

## **MIDDLE POWERS' DRIVE TOWARDS REGIONAL CO-OPERATION: THE CASE OF NORTHEAST ASIA<sup>1</sup>**

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**I**n examining the crucial question of whether East Asia is to be constructed mainly through her 'big' powers or—complementarily, rather than conversely - to be constructed also with her 'middle' powers, it is worthwhile seeking to remember a few basic, conceptual considerations. This paper thus aims to look at the drive behind regional co-operation, in particular in the case of East Asian middle powers, from the point of view of history and with hypotheses rather than from that of conjunctures or with certainties.

Logically, it begins with a preliminary question : what is « the drive behind the drive » ? That is : what is the motivation behind the desire to analyse regional co-operation ? In other words, what is it that we may be assuming when we embark upon such an analysis ? Do we not assume and take for granted – more perhaps than we would be willing to admit - that regional co-operation is 'important' ? And important to the extent that it would constitute a 'desirable', an 'unavoidable', even an « unescapable » path in human history ?

To be sure, the literature about regional co-operation, in general, and East Asian co-operation in particular is full of such wishful expressions such as the greater or lesser « success » in « progress » towards « achieving » regional co-operation *vis-à-vis* other regions in the world. To this effect, or rather in this respect, East Asia, and in particular Northeast Asia, is deemed "less

1. In preparing this paper, first presented at the international conference *East Asian Partnership and Cooperation towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* organized in Ulaanbaatar by the School of Foreign Service of the National University of Mongolia on the 9th of July 2004, the author benefited from support offered by the French Embassy in Mongolia for a teaching and research stay at the National University of Mongolia in April 2004. The author thus wishes to express his warm thanks to these institutions, in particular to HE Nicolas CHAPUIS, Ambassador, and Alain DESJACQUES, Director of the Centre de Culture et de Langue Française.

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successful", has a « poor performance » in results of co-operation, above all institutional,<sup>3</sup> than say Western Europe, Latin America, West Africa, even Southeast Asia, or Southern Africa<sup>4</sup>.

So regions in the world could be, should be, « classified » according to their level and degree of regional, multilateral co-operation, and of integration, in particular institutional integration. I disagree for two reasons with this approach to comparing regional experiences.

First, I disagree with this approach because, taking the trouble to appraise contemporary evolutions against the backcloth of history, one cannot deny that the world simply went along before the post second World War for *centuries* – at least – of « mono-lateral » or unilateral endeavours and imperial drives. Realists, even neo-realists, would – I think – rather agree here ! And one needn't explain to Mongolians, Europeans, Japanese, « United States-ians<sup>5</sup> » what a "mono-lateral, imperial drive" is ! So the world managed perfectly well *without* regional, multilateral co-operation, let alone institutional construction. For centuries it has known at best alliances, but even so more often with rivalries and conquests, and often – to be sure – reciprocal conquests. Why, then, *should* the world *necessarily* evolve towards multi-regional constructions ? The detractors of - supra-national - regional co-operations are right to trigger such unnerving questions, which we would naturally be wrong to forget.

Second, I disagree with the view that regions of the world should be « classified » – and even perhaps « rated » - according to their degree of multilateral co-operation and integration, because East Asia, even Northeast Asia, is *not* « lagging » so much "behind" other regions in terms of the contemporary drive towards co-operation and construction. There is mainly here a *chronological* gap involved *vis-à-vis* other regions, in particular Europe. Fifty years ago, no-one could predict for certain that Europe would be so integrated as-she is today. No-one, today, can rule out for certain that in fifty years' time or even before that, East Asia, even Northeast Asia, *will* be as integrated : already the ASEAN, the ASEAN + 3, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (with a potential as a regional *security* organisation), the Asia Co-operation Dialogue – which Mongolia joined on 22 June 2004 -, and even such longer-

3. Among others, see In-Kyo CHEONG, *East Asian Economic Integration*, Seoul, The Korean Institute of International Economic Policy, 2002; Peter KATZENSTAIN, "Varieties of Asian Regionalisms", in *Asian Regionalism*, Ithaca, Cornell University, 2000 ; Peter KATZENSTAIN, "Regionalism and Asia", in *New Political Economy*, n° 5, pp. 353-368; John RAVENHILL, *APEC and the Construction of Pacific Rim Regionalism*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2001; and Richard STUBBS, "ASEAN Plus Three : emerging East Asian Regionalism", in *Asian Survey* 42, 440-544, May-June 2002, all cited in Chung-In Moon "Regionalism and Nationalism in Northeast Asia", paper presented to APSA, August 27-31, 2003.

