Constructive competition or destructive conflict in the Caspian Sea region?
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CHAPTER 3: Revisiting Functionalism

1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the relevant academic debate, its vocabulary, modes of reasoning, instruments and the main gaps and limits of the relevant literature. It also identified the points at which the debate is weak or lacking crucial insights, which illustrates the relevance of offering an alternative, comprehensive theoretical toolbox. Chapter 2 illustrated that the geopolitical debate is still stuck in the 19th century logic. Building on the previous chapter, this chapter revisits classical functionalism in order to foreground its relevant theoretical insights. The main aim of this chapter is to establish a critical theoretical groundwork for the analysis that makes up the empirical chapters (4, 5 and 6).

This chapter revises functionalism via social constructivist insights as it forms a new challenge to pessimistic traditional thinkers. In this regard, my revision integrates contributions from scholars who do not conceive of themselves as working in the functionalist tradition per se (Adler 1997; Checkel 1998; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 2001; Price and Reus-Smit 1998; Ruggie 1998; Wendt 1992). Classical functionalism embodied a number of insights that can be argued to be social constructivist in character (e.g., insights concerning the logics of appropriateness, acknowledging the role of organizations and experts, explaining changes within social and material relations), but classical functionalism did so implicitly, since the social constructivist turn in Sociology and the study of International Relations (IR) had not yet taken place. With these insights having since been explicated and integrated, it is easy to relate debates on classical functionalism to those on social constructivism. Each theory has distinctive weak aspects that are complemented by the other’s strengths. Social constructivism addresses many issues that are similar to those that classical functionalism has addressed from a different angle. In light of this, the current chapter aims to illustrate how social constructivism echoes a number of arguments expressed earlier by Mitrany (1948, 1965, 1966, 1975). By doing this, it is able to offer a richer understanding of some phenomena which is lacking within classical functionalism.
Functionalism is both a theory and an empirical observation, which seeks to survey different nations through their common societal interests and problems without emphasizing power politics, nationalism or religious, cultural and ideological differences (Mitrany 1966). It can be characterized as an issue-specific and technocratic approach to politics. Because of this it is more explicit about its prescriptive consequence as it suggests instructions on how to soften antagonism among different actors. David Mitrany (1888-1975), who was a Romanian born British scholar, is considered a key theorist of functionalist theory.\textsuperscript{12} His pamphlet \textit{A Working Peace System: An Argument for the Functional Development of International Organization} from 1943 is a detailed expression of the aims of functionalism.\textsuperscript{13} At the core of functionalism is the prioritization of human needs and public welfare through the practical appreciation of their technical aspects. The reason for this foregrounding of technical aspects is to sideline the restrictions created by nationalism and differing ideologies. The functionalist perspective has been widely influential, and it has been applied to the analysis of integration, international organizations, multilevel governance and in interdependence literature. Yet, it has also been marginalized for being “idealistic.”

Following the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952, neofunctionalism was developed to explain how the ECSC’s regulatory harmonization efforts had “spilled over” into broader economic integration, through the European Economic Community (EEC) and energy integration, through the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). The term neofunctionalism was first introduced by Ernst B. Haas (1924-2003), a German-born American political scientist. It was originally based on Haas’ analysis of the ECSC, but was extended to include his conclusions on both the EEC and Euratom (Haas 1958, 1961, 1964, 1975, 1980, 2001). Later, Leon Lindberg (1963) contributed to neofunctionalism by explaining the formation of the EEC. While Haas mainly concentrated on the role of nongovernmental elites, Lindberg largely focused on governmental elites, socialization processes and engrenage (Niemann 2006).\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12}For detailed information about Mitrany’s life see Mitrany (1975, Ch1) and Hammarlund (2005, Ch 1).
\textsuperscript{13}In 1938 Mitrany was asked to work “with an academic intelligence group (camouflaged as ‘The Foreign Research and Press Service’).” In 1941 he wrote two papers for this group that would culminate in the pamphlet. But, as the papers were badly received, he resigned from the Foreign Office in the meantime. His superiors were not interested in any post-war scenarios that included an active role for the Soviet-Union nor for Germany. According to Mitrany diplomats put too much emphasis on balance-of-power interests. But he published \textit{A Working Peace System} as a book in 1943 (as cited in Mitrany, 1975, 19-20).
\textsuperscript{14} See: Haas (1958, Ch. 5 and 6); Lindberg (1963, Ch. 4) and engrenage has been defined on pp. 18–19.
After the 1960s, the popularity of the theory decreased and there was a gap until the late 1980s. The theory regained its status for a short term in the early 1990s, which saw a more historical reading of Mitrany, his personal knowledge of Balkans and origins of his assumptions (see e.g., Anderson 1998; Ashworth 2005; Long 1993). Despite its popularity in the 1950s, 1960s and the 1990s, the theory does not figure prominently in recent contributions to the rapidly growing body of literature on cooperation, international organizations or regional integration. The last time the theory was discussed systematically was in the *Journal of European Public Policy* in 2005, which dedicated one of its special issues to the nostalgic review of neofunctionalism.\(^{15}\) Ernst B. Haas passed away in March of 2003 and this special issue paid tribute to one of the greatest thinkers in European integration studies (Börzel 2005, Preface of the special issue).

The theory is briefly mentioned in a few recent publications and it is mainly applied to explain the bureaucratic and administrative governance of the European Union, such as negotiation and decision making processes among different European Institutions, local and regional policy formation, EU-wide regulations, the admittance of new members and barriers during this process (see for instance Börzel 2006; Farrell and Héritier 2005; Holthaus 2018; Macmillan 2009; Niemann and Ioannou 2015; Weiss and Wilkinson 2014; Zwolski 2018). Overall, the theory has come to be ignored by its erstwhile critics as well as proponents. This is an unfortunate oversight since several of its insights are as relevant to present-day debates as they were during the decades of their initial development by Mitrany. These insights include emphasizing both non-material and material cooperation, approaching the subject matter non-state-centrically, recognizing intrinsic dynamics, acknowledging the role diverse experts, a logic of appropriateness, and being pragmatic in terms of preferences. The unique feature of functionalism is that it is more explicit about its prescriptive consequence as it suggests how to avoid antagonism among different actors. The knowledge produced by functionalism is generally more useful in changing the view of the world as mainly made up of antagonistic relationships than in working within it.

This chapter lays out the theory of (neo)functionalism in order to demonstrate where the theory ought to be revised to take into account the valid critiques it has met with. To that end, this chapter is divided into five sections. Following the introduction, the second section critically engages with the core arguments of functionalism and neofunctionalism. This section

\(^{15}\) Link for the journal: [http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjpp20/12/2?nav=tocList](http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjpp20/12/2?nav=tocList)
seeks to delineate the origin of functionalism and its applicability, benefitting from Mitrany’s and Haas’ original conceptualizations. The third section discusses the existing critiques of functionalism and responds to them. The fourth section offers my interpretation of the discussion, in which I take into account global developments, historical and geographical changes and social constructivist turn in IR. Fifth and finally, the conclusion presents the chapter’s findings.

2. Outlining the Theory of (Neo)Functionalism

2.1. Underlying Assumptions

In order to establish the groundwork for the revised functionalism I intend to develop and use, it is necessary to first selectively and briefly recall the classical functionalist assumptions of David Mitrany, Ernst Haas and Leon Lindberg, and synthesize their main points. This will provide the basis for replying to existing critiques and specifying what the revised functionalist framework will encompass. The reason for this selectiveness is that there are already a number of works in existence that comprehensively address most principles of both functionalism and neofunctionalism (e.g., Alexandrescu 2007; Ashworth and Long 1999; Holthaus 2018; Imber 2002; Oneal et al. 1996; Rosamond 2005; Groom and Taylor 1975; Zwolski 2018). Therefore, it is unnecessary to walk the same pathways.

Following the early works of Mitrany (1948, 1965, 1966), Haas (1958) and Lindberg (1963), the essence of the classical functionalist theory can be said to have been derived from five core observations. These observations are that: (1) states are not unified actors and not the only actors in the international arena, meaning that the international system is constructed by a multitude of diverse actors. Classical functionalism offers both specific and broad theoretical implications to cover the preferences, roles, networks and power of actors besides and beyond states. Although new institutionalism also places the analytical focus on this aspect, it grants only a restricted role to institutions and organizations as neoliberal institutionalists consider them to be the creations of states. (2) Preferences should not be perceived as constant or fixed since they tend to change through cooperation processes since actors undergo learning over time. (3) The similarity of problems, which challenge the different sub-systems of the world—individual states or blocs of states—produces shared interests which in turn act as incentives
for seeking common solutions. These problems cannot be solved in any other way than by joint efforts, or can be solved on a national level but at much higher costs. Classical functionalism highlights intrinsic dynamics of issues and cooperation, which means the characteristics of an issue determine its geographical scope, the expertise required to solve it, who the functionally involved actors are and other dimensions. (4) Functional cooperation is pragmatic, technocratic, and flexible rather than political. This means that technical problems should be left to specialists because they focus on the root causes of a problem and the best means to solve it without emphasizing political feelings or the balance of power. Civil servants, technicians and scientists can link sectors of their national societies and sections of their national institutions together into vast and growing networks of international relations that are peaceful and beneficial to their work. The new ideologies of the time (communism, fascism and liberal-capitalism) had to be circumvented, leading to the advent of new habits and interests which diluted these ideologies over time. In this regard, modern national and international issues require not only the involvement of state-centric politicians, but also the contribution of social, economic and technical experts. (5) Each and every problem has to be tackled as a practical issue in itself. This means cooperation in one field should be left to generate others gradually. This is called “ramification.”

