THE AGE OF CONNECTIVITY – ASEM AND BEYOND

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Preface

Enhancing cooperation between Asia and Europe was one of the main cornerstones on which the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was founded two decades ago. As one of the key platforms for dialogue between Asia and Europe, it has grown from an initial gathering of 26 partners to 53 partners from both regions. With its biennial summits and intermediate regular meetings, ASEM has driven exchanges among participating countries across political, economic and socio-cultural issues.
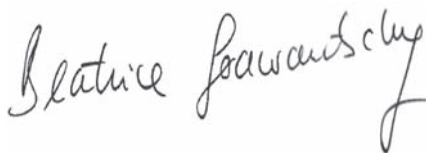
As ASEM enters its third decade, greater convergence in connectivity between the two regions was emphasized at the 11th ASEM Summit in Mongolia in July 2016. All leaders agreed to focus on building and enhancing ties and increasing the relevance of ASEM. In light of severe global challenges, the need for greater connectivity has become imperative and ASEM can play a pivotal role in becoming the bridge to address this demand. ASEM as an intergovernmental platform can further strengthen networks between the regions and act as an agenda setter, contributing, for instance, to global sustainable development. Cooperation between the two continents has extended beyond trade and economics to include disaster management, migration, climate change, maritime security, infrastructure, digital urbanization and non-tangible links, such as people-to-people programmes, educational and cultural exchanges and connectivity of ideas. Advocating solidarity and cooperation as well as creating networks through people, institutions and ideas can help ASEM form a better foundation for physical and institutional connectivity.

Think tanks can play an important role in enhancing connectivity by providing strategic visions and suggestions. Strengthening research partnership and facilitating networking among thinks tanks can trigger collaboration in broader areas and enhance connectivity across Asia and Europe. Cooperation between think tanks in Asia and Europe will definitely contribute in advancing ASEM's connectivity goals and also in increasing its relevance in the evolving global arena.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia and the Pacific in Singapore and the Institute for Strategic and Development Studies in the Philippines, in close cooperation with the EU-Centre in Singapore, have been supporting this "connectivity" through the Asia-Europe Think Tank Dialogue since 1998. The papers of this publication

were presented at the 18th Asia-Europe Think Tank Dialogue in May 2016 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The chapters of this book analyse ASEM's role in facilitating the connectivity of ideas and in enhancing cooperation in the non-traditional security and economic spheres as well as its potential impact on global governance. Related questions on existing institutional structures and the new world order are also analysed from both Asian and European perspectives. Finally, the book explores how Asia and Europe can strengthen their connections in times of rapid changes and seeming ambiguity.

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ASEM at a Crossroad:
A Mix of Ideas and Connectivity will Revive ASEM in the Next Decade

Shada Islam

INTRODUCTION

Leaders attending the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Ulaanbaatar in July 2016 showed a much-needed commitment to injecting new life into their 20-year old partnership. The "Ulaanbaatar Declaration" they adopted talks ambitiously of a "Partnership for the Future through Connectivity" and underlines ASEM's "vitality and relevance as an important and unique platform for dialogue and cooperation". The meeting therefore gives hope that as it enters its third decade, ASEM is endowed with renewed geo-strategic relevance and increased credibility.

The challenge over the coming years will be to ensure that the promises made in Mongolia are turned into policy and actions. If not, ASEM runs the risk of slipping down the political ladder to become less visible on a crowded global landscape characterised by increased competition among rival organisations.

The outlook so far is relatively upbeat. As illustrated in the run-up to the summit in Mongolia, ASEM stakeholders—including policymakers, members of parliament, civil society representatives, academics and think tankers as well as young people and business leaders—are engaged in impressive efforts to make ASEM fit for purpose in the 21st Century. The focus is on energising discussions through changed formats, better working methods and a stronger focus on content and substance. It is important to underline that re-thinking ASEM does not require an overhaul of the entire structure of the Asia-Europe relationship. But it does require a freshening up of the ASEM narrative and a revitalisation of the ASEM "brand".

To stay ahead of its rivals, ASEM's new 21st Century narrative should more than ever before be about geo-political and geo-economic connections. It must also focus on the importance of knowledge and the power of ideas. As Asia and Europe reflect on ways of implementing their decision to upgrade the relationship in the coming decades, a mixture of new ideas and increased connectivity can provide a potent recipe for injecting new energy and dynamism into ASEM.

Transforming ASEM into a hub or network of ideas and initiatives will give the Asia-Europe relationship a geo-strategic raison d'etre which it has lost over the last two decades. Although established in 1996, with its focus on connectivity, ASEM was already a 21st-Century construct. The platform for networking, dialogue and cooperation it provides today makes it even more essential in an interdependent and complex world. Asia-Europe connectivity is now a fact of life and reinforcing these networks through stronger institutional, infrastructure, digital and people-to-people linkages is rightfully emerging as a central element of efforts to revive and renew ASEM.

ASEM has met many of its original goals by providing Asian and European leaders with opportunities to get to know one another, encouraging greater people-to-people understanding and providing the two regions with avenues to explore new areas of cooperation in the political, economic and social sectors. An array of ASEM meetings allows policymakers from both regions to exchange views on regional and global issues and strengthen their economic relations through greater trade and investment. Additionally, meetings between business leaders, parliamentarians, academics and civil society actors—and young leaders—have allowed ASEM to make important headway in enhancing mutual Asia-Europe understanding and upgrading the quality and diversity of the Asia-Europe conversation.

While these connections are important, ASEM can do much more by playing a more central role than it has so far in generating, nourishing and disseminating new ideas about living and working together in a globalized world. This requires the setting up of an "ASEM Brains Trust" or network of think tanks/studies centres which can help to enliven ASEM by turning it into a marketplace for ideas and initiatives. Proposals and ideas generated within such a studies centre should be fed directly into the work of senior ASEM officials and the activities of other stakeholders. This combination of ideas and connectivity allowing for a permanent circulation and exchange of

thoughts, knowledge, experience and expertise can revive ASEM for the third decade.

A DELICATE BALANCING ACT

The challenge facing ASEM in the coming years is to keep the focus on connectivity as a key asset while also seeking to strike the right balance between:

- Rethinking and innovating while preserving the parts of ASEM which are good and need to be consolidated.

- Keeping the informality and light structures of ASEM while meeting aspirations for enhanced actions and deliverable outcomes.

- Combining the search for new ideas and strong substantial discussions with a focus on streamlining processes and procedures.

Connectivity has always been the essence of ASEM and should be given centre-stage. At the same time, ASEM should encourage and promote out-of-the box thinking on key global and regional challenges. Without the correct balance between these imperatives, ASEM will not be able to flourish and thrive. It is this author's view that ASEM is a vital element of Asia-Europe cooperation and global networking but needs a rethink—and a narrative to make it relevant and credible in an unpredictable and complicated world.

AHEAD OF ITS TIME

At its launch in 1996 in Bangkok, ASEM was in many ways ahead of its time. Undoubtedly, there was a need for Asia and Europe to talk to each other about trade and investments, security and culture but overall the world was a simpler and tidier place. East Asia was already a dynamic powerhouse but China's remarkable economic development was only just beginning to result in impressive GDP gains.

ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was active at a regional level but had not made a global impact. The United States was the undisputed superpower although many in Asia and Europe yearned for a "multipolar" world instead of a unipolar one. European integration had yet to result in eastward enlargement or the introduction of the Euro single currency. And Asia-Europe links were still largely under-developed.

Today's volatile international environment makes Asia-Europe dialogue and cooperation a much more compelling necessity. The world today is messy, chaotic and often violent, with no clear centre of power. In Europe, many decry the end of the post-World War security order. In Asia, re-emerging nations are clamouring for recognition, jostling each other to gain the upper hand as regional and global leaders.

Everywhere, international norms and institutions built in the last century are under stress, and seemingly unable to cope with the increasing demands and insecurity of the 21st Century. Most multilateral organisations, set up in the aftermath of World War II, face the daunting task of adapting to new economic, political and social realities, including the rise of emerging powers.

Given its Asia-Europe connections, ASEM is well-placed to host a broad global conversation on living and working together in an interdependent but increasingly anxious age. Asia and Europe face a growing list of common concerns ranging from climate change to tackling pandemics and combating violent extremism. The two regions' economies are even more closely linked than before. A fragile security environment in one region prompts unease and tensions in the other.

Exploiting ASEM's full potential therefore is about more than just improving the channels of communication between Asia and Europe. It is also about providing global public goods, better governance, managing complexities and tensions and working together in trying to shape a new world order. More than ever before, ASEM's focus should be on encouraging new ideas and fresh initiatives.

To re-energise ASEM, it is important to view it as an integral and vital part of a much-needed global conversation on 21st-Century economic, societal and security challenges. These discussions also take place in other fora, including the United Nations, its agencies and the G20. But if its potential for informality and networking is tapped to the full, ASEM can make a real name for itself on a crowded global landscape and become a critical part of the expanding global conversation on dealing with the new world and its multiple challenges. ASEM provides a platform for a discussion of such complexities. ASEM's real usefulness and value lie in its role as an informal club of nations—big and small, rich and poor, like-minded and non-like-minded—which work together to deal with shared challenges.

CONNECTIVITY AND IDEAS

To count in an increasingly complex and interdependent world, individuals, institutions, companies, continents, regions and countries have to be connected. Lack of connections translates into lack of influence. It means having no voice, no role and no chance to make an impact. What's true for individuals is also true for countries. Nations which have clout in this rapidly changing 21st Century are those that are connected to the rest of the world.

Asians have taken the lead in putting the spotlight on connectivity. The Connectivity Masterplan drawn up by ASEAN is impressive in its scope and content. And of course China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative is making headlines worldwide.

As these different initiatives illustrate, connectivity can and does take many forms. The first focus is clearly on transport—building roads, bridges, railways as well as maritime and air routes. There are also digital networks. Connectivity is also about building networks that connect people, schools and colleges, media, civil society organisations, businesses, policymakers and institutions.

Being connected is good for the economy by helping to boost trade and investments and create jobs. It is good for creativity and innovation. It is good for fostering mutual understanding. And of course it is very good for peace and stability.

Today's volatile international environment, and the diffusion of power from West to East, makes Asia-Europe dialogue and cooperation a much more compelling necessity. That is why it is encouraging to see the attention now being paid to Asia-Europe connectivity as a driver for ASEM. Asia-Europe economic connectivity has grown. The economies, societies and people of Asia and Europe are ever-more closely connected. Compared to 1996 when ASEM was launched or even ten years ago, there is now a stronger EU-Asian conversation on trade, business, security and culture. Asia and Europe are linked through an array of cooperation accords. Discussions on climate change, pandemics, illegal immigration, maritime security, urbanization and green growth, among other topics, are frequent between multiple government ministries and agencies in both regions. These contacts reflect a growing recognition that 21st-Century challenges can only be tackled through improved global governance involving cross-border and cross-regional alliances.

Trade and investment flows within ASEM and between Asia and Europe are thriving. The increased connectivity is reflected in the mutual Asia-Europe

quest to negotiate Free Trade Agreements and investment accords. The EU and China are currently negotiating a bilateral investment agreement. The FTAs concluded by the EU with South Korea and Singapore and similar deals under negotiation with Japan, India and individual ASEAN countries are important in consolidating EU-Asia relations.

Recent ASEM meetings, including the summit in Milan in October 2014 and meetings of foreign ministers in Delhi in 2013 and in Luxembourg in 2015, have injected new momentum into the Asia-Europe relationship by reviewing and simplifying ASEM's content, procedures and outreach. New formats have been introduced for meetings and there is a sharper focus on content as well as on stronger engagement with civil society and the media.

Connectivity—including digital connectivity—was underscored by the ASEM summit in Milan, with leaders underlining the contribution increased ties could make to economic prosperity and sustainable development and to promoting free and seamless movement of people, trade, investment, energy, information, knowledge and ideas and greater institutional linkages.

The summit urged the establishment of an integrated, sustainable, secure, efficient and convenient air, maritime and land transportation system, including intermodal solutions, in and between Asia and Europe. It also noted the usefulness of an exchange of best practices and experiences on areas of common interest, relating for example to the governance of the EU Single Market and the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity.

Discussions on promoting various facets of connectivity within ASEM have already begun, with seminars held in 2015 in Riga on transport and education connectivity, in Chongqing on industrial connectivity and in Seoul on inter-modal transport. A conference on tourism (people-to-people connectivity) was also held in Tokyo in October 2015. The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) is actively engaged in promoting people-to-people networks in an array of sectors. Work on promoting ASEM-wide links in education have gained momentum since the first ASEM ministerial meeting on education in 2008. Media connectivity was the subject of a conference organised by China, Pakistan, Singapore and New Zealand in Guangzhou in April 2016. A think tank dialogue was convened by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar in May 2016.

Connectivity was top of the agenda at the Ulaanbaatar ASEM summit in July 2016, with leaders underlining that "enhancing connectivity across diverse domains is an important and commonly shared objective." The

"Ulaanbaatar Declaration" notes that connectivity will be mainstreamed into all ASEM cooperation frameworks and through the three pillars: political dialogue, economic and financial cooperation, socio-cultural and people-to-people connectivity.

THE WAY FORWARD: RETHINKING AND INNOVATING ASEM WHILE PRESERVING AND CONSOLIDATING WHAT WORKS.

The search to revive ASEM has been on for almost ten years, with the ASEM summit in Helsinki, Finland, in 2006 raising the issue of exploring ASEM's future possibilities. The ASEM summit in Beijing in 2008 was important in signalling EU-Asia solidarity in the face of the global economic slowdown. Efforts to revise ASEM's working methods were a priority for the Belgian government in the run-up to the ASEM summit held in Brussels in 2010. Significantly, the gathering of ASEM leaders in Vientiane, Laos, in 2012 highlighted the importance of EU-Asia cooperation on non-traditional security issues. ASEM summits have also regularly underlined the importance of combating protectionism, working together to promote sustainable development and fighting climate change. This momentum needs to be sustained and built on.

To accommodate and turn diversities into strength, there is a need to reinforce the multiple tracks of dialogue during ASEM summits, a retreat for strategic dialogue that is important for political symbolism, smaller group conversations in different constellations to catalyse further actions and a series of bilateral and trilateral meetings at the margins of the ASEM summit.

To transform ASEM to be ready for the 21st-Century world, there is a need to transform the mind-set of those involved—from one of merely managing and controlling the process to one of leading and empowering change. ASEM members need to think global but act through networks and coalitions within the ASEM framework to generate the energy and momentum to sustain itself, and deliver tangible benefits in connecting institutions, businesses and people.

KEEPING THE INFORMALITY AND LIGHT STRUCTURES OF ASEM WHILE MEETING ASPIRATIONS FOR ENHANCED ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLE OUTCOMES.

The Ulaanbaatar summit underlined the value of ASEM for "promoting informality, networking and flexibility…with a view to bringing about deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's history, culture, traditional and aspirations".

The focus on informality and light structures has worked. Although ASEM may still lag behind in terms of concrete achievements, compared to ten years ago, there appears to a real dialogue and sharing of norms and best practices on questions of common interest. Importantly, at the summit in Milan, member countries agreed to India's proposal that ASEM partners work in smaller groups or clusters on 16 "tangible cooperation areas", including disaster management, renewable energy, higher education, connectivity and information technology.

ASEM participants do not always agree on all issues but over the years, progress has been made in meeting ASEM's key goal of enhancing Asia-Europe understanding on regional and global challenges. The "socialisation" of ministers, officials, experts and others who work on ASEM continues to take place, with insiders pointing to ways in which "peer pressure" can help countries to thrash out compromises. More needs to be done, however, to turn ASEM into a real incubator of new ideas and to encourage Asia and Europe to talk to each other and try and coordinate their positions before and during international meetings.

In order to maintain ASEM's unique informality, networking and flexibility but also make it more pragmatic, effective and result-oriented—and more relevant to partners' economic and social priorities—a balance must be found between ASEM as a forum for dialogue *and* as a platform for more action-oriented cooperation in specific areas of common interest. These two goals are mutually compatible and not in competition as is often argued. Both are necessary to reinvigorate ASEM. This paper has already highlighted ASEM's contribution to a global conversation on common challenges. In addition, tangible cooperation, provided it is voluntary and variable rather than obligatory, could give the forum an additional boost.

Progress on ensuring informality and allowing for more results-oriented cooperation was made at the Milan and Ulaanbaatar summits where leaders did indeed meet in retreat format allowing for more informality and a real

conversation but where the decision was also taken to issue an indicative list of ASEM members interested in specific cooperation areas. Subjects such as disaster management, water and waste management, SME cooperation, renewable energy and energy efficiency, skills development and cooperation in higher education have been identified as having the support of several ASEM partners from both regions. This illustrates that broader interaction does not stand in the way of concrete cooperation. But, information about these projects must not be allowed to get lost in long-winded communiqués which are read only by a few persistent and avid academics and researchers.

ASEM should preserve and even upgrade its networking credentials through, for instance, an even more active effort to encourage bilateral contacts between leaders (and ministers) and even holding "minilateral summits" within the larger gathering on topics of interest to groups of states rather than the entire ASEM membership. The informal meeting of ASEAN-EU leaders which was organised on the margins of the Milan meeting was in keeping with this principle.

ASEM summits should be transformed into an "Asia-Europe Marketplace" for different exchanges, interactions and transactions among business leaders, civil society representatives, parliamentarians and others in one central arena. This would allow ASEM to be really used as an incubator of ideas, to facilitate global governance and improve Asia-Europe connectivity. At the same time, countries which want to work together would be encouraged to work in groups or clusters, within their own timelines and with their own experts—provided the process was transparent and inclusive.

To really revive ASEM's original informality, leaders and ministers should seize back some of the initiative and power from bureaucrats who have come to dominate the process and content of many Asia-Europe gatherings. This will help to ensure that ASEM is used to explore new ideas, to stimulate and facilitate progress in Asia-Europe understanding in other multilateral fora and encourage capacity-building across sectors. The experts can be brought in at a later stage to put flesh on the bones of certain ideas, turning them into potential joint projects.

While there is still no agreement on whether or not to set up an ASEM secretariat, more must be done to ensure that the forum has an effective "institutional memory" and there is efficient coordination between the different regional groups. This is essential if ASEM is to keep evolving in keeping with the changing global and Asia-Europe landscape. Understandably, the drive to

set up an ASEM Secretariat is essentially driven by Asian partners who feel the need for such an institution. Europeans, on the other hand, are generally satisfied with the current situation since the European External Action Service plays an important coordination role for European partners. Since this debate is likely to continue, another option would be to set up smaller functional sectoral ASEM "agencies" to reinforce synergies and ensure follow-up in specific areas.

One example of such cooperation is the ASEM education secretariat which encourages synergies in the areas of higher education and vocational education and training and was set up in 2009 as a body which would rotate among ASEM participating nations every two to three years. The secretariat was initially hosted by Germany and is currently in Jakarta. A similar initiative could be launched in the area of disaster management or indeed on connectivity.

THE POWER OF IDEAS

The variety of issues discussed in ASEM at different levels and with different participants is impressive. Important activities include regular meetings of ASEM Customs Directors-General and Commissioners to discuss relevant developments and priorities of customs work. There is an annual forum to strengthen links between ASEM members' immigration authorities and to permit exchanges of information and of good practices in the field of international migration. Biennial ministerial meetings bring together Asian and European ministers of finance, culture, transport and labour and employment. The Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights series was launched in 1997 to deepen relations between civil society actors and governments in Asia and Europe on human rights issues.

Other activities include regular seminars on innovative education which aim to share knowledge within ASEM on how the education sector can proactively involve children and youth in programmes promoting innovation and creativity. There is a dialogue on the municipal level between Governors and Mayors of cities in ASEM countries in Europe and Asia. ASEM experts meet to discuss nuclear safety and sustainable development and there are also regular meetings of university rectors.

Connectivity will be the theme of several ASEM activities in the coming years. In 2015 seminars were held in Riga on transport and education

connectivity, in Chongqing on industrial connectivity and in Seoul on inter-modal transport. A conference on tourism (people-to-people connectivity) was organised in Tokyo. The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) is actively engaged in promoting people-to-people networks in an array of sectors. Work on promoting ASEM-wide links in education has gained momentum since the first ASEM ministerial meeting on education in 2008. There is an ASEM education secretariat—the only ASEM structure of its kind—currently established within the Indonesian Ministry of Education in Jakarta. Meeting in Riga in April 2015, ASEM education ministers agreed to further develop their cooperation.

Participants at the meeting in Chongqing supported the establishment of the ASEM Cooperation Centre on Science, Technology and Innovation. The meeting of ASEM transport ministers in Riga underlined the importance of developing new international multimodal transport corridors that are efficient, secure and economically and environmentally sustainable as an alternative or supplement to traditional ocean routes.

While such encounters produce interesting interaction and results, it is important that the content of these meetings is put centre-stage with the focus on a limited number of key issues. ASEM should have a sharper focus on a smaller cluster of issues which allow for real exchanges of views, ideas and experience-sharing.

Below are some topics which deserve enhanced attention:

ASEM is about connecting countries, regions and people. Connectivity is therefore undoubtedly—and justifiably—the new ASEM buzzword. It should secure enhanced ASEM attention. The race to build stronger institutional, infrastructure, digital and people-to-people linkages is transforming Asia, creating new partnerships and opening up new opportunities for Asian and European businesses. At the same time, rapid advances in information and communications technology (ICT) have created tremendous opportunities for economic and social gains in the world's poorest areas. The significance of Asia-Europe connectivity—including digital connectivity—was underscored by the summit in Milan, with leaders underlining the contribution increased ties could make to economic prosperity and sustainable development and to promoting free and seamless movement of people, trade, investment, energy, information, knowledge and ideas and greater institutional linkages. The summit urged the establishment of an integrated, sustainable, secure, efficient and convenient air, maritime and land transportation system, including

intermodal solutions, in and between Asia and Europe. It also noted the use-fulness of an exchange of best practices and experiences on areas of common interest, relating for example to the governance of the EU Single Market and the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. Enhanced connectivity requires the engagement of all stakeholders, including industry and the think-tank and academic community.

Bold steps are needed in order to revitalize ASEM's long-dormant eco-nomic pillar. One option would be to finally acknowledge the elephant in the room and open exploratory talks or a scoping exercise on the pros and cons of an ASEM-wide Free Trade Area. This will of course require that ASEM eco-nomic ministers—who have not met since 2006 in Rotterdam—start meeting regularly and that there are more frequent contacts between economic experts, policymakers and business leaders from both sides. Discussions on an ASEM FTA would reflect the growing economic interdependence between Asia and Europe that has been highlighted earlier while also keeping pace with the increase in the number of so-called "mega-regional" trade agreements, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which are under negotiation. There is not much appetite for such a deal in many ASEM countries at the moment but this could change if the leitmotif for such an agreement is properly explained to businesses, parliamen-tarians and the public.

Discussions on security challenges facing both Asia and Europe take place already but need to be given more attention and priority. There is no doubt that the Asian Century is marked by an over-arching paradox. The region's vibrant economies remain in the global spotlight as the region expands and deepens its trade and investment networks. But Asia is also home to many unresolved territorial disputes, lingering historical animosities, increasingly strident nationalism and a rise in arms spending. Similarly, Europe faces a challenge in both its eastern and southern neighbourhoods. Relations with Russia remain tense following the annexation of Crimea and the destabilisa-tion of Ukraine. The so-called "ring of fire" in North Africa and parts of the Middle East has led to increased immigration into the EU as well as a rising threat of violence and terrorism. Some of these discussions already take place in ASEM and in other fora such as the ARF but they need to be more focused and in-depth. Asia-Europe cooperation on non-traditional security issues should be deepened, with a focus on experience-sharing.

Asia and Europe should talk more frequently about the shared challenge of combating terrorism and violent extremism. Issues related to minority rights and the rights of women and children would benefit from moving higher up the ASEM agenda.

In order to ensure a stronger conversation on these and other issues, ASEM participants should give serious consideration to the setting up of a "brain trust" or permanent network of think tanks and academic institutions which are working on Asia-Europe relations. Such an entity could work closely with ASEF, providing new ideas for the Foundation and for ASEM more generally.

Such a brain trust or centre should also have a strong online and social media presence to involve more interested people in the conversation. The focus should be on future trends in Asia-Europe relations, encouraging exchanges on new economic models such as circular and sharing economies, and the role and rising influence of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or micro-enterprises. The ideas developed within such a trust could be further explored and given more substance in other fora. The focus of such brainstorming events and gatherings should be strategic, with attention being paid to the added value of engaging in an Asia-Europe conversation on issues. ASEM has long been thought of as an incubator and/or laboratory of ideas. This should now become a reality.

Asia and Europe connect and engage with each other in multiple fora as well as on a bilateral level. The conversation is ever-expanding and exciting. ASEM deserves to be at the centre of these discussions, not an afterthought.

Shada Islam is Director of Policy at Friends of Europe and has special responsibility for the Asia Programme. A former Brussels correspondent for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Asia's leading news magazine, she is an experienced journalist, columnist and policy analyst and contributes regularly to European and international publications. She previously headed the Asia Programme at the European Policy Centre. A specialist in EU-Asia relations, including Asia-Europe Meetings (ASEM), Shada's views on the subject are much sought. She writes regularly on ASEM and EU-China, EU-India and EU-ASEAN relations and is a regular speaker at Asian and European conferences. She has travelled widely in the region and interviewed many top Asian and European policymakers and business leaders.

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Tangible Cooperation and Continuous Policy Dialogue in the ASEM Process

Bart Gaens and Jelena Gledic

INTRODUCTION

ASEM was destined to be an open and evolutionary process. Membership of the forum aimed to be inclusive, discussions were conducted on the basis of achieving consensus, and the topics and themes tackled by the summit and subsidiary meetings were to evolve along with the transforming global system. ASEM's core challenge therefore has always been to keep the forum relevant in times of rapid change and ambiguity, in order to ensure that the Asia-Europe partnership has an impact and offers added-value in a shifting global environment. The question as to how ASEM should evolve in order to have a stronger policy-shaping influence has therefore always been on the table, but the issue receives particular attention on the occasion of anniversaries, such as this year's celebration of two decades of inter-regional relations between Asia and Europe.

This chapter aims to contribute to the general debate on ASEM's working methods. The eleventh ASEM summit held in Ulanbaatar on 15 and 16 July 2016 again emphasized the need to rethink working methods and coordination within the forum, continuing a process that was initiated at the ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi in November 2013. The particular focus of this chapter is on how ASEM, at a very practical level, can facilitate continuous policy discussion and promote tangible and result-oriented activities to feed into the summits. The chapter argues that this can be achieved by increasing transparency and agility, and by making the most of available solutions.

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1. CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

It is clear that during its twenty years of existence, ASEM has evolved substantially. Since 1996 ASEM has expanded significantly in terms of membership, from 26 to 53 partners, with a vast geographical diversity. It now comprises 2 institutional entities (the EU and the ASEAN Secretariat), 28 EU member states, 2 other European countries, as well as 10 Southeast Asian, 4 Northeast Asian, 3 South Asian, and 2 Australasian states, in addition to 1 Central Asian, and 1 Eurasian state. For many policymakers the continuing applications for membership are a sign of success, as they show that there is a demand for the role ASEM can play as a platform for inter-regional relations (Gaens 2015). Expansion is furthermore a sign that ASEM has evolved together with important changes in the global environment. These include for example the emergence of new global players, and the shift from region-to-region relations to more diffuse transregional interaction.

Also, in terms of topical approach, ASEM has clearly evolved. While ASEM initially had a strong trade and economy focus, since the Asian Financial Crisis (1997-8) and the ensuing end of the so-called East Asian economic miracle, and in particular since the 9/11 attacks and the war in Iraq, the security agenda has taken on a much stronger position in the Europe-Asia dialogue. Clearly the awareness has grown that, as a result of globalization, the global security agenda is increasingly determined by "new", "soft" or "non-traditional" security challenges, including migration, transnational crime, illicit trafficking, climate change and environmental degradation, disaster management, and infectious diseases. This has resulted in the discussion of topics that are multidimensional in nature, exceeding the narrow confines of the initial three pillars representing the political, economic, and social/cultural fields.

At the same time, however, ASEM has remained remarkably stable and constant. Few changes have taken place in working methods and overall set-up. Importantly, the forum still faces the same challenges and shortcomings. ASEM is criticized for being little more than a talking shop, with discussions that do not lead to any tangible outcomes. The forum is lacking in visibility and public awareness, and its track record and work in progress are not easily quantifiable or obvious. Projects and initiatives lack ownership and a common denominator. In addition, the paucity of continuous policy dialogue forms a salient challenge, together with a less-than-perfect institutional memory, not only at the official, governmental level but also within the different stakeholder

groups. As stated in the Chair's Statement issued at the Milan Summit in 2014, "the informal nature of ASEM has allowed it to be responsive to the fast-changing global environment" (ASEM 2014). Nevertheless, the criticism that ASEM has not adapted itself enough, and, in the course of twenty years, has perpetuated the same challenges, should not be dismissed.

