Conflict management in the EU: Europe as global paradigm?

contribution provided by

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Outline

Abstract

Since the end of the East-West-conflict two topics have gained steady relevance in the debate on international relations: globalization and regionalization. While both seem to be intrinsically tied to the "new world order", regional integration is increasingly identified as an appropriate answer to the challenge of globalization. It can be observed that almost every region in the world initiated formalized cooperation during the last decades. The growing attraction of regional integration has directed the attention to the European Union as successful model of regional integration. The question is, does the process of European integration hold lessons for integrative efforts in other parts of the world? If so, European integration could be of special interest for regions like East Asia that are still suffering from the danger of aggressive threats and in some cases military confrontations. This paper will argue that regional integration is indeed an answer to the novel challenge of globalization. European integration is seen as a successful model of integration that one the one hand could be adapted piecemeal, for instance in the establishment of a common market, but on the other hand is not suited to be *the* model of regional integration or even global paradigm for regional integration. On this basis, the paper will examine one important feature of the European political system: the EU's methods of conflict resolution. Assuming that the institutional and legal development of the EU created dependencies that make aggressive confrontation within EU-Europe almost impossible, this paper will attempt to outline the extent to which the EU's methods of conflict management could help East Asia to settle disputes.

I. Introduction: Globalization, regionalization and the EU

Since the end of the East-West-Conflict two topics seem to attract scientific debate on developments in international relations like few others: globalization and regionalization. Both seem to be intrinsically tied to the "still nebulous" (Hettne 1999: 1) concept of a "new world order". Yet, the debate has not agreed on a definition or on the historic origin of these phenomena. The latter is easier to find than a common definition: we may accept that the fall of the Soviet Empire went hand in hand with dramatic changes in international relations resulting in an upheaval of the "old" world order (Czempiel 1993). We may also accept that these developments have replaced old alliances in favor of new spheres of cooperation that do not function like the old ones. At least, the bipolar system of world politics disappeared. It seems that this has caused two conflicting desires: the wish to create a world free of barriers – especially of economic ones to foster free trade and economic prosperity – and the desire to establish formalized cooperation with others.

Regional integration is far from being a new phenomenon. Exempt from the voluminous literature on European integration, regional and economic integration has attracted researchers since the 1960s (Csillaghy 1965, Schmitter 1972). Early studies differ from recent studies in two aspects: the number of analyses is rather moderate in extent. Apart from this, studies focus on initiatives in former "third world"-countries and understand regional integration as an instrument of development for the former "Third World" (Rinke 1970, Yadi 1979). Comparative analysis with other integration processes is of rather ancillary relevance, as well as the general understanding of regional integration as a global process. Recent reflections consider this aspect much more, heralding a change in research interest. Regional integration is not only "back in fashion" (Higgott 1998: 42) as research topic: recent studies pay more attention to comparative aspects. The European experience is taken as an example of successful integration and as a possible fixed point of comparison (Murray 2004; Laursen 1999; Laffan 1997).

The enormous attraction the European integration process seems to ellict since the early 90s has brought up the question of the EU possibly serving as a model or even the paradigm of successful regional integration (Murray: 2004; Richards/Kirkpatrick: 1999; Laffan: 1997). Integrative efforts in emerging regions like East-Asia motivated researchers to compare the European integration with developments like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) (Beeson/Jayasuriya 1998). Other studies try to develop theories on regionalization by critical analysis of inter-regional arrangements like the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), stating that "posing issues in terms of 'national' versus 'global' overlooks a vital level of analysis, namely emerging interregional arrangements" (Richards/Kirkpatrick 1999: 683). These studies add a new aspect to the discussion: the phenomenon of an emerging regional bilateralism.

The majority of studies on globalization and regionalization still focus on changes in global or regional economic cooperation (Colemann/Underhill 1998) and argue on the basis of neo-liberal or rationalist theories (Boyer 2002). Recent political analyses try to broaden the view. They reflect the political implications globalization and regionalization could have for political systems and global governance as a whole: a possible long-term development could be the establishment of a system of global governance in the sense of a "non-hegemonic and pluralist collective world order" (Lamy/Laidi 2001: 10). Nevertheless, the scholars themselves admit that "global governance's heyday is still some way off" (Lamy/Laidi 2001: 9). Less revolutionary political analyses focus instead on the historic development of European integration, passing on useful lessons that may be learned from future EU-integration and regional efforts in other parts of the world (Laursen 1999).

On the basis of these reflections this paper will examine the extent to which European integration could be a useful model for regional efforts in other world regions. This question is tied to the novel debate on globalization and regionalization. Both phenomena can hardly be isolated from existing examples of regional integration like the EU. The key issue is how far

globalization and regionalization are related to each other. This paper will assume that both developments are linked to each other as challenge and response. Further examination on this basis will analyze how far European Integration could be imitated in other parts of the world. Doubts are justified that the European model *as a whole* can be transferred (Murray 2004). European integration is not a "simple 'role model'" (Kühnhardt 2004: 4) that can be adopted one-to-one like a political construction kit to automatically achieve same effects. Nevertheless, single features of European integration may motivate other regions to follow a similar track. The creation of a common market is one. As the regional focus of this paper lies on East Asia, we may also think of strategies to stabilize regional security and peace. These topics seem to be of high relevance for East Asian countries, as their enormous economic success seems to be at risk from the threat of aggressive conflicts. This paper will therefore focus on conflict resolution in EU-Europe and elaborate as to why conflicts within EU-Europe and between the EU and non-EU-countries have never escalated into aggressive confrontation. This leads to the question of which requirements East Asian countries have to fulfill to adapt EU's methods of conflict management and what chances of success can be expected.

The examination of these questions may unveil answers for East Asia or other global regions that may be rather disappointing. Blaming the EU for the lesser success of economic or political integration elsewhere is – of course – not helpful. This may be considered especially when it comes to trade-relations between the EU and other countries. The assumption of a "Fortress Europe mentality" may be a catchword in political debates. In scholarly debate, however, we may achieve more if we stick to less emotional reproaches. The "new world order" provides the global society with chances that have never existed, especially in terms of economic development and democratic transformation. Since the mid 90s, there are for the first time significantly more political systems that are democratic rather than non-democratic. Nevertheless, globalization seems to demand its price. The danger of regional conflicts seems to have grown and puts intra-regional connections at stake. Hence, it is of essential interest to establish regional frameworks that help avoiding destructive developments in an interdependent world. This paper cannot examine the complex theoretical and practical implications of globalization, regionalization and inter-regional dependencies as a whole. It has to stay incomplete even at points where the reader may expect a more detailed investigation. Still, it may add a few points to the debate on regional integration and the EU as the "success-model".

