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INTRODUCTION

# Introduction: the EU, East Asian conflicts, and the norm of integration

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**Abstract** The promotion of regional integration is a core objective of the European Union's (EU) foreign policy and has been seen as part of its attempt to transform international society and to make the world a more peaceful place to live. However, the success of this regionalization strategy has been limited and East Asia has been a particularly problematic case. This introduction raises some fundamental questions by first presenting some basic concepts so that the overall studies of the special issue can be systematically undertaken. The underlying questions are the following: How bleak is the picture with regard to regionalism in East Asia and the roles of the EU? Has the EU had no effect on the development of East Asian regionalism? And what potential does regional integration have in helping the transformation of conflicts in East Asia? In addition to these questions, it also discusses and conceptualizes underlying discourses on regional integration, conflict transformation, and regionalism in East Asia. By doing so, it aims to point out that the East Asia region is changing, the EU does play a role in this, and regionalization cannot be ignored as an institutional context that has the potential to assist conflict transformation, especially if windows of opportunity for such engagement arise in the future.

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## The EU and regionalism in East Asia—a bleak picture?[1]

The promotion of regional integration is a core objective of the European Union's (EU) foreign policy. From the early days of the European integration process, but in particular since the end of the Cold War, the EU has sponsored regionalism in other parts of the world financially and ideationally, and it has tried to forge links between itself and other regional organizations. Furthermore, by virtue of its very existence and its success, the European integration process has set standards for other integration attempts. Even today, and despite a number of crises from the disagreement over the Iraq war to the financial crisis and the resurgence of nationalism in nearly all EU member states, EU-Europe remains the regional international society in which the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention have seen their deepest transformation (Diez et al. 2006). Regionalization is also one of the pillars of transformation in international society that the EU engages in (Ahrens and Diez 2015).

This promotion of regional integration has always had an economic and a political side. On the one hand, the EU has tried to foster the development of integrated markets and free trade areas with which it could do business, rather than forging trade links between the EU and individual countries on a bilateral basis. Yet on the other hand, the EU's own historical experience has been that of using the integration process to overcome a history of war and violent conflict. It received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, and the promotion of regional integration thus has to be seen as part of the attempt to transform international society and make the world a more peaceful place through regionalization.

The success of this regionalization strategy has been limited, to put it mildly. East Asia has been a particularly problematic case. While the EU is an example often referred to by those who advocate regionalism in East Asia, and while the EU is even formally linked to East Asian regional organizations such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) or the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a series of obstacles remain. Given the relatively recent history of colonialism, sovereignty as a norm remains a much stronger reference point in public discourse in East Asia than it did in Europe of post-World War II devastation. The power asymmetries in East Asia are much more pronounced than within Europe, with China being the dominant power and capable of acting as a regional hegemon, which may foster, as well as undermine, integration, depending on how the other states in the region view China's policies. The Cold War has left considerable scars on East Asia, most visible in the continuing partition of Korea. And the USA, while having sponsored the initial western European integration process, observes East Asian regionalization with a lot more suspicion, especially if it is pursued without an explicit Pacific dimension that includes the USA (Beeson 2005).

But how bleak is the picture really? Has the EU had no effect on the development of East Asian regionalism? And what is the potential of regional integration to help in the

[1] This special issue including the introduction and the other five case study articles draws on our involvement in an international research project on the EU, the promotion of regional integration, and conflict transformation funded by the Compagnia di San Paolo in cooperation with Riksbankens Jubileumsfondet and the Volkswagenstiftung as part of the "Europe and Global Challenges" program. Further information about the project can be found at www.regioconf.eu. We would like to thank the participants of a workshop on "Integration for Peace" held in Seoul, 16–18 July 2015, for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this text.

transformation of conflicts in East Asia, from Korea to the island disputes in the South China Sea?

The contributions to this special issue provide a fresh in-depth look at these questions. None of them argues that the EU and its regional integration model is a panacea for the conflicts in East Asia. Yet they do point out that the region is changing, that the EU does play a role in this, and that regionalization cannot be ignored as an institutional context that has the potential to assist conflict transformation, especially if windows of opportunity for such an engagement arise in the future.

