



Working Paper Series

Working Paper Nr. 9 (May 2014)

The Impact of Regional Cooperation on Regional
Conflicts: The Cases of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis
and the South China Sea Territorial Dispute

Moosung Lee, Myongji University

Yeikyung Kim, Myongji University

I. Introduction¹

The North Korean nuclear issue and the South China Sea territorial dispute constitute sources of grave concern for regional security. One of the easiest ways to address these concerns is to pursue military action. Yet this option seems inconceivable now and forever given the tremendously high costs incurred. Instead, more peaceful approaches have been preferred. Of these, multilateral talks engaging those countries directly engaged have emerged as alternative option. This seems the more attractive, as recently, a number of regional integration projects in Asia to ensure prosperity and stability are taken seriously. If history is any guide, in particular, the attempts for cooperation and/or integration are to be assessed to make certain positive contributions to conflict resolution, whether they are through neo-functionalist spill-over effects or normative persuasion (Weissmann, 2012; Haftel, 2012). This argumentation seems more convincing, as both academics and policy-makers appreciate the EU's regional integration projects aiming for the peaceful resolution or at least the management of conflicts (Diez and Tocci, 2009; Lee and Kim, 2011: 178; 이미숙, 2007).

It is also notable of the EU's presence and impact on these initiatives in Asia that can be traced directly and indirectly. Since the renewed attention of the EU to Asian affairs, the EU has emphasized political dialogue and regional integration as desirable instruments in dealing with regional conflicts in Asia (Commission, 1994: 4). This is largely because it has hoped for a stable economic, political and societal environment, considering them as prerequisites for the fulfilment of their economic interests. The construction of institutional frameworks via cooperation among Asian nations, as well as via Asia-Europe interactions, has thus been actively promoted and pursued. This tendency has become more salient than before with the passage of time.

However, these new political experiments on conflict resolution have also become the center of controversy. Doubts that question the genuine effectiveness of such an approach should not go unnoticed. The first and foremost underlying reason is connected with the nature of the US Asian (security) policy. The US has basically maintained its "hub and spokes" system in Asia in order to constitute it as the most striking and enduring element of the secu-

1 This work is a revised version of the paper presented at the 2013 ISA annual international conference in San Francisco, USA, and at the mid-term workshop of the RegioConf Project in Rome, Italy in 2014.

rity architecture of the region (Cha, 2009: 158). While the US has long been considered *the* key security provider in Asia, a tendency to downplay the role of regional integration seems inevitable, particularly when hard-security issues are concerned. This has persistently been the case despite some recent acknowledgements of the positive impact of regional integration from the long-term perspective: with the inauguration of the Obama administration, the US has gradually recognized its importance, mentioning that “addressing complex transnational challenges of the sort now faced by Asia requires a set of institutions capable of mustering collective action”(Clinton, 2011: 61).

The argument for the role of regional integration has further been undermined due to the ongoing controversies over the methodologies most regional cooperation is currently relying upon. It is indeed hard to ignore a view highlighting that the constant dialogues and communication within the context of regional cooperation and integration are not necessarily conducive to enhancing peace. Skepticism thus looms large, when there are no practical ways to punish those members that violate the rules and when issues of regional conflicts have, in practice, been managed outside of regional fora (Haacke and Morada, 2011: 227). Against this backdrop, it can be said that the regional integration support policy of the EU is much more apparent than real, as neither is the EU conventionally seen as a critical security stakeholder in Asia, nor is the regional integration process it has promoted considered a dominant method to achieve the objective of security assurance (Interview US Embassy, 2013).

Amid controversies of the merits and drawbacks of the possible roles of regional integration in Asia, this paper questions to what extent and under which conditions regional cooperation in Asia can contribute to the positive transformation of regional conflicts, and how to construe the role the EU sees itself playing in the process.² With this question in mind, this study aims to examine the process of the EU’s influence inside and outside regional cooperation/integration, as well as to consider their possibilities and limitations in the process of addressing the root causes for regional conflicts.

² Here, the impact on conflict transformation is, in a sense, defined as the reduction of the degree to which the conflict parties construct the other parties as existential threat through securitization (Buzan et al., 1998), just as the theoretical framework of the RegioConf project suggests.

II. Nature and Origin of Regional Conflicts

Of the many sources of conflict in East Asia, North Korean nuclear issues and territorial disputes in the South China Sea have been chosen for the case studies. The main reason for their selection is twofold. One is that they have the potential to be developed not only as regional conflicts, but also as global challenges. The reckless policy choice of nuclear weapons development of North Korea and the assertive posture of China towards its territorial sovereignty in the South China Sea area cannot be disregarded lightly when the US and other regional actors are obliged to be engaged in. The other is that both case studies provide the opportunity to examine the impact of regional cooperation through attempts to embed them within a multilateral framework for conflict settlement. So, identifying, dissecting and examining the nature and origin of these regional conflicts is of great importance, in that this highlights the ontological positions of these cases, as well as the epistemological assessment of how frameworks of regional cooperation and integration are workable within the context of the Asian region.

1. North Korean nuclear crisis

With the end of the Cold War, North Korea has begun to realize that the regional and global security dynamics are unfavorable to its regime survival. North Korea received a severe blow from the collapse of Communist bloc that resulted in the demise of the Soviet Union and Beijing's wavering commitment to its former strong ally (Maass, 2012: 306). Under these unfavorable circumstances, it has kept a dual strategy to ensure its regime security. On the one hand, North Korea has shown a gesture of compliance when it needs to extract as much assistance as possible. On the other hand, it has also abruptly changed its position when its bilateral relationship with the US - for example and also predominantly - is not considered advantageous, just as the previous negotiations to shutdown the Yongbyon reactor in return for energy aid have indicated (Maass, 2012: 310). Amid this unpredictable development of North Korea's foreign policy, a sense of uncertainty and threat has eventually become more pervasive than ever before when the State of Union Address was made in 2002. US President George W. Bush, at that time, dubbed North Korea as an axis of evil, and a nuclear crisis oc-

curred as a consequence in 2003 with the announcement of North Korea that it would withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Pyongyang cited as its reason the failure of the US to fulfill its end of the Agreement Framework signed in 1994.³ North Korea began reprocessing the 8,000 spent fuel rods that had been placed in storage pursuant to the Agreed Framework, soon after the IAEA adopted a resolution in January 2003, condemning North Korea's violations of the NPT (Oh and Hassig, 2004: 27).

A large number of studies have been undertaken to account for the nature and origin of the nuclear crisis. Of these, the nuclear crisis can be construed as the consequence of North Korea's psychological consciousness of crisis concerning its regime insecurity (김영재, 박인휘, 2004: 201). Its regime insecurity has both internal and external aspects. The domestic economic hardship and thus the potential of political upheavals have forced the North Korean regime to stress its regime security by exaggerating the existential threats from the outside. It is where the tactic of 'securitizing moves' is at play and this seems more plausible when it is capable to articulate explicitly existential threats to the "self" (Diez, Stetter and Albert, 2006: 568). As a result, the current preoccupation of North Korea's domestic conundrums well coincide with external threats that might intensify its fear of ontological security, i.e., "incapacitating fear of not being able to organize the threat environment and thus not being able to get by in the world" (Mitzen, 2006: 273). Not only has the North Korean regime taken advantage of routines of nuclear threats as an effective strategy to hold Pyongyang's profound uncertainty at bay by solving the domestic chaotic economic and possible political problems, but it has also been equipped with a good pretext of maintaining a sense of self by pinpointing the imminent external threats. Just as Giddens (1991: 39) argues that '[t]he maintaining of habits and routines is a crucial bulwark against threatening anxieties', North Korea's domestic urgent need to securitize subjectivity, i.e. "an intensified search for *one* stable identity" (Kinnvall, 2004: 749), has been manifested through the nuclear weapons development programs. In this sense, the second nuclear test was once again ventured in 2006 as was the case in 2003, protesting against US financial sanctions against North Korea as a result of a breach of the denuclearization pact signed in September 2005. Pyongyang also repeated the same routines at the third nuclear test in 2013, when the newly inaugurated Kim

3 The treaty prompted North Korea to halt its nuclear program in return for energy aid.

Jung-Un regime badly needed regime security.

