

Dilemmas of Regionalism in East Asia*

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Abstract

In contrast with Europe, East Asian regionalization follows a distinctive logic, which could be described as going from the periphery to the center, while in Europe from the center to the periphery. After more than a decade of great progress, however, the ASEAN-centered regionalism brings East Asia to a crossroad. The US is wary of the potential for the APT, for example, to become an anti-US bloc, on both the political and economic fronts. But at the same time it does not commit itself to craft a replacement in this region or just leave it to local actors. Neither China nor Japan would tolerate the other side taking a leadership status in East Asian regionalization. And none of them could achieve such a position without repercussions from the other side. To maintain its leading position in the regional process, the ASEAN takes advantage of the US interference and the China-Japan rivalry in a hedging strategy. Therefore, East Asia can not directly follow the way of European integration to build its own regional architecture. What East Asia can seek to achieve for now is only a limited regionalization, an inadequate regional security framework, and a partial security community.

Keywords: Regionalism, Regionalization, the Center, the Periphery, East Asia, ASEAN

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I. Introduction

With the new wave of regionalism around the globe after the Cold War,¹ East Asia has made great progress in promoting regionalization. The Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), so far, has played a key role in the whole process of regionalization. However, ASEAN-centered regionalism has brought East Asia to a crossroad, where almost all relevant parties face paradoxical choices with serious consequences to the future direction and prospects of East Asian regionalization.

This paper tries to explore the underlying dilemmas of regionalism in East Asia and discusses its future development from a comparative perspective. Part I gives a brief description of East Asian regionalism at the current stage. I argue that one major shortcoming of this process is the lack of an overarching institutional arrangement in East Asia that is really regional and really functional. Part II compares the two different logics of regionalization in Europe and in East Asia. While in Europe the process of regionalization could be described as going from the center to the periphery, the East Asian goes from the periphery to the center. Parts III, IV and V examine the dilemmas of regionalism in East Asia focusing on such major players as the United States, Japan, China, and the ASEAN countries respectively. Part VI concludes by peering into the future of East Asian regionalism and presenting several policy implications.

II. East Asian regionalism at a crossroad

The old saying about East Asia was that it was a region without regionalism. For the duration of the Cold War, the region had no important or effective governmental multilateral institutions. The 1990s changed all of that. Partially thanks to the efforts of the ASEAN, East Asian countries have developed several regional arrangements in the past decade and a half. Various multilateral regimes have appeared in East Asia and beyond as enumerated in the following table.

Table 1: Regional regimes in East Asia

Pan-regional	the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region (CSCAP), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD), the Shangri-La Dialogue, the Six-Party Talks, etc.;
Trans-regional	the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), etc.;
Sub-regional	the China-Japan-ROK Summit, etc.;
Regional	the ASEAN, the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) ("10+3"), the East Asia Summit (EAS) ("10+6"), etc.

¹ See, Edward Mansfield and Helen Milner, "The New Wave of Regionalism", *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Summer 1999, 589-627; Fredrik Söderbaum and Timothy Shaw, eds. *Theories of New Regionalism: A Palgrave Reader*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003; Shaun Breslin, et al., eds., *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy: Theories and Cases*, London: Routledge, 2002.

Nonetheless, the process of regionalization in East Asia is still problematic compared with that in Europe. Its great problem, which has been fully discussed elsewhere, is its need for more institutionalization.² The ASEAN, as the most successful regional organization in East Asia,³ is only a decentralized intergovernmental and nongovernmental congress that operates without centralizing powers. It does not have a powerful commission, council, or large bureaucracy like the European Union (EU). The ARF and the APT, as the most powerful and effective regimes in East Asia, are still quite tentative and weak when compared with the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁴ The ARF, which was established in 1994 and brought together states from Southeast and Northeast Asia to discuss security issues with representatives from North America, Australasia, and Europe, aims to foster security discussions and contribute to regional confidence building. Constrained by the principle of “non-interference”, however, the ARF has yet to build an impressive record of resolving significant disputes. The APT, which was launched in 1997 against the background of the Asian financial crisis, aims to facilitate economic integration between Northeast and Southeast Asia. During the annual “10+3” summit meeting, leaders from China, Japan and the ROK will meet those from the ASEAN to discuss their mutual cooperation, thus forming three sets of “10+1” frameworks. Nonetheless, the APT is not an integral whole. It is at best a “10+3”, or a three “10+1”, not a “13”. It is relatively fair to say that there is no overarching institutional arrangement in East Asia that is really regional and really functional.