II. Globalization and regionalization: a question of challenge and response

The end of the East-West era did not only change the global order. Since the early 90s we may also observe a "global proliferation" (Kühnhardt 2004: 4) of regionalism that coincides with a changed global role of the EU. Though the EU understands itself as "soft power" (Lamy/Laidi 2001: 10) – or maybe just because – other countries look at European integration with a mixture of admiration and skepticism (Murray 2004: 37). The EU offered to support integrative efforts in other parts of the world on a friendly basis (Parliament 1997). Anyhow, regional integration is no (longer) a unique phenomenon to be observed in certain parts of the world only, but a global process. Almost every world-region has initiated integrative measures, some bearing the heritage of former failures, like the Central American Mercado del Sur (Mercosur).[1] Obviously, the end of the East-West-conflict has left a vacuum severe enough for almost every state around the globe to initiate new forms of cooperation with geographical neighbors or other countries that share a common interest. Also, regional integration or "regionalism"[2] after 1989 seems to be

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[1] See for an overview over regional initiatives after 1989 Kühnhardt (2004).
[2] The term "regional integration" describes a unique phenomenon. The more generalizing term "regionalism" indicates a global movement.

fundamentally different from former initiatives at least in number and success (Laursen 1999: 67). A major reason is that in the bipolar world of East and West also regional initiatives were assigned to one of the two poles. Hence, regional integration appeared as a sub-development within the overall framework of one side. In opposite, we can hardly deny that regionalism after 1989 is multipolar and driven by different fundamental ideas. This allows us to talk about the "old" and the "new" regionalism (Hettne 1999: 7).[3]

1. Theoretical approaches to globalization and regionalization

Despite its global relevance, the scientific community has not yet agreed on a definition of regionalism and the requirements of regional integration. The existing terms and definitions are indeed confusing (Kühnhardt 2004: 4). This shows that the debate on what drives regional integration is far from being completed.[4] Nevertheless, regionalism implies a few requirements that can hardly be denied: every process of regional integration includes a momentum of consolidation, determination and the pooling of a common interest. The level of pooling interests may differ strongly and can, as in the case of the EU, include the pooling of national sovereignty. Taking this minimal definition, regional integration forms the counterpart to a second major development in international relations since the early 1990s: globalization. Both developments create a certain paradox. Regionalism requires the commitment of countries to a determined political or economic project. Globalization, by contrast, is driven by the idea of a "borderless world", in which "territory has lost all importance and functionalism is predominant" (Hettne 1999: 2). Regional alliances may be open, while others – like the EU – are rather exclusive. Hence, regionalism coincides with integration[5] and determination, while globalization implies the vision of a world free of barriers, especially in economic and trade relations.

The awareness that both developments oppose each other does not predict their relation. Some scholars argue that globalization and regionalization form alternative options for states in the "modern" world (Boyer 2002: 33). Subliminally, this approach treats regionalism as equivalent to protectionism. Concerns may be justified that regional integration fosters the foreclosure of markets. Anyhow, it is hasty to conclude that globalization and regionalization form two options between which states just have to choose. If this was the case, both developments would de facto reestablish a bi-polar understanding of the world that was rejected after 1989. In fact, globalization and regionalization seem to be linked to each other, forming two developments countries have had to deal with since the end of the 20th century. To prove this, we may look back and find that both developments emerged almost in parallel. Especially the term globalization has experienced an inflationary use during the last years. This implies that both globalization and regionalization are part of those global changes after 1989 that form the new world order: globalization and regionalization are elements of a larger process of "global structural change" (Hettne 1999: 2) that creates "the new world".

Recent analyses reflect globalization and regionalization from two points of view. Neo-liberal approaches assume that globalization weakens national policy instruments and motivates states to initiate trans-national problem-management on regional level. New institutionalists assume that already the establishment of institutions – that are seen as organized rules – allows a collective problem-solving that is necessary in a globalized world.[6] Both approaches assume that

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[3] I will talk about the "new regionalism" in this paper only, as focusing on former initiatives would go far beyond the scope of this paper.

[4] Compare e.g. Laursen (1999: 67) for only two out of a number of basically different approaches.

[5] A common definition of "integration" does not exist. Some define integration as the most intense form of state-interaction, others as the opposite of segregation (see: De Lombaerde/Van Langenhove 2004: 8 ff).

[6] See for both approaches Higgott (1998: 45), who declares his as an "institutional rationalist approach".

globalization and regionalization are "twin phenomena" (Coleman/Underhill 1998: 3) that are linked to each other as challenge and response (Hettne 1999). Globalization is the challenge that provoked regional integration. This assumption finds empirical proof. Today's number of regional confederations is large, including almost every region of the world. Regions with a low degree of integration like North Asia or the Middle East suffer from the most difficult troubles (Kühnhardt 2004: 4). However, "integrated" regions seem to dissociate from aggression. One cause is certainly that globalization and regionalization give way to a pragmatic attitude towards trans-national cooperation. Economic "partnerships" for instance often include former adversaries. Borders and political limits lose relevance. Regional integration forms "increased, institutionalized economic co-operation" that includes countries from all over the world (Coleman/Underhill 1998: 5).

2. European integration as a model of regional integration

It is widely accepted that the EU is by far the most developed form of regional integration (Laffan 1997: 1; Murray 2004: 44). Some state that the EU "in contrast to other regionalisms in the world" represents a "deep regionalism" (Laffan 1997: 3). More comparative approaches measure regional integration on a scale of five degrees (Hettne 1999: 10 f.): on a first degree of rather natural "regionness", regions appear as geographical units that do not require any kind of human interaction. As soon as states interact, a second degree is reached. Mere geographic units turn into social entities that foster trans-national exchange, yet stay below a standardized cooperation. Regular political, economic or military interactions are features of a third degree: region as organized cooperation that requires a formal basis and goes along with a kind of membership. Actors of regional cooperation are political or economic elites only. Once a broad intra-regional communication starts that includes civil actors a fourth degree of region is reached: region as civil society that acts on the basis of commonly accepted values and within an organizational framework. The fifth and highest degree describes a region as an acting subject that shows its own identity and actor capability as well as structures that allow region-wide decision making.

a. The EU as model of regional integration

The clear advantage of this scale is that it provides a comparative instrument to measure regional integration on an abstract level, without assuming that regional developments in different parts of the world are inevitably linked to each other. The fact that the EU has reached the fifth degree on the scale underlines the assumption that it is the most developed form of regional integration. This does not inevitably mean that the EU is *the* global paradigm for regional integration. The EU-Commission denied this thought already in 1995, right before the initial Asia-Europe-Meeting (ASEM) that took place in March 1996 in Bangkok. In a basic document on integrative developments in the former "Third World" (Parliament 1997) the EU promised to support regional (economic) integration in other parts of the world and stated that the "external support for regional economic integration" especially in developing regions was of "of great importance". The EU was "particularly well placed to assume a leading role in this field" because of its own integration process (Parliament 1997: 1). At the same time the EU straightened out that the European model of integration "can only serve as a source of experience" (ibd.). It is not "directly transferable" to other parts of the world (ibd.). The "export" of the EU's model of integration is not even a topic on the EU's agenda.

This self-perception shows that the EU friendly offers support and is rather interested in becoming significantly involved into regional integration processes in other parts of the world.