However, it is worth mentioning that while some ideas overlap between functionalism and neofunctionalism, they are partly based on different assumptions. For example, while functionalism did not define integration to be limited by any territorial scope, neofunctionalism gave it a specific regional focus. Furthermore, Mitrany argued that the form, scope and purpose of a functional agency would be determined by the issue-specific task that it was designed to fulfil, while neofunctionalists attach considerable importance to the autonomous influence of supranational institutions. Another difference is that spillover is extended and diversified in neofunctionalism. Finally, Mitrany asserted the importance of changes in popular support, the needs of people and the functional arrangements that help fulfil those needs. However, by using the cost-benefit assumptions, neofunctionalists emphasize the attitudes of the elite and self-interest.
2.2. State Fixation

Writing at a time of international crisis (i.e., the Second World War), Mitrany advocated that global integration should be based on administrative and technical cooperation, rather than political cooperation among nation-states. In this regard, the idea of the nation-state has been described by Mitrany as one of the “basic enemies.” In his publications, Mitrany sought to refute the “state fixation” attitude toward international politics. According to Mitrany, state fixation should not be one of the primary principles of international politics because it is an obstacle to innovative thought and obstructs international affairs (Mitrany 1966). While criticizing state fixation and nationalistic feelings, Mitrany argued that by clinging to them, people would not be able to end rivalries and conflicts. States are not absolute and should not be the predominant actors in the regional or international system of cooperation and negotiation due to modern technologies, new inventions, complex economic developments and trans-border issues (Mitrany 1966, 9). Mitrany criticized scholars from Machiavelli to Treitschke, who exaggerated the importance of the state for the social development of the community (Mitrany 1975, 86-114). According to him, their political approaches were restricted by “dogmatic narrow mindedness” which meant they were victim to the “state fixation of political writers” (Mitrany 1975, 97-114). According to Mitrany:

“trade and finance, culture and communication, were integrated at different levels and periods, not through political union but through changes and advances in particular fields of activity. Every new invention, every new discovery is now apt to breed problems which for the first time in history are global in their very nature and in their scale. And that, inescapably, also projects the scale of the coming international system. New issues and inventions yet to come are free of any sovereign land or air limits. The new problems are leading states not to create sovereignty but to deny it and not to exclusive political integration but to collective functional integrations (1975, 27).”

Mitrany highlighted that putting economic and social activities under a particular ideological dogma would not bring cooperation and stability. He argued that states would be more effective and peaceful without traditional political dogmas. Therefore, flexibility and open-mindedness in the international system should be the key ideas (Mitrany 1966, 138). Overall, the argument
against state fixation is one of the important insights of classical functionalism because it emphasizes global changes, interconnected issues, the role of non-state actors, non-political issues and fields and the limits of state-centrism to address these things. However, it is worth mentioning that while he was right in saying that when issues are perceived as technical, cooperation is easier, Mitrany was wrong in distinguishing technical aspects from political aspects. Therefore, this distinction should be viewed as a matter of framing, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

2.3. Sharing Interests through Functionalist Agencies and Elites

According to Mitrany,

“not all interests are common to all, and common interests do not concern all countries in the same degree. In this regard, unity within diversity can be done by making use of the present social and scientific opportunities to link together particular activities and interests, one at a time, according to need and acceptability, giving each a joint authority and policy limited to that activity alone (1966, 200).”

The habit of coming together to deal with shared issues might flourish in the countries of a region, and they may discover a new interest and a new pride in solving their shared problems. Mitrany (1966, 115-116) argues that “it is important to determine those activities that are common, where they are common and the extent to which they are common.” Also, while states are part of these activities with respect to their interests and resources, there should not be an obligation to either participate in all of the activities or stay out of any of them (Mitrany 1966, 116-125). One way of making sure this is the case is to divide issues into specific economic, technical and social parts that can be dealt with as separate cases (Mitrany 1966, 200-203). This offers the assurance of non-domination and equality of opportunity to even the weakest of countries as the benefits of any functional cooperation it participates in (Mitrany 1966, 205).

The task itself can never be defined or limited in advance but must remain continuously variable, reflecting that situations have the propensity to change. In the vocabulary of functionalism, cooperation for the common good is the task, both for the sake of peace and that of a better life, and it is essential for that cooperation that certain interests and activities should be taken out of the realm of competition and worked on together (Mitrany 1975, 123). In other words, the key component of a functional approach is that it can be employed across borders,
across allegiances and identities, because it works towards the common needs of individuals, regardless of allegiance or group rivalries (Steele 2011).

In this regard, Mitrany found the approach in the New Deal, particularly that of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), a good example of functionalism because its aim was to deal with practical issues without changing the general system of government or challenging the Constitution. It was the wholly pragmatic response to the “felt necessities” of a pressing situation. Although the Tennessee River crosses several states, the TVA was able to circumvent most of the local juridical barriers due to its technical, issue-specific aim. To address the common issues and needs of people, the TVA oversaw irrigation works, canalization, industrialization and reforestation in the Tennessee River basin and combined it with social measures like the extra taxing of high incomes, extending loans to people with mounted mortgages and building extra houses in suburbs (De Wilde 1991). The TVA sidelined ideology, religion and bureaucratic interests, by dealing directly with the technical aspects of the given problem. In this regard, the TVA became a remarkable example of Mitrany’s functionalist ideas as it incorporated a particular public dimension without directly contradicting old-fashioned constitutional and territorial areas of state authority.16

Mitrany (1966, 115) proposed global service agencies forming a strong network with other agencies and performing the required tasks while sidelining ideological, national and geopolitical differences. Under the general name of technical assistance, these agencies would establish, shape and articulate new and acceptable norms, interests and identities among different countries (developed or underdeveloped) and address their communal needs. According to Mitrany (1966, 159), the common index of needs could be made by joint agencies set up to deal with the common and specific needs. Such functional agencies could be started up by a small coalition of countries, initially to deal with logistics, for instances, and could later be broadened to include new members or reduced to let reluctant members drop out, while functions could equally be added or abandoned without devastating the system as a whole. In other words, no states would have to be forced to come in and no state would be excluded from the cooperation. States can participate in specific tasks based on their specific resources. The aim of these agencies should be made on practical cooperation such as on social, technical or

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16 With the country reeling from the Great Depression, President Roosevelt created his “New Deal” to help America recover. The Tennessee Valley Authority was founded to help the hard-hit Tennessee Valley, where it was tasked with improving the quality of life in the region. - See more at: https://www.tva.gov/About-TVA/Our-History#sthash.fQeNMkYS.dpuf
economic issues. “The issue-specific task can determine scope and purpose of a functional agency. These agencies can be flexible to give service wherever needed, so it would clearly be their duty to deny service where it was not obviously needed, or might be abused” (Mitrany 1975, 183).

The way of working that Mitrany proposed was modelled after the examples of international organizations and unions, such as the Universal Postal Union (UPU), International Telecommunications Unions (ITU) and International Labour Organization (ILO). The UPU is one of the best-known examples. It was established in 1875 by twenty European countries, Egypt and the USA. Later, its services were extended to other countries as well, which made it one of the first global service networks. The UPU still exists and has 192 member-states.17 The International Telegraph Union (1865), predecessor of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), developed similarly. The ILO, which also had a strong influence on Mitrany’s ideas, had been created in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles to improve labour rights and living and working conditions. It was an agency of the League of Nations and was unique because it gave an equal voice to both government representatives and non-state actors such as workers and trade unions regarding technical assistance. It survived the Second World War and became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946 (ILO, September 2019). Considering he wrote in the early 1950s, these can be said to have been the prime examples for Mitrany at the time. The number of specialized organizations has increased, but this has not led to the world peace Mitrany expected.

In their works, Haas and Lindberg decreased the scope of functionalist agency from the global to the regional level by discussing the European Commission. Like functionalism, neofunctionalism emphasizes the mechanisms of technocratic decision-making, incremental design and learning processes. Similar to Mitrany, Haas and Lindberg portrayed the relationship between nation-states and a functionalist agency as a win-win endeavour rather than zero-sum one. In the ECSC example, Haas and Lindberg described functionalist agencies as one of the main kinds of actors strengthening the regional political and economic integration between different nation-states. One way of doing this was to bring the different national elites together under the ECSC’s umbrella to nullify the differences and emphasize the shared interests. Therefore, unlike Mitrany, who indirectly suggested diminishing the future role of nation-

17 For detailed information about this organization and its current members see: http://www.upu.int/en/the-upu/the-upu.html
states, Haas (1958, Ch. 5) and Lindberg (1963) proposed dividing this role between functionalist agencies and nation-states.

In contrast to Mitrany, who prioritized human needs in his approach, Haas (1958, Ch. 5 and Ch. 6) and Lindberg (1963, 6) emphasized the needs of elite groups in their neofunctionalism. In this sense, they emphasized the importance of self-interest and cost-benefit cooperation among different elite groups. For Haas, the integration between Western European states is based on the self-interest of dominant elites and policymakers (Haas 1958, Ch. 5 and Ch. 6). He claimed that European integration advanced due to the strong support of elites, both in the governmental and private sectors. According to Haas (1958, Ch. 6), “interest politics” is a determinative factor for the success of international cooperation among different governments rather than a natural harmony of interests. Eliminating their interest in politics would complicate interpreting and understanding relations between experts. According to Haas, “all political action is purposively linked with individual or group perception of interests. Cooperation among groups is thus the result of convergences of separate perceptions of interest and not a spontaneous surrender to the myth of the common good (1964, 34).”

Haas (1970, 627) argued that rational and self-interested actors have the capacity to learn and to change their preferences and loyalties. Their preferences and loyalties are likely to change during the integration process, as actors benefit from regional policies and learn from their experiences in cooperative decision-making (Haas 1958, 291). Because of this, interest-driven national and supranational elites, recognizing the limitations of national solutions, provide the key impetus for international integration.

