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Normative regionalism has been largely overlooked and ignored; and normative questions concerning regionalization are deemed unimportant, idealist and irrelevant to Asia. This is mainly due to the domination of realism, pragmatism and functional approaches, thus inhibiting the substantial progress of regionalism in East Asia. It is time that scholars and policy-makers take normative orders of regionalism seriously.

This chapter examines the state of normative regionalism and its impact in East Asia through an overview of the historical evolution of the concept of regionalism, the meanings of and variations in Asian regionalism, and the impact of all these on regional cooperation in East Asia. It examines the old pan-Asianism, the advocacy of “re-Asianization” in Japan, Mahathir’s idea of neo-Asianism in Malaysia and the ideas of regionalism developed in Korea and China. This examination provides the basis for a discussion of the normative order of East Asian regionalism by addressing a set of questions concerning national sovereignty, nationalism, democracy and regional identities.

In particular, this chapter will examine how Asian nationalist and statist normative thinking influences various ideas of regionalism and constrains the development of genuine regionalism in East Asia.

Normative regionalism

Four approaches to regionalism have been summarized in the preceding chapter (see Higgott and Timmermann in this volume).
• De facto regionalism is concerned with informal, market-led economic integration and takes a rationalist-economic analytical orientation.
• De jure regionalism is about formal, rule-governed, state-led institutional cooperation, and takes a legal-political analytical orientation.
• Instrumental regionalism focuses on identifying the interest to be gained by the development of a common policy towards third parties in a given topic area.
• Cognitive regionalism builds on shared cultural, historical and emotional affiliations that distinguish “insiders” from “outsiders”.

While these four stances are comprehensive enough to cover almost all approaches to regionalism, there is still room to add another substantial approach: namely, normative regionalism that focuses on shared values and provides conflict-resolution mechanisms. Normative regionalism is extremely important, for four reasons.

First, any regionalization involves substantial changes in normative thinking and behaviour (particularly in adjusting national norms and establishing regional identities and values). If regionalization is possible in East Asia, the development of regional norms and values is an essential precondition.

Second, normative regionalism has constructive roles to play in guiding directions, providing visions and setting up the principles of organizing and creating a regional community.

Third, normative regionalism is required because of the insufficiency and inadequacy of instrumental or functional regionalism. Economic trade and cooperation have been an engine of Asian regionalism. Functional regionalism, however, is limited to a few selected areas and is based on the calculation of economic interests. It is unstable and has an inherent limitation in developing effective and good governance on a regional basis. Shared values are essential for solid normative regionalism.

A fourth reason for normative regionalism is the challenge of the EU normative model for East Asia. Do the European practice of regionalism and its normative assumptions provide a successful model for East Asia? Is the application of EU standards appropriate for East Asia?

The state of normative regionalism and its impact in East Asia will be analysed through an examination of Asian ideas of regionalism and their associated normative assumptions.

Japan’s ideas of Asianism

As early as 1916, Odera Kenkichi (1878–1949) elaborated the idea of Greater Asianism as a tool of racial unity to confront the White Peril.¹ Pan-Asianism held the view that East Asians are of the same yellow
race, in opposition to the white race, and that Japanese, Chinese and Koreans should unify to establish a new order and an East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Rin Kaito, a publicist, called for a spirit of Japanese pan-Asianism: “For over a century-and-a-half, the Asians have been pressed down by the Whites and subjected to Western tyranny. But Japan, after defeating Russia, has aroused the sleeping Asians to shake off the Western tyranny and torture.”

The idea became increasingly popular. Major-General Kenji Doihara, who had the reputation of being one of Japan’s most astute military diplomats and experts on the Asian mainland, was an avowed advocate of pan-Asianism. The doctrine of “Asia for the Asians”, according to Doihara in an issue of Dai Asia Shugi (a magazine devoted to expounding pan-Asian ideas), “is based on the supreme principle that Asia must be safe-guarded and maintained by Asians”. In other words, the Occidentals should go – from China, first of all, and then from the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, India and other parts of Asia. Under the conditions at that time, however, “Asia for the Asians” was in practice synonymous with “Japan over Asia”, or Japanese supremacy in Asia through the withdrawal of the influence of the West.