Nevertheless, the EU can hardly avoid the attraction it ellicts to other regions. At least the EU's economic integration, presented by the SEM and – to some extent – the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), are thought of as the most successful steps. Indeed, the majority of recent global efforts on regional integration aim on liberalizing trade relations. Major examples are the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the Mercado del Sur (Mercosur), APEC, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and ASEM. APEC underlines its purely economic objectives by avoiding the term "member state". APEC-members are "Member Economies", though APEC's objectives include political issues like the creation of "an environment for the secure and efficient movement of goods, services and people across borders in the region through political alignment and economic and technical cooperation" (APEC 2003: 2). Still, APEC is far from being a common market providing citizens with market freedoms like the EC does. However, it is true that regional integration very often aims at facilitating trade (Laursen 1999: 67). Liberalization of trade connections can help to overcome severe intra-regional conflicts. The EU, for instance, accepted China's "One China" policy against Taiwan because the EU believes that economic exchange between both countries will calm the conflicts. To foster this, the EU supported Taiwan's access to the WTO: "increasing economic integration" in the APEC region and especially between China and Taiwan will substantially contribute to "creating a more favorable climate" and an "eventual resolution of the question of Taiwan" (Commission 2003). Indeed, economic relations between Taiwan and China have become of growing relevance for both countries and foster stabilizing effects (Shaocheng 2003: 19).

Regional economic integration can also be seen as a strategy to overcome "a fundamental problem" in the traditional system of international relations, "that of defection" (Laursen 1999: 74). Market integration differs from mere political alliances mainly through the fact that international (political) agreements are fragile and unstable. Changes in national interest easily lead to changes in international preferences and political actors will be "tempted to cheat or defect" from agreements in order to realize more advantageous outcomes (Laursen 1999: 74). The difficult political relations between Taiwan and China are a perfect example of this rather realist view on international relations: for Taiwan, a variable of major importance, but of changing reliability, has been US-American interests in the region. The US is an important ally to Taiwan and supported the country against China. Hence, US-interests in the region are ambiguous. While the US is interested in limiting China's power, it also has strong economic relations with China (Shaocheng 2003: 21 ff.). The establishment of trade relations and the liberalization of markets can be a strategy – not only in East Asia – to stabilize regions and overcome political conflicts (Laursen 1999: 75). At any rate, we cannot say at this point that such a strategy is enough to *guarantee* stability and peace. While the EU may be a shining example of how to overcome the defects of international political cooperation by establishing a free common market, the EU has never been only a market-based project.

b. Characteristics of European integration

Economic integration has only been one of the driving forces behind European integration. Other features of the EU are its supranational institutions and its legal system. The inner shape of the EU is, so far at least, unique in the world. None of the mentioned regional integration projects come close to the EU's system of institutions and supranational legislation. NAFTA and APEC are free trade agreements that can be compared at the most to the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). EFTA was founded in 1960 as a counter-movement to the European Economic Union. In fact, EFTA did not even come close to the efficiency of the supranational EC. Already in 1961 protagonists of EFTA – United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland – applied for EC-accession. 10 years later, in 1973, they joined the EC. The dynamics of EU-integration are based on three essential systemic decisions made by the EC's founders: the creation of supranational institutions according to the national system and with vast respect to the principle of separation of powers; the

assignment of powers of decision to the EC-level together with the obligation for the European institutions to create and develop "European" policies; the establishment of a "European" culture that does not displace, but extends national culture.

One main difference between the EU and "traditional" international organizations is the EU's institutional system. Already the founding Treaties paved the way for the establishment of genuine European institutions that act free from national intervention only on the basis of the Treaties' settings. In addition, these institutions were given competencies of decision and surveillance to control the implementation of EU-law. From the beginning, these supranational institutions – most of all the EU-Commission and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) – were supposed to promote European integration. The major advantage of the system has been the separation of integrative interest between the EU-Commission as the "engine" of integration and the Council of Ministers as the defender of national interest. The Commission has power not only as initiator of EC-legislation, but also in respect to implementation of EC-law. As Europe's anti-trust authority, the Commission monitors the national authorities' compliance with EU-law. The Commission is supported in this by an ECJ that sanctions non-compliance to EU-decisions. Both institutions form a "European" political elite that was declared as the success-factor of European integration by former Commission-president Delors (1993: 3): being loyal to the European project and interested in its development, those institutions would push European integration if only for institutional self-interest. Indeed, the Commission, the ECJ and – since 1979 – the European Parliament have developed an enormous integrative power.

A second essential characteristic is the EU's commitment to binding supranational law that is supreme to national law (ECJ case 6/64). EC-law applies to national administration and is to be used by national authorities prior to national law. The commitment to supranational law initiated the development of a European legal community that is irreversible. The French *Conseil d'Etat* found in 1992 – the year of the completion of the SEM – that 22.445 EC-regulations and 1.675 EC-directives were in force in France (Janowski 2005a: 30). The *acquis communautaire* –EC-legislation as a whole – created a solid institutional and normative basis that allows intensified economic and makes political interaction possible. In 2004 for instance, the EU's main trading partner was the EU itself. More than 63% of trade-actions of the EU-15 were conducted within the SEM. The major external trade-partner for the EU was the USA with 24.3% (Commission 2004).

In addition to this, the EU developed a "European" culture. The term is multifaceted and includes many different aspects. One aspect is that a *European* elite emanated from the EU's institutional system. A civil facet of the European culture is European citizenship. Citizens of EU-member states are part of the EU's system of governance. They dispose on political rights and market freedoms, they elect the members of the European parliament and they can be elected into local authorities in other member-states than their home-country. European citizenship initiated the development of a European society that yields fruits: in spring 2005, 54% of EU-citizens in the EU-25 thought that EU-membership is a "good thing" (Commission 2005: 10). This is a remarkable commitment, especially considering the fact that 10 new members just entered in May 2004. The EU has also launched symbols that support the commitment to the EU and the development of a European culture like the "Day of Europe" (that could become a Europe-wide holiday), the European flag and a European anthem. These aspects are part of a European "polity building" (Laffan 1997: 9) that fosters socio-cultural integration in Europe.

A further step into this direction was the definition of a European agenda of values that links the legal, political and economic heritage of Europe. After the fall of the Berlin wall, almost all countries of Middle and Eastern Europe that were forced into a more or less friendly alliance with the Soviet Union could hardly wait to join Western alliances. This desire motivated the Commission and the European Council to sum up basic values of the EU's system of governance that were defined as *the* value-basis of the EU during the historic Copenhagen summit in June 1993. Their fulfillment was declared as the requirement for EU-accession: only three years after German Unification the European Council declared that countries in Central and Eastern Europe

"that so desire shall become members of the European Union" (European Council 1993: 13) if they fulfill certain criteria summed up in the famous "Copenhagen-criteria":

> "Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of (the) political, economic and monetary union" (European Council 1993: 13).