For neofunctionalists, the integration process is always supported in the long run by a change of attitudes and expectations (Lindberg, 1963). Lindberg (1963) drew attention to the proliferation of EEC working groups and sub-committees, which, by bringing thousands of national officials into frequent contact with each other and with committee officials, had given rise to a complex system of bureaucratic interpenetration. These kinds of interaction patterns, Lindberg argued (1963), increase the likelihood of socialization processes occurring amongst national civil servants within the “Council framework.” It has further been implied that these socialization processes, which foster consensus formation amongst agents of member governments, would eventually lead to more integrative outcomes, which is also called “engrenage” (Lindberg 1963: Ch. 1 and 4; Lindberg and Scheingold 1970, 119). As opposed to
lowest-common-denominator bargaining, which Lindberg saw as inherent in intergovernmental decision-making, supranational systems were characterized by “splitting the difference” and more significantly a bargaining process of “upgrading common interests.” Common interests are advanced to the extent that each participant feels that, by conceding something, they have gained something else (Niemann and Schimitter 2009). Engrenage is the process whereby national civil servants are encouraged to take integrative decisions through their increasing involvement with each other (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970; Niemann 1998).

While Haas and Lindberg strengthened functionalism by accounting for the needs and preferences of elites, they shifted the debate to discussing a cost-benefit logic. Mitrany had, however, emphasized that participation is not primarily related to calculating profits or preferences, but instead relies on interpretations of reasonability, human need, natural cause and moral good. In other words, Mitrany’s original argument includes both cost-benefit logic and logic of appropriateness. According to March and Olsen,

“actor action is driven by rules of appropriate or exemplary behavior, organized into institutions. Actors do what they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation. Within the logic of appropriateness perspective, preference or self-interest is seen as one of many possible rules that actors may come to believe is exemplary for specific roles in specific settings and situations, which means actors combine several modes of action in their behavior (2011, 479).”

Considering this approach, it can be argued that actors broadened the role of the ECSC because they saw the given action as right, appropriate and exemplary. For them, sharing in the ECSC becomes a way of meeting obligations stemming from their roles, identity and membership of their political community.

2.4. The Ramification or Spillover Approach

The idea of ramification is another significant aspect of functionalism. It claims that collaboration in one field could result in new cooperation in another area (Mitrany 1966). According to the ramification approach, if A and B could cooperate in one shared field or to address one shared need, it becomes likely that they will establish cooperation on other issues.
In that respect, the ramification approach would contribute to a change of attitude among the states in favour of widening and broadening cooperation (Mitrany 1966). Mitrany explained that

“every function was left to generate others gradually, like the functional subdivision of organic cells, and in every case the appropriate authority was left to grow and develop out of actual performance (1966, 56).”

In other words, Mitrany argued that it is important to establish cooperation in technical, social and economic fields first, increasing trust between parties and decreasing nationalistic feelings, after which political cooperation would likely follow. In accordance with the concept of ramification, Mitrany argued that the broadening and widening of cooperation would diminish the probability of war breaking out and eventually eliminate war through an incremental transformation from adversarial to cooperative patterns of behaviour. The transformation of behavioural patterns is incremental or gradual because the ramification effect takes time. The significant point in that emergency action was that each and every problem was tackled as a practical issue in itself. Its character would be the same for certain purposes; only the range would be new (Mitrany 1966, 56). Mitrany explained this assumption in a limited manner and he left a number of questions unanswered, which have been addressed by Haas, Lindberg and others later. This idea was later named “spillover” by neofunctionalists (Haas 1958).

Similar to Mitrany, Haas (1970) argued that integration at the regional level in one sector is only tenable in combination with integration in other sectors, as problems arising from the functional integration in one task can only be solved by integrating yet more tasks. At first, the term was applied in two distinctive manners: (1) it was used as a sort of shorthand for describing the occurrence of (further) integration; and, (2) it was used to identify the driving force and inherent logic of integration via increased functional/economic/technical interdependence (Petersen 2016, Ch. 1). Haas identified that the integration of coal and steel production placed pressure on European transportation networks to deliver the products to markets, which encouraged countries to cooperate more closely in secondary sectors. Similar to Mitrany, both Lindberg and Haas were optimistic regarding the “automatic” spillover, which has been criticized by a number of scholars (see e.g., Niemann 1998, 2009, Rosamond 2003).

However, Haas and Lindberg put considerable emphasis on the role of economic and political elites in supporting the automatic spillover process. National elites were assumed to realise that problems of substantial interest cannot be satisfactorily solved at the national level. This would lead to a gradual learning process whereby elites shift their expectations, political
activities and – according to Haas – even loyalties to a new centre. As a result, national elites would promote further integration, thus adding a political stimulus to the process. In this regard, it can be argued that unlike Mitrany, Haas and Lindberg emphasized that integration could be started and extended from high political level. The result of the pressure emanating from that high political level is that political parties, business and professional associations, trade unions or other interest groups alter their perception of the proposed integration. Presuming that they would perceive integration to have positive benefits, these private organizations should support further integration (Haas 1958).

3. Critiques of Classical Functionalism

Functionalism is a strongly criticized theory (e.g., Hoffmann 1995; Holland 1980; Milward 1992; Moravcsik 1993, 2005; Risse-Kappen 1996; Taylor 1983). The theory has been criticized from both within the functionalist camp itself by various scholars. While some critiques contributed to the further development of the theory, a number of critiques levelled against functionalism misrepresented its claims, distorted its arguments or interpreted the theory selectively and narrowly. Therefore, only some of the critiques of (neo)functionalist theory are entirely justified.

The first critique concerns the concept of automatic spillover. In the 1990s, some scholars argued that the definition of spillover was not specific enough and lacked a comprehensive, refined and integrated specification of the conditions under which spillover might occur (Groom 1994; Lelieveldt and Princen 2015; Nieman and Schmitter 2009; Schmitter 2005, 1969; Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991). In doing so, a series of adjectives have come to be considered applicable to the term, such as: functional, political, economic, induced and dialectical; and new terms such as “spillback” have been proposed. According to Tranholm-Mikkelsen (1991), “functional spillover” is a mechanism arising from the inherent technical characteristics of the functional tasks themselves. The idea is that some sectors within industrial economies are so interdependent that it is impossible to treat them in isolation. In other words, “projects of integration engender new problems which, in turn, can only be solved by further integration” (Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991, 4–6). “Political spillover” encompasses the integrative pressures exerted by national elites, who realize that problems of substantial interest
cannot be satisfactorily solved at the domestic level (Groom 1994; Niemann 1998). As a result, national elites promote further integration, having developed the perception that their interests are better served by seeking supranational rather than national solutions. “Cultivated spillover” is linked to supranational organizations actively fostering further integration with actors seen as policy entrepreneurs (Lelieveldt and Princen 2015, 28-36). “Induced spillover” refers to “involuntary motives”, such as extra-community demands and unforeseen threats to community interests. Sharing preferences with external actors is the unexpected result of this process and may be influenced by international interdependence or utility-maximizing outsiders inspired by the success of a regional bloc or the ineffectiveness of purely national solutions (Niemann 1998). Finally, due the deadlock that occurred in the early 1960s, the term “spillback” was created to explain a halt to integration (Niemann and Schmitter 2009). It is argued that the spillback, or a reverse of spillover, can occur when leaders (such as Charles de Gaulle or Margaret Thatcher) or interest groups, lobbies, or opposition parties, or even public opinion, are wary of further integration and stall the process (Niemann 2006; Petersen 2016).

Nevertheless, while recognizing the niche utility of these terms, it can be argued that their added value is very limited as some of them give off the impression of being moves in a language game among different scholars. Spillover is not limited to being economic, cultivated or political, it can also be environmental, legal, social and technical. Thinking of concepts such as spillover in such a limited way puts specific requirements and constraints on concepts and their operationalization. With such strict standards of verification and proof there is very little of significance that can be said about spillover. Spillover was not intended to be a measurable concept, but a heuristic one or even just a metaphor to indicate an expectation about the consequence of pragmatic cooperation on one issue. For example, if one looks at spillover from a constructivist perspective one will encounter certain specific operational demands. From a critical theory perspective, one may interpret spillover in light of progressive change — a means to sideline the power of the sovereignty discourse. Considering this, it can be argued that the classical term spillover is sufficient to indicate a process triggering further cooperation among different nations. The classical spillover does not restrict cooperation to any specific form. Therefore, there is no problem with ramification in Mitrany’s functionalist approach because unlike his critics he did not make assumptions about the relationship between issues. Rather, Mitrany (1966, 56) argued that any theory of integration should include an account of the transferability of lessons because social, political and economic issues constantly change and transferability is therefore desirable.
The second critique argues that neofunctionalism exaggerated the power supranational institutional have over states. Neofunctionalist scholars argued that supranational entities like the European Commission would challenge the power of nation-states. However, in the early 1960s, neofunctionalism ran into difficulty as European integration stalled for several years due to political difficulties in countries like France, undermining the central tenet of the theory. After its heyday in the mid-1960s, critiques of neofunctionalism emerged from intergovernmentalist scholarship (e.g., Hoffmann 1995, 84) and also increasingly from within the neofunctionalist camp itself, not least from its self-critical founding father (Haas 1976, 175). This critique is partly a myth since the existing literature exaggerates the failure of theory to explain the period of stagnation. Despite the stagnation phase in the 1960s, the integration has continued in Europe and even the role and number of functional agencies has increased during and since 1960s, most notably the development of European Law.