General Iwane Matsui also described “an Asiatic League of Nations” as one of the ideals of his organization. He declared that pan-Asianism had won followers in China, India, French Indo-China, the Philippines and Afghanistan. On 3 November 1938 Japanese Prime Minister Konoye Fumimaro proclaimed a New Order in East Asia, and on 1 August 1940 Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke made public the concept of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

If pan-Asianism took the form of religious spirit and non-violence in India, it assumed a military and violent form in Japan. This difference was reflected in the different understandings of “spirit”, which the Japanese usually thought of as bushido, or the martial ethos of the samurai warrior class that had dominated Japanese society until its class privileges were abolished in the late nineteenth century. The businessman Kunihiko Okura, for example, defines the “national spirit” as complete loyalty to the state and all its activities: “The Japanese Spirit consists in realizing the glory of being a subject of the Emperor.”

Military pan-Asianism contributed to Japan’s drive for expansion. Japanese pan-Asianism justified the war against Korea and China by suggesting that the objective was to safeguard the “Japanese spirit that we have cultivated for thousands of years” against the threat of communism. For Okura, it was the war of “Asia” with “each person of the country doing his own bit for the realization of idealism” and, as a result of the war, the Japanese had grown “spiritually strong and true”.

Re-evaluation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere began in the early 1950s, and continued through the 1960s and into the 1990s.
Kobori Keiichi, a professor at Tokyo University, believed that there would come a time to return to the idea of pan-Asianism. Former Japanese Prime Minister Takeshita expressed his affirmative view of the Greater East Asia War. Although the idea of pan-Asianism is not likely to have much impact on Japanese policy, the idea lies beneath the surface of popular consciousness like an unexploded bomb. An increasing number of Japanese scholars have identified a “re-Asianization” of both Japan and the region. Increasingly it is argued that a shared set of values, which include respect for personal relationships, cooperation, balance, harmony and non-contentious consensus building, signify an emerging sense of pan-Asianess.

The economic dynamism of the Pacific-Asian region and the end of the Cold War facilitated a search for a new conception of regionalism. The “new Asianism” was promoted mostly by economic rather than geopolitical élites. Kobayashi Yotaro, the president of Fuji Xerox, encouraged his country to undergo “re-Asianization”. Japan’s Economic Planning Agency identified Japan, the NIEs and ASEAN as potential forces to form one organic unit, and called for the formation of a regional organization. Under the Hashimoto cabinet, the ASEAN-Japan Multinational Cultural Mission was established to create a contemporary Asian culture. Toshio Watanabe, an economist at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, points out that “Japan’s new nationalism is real, and it is intimately linked with Asianism”.

This new Asianism has cultural normative implications and represents Asian culture as a counterpoint to Western culture. Shintaro Ishihara, a Japanese parliament member between 1968 and 1995 and author of *The Japan That Can Say No*, asserts:

> The end of East-West ideological conflict has finally enabled Japan to start to disengage from the West. Given the historical forces at work, our sojourn was unavoidable, but now we must free ourselves from delusions fostered by the Cold War. We can begin with self-awareness. Under the Japan-US mutual security treaty, the Self-Defense Forces are a battalion on call to the Pentagon. Japanese are Asians related to this region by blood and culture, and Japan is an Asian country.

In December 1990 the Malaysian Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir, in his first proposal for an East Asian Economic Group (EAEG), which subsequently became the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC), gave Japan the prominent role of being the “voice of Asia” in the G7 meetings. Such a role would enhance Japan’s international position and contribute to its independence from the United States.