4. And, indeed, Africa as a whole (with the African Union constituted in 2002). I underline Africa because that continent is – so many tell us – « left out » of world-wide evolutions, which is not true.

5. The use of such an unusual neologism to qualify actors 'of the United States' derives from my repeated surprise that there exists no national adjective to qualify them, such as English for actors of England, Canadian for those of Canada or Mexican for those of Mexico, etc.

dating projects as a Community for Security and Co-operation in Asia - CSCA<sup>6</sup>, or of an East Asia Economic Community - EAEC<sup>7</sup>, etc, are tangible results, more tangible even than European ones in the years prior to the 1950s - and indeed, in those years, Europe was at war, which Asia is not.

But Asia, above all East Asia, is not following in the footsteps of western concepts, ideals, or formats of regional co-operation. This « departure » from established (in European minds) modes of reasoning troubles western observers. But why should Asia and East Asia follow in these footsteps ? Why should they « duplicate », nay « imitate » European regional inventions<sup>8</sup> ? That is the very question, which we must keep in mind today ... and ... tomorrow. We could forget it a little during the NADAM festival ... but we have to remember it soon afterwards and we must keep it in mind in the coming times.

With this in mind, what I would like to do in the remainder of this paper is to raise questions (more perhaps than bring definitive answers or, even less so, produce a « final » analysis). Indeed, as a European addressing an Asian audience in Asia, let me be modest in suggesting queries concerning two main bodies of theoretical dimensions (beginning each section with a politically incorrect question), namely the functional *vs* institutional debate as applied to the origins (1) and products (2) of regional co-operation.

#### Section 1. The functional origins of regional co-operation

The starting question here is the following. Are functional premises, loosely conceived of as 'reasons and common interests to engage in co-operation', sufficient – admittedly they are necessary - for regional co-operation to produce binding constructions ? And the tentative, provisional answer is 'no !'. For some element must pre-exist, before the concrete and functional forms of cooperation can set in. That element is rather, I argue, values (even if some lengthier discussion than there is here room for must take place as to what values are) taken in the simple socio-political sense of « more or less subconscious landmarks with which people can *make sense* of the national reality and of the world surrounding them and of which they are part ».

To begin with values is indeed correct, both in academic analysis and in governmental multilateral co-operation. Such a form of co-operation can hardly be thought of as being possibly

6. Inspired by, rather than modelled on, the 1975 Helsinki Conference.

7. Similarly, inspired it would seem, by the European Economic Community of 1957.

8. Indeed, the capacity of Asia to 'invent' models of her own is astounding enough to convince us : authoritarian democracy as some view it in Singapore, liberal communism in China and Vietnam, multi-ethnic/confessional/lingual unitary states such as in Indonesia, etc.

created *ex nihilo*. It must draw on some propensity to co-operate, even if a propensity made pressing by the awareness, as in the European case by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, that lasting intra-regional conflicts and wars will ultimately bring about the geopolitical « disappearance » (in terms of international influence) of a region. Values then seem to constitute some common ground on which to build. But strangely enough, the analytical detour is seldom made through this preliminary, humane ground. Last year, I prepared a class which I lectured at the Institute for European Studies (of the Free University of Brussels) and at InHa university (Inch'eon, South Korea), about the comparative analysis of regional co-operation in Southeast Asia, Western Europe, Latin America and Western Africa. I then felt – and still do feel – justified to suggest two elements of analysis.

- in all cases of regional co-operation – if that co-operation is to be peaceful, lasting and constructive - there must be an equality of 'weight', of decision-making role and of importance among partners, whether they be big powers or middle powers, even when (or perhaps in particular when) regional partners contrast greatly in size and might [which leaves entirely open the question of the criteria upon which powers are assessed in terms of one another, a complex discussion which I suggest to tackle below]. This is true even of the formal *modus operandi* of the European Union, more so, still, since the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice treaties specified the delicate balance between majority and unanimity modes of decisions-making.