2. CHALLENGES AND COUNTER-MEASURES

ASEM has attempted to deal with the stated institutional shortcomings on several levels. However, in general, examples show that the implementation of the relatively minor reforms has been rather uneven. Firstly, during most of ASEM's existence numerous calls have been launched to strengthen institutional coordination mechanisms. The growth of the partnership and the proliferation of meetings and initiatives increase the need for effective and smooth coordination, adequate administrative support, and functional follow-up. As early as 17 years ago, the Asia-Europe Vision Group (AEVG 1999) had proposed the creation of a "lean but effective secretariat" as a point of communication and coordination, and also as a tool to promote continuity between summits. The 2004 summit made reference to the possibility of creating a secretariat "at an appropriate time", but resistance against further institutionalization remains strong. As a form of compromise the ASEM Virtual Secretariat (AVS) was inaugurated at ASEM6 in Helsinki in 2006. However, the Virtual Secretariat ended before it had properly started, due to a duplication of certain functions of the existing ASEM Infoboard, insufficient utility of the intranet function of the AVS, and the lack of continued funding for the project.

As a second example, ASEM's search for an overarching narrative can be given. The forum's 53 partners often disagree on ASEM's main *raison d'être*. While some push for deliverables, others find informal dialogue and confidence-building more important. Indeed, since the forum's early years, there has been a tension between the emphasis on ASEM being a political process and a forum for dialogue on the one hand, and an international institution and a framework for cooperation on the other. Furthermore, whereas some countries see ASEM mainly as a platform for political dialogue and a forum for "constructive engagement", others see it more as a tool to implement an economic agenda, for example by discussing trade liberalization with a possible ASEM Free Trade Agreement as a long-term objective in mind.

ASEM's idea to implement "variable geometry" forms a third example. It was the ASEM6 summit in Helsinki (2006) that, under the banner of "issue-based leadership", launched the idea that different interests and priorities should allow for the shaping of informal functional groups of states driving forward cooperation through "coalitions". However, the implementation of this new guiding tool for cooperation was highly flawed, and characterized by relatively low commitment, little information-sharing, and uneven follow-up. India, the organizer of the eleventh ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM11), revived the idea in 2013, renaming it "tangible cooperation", after which the Milan summit in 2014 confirmed a list of groups of interested members in 16 different issue areas (ASEM 2014 annex 3). The FMM12, held in Luxemburg in 2015, upheld 19 tangible cooperation areas (ASEM 2015 annex 2). The most recent anniversary summit held in Ulanbaatar added one "agreed priority area of cooperation", namely youth cooperation, to bring the total tally to 20 areas. Each area now comprises between two and 24 participating partner countries (ASEM 2016 annex 2).[1]

In spite of this seemingly encouraging progress in forming issue-based coalitions and implementing variable geometry, the challenges remain similar to the existing ones. It is unclear to what extent these groups of countries are "tangibly" cooperating, or even to what extent they are committed to the project. It is ambiguous where ownership of the groups of clustered initiatives lies. Transparency is lacking, and there is very little information-sharing and follow-up. Tensions may also exist at the national level, between the foreign ministry's proposal for inclusion in a project, coupled with oversight responsibilities, on the one hand, and the so-called line ministry in charge of implementation on the other.

To summarize, one of ASEM's greatest challenges, therefore, seems to be related to organizational management. A continuous workflow carried out by self-organizing and self-coordinating teams working on specific projects under a unified, guiding vision could help ASEM in resolving these issues. It will be shown in the following sections how such an approach can enhance transparency, information-sharing, and the implementation of collaboration initiatives, while at the same time enabling ASEM to adapt to change and improve on a constant basis.

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[1] "Disaster management and mitigation" has 24 participating partners, but only two countries each are the driving force behind "Technologies for diagnostics" and "Youth cooperation".

3. DIALOGUE AND DELIVERABLES

This chapter argues that, in order to facilitate continuous policy discussion feeding into the summits, ASEM can benefit from a threefold approach relating to the *why*, the *what*, and the *how* of this Asia-Europe institution. Specifically, with a clear overarching aim, applying available, tried-and-tested solutions to make practical changes in working methods can significantly enhance the outcomes of focused initiatives, as shown below.

The *why* is related to ASEM's vision, an essential tool for making changes in organizational management vis-à-vis organizational culture. ASEM needs to refine its vision and prime objectives by creating narratives that can establish credibility and generate creativity. In view of the recent extensive enlargement process, it seems clear that ASEM as a platform can promote connectivity as the core of such a new narrative. As highlighted by the FMM12, connectivity should be mainstreamed into all relevant ASEM cooperation frameworks, as it closely relates to integration, economic growth and trade, but is also linked to sustainable development, energy, knowledge, institutional linkages and people-to-people exchanges (ASEM 2015). It can therefore be applied to political connectivity (political and diplomatic linkages); physical connectivity and hard infrastructure (transport by air, road, rail or sea); institutional connectivity and soft infrastructure (customs integration, liberalization of trade and services); technological connectivity (technology and innovation); digital connectivity (digital links between networks and institutions); and people-to-people connectivity (tourism, education, culture, exchanges between think tanks and research communities). The Ulanbaatar Summit confirmed the decision to mainstream connectivity in all its dimensions into all relevant ASEM activities (ASEM 2016).

Building on this foundation, tried-and-trusted changes in work management can be promoted to facilitate the implementation of specific initiatives in areas that have shown potential for successful cooperation. When it comes to the *what* and the *how*, ASEM does not need to reinvent the wheel, but instead should focus on what can be done with the experience and solutions at hand. The cooperation areas can be determined based on ASEM's work thus far. The work methodology, on the other hand, can also build on the existing work methods, but by enhancing them to create an organizational culture that is more responsive and adaptable to change. The following section examines in more detail potential solutions and issue areas where ASEM could pilot the suggested changes in work management.

4. CLARITY IN COOPERATION

In order to ensure tangible cooperation and continuous dialogue that feeds into the summits, in the coming period ASEM should promote initiatives that have a clear mandate, focus, and are supported by mechanisms for co-ordination, monitoring of progress, reporting, and evaluation. At the same time, ASEM should focus on specific issue areas where a difference can be made, linked with the agenda of the summit. Here action-planning dialogues between all stakeholders for concrete issue-based collaboration play a central role, and—as mentioned above—the idea of issue-based leadership has made a comeback in recent years. At the same time, issue-based work management and cross-functional collaboration is a key element in the foundation of agile, lean, and just-in-time approaches (see Nikolic and Gledic 2013) that have revolutionized productivity and quality assurance in areas ranging from manufacturing, through software development, to education.

ASEM's work scope and structure are particularly fitting for applying the stated changes in organizational culture. The current work methods already call for informal and interactive meetings, focused agendas, clustered activities, coordinated follow-up, and public outreach—all pillars of management responsive to change and development. At the same time, ASEM's intricate structure is expected to function in a relatively predictable way—fully in line with the concept of "agility" attributed to work organizations faced with similar challenges.

Agile arose as a response to the need to do more with less in a constantly evolving environment. Rather than focus on an ideal outcome that may never be realized, self-organized cross-functional teams work on values that are delivered iteratively, with full transparency of the work process. Agile methodologies can enable the high performance of geographically distributed, international teams through structured networking and co-operation, precisely the way ASEM can implement collaboration. In order to facilitate effective action-planning dialogue and project implementation to feed into the summits, several specific methods for work process coordination and visualization are suggested, followed by examples of specific challenges onto which they can be applied.

4.1 COORDINATED CHANGE

There are various methods that are collectively known as Agile. Although originally designed for software development, they are increasingly used in other fields, combined with lean (no superfluous processes) and just-in-time (based on specific needs, not just-in-case) approaches to work management. In line with their popularity, there is a plethora of free, online solutions for coordinating cooperation and work process visualization. While ASEM's initiative for an AVS may have proved to be superfluous, inert, and costly, using an online collaboration tool for specific projects could be a welcome innovation—a sort of pop-up online office for specific issues with no set-up costs.

In line with ASEM's work methods and practice, the stated work management changes could be implemented once an area is deemed to have potential for fruitful collaboration. Issue-based face-to-face meetings could be organized with working groups to create specific tasks and steps in line with the given challenge. In addition to existing interactive work methods, facilitators for team work could be invited to help in creating agendas on the spot based on the priorities of those present at the given meeting. After the discussion, a necessary step would be creating an action plan and transferring it into doable tasks outlined in the online office. The created action plan would include specific, practical steps such as funding, choice of participants, organizational details for an event etc.

For creating the online action plan, there are many work process visualization tools that can be used, many of which are based on the Kanban system. Kanban is a scheduling tool related to lean and just-in-time production. Devised by Toyota in the 1950s, it uses cards to visualize the workflow, which is split into tasks usually divided into three lanes—"to do", "doing", and "done". The action plan created on a Kanban system following a face-to-face meeting enables delegating tasks and defining outcomes which can be followed up online at one's own pace. This is especially significant for ASEM due to the stated struggle to deal with the challenges of the tensions of authority when it comes to project implementation. Another added value of online work process visualization is the fact that it facilitates information sharing and work transparency. Those newly assigned to a certain project can be given credentials to access the online platform, enabling them to individually gain an instant overview of the work done and all the detailed information, without the need for cumbersome briefing processes. As for work transparency, the processes can be monitored discretely and in real time, thus facilitating timely

problem detection and resolution. Kanban offers a clear visualization of the project—what needs to be done, what is being done, and what has been done: DO-DOING-DONE. It is, at the same time, an insight into the current work process and an archive of what has been planned and done. Finally, as stated, there are many free software solutions that offer this type of work management, with guaranteed data security and privacy.

4.2 Delineated deliverables

The proposed change in work management to facilitate continuous policy dialogue can be implemented in several areas where ASEM's approach shows potential for efficient collaborations. Under the banner of connectivity—outlined above as the suggested overarching narrative—ASEM could tackle issues related to the Arctic development agenda, and specific projects in this area could be implemented using the suggested adaptable work methodology. ASEM includes Nordic EU countries as well as Norway, and numerous Asian ASEM countries are turning their attention to the region. Japan, China and South Korea for example, in April 2016 held their first-ever trilateral meeting on arctic policies, and increasingly look to the Arctic for its natural resources as well as potential new shipping routes. Making full use of its informal approach and mission to complement rather than duplicate work carried out in other multilateral fora, ASEM could promote relevant projects in this area in order to contribute to ongoing work in the Arctic Council. For example, ASEM members can use the forum to rally support for and achieve a common standpoint on ways to protect vulnerable communities in the Arctic region, or to tackle the ecological impact of the development of the new Arctic shipping routes, resulting in a study on best practices or a set of non-binding recommendations.

Customs cooperation is another issue area also linked to the connectivity idea in which ASEM's work thus far has proven beneficial. Joint international customs operations have already achieved tangible outcomes. In 2007, 2009 and 2014, Member States of ASEM and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) collaborated with Interpol, Europol and the World Customs Organization (WCO) in large-scale operations to counter the smuggling of excise goods such as tobacco and alcohol. The success of these operations clearly shows that informal dialogue can be complemented by cooperation on the ground in tackling issues such as transnational organized crime. Furthermore, because ASEM can bring together private sector players,

issue-specific specialists as well as official enforcement channels in an informal setting, it is a highly useful platform to discuss procedures, standards and norms in customs cooperation, without duplicating the work of the respective trade ministries or agencies (Werly 2015). An agreement on planning and developing border security could be a concrete deliverable, implemented using the suggested methods.

A third, and especially fitting, example is cooperation between Small and Medium-Sized enterprises (SMEs). Firstly, it ties in with the summit-level discussions on the promotion of financial and economic cooperation between Asia and Europe. At the Milan summit for example, "[l]eaders underlined the role of the private sector, and in particular the pivotal role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), in contributing to sustainable economic growth and decent job creation, while consolidating existing partnerships and forging new paths of economic cooperation to meet today's challenges" (ASEM 2014). The Ulanbaatar summit furthermore stressed the importance of implementing targeted policy measures in support of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), including through the promotion of business start-up support services and financing (ASEM 2016). Secondly, SME cooperation is strongly linked to connectivity, which is set to become ASEM's trademark, and has strong relevance for trade, investment, and tourism, for example. Thirdly, it is cross-dimensional, as it relates to social and economic challenges, including working conditions, women's rights, and youth employment, as well as to ecology, as evidenced by the ASEM SMEs Eco-Innovation Center (ASEIC), established in Seoul in 2011. And fourthly, it brings in the activities of the business community, through the Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF). The 15th AEBF gathering on 13-14 July 2016 in Mongolia, for example, included one session dedicated to the integration of SMEs into global value chains.

Using the suggested work methodology, ASEM could organize an Asia-Europe start-up event to exchange ideas, facilitate collaboration, engage youth, promote multicultural dialogue, and encourage entrepreneurship and SMEs. Importantly, SME cooperation already constitutes an official ASEM tangible cooperation area, with 7 European and 12 Asian participating ASEM partners (ASEM 2016 Annex 2). This group of countries could cooperate both in facilitating action-planning *dialogue* on entrepreneurship and SMEs, and in creating a *tangible outcome,* for example in the shape of a "Asia-Europe start-up event" bringing together young innovative startups, capital investors and media. Such an event could be organized precisely through piloting the stated work management innovations.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined how ASEM can address challenges related to working methods in order to promote continuous policy discussion and tangible and result-oriented activities. In particular the chapter has proposed a threefold approach. First, ASEM should refine its vision with connectivity at the core. A clear, overarching aim can significantly enhance the outcomes of focused initiatives. Second, in line with the principle of issue-based leadership, also known as tangible cooperation, ASEM should promote a constant workflow carried out by self-organizing and self-coordinating clusters of countries working on specific projects. Methods that are collectively known as Agile provide ASEM with the tools to be adaptable to change, avoid superfluous processes, and focus on specific needs. These management tools help the forum to overcome challenges related to mechanisms for coordination, monitoring of progress, and transparency in workflow and communication, reporting and evaluation. Third, ASEM should focus on issue-based cooperation in fields where the forum can make a difference. Issues related to the broader Arctic Development Agenda, or cooperation in the fields of customs or Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, are areas where action-planning dialogue as well as projects on the ground can yield results. ASEM is well placed to tackle these issues because of its informal and non-binding approach; because of the tie-in with the highest (summit and ministerial) level; and because the involvement of different stakeholders including state players, businesspeople, civil society, and media allows for the formation of informal, multi-stakeholder working groups.

Relatively minor changes in organizational management can contribute to turning ASEM into "A Swinging, Eclectic Marketplace (Asem)" (Yeo 2014) of ideas, initiatives and projects geared towards connectivity. Not least importantly, streamlining tangible cooperative projects to complement continuous policy dialogue feeding into the summits can help ASEM to remain relevant in a shifting global environment.

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Sub-Regional Clusters – ASEM as a Tool to Foster Sub-Regional Integration

Ummu Salma Bava

Asia and Europe's engagements have both old and new aspects that go beyond the historical and are growingly being embedded in new patterns of engagement. The end of the Cold War in 1990 opened up possibilities for re-envisioning the engagement between the two large continents and in this context the launch of ASEM in 1996 displayed the beginning of a new bridging venture led by renewed political impulses. ASEM was launched to help raise awareness between the two regions, coordinate multilateral policies where possible, generate initiatives, open up opportunities for trade and investment and promote the development of civil society networks (ASEM website). The last two decades have provided ample opportunities to expand the level of interaction between Asia and Europe and also build trust into this partnership, a key element for converting ideas into deliverable public goods. This short article explores the idea of how ASEM can build on sub-regional clusters as a way forward in promoting sub-regional integration in its third decade.

TWO DECADES OF BRIDGING ASIA AND EUROPE THROUGH ASEM

Post-Cold War Europe witnessed the most dramatic consequences of the end of the geopolitical divide. The unification of Germany and the implosion of the Soviet Union led to the transformation of regional integration in Europe, leading to the creation of the European Union (EU) in 1992 and the subsequent enlargement which brought in new Members from Central and Eastern Europe. Europe witnessed a post-modern turn in politics with further pooling of sovereignty in Brussels and the efforts to create a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In contrast Asia witnessed the rise of new economic actors in the Asian Tigers and the re-emergence of two power houses—China

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and India. Unlike the European experience at regional integration, Asia has displayed an informal approach with varying degrees of success. Thus, the launch of ASEM in 1996 created a unique platform for the exchange of ideas across politics, economics and cultures encompassing people-to-people interactions between the two regions.

The ASEM process was envisioned to launch the relations between Asia and Europe on a different podium. The main characteristics of the ASEM process include that it promotes an informal process of dialogue and cooperation, based on informality, multi-dimensionality, equal partnership and enhancement of mutual understanding. Like the intertwined Olympic rings, the three pillars of ASEM also reflect this intertwining between the political, economic and cultural domains that sought to link the two regions through informal mechanisms. With 53 members, the ASEM dialogue platform has been instrumental in addressing political, economic and socio-cultural issues to strengthen Asia-Europe connections in mutual respect and equal partnership. The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), established in 1997, is the only institution under the ASEM framework (http://www.mea.gov.in/aseanindia/about-asem.htm). Over the last twenty years, ASEM has sought to bring together governments and civil society members through an informal political dialogue process and also enhance economic and cultural cooperation.

Within the ASEM framework, ASEAN and EU have become significant drivers for the ASEM meeting. As an interregional forum of two regions, what stands out is that Asia and Europe adopted different approaches towards regional integration that reflected their respective political histories and value preferences in community building. Europe has seen the evolution of the postmodern "pooling of sovereignty"-led cooperation that began in the ashes of the Second World War with the European Coal and Steel Community and went from functional cooperation in economic activity to enhanced economic cooperation through the European Economic Community. The ultimate testament to this regional integration was the incremental institutionalisation and building of extensive rules and regulations to conduct political, economic, and social and, in the last twenty-five years, common foreign and security policy through the European Union. The Asian region, in contrast to Europe, especially Southeast Asia, took steps toward regional integration in the 1960s with the launch of ASEAN but has been reluctant to build similar formal structures and has stayed away from institutionalisation, preferring to let trust-building among members lead to the "ASEAN way" (which emphasises

total consensus among all members) of doing business. Different historical trajectories have shaped their respective collective identities and this has also had a marked impact on the process of regional integration, identity building and community formation both in Europe and in Southeast Asia. Two different cultures of engagement have thus come together on the platform of ASEM and the outcome has been that in the inter-regional engagement, the informal has gained precedence as the cooperation cultures are different (See Fitrani in Telo, Fawcett and Ponjaert 2015).

FROM A PLATFORM OF IDEAS TO A PLATFORM OF DELIVERY

When ASEM was launched in 1996 at the behest of France and Singapore, the respective regions displayed a growing economic impulse that pushed for such a connection that could bring new synergies to both sides. Growth in members shows the changing power equations and why the bridging is even more necessary in a globalised world. However, twenty five years after the end of the Cold War that galvanised both continents, the marketplace for ideas has many more competitors and platforms and ASEM is faced with tough competition to find relevance. ASEM's informal setting has facilitated more interaction but this has also led to shallow cooperation. The absence of an institutional apparatus except for the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF) has in many ways facilitated free and frank understanding between both sides. However, that very asset is seen as being counterproductive if it does not take the interaction between Asia and Europe beyond the realm of ideas. A quick survey of Southeast Asia reveals how perception and outcome is being shaped by the Shanghai Cooperation Council and the East Asia Summit. Asia's growing geopolitical significance received further confirmation about five years back when the United States also endorsed its new foreign policy approach to the region through its "pivot to Asia" strategy first articulated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2011. The American "pivot" is a much more geostrategic political, economic and security engagement, particularly in Southeast Asia, and indicated concerns about a rising China. Undoubtedly, the US policy to "pivot to Asia' signalled the growing strategic significance of the region. Amidst this backdrop, ASEM's strength lies in the fact that it is not a recent development of geostrategic repositioning against a particular country but has already established a broad-based platform for the exchange of ideas.

Second, it has a component of civil society engagement that is lacking in other formats and consequently, according to Reiterer (2016), ahead of its time in seeking to be a forum where all stakeholders would be able to participate. The 2000 Summit Meeting at Seoul was a "historic milestone in the evolution of the ASEM process and provided an opportunity to review progress and achievements so far and to consolidate this foundation for a comprehensive and sustained cooperation between the two regions" (ASEF website). The ASEM meeting gave further direction to this engagement by adopting the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework by identifying political, economic and civil society priorities and indicating the mechanisms for coordinating, focusing and managing ASEM activities. In the absence of formal institutions to chart the course of action, the 2000 Summit created a system by identifying Foreign ministers, Economic and Finance ministers and senior officials as key instruments in taking forward the cooperation and dialogue.

Consequent upon the 2000 Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework, three forums for enhanced interaction were launched, namely, (i) Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP)—to promote cooperation between parliaments in Europe and Asia and to offer parliamentarians an opportunity to influence the ASEM process; (ii) Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF)—it provides for meetings of business leaders from Asia and Europe, and was created by the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) to strengthen economic cooperation between the business sectors of the two regions; and (iii) Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF)—an inter-regional network of civil society and social movements across Asia and Europe (ASEF website). These initiatives reflected that the three pillars of ASEM were comprehensively covered so as to create a larger scope for exchange of ideas and intensification of engagement.

A critical aspect of ASEM engagement has been that it has endorsed multilateralism and rules-based order. Emphasising that this was a partnership of equals undercut the past historical colonial relations in some instances, but also drew attention to the shift in the post-Cold War period to the launch of new initiatives that sought to create novel means of engagement and, in the case of Asia and Europe, it sought to link together two very different regions across political, economic and cultural equations through dialogue on a new platform—the ASEM. A perusal of documents and statements by ASEM leaders conveys the impression that a deliverable outcome beyond dialogue was not envisaged, and this has in many ways hindered the ASEM from truly emerging as a significant platform of interregional cooperation.

While the rise of the Asian Tigers signalled the slow realignment of global economic flows, the rise of China had a geostrategic significance for and beyond Southeast Asia that indicated not only the emphatic rise of a global economic player, but a political actor who, while engaging the world, was asserting its own rules in the region but also appearing as a significant security actor. Seen from this perspective, the two decades of ASEM seemed to have missed an opportunity to tune to these geostrategic indicators. This begs the question as to whether including the security component in the dialogue would have resulted in a different outcome.

No clear answers emerge to such a line of enquiry, but a few observations help draw some conclusions on this major aspect dealing with security. First, Europe is not a major security player in Southeast Asia like the United States and although the EU took part in the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) in Indonesia along with ASEAN members and Norway and Switzerland from 2005 till 2012, it did not create a different image about the EU as a security actor. The EU has conducted both civilian and military missions. Till date it has concluded 19 missions and has 17 ongoing civil and military missions that underscore the incrementally changing profile and evolution of the Union as a security actor.

Despite these civil and military missions there are many points that lead to the continued perception about the EU not being a security actor in Southeast Asia. The prime reason is that Southeast Asian states are still focussed on traditional security and borders. Although diverse non-traditional threats have also impacted many ASEAN countries and the EU has envisioned itself as a global security actor since the launch of its 2003 European Security Strategy, the Union has a very limited footprint in the region. The nuclear militarisation of North Korea, the rising political, economic and military power of China and the classic balance of power played out vis-à-vis the United States leaves very little room for the EU to be active in terms of the traditional security discourse.

However, in the field of non-traditional security threats, the potential for cooperation is immense. Yeo Lay Hwee (2010) succinctly puts forth the argument that the EU can and already has reached out to ASEAN, especially in the area of non-traditional security threats, and that the scope for joint actions can change the discourse and perception on both sides.

Given the boldness of vision in creating such a platform of inter-regional engagement 20 years back, it is important that ASEM moves forward from

being a platform for exchanging ideas and dialogue to becoming a platform for delivery. The major achievement for ASEM in the last two decades was to provide a platform for the joint development of future public policy, exchanging of experiences and sharing of knowledge (ASEF website). However, as many analysts point out, ASEM was unable to convert these ideas into visibility and more importantly into deliverable public goods. ASEM summit meetings were bypassed by many European leaders, and in the absence of institutional arrangements, outcomes were reduced to declaratory statements and low visibility and brand recall among people. This near invisibility of ASEM, partly due to its style of functioning and the simultaneous rise of other platforms, meant that in the last two decades it was unable to realise its full potential and be a game changer.

On the occasion of ASEM completing 20 years since its launch in 1996, it is a good moment to reflect on the journey ahead and see how cooperation between Asia and Europe can be strengthened in the face of new opportunities and challenges. The third decade of ASEM is a critical point to reflect and map a future course of action that seeks to renew the vision of connectivity between Asia and Europe, enhance the ability to address common concerns and address how both Asia and Europe can better contribute to global public goods. In the face of globalisation, a forum such as ASEM can serve to contribute to the discourse on cooperation and global and regional public goods and significantly evolve common strategies to address diverse issues in different regions. One major exercise for Asia and Europe at this juncture is to consolidate the relationship of the last twenty years and innovate for the decade ahead.

SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION AND THE HONEYCOMB NETWORK

Twenty years of iterative interaction between Asia and Europe within the ASEM framework has provided a strong base on which to take forward this cooperation to address the challenges emanating from the growing turbulence in world politics today. Growing forces of globalisation have not only undermined state sovereignty but also weakened state capabilities to respond to the newer threats, which are increasingly non-traditional in nature.

In order to move the tempo of the engagement between Asia and Europe from a platform of ideas to a platform of delivery and give direction to enhanced cooperation, the issue areas for envisioning a new partnership

exist within the ASEM framework and are enumerated in the outcomes of different meetings and summit-level engagements. Here the most significant issues identified by ASEM emerged at the 11th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEM FMM11) in 2013, wherein 12 areas for tangible cooperation amongst ASEM members were identified. With the addition of 4 more areas subsequently at the 10th ASEM Summit and 3 more areas at the ASEM FMM12, there are today 19 identified areas of tangible cooperation (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India website).

It may also be noted here that the FMM marked the beginning of a new orientation for future ASEM meetings, as members agreed that the dynamism of ASEM should find expression in tangible result-oriented initiatives which could be utilized to define joint responses by Asia and Europe to global and regional challenges and also seize opportunities for growth and development (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India website).

The issue areas identified seek to do three things, namely, (i) promote new cooperation, (ii) specify concrete issues and (iii) have a specific time line for deliverables. In other words looking at the list, one can discern an action-oriented approach to cooperation among ASEM members. The 19 areas identified for tangible cooperation are: (i) Disaster Management and Mitigation, Building Rescue and Relief Capacities, Technologies and Innovation in Rescue Equipments & Techniques, (ii) Efficient and Sustainable Water Management, Innovations in Water & Waste Management, (iii) SME Cooperation, (iv) Renewable Energy: mitigation, adaptation, financing and technological innovations, (v) Energy Efficiency Technologies, (vi) Higher Education, (vii) Vocational Training & Skills Development, (viii) Food Safety Issues, including training of Farmers, (ix) Education and Human Resources Development, (x) Waste Management: More efficient use of material resources, the waste sector as a central player in the economy with waste to energy and more efficient reuse and recycling models, (xi) Promote Trade and Investment/Involve Private Sectors, (xii) Poverty Reduction, (xiii) Promotion and protection of human rights, (xiv) Information Technology/Knowledge Connectivity, (xv) Transport and Logistics, (xvi) Technologies for Diagnostics, (xvii) Promotion of tourism, (xviii) Women's empowerment and (xix) Nuclear Safety.

I have indicated that the way forward to building this new cooperation is through a model of "Honeycomb Network". Like the honeycomb of the bees, the model envisages that sub-regional clusters be built for each of the 19 issues of tangible cooperation that cover the three pillars of ASEM, spanning the geo-political, geo-economic and geo-cultural interface between Asia and

Europe. Drawing upon expertise on both sides and geographically address-ing the issue areas would provide tangible results. What the model effectively proposes is that each issue is located in one of the cells, which is connected to the next cell, thereby creating a network of cells. One can expand such a network of honeycomb cells across sub-regional cooperation, thereby bringing about holistic development at this level.