The third critique concerns the applicability of the theory outside Europe. In his early work Haas observed and studied integration not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world, such as Latin America, Africa, the European members of the Soviet bloc, and the Arab world. In one of the most important articles on regionalism published in 1961, Haas concluded that the conditions required for integration in the EEC area, such as an industrial economy and liberal politics, did not apply elsewhere. He concluded that “whatever assurance may be warranted in our discussion of European integration is not readily transferable to other regional contexts” (Haas 1961, 378). Later, by misinterpreting Haas’ assumption, other scholars argued that the theory is not useful or even applicable outside Europe (Jensen 2003; McGowan 2007, Risse-Kappen 2005). The reason for this misperception is that when the theory is applied to other regions, the scholars often expect European style integration (Blum 2002; Mattli 2005; Macmillan 2009; Petersen 2016; Schubert 1978). If the regional developments do not lead to the new organization or regional cooperation similar to the EU-style cooperation, they argue that functionalism failed. One weakness in previous thought is that too often regions are considered desirable and good (Söderbaum 2016). It is indisputable that regionalism can solve a variety of collective action dilemmas, but it is equally clear that it may sometimes be exploitative, reinforce asymmetric power relations or lead to a range of detrimental outcomes. Thus, it should not be assumed beforehand that regionalism is either positive or negative (Söderbaum 2016).

Having said that, Acharya (2012) argues that Haas did not imply that regional integration in other parts of the world, driven by different functional pursuits than Western
Europe and responding to a different set of converging interests, would not succeed. On the contrary, Haas warned that other regions have their own functional objectives and approaches to integration or impulses peculiar to them. These differences in purpose and trajectory meant that there could be no universal law of integration deduced from the European example (Haas 1961). While styles of cooperation and integration are different, some regions besides Europe are also integrating, economically at least, but not along the European pathway. East Asia has pursued a market-led rather than organization-driven integration. Regional institutions in Africa, Asia and Latin America have all contributed to peace and security in a way that is consistent with their own set goals or objectives. In this regard, Haas’ prescient warning seemed to have been ignored by those latter-day advocates of the European example, who tend to judge, explicitly or implicitly, the performance of non-European regional institutions on the basis of the European benchmark. In this regard one may say that because the theory has been applied to explain developments and changes in EU, its applicability outside the field of EU studies has come to be restricted.

In other words, the reason the European example does not translate is because the EU is a unique organization. However, classical functionalism does not argue or expect the creation of closed regional organizations like the EU and even Mitrany (1965, 125-130) argued that there should not be utopian expectations. Originally, Mitrany’s aim was not to develop a theory of European integration, but to assemble a generic portfolio of propositions about the dynamics of cooperation in any context. The theory possesses certain analytical tools to deal with a certain kind of developments, e.g., those related to explaining integration. By looking at these studies from a post-colonial perspective, one may ask if non-Western regions can do what the West can do, which they cannot. The principles of functionalism as formulated by Mitrany are more subtle and much closer to historical practice. Moreover, why should Latin American or African states integrate into confederal states? Unlike European integration, the purpose of much of the non-EU regionalist interaction was to seek autonomy, secure independence from colonial rule and limit the influence of outside powers in regional affairs (Acharya 2016, 6). The EEC was basically conceived as a project to tame nationalism and constrain state sovereignty; non-Western regionalisms were inspired by exactly the opposite motivations, to advance nationalism and preserve sovereignty after centuries of colonial rule. It is obvious that scholars in European Studies are normatively strongly influenced by the ideals specific to Europe. In all, it is limiting and ethnocentric to use the EU as a benchmark to explain the regional cooperation and development in the post-colonial world.
The fourth critique centres around the distinction that functionalism makes between political and technical issues. Mitrany (1966, 132-135) argued that due to the strong impact of state fixation, politicians view every issue, even human needs issues, from the perspective of politics, balance of power and rivalry. According to Mitrany (1966, 27-38) however, one should detach the functional core of a problem from its political shell, as it is difficult and complex to achieve cooperation among political elites because of their differing security needs and political agendas. This has been criticized by several scholars (De Wilde 1991, Ch. 7; Hammerlund 2005, Ch. 2-3; Haas 1958). More specifically, it is argued that it is difficult to find clear distinction between political, economic and technical issues.

However, Mitrany envisions a new way of conducting politics based on service and needs, rather than on traditional power-struggle. This does not mean that functionalism really sidelines politics (as Mitrany argued), but it changes the rules of the game. The power of language is that it structures our conceptualizations of issues to some extent. By separating the political from the technical, language is used to divide issues into multiple levels, which creates a conceptualization in which different actors’ needs are prioritized at different levels (Diez 1999). By labelling or framing something political, an actor claims a need and a right to treat it by extraordinary means, which raises political management questions such as distribution of cost-benefit, sovereignty, autonomy and regime formation. Since politicization enables emergency measures outside democratic control, Mitrany argued that the technical should generally be preferred over the politicized mode of problem solving, addressing human needs and necessities. One of the linguistic functions of the term functionalism is to show the irrationality or counter-productiveness of the political mode of reasoning. In this regard, this distinction is better understood and seen as a speech-act, where the main point is not to stress whether issues are political or not, but the ways in which a certain issue (pipeline construction, building a transnational railway; facilitating caviar trade; environmental cooperation) can be socially constructed as political (meaning the issue is part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocation).

Finally, a number of authors (Hoffmann 1995; Nieman and Philippe 2009; Söderbaum 2016) have argued that (neo)functionalists failed to take the broader international context into account adequately as the theory restricted its scope to regions. This argument is not completely sound because classical functionalism adequately considers the broader international developments. Therefore, it is clear that the critics who levelled this critique had failed to appreciate the assumptions of classical functionalists. Mitrany argued that
“the argument about the need of an intermediate step is obviously only valid if the regional unions are to be open unions; whereas if they are to be closed and exclusive unions, the more fully and effectively they are integrated the deeper must in fact be the division they cause in the emergent unity of the world (1965, 123).”

Any (regional) cooperation’s level of embeddedness in a global context depends on whether it is meant to promote closed and exclusive regional unions or administrative devolution with a universal system. The regional idea would have vastly different consequences if used to set up closed political units (Mitrany 1966, 178-185). These new units would then not support but cut across the jurisdiction and authority of any international system. While explaining cooperation between different actors regional or international, Mitrany highlighted that it is necessary to adequately consider the wider issues of interdependency and the global context. More concretely, Mitrany explained that “all, the emergence of unforeseen and irreducible global issues, with others yet in the making. None of these can be dealt with by regional or continental unions” (1975, 244). This is also the reason for Mitrany’s earlier claim that “the League system did not fail because it was not regional, but rather because it was regional in effect” (1966, 183). Mitrany was against isolated regional cooperation and institutions that draw a border between a region and the outside world. Even when criticizing Europe Mitrany mentioned that “as to the limits of the union, the search for a true European solution requires more than a solution of little Europe” (1965, 127). Nevertheless, the relevant literature has neglected Mitrany’s original arguments and blamed functionalism for being a regionalist approach.

In short, it can be argued that functionalism’s success as a source of inspiration for the creation of the European communities, such as the ECSC and the EEC, has killed its success as a theory. European integration has become the benchmark for judging functional cooperation elsewhere, meaning that other regions’ performance is not viewed in terms of goals set by those regions themselves. By using positivist logic, the existing scholarship has tried to test the assumptions of functionalism, such as the occurrence of spillover, socialization and technical cooperation in different regions. In doing so, scholars expected these regions to follow the (West-)European example—which had its own specific spatial and temporal circumstances, however. The orthodox, fixed assumptions about problem-solving and having a rationalist focus on regional organizations sidelined alternative questions and answers about cooperation outside Europe. Considering the historical, political, economic and normative differences, it can be argued that the EU model has not and will not travel well in the developing world. Moreover,
it can be argued that functionalism has not been applied in the context of the specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN). They are clearly based on the logic of issue-specific cooperation. Therefore, it can be said that the relevant literature has been remarkably silent on the specialized agencies of the UN.

4. Functionalism Revised via Social Constructivism

To determine exactly what functionalism stands for is no straightforward undertaking, as the theory has come to mean different things to different people at different times. Therefore, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish what exactly qualified as functionalist thought because the theory underwent a series of reformulations in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As discussed, Mitrany’s original functionalism was revised and modified by Ernst Haas and Leon Lindberg. Later, neofunctionalism was also revised and modified by a number of writers, such as Philippe Schmitter, Stuart Scheingold and Arne Niemann. However, they mainly discussed European cases (e.g., Holthaus 2018; Macmillan 2009; Niemann 2009; Schmitter 2005). In light of this, this section offers my own interpretation of the existing discussion, which keeps the most important original functionalist assumptions, while dropping the positivist attitude towards functionalism and adopting one influenced by social constructivism instead.18 The aim of this revision of functionalism is to slightly broaden its theoretical scope. This revised functionalism is thus the result of the cross-fertilization, on multiple levels, between classical functionalist insights and social constructivist insights.

Any discussion of functionalism should start with establishing an understanding of the trends of the time and the significant recent changes in the international system, which many critics fail to do. This includes the end of the Cold War, the emergence of the complex and interconnected economic, political, environmental, material and cultural issues, macro-electronic revolution, and the spread of transnational corporations (TNCs) and non-governmental and international governmental organizations (NGOs and IGOs), which are all glossed over in the existing functionalist scholarship. My revised functionalism on the other hand recognizes that the role of states relative to that of TNCs, NGOs, and IGOs is changing remarkably. In this sense, I take the functionalist discussion further by acknowledging TNCs, NGOs and IGOs. My revision also integrates contributions from scholars who do not conceive

18 See the section “Criticism” for an explanation of the positivist attitude.
themselves as working in the (neo)functionalist tradition (e.g., Barry 2013a, 2013b; Bijker 2001; Chandler 2013; Coole 2013; Edward 2016; Latour 2005; Verbeek 2005).