- in all cases of regional co-operation, there must be and there is a deep, genuine, irrevocable value, often engraved in people's minds beyond their consciousness, a value which far exceeds politicians' and governments' - or indeed formal – arrangements. In Europe, this value seems to be some 'addiction' to innovations, a form of (if one be permitted an innocent pun) Christian drive to subsuming different 'beliefs' in one 'faith' (here – to be sure - the faith in the virtues of region-building). In Southeast Asia, this value is a need to let western, barbarian invasions be bygones *vis-à-vis* very ancient and refined civilisations. In (Western) Africa, the deep-seated value is an existential urge to remedy the des-humanising, colonial wounds, inflicted against all respect of humanism. In Latin America, it is the desire to transform almost two centuries of post-colonial neo-dependence into a thriving form of independence (or, to paraphrase Monroe – a '*Latin America to Latin Americans !*').

So, in *all* cases, a deep value but a different and specific value in *each* case.

Let us take these two points again as concerns East Asia, where the contrast in partners' might is great and where the degree of existence of a common value is uncertain.

a) East Asian partners would display one of the greatest contrast in the world, by which one can mean Singapore and China, or Korea and Mongolia, etc. Actually, is this true ? What about the USA *vis-à-vis* Canada and Mexico *in NAFTA* ? What about Luxemburg *vis-à-vis* Germany, France and Britain *in the European Union* ? What about Nigeria *vis-à-vis* Togo *in the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa* ? Indeed, what about Paraguay and Uruguay *vis-à-vis* Brazil and Argentina *in the MERCOSUR* ? Vast 'differences' among nations is no impediment to regio-building. Still, in East Asia, China and Russia would simply – so they tell us - not compare with Korea, and even with Japan. However, the question here is less that of the comparability than that of the factors of comparison. What is/are the factor(s) by which to judge contrast : territorial size (easy enough) ? demographic givens (Russia's size plays a lesser role *vis-à-vis* China) ? economic performance (but, within economic performance, which factors : growth ? national product ? direct foreign investment ? the soundness of management of conglomerates ? the capacity to produce energy without dependence for supplies ?). Taking these criteria, one can see, for instance, how China classically far exceeds Japan but that, in other ways, Japan far exceeds China.

So contrast is a dimension of relative - not absolute - significance. And (East)Asia can perfectly well launch forms of regional co-operation as effective as in other regions in the world. Which means forms of co-operation where neighbours become partners, more interested in exchanging and collaborating with each other than in dominating or threatening one another.

b) As regards East Asian partners' drive towards regional construction, what common value, which degree of commonality is there among them ? This is tricky for a non-regional observer to suggest. And there are three – not just one - things to consider.

- admittedly, « turning the historical page » – as Europeans have so readily done after the second World War - is more difficult in a Buddhist, Confucianist culture than in a Christian one<sup>9</sup>. But East Asians are turning the historical page, and « forgiving » each other for earlier real mischief and former aggression (which, by the way, go back in time far beyond the communist / liberal divide). The Japanese Emperor visited China in 1992; Japan and Korea have normalised their relations; the two Koreas have held a common Summit four years ago; the Chinese President was in Mongolia last year and the Mongolian President visited China last Summer, etc. We can discuss whether these steps are enough but we cannot dispute that these are real regional results.

9. This is, naturally, a simplification suggested for the sake of discussion. Nevertheless, one can argue that Christianity revolves around the concept of 'forgiveness', deemed and indeed conceived of as possible, whereas Buddhism revolves around that of 'causality' where direct human decision is much less evident.

And the meaning of these results is regional : we know that progress in bilateral relations can never be so great as when set within a regional ambition.<sup>10</sup>

- a good factor of commonality is « commonality perceived as difference, even resistance, to otherness ». 'Others', in the eyes of Asians, are the Westerners, in the form of past colonisers (some of which supported Japan's – today dated – military approach to regionalism and regional « co-prosperity » many decades ago). The perceived otherness can assume a negative form : negatively, there must necessarily be some degree of anti-western feelings in Asian regional constructions. But it can also assume a positive form : positively, westerners will eventually understand that they can only, at best, exchange as *equal* partners with Asians. And, of course, beyond these dichotomic stages, Asians are today bringing about an Asian identity less and less perceived as difference, or reactive, and more and more anchored in Asian identity *per se*, or constructive (see below section 2. b).

