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Panel: Towards an East Asian Community

Presenters

Paul Close (Convenor), Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance (CCIG),
Faculty of Social Sciences, Open University, UK; Email: p.c.close@open.ac.uk

Keisuke Abe & Yoshiaki Sato, Faculty of Law, Seikei University, Japan

Mohamed Aslam, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Stephen Epstein, Director, Asian Studies Programme, Victoria University of Wellington,
New Zealand

Deepak Nair, Institute of Southeast Asia Studies (ISEAS), Singapore

Benny Teh Cheng Guan, School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang,
Malaysia

Ewa Oziewicz Director of Center of East Asian Studies and Head of International
Economic Relations Department Faculty of Economics, University of Gdansk Poland

Summaries

Paul Close, 'Regional Integration the East Asian Way'

My presentation will draw upon my *Challenging International Relations in East Asia* (CIREA) project - the second stage of a long-term programme of research and writing on regionalization, regional integration, regionalism and supranationalism, focusing especially on Europe and East Asia in global context. The CIREA project is about the process of regional integration in East Asia in comparison with and relation to regional integration in Europe alongside the perhaps somewhat contradictory processes of economic, political and cultural globalization towards a *single global social space*. A guiding issue is that of assessing the prospects for an *East Asian Community* (EAC), and in particular an EAC which resembles the European Union, or which is fundamentally different from the EU, or both. Attention is being paid to the parts played in East Asian regional integration by a) current regional formations, such as ASEAN, ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and the East Asian Summit (EAS); b) such mediating factors and forces as nationalism, regionalism, ultranationalism and supranationalism; c) cultural diversity, human rights concerns and the evolving commitment to sustainable development; d) emphases on nation-state sovereignty, on the one hand, and pressures favouring regional

and global governance, on the other; and e) the power, control and interests of social compacts of local, regional and global political-economy players.

The first stage of the research and writing programme resulted in *Citizenship, Europe and Change* (Macmillan, 1995); (with Emiko Ohki-Close) *Supranationalism in the New World Order: Global Processes Reviewed* (Macmillan, 1999); and *The Legacy of Supranationalism* (Macmillan, 2000). The second (CIREA) stage has resulted so far in (with David Askew), *Asia Pacific and Human Rights: A Global Political Economy Perspective* (Ashgate Publishing, 2005); and (with David Askew and Xu Xin), *The Beijing Olympiad: The Political Economy of a Sporting Mega-Event* (Routledge, 2007). A further book on *Challenging International Relations in East Asia: Regionalization and Globalization in the New World Order* will be published by Ashgate in 2011.

In my presentation, I will argue that an EAC is indeed emerging which will largely resemble the EU, but which will unfold around certain distinct considerations and concerns rooted in recent global developments and issues, and consequently around a focus upon East Asian monetary union.

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Keisuke Abe & Yoshiaki Sato, 'Regionalism, Cosmopolitanism and Identity Trimming: the Prospects for Asian Integration and the Altered Japanese Legal Landscape'

This presentation draws on Keisuke Abe's work on the changing constitutional landscape of Japan and Yoshiaki Sato's complementary work on the construction of the East Asian Community. In these areas of interest, the situation has changed considerably over the past couple of years. Gone are the ultraconservatives' proposals for constitutional revision featuring elimination of the 'No War' clause and arrived in Japan are nurses and caregivers from Indonesia. Not a single day passes without news or comments on Asian integration. Japan finally seems to be opening its doors and minds to its neighbours. Internally, particularly significant is the decision of the Supreme Court in June 2008, declaring a provision in the Nationality Law unconstitutional under the Equality Clause as well as in contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Until this decision was made, children born out of wedlock to non-Japanese mothers and Japanese fathers and acknowledged by the fathers *after* they were born had been denied Japanese nationality. In holding that such discriminatory treatment is no longer allowed, the Court placed emphasis on the rapid progress of globalization, specifically referring to the increase in the number of international marriages and instances of cohabitation. It is estimated that there are currently millions of such children born to international couples living in Japan. Another area of major action is the Immigration Control Law and related ministerial orders. Japan's Industrial Training and Technical Internship Program, by far the largest in terms of its size among major nations, was originally introduced in the 1960s as a means to transfer industrial technologies and skills to developing countries, but has lately been under criticism for its misuse, i.e. as a disguise to attract low-skilled foreign workers. The government has recently made plans to overhaul the system so that all labour law