Figure 1: Honeycomb Network Model
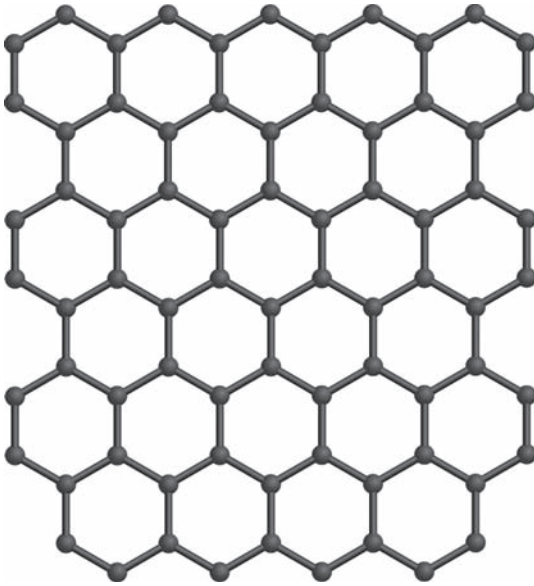
The overarching ASEM framework would serve as a catalyst to push for cooperation since it addresses the issue in an interconnected manner while the actual deliverable would be visible at the sub-regional level. This will also lead to new engagements and renew the entire partnership. This also requires turning the regions to a new vision while still conforming to multilateral rules of engagement and reinforcing multilateralism and inclusive rules-based order and a partnership of equals which is values-based.

A second component of the Honeycomb Network model is to bring in a model of Public Private Partnership (PPP) that implements programmes across the 19 areas of tangible cooperation. A key theme identified for the current ASEM summit is connectivity. In the context of the renewed partnership and the 19 areas of tangible cooperation, connectivity is about linking the sub-regional groups to each other and to the region and linking the region to the

global such that the addressing of the 19 areas of tangible cooperation results in the creation of regional and global public goods. Capacity building across all the identified areas of cooperation has the potential to bring about lasting change in Asian countries. Addressing the new challenges requires enhanced cooperation but imagined in a new deliverable way. Given that the scope of the problem is not the same across the countries in ASEM, sub-regional cooperation is the key to taking forward the cooperation.

Such an approach also calls for re-examining the three pillars of ASEM such that there is connectivity across the three pillars as well. As the Chair's Statement of the Tenth Asia-Europe Meeting Milan, 16-17 October 2014, summarised, "addressing global matters in an inter-connected world is the crux to taking forward the ASEM process". In addition, both Europe and Asia need to re-envision their engagement with each other.

CONCLUSION

"ASEM represents around 62.3 percent of the world's population, 7.2 percent of the global GDP and almost 60 percent of the world's trade. Endorsement from the highest level has to percolate down to bring real time change in the lives of ordinary people especially in Asia where implementing the SDG are of vital importance to the quality of life and everyday living" (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India Website).

Sub-regional clusters of cooperation across the 19 issues will link ASEM horizontally and vertically, bringing the benefits of connectivity. Not only will the Silk Road network expand, it will simultaneously spur digital connectivity. Security has become indivisible, impacting both the internal and external dimensions of any state. Against the backdrop of growing non-state actors that can inflict terror at their choice, a greater networked system of intelligence collection and sharing, along with securing the cyberspace, will assume even more significance across ASEM countries.

As ASEM takes steps into the third decade of its existence, it will be called upon to shoulder more responsibilities. The changing contours of global politics, the rise of non-traditional threats to security and non-state actors, and the growing interconnectedness of political, economic, security and social problems require ASEM to re-envision the platform that was launched 20 years back. Infusing action and vitality in creating deliverable regional and global public goods will be the key to strengthening the engagement between the political, economic and cultural pillars and the political leaders have to

guide ASEM to realise its potential. ASEM will have to connect more internally, become more visible externally, find connectivity to other regions, and address issues of global governance.

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Asia Cooperation: Quiet Diplomacy and Conflict Mediation – A European Perspective

Michael Reiterer

While "quiet diplomacy"[1] is a form of discrete and confidential diplomacy often used to promote human rights behind closed doors, "to bring objections and matters of concern to the offending party without risk of wide spread controversy or public outcry"[2], conflict mediation and crisis management are part of the holistic approach of the EU foreign policy in general and with regard to security matters in particular.

This approach foresees involvement in all phases of the crisis cycle—from preventive strategies to post-crisis rehabilitation and reconstruction. To this end the EU manages substantial resources devoted to countries in political crisis through its country programmes and the Instrument for Stability. This approach was confirmed by the new Global Strategy, which foresees "a multi-phased approach, acting at all stages of the conflict cycle...prevention, resolution and stabilisation"[3].

However, a comprehensive foreign policy is not limited to crisis management as the 3Ds (diplomacy, development, defence) demonstrate. The 2014 EU Maritime Security Strategy[4] is the incarnation of this integrated EU approach, covering various aspects, ranging from maritime environmental protection to disaster management and dispute settlement[5].

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* This paper was submitted on 29 July 2016.

[1] Katrin Kinzelbach (2015). *The EU's Human Rights Dialogue with China: Quiet Diplomacy and its Limits*. Routledge, p. 2.

[2] David Forsythe. Ibid., p. 3.

[3] "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe: A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy" (2016), p. 28, https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/about/eugs_review_web_4.pdf.

[4] http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2011205%202014%20INIT.

[5] Michael Reiterer and Thomas Henökel (2015). "Orchestrating Multilateralism: The Case of the EU-Asian Inter-regional Engagement". *Regions and Cohesion* Vol. 5, issue 3, Winter 2015, pp. 83-108.

In the case of maritime disputes there is a toolbox at hand for conflict mitigation[6], which includes measures such as

- Joint development of resources like fish, oil, and gas, including mechanisms to verify, thereby separating the sovereignty issue from economic exploitation.

- Joint fisheries agreements like those between Japan and Taiwan, and between China and Vietnam to reduce the potential for tensions.

- Establish crisis communication lines ("red telephones") to allow quick clarification of incidents to avoid escalation because of mishaps and in case of invoking an alliance defence clause. Better communication improves understanding and transparency and avoids misperceptions—knowing differences is as important as knowing commonalities.

- Trust/confidence-building measure like dialogues, seminars, and mutual visits, including military-to-military contacts leading to port calls and common exercising; People to people contacts reduce nationalism and prepare the ground for cooperation.

- Strengthening the regional architecture to provide for permanent forums for discussions of threat perceptions, negotiations, including back-channel diplomacy, and conflict mitigation, to find solutions through mediation by third parties or decisions by international arbitration or courts, to avoid a spillover of politics into economics, like in the case of rare earth, boycott of third-country products, and cancellation of participation in international/regional meetings of international institutions, through pre-established procedures of conflict management.

- Strengthen awareness for and understanding of the benefits of a rule-based system which creates stability and predictability—both were preconditions for China's re-emergence as well as for the development of the East Asian region, which was driven by export-led economies.

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[6] Michael Reiterer (2015). "The EU's position on maritime disputes". 9th Berlin Asia Security Conference 2015, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/projects/BCAS2015_Reiterer_ Michael_Web.pdf.

The new Global Strategy deals with mediation in the context of an effective migration policy (p. 30), pre-emptive peace and conflict settlement (p. 31) and UN peacekeeping (p. 40).

It is, however, worthwhile recalling that the EU already has acquired experience in concrete engagements in the Asia Pacific as it was engaged in Indonesia, in Aceh, and is trying to be helpful in the Philippines, in Mindanao.

The Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM)[7] was a civilian mission which served to monitor the implementation of various aspects of the peace agreement set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) on 15 August 2005 in Helsinki, Finland. The European Union, together with five contributing countries from ASEAN (Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines and Singapore), Norway and Switzerland, provided monitors for the peace process in Aceh.

The tasks were to

- investigate and rule on complaints and alleged violations of the MoU;

- establish and maintain liaison and good cooperation with the parties.

Furthermore, since 2007 the European Union has promoted and supported the conclusion of a politically negotiated settlement of the conflict in Southern Mindanao. In March 2014 the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Since then, the EU supports the Parties in completing, implementing and monitoring the Agreement.

"Mediation" is one of the areas which was identified in the 2015 "Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council—The EU and ASEAN: a partnership with a strategic purpose"[8] as a field of cooperation between ASEAN and EU in order to meet common threats. The EU co-organised the ARF Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation training in Yogyakarta[9] (November 2015) and will co-organise another version with Myanmar in 2017.

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[7] http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/csdp/missions-and-operations/aceh-amm/index_en.htm.

[8] p. 13, http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9025-2015-INIT/en/pdf.

[9] "Joint Statement between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission on the Asia-Pacific", Djakarta, 8 April 2016, http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2016/160408_03_en.htm.

Given the growing tensions and the EU's security interest in the South China Sea[10], the series of EU-ASEAN dialogues, such as the 3rd High Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation co-hosted by Thailand and the EU on 15-16 September 2016 in Bangkok[11], are important elements of quiet diplomacy.

The EU co-sponsored the Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) to promote dialogue between all those concerned with Myanmar's ethnic peace processes; this facilitates the country's transition to democracy and forms a continuous contribution to conflict mediation[12].

The most recent example of mediation is the EU's mediation which led to the conclusion of a nuclear deal with Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).[13] The Declaration on the 9th Asia Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting[14] (Ulaanbaatar, April 21-22, 2016) appreciated these efforts for two reasons: first and foremost, this was a successful operation, and second, it might have a bearing on another conflict in the region, the Korean Peninsula, i.e., the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and its potential denuclearisation. Some of the lessons learnt are:

- During negotiations the EU acted as the facilitator and co-ordinator of the negotiations, assuming the role of coordinating E3+3 positions and leading discussions with Iran;

- The JCPOA is a historic achievement strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. It aims to redirect the Iranian nuclear programme through strict limitations in the most sensitive nuclear

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[10]   "Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the Award rendered in the Arbitration between the Republic of the Philippines and the People's Republic of China", 15 July 2016, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/07/15-south-china-sea-arbitration/; "Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Recent Developments in the South China Sea", 11 March 2016, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/11-hr-declaration-on-bealf-of-eu-recent-developments-south-china-sea/.

[11]   "Joint Communiqué of the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting", Vientiane, 24 July 2016, para. 119, http://asean.org/storage/2016/07/Joint-Communique-of-the-49th-AMM-ADOPTED.pdf.

[12]   http://www.mmpeacemonitor.org/stakeholders/myanmar-peace-center; see also Guy Banim (2014). "The EU in Myanmar: Preventive diplomacy in action?", European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), Brief October 2014, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_29_Burma.pdf.

[13]   http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/jcpoa/.

[14]   Para 19, http://www.aseminfoboard.org/sites/default/files/documents/Declaration.pdf.

activities as well as to promote civilian co-operation in the nuclear field. In exchange, the unilateral and multilateral sanctions are progressively terminated;

- In the context of the implementation of the JCPOA, the EU is acting as coordinator of the Joint Commission, which is overseeing implementation, as well as facilitator for the Procurement Working Group monitoring the transfer of sensitive dual-use goods;

- The conclusion of JCPOA is a success of multilateral nuclear diplomacy. This diplomacy was based on a dual-track approach, e.g., sanctions and incentives. First, sanctions were a necessary tool to bring Iran back to the negotiating table; second, the incentive package, including in the nuclear area, was crucial to get all players on board and in particular the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran;

- JCPOA was possible because of many carefully elaborated compromises within E3+3 and with Iran. All stakeholders had to carefully calibrate approaches in diplomacy as well as be innovative in technical areas.

CHALLENGES FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

- Robust monitoring and verification provisions are important: JCPOA contains very detailed modalities for International Atomic Energy Agency(IAEA) monitoring, drawing on the use of modern technologies as well as access to sites;

- IAEA will need political, financial and technical support over many years to ensure monitoring mission;

- Implementing Annex III will be crucial to transforming the Iranian nuclear programme into a reasonable civilian programme. This is the only way to create trust and confidence in the international community that the Iranian nuclear programme is peaceful in nature. In this context it is important to absorb Iranian nuclear-related human resources as well as the relevant industrial capacity into benign and overall coherent civilian nuclear activities;

- Restrictions on nuclear activities are limited in time and will be phased out over ten to fifteen years. This transition period will have to be used to sustainably transform the programme into a civilian nuclear programme in line with other countries having emerging civilian nuclear energy programmes, i.e., less focus on nuclear fuel cycle activities.

On the Korean Peninsula the Iran agreement met with great interest, although opinions as to whether this could serve as a source of inspiration for reaching an agreement with the DPRK vary widely[15].

COMPARISON WITH DPRK

- In the Iranian context, the combination of incentives and sanctions has in the end allowed the parties to achieve a solid result. Concerning DPRK, the effect of sanctions is more questionable since obviously the Iranian economy is very dependent on oil exports. The situation in DPRK is quite different, as there is neither an export-oriented economy nor, more generally and important, a desire to open up and become engaged in and with the international society or at least its neighbours;

- On the other hand, efforts to work on a solution to the DPRK nuclear issue have been ongoing for more than two decades and some basis for technical solutions have been developed. We only need to recall the time the EU participated in the Korean Energy Development Organisation (KEDO), which still exists as a legal shell.

- Technical contacts and discussions can be a good starting point for the development of compromises once political circumstances have changed; therefore it is essential to keep lines of communication open—track 2 events could be useful in this context.

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15   George Perkovich (2015). "Why the Iran Nuclear Deal Is Not the North Korea Deal", Carnegie Endowment, 28 April 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/28/why-iran-nuclear-deal-is-not-north-korea-deal-pub-59923; Matthew Bell (2015). "The Iran nuclear deal has North Korea written all over it", PRI The World, 21 July 2015; http://www.pri.org/stories/2015-07-21/iran-nuclear-deal-has-north-korea-written-all-over-it.

A ROLE FOR ASEM TO PLAY?

As a dialogue forum, ASEM can provide a platform for talks: As there is no ASEM leader, nor an ASEM president or a secretary general, ASEM partners have to take the initiative. ASEM has always dealt with security[16] issues when discussing regional or global developments. Developments on the Korean Peninsula in general and the DPRK in particular have always figured on the agenda and were reflected in Chair's statements[17]. The informal nature of ASEM, which can provide an informal and discrete setting for talks, could provide the framework for mediation or quiet diplomacy, either among ASEM participants or for an initiative where a bi-regional approach has added value.

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[16] Michael Reiterer (2002). *Asia-Europe: Do They Meet?*, ASEF, Singapore, "The ASEM Security *Acquis*", pp. 121-133.

[17] See, for example, paras. 25-27 of the 11th ASEM Summit Chair's Statement "20 Years of ASEM: Partnership for the Future through Connectivity", Ulaanbaatar, 15 July 2016, http://www.aseminfoboard.org/sites/default/files/documents/Chairs-Statement-ASEM11-adopted.pdf.

Cross-Cultural Approaches to Security, Peace and Development

Bunn Nagara

INTRODUCTION

Sound theory derives from observed practice, just as evolved practice emanates from thoughtful theory. However, it is also well to avoid fanciful or cumbersome theory, or theory for its own sake, when lived practice and its consequences are what count. Proper understanding can result only from creditable study and judicious observations, regardless of the qualms and strictures of orthodox theory. In both policymaking and policy-relevant research, practice is primary, study a derivative, and theorizing a subset of study—however much a theory may purport to refine or develop subsequent practice.

Societies and cultures handle issues relating to security, peace and development as part of their public decision-making process in different ways. These differences pertain to their respective priorities, historical experiences and cultural distinctiveness. Where problems arise, they typically do so where cultural dissonances emerge from a lack of empathy, understanding or appreciation for the impact of local culture on the daily practice and outlooks of others. That there are differences between different societies, communities and cultures is a given and should not be construed as a problem in or of itself.

This paper looks at some examples of Asian approaches to security, peace and development—and some of the other issues that shape those approaches in particular Asian settings. These examples may be seen as contrasted with mainstream European practice. Far from constituting any challenge, the differences may be regarded as grounds for better cooperation between Asian and European societies by each contributing to a synthesis of sorts. Also, beyond academic curiosity, appreciating the uniqueness of each continental or national position also affords a better understanding of the other for better cooperation.

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* This paper was submitted on 4 October 2016.

CULTURE AS A DETERMINANT

Cultural determinism is neither required nor necessarily helpful in understanding a basic reality: that culture is a significant factor in shaping collective societal actions and responses, which in turn determine public policy. It is enough to realize that culture can be sufficiently definitive as a societal marker or national identifier, even if it is not the only one. The more highly organized or community-based the society, the more important the role of culture tends to become. But what is culture?

At a basic level, culture itself is determined by the physical opportunities and limitations of the space occupied by a community, the community's daily needs, the demands placed on the community in its efforts to thrive, and the resources available to fulfil all of these. An individual has a lifestyle, but a community has a culture. The fact that culture tends to exercise influence over formal public policy matters, and often does, is commonplace and only to be expected.

Thus culture may simply be defined as what people as a community do as part of their daily lives and how they do it as defining features of their group identity. Their collective *modus operandi*, refined and entrenched over generations, constitutes much of the body of their culture, including their belief systems, hopes, expectations, aspirations and taboos as a people. This is the most common understanding of culture. It is historico-anthropological culture, that of an organic community or *Gemeinschaft*.

There is also culture formed and developed in the more immediate operational environment, such as work culture, institutional conventions and occupational norms. This form of culture is more societal than communal, being that of a functional condition or *Gesellschaft*: newer, less rooted over time, but also more formalized and more distinctly acknowledged. In modern societies, *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*[1] are not mutually exclusive but often co-exist. Which of the two predominates at any given time depends on the circumstances at the particular time.[2]

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[1] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Leipzig, Fues's Verlag, 1887; Charles P. Loomis, *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology*, New York, American Book Co., 1940, and *Community and Association*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955, and *Community and Society*, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1957.

[2] Tony Waters and Dagmar Waters (eds), *Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

The purpose of this paper is not to advocate a "culturalist" or culturally deterministic theory, model or school of thought—nor is there an attempt being made to do so. Neither does this paper suppose that the cultural dimension is or should be pre-eminent in policy analysis. Rather, it seeks to give due acknowledgement to what is often underrated, neglected or ignored: negatively, the cultural roots of misunderstanding, disagreement, disputes and conflicts; and positively, the cultural capacities, opportunities and advantages that joint intercultural efforts can tap and develop.

Thus culture in general may be defined as the collective narrative of a society or community as a result of the shared historical, economic, political, societal and environmental experiences of members of the society or community. Cultural artefacts are then the body of customs, practices and implements produced by such a narrative. Why has culturally informed politics or "identity politics" become so prominent lately? Its apparent surge may be a reaction from the ground, of elements of localized cultural identity against the tendencies of universal conformism exerted by the forces of globalization, lately amplified by mass migrant flows that dramatically concentrate cultural heterogeneity in a relatively short space of time.

Like power, culture on its own is essentially indeterminate. To have any discernible impact and character and be amenable to analysis it needs focus and direction, such as it may endow political power through the socialization and legitimation of authority. When power is informed—determined and directed—by culture, notably political culture that includes ideology, it begins to take shape and become consequential. Like Bourdieu's "habitus"[3], this may be for good or ill.

SOME ASIAN EXAMPLES

Inter-continental differences such as those between Europe and Asia may exist in the ways power is exercised or authority is regulated. It is important to recognize these differences particularly if Europe and Asia are to cooperate in such areas as diplomacy and conflict mediation. For example, multilateral agreements or groupings such as the European Union are visibly associational or *Gesellschaft* in nature, whereas ASEAN is more communal or *Gemeinschaft*

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[3] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1987.

in character. This explains ASEAN's slow and modest progress towards integration of all members, and still striving for formal "community" status some 50 years after its founding, making sure that all members share a working comfort level in the absence of detail-specific treaties even if it means working to the lowest common denominator and slow progress.

In East Asia as elsewhere, inadequacies or failures are not uncommon in policies pertaining to community formation and societal governance. Laudable policies can have a positive, zero or negative effect on national polity regardless of the favourable spin given them by governments. Occasionally, shortfalls or breakdowns result from deliberate failure because of the vested interests at stake. Often enough, inadvertently inadequate or failed policies result from the relative immaturity of nations as modern nation states—particularly when modern states are obliged to, among other things, accord all component communities with equal and basic rights.

A common thread that runs through the experience of East Asian countries is unbalanced development.[4] While capital cities are typically congested, polluted and straining at the seams, rural areas tend to be overlooked, neglected and underdeveloped. The general lack of prospects for gainful employment, growth and development also means added pressures for the younger generation to drift to urban centres. The result is a steady hollowing out of vast tracts of rural hinterland, even when these areas are also richly endowed with natural resources.

Unbalanced development, particularly between rural areas and urban centres, has been snowballing for centuries. The colonial and post-colonial periods have added to the disequilibrium, apart from the occasional siting of extractive industries of limited duration and utility in or near rural communities. Genuine investment by contrast provides meaningful, long-term employment, investment and growth opportunities. Given the increasingly stark polarization between rich/endowed/empowered and poor/deprived/disenfranchised, with the differences projected onto geographical settings within a country, the political challenges can be unsettling.

In Thailand, these differences are visible between Bangkok (together with the northern rice-growing provinces) and the southernmost ("deep south") provinces. The concentration of political resources and attention at the centre or capital is such that Bangkok politics, however trivial or personal, takes

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4   Leo Suryadinata, *The Making of Southeast Asian Nations: State, Ethnicity, Indigenism and Citizenship*, Singapore, World Scientific Publishing Co. Ltd, 2015.

precedence over southern concerns, however urgent. Almost routinely, schisms in the former take precedence over deadly violence in the latter. The result is that the violence becomes more intractable, less amenable to resolution, and even contagious.

In the Philippines, a similar north-south divide prevails. Manila in particular and Luzon in general have long concentrated political and economic power, such that the central Visayas region and especially Mindanao remain marginalized. On southern Mindanao itself, the south-western provinces in particular have remained neglected. As in Thailand, the fact that people in these provinces are of a different ethnicity (tribal group) and religion (Islam) from those in the power centres accentuates the differences. As a result, outbursts or campaigns of violence in the south are regarded as difficult to manage and challenging to police, making it even more so.

In Myanmar, the differences and the violence between the dominant Bamar and other ethnicities ("nationalities") are legion. The state "officially recognizes" 135 ethnic groups but not some others such as the Rohingya, widely regarded as the world's most persecuted community, which is denied basic human and civil rights including the right to citizenship. The country's change from military to civilian leadership has not changed the attitude of the power centre or the status of the Rohingyas, despite their being natives of Arakan (Rakhine) state before Myanmar annexed the territory. Now that the territory is known to be rich in minerals, and predatory business interests loom while overt military control recedes, driving the Rohingyas off their land is bound to get more brutal and violent.

Certain ethnic minorities in some other East Asian countries also face discrimination: the Vietnamese community in Cambodia, the Ainu in Japan and the Uighurs in China. The intensity of their alienation from the majority ethnic group and their aversion to formal state authority, and vice-versa, vary according to local condition and national history. Since official state authority is obligated to serve the public interest of all component communities, regardless of political system or any rival inter-ethnic differences, the onus is on the authority whose legitimacy lies in its non-partisanship to strive constantly for the common good: security in the public sphere, basic needs, freedom from want and universal human rights in aiming for Gross National Happiness.[5]

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[5] United Nations General Assembly Resolution 65/309, "Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development," 65th Session, Agenda Item 13, adopted by the General Assembly on 19 July 2011.

This is where frequent and regular exchanges with foreign communities such as those in Europe can help. Narrowly chauvinistic ethnic groups can then be less discriminatory and more cosmopolitan with more exposure, becoming less insular, sectarian and self-obsessed. Formal authorities within the country would also be reminded of the obligation to abide by international norms and formal conventions. However, no participating community anywhere should presume any prior expertise, wisdom or superiority. All communities are expected to contribute to an on-going discourse for a unifying narrative, since learning and enlightenment are mutual and reciprocal.

SECURITY, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

The core objectives of developing nations are security, peace and development. Looked at another way, their chief threats or challenges are instability or insecurity, violent conflict and mass poverty. Since these nations are often either impoverished, newly independent or riven by conflict within or with another country, they tend to be weak and vulnerable. Being liable in one way often renders a country liable in other ways as well. A lack of educational opportunities, employment prospects and steady incomes can make populations frustrated and desperate, enlarging disagreements into disputes and disputes into conflicts. As violence sets in, the conflict endures and the prospects for education and employment deteriorate further in a vicious cycle.

Conversely, the virtuous cycle of security, peace and development has been attained by developed countries to which developing nations aspire. Yet however obvious the linkage between security, peace and development may be, policymakers who operate with self-interests uppermost typically fail or refuse to take notice. Only with adequate security can there be lasting peace, facilitating the long-term confidence needed for investment, growth and de-

velopment. The literature on security, peace and development in recent years makes the linkage between them clear enough.[6]

While the case for linkage may have to be made more apparent in developed countries, developing nations live its realities by the day. Security involves more than the physical safety of persons and property, as it includes the viability of community, society and nation. Peace is more than the absence of war or conflict, but subsumes peaceable channels for handling disputes. Development means more than economic growth by numbers, and must translate into better living standards from a just and equitable system of distribution. All of these should then be presided over effectively by the rule of law. These tend to be challenges for developing nations which have weak or absent institutions to provide for good governance and an efficacious system of checks and balances.

A corollary to building peace, security and development within nations is investing in peace and stability in regions as a whole. Conflict and violence are liable to spill over borders into neighbouring countries, particularly as partisans flee or intrude into another territory. Security forces are loath to cross into the territory of another sovereign nation as such trespasses may be regarded as aggression or undue provocation. It then behoves the adjacent countries to reach an understanding by which their common peace and security are best assured with a region-wide regime of law and order.

Ever since violent conflict broke out in Thailand's southernmost provinces in 1948, it has been in Malaysia's security interest to contain if not resolve it. Some Thai insurgents opposed to Thai authority not only lived on the Malaysian side of the border where their communities had resided for generations before the current border was established, they also held dual citizenship.

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6   Heiner Janus and Gerrit Kurtz, "Post-2015: Peace, security and development belong together," The Current Column, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (German Development Institute), 2014; Ramses Amer, Ashok Swain and Joakim Öjendal (eds), *The Security-Development Nexus: Peace, Conflict and Development*, London-New York-Delhi, Anthem Press, 2012; Ursula Oswald Spring (ed.), *International Security, Peace, Development and Environment*, Vol. 1, Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems, Oxford, EOLSS Publishers / UNESCO, 2010; World Council of Churches, "Statement on peace, security and development in South Asia," Christian Conference of Asia - South Asian Councils of Churches, 2 April 2009; Lars Burr, Steffen Jensen and Finn Stepputat (eds), *The Security-Development Nexus: Expressions of Sovereignty in Southern Africa*, Cape Town, Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala and HSRC Press, 2007; Stephan Klingebiel (ed.), *New Interfaces Between Security and Development*, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (German Development Institute), Bonn, 2006.

In the 1980s Malaysia declared that members of these border communities had to opt for only one nationality, and as dutiful citizens of their chosen nation they had to remain loyal to that country. After clarifying the status of their citizenship, the work of ensuring peace and policing security could be facilitated in earnest.

However, much as Malaysia as a neighbouring country wishes to see the conflict in southern Thailand resolved, it is the prerogative of Thailand alone to do so. It is solely a Thai conflict, and the Thai parties involved need to come to an agreement or accommodation to resolve it. Malaysia at most can only act as an honest broker to facilitate that coming together of the Thai parties, upon their agreement and at their invitation. From the start it was made clear that it was not for Malaysia or any other country to determine the course of Thailand's affairs. Despite initial disgruntlement in some quarters in Thailand who felt that the Thai parties alone should resolve their problems without Malaysia, the Thai government in 2013 with the agreement of rebel representatives invited Malaysia to facilitate peace talks. A commitment to continue with negotiations has been expressed by the military government following the 2014 coup.

In the Philippines, the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed by the government of President Benigno Aquino III and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2012, to replace the failed Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Malaysia also acted as facilitator in the negotiations upon the agreement of both the Philippine government and the MILF. In 2014, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) as the final agreement was signed by both Philippine parties for implementing the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL). However, the BBL was held up by Congress and remains pending, although the new government of President Rodrigo Duterte has pledged to continue with efforts at implementation.

The experience of Asian countries in conflict mediation is that quiet diplomacy works, or works better. Advance major publicity of mediation, or any publicity at all, is not considered a priority. The sensitivities of all concerned parties in the negotiations need to be considered, such that trying to meet on common ground may be hindered but not helped by premature commentary or undue speculation. In case of misunderstanding or failure, the dignity or "face" of negotiating parties also needs to be protected. Yet this need not mean blanket secrecy of the talks taking place; Malaysia's role as convenor of talks in Kuala Lumpur between North and South Korea in the 1980s, and of

talks between the United States and North Korea in 1995 and 2000, being examples of this.

In Asian settings, the will of each contending party to engage in negotiations is taken as primary, such that the details may be worked out subsequently as part of the ensuing process. The greater priority lies in a certain readiness and commitment to engage in the process with the other side. Although Occidental ways of preparing for and conducting negotiations, whether as principals or facilitators, may be more contractual and involve more distinct items on the agenda with greater fanfare, it remains useful and instructive to consider alternative ways. When more items on the agenda are negotiable, as they would be if minimal or no preconditions are set, allowing for the details to be worked in later, the chances of successful negotiations may be higher. In the process, the point about compromise as a common requirement can be made subtly and implicitly to all the parties.

