

## **Introduction: Normative and Economic Dimensions of EU-East Asia Relations\***

緒論：歐亞關係中經濟與規範力量的較勁

The U4 Network is a European University Network Made up of Ghent University in Belgium, the Georg-August University of Göttingen in Germany, the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, and Uppsala University in Sweden. The aim of the network is to support cooperative initiatives in the field of education, research, and institutional management, and to enhance exchanges of students and staff.

Being well aware of the growing importance of East Asia in world politics and economics, and of the special position of Taiwan in the East Asian region, Ghent University, the University of Groningen, and the Georg-August Universität Göttingen/Georg-August Universität Stiftung Öffentlichen Rechts (UGOE) signed an agreement with Taiwan's Ministry