The Copenhagen-criteria are the first comprehensive definition of European values and were revisited during the elaboration of the European Constitution. The EU's explicit commitment to a "society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail" and which is "common to the Member States" (Art. I-2 TEC) underlined a cultural homogeneity that determines EU-Europe from other parts of the world. The agenda of values shows that the EU developed into a value community next to a political union, an economic and a legal community. Subsuming these reflections to the scale of "regionness" (Hettne 1999: 11), that was mentioned above we will find that:

the EU acts as a subject with a distinct identity. In external trade-relations and economic association agreements with third countries the EU Commission has been the acting institution that implemented the decisions of the European Council, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Most important is that trade-associations between the EU and non-EU-countries were concluded with the EU and not with the EU-member states (Art. 181a, 182 ff. EC).[7] The de facto bilateral agreements with the EU and third countries implied a legal personality of the EU. The TEC[8] would clarify this by stating that the EU has a legal personality (Art. I-7 TEC).

the EU has actor capability. All EU-policies are shaped on the European level by the EU's institutions. The Treaty of Maastricht introduced two major changes in the decision-making process that was formerly dominated by the Council of Ministers: the extension of the qualified majority vote (QMV) and the co-decision procedure (Art. 252 EC). Both strengthened the supranational decision-making as the QMV allows member-states to simply outvote others that do not want to compromise. The extension of the co-decision procedure raised the pressure on the Council of Ministers to consider positions of the European Parliament as it gives the Parliament a de facto veto-option. Apart from EC-legislation the EU has a strong actor capability in implementation of and compliance to EC-law (Art. 81 ff. EC).

the EU provides a legitimate structure of decision making. Much has been debated about the so called democratic deficit of the EU. Scholars have examined the democratic legitimacy of the EU in detail and discussed alternatives to the current system.[9] Nevertheless, the EU established a system of decision-making that is highly formalized in regard to the legal basis as well as in regard to the procedure. Democratic legitimacy is provided mainly by the European Parliament as the representative of the European citizens and the Council of Ministers as the representative of the EU-member states in an EU that is still an international organization and not a sovereign state.

the EU is a community of values. The agreement on common values in the TEC is notable as it accepts that the common "European" heritage is more than economic interests. The commitment to values that describe a certain kind of political system – namely a pluralist democracy – can be

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[7] Abbr. for "Treaty Establishing a European Community" (EC-Treaty).
[8] Abbr. for "Treaty Establishing a European Constitution" (European Constitution).
[9] See for an overview over the debate and discussion Janowski (2005b).

seen as a clear commitment to this system of "good" governance. A major example is the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (ECFR; Part II TEC) that was adopted in 1999 by the European Council of Nice. Though the ECFR was not adopted as supranational law, it protects EU-citizens from supranational power. The Charter sums up the jurisdiction of the ECJ that is part of the EC-law and binding to European and national authorities. Apart from this, the Charter sums up "civil" European values and clarifies that European integration has become part of societal development.

These reflections show that the process of European integration is hardly suitable as a paradigm for regional integration in other parts of the world. It may serve as reference model in the sense stated by the Commission: to show how successful integration is possible without stating that the EU's way is the master-path. Some scholars state that the EU does not need "symmetric developments" in other parts of the world "to prove the global relevance of European integration experience" (Kühnhardt 2004: 3). Indeed, one may ask, if a detailed research agenda on the EU as global model (Murray 2004) is necessary. One may find arguments for or against European integration as a paradigm for regional integration. At any rate, one has to admit that deep integration as in the case of Europe is simply not a political aim of other regions. East Asian countries, for example, understand regional integration as a means to consolidate and enhance state power (Beeson/Jayasuriya 1998: 316). A pooling of sovereignty on a regional level is so far not a political aim. The list is easy to extend: ASEAN-countries for example differ in their political system. Some have established democracies more or less in the western-style, while others still pursue dictatorships. Comparative studies of economic integration in EU-Europe and the APEC-region find differences that are considered as irreconcilable in short-term: the economic integration in East Asia, it is argued, "has been strongly shaped by cameralist forms of rationality" (Beeson/Kanishka 1998: 330). In contrast, European economic integration is driven by a liberal approach. Also, integrative efforts in the APEC-region unveil a paradox: while states in East Asia intervene into economies at state level, "these very same states are vehemently opposed" to any regulation or interference in their sovereign decision at regional level (Beeson/Kanishka 1998: 332).

It is very useful therefore to abandon the idea that the "deep regionalism" (Laffan 1997: 1) presented by the EU could be copied by other regions. The EU is one example of regional integration that may provide others with successful strategies for example in terms of economic integration. But with every model it is important to state that parts cannot simply be isolated like cherries picked from a tree. Copying European integration means adapting basic features of the EU's political system. This requires before anything else the willingness to assign competencies to the regional level and build supranational institutions that will establish a system of legislation and policy. Finally, we may not confuse reflections on the EU as model of regional integration with a general criticism on the EU and its exclusive system. It may be justified to state that the EU because of its "sheer size and economic strength" is admired as much as it is "viewed with apprehension" as a potential threat. One reason for ill-feelings in regard to the EU is probably that non-EU-countries assume a "fortress Europe mentality" (Murray 2004: 37). Indeed, those concerns mainly aim at the EU's external trade-regulations that may dissatisfy other countries. It does not change the fact that other regions wish to establish an economic co-operation exactly as tight and successful as the European Union and its common market are.

III. Conflict management in EU-Europe: the EU as global paradigm?

The EU may appear united in harmony from a distance. However, upon closer examination we discover manifold conflicts that characterize the process of European integration. Indeed, the politics of the EU have always been "politics of conflict and consensus" (Murray 2004: 39). The latter is essential: the history of European integration is far from being a continuously amicable development. Even "historic" decisions resulted from strong disputes that could be solved only trough bargaining and consensus. Very often, those final agreements were motivated by the sheer necessity for the relevant measure. The list of conflicts that were severe enough to block European integration for some time is long. The current debate on the European Constitution and the disagreements on the reform of the EU's budget – an issue added during the European summit of June 2005 – are just another two examples in a long line. However, as of yet no conflict has been severe enough for EU-members to abandon this project or even stumble into aggressive confrontation. So far every conflict has been solved. The European Constitution provides for the first time a formal basis for a definite way of conflict resolution: countries that are tired of EU-membership may exit the EU. However, the exit option of Art. I-40 TEC provides also an interesting option: EU-members that abandon their EU-membership may stay associated to the European Economic Community. This shows that EU-membership once accepted is de facto irreversible. The EU has developed a level of inter-dependence whereby even destructive behavior of single member-states is turned into a benefit fro all affected parties.