This very reckless game of ‘crisis diplomacy’ (Weissmann, 2012: 119) assumed to be a result of a securitizing move to ensure its ontological security also has significant security implications: It poses not only a regional security threat to North East Asia, but also a global security challenge. This is largely because the ramifications of the nuclear crisis have not solely been limited to the two Koreas, but also affect other adjacent countries and even the international community. Above all, the neighboring countries of the two Koreas cannot be free from the current nuclear crisis, but they are in fact its direct victim. Japan, among others, has reacted very sensitively, and even gone as far as to justify its re-militarization as a means of self-defense (Hughes, 2009). China cannot also be indifferent to the overall development of the nuclear crisis. By engaging actively in the issue, it has instead attempted to create an international environment favorable to its rise in its peripheral regions. Yet its approach has been somewhat different from that of the US, which in turn creates more potential for regional insecurity. While the latter has implemented both bilateral and multilateral approaches aiming for direct resolution of the nuclear issue, the former has rather focused on the maintenance of the status quo, preferring to prevent North Korea’s nuclear weapon development but not to push it to the brink of collapse due to the nuclear issue (Lee, 2010). Moreover, although China’s basic position is being argued to have played ‘a role of bridge between conflicting parties (Interview CRI, 2013), its emphasis on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in general has also sown the seed of confrontation with the US, which has hitherto been summarized as to put a specific pressure on North Korea to give up its nuclear aspiration.

2. South China Sea Territorial Disputes

The South China Sea is an area comprising over 200 islands, rocks, and reefs.⁴ With a large number of states bordering each other within this area, it is natural and inevitable for them to clash with each other in the process of claiming their territorial and maritime sovereignty. This tendency has become much acuter since the 1990s when the renewed Chinese assertive-

⁴ They include the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas Islands, Macclesfield Bank, and Scarborough Shoal.

ness that has complicated the territorial dispute has been considered one of the determinant factors (Wu and Zou, 2009: 3). Amid the intensifying claims of the littoral countries to maritime territories in the sea, there is an ample possibility that the territorial spats over the waters and islands of the South China Sea have turned into a flashpoint.

Insomuch as the fear of Chinese assertiveness over the waters and islands of the South China Sea is real, the littoral countries, such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, would not stand idle when substantial threats to the economic interests are argued to be substantial. The large amount of fishing stock is hard to give up, and this has rather led to a fierce rivalry and competition, just as Chinese engagement with the Philippines by way of the assertive “fishing boat” diplomacy indicates. In addition to the immediate competition over the fishery resources, the potential economic gains expected from the exploitation of a huge amount of natural resources have also increased the potential of further regional conflicts. Specifically, when it comes to huge oil and gas reserves beneath its seabed, it is hard for any of the countries adjacent to the Sea to give up their interests. Although specific data quantifying the value of such reserves has not yet been available (Valencia, Dyke, and Ludwig 1999, 9), this area is estimated to hold oil reserves of around 11 billion barrels and natural gas deposits of around 190 trillion cubic feet according to a US Energy Information Administration report (Lin and Wang 2013). The governments of claimant countries have thus competed to monopolize suspected oil and gas deposits below the ocean floor and this constitutes an important part of regional maritime border disputes surrounding the South China Sea which would otherwise be obscure (Frost, 2008: 194).

South China Sea’s strategic significance has added more fuel to the flames of territorial disputes. It is the shortest route connecting the Indian and Pacific Ocean and serves as a corridor that holds tremendous maritime strategic value (Phan, 2010: 428). So, the renewed Chinese assertiveness could easily disquiet all of the neighboring countries by sparking fears that the projection of Chinese military power into the South China Sea would imperil free access to vital shipping lanes, while disrupting the balance of power in the region (Hund, 2012: 188). Moreover, the South China Sea territorial dispute could also be escalated into a regional arena for power-jockeying between global actors, such as the US and China, given that the South China Sea is located in a strategic seaway where the 7th US-American fleet passes by (Buszynski 2012, 139). The possibility of a confrontation between the two global powers has remained high, since the US has implemented a policy of re-engagement in Asia,

encapsulated in the notion of the US 'pivot' under the Obama administration. As a result, when US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Asia in 2010, she once again stressed that "the United States has a national interest in freedom of navigation, open access to Asia's maritime commons, and respect for international law in the South China Sea" (Clinton, 2011). As a result, whenever there are head-on confrontations, e.g., the fishing boat diplomacy or territorial disputes with Vietnam over the Spratlys and the Paracels, the US' presence has been felt large, as it has even reinforced its military bases near the ocean around China, making the tussle between the two superpowers for regional leadership firmly set in (Yahuda, 2012).

Under these confrontational circumstances, more notably, the growing inclination of ASEAN countries to use the U.S. aiming to hedge China's growing power appears worrisome. As for China, this move can be seen as the U.S. using the ASEAN countries to expand its regional presence, while isolating China further and internalizing its domestic issues against its will (ICG 2012a, 7). If this tendency continues, both China and other Asian countries are also likely to perceive each other as 'object-other' or project negative aspects of the 'self' onto the other (Kinnvall, 2004: 753), although they are important economic partners (ICG 2012b, 31).

With these analyses in mind, the following sections examine the possibility of regional cooperation and integration as an alternative route for conflict transformation, if not resolution. We then posit that regional integration can affect and transform the parties in conflict and transform their rigid/maladaptive basic trust system into a healthy basic trust one (Willmott, 1986). To prove whether and to what extent the experimentation of dialogues and engagements in a number of institutional frameworks and fora can help the parties in conflict to be guided and directed towards experimentation, learning and growth, instead of treating its saber-rattling routines as ends in themselves (Mitzen, 2006: 274), we also assess to what extent a securitization move can be transformed into a desecuritization one during the process.

III. EU and Regional Integration in Asia

Regionalism in Asia was initiated by the creation of the ASEAN in the late 1960s and has evolved with the tide of political opportunism and cost-benefit assessments. As of now, the Northeastern part of Asia appears to have come under its influence. Although China, Japan

and South Korea started to demonstrate their earnest interest following the 1997 financial crisis, their moves for regional integration and cooperation had already been galvanized by ASEAN plus three (APT). The APT has functioned as a multilateral dialogue and cooperation process that is making fast headway in devising and announcing new cooperation initiatives, with its scope of membership and geographic extension being deliberately and exclusively East Asian (Hund, 2012: 52). Stemming from growing regionalism in Asia, the European Union has also played its own reinforcing role, but its actions have not been very explicit. Commensurate with its weak presence, it has made its own commitments in three different but interrelated ways. They are the provision of an ASEAN-EU program to support ASEAN-centered regionalism, the invigoration of inter-regional cooperation conducted via a series of fora and institutional frameworks, such as the creation of the Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM) and the support of the ASEAN regional forum (ARF), and diffusion of its model as a reference for the future development trajectories of the Six-Party Talks, APT, EAS and the like (임을출, 2009),

There are a number of reasons behind the lack of direct initiative on the part of the EU. The first is lukewarm local responses. The underlying reasons for such responses vary, depending on the contextual conditions, as well as the interests and perceptions of the actors engaged. When it comes to Northeast Asian countries, mutual misunderstanding and mistrust is hard to erase due to historical animosity and territorial disputes among them, which contribute toward making the very idea of regional cooperation appear infeasible at the moment. This is particularly the case as China and Japan continue to compete against each other for regional influence and leadership (Lee and Kim, 2011: 178). On the other hand, given that Southeast Asian countries tend to adhere to their ‘ASEAN way’ (Jetschke and Murray, 2012: 175), they are unlikely to follow the EU’s leading role in this area blindly. While engaging themselves in the regional integration process *per se*, they still resist both the outright diffusion and/or adoption of the EU model that can be, in some sense, incompatible with their constitutive norms, such as respect for the sovereignty, non-interference and territorial integrity of each country (Farrell, 2009: 1179-1180). Moreover, reservations about the role of external actors regarding regional integration also stand in the way. The US, among others, maintains a skeptical view based on the concern that China and Japan might extend their power through regionalism and challenge its hegemonic position (Interview US Embassy, 2013).

The interest-based approach of the EU makes the whole dynamic even more complicated. There has been EU attempts to incorporate regional conflicts into a framework of regional cooperation and integration. Yet this has been pursued with some conditions attached, i.e., the focus is largely confined to low politics. The underlying reasons are the EU's "more interest-based and pragmatic policy path" (Jokela & Gaens 2012: 145) and Asian countries' skeptical view of the EU's political and security role (Hofmann, 2007: 190).

Under these circumstances, one of the sources for regional insecurity caused by the North Korean nuclear crisis has been coped with, as it has been embedded within institutional frameworks. This manifested itself in the EU's participation as an executive member of the KEDO. Until the entrenched power politics between the US and North Korea wrecked the very process itself (Interview KIDA, 2013), economic incentives were offered to ease North Korea's securitization moves. Apart from KEDO which was designed for the specific purpose of addressing the North Korean nuclear issue, other modes of regional cooperation have also been used. The ARF, despite its lack of enforcement mechanisms or sanctions (Haacke and Morada, 2011: 227), has offered the opportunity for the EU and other parties to discuss the North Korean nuclear issue in a broader regional security context. The ASEM has also played a similar role, including many Asian and EU member countries and addressing a whole array of concerns in focus (Forster, 2000: 796). Yet its effects have to be understood in a much broader context of regional peace and prosperity, as the ASEM is designed for the general effects of regional integration and leaves its effectiveness for the conflict transformation itself open to question (Interview Asan Institute for Policy Studies, 2013).

