of Asia-Pacific co-operation. The difficulty of "who to include and who to exclude" has limited the development of such organizations and APEC is the latest in the line to postpone such crucial decisions. China, Taiwan and Hong Kong as potential entrants posed a problem for all concerned. At the second meeting of APEC in July 1990 the agreement was to delay a decision granting the three China's entrance until the next year.¹⁵ Initially it was the US that pressed for the inclusion of the latter three in the first talks in Canberra but were prevented from this by stiff opposition from ASEAN. Despite the fact that Japan was prepared to accept Hong Kong as a participant which after all had an identity in GATT and was the eleventh largest world trading body, it was also reticent like ASEAN in drawing in Taiwan and China as partners. In November 1991 the Third Ministerial meeting proved to be a turning point in these developments as the "three Chinas", China, Taiwan and Hongkong participated for the first time as new members in the APEC forum. Significantly, this strengthened APEC's stature as the largest single forum pressing for trade liberalisation. Prior to the admission of these new members the combined GNP of APEC countries amounted to US\$ 10 trillion in 1990 with trade accounting for 32% of the global volume.¹⁶ The new membership therefore increased their stature significantly. Other political problems with membership included the difficulty that Indonesia and Malaysia as members of the non-aligned movement had a problem with the inclusion of South Korea but not North Korea.

Role of ASEAN

A second constraint facing the institutional development of APEC emerged in the form of the role of ASEAN and its perceptions of the organization. For instance in the first meeting in Canberra ASEAN did not want any security issues on the agenda in line with its view that ASEAN is traditionally a conflict reduction mechanism and it is unnecessary to move beyond that forum in South-East Asia. On the whole they were fairly lukewarm to the entire scheme being suspicious of the principal instigators in Australia and Japan. The idea that carried strong currency was that ASEAN should be the model for the new activities and that any new grouping should not on any account reduce the activities or status of ASEAN.¹⁷

Asean was particularly sensitive about its perceived role as a back-up mechanism; the Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas wanted to have APEC meetings focus on the annual ASEAN post ministerial council after the ASEAN Foreign Ministers meetings. Clearly the intention was to present ASEAN as the model for intergovernmental processes in the region; the idea was to assess the ASEAN experience and proceed from there. ASEAN and APEC were commonly linked in terms of an "umbilical cord" for his purposes. Singapore on the other hand took a

¹⁵ See the *Economist* (4/8/90).

¹⁶ See "Growing Up Pains" in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (14/11/91).

¹⁷ See Marjorie L. Suriyamongkol, *Politics of ASEAN Economic Co-operation* (Singapore: Oxford University Press).

more balanced approach with the trade and industry minister Lee Hsien Loong arguing that "to us, ASEAN and APEC are really concentric circles to which we belong. They have different processes, they have different memberships. The areas of common interest within ASEAN are not necessarily the areas of common interest in APEC."¹⁸

In spite of these different reservations, ASEAN has gradually come to accept APEC and support the group. There are at least three reasons for why this has occurred in terms of ASEAN's concerns with "economic security". Firstly, APEC appears to have a role in resolving and/or managing trade conflicts on a regional basis. The Minister for Industry and Resources of Brunei has argued that APEC could "serve as a means to help reduce trade and economic tensions... [and provide] a forum in which we could consult each other."¹⁹ Secondly, APEC plays an important role in multilateral trade negotiations bringing some developing countries interests together who are interested in a united front for the purposes of the GATT Uruguay Round. And lastly, in times of regional uncertainty caused for instance by development in other regions, such as Eastern Europe and Russia for instance, APEC serves as an incentive for other major players such as Japan to co-operate and strengthen ties with an already existing regional group.²⁰

Conditions however were and have been attached for the support of ASEAN to APEC including that the latter should not deal with traditional political and security issues (which was after all ASEAN's *raison d'être*). Moreover the idea of APEC acting as a trade bloc was ruled out and ASEAN wanted its own machinery to be at the heart of the APEC process.²¹

It is clear then that APEC's development has been more dynamic in recent years and this to some extent managed to fend off challenges to its role even by other emerging concepts and groups such as the proposed EAEC to which we now turn.

4. The East Asian Economic Caucus

In December 1990, the idea of establishing an East Asia Economic Group emerged following the collapse and failure of the Uruguay Round Talks concerning agricultural subsidies. This idea was initiated by Malaysia and was the brain-child of their Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Malaysia's Primary Industries Minister indicated shortly before the failure of the GATT talks of the need for a "regional trading bloc."²² This was language that was shortly thereafter to be eschewed as ideas of trade blocs were seen as problematic in winning support for the concept. At an international conference on ASEAN and the world economy in Bali in March 1991, Mahathir called on ASEAN to push the concept of the EAEG in the interests of free trade; "the mere existence of the group, backed as it is by the massive combined strength of the members should help to retard the slide towards trade blocs

¹⁸ See the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (16/11/89).

¹⁹ See speech by Naji Abdul Rahman Taib, Minister for Industry and Resources, Brunei, to APEC Ministerial Meeting, 30 July 1990, p. 4.

