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The EU's norm diffusion in the promotion of regional integration in East Asia.

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Abstract

This paper examines the attempts by the EU to diffuse and transfer processes of regional integration “from the inside out,” that is, it focuses on the EU as an agent of diffusion in integration-promotion. It examines the EU’s efforts to promote and diffuse its own experience of regional integration in East Asia. It seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the EU as an integration-entrepreneur and integration-exporter. It suggests that integration is a distinctively EU norm that has been promoted – albeit inconsistently - by the Commission and that has been received with both contestation and admiration in East Asia. It suggests that EU norms of integration promotion have resonated more among some elites in East Asia than among others and that Asian scholars and elites are divided in their perception of this European ‘idea’. It examines how and under what conditions the EU is a promoter of integration and of inter-regionalism, in the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), and in its influence on the Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Eminent Persons Group Report (2007) and the ASEAN Charter (2008). The diffusion mechanisms that are utilized by the EU in this context will be explored – such as dialogue and consultation mechanisms and socialization (as mechanisms of diffusion) in ASEM, the use of the multi-annual regional program of the EU and the ASEAN-EU Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS). The role of compliance or alignment via agreements and dialogues with ASEAN and through ASEM is examined. Finally, the paper illustrates that the centrality of the EU in much of the scholarly analysis of comparative regional integration has added to the perception of Euro-centrism in EU – and particularly Commission – rhetoric and among integration scholars, and the resultant problems related to emulation are examined.

1. Introduction.

This paper examines the attempts by the European Union (EU) to diffuse and transfer its processes of regional integration “from the inside out”. It examines the EU as an agent of diffusion in integration-promotion. In examining the EU’s efforts to promote and to diffuse its own experience of regional integration to regional bodies in East Asia, it seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the EU as an integration-entrepreneur and integration-exporter. The paper suggests that this promotion of integration is a distinctively EU norm, which is not advanced by individual member states and that that has been promoted – albeit inconsistently - by the European Commission. This has been received with both contestation and admiration in East Asia by scholars and policymakers. The paper suggests that EU norms of integration promotion have resonated more among some elites in East Asia than among others and that Asian scholars and elites are divided in their perception of this European ‘idea’.

The paper examines how and under what conditions the EU is a promoter of integration and of inter-regionalism, in the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), and in the influence on the Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Eminent Persons Group Report (2006) and the ASEAN Charter (2008). The diffusion mechanisms that are utilised by the EU in this context are briefly explored – such as dialogue and consultation mechanisms and socialization (as mechanisms of diffusion) in ASEM, the use of the multi-annual regional program of the EU and the ASEAN-EU Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS). The complex role of compliance or alignment via agreements and dialogues with ASEAN and through ASEM is examined.

Finally, the paper points out that the centrality of the EU in much of the scholarly analysis of comparative regional integration has not necessarily been advantageous for scholars who seek to compare regional integration across geographical areas. This has been an impediment to the development of a level playing field in comparative analysis and has led to the perception of a form of Euro-centrism in the rhetoric of both the EU – and particularly the Commission - and of some integration scholars. The resultant problems related to emulation of the EU experience as a paradigm are examined.

2. Scholarly Context

Börzel and Risse (2009: 5) argue that European ideas are being emulated across the globe, including in ‘the newest attempts at regional integration in Asia’. They correctly assert that some European ideas find more resonance than others. Indeed, not all ideas exported as European are distinctively European, even if they are being diffused or emulated as such. The EU’s attempts at regional integration norms diffusion has yet to be proven a success, and an adequate and accurate means of measurement has yet to be designed. What is currently evident is a burgeoning discussion across the Asia Pacific regarding the EU’s integration experience, particularly in the wake of recent Australian and Japanese proposals for an Asian Community (Rudd, 2008; Soesastro, 2009; Tay, 2009; White, 2008). Börzel and Risse (2009: 5) suggest further that European integration ‘is itself embedded in and responds to larger global diffusion processes – economically, politically and culturally’. This is certainly the case, as the EU attempts to manage the process of globalisation, especially since the Laeken European Council, which stated that

'Europe needs to shoulder its responsibilities in the governance of globalisation. The role it has to play is that of a power ... seeking to set globalisation within a moral framework' (European Council, 2001).

Börzel and Risse (2009: 5) correctly point out that the process of the diffusion of ideas is not 'free of conflict, resistance and politics'. Not only are those who address the EU's efforts to diffuse values, norms and rules obliged to cope with heterogeneity and diversity, but as Börzel and Risse recognise, European norms may not often resonate with the domestic structures of their recipients. This paper suggests that there is a two-fold reaction to European norms of regional integration (RI) – resistance and admiration. While many Asian – and Asia Pacific - elites and scholars may admire the experience of peace and stability in the European region and attempts to maintain it in the European neighbourhood, there is a deep and persistent insistence, over many years, among both scholars and policymakers, on the EU experience as a model or yardstick for Asian regionalism, in whatever form it might take (Acharya 2007) and particularly for the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Norms can be understood as the collective understandings of the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity and in a given context (Finnemore/Sikkink 1998). Norms, in this usage, are shared and social and concern behaviour. Actors may adhere to a norm either because they have internationalised it or because they feel pressure to accept the norm (Elgström/Jönsson (Eds.) 2005). Further, actors may subscribe to a norm – or align to or comply with it – as they have internalised it into their mindset or mental map of actorness and international relations. Internalisation is as important, then, as internationalisation of a norm.