It is also important to note that the EU, alongside other parties involved, has made use of these institutional frameworks to make a continuous endorsement for the effective operation of the existing frameworks exclusively dealing with the issue. That is, it has called for the resumption of the deadlocked Six-Party talks through, to name but a few, the ARF meeting in 2004, as well as ASEM summits in 2006 and 2010 (ASEM 2006; 2010).

The EU's attempt to embed the South China Sea territorial dispute issue within the institutional frameworks is also related to its strategic interest to ensure unrestricted navigation of Asia's waterways (Commission, 1994: 9). Thus the EU has continued to encourage the parties concerned to resolve disputes through peaceful and cooperative solutions and in accordance with international law, such as UNCLOS, while encouraging all parties to clarify the basis for their claims (Council, 2012: 20).

To this end, the ARF has been encouraged continuously to cover the South China Sea issue in its ministerial meetings since 1994 (ASEAN secretariat, 2002). The EU's promotion of regional fora to cope with the challenges relating to the territorial disputes has been marked by the attendance of its High Representative to the ARF meeting to discuss maritime security, coinciding with the US' recent acknowledgement of the complementary roles of regional cooperation conducive to long-term peace (Europe Asia Security Forum 2012). In addition, when China has emerged as a regional hegemon in the early 1990s and exaggerated its claims over maritime territories in the South China Sea, the ASEAN was faced with a fundamental shake-up of the regional environment and has therefore been forced to deal with it. Last but not least, although the South China sea issue has not been an official agenda inclusion (Hernandez et al., 2006), the ASEM has acted as an informal meeting that creates an environment for cooperation between members, and has been encouraged to address root causes of conflict in a peaceful way (Yeo, 2007: 187). By doing so, the EU has not only connected the existing regional cooperative frameworks with each other, but also displayed its long-term intention to handle regional conflicts within the multilateral frameworks.

IV. Pathways of Influence

As a second step of analysis, this section concentrates on the examination of the pathways of influence. To make this analysis more systematic, the effects of the different kinds of actors are considered. With these in mind, this section asks to what extent, and under which conditions, they could also provide an opportunity to reduce the degree of existential threats to the self through desecuritization moves.

1. Compulsory pathway

One conceivable way of dealing with the North Korean nuclear issue is to provide economic incentives through multilateral cooperation. Through the KEDO, the EU and other parties assessed how and whether parties in conflict with each other can shift toward conciliatory policies by means of positive conditionality (Dorussen, 2001). Despite the initial hope, how-

ever, there was a gap between stated objectives and developments in practice. The US political stance began to change with the inauguration of the Bush administration and the Japanese government also began to question North Korea's sincerity (Quinones, 2006: 1). Finally when Washington pressured for actual progress in order to tackle the nuclear issue step by step (Weissmann, 2013: 120), the positive incentives lost their value⁵. In hindsight, the demand for the overall abandonment of its nuclear development program as a condition for the return of financial awards could not have been seen as an acceptable choice for North Korea. Instead, this heightened tension such that North Korea could only exploit it as a pretext for its apprehension strategy of regime security (Interview KIDA, 2013).⁶

Amid the confrontational relations between the US and North Korea, the EU's role was not very remarkable for two main reasons. First, its financial contribution to KEDO was indeed very modest. It only promised to pay 75 million euros over a period of five years, accounting only for 2% of the overall contributions. Just as its financial contributions were meagre, the EU's political will was also problematic. It made clear from the outset that it had no intention to take a leading role in the program (Interview EEAS, Brussel, 2013). This was not only because the EU did not consider Asian affairs among its main foreign policy concerns (Lee, 2005), but also because three key KEDO members, namely, the US, Japan and South Korea, were also not "enamored of a European approach which smacked of trying to buy a way in" (Bridges, 2008: 219).

In opposition to incentives, the EU has also used negative conditionality, i.e. imposing sanctions in conjunction with the international community. In 2002 when the nuclear crisis occurred and posed regional security threats, the EU exhibited its unequivocal commitment to maintain the integration of the NPT (Council of the EU, 2004: 22).⁷ Since then, it has continuously compelled North Korea to comply with UN resolution 1718, 1874 and 2087. However, as long as the EU characteristically has few tools at its disposal (Diez, Stetter, and

5 The failure of the KEDO, however, is not solely attributed to the US attitudes. Without doubt, the dual strategy of North Korea was no less problematic. With hindsight, North Korea seemed to show a gesture of compliance when it needed to extract as much assistance as possible, but it abruptly changed its position when the advantages of KEDO programs were no longer visible.

6 This is well demonstrated by the North Korean spokesman commented after the Bush administration strategy of Axis of Evils that "US policy as "unilateral and conditional in its nature and hostile in its intention" (KCNA, 2001).

7 See Council of the European Union (ed.), Presidency conclusions of the Brussels European Council (December 12-13, 2003), Brussels, February 5, 2004, 5381/04, p. 22.

Albert, 2006: 573), the scope of its sanction is limited. This is all the more so when the distribution of costs would be disproportionately uneven for South Korea (Frank, 2006: 12). The best strategy it can come up with is to participate in multilateral sanctions, or the withholding of positive incentives, such as the KEDO program. Thus sanctions, as is the case with incentives, have not generated positive results strong enough to alter the opportunity structure among conflict parties.

Compared to the North Korean case, there is some evidence of compulsory impact in other cases within the context of regional integration centered around the ASEAN, as well as the contributions of the EU within the process. With hindsight, the EU has made strenuous efforts aiming to promote regional integration within the framework of ASEAN. The implementation of ASEAN-EU programs concretized as APRIS-1, APRIS-2 and AEISP should be construed in this context, as these helped promote the regional integration in general (Commission 2003, 15) and security stability in particular (Council 2007, 5). As a result, there is some positive evidence of how the incentive-driven policy has often generated some positive effects in terms of conflict transformation. Some of the examples include the stabilization efforts of East Timor, the provision of financial assistance and the supervision of the implementation of the peace agreement between Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement, and the contribution to the pacification between the Muslim population in Mindanao and the central government of the Philippines (Berkofsky 2013).

When it comes to the South China Sea case, however, the degree and nature of compulsory effects within the framework of regional integration has not been analogous (Interview Beijing University, 2013a). Not only has the imposition of multilateral sanctions been virtually impossible, given the economic, political and strategic importance of China, but the provision of economic incentives requiring the fulfillment of conditions attached has not been made. This is due to, first, difficulty that is embedded in the contextual conditions that are aggravated by the intransigence of China. In fact, China has been very cautious in changing its positions on the conditional role of regional integration, particularly when it has been opposed to involvement in disputes of countries that fall outside of the region. (赵锐玲 2002: 110-113; China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Weimin's Regular Press Conference on June 4, 2012; May 31, 2012). Moreover, the ambivalent attitude of other claimant countries has also been problematic, in that they seek to strike a balance between economic interests and security strategies, due to the warnings of the Chinese against any direct internationaliza-

tion of the issue and the Chinese position as an invaluable partner for their economic growth (Pham 2010: 430-432). When the Philippines and Vietnam were exposed to incidences of Chinese covetousness, the former solicited collective support from fellow ASEAN members, as did the latter regarding its claims to the Spratlys and the Paracels (Hund, 2013: 189). But non-disputants are reluctant to push China to multilateralize talks regarding the South China Sea, given their preference, among others, to keep the environment peaceful and stable to allow continued economic development. The failure of the 45th ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting (AMM) in Phnom Penh in 2012 can be seen a supporting evidence in this context. Issuing the usual end-of-meeting communiqué, the AMM had to witness a crack in ASEAN's unity for the first time in its 45-year history due to the discrepancies among the members of the ways to deal with the South China Sea. Thus Cambodia, the then Chair country of the AMM, refused to include the Philippine and Vietnamese positions on the disputes (CSCAP Regional Security Outlook 2013, 6) and this was largely due to the possible economic costs Cambodia had to bear.⁸

Against this backdrop, the EU cannot ignore both internal and external challenges caused by pushing ahead with the compulsory pathway of influence within regional integration frameworks in Asia. On the one hand, the internal division between member states over the EU policy towards China stands in its way, as not a few would consider China as one of the EU's most important trade partners in Asia, and imprudence in dealing with China as unacceptable (张健 2013, 20). On the other hand, China complains that Europe is already "interfering" too much in China's internal affairs endorsing US-driven containment policies (Berkofsky 2013), whereas Southeast Asian countries do not expect much from the role of EU to resolve the South China Sea dispute because of its limited leverage, in spite of their principle endorsement of its involvement (Interview Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, 2013; Interview Department of National Defense, 2013).