Just as Douglas Webber argues, the ASEAN as a regional organization failed to act in any meaningful manner to the financial crisis of 1997-98. This failure exposed many of its institutional and political flaws and weaknesses.⁵ Moreover, the inaction of the APEC during the crisis, suggests that both the “small” and “big” versions of regional governance failed to provide any form of effective governance when it was most needed. The ASEAN was too small and the APEC was too big. But, the failure of the ASEAN and the APEC to find effective and/or acceptable solutions to the financial crisis had as much to do with their political will and institutional frameworks as to do with their wrong size. The widely characterized “talking shop” nature of the ASEAN and its variants such as the ARF, the APT, and even the East Asia Summit (EAS) drive many ob-

² Richard Higgott, “The International Political Economy of Regionalism: Europe and Asia Compared”, in William Coleman and Geoffrey Underhill, eds., *Regionalism and Global Economic Integration: Europe, Asia, and the Americas*, London: Routledge, 1998, 42-67; Peter Katzenstein. “Regionalism in Comparative Perspective”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 31, No. 2, June 1996, 123-159; Amitav Acharya. *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, London: Routledge, 2001.

³ Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*; Jürgen Haacke. “ASEAN’s Diplomatic and Security Architecture: A Constructivist Assessment”, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2003, 57-87.

⁴ Lowell Dittmer, “The Emerging Northeast Asian Regional Order”, in Samuel Kim, ed., *The International Relations of Northeast Asia*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004, 331-362.

⁵ Douglas Webber, “Two Funerals and a Wedding? The Ups and Downs of Regionalism in East Asia and Asia-Pacific after the Asian Crisis”, *Pacific Review*, Vol. 14, No. 3, September 2001, 339-372; See also, Markus Hund, “ASEAN Plus Three: Towards a New Age of Pan-East Asian Regionalism?” *Pacific Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3, September 2003, 383-418.

servers to question the building blocks of regional governance in East Asia. Except in terms of geography, any characterization of East Asia as a unitary or integrated system is still “highly misleading.”⁶

III. Distinct logic of regionalism in East Asia

Many factors explain the evolution of regionalism in East Asia, both its achievements and its weaknesses. One of which I would like to highlight here is the distinct logic of regionalism in this region. The process of regionalization in East Asia is mostly epitomized in the development of the ASEAN. However, when compared with the same phenomena in Europe, and in America as well, we will find distinctions in East Asia which are summarized in the following table.⁷

Table 2: Different logics of regionalism in Europe and in East Asia

	In Europe	In East Asia
Process	driven by great powers and followed by smaller nations	driven by smaller nations and followed by great powers
Logic	from the center to the periphery (e.g. enlargement)	from the periphery to the center (e.g. enlargement)
Result	closed, exclusive, hard regionalism	open, inclusive, soft regionalism

While regionalism in Europe comes from the large countries, the Franco-German axis, in East Asia it has come from the small states. In Europe most initiatives about regionalization were made by the great powers and followed by the smaller ones. In East Asia the process goes in opposite direction, being initiated by the smaller countries and followed by the big powers. If we define the logic of European regionalization as a process from the center to the periphery, then the logic of East Asian regionalization is the process from the periphery to the center.⁸ The ARF and the APT are examples of regionalism coming from the periphery and spreading to the center in East Asia. Other regional organizations, including the APEC, the ASEM, and the East Asian Economic

⁶ Jonathan Pollack, “The Transformation of the Asian Security Order: Assessing China’s Impact”, in David Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift: China and Asia’s New Dynamics*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005, 331.