There is a burgeoning literature on the EU as a civilian power and normative actor (Manners 2002/Sjursen 2006/Hyde-Price 2006), with explorations of conceptualizations of smart power and ethical power. The EU has been examined as a superpower (Leonard, 2005), a civilian, or, more recently, normative, power (Duchene 1972/Manners 2002), a soft power (Nye 2004) with pertinent questions as to the nature of EU power (e.g. Sjursens 2006).

The EU seeks to promote peace, democracy, human rights and multilateralism, and to strengthen democracy, good governance and the rule of law. It seeks to combat torture, abolish the death penalty and support the International Criminal Court, for example. It attempts to combat racism and discrimination. It seeks to be a normative actor in the areas of environmental protection and climate change (Falkner 2007) and to promote cooperation in multilateral and international fora. Nye (2004) suggests that the EU's emerging soft power constitutes a positive force for solving global problems. The EU regards its promotion of democracy and of human rights as helping to advance shared values. These all form part of the EU's norms diffusion. They are received in different ways externally and with varying responses. For example, Keukeleire and MacNaughton (2008: 224) argue that the legitimacy of the EU's emphasis on human rights norms has been contested, for example in EU-ASEAN relations and Asia Europe Meetings (ASEM), where the EU is regarded as over-emphasising human rights to the detriment of stability and human security.

The EU is using 'soft power' in its promotion of regionalism. Soft power is, according to Nye (2004), the principal way to impose power in international relations, as it provides an incentive to the aggressors to change and to employ cooperation as opposed to using force or hard power. The EU as a civilian power firstly uses economic power to achieve its goals and secondly places its emphasis on diplomacy and cooperation in solving international problems and, thirdly, is willing to utilise legally binding supranational institutions such as the UN and the Kyoto Protocol to achieve international progress (Manners 2002). Thus, the EU executes its soft and civilian power by using, for example, economic sanctions and conditionality to impose its norms and values on third countries.

From outside the EU, most studies regard the EU as a rather successful economic entity but may not understand the transformative nature of the EU in political or normative terms (Murray 2010; 2009a). Jachtenfuchs (2001: 256) has observed that 'the most exciting and most important aspect of European integration – namely the transformation of traditional nation-states into constituent units of a new transnational political system that is not going to become a state – is largely overlooked from the outside'.

There is little scholarly analysis to date of the *long-term* effects of the EU's conscious efforts at norms-exporting, and especially integration-exporting. In particular, there is a black box regarding the recipients of the EU's integration norms in East Asia. Further, the scholarly literature on the EU's relationship with Asia has tended to neglect the *receiving* aspect of norms exporting and integration norms-exporting in particular. There is a clear EU desire to increase Asian interest in, and knowledge of, the Union. This is combined with the desire to promote interregional relations and develop political dialogue, for example in ASEM.

There is a wealth of literature on EU-Asia relations focussing on trade, development aid, foreign and security aspects and human rights (Fort/Webber 2006; Wiessala 2006; Smith 2008). In literature examining regional integration in a comparative context, some scholars have tended to regard the EU as their main focus and dependent variable, as the most advanced and progressive example of regional integration in the world (Murray 2008a, although see Nakamura Ed. 2007).

3. Policy context

The EU's stated objectives in East Asia are set out in four major policy documents – the 1994 (CEC 1994), 2001 and 2003 strategies, regional programmes (European Commission 2007a, 2007b, 2007c) and 2007 foreign policy Guidelines. The European Commission (2001) *Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnerships* sought to establish a 'sound policy framework' and to provide for institutional structures for the EU's relations with Asia over the next decade. The 2001 *Strategy* focused on six dimensions: strengthening EU engagement with Asia in the political and security fields; strengthening EU-Asia two-way trade and investment relations; contributing effectively to reduce poverty in the region; helping promote the spread of democracy, good governance and the rule of law across the region; in turn building global partnerships with key Asian partners (in combating global challenges as well as in international organizations); and, finally, promoting further awareness between the two regions. These continue to form the basis of the EU approach to East Asia and are complemented by an

assessment of the EU's strategic interests in East Asia which seeks 'a more developed, coherent and focused foreign and security policy in East Asia, the purpose of which is to secure and advance the EU interest' (Council of the EU 2007) .

The European Commission (EC) and ASEAN commenced formal Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations in May 2007, seeking to facilitate trade between the two regional bodies. The EC and ASEAN have since met seven times to further develop the details of the negotiations. Six expert groups were set up for services and establishment/investment, rules of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, technical barriers to trade (TBT), customs and trade facilitation and dispute settlement. However, the ASEAN states did not consider that the FTA represented their views sufficiently and so, to allow for reflection on the appropriate format for the FTA negotiations, the 7th Meeting of the Joint Committee for the ASEAN-EC FTA, held in March 2009 in Kuala Lumpur, agreed to take a pause in the negotiations as not all ASEAN member countries were ready to make commitments to the proposed FTA, although both sides have since signaled in May 2009 their intention to continue the negotiations (ASEAN/EC 2009).