²⁰ See speech by BG Lee Hsien Loong, Minister for Trade and Industries, Singapore, before the Indonesia Forum, Jakarta, 11 July, 1990, p. 4.

²¹ See Noordin Sopjee, "Pan-Pacific talks: ASEAN is the key" in *International Herald Tribune* 4 — 5 November 1989.

²² See *Far Eastern Economic Review* (31/1/91), p. 32.

and protectionism."²³ And he stressed the responsibility of the developed world to the developing world through such a mechanism in boosting the economic growth of weaker members of the nations in East Asia. The economic position of the region with its emergence as a distinctive region, its growth in terms of trade, investment, aid and common interests meant that the concept was a feasible proposal. Japan was expected to lead such a grouping with its increasing interest in the regional situation. In the 1980s for instance there was a six fold increase in private Japanese investment in the region.²⁴

Membership and Problems

Perhaps the most problematic idea of the EAEG was to be its membership. And the problem of who to include and who to exclude has again become a major difficulty in initiating a regional organization. Malaysia wanted to include all of the ASEAN countries and Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan but wanted to exclude the United States and Australia, key members of APEC.

The US was the most visibly negative concerning this idea (particularly in light of its exclusion) and Japan was also lukewarm over the proposal:

We think this is a very unwise direction to proceed ... the reason there's been such a dramatic expansion in the economies of East Asia is because you've had open markets ... And if you have regional trading blocs developing, it will even have a more unfortunate effect because many of the countries mentioned [in the Malaysian proposal] are not natural trading partners. They are competitors."²⁵

Similarly the US Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Michael Armacost argued that trade liberalisation would not be promoted by the setting up of such a body particularly with its restrictive membership.²⁶ Neither was Japan interested in the development of a regional trading bloc.²⁷ Support for the idea was forthcoming from Singapore but other ASEAN members were somewhat negative over the proposals. Indonesia and the Philippines both seemed to disapprove of the idea and at best remained ambivalent over the proposals mooted by Malaysia; Thailand was concerned about possible conflicts of interest such a group might have with ASEAN and/or APEC.

In terms of the subsequent development of the concept it appeared clear that there was a deliberate movement away from the EAEG being viewed as a trading bloc. Malaysia now turned to promoting the concept as a consultative forum, diluting its original intentions in an attempt to ameliorate fears amongst East-Asian states. Such a forum would be appropriate in discussing trade and economic issues in order to foster economic co-operation.

This alternative conception became more acceptable to other ASEAN members and eventually the acronym was changed to represent the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) in October 1991 in an effort to diffuse fears by some Western nations

²³ See *The Straits Times* (5/3/91).

²⁴ See *International Herald Tribune* (8 — 9 December 1990).

²⁵ See *The Straits Times* (22/12/90).

²⁶ See *The Straits Times* (6/5/91).

²⁷ See *The Far Eastern Economic Review* (31/1/91), p. 32. Japan conveyed its disinterest in a regional trading bloc shortly after the Malaysian proposal was announced.

that it would become a trade bloc. At the Fourth ASEAN summit meeting in January 1992, the concept of the EAEG was high on the agenda with Dr. Mahathir arguing that the necessary steps should be taken to realise these ideas within the next five years. Other ASEAN members such as Indonesia were interested in the idea of the caucus being incorporated into other regional groupings such as APEC and the Summit itself issued a general declaration saying it was a useful forum for consultation amongst East Asian economies but stopped short of providing full support for the body on a formal basis.²⁸

Clearly in this light, the Malaysian proposal still has a long way to go with open hostility on the part of the US and ambivalence and misgivings on the part of countries such as Japan and Indonesia.

5. Conclusion

The trend towards promoting regional organizations out of economic security concerns has become more fashionable in recent years in the Third World. This is especially so in the East and South-East Asia. The Nomura Research Institute produced a map in 1991 showing at least eight pockets of economic co-operation on a regional basis in East Asia. These included North-east Asia Economic Co-operation, Korea-China Co-operation, the Southern China Economic Area and the Singapore-Johore-Batam Growth Triangle amongst others.

The preceding analysis supports this trend and highlights some of the problems that emerging regional organizations in the Third World can experience.

Some of the most common problems in fostering closer economic ties and therefore building economic security appear to lie in areas such as the absence of common trading practices and the fact that these economies may not have much in common. The members of ASEAN for instance have very diverse economies from one another and this does not promote intra-regional trade. The problem of who to include and who to exclude is a stumbling block also as seen in the case of the EAEG (which excludes the US). This may have negative consequences for the development of regional groups. The failure to gain support from the larger industrialised nations who may see such groups as developing "protectionist" tendencies is highly problematic for the success of such concepts and begs the question of whether the developing world can initiate regional organizations on their own.

With the global economic system in the post-cold war era focusing on the development of large blocs such as the European Community (EC) and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the impetus is there however for dynamic regions such as East and South East Asia to focus on the process of co-operation and coordination in economic terms.

²⁸ See *The Straits Times* (29/1/92).