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily imply that there are no possibilities of compulsory impact in the process of transforming conflict within the context of regional integra-

⁸ The Chinese government prompted its domestic firms to make \$8.2 billion worth of investment to Cambodia in 2006 alone and also there has been billion-dollar worth of aids and soft loans for Hun Sen's government with no strings attached (Hunt 2012).

tion. In fact, there is a phenomenon of growing economic interdependence as a result of expanded economic exchange, such as free trade agreements (Dorussen, 2001: 251). This creates an incentive that is conducive to intensifying conflict-prevention potential and longer-term peace-building (Weissmann, 2012: 109). This is particularly so when free trade agreements have been perceived as important carrots to influence parties outside the institutional framework of regional integration (Diez, Stetter and Albert, 2006: 573). This logic has also underpinned the EU's regional integration support policy in Asia that has been further materialized through technical transfers and financial assistance: the EU has hoped for the spillover effects of expanded economic exchange both inside and outside the confinements of regional integration frameworks, on the assumption that they would positively affect the parties in conflict, and entice them to alter their securitization strategies.

That being the case, unambiguous signs of growing economic interdependence between China and ASEAN member states should be understood in the same context.⁹ While China has become ASEAN's largest trading partner, ASEAN ranks as China's third-largest trading partner as of 2013 (www.asean.org/resources/2012-02-10-08-47-55). With the passage time, moreover, economic interdependence has also paved the way for the creation of the ASEAN-China free trade area (ACFTA) in 2010. As a result, an assertion can be made that the benefits of economic cooperation would to some extent overshadow the problems in the South China Sea territorial disputes (Weissmann, 2010). However, it is not sure whether there is a direct correlation between the EU's regional integration promotion efforts and its positive effects on conflict transformation as a result of growing economic interdependence (Interview Qinghua University, 2013). More importantly, it is also difficult to measure correctly whether this phenomenon would be conducive to a desecuritization move.

1. Social learning

The type of social learning that the EU would expect within its institutional framework is the

⁹ Most of them are actually claimant countries of the territorial dispute

internalization of its underpinning norms and values (Risse, 2000). Through the process of social learning, actors are persuaded to change “their attitude about cause and effect in the absence of overt coercion” (Checkel, 2001: 562). However, it is hard to expect the same kind of social learning within the regional institutional contexts when they are prompted to cope with the North Korean nuclear issue. First, the EU is not at the heart of the institutionalization process of regional cooperation, in which societal diffusion of a desecuritization agenda can take place. Second, and more importantly, it is often precluded from even participating in the very process of social learning itself.

Nevertheless, there is evidence of learning among conflict parties, irrespective of whether it is an individual conflict or a collective one. The KEDO first allowed learning between conflict parties to occur. When South Korea’s “sunshine diplomacy” under the Kim Dae-Jung administration aimed for peace and co-prosperity on the Korean peninsula, the hitherto mistrust among the two Korean elites was to some extent alleviated, and the groundwork for social learning seemed to be consolidated (Interview with former NSC chair, 2013). Against this backdrop, both South and North Korean elites involved in the KEDO programs at least learned that neither of them is the archenemy to be afraid of. In the process, moreover, the outside world that used to be ignorant of North Korea also came to have a better understanding of this country (Weissmann, 2012, 137-8). Such a change in discourse can be seen as an initial stage of social learning (Tocci 2007: 16) that has also continued through other regional institutional frameworks. The process of adopting the Seoul Declaration at the 2000 ASEM summit demonstrated the growing mutual recognition among parties in conflict as regards their possibilities as partners for dialogue (Kim, 2001: 13-20). This tendency has also persisted even in the framework of the Six-Party talks, in which the EU is precluded from participating. For the sake of North Korea’s face saving, the US has learned to practice conflict avoidance in its reactions to North Korean provocations (Weissmann, 2012: 135-6).

There has also been social learning in track 1.5 diplomacies to which the EU has made its own commitments (Interview Hanns-Seidel Stiftung, 2013). When North Korea was hit hard by floods, it badly needed external aid. To meet its demands, collective forms of humanitarian engagement were organized and enforced accordingly. Since then, the EU, along with the US, Japan and South Korea, has actively participated in multilateral efforts to aid North Koreans (이금순, 2003: 8-9). These multilateral aid operations, in conjunction with bilateral contacts, have led North Korea to rely more on the EU, as the former has learned

that the latter can act as an alternative channel to express its views (Lee, 2012: 49-50).

The learning process identified above, however, cannot be seen as complex learning. It rather exhibited the features of simple learning. Through institutional interaction, actors simply acquired new information and altered their strategies, but not their preferences and identities (Levy, 1994: 286). Thus it is hard to say that argumentative persuasion among parties in conflict did take place (Interview West Europe Division, MOFA, 2013). This is not groundless, as the nuclear contingencies, *inter alia*, serve as a counterargument highlighting that North Korea has not been convinced to alter its identity and preferences voluntarily. So, the EU, like other conflict parties, has no choice but to see Pyongyang continue to exploit the current channels of diplomacy as instruments to gain more time for its nuclear weapons program and to limit possible repercussions (Maass, 2012: 309).

Like the North Korean nuclear case, the same basic norms and values apply to the case of the South China Sea territorial dispute, *i.e.*, the enabling of dialogues and interaction within the framework of regional integration for conflict transformation (Interview IISS-CCPS, 2013). Or, more specifically, it may be alternatively suggested that there is social learning that the territorial dispute could be effectively addressed using frameworks of regional cooperation or integration. Accommodating these underpinning norms and values, South China Sea claimant countries have acknowledged the importance of dialogue and interaction, which are pertinent to mitigating maritime security threats. The driving force behind these transforming dynamics and norms has been the Chinese change in attitude towards multilateralism that has significant political and strategic implications. Despite its passive attitude towards multilateral engagement of its dispute in the past, China has gradually held its view and position from “self-imposed isolation” in the international system to its integration into it (Wu and Lansdowne 2008). The underlying reason is its recognition that dispelling the perception of a Chinese threat is one of the top foreign policy priorities (Song 2013, 473-474). The position of ASEAN countries appears to be not very different from that of China creates another favorable condition. Even among those countries that have experienced heated confrontational relationships, a lesson has been learned with respect to the degree of tension that could be attenuated by the continued interaction and dialogue facilitated by the institutional framework of regional cooperation and integration (interview Diplomatic Academy of Vi-

etnam, 2013).

The signing of the 2002 Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) has to be seen in this context (ASEAN secretariat, 2002). This agreement is a token not only of the common understanding, but also of shared values and norms, among ASEAN countries and China about the importance of legitimizing interactions that may contribute to the transformation of hostile contextual conditions to amicable ones. Despite the initial hope, however, the tendency of mutual recognition has also been often hampered by conflict, as time goes by. This is first due to China's more assertive stance regarding territorial and maritime disputes (Casarini 2013, 194), facing the US pivot to Asia: it defined the territorial dispute as one of its "core interests" in 2010, a term traditionally reserved for matters of national sovereignty such as Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang (Swaine 2011, 2).¹⁰ At the same time, some of the other claimant countries that maintain guard positions in the disputed areas complicate the situation. The confrontation between the Philippines and Vietnam and China regarding fishery rights in their EEZs in 2011 (for details of the conflict, see Keine-Ahlbrandt, 2011) can be seen as a consequence of this hostile relationship.

Nevertheless, their appreciation of continued interaction and dialogues has been sustained, even when the mutual relationships have deteriorated. For example, despite the heightened tension caused by the clash between China's patrol vessels and Filipino and Vietnamese seismic ships in 2011, both parties were not discouraged to sign the July 2011 China-ASEAN agreement on the Implementation Guidelines for the Declaration of Conduct in the South China Sea. No one could force them to give up their dialogues and interactions even when the Philippines took the dispute to the arbitral tribunal under UNCLOS in 2013 (ICG 2013, 3). In contrast to general concerns, the conflict parties made another concessive agreement that led to a joint-statement to hold "official consultations" on a proposed Code of Conduct (COC) to govern the South China Sea "naval actions" (MFA China, 2013). This tendency continued, and ASEAN and China held their first formal consultations on the possibility of a COC in the South China Sea at the 6th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting and

10 Chinese researchers almost unanimously agree that the government has not made any conscious policy decision to rank the South China Sea as a core interest at the same level as an issue such as Taiwan (Interview Renmin University, 2013; Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Jiang Yu's Regular Press Conference on September 21, 2010).

the 9th ASEAN-China Joint Working Group Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC in Suzhou, China, September 14–15, 2013. This meeting adopted a work plan for 2013–14, approved an eminent persons group to offer technical advice, and agreed to meet in Thailand in the first quarter of 2014.