In the remainder of this introduction, we first set out the theoretical case for such analyses. In the following section, we provide an overview of regionalization attempts in East Asia and the role that the EU plays at an organizational level, before introducing the specific conflicts that the contributions to this issue analyze, and the arguments they put forward. We conclude with a collation of some of the general themes that run through the papers in this issue.

## Theorizing regional integration and conflict transformation

### Defining regional integration

Since we are dealing with some rather broad and contested terms in this paper, let us first define our core concepts. As readers will have already noted from the introductory paragraph, we treat regionalization and regional integration as synonymous, both related to regionalism. Hettne (2005: 555) regards regionalism as the ideology that drives regionalization, which he in turn defines as "increasing regionness." As we have done above, he and others see such increasing levels of regionness as a phenomenon that has taken off in an invigorated fashion after the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, with an emphasis not only on internal regional development but also on the interlinkages between regions. To Hettne and Söderbaum (2000: 462), regional integration in the sense of building regional organizations is a "second-order phenomenon" that builds on such regionness and reinforces it.

We would not go quite as far. Rather, different kinds of regionness and different kinds of regional integration, from our point of view, are intrinsically linked with each other. Thus, we do not tie regional integration as a concept to the European experience which includes the transfer of competences to the regional level. In other words, we do not see supranational institutions as a defining feature of regional integration. Instead, regional integration for us is a broad spectrum that can include mere intergovernmental cooperation on the one hand as well as the pooling of sovereignty on the other. We see this as similar to Deutsch's spectrum of security communities, which can vary between "pluralistic" and "amalgamated" communities (Deutsch et al. 1957; see Adler and Barnett 1998). Importantly, whether the institutions at the regional level take on the role of new central authorities or whether they formally perform the tasks that member states set up, and independently on the formal sovereignty claims made, they may all contribute to a sense of regionness and thus to integration on the broader societal level. Thus, while the EU may promote a specific kind of integration, the integration processes and institutions in other regions may look very different. Even if they look similar at the symbolic level, such as in the case of the African Union (AU), their

practices may differ, at least for the time being. Consequently, if Asian policy makers emphasize the "ASEAN way" of doing things, and thus the role of sovereignty and non-intervention, we would see them nonetheless as engaging in regional integration, even if this is different from the EU experience.

## Defining conflict transformation

Likewise, we take a rather broad definition of conflict transformation. To start with, conflicts in our definition do not necessarily include violence. Conflicts simply arise from substantial differences in interests, norms, and identities. In other words, they capture situations in which the positions on subjects on any of these dimensions seem incompatible (Diez et al. 2006: 565). Conflict parties act on such incompatibilities in a variety of ways: they may resort to violence, but they may also agree on rules to deal with their differences, in which case (if successful) the conflict persists, but the behavior of conflict parties is regulated. Conflict transformation, for us, is thus marked by a change in the patterns of conflict behavior, from more violent to more regulated forms of behavior. It does not necessarily mean the resolution of conflict, neither in the sense of meeting the needs of individuals involved in conflict nor in the sense of a dissolution of the underpinning differences because of a fundamental change in the position of conflict parties (Miall et al. 1999: 21), although we do not exclude such a resolution as an extreme pole in the spectrum of conflict transformation.

As a consequence, we see the management of conflicts through the formulation of common rules not merely as a temporary suppression of conflict within a realist framework (Dahl 2012: 249), but as one step on the ladder of conflict transformation. Whether such a step is a positive one depends on context and on one's political and normative preferences, and is not something we want to discuss here. At the very least, conflict management may minimize violence, even if it may undermine more radical transformations in some cases (Jabri 1996: 153). In many of the cases included in this special issue, the development of a framework of rules to govern the behavior of conflict parties, even if it is only in the form of a "code of conduct" such as in the disputes in the South China Sea, would already be a significant step forward, which is not to say that more fundamental transformations would not be even more desirable.