In response to the pause, the EC officially welcomes member states of ASEAN to push for bilateral FTAs. This strategic move from the EC of offering bilateral FTAs to some countries is based on an expectation that, once one country signs, others will be more inclined to consider a FTA when they perceive the benefits to neighbouring countries in the region. Thus, in a sense, the EC is using the power of attraction by the means of bilateral relations to push for regional compliance in a regional FTA.

4. Diffusion and transfer of regional integration “from the inside out”.

This section examines the EU's efforts to promote and diffuse its own experience of regional integration to East Asia. There is a research lacuna concerning the role of the EU as an actor that promotes regionalization (De Lombaerde and Schulz, 2009) although a pattern of diffusion of functional integration attempts is evident in EU-ASEAN specific projects and some normative aspects in political dialogue.

Keukeleire and MacNaughton (2008: 223) point to the shaping of a distinct international identity of the EU as a values-driven normative power, and this is evident in interviews with Commission officials who stated that 'the EU is very definitely a value-driven global actor' and that 'EU international ambitions are going to be value-driven'. The EU emphasis on values is evident in a recent statement that 'Europe is a Union of values. That is why we have a responsibility to play an important role in the world. There can be no future for this world without many of our values' (Van Rompuy, 2009).

It is important to be aware that, in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the EU as an integration-entrepreneur and integration-exporter, Europe has not regarded East Asia as a priority in its external relations or foreign policy. The EU is not a hard power in the East Asia region, unlike the US and neither is it a soft power in the same way as the US. Where it differs normatively from the US is in its attempt to export and promote regional integration as a distinctively EU norm. No single EU member state seeks to do this. Neither does any other power involved in the East Asian region, although recently the

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (2008) has advanced the idea of a more coherent Asia Pacific regional body.

The EU engages with East Asia in both reactive and pro-active ways. It advances regionalism as a distinctively EU norm and has developed the functionalist objectives of this norm in an incremental manner. Further, the EU experience has endured as a model over time. The EU promotes regionalism, then, as both a norm and as a standard in East Asia, in a pro-active manner. It actively promotes this through inter-regionalism in the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), for example. It also does so through its involvement in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) security architecture. The need for the EU to come to terms with the rise of Asia (implying a reactive perspective) is recognised as important if the EU is to 'live up to our global responsibilities and consolidate our way of life'. Six contexts are presented for this engagement imperative. Firstly, Asia is 'home to world giants'; secondly Asia accounts for nearly a third of EU trade flows; thirdly, in security and peace building the EU's soft power has led the EU to play a key role in several countries, with success in Aceh (Indonesia), and a key role in the fight against pandemics and in disaster relief. Fourthly, the EU engages with Asian global and multilateral efforts to jointly face common challenges, in particular climate change, migration, and the financial crisis and, fifthly, Asia is still home to two-thirds of the world's poor and the EU is a major donor of development assistance and humanitarian aid. Finally, the EU fully supports regional integration and interregionalism (ASEAN, ASEM, ARF) where it has a particular added value (Ruche, 2008, 10). The EU involvement in East Asia is thus across several policy domains and societal contexts, and as part of its strategies of interregionalism, multilateralism and globalisation.

There has been an evolution of the EU's regionalising impulse in East Asia. This is seen in the 1994 *Asia Strategy* (CEC 1994) and the competition with East Asian Tigers. The rise of Asia, the development of ASEAN and the increased importance of the EU as an important international power and influence, through external relations, the importance of the euro and Common Foreign and Security Policy all constitute reasons for the EU to become more involved in East Asia over the last 15 years. The development of the EU as an international actor was parallel with the development of regionalism and inter-regionalism promotion. The EU's norms diffusion is described by Commission officials interviewed. While one suggested that 'there is always a certain attraction on our side with regional integration processes and we feel that it is interesting trying to see where we can engage and develop closer relationships with regional integration groups', another recognised that ASEAN interest in the EU experience is for 'different reasons than the reasons why the EU integrated.' Another noted that 'We think that the better ASEAN integrates, or East Asia integrates, the better it is for the rest of the world.'

ASEAN-EU Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS).

The EU seeks to support economic and other types of integration in ASEAN. It provides for programmes and training and visits to Brussels of ASEAN and national officials on a range of economic integration issues (Martin, 2009). The EU's support for regional integration in ASEAN is evident in the ASEAN-EU Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS), which emphasises that the EU and ASEAN have worked together for

some 30 years and that, during that time, the EC (1995) has ‘increasingly recognised the positive role economic integration can play among developing countries’. In 2003, the Commission produced a further Communication entitled “A New Partnership with South East Asia”, with a view to revitalising the EU’s relations with ASEAN and ASEAN Member Countries (AMC) by *promoting policy dialogue, providing expertise in regional integration, promoting regional trade and investment relations and reinforcing inter-regional economic ties*, amongst others (my emphasis) (ASEAN, 2009).

