

A Comparative Study of the RCEP and the USMCA from the Perspective of International Political Economy: Based on the Analysis of Digital Trade Rulemaking

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Abstract. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) are both emerging free trade agreements, covering the major economies in East Asia and North America respectively. After screening, 24 papers were selected to do a comparative study of RCEP and USMCA. The paper applies the interdependence theory and the dependency theory in the field of international political economy to interpret the logic of rulemaking of the two FTAs. For the RCEP, the key is the growing interdependence (with increasing trade volumes and growing economic gains) between ASEAN countries and other member states. In addition, economic complementarity also influences the interdependence between the ASEAN and other states in East Asia, reinforcing their willingness to deepen this relationship. For the USMCA, the key is the dependency relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. This dependency continues to this day due to the untouchable structural power of the United States, and still forces Mexico to submit to the U.S. willingness to set rules for the USMCA. This paper innovatively introduces theories from the field of international political economy to study the rulemaking of the new FTAs, which provides certain directions for future academic research in the related fields.

Keywords: RCEP, USMCA, Interdependence Theory, Dependency Theory, Digital Trade Rules.

1. Introduction

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a free trade agreement (FTA) initiated by ASEAN countries in 2012, signed after eight years of negotiation and finally came into force on January 1, 2022. Up to now, there are 15 member states in the RCEP, including the ten ASEAN countries and China, Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand, covering nearly half of the world's population and one-third of the trade volume, which is the world's most populous, largest economic and trade scale, and the most promising FTA.

However, the emerging RCEP also faces many challenges. since 2020, the outbreak of the COVID-19 has put the global economy under tremendous downward pressure, and the economic development of developing countries has been seriously hampered. In addition, trade liberalization has been seriously hampered by the rise of trade protectionism in developed countries in recent years, and the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022 and the increasingly severe European debt crisis in recent years have dealt a heavy blow to the world economy and trade, and the RCEP, which officially came into force under such circumstances, is facing a lot of resistance and even threats.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is a FTA signed in the same year as the RCEP. Its predecessor is NAFTA, which has been in operation for 20 years. The official launch of the USMCA has a profound significance against the background of rising trade protectionism in the U.S. and the epidemic causing huge economic downward pressure on countries around the world. At the same time, the birth of the USMCA forms a stark contrast with the RCEP - both are free trade agreements covering both developed and developing countries, with the same huge markets and large populations, but also with many differences. The two also exhibit two very different patterns and dominant forces of regional economic integration.

This paper will go beyond the previous comparative study of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) or Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

(CPTPP) and the RCEP, and will instead focus on the RCEP and the USMCA. Starting from the digital trade rules, this paper elucidates the preferences of different countries' interests reflected in the rules of the two FTAs, and applies the interdependence theory and the dependency theory in the field of international political economy to interpret the logic of rule-making of these two FTAs respectively. Then, from the structural power theory, the paper further explains the internal logic of rulemaking of the two FTAs. This paper innovatively introduces theories from the field of international political economy to study the rulemaking of the new FTAs, which provides certain directions for future academic research in the related fields.

2. Literature Review

Due to the specificity of the RCEP and the USMCA, they have been studied by many scholars. Studies on the RCEP has focused on the following areas: (a. potential economic benefits; (b. the negotiation process of the RCEP and explain it from the perspective of political games and geopolitics; (c. the ASEAN dominance of the RCEP; (d. energy issues or sustainable development issues; (e. the RCEP rule instruments in specific areas.

2.1. Studies on the RCEP

First, about the studies on the RCEP, some scholars have predicted the potential economic benefits of it before its formal entry into force, and they generally agree that the RCEP membership has overall positive economic benefits for developing countries. Using the GTAP (Global Trade Analysis Project) to simulate the macroeconomic effects, the majority of member states will benefit from tariff concessions and receive significant improvements in trade size, economic aggregates, social welfare levels and other indicators after the RCEP comes into effect [1]. In addition, comparing with the existing bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) and multilateral FTAs in East Asia, the economies concerned will be able to find new economic drivers after the completion of the RCEP in terms of three indicators: trade effects, economic benefits and welfare effects [2].