The presence of the EU has been determined by contextual conditions. First, at the track-one diplomacy, in which formal interactions are made to discuss the adoption of the DOC and the COC, the EU's contribution as a mediator or persuader is neither very specific nor salient (Interview NIIS·CASS, 2013). There have been principal endorsements for dialogue and interaction through regional integration contexts. To name but a few, it "strongly" encouraged full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (ARF 2005, 38), or dispatched its High Representative to these regional fora and dialogues after the Lisbon treaty. However, when it comes to track-two diplomacy, the EU's role has been demonstrated in a more conspicuous way. This is largely because informality associated with 'track two' initiatives would allow for discussion and dialogue without being bound by political fetters (Townsend-Gault, "Track Two Diplomacy," 2013; Katzenstein 2005: Ravenhil 2007; 135-154). In this context, some ASEAN claimants apparently began to recognize the importance of the EU's successful experiences with respect to resolve the South China Sea dispute (Interview Vietnam National University, 2013). Some examples of where the track-two diplomacy of the EU's commitment for social learning among parties in conflict has been salient include the EU's contribution to the Inter-sessional Group on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (Hofmann 2007:189); a policy study comparing the regional integration process of the South China sea region with the Baltic Sea to come up with an effective maritime management scheme (North and Turner, 2010: 271-277) and the EU's participation in the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) to enhance mutual trust and confidence among parties in conflict through network building process (Weissmann, 2012: 100).

2. Changing Context

When the EU promotes regional integration, it aims at the changing context in which desecuritization moves among conflict parties can be justified that may otherwise be considered il-

legitimate (Buzan et al., 1998: 41-2). On appearance, this attempt has gained momentum when its positive value has been gradually recognized by global and regional actors. The US, with the inauguration of the Obama administration, has started to appreciate the roles of multilateral institutions in coping with Asia's regional security challenges (Clington, 2011: 58), and the Chinese government has also made its own principal endorsement in a similar context (Interview CRI, 2013). However, it is still open to question as to whether the regional integration process in Asia has fulfilled its "center-building" objective with "a collective action capacity" (Olsen, 2002: 923). As far as institutional frameworks, dealing with hard security issues, are particularly concerned, it appears difficult to create a context in which a common position for all conflict parties is established in order to encourage a greater regional understanding of the disputes. Most of the time, there are only declaratory gestures. Or, sometimes, conflict contexts were even fostered, depending on the perception and interests of some of the parties in conflict. Moreover, the diffusion of EU institutional rules has been confined only to ASEAN-based entities, such as the ARF and the ASEM, and the corresponding effects have remained less direct.

Above all, reflecting the EU's "multilateral and civilian power initiatives" (Casarini, 2013: 188), the ASEM has encouraged Asian countries to resolve conflicts through dialogue (Yeo, 2007: 187); but its impact tends to be limited when it comes to the North Korean nuclear issue. For instance, at the 2000 ASEM summit, the conference participants appeared to welcome a gesture of reconciliation between the two Koreas formulated after the June inter-Korean summit (Kim, 2001: 13-20). A common endorsement was then made in order "to improve relations between ASEM, its individual partners and DPRK through dialogue, people-to-people exchange, economic links, as well as DPRK participation in multilateral dialogues" (ASEM, 2000: 3). For a brief moment when contextual conditions permitted, optimism over the promises of a strengthened role of effective multilateralism prevailed. But this was nothing more than declaratory diplomacy, given the ASEM's informality as a meeting forum, which thus focuses only on non-legally binding arrangements (Forster, 2000: 796).

These trends have also been symptomatic for the ASEAN Regional Forums. As a multilateral regional security body that deals with North Korea's nuclear issue since 1996 (양길현, 2012: 149),¹¹ the ARF has principally worked for the peaceful settlement of dis-

11. One of the main objectives of the ARF is also the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

putes through confidence-building mechanisms (Weber, 2013: 346). In particular, ever since the Six-Party talks have been stalemated by North Korea's brinkmanship diplomacy, there has been renewed attention from South Korea when the newly inaugurated Park Geun-Hae administration announced its new North Korean policy, called "the Korean trust-building process". As part for the fulfillment of this objective, cooperation among like-minded groups within the ARF has also been highly appreciated (Interview ASEAN Cooperation Division, MOFA, 2013). However, the concerted efforts for changing context within regional cooperation are not free from the adverse effects resulting from North Korea's continued desecuritization move. For instance, at the 19th ASEAN Regional Forum in Phnom Penh, July 2012, North Korea continued to defend its position by allying with Cambodia, which held the summit Presidency at the time (엄상윤, 2012: 12). When the Chairman's statement was decided, it succeeded in persuading Cambodia and only allowed it to emphasize "the importance of peace, security and stability on the Korean peninsula" (ARF, 2012: 2). The failure to highlight North Korea's long-range missiles and enriched uranium programs is indicative of the inherent constraints that the ARF finds difficult to overcome. As a result, the effect of changing context expected by the EU within the frameworks of regional cooperation has proved unsatisfactory, and an amicable context legitimating interaction still seems to be in the distant future (Interview with a diplomat, MOFA, May 2013).

Meanwhile, more institutionalized and regulated patterns of interaction have been detected in the case of the South China Sea disputes which may create a systemic effect of alleviating the degree of securitization moves among parties in conflict. Based on its past experiences, the EU has above all encouraged ASEAN and China to build this foundation through the agreement of the COC. The underlying reason behind the EU's commitment is related to the assumption that this formal institutional rule, if welcomed by the relevant parties, could offer the opportunity to share the experience of the EU and its Member States in relation to the consensual, international-law-based settlement of maritime border issues (Council 2012, 20).

A detailed examination of the agreement process of the new formal rules helps to understand, whether the COC has been successful in helping legitimize interactions through the changing context impact. Specifically, when ASEAN countries proposed to discuss the COC, China also agreed to engage in the discussion, largely ascribed to its economic interdependence with other ASEAN countries and its political intention to reduce the perception

of a Chinese threat (Moore, 2008: 38-41). After a long-winded discussion, the China-ASEAN agreement on the Implementation Guidelines for the DOC was finally signed in July 2011. In its wake, a similar pattern of conciliatory gestures was also observed at a series of high-level ASEAN meetings in Suzhou in September 2013 when the senior officials of the participating countries met for the first time and formally discussed the possibility of a code of conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.

Notwithstanding the overall willingness to deal with conflicts within the institutionalized framework, the conditional contexts have not been fully transformed in such a way for the interactions of parties in conflict to be legally bound. This is first attributed to China's indeterminate attitude towards multilateralism (Interview Beijing University, 2013 b). China often seemed more comfortable bringing up the issue bilaterally than in multinational forums, in spite of its growing recognition of the necessity of dialogues and interaction through the social learning process.¹² Thus its nominal agreement with the COC should not necessarily be seen as its readiness to make the adjustments necessary to draw up a functioning document (Interview Renmin University, 2013; Wang 2000, 476). The degree of progress up to now illustrates its intention: no specific deadlines or details about the joint working group that will carry out the actual tasks are yet available, although China and ASEAN countries have already agreed to seek gradual progress and consensus through consultations (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying held a press conference on October 9, 2013). As a result, consultations on the COC will take considerable time because China has only agreed to indirect consultations on the COC as part of ongoing discussions (Interview NIIS·CASS, 2013). This is more likely the case, if China uses the principle of consensus to veto any proposal with which it does not agree (Sinclair 2013). Instead, it is appropriate to interpret the announcement of Chinese officials at the 19th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Consultation that China is willing to commence discussion on the COC with the ASEAN later in 2013 as one of its strategies to counter the influence of the Philippines and, possibly, Vietnam on the overall position of the ASEAN when the details of the COC is actually under discussion (Thayer 2013, 4). As a result, the COC is not so much an effective institutional rule to deal with the South China Sea issue, but a tool to strike a balance between China's great power aspirations and the interests of smaller countries in accruing economic and security benefits from the re-

¹² This social learning effect of accepting multilateralism has also been identified in other areas of China's

gion (Pal 2013).