Coherent norms diffusion?

However, the EU cannot be regarded as a comprehensive or consistent normative power or a norms diffuser within East Asia, when it is not coherent in its general policy approach to East Asia (Cameron 2008; Murray/Berryman/Matera 2008) and when it appears to impose its human rights norms in agreements without the agreement of its interlocutors. A great deal of its involvement in East Asia is in development aid. However, the EU attempts to move beyond development assistance by establishing Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) in order to ensure a more equal partnership as opposed to one partner providing aid for the other (EC, 2007d). The progress of the negotiations has been slow, with some reluctance evident amongst the Asian states with regard to the need to accept the EU’s essential elements in the document such as the rule of law and human rights clauses (in the negotiations with Thailand and Vietnam). Thus, in this sense, there is a clear reluctance in the ASEAN states to accept EU norms set out in the PCAs. Recently, however, the first PCA was signed with Indonesia (Council of the EU 2009a) and both functionalist and normative language was in evidence, in reference to a new era, ‘based on shared principles such as equality, mutual respect, mutual benefit, democracy, rule of law and human rights’, while the agreement is intended to strengthen political, economic and sectoral cooperation across a wide range of policy fields. These include trade, environment, energy, science and technology and good governance, as well as tourism and culture, migration, counter terrorism and the fight against corruption and organized crime.

This new development of attempting to develop PCAs could well be recognition that other strategies might not be successful in their entirety. It has been noted that the main limitation of the country and regional ‘strategy papers’ has been ‘that they are rather guiding the strategy in development cooperation and have no political basis as such’ (Ruche, 2008, 11).

Why then, does the EU promote regionalism in general, and specifically in East Asia? The first reason is the desire to maximise EU influence by shaping interlocutors’ regional architecture. Secondly there is the desire to facilitate a greater ease of engagement with other regions; to secure support from other regions in multilateral negotiations such as the WTO; and to influence the shape and direction of global governance. The EU official position is that the European Commission (2009b) supports regional integration in Asia. It clarifies, with reference to the policy and model contexts:

Further integration inside the Asia-Pacific region is a means of supporting development and growth, and reducing per capita income disparities within the

region. In this context, the lessons that can be drawn from the EU's extensive and unique experience with regional integration are highly relevant for Asia.

A European Commission (2007b) report on the EU's Regional Strategy in Asia states that regional cooperation could facilitate development and a means to deal with common problems and globalisation challenges.

5. Understanding the EU as an integration-entrepreneur and integration-exporter.

Integration is a distinctively EU norm that has been promoted – albeit inconsistently - by the Commission and that has been received with both contestation and admiration in East Asia. The lack of a single institutional framework for foreign policy, to date, and of a single normative framework or framework for norms diffusion remains a challenge for the EU. Further, there is an inconsistency in its diffusion of its human rights norms, for example, with far more consistency regarding opposition to the death penalty and far less coherence or emphasis on minority rights (Keukeleire and MacNaughton, 2008: 166ff). Although the EU advances regionalism as a norm in ASEAN, there is no single European model and no single type of integration actually being promoted by the Commission, for example. In political terms, the model advanced by the EU encompasses democratisation programs; human rights protection; minority rights; the charter of fundamental rights; peace-enhancing, peace-making contributions and cross-border cooperation. The idea of the EU as a laboratory is explored by many scholars. One, who participated in a survey I conducted on EU-Asia relations, suggested:

European integration and the EU in particular are extremely useful as laboratories, i.e. as a means to observe processes and learn from mistakes as well as successes. However, the EU is not very successful in the generation of common values that are not shared with other Western countries at anything other than a superficial level. Also, to the extent that it has one, the European social model ...is largely non-transferable outside EU political cultures. (Survey response).

Success as integration promoter?

A few caveats are in order in an examination of the ways that the EU supports regionalism and inter-regional dialogue. Firstly, the EU's regional dimension is considerably overshadowed by the desire to engage with China and also by the individual approaches adopted by individual member states. A second issue is that there is a distinctively self-reflexive element to the EU's pronouncements. A third challenge for scholars and for interlocutors is that, in promoting an EU model, some in the EU regard it as a path to transformation of the East Asian region. Yet the fact remains that hard security is a first order concern for East Asia in the relationship with the US. A final issue is the relative lack of coherence in the EU's approach to the East Asian region. The coherence problem is also evident in the way that the EU presents a dominant narrative of regionalism promotion at some times and one of human rights promotion or economic integration at others. A further issue is that there is evidence of a spread of the EU's policies across a broad spectrum – trade, development aid, migration, security, humanitarian assistance, norms entrepreneurship and governance promotion, which can lead both analysts and interlocutors to conclude that the EU might be too thinly spread

over policies and the enormous Asian region. There is little evidence of analysis of the effectiveness of the EU's strategy as a regional entrepreneur, although the APRIS has been assessed by the Commission (Martin, 2009, APRIS reports).