Japan has been ambivalent about the EAEC. It was constrained by US policy and did not have full autonomy on regional issues. Since the
United States rejected the EAEC and supported APEC, Japanese Prime Ministers Miyazawa, Hosokawa, Hata and Murayama have placed the highest priority on multilateral forums that included the United States and promoted “open regionalism”. In February 2002 Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi proposed an open regional partnership with Southeast Asia, China, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, thereby making ASEAN+5 practically no different from APEC.

**Malaysian ideas of regionalism**

Malaysia initiated the Association of Southeast Asia in 1959, and Maphilindo (Malaya, Philippines, Indonesia) in 1963. Although both organizations disintegrated, they were illustrative of Malaysia’s attempts at regional coalition building. At present, Malaysia participates in two major regional organizations: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

The ARF provides an important security forum for Malaysia. It illustrates the fact that “the states of East Asia are viewing their security increasingly in regional, rather than global, terms, as the region becomes ever more distinct as a differentiated security complex”.

Mahathir’s proposal of the EAEC in 1990 was the boldest and most assertive attempt to build an exclusive Asian regional bloc. It provided an “Asian-only” alternative to APEC: Malaysia criticizes APEC as being too large to be effective and dominated by Australia and the United States.

The EAEC was also designed to act as a counterweight to the powerful, competing organizations of NAFTA and the European Union. Mahathir said, “We think the EAEC will prevent domination of world trade by any one bloc, enhance East Asian prosperity, and contribute to regional stability and peace.” He stressed Asia’s own regionalism, independence and dignity. His proposal was a significant indication that some Asian countries increasingly wish to be seen as a single, coherent region.

His version of Asianism implicitly or explicitly adopts the doctrine of defending traditional culture and resisting the penetration of Western culture, and had a strong anti-US element. It even implied that Australia, if it wanted to be a part of Asia, must not follow the policies of the United States.

Mahathir’s proposal deliberately excluded the United States, which supports APEC. In turn, the United States has marginalized the EAEC project and prevented an East Asian economic “bloc” from emerging. The proposal thus not only overlooked the overlapping patterns of
economic development in the late twentieth century, but also the reluctance of East Asian states to exclude important trading partners such as the United States from regional organizations. Moreover, East Asian security relies heavily on the United States; China and Japan have felt more comfortable with Western countries than with each other; and Southeast Asian countries are worried about Japan-led regionalism.

On the whole, the EAEC has not developed into an institution, and has not gained the approval of as many countries as Mahathir wished. Nevertheless, its putative membership has emerged as “ASEAN Plus Three” (China, Japan and the ROK) and it has reinforced regional countries’ affinity with, and commitment to, the concept of East Asia – albeit without creating a political and ideological identity.19

Korean ideas of regionalism

In line with Mahathir’s position, Koo Jong-suh proposes a Korean version of pan-Asianism for the primacy of East Asia. He argues that the current unipolar system, with the United States at its apex, will be replaced by a multipolar system wherein East Asia, Western Europe and North America will share international hegemony. He even imagines that a global order could be dominated by East Asia at the end of the twenty-first century. For such a grand agenda, Koo suggests that a pan-Asianist movement should take a fresh approach, with Korea’s mission being to build a Northeast Asian community of cooperation.20

Ahn Byung-joon from Yonsei University does not favour Malaysia’s re-Asianization approach. He argues that “re-Asianization” actually means “de-Westernizing” Asia, or “de-Americanization”, and that South Korea has supported the Pacific view of open regionalism as a counterbalance to the more conservative assertions of Asianism. Ahn suggests that the United States, Japan, China and other actors should share leadership in facilitating regional cooperation, with Japan taking a leadership role in economic regionalism and the United States taking a lead in security regionalism.21

Rhee Sang-woo from Sogang University discourages the competition between China and Japan for hegemony in East Asia, and welcomes the formation of a new Asian community based on cooperation. In his conception of a new order for an East Asian Community, he suggests that China and Japan should build an economic community through integrating their economies, developing a joint security system, promoting cultural exchange and developing a new East Asian culture.22

In pursuing EU-style economic integration, Chang-Jae Lee, director of the Center for Regional Economic Studies at the Korea Institute for
International Economic Policy (KIEP), suggests that the Korean government should propose the formation of a Council for Northeast Asian Economic Cooperation to discuss economic cooperation and major economic issues among China, Japan and South Korea. In Singapore, on 27 November 2000, President Kim Dae-jung proposed that the current ASEAN+3 be transformed into an East Asian Summit that would eventually develop into an economic community, leading to Northeast Asian economic regionalism.