The five points summarized below are addressed in revised functionalism and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The first point is that the revised functionalism extends the idea of technical cooperation to the construction of material infrastructures such as pipelines, railways, ports, fibre-optic cables and roads. This enriches the theoretical tools of functionalism and gives the research empirical insight in the transnational movements of things, people and ideas that lie at the heart of most projects of the contemporary time. In doing so, revised functionalism does not include Mitrany’s misleading admonition about distinguishing between the political and the technical. However, drawing insights from social constructivism, I argue that when political aspects are perceived as technical, cooperation is easier, which means that the distinction is just a matter of framing. The second point is that revised functionalism includes TNCs as functionalist agencies since they offer the required resources and instruments that most states do not have or cannot afford. Related to this point is the third point; that revised functionalism puts more emphasis on the importance of different functionalist agencies, such as companies, IGOs, financial institutions and NGOs networking. The fourth point is that while considering the importance of spillover, revised functionalism includes stop and go rhythms of spillover. The final point is that besides the bureaucratic power of functionalist agencies, revised functionalism mainly emphasizes the economic leverage of agencies.

While dropping some of the assumptions of classical functionalism, such as the expected disappearance of nation states and the automaticity of spillover, several of its assumptions remain unchanged: (1) States are not unified actors and certainly not the only actors in the international arena. This system is also built up and influenced by multiple and diverse other actors, some of them private, some of them state-owned but non-political (like state-owned companies) or semi-public (like state-owned or capital-dominated media), some of them sub-state (like cities) or trans-governmental (networks of civil servants). (2) Preferences are not constant or fixed, but likely to change during cooperation processes since actors gain new insights all throughout it. Revised functionalism intends to show the irrationality or counter-productiveness of the political mode of reasoning about fixed preferences. (3) The problems faced by the different systems of the world—individual states or blocs of states—are similar to some extent, which produces common interests between these systems, which in turn act as incentive for seeking common solutions. (4) Functional cooperation tends to be pragmatic, technocratic, and flexible. This means that we must try to circumvent the influence of ideologies
and national/ethnic identities, since we have not been able to sidestep them entirely, leaving it to the growth of new habits and interests to dilute them over time. (5) Each and every problem should be tackled as a practical issue in itself.

4.1. Social Constructivist Insights

To establish the groundwork for cross-fertilization, it is necessary to selectively and briefly outline three core features of social constructivists that are relevant for this research. The reason for this selectiveness is that there are already several excellent works that broadly discuss the intellectual history of the constructivist school (e.g., Adler 1997; Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Burr 2015; Finnemore and Sikkink 2001; Guzzini 2000; Peltonen 2017). Therefore, it is unnecessary to retread the same paths.

In the 1990s, social constructivism was a new turn in the study of IR, which was developed in response to the dominant (neo)realist and (neo)liberal paradigms. The essence of social constructivism can be derived from a number of key underlying arguments. A first defining feature of social constructivism is its attention to the ways in which the material world is socially conceptualized. Constructivists argue that “objects shape and are shaped by human action, and interaction depends on dynamic, normative and epistemic interpretations of the objects” (Adler 1997, 322). This assumption means that material objects (e.g., a pipe, musical instrument or a totem pole) are assigned meaning, significance and value by the social, historical and cultural contexts, through which they are defined and interpreted (Checkel 1998; Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). For example, railways, roads and infrastructures do not exist in nature but once constructed each of them is attributed a special meaning and use by diverse social groups. In light of this, the meaning and use of an object can never be said to be singular because the different social groups that encounter and use any given object may attribute different uses and meanings to it (Bijker 2001). It also means that language and framing influence how people think about objects and issues. Framing influences how people perceive objects and issues, whether they are technical, (geo)political, economic or social, which accordingly influences how people behave. Therefore, unlike Mitrany (1966, 134-135), who emphasized the distinction between political and technical dimensions to objects, constructivists argue that the meaning of an object is dependent on how it is framed, increasing or decreasing any object’s value and role.
Conversely, social interaction is also shaped by the particulars of an object or artefact. Once a technological artefact (e.g., a railway) is established, it can facilitate or restrict interaction, communication and the transportation of people, information or artefacts (Bijker 2001). This aspect is emphasized by scholars who work on socially constructed elements of technology and actor-network theory (see e.g., Barry 2013a, 2013b; Bijker 2001; Sismondo 2009). The following sections will offer a more detailed description of this point.

A second defining feature of the constructivist approach is that it, like functionalism, does not view states as the only actors in the international arena. In the constructivist approach, “actors” may be individuals, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, governments within states and international institutions (Keck and Sikkink 1999). Actors depend on their social environment and its shared systems of meaning (Risse-Kappen 2009). More concretely, constructivism emphasizes that actors and international structures are mutually constituted and they influence each other. For example, Finnemore and Sikkink (2001) explain that international organizations frame issues, identify agendas, adjust the existing norms and rules or generate and even “teach” states new norms and rules. According to Keck and Sikkink (1998), a number of techniques and tools (e.g., economic or political leverage, issue framing, strategic use of information and naming and shaming) are implemented to construct or promote norms, rules and interests. Besides this, international organizations play a key role in promoting socialization between different actors, as Checkel (2005) highlights.

Related to this, the third defining feature of social constructivism is how it perceives the construction of relationship among different actors. In contrast to realism, constructivism argues that social relations and interests among different actors are not fixed or given. A similar argument is suggested by liberal theories. However, what distinguishes the social constructivist argument about the interests of actors is that it holds that actors’ interests and identities are influenced and constructed by their interaction with others and with their social environment (Hurd 2008). In light of this, a relationship of enmity or friendship is seen by social constructivist as the result of ongoing socialization between actors in their social context. This socialization may reinforce the enmity or friendship. It may also reinforce or change the broader social structures in which the actors exist, including norms and other forms of shared meaning regarding sovereignty, threats and interests (Adler 1997). By looking at the ways actors influence each other and the social context in which they interact, as well as how this context influences them, social constructivists seek to understand and explain changes in the
relationship between diverse actors, most importantly the change from conflict to cooperation or from war to peace.

This section briefly introduced the constructivist insights that are relevant to this research. The following sections will provide in-depth discussion of the abovementioned features by incorporating them into classical functionalism. This will help to establish a comprehensive theoretical background and give rise to insights of revised functionalism.

4.2. Mediating Interfaces: Cross-Border and Transnational Infrastructure

The literature on functionalism views cooperation mostly as a set of intergovernmental treaties, institutional agreements, passages of policies, the formation of regional and international institutions and organizational frameworks. As a result, it focuses primarily on the bureaucratic conceptualization of treaties, norms, agreements and regulations. While the literature acknowledges the importance of technical cooperation, it rarely explains or acknowledges the its proclivity to bring different societies together and increase their capacity to interact (Högselius, Van de Vleuten and Kaijser 2016). The existing literature also fails to consider necessary transnational perspectives to adequately analyse the technical networks. Mitrany believed that it was on specific technical issues that cooperation would advance primarily and most efficiently (Ashworth 1999, 6). According to Mitrany,

“only by guiding material and technical resources into joint international activities and services could we possibly hope to meet the social needs and claims of the world's surging populations, with fair provision for all (1966, 19).”

This statement shows that technical cooperation should not be conceived as only consisting of international treaties, but rather as being based on the existence or construction of material structures. For example, European integration was shaped, carried and flagged by both ideational or normative structures and material networks such as infrastructure, technical systems and artefacts (Misa and Schot 2006).

Considering the social constructivist insights (Adler 1997), it can be argued that Mitrany’s technical cooperation or technical issues should be viewed from two perspectives,
that is as either non-material or material structures. The non-material perspective looks at functional agreements, regulations, and rules, which address and facilitate both needs of ordinary people, elites, non-state actors and states. The material perspective looks at transnational infrastructure, postal service, telecommunication cables and natural resources, which shape society materially, address material issues or needs and encourage state and non-state actors to cooperate as no single actor has the capacity to solve these issues or provide in these needs. The material perspective is helpful in thinking through the significance and the role of technical matters and material issues.

Mitrany admired the TVA, the ITU and the UPU because they addressed human needs by dealing directly with the material and non-material aspects of a given problem. The ITU and UPU were the first administrative unions based around infrastructures. As one of the world’s global service organizations, the UPU sets the rules, regulations and agreements for specific material exchanges, including letters, mails and parcels. However, while discussing the UPU or the TVA, the existing scholarship concentrates on rules, services and arrangements the UPU makes as an actor. In doing so, the literature neglects that the UPU offers global service to facilitate and address the material needs of people. In the same vein, the TVA designed the New Deal to address both non-material and material problems of the time by ignoring ideology or political differences, which existing scholarship does not fully appreciate. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the intertwined relationship between material and non-material needs and issues to fully appreciate the functioning of these unions.

Although the place of material need is apparent in classical functionalism, it has remained a marginal aspect within the literature. In light of this, the vocabulary of functionalist technical cooperation needs to be supplemented and modified via insights from social constructivism. It can be argued that the notion of a specific “technical sector” can be interpreted as “infrastructure” such as railways, roads, telecommunications, cables and pipelines which transcend national boundaries, connect a number of different actors, bring new restrictions and affect interaction capacities. Infrastructure is also self-determined, which means it fixes its own geographic scope, which actors are involved in it, its organizational structure, inherent nature, boundaries, and power. Particular infrastructure can have subtle and enduring functional importance for economic development, security, political and societal interaction. The reason for this is that infrastructures have efficacy: they make a difference, produce effects and alter the course of events through the advantages and disadvantages they offer. Infrastructure may facilitate movement, encourage cooperation, authorize new regulations, influence relationships, suggest new policies, and so on (Bennett and Patrick 2010). However,
the influence infrastructure exerts often exceeds the deliberate intent of those who design it, as it can be more flexible and more unpredictable than its designers realize. For example, the way infrastructure reshapes landscapes and its capacity to promote or impede ways of living in particular places sometimes offers other actors an unforeseen purchase on power by providing unexpected means for them to act. Latour (2005) argues that infrastructure becomes “strategic” because of the number of connections it makes possible in a highly contingent world. Therefore, infrastructure is much more than a power resource; it is the core medium of interaction for international actors (Herrera 2006).