⁷ Another distinct feature of the East Asian regionalism is that it has been largely market-driven. Many participating countries in the East Asian regionalization are very much interested in economic gains rather than political benefits. (I would thank anonymous reviewers of *Korea Review of International Studies* for reminding me of this point).

⁸ Zhongqi Pan. “Dongya diqu zhuyi yu diqu anquan: jincheng, kunan yu qianjing” [“Regionalism and Regional Security in East Asia: Process, Problems, and Prospects”,] *Zhongshan Renwen Shehui Kexue Qikan* [*Journal of Social Science* at Sun Yat-sen Graduate Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities, National Chengchi University], Vol. 14, No. 1, June 2006, 1-35; See also, William A Callahan. “Institutions or Ethics? The Logic of Regionalism in Europe and East Asia”, paper presented at the International Conference on China and East Asian Regionalism, Fudan University, Shanghai China, January 7-8, 2005.

Group (EAEG), likewise came from initiatives from states on the periphery such as Singapore, Malaysia and Australia rather than from the center.⁹ This distinct logic of regionalism in East Asia has been clearly demonstrated in its enlargement. Both the EU and the ASEAN developed by enlargement in the post-Cold War period. Like the EU welcoming in ten former communist countries in 2004, the ASEAN is open to embrace former enemies. By 1999, the ASEAN included all of its former communist adversaries, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, as full members. The ASEAN also spread to Northeast Asia to include China, Japan and South Korea in the security organization, the ARF in 1994, and in a more robust regional organization, the APT in 1997.

Although this distinct logic has been successful in boosting regionalization through widening and deepening in East Asia, it has also diverged in its direction of development and sown the seeds for its difficulties. As a result, the logic from the center to the periphery brought an institutionalized regionalism in Europe. By contrast, the logic from the periphery to the center paved the way for an un-institutionalized regionalism in East Asia. While the former is a kind of closed, exclusive, “hard regionalism” relying on formal institutions, the latter is an open, inclusive, “soft regionalism” relying on informal networks.¹⁰ Even though “soft regionalism” does not necessarily mean inferior to “hard regionalism” in terms of function, it does bring many dilemmas to the process of regionalization in East Asia.¹¹

IV. The United States and East Asian regionalism

The United States presents a dilemma for East Asian regionalism from the very beginning. East Asia is a region that is largely dependent on the presence of an external power, the US, for the maintenance of security and largely dependent on that same external power for its economic development. But, geographically speaking, the United States is not an East Asian country.¹² Should the US be included or excluded in the process of regionalization in East Asia? This question did in the past, does at present, and will continue in the future to puzzle both the United States and East Asian countries alike.

This dilemma is not exceptional to East Asia. Regionalism in Europe almost faces the same problem, but subject to a different historical background. In Europe, the process of regionalization had made breakthroughs even before the United States showed its ambivalent attitude towards European regionalism. During the Cold War

⁹ Takashi Terada, “Constructing an ‘East Asian’ Concept and Growing Regional Identity: From EAEC to ASEAN + 3”, *Pacific Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, June 2003, 251-277.

¹⁰ Peter Katzenstein. “Introduction: Asian Regionalism in Comparative Perspective”, in Peter Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraiishi, eds., *Network Power: Japan and Asia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, 1-44.

¹¹ Samuel Kim. “Regionalization and Regionalism in East Asia”, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, January/April 2004, 39-67.

¹² Barry Buzan, “The Asia-Pacific: What Sort of Region in What Sort of World?” in Anthony McGrew and Christopher Brook, eds., *Asia-Pacific in the New World Order*, London: Routledge, 1998, 68-87; Kishore Mahbubani. “The Pacific Impulse”, *Survival*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 1995, 105-120.

period, the Soviet Union, as the geopolitical and ideological “other”, was regarded as a common challenger to both European countries and the United States. It was relatively straightforward for the United States and most West Europeans to agree on the nature of the threat and to develop a collective strategy for addressing it. The common enemy, therefore, facilitated European powers in winning American support for its regional enterprise, which in turn made Franco-German rapprochement both possible and necessary. It was too late for the United States to stop the momentum of regionalism in Europe when it felt uneasy with the dynamic process after the end of the Cold War.