Finally, the EU combines governance norms with regulatory norms in its approaches to the rest of the world. In the case of East Asia, it seeks to export its trade regulatory practices and norms. At the same time, it is also actively promoting regional integration, using its experience as a model - what Sally (2007: 8) refers to as 'another vehicle for regulatory export'.

5. East Asian Responses

EU norms of integration promotion have resonated more among some elites in East Asia than among others. Asian scholars and elites are divided in their perception of this European 'idea'. The EU experience of regional integration is in stark contradistinction to that of ASEAN, particularly in regard to sovereignty and the maintenance of intergovernmentalism. The pooling of sovereignty and the increasing use of qualified majority voting in the decision-making process are two aspects of the EU model of regionalism that makes it unique. The pooling of sovereignty in the East Asian region is currently unlikely for two main reasons - firstly, ASEAN states' recent independence from their colonial past, and, secondly, the unwillingness of the northern states to surrender their dominance and political influence in the region. Furthermore, the use of consensual decision-making is directly linked with the East Asian values of non-interference in domestic affairs. Hence, the unwillingness to surrender sovereignty and the respect of non-interference hinders further development of institutionalisation in East Asia. Wheatley (2009) recently pointed out that 'Asia is not about to set up an Asian Monetary Fund or sacrifice its sacrosanct principle of non-interference to create the institutional basis for anything that looks like a fledgling European Community'. Park and Wyplosz (2009, 134) contend that East Asian policymakers often refer to Europe as a benchmark, if not a blueprint. Yet, they argue, 'Europe's way is not directly transferable to East Asia'.

Some third countries perceive the EU as a multi-actor entity, with many voices and a problem of policy inconsistency. While it may well constitute a model for some business elites (Tanaka, 2008) it is predominantly perceived as an economic actor, rather than as a soft power (Chaban, 2008). There are some who regard the EU as a difficult interlocutor, which is both over-regulated and arrogant (Murray 2005). Although the ASEAN Eminent Persons Group (2008) regarded the EU with considerable interest, there is also a perception that the EU is distant from, and uninterested in, Asia (von Hofman 2007; Tanaka 2008) or not relevant to the Asian experience (ADB 2006).

The problems of the EU in seeking to achieve policy coherence, especially in East Asia have been noted (Berryman/Matera/Murray, 2008; von Hofman 2007). Some third countries, including in East Asia, regard the EU as an actor that lacks strategic vision on international issues, and therefore not the ideal partner. '[A]ccording to several Southeast Asian members, Europe should first of all resolve its own foreign policy commitment and

leadership questions if it wants to be an effective and active partner of the ARF' (von Hofman, 2007: 189).

East Asian scholars and governmental elites are divided in their perception of the European promotion of regionalism. There is little understanding of the norms reception by the recipients of this promotion of European integration in East Asia, although transnational research reveals that the EU is regarded primarily as an economic actor and a powerful influence on economic agendas in multilateralism (Chaban and Holland (Eds.) 2008).

The ASEAN EPG stated in its recent report that it had visited Brussels, 'to study the integration experience and problems' in the EU, 10-11 July 2006 and they regarded the study visit as providing the EPG with 'a better understanding of these issues as ASEAN contemplates its own integration'. Although the EU is not referred to explicitly in its recommendations, the report refers to the fact that ASEAN economies are growing and are now more inter-linked and that this entails the 'need for greater political commitment to realise the vision of an ASEAN Community'. Among its recommendations are that ASEAN leaders meet more frequently, in order to 'give greater political impetus to ASEAN's community building' (ASEAN EPG, 2006: 4). They proposed re-naming the ASEAN Summit the ASEAN Council, meeting twice a year; the formation of three Ministerial-level Councils to oversee the three key aspects of building an ASEAN Community (political-security, economic, and socio-cultural) and the creation of a Single Market with free movement of goods, ideas and skilled talent along with efforts to harmonise regional economic policies. It also echoed the two—or multi-speed Europe or variable geometry concept in the EU in its proposal for an "ASEAN minus X" or "2 plus X" formula of 'flexible participation' situations, in order to assist ASEAN cohesiveness (ASEAN EPG, 2006: 18).

Borzel and Risse (2009) illustrate that actors borrow ideas in order to improve their performance (emulation) in comparison to others and that ideas may become "contagious" under conditions of uncertainty, policy failure and dissatisfaction with the status quo, rather than external pressure. Actors look to others for policies and rules that effectively solved similar problems elsewhere and are transferable into the domestic context. The Asian Financial crisis of 1996-7 and recent concern about the rise of China and the effectiveness of ASEAN have featured in debates in East Asia regarding the need for increased and more formalised regionalism, some drawing on the experience of other regional entities such as the EU.

Tanaka (2008) summarises some East Asian perspectives as ranging from those who greatly admire the EU experience and see it as a yardstick for a much-needed East Asian Community and those who emphasise the diversity of Asian economic, historical and political experiences. There is considerable debate regarding the desire for an East Asian community. For example, Tay has commented that socialising the states 'to a greater sense of regionalism is a long haul and a difficult undertaking; one that ASEAN takes seriously' (Tay 2009).