Some scholars focus on analyzing the negotiation process of the RCEP and explain it from the perspective of political games and geopolitics. JEFFREY D. WILSON argues that the RCEP and the TPP objectively constitute a competitive relationship [3]. Coupled with China's active participation in the RCEP and the influence of the U.S. domination of the TPP, the choice between the TPP and the RCEP for different states will mean choosing between two major powers (China and the U.S.) in the Asia-Pacific region, and any choice may be made at the expense of the relationship with the other major power in favor of the other. Min Ye argues that China would prefer to join the TPP out of coercion logic, while it would prefer to join the RCEP out of competition logic [4]. At the same time, the author suggests that the weakening of ASEAN's centrality would make China more inclined to join the RCEP, while the TPP, if it were more inclusive, might also. If the TPP is more inclusive, China may also be more inclined to join the TPP. From the Chinese position, Sheng Bin and Guo Ting combine the perspective of benefit and cost analysis, comparatively analyze the similarities and differences between the RCEP and the TPP, and outline the future path of Asia-Pacific economic integration and analyze China's interest tendency in it [5]. Chen Shumei and Quan Yi argue that the RCEP promoted by the ASEAN will be in strong competition with the TPP [6]. They also discuss the impact of the two paths, the TPP and the RCEP, on the Asia-Pacific economic integration process. Wang Jinqiang focuses on the U.S. joining the TPP to return to the Asia-Pacific, the ASEAN-led construction of the RCEP to counterbalance the influence of the TPP and the U.S.-China game behind the TPP and the RCEP [7]. And he argues that the U.S. joined the TPP to compete for the dominance of economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, while China hopes to join the RCEP to counterbalance the U.S. influence. David Vines analyzes the RCEP in the context of The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a China-led initiative [8]. He argues that China can combine the BRI and the RCEP with a view to promoting Eurasian trade integration, while the TPP is a strong competitor to the BRI and the RCEP and will be a risk factor for the role of the Belt and Road Initiative. Jagannath

P. Panda analyzed the RCEP and the Asia-Pacific regional integration process in the context of geopolitical factors from India's interests and position, summarizing India's interests and possible economic benefits to be reaped [9].

Some scholars have focused on the ASEAN dominance of the RCEP. Yoshifumi Fukunaga, Ikumo Isono analyzed the existing FTAs of ASEAN and the FTAs among the six states that were dialogue partners at the time and found that the five so-called "ASEAN+1" FTAs suffered from inadequate levels of liberalization in the areas of tariffs and services [10]. They also suggest that the TPP and the TPP+1 FTAs are not sufficient to achieve a reasonable level of liberalization in trade and the existence of the TPP and the China-Japan-Korea FTA could challenge the centrality of the ASEAN. Finally, the two scholars offer five recommendations to help the ASEAN address these issues. Kazushi Shimzu studied the historical process of the ASEAN economic integration and analyzed the role of RCEP in the global economy from the perspective of economic development and cooperation within ASEAN [11]. Wang Yuzhu clarifies the framework and objectives of the RCEP, and then points out the challenges of it: the five ASEAN-centered "10+1" FTAs are too different and face the "barrel effect" constraint; the bilateral FTAs among the RCEP participants are insufficient; and the construction of the ASEAN Economic Community is difficult to implement on schedule [12]. The paper also pointed out that there are not enough bilateral FTAs among the participating states of the RCEP, and it is difficult to implement the construction of the ASEAN Economic Community on schedule; the RCEP is a framework for the ASEAN to maintain its "centrality" in the context of the changing cooperation landscape in the Asia-Pacific region.

Meanwhile, some studies have combined the RCEP or the RCEP member states with energy issues or sustainable development issues, with considerable results [13-15].

Besides, A small number of scholars have focused on the RCEP rule instruments in specific areas. Hong, Junjie and Chen, Ming focus on the topic of digital trade rules and compare the RCEP with the USMCA, and make suggestions on how China can comply with and use digital trade rules to promote the development of the local digital economy [16].

2.2. Studies on the USMCA

Second, the studies on the USMCA have focused on the following areas: (a. ecological footprints of the USMCA members [17]; (b. the efficacy of the economic policy uncertainty on tourism demand in the USMCA [18]; (c. Labor protection, environmental protection and public health) [19].

2.3. Research Gap

From the relevant studies, scholars have conducted many studies on the negotiation process of RCEP and the political game behind it, and basically clarified the interests and demands of states in participating in the RCEP negotiations, as well as the game mentality behind it; some other scholars mainly used quantitative analysis and combined with economic analysis models to make predictions on the possible economic benefits of the RCEP. A considerable number of studies have compared the RCEP with the TPP and other FTAs, providing a reference for subsequent studies; some studies have focused on the dominant position of the ASEAN in the RCEP and have systematically reviewed the historical process of ASEAN economic integration. A few scholars also focus on the progress of RCEP on specific issues and the details of specific rules, such as digital trade rules, and conduct comparative studies with USMCA, providing a novel and micro-detailed entry point for research. Relatively few studies have been conducted on USMCA, but several field-specific studies have been generated, which provide a reference for studying the impact of USMCA.