By contrast, East Asia is not so fortunate/misfortunate as Europe. In East Asia, the Soviet Union is presented differently. East Asians chose to define threats for themselves and continued to rely on themselves to address these threats. The position of the two most significant East Asian powers – China and Japan – is telling. For China, it did not choose to ally fully with the Soviet Union or the United States. Instead, China preferred to follow a broadly independent path. For Japan, the bilateral relationship with the US has been the core of its security. But that is precisely its defining characteristic: it secures Japan but has never been capable of supporting a broader collective security system. Since there was no common threat and shared strategy among East Asians, and with China and Japan belonging to opposite camps during the Cold War era, conditions and impetus fell short for a China-Japan rapprochement to develop. The project of regionalization in East Asia was left to the smaller nations. And for worse, when East Asian regionalism gained some momentum in the post-Cold War period, it met strong opposition and interference from the United States.

American attitude towards East Asian regionalism is understandable, though not desirable from an East Asian perspective, if we take the US grand strategy into consideration. As Bob Kagan argues, “It is very difficult for Americans to imagine an international order that does not have American power as the keystone in the arch. This notion, which has deep historical roots, was adequately expressed by Madeleine Albright when she referred the United States as the ‘indispensable nation.’ Therefore, when talking about American grand strategy, in addition to the goal of promoting a liberal international order, we must include the very important ingredient of maintaining American hegemony.”¹³ As other powers have advanced regionalism as a response to the end of the Cold War, so the US has gone in the opposite direction: from multilateralism to unilateralism.

Any regionalism is a kind of multilateralism, and thus a problem for the US in seeking unipolarity in a unilateral way. Thus, the United States keeps interfering in the process of East Asian regionalism both indirectly and directly. When the vision of an EAEG—a self-consciously “Asian” group that excluded the United States by design—was advanced by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir in 1990, it was quickly killed by the US through extensive pressure on Japan and South Korea to reject it. Then American Secretary of State James Baker called this initiative “drawing a line down the Pacific.”¹⁴

¹³ Robert Kagan, “Strategic Dissonance”, *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Winter 2002-2003, 135-156.

¹⁴ Cited in David Capie, “Rival Regions? East Asian Regionalism and Its Challenges to the Asia-Pacific”, in Jim Rolfe, ed., *The Asia-Pacific: A Region in Transition*, Honolulu, HI: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004, 159-160.

When the proposal to establish an Asian Monetary Fund in order to save East Asians from financial crisis was initiated by Japan in 1997, it was likewise stymied by the US through direct pressure on Japan to give it up. Regional states were left with no regional solutions and instead had no option but to accept the type of solutions imposed by western dominated financial institutions during the financial crisis. The US also develops various security arrangements with itself at the center. While the US continues its multiple bilateral military alliances (with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia), it promoted the Philippines and Thailand to the status of “non-NATO allies”, developed a Regional Maritime Security Initiative with Singapore and initiated the Shangri-La Dialogue, etc.

It seems clear that the US policymakers are ready to say no to any exclusive initiatives of regionalism in East Asia. This is consistent with American policy towards regionalism elsewhere. For example in Europe, when France pushed for the development of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), the United States, though it could not prevent the ESDP, imposed its own conditions, known as the so-called “3 Ds”: ESDP must not diminish NATO’s role, duplicate NATO’s capabilities, nor discriminate against the US. As Chris Layne notes it, “if these ‘Three D’s’ are implemented-especially the proscription on the EU duplicating military capabilities already possessed by NATO-Europe would be foreclosed from achieving strategic autonomy and would remain subordinate to the United States. And that is really the point of US policy. Washington seeks to uphold NATO’s centrality in order to maintain its leadership role in European security affairs.”¹⁵ And, as Michael Brenner puts it, Washington’s declared aim is “to prevent the emergence of any power or bloc of states that could countervail the US. The American government did not make an exception for the EU.”¹⁶ The EU is no exception, nor is the ASEAN. The US is wary of the potential for the APT, for example, to become an anti-US bloc, on both political and economic fronts. But at the same time it does not commit itself to craft a replacement in this region. What the United States is really interested in is maintaining its hub-spoke security system instead of constructing a multilateral regional framework, or just leaving it to local actors.