A frank assessment of the Asian response to the EU's attempts at norms-diffusions is presented below:

in the eyes of some Asian countries, the EU often adopts a rather sanctimonious and preaching attitude towards human rights. Double standards are regularly mentioned. So the EU should not take for granted that the advance of [a] western-style model of democracy, liberalism and secularism is assured, or even is a wise objective (Ruche 2008: 12).

The issue of the EU linking its policies in a normative manner has been criticised by Sally (2007: 13), who, interestingly, also refers to preaching:

The EU should refrain from linking trade to its all-embracing non-trade goals, such as democracy, human rights, the environment, cultural diversity and sustainable development... These issues should be discussed on separate tracks. Linking them to bilateral trade issues makes the EU look politically correct and preachy, constantly pandering to its anti-market NGO and other constituencies. It also gets Chinese backs up.

The question remains whether there is clear and long lasting norms diffusion by the EU in the East Asia. A trenchant critique has been made of the EU in East Asia. Robles (2008) has argued that the EU is not a success as an international actor in its relationship with ASEAN, arguing that, by 2007, the two conditions set by the EU for free trade agreement negotiations, namely, a convergence between EU and ASEAN regulations and, secondly the successful completion of WTO negotiations, had not been fulfilled. Further, the EU's norms of human rights and good governance were severely undermined by the fact that the Commission made no attempt to evaluate ASEAN's human rights record and democratic credentials, he argues, because had it done so it would have realized that ASEAN lacked regional human rights mechanisms. He regards the EU as a failure as an international actor because it is not able to promote what was effectively human rights norms diffusion (Robles 2008: 553). It is noteworthy, however, that recently, ASEAN established the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. The EU response was that it looks forward to 'continuing working in partnership with ASEAN on human rights issues, and stands ready to offer assistance and share experiences in this field, including in the further development of the AICHR'.

6. Conditions to promote integration and inter-regionalism

The EU promotes integration and inter-regionalism in the Asia Europe Meeting and has been in contact with the ASEAN Eminent Persons Group which provided recommendations for the ASEAN Charter (2008). The diffusion mechanisms utilised by the EU include dialogue and consultation mechanisms and socialization (as mechanisms of diffusion) in ASEM and the ASEAN-EU Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS). Much of the EU's promotion of regional integration in ASEAN is based on economic indicators and draws on development assistance, given the economic situation of many of the ASEAN constituent states. The integration promotion carried out by the EU can be broadly divided into two types – economic/functional and political.

The EU promotes regionalism in order to achieve key objectives. Firstly, it does so in order to pursue multilateral objectives – to have other regions ‘on side’ in WTO and UN and associated agencies. Secondly, it seeks to promote its objectives of good governance in other parts of the world and to use regionalism as a framework for this (e.g. APRIS). Thirdly, it promotes regionalism in order to have a more coherent negotiating strategy so that it deals with regions on policy issues rather than individual countries. A fourth reason is to influence events in the region – security, development, humanitarian, governance issues and crises. Fifthly, the EU seeks to promote regional integration in its attempt to promote its Common Foreign and Security Policy profile in the region. Sixthly, it seeks to carry out its soft power aspirations and advance its norms in regions. A seventh reason is interest-oriented – that it, to seek improved access to a region’s markets. A less defined but often mentioned reason is to utilise regionalism in order to counterbalance the influence of the US in the Asian region. A ninth reason is that it seeks to promote the EU as an international actor (Söderbaum/Van Langenhove 2005). One respondent to a survey of EU-Asia experts that I conducted suggests that there is a belief within the EU that regional integration contributes to welfare and stability; it is easier to deal with one partner than several, while another was of the opinion that the EU promotes regionalism in order to ‘shape the East Asians as a "familiar" and "ideal" trading partner, with the same sets of values and norms which Europeans hold dear’. The European Commission (2009b) states that the EU is stepping up its support to regional integration through ASEM; ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Interviews with Commission officials reveal considerable interest in promoting regional integration in East Asia. They ‘have always tried to see if we could somehow influence their process of economic integration on the basis of our own experience’ and ‘Wherever places in the world get interested in this [RI], we get interested in them’. They point to “a certain attraction on our side with regional integration processes”. One commented that “the better ASEAN integrates, or East Asia integrates, the better it is for the rest of the world”. One survey respondent noted:

Trends are moving towards active/thick bilateralism versus passive/thin multilateralism. Material interests, such as that perceived in trade, will dictate the bilateral relationships. Values, norms, and code of conducts have a role to play in maintaining the fairness of these material interests (survey respondent 2).

A functional example of economic integration promotion is seen in the following tables regarding APRIS I and APRIS II.