ASEAN AND MALAYSIAN WAYS

Southeast Asian ways of conflict mediation, conflict resolution and conflict management may generally be seen as community defined and culturally determined approaches to the conception and handling of disputes. They are typified in the ubiquitous catchphrase "the ASEAN Way."[7] These approaches that are so commonly found in the region may be regarded as a subset of Asian ways of engaging those who differ; in turn, Malaysian approaches form a subset of the "ASEAN Way." These are seen to differ distinctly from Occidental and other culturally determined approaches on several levels, including being more:

1. intuitive, in getting into the spirit of accommodation even before formal talks begin;

2. wholistic, by considering related matters beyond the official agenda items;

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[7] Logan Masilamani and Jimmy Peterson, "The 'ASEAN Way': The Structural Underpinnings of Constructive Engagement," *Foreign Policy Journal*, October 15, 2014; Gillian Goh, "The 'ASEAN Way': Non-intervention and ASEAN's Role in Conflict Management," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Volume 3, Number 1, Spring 2003.

3. consultative, in getting the views of all parties (their cultural dispositions) first;

4. eclectic, by transcending any prior specific ideology, theory or model;

5. anticipatory, by preparing to accommodate a certain outcome and smoothen its arrival;

6. diplomatic, in combining proper protocol with right atmospherics to ensure success

The ASEAN Way has often been commended and criticized for relying too much on decision-making by consensus and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of fellow member states. Yet neither issue is unique to ASEAN; both the EU and the UN Security Council operate by consensus, and non-intervention is a founding principle of the UN Charter, the Non-Aligned Movement and several other transnational entities. ASEAN today—both from its inception and ASEAN's inclusion of the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam)—would not even have been possible without consensus and non-intervention. More substantive criticisms of ASEAN may derive from its slow pace of progress and its need to work from the lowest common denominator—both inevitable outcomes of a diverse membership.

The Malaysian way in conflict mediation incorporates all the features of the ASEAN Way above, sometimes accentuating key features, plus certain others of its own. These are:

(a) inclusiveness, where feasible by involving all pertinent parties;

(b) pragmatism, by using whatever means that can help ensure and expedite progress;

(c) heuristics, in taking one step at a time in a general direction with final details fixed later;

(d) non-partisanship, with a neutral stand between partisans, developing a trusted credibility

Malaysia's diplomatic activism has covered intra-ASEAN and extra-ASEAN disputes. It is of a degree that casts the country as "punching above its weight"

in conflict mediation in Asian and global settings.[8] Yet at the same time, non-aligned Malaysia is not a country with exceptional clout in political, diplomatic, economic or other terms. However, with a record of disinterested non-partisanship, Malaysia has built a respected reputation for fairness, judiciousness and mature wisdom in its part of the world. In this way, Malaysia may be regarded as the quintessential microcosm of ASEAN as an honest broker in dispute mediation or talks facilitation.

Malaysia's efforts at conflict mediation may be understood better in the context of its own demographics. This is not only a multi-ethnic country but one with sizeable minorities and a small racial-religious majority (Malay Muslims). From the beginning, national unity and prospects of nationhood depended on agreeable relations among its different component communities.[9] After deadly race riots in 1969 in particular, the state took an active and consistent role in mediating between contending communal interests, whether the contentions were real or perceived. A result was Malaysia's style of conflict mediation abroad, with an informed touch of sensitivity to the sensibilities of contending parties, which appears to be a natural development given its peculiar national culture.

Unlike its immediate neighbours Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, Malaysia's path to inter-ethnic harmony and national unity is through a policy of integration, not assimilation.[10] Whether or not this is because of the sizeable minorities, the cultures and identities of the Chinese and Indian minority communities are duly acknowledged and preserved through a variety of regular activities such as annual festivals, the mass media (multilingual) and vernacular (mother tongue) schools, under a Constitution that provides for freedom of religion. The coalition government's composition also reflects the various communities in the main ethnic component parties' "power sharing" formula, as does the Cabinet as the executive arm of the federal government. Cabinet posts are also distributed among eligible appointees from across the different states and parts of the country.

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[8] Hishamuddin Mohd Hashim, *International Negotiation Styles: A Perspective of Malaysian Diplomats*, thesis submitted to the Auckland University of Technology for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Institute of Public Policy, 2010.

[9] Tan Cheng Im, "Managing a Plural Society: Issues and Challenges of Multiculturalism in Malaysia," The Asian Conference on Cultural Studies, Osaka, 2012.

[10] Shamsul A.B., *Many Ethnicities, Many Cultures, One Nation: The Malaysian Experience*, Bangi, Institut Kajian Etnik, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2008.

In essence, however, neither Malaysia nor any other ASEAN country is necessarily distinctive in conflict mediation. Perhaps any country in ASEAN—or outside ASEAN—can distinguish itself in this endeavour if it tried hard enough. Alternative approaches taken in conflict mediation, such as by countries in Europe or North America, may also be as successful. Much depends on the circumstances leading up to the conflict, the nature of the conflict itself, the parties to the conflict and their priorities. The foregoing are observations of efforts undertaken in East Asia, particularly in Southeast Asia, and notably Malaysia. They are observations made in the context of the political and diplomatic cultures of the region and country, to help explain how the approaches taken came to be so.

FROM PRESENT TO FUTURE

In moving from here (the present) to there (the future), it is at least as important to regard current realities as to consider aspirations for the future. Among the realities that prevail within countries is identity politics, where culture and politics merge in the context of history, in such a way that cultural self-awareness or identity determines and drives politics. Where this aligns with the political status quo, there may be a boost to the latter's agenda instead of a challenge. However, where there is a misalignment with the status quo, there may be a challenge or problem developing into a prospective crisis. Insofar as this remains a domestic issue without spilling abroad, however, the crisis may be contained within national borders.

Another reality within countries is the occasional rise of nationalism. In a globalizing world where borders undergo stress or become more permeable, there is a risk of nationalist tendencies spilling across borders to mount a threat to the sovereignty of other countries. In Southeast Asia however, this prospect is curbed by ASEAN as an institution and as a confidence-building measure. Any untoward flaring of aggressive nationalism in any ASEAN country may be neutralized within ASEAN, for which "ASEAN centrality" and the ASEAN Community are critical. Nonetheless, however well ASEAN's benign influence works among member nations, it may be ineffective or irrelevant where major powers assert themselves. Even in the South China Sea, which is squarely in Southeast Asia, ASEAN centrality may increasingly be challenged.

The two most evident major powers in this region are the United States and China. While they enjoy close economic relations despite occasional

rivalry, these major powers are strategic competitors in East Asia and particularly in Southeast Asia. Although the competition is not always intense, its occasional repercussions are enough to make the smaller nations of ASEAN uncomfortable. Both the US pivot/rebalance and China's assertiveness in the South China Sea in particular amount to tit-for-tat posturing that can destabilize the regional status quo.

It seems ironic that while China has moved to occupy and extend reefs and islands in disputed territories, it is also having to seek greater regional cooperation in the same area. The South China Sea is where China's proposed Maritime Silk Road lies, at the easternmost end of its Silk Road Economic Belt proposal, these being the two components of its ambitious One Belt, One Road (OBOR) system of transportation infrastructure development linking East Asia with Europe. This largely land-based scheme will also take in parts of South Asia, Central Asia and Africa, and the countries covered have generally signalled a positive response to it. For several countries in ASEAN, however, there are mixed feelings about having to manage the development promise held out by China and the strategic challenges it poses at the same time.

Clearly, what East Asia as a whole requires are more meaningful confidence-building measures.[11] If Northeast Asia—China, Japan, Korea—can come to a long-term strategic understanding to build on its Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), it would help. So would a strengthening of ASEAN centrality. The bold diplomatic initiatives of Seoul's current Park administration are to be welcomed, as they can help the development of a Northeast Asian community. Together, such a community that helps all countries without challenging any can work exceptionally well with ASEAN. It could prove a boon to both Northeast and Southeast Asia to make East Asia, and the Asia-Pacific, a thriving economic mega-region with open markets and secure communities. Then the old threats and challenges would be history.

Instead, history today continues to haunt Northeast Asia while Southeast Asia remains in doubt about the prospect of long-term regional development. How far or if the Maritime Silk Road and the Silk Road Economic Belt can even take flight is still in doubt, particularly the former. A highly ambitious infrastructure scheme involving various countries on several continents has

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[11] Russ Swinnerton, "Confidence-building measures at sea: The challenges ahead in Southeast Asia," *The Pacific Review*, Volume 8, 1995.

no choice but to obtain the goodwill, trust and confidence of all the countries concerned. Like a chain, the strength of this "chain" of countries along the Belt is in its weakest link. Unless and until the necessary elements are in place, OBOR will remain no more than a plan. But what is the most likely way forward?

After releasing the first draft of OBOR in early 2015, China has not done much to enlarge on it.[12] Some criticisms of the lack of detail have followed, but these are misplaced. China can be credited for leaving many of the details for other countries to help fill in. It would not do for a single country to propose such a vast project and then also spell out everything about it—that would elicit even more, and more justified, criticism of undue presumption and dominance. If the project were to be truly participatory, by encouraging all countries involved to have a stake in it by working for it, then other countries along OBOR's route should help produce possible details for it. Then by doing so, each country would bring to the table its own culturally informed policies and preferences to make the intercontinental project reflect the myriad landscapes it comprises.

A megaproject of intercontinental proportions such as OBOR holds the promise of conjoining the various national cultures of its constituent countries to work productively in their larger shared interests. However, important as culturally informed international goodwill may be, that is not the project's only strength. Another advantage of a project like OBOR is the way it encourages national authorities to take due cognizance of their respective constituent cultures and their interests, since the series of infrastructure projects will directly involve and impact on their local communities. A melding of cultures need not signify a "clash", but instead can inspire creative exchanges between them. When common interests are clearly identified, intercommunity, intercultural, international and intercontinental trust and confidence can be built along with the goodwill and the physical structures as project components.

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12 National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China, "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road", March 2015; Gisela Grieger, "One Belt, One Road (OBOR): China's regional integration initiative," European Parliamentary Research Service (Briefing), July 2016.

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Europe-Asia Cooperation on Disaster Management in the Shadow of Climate Change Threats

A N M Muniruzzaman

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is, at present, arguably the biggest challenge the world faces. Academic debates in the field of non-traditional security have now become dominated by this issue. Climate change first became a global issue in the early 1970s, through the 1972 Stockholm Conference, the first major international governmental conference on environment preservation. The extent and significance of climate change as a global concern have been growing ever since. Every country in the world has more or less realized the threat of climate change and is trying to move towards effective mitigation policies.[1]

The threat of climate change is not limited to regional boundaries, but because of its global extension, there has been a dramatic increase in natural and man-made disasters around the world. A number of fatalities and damages have happened because of poor disaster management efforts. In that context, a global problem can only be resolved by a global solution.

It has to be grasped that developing countries have not reached that point in the development curve where they are independently able to fend off impacts from climate-induced disasters. Hence, there have been calls for a certain level of inter-regional cooperation especially between Europe and Asia. Having a strong relationship will instil confidence among the vulnerable countries, which are at immediate risk of becoming victims of a disaster. In effect, it will help them build an effective response strategy, minimize damage loss and speed up the recovery process.

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[1] Nema, Pragya, Sameer Nema, and Priyanka Roy. "An overview of global climate changing in current scenario and mitigation action." *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 16, no. 4 (2012): 2329-2336.

In light of the Hyogo Framework for Action, which directly emphasizes the importance of strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels, it is known that in coping with disasters, national resources could be overwhelmed, especially in the event of large-scale disasters. In this respect, bilateral and inter-regional cooperation is of particular importance.[2]

The key areas of bilateral cooperation may be notification of impending disaster and information on hazards of emergency situation and disasters. Besides these, there can be exchange of knowledge and experiences, joint education and training exercises and arrangement for joint response intervention where one region will render assistance to another in the event of disasters.[3]

CURRENT SCENARIO

Climate change, over the years, has become a burning issue across the globe. Its manifestation poses a direct threat to the stability of societies, by severely impacting and changing the standard and harmonic state of managed as well as natural ecosystems.[4] Over a period of 100 years, it is a fact that has been clearly established that rises in greenhouse gases and anthropogenic activities as a result of progression are directly linked to global warming; thus raising concerns over the integrity of the environment—as pushing the situation from its baseline scenario has had a devastating effect on the frequency of disasters around the world.[5]

Global climate change and its major impacts are seen in the evidence of a global warming effect, i.e., a gradual rise in surface temperature across the

[2] Dobnik, Milena, "Bilateral And Regional Cooperation In Disaster Management—Good Practices/Experiences Of Slovenia." 22nd OSCE Economic And Environmental Forum "Responding To Environmental Challenges With A View To Promoting Cooperation And Security In The OSCE Area" 4(2014). http://www.osce.org/eea/110805?download=true.

[3] Dobnik, Milena, "Bilateral And Regional Cooperation In Disaster Management—Good Practices/Experiences Of Slovenia." 22nd OSCE Economic And Environmental Forum "Responding To Environmental Challenges With A View To Promoting Cooperation And Security In The OSCE Area" 4(2014). http://www.osce.org/eea/110805?download=true.

[4] Brown S. "Opportunities for mitigating carbon emissions through forestry activities". Arlington, VA: Winrock International, 1999.

[5] Government of India. "National Action Plan on Climate Change." June 30, 2008. http://www.moef.nic.in/downloads/home/Pg01-52.pdf.

globe. Visual evidences are obvious in connection to the melting of glaciers and ice bergs that are observed, and the imminent rise in sea level.[6]

Figure 1: Thermal temperature mapping of Earth for the last 100 years.
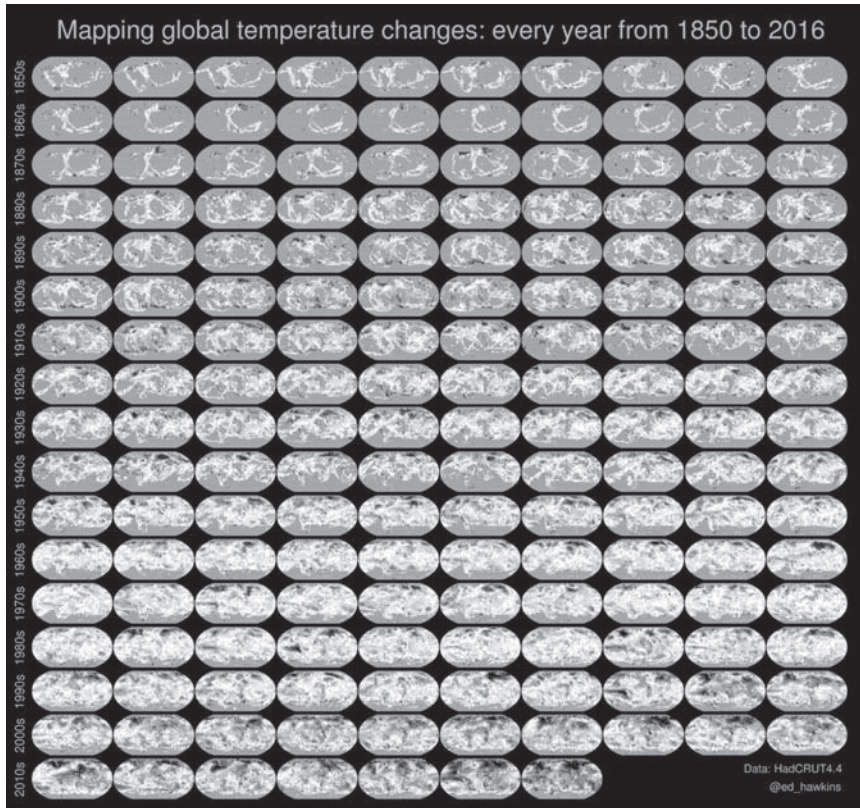
Source: Ecomax 2016.

This on-going phenomenon, among other direct and indirect results, would increase natural events such as floods, weather disasters, heat waves, forest fires etc. Developing countries like India, Bangladesh, Nepal and all Asian countries are already looking at tremendous environmental stress due to rapid urbanization, industrialization, and economic development—with such a

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[6] IPCC. *2006 IPCC guidelines for national greenhouse gas inventories.* Hayama, Kanagawa, Japan: Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) for the IPCC; 2006.

pace in progress, and increasing population density, the additional impending disasters pose a threat to environmental and socio-economic systems.

In the period of 1970-2008 alone, South Asia witnessed a surge in natural disasters, mainly triggered by floods and rainfall as floods account for more than half of the occurrences.[7] Because most of the indigenous peoples, among others, depend heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods, the droughts faced by many Asian nations may prove to be catastrophic. For communities that depend on agriculture, people are forced to migrate to areas that are more irrigated.[8] And floods affecting countries like Bangladesh displace habitants every year. 60% of Bangladesh is flood prone. In addition, the floods in 2007 that swept India, Bhutan, and Nepal also flooded all six divisions of Bangladesh causing large-scale damages and death tolls above 500.

The current status suggests that Bangladesh is face-to-face with sea-level-rise devastation. It is predicted that by 2030, almost 34 million people in Bangladesh will be affected by the potential impact.[9] Current management of disasters should be a direct indication that countries like Bangladesh are not equipped to withstand such predicaments.

There is hence a dire need for inter-state cooperation. Europe harbours fine state agencies that are capable, well-trained and knowledgeable. With the best equipment at their disposal, Japan and other western countries are more than capable of minimizing risks from disasters. A "sharing" of good practices can enhance the capability of poverty-stricken and vulnerable nations to better reduce the intensity of damage, and build up a recovery capability.

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[7] Memon, Naseer. *Disasters in South Asia: a regional perspective.* Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research, 2012.

[8] Gaiha, Raghav, Kenneth Hill, and Ganesh Thapa. *Natural Disasters in South Asia.* No. 2010-06. The Australian National University, Australia South Asia Research Centre, 2010.

[9] Streatfield, Peter Kim, and Zunaid Ahsan Karar. "Population challenges for Bangladesh in the coming decades." *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition* (2008): 261-272.

Table 1: Disasters in South Asia in numbers.[10]

Country	Population affected (000)	Deaths (000)	People Affected (000)	Population affected (%)	Damages (US$ 000)
Afghanistan	22,615	6.1	5,410	23.9	69,060
Bangladesh	143,990	155.3	145,713	101.2	12,984,000
Bhutan	602	0.2	66	11	3,500
India	1,071,608	53.4	885,244	82.6	25,743,100
Maldives	279	0	2	0.7	500,100
Nepal	25,278	4.6	2,796	11.1	245,100
Pakistan	162,662	9.4	27,943	17.2	3,573,054
Sri Lanka	19,258	0.5	6,331	32.9	1,670,070
Total	**1,368,327**	**229.5**	**1,073,504**	**78.5**	**44,787,984**

Table 2: Number of Natural Disasters in South Asia.[11]
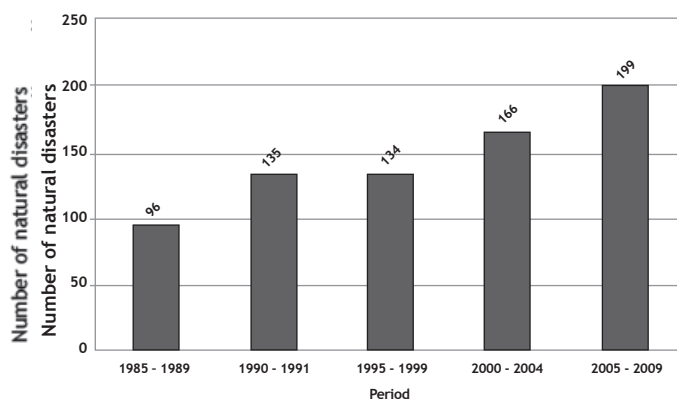
VULNERABILITY

On the basis of scientific literature and analytics, vulnerability can be classified into different groups. There is regional vulnerability—some regions (e.g., South Asian region) may be more at risk of climate change disasters due to an on average higher frequency of disasters that occur in those places, or because of lack of sophisticated development that inhibit the construction of disaster-mitigating infrastructure. Included also are coastal regions, which are so near the coasts that these locations are almost always the first to be affected; the inhabitants of coastal regions face a higher risk of being displaced and forced to migrate, losing their livelihoods.

[10] Memon, Naseer. *Disasters in South Asia: a regional perspective.* Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research, 2012.

[11] Memon, Naseer. *Disasters in South Asia: a regional perspective.* Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research, 2012.

Geophysical vulnerability refers to the physical geography of specific countries, such as low-lying nations like Bangladesh or small islands that are more vulnerable to a phenomenon such as sea level rise.

Another important group is financial vulnerability, because the poor are more vulnerable to climate change disasters. They rely more on natural resources that will likely be damaged, and hence will experience loss of livelihood impacts more directly. They become more in need of assistance to migrate, recover and reinstate themselves in society.

Gender vulnerability is a big issue, as females are more vulnerable than their male counterparts.[12] The ratio of women (to the total population) affected or killed by climate-related disasters is already higher in some developing countries than in developed countries. It is thus clear why the East and West are required to create a common platform to share expertise and vulnerability-reducing strategies.

Figure 2: Map of Vulnerable Cities in Asia.[13]
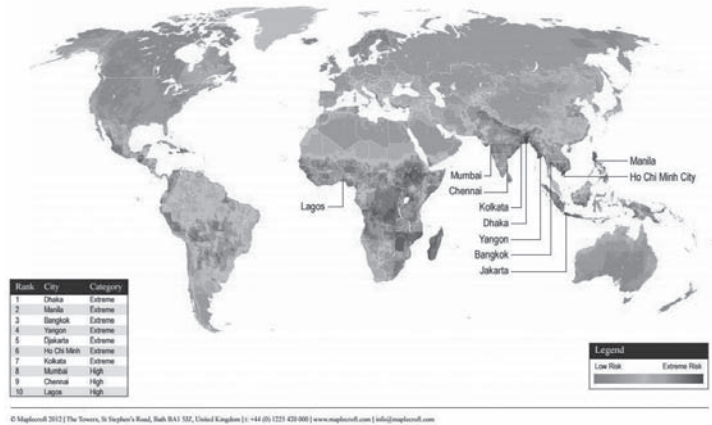
"South Asia's vulnerability to these and future disasters is especially profound", principally due to reasons of population and poverty[14]. The majority of South

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[12] "Climate Impacts On Global Issues | Climate Change | US EPA". 2016. https://www3.epa.gov/.

[13] ReliefWeb. 2012. *Climate Change Vulnerability Index 2013 - Most At Risk Cities.* http://reliefweb.int/map/bangladesh/maplecrofts-climate-change-vulnerability-index-2013-cities-dhaka-manila-bangkok.

[14] Bhatiya and Neil. 2014. "Why South Asia Is So Vulnerable To Climate Change". Foreign Policy. http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/04/22/why-south-asia-is-so-vulnerable-to-climate-change/.

Asian countries are low- or lower-middle income countries that already struggle to support the daily needs of their growing populations. Because poorer households dedicate more of their budgets to food, they are the most sensitive to weather-related shocks that can make daily staples unaffordable.

Rising sea level is one of the deadliest results of climate change.[15] There is cause to be concerned especially for Kolkata, Mumbai and many other vulnerable cities in Asia. Low-lying Bangladesh is vulnerable to flooding and cyclones in the Indian Ocean. Several scientific studies suggest that this will grow more intense in the coming decades.[16]

Due to its location in the tropics, the Philippines is naturally prone to environmental disasters.[17] Due to developmental factor and other human factors, the community does not have the proper ability to cope with such disasters. The UN states that the Philippines is the fourth-most disaster-prone country in the world, thus rendering it a nation that could very much use Europe-Asia cooperation to shield themselves from impending disasters.

Small islands, whether located in the tropics or higher latitudes, are already exposed to extreme events and changes in sea level. This existing exposure will likely make these areas sensitive to the effects of climate change. Deterioration in coastal conditions, such as beach erosion and coral bleaching, will likely affect local resources such as fisheries, as well as the value of tourism destinations. Sea level rise is projected to worsen inundation, storm surge, erosion, and other coastal hazards. These impacts would threaten vital infrastructure, settlements, and facilities that support the livelihood of island communities. Invasion by non-native species is projected to increase with higher temperatures, particularly in mid- and high-latitude islands. Maldives, Seychelles and similar places face a shortage of adaptation technique that can be implemented to prepare for climate change impacts.

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[15] UNEP. 2016. *Environment And Vulnerability - Emerging Perspectives.* Geneva: The Global Development Research Center. Accessed September 7. http://www.gdrc.org/uem/disasters/disenvi/environment-vulnerability.pdf.

[16] UNEP. 2016. *Environment And Vulnerability - Emerging Perspectives.* Geneva: The Global Development Research Center. Accessed September 7. http://www.gdrc.org/uem/disasters/disenvi/environment-vulnerability.pdf

[17] Wingard, Jessie and Anne-Sophie Brändlin. 2013. "Philippines: A Country Prone To Natural Disasters | Asia | DW.COM | 10.11.2013". *DW.COM.* http://www.dw.com/en/philippines-a-country-prone-to-natural-disasters/a-17217404.

THRUST AREAS

Several factors need to be strengthened as a shield from disaster. An area for research and development on climate change disaster prevention is early warning systems. This is one of the preventive measures that should be taken for disaster prevention; it will rely on forecasting information or information about an imminent threat so that the community can make appropriate and timely preparation. Preparation measures can include shelter basis self-preservation or early migration to other areas. On the basis of alertness and knowledge, information on impending danger can be disseminated among nearby communities. The effectiveness depends on types of early warning systems being implemented and media of communication. Since this is one of the very first sectors of disaster that needs to be activated on short notice, it must be ensured that this sector is strengthened.

Another threat area is coping with and recovery from a disaster. Heavily reliant on the response strategy and protocols, it requires delving deeply and detailed planning and outlining (such as an action plan strategy) that should consist of a step-by-step procedure for crisis management. In particular, emphasis should be placed should be on creating climate change disaster-centric plans.

After coping with the disaster, post-disaster management should encompass the recovery process, with an emphasis on speedy recovery so as to minimize inactivity time. This will ensure that economic or social activities are not stagnant for longer than they need to be, thus minimizing losses and damages.

Given the importance of these thrust areas, a multilateral framework involving all stakeholders needs to be erected from the ground up. In addition, a high priority should be given to building capacity; only then will carrying out the correct protocols be possible. A good disaster management programme without capacity building is like a sword without sharpness.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

For many years now, Japan has been a strategic partner for the European Union. This contributes positively to not only strengthening the cross-border

relationship but also improves the EU's readiness by having an ally to rely on.[18]

It facilitates responses to disasters through joint operations, preparedness and building capacities. "It also aims to further promote disaster risk management policy internationally and its integration in sustainable development policy and in the global international agenda."[19]

This is the direct evidence that cooperation helps regions that have a degree of disparity in terms of awareness, training, equipment quality, response framework and recovery plan, otherwise known as action plan. As a part of boosting South Asia and Asia's strength in fighting disaster, increased cooperation between Europe-Asia must be consolidated.

TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY

Transfer of technology is one of the major aspects of enhancing efficiency, speed of operation and the recovery process.

Mobile apps can be utilized to its most effective extent as we can custommake apps that focus on environmentally vulnerable zones. These apps can be distributed to various hierarchies at national, sub-national or local levels. They can be used as an innovative and effective early warning system for developing nations. With the help of the technology and expertise the West possesses, Asian countries can develop a common app to be shared and distributed among all countries. Movement tracking is an effective tool; perhaps cell phone towers can be utilized to track movements of people. In this way, authorities can ensure that people in vulnerable communities are relocated properly to safer areas, and can map a routine exit plan for cases where there needs to be quick forced migration just before disaster strikes. If anyone strays from the safe route, the government will be instantly alerted and can take corrective measures, preventing anyone from inadvertently residing or moving into vulnerable areas.

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[18] EU-Japan Cooperation On Disaster Management And Humanitarian Aid - Humanitarian Aid And Civil Protection - European Commission". 2015. *Humanitarian Aid And Civil Protection.* http://ec.europa.eu/echo/eu-japan-cooperation-disaster-management-and-humanitarian-aid_en.

[19] EU-Japan Cooperation On Disaster Management And Humanitarian Aid - Humanitarian Aid And Civil Protection - European Commission". 2015. *Humanitarian Aid And Civil Protection.* http://ec.europa.eu/echo/eu-japan-cooperation-disaster-management-and-humanitarian-aid_en.

GPS is an important tool for disaster management. However, having mapping technology, sensors and enhancing situational awareness is not enough, sharing of technology such as remote sensing brought from the West will require manufacturing technologies. Equipment usage training has to be provided too.