Regionalism is clearly not a priority of US policy, and US policy has done little to foster regional institutions. The unilateral quality of the projection of US hegemony into the region has apparently generated competitive multilateral responses by local powers. However, these are unlikely to prosper in the short and medium term since what regional states can get in their relations with the United States far exceeds any tangible benefit that might emerge from regional cooperative projects. While the process of regionalization in East Asia poses a challenge to the United States, US policy towards East Asian regionalism in turn presents a difficult choice for East Asia.

¹⁵ Chris Layne, “US Hegemony and the Perpetuation of NATO”, in Ted Galen Carpenter, ed., *NATO Enters the 21st Century*, London: Frank Cass, 2001, 78.

¹⁶ Michael Brenner, “The CFSP Factor: A Comparison of United States and French Strategies”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 38, No. 3, September 2003, 187-209.

V. China-Japan rivalry and East Asian regionalism

Unlike France and Germany which rapprochement serves as a key driving force for the regionalism in Europe, China and Japan do not play a due role in promoting East Asian regionalization. On the contrary, their competition works against other countries' endeavors to construct a region in East Asia. The defining feature of current China-Japan relations is still not reconciliation but confrontation over a variety of troubles, from historical issues to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute, from the textbook issue to Yasukuni shrine visit, from Japan's attempts at revising constitution to sending military forces overseas, and so on and so forth. The regional process of integration led by the ASEAN just provides another platform for this deeply rooted rivalry.

For Japan, the dilemma is that it can not sacrifice its relationship with the United States to fully devote itself to the regionalism in East Asia on the one hand, and it can not tolerate China gaining leadership in the process of regionalization by default on the other. Japan is so far fully dependent on the US for its security and wants to resume its leading position in the world affairs by affiliating with the US in a "global alliance." Japan's consideration is in line with the American strategic intention to transform Japan into "Britain of the Far East."¹⁷ Thus, Japan could not say no to the US when it was asked to give up its Asian Monetary Fund initiative. However, Japan keeps its eyes on China's move towards East Asian regionalism at the same time. When China approached the ASEAN, Japan felt really anxious. Even though Japan was originally reluctant to join the APT process for fear of antagonizing the United States, it finally did. Just as Richard Stubbs notes it, "Although Japan was still reluctant to get involved, the Chinese government's agreement to take up ASEAN's invitation essentially forced Tokyo's hand. Beijing was interested in building on the economic ties that were developing with Southeast Asia and the Japanese government could not afford to let China gain an uncontested leadership position in the region."¹⁸

To a degree, China's involvement in East Asian regionalism also suffers from a similar dilemma. Even though China is not dependent on the United States like Japan for its security, it is really concerned about its US relations for the sake of its peaceful rise to power, as well as several bilateral issues such as the Taiwan problem, the China threat theory, trade imbalance, etc. Since the US is already alarmed at being driven out of Asia by China's rise, any move of China in the process of regionalization may be interpreted by the US in the same vein. For example, when the first East Asia Summit was to convene in 2005, China was mistakenly blamed for keeping the US excluded. Therefore, China's proactive engagement in the East Asian regionalism, though apparently advantageous to China, may actually be counterproductive to its peaceful rise which essentially relies on the acceptance of other countries, in particular of the United States. As a Chinese analyst suggests, China should follow the example of the EU which has risen peacefully to global economic and political stature by "neither threatening the

¹⁷ Richard Armitage, et al., *The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership*, INSS Special Report, National Defense University, October 11, 2000.