protections will apply to trainees and interns from overseas. Various research institutions are hosting conferences on this issue as well. Meanwhile, the Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement took effect in July 2008. As Japan's labour force is expected to continue shrinking in coming years, the tide of globalization seems irreversible. Discussion about the East Asian Community is entering a new stage both in academe and in the broader society. What are the prospects of East Asian nations achieving unity, adopting the Charter of the East Asian Community, for example? Is Japan prepared to reshape its law so that it can fully accommodate people from overseas as well as traditionally marginalized members of its society, fulfilling its mandate as one of the key players in the region? Combining insights from constitutional law and international law, the authors will explain recent developments on the integration front and explore answers to some of the most difficult questions concerning this region

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Mohamed Aslam, 'The Roles of China and Japan in Engaging With the Rest of East Asia in a Regional Grouping'

Prior to ASEAN Plus Three (APT), China, Japan, and South Korea which are amongst the world's largest traders had not participated in any regional agreements. However, those countries are members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) that was created in 1989. Ahead of the establishment of APT, Japan and South Korea put great emphasis on APEC for trade and investment liberalisation. Until now APEC has failed to materialise in establishing potential economic cooperation among members. On the other hand, the Association of Southeast Asia Nation (ASEAN) which was formed in 1967 is an active regional group. With its sub-regional economic co-operation – that is, ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) - which was the only free trade area in East Asia before the APT, and now the members are looking forward to the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community. Actually, ASEAN was the main mover in forming economic cooperation in the region – that is, it brought other countries in the region including China, Japan and South Korea to the negotiation table and finally ASEAN Plus Three (APT) was formed in 1998. China and Japan, have their own motives for participating in the regional group. Apart from APT, both countries have their own reasons in negotiating and signing bilateral FTA agreements with non-ASEAN members. The move implicitly, has “eroded” the main intention of APT in developing a single and solid free trade area in East Asia. The Japanese proposal on establishing an East Asian Community (EAC) is at stake of failing if there is no full attention by members of APT in looking forward to the possibility of forming the EAC. The main intention for the development of East Asia Summit (EAS) was to bring members of ASEAN and East Asian countries to the discussion table, however by including non-East Asian such as Australia, New Zealand, India, Russia and other countries implicitly it has expunged the significance of EAS objectives. Development of the APT and EAS show China's and Japan's role in maneuvering and influencing the direction of APT. There is competition between the two nations in engaging the APT and in the EAS meeting. Not only are economic matters looked upon by the countries but also political motives have moved them into regional economic cooperation in the region. The acts of these two countries until now do not

provide a clear signal that the APT is moving into a single FTA. This paper will discuss China's and Japan's role or their motives in engaging with other members of East and Southeast Asia in regional grouping.

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Stephen Epstein, "The Bride(s) from Hanoi": South Korean Popular Culture and Vietnam in the New Millennium - the Implications for East Asian Regional Integration?

In recent years South Korea has witnessed an efflorescence of cultural productions that highlight the nation's increasing encounters with the foreign generally and Asia more specifically. Growing travel for Koreans within the larger region, a popular discourse that celebrates the success of the Korean Wave across the continent, a dramatic increase in labour migration and, perhaps most significantly, a meteoric rise in international marriages are all reconfiguring Korea's understanding of its relationship with its neighbours. Inevitably, this recalibrated understanding is also being reflected – and refracted - in popular media. The presentation I will give is part of a broader project examining the spate of recent Korean television dramas and reality-cum-talk shows that draw attention to Korea's relationship with Asia. I will discuss a series of Korean television productions that draw attention to Korea's encounter with Vietnam with a particular focus on dramas such as *Hanoi sinbu* (The Bride from Hanoi), *Hwanggeumui sinbu* (Golden Bride) and the reality show *Sadon cheoeum boepgesseumnida* (Meet the In-laws). I will consider the extent to which these shows are a) inculcating a hierarchical sense of Korea's relationship with an Asian hinterland; b) promoting a radical shift in Korea's gendering of the "foreign" from male to female; and c) signaling a cultural softening in favour of East Asian regional integration.

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Deepak Nair, 'A Frustrated Regionalism?'