The systemic effect of changing context with the introduction of new institutional rules is further undermined by the inclination of ASEAN claimant countries that keep on construing China as an existential threat through securitization moves. Although the social learning process has enabled multilateral interactions and dialogues amid the growing tension often caused by head-on confrontations, contextual conditions have not been shaped in a way that is favorable for positive conflict transformation. There still remains a tendency on the part of the ASEAN to challenge China's claim of the South China Sea by engaging external forces in the dispute (ICG 2012a). During Vietnam's 2010 ASEAN chairmanship, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asserted that the South China Sea should be freely navigated (Weitz, 2010). Against this backdrop, the Chinese fear grew. This misgiving proved legitimate, given the inclination of some ASEAN countries seeking closer military ties with the US when tensions mounted around the South China Sea area. Facing such internal and external challenges, it is unsurprising to see the Chinese seek to discourage U.S. involvement and the internationalization of the dispute (环球时报 2010). Thus, the efforts to legitimize interaction conducive for the long-term process of conflict transformation remain rather limited.

3. Model Setting Effect

The model-setting effect depends on a number of elements. First, it concerns the persistence of the EU's role and image in Asia. Despite the EU's increasing confidence to play a greater political role since 1997, its main focus of engagement has remained on the economic area. Just as a policy of pragmatism concentrated on trade-related issues has become pivotal in the EU's regional strategy (European Commission, 2001), the model-setting effect encompassing hard-security issues has been consistently questioned. In addition, the reputation of the EU model gets further undermined by the recent financial crisis. Although there is hope that the fallout is likely to be temporary (Cameron, 2012), it has turned increasingly inward-looking by jeopardizing any ambitions to play a greater political and security role in Asia (Gaens, Lokela and Mattlin, 2012: 93). The EU has thus been discredited as an effective integration model to emulate after the debt crisis.

foreign policy practices in international politics. For more details, see Dittmer (2008).

At the same time, skepticism remains high among Asian countries, asking whether the EU model can be seen as an effective mode of governance, as long as its capability and expectation gap (Hill, 1993) is taken seriously even in Asia after the debt crisis. When it comes to the North Korean nuclear issue, the state-centric lenses of territorial integrity tend to predominate (Yeo, 2013: 466). For local as well as global actors, therefore, the active adoption of the EU model to the extent that even security issues can be addressed within multilateral arrangements has proved unconvincing at the moment. In particular, China resists the EU's attempts to intervene directly in political and security issues in Asia (宿亮 2011, 42-50), while the US also still wants it to play a only complementary role, *when* it is requested to do so (Interview Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Korea, 2013).

Under these circumstances, it is not so much the European model, but its norms that they want to copy, hoping that it may help to overcome political, physical, economic and social barriers by common accord (Jetschke and Murray, 2012; Gaens, Lokela and Mattlin, 2012: 97).¹³ This is very reasonable as the EU defines itself as a normative power in Europe that has the ability to shape conceptions of what is normal in world politics (Manners, 2002). As a result, if European experiences do not constitute a model to emulate, it can still be regarded as offering an important reference point against which local actors try to outline their own policy of regional cooperation and integration. This trait has recently been highlighted at the EU-South Korean summit in 2013. Both leaders underlined their mutual commitment to peace and stability in Northeast Asia. While South Korea once more recognizes the role of the EU in building peace and security within and beyond its boundaries and its willingness to share its experience where useful in Asia, the latter supports the ROK's Trust-building Process on the Korean Peninsula by welcoming the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative proposed by the President of the Republic of Korea as a way of building dialogue and trust in the region (Council, 2013). In this context, mentioning the EU as a long-term reference point appears to have been publicly endorsed when it comes to the future trajectory of some of regional forums, such as the Six-party talks, EAS and APT (김성환, 2008: 8; 파이낸스 뉴스). This tendency was also demonstrated by the former South Korean president Roh who once said that "the Talks draw a lesson from the EU ... that has successfully resolved

13 Most of the interviewees, whether they are government officials, academics, and diplomats, agree with this point.

conflicts among its member states through integration”(이미숙, 2007).

When it comes to the model-setting impact on the case of South China Sea territorial dispute, the EU has also been considered a successful model of regional integration to emulate. Specifically speaking, ASEAN claimant countries have displayed their interest in the EU's successful experiences of conflict resolution (Interview Vietnam National University, 2013), and they have been encouraged to pay more attention to its accumulated experience as a soft or normative power and to its civilian-dominated approach of peace keeping missions in Asia. (Hofmann, 2007: 189). On the other hand, the EU has also indicated its willingness to replicate its own integration experience in Asia as part of its foreign policy strategies to ensure peace and security in the area. This objective has been first pursued within the framework of the ASEAN-EU program of Regional Integration Support (APRIS) and a Plan of Action afterwards (Jetschke and Murray, 2012: 178). In addition, its impact as a model has also been identified, exporting its norms of peaceful conflict resolution or preventive diplomacy mechanism through inter-regional meetings, such as the ASEM and ARF.

However, it is hard to argue for an explicit reflection of any European paradigm on the frameworks of regional cooperation and integration (Interview IISS-CCPS, 2013b). This is first due to the fact that Asian countries are geographically distant from the EU, and have not been under its sphere of influence neither through membership agreements nor through other mechanisms. Thus, instead of obliging them to accommodate or adopt its mode of governance, it has rather relied on 'soft' incentives as well as persuasion (Jetschke and Murray, 2012: 178). It is also because of its often pragmatic policy pathway: the EU's foreign policy has often been less prioritized vis-à-vis the economic interests of the member states (Jokela & Gaens 2012: 145; 160) and this tendency has further been intensified due to the recent debt crisis that has undermined its self-confidence.

On top of this, local countries' responses were not of great help for two reasons. On the one hand, many countries in Southeast Asia seem still preoccupied with problems of economic development, nation building and internal stability, and they are unable to take other issues seriously, whether they are community-building projects or regional security issues (Busse and Maull, 1999: 227). On the other hand, despite the ongoing phenomenon of regionalism, the core of ASEAN's approach has different premises from the EU model in terms of their goals and methodologies to achieve these objectives (Interview Diplomatic Academy

of Vietnam, 2013). This seems particularly so, as long as they basically uphold their ‘ASEAN way’ (Garelli 2011: 1, 5; Interview Philippines’ Department of National Defense, 2013). Thus, it remains to be seen how and to what extent its ASEAN claimant countries, which mainly rely on the consensus of all parties involved in terms of decision-making, are compatible with and draw on European-style security policy implementation mechanisms.

Moreover, given that China is especially sensitive to any multilateral attempt to mediate the South China Sea issue, which is considered to be a domestic concern (He, 1998, 6-7), it is still hesitating to embed this issue within the regional framework as it is perceived as a “western-dominated” system (Carlson, 2004, 9). Perhaps, multilateralism has become a core, yet “selective”, part of China’s foreign policy because China does not want to be bound in all areas (Karns and Mingst 2010, 264). Instead, it inclines to regard multilateralism largely as a way to promote its economic development and expand its political power (Wang 2000).

Against this backdrop, it appears that the European model of integration is unsuitable in an Asian context (Fitriani 2011: 44) when it comes to handling regional security issues, such as the South China Sea territorial dispute. Moreover, it is only selectively pertinent. This is why the ASEAN has tenuously considered its integration process as a model in its own (Acharya, 2009). Similarly, the advancement of the EU’s normative objectives through ASEM has been selectively fulfilled due to the inconsistency in projecting ‘European’ values through its foreign policy, i.e., it often sidelines the human rights agenda when facing economically powerful counterparts, such as China (Jokela & Gaens 2012: 145; 160). In addition, there is a significant limit to diffusing the EU model when the actual security issues are discussed within the ARF, just as ASEAN countries have resisted the EU proposals, such as to establish ARF Secretariat, or to study the past experiences of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to help institutionalize its prevention diplomacy mechanism.

4. Conclusion

The regional security threats in Asia could, in a sense, be managed, if the effective operation of regional cooperation and integration is guaranteed, just as the EU has aimed for. The

chance for its success, however, has proven much slimmer than expected at the moment, largely due to the complicated interplay between the interests and perceptions of the actors involved and the contextual conditions they have to confront. Yet this paper still makes the conclusion that in terms of the impact of regional integration on the process of transforming conflicts positively, the South China Sea case is more positive than the North Korean case in relative terms.

When it comes to the North Korean nuclear crisis, above all, a widespread skepticism over the impact of regional integration is still hard to ignore at the moment. This, of course, does not negate the examples of intermittent positive contributions through compulsory impact and the long-term role of regional integration, if the EU's integration process is taken as a good reference model to emulate and adopt accordingly, with some alterations that are suitable for the demands of regional contexts. In contrast, relatively more sanguine prospects are expected when the current framework of regional integration in coping with the South China Sea territorial dispute gains further momentum. A long-term prospect of spill-over effects through growing economic interdependence, coupled with a certain level of social learning may legitimize further interaction. In the process, a more consolidated contribution of regional cooperation and integration can be discussed, regardless of whether and to which extent the EU paradigm, as a successful case of conflict transformation through regional integration, permeates the current regional integration process in Asia. Even so, both of the cases still illustrates that the current frameworks of regional cooperation and integration are neither likely to offer dominant pathways to cope with regional security threats, nor position the EU as a determinant actor at the moment.

