

# **Empirical Signatures of Development Models: A Comparative Analysis of East Asia and the European Union**

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## **Abstract**

Comparative political economy has developed a rich set of typological frameworks to capture cross-national diversity in capitalist development. Approaches such as Varieties of Capitalism (Hall & Soskice 2001), growth models (Baccaro & Pontusson 2016; Baccaro & Blyth 2022), developmental state theory (Johnson 1982; Amsden 1989; Wade 1990), and world-systems analysis (Wallerstein 2004) highlight different mechanisms through which economies specialize, coordinate, and integrate into global markets. Yet these frameworks typically begin from theoretically derived ideal types often based on the close inspection of single countries. By contrast, less is known about how development models manifest empirically under contemporary conditions of intensified regional and global competition and whether the resulting diversity can be successfully captured in a single typology.

Drawing on two recent studies (Heibel, Dominy & Kapeller 2025; Dominy et al. 2025), we examine this question using a consistent empirical strategy applied to two major world regions: East Asia and the European Union. Building on a multidimensional assessment of macroeconomic structures, technological capabilities, and external positions, we identify coherent structural configurations that represent distinct, path-dependent development models within each region. These configurations are interpreted as empirical manifestations of how countries position themselves within regional hierarchies shaped by global competition and integration — from technologically leading cores to dependent peripheries, financial hubs, and intermediate upgrading models.

By applying the same analytical lens to both regions, the presentation illuminates how processes of structural differentiation and locational competition shape developmental trajectories in different institutional and historical contexts, and how such patterns can be systematically identified and compared.

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