¹⁸ Richard Stubbs, "ASEAN Plus Three: Emerging East Asian Regionalism?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 3, May/June 2002, 440-455.

hegemonic position of the US, nor transforming the international system.”¹⁹ With this preoccupation, China is reluctant to fully engage with the process of regionalism centered on the ASEAN. And, to a certain extent, China is unable to take the lead in the process of regionalization. It was only recently that China began to embrace multilateralism in international affairs and found agreement with the ASEAN on the international norms enshrined in the New Security Concept and the so-called “ASEAN Way”, both of which put emphasis on such normative principles as non-interference in domestic affairs, consultation, consensus, and cooperative security.²⁰ But the ASEAN members are still suspicious of China’s intention (more below). At the same time, China, like Japan, is unwilling to allow other powers, especially Japan, to gain an uncontested leadership position in the region. China joined the United States in opposing Japan’s proposal for an Asian Monetary Fund in 1997. China often casts doubtful eyes on Japan’s initiative with regard to East Asian regionalism, as does Japan on China’s.²¹

Neither China nor Japan would tolerate the other side taking a leadership role in East Asian regionalization. And none of them could achieve such a position without repercussions from the other side, as well as from the United States, South Korea, and the ASEAN. The China-Japan rivalry has negatively extended itself to the field of East Asian regionalism and is locked-in with American interference in a downward spiral. Accordingly, this spiral provides room for the ASEAN to steer the regional process but the ASEAN is not without its own dilemma.

VI. The ASEAN and East Asian regionalism

The ASEAN is arguably the most successful regional organization in East Asia, like the EU in Europe. And like the EU, the ASEAN has enlarged itself by accepting former enemies to complete “One Southeast Asia” by 1999. However, unlike the EU, the ASEAN has expanded in quite a different way. Rather than demanding conditions and structural adjustments from new members as in the EU, the ASEAN’s regionalism is more open. Its inclusive networks bring in the outsiders, without demanding that they change their domestic structures of governance—indeed, one of the norms of the ASEAN is non-interference in domestic politics. Rather than a model where the periphery assimilates the center’s values, the ASEAN works more through dialogue than coercion. As a Singaporean foreign minister explained, “the ASEAN way stresses informality, organizational minimalism, inclusiveness, intensive consultations leading to consensus

¹⁹ Song Xinning, “Zhongguo de jueqi yu Ouzhou de jingyan” [China’s Rise and the European Experience], *Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu* [Teaching and Research], No. 4, April 2004, 6-7.

²⁰ Jianwei Wang, “China’s Multilateral Diplomacy in the New Millennium”, in Yong Deng and Wang Feiling, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005, 159-200.

²¹ Aaron Friedberg, “Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia”, *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Winter 1993/94, 5-33; Lowell Dittmer, “East Asia in the ‘New Era’ in World Politics”, *World Politics*, Vol. 55, No. 1, October 2002, 38-65; Richard Betts, “Wealth, Power and Instability: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia”, *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Winter 1992-1993, 32-75.

and peaceful resolution of disputes.”²² Partially because of this distinct logic of regionalism, the ASEAN is reluctant to expand further beyond Southeast Asia, even though it has established several mechanisms such as the ARF and the APT across the whole region of East Asia and even Asia Pacific. And partially because of this distinct logic of regionalism, the ASEAN itself should not be regarded as a unitary actor in the East Asian regionalization process. The internal divisions within the ASEAN countries figured prominently with regard to, for example, the issue of launching the EAS in 2005.

The limited enlargement indicates a difficult choice for the ASEAN as a whole—it wants to push forward the regionalization of East Asia and at the same time remain in control of the driver’s seat. The ASEAN did form the ARF and the APT but it did so because it was afraid of being marginalized by China and Japan, on the one hand, and by the EU and the US, on the other.²³ So, in contrast to the EU, the ASEAN does not embrace the major regional powers in East Asia—China, Japan, and South Korea—as full members, and in fact has no such a plan.²⁴ The ASEAN countries are worried that China, Japan, or South Korea may dominate this regional institution if they were granted memberships. Since the ASEAN really wants to keep “monopolizing” the process of East Asian regionalization,²⁵ it is unlikely that the ASEAN will transform into a true regional organization like the EU. Actually, the ASEAN has limited the growth of regionalism in East Asia because it wants to maintain its relative power, so that the region’s key countries—China, Japan, and South Korea—are marginalized in the process of regionalization, partaking as poor add-ons in the APT.