References

김성환(2008) “지역주의와 다자동맹: 동아시아에서의 공존 가능성에 대한 시론”, 국제정치논총, 48집, 4호.

김영재, 박인휘 (2004) “온건주의 연합: 북핵 문제 해법을 위한 한미일 정책 공조”, 국제정치논총, 44집, 4호.

양길현(2012) “오바마-이명박 정부의 북핵 정책에 대한 비판적 평가: 반주변의 시각”, 국제정치논총, 52권, 2호.

엄상윤 (2012) “프놈펜 ARF 외교장관회의와 동아시아 안보정세”, 정세와 정책, 2012, 8월호.

이금순 (2003) 대북 인도적 지원 개선방안: 개발구호를 중심으로, 연구총서 00-32 (서울: 통일연구원)

이미숙 (2007) “헬싱키 프로세스, 동북아서도 모범”, 문화일보, 2007, 6, 22.

임을출 (2009) “6자회담의 다자적 제도화: 초기조건과 결정요인”, 통일정책연구, 18권, 1호, pp. 97-123.

环球时报, “别把南中国海 ‘多边化’,” 环球时报, 28 July 2010.

张健 (2013), “试析欧盟在美国亚太战略中的角色,” 现代国际关系, 第5期.

宿亮(Su Liang), “欧盟参与东亚安全治理: 行动与局限,” 太平洋学报, Vol.19, No.6, 2011.

赵锐玲(Zhao Ruiling), “东盟对南中国海问题的介入及其消极影响,” 解放军外国语学院学报, Vol.25, No.6, 2002.

Acharya, Amitave (2009) *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

ARF (2005) ARF Annual Security Outlook 2005.

ARF (2012), Chairman’s Statement of the 19th ASEAN Regional Forum Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 12 July 2012.

ASEM (2000) Chairman’s Statement, Asia-Europe Meeting, 20-21 October, 2000.

ASEM (2006), Chairman’s Statement of the Sixth Asia Europe Meeting, Helsinki, 10-11 September 2006.

ASEM (2010) Chair’s Statement of the Eighth Asia-Europe Meeting, Brussels, 4-5 October, 2010.

ASEAN secretariat (2002) Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea.

Berkofsky, Axel (Senior Advisor at the EU-Asia Centre and Professor at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Pavia, Italy), 2013, "The EU in Asian Security: Too Much for Beijing, Not Enough for Washington - Analysis," *Eurasiareview.com*, November 16.

Bridges, Brian (2008), "The European Union and the Korean Conundrum", in Richard Balm and Brian Bridges (eds.) *Europe-Asia Relations: Building Multilateralisms* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan)

Busse, Nikolas & Hanns W. Maull (1999), "Enhancing security in the Asia-Pacific: European lessons for the regional forum," *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft*, March.

Buzan, Barry; Wæver, Ole; Wilde, Jaap de (1998): *Security. A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynn Rienner).

Buszynski, Leszek (2012) "The South China Sea: Oil, Maritime Claims, and U.S. - China Strategic Rivalry," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2012.

Cameron, Fraser (2012) (Director, EU-Asia Centre, Brussels), "Is the EU an actor in Asia?" *Asia-Europe Foundation* (6 August).

Carlson, Allen, 2004. "Helping to Keep the Peace (Albeit Reluctantly): China's Recent Stance on Sovereignty and Multilateral Intervention," *Pacific Affairs*, 77(1), (Spring)

Casarini, Nicola, "EU Foreign Policy in the Asia Pacific: Striking the Right Balance between the US, China and ASEAN," *EUISS* (EU Institute for Security Studies), 7 September 2012.

Casarini, Nicola (2013) "The Securitisation of EU-Asia Relations in the Post-Cold War Era", in Christiansen, Thomas, Kirchner, Emil and Murray, Philomena (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU-Asia Relations* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan).

Cha, D. Victor (2009) "Powerplay Origins of the US Alliance System in Asia", *International Security*, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 158-196.

Checkel, Jeffrey T. (2001) "Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change." *International Organization*, vol. 55, no. 3 (Summer), pp. 553-588.

Clinton, Hillary (2011) "American's Pacific Century", *Foreign Policy*, November.

Council of the European Union (2004), Presidency conclusions of the Brussels European Council (December 12-13, 2003), Brussels, February 5, 2004, 5381/04, p. 22.

Council of the European Union, Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia, 15 June 2012.

Council of the European Union (2013) "Joint Declaration in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the European Union and the Republic of Korea", Brussels, 8 November 2013 15875/13 (OR. en) PRESSE 462

CSCAP Regional Security Outlook 2013.

Diez, Thomas, Stetter, Stephan and Albert, Mathias (2006) *The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Transformative Power of Integration*, International Organization, vol. 60, summer, pp. 563-593.

Diez, Thomas and Tocci, Nathalie (eds.) (2009) *Cyprus: a conflict at the crossroads* (Manchester: Manchester University press).

Dittmer, Lowell. 2008. "China's New Internationalism." In *China Turns to Multilateralism: Foreign Policy and Regional Security*, edited by Guoguang Wu and Helen Lansdowne. New York: Routledge, pp. 21-34.

Dorussen, Han (2001) "Mixing Carrots with Sticks: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Positive Incentives", *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 251-262.

Europe Asia Security Forum (2012), "Under-reported at ARF: The joint EU-US statement on the Asia-Pacific region," 7 August.

European Commission (1994) *Towards a New Asia Strategy*, Com (94) 314 final.

European Commission (2001) "Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for an Enhanced Partnership", Communication from the Commission, COM (2001) 469. (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 4 September 2001).

Farrell, Mary (2009) "EU policy towards other regions: policy learning in the external promotion of regional integration," *European Journal of public policy*, vol. 16, no. 8.

Fitriani, Evi (2011), "Asian perceptions about the EU in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)." *Asia Europe Journal* (9), pp. 43-56

Forster, Antony (2000) "Evaluating the EU-ASEM relationship: a negotiated order approach", *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 7, no. 5.

Frank, Ruediger (2006) "The Political Economy of Sanctions Against North Korea", *Asian Perspective*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 5-36.

Frost, Ellen L. 2008. *New Asia's Regionalism*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher.

Gaens, Bart, Juha Jokela, and Mikael Mattlin (2012), “The EU’s Asia: renegotiating boundaries, renegotiating norms”, *Asia Europe Journal*, vol. 10, 91-97.

Garelli, Serena “The European Union’s Promotion of Regional Economic Integration in South-East Asia: instruments, dynamics and perspectives.” *European Institute for Asian Studies-EIAS, Newsletter October/November 2011(26/09/2011)*.

Giddens, Anthony (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Haacke, Jürgen and Noel M. Morada (2011) “The ARF and cooperative security: more of the same?”, in Haacke, Jürgen and Noel M. Morada(eds.), *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific* (London: Routledge).

He, Kai (1998) “Looking Back and to the Future on China-ASEAN Relations,” *Beijing Review*, February 23-March 1.

Hernandez, Carolina et al (2006) “Philippines Country Report,” in Yamamoto, Tadashi and Hwee, Lay Yeo (eds.), *ASEM in its Tenth Year: Looking Back, Looking Forward* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange), pp. 89-117.

Hill, Christopher (1993) *The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualizing Europe's International Role*, *Journal of common market studies*, vol. 31, no. 3

Hofmann, Norbert von (2007) “How do Asians evaluate Europe’s strategic involvement in East Asia?” *Asia Europe Journal*, vol. 5, pp. 187–192.

Hughes, Christopher (2009) “Super-Sizing” the DPRK threat: Japan’s Evolving Military Posture and North Korea”, *Asian Survey*, vol. 49, no. 2.

Hund, Markus (2013) *Manifestation of Collective Identities in Southeast and East Asia?* Sasrbrücken: AV Akademikerverlag.

Hund, Markus (2012), *Manifestation of Collective Identities in Southeast and East Asia?* (Sasrbrücken: AV Akademikerverlag).

Hunt, Luke (2012), “Big Summits, Old Problems,” *The Diplomat*, 28 November, 2012.

International Crisis Group (2012a), “Stirring Up the South China Sea(I),” *ICG Asia Report No. 223*, 23 April.

