A Sociology of Regions –Institutions, Identities and Asian Integration.

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Abstract:

Institutions, ideas and goals, and identities provide critical markers for regional integration. Despite the flurry of meetings and committees, the rapid consolidation of the East Asian region has left us with few robust institutions to date. Thus studies of the East Asian region often provide only statistical profiles of trade and investment, or chronologies of cross-border agreements. A Sociology of regions would turn attention to the structuring of cross-border cooperation within institutions, and to their links within networks. The robust role of states in the economic development of the nations of Northeast Asia would suggest also the need for close attention to state-society dynamics in regionalization efforts.

I begin with state and society in East Asian integration, outline a Sociology of Regions, and then introduce three areas of recent research – production networks, consumer networks, and knowledge networks. To exemplify a sociological focus, I offer a brief analysis of innovation in the region, looking to systems of innovation. In conclusion, I return to the elements of a Sociology of Regions.

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