- one question remains, which is for East Asians to solve; but also a question which applies to all regions in the world : are economic trading matters a premise or a consequence of regional co-operation ? That is indeed the question which inspires this whole first section of the paper and to which several elements of clarification have now been given. To sum up, *economic* matters or results (see section 2 below) are a *consequence* and, furthermore, economic results are always fragile. The deep-seated value of the desire to unite and « forget » former tensions is much stronger. The present emphasis put in Asia on material, economic forms of co-operation should be viewed for what it is : not a conditional premise but a chronologically preliminary step . It is an echo to the impression European co-operation gave at its onset in the 1950s. The European *Economic* Community could be viewed as both the premise and the product of co-operation among Europeans. We know today that it is mainly the product of such a co-operation, the premise of which is based on shared *political* values. Similarly, (economic) co-operation in (East) Asia - in which by the way 'middle' powers (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, etc) and even 'small' powers (Singapore, Brunei, etc) play a key role – will gradually reveal the political foundation on which it is being built.

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*10. This can be applied, from a different angle, to the significance of regional, multilateral constructions for helping to solve bilateral disputes or national tensions : Northern Ireland after 1972, the Basque country after 1986, Cyprus (after 2004 ?) in the European context.*

## Section 2. The institutional products of regional co-operation

The starting question here is the following. Are institutional products, in the concrete form of legal structures abiding by community rules (*règles communautaires*) and producing norms (in the European case : community law, *droit communautaire*) indispensable and sufficient – or even necessary in that concrete and binding form – for regional construction ? And the tentative, provisional answer is ‘no !’. For some element must accompany functional co-operation *as based on common values* (see section 1). That element is identity (even if, again, some lengthier discussion than there is here room for must take place as to what identity is) taken in the simple socio-political sense of a « more or less conscious ground on which people build a capacity to *mobilise* against perceived threats to that identity and for its necessary consolidation ». Identity must accompany values, more fundamentally perhaps than institutions can reinforce and stabilise their co-operation and – above all – make it perennials.

Paradoxically (for a European, that is), institutionalism and institutionalisation is one aspect of regional co-operation with which I am least at ease (even though I was, as a child, breast-fed with the taste and consistence of European institution-building !). To be sure, there can be such a thing as excessive institutionalisation. Institutions can disconnect themselves from popular aspirations and, thus, be conducive to artificial regionalisation. This is the very risk, which the making of a European constitution has been running for some long months now in the European Union.<sup>11</sup>

The main point in this second section (the question of over-institutionalisation will be best addressed in the conclusion) is that institutionalisation produces the (possibly) excessive drive for results. This is even a fundamental difference between institutionalism and functionalism. **Institutionalism** refers by and large to a *formalistic* form of co-operation in which *programmed progress must be as rapid as possible for fear of undermining co-operation itself*. One expects, *ex ante*, certain results and feels compelled to say : ‘in terms of expected results, this has been a development lagging behind of schedule’. By this token, European construction has been slower than anticipated. **Functionalism** refers by and large to a *pragmatic* form of co-operation in which *step by step progress can be slowed or accelerated without undermining co-operation*. One needs only, *ex post*, to look at results and feels able to suggest : ‘as regards the

<sup>11</sup>. A risk which will only be remedied by a widespread democratic debate over ratification procedures by referenda as well as by a real popular adhesion or 'rallying' to the Constitution, a 'rallying' assessed, at the very least, by a participation rate in the referenda of 75 % or more and a 'yes' vote of 60 % or more.

former state of affairs, this has been a fast/slow development of co-operation'. By this token, East Asian construction(s) is (are) fairly rapid, especially if/when bearing in mind the impairing legacy left in Asia by the Cold War, as a legacy combined with the virulence of decolonisation.<sup>12</sup>

Let us take the concept of relativity in the pace of progress as doubly applicable to East-Asia and identity-building, severall starting points yielding and leading to evolutions.

a) Regionalisms differ in starting points. Regions in the world did not begin this co-operation from situations which quite resembled each other. One needs only to remind oneself of the obvious to be convinced of that. Let us conduct a brief comparison between (East) Asia and the other three regions mentioned in this respect : Europe, Latin America, (West) Africa.