## Linking regional integration and conflict transformation

The idea that regional integration transforms conflicts originates in the liberal peace of the interwar years and has been strongly advocated as a legitimization of EU enlargement in the 1990s and early 2000s (Higashino 2004). At first sight, the relationship between integration and conflict transformation seems tautological. The whole point of integration is to affect the behavior of those involved in the integration process, whether in their practices towards particular organizational features or on a deeper level to their identities. Yet while integration and conflict transformation are closely related, they are not reducible to each other. Two aspects of regional integration are of particular importance.

Firstly, in the narrow sense, integration is about the building of common formal institutions, whether they are centralized or intergovernmental. We would normally expect such institutions to have an effect on the behavior of the actors within them,

whether through rational calculation (new institutions bring new opportunity structures) or socialization (members are shaped in their self-understanding by the context in which they work). Thus, we would also expect the formal institutions of regionalization to have an effect on the behavior of their members towards each other. Yet actors often show remarkable resilience in their behavior. They may interpret organizational incentives in their own way or may be so wedded to their old behavioral patterns that changing them would jeopardize their ontological security to such an extent that they are not willing to go down that route, as Lee argues in his contribution to this issue in relation to North Korea. Understood in such a way, integration in the sense of building formal institutions is not the same as integration in the sense of changing informal, social institutions. While both may influence each other (Spandler 2015), in this issue, we are particularly concerned with the effect that formal institutions have on informal institutions in the sense of patterns of conflict behavior.

Secondly, we need to recall David Mitrany's functionalist idea of integration as a process that would start within narrow, technical policy confines and then spill over into other policy areas, ultimately encompassing even more aspects of political and social life (Mitrany 1943). Mitrany thought that this was a more viable, and in several senses more "functional," way to achieve peace than to integrate states on a territorial basis through some kind of grand treaty. This allows us to understand how economic integration processes may contribute to peace through the increasing entanglement of conflict parties in a myriad of functional linkages. It also means that, for the present discussion, integration may take place in policy fields seemingly unrelated to conflict, and only affect behavior towards the specific incompatibility in question as a second step. In conflict resolution terms, integration would serve as a confidence building measure that ultimately will also affect the parties' view of the conflict and of each other.

Both of these aspects of integration allow us to see that regional integration is not the same as conflict transformation. They also highlight that the linkages between the two may follow both rationalist calculation and the logic of appropriateness. These linkages are not of a causal nature in the narrow sense. Instead, integration opens up windows for the recalculation of cost/benefit calculations and provides the frame within which the re-articulation of identities becomes possible. The relationship may thus be thought of as a constitutive one, where integration allows for changing behavior without necessarily inducing it. In fact, previous research on the effect of integration on conflicts within the EU, or in its immediate neighborhood, has shown that the transformation of border conflict behavior is dependent on a number of other factors such as the following: the specific conflict configuration and the established identities of local actors or the role of other actors in the conflict environment (Diez et al. 2006; Tocci 2007).

## Analyzing the EU's role in promoting integration

How can the EU affect such processes of integration that in turn impact conflicts? We should emphasize that we are not primarily interested in direct conflict intervention by the EU, as a mediator, through military force, or otherwise. Such intervention may well have an impact on the fate of the EU's promotion of regionalization. But it is mostly in this context of such regionalization efforts that we are interested in direct interventions

in conflicts. As we will show in our next section, and as Scherwitz elaborates in her paper, the EU has done a lot to promote regionalism in East Asia and has tried to forge partnerships with the emerging regional institutions.

We argue that the EU can influence regional integration elsewhere both actively and passively. Actively, it can try to compel actors to change their behavior by providing incentives through financial support, preferential market access, or the provision of technical expertise, or by putting pressure on actors, such as making regionalization a condition for development assistance. All of these measures are based on a rationalist logic of carrots and sticks, which may make actors engage in regional integration.