However, the available studies also have the following shortcomings and deficiencies. The existing studies on the RCEP have focused more on economic benefits, negotiation process, political games and geopolitical factors, and relatively less on the actual rule text of the RCEP, and even less on the domain-specific rule text. In terms of comparative studies, although scholars have conducted a lot of comparative studies on the RCEP and other FTAs, they mainly refer to TPP, CPTPP, etc., but less compare the USMCA, which was signed almost at the same time as the RCEP, and the two actually

have a lot of significance for comparative analysis: both are emerging giant FTAs that came into force almost at the same time; both have similar membership composition but very different dominant players (the RCEP is dominated by the ASEAN, the USMCA by the U.S.); both cover the world's major economies. Moreover, most of the existing studies on the RCEP and the USMCA have been conducted from the perspective of other disciplines such as economics, while the perspective of international political economy is relatively absent. The few articles that study the RCEP and the USMCA from the perspective of IPE do not focus on micro issues and specific rules, and even fewer focus on digital trade issues, which proves the importance of writing this paper.

3. Digital Trade Rulemaking of the RCEP and the USMCA

3.1. Comparison of Digital Trade Rules of the RCEP and the USMCA

As emerging FTAs covering major economies in the regions (East Asia and North America), both the RCEP and USMCA encompass almost all areas of trade, the digital trade - which is becoming increasingly important for economic development and technological innovation - is no exception. However, the digital trade rules (which is called “Electronic Commerce” in RCEP) of the two are significantly different, which reflects the respective preferences of their interests.

In a nutshell, the digital trade rules of the RCEP are more inclined to developing member states and provide corresponding protection and support to them. The USMCA, on the other hand, clearly favors developed countries, especially the United States; to a certain extent, its digital trade rules even reflect the increasing trade protectionism of the United States in recent years, which can be supported by the specific content of the rules [16].

Table 1. RCEP’s and USMCA’s Digital Trade Rules Comparing

Contrast Item	RCEP	USMCA
Customs Duties	Article 19.3	Article 12.11
Non-Discriminatory Treatment of Digital Products	Article 19.4	None
Domestic Electronic Transactions Framework	Article 19.5	Article 12.10
Electronic Authentication and Electronic Signatures	Article 19.6	Article 12.6
Online Consumer Protection	Article 19.7	Article 12.7
Personal Information Protection	Article 19.8	Article 12.8
Paperless Trading	Article 19.9	Article 12.5
Principles on Access to and Use of the Internet for Digital Trade	Article 19.10	None
Cross-Border Transfer of Information by Electronic Means	Article 19.11	Article 12.15
Location of Computing Facilities	Article 19.12	Article 12.14
Unsolicited Commercial Electronic Communications	Article 19.13	Article 12.9
Cooperation	Article 19.14	Article 12.4
Cybersecurity	Article 19.15	Article 12.13
Source Code	Article 19.16	None
Interactive Computer Services	Article 19.17	None
Open Government Data	Article 19.18	None
Settlement of Disputes	None	Article 12.16
Dialogue on Electronic Commerce	None	Article 12.17
Transparency	None	Article 12.12

According to the Interactive Computer Services provision of the digital trade rule of the USMCA, no participant shall take or retain measures to treat a supplier or consumer of an interactive computer service as the creator of information content in response to damage related to information stored, processed, transmitted, distributed or made available by that service, except to the extent that the supplier or user developed or created that information in whole or in part [20]. Whereas while the RCEP doesn’t have this provision (see Table 1). Such a rule means that the Internet platforms are not jointly and severally liable for the occurrence of non-IPR infringement by third parties. Besides, the

USMCA states that interactive computer service providers and users have the right to, in good faith, voluntarily restrict others from providing harmful or objectionable material through the computer service, and other member states shall not hold them liable, which facilitates the export of U.S. Internet platforms to foreign countries [16, 20]. Since the U.S. has an advantage in many digital technologies and is more competitive in digital trade, the USMCA rules preserve the competitive advantage of the state and thus show a preference for U.S. interests.