Table 1. RESULTS FROM APRIS I¹

Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support to develop Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) as the basis for ASEAN Integration, 2004-2010;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of an Outline Perspective Plan (OPP) for ASEAN Economic Integration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and development of the ASEAN Single Window for Customs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background study and design of a Regional Work Plan for the Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers in ASEAN.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of a scoping study on alignment of external tariffs and enhanced customs co-operation within ASEAN.
Technical Assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design, development and launch of the ASEAN Consultation to solve trade and investment issues (ACT).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transposition of the ASEAN Cosmetics Directive into national law of Lao PDR and Viet Nam;
Capacity Building for the ASEAN Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity building for the ASEAN Secretariat, including technical training for Secretariat staff on regional economic integration, dispute settlement, investment, rules of origin, services, standards and statistics; and skills training on communication skills, project cycle management, research, and staff management;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of quality management systems, operating procedures and key performance indicators, to institutionalise best practice within the ASEAN Secretariat in support of ASEAN co-operation and integration

¹ The first Phase of the APRIS Programme ran from Sept 2003 to Sept 2006. Source: ASEAN, ASEAN-EU Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS) - Phase II. <http://www.aseansec.org/apris2/index.htm>. Accessed 18 Nov 2009

Table 2. APRIS II STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES: Results expected.

Component I - Standards and Conformance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of common ASEAN technical regulations and standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonisation of ASEAN standards with international standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEAN post-market surveillance systems for conformity assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved competence in other areas of standards and conformity assessment
Component II - Customs and Trade Facilitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved customs clearance systems in most AMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a (sub-) regional transit regime
Component III - Investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of a regional Action Plan for a free and open investment regime
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved national/regional practices in other areas of investment liberalisation, facilitation and promotion
Component IV - Capacity Building (including the ACU)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved capacity of ASEAN Secretariat's Agreements and Compliance Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved functioning of the ASEAN Dispute Settlement Mechanism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved institutional capacity and understanding of key integration issues by Secretariat staff
Component V - TREATI and READI Dialogues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of common positions/joint initiatives in support of the Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative (TREATI) and the Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI)

7. Compliance and/or alignment

The role of compliance or alignment via agreements and dialogues with ASEAN and through ASEM will be illustrated. Indirectly, the EU seeks compliance through multilateralism in seeking alignment with its positions in multilateral organisations such as the WTO, the UN and its agencies and international financial institutions. It can be argued that the EU is falling short of coherence in its objectives of norms exporting and integration promotion, as differing norms apply for differing policies. While norms related to development aid relate particularly to human rights and governance, in trade they are characterized by regulatory issues. Nevertheless, the EU-ASEAN (2007) Plan of Action does set out a set of objectives 'to serve as the master plan for enhancing ASEAN-EU relations and cooperation in the medium term (2007-2012) in a comprehensive and mutually beneficial manner'. Its first objective is to 'support ASEAN integration, through helping to realise the end-goal of the establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015, consisting of three pillars, namely ASEAN Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, through, inter alia, the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) and subsequent plans to achieve the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II.' To this end, ASEAN and the EU agreed to the following five joint cooperation contexts: Political and Security Cooperation; Economic cooperation; Cooperation in the field of Energy Security; Climate Change/Environment and Minerals; Socio-cultural and Development cooperation.

The importance of norms compliance is outlined by Borzel and Risse (2009: 15). Keukeleire and MacNaughton (2008: 224-5) make two points in this regard. It is not, they persuasively argue, sufficient to provide support for democratic structures in third countries. It has to enter the mindset in the sense that 'the main challenge is to make these norms part of the mental structures of the elites and the population'. Secondly, the gains for the third countries must be clearly discernible – and there must be a 'sufficiently strong endogenous basis to make long-term structural changes and an internalization of norms and values possible'. They and Youngs (2004) argue that there is an element of identity construction in this context as the EU encourages a socialization of identities around a positive adherence to democratic norms – and these comments can be applied to the diffusion of the RI norm in East Asia. There is little substantiated evidence to date of elite mindset change in East Asia regarding the need for increased integration as a result of EU norm diffusion directly. There are however two developments that are worthy of note. Firstly the ASEAN Charter (ASEAN, 2008) has embodied some practices that also characterize the EU, such as a COREPER, and it has increased dialogue in the ASEM facility on a number of broad normative issues, such as intercultural dialogue. A further challenge is that there are no commonly agreed measures of compliance to norms to date.

The role of regionalism is increasingly topical in East Asia however, for a number of reasons. The first is the desire for an institutionalization by ASEAN in its recent charter. The second is the Australian government (Rudd 2008) initiative for an Asia Pacific community. The third is the recent Japanese proposal for an Asian community (White 2009). The fourth is the recent visit of President Obama to APEC in November 2009. Regionalism is in the news again and in the mindset of the elites of Asia and the US. It is interesting that the EU features far more in media and academic debate in the last few

years than ever before. So the impact of the EU's regionalism norm may well be gradual and indirect. The EU remains the most important regional entity in terms of comparison in the debates.