Infrastructure has a number of functional aspects that need to be highlighted. First, cross-border infrastructure (e.g., gas or oil pipelines, fibre-optic cables and railroads) forms material networks and building those is beyond the economic, technical, political, and social capacities of most individual states, which may encourage governments to look for cooperation with other interested actors: other governments, companies, individuals, engineering communities, banks, and financial IGOs. Even large-scale domestic infrastructure projects often require international expertise, as was the case with the Yamal project in Russia. Also, in the case of China, whose government and state firms initiate huge infrastructural investments in Asia and Africa, one needs to realize that their ability to do so is the result of opening up to the world economy. Its grown (perceived) power is not a unilateral achievement, but a result of giving up isolation. When the serious financial, political, environmental, and social risks that such projects often incur can be shared between multiple actors, the projects become much more viable. Meanwhile, these actors implicitly and explicitly decide who to connect to and who to bypass and how to design the infrastructure for economic, political and security-related purposes (Högelius, Van de Vleuten and Kaijser 2016). As explained by social constructivism, international organizations aim to spread, teach, and promote new norms and values (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). Thus, international organizations look for ways and opportunities to do so. Facilitating the construction of infrastructure can offer international organizations, such as the World Bank, opportunities to spread their norms and values, because they can compel governments to comply with certain norms and rules (financial and ecological norms and rules for instance) by helping build infrastructure.

Second, infrastructure is an important component of economic activity. According to Nijkamp (1986) infrastructure is one of the tools for economic development. It can affect, directly or indirectly, a region’s social-economic activities and other capacities, as well as influence its abilities to produce goods and services. According to Kuroda (2006), the president of Asian Development Bank, cross-border infrastructure may influence a country’s prospects
for economic growth, employment creation, poverty reduction, and social improvement. In the same vein, Martinkus and Lukasevicius (2008) consolidate that the infrastructural services and physical infrastructure are factors that affect the investment climate at the local level and increase the attractiveness of the region. An efficient infrastructure supports economic growth and improves the quality of life (Baldwin and Dixon 2009). This is one of the important reasons it gets the attention of both state and non-state elites. Clear examples of this are the ECSC and Euratom, which played a critical role as the centres at which the regulation of production and transport of raw materials across different borders was coordinated. They offered economic benefits and prosperity to their member states. In doing so, interest groups gradually promoted further cooperation, as they became aware of the benefits of so-called technical cooperation (Niemann 2009). However, the downside of infrastructural cooperation is that it is set up to exploit specific natural resources or places. In doing so, it may lead to the misuse of a given periphery rather than to its development. Infrastructure may unite or divide people and places through economic disparity, ecological issues, crises and wars (Herrera 2006). Transport, communication and energy infrastructure may supply food, power, health products, and unprecedented wealth, but infrastructure capacities can also be utilized for waging war on scales hitherto unknown. Therefore, while discussing economic benefits, it is important to consider who is connected to whom, who is left out, and why?

Third, cross-border infrastructures such as railways or pipelines can enhance the regional and global capacity for interaction and connect landlocked countries to global networks. Mitrany favoured the ITU because from a material perspective, telecommunication infrastructure has provided links between different continents and effected global interconnectedness. Badenoch and Fickers (2010, 12) describe infrastructure as mediating interface, because it consists of structures “in between” that allow things, people and signs to travel across space by means of more or less standardized paths and protocols for conversion or translation. It is not enough to simply create regional institutions and coordinate tariffs and regulations at a regional level. Countries need to be connected by road, rail, electricity, and communications networks. In this sense, regional integration and/or cooperation requires both a coordinated set of rules across the region and physical interconnections such as road, rail, and electricity transmission lines, energy infrastructures between and within countries (Bond 2016).

According to social constructivism, there are several ways in which infrastructure can facilitate socialization among different actors (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Hurd 2008). Social constructivist usually relate socialization to international organizations, which will be discussed in detail in the next section. However, another way for socialization might take place
is the construction of infrastructure, which offers different actors additional incentives to engage in joint action. If they wish to build infrastructure, governments need to build a shared consensus about bureaucratic regulations and overcome environmental, social, economic, political and technical obstacles (Bourguignon and Pleskovic 2008). In other words, to benefit from cross-border infrastructure, states need to relax their sovereignty concerns and create common rules, management strategies and abide by common regulatory frameworks. To achieve this, they need to have regular meetings, joint studies and dialogue among politicians, experts, media and citizens, which will help them to learn to appreciate the differences in their perspectives, share their risks, and deal with them accordingly. This regular interaction cutting across national borders might increase socialization among different state and private institutions and might lead to the creation of joint institutions to govern transnational infrastructures. Meanwhile, such material cooperation also requires social or institutional mediators, the institutions and individuals who work to govern and shape the way the finished infrastructure will be used (Badenoch and Fickers 2010, 12).

Finally, infrastructures can either be conflictual or cooperative. By using traditional interdependency theory, Cooper (1999, 37) argues that cross-border infrastructure can increase costs of conflict in the region, which would make international conflict less beneficial, less popular and ultimately less feasible. Considering the high economic costs of the infrastructure, the foreign investment in it and the income it generates, states would think twice before starting a war with their neighbours (Oneal et al. 1996). Scholars going back to Adam Smith and Immanuel Kant have theorized about the pacifying effects of economic interdependence. However, in the 21st century this argument is not fully applicable and too simplistic. As is mentioned by De Wilde (1991, 214), interdependency can be troublesome, but only when it is ignored. According to De Wilde (1991, Ch. 8), the basis for cooperation should not necessarily be the similarity of material resources and material needs or specific relational conditions, but rather the awareness of these conditions. In the absence of awareness of interdependency, even a high degree of material interdependency would not produce any particular progress toward either integration or cooperation (De Wilde 1991, Ch. 8 and Ch. 1). When actors are aware of their interdependency, they might coordinate their actions in order to enhance efficiency, or collaborate in order to find joint solutions to problems and challenges that are deemed relevant and important. When actors are not aware of their interdependency, or when they neglect or underestimate their importance, they will be confronted with unexpected crises. Therefore, cross-border infrastructures do not necessarily prevent conflict by themselves. Their interdependency conditions should also be understood and recognized by the actors involved.
4.3. Functionalist Networks

In the previous section I discussed material networks, such as transnational infrastructure. However, another point that classical functionalism highlights but that is not explained systematically is the network of different agencies it advocates for, the so-called “transnational networks.”

According to Mitrany,

“the question will be asked, however, in what manner and to what degree the various functional agencies that may thus grow up would have to be linked to each other and articulated as parts of a more comprehensive organization. It should be clear that each agency could work by itself, but that does not exclude the possibility of some of them or all being bound in some way together, if it should be found needful or useful to do so. That indeed is the test. As the whole sense of this particular method is to let activities be organized as the need for joint action arises and is accepted, it would be out of place to lay down in advance some formal plan for the co-ordination of various functions (1966, 73, 135).”

This means that the coordination of several groups of functionalist agencies can provide different instruments (e.g., technical, administrative, economic) for broader functional application. The power of functional agencies rests in a large part on their access to the global donor and technical assistance networks that regional actors may not be able to reach (Mitrany 1966, 140-141). However, recent functionalist literature has paid surprisingly little attention to analysing the role and structure of transnational networks. This oversight, however, has been addressed by social constructivism.

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19There is diverse and growing literature on networking that explains the term from different perspectives such as economic, political, social, and technological. In this regard, the term network means different things to different scholars. One of these well-known interpretations is the Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) (Barry 2013a, 2013b; Chandler 2013; Coole 2013; Edward 2016; Latour 2005; Verbeek 2005). In contrast to ANT, this current work seeks to explain social and economic sides of a networking approach. While acknowledging the importance of the ANT, the contribution of this theory to this project is limited due to the abstract assumptions ANT is based on. Because of this, this work integrates only a few particular complements from the ANT.
Social constructivists argue that the interaction of different actors is structured through networks (Checkel 1998; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Sikkink 2009). Considering the existing interconnected global arena, which has created complex economic, social, political, and environmental issues, social constructivists argue that strong transnational networking can play a number of roles, economic, political, cultural, and technical (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). Networks include diverse actors, such as international organizations, private actors, scientists and illicit groups (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Along with nation states, international actors are actively involved in addressing specific new technical, political and economic challenges and have launched joint projects to bring different stakeholders together (Finnemore 1996; Sikkink 2009).

There are important ways in which transnational networks add value that need to be highlighted. The first way in which transnational networks add value is their capacity to draw the required resources from diverse sets of actors (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Given the complexity of modern cross-border or cross-sectorial problems (e.g., problems that have, for instance environmental, technical and economic dimensions), no state agency or public actor has the wherewithal to address issues single-handedly (Börzel and Heard-Laureote 2009; Christopoulos 2017). The result is an increasing reliance upon the cooperation and resources of outside private and non-private actors, who can bring to the table either material or non-material resources (e.g., information, empirical knowledge, specific technical expertise, financial means and political clout and support), or both (Christopoulos 2017, Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). By using the networking power actors can facilitate valuable informal relations between private and public actors. Adler (1997) explains that they can formulate and shape new norms or rules (e.g., human rights and ecological sustainability), which can provide individuals and governments with direction and action. They can also balance the loss of some of economic, technological and political powers by forging coalitions with other actors. In doing these things, networking participants bring different kinds of resources and expertise to the table by creating synergies. This coordination can create opportunities for each of those involved to address specific needs or issues while working towards a common goal.