On the contrary, the RCEP is more flexible, with differential treatment for less developed countries (LDCs), reflecting a greater degree of inclusiveness. In the text of Cross-border Transfer of Information by Electronic Means, Electronic Authentication and Electronic Signature, Online Consumer Protection, Unsolicited Commercial Electronic Messages, Location of Computer Facilities and Online Personal Information Protection the RCEP sets up exception clauses for individual states (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar), stating that they “shall not be obliged to apply this paragraph for a period of five years after the date of entry into force of the Agreement” [21]. These rules effectively accommodate the interests of LDCs by giving such states an appropriate transition period and room for development. While in the USMCA, despite of the presence of Mexico, the agreement adopts uniform standards for both types of states in key areas such as source code protection and localized data storage, without valuing the digital divide and giving developing countries the necessary special treatment.

3.2. Analysis of the Rulemaking of the RCEP and the USMCA

3.2.1 Understanding the Rulemaking of the RCEP – Analysis based on Interdependence Theory

To understand the rulemaking of the RCEP, the paper uses interdependence theory to analyze, for the mutual compromise embodied in this rulemaking strongly reflects the interdependence of member states. Since the dominant member in the RCEP is the ASEAN, the analysis focuses on the interdependence between the RCEP members and ASEAN and the extent of such kind of relationship.

According to Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye's study, dependence is a term used to describe a situation in which one is heavily influenced by external factors. To be more specific, interdependence is mutual dependence. Situations marked by reciprocal effects across countries or between actors in various countries are referred to as interdependent in international politics [22]. It is indisputable that there is interdependence between the ASEAN and the RCEP member states, but the crux of the matter is the extent of it. To be more specific, it is the growing interdependence that allowed these states to embrace ASEAN initiatives and to accept trade rules that accommodate less developed countries.

In China, for example, according to the data released by the Chinese government in 2021, the state's bilateral trade with ASEAN was \$8.36 billion in 1991, a figure that rose to \$685.28 billion by 2020, with an average annual growth rate of 16.5 percent. The data is 3.4 percentage points higher than China's average annual growth rate in external trade over the same period. Additionally, between 1993 and 2020, China's exports of electromechanical goods to ASEAN climbed from 28.9% to 58.3%, and the state has also been boosting its exports of cell phones, ships, and automobiles. [23]. Such a huge volume of trade in goods has reaped huge benefits for both ASEAN and China, and at the same time has deepened their interdependence. By the year of 2022, ASEAN has become China's top trading partner for the third consecutive time, and China has been ASEAN's top trading partner for more than a decade. The huge trade exchange has deepened their economic interdependence, and the good trade growth has reinforced their common will to deepen the interdependence.

In addition, economic complementarity is an important factor influencing economic interdependence. In general, the stronger the degree of economic complementarity, the higher the degree of interdependence [24]. The strong economic complementarity between ASEAN and China, and the fact that this complementarity maintains a growing trend, likewise strengthens their determination to deepen interdependence. Compared to ASEAN states located in the tropics, China has a relative lack of certain natural resources, such as tropical forest resources, marine resources, agriculture and mineral resources. This difference in resource endowment gives economic complementarity between China and the ASEAN. On the other hand, the differences in the level of

productivity development and industrial structure between China and the ASEAN states also contribute to the increasing complementarity of their economies [24]. Some scholars argue that economic complementarities exist between China and the ASEAN even in the same industrial sectors, such as in some labor-intensive industries. A study focusing on the economic and trade exchanges between China and Indonesia shows that, according to the transferability of international comparative advantages, the space for economic complementarities between the two states is bound to expand with the development of their productivity, the restructuring of their industries, the increase of mutual investments, and the expansion of their trade policies, i.e., by improving their international division of labor and trade status. In sum, the existence and strengthening of economic complementarities has deepened the degree of economic interdependence between the two and has contributed to the willingness to strengthen cooperation, which has led China to accept ASEAN's initiative to accept the provisions of rules that have special protection for less developed countries. As for the motivation of other member states to participate in the RCEP negotiations and to accept the RCEP rules, the motivation is similar.

3.2.2 Understanding the Rulemaking of the USMCA – Analysis based on Dependency Theory

When it comes to the Rulemaking of the USMCA, dependency theory is used to analyze, for, as noted earlier, the USMCA's digital trade rulemaking clearly demonstrates a preference for U.S. economic interests, which reflects the dependency relationship between member states. Focus of this paper is on the dependency relationship between the United States and Mexico.