Furthermore, the EU can promote the norm of regionalism both on a global level within the United Nations system or through exchanges on the political, diplomatic, or bureaucratic level. Joint parliamentary committees, inclusion in the EU's research framework programs, internship schemes, student exchanges, EU Research Centers, Jean Monnet Chairs in universities—all of these are attempts (at least to some extent) to spread the idea of integration across the globe. In Ian Manners' ways through which the EU's "normative power" works (Manners 2002: 245), they would count as instances of "transference," where the norm of integration is "transferred" through exchange. In a broader theoretical frame, we would see them as instances of socialization and social learning, either through mutual engagement or through the setting up of new regional organizational contexts, for instance through the evolution of ASEAN and its various emanations. We need to bear in mind, however, that learning can also work through rationalist mechanisms: in the above example, actors learn to make use of the windows that integration opens to them. There is always a degree of identity change in learning, but in this latter case, rationalist calculation prevails.

Yet the EU can also influence regional integration "passively" simply by its existence. Indeed, this has been one of Manners' core claims in the normative power Europe debate; that the question about the extent to which the EU is an actor may be misguided because it ignores the normative power that the EU may have by virtue of setting an example for the successful transformation of international society in Europe. In other words, the EU becomes a model for other regional actors. If the EU consciously and purposefully promotes this model, it engages in active policy. Yet if it is able to influence others' behavior because they take the EU as a model, it is passive in the process. Such model-setting can again have rationalist and normative dimensions as well: actors may choose to follow the EU model because they expect to enhance their competitiveness, or they may follow the EU because they have taken on the idea that the future global order should be regionalized. Both aspects are clearly present in the EU influence on regionalisms elsewhere. Indeed, the fact that regionalization persists and references to the EU continue to be made even in the face of the recent crises seems to suggest that the "normative model" has not been entirely wiped out by the "rationalist model." Furthermore, even if actors, for instance in East Asia, explicitly reject the EU as a model for their own integration project, they still implicitly hold up the EU as the standard bearer, as otherwise they would feel no need to distinguish their own project from the European one.

The EU's role in promoting integration therefore comes in a variety of different colors and shapes. How these are reflected in East Asia is the subject of the next section.

## Regional integration and the EU in East Asia

### ASEAN, formal institution of regional integration, and the EU

We can trace regionalism in East Asia, comprising both Northeast and Southeast Asia, back to the onset of ASEAN in the late 1960s. As the product of the first wave of regionalism, its initial impact was limited and, due to its geographical coverage, mainly focused on the Southeast Asian region. With the turbulence of the financial crisis hitting both the Northeast and Southeast Asian nations hard in 1997, the idea and phenomenon of regionalization initiated by ASEAN has also spread to other parts of Asia, such as China, Japan, and South Korea, and provided a stimulus to wider regional cooperation. There has been a proliferation of regional forums and summits following the creation, among others, of ASEAN Plus Three (APT) in 1997 and the East Asian Summit in 2005. This has produced regionness in the sense that the geographical area of East Asia is being transformed from "a passive object to an active subject capable of articulating the transnational interests" (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 461). Notwithstanding this growing salience of regionalization, however, there is a variation in terms of the ways in which it is presented, as well as the ways in which the EU is reflected in the process. Providing an overview of regionalism in East Asia and the role of the EU in it, we set a preliminary guideline for the case studies that follow.

Among the regional organizations in East Asia, ASEAN can be depicted as a case in which a more formal and thick institutionalization of regional integration takes place. It has also displayed diverse interests in a wide range of issues. Not only does it seek the acceleration of economic growth, social progress, and cultural development but it also pays increasing attention to the promotion of regional peace and stability. Nevertheless, the impact and roles of ASEAN as an efficient regional entity remain to be seen. Above all, the initial intention of the member states to preserve their sovereignty (McDougall 2008: 29) affects the way in which ASEAN is shaped so that intergovernmentalism remains at its heart. Moreover, the "ASEAN" ways of governance, stressing socialization, confidence building, and networking, in order to maintain regional resilience (Stubbs 2008) leave an open question as to the ways in which its institution building process may evolve, and how this would in turn affect its contributions to conflict transformation.