International Crisis Group (2012b), “Stirring Up the South China Sea(II): Regional Responses,” *ICG Asia Report No. 229*, 24 July.

International Crisis Group (2013), “Dangerous Waters: China-Japan Relations on the Rocks,” *ICG Asia Report No. 245*, 8 April.

Jetschke, Anja and PHILOMENA MURRAY (2012) Diffusing Regional Integration: The EU and Southeast Asia, *West European Politics*, vol. 35, no. 1.

Jokela, Juha and Gaens Bart (2012), "Interregional relations and legitimacy in global governance: the EU in ASEM," *Asia Europe Journal*, Vol. 10, 145–164.

Karns, Margaret P. and Mingst, Karen A. 2010. *International Organizations: The Politics and Process of Global Governance*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Katzenstein, Peter J. (2005), *A World of Regions: Asian and Europe in American Imperium*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Keine-Ahlbrandt, Stephanie (2011), "Rocky times ahead in South China Sea," *Global Post*, 5 July.

Kim, S. Samuel (2001), "North Korea in 2000 Surviving through High Hopes of Summit Diplomacy," *Asian Survey*, vol. 41, no. 1.

Kinnval, Catarina (2004) "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security", *political Psychology*, vol. 25, no. 5

Lee, Dong Ryul (2010) "China's policy and influence on the North Korea nuclear issue: denuclearization and/or stabilization of the Korean peninsula?", *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 163-181.

Lee, Moosung (2012), "A Step as Normative Power: the EU's human rights policy towards North Korea", *Asia Europe Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1.

Lee, Moosung and Kim, Yeikyung (2011) "The Relationship between Local Governments in South Korea and China: A Step toward Regional Integration", *Issues & Studies*, vol. 47, no.3, pp. 177-209.

Lee, Jae-Seung (2005), *The Two Faces of EU-Korea Relations*. *The Korean Journal of Defence Analysis* 171: 33-52.

Levy, Jack (1994) "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield", *International Organization*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 279-312.

Lin, Shu-yuan and Wang, Jamie (2013), "U.S. report details rich resources in South China Sea," *Focus Taiwan*, 9 February 2013.

Maass, Matthias (2012), "North Korea's Instrumentalization of Diplomacy: Passing Through the "Danger Zone" of its Nuclear Weapons Program", *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 303-320.

Manners, Ian (2002), "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?." *Journal*

of Common Market Studies. Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 235-258

MFA China (2012), "Foreign Minister Wang Yi Attends China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting Stressing China Regards Developing Friendly Cooperation with ASEAN as Priority of Its Relations with Neighboring Countries," 30 June.

Mitzen, Jennifer (2006), "Anchoring Europe's civilizing identity: habits, capabilities and ontological security", *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 13, no2, pp. 270-285.

Moore, Thomas G. 2008, "Racing to Integrate, or Cooperating to Compete? Liberal and Realist Interpretations of China's New Multilateralism," In *China Turns to Multilateralism: Foreign Policy and Regional Security*, edited by Guoguang Wu and Helen Lansdowne. New York: Routledge, pp. 35-50.

North, Michael and Turner, Barnard (2010), "The Baltic Sea and South China Sea regions: incomparable models of regional integration," *Asia Europe Journal*, 8(3), 271-277.

Oh, Kongdan and Hassig, Ralph C. (2004), "North Korea's nuclear politics", *Current History*, vol. 103, issue. 674.

Olsen, P Johan (2002) "The Many faces of Europeanization", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 5, pp. 921-952.

Pal, Deep (2013), "A Code of Conduct for South China Sea?" *The Diplomat*, 25 September.

Pham, Quang Minh (2010) "The South China Sea security problem: towards regional cooperation," *Asia Europe Journal*. Vol. 8, pp. 427-434.

"EU ready to assist in West Philippine Sea dispute," *Philstar.com* (2011-11-25)

Quinones, C. Kenneth (2006), "Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) A Bridge Too Far?" a paper presented at international Studies Association Conference Chicago March 2006.

Ravenhill, John (2007), "Mission Creep or Mission Impossible? APEC and Security." In *Reassessing Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Competition, Congruence, and Transformation*, edited by Amitav Acharya and Evelyn Goh. Cambridge: MIT Press, 135-154.

Risse, Thomas (2000), "'Let' Argue" Communicative Action in International Relations', *International Organization*, vol. 54, no, 1, pp. 1-31.

Sinclair, Paul (2013), "Report on the 5th International Workshop on the South China Sea: Cooperation for Security and Development," *Asia New Zealand Foundation*, 22 No-

vember.

Song, Xinning (2013) "Security and the Role of China", in Christiansen, Thomas, Kirchner, Emil and Murray, Philomena (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU-Asia Relations* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan).

Swaine, Michael D (2011), "China's Assertive Behavior, Part One: on 'Core Interests'," *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 34, 22 February.

Thayer, Carlyle A. (2013), "New Commitment to a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea?" *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 9 October.

Tocci, Nathalie (2007), *The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting peace in the backyard*, London and New York: Routledge.

Townsend-Gault, Ian (2013), Director South China Sea Informal Working Group at the University of British Columbia, "Track Two Diplomacy," *Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea*, <http://faculty.law.ubc.ca/scs/>(accessed 2013-12-9)

Valencia, Mark J., Jon M. Van Dyke, and Noel A. Ludwig (1999), *Sharing the Resources of the South China Sea* (Honolulu: University Of Hawai'i Press).

Wang, Hongying (2000), "Multilateralism in Chinese Foreign Policy: The Limits of Socialization," *Asian Survey*, 40(3): 475-491.

Weber, Katja (2013), "The ASEAN Regional Forum and the EU's Role in Promoting Security in the Asia-Pacific", in Christiansen, Thomas, Kirchner, Emil and Murray, Philomena (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU-Asia Relations* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan).

Weissmann, Mikael (2012), *The East Asian Peace: Conflict Prevention and Informal Peacebuilding* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

Weitz, Richard (2010), "Why US Made Hanoi Move," *The Diplomat*, 18 August.

Whiting, Allen (1997), "ASEAN Eyes China: The Security Dimension," *Asian Survey* 37(4)(April).

Willmott, C. Hugh (1986), "Unconscious Sources of Motivation in the Theory of the Subject; An Exploration and Critique of Giddens' Dualistic Models of Action and Personality", *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, vol. 16, no. 1.

Wu, Guoguang, and Helen Lansdowne, eds., (2008), *China Turns to Multilateralism: Foreign Policy and Regional Security*. New York: Routledge.

Wu, Shicun and Zou, Keyuan, "Maritime Security in the South China Sea: Coopera-

tion and Implications, ” in Wu, Shicun and Zou, Keyuan(eds), *Maritime Security in the South China Sea: Regional Implications and International Cooperation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

Yahuda, Micheal (2012) “China’s Recent Relations with Maritime Neighbours”, *The International Spectator*, vol. 2, pp. 30-44.

Yeo, Lay Hwee (2007), “The Inter-Regional Dimension of EU-Asia Relations”, in Peter Anderson and Georg Wiessala (eds.), *The European Union and Asia: Reflections and Re-orientations* (Amsterdam: Rodopi).

Yeo, Lay Hwee (2013), “Can the EU be a serious security actor in Asia?” *Asia Europe Journal*, vol. 11.

(2011) “EU Ready to Play Vital Role in West Philippine Sea Dispute,” *New Europe*, 25 November.

Interview Hanns-Seidel Stiftung (2013), Seoul, May 28.

Interview West Europe Division, MOFA (2013), Seoul, May 28.

Interview with a diplomat, MOFA (2013), Seoul, May 29.

Interview Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Korea (2013), Seoul, May 29.

Interview US Embassy (2013), Seoul, June 5.

Interview Asan Institute for Policy Studies (2013), Seoul, June 11.

Interview CRI (2013), Seoul, June 19.

Interview KIDA (2013), Seoul, July 5.

Interview ASEAN Cooperation Division, MOFA (2013), Seoul, July 24.

Interview with former NSC chair (2013), Brussels, July 11.

Interview EEAS (2013) Brussels, October 25.

Interview Renmin University (2013), Beijing, July 27.

Interview IISS·CASS (2013), Beijing, July 28.

Interview Beijing University (2013 a), Beijing, July 30.

Interview Beijing University (2013b), Beijing, July 30.

Interview Qinghua University (2013), Beijing, July 31.

Interview IISS·CCPS (2013a), Beijing, August 1.

Interview IISS·CCPS (2013b), Beijing, August 1.

Interview Vietnam National University (2013), Hanoi, August 7.

Interview Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (2013), Hanoi, August 8.

Interview Department of National Defense (2013), Manila, September 19.