Since the discovery of the American continent by Columbus, Spanish soon arrived in Mexico and made this ancient empire their colony. Since then, Mexico has been trapped in a colonial dependency. Commercial capital and colonial sovereignty together dominated the economic relations between Spain and the colonies. By monopolizing the land, minerals, and human resources of the colonies in Mexico and thus monopolizing trade, Spain promoted the economic dependence of the colonies on their own suzerainty. Spain strictly restricted agricultural production in Mexico, not allowing the cultivation of grapes and olives, which posed competition to Spain, but only basic crops such as barley, wheat, and rice, while the colonial farm owners were allowed to grow tobacco, sugar cane, and cotton, which could make huge profits. Silver and gold mining are in even worse shape. Take example of the Guanajuato and Zacatecas mines in Mexico, the economic surplus that Mexico lost through the export of silver and gold between 1760 and 1809—barely half a century—has been calculated using data from Alexander von Humboldt's previously cited Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain. This surplus is now thought to be worth approximately 5 billion current dollars. There were no more significant mines in Latin America during Humboldt's period. The Valenciana mine in Guanajuato produced 36 times more silver around the turn of the century and generated 33 times as much profit for its investors, according to the famous German scholar who compared it to the Himmelsfurst mine in Saxony, which was then the richest in all of Europe [25]. Similar manifestations of colonial dependency abounded during this period.

In 1821, Mexico became independent of Spain. But in the war with the United States, Mexico has been losing, and finally even ceded a full half of the country. The contrasting strengths and weaknesses of the war soon affected the economic interactions between the two states. Forced by the strong military power of the United States, in this unequal economic and trade exchanges, Mexico had to choose to compromise. In order to promote the country's industrial development, the United States urgently needs energy mineral resources. As a result, Mexico's land, mineral and oil resources are heavily in the hands of the Americans. Marines landed everywhere to "defend the lives and interests of U.S. citizens"—the same holy-water mantra that would be used to deodorize the crime in the Dominican Republic in 1965. U.S. interests also grabbed control of properties, customs houses, treasuries, and administrations [25]. In addition to energy resources, Mexico's agricultural cultivation is not immune to. Since then, Mexico has fallen into economic dependence on the United States.

In essence, today, such dependence has not disappeared, but have taken on a new form. The continuation of this dependence can be seen in the preference for U.S. interests displayed in the USMCA's digital trade rules. The USMCA is developed from the NAFTA. It is undeniable that the

operation of the NAFTA led by the United States has accelerated Mexico's economic transformation and promoted the country's export growth by leaps and bounds. But at the same time, it also makes Mexico's trade deficit for a long time, also failed to solve the problem of employment of Mexican population, failed to effectively promote the income growth of Mexican residents, and even indirectly led to the worsening of Mexico's income distribution inequality and poverty [26]. Such a situation is evidence of the continuation of the dependency relationship between the United States and Mexico – Mexico has to rely on the U.S.-led process of North American integration and trade liberalization to drive its trade growth and economic transformation, but due to the unequal status of the two states and the gap in competitive trade power, the gap between the Mexico and the U.S. economic power has grown in the process, and the living standards of the Mexican people haven't improved significantly. It is at this point that Mexico compromised on the USMCA rules, which are dominated by the United States.

The strategic importance of digital trade has been recognized by states around the world in recent years. The Mexican government has been making the strengthening of digital industry an important national strategy, hoping to boost economic growth through digital service trade. But the USMCA's digital trade rules clearly favor the United States and the Mexico's own digital industry system is unreasonable, making it difficult for Mexico to achieve the desired goals in the future of digital trade. Mexico's digital industry has a very serious monopoly problem. For instance, by 2021, Mexico's largest telecommunications company is the America Móvil this enterprise accounted for a market share of 383.32 billion Mexican pesos, more than the total amount of the nine largest telecommunications companies behind it [27] (See Fig 1). Such a monopoly severely inhibits the vitality of Mexico's digital industry, making Mexico's vulnerability in the digital trade competition increasingly evident.