1. EU-actors between conflict and interdependence

Almost every big success of European integration followed a severe conflict: when the French Assembly rejected the Treaty establishing a European Defense Union in 1954, the establishment of a European Political Union had to be cancelled as well. The only possible alternative was the creation of the European Economic, Atomic and Coal and Steel Communities that unfolded spill-over-effects and fostered the European political integration. In 1965, negotiations on a reform of the common agricultural policy were answered by France with the policy of the empty chair. The compromise of Luxemburg enabled the French government to "return" to Brussels, but burdened negotiations with the threat of a national veto. The completion of the Single European Market became more and more difficult during the 70s resulting in a "Euro-sclerosis". This motivated the EC-members to finally accept the European Single Act (ESA) that was pushed by EU-Commission-president Jacques Delors and signed in 1985. The ESA started a rush of integration development that was never seen before. In only 12 years the Commission realized what had been impossible for almost 30 years: a common market free from manifold non-tariff trade-barriers that had caused enormous economic loss.[10]

      The completion of the SEM in 1992 heralded a new epoch of EU-integration. Still, the EC was an economic, but not a political Union, though policies beyond economy were increasingly affected. In 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht established the European Political Union that was first planned in the 1950s. The ratification of the Maastricht-Treaty became a tight match in many countries including Germany. The launch of the Euro – part of the Maastricht-development – was accompanied by debates and protest, though first plans on a Currency Union go back to the 1970s. UK, Denmark and Sweden rejected the Euro, dividing EU-Europe into a "Euro-zone" and a "non-Euro-zone". The EU-enlargement in 2004 unveiled the EU's need for reforms, especially of the

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[10] See Commission of the European Communities (1985): Completion of the Single European Market, White Book to the European Council, Luxemburg; and the "Cecchini-report" on financial benefits from the SEM.

EU's institutions, its decision making-process, certain policy-fields, its legitimacy and transparency. The reform attempts of 1996 (Treaty of Amsterdam) and 1999 (Treaty of Nice) were rather disappointing though both Treaties launched incremental developments like the expansion of the qualified majority vote. The differences on the Iraq war showed in 2001 that a common Foreign and Security Policy does not exist in Europe.

The most recent and maybe most dramatic conflict since then is the current stagnancy of the EU's constitutional process. After an encouraging start, the ratification of the European Constitution in the EU-member states flagged after a negative referendum in France and the Netherlands. So far, 14 members of the EU-25 have ratified the Treaty, next to 9 that have postponed the ratification sine die. This status is dramatic. The European Constitution is a reform-Treaty the "enlarged" EU urgently needs. It provides a solid concept to issues like the EU's identity, the division of competencies between the EU and its member-states, democratic legitimacy and transparency, an institutional reform and the simplification of decision making (Höreth/Janowski/Kühnhardt 2005). The "period of reflection" the European Council declared in June 2005 was supposed to avoid a deadlock, but may have caused exactly this. While some national parliaments ratified the European Constitution despite the developments, other governments have withdrawn referenda that were already scheduled. In the meanwhile, another conflict came up: the claim for a financial reform of the EU that was fostered by the British EU-presidency.

While some conflicts have blocked integrative projects forever or for several years, others are in fact part of the agenda. Especially details of EU-legislation are subject to disagreements on a regular basis. The EU has adapted to the necessity of efficient conflict-resolution by special modes of decision-making: the Council of Ministers for example – that decides upon bargaining and consensus – formulates positions on three working levels that act strictly hierarchic. Only 10-15% of all positions are negotiated by the ministers themselves during the Council's meetings (so called "B-points"). Normally, these are highly disputed issues. Of all positions that are finally adopted by the Council of Ministers, 85-90% were pre-negotiated on one of the working levels and are accepted without further debates or changes (so called "A-points"). Of all positions adopted by the Council 70% were formulated already on the lowest working level – i.e. in an ad-hoc-committee or a working group. Another 15-20% was formulated by the Committee of the Permanent Representatives (COREPER), the second and major working level (Hayes-Renshaw/Wallace 1997: 78; Janowski 2005a: 188 ff.). It is important to remember that the Council is only one out of three legislative organs that also developed internal mechanisms to solve disagreements most efficiently in favor of acceptable solutions.

2. Levels of conflict in EU-Europe

The levels of conflict within EU-Europe are as manifold as the conflicts itself. Conflicts may appear between all levels of governance, including EU-institutions and EU-member states. Conflicts may also appear between EU-institutions or EU-member states and individuals in EU-Europe – i.e. EU-citizens or European companies. Apart from this, the EU and its member states may be entangled in conflicts with non-EU-members – so called "third countries", for instance in conflicts on trade. The following table provides an overview over major actors and leaves out further levels of conflict, for example between the EU and sub-national levels like the regions and the local authorities.

	EU-institutions	Members states	Individuals	EU-associates	Third countries
EU-institutions	x	x	x	x	x
Member states	x	x	x	x	x
Individuals	x	x	x		
EU-associates	x	x			
Third countries	x	x			

Table 1: Levels of conflict within EU-Europe

An all-embracing empirical examination of the levels of conflict would go far beyond the scope of this paper – though it is in fact still missing in scholarly literature. To show the maximum extent to which conflicts in EU-Europe escalate I will pick out remarkable examples. These examples will allow a deeper reflection on the methods of conflict management within EU-Europe and the general level of conflicts in regard to aggressiveness and destructive potential.

EU-institutions versus EU-institutions: the relationship between the EU-institutions is characterized by a strong inter-dependency. This goes along with the requirement for every EU-actor to cooperate with others and act coherently in EC-policies (Nugent 2004: 356 f.). To enable this, the EU's legislative institutions – European Commission, Council of Ministers and European Parliament – have adopted a number of formal or informal inter-institutional agreements. Informal agreements include regular meetings of representatives of the three institutions on various, mainly controversial issues. On a monthly basis, the presidents of the Parliament, the Commission and the Council meet to exchange positions and discuss issues. The development of the co-decision procedure (Art. 251 EC) has raised the pressure to "sound-out" positions and find a consensus. The Council and the Parliament are forced to consider the position of each other, as both institutions de facto have a veto-option. The conciliation committee is a solution, yet for a limited number of cases. Regarding the annual amount of EC-secondary law,[11] it is essential in the majority of cases to find an agreement on an early stage. Therefore, the institutions agreed on "Practical Arrangements for the New Co-Decision Procedure" on a formal basis (European Parliament/Council/European Commission 1999).

These agreements show that inter-institutional conflicts are increasingly overlapped by agreements and other linkages that foster inter-institutional cooperation. It is therefore important not to exaggerate on the amount of disagreements (Nugent 2005: 357). Conflicts are very often solved on a routine basis. Despite this, the relationship between the EU-institutions have not always been peaceful and efficient. Some relations resulted from tough power struggles, mostly in the early years of EC-integration: the Commission for example elaborated an initiative to implement the European Parliament's budgetary competencies only, after the Parliament had threatened a vote of distrust against the Commission in 1972 (Schindler 1999: 3553 ff.). The Council of Ministers hesitated until 1979 to create the legal basis for direct elections to the European Parliament – though already the Treaty of Rome declared a European direct elections act as an objective of European integration. The European Parliament sanctioned the Council of Ministers a few years later: in 1983 the Parliament sued the Council for passivity in implementing

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[11] See for sorted data on EC-initiatives and EC-legislation between 1980 and 2001: Janowski (2005a: 48 ff.).

a common traffic policy. The ECJ decided in 1986 that the Council has to adopt the necessary measures to realize this policy according to the EC-Treaty (ECJ case 13/83).