Churl-Jin Suk proposes that China, Japan and South Korea should imitate the European integration model to overcome their unpleasant history by establishing a prospective East Asian Community. He suggests that these three countries should establish regional goals based on common ideas and develop a sense of community in East Asia through cultural exchange among the younger generation and knowledge-based information exchange. Additionally, he says that East Asia should develop regional security cooperation, like NATO, to implement common foreign and security policy.

Chinese ideas of regionalism

Mahathir tabled his EAEG proposal during a meeting with the then Chinese Premier, Li Peng, in 1991. In the face of Chinese opposition, the idea of including Chinese Taipei was dropped. Although Chinese leaders such as Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin supported the EAEG, China, which has to balance its relationship with the United States, did not endorse Mahathir's exclusive regionalism against the United States.

China has been reluctant to accept Asian multilateralism. It was not a founding member of APEC, and it initially opposed the concept of a "Pacific Community". China was also reluctant to engage in multilateral security dialogue such as through the ARF. For China, however, the political costs of non-participation in the ARF are large: "China will find it far more difficult to spurn US initiatives to define a set of 'rules of acceptable behaviour' if these rules are institutionalized through the ASEAN Regional Forum."

Although its position on the ARF has warmed up, China still wants the forum to remain a consultative body rather than for it to develop as a mechanism for conflict resolution.

Regionalism, however, is a recent phenomenon in China. It does not have a larger view of regional development and cooperation. Chinese intellectuals seldom talk about great visions of regionalism or, if they do, they tend to criticize pan-Asianism or neo-Asianism. Instead, they more often speak of "Greater China".
Unlike the middle powers of Malaysia and South Korea, China’s status as a big country and big power in Asia reduces its incentive to establish regionalism for its survival and influence. The domination of Chinese nationalist discourse gives little room for genuine regionalism; rather, regionalism is used as a tool to build the Chinese nation-state. Chinese nationalist grievances about historical humiliations make it difficult to accept multilateral cooperation with Japan. The self-perceived centrality of China in its long history creates a psychological barrier for the Beijing leadership to get out of a China-centric framework to embrace regionalism and grasp and meet any peripheral challenges. China’s tribute system consisted of a series of bilateral relations, thus it lacks experience of multilateral diplomacy. Confucian diplomacy tended to take international relations as interpersonal rather than inter-state. All these factors have hindered China’s role in developing regionalism.

Nevertheless, Chinese cultural attitudes and values are changing. Professor Zhang Xizhen of Beijing University has argued that China should support Japan in playing a leading role, and that Japan and China should be the core nations in building East Asian regionalism. They can check and balance each other, and prevent the formation of hegemony in the region. Equally Professor Liang Yunxiang, also of Beijing University, suggests that China and Japan could find common interest with the construction of Japan- and China-led East Asian regionalism.  

Normative order of Asian regionalism

Diversities and differences still overshadow the development of an East Asian regional identity. East Asians may agree on peace, coexistence, prosperity and progress, but they disagree, for instance, on human rights and democracy. The above discussions of Asian ideas reflect a normative order of East Asian regionalism with several features: democracy is not a normative value for regional organizations; national sovereignty should not be sacrificed for a regional order; and Asian regionalism is a process of an elite-led, market-driven and ideologically biased movement against the West.