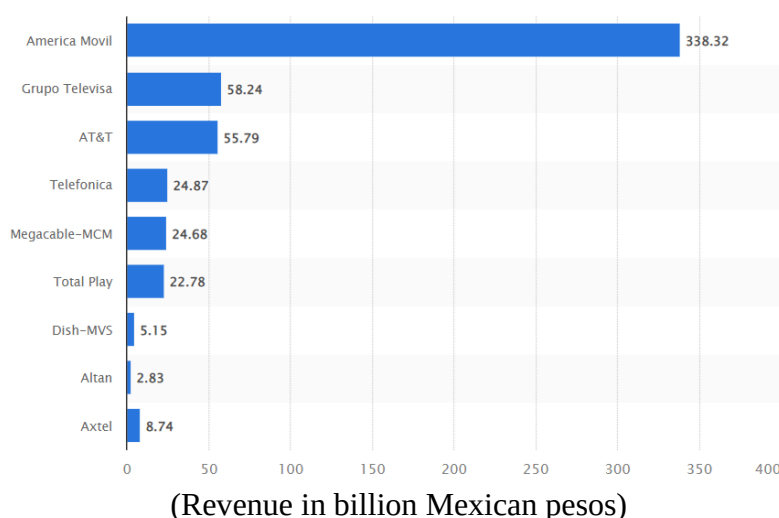


Figure 1. Mexico's top 9 telecommunication companies and market share in 2021 [27]

From the standpoint of developing countries, the digital trade rules of the RCEP will allow the ASEAN states to have more space and better conditions for development than Mexico.

4. Discussion

4.1. Discussion of the Difference of the Rulemaking

After the above analysis, the reasons why the RCEP and USMCA rules have different interest preferences have been explained. Moreover, the difference in rulemaking between the RCEP and the USMCA essentially shows the difference in the power structure of the two trading systems. Obviously, in the RCEP the ASEAN is the dominant player, while in the USMCA it is the U.S. The Crux of the matter is what makes them the dominant player in the trading system. To explain this, the introduction of structural power theory is necessary.

In general, structural power can be found in four distinct but connected structures: the ability to exert control over the security of others against violence; the ability to determine the system of production of goods and services; and the ability to determine the structure of finance and credit, which (in all but the most rudimentary economies) enables the acquisition of purchasing power without the need to work or pay taxes and the ability to influence knowledge and information [28]. Susan Strange's article in 1987 has amply demonstrated that the U.S. is at the top of the world in all four of these areas. And as Susan tries to illustrate in her article, the U.S. hegemonic power remains unshakable. To this day, this situation has not fundamentally changed, at least for the States of the Latin America, which are described as peripheral states in Prebisch's center-periphery thesis. Thus, it is not surprising that the dependency relationship between the U.S. and Mexico continues, and it is because of this that the USMCA rulemaking shows such a clear preference for U.S. interests.

As for the RCEP, what is clear is that there is no such state in East Asia that is dominant in all four power structures, which drives the interdependence of East Asian states. Over the years, numerous FTAs have been formed in East Asia, the most prominent of which is the 'ASEAN+' FTAs between ASEAN and other states. East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN+3, and ASEAN+1 FTAs are all initiatives of the ASEAN-led East Asian Cooperation. East Asian regional cooperation was carried out in a multi-layered manner, with ASEAN serving as a key axis. In reaction to the political and economic changes in East Asia, each regional cooperation has been established with its own goals and participants. As a result, regional cooperation in East Asia has taken many different forms. The hub of this East Asian regional collaboration was ASEAN [11]. Thus, ASEAN's dominant position in the East Asian trade liberalization process is supported, which also explains ASEAN's dominant position in the RCEP.

4.2. Limitations

First, since the RCEP and the USMCA have been in effect for a relatively short period of time, there is a lack of sufficient data to support them, and if a large amount of data were available in the future, it would provide stronger evidence of their different interest preferences. Second, in analyzing the interdependence between the ASEAN and other members, the current study does not further examine the characteristics of the relationship (e.g., vulnerability, inequality, etc.), which relies on later studies to supplement it. Last, the paper does not further analyze the dynamics of the dependency relationship between the U.S. and Mexico, and it is hoped that future research will fill this gap.

5. Conclusion

Starting from the digital trade rules of the USMCA and the RCEP, this paper analyzes the differences between them and the differences in the interest preferences of the two FTAs' rulemakings. Subsequently, the paper explains the logic of RCEP and USMCA rulemaking using interdependence theory and dependency theory, respectively. For the RCEP, the key is the growing interdependence (with increasing trade volumes and growing economic gains) between ASEAN countries and other member states. In addition, economic complementarity also influences the interdependence between the ASEAN and other states in East Asia, reinforcing their willingness to deepen this relationship. For the USMCA, the key is the dependency relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. This dependency continues to this day due to the untouchable structural power of the United States, and still forces Mexico to submit to the U.S. willingness to set rules for the USMCA. This paper focuses on the issue of rulemaking for new types of FTAs and innovatively applies theories in the field of international political economy to study this topic, which is an exploration of the future study of rulemaking for FTAs in the field of international political economy.

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