The second way in which transnational networks add value is that they also have a socializing function, which is important in relation to the political, economic, and cultural diversity arising from organizational enlargement (Börzel and Heard-Laureote 2009; Finnemore 1996). In transnational networks, actors are often tied together in multiple ways, which is one way of generating continuous interaction because it invokes the image of connectedness amongst individuals, between different organizations and between private and
public actors. Unlike realists and neoliberal institutionalists, who take identities and interests for granted, social constructivists recognize that actors’ behaviour, interests, self-understanding and identities are shaped by the social milieu in which they live (Adler 1997; Barnett and Finnemore 1999). The social constructivist literature argues that transnational corporations, NGOs or IGOs, are not only important for their economic, political and technical contributions, but also for their strong international networks, which might create informal interaction, new interests, and smooth negotiation among different actors. By using their networks, international organizations may link states in a network that allows for direct and indirect transmission of information about interests and intentions (Adler 1997; Finnemore 2001). Direct personal or organizational contacts may facilitate the creation of shared understanding of policy issues and measures to resolve them (Dorussen and Ward 2008; Gan 1993).

It is worth noting that when speaking of socialization, the literature expects norms, rules, interests or cooperation to arise on things that most of us would consider “good”, such as human rights and environmental cooperation. There is no reason for this misleading orientation because different actors perceive socialization under common issues differently and aim to achieve different goals (e.g., strengthening autocratic regime or crime syndicates). In this sense, social constructivism includes a set of pragmatic lenses through which it views all socially constructed “good” and “bad” reality (Adler 1997).

The third way in which transnational networks add value is through enhancing flexibility and adaptability (Cao 2009; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2017; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Sikkink 2009). This means the structure and composition of networks can be more easily modified to respond to changing needs. “It is necessary to determine those activities which are common, where they are common and to the extent that they are common” as is argued by Mitrany (1966, 115-116). Flexibility would also mean that different actors would be involved in the activities of any proposed cooperation while there would be no obligation to participate in all of the activities, or to stay out of any of them (Mitrany 1966, 205-210). The task itself can never be defined and limited in advance, but must remain continuously variable, reflecting the fact that situations may change. In this context, the informal nature of network ties allows different actors to collaborate on specific problems according to the nature of the problems rather than according to predetermined divisions of responsibility or jurisdiction (Podolny and Page 1998). This offers to even the weakest actor, either state or private, the assurance of non-domination and of equality of opportunity as working benefits of any functional activity in which it participates (Mitrany 1966, 205).
4.4. Economic Leverage

While explaining the influence different kinds of agencies possess, Mitrany briefly mentions the particular leverage wielded by international actors. Mitrany explains this leverage with the example of a non-violent functional embargo as a means of restraining an aggressor. Mitrany proposed withdrawal of essential services, such as economic, technical and administrative, by a number of functional organizations and actors as a deterrent to aggression and a means of ensuring compliance within a functional sector (1966, 76-77). According to Mitrany, economic technical agencies, by their very nature, could be preventive in a way in which military agencies can never be. Just as it would be their function to give service wherever it was needed, so it would clearly be their duty to deny service where it was not obviously needed and might be abused; and they would have the means to do so without using force. A European railway authority, for example, would naturally and properly refuse to build railways which would have a strategic rather than an economic purpose, just as it could prevent the accumulation of rolling stock in a particular place in preparation for aggression (1975, 183).”

Mitrany never offered a detailed explanation for this aspect of transnational networks, however. Social constructivists on the other hand did explain how IGOs and NGOs seek to create, consolidate or change and reformulate rules, norms, understandings and interests by presenting the benefits that working with them would offer to states, such as technical assistance, financial grants, being spared from public shaming and set agendas (Adler 1997; Finnemore 2001). Having one of these kinds of benefits as leverage over a state plays a crucial role in attracting states, because states are no aware that when they join certain organizations they might give them certain rights to function in their territory, which states are inherently loath to do (Follesdal, Wessel and Wouters 2008). On the other hand, states are becoming aware that they need to comply with certain requirements in order to get help or support from international organizations. To do so, a state might need to break some of its old habits or adopt certain new habits. However, considering the number and functions of international organizations, states have the leeway to join one organization and ignore another. Because of this, states want to know what benefits an organization offers in cooperation.
One of the benefits that states look for is financial support or gains. According to Prange-Gstöhl (2009), states accept the requirements, norms and values of international organizations because states envisage significant economic gains. For example, non-EU member countries like Georgia and Ukraine are willing to accept the EU norms and values because they want to access the EU’s market and attract EU investors to their economies (Prange-Gstöhl 2009). Similarly, Schulze and Tosun (2013) argue that states are more willing to accept the requirements of international organizations if they can receive financial aid and developmental assistance from said international organizations. Offering assistance can help international organizations spread their norms and it can help states strengthen their institutional capacity and cover their certain costs.

Additionally, Karreth (2017) argues that IGOs with high economic leverage over states shape state behaviour during interstate disputes which substantially lowers the risk that such political disputes escalate to armed conflicts. Examples include the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and regional development banks. Their leverage derives from their ability to reliably and quickly impose penalties on states they are involved with that engage in violent conflict (Karreth 2017). The economic leverage these organizations have over states they are involved with includes the short-term or long-term loans they have provided, their ability to harmonize currencies and trade, and their ability to enhance market access, facilitate foreign investment, assist with and coordinate the production of goods and facilitate the extraction, processing and sale of natural resources (Karreth 2017). IGOs with economic leverage can also facilitate the splitting of resources under dispute to prevent commitment problems arising from bargaining over resources that themselves will substantially alter the distribution of power.

Multilateral development banks lose some of their investments and loans when recipient states spend considerable resources on war and when military action causes damage in recipient countries. IGOs can convert, and have previously converted, such anticipated negative effects into costs for member states engaging in military conflict. When a member state chooses to go to war over an issue with another state, that member state can expect some form of negative ramification from the institution. This ramification may come in the suspension of benefits, direct costs, such as sanctions or exclusion.

Economic benefits can be suspended on a number of time scales. They may be suspended immediately, as is the case when states go to war. Institutions that provide loans, projects or information, such as the World Bank, typically “step out during active conflict” (Karreth 2017, 8). In the medium term, states at war may be excluded from active institutional
cooperation, such as the further liberalization of trade barriers in trade organizations. Similarly, IGOs may halt projects until states resume peaceful interactions. In the long term, warring states may gain the reputation of being unstable partners that tarnish the reputations of institutions they work with, which may then preclude them from extensions of current institutional arrangements. Altogether, going to war will create costs for the involved states, either directly or indirectly through the costs of the withdrawal of benefits (Karreth 2017).

4.5. Transnational Corporations

The contribution of the idea of functional organizations to this research is to provide critical assumptions regarding the role of different intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies. However, an oversight in functionalist assumption is the role of transnational corporations (TNCs) as functional agencies in international relations, to which very little attention has been paid. Although Mitrany worked as a policy adviser for Unilever and Lever Brothers, Ltd. from 1944 until his retirement in 1960, which should have been enough to recognize the relevance of economic expertise in political enterprises, he paid scant attention to the role of transnational firms or corporations in terms of functionalism (De Wilde 1991). While the classical functionalists Haas and Lindberg later highlighted the contribution of non-governmental private elites to cooperation, recent scholarship on functionalism has overlooked this aspect of cooperation. Haas (1958, 312-313) in particular focused on the pressures exerted by nongovernmental elites, such as business and professional associations, trade unions or other interest groups. In light of this, it can be argued that the role of TNCs did originate in the classical functionalist writings.

Considering the global economic, political, and technical developments, it can be argued that the category of functional actors should not be restricted to intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies only. Global developments are not fully dominated by states and institutions only, but also by private and semi-private firms and companies (Clapp 2005; Hall and Bierstekker 2002). Similar to international organizations, TNCs offer the resources, networks, and instruments that projects require but most states lack such as professional personnel, advanced technology, organizational capacity, access to the world market, support from their home countries, and financial power (Forsgren 2008). As a result, TNCs deliver specific functional services and products such as energy, security, agriculture, communication, financial, education and constriction to different projects (see e.g., Abdelal 2015, 2012; Hall
and Bierstekker 2002; Nye 1974). Some TNCs can access certain regions easier and faster than certain international institutions.

In short, they do many of the things traditionally associated with the state. According to Hall and Bierstekker (2002, 6), TNCs can now set agendas, and establish boundaries or limits for action, and they offer rescue, guarantee contracts and provide order and security. They act both in the domestic and in the international arenas simultaneously. These actors can challenge states while negotiating debt rescheduling, organizing external boycotts or choosing new locations for production and employment (Hall and Bierstekker 2002; Nye 1974). From an economic perspective, they are financial powers to be reckoned with because their decisions to investment matter in particular communities and countries. By using their international reputation, TNCs can establish trust, socialization and financial connection between different actors. For example, certain financial institutions invest in different projects if there are well-known transnational corporations attached like BP, Huawei or Shell because it decreases project risk. It is worth noting that these functions are not only belong to TNCs. However, state firms (e.g., China National Petroleum), who internationally functions like TNCs, offer also these resources and functions. Their impact on their home governments is as big as the political influence of (Western) TNCs.

Meanwhile, the involvement of certain companies can influence the reputation of certain countries as being business-friendly place or not. In light of this, it is important to link the principles of functional agencies to the possible role of transnational corporations like Shell, BP, Chevron and Gazprom. Another reason this linkage is necessary that international affairs are growing more complex than ever and states cannot make decisions without considering international companies. Technical and economic challenges introduced by globalization are not manageable for institutions and states on their own.