EU-ASEAN non-political compliance appears to be high under the APRIS project in both phases I and II (Martin 2009). There is a significant amount of mutual recognition and standard assessment taking place across a large number of policy areas from fisheries to certification of products, air transport regulations, competition policy, cybercrime legislation and regulatory norms. The term compliance is utilised in the fourth of the APRIS II objectives, namely Component IV – Capacity Building (including the Agreement and Compliance Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat). With regard to ASEAN Capacity Building, this includes the ASEAN Economic Community Communications Plan of 2008.

In a sense, political compliance can be observed in the forum for interregional dialogue of ASEM, which continues to provide a dialogue platform for cooperation on economic, political and socio-cultural and cultural issues, and, although its role will continue to be debated (Murray 2008b), ASEM remains the most ambitious attempt to provide a framework of EU–East Asia relations to date (Yeo, 2008). The membership of ASEM can be seen as an example of the expansion of membership and scope of interregional dialogue, with Asian membership now including ASEAN plus Three (China, Japan and South Korea) and India, Pakistan, Mongolia and the ASEAN secretariat, and the EU membership consisting of the 27 member states and the European Commission. The inclusion of the Commission and ASEAN Secretariat can be seen as reflecting normative influences as the Commission has been engaged in capacity building programmes with the ASEAN Secretariat over some years.

Attempts at ensuring compliance or alignment would ideally be made by an international actor with a clear international agenda. The EU has been subjected to critiques, as we have seen, for a lack of coherence of policy and approach (Murray/Berryman/Matera 2008) and has recognised this problem in its 2006 Europe in the World document (European Commission 2006). There is an assessment that a considerable gap persists between the EU's support for universal norms, on the one hand, and the reality of European international action. Falk argues that, while this is often explained with reference to implementation problems, it is in fact 'symptomatic of deeper tensions between competing normative aspirations and between different domestic interests'. This will no doubt constitute a key element for future research agendas.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of norms compliance in terms of regional integration is evident in the May 2009 ASEAN/EC joint statement.

The Ministers appreciated the EU's contribution to ASEAN integration and community building efforts and looked forward to the EU's continued support for the realisation of the ASEAN Community including through various sub-regional programmes such as the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and other sub-regional endeavours, which contribute to enhancing regional integration, as well

as the trilateral cooperation which combines the development assistance of individual ASEAN member states and the EC to the benefit of CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam) countries (ASEAN/EC 2009).²

8. Centrality of the EU

Finally, the paper suggests that the centrality of the EU in much of the scholarly analysis of comparative regional integration has added to the perception of Euro-centrism in EU – and particularly Commission – rhetoric and among integration scholars. This centrality remains a characteristic of the European Union's promotion of regionalism in East Asia. There is a perception of Euro-centrism in EU rhetoric and particularly in the discourse of commission leaders as well as among integration scholars. This symbiotic relationship between scholars and elites within the EU remains a problem.

While there are important and valid aspects of comparison between the EU and ASEAN, such as the origins and objectives of these two regions, there are fewer points of comparison between the two when it comes to achieving their objectives. Historical differences between the two regions constitute the major reason that a direct comparison is neither useful nor productive. The centrality and the exceptionalism of the EU in much of the comparative regional integration literature has unfortunately meant that the promotion of the EU experience as a model or paradigm is far from analytically helpful (Murray, forthcoming, 2010).

9. Conclusions and research pathways

There is evidence of EU norms projection and equally a lack of norms coherence in its relationship to East Asia. There is an emphasis on regionalism, yet the EU is not adverse to being opportunistic in choosing between inter-regional, bilateral and multilateral relations for self interest in what I call “opportunistic regionalism”. Is the EU a failure or a success in norms diffusion? It is clear that the EU does engage in norms diffusion yet it can be argued that there is no clear evidence of political or behavioural norm acceptance, although there is considerable economic compliance in largely technocratic issues with ASEAN. There is some, increasing, shared understanding of the importance of regionalism as a process or as a norm among the EU and East Asia elites.

The structures utilized by the EU and East Asia in ASEM are not firmly grounded in norm agreement. So is the EU a consistent and coherent normative actor? Some questions require further research. These include the following. When promoting norms is the EU open to allegations of hypocrisy? To what extent does the EU's effectiveness and legitimacy as a normative actor differ depending on the interlocutor? Moreover, is the

² The joint statements also states: Ministers welcomed the signing of the Declaration on Accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia by the European Union and European Community and the ASEAN Declaration of Consent to the Accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia by the European Union and European Community and agreed to intensify efforts to accelerate the completion of the Treaty's amendment process which is necessary for the accession of the EU/EC. The EU/EC's accession to the TAC reflects the EU/EC's strong support for and contribution to regional peace, security and cooperation as well as its willingness for greater constructive engagement in regional integration processes.

21. The Ministers supported the commitments and efforts

EU more effective as a normative actor when dealing with individual states or with other regions? How important is the active degree of reflexivity in EU actions for its role as a normative actor? To what extent are European ideas influential when there is only limited evidence that they resonate with receiving countries? The challenges for scholars are many – and exciting. Rather than manifesting a transformative power in its external relations, the EU manifests little more than transformative influence at this stage, and this merits further comparative and transnational research.

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