As the logic and tendency of intergovermentalism prevails in ASEAN, the positions and contributions of the EU towards regionalism have produced mixed results. The EU has been involved in the integration process of ASEAN for a considerable time, as its informal contact with ASEAN started already in 1972 through ASEAN's Special Coordinating Committee. Yet the EU's proper contributions only began in 1995 when its regional integration support scheme was officially published (Commission 1995). To incentivize ASEAN member states to revamp existing institutions, the EU has provided technical and financial assistance and institutional support for regional integration, such as APRIS (ASEAN-EU Programme for Regional Integration Support or APRIS) I and II. Moreover, since the end of the Cold War that resulted in the transformation of geopolitical, economic, and strategic conditions and along with the 1997 financial crisis that questioned its effectiveness as a genuine form of regional integration, there was a more active move on the part of ASEAN to either learn or mimic the EU's experience of regional integration (Jetschke and Murray 2012). Even

so, while the EU is neither driving the regional integration agenda in Asia in general nor is it in a position to coerce ASEAN to adopt a regional integration agenda in particular (Börzel and Risse 2012), it remains to be seen how ASEAN will accommodate the EU input.

## Beyond ASEAN, functional regional cooperation, and the EU

The path of regionalism initiated by ASEAN has shaped other constellations of regionalization in East Asia. There is an ASEAN-centered regionalization, such as the ARF and ASEAN Plus Three initiatives, and ASEM, and there are other cases of regional cooperation not focused on ASEAN, which are mostly based in the Northeast Asian region. What is common among them is that virtually all of them follow the functionalist type of regional integration. They constitute regional cooperation designed for specific objectives within narrow, technical policy confines. Furthermore, they exist to facilitate intergovernmental bargaining and/or interregional dialogues that are used as instruments to resolve conflicts and confrontation or to reinforce cooperation and compromise.

The ARF, founded in 1994, provides one such opportunity to discuss regional security issues in a regional setting. Along with other venues, such as the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and the ADMM+8, the ARF opens the space to discuss security issues that used to be too sensitive to address at a regional multilateral setting. This move towards further institutionalized cooperation at a regional level might gain further momentum if the USA, in the spirit of its renewed engagement through its "Asia pivot," pays attention to the possible, albeit complementary, role of a regional framework, such as the ARF, in coping with regional security issues. When the ARF had been placed in the limelight as a systematic frame for regional cooperation, it began to nurture ambition to create trust among its members through confidence-building mechanisms. However, as long as its practice of governance is framed to reinforce regional and national resilience by upholding the ASEAN way (Morada 2010: 16), the ARF is unlikely to transcend its negative image of being a mere "talk shop."

APT and ASEM have also provided opportunities to deal with a broader range of issues in regional settings. APT fosters regional cooperation, expanding the scope of membership; it, in fact, acquires significance for embracing Northeast Asian countries as partners for regional cooperation (Hund 2012: 367). ASEM was conceived in the 1990s when great optimism for regionalism existed. Yet it remains less a platform for negotiations or problem-solving, but functions as forum for making politically correct statements and exchanging information through region-to-region dialogue (Yeo 2013). As ARF, APT, and ASEM, too, are designed to create an environment for functional regional cooperation, they provide concerted and supportive action in political dialogue and economic, social, and cultural cooperation. Hence, they are neither exclusive forms of regional integration nor do they amount to a thickly institutionalized form of regionalism equipped with a functioning supranational bureaucracy. Instead, they resemble a "regional complex," which allows for "increased social contacts and transactions between previously more isolated groups" (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 423).

Apart from ASEAN-centered regionalization, other forms of regional cooperation and "weaker" versions of integration have also emerged, especially in Northeast Asia.

What is unique here is that regional integration, despite continued discussion for its necessity and inevitability, has yet to be accepted wholeheartedly. Historical legacies and geopolitics, among others, prove to be main impediments (Lee and Kim 2011: 178). The historical animosity pitting Japan against Korea and China is unlikely to resolve soon, while the predominant presence of the USA in the region as a critical security provider (Cha 2009) does not work in favor of regional integration in dealing seriously with hard security issues. Thus, institutional frameworks that allow for regional cooperation with specific objectives in mind rarely exist, and, if they do, their functions are very limited in terms of membership and objectives. Some of the prominent examples can be found in the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the Six-Party Talks. While the former no longer operates due to the deadlock produced by power politics among participants, the latter remains in place, but its effectiveness as a multilateral forum in discussing hard security issues revolving around the Korean peninsula remains controversial.