4.6. Avoiding Utopic Thinking: the ill-fitting European Benchmark

While discussing classical functionalism (e.g., the spillover assumption), the existing literature mostly argues that it is not applicable outside Europe. The reason for this misleading conclusion is that the existing scholarship expects to see integration that, although it takes place outside of Europe, is nonetheless similar to the integration that took place in Western Europe and produces strong organizations like the EU in other regions. More concretely, the relevant literature
mainly focuses on endpoint rather than process. By using the EU benchmark, the relevant literature ignores that regions are socially constructed through different developments. In contrast to this, constructivists understand the relationship, both normative and material, between different regional structures. Constructivists argue that the concepts of cooperation, competition, norms and interests influence different actors differently (Checkel 2005, Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). Actors react differently for different reasons and can be influenced by geographical, economic, and social factors, for instance, which is important to understand the differences between regions, the most important of which are listed below.

First, integration by definition implies a giving up of sovereignty rights, either voluntarily or through pressure (Acharya 2012; Werner and De Wilde 2001). Therefore, the lens of cooperation is better suited to view non-Western regional cooperation through than the lens of integration. The reason for this is that, when considering the colonial history of other regions (e.g., the Middle East, Central Asia, Caucasus), it can be argued that when these regions create or join an organization, their end goal is to prevent external intervention and to preserve their autonomy, independence and international recognition. Second, one may argue that the EU is a unique development and it is better to look for sector-specific developments rather than EU-style integration in other regions. Third, the classical functionalists like Mitrany did not claim that the end-point of functional cooperation should be a closed regional union like the EU. Instead, Mitrany advocated that regional organizations or unions need to recognize their global interdependency.

Finally, in expecting other regions to form institutions like the EU, the existing scholarship neglects one important dimension: time difference. Mitrany and Haas established the spillover assumption in the 1950s, which saw the beginning of the Cold War and was a time of recovery for most countries. States were experiencing interconnection between different areas, which hugely facilitated the spillover process, for the first time. However, in 2019, the situation is different as states are aware of spillover and countries outside the EU have seen the practice of spillover cooperation, which makes them take further steps more cautiously and slowly. Also within the EU this has become manifest with features like the initial no-vote against the Maastricht Treaty by Denmark in 1992, the no-vote against the EU Constitution by France and the Netherlands in 2005 and most strongly by Brexit- a process that started in 2016. Considering this, it is important to explain why the decision-making system only occasionally succeeds in producing further cooperation. What is the time lag between spillover occurring into the first and into the second spillover area? And why does integration halt in some periods
or parts? Functionalists continue to see national obstruction as a simple delay rather than as a fundamental variance with the theory that would require reflection. Functionalism leaves the question of spillover’s stop-and-go rhythm unanswered. Corbey (1995) proposed “dialectic spillover” to address these shortcomings of the theory, but it has been rarely mentioned since.

Dialectical spillover does not expect the spillover effect to produce integration straightforwardly. Instead, the hypothesis is that states protect sovereignty in those policy areas that are functionally linked to areas subject to integration. States only agree to integration when their mutual policy competition has turned into a lose-lose situation of them intervening in costly and dead-end ways. Dialectical spillover facilitates an understanding of the stop-and-go in the spillover process by proposing a number of assumptions.

According to dialectical spillover, each spillover round provokes resistance to further integration and decreases willingness to cooperate in adjacent areas. The first reason for this is that with each round of spillover states become aware of the ongoing integration process and they know that to increase benefits they need to move to other areas and relinquish their autonomy over the spillover areas. But they are unwilling to let go of the benefits they had hoped to reap from the policies subject to integration. Governments need room to manoeuvre and will thus safeguard functionally linked areas against further integration and thus prefer to safeguard their adjacent policy areas. The second reason for states’ resistance to spillover is that different interest groups are involved. Areas that are accessible to or covered by powerful interest groups are more liable objects of intervention than others when spillover into these areas becomes likely. These interest groups can include companies and ministries, but this increase in intervention can also be caused more indirectly by structural limitations, because a country’s economy, its demography, its legal tradition or its administrative structure might also block integration. According to Schmitter (2005), governments may be constrained directly by agents, such as by lobby groups, opposition parties, the media or public pressure. Governments’ restricted autonomy to act may prove disintegrative, especially when countries face strongly diverging domestic constraints. This may disrupt emerging integrative outcomes, as domestic constraints of governments may lead to national vetoes or prevent policies from moving beyond the most easily defined shared interests.

In time, however, participants come to see this reaction as counterproductive. When state intervention (or policy rivalry) in neighbouring areas becomes counterproductive, policy preferences converge and further integration is demanded more and more by the member states.
Stagnation and progress may thus be understood as regular stages in the process of integration. The spillover effect seems to apply—but only much later than expected.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that, despite what critics argue, classical functionalism still offers useful, alternative tools that promise to understand and explain contemporary developments. Although classical functionalism has been trapped and marginalized within European Studies, certain processes it describes, such as the role of multiple actors, the contribution of technical dialogue, spillover and socialization, are nonetheless insightful when analysing the cooperation potential in other regions. Benefitting from including the best of Mitrany’s and Haas’ original arguments, this chapter presented a revision of functionalism via social constructivism. Specifically, this chapter has illustrated that although there has not yet been systematic debate between functionalists and social constructivists, there are several promising avenues for cross-fertilization. This establishes a critical and innovative theoretical tool box as well as new areas for empirical investigation, which does not exist for realists and is overlooked by liberals.

First, by highlighting the importance of framing, the chapter has argued that Mitrany was wrong in distinguishing technical aspects from political aspects. In its place, the chapter has proposed that when something is framed as technical, cooperation is easier because it changes people’s tendency to view something within a power political zero-sum framework. By (artificially) moving an issue or specific stakes from a political arena to a technocratic or bureaucratic arena there can be changes in the type of actors involved, their power relations and interests as well as their logical approaches to and modes of reasoning about the issues and stakes. In this sense, it is necessary to understand how the meaning, significance, role and value of objects and issues are socially constructed and not fixed within a particular context. This also means that framing influences how people think about objects and issues and how people perceive and behave towards objects and issues; whether they are technical, (geo)political, economic or social minded.

Second, the chapter has moved the discussion about functionalist cooperation beyond shared treaties, regulations, rules and policies by including the role of material artefacts and natural resources. Functionalist technical cooperation is argued to include both shared regulations and material entities. This is because material objects influence and are influenced by actors’ actions and interactions. In doing so, revised functionalism presents the potential benefits of completing infrastructural projects as one of the incentives for technical cooperation,
which in effect means establishing policy coordination and the formation of administrative and regulatory bodies. These bodies do not infringe on sovereignty, but they help to create trans-governmental influences within the ministries and state-owned companies of the participating states. Therefore, it is necessary to understand correlations between technical artefacts and their bearing on social situations.

Third, considering the current global economic, technical and political developments, revised functionalism argues that it is necessary to include the contribution of transnational corporations in functional agencies, either directly as members, indirectly as powerful lobbying groups or as concrete stakeholders in the maintenance of infrastructures. They provide the necessary functional economic, technical and administrative instruments that most states do not have. Combining the social constructivist insights, this chapter has highlighted that similar to NGOs and IGOs, transnational corporations socially construct alternatives, promote socialization and help to create social reality. In contrast to neoliberal and realist works, which link them to transaction costs and grant limited roles to these actors, this chapter has explained that private actors as well as state firms do more than just levy transaction costs and are not just empty shells, as they can expand and constrain state interests.

Fourth, revised functionalism puts less emphasis on integration and more emphasis on the role of networking and coordination between different agencies, such as companies, IGOs, financial institutions, individuals and NGOs. The interaction between diverse actors is structured in networks and aimed at achieving specific goals. Drawing insights from social constructivism, this chapter has illustrated that networks of international and regional agencies establish, shape, articulate and transmit new norms, responsibilities, interests and rules, which influence state practices and identities. They help governments to overcome collective action dilemmas. In doing so, network of agencies, specifically regional networks, can become new sites for interaction, and they may help states, their elites or societies view themselves as part a region. The coordination of different agencies can provide opportunities for wider functional ends and access to global investors and technical assistance that national regional actors may not be able to reach.

Related to this, revised functionalism highlights the economic and technical leverages of international organizations, which can be used as a means of restraining aggressive policies and facilitating cooperation among different states. More specifically, the chapter has argued that states are more likely to accept the norms and values of international organizations if they can receive economic assistance in the form of grants, loans, credits or access to other financial sources. This economic assistance can allow international organizations to influence state
behaviours and spread their norms, and it can help states to strengthen their institutional capacity and cover certain costs.

Finally, sideling the European benchmark, revised functionalism has highlighted that regions (both Western and non-Western) are socially constructed and can be redefined. In this sense, the ideas of cooperation, competition and conflict influence different regional structures differently. By understanding this difference, one can explain how and why complex dynamics change over time. By sideling Eurocentrism, this chapter has emphasized the idea of cooperation rather than that of integration. In this regard, revised functionalism does not expect Western Europe style cooperation or the establishment of dominant organizations like the EU in other regions. Rather, it seeks to understand and explain the process of cooperation. By using dialectical functionalism, this chapter has argued that the change necessary for cooperation happens in different areas according to perceived necessity and need. Often states only agree to cooperate when their mutual policy competition has turned into costly dead-end interventions.

By using the functional insights, economic leverage, networking and the role of multiple actors, chapter 4 will show how shared technical and environmental issues challenged the capacity of the Caspian littoral states and encouraged them to seek the assistance of multiple intergovernmental organizations, such as the World Bank, the UNEP, the UNDP and the GEF. These specialized agencies fulfilled important roles in the managing cooperation on issues in the Caspian Sea region and offered the littoral states the comprehensive economic and technical support needed to establish the Caspian Environmental Program (CEP).