EU-institutions versus member states: the EU's member states have been far from supporting EU-integration without reservation during the last 50 years. Indeed, the transfer of sovereignty from the national to the EU-level was often a result of long bargains. European legislation was many times not welcomed even by governments or administrations that were directly involved in the process of decision-making. The early years of European integration were also characterized by power struggles between the member-states and the EC's supranational institutions. The French policy of the empty chair was also targeted against the Commission and meant to clarify its subordinate role in decision-making (Wallace 1996: 42 ff.; Janowski 2005a: 35 f.). When French President de Gaulle's refused to allow a representative of the Commission during the negotiations on the Luxemburg-compromise, he meant to show that the Council of Ministers was the predominant institution in EC-legislation. The Commission was from his point of view a subordinate administrative unit, established to assist the Council's work. This institutional understanding, that characterizes traditional international organizations, could not be ruled out – at least for some years.

In the meantime, things seem to have calmed down – in so small part because EC-legislation has developed significantly and the EU-institutions have grown in their roles in decision-making. Therefore, it is not astonishing that more recent conflicts between the EU-institutions and the member-states appear along another cleavage within the EU: implementation of and compliance to EC-law. While the relations between the intergovernmental and the supranational institutions of the EU are more and more determined by formal obligations, the gap between the EU and national institutions or administrations that are supposed to implement EU-decisions seems to grow. Until 1999, none of the EU-countries had implemented all acts completing the SEM in the full extent. This should have been done by 1992. At least the EU's average was above 90% (Wallace/Young 2000: 100). The "transposition deficit" (Sverdrup 2003: 27) has declined since the end of the 90s. Still, some EU-countries do not manage to transform EC-law in time. As a result, the number of reasoned opinions and court proceedings on infringement of the EC-Treaties increased (Sverdrup 2003: 29 f.).

EU-institutions versus individuals within the EU: the founding of the European Communities heralded a new era of law – the era of binding supranational law enacted by the institutions of an international organization. The supremacy of EC-law, that was ascertained by the ECJ in 1964 (ECJ 6/64), underlines that EC-legislation directly affects EU-citizens – in opposite to "regular" international law that binds the negotiating governments only. This raised the question of the protection of the individual from supranational EC-law. The ECJ rejected the topic initially (ECJ 1/58). In 1969 the Court commenced a long row of jurisdiction on European fundamental rights stating that the supremacy of EC-law requires a protection of the individual (ECJ 29/69: 419). In the following decades the ECJ developed a detailed unwritten catalogue of fundamental rights (Chwolik-Lanfermann 1994) that provided a solid protection of the individual many years before a European Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms was declared.

The jurisdiction of the ECJ on fundamental rights includes also **the protection of EU-individuals against other EU-member states**. The ECJ developed one major principle of the EC-Treaties: the ban of any kind of discrimination of EC-citizens that was written down in the EC-Treaty (Art. 12 f. EC). The ECJ stated on that ground that national administration has to avoid any kind of discriminative or disadvantageous treatment against citizens of other EU-countries and has to provide these citizens with the same rights and freedoms that apply to the citizens of the relevant country. The ECJ confirmed this even for legal actions: EU-citizens, who have to respond themselves in front of a court in an EU-country other than the home-country, have to be provided with the same legal advice that applies to the relevant country's citizens (ECJ 98/79: 712). The jurisdiction of the ECJ on fundamental rights catalyzed the development of the

European Communities from an economic community to a legal community by accepting fundamental rights as essential and indispensable part of a democratic system of governance.

The EU versus "third countries": the last major category of conflicts in EU-Europe includes the various disagreements between the EU and non-EU-countries. The best examples are the various disputes on details of the trade-relations between the EU and non-EU-countries. The EU was accused many times of taking advantage of its enormous economic power by infringing on the WTO- and similar agreements. The highly developed net of market regulations that control imports into the EU has earned the EU the reputation of a "Fortress Europe". Especially the strict import-regulations on agricultural products were criticized as being excessively protectionist (see: Murray 2004: 39 ff.). The list of EC-regulations that have created controversery on the side of third-countries is long. A prominent example is the banana-market regulation (No. 404/93/EC from 13. Feb. 1993, Official Journal No. L 47: 1) that complicates the import of bananas from third countries, excluding the Lomé-partners. The main objective of this regulation, one that also caused controversial debates within the EU itself, was a reduction of the import quota on bananas and a raise in subsidies on EC-bananas. The disputes on banana-imports escalated into numerous proceedings in front of the ECJ that were brought forward primarily by affected trading companies. The ECJ rejected all complaints and stated that the regulation fully corresponds to the obligations of the EC-Treaties. The ECJ could not find an infringement on WTO agreements (ECJ cases C-469/93, C-465/93). The quite short elaboration of the latter did not fully convince opponents of the regulation.

The banana-market regulation is a catchy example that fears of a "Fortress Europe mentality" are comprehensible. Especially the economic success of developing countries very often depends on import options into EU- or US-markets. However, the subjects of conflicts are not limited to agricultural products and to disagreements with less developed countries. A popular case is the merger of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas that caused long-lasting negotiations between the EU-Commission and the US-Federal Trade Authority. The EU-Commission evaluated the merger of both companies and found that Boeing would achieve a "dominant position" within the European Economic Area through which "effective competition would be significantly impeded" (Commission 1999: 23). To continue business within the EU, Boeing had to present a list of remedies that finally motivated the Commission to adjust its evaluation and allow business activities in the common market, as long as Boeing was "subject to full compliance with the commitments made" (Commission 1999: 28). So far, the conflict persists. Currently the EU and the US disagree on the financing of the new Airbus A350 that was developed by the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Agency (EADS) and a competitive product, the new Boeing 787. While the US classified the cheap loans Airbus received for the development of the A350 as a public subsidy, the EU claims that the US is subsidizing Boeing indirectly by military programs and orders from NASA (Spiegel 2005).

3. The EU's strategies to formalize disagreements

The overview of conflicts and conflict-levels in Europe shows that EU-integration is characterized by numerous disagreements in daily politics. However, it is overly hasty to conclude that Europe is internally estranged. If this was the case, recent achievements of European integration like the establishment of a European Political Union by the Treaty of Maastricht, the reform-Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice, the signing of a European Constitution and the integration of 10 new member states – the biggest EU-enlargement so far – would have hardly been possible. In fact, conflicts within EU-Europe and between the EU and third countries seem to be in large amount part of the agenda as the EU understands itself as pluralist democracy that allows the exchange of

opposing views. At any rate, conflicts within EU-Europe seem to be carried out with in a quite formalized way. European actors never leave the diplomatic track. Not even the toughest conflict within Europe in the past or in recent years – like in the sanctions against Austria or between the EU and trade-partners like the US – have brought the EU close to using aggressive force. The "peaceful" methods of conflict management influenced the theoretical debate on conflict-resolution in the EU. Theoretical approaches mainly measure conflict-resolution in the EU in terms of compliance or non-compliance to EU-legislation. This underlines the strong level of institutionalization and legalization of policy and policy process in the EU. Non-compliance challenges the EU's system of governance severely as it endangers the EU's coherence and effectiveness.