Where did *Europeans* begin from? From devastating, internal wars – but wars of their *own* making, not wars brought about by outsiders. This is a first difference with Asia, an Asia weakened in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by external conquests (European, including Russian). In other words, whereas Europeans had no choice but to unite – or disappear in terms of international influence -, Asians have a choice. For one thing, Asians have been able to gain influence over the world without formal regional constructions; for another, Asians are demonstrating a capacity to innovate namely by co-operating regionally in a quite different manner from other regional experiences elsewhere in the world : extending ASEAN dynamics without embarking upon community institutions (*institutions communautaires*) and acting as if they 'knew better', which they indeed seem to do.

Where did *Latin Americans* begin from ? From over one hundred and fifty years of independence (1830s to 1980s), from a legacy of European diplomatic roots and, towards the end, from a change in US perception of Latin America under Carter. This is a second difference with Asia, where independence goes back only fifty years, with superpowers' tensions having dominated these fifty years and while US perception of Asia has changed little. To be sure, in this case, regionalism means a levelling-off with North-America (more than a casting-away of North America). Asian regionalisation will not be as integrative (nor so manichean). Asians have already demonstrated a capacity to develop through economic *complementarity* with « the other », namely the West. What is needed is political affirmation, which Latin Americans have already gained.

Where did (West) *Africans* begin from ? From a monstrous pre-colonial European slave trade and a totally up-rooting form of colonisation and no bedrock experience of nation-state

12. As regards contemporary history, decolonisation has known virulence also in Africa (North/South American independences date back further in history) but the Cold War divide was more markedly present in (East) Asia.

stability. This is a third difference with Asia for, to Asian long-standing nations-states, the equally brutal colonial times are a parenthesis, however brutal, in the history of their constituted political systems, a parenthesis which time will register as proving the importance of ensuring an « Asia to Asians » form of carefulness in conducting international relations. In short, whereas Africans have little other option but to construct themselves institutionally (the names, roles and interactions of African regional institutions are so close to European ones<sup>13</sup> that one may speak of a European model in Africa), Asians are tackling the question of values and identity *ahead of* institution-building.

All in all, the original values of regionalisation in Asia can already be identified through rapid evolutions in that regionalisation.

b) Time is, however, necessary to go from reactive to proper, or *sui generis*, identity. Indeed, the three differences underlined above point to the fact that obstacles and hurdles have accumulated for any Asian regional construction to spring up and that, logically, Asian identity was more difficult to build other than as a reactive identity.

- obstacles to (North)east Asian construction have indeed accumulated. The past fifty years have seen these three differences combine their effects.

First, as an ideological obstacle. The Cold War divide, which is of European origin, has split Asia more deeply than any other region (except Europe). And Asia was torn as a region, partly communist and partly liberal, at a time (1947-1989) when this divide was the subsuming logic of world affairs - but not a logic of Asian origin. And today, only too logically, this divide only exists in the country artificially divided in 1945 against all possible rationale (Korea). In the post Cold War, united communist countries and united liberal countries co-exist, nay interact, on a level which is regional beyond former tensions. The inter-Korean dialogue since 1991 serves this point quite strongly as a dialogue having come about *despite* non-Korean obstacles.<sup>14</sup>

Second, as a legal obstacle. The diplomatic tradition of Asia is one of trading relations much more than one of binding, multilateral agreements and treaties. This is the reason why

13. See Pierre Chabal «From bilateral decolonisation to regional construction : the case of Western Africa [De la décolonisation bilatérale à la construction régionale : le cas de l'Afrique de l'Ouest]», in G. LO et alii (dirs.), *La Coopération euro-africaine à l'épreuve de la mondialisation*, to be published in 2004.