The EU has made two distinctive, but, at the same time, interrelated, contributions to this development. Most obviously, the EU has participated in the ARF and ASEM, but it has not been involved in APT, of which it is not a member. The EU has been lending its normative support to the ARF in an effort to consolidate the confidence building and preventive diplomacy mechanisms (Commission 2007: 2). Yet it needs to be noted that its contribution is also dependent on whether and to which extent key ARF members are willing to give up their national autonomy and sovereignty in favor of further institutionalization. Similarly, the EU has engaged in regionalization through strategic partnerships with key states in ASEM, which has provided the Union with a testing ground to support its "European" values and principles, including the rule of law, democracy, and respect for human rights (Jokela and Gaens 2012). By diffusing its norm-based method to approach diverse regional issues within regional contexts, the EU has helped to further regional cooperation through the formulation of common norms and ideas, but its effects are rather limited in the fostering of further supranationalization.

In Northeast Asia, the contribution of the EU in the advancement of regional cooperation is minimal. It has often provided some financial and technical incentives (as in the case of the KEDO), but also made a decision that it will shy away from interfering in the process of regional cooperation (in the case of the Six-Party talks). However, this does not necessarily mean that the EU has had no impact. It has reinforced the legitimacy of the ongoing process of regional cooperation within the regional setting through other forms of regional forums, such as ARF or ASEM. Furthermore, it acts as a model for regional integration when discussions for the so-called East Asian community are underway, even if it has not actively promoted its model, and even if this also has not been explicitly rejected. It is in this passive way that the EU helps local actors to become more aware of the legitimacy and necessity of regional cooperation as a viable political option.

## Overview of the case studies in this issue

This special issue includes five case studies. They are all interconnected, illustrating different dimensions of the regional integration and conflict-transformation nexus. The

first three articles adopt the same analytical framework and evaluate the effects associated with the compulsory, social learning, and model-setting pathways of influence observed within regional integration. Keeping these frameworks in mind, Scherwitz first highlights the EU's position towards regional integration in Asia, focusing on the nature its Asia policy is put into practice, the hitherto attempts to link regional integration scheme with conflict transformation, and the comprehensiveness of regional security strategy. In answering these questions, she points out that the attitude of the EU has been transformed in terms of promoting regional integration in Asia, as well as in identifying the sources of regional conflicts. In particular, given its relative weak position as a stakeholder in Asian affairs, the EU has developed a prudent posture appreciating the effects of social learning and conditionality, rather than imposing its model. The underlying reason, according to her, is the changing role perception of the EU, which has been affected by the recent financial crisis in Europe that undermined its competence as a crucial actor in world politics. It is on this interconnectedness that the article considers critically both the role of the EU and the effectiveness of its regional integration promotion policy.

The second study examines the case of the South China Sea territorial disputes. While the direct impact of the EU through the frameworks of regional integration remains marginal and implicit, Kim still argues that there is undeniable potential for long-term effects. The socialization pursued within the institutionalized framework of regional forums or summits has encouraged conflict parties to perceive each other as partners for dialogues, and they, in the process, even came to agree to act in such a way as to change the contextual conditions of interaction, for instance, by first adopting the Declaration on the Conduct of parties in the South China Sea and then negotiating the Code of Conduct. She further illustrates the potential for the EU's increasing role, given the local and global actors' growing hope that regional integration arrangements can be instrumental to the maintenance of peace among conflict parties, which would otherwise be aggressive in defending their territorial sovereignty. Even so, Kim also expresses her reservations about the genuine effectiveness of regional integration. The first and foremost hindrance, according to her, comes from China's unrelenting preference of bilateralism in coping with the South China Sea territorial disputes. This appears to be further aggravated by the internal schism often identified among the ASEAN countries. It is for this reason that while virtually most of the ASEAN countries are supportive of further regional integration facilitating multilateral contacts and dialogues, we do still observe the inherent difficulty in securing a common ground on which to cope with regional security issues collectively.