For carrying out of rescue operations, Asia does not have state-of-the-art logistic support. Hence emphasis should be placed on building the foundation for "fluid exchanges of information and equipment" that will enable developing Asian countries to tap into the advanced technology and knowledge that would be harder to obtain otherwise.

COOPERATION IN SATELLITE MANAGEMENT

Satellite provides a pivot point in playing an important role in quick dissemination of information, preparedness and subsequent risk reduction, and is proving to be absolutely effective in preparedness, prevention and relief. For example, typhoons hit Philippines very frequently, and the best way to battle this disaster is to conduct a threat mapping using satellites to trace the typhoon. This will enable the communities to identify the areas that will be affected and prioritize action plan implementation accordingly. Therefore satellites have gained wider use for warning of oncoming disasters that may be visible to satellite imagery tracking.

We also cannot rule out mass evacuation capacity development. Implementing Geographical Information System (GIS) and a remote sensing system can provide a means of providing effective evacuation paths for communities in the event of disasters so that they are safely guided outside of risky or vulnerable zones.

Developing nations may not have such high-tech equipment at their disposal. European nations that have already implemented such systems can share the technology or provide information on their experiences and lessons learnt. Many of these technologies, including remote sensing satellites are of potential interest and use to the disaster-mitigation community.

REFORMULATING NATIONAL STRUCTURE

Cooperation in building up the national structure from the grassroots level to the top level is necessary. Cooperation should not be exclusive to higher

levels, as cooperation across all levels of the hierarchy will increase transparency and ensure better communication and division of tasks. The roles of the different tiers of the administration in disaster management efforts can be distributed to appropriate entities so that the preparation level for every tier of the administration is maintained. Every level of the administration, from the lowest to the highest level, should be given proper training and briefings about formulating action plans. This can be carried out through conducting inter-regional conferences and workshops where Asian countries can be guided by experienced entities in Europe.

The current national structure of nations like Nepal and Myanmar may not have a separate ministry for disaster management in the government. Until a few years ago, Bangladesh did not have a separate ministry for this sector as well. This could perhaps be due to lack of trained individuals or experts; however, it is imperative that there is a focused ministry monitoring activities from a broad perspective, from grassroots level to the top level. Many communities lack a "Disaster Management Working Group" in every village and locality that is linked to the government.

The main objective, hence, is to reformulate the national structure, the model being the structure of the European nations, so as to promote best practices and working frameworks from around the world and bring them to the reach of Asia to boost readiness and swift mobilization of the respective workforces, which may not be as up to date or robust as they can be.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal need to have robust infrastructures that are planned in such a way that they are able to withstand pressure from natural calamities. Japan is prone to earthquakes, experiencing them almost on a regular basis, but they have developed state-of-the-art buildings and modern drainage systems. This enables the buildings to absorb the shocks of earthquakes, and during extreme monsoon seasons, no flood displaces residents or makes any cities dysfunctional. However, in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh alone, a similar-intensity storm washed out millions of inhabitants, over-irrigating agricultural activities and hindered several normal activities.

Building modern and well-planned cyclone centres and warehouses in poverty-stricken communities can assure that the people can be rushed to and

maintained in safety during storms or flash floods. Establishing a modern drainage system can help drive out water quicker, speeding up the recovery.

Interstate cooperation can not only assist in policy making but also in establishing proper physical infrastructures. Through knowledge impartment, countries that have infrastructure in a vulnerable state can know where to build the resistance capacity.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Given the importance of early warning systems as outlined above, it is obvious that some developing nations have ancient and outdated systems that render them ineffective in today's environment. Upgrading the early warning system can improve communication and enable it to reach a wider audience. For example, using the radio to disseminate warnings can prove to be slow as radio has become obsolete or less used. In Bangladesh, for example, everyone uses a mobile phone, and a text-based system can enable news to reach everyone much faster.

Studies show that "for every $1 invested in storm, cyclone and flood warning prediction systems in Bangladesh, the estimated return is between $8 and $500 for a 10-year period."[20]

Integrating social media in the early warning system can enable it to reach communities that are mostly upper tier. Although less vulnerable, the upper-tier communities can regularly stay updated on impending disasters so as to be able to provide aid to the more vulnerable communities.

This will also facilitate the integration and movement of migrants from one region to another; relevant people connecting in social media can be expecting victims of disasters to seek asylum. This information distribution can prove to be helpful. Above all, every institution from grassroots to the top level can stay up to date using social media as an early warning system. France, for example, uses the Vigilance System. Evidently, there are plenty of warning systems employed in the West that Asia can learn and adopt from. The less-developed regions can start learning from Western practices and incorporate them under a broad umbrella of similar but region-appropriate systems.

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[20] UNESCAP. 2012. *Bangladesh Improves Disaster Early Warning System With ESCAP Support.* http://www.unescap.org/features/bangladesh-improves-disaster-early-warning-system-with-ESCAP-support.

LEGISLATION

When a region is faced with a disaster, the situation should automatically trigger competent authorities and relevant stakeholders to act quickly and efficiently. Every entity will have its own delegated tasks they will need to carry out with minimal real-time supervision and it will need to carry out a fixed set of necessary instructions.

To follow through on the action plan, there is a dire need to have pre-existing legal protocols. For example, proper legislation is mandatory to facilitate sanctions of funds, and sanctions of federal activities. In cases of federal activities, a law-based system should pre-exist so that there are legal grounds and basis under which the Federal Bureau can work. This will help in defining the roles of different actors within the national structure as well; delegating tasks is necessary for a working system to be established.

In reference to sharing of technology; laws and acts on intellectual property rights play a major role in easing transfer of technology. Loosening strict property rights can enable two regions to have a common platform for technology use.

Europe most certainly has more experience in setting up a legislation framework. Through communication and mutual understanding, a back and forth transfer of information can help the endangered countries in Asia develop the necessary legal foundation that will not hinder pre- or post-disaster operations.

MILITARY-TO-MILITARY COOPERATION

The military forces in most Asian countries especially in South Asia are the first responders to any disasters. Due to their logistic capacity and mobility, they are relied upon in the hour of need. As a result of climate change-induced disaster, the military will face increased challenges. It must be recognized that they are a potent force against any disasters. It is recommended that correct measures be taken in equipping them with the newest and advanced gears. It is essential that they are allocated adequate training and realistic drills. Only with such experience can the army upgrade their response strategy as well as their preparedness level.

Such a high level of enhancement is only possible when military forces obtain a degree of cooperation with European military forces. The hands-on experience will provide Asia's military forces with better knowledge, insights

into the strategy-making process and enable them to prepare and improve their first-response strategies. To accomplish this, it is recommended that the militaries share data and techniques and are provided with common training programmes.

The military forces in Asian countries can develop cooperation missions with European military forces and deploy their armies to joint rescue exercises. In this way, South Asian military forces will gain firsthand experiences on how the developed nations equip themselves, carry out protocols and use the equipment at their disposal to their advantage.

Military-to-military cooperation will open up ways to communicate in need, share workforce for rescue operations or even share equipment. Working with the military forces of other regions will in essence give the developed nations a higher degree of awareness of the impending danger that climate change poses, which is often missing in the armed forces of developing regions.

There is a dire need to develop new climate change strategies and action plans for management during crisis. Military-to-military cooperation will help integrate the army's role in mitigation and adaptation to climate change as a long-term strategy.

COMMUNITY-BASED MANAGEMENT

The local community has a central role in long-term and short-term disaster management and therefore the focus of attention in disaster management must be on the local community. In dealing with disaster management it is necessary to develop, implement and maintain an effective end-to-end early warning system, because a degree of readiness is crucial in having community-based management programmes. Having volunteers also helps in creating a larger rescue force and meeting the need for adequate assistance in times of crises.

The benefits will not only lie in saving more lives but also increasing the level of public knowledge, which will result in an enhanced core infrastructure to support other community concerns.[21] It should be noted that in Niger alone, as many as 3,000 local individuals have been imparted with high-level training. In the first year of the project, teams have successfully integrated

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[21] UNESCAP. 2012. *Bangladesh Improves Disaster Early Warning System With ESCAP Support.* http://www.unescap.org/features/bangladesh-improves-disaster-early-warning-system-with-ESCAP-support.

disaster risk management into ten community development plans, ensuring sustainable and resilient growth.[22]

Having said that, integrating local community-based organizations will require adequate and effective training for the organizations as well as the community volunteers.[23] Special emphasis must be put on how the local authorities will be training the community people, and how they will be equipping them with information, techniques and equipment effectively. By studying European experiences and training programmes, the local authorities in Asia will understand how to develop proper training programmes and conduct assessments to ensure capacity-building.

This can only be successful if a trusted partnership is established among community leaders around the world, both international organizations as well as non-governmental organizations. Developing an inter-regional community connection can be the perfect approach to strengthen this area of cooperation. Communities around the world can communicate, discuss and exchange various local/indigenous techniques and opinions to integrate best practices into their own disaster management programmes. Many natural practices in Asia are not known in the West; hence Europe-Asia cooperation will certainly be a two-way road to benefits.

HEALTH MANAGEMENT

"The goals of environmental health management in threatened areas are to protect the population and to ensure a state of preparedness and the availability of water, food, shelter, and clothing."[24] At the onset of disasters and after the disasters are the two crucial points where health management plays a lifesaving role.

If the onset of a disaster is gradual, as in the case of some floods or hurricanes, the criteria for a number of measures should be reviewed and

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[22] The World Bank. 2016. *Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction In Niger.* Stories Of Impact. Niger: The World Bank. http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2014/06/16/community-based-disaster-risk-reduction-niger.

[23] University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. 2010. *Flash Flood Early Warning System Reference Guide.* Comet. http://www.meted.ucar.edu/hazwarnsys/haz_fflood.php.

[24] Pan American Health Organization. 1982. *Environmental Health Management After Natural Disasters.* Scientific Publication. Washington: Pan American Health Organization. http://www.mona.uwi.edu/cardin/virtual_library/docs/1238/1238.pdf.

disseminated. Among these criteria are those for the establishment of emergency shelters in camps or buildings, the use and development of resources, and proper procedures for issuing requests for aid. The rescue and accommodation of displaced persons are the objectives of measures taken during this period. The rescue team should automatically notify a team of doctors and nurses so as to assure a level of medical preparedness to receive and tend to traumatized victims.

With the help of a Europe-Asia cooperation platform, Asia can learn about and develop a toolkit for assessing health-system capacity during such crisis management. The idea is to identify gaps and assess the capacity to respond to threats of disasters. Accordingly, each government will take the responsibility to be able to train staff, manage a surge in need, conduct timely surveillance, prevent secondary consequences and minimize casualty.

Preparation should be taken to make sure that epidemics are prevented from spreading during disasters. Environmental disasters can result in diseases being spread through forced migration as well as other vectors. For example, the impoundment of rain or flood water in empty receptacles or in the soil and other places creates unsanitary conditions because debris and solid wastes accumulate, allowing insects and rodents to proliferate. Certain diseases—malaria, yellow fever, typhus, tularaemia, and diarrhoeal infections—are transmitted in this way.[25]

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[25] Pan American Health Organization. 1982. *Environmental Health Management After Natural Disasters.* Scientific Publication. Washington: Pan American Health Organization. http://www.mona.uwi.edu/cardin/virtual_library/docs/1238/1238.pdf.

Table 3: Disaster Type and Related Health Issue.[26]

	Most common effects on environmental health	Earthquake	Cyclone	Flood	Tsunami	Volcanic eruption
Water suppply and wastewater disposal	Damage to civil engineering structures	1	1	1	3	1
	Broken mains	1	2	2	1	1
	Damate to water sources	1	2	2	3	1
	Power outages	1	1	2	2	1
	Contamination (biological or chemical)	2	1	1	1	1
	Transportation failures	1	1	1	2	1
	Personnel shortages	1	2	2	3	1
	System overload (due to population shifts)	3	1	1	3	1
	Equipment, parts, and supply shortages	1	1	1	2	1
Solid waste handling	Damage to civil engineering structures	1	2	2	3	1
	Transportation failures	1	1	1	2	1
	Equipment shortages	1	1	1	2	1
	Personnel shortages	1	1	1	3	1
	Water, soil, and air pollution	1	1	1	2	1
Food handling	Spoilage of refrigerated foods	1	1	2	2	1
	Damage to food preparation facilities	1	1	2	3	1
	Transportation failures	1	1	1	2	1
	Power outages	1	1	1	3	1
	Flooding of facilities	3	1	1	1	3
	Contamination/degradation of relief supplies	2	1	1	2	1
Vector Control	Proliferation of vector breeding sites	1	1	1	1	3
	Increase in human/vector contacts	1	1	1	2	1
	Disruption of vector-borne disease control programmes	1	1	1	1	1
Home sanitation	Destruction or damage to structures	1	1	1	1	1
	Contamination of water and food	2	2	1	2	1
	Disruption of power, heating fuel, water supply or waste disposal services	1	1	1	2	1
	Overcrowding	3	3	3	3	2

[1]Source: Pan American Health Organization (2000).
1 - Severe possible effect.
2 - Less severe possible effect.
3 - Least or no possible effect.

DEALING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

It should be noted that establishing Europe-Asia cooperation can help with dealing with violations of human rights. It is well known that in regions with lower development and educational levels, such as countries in South Asia, harassment of people, especially females, is very common. The safety of women and children need to be especially looked after during disasters as they can easily be separated from their families, ending up in wrongful situations.

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[26] World Health Organization. *Environmental Health In Emergencies And Disasters.* World Health Organization, 2012. Web. 8 September 2016.

It is of utmost importance that law enforcement agencies have the proper protocols and plans, so that during disasters they are well prepared to deal with potential issues regarding violation of human rights, whether in cyclone centres, shelters or camps. For the local law enforcers to carry out this hefty task, they will need a degree of exposure to adequate courses and training programmes that will enable them to be aware of human rights issues as well as a broad understanding of the crimes related to the circumstances. International organizations must cooperate with countries in Asia and refer them to the correct institutions that can impart such programmes with the highest standard.

These learning programs should not only be exclusive to law enforcers, who will build capacity in preventing these crimes from happening, but should also be catered for the community people, especially the leaders and elders or local mentors, who will then work out a way to reach out to every individual, teaching them the value of life and the need to preserve human rights. Europe can help these communities to implement the best policies to do this.

FUNDING

The financial aspect is extremely sensitive and must be handled with caution. The most important point is that there must be sufficiency in amount. Secondly, the funding must be effectively used; to ensure this, there must be a detailed allocation of utilization of fund. Securing a fixed source of funding for disaster programmes as well as integrating multinational donor agencies are issues to tend to.

Having a strong relationship among all regions can enhance transparency and an intense understanding of how to prioritize issues, allocate funds and obtain maximum utilization of budgets.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

European disaster management programmes are known to be very advanced. If the disaster management programmes are able to establish a common platform globally, this would result in equal knowledge across Europe and Asia.

Sharing of best practices with Asia countries can result in vulnerable cities learning from the experiences of European countries on how to hold conferences, conduct training workshops and disseminate knowledge among

the local community and all related stakeholders to ensure the highest level of preparedness. Besides these, it is important to maintain the monitoring of different institutions of disaster management programmes. Monitoring capacity is also a difficult task that can be learnt, adopted and modified by different communities according to need.

Europe-Asia cooperation is not a unidirectional development policy, as there may exist best practices in Asia that the European region can adopt into their system as well. Such cooperation will reduce the disparity between the two regions, which will provide a boost to the global economy.

CONCLUSION

Vulnerable countries, especially developing countries in Asia, which are gradually moving up their development curve, cannot possibly introduce re-vamped policies like those in developed nations to keep the impact of disasters in check. For these regions, it is all about having a ready-to-work action policy to reduce the impact of disasters.

On top of everything, inter-organizational communication is essential for effective disaster risk management and it is absolutely imperative that accountability is ensured for the proper management of relief programmes.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION—THE WAY FORWARD

To form a sustainable Europe-Asia relationship in dealing with preparedness for disasters and their aftermaths, the relevant government bodies should establish institutional changes to incorporate policies that will provide crucial mechanisms to maintain high standards in cooperation.

A need assessment survey should be carried out to assess the current state and capacity of Asian countries in dealing with disaster management. This will show the cooperation needs in the two regions.

There is an urgent call to form a joint working committee on disaster management. This committee will include Europe-Asia's finest representatives, to ensure efficient and articulated communication. Establishing this inter-regional relationship will open doors to sharing of knowledge, techniques, technology and opportunities to build capacity to respond to and prepare for disasters.

Needless to say, it is necessary to identify and appoint focal points on the basis of country and region, in terms of who should be in charge of coordinating and communicating for disaster management programmes. For example, regional organizations such as ASEAN or SAARC can appoint competent representatives who will take the initiative to relay back and forth the issues and possible solutions in disaster management.

Above all, an annual top-level intergovernmental conference on disaster management could be initiated to conduct audits at annual intervals. This yearly review will reveal new requirements each year. Outdated methods can create information, communication and operational bottlenecks; hence additional areas of emphasis are to update capacities and create a framework for cooperation, which must be broad-based and multi-lateral in all areas of the aforementioned sectors.

Major General Muniruzzaman (retd) is a former military officer who served 38 years in active duty. He is the current President of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) which he established upon his retirement from the Army in 2007. General Muniruzzaman served as a faculty member at the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) and has lectured at the Armed Forces War College and the National Defence College in Dhaka. He had the distinction of serving as the Military Secretary (Principal Military Advisor) to the President of Bangladesh. He later served as the Director General and CEO of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. General Muniruzzaman is an experienced peace keeper; he was a member and head of the country contingent to United National Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and represented UNTAC in Thailand. He had the distinct honour of heading the post-election UN Mission in Cambodia monitoring the political and security stabilisation process. General Muniruzzaman is also the current Chairman of the Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change (GMACCC), a global expert body of over 30 serving and retired General and Flag officers drawn from all continents. He is also an advisor on Climate Change and Energy Security at the G-20 consultative process. General Muniruzzaman is an alumnus of the National University of Bangladesh, National Defence College, Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College, US Naval War College, Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) in Hawaii and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is a Distinguished Fellow of Institute of National Security Studies, Sri Lanka (INSSL).

ASEM's Role in Promoting Cooperative Disaster Management

Myint Thu

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the role of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in promoting and further enhancing effective cooperation in disaster management.

ASEM, over the years, has been strengthening and further promoting Europe-Asia cooperation in managing and mitigating disasters, which have considerable impact on global governance and the well-being of the people in both regions.

There has also been sustained progress in building a comprehensive and future-oriented partnership between Asia and Europe to address the challenges and transform them into opportunities.

It is also encouraging that the existing dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe are based on the spirit of equal partnership and mutual benefit and are thus contributing positively to security, prosperity and sustainable development for the benefit of the people.

ASEM COOPERATION IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT
NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS IN ASIA AND EUROPE

Over the years, the frequency and intensity of natural and man-made disasters and related humanitarian crises have increased, resulting in serious impact on economic development and sustained progress in the Asia and Europe regions.

It is hence imperative to address this global threat of natural disasters while deepening ASEM cooperation in other focused areas of action through dialogues and action-oriented programmes.

The Helsinki Declaration on the Future of ASEM, adopted in September 2006, specifically outlined the focused areas of action for the 21st century,

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which include, among others, sustainable development, climate change, environment and disaster management and mitigation.

Over the years, ASEM has constantly collaborated to address the emerging challenges of disaster risk reduction and mitigation through awareness programmes, early warning systems, use of innovative technologies, search and rescue operations and post-disaster rehabilitation.

ASEM has always placed disaster management high on its agenda as we truly believe that effective disaster management can contribute to sustainable development and economic progress in both regions.

However, the governments alone cannot achieve disaster management goals. It is therefore vital to facilitate strenuous efforts at the local, regional and global levels in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

There is also a need to raise public awareness, reaffirm political commitments and initiate people-centred approaches in building disaster-resilient communities.

Active participation by the public and private sectors, civil society organisations as well as academics and think tanks will further contribute to the success of ASEM disaster-management endeavours.

It is also advisable that governments should engage with the relevant stakeholders, including women and children, people with disabilities and older persons, who are the most vulnerable to chaotic disasters.

Moreover, the governments should intensify and promote their disaster-management endeavours through mutual support and assistance as well as comprehensive and integrated initiatives, which are in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

ASEM has been on the right track in implementing and facilitating the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (ACEF) adopted by the 3rd ASEM Summit held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2000.

Furthermore, it is heartening that ASEM has intensified its dialogue and cooperation on regional and international issues of common interest and concern as well as strengthened its collective efforts in tackling global challenges, including natural disasters and related calamities.

Disaster Management Mechanisms in Europe

It is encouraging that Europe has established the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to facilitate effective collaboration among the national authori-

ties across Europe through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC).

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism has rendered much-needed assistance in the aftermath of devastating disasters in our region, namely, the East Japan earthquake (2011), Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (2013), and the earthquake in Nepal (2015), among others.

The European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC) has also played a pivotal role in responding to natural and man-made disasters within the European territory and beyond.

It has also demonstrated its role as a catalyst in providing better organized, swifter and more coherent responses in times of disasters around the world.

Disaster Management Mechanisms in Asia

In the Asian region, there are several initiatives to address the natural disasters phenomenon:

- The Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC), based in Bangkok, has been instrumental in making our region safer by strengthening disaster resilience at all levels.

- Furthermore, the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held in Japan in May 1994.

- The Hyogo Framework for Action: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (2005-2015) was also adopted at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held in Japan in January 2005.

- More recently, the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan in March 2015, came up with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030).

ASEAN's initiatives on Disaster Management

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) established the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) in 2003 and ASEAN

foreign ministers signed the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) in July 2005.

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) was established in November 2011 as mandated by AADMER to jointly respond to disaster-related emergencies through concerted efforts and intensified regional and international cooperation.

The ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) has also been instrumental in responding to natural catastrophes in our region. It has effectively coordinated with the National Disaster Management Officers (NDMO) of affected countries in order to coordinate the mobilization and deployment of regional disaster management capabilities in an effective manner.

ASEAN-ERAT Missions were dispatched to disaster-affected countries in the region, including Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar (2008), flood in Bangkok, Thailand (2011), Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (2013), Bohol earthquake in the Philippines (2013), and Typhoon Rammasun in Viet Nam (2014), among others.

CONCLUSION

Asia and Europe can, therefore, learn from each other's best practices; support the respective preventive and preparedness efforts; facilitate better access to disaster information; promote disaster resilience; and reinforce early warning mechanisms. Both regions should facilitate a coherent and collective response to disasters through effective disaster management frameworks.

Based on the existing mechanisms, experiences and best practices, ASEM can play a leading role in disaster management through gender-inclusive approaches, early warning mechanisms, advanced management capacities, search and rescue capabilities, infrastructure development and improved readiness in response to natural calamities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The author proposes the following recommendations on promoting ASEM's role in disaster management:

1. Facilitate a **common platform of cooperation** in order to share know-how and innovative technologies as well as ensure access to information and best practices on disaster management;

2. Strengthen **national capacities and capabilities** and **national legislations** for natural and man-made disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness;

3. Enhance **coordinated, sustained and adequate support** to affected countries through technical and financial support, humanitarian assistance and strengthened national capacities;

4. Support **effective networking** among government agencies and establish strong partnerships with regional and international organisations;

5. Encourage **coordination among the existing Centres** to exchange information, experiences and best practices in support of decision-making in emergency responses;

6. Promote **public awareness** on ASEM disaster management programmes through disseminating information to achieve greater visibility and mindfulness among the wider public;

7. Develop an **all-inclusive partnership** with different stakeholders, including academics, think tanks, the business sector, civil society organisations and the media;

8. Facilitate a **holistic approach** to disaster management, including disaster prevention, preparedness, response and rehabilitation, between Asia and Europe; and

9. Engage with the **Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System** (GDACS) to facilitate preparedness and effective coordination of disaster response.

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Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), Sendai, Japan, 2015.

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Connecting European and Asian Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Eleonora Poli

INTRODUCTION

Market globalisation and the development of a dense network of trade and production fragmentation can certainly allow those European and Asian countries able to profit of such economic openness to grow economically faster. To date, ASEM countries account for 60 percent of global trade and 50 percent of world economic output.[1] Yet, since countries within the ASEM process are at different stages of development, economic liberalization might raise economic and social inequalities among them, especially considering the multiple economic and financial crises they have been facing.[2] In this framework, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), accounting for a large share of companies and employment in all ASEM countries, can play an important role in boosting national economies and general welfare.[3] In particular, the development of more connections and international exchanges among ASEM SMEs, operating within growing and innovative sectors such as the digital and the green economies, has the potential to rebalance global market trends with domestic and regional demand and nurture sustainable and inclusive growth.[4] Sectors such as the digital and green economies are

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[1] 1st ASEM Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Ministerial Meeting and Trade and Investment Fair, http://www.aseminfoboard.org/events/1st-asem-small-and-medium-enterprises-smes-ministerial-meeting-and-trade-and-investment-fair.

[2] Harvie, C. and T. Charoenrat (2015), "SMEs and the Rise of Global Value Chains", in *Integrating SMEs into Global Value Chains: Challenges and Policy Actions in Asia*, pp. 1–26. Manila and Tokyo: Asian Development Bank and Asian Development Bank Institute.

[3] Harvie, C. (2010), "East Asian Production Networks – The Role and Contribution of SMEs", *International Journal of Business and Development Studies*, 2(1): 27-62.

[4] Lim, H. and F. Kimura (2010), "The Internationalization of Small and Medium Enterprises in Regional and Global Value Chains", ADBI Working Paper Series No. 231, Asian Development Bank Institute.

of fundamental importance for building international competitive advantage, economic dynamism, welfare and jobs. At the same time, however, to profit from global opportunities while operating in such areas, SMEs need to foster direct or indirect linkages to international markets and cross-border operations. In other words, they need to increase their level of connectivity.[5]

ASEM, as a process born out of the need to foster greater cooperation among European and Asian countries, can play a major role in promoting SMEs' connectivity, and ASEM dialogues have been increasingly focusing on this issue. To be specific, during the ASEM summit held in Milan in February 2014, it was made clear that ASEM members should strengthen inter-governmental cooperation to foster SMEs' connectivity.[6] This was again reiterated during the 11th ASEM Summit, held in Ulaanbaatar on 15-16 July 2016, when leaders highlighted the importance of promoting long-term economic growth by also implementing "targeted policy measures in support of micro, small and medium enterprises".[7]

In this framework, the aim of the paper is to analyse how Asian and European SMEs can be better connected. The first section will provide a definition of SMEs and their impact on European and Asian digital and green markets. The second section will analyse the problems SMEs have to face when attempting to access international markets. The conclusion will then filter the result of the analysis in order to provide some final recommendations.

ADDRESSING SMES IN EUROPEAN AND ASIAN ASEM COUNTRIES

Addressing connectivity among ASEM SMEs is particularly challenging for two main reasons. On the one hand, the ASEM process comprises countries

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[5] Abonyi, G. (2015), "Best Policy Practices for Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment for ASEAN and East Asia", in Oum, S. P. Intarakumnerd, G. Abonyi and S. Kagami (eds.), *Innovation, Technology Transfers, Finance, and Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment*, ERIA Research Project Report FY2013, No. 14, Jakarta: ERIA, pp. 37-96, http://www.eria.org/RPR_FY2013_No.14_Chapter_2.pdf.

[6] Intervento di apertura del Sottosegretario Della Vedova al Seminario, "ASEM - Financing SMEs in Asia and Europe", http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/interventi/2015/10/intervento-di-apertura-del-sottosegretario.html.

[7] 11th ASEM Summit, "20 Years of ASEM: Partnership for the Future through Connectivity", Chair's Statement.

with different political and economic institutions. On the other hand, the absence of a universal definition of SME results in the lack of comparable data.[8] Indeed, the term encompasses a broad range of definitions, which differ according to country, geographical position, stage of development, business culture, local needs and practices. For instance, some Asian ASEM countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar have specific regulations or central bank's guidelines to define SMEs.[9] Hence, this paper will combine the definitions of Asian and European central institutions such as the European Commission and the Asian Development Bank. The European Commission has defined a SME as a company employing less than 250 workers and with an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro. Within such a categorization, a small enterprise is a company employing less than 50 persons and with an annual turnover not exceeding 10 million euro.[10] On its side, the Asian Development Bank considers a SME to be a firm with 50 or fewer workers.[11]

Despite the different definitions, statistics shows that in 2015, SMEs constituted the overwhelming majority of global firms (95%), accounted for 50% of world GDP and generated 60%-70% of total employment.[12] Within this frame, SMEs in Europe and Asia are certainly not an exception; they dominate not only the European economy, but also the Asian one.[13] According to the annual report of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), SMEs represent 96% of companies; they provide 62% of jobs and their contribution to GDP is around 42%. In addition, Asian SMEs have an important role in the balance of trade. For instance, in 2015, Chinese and Indian SMEs accounted for more

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[8] Taylor, Michael and Andrew Murphy, "SMEs and ebusiness", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise development*, 2004; 11, 3; ProQuest Business Collection, p. 280.