My presentation draws on 'Regionalism in the Asia Pacific/East Asia: A Frustrated Regionalism?' in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 31/1, April 2009. I will address the question 'Why have Asia's many projects in regionalism not been able to realize their stated goals, despite the fecundity of, and enthusiasm for, region-building initiatives over the last two decades?' In an attempt to answer this question, I identify the pursuit of a holistic regionalism embodied in the desire for a regional community as a persistent goal in official discourse, and argues that an apparent state of frustration describes the difficulty of regional institutions and forums in bridging the growing gap between these articulated goals and actual outcomes. The empirical case for the argument here is provided by the founding of the East Asia Summit in 2005, which has disclosed the limits of both exclusive and inclusive models of regionalism in Asia. In exploring causation, I will argue that both structural and agential factors are at the heart of this problem. The tensions thrown up by the competing processes of realist and liberal-institutionalist order-building in Asia have imposed structural constraints on the ability of regional projects to

realize their normative aspirations. Equally important in causing this state of frustration are the agents of regionalism - in particular, regional elites - who articulated the goal of a regional "Community" to propel regional projects, and have set the bar above the current capacities of regional institutions.'

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Benny Teh Cheng Guan, 'Community Building: Japan's Role in the East Asia Summit (EAS)'

In the building of an East Asian community, the Asean Plus Three (APT) process has played a significant role as the prime vehicle in regional cooperation since the onset of the 1997 Asian financial crisis. However, differences among the APT members failed to turn the APT into an East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2005 as what was originally envisioned, leaving two parallel entities with overlapping members and objectives in the course of action. To keep them distinct, the APT leaders agreed to maintain the APT's dominant role with the EAS taking a supplementary position. This current configuration reflected in essence the uneasiness between Japan and China in influencing the direction of regionalism. Is the EAS playing a supporting role and therefore complementing the APT or are there efforts to develop the EAS in ways that would raise Japan's influence vis-à-vis China? In analyzing this question, the paper looks at the role that Japan plays in the

EAS. It provides a historical account of the EAS process from 2005 onwards and makes a comparison between the APT and the EAS in pushing for closer integration. While taking into consideration the roles played by other members, it observes that Japan has paid greater attention to the EAS and taken unilateral initiatives under the EAS framework of cooperation, suggesting that efforts are made to elevate the status of the EAS. The extent in which the EAS is able to contribute to community building is, however, dependable on the ability of Japan to convince the other members of the EAS's efficacy and the willingness of the members to support Japan's lead.

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Dr Ewa Oziewicz
Full Professor, Center of East Asian Studies and Institute of International Business,
University of Gdańsk, Poland

New face of Asian regionalism from ASEAN perspective

The last years of the 20th century, especially a halt of multilateral negotiations within the new Doha Round in 2003, have become the major factor of turning towards new regionalism and especially free trade areas all around the world and in Southeast Asia as well. It has pushed ASEAN and its members towards new, open regionalism, providing a strong institutional impetus for the proliferation of bilateral free trade areas (FTAs).

Other causes that have driven ASEAN economies towards seeking new forms of integration such as FTAs among others, are connected with the necessity of taking measures against the risks of globalization based on disappointments of the Asian financial crisis time. The financial crisis has also shown that ASEAN countries cannot count on the West, precisely neither on the US nor on Japan.

Now the Asian economies are looking for new strategies which would allow them to navigate in the deep waters of globalization and cope with the challenges that this process puts in front of the Asian nations. Many Asian governments see in new Asian regionalism a salvation. They are of the opinion that they should diminish their dependence on the Western countries and multilateral financial institutions, such as IMF or World Bank. In 1997 there was born the idea of Asian Monetary Fund. ASEAN's enthusiastic attitude towards this idea and several other initiatives, one of which is the Chiang Mai Initiative, showed that the member countries were seeking for solutions that would be more based in the region. Regional institutions that are concentrated more on the problems of the region could better serve individual countries' needs.

The idea of creating totally regional grouping: East Asian Economic Group (EAEG) comprising ASEAN, China, Japan and South Korea has failed, although it has survived as ASEAN+3 concept. Anyhow, ASEAN+3's intends to establish "East Asian Community". The paper will try to find an answer to the question how the future of Asian integration will look like and what consequences current financial crisis brings to ASEAN and wider regional integration.