Three models of conflict-management dominate the debate. The supranational or enforcement model defines compliance to EU-decisions from a top-down approach (Palumbo and Calista 1990). The main driver for compliance is from this point of view the availability of surveillance and monitoring capacities. Developed methods of monitoring produce a higher level of compliance, while compliance will decrease as soon as monitoring capacities are reduced. The opposing intergovernmental model assumes that compliance depends on the degree of knowledge and influence participants of European decisions have. The key factor is the comparative advantages national governments expect from common decisions: "negotiated agreements appear to be efficient, whether or not supranational actors intervened, because preferences were transparent" (Moravcsik 1999: 481). A third model stresses the dynamics of institutions (March and Olsen 1989) and points out that certain institutional structures and traditions facilitate conflict resolution, others may complicate it. A major problem for the effective implementation of EU-legislation is seen in the "impact of national administrative traditions", since EU-secondary law is to be implemented mainly on national level by national organs or administration (Knill 1998: 1). To overcome conflicts, actors voluntarily or involuntarily chose from two opposing methods: conflicts may be solved in a confrontational manner by voting out others during decision making or provoking proceedings in front of the ECJ. A more defensive method tries to avoid direct confrontation in favor of "sorting out" and consensus.

Empirical examinations of compliance during the last decade prove the supranational and the institutional dynamics model (Sverdrup 2003: 19 ff.). This is very interesting as examinations of earlier years of European history come to the conclusion that the intergovernmental model has been the mode of conflict resolution (Moravcsik 1999). Possibly, the development of the European project from a market-oriented European Economic Community to a Political Union also changed the modes of decision-making and conflict-management. The empirical analysis of compliance unveils two main factors that drive conflict resolution in EU-Europe since the late 1990s. A first factor is the availability of monitoring and surveillance power that allow the EU-institutions – first of all the Commission – to detect non-compliance and sanction the relevant member states. A second main driver is the awareness that compliance is necessary and of interest for all EU-partners. This motivates member states to "sound out" options in advance and find consensus on an early stage of decision-making. An interesting finding is that modes of conflict resolution differ within EU-Europe: large EU-members tend to pursue a "confrontational style" by escalating conflicts up to procedure in front of courts and court decisions. Smaller member-states and particularly the Nordic EU-members prefer a "more consensus seeking approach" by "sounding out" positions on an early stage (Sverdrup 2003: 2).

The question remains: why do EU-members act disciplined when it comes to compliance and conflict-resolution in EU-Europe? This question is not easy to answer and requires a deep understanding of the EU's system of governance. As was mentioned, decision making in EU-Europe is characterized by a strong inter- and intra-institutional dependency including all levels of governance – also the national. EU-law penetrates the national legal systems to a large extent. European decision making is closely linked to national decision-making even in those policy-fields that have not yet been communitized. European decision making is formalized (Nugent 2005: 337 ff.). Every step follows terms of procedure that are laid down formally and have to be

fulfilled. Patterns of conflict-resolution are already integrated in the formal procedures of decision-making. The co-decision procedure (Art. 251 EC) for instance enables on every step of procedure formal and informal sounding-out between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament to finally agree on a common formulation of the relevant legislative act. The pressure is high as the legislative act requires the agreement of both sides to be adopted. The last option is the conciliation committee, in which members of Council and Parliament come together to finally agree on a joint text for the relevant legislative proposal. If the committee's negotiations fail also, the relevant proposal cannot be adopted. The conciliation committee is therefore a method of conflict-resolution intrinsically embedded in a major process of EU-legislation. This shows that in the EU's system of governance conflict resolution is formalized already at the stage of their initial development.

Of course, the empirical analysis also shows that a final consensus does not guarantee proper implementation and compliance to EC-law. For this, there may be too many authorities and individuals affected in EU-Europe. Nevertheless, conflict-management remains on a highly formal level. This is especially the case for conflicts that appear after processes of decision-making have been completed. After decisions have been published in the official journal of the EU, the Commission monitors the implementation of EU-law (Art. 211 EC). In case member states or national authorities do not comply, the Commission may initiate an infringement procedure. A procedure in front of the ECJ that may sanction the actions of the relevant state or individual (Art. 226 EC; Nugent 2005: 247 ff.) is the final step of procedure. This ultimate means of sanction is taken only, if member states refuse to cooperate. The first step is a formal letter of notice followed by a reasoned opinion that both open up numerous opportunities of formal and informal exchange to explain the accused's own point of view and attempt to overcome the disagreements. Only if the accused states or individuals consistently refuse compliance will the ECJ have to decide the case. The level of formalization of the process as a whole grows the higher the probability of an ECJ-proceeding becomes.

The EU-institutions have also developed strategies to overcome disagreements on the general development of European integration efficiently. The strongest example is the "new open method of coordination" (European Council 2000: 2) that was adopted by the European Council already during the Luxemburg summit (European Council 1997). The Lisbon-summit developed the strategy and defined a broad frame for the potential application of this method (European Council 2000). The main goal of open coordination is to overcome barriers in the process of history-making decision, i.e. the EU's basic strategic decisions on integration development. The approach gives hesitant EU-members the opportunity to opt-out. In opposite, countries willing to deepen trans-national co-cooperation have the chance to do so on a less formal basis than EC-legislation provides. Open coordination is therefore to a large extent driven by voluntary commitment and political will. It also allows member states to move on different speeds and allows to foster European integration "in areas where full harmonization is blocked" (Mosher 2000: 2), but where single countries may be interested in co-coordinating their policy decisions. This approach is not new. Already the Schengen-agreements and the introduction of the Euro de facto created core-areas of EU-integration in the relevant fields of policy.

The method of open coordination is also promoted by the EU-Commission as part of the Commission's millennium concept for good-governance in EU-Europe. In its governance-White Book the Commission underlined that open coordination is supposed to push integration rather than "dilute" common strategic goals (Commission 2001: 29). To avoid this, the Commission also clarified that the method of open coordination should apply to cases only where European legislation is not possible – either because it does not exist, or because the policy has not yet been fully communitarized (Ibd.). The Commission finally straightened out that the relevant subjects of open coordination should correspond to general strategic goals of the EU. This corresponds to the European Council's decision to apply open coordination to economic objectives: the "Lisbon-process" aims at turning the EU into the "most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and

greater social cohesion" (European Council 2001: 2). The main steps are the development of the European knowledge infrastructure, the promotion or technology and research, the reform of the national welfare systems and fostering economic growth (Ibd.).