These Asian normative ideas have informed and affected regionalization in East Asia, as illustrated by the developments in Asian inter-governmental forums like the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the ARF, and informal networks between non-governmental organizations. Such forums have increasingly assumed and promoted shared economic, political, social and cultural agendas. But are there any prospects for a normative development towards the acceptance of pooling sovereignty, as seen in the case of Europe?
Pool of sovereignty and unanimity

In the maturation process of the European Union, nation-states have pooled their sovereignty in certain areas to form a great union. Such sacrifice of national sovereignty is a new normative order for the greater unification of the EU member countries.

The development of East Asian regionalism reveals a completely different order. Rather than pooling sovereignty, national sovereignty has been strengthened in the process. From the beginning, East Asian regionalism has been based on respect for and consolidation of national sovereignty. The mutual recognition of national sovereignty and the statist emphasis on the principle of non-intervention have been prerequisites for joining ASEAN, as evidenced by the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (1976).

In the early stage of development of East Asian regionalism, the consolidation of national sovereignty was an attractive incentive to encourage national leaders to support and push regionalism. Any early attempt to sacrifice national sovereignty would have caused panic among these leaders and invited resistance to regional integration. The pooling of sovereignty would therefore be an option only at a much later stage.

Whereas the European Community inspired the leaders of Southeast Asia to emulate European integration in the 1950s through to the 1970s, in the 1980s Southeast Asian leaders realized that the concept of European integration meant a partial transfer of sovereignty and a strong institutional framework. They stressed that ASEAN never intended to follow the example of European integration.35

Their colonial past has made East Asian states sensitive to relinquishing any degree of national sovereignty, and, given their current weak position in world politics, sovereignty is seen as necessary to prevent foreign powers from intervening in their domestic affairs. In this historical and political context, most leaders in East Asia are reluctant to initiate or accept regional cooperation.

Asian consensus (or unanimous decision-making) has been another main principle in Asian regional cooperation. Unanimity guarantees that a nation-state could block regional decisions in safeguarding its sovereignty and defending its political fate, but such a process of decision-making is slow and consensus almost impossible to achieve.

This strong commitment to national sovereignty and the rule of unanimity has prevented ASEAN, for example, from developing an effective regional response to regional environmental problems,36 the Asian economic crisis and the East Timor crisis. Realizing that the rule of unanimity no longer works, the notion of “flexible consensus” and the idea of “concerted unilateralism” were proposed.37
Nationalism: Driving force for East Asian regionalism

The development of Asian regionalism did not begin with reducing national sovereignty, but with supporting it.

East Asian regionalism, moreover, needs to be understood in the context of nationalism. In fact, the key to understanding Asian regionalism lies in nation-states. The core element of Asian regionalism is the centrality of the nation-state. While regionalism is an application instrumental to nation building, nationalism is always of the essence. Asian nation-states are the driving forces for regional development, as in the case of the competition between Japan and China which led to the rapid development of a regional free trade proposal, agreement and implementation from March 2001. East Asian countries support regionalism for national interests and issues of state power. Asian regionalism never significantly challenges the nation-state system. Respecting and strengthening national identity will be the key to the success of any project of regionalism.

Gilbert Rozman, who examines flawed strategies of regionalism in Northeast Asia, strongly argues that nationalism stands in the way of East Asian regionalism. Indeed, nationalism seems to be fundamentally antithetical to the creation of a regional polity and has little sympathy for regional identities. It can therefore be regarded as a significant obstacle to the promotion of genuine regionalism.

An East Asian, however, might hold a different view, and might make a distinction between several types of nationalism. While an inward-looking, narrow and irrational nationalism is dangerous and constitutes an obstacle to regionalism, an outward-looking, rational and legitimate nationalism is concerned with national status and interest. Such a consideration, taken seriously by nationalists, is the norm in the practice of East Asian regionalism and constitutes a positive force for regionalism. This kind of nationalism is perfectly compatible with East Asian regionalism because such regionalism clearly demonstrates a different normative logic of development.

Consequently, East Asian regionalism is a process of intergovernmental collaboration on a geographically limited basis. It involves no more than regional material exchange, free trade agreements and a security dialogue among countries, with no intellectual or political commitment to a greater union.