[9] Asian Development Bank, *Asia SME Finance Monitor 2014*, http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/173205/asia-sme-finance-monitor2014.pdf.

[10] Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (Text with EEA relevance) (notified under document number C(2003) 1422), http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361.

[11] Asian Development Bank, *Asia SME Finance Monitor 2014*, http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/173205/asia-sme-finance-monitor2014.pdf.

[12] Edinburgh Group, *Growing the global economy through SMEs*, http://www.edinburgh-group.org/media/2776/edinburgh_group_research_-_growing_the_global_economy_through_smes.pdf.

[13] World Trade Organisation, "SME Competitiveness and Aid for Trade: Connecting developing country SMEs to global value chains", http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Publications/SME%20Competitiveness%20and%20Aid%20for%20Trade-connecting%20developing%20country%20low-res.pdf.

than 40% of their total export values, followed by 26% in Thailand, 19% in the Republic of Korea and 16% in Indonesia. On average, in the last few years, SMEs have been continuously growing, reducing poverty and increasing the number of middle-income workers in most Asian countries.[14] Similarly, according to the annual report of the European Commission, in 2014, 9.9 European companies out of ten were SMEs; they employed two out of three workers and accounted for 71.4% of the increase in employment. In addition, more than half of European SMEs have economic growth expectations, while only one in ten believes that its revenue will decrease.[15]

Economic globalization certainly has the potential to allow SMEs to grow. Indeed, the reduction of trade barriers represents a good opportunity for them to operate in the international markets directly or through international production chains. This process does not only allow economic gains to be equally distributed, but it might well result in SMEs developing into larger firms, improving national productivity and competitiveness. In this framework, connecting Asian and European SMEs by internationalising their production or trade can certainly represent a good counterbalance to the current economic slowdown. By producing locally, SMEs have the potential to actually boost local employment and economic activities. However, while trading globally, they can diversify the structure of their national economies, promoting sustainable growth.[16]

Additionally, although the emergence of international markets has resulted in firms expanding their sizes, revolutionizing modes of production and dominating trade transactions, SMEs have not been swept away.[17] On the contrary, to date, global markets account for between 420 to 510 million SMEs, of which between 360 to 410 million are located in developing coun-

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[14] Asian Development Bank, *Asia SME Finance Monitor 2014*, http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/173205/asia-sme-finance-monitor2014.pdf.

[15] European Commission, *Annual Report on European SMEs 2014/2015: SMEs start hiring again*, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/performance-review/index_en.htm.

[16] Abonyi, George (2015), "Best Policy Practices for Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment for ASEAN and East Asia", in Oum, S. P. Intarakumnerd, G. Abonyi and S. Kagami (eds.), *Innovation, Technology Transfers, Finance, and Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment*, ERIA Research Project Report FY2013, No.14. Jakarta: ERIA, pp. 37-96.

[17] Harvie, Charles (2010), "SMEs and regional production networks", in *Integrating Small and Medium Enterprises into More Integrating East Asia*, ERIA Research Report 2009 No. 8.

tries.[18] Their role has evolved, enabling many to retain a competitive position in the global markets by responding adaptively to market trends. Indeed, the rise of niche markets and the fragmentation of production, which has resulted in growing subcontracting opportunities, are elements that can facilitate the development of SMEs. For instance, the creation of online platforms such as eBay or Alibaba has allowed SMEs to increase their market transactions and their client pools. SMEs address small sections of the market that are traditionally ignored by big firms, as they do not provide large profits. This has allowed the development of born global SMEs that sell peculiar products to customers located in different countries through platforms created by big corporations. Similarly, reduced product life cycles have made flexibility more important than the volume of production. In this frame, SMEs' limited bureaucracy and innovation capacity makes them able to respond to rapidly changing customers' demands. This is especially true when dealing with economic sectors such as the ICT and the green economies, where high levels of innovation and flexibility are required. Nevertheless, to survive in an increasingly competitive environment, and to participate in the business opportunities within global and regional value chains or production networks, Asian and European SMEs require some instruments to foster their capabilities and effectively connect to dynamic segments of global trade.[19]

1. CONNECTING SMES IN THE DIGITAL AND GREEN ECONOMIES

As the most promising markets for global economic growth, the digital and green economies are certainly optimal sectors to boost SMEs' connectivity. For instance, the digital economy is considered a key enabler of competitiveness, innovation and growth and by the end of 2016 it will reach 3.2

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[18] North, Klaus, and Gregorio Varvakis (eds.) (2016), *Competitive Strategies for Small and Medium Enterprises: Increasing Crisis Resilience, Agility and Innovation in Turbulent Times.* Springer, 2016, 1.

[19] Harvie, C. and T. Charoenrat (2015), "SMEs and the Rise of Global Value Chains", in *Integrating SMEs into Global Value Chains: Challenges and Policy Actions in Asia*, pp. 1–26. Manila and Tokyo: Asian Development Bank and Asian Development Bank Institute. Harvie, Charles (2010), "SMEs and regional production networks", in *Integrating Small and Medium Enterprises into More Integrating East Asia*, ERIA Research Report 2009 No. 8.

trillion euros with an 8% annual growth rate.[20] To date, in European ASEM countries, digital SMEs provide the majority of jobs in Europe's ICT sector and generate 40% of the volume of sales. SMEs grow faster when they embrace digital means and digitally-connected SMEs have 22% higher revenue. Yet, only 1.7% of EU enterprises take full advantage of the digital opportunities, leaving the digital market dominated by large multinational business groups. Moreover, even when embracing the digital market, European SMEs tend to operate at a national level. According to the European Commission, only 25% of SMEs currently export, only 13% of them export outside the EU on a regular basis and only 2% have invested outside their home country.[21] As far as Asian ASEM countries are concerned, it is very difficult to find reliable data on the development of SMEs in the ICT sector. The majority of the data is indeed nationally based and thus very difficult to compare. Yet, according to the World Bank Enterprise Survey, in the years between 2006 to 2014, in 13 Asian countries only 32.7% of SMEs had a website and only 8.6% used technology licensed from foreign companies.[22]

As far as the green economy is concerned, in 2015, 329 billion dollars were invested globally in new clean energy.[23] Yet, in European ASEM countries, only one in three SMEs produces green goods or services and four in ten SMEs provide one green job.[24] Moreover, the 87% of European SMEs involved in the green economy operates mainly in national or domestic markets. Not only do they not take advantage of the business opportunities of the Single Market, only 3% trade green products in ASEAN Asian market.[25]

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[20] Iansiti, M. and K. Lakhani (2014), "Digital ubiquity: How connections, sensors, and data are revolutionizing business", *Harvard Business Review*, 92(11), 90–99.

[21] Europe Digital SMEs Alliance (2016), "10 ideas for the future of Europe's digital economy – 'SMEs as the engines of digital change'", http://www.digitalsme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/DIGITALSME_10-ideas-for-EU-digital-economy.pdf.

[22] http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/.

[23] EY, "Renewable energy country attractiveness index", 46 February 2016, http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-RECAI-46-Feb-2016/$FILE/EY-RECAI-46-Feb-2016.pdf.

[24] Jakob Thomä, Diane Strauss, Viola Lutz, and Anna-Corinna Kulle (2015), "Green SMEs and Access to Finance: The Role of Banking Diversity", http://2degrees-investing.org/IMG/pdf/2ii_banking_diversity_v0.pdf.

[25] European Commission, "Small enterprises: Shift to green economy underway, but not at full speed yet", March 2012, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=5845&lang=en&tpa_id=1054&title=Small-enterprises%3A-Shift-to-green-economy-underway%2C-but-not-at-full-speed-yet.

Although several green economy initiatives have been implemented in many Asian countries, such as Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, SMEs require adequate financing to invest in eco-efficient equipment and clean technologies necessary to operate within the green economy.[26] In this respect, there is huge potential for fostering ASEM SMEs' regional and interregional connectivity within the ICT and green market sectors.[27] Although SMEs are flexible and normally adapt quite easily to market trends, they lack the financial and technological resources as well as the skilled labour force and market information to compete in the global markets within the above-mentioned sectors. In both areas, the ASEM process could certainly be a key enabler of such developments. In fact, looking at the current global economic slowdown, SMEs could represent important factors for fostering national economies, as many countries in both Europe and Asia remain heavily dependent on SMEs, particularly for employment generation.[28] In order for ASEM countries to allow SMEs to benefit from market opportunities arising from closer regional economic integration, they must facilitate them in becoming internationally competitive. In this vein, the next section will address the problems affecting SMEs that European and Asian ASEM countries should overcome in order to boost connectivity.[29]

2. BARRIERS TO CONNECTIVITY AMONG SMES

While there is a large potential for both European and Asian SMEs to expand in each other's markets, SMEs are still insufficiently internationalized and have limited access to opportunities offered by the global market's value

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[26] Switch Asia, "Enabling SME access to finance for sustainable consumption and production in Asia", January 2015, http://www.switch-asia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/2015/SWITCH-Asia_and_ADFIAP_Study_Green_Finance.pdf.

[27] Abonyi, G. (2015), "Best Policy Practices for Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment for ASEAN and East Asia", in Oum, S. P. Intarakumnerd, G. Abonyi and S. Kagami (eds.), *Innovation, Technology Transfers, Finance, and Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment*, ERIA Research Project Report FY2013, No.14. Jakarta: ERIA, pp. 37-96, http://www.eria.org/RPR_FY2013_No.14_Chapter_2.pdf.

[28] Naoyuki Yoshino and Farhad Taghizadeh-Hesary (2016), "Major Challenges Facing Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Asia and Solutions for Mitigating Them", April 2016, ADBI Working Paper 564, http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/182532/adbi-wp564.pdf.

[29] International Trade Center, SME Competitiveness Outlook, Connect, compete and change for inclusive growth, 2015 12-14, http://www.intracen.org/publication/SME-Competitiveness-Outlook-2015/.

chains, which represent 49% of the world trade in goods and services.[30] SMEs can internationalize by directly selling final goods and services or by acting as suppliers within global value chains—that is, selling parts, components, and tradable services to other enterprises.

Yet, independent from the economic sector they are operating in, SMEs' connectivity between Europe and Asia is still limited. The majority of SMEs in Europe and Asia address mainly local or domestic markets and going international is considered too risky, too costly and too complicated.[31]

Currently, what should be a land of opportunities for SMEs is an inhospitable environment hampering their capacity to fully leverage their potential.[32] On the one hand, connectivity within Europe is developing but still limited. On the other hand, despite the development of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in January 2016, Asian SMEs' regional connectivity has to improve as well. The barriers causing such problems are related to several factors, such as general managerial culture, lack of information, national regulations and access to finance.

2.1 Culture, technical skills and administrative burden

SMEs' ability to internationalize their green or ICT business is always linked to the costs of innovation entailing processes and acquiring information that SMEs' management need to invest. While big companies can bear such costs, SMEs' resources might be limited. These costs include not only direct financial rates, but also "hidden" expenses, such as time or managerial skills.[33] Entrepreneurship capabilities are indeed crucial in order to elevate SMEs' technical skills acquired on small-scale operations to a higher level and to

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[30]   World Trade Organisation, International Trade Statistics 2015, https://www.wto.org/english/ res_e/statis_e/its2015_e/its2015_e.pdf.

[31]   Taylor, Michael and Andrew Murphy, "SMEs and ebusiness", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise development*, 2004; 11, 3; ProQuest Business Collection, p. 280.

[32]   Poli, Eleonora and Maria Elena Sandalli, "Financing SMEs in Asia and Europe", 2015, IAI working paper, http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/financing-smes-asia-and-europe.

[33]   Revell, A. and R. Blackburn (2004), "SMEs and their Response to Environmental Issues in the UK", Kingston Business School, Occasional Paper Series, No. 57. Taylor, Michael and Andrew Murphy, "SMEs and ebusiness", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise development*, 2004, 11, 3; ProQuest Business Collection, p. 280.

adapt existing operational structures to changing products' demands.[34] In this respect, what ASEM countries could do in order to boost SMEs' managerial effectiveness is to provide training opportunities, which might help them to remain competitive in the global market. For instance, the primary constraint on ASEAN SMEs with regard to accessing international markets is represented by the lack of information on market characteristics and on existing regional, bilateral and investment agreements.[35] Similarly, although European SMEs are generally aware of national legislations on the ICT or green economies, they lack the specific knowledge and capacity to fulfil the requirements and to meet such obligations. In this respect, they often have to face additional costs, since they have to hire external consultants.[36] Hence, ASEM countries could reduce the administrative burdens for operating in the ICT or green economies, especially when the latter represent unaffordable financial and time resources. For instance, free trade agreements between the EU and Asian countries, such as the FTAs with Vietnam and Singapore, contain specific provisions for SMEs to facilitate their understanding of the regulatory environment.

The development of business networks could also directly help SMEs to acquire relevant information necessary to access the global market. Business networks are also important in attracting international firms that normally prefer to deal with groups rather than with individual small enterprises and they can boost innovation by facilitating linkages and partnerships among

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[34] Hoevenagel, R., G. Brummelkamp, A. Peytcheva and R. van der Horst (2007), "Promoting Environmental Technologies in SMEs: Barriers and Measures", European Commission, Institute for Prospective Technological Studies. Rizos, V., A. Behrens, T. Kafyeke, M. Hirschnitz-Garbers, and A. Ioannou (2015), "The Circular Economy: Barriers and Opportunities for SMEs", CEPS Working Documents.

[35] Abonyi, George (2015), "Best Policy Practices for Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment for ASEAN and East Asia", in *Innovation, Technology Transfers, Finance, and Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment* , p. 37. Abonyi, G. and A. B. Supapol (2012), "Getting More Out of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Single Market: Developing Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Policy Index for ASEAN", prepared for the Economics and Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Jakarta.

[36] Calogirou, C. et al. (2010), "SMEs and the environment in the European Union", PLANET SA and Danish Technological Institute, published by European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry. Rizos, V., A. Behrens, T. Kafyeke, M. Hirschnitz-Garbers and A. Ioannou (2015), "The Circular Economy: Barriers and Opportunities for SMEs", CEPS Working Documents.

enterprises.[37] To date, the European Commission has established a number of EU business cooperation centres[38] in Asian markets that advise SMEs on how to invest and seize business opportunities abroad. In Asian countries, such as Japan, the government has implemented SME support programmes and held business meetings to connect SMEs with Asian counterparts. Similarly, the APEC SME Innovation Center in Korea has provided advice to 96 firms in 7 economies. In this respect, the creation of more ASEM SMEs networks is certainly a critical first step to facilitate regional connectivity.

2.2 Access to Finance

The current crisis has resulted in European and Asian SMEs having limited access to finance, in comparison to larger companies. In particular, while banks are still the dominant source of credit for local businesses, market failures have decreased their will to finance risky businesses such as SMEs. First of all, banks do not have easy access to data assessing SMEs' financial positions. SMEs, on their side, face difficulties in obtaining the collateral or guarantees required by the banks. For instance, in Asian ASEM countries, bank loans to SMEs represent only 18.7% of total bank lending in the region.[39]

ASEM countries should support the development of SMEs credit rating systems, which have the potential to benefit both banks and SMEs. On the one hand, SMEs' databases would reduce banks' risk by providing them with information on SMEs' financial health, enabling the banks to adjust interest rates on loans, and to set lending ceilings for each SME client accordingly. On the other hand, SMEs would also benefit from such systems as they could raise funds from banks more easily and gain access to the securitised debt market. For example, the Asian Development Bank is supporting many countries in

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[37] Harvie, Charles (2010), "SMEs and regional production networks", in *Integrating Small and Medium Enterprises into More Integrating East Asia*, ERIA Research Report 2009 No. 8. Abonyi, George (2015), "Best Policy Practices for Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment for ASEAN and East Asia", in *Innovation, Technology Transfers, Finance, and Internationalization of SMEs' Trade and Investment*, p. 37.

[38] The EU SME Centre in China, the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation, the European Business and Technological Centre in India and the European ASEAN Business Centre in Thailand.

[39] Müller, S. and B. Tunçer (2013), "Greening SMEs by Enabling Access to Finance. Strategies and Experiences from the Switch-Asia Programme. Scaling-up Study 2013", The Switch-Asia Network Facility.

Asia in the process of modernizing and improving their business registries. These actions are intended to improve the overall business environment for SMEs and support sustainable and inclusive growth, by facilitating them in obtaining the financial resources necessary to start to grow their businesses.[40] Similarly, the Japanese government has established a Credit Risk Database, which contains data from 14.4 million SMEs. This system has increased SMEs' reliability and encouraged banks to invest in their businesses.[41] Apart from banks, SMEs have difficulties in assessing different funding options, such as regional or national support programmes and government grants, and they do not invest abroad due to the fact that they do not have the necessary knowledge of global markets. In this vein, European and Asian governments have made several efforts to boost SMEs' access to finance and knowledge of foreign markets through measures such as subsidies and by safeguarding banks. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) has established a network of commercial banks in ASEAN countries, in order to provide market information to SMEs willing to invest abroad and it interacts with Japanese financial institutions, in particular regional banks that operate in small cities and towns where they are rooted and where they work closely with SMEs. Given that SMEs consult regional banks on a day-to-day basis, JBIC is working towards interpreting the needs of SMEs with the intermediation and technical assistance of regional banks.[42] Moreover, with 3 billion euros allocated for the period 2014-2020, the EU SME Instrument is a programme of financial support to SMEs dealing with innovation, connectivity and internationalization. The project is structured in several stages to guide SMEs in developing market strategies and business plans.

Other interesting examples of alternative finance are represented by crowdfunding platforms such as the Singapore-based MoolahSense, the Chinese Zhao Cai Bao, the Indonesian Wujudkan or the Swedish fundedbyme.com that can be used by SMEs to finance their business. The aim of such platforms is to attract Asian and European investors interested in

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[40]   Asian Development Bank, "Statistical Business Registers for Improved Information on Small, Medium-Sized, and Large Enterprises, 2013", http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/79695/47108-001-tar.pdf.

[41]   Kuwahara, Satoshi, et al. (2015), "Role of the Credit Risk Database in Developing SMEs in Japan: Lessons for the Rest of Asia.".

[42]   Poli, Eleonora and Maria Elena Sandalli (2015), "Financing SMEs in Asia and Europe", IAI working paper, http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/financing-smes-asia-and-europe.

investing in early-stage Asian companies and SMEs. However, the lack of legal and regulatory foundations for crowdfunding, security of investments and scams might negatively affect such instruments. Another problem is represented by the extremely competitive environment of popular crowdfunding websites, which can result in many SMEs not obtaining the funding they require.[43] In this respect, ASEM countries should implement regional funding programmes through a mix of private and public funding. Following this trend, the Juncker plan, launched by the European Commission in 2014, aims at mobilizing more than 300 billion euro in strategic investments. The Plan has led to the creation of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) with a capital of 16 billion euro from the EU budget and 5 billion euro from the EIB, and aims to provide 75 billion euro to projects involving SMEs. Similarly, national agencies should enforce existing regulations. For example, the Malaysian Plan for "Enhancing Cooperation in Facilitating SMEs Access to Finance for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)" was certainly promising, but its development and implementation was quite limited. In conclusion, while SMEs should base their financial models on tight coordination between private and public actors, the ASEM process could facilitate information flow on national, regional or private programmes to simplify their access to finance.

CONCLUSIONS

Globalization and regional economic integration are certainly good opportunities for ASEM SMEs, yet extreme market liberalization might also hamper their capacity to compete. To have a positive impact on the national economy, SMEs need to be able to participate in regional production networks to connect and cooperate. Certainly, not all SMEs will be flexible and innovative enough to apply such a strategy. Nonetheless, ASEM countries have to create the necessary conditions to allow such a trend. A first step could be the creation within the ASEM process of SMEs capacity-building programmes to promote awareness of the general benefits and opportunities of international markets and online information portals. Even though Free Trade Agreements between the EU and Asian countries might have already harmonized some

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43   Asian Development Bank, *Asia SME Finance Monitor 2014*, p. 37, http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/173205/asia-sme-finance-monitor2014.pdf.

administrative rules, ASEM countries should attempt to lower administrative burdens for SMEs.

Moreover, to boost SMEs' capacity to invest and connect and grow, ASEM countries have to also facilitate cross-border flows of financing and financial instruments. For instance, the creation of databases of regional crowdfunding platforms or regional bank loans supported by international organisations could certainly allow SMEs to acquire more information on funding. Another regional initiative could be the implementation of mechanisms, such as the Japanese one, to reduce information gaps between banks and SMEs. In conclusion, although the differences among ASEM countries do not allow a unique "one size fits all" policy, certainly the number of actions that countries could implement within the ASEM process is significant and has the potential to radically boost SMEs' economic performance.

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Connectivity of Ideas: Engaging Civil Society Organisations

Bruce Wilson

INTRODUCTION

Every day, media outlets all over the world report on the most recent manifestations of global conflict and uncertainty. Climate change, terrorism, trade talks and social trends all attract attention, each affecting many nations in different regions.

Much of this news coverage gives particular attention to the efforts to address these global challenges through international negotiations. These negotiations increasingly are multilateral, involving various degrees of shared learning and collaborative action, on the one hand, and coercion on the other.

In 2015, two major examples demonstrated the increasing capacity of international forums to take action, or at least to set out directions for action. In September 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, 2015-2030, and in December 2015, the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) reached agreement on a common framework that commits all countries to report regularly on their emissions and implementation efforts, and undergo international review.

The European Union (EU), China and other Asian countries played significant roles in each of these decision-making processes. Each was the outcomes of sustained dialogue and intense exchange of views over several years. In both cases, intergovernmental negotiations were influenced by civil society. Citizens, through many non-governmental organisations (NGOs), made a significant contribution to shaping both the environment for agreement, and the terms on which agreement was reached.

The role of civil society demonstrated the effective learning and collaborative action that can arise from the continuous exchange of ideas and

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experiences amongst non-government organisations and civil society representatives. Their expertise and experience in "on the ground" programmes can be a crucial source of knowledge and understanding to inform intergovernmental negotiations. Key actors in this context are academics in universities and other research and development institutes, policy-advisors in both business and NGO organisations, as well as unattached representatives of civil society.

The evolution of the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) demonstrates the potential of civil society to complement and to inform intergovernmental proceedings. This chapter will explore this arena of action and how cooperation among think tanks, and between the academic and policy level can contribute to enhancing the climate for international cooperation on key issues. In relation to ASEM, several European-Asian networks have aimed to share research and ideas, and to promote sharing of knowledge, ideas and a commitment to ongoing learning. To demonstrate this, this chapter will draw on the example of the development of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4 on Education.

IMPLICATIONS OF INTENSIFYING GLOBALISATION

The recent decision by British voters for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, along with key themes in the 2016 United States presidential campaign and widespread concern about protecting national borders, has prompted renewed reflection about the apparent costs of globalisation. Have the growing interconnections amongst nations, through trade, human security issues and disasters, been accompanied by increasing distrust and fear of others, and their perceived threat to living standards and cultural practices?

Globalisation is used as a shorthand term to describe the apparent intensified interaction amongst nations in all parts of the world. It points to perceived loss of national sovereignty, diminished identity and uncertain standard of living and quality of life for many people. These perceptions and political tendencies reflect the growing centrality of information and communication technologies as a pervasive and generic infrastructure for economic, social, political, and cultural activity. At a very practical level, this leads to the "collapse of time and space" (Harvey 1989), so that wherever you are, it is possible, if you have access to the technology, to watch in real time a speech, a riot or a sporting event. Even in the poorest countries, at least two thirds of the population have a mobile phone. Social media enable any citizen with

a smartphone to become an international journalist, offering photographs as well as text. Business and trade have been transformed by the now common capacity for remote management of parallel production processes. Finance can move internationally almost instantly, and stock markets respond similarly to actions or sentiments in quite distant jurisdictions.

Hence, ASEM's commitment to exploring the potential benefits of increased connectivity and how it might be realised is very timely. So also is the involvement of civil society in these debates and in supporting constructive initiatives. The continuous exchange of dialogue and experience, not only at the intergovernmental level, is crucial to ameliorating citizens' fears. It offers information in place of misrepresentation, and facilitates a shared approach to problem solving.

Many kinds of human problems are global challenges. The importance of collective and comprehensive action has been recognised in relation to many of these issues, not least for example, with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under the terms adopted by the United Nations, the SDGs apply to all nations, demonstrating their global character. This is demonstrated yet further in the recognition that, while governments are responsible for reporting on performance against the 17 Goals and their associated targets, achieving progress will depend heavily upon the engagement of NGOs and business. The advocacy for, and action to implement, the SDGs will involve research, funding, programme leadership and practical delivery from every part of society, not only from governments.

ASEM AND THE SDGS

The SDGs provide an important opportunity already for demonstrating the potential for ASEM to contribute as a platform for Asian and European leaders to explore issues related to their implementation. Unlike the previous Millennium Development Goals and the associated "Education for All" programme, up to 2015, which provided an agenda for relieving poverty in the poorer nations, the SDGs apply to all. The United Nations expects all nations to report on their performance against the targets and indicators agreed for each Goal. This means that they are relevant to all member states of the European Union, as well as to Asian nations.

In November 2015, ASEM foreign ministers adopted a statement which affirmed the significance of the Sustainable Development Agenda, its scale

and the depth of the challenge. They agreed on the importance of balancing economic, environmental and social development, acknowledging the link-ages between eradicating poverty and building sustainability. They agreed that ASEM had a key role to play:

> Ministers underlined the importance of systematic and multi-layered follow-up and review of implementation of the Agenda. ASEM could contribute to that follow-up and review process. They agreed to fur-ther work in the ASEM framework on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, so as to facilitate and encourage the sharing of best practices. (ASEM FMM12 2015)

This theme was also a key focus in the outcomes of the ASEM Leaders' Summit, ASEM11, in Ulaanbaatar in July, 2016. Recognising the significance of several international agreements in 2015, ASEM leaders noted particularly the opportunities to collaborate in the implementation of the SDGs, build-ing on the ASEM Budapest Initiative on Sustainable Development Dialogue. They agreed on

> the importance of adapting the relevant national planning process, development plans or strategies to integrate the Sustainable Develop-ment Goals (2015) and of putting in place systematic and multi-layered follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the international and national level. They expressed the readiness on the part of ASEM to contribute to the follow-up and review process of the UN and other organizations at the international levels. (ASEM11 2016, 2)

Sharing best practices and experiences was highlighted as a particular oppor-tunity for collaboration. This is an objective which civil society can assist with readily, given the degree of collaboration which has been fostered during the process of shaping the specific character of the Goals and Targets.

SDGS AND LIFELONG LEARNING: A FOCUS ON ACTION

The development of the SDGs was very much a global process involving in-tergovernmental decision-making which drew on civil society experience and advocacy. This, with the Paris Agreement, demonstrates a new era of linking intergovernmental processes with civil society engagement.

The United Nations ratified the Sustainable Development Goals after a highly consultative process that was implemented following the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). That confer-ence agreed that an Open Working Group structure would be established

to facilitate the development of the goals (United Nations Sustainable Development, 2016).

In the subsequent three years, a broad range of government and statutory bodies, and civil society organisations participated in a range of regional and global forums to debate possible framing of the Goals. These discussions were brought together by the Open Working Group, which ultimately established the frame of the 17 Goals. The specificity of the Goals was addressed through identifying an overall package of 169 targets (each linked to one or the other of the Goals), against which specific indicators were proposed, supposedly measurable so that each nation would be able to respond objectively.

A very specific example is provided by the development of the Education Goal. Goal 4 states: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. The Targets, which give some shape to the Goal, are:

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

- By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

- By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

- By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

- By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable

lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

▪ Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

▪ By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

▪ By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.

(See the United Nations' website, http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/.)

The seventh target is important because of its clear emphasis on the centrality of lifelong learning for all of the Goals. Successful progress on each of the other Goals depends, in one way or another, on the engagement of all citizens in various processes for gaining and creating knowledge, enhancing capability and changing attitudes, as well as the other Goal-specific actions that are likely to be undertaken both through multi-level governance in each nation, and by NGOs.

The inclusion of lifelong learning in the Goal itself was a significant outcome of advocacy by adult education NGOs, as was the number of Targets which clearly imply outcomes for adults, and an ongoing commitment to promoting learning as an integral aspect of adult life. The peak bodies in Europe and Asia which bring together the national associations for adult education and lifelong learning are the European Associated for Educating Adults (EAEA) and the Asian and South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE). Both are key members of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and were involved deeply in shaping

its position with respect to shaping an international agreement to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EfA). EfA had seen significant advances in achievements with respect to primary education, but had left much to do with adult education and lifelong learning (see the Final Statement from the Global Education for All Meeting in Oman, May 2014, http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Santiago/pdf/Muscat-Agreement-ENG.pdf). The ICAE was a key participant in the various online networks and key forums shaping the new agenda.