A main aim of the Lisbon-process is to "regain the conditions for full employment, and to strengthen regional cohesion in the European Union", two new issues that challenge some EU-members significantly. It is therefore true that many of the issues the European Lisbon-summit proposed for open coordination "are policy-areas were member-states seem to be capable of proceeding individually, but may be unsure of the best path to take" (Mosher 2000: 2). This leads to a final and essential finding on conflict-management in EU-Europe. Studies on international cooperation tend to stress the transaction costs of trans-national cooperation. Indeed, fragmentation and national unilateralism may cause enormous costs as well. Europeans especially have "strong and recent memories" of those transaction costs (Wallace 2000: 41) and therefore measure costs and benefits "over the medium to a long term" (Ibd.). The long-term costs of fragmentation may be that high that any kind of trans-national cooperation becomes "cheaper" and a beneficial surplus. Strategies like the open method of coordination support this with an additional incentive as they do not require further assignments of power, but unfold similar effects. They foster the deepening of integration on a voluntary and intergovernmental basis.

IV. The EU's methods of conflict-management: a model for East Asia?

The analysis of the EU's methods of conflict-management leads us to the final question: can East Asia learn lessons from the EU? The scope of this paper does not allow a detailed reflection of East Asian regional integration in comparison to EU-integration. Nevertheless, the reflections made here allow several remarks. Efficient conflict-management has been a main objective of East Asian efforts on regional integration. Next to APEC, ASEAN defines the promotion of "regional peace and stability" (ASEAN 2005: 1) as a main objective. This objective is of such importance that it is named equally to the aim of accelerating economic growth. Already in 1976, ASEAN laid down in its fundamental Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) the necessity of the "settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner" (ASEAN 2005: 2). Obviously, all East Asian countries share the view that avoiding aggressive confrontation is as important as economic prosperity is. This is an important development as the escalation of disputes may severely harm economic prosperity. What is true for ASEAN in this regards is true for APEC and other regional integration as well: economic growth is one important objective, the creation of peaceful methods of cooperation another. Both may be linked as the EU assumes for Taiwan and China in the hope that economic growth fosters peace.

So far, this equation has not been achieved in its full extent. APEC is an example of regional integration that also has to achieve a certain state of development to secure stability and peace. APEC was established in 1989 as a trade forum and also as initiative to enhance security in the region and "strengthen the Asia-Pacific community" (APEC 2003: 2). This commitment did not avoid the fact that two APEC-members – China and Taiwan – stumbled into a conflict that came close to escalating into military aggression. The situation was severe enough to bring about negative consequences for neighboring regions: only in spring 2005 did US-experts adjure the peaceful settlement of the disagreements. "One of the greatest" threats for international security was seen in "the possibility of a military confrontation between China and Taiwan that leads to a war between China and the United States" (Lieberthal 2005: 53). Interestingly, to calm the conflict a bilateral solution was suggested: both sides agree on a "20-to-30-year"-lasting framework on the Taiwan Strait (Lieberthal 2005: 60). "Today's fragile status quo", so was stated, may be locked only if both sides move in the direction of each other, i.e. if Taipei forgoes the political goal of "full independence" and Beijing stops "threatening to use force" (Lieberthal

2005: 61). Two aspects are remarkable on this proposal. First, APEC was not even considered as forum for local conflict-resolution. Second, regional peace seems to be of essential interest, not only for countries in the region but also for countries that realize own economic interest in the region, like the US and the EU.

This leads to the final question of whether East Asia could learn any lessons from European integration. In general, we may agree that APEC faces "a much more complex, fractured, diverse political and economic regional environment" (Beeson/Jayasuriya 1998: 312). This exposes one barrier to a deeper integration in East Asia: regional integration requires the discovery of similarities. Countries that are willing to integrate launch a learning process that leads from "relative heterogeneity" to an "increased homogeneity" (Hettne 1999: 11). This is one reason why regional integration obviously fosters peaceful strategies of conflict-resolution. Countries that commit themselves to regional cooperation seem to develop dependencies that let aggressive conflicts appear as high risk also for the aggressor: an aggressive "settlement" of disputes may cause enormous costs, whereas diplomatic ways offer a low-risk and low-cost option. China and Taiwan are an example of this. Experts estimate that trade connections have become so tight that the escalation of disagreements becomes costly for both sides. As a result of this, the relations seem to stabilize. At least, the threat of military force is not as acute as it was in 1996 (Shaocheng 2003: 23 f.). This indicates that regional integration could be a way to settle conflicts by raising the mutual benefit of peaceful solutions.

The question connected to this is: to what extent does regional integration have to develop before military threat becomes improbable or de facto impossible as in the case of the EU today. To give a definite answer we would have to examine projects of regional integration much more deeply than was done here. We may get an idea when we take a final look at the mentioned scale of regional integration. A region as geographic unit "delimited by a more or less natural physical barriers" (Hettne 1999: 10) does not avoid aggressive confrontations as history shows. Even in Europe, a region that was always characterized by a propensity for cross-border cooperation (Wallace 2000: 40), the first half of the 20th century was marked by devastating wars between European neighbors. A region as a social system, creating a loose "security complex" (Hettne 1999: 10) may be a first step, but still cooperation is not intense. At the least, a third degree of regional integration – a region as organized cooperation requiring a kind of membership – seems to be necessary in order to raise the chance of peaceful cooperation. Of course, major question marks include the grade of formalization and the power of regional institutions to settle conflicts. Non-affected members of the region may act on regional level as a mediator. But: regional fora have to dispose on powers that allow a successful mediation. Conflicting parties have to be willing to trust the regional authority. The benefit of regional integration is high: the example of the EU proves that the formalization of cooperative efforts reduces the danger of aggressive confrontation. This may be the most important lesson from EU-integration.

V. Conclusion

This paper tried to approach the question of whether the EU could be a model of regional integration and of the peaceful settlement of disputes in other parts of the world. The EU is suited for neither a model of regional integration, nor as a model of conflict-resolution – at least in the sense that single of the EU's strategies could be adopted one-to-one. The major hurdle other regions in the world may discover if or when they try to copy European integration is that the EU is not simply a "static model that can be proliferated" (Kühnhardt 2004: 3), but a dynamic process that has to be seen in the context of European integration as a whole. It is understandable that European integration emits a high attraction to protagonists of regional integration in other parts of the world. The challenge of globalization to which regional integration is an appropriate answer

fosters the willingness of countries to cooperate closely with geographical neighbors. Yet, no region has even paved the way to achieving the deep regionalism the EU presents. Many countries are still very reluctant to assign powers even to a small extent to a regional level. Therefore, it is not probable that a second supranational community develops in short-time perspective.

European integration has not only overcome national reluctance to "sacrifice" powers to a supranational level, it has also managed to develop tight legal, institutional, political and economic structures that were recently completed by a clear commitment to common values. The question remains as to which lessons the EU could hold for regions like East Asia that still suffer from the threat of aggressive confrontation. Regional integration – even if it does not reach the level the EU does – fosters dependencies between cooperation partners that link regions together. To give up these dependencies may cause high costs for all sides affected and will become more improbable the stronger the connections become. This means that member-states will avoid aggression in favor of dialogue-oriented ways of conflict-management the more regional integration develops. Institution-building and formalization can support this as long as member states are willing to assign them with appropriate (supranational) powers. All in all, the EU can be a motivating factor that supports these developments. Nevertheless, it is not suited as a model or even *the* global paradigm of regional integration.

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