Mahathir, for instance, proposed the EAEC idea in order to promote Malay nationalism. He played an assertive role in voicing Malaysian views in the international arena and successfully raised the country’s international profile.

Malaysia as a “middle power” has to build up partnerships with its neighbours of similar size in order to increase its influence. The growing
regional consciousness and continued enmity between the region's great powers suggest the construction of a multilateral regional political association centred on the small and medium powers, and drawing the great powers into a framework of voluntary restraint. The aim is to increase the voice of small and middle states in international affairs. Regionalism gives the smaller countries or middle-power states a say in the nature of the regional arrangement and its strategic organization.

Another example is China's attempt to constrain Chinese Taipei through regional organizations. Beijing's proposed FTA between China and ASEAN excluded Chinese Taipei (by contrast, Chinese Taipei is a member of APEC). Economically, Chinese Taipei is an indispensable member of an East Asia Free Trade Agreement. The question of Chinese Taipei, however, poses a significant challenge to East Asian regionalism. Chinese Taipei demands regional membership in its own right, but Beijing sees it only as being a part of China. If nationalism seems to be compatible with regionalism in Southeast Asia, it certainly contradicts regionalism in Northeast Asia, as evidenced by the Chinese Taipei membership question.

Democracy and regionalism

The European Union has required democracy as a necessary precondition for its members. Thus, EU expansion has been a process of spreading democracy in Europe. The entry of Turkey into the European Union has been delayed largely due to its regime system (and, to some degree, its Islamic culture). Western commentators have consequently suggested that the expansion of ASEAN should take a democracy requirement seriously. ASEAN, however, against heavy criticism, admitted a military-dominated Myanmar as its newest member in 1997 and fostered regional relations with the authoritarian state of China. Asian pragmatism thereby won out over normative requirements in order to push East Asian regionalism. Mainland China, North Korea, Viet Nam and Myanmar have not been democratized, Singapore, Malaysia and Cambodia have only an electoral form of democracy. This uneven political development has ruled out a democracy requirement for East Asian regionalism. One also needs to bear in mind that East Asian democratization only started in the Philippines, South Korea and Chinese Taipei in the 1980s, and in Indonesia in the 1990s, while most EU states have been democratized for decades.

In addition, historical legacies can play a more important role in the development of regional cooperation than the nature of the political regime. Japan and South Korea are both democracies, but their conflict
over the history textbook issue has substantially inhibited the development of regionalism in Northeast Asia (see Berger in this volume).

Nevertheless, East Asian regionalism has incorporated the idea of democracy in recent years. The year 2005 was a watershed in the history of East Asian regionalism. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Establishment of the ASEAN Charter embodied the first written requirement for the promotion of democracy and human rights, and obligations for transparency, good governance and strengthening democratic institutions. It was signed at the Thirteenth ASEAN Summit in Singapore in November 2007.

The ASEAN way is strikingly state-centric, but the statist norm has increasingly been challenged by networks of non-governmental organizations that have advocated the principle of "people-hood", or a people-centric approach to regionalism. In order to build a people-centric order, civil society groups demand more funding from, and representation in, various regional governmental bodies. For example, it was argued that non-governmental organizations should be accredited or granted observer status at the East Asian Community Summit. Regional cooperation among civil society groups within Asia complements regionalism at the non-governmental level, and there is a need to develop closer cooperation between NGOs and governments. 41

In response to mainland China's blockage politics, several democracy-centric organizations (reaching beyond East Asia) have been established under the sponsorship of Taiwan, which has been excluded from some regional organizations.

The Democratic Pacific Union was established in 2004 and aims to safeguard human rights, democracy and the rule of law; ensure the peaceful resolution of regional disputes and the protection of human security; and promote maritime culture and sustainable development in the Pacific region. 42 The World Forum on Democratization in Asia was founded in 2005, with the objective of pledging solidarity and support for Asian democracy activists struggling against autocratic forces in the region. 43 In addition, the Initiative and Referendum Institute Asia (2006) and the Global Forum on New Democracies (2007) were supported by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy to advance constitutional reform and promote new democracies.