One important insight from this experience is the contested character of advocacy and negotiation involving NGOs and other civil society partners. This reflects significant differences in values, ambitions, interests and resources, much the same as the disagreements in intergovernmental negotiations. Many civil society organisations purport to emphasise the weight of their perspectives through relying on "evidence", whether from the experience of programme implementation or research. Even here, debate can focus on the merits of different kinds of evidence, and on its relevance to the policy agendas under negotiation. Researchers in universities and elsewhere play a key role in projects and peer review of findings, providing verified insights into current circumstances and possible action to effect change. Civil society organisations, perhaps even more than governments, can claim that their representations are on behalf of vulnerable citizens who are otherwise without a voice in these processes. This is especially so when the debates are at a global level, especially far from the daily experience of citizens in poorer nations.

ASEM AND CIVIL SOCIETY EXCHANGE

In the first place, the Sustainable Development Goals are relevant to ASEM because, unlike the MDGs and EfA, of the UN's expectations that all nations from the least to the most developed will report against the Targets and Indicators. All nations, European Union member states, ASEAN members and other Asian states, have work to do to demonstrate that they have reached the Targets for the 17 Goals. Australia, as one example of a developed country, does not meet each of the targets across all Goals, and has substantial work to do against some Targets. Clearly, circumstances differ across nations in all parts of the world, so each nation will set their own priorities in how to achieve the best outcomes in their contexts. Economic, social and environmental factors are fundamental to the achievement of the Goals, and the ASEM foreign

ministers have recognised this in their declaration that relevant *national* policies or programmes need to serve as the foundation for action in each nation.

Hence, a bi-regional forum such as ASEM can be an important platform for sharing experiences and supporting various approaches to implementation because of its scale and diversity. It brings together the largest number of nations for bi-regional discussion, including nations with very different histories, resources, economic and political outlooks, and experiences of global programmes. Some of these are amongst the wealthiest nations in the world, with very large economies, while some are the poorest. Notwithstanding the benefits of scale, its inter-regional character means that that it does provide a more focused environment for genuine discussion of various, even competing, views on specific topics amongst nations from adjoining continents (see Yeo 2014, for a discussion of these opportunities and risks).

More interestingly, ASEM is a relevant forum for exchange because of its diverse tracks, which provide not only for intergovernmental exchange, but also engagement with civil society. Its flexibility and its voluntaristic character (in the absence of a formal secretariat or organisational infrastructure) mean that conversations are sought rather than forced. Nations participate in these processes, even the Leaders' Summits and the Foreign Ministers' Meetings, as they judge it to be in their interests and of value to them. This applies also to other ASEM Ministerial meetings, covering Education, Transport, Labour and Finance, for example.

ASEM has a unique source of support for the interaction of its intergovernmental tracks with civil society through the resources of the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF, http://www.asef.org/). ASEF undertakes approximately 100 projects, covering such topics as culture, sustainability, the economy, public health and governance. Its projects play a key role in facilitating participation of voices in dialogue between Europe and Asia which might not otherwise be heard. It exercises considerable leadership in promoting discussion about topics such as youth employment and entrepreneurialism, and builds opportunities for different nations to draw on others' initiatives.

With ASEF leadership and support, there are other ASEM initiatives which promote a role for civil society. For example, the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub facilitates interaction and shared projects among lifelong learning researchers from Europe and Asia. Based in Copenhagen with support from the Danish government, the Hub has five research networks, covering issues such as work-based learning; e-learning; professional qualifications;

and national policies for lifelong learning. Hub and network conferences have been held in recent years in such diverse places as Bali, Melbourne, Glasgow, Copenhagen and Hanoi.

ASEF also plays a key role in the organisation of an ASEM Conference for University Rectors, associated with a Forum for students. These are important opportunities for exchange for one segment of civil society, typically focused on a topic such as youth employment and entrepreneurialism. One of the key features of ASEF's approach is that they structure these events so that there are linkages with others. For example, a statement from the Students' Forum is presented to the Rectors' Conference. Similarly, a meeting of the Lifelong Learning Hub's network on national policies presented a summary of its discussions to an ASEM Labour Ministers' Meeting. Other activities include an Editors' roundtable, and a Model ASEM involving students.

There are opportunities for civil society to meet prior to ASEM Leaders' Summits, and to present a summary of the outcomes of their deliberations to the Leaders. There are three forums which have this opportunity:

▪ the Asia-Europe People's Forum is an opportunity for NGOs, trade unions, and transnational networks to examine key social justice and democratic themes (http://www.aepf.info/);

▪ the Asia-Europe Business Forum focuses on topics such as building an inclusive economy, Asia-Europe connectivity, integrating SMEs into global value chain and promoting investment and green development (http://www.aseminfoboard.org/sites/default/files/documents/Declaration_0.pdf); and

▪ the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership also meets prior to the Leaders' Summit to promote cooperation between parliaments in Europe and Asia, and offers parliamentarians an opportunity to engage with the ASEM process (see http://www.aseminfoboard.org/content/asia-europe-parliamentary-partnership-meeting-asep).

Taken together, this overview of different means through which civil society links with the ASEM intergovernmental process demonstrates the significant potential for various stakeholders to contribute to the exchange of ideas. Academics, students, NGOs, business networks and individual parliamentarians all have opportunities to develop an agreed perspective on key issues, and for them to be heard in Ministerial meetings. This is not to obscure the difficulties of reaching consensus, nor the complexity of many of the issues

under consideration. However, it does indicate the potential of the ASEM process across its various tracks to facilitate exchange amongst a broad range of European and Asian stakeholders.

CONCLUSION: A ROLE FOR ASEM WITH THE SDGS

The importance of the SDGs for ASEM has been suggested earlier in the references to the Chairs' Statements from the Foreign Ministers' meetings (November 2015) and the Leaders' Summits (October 2014 and July 2016). However, ASEM's supplementary tracks offer several other opportunities to support and lead action to drive the implementation of the SDGs. This is not only a role for ASEM; the openness of the ASEM agenda offers opportunities for new alliances with other international networks.

This kind of international collaboration is of fundamental importance because there is so much that is unknown about how the SDGs can be implemented. There are enormous tensions between the ambitions which have been set by the UN and the apparent global capacity to deliver on some Goals, at least. Both intergovernmental collaboration and civil society engagement will be necessary for there to be any prospect that the Goals' Targets can be achieved.

ASEM, through its various tracks, can provide valuable forums for debate about these kinds of issues. For example, with respect to the key issues around the role of lifelong learning, the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub can address the role of research in this area, and identify research priorities. Through the Hub, researchers from Europe and Asia bring a broad diversity in the types of national contexts from which researchers are drawn, providing some sensitivity to the questions of diversity of circumstances and resources.

These SDGs pose very significant research questions. Setting a clear research agenda is important as nations in widely divergent situations will benefit from evidence about how best limited resources can be most usefully applied to achieve specific kinds of outcomes. While there are a raft of very specific research issues related to each Goal, some questions encompass all areas:

- ▪ What capability do nations have to implement the Goals?

- ▪ What kind of international collaboration will be most useful in enhancing national capability to implement the Goals?

- How appropriate are the targets and indicators that are being developed?

- How is adult education best able to support the implementation of the Goals other than Goal 4?

Are they the most useful types of research questions to ask? Should the research agenda be focused more around more immediate issues that will arise in determining relevant action towards the targets? To what extent will the priorities in research questions vary in different settings?

The commitment made already by the ASEM Leaders' Summit and the Foreign Ministers Meeting to give some priority to the implementation of the SDGs provides an over-arching policy framework to support and guide the work of the other ASEM tracks and ASEF. Similarly, ASEF's priority on the SDGs provides an active opportunity to coordinate the outputs from the various tracks' deliberations into a wider network. For example, the Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum provide valuable opportunities for linking the LLL Hub's work with a wider audience, and potentially other researchers that might wish to get involved. Work by the Hub might be useful also for promoting the Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF) to see an ongoing role in the debates about the implementation of the SDGs. Taken together, ASEM can make a deep contribution not only to direct exchange amongst European and Asian nations on these issues, but also lead the way in exploring new questions of global governance, and how these kinds of global challenges can be addressed.

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Connectivity of Ideas: Enhancing Parliamentary Cooperation

Jürgen Rüland

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is the compression of time and space (Robertson 1992). Once-distant world regions become increasingly interdependent. Revolutionary advancements in digital technology are the key drivers of an intensifying connectivity which also markedly accelerate the exchange of ideas. The flow of ideas and the normative change it triggers, has been the object of intense study in virtually all major disciplines of social science. In political science, diffusion research has been stimulated by what have since become known as Europeanization studies: research examining to what extent and how Eastern European accession countries have adopted the EU's *acquis communeautaire* (Radaelli 2000). More recently, this research has been extended to the interactions of regional organizations (Börzel and Risse 2012; Börzel 2013). Inspired by Ian Manner's seminal article, portraying the EU as a "normative power" (Manners 2002)—an international actor differing from conventional great powers and their reliance on military strength—a research agenda emerged studying the EU's influence on the ideational repository and institution-building of other regional organizations. The "Transformative Power Europe" project at the Free University in Berlin,[1] for instance, regarded the EU as a major norm entrepreneur, which influences the institutional structure of non-European regionalism to such an extent that, if there is not a convergence of forms of regionalism towards the EU model, there is at least an increasing similarity of regional organizations across the globe.

While the extent to which the EU influences other regional organizations is empirically contested, it is evident that the European Parliament (EP) indeed

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acts as a major norm entrepreneur (Feliu and Serra 2015). Recent research has persuasively shown that this is also the case in the EP's relations with Asian counterparts (Rüland and Carrapatoso 2015). Focusing on the interactions of regional parliaments or parliamentary bodies such as the EP, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Association (AIPA) and the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP), the following chapter examines the ideational impact of parliamentary public diplomacy on regional "Others" under the roof of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). It first discusses why it is relevant to enhance parliamentary interaction, before examining the ideational connectivity of interregional parliamentary relations in greater detail. The concluding section offers recommendations for strengthening parliamentary cooperation.

WHY INTERREGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION IS IMPERATIVE

Most international organizations struggle with a serious democracy deficit, irrespective of the fact that the living conditions of an ever-increasing percentage of the population are affected by decision-making beyond the nation state. Trans-regional dialogue fora such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) are no exception to this problem. ASEM shares with many other international institutions a pillarized structure consisting of the Political, Economic and Sociocultural Pillars. Yet this structure is highly asymmetric as the Political Pillar, or track one, where governments interact, is absolutely dominant. Critics rightfully bemoan that executive interactions suffer from a deliberate lack of transparency and accountability. Hence, the legitimacy of many international institutions is contested, a predicament that is exacerbated by the fact that there is no nexus and, hence, synergy between the pillars. Although the University of Helsinki's comprehensive study, taking stock of ASEM's first decade, highlighted the lack of interconnection between the three pillars (University of Helsinki 2006; Gaens 2008), little tangible progress has since been made in this realm. If there is connection between the pillars at all, it is mainly between government and business representatives, in the case of ASEM reflecting the high priority member governments attach to economic objectives. However, such government-business interaction is suspected by civil society organizations and critical parliamentarians as a mechanism confining interregional or transregional dialogue fora to venues for advancing a neoliberal globalization agenda, benefiting in the first place transnationally

operating companies, and spurring economic growth that is neither equitable nor sustainable. The problem associated with this seemingly deficitary "input legitimacy" of international institutions is that it triggers leftist and rightist populist resistance which makes the implementation of multilateral policies increasingly difficult. Even worse, in such cases, as governments are facing headwind in the implementation of international agreements, the "output legitimacy" of international fora is also at stake, confronting them with the charge that they are merely "talk shops," not worth the governance costs their existence entails. Such trends surrounding virtually every major international institution weaken global governance and reduce it to a "diminished multilateralism" (Rüland 2012), making cooperative and multilateral solutions to the mounting cross-border problems associated with globalization increasingly difficult to implement.

Independent civil society fora and interregional parliamentary cooperation have the potential to mitigate the legitimacy problems of the executive pillar. However, this effect is tied to the preconditions that such fora reach a critical mass of interactions, that invigorating regional parliaments is an objective shared by the members of an international institution and that they are sufficiently connected with the respective institution's other pillars. If this is the case, they could reduce the information deficit on activities of transregional fora such as ASEM, establish a modicum of oversight and thereby assuage their accountability problem. They can expedite the flow of ideas, norms and policies, disseminate best practices and help to identify problems. Moreover, by placing cross-national or cross-regional problems on their agendas, they could contribute to transforming inter- and trans-regional fora from mere "balancing" (Hänggi, Roloff, and Rüland 2006) or "hedging" devices (Rüland 2011) to genuine "multilateral utilities" (Dent 2004). In the process, trans-regional parliamentary bodies might facilitate "bounded learning" (Weyland 2005) which, however,—as recent research has shown time and again—by no means *per se* leads to full-fledged transformation of previous ideational orders, the so-called "cognitive prior" (Acharya 2004, 2009). Much more frequent are processes of mimicry and localization, which to varying degrees go hand-in-hand with rhetoric-action gaps and "decoupling," denoting a process of ideational and functional deviation from the external model (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Acharya 2004, 2009; Rüland 2014). This also means that external ideational stimuli are appropriated only partially. Usually they are adapted to extant local ideas, world views, norms, beliefs or policies. It would

thus be completely misleading to expect that even vocal norm entrepreneurs such as the EP succeed in paving the way for normative Westernization with the whole gamut of pertinent norms, including liberal democracy, respect for human rights, good governance, rule of law, minority protection and the like. Normative change is competitive and omnidirectional and subject to processes of negotiation involving external and domestic actors.

REGIONAL PARLIAMENTS AND THE CONNECTIVITY OF IDEAS

Regional parliamentary bodies have indirect and direct means for promoting ideas, norms and policies. Indirectly, they may foster ideational connectivity through resolutions, reports and budgetary powers, whereas direct links for transporting ideas include (1) joint parliamentary bodies, (2) delegations visiting their counterparts in the region and (3) election observer missions. Yet one major problem regional parliamentary bodies in Asia face in this role is that they are neither parliaments nor assemblies, but merely "conventions" (Kraft-Kasack 2008), which have at best only weak consultative power, but no legislative, no oversight and no budgetary powers. Member governments unswervingly stick to the state-centric nature of their regional organizations, thereby retaining what has been termed "regional corporatism" (Rüland 2013, 2014; Rüland and Bechle 2014). In other words, they act as controllers and gatekeepers of non-state interest representation and thereby strongly curtail the latter's independent norm entrepreneurship. The subsequent paragraphs briefly discuss the impact these parliamentary channels have on the flow of ideas in ASEM, although this can only be a perfunctory analysis as the normative entrepreneurship of regional parliamentary bodies is completely under-researched and empirical evidence unsystematic and scattered at best.

INDIRECT LINKS

RESOLUTIONS, REPORTS AND BUDGETARY POWERS

The EP passes many resolutions and reports with a normative message. While such resolutions always target the domestic audience in Europe, including EU member governments and the European Commission, they much more address what legislators and the international public regard as serious breaches of essential rights promoted by the EU. In most cases, resolutions thus criticize

repressive regimes and express concern for the respect of human rights in a region or a specific country. Between 1 January 2010 and 30 April 2014 alone, the EP passed 221 human rights- and democracy-related resolutions, an average of four per month (Rüland and Carrapatoso 2015: 201). Nearly one-fourth of them (fifty-two) centred on ASEM's Asian member countries with China, Pakistan and Myanmar as the most frequent targets. EP resolutions supported the sanction policies against the Burmese military rulers, urged them to initiate democratic reforms and criticized the expulsion of the Rohingyas, a Muslim ethnic minority residing in the state of Arakan. The EP also exerted pressure on the Commission to include a human rights clause in all of the Community's external agreements (Ibid.: 200).

Paradigmatic for the normative entrepreneurship of the EP are two Foreign Affairs Committee reports in support of a motion for a resolution. Of the forty-six items in the 2014 report on EU-ASEAN relations, eleven addressed human rights concerns (including labour rights) and an additional three democracy issues. In particular, the report called for a strengthening of the parliamentary dimension of ASEAN-EU ties, the recognition of AIPA as an integral part of ASEAN in the ASEAN Charter, the creation of a Europe-ASEAN parliamentary assembly and the creation of links between the EP's Subcommittee on Human Rights and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR). The report explicitly endorsed European capacity-building measures offered to ASEAN under the APRIS and ARISE schemes (Jetschke and Portela 2012; Jetschke 2013; Reiterer 2013) and the EP's Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy (OPPD) (Nuttin 2016: 316). Also, the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP) is mentioned, expressing hopes that this interregional tie can be strengthened.[2] Although to a greater extent focussing on economic issues, the report on EU-China relations, too, prominently touches upon human rights issues.[3] On a more general level, the EP adopts an annual report and a resolution on human rights in the world, which also contains policy recommendations for the EU's relations with Asian countries (Feliu and Serra 2015: 22).

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[2] "Report on the future of EU-ASEAN relations (2013/2148(INI))," Committee on Foreign Affairs, available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2013-0441+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN (accessed 5 May 2016).

[3] "Report on EU-China relations (2015/2013 (INI))," Committee on Foreign Affairs, available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2015-0350+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN (accessed 5 May 2016).

Finally, the EP employs its budgetary rights to promote the European repository of liberal-cosmopolitan norms. The EP played a decisive role in the creation of a budget line for the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and exerts budgetary control over virtually all of the EU's external financial instruments (Ibid.: 23). Closely connected with the budgetary instruments of the EP is the EU's conditionality policy, which the EP has always strongly supported and which may lead to substantial aid cuts in case of human rights violations or unconstitutional changes of government. The EP has therefore been a major promoter of the "Essential Element Clause," which commits EU partners to respect human rights and to foster democratic principles and constitutionality (Ibid.: 29).

By contrast, although AIPA's data bank of resolutions was not accessible at the time of writing, scattered evidence suggests that AIPA is much more inward-looking than the EP and rarely addresses issues in the EU (Nuttin 2016). Also, the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), dominated by Middle Eastern Muslim countries, rarely addresses issues beyond the Middle East and Asia. SAARC so far does not possess a regional parliament, although the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians can be considered as a parliamentary nucleus. The Shanghai Cooperation Corporation (SCO), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Eurasian Economic Union have no parliamentary representation at all. The organizational asymmetry between the EP and Asian regional organizations is thus also reflected in the intensity of parliamentary public diplomacy and norm entrepreneurship. Moreover, unlike the EU, Asian parliamentary organizations operate on a strictly inter-governmental basis, impeding existing regional parliaments from engaging in an open discourse about norms, as this would be tantamount to a violation of their quintessential non-interference norm. This also explains why they do not operate with conditionalities. Yet this diffusion of the non-interference norm to Asian regional organizations is one of the most remarkable successes of ASEAN's norm entrepreneurship (Stubbs 2008).

With a view to the EP, we may expect budgetary powers to have a greater influence on partner states than resolutions and reports. Due to their non-binding and primarily recommendatory nature, the latter may at first sight appear as weak leverage for the promotion of ideas, norms and policies.[4] However, on closer examination, it becomes evident that this is not neces-

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[4]   The following paragraphs draw from Rüland and Carrapatoso (2015).

sarily the case. For instance, EP resolutions are disseminated widely; they are usually sent to the European Commission, the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the EU Member States, the government of the concerned country and, if the country of the resolution is a member country of a regional grouping, to other member governments of this regional organization. In the case of ASEAN, they are also sent to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Human Rights Commission (AICHR), the member countries of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the UN Secretary General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and, for resolutions concerning Myanmar, also to the UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur for Myanmar. Resolutions therefore have a significant impact on public opinion in Europe and beyond. By setting normative benchmarks, they markedly increase the accountability pressures on EU bodies, EU member governments and—consequentially—also Asian governments under scrutiny. The EP's resolutions resonate in the media, facilitated by the fact that about 1,000 journalists are permanently based at the EP (Klingshirn and Lauschinger 2013: 14). Moreover, while local as well as trans-nationally organized civil society networks and international organizations take note of them, websites, blogs and social media also spread their message. This, however, is much less the case for AIPA or ASEP, which at best get cursory attention by the media and thus face major obstacles in the dissemination of the ideas and norms on which their resolutions rest (Rüland and Carrapatoso 2015: 204).

Second, EP resolutions strengthen government-critical parliamentarians and NGOs advocating human rights and democracy reforms in Asia. In many Asian countries (but increasingly also in Eastern European countries under the leadership of right-wing populist political parties), these groups constitute a political minority. They have to contend with government suspicion and, in autocratic regimes, often even harassment. Interaction with the EP raises their stature and international visibility, which makes it more difficult for governments to discredit them. This is the case if—as documentary analysis suggests—the EP invites experts and NGO representatives from Asia to testify in its hearings. In some cases, the EP was even directly approached by concerned Asian parliamentarians as well as local and trans-nationally organized NGOs to respond to human rights violations or to pressure Asian governments to respect human rights (Rüland and Carrapatoso 2015: 204). Cases in point are groups such as the Asian Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC),

the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Caucus on Human Rights, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Caucus on Good Governance and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Caucus on Labor Migration (Ibid.; Deinla 2013; Nuttin 2016).

Third, EP resolutions do not only resonate in the European public, or among (trans-national) civil society networks, international organizations and government-critical groups in Asia, they also impact on the targeted governments. Rarely do Asian governments ignore EP resolutions, although—if we apply Risse, Ropp and Sikkink's spiral model—they often respond by denial or tactical concession, albeit in some cases also by elevating reforms to prescriptive status (Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999). Denial is often accompanied by accusing the EP of interfering in their internal affairs and disrespecting their sovereignty (Hindley 1999: 29). However, in other cases, they seek to assuage EP critique by providing evidence that they are in the process of remedying the problem exposed. How seriously Asian governments take the EP is further shown by the fact that high-ranking government dignitaries visiting the EU often also meet the leadership of the EP, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the members of the respective delegation, or, in some cases, even address the EP plenary. Asian governments also respond seismically to the awarding of the Sakharov Prize, which the EP created in 1988 in order to honour outstanding human rights activists. Among the Asians to whom the prize was awarded were former Burmese opposition icon Aung San Suu Kyi, Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen, Timor Leste independence leader Xanana Gusmao and Chinese regime critic and social activist Hu Jia.[5] The award to the latter triggered fierce protests from the Chinese government that accused the EP of honouring a "criminal."[6]

DIRECT LINKS

JOINT PARLIAMENTARY BODIES

The EP is partner to four inter-parliamentary assemblies: The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean and the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly. For Asia no inter-parliamentary assembly exists. The EU-ASEAN parliamentary association proposed by the EP has

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[5] *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 24 October 2008.

[6] Ibid.

so far failed to materialize. The only parliamentary forum that could be regarded at least as an informal joint parliamentary assembly is the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP) (Nuttin 2016: 319), although on the EP's side there is mounting frustration about the forum's poor performance (Rüland and Carrapatoso 2015: 209).

ASEP was founded on the insistence of European parliamentarians with the ambitious objective of democratizing ASEM (Bersick 2008). Established in 1996, ASEP serves as the parliamentary arm of ASEM. ASEP convened for the first time in 1996 in Strasbourg, but had to be revived after it failed to meet in 1998 and 2000. Since the 2002 meeting in Manila, it has convened regularly every two years, with the eighth and most recent meeting held in Ulaanbataar (2016). ASEP pursues the objectives of helping to advance ASEM, monitoring the progress achieved within ASEM, strengthening dialogue and mutual understanding among parliamentarians, and drawing to the attention of ASEM leaders a number of issues which legislators consider to be priorities as laid down in resolutions and the final declarations of ASEP meetings. Meetings cover a broad array of themes on a non-binding basis, fitting well the broad band and "talk shop" nature of institutions generated by "diminished multilateralism" (Rüland 2012). EP legislators are thus openly critical of ASEP and question its effectiveness. Due to the limited duration of the meetings, lack of preparation and coordination, ceremonial plenary sessions with sterile prefabricated speeches, extremely limited debate, consensual decision-making and poor attendance (Rüland and Carrapatoso 2015: 209-210), they regard it as a typical case of a "low-key event with little substance," (Nuttin 2016: 319), in other words, hardly more than a social gathering of parliamentarians. The Ulaanbataar meeting, for instance, was scheduled for three days: the first day was reserved for arrival of the participants, the second day for plenary and committee meetings and the third day for sightseeing. Working meetings on the second day lasted six hours, but only 2.5 hours were earmarked for debates and open exchange in committees.[7] It goes without saying that these are adverse conditions for a vibrant discourse and the free flow of ideas in either direction. Ideas can only have a sustainable impact if there is sufficient time and space for making an informed argument, thorough deliberation of best practices and careful probing of the claims made. Moreover, until the 2014 Milan summit, there was no direct interaction between parliamentar-

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[7] The ASEP-9 agenda is available at: http://www.asep9summaryreport-2.pdf, (accessed 26 May 2016).

ians and government leaders at ASEM summits. Yet, although the Milan summit scheduled a meeting between the heads of state and government and parliamentary, civil society and business representatives, lasting only 15 minutes, the meeting was hardly more than symbolism.[8] Consequently, there is little pressure on governments to act on the ASEP resolutions and thereby increase its accountability.

Inter-parliamentary delegations

Another option for regional parliaments to promote ideas are inter-parliamentary delegations. In the EP, the number of such delegations has almost doubled over the last two decades and currently stands at forty-one.[9] Their membership varies between twelve and seventy legislators representing a cross-section of the EP's party groups.[10] As far as the region covered by ASEM is concerned, there are nine EP inter-parliamentary delegations, including Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia, South Asia (without India), India, China, Japan, the Korean Peninsula, Southeast Asia and ASEAN countries and Australia and New Zealand.[11] However, in partner countries, groups of parliamentarians interested in such exchanges are usually much less institutionalized; in some countries they are merely informal Friendship Groups (Nuttin 2016: 328).

Inter-parliamentary delegations usually meet alternately in the respective Asian countries and in Brussels or Strasbourg. The delegation on Southeast Asia and ASEAN countries, for instance, organizes three to four trips per annum to the region, with four to ten legislators participating. These delegation trips take between three and six days. The programme is usually dense and includes meetings with the parliamentary counterparts, the head of the EU Delegation Office in the respective country and other European diplomatic staff, but very often, delegation members also have the opportunity to meet high-ranking government representatives of the host country such as the prime minister or president, the foreign minister, and senior officials. Also

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[8]   See the ASEM-10 agenda in Milan, available at: http://www.aseminfoboard.org/events/10th-asem-summit-asem10 (accessed 26 May 2016).

[9]   See http://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/about-delegations.html (accessed 5 May 2016).

[10] See European Parliament, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/0058a10b22/Delegations.html (accessed 12 May 2014).

[11] Ibid.

frequently scheduled are meetings with opposition leaders, labour unionists and other civil society representatives (Posdorf 2008: 15). In Brussels the delegation meets regularly with the ASEAN Brussels Committee, composed of the ASEAN ambassadors accredited to the EU. Delegation members also participate in many other activities, such as think tank meetings, exposure tours of donors and other dialogue events, where they meet counterparts or members of the epistemic community of the other region (Rüland and Carrapatoso 2015: 208).

As the published programmes of inter-parliamentary meetings suggest, these encounters typically cover a broad range of themes, such as the relations between the EU and ASEAN, the EU and individual ASEAN member countries, geopolitics, issues related to trade and investment, specifically the state of affairs in the negotiation of free trade areas and Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs), the political situation in the region or a given country, and in this regard, key European concerns such as human rights issues and basic liberties, democratization, good governance and the rule of law. While delegations often admonish their Asian counterparts to adopt the liberal-cosmopolitan norms championed by the EU, occasionally they also resort to thinly veiled threats when they feel that regimes (of smaller countries such as Laos or previously Myanmar) fail to show any reformist zeal.[12]

However, the impact of these delegations on the flow of ideas is limited. Resolutions sponsored by members of these delegations in the EP may have the effect that has been discussed above, but the impact of the direct interaction between the parliamentarians should not be overrated. Although the density of the visiting programme ensures that legislators are able to accumulate a sizeable amount of information on "their" region or country, delegation trips are usually too short and their design too broad as to provide time for exhaustive talks with members of the legislature of the host country. It is thus quite unlikely that these meetings have a sustainable ideational impact. In addition, as many ASEAN delegations are in their majority composed of pro-government legislators, receptiveness towards normative overtures of the EP counterparts has its limits from the very outset. They often use parliamentary dialogues to support governmental strategies seeking international recognition and legitimacy. As far as this includes normative exchanges, with the exception of the heyday of the Asian values thesis in the 1990s, such a

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[12] For examples, see Rüland and Carrapatoso (2015: 207).

discourse is usually more defensive than offensive, pre-occupied with rejecting and de-legitimating EP positions.