To maintain its leading position in the regional process, the ASEAN takes advantage of the US interference and the China-Japan rivalry as a hedging strategy. On the one hand, the ASEAN countries, as well as other Chinese neighbors, have seen the US presence and its security arrangements in East Asia as a means of hedging against potential Chinese power. Although China’s posture of late has been largely reassuring to the region,²⁶ its past behavior has not always been so. China is seen as a rising power that presents a potential threat to regional order and stability. These fears stem from China’s rapid economic growth and military modernization in the past two decades. Moreover, there are concerns that China’s future will follow the pattern of its imperial past. Some see China as modernizing the traditional Sino-centric order where the Middle Kingdom is surrounded by a periphery of tributary states and barbarians. As a consequence, several regional states appear to be practicing various types of “hedging” strategies.²⁷ On the other hand, however, the ASEAN countries also wish to take the rise of China as a means to counter the US hegemonic interference in their regional en-

²² Cited in Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, 63.

²³ Terada, “Constructing an ‘East Asian’ Concept and Growing Regional Identity.”

²⁴ Nor China, Japan, or South Korea as “reluctant powers” is proactively interested in becoming a formal member of the ASEAN.

²⁵ See, Pekka Korhonen, “Monopolizing Asia: the Politics of Metaphor”, *Pacific Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1997, 347-365.

²⁶ David Shambaugh, “China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order”, *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Winter 2004-2005, 64-99.

²⁷ David Shambaugh, “Return to the Middle Kingdom? China and Asia in the Early Twenty-First Century”, in Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift: China and Asia’s New Dynamics*, 41.

deavors. While they prefer to see the United States staying engaged in the Asia-Pacific region, they do not welcome the unrestricted involvement of the only superpower in the world. And none wish to be put in the position of having to choose between Beijing and Washington. This hedging strategy further limits the growth of regionalism in East Asia, though unintentionally.

VII. Conclusions: whither regionalism in East Asia?

Constructing a regional structure is not an easy task. It is especially true for East Asia. The aforesaid factors may explain why regionalism is currently proliferating in this region, even though there has been no strong progress of achieving effective cooperation schemes. Then, what implications do those dilemmas have on the future development of East Asian regionalism? Can East Asia establish an EU-like security community as the ASEAN proposed in the Bali Concord II of 2003?²⁸ There are no ready answers to these questions. What is certain is that East Asia can not directly follow the way of European integration to build its own regional architecture.²⁹ Given different backgrounds and divergent logics of regional process in Europe and in East Asia, East Asia must find its own way to overcome those dilemmas as mentioned above and develop its own model of regionalization.

The most feasible way for the East Asian model to bear fruit is to continue the current logic of regionalism in East Asia—from the periphery to the center. What East Asia can expect to achieve for now is only a limited regionalization, an inadequate regional security framework, and a partial security community. The regional structure centered on the ASEAN and the leadership of the smaller nations should be respected and granted more time and space. And resolving the various dilemmas should be left to another day. The most potential and promising regimes, such as the ARF, the APT, and the EAS, should be strengthened and further institutionalized. Stronger political will and more farsighted vision should be injected into the current process of regionalization in East Asia.

It should be noted that the European Union is not the only paradigm that East Asia could follow to build its regional framework. Europe's today is not the only possibility of East Asia's Tomorrow.³⁰ East Asians need to be creative. The most crucial step to take as of now should be to develop a sustainable and innovative plan to ensure a brighter and more promising outcome of a true East Asian unity so uniquely "East Asian."

²⁸ ASEAN, "Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II)", Bali, Indonesia, October 7, 2003, at <http://www.aseansec.org/15159.htm>, (accessed on March 6, 2008).

²⁹ See, William Wallace, *Regional Integration: The West European Experience*, Washington DC: Brookings Institute, 1994.

³⁰ See, Aaron Friedberg, "Will Europe's Past Be Asia's Future?" *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 3, September 2000, 147-160; Amitav Acharya, "Will Asia's Past be its Future?" *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2004, 149-164; Joakim Öjendal, "Back to the future? Regionalism in South-East Asia under Unilateral Pressure", *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 3, 2004, 519-533.

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