Asian culture is problematic for Asian regionalism

Shared cultural inheritances have facilitated the formation of the European Union. But is a common regional cultural identity indispensable for a regional group?
Mahathir’s proposal assumed a common regional identity and culture to justify the formation of the EAEC. The emphasis on cultural homogeneity limits membership, resulting in a greater role for regional actors. By restricting membership in this way, power can be concentrated within the region while avoiding Western influence and dominance. Mahathir tried to argue that regional cultural identity is the basis for Asian regionalism.

Yet Mahathir’s cultural identity argument cannot hold. Anti-West sentiment is the pitfall of Asian regionalism. The idea of opposition between West and East is unworkable because of the penetration of Western influence, the domination of the United States and the overlapping of communities. Asia has undergone a process of Westernization and/or modernization; Marxism and liberalism are mixed with Islam, Confucianism, Daoism and other traditional beliefs. Around 30 per cent of the South Korean population, for example, are Christian. Singapore is best described as an immigrant and commercial society, or a legalist-controlled and Chinese-dominated community where Western capitalism, the rule of law and diverse cultures coexist. Asian culture as a mechanism for regional identity does not constitute a strong basis for regionalism. As Anwar points out, “Asia has not a settled identity at present. It is in the process of coming into being.”

Take, for example, the proposal that China and Japan be treated as part of the same civilization, with common features such as a Confucian value system and the same written characters, and that this commonality could provide a foundation for regionalism. This is not a viable proposal, however. Some Japanese nationalists emphasize the uniqueness of Japan, while Chinese nationalists take little interest in any such regional identity. In addition, mainstream opinion in China harbours strong resentment against Japan. In fact, it was the competition between Japan and China that ASEAN countries were able to draw on as an incentive to speed up regional cooperation. The fact that Japan and China competed with each other to push for a free trade agreement with ASEAN is evidence of this.

Although the diversity in Asian cultures is problematic for providing common ground for a single regional identity, the cultures do play important roles in building East Asian regionalism. First, they tend to prevent Australia from participating in East Asian regionalism, simply because Australia is not regarded as being a part of Asian culture. Second, diverse Asian traditions play a part in the construction of regional orders. Japan has taken a leading role in developing a great vision of Asian regionalism, and this has been associated with its tradition of pan-Asianism. China’s conception of regional order is a remnant of a post-tribute system in which China attempts to pacify neighbouring countries through a trade surplus with China. And the historic rivalry between
Japan and China has continued to play various roles with regard to the development of regionalism. East Asian regional order has been, and will continue to be, rooted in its history and culture.

Certainly, Asian conceptions of regionalism are constrained by geopolitics, and by historic and economic factors. What underlies Asian perceptions of regionalism is the awareness of a dominant US power in Asia. The unipolar system, under which US power is felt in East Asia and maintains the fragmentation and division of East Asia, has made it difficult (if not impossible) for a common Asian identity to emerge.

Washington has defined the basic norm of East Asian regionalism: that such regionalism should be open, inclusive and transparent. This is designed to preserve American domination in the region, and explains why the United States supported APEC but rejected the EAEC.

Washington promotes Asia-Pacific regionalism that centres on the Pacific Ocean. It is an open regionalism associated with the values of human rights, democracy, individualism and free trade. The governments of the United States, Australia, Japan and South Korea support this concept. The competing normative regional order is based on pan-Asianism and is centred on the Asian continent. It is a closed regionalism, restricted to Asians themselves and associated with Asian values and cultures. Malaysia, some sections of the Japanese business elite and some Korean scholars support this kind of regionalism. These two competing orders are divergent and in conflict, and they create different expectations and visions of how the East Asian region should evolve.