Vice versa, on the part of MEPs, Eurocentric attitudes are still widespread, creating a barrier for ideational flows in the opposite direction. Many MEPs (and members of European national parliaments) still think of the EU as the gold standard of regional integration, allowing them to teach lessons to regional organizations they consider as less advanced. In private conversations, they usually have great difficulties to name policy fields in which the EU can learn from their Asian counterparts. Yet, if one party is very certain about who is the provider and who is the recipient of ideas, this is not a conducive environment for "communicative action" and "arguing," that is, mutually inclusive deliberative processes of truth-seeking under conditions of uncertainty (Risse 2000). The diffusion effect of parliamentary delegation meetings is thus quite marginal. Much more than hitherto, MEPs must realize that increasingly their Asian counterparts also look for other ideational inspirations—from Latin America and Africa, in particular, reminding us that ideational flows are omnidirectional as claimed above.

Electoral missions

Between 1999 and 2014, the European Parliament was involved in some 143 election observer missions. Of them ten covered elections in Asian member countries of ASEM. EP election missions are fully integrated into the EU's election observer missions (EU EOM). The latter need the authorization of the country whose elections will be scrutinized. The EP mission is usually composed of four to seven members who submit a report to the parliament after completing the mission. The report format is—with slight variations— uniform, briefly sketching the political context in which the elections are held, assessing the preparation of the elections and issues related to electoral administration, analyzing events on election day and ending with conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions usually state whether the elections were free and fair by international standards and whether and to what extent they were marred by election-related violence (Rüland and Carrapatoso 2015: 211).

Election missions are a potentially strong instrument in the hands of (democratic) norm entrepreneurs. They exert pressure on the country monitored to comply with certain minimum standards of electoral fairness. If this is not attested by the observers, exposure of election fraud subjects a

country to naming and shaming and possibly a substantial loss of external legitimacy. This may explain why among the Asian countries which have allowed the EP to monitor their elections, we find many that can be categorized as semi-democracies. These countries, particularly if they are dependent on development aid, seek a stamp of approval for their elections as an important part of their strategy for complying with Western governments' conditionality policies. However, norm promotion coupled with conditionalities entails an element of coercion and may backfire, given the strong penchant of Asian countries for national independence. Moreover, as an internal report of the EU rightfully stated, election missions can only succeed if they are supplemented by democracy promotion and capacity-building in-between elections; measures in which the EP could, but so far has largely failed to, play a crucial role (Meyer-Resende 2008: 5).

IMPROVING THE TRANS-REGIONAL FLOW OF IDEAS THROUGH ENHANCED PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

At the outset of this chapter, I argued that the democratization of international institutions, including inter- and trans-regional fora, is crucial for creating a more legitimate global governance process. The subsequent empirical analysis of parliamentary interaction between European and Asian parliaments has shown that many parliamentary instruments for facilitating the flow of ideas between Asia and Europe already exist. It has also shown that given the functional and organizational asymmetries of regional parliamentary bodies in Europe and Asia, the momentum for propagating new ideas is currently on the European side. European assertiveness is particularly true for liberal-cosmopolitan norms such as "participatory regionalism" (Acharya 2003), fundamental freedoms, democracy, human rights, good governance, rule of law and minority rights.

However, as stated above, discourse hegemony is not conducive for even-handed ideational exchange that should eventually lead to a stronger parliamentarization and ultimately democratization of international institutions. Asian countries averse to Western "normative proselytization" (Acharya 2009), lecturing and finger-pointing simply resist these overtures. They reject the "tough love" of Europeans as a thinly veiled form of neo-colonial interference. And, indeed, as we have seen, the impact of the EP's norm entrepreneurship is limited in Asia. So, in order to strengthen parliamentary cooperation and

transform regional parliaments into fora for an intensive exchange of ideas, there must, *first,* be an intra-Asian discourse about the parliamentarization of regionalism. This presupposes that in the case of ASEAN the region's strong parliaments, such as the DPR in Indonesia and the Congress in the Philippines, must take the lead in the quest for a genuine regional parliament. Philippine and Indonesian legislators have indeed launched several initiatives towards this end, but these found little resonance in the region's other parliaments. And, unfortunately, when it came to crucial decisions for Southeast Asian regionalism, even the Indonesian and Philippine parliaments were feeble and docile. None of them demanded a pro-active role for national parliaments and AIPA in drafting the ASEAN Charter and other major documents such as the terms of reference of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission of Human Rights (AICHR) or the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. Civil society organizations were much more vocal in this respect. One precondition to create a more fertile ground for the exchange of ideas converging on the strengthening of regional parliamentary bodies is thus that ASEAN parliamentarians persuade their regional peers of the need for a strong regional parliament that has more than only consultative powers and plays a more elaborate role in decision-making than only the one of a transmission belt socializing regional decisions to the national parliaments and mobilizing their support for them.

Second, parliaments in many Asian countries are not only subordinated to the executive, they also struggle with a tarnished image at home. In countries like Indonesia and the Philippines where legislatures are influential, but also during the democratic phases of Thailand, parliamentarians—rightly or wrongly—have or had a very low public reputation. In institutional trust surveys, they usually rank at the bottom. Also the media regularly engage in parliament bashing, portraying legislatures as utterly corrupt, elitist and lazy, out of step with the needs and concerns of their constituents. Only if legislatures are valued by the public as competent institutions in political decision-making, can a better understanding be nurtured concerning why parliaments *must* be more than merely rhetorical actors in regional and interregional fora.

If European parliamentarians intend, *third*, to support Asian legislators in parliamentarizing regional—and for that matter—also interregional institutions, they must cooperate with counterparts who regard a greater parliamentary role in foreign policy-making and public diplomacy as significant.

Such exponents of a "participatory regionalism" are in ASEAN's case "insider proponents" (Acharya 2009) which may be found among legislators who engage in the various ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary caucuses mentioned above. They are the ones who transcend the usually inward-looking nature of Southeast Asian legislatures and thus are also the ones who could persuade their peers to engage more in international affairs than hitherto.

Fourth, civil society activists have been much more vocal in demanding a more inclusive regional and global governance. They vigorously demand participatory rights in ASEAN decision-making and, as a result, since the drafting of the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN governments have started to concede that the grouping must become more people-oriented. "People-oriented," of course, does not necessarily mean becoming more democratic; yet it is clear that in a process of localization governments must find new forms of interaction with civil society. European legislators and their more progressive Asian counterparts should therefore align themselves to a much greater extent with civil society groups when it comes to working for more participatory space for non-state actors. The EP has made suggestions to this effect, but beyond some feeble moves under the aegis of the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF), not much has happened so far.

Fifth, there are technical options to improve parliamentary cooperation. One is that if the European Commission concludes Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA), it builds in a clause including parliamentary exchanges in the form of a Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC). Such committees are part of the PCAs the EU concluded with Central Asian Republics, but it is missing in the PCAs the EU negotiated with Southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Singapore) (Nuttin 2016: 317).

Other urgent reforms concern the format of the meetings themselves. The preparation often leaves much to be desired, coordination between Asian and European parliamentarians is unsatisfactory and the meetings do not provide sufficient time and space for substantive dialogue. But remedying this problem is difficult: If AIPA only meets a few days per year in its general assembly and if inter-sessional activities are few, it is hardly possible to demand that interregional parliamentary fora meet more frequently. The often superficial nature of the dialogue does not attract legislators to participate in inter-parliamentary delegation meetings or ASEP conventions; attendance is thus low. Another crucial aspect in upgrading the significance of interregional

parliamentary cooperation is the creation of links to track one. That ASEP meets several months before the summit does not constitute an incentive for legislators to meet as it is highly uncertain as to what extent government leaders consider their resolutions at the summit.

Also important in this context is better information for the public about the functions and the activities of regional parliaments. While the EP has responded to that problem—even if not solving it—through an array of public relations measures, Asian regional parliaments neither appear often in the media nor do they provide helpful information to the public. AIPA's website, for instance, is a public relations disaster.[13] Capacity-building of the OPPD and projects under APRIS and ARISE are also technical, but in some cases "technical assistance," as Maier-Knapp writes, when it "is embedded within specific normative contexts," [….] "allows an implicit projection of norms" (Maier-Knapp 2014: 227). Yet, though difficult to assess, the normative impact of these capacity-building projects seems to be quite limited.

A *sixth* and last strategy discussed here for upgrading parliaments to fora facilitating the connectivity of ideas would be a replication of the multi-layered nature of global governance with respect to parliamentary interaction. Parliamentarians must have a role in global, interregional and regional fora, but they must also meet at the level of national parliaments. The German Bundestag, for instance, has nine groups of parliamentarians, which liaise with counterparts of Asian ASEM member countries. But these groups suffer from the same weaknesses as the inter-parliamentary delegations of the EP; more time is needed for a substantive exchange of ideas. As a result, in the ASEP-9 meeting, a German delegation of parliamentarians was conspicuously absent.[14] In this context, it would also be worthwhile to think about the parliamentarization of trans-border cooperation schemes—such as the Euro-regions in Europe or the various growth triangles and quadrangles in Asia. These schemes are so far parliamentarized neither internally nor as Asian-European platforms of people-to-people connectivity.

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[13] See http://www.aipasecretariat.org/ (accessed 5 May 2016).

[14] See http://www.asep9summaryreport-3.pdf, (accessed 26 May 2016).

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Think Tanks as Knowledge Brokers

Melissa Conley Tyler, Rhea Matthews and Christian Dietrich[1]

INTRODUCTION

Complex global and domestic challenges require well-informed, evidence-based policy-making. Unfortunately, decision-makers too often find it difficult to connect with relevant evidence and take research outputs into consideration. To this end, the work of knowledge brokers such as think tanks is vital as they create the necessary links between knowledge producers and knowledge consumers.

This paper examines how think tanks can facilitate the connectivity of ideas through acting as knowledge brokers. It begins by setting out the problem of policy disengagement and reasons for this. It then goes on to define the concept of a "knowledge broker" and illustrate how thinks tanks are essential bridge institutions between the worlds of policy and research. The article uses the example of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, a leading think tank in Australian international affairs, to outline its role as a knowledge broker, its networks and activities. To round out the discussion the article concludes by looking at potential challenges faced by knowledge brokers and avenues for improvement.

DISENGAGEMENT OF POLICYMAKERS

A challenge faced by many think tanks and research institutes is getting policy-makers to engage with them in order to facilitate the connectivity of ideas. There are numerous examples of decision-makers failing to incorporate objective, evidenced-based research into their policy-making. Often, policy-makers are either selective in their use of research or chose to ignore neutral, well-informed voices especially under the powerful sway of public opinion

and lobby groups. In this way, political expediency undermines effective policy-making.

There exists a worrying gap between the academic and policy-making worlds which has contributed to frequent policy errors. In most cases, the connection between the two communities is hardly made as they are both governed by cultures with different types of knowledge (Conley Tyler 2015c).

First, for academics, the incentives for advancement are clear: focus on theory, abstraction and the discipline. This leads to a culture where the pinnacle of academic achievement is a new conceptual theory and a "tendency toward ever narrower and more arcane study" (Lowenthal and Bertucci 2014). For researchers, having "too cozy a relationship with those in power can have negative professional consequences" (Lomas 2007; Lowenthal and Bertucci 2014). At the same time, there is also a level of academic disdain for policy-makers who make decisions with a lack of analytical rigour and disregard for key research and scholarly work.

Among policy circles, the adjective "academic" can be used as a synonym for "irrelevant". Many people involved in the development of public policies see academic researchers as failing to take the reality of policy into account in setting research questions (Shergold 2005). For these reasons academic researchers find it difficult to make an impact on the development of public policy. There exists a clear disconnect between the two sides which needs to be bridged if there is to be better-informed policy-making and more impactful research.

DEFINING A "KNOWLEDGE BROKER"

Although the gap between academics and policy-makers is troubling, it is not insurmountable. In fact, many organisations and individuals in different fields have been working to bridge the divide. They function as "knowledge brokers", a concept that has gained prominence in recent years to describe those working to mend the gap between social science research and the development of public policy. Indeed, knowledge brokers have become key players in some sectors in recent years, carrying out facilitative and interactive work that assists policy-makers and practitioners to address their current policy and management challenges.

There is no "one size fits all" approach for knowledge brokers given that knowledge brokers operate in multiple markets and technology domains.

Hence, various organisations can customise the definition to suit their needs (Hargadon 1998). However, a useful general definition of a knowledge broker is offered by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF), which has adopted this role for the past 15 years. The CHSRF defines knowledge brokering as "all the activity that links decision-makers with researchers, facilitating their interaction so that they are able to better understand each other's goals and professional cultures, influence each other's work, forge new partnerships and promote the use of research-based evidence in decision making" (CHSRF 2003).

WHAT DO KNOWLEDGE BROKERS DO?

In terms of function, knowledge brokers generally facilitate the transfer of knowledge from where it is abundant to where it is needed, thereby improving the innovative capacity of organisations in their network. Typically, knowledge brokers are involved in four key activities listed below:

- Establishing access to knowledge (i.e., screening and recognising valuable knowledge across organisations and industries)

- Learning (i.e., internalising experiences from a variety of industries, technology platforms, etc.)

- Linking of separate knowledge pools (i.e., through joint research, consulting services, etc.)

- Implementation of knowledge in new settings (i.e., by combining existing knowledge in new ways).

According to the CHSRF, the general attributes and skills of a knowledge broker include:

- Entrepreneurial (networking, problem solving and innovating);

- Trusted and credible;

- Clear communicator;

- Understands the cultures of both the research and decision-making environments;

- Able to find and assess relevant research in a variety of formats;

- Facilitates, mediates and negotiates.

It is important to note that despite purposefully engaging with both the research and policy communities, knowledge brokers garner their legitimacy from their perceived impartiality and neutrality. Maintaining this impartiality can at times be challenging; however, it is central to the value knowledge brokers offer. As Steen (2010) puts it, "[k]nowledge brokers aren't insiders; they are on the edge of two or more communities. It's a precarious position to be in and knowledge brokers need to work hard to stay involved with multiple groups with different cultures and expertise".

Additionally, what distinguishes knowledge brokers from most other knowledge service providers is the active role they play in providing the links and the development relationships that address the innovation needs of their customers (Sousa 2008). Their networking and relationship-building activities are what make knowledge brokers effective bridge builders and central actors in knowledge networks which include "professional associations, academic research groups and scientific communities organised around a special subject matter or issue" (Stone 2004, 12). In this way they are able to create those vital connections which enable policy-makers and researchers to better understand each other and work together to create more evidence-informed, innovative policy.

THINK TANKS AS KNOWLEDGE BROKERS

As institutions with the "primary purpose of undertaking applied research in public policy and shaping policy outcomes" (Gyngell 2008, 3), think tanks can play a major role as knowledge brokers. In fact, as they occupy a place between government and academia, they act as ideal links between the research and policy-making worlds. As bridge institutions, the role of think tanks is to convert knowledge into practice. There are certainly good reasons to try to bridge the gap, no matter how wide. Scholars can bring a long-term time horizon, they can undertake comparisons of the same issue in different countries and regions, they can provide history and context for current decisions and they can provide data and analysis on trends. They provide institutional memory of relevant prior experiences and draw lessons for current policy. Hence, scholars can challenge mindsets and conceptual frameworks and develop new concepts that reframe problems and open up opportunities to act (Conley Tyler 2015c).

As knowledge brokers the work of think tanks is wide-ranging and diverse. They generate new thinking and policy options, convene experts, offer advice, provide a platform to float ideas, offer training, build transnational policy networks and inform and engage the public. When individual governments struggle to find the time to deal with complex cross-border issues from climate change to internet governance, the work of think tanks helps address these challenges. Think tanks play an important part in articulating alternative frameworks and in identifying, and taking, the first steps to bring about change. This can include framing issues in a new way, informing the uninformed and helping to shape the debate (Conley Tyler 2015a).

Think tanks can also ensure that governments remain engaged in multi-stakeholder processes and are essential in coming up with ideas that governments can apply and other stakeholders can carry. Their understanding of policy-makers' motivations and methods enables them to inculcate in academics some knowledge of how to interact with officials. As denizens of a neutral space, they can help propose what, when and by whom things should be done (Conley Tyler 2015a). Thus, if ideas matter, think tanks matter given their central role in facilitating the connectivity of ideas.

THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS' MODEL

The Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) is a prominent knowledge broker in the Australian international affairs space. It is an independent, non-profit organisation established in 1924 to promote interest in and understanding of international affairs in Australia. It consists of a number of independent branches, which are located in seven Australian states and territories, and a National Office in Canberra. In addition, close contact is maintained with the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, and with sister institutes and similarly minded organisations around the world. It is financed by members' contributions, a small government subvention and tax-deductible donations from individuals and businesses.

The AIIA provides a forum for discussion and debate, but does not seek to formulate its own institutional views. It does this through arranging a programme of lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences and other discussions, and sponsors research and publications.

The AIIA achieves its mission of promoting interest in and understanding of international affairs in four ways:

- **Providing a forum for debate:** The AIIA provides a forum for debate by arranging lectures, seminars and workshops for its members. These range from intimate discussions to large lectures. More than 150 events are held across the country each year.

- **Disseminating ideas**: Throughout its history the AIIA has been involved in the key debates of international relations through its publications. The AIIA currently publishes the *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, the *Australia in World Affairs book* series and its popular Australian Outlook blog.

- **Educating on International Issues**: The AIIA also works to educate the community on international issues. One of the key areas of focus is on youth, including school programmes, careers fairs, internships and young professionals' networks around the country.

- **Collaborating**: The AIIA seeks to collaborate with its sister institutes and other organisations in Australia and overseas. By maintaining close relationships the AIIA can assure an international view on current affairs, expand its knowledge and project Australia's international image.

THE AIIA AS A KNOWLEDGE BROKER

The AIIA draws on a number of strengths to build the bridge between policy-making and research. These include:

- Dissemination of independent analysis of international issues.

- Prestige owing to its long history and track-record.

- Ability to bring awareness and recognition of issues and organisations to national and global audiences.

- Wide reach across Australia with presence in seven state and territories.

- Employer of choice for intelligent and ambitious people seeking to build a career in international relations.

- Access to leading policy-makers, experts and researchers in Australia.

- Collaborative links with sister institutes in the Chatham House tradition.

- Strong network with close links to government, the diplomatic corps, academia and other think tanks.

The AIIA regularly succeeds in securing speakers and participants of interest from the latter areas through lectures, seminars and workshops that connect policy-makers, experts and the general public. Beyond providing a forum for debate, the AIIA has also been successful in establishing and maintaining a network of other institutions, governmental staff and departments as well as academics from all over Australia—and to some extent abroad. For example, it has negotiated website-republishing agreements with 12 other institutes of international affairs through its "Global Wire" initiative.

The AIIA's success as a knowledge broker has enabled it to expand its activities, strengthen its network and achieve the accolade of being voted the top think tank in Southeast Asia and the Pacific for 2015 and 2016, according to the *Global Go To Think Tanks Index.*

THE AIIA'S NETWORK AND REACH

The AIIA's diverse and influential network gives it a unique role as a knowledge broker in Australian international affairs. The AIIA "family" comprises multiple stakeholders, including the AIIA National Executive, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), policy-makers, the diplomatic corps, AIIA Fellows, members, friends, contributors, the business community, media, interested public, global think tank community and students and young professionals. The table below sets out the AIIA's different stakeholder groups and their relationship to the organisation.

Stakeholder Group	Relationship to AIIA
AIIA National Executive	The National Executive is the AIIA's governing committee and includes state presidents and representatives from DFAT.
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the AIIA's primary institutional supporter.
Policy-Makers	These are prominent individuals within government who are at the forefront of making and influencing Australia's foreign policy.
Diplomatic Corps	These are representatives of the various embassies and foreign missions whom AIIA partners with for its events.
Fellows	This is a selection of individuals who have provided exceptional contributions to Australia's international relations.
Members and Friends	These individuals pay for access to the AIIA's publications and events. This category also includes Friends of the organisation who have made an outstanding financial contribution to the organisation ($500 or more) or indicate an intention to leave a bequest to the AIIA.
Business Community (including corporate sponsors)	These are corporate organisations with special business interests in the AIIA and in particular its networks. This category also includes organisations that have made a significant financial contribution to the AIIA for one or more events, or made a yearly donation.
Contributors	These are the academics, students and industry experts who contribute to the AIIA blog and publications.
Media	This includes members of the media who regularly approach AIIA for opinions on international issues and also cover its larger events.
Global Think Tank Community	This category includes AIIA's partner think tanks within Australia and around the world, e.g., Asian Development Bank Institute, ASPI, etc.
Interested Public	These are the people visiting AIIA's website, reading its publications and attending their public events.
Students and young professionals	Volunteer staff (usually students) who work at the various state offices and branches, helping with various event management and other daily operations.

Given the varying needs and characteristics of each stakeholder group, the AIIA presents a slightly different value proposition to each. A summary of these is illustrated in the graphic below.

AIIA National Exec.	•Opportunity to grow personal and AIIA's reputation nationally and abroad. Access to AIIA's networks.
DFAT	•Association with an entity that is globally recognised for its objectivity and integrity.
Policy Makers	•Unique access to world leading research, academics and industry experts in informal settings
Diplomatic Corps	•Access to important networks of diplomats, policy experts and academics. Assistance from AIIA staff in organising key events throughout the year.
Fellows	•Formal recognition of lifelong service by a highly respected institute. Access to powerful AIIA networks.
Members and Friends	•Access to important indivicuals, networks within the international relations sphere and premium publications from a high calibre of experts and academics.
Business Community (incl. corporate sponsors)	•Brand exposure and dissemination to a potentially new and otherwise hard to access client base. Outlet for publishing on international affairs through a globally respected organisation.
Contributurs	•National and international exposure through articles and publications disseminated by a highly respected institute.
Media	•Access to credible, high quality opinions on international affairs.
Global Think Tank Community	•For local sister institutes there is access to AIIA's strong network of diplomatic corps, policy makers and other experts and analysts in the field. International sister institutes have access to articles and publications disseminated by a highly respected institute.
Interested Public	•Access to news, views and analysis on issues of global importance from a high calibre of experts and academics.
Students and Young Professionals	•Access to important career-developing AIIA networks. Unique 'hands-on' work experience.

Each group has varying degrees of influence on the organisation and a unique set of expectations that need to be met. Therefore, the AIIA offers a range of products to each of these groups, some of which overlap. For instance, the AIIA's online blog, *Australian Outlook*, which provides high-quality analysis on topical international issues, is valued by all stakeholders in the network, garnering more than 29,000 unique visitors per month. Similarly, the AIIA's premier event on Australian foreign policy, its National Conference, which in 2015 brought together more than 350 attendees, gives it wide reach across all its stakeholders. However, for some stakeholders the institute offers tailored activities, including: policy roundtables and international dialogues for policy-makers; a "Windows to the World" embassy open day for the diplomatic corps and the interested public; publication of its high-quality journal in the field of international relations, the *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, for academics and students; and various programmes for youth and young professionals with a passion for international affairs.

Therefore, through its broad network and outreach activities the AIIA fulfils the primary, entrepreneurial function of a knowledge broker, namely, the ability to build connections and create linkages between research producers and research consumers.

THE AIIA'S POLICY FORUMS AND DIALOGUES

An important part of the AIIA's role as a knowledge broker is organising dialogues involving academics, experts, and policy-makers. Given its reputation as an independent, non-profit organisation, the AIIA is able to provide a forum where individuals can freely exchange ideas and opinions, understand each other's perspectives and in this way canvass innovative solutions to common problems.

For instance, the AIIA holds various invitation-only policy forums as a way of connecting knowledge producers and knowledge consumers. A successful example of this was the forum titled "Going Global: Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Korea and South Africa in International Affairs", which was jointly organised by five institutes of international affairs. In order to examine their respective involvements in international affairs, delegations from Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa and South Korea joined with the AIIA in Jakarta, Indonesia from 25-26 May 2010, at an event supported by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Topics included the responsibilities of regional powers, dealing with major powers, global challenges and building an international system that is accommodating of these countries' needs and priorities. One of the most immediate outcomes of the forum was the establishment of solid networks through personal contacts and dialogue which paved the way for joint activities by the institutes. Furthermore, the ideas presented and discussed at the event were delivered to policy-makers and the general public through a book publication. In this way, the forum offered some useful inputs into national policy-making on the issues discussed.

Apart from forums, the AIIA also holds a number of cross-country dialogues, bringing together a range of actors to discuss complex issues in a more informal environment. For example, in March 2013, the AIIA acted as the secretariat for DFAT to host the Indonesia-Australia Dialogue. The event brought together academics, think tanks, politicians, government officials, businesspeople and media representative from Indonesia and Australia. The Dialogue was designed with a special focus on enhancing people-to-people

links between Indonesia and Australia. It included larger panels as well as working groups for in-depth discussions which produced more detailed policy recommendations. It was a fruitful event which increased linkages between the two countries and produced practical and innovative recommendations in the areas of science, business, media, education and culture.

CHALLENGES FOR KNOWLEDGE BROKERS

Despite its success as a knowledge broker, there are various obstacles and threats the AIIA faces in maintaining its activities. Some of these will be elaborated below and apply to think tanks in general.

While its wide network allows the AIIA to reach a range of different audiences, there is continued pressure to engage effectively with all stakeholders. As each group is only interested in some part of the AIIA's activities and is typically indifferent to activities undertaken for other audiences, it becomes challenging to sustain the interest of all stakeholders. Thus, as an organisation with limited resources trying to spread itself thinly across multiple audiences, there is a real danger that the AIIA will be viewed as peripheral by most of them.

Another challenge faced by most independent, non-profit think tanks like the AIIA is maintaining economic viability through ensuring future income generation. Currently, the AIIA's main income is revenue from publications; government contracts and grants; membership fees; and events. It relies heavily on volunteers.

Finally, returning to the problem with which this paper started, the issue of think tanks being overlooked by policy-makers poses an enduring challenge for think tanks working in international affairs. For the AIIA, despite its engagement with policy-makers, it is not easily identifiable whether the institute's activities necessarily translate into policy. Hence, it is "hard for a think tank to claim credit for a policy improvement" (Conley Tyler 2015a), which can at times lead to frustration and a feeling of irrelevance. However, these problems can be mitigated through a change of perspective and more targeted activities.

AVENUES FOR IMPROVEMENT

To address the challenges above, it is crucial for think tanks to evaluate their activities regularly and find innovative ways to improve and have greater impact. This can be done for instance through periodic reports, strategy meetings, evaluative surveys and briefing papers, all of which are common practice for the AIIA.

Secondly, a key point for think tanks to keep in mind is that knowledge brokers should not necessarily aspire to impact policy. Instead, the goal of knowledge brokers should first and foremost be about opening up lines of communication and connecting people, giving them opportunities to build good working relationships and feel comfortable exchanging information and ideas (Harris and Lusk 2010). Focusing on building stronger informal and formal ties with knowledge producers and knowledge consumers will make it easier to bring them together to address policy problems when they do arise. This is in line with the argument that "knowledge depends for its circulation on interpersonal networks, and will only diffuse if these social features are taken into account and barriers overcome" (Greenhalgh et al. 2004).

Finally, to influence the development of more informed policy, knowledge brokers should engage early in the policy-making process. Where they provide input to policy-makers, think tanks must focus on the usability of their results and have a communication plan for their ideas. As recent studies by Nutley et al. (2007), Waddell (2007) and Edwards (2010) all confirm, research is more effective when it is part of policy development and decision-making processes.

Engaging early might mean:

- Periodically meeting with senior officials with the express purpose of determining the priorities of government and consequent relevant research topics;

- Maintaining contacts with a network of researchers and ascertaining relevant academic expertise available;

- Playing a key role in engaging with relevant governments the final set of topics, mechanisms by which they would be researched, methodology and time-lines, and;

- Forging a high profile for activities within government (ANZSOG 2007, 26).

Therefore, think tanks that wish to make a difference have to connect with policy-makers' agendas and needs by providing input at the right time and in the right format (Conley Tyler 2015b).

CONCLUSION

Think tanks have a key role in the development of evidence-based, well-informed policy. In occupying a middle-ground between the academic and policy-making communities, think tanks are ideal knowledge brokers. As the model of the AIIA illustrates, the key strength of think tanks is their wide networks and access to a variety of different audiences. This enables them to transfer knowledge from where it is produced to where it is needed. In this way, they act as a "transmission belt" for academic ideas to policy-makers (Conley Tyler 2015b). While think tanks face the challenges of lack of funding and human resources, these can be mitigated by instituting processes of review and innovation. If think tanks are to be effective knowledge brokers, their main focus should be on relationship-building: maintaining links with individuals from both the policy-making and research communities, so that when policy issues do arise they are able to engage early and discuss innovative solutions. Without the work of think tanks the gap between research and policy would be even more of a chasm.

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