The third article concerns the North Korean nuclear issue. The so-called Sunshine policy initiated by the former Kim Dae-Jung government of South Korea has suggested the potential contributions of regional integration to addressing the security issue revolving around the Korean peninsula. Yet there have been intensive controversies as regards the possibilities and limits of regional cooperation, let alone regional integration. Amid these heated debates, the EU has been regarded as a reference point, and some local actors have been eager to adopt the EU model as a way to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue. However, despite the general perception of the long-term merits of regional integration, the effects so far have not proved satisfactory for a number of reasons. To name but a

few, the reluctance on the part of the USA that prefers a bilateral approach in dealing with the regional hard-security issues is one of the critical reasons. Likewise, North Korea's nuclear aspiration, often seen as an ontological-security-seeking activity, has been of no help, either. Lee thus makes a case that while South Korea and other local actors have slowly but gradually appreciated the potential contribution of regional cooperation, it still remains to be seen whether and to what extent this normative scheme of conflict transformation can claim its relevance in the case of North Korea.

Compared to the three articles mentioned above, the next two pieces demonstrate the different but complementary aspects of the regional-integration and conflict-transformation discourse. Paik's article deals with the human rights issue of Myanmar, focusing on the actorness of regional entities, such as ASEAN and the EU, rather than examining the contractual effects expected from regional integration. Instead of enabling conflict parties to alter their interests and perceptions through socialization, regional entities, according to this article, have been portrayed and presented as a channel that helps create a common front in addressing the root causes of regional insecurity, such as Myanmar's humanitarian crisis. Yet despite the positive contributions in helping those who suffer from natural disasters, collective approaches within the framework of regional cooperation have not produced any tangible effects on tackling the humanitarian crises of Myanmar, particularly if they are caused by political reasons, such as the authoritarian Myanmar government seeking regime survival. Besides illustrating the role and implications of regional integration differently from those cases introduced above, Paik broadens the spectrum of conflicts, selecting human security issues as the subject for analysis. He sees the human rights crisis in Myanmar as the main concern of regional insecurity, if the ethnic-religious conflicts are aggravated to the extent that they can constitute the source of societal insecurity. As a result, Paik argues that if the Myanmar case counts as a regional security issue, a regional response drawing on regional integration seems adequate.

Last but not the least, Higashino's work, instead of examining a specific case of regional conflicts, provides further insights into the debates concerning the EU's regional integration promotion policy in Asia. She argues that local partnership is critical to the success of regional integration arrangements, but, surprisingly, finds it absent in the current dynamics of a bilateral relationship. Despite the imperativeness for the EU to secure any local support, for example, through strategic partnership, Higashino points out that the EU has yet to fully appreciate its significance and remains less inclined to form solidarity with the like-minded countries of the area. The EU's foreign policy, built on a taking-no-sides approach, also contributes to the poor record of bilateral cooperation. The neutrality is largely ascribed to its misgiving that a close partnership with Japan can incur the resentment of other local actors, which are also in conflict with Japan in some cases of regional confrontation. Last but not the least, Japan's so called expectation deficit also discourages its cooperation with the EU, which has become more salient since the 2008 financial crisis that further questions the EU's competence. Shedding light on these aspects of Japan-EU relationship, Higashino argues that local partnership, a prerequisite for the success of the EU policy, still remains unfulfilled.

## Conclusions

These five papers with their various empirical focal points all recognize the potential of the EU to contribute to conflict transformation through integration in East Asia. At the same time, their analyses highlight the difficulties that the EU faces as well as some of the problematic aspects of the EU becoming involved in a different world region. Some common findings stand out.