In this context, there are enormous challenges to normative rethinking of Washington's leadership. The arrogance of the position that East Asian regionalism achieves nothing if it lacks American endorsement and support is unproductive, and the argument that Asian regionalism should not alter or undermine the bilateral agreement between the United States and South Korea (or Japan) is problematic and unhelpful. The traditional divide-and-rule strategy does not help to promote a cohesive regionalism in Asia. It is time for Washington to accept that certain forms of strong and stable Asian regionalism are in the greater interest of the United States. The policy-makers in Washington will regret in the future if the United States inhibits or destroys East Asian regionalism.

At the same time, the recent development of East Asian regionalism demonstrates the increasing influence of China's regional power and the slow erosion of US power, as evidenced by the exclusion of the United States from ASEAN+3, the Asia-Europe Summit, the SCO and the GMS summit, and by the decline in the importance of APEC. The gradually declining American influence on various regional organizations and summits, the increasing critique of the application of the EU model in East Asia and the increasing self-confidence of East Asian countries -
plus the rise of China's power – will dictate the future of East Asian regionalism.

Conclusion

East Asian regional development has been measured against the benchmark of the European Union, which for a long while has offered inspiration, hope and standards. But an examination of different normative orders of regionalism in East Asia and the European Union reveals that simply borrowing the ideal order of the European Union is superficial. European regionalism and East Asian regionalism have several different normative elements and tensions. The normative foundations of the European Union are democracy, human rights, individual liberty, the reduction of national sovereignty and the rise of regional organizations that are able to override national governments. The normative foundation of Asian regionalism is a nationalist doctrine with a clear and unvanishing focus on sovereignty, statist power and Asian culture or values.

The Asian pragmatic and functional approach is problematic, and especially inadequate to deal with international normative challenges. One thing is certain, however: the Asian normative order of regionalism will strengthen national sovereignty through the strategic use of nationalist ethos and forces. At the same time, East Asian states will need to be flexible enough to surrender a portion of their sovereignty to regional organizations in order to make regionalism effective. So far, the East Asian preoccupation with (and overcommitment to) national sovereignty and the approach of unanimous voting make it impossible to develop a powerful regional organization to tackle intra-regional common issues. It is time for East Asians to go beyond existing intellectual constraints and search for an appropriate order that is suitable for the region.

The question of how to strike a healthy balance between the understandable desire for national sovereignty and the needed willingness to give up some sovereign powers in order to respond better to global and regional challenges will be a thorny one for East Asia.

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Notes


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 22.

5. Ibid.


7. Ibid., p. 320.


14. Ibid., p. 49.


18. FitzGerald, Viviani and Wesley, note 15 above, p. 22.


30. It is very striking that mainland Chinese scholar Wei-Wei Zhang talks only about the concept of a Greater China while other authors discuss various aspects of East Asian regionalism. See Liu, Fu-Kuo and Philippe Régnier, eds (2003) Regionalism in East Asia: Paradigm Shifting?, London: Routledge/Curzon.


32. Professor Wang Gungwu made this point in a meeting at the East Asian Institute on 4 March 2003.


34. Liang, Yunxiang (2002) "Sino-Japan Relationship and East Asia System", in Pai and Zhang, note 27 above, pp. 35–45.


41. NGOs in Japan and South Korea have been promoting regionalism, but they face some major obstacles such as historical grievances, disparity in their economic systems, territorial disputes and security issues that impede the development of regionalism. See Takashi, Shirasu and Lau Sim-Yee (1999) "Nongovernmental Initiatives in Japan for Regional Cooperation", in Tsuneo Akaha, ed., Politics and Economics in Northeast Asia. Nationalism and Regionalism in Contention, New York: St Martin's Press, pp. 329–346; Jung, Ku-Hyun (1999) "Nongovernmental Initiatives in Korea for Northeast

42. See www.dpu.org.tw.

43. See www_wfda.net. The extensive list of participants and partners is available at www.wfda.net/partners_asia.htm.

44. The simple fact that the common working language used in Asian regional forums must be English is evidence of this.


46. Rozman, note 31 above, p. 120.