14. It would be naïve to reject the analysis, which I defend, that a divided Korean peninsula serves the strategic interests of her four « big » neighbours. It has served them for 59 years (and, before that, instrumentalisation of Korea before the division has served them for 40 years). Tension on the peninsula, even today, has little to do with inter-Korean tensions. See Pierre Chabal «The geostrategic situation of Korea and the perspectives of reunification in interregional multilateralism : after a reading of Myung-Hyun Cho [Situation géostratégique de la Corée et perspectives de réunification dans le multilatéralisme interrégional : en relisant Myung-hyun CHO]», in M. Nedeljkovic (ed.) *Les pays du Pacifique en crise : à la recherche de l'unité dans la diversité*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 2002 ; and CHO Myung-Hyun, *Korea and the Major Powers : an analysis of power structures in East Asia*, Seoul, Research Center for Peace and Unification of Korea, Korean Unification Studies Series 7, 1989, 361 pages.

observers have to understand that the Asian equivalent to regional *construction* elsewhere in the world is less construction of Asia than *cooperation* in Asia. And, in a nutshell, this is why progress in Asian cooperation (pointedly, to take only one example, the recent Chinese involvement in the Korean nuclear issue since March 2002 - multiparty talks in Beijing - with China's « coming out » [of her splendid isolation - *splendide isolement*]) is so future-bearing for the whole region.

Third, as a psychological obstacle. The painful awareness of the degree of cynicism which westerners have applied to Asia, in particular with regards to Korea (the 1905 Taft-Katsura agreement, the 1945 division of the peninsula) and, more recently, to Timor, from the 1970s to the 1990s is truly an 'eye-opening' awareness. One should feel therefore astounded less at the virulence of certain forms of rejection of the West in Asia (see below) than at the capacity in Asia to combine openness to innovations (some of them western : democracy, individualism, etc) with adherence to conservatism (loyalty to elders, relatives' networks, etc). This virtue, no doubt, can be explained in (North)east Asia, in part, through the deep influence of Confucianism.

Progress in co-operation in Asia is therefore not to be assessed relatively to other examples in the world but relatively to obstacles which lay in its way at the onset.

- any (North)east Asian identity was thus logically prone to be reactive. If one may be permitted to simplify things to the extreme, let me suggest only two elements of analysis, highlighting the fundamental evolution from reactive (and negative) identity to proper (and positive) identity.

In the 1970s and in the 1980s, attitudes in Asia have essentially been attitudes of rejection in the form of « anti-something-ism » : anti-Americanism often and more generally anti-« Westernism ». One remembers the slogan of « an Asia that can say 'No' (to westerners) », inspired by radical ideas originated in Malaysia. And one can mention here the form this took in Korea with the idea of « a Korea that can say 'No' – 'No'-rago mal-halsu-inneun Hankuk » – no doubt 'No' to US domination. These attitudes were often perceived in the West and in the USA as negative, even aggressive, and – to be sure – as tension-prone.<sup>15</sup> This would have been a misinterpretation for these attitudes were not the negation of the West *per se* but a rejection of western *excessive influence over* Asia. Today, twenty or so years later, any Asia observer knows that that region, having 'realised' herself, is quite content with western (and other) involvements, investments, interests in Asia.

15. By the end of the 1980s, this has become a quasi certainty of a « coming to war » between the West (namely the USA) and the East (namely China). See the debate in the early 90s about « Head to Head : the coming of war ».

In the 1990s, in effect, attitudes in Asia have changed to take on much more complex and subtle diplomatic forms and become inter-regional inspirations for Asia. Clearly, there has been no doubt a willingness to engage in APEC,<sup>16</sup> probably for fear of being left out of the post Cold War worldwide evolution towards « generalised exchanges » (taken in the sense of the Vienna sociological school – politics as generalised exchange -, not in that of « liberalism as a virtue » !). At the same time, there has been an activism towards Europe and a decided co-creation of ASEM for fear, no doubt, of western domination within APEC. Admittedly, ASEM means dealing also with westerners, among which several fierce former colonisers (France, Britain, Portugal, Holland, Germany...) but with other Westerners than in APEC (North America, South Pacific, some Latin Americans).

Having thus acquired, by the end of the 1990s, a capacity to « balance out » some westerners *vis-à-vis* other westerners (and potentially a capacity to play some of these against others), Asians and in particular East Asians are now able to build an identity no longer mainly reactive but mainly properly Asian. And I do not believe that the construction of an Asia that is Buddhist, Muslim, Shintoist, with a substantial Christian presence will in any way be an Asia built on divisive lines - cultural, or « civilisational » - any more than religion, today, divides Europeans - or does it still ? And this directly connects to middle powers' propensity to favour diversity, tolerance and multiplicity. Middle powers have a more direct leverage on regional identity-building as multicultural and multilingual identity. Middle powers are more sensitive to identity co-existence than big powers. Major powers have historically been more prone to identity homogenisation and less to identity diversification.