One observation that runs through this special issue is the focus of the EU on a socialization approach. In the absence of a membership perspective and relatively weak incentives that the EU can provide, compulsion in the form of conditionality or sanctions to enforce conflict transformation is difficult for the EU to implement, especially in the presence of China as a regional great power with different views about the core norms of international society. In the main part, therefore, the promotion of regionalism needs to take a "soft" approach, and it would be inappropriate to measure EU success in terms of its ability to enforce integration. Instead, engagement on the level of common institutions and exchanges is the main instrument at the EU's disposal. As Higashino points out, it may be helpful in pursuing this path to seek closer cooperation with actors in East Asia that share fundamental values with the EU, although at the same time, the EU has to guard itself against being seen as biased in the conflicts of the region.

Even more central to the EU influence is its model setting. The European model of regional integration may be altered, it may be instrumentalized and used selectively, or it may even be rejected—yet it nonetheless remains a central reference point in the debate, the recent financial crisis notwithstanding. This suggests that the normative model of EU peace is stronger than the rationalist model of EU economic success, although the weakening of the latter does reduce the overall attractiveness of the EU. To note, the role of model-setting is not to argue in favor of a one-sided quasi-imperial influence of the EU over East Asia. On the one hand, it is simply to say that even in recognition of "homegrown" East Asian regional initiatives, European integration remains a standard against which actors in East Asia often formulate their policies, and which has inspired some of them. On the other hand, we also want to emphasize that the EU ought not to treat its own experience as the only possible path to integration, and as Scherwitz points out, there has been some learning on the EU side to recognize the variety of historical experiences and thus of regionalisms. Thus, EU actors have increasingly refrained from offensively propagating European integration as a model, so that passive model setting has become much more important as a pathway of influence.

As the limits of compulsion show, one of the main aspects of EU engagement with East Asia is the importance of other great powers. China stands out as an actor located in the region with norms and interests that often diverge from those of the EU. The USA, however, is also of central importance. Its "pivot to Asia" has sparked, but also limited, EU engagement. While in the EU's immediate neighborhood, US influence is not negligible but clearly weaker; in East Asia, EU influence always has to take into account the interests of the USA in forging a Pacific region or pursuing strategic objectives. This is most obvious in the North Korean case, as evident in Lee's chapter, but it is a theme that runs through all of the papers.

Yet this should not lead us to discard the idea of EU influence altogether. In his analysis of Myanmar, Paik confirms the expectation that domestic changes that arise from developments unrelated to the EU provide windows of opportunity for EU influence to set in. He observes that such influence has been stronger in conflicts arising from humanitarian issues rather than ethnic and religious cleavages, but it would require further research to assess whether this is a general condition of EU impact or indeed of the possibility of regional integration. In principle, integration would not really live up to its expectations if it ultimately was not able to help the transformation of ethnic and religious conflicts as well.

The finding that there has to be a window of opportunity for regionalism, however, is shared by the other contributions. The "hard" security issues of North Korea and the South China Sea in particular present cases in which we should not expect the EU promotion of regionalism or its model-setting to work without any previous changes to the conflict structures. One may even argue that in contrast to the EU's neighborhood, the stakes for the EU as a normative power, and the interests of local actors to get the EU involved, are much more limited in this region as to warrant a strong and active engagement in a situation of military stand-off. Yet as both Kim and Lee argue in their chapters, the EU's time may come if there are broader changes in the region at some point in the future. Then, the EU model may play a much more important role than it already does, and financial and normative engagement may become more warranted and welcome. In that sense, the EU would be a powerful influence "in the waiting." This is not a new finding in research about the EU and conflict resolution. In fact, even in the EU's own genesis, it required a devastating war to change the prospects for peaceful integration, and more recently, the collapse of the Soviet Union has allowed integration to take hold in Central and eastern Europe. While one certainly would not want to wish a war onto the people of East Asia, domestic changes or economic development may still lead to escalating conflicts in the future.

Despite the skeptical tendency that the pieces in this issue share with much of the literature, they thus point to existing influences of EU regionalism in what one may see as pockets of regionalism, as much as they agree that the promotion of regionalism continues to be a promise for the future development of East Asia—not as a copy of European integration but in its own, East Asian or ASEAN way.

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