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Johann Georg Goldammer: Feuer in Waldökosystemen der Tropen und Subtropen; Birkhäuser-Verlag Basel — Boston — Berlin, 1993, 251 Seiten, 47 Abbildungen, ISBN 3-7643-2813-4.

Dem Treibhauseffekt und Klimawandel werden heute in den Medien besondere Aufmerksamkeit entgegengebracht und auf der Suche nach den auslösenden Ursachen wird gerne auf die Brandrodung in den südlichen Breiten verwiesen und diese für die bedrohte Stabilität des Weltklimas mitverantwortlich gemacht. Zugleich wird oft der Eindruck erweckt, daß Feuer ein junges Phänomen sei, das als Begleiterscheinung der Waldvernichtung in den Tropen und Subtropen nun auch für uns zur Gefahr wurde. Das Feuer war aber schon seit jeher ein Werkzeug des Menschen, nur geraten jetzt immer weitere Bereiche nachhaltig unter seinen Einfluß.

Zu diesem Thema steht nun in dem gegenständlichen Band eine umfassende Darstellung zur Verfügung. Der Autor konnte neben der Berücksichtigung des in der jüngeren Vergangenheit stark gestiegenen Schrifttums (das Literaturverzeichnis erwähnt 757 Titel) vor allem auch seine eigene, langjährige wissenschaftliche Erfahrung in allen tropischen Kontinenten einbringen. *Goldammer* versteht dabei Feuerökologie als neues Wissensgebiet, in dem es nicht nur um ein Teilgebiet der Ökologie allein geht, vielmehr wird das Feuer als Teil physikalischer, vegetationsgeographischer, historischer, wirtschaftlicher und sozialer Rahmenbedingungen verstanden. Unter diesem Ansatz verbindet er Ergebnisse spezieller Studien mit allgemein gültigen Gesetzmäßigkeiten, Wertungen und Hochrechnungen. Der so entstandenen Zusammenschau wird steigende Bedeutung zukommen müssen, weil vom Feuer geprägte Merkmale die Physiognomie und Dynamik der Vegetation auf zunehmend größeren Flächen bestimmen. Natürliche Vegetationsbrände treten gegenüber anthropogen verursachten stark zurück, die Teil bestimmter Landnutzungssysteme sind.

Im ersten Kapitel wird ein Überblick über die Anwendung des Feuers von prähistorischen Belegen bis in die Gegenwart gegeben, und im besonderen auf Brandrodungshackbau, Weidewirtschaft und forstliche Nebennutzungen eingegangen, aber auch auf kulturelle und politische Hintergründe.

Vegetationskundlich-ökologische Aspekte bilden den Hauptteil des Buches, gliedert nach tropischen und subtropischen Zonobiomen, unter Einschluß von Plantagenwaldgesellschaften und zu Entwicklungsländern gehörigen Ökosystemen der gemäßigten Klimazone. Er umreißt die jeweiligen meteorologischen Voraussetzungen und Ursachen der Brände und behandelt die dem Feuer folgenden spezifischen Prozesse der Regeneration der Vegetation, der Selektion von Arten bis hin zu feuergeprägten Formationen und Degradationsstadien, sowie der sich daraus ergebenden Besonderheiten für die Nutzungen. Flächenmäßig am allermeisten betroffen sind dabei die offenen Vegetationsgesellschaften; sie stehen am häufigsten und flächendeckend unter dem Einfluß von Feuer und sind zum Teil wohl auch erst dadurch entstanden.

Aus der Vielfalt der Auswirkungen des Feuers heraus werden in einem weiteren Abschnitt Strategien zur Minimierung oder Lenkung des Feuereinflusses bespro-

chen. Dazu wird ein Konzept des integrierten Feuer-Managements entwickelt, in dem das sozio-ökonomische, ökologische, technische und organisatorische Umfeld berücksichtigt werden muß.

In einem sehr aktuellen, letzten Teil befaßt sich der Autor mit den Einflüssen der Vegetationsbrände auf das Klima. So zeigt er neue Möglichkeiten der Abschätzung des Ausmaßes der von Feuer betroffenen Flächen und über die Häufigkeit der Wiederkehr und Intensität der Brände kommt er zu Schätzwerten für die jährlich verbrannten Mengen an Biomasse. Die daraus entstehenden Emissionen werden hinsichtlich ihrer Klimarelevanz diskutiert und Klimamodelle sowie Szenarien einer Wechselwirkung Klimawandel — Vegetationsentwicklung vorgestellt.

Übersichtlich durch in sich geschlossene Kapitel führt das Buch, untermauert von vielen Forschungsergebnissen, in eine relativ junge Wissenschaft, die auf breiten Grundlagen entstand. Gerade wegen der fachübergreifenden Aspekte richtet es sich nicht nur an den ökologisch interessierten Leser; auch alle jene, die sich für Landnutzungspraktiken und -probleme, Vegetationsdynamik, Klimawandel oder Entwicklungspolitik interessieren, finden hier kompetente Unterlagen und Argumentationshilfen.

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