**Conclusion** - It would be an illusion to think one can conclude such a topic as regionalisation in Asia, whose very essence in, to quote R. Aron's famous phrase, « history in the making ». Let me, less presumptuously, return in ending to the question of '(over)-institutionalisation' and raise some questions for discussion.

- It is clear that one criterion that is simply *not* applicable to assessing regionalisation in (East)Asia is the criterion of institutionalisation.

First, in effect, institutionalisation does not ascribe to the Asian cultures. The Asian equivalent to institution-building in Europe is trust-consolidation. Hence the emphasis put in

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16. *The founding Canberra conference in 1989 was a joint Australian/Japanese suggestion but the policy-orientation conference in 1990 took place in Seoul.*

Asian diplomacies and in analyses of today's Asia on 'confidence-building measures', the *maitre-mot* of observers after 1991.

Second, institutionalisation as a process is not free of a western legacy : institutions refer, *volens nolens*, to a European-type model of regionalisation. Europeans have strived to realise their cultural preference for formal arrangements since the 1648 treaties of Westphalia and cannot reason outside legal formalism, European institutions having from the onset produced European norms and, indeed, European law.

Last, institutionalisation is perhaps, moreover, not the main aim of regionalisation in Asia, where regional institutions will, at best, serve as relays of multilateral mediations and regulations, not prove a supra-sovereign basis for integration. This fundamental difference between European-type and Asian-type regionalisation is over-neglected by analysts.

Even in Europe, the cradle of regional institutionalisation, an awareness is emerging of the excessively rigid effect of institution-building. To be sure, the project of a European constitution contains a (constitutional) provision for making the expelling of a Member State possible by majority decision (against all – Latin – legal conception of the « parallelism of forms » – entry through unanimity decision).

- My ambition in this paper is little more than to suggest further discussion on several issues, beginning with two or three, that reflect the exchanges which took place on July 9 in Ulaanbaatar, during the question sessions very generously made possible by our Mongolian colleagues. These are also present in other papers of these proceedings.

First, what is the nature of East Asian institutionalism ? That is to say, what is the Asian contribution to the functionalism vs institutionalism debate ? The answer is not for me to suggest but it seems that in Asia regional institutions will remain a mere means as against an aim in itself. Asians should fuel intellectual debates with Europeans by clarifying this point, instead of paying lip-service to the European « model ».<sup>17</sup>

Second, can there be ways of avoiding excessive institutionalisation in Asia ? If regional institutions flourish and prosper (one thinks here in particular of the astonishing development of ASEAN since 1995, or of that of the Shanghai Group since 2000), does it mean that Asia will be

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17. That is the very subject matter of the 2nd joint international Political science Conference organised by InHa and Le Havre universities in Inch'eon next year (18-19 April 2005) : " Neo-functional vs neo-institutional approaches to the policies of regional cooperation : West-european and East-asian experiences", following the conference held in Le Havre on 17-18-19 May 2004 "Regional Regime Dynamics in Europe and East Asia". Organisers : YT Jung, EK Kim and P. Chabal.

drawn to formalistic, integrative institution-building as in Europe ? This, to me, would be an historical reversal of excessive magnitude.

Third, how does the post Cold war significance of security connect to East Asian construction of security organisations? That is to say, will (East) Asia build regional organisations following, in sequence,<sup>18</sup> European organisations (Communities dealing with economic and energy issues, leaving security issues to a supra-European organisation : NATO) or develop, straight away, regional security organisations in their own right?

No doubt these questions will be part of the thriving exchanges among all participants to the conferences organised by the School of Foreign Service of the National University of Mongolia, beginning with their individual exchanges in between two such conferences.

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18. *And as successive (excessive) layers : will East Asians drag on for over fifty years as in Europe with an impossible dilemma : Asian vs Pacific security, as European haven't yet solved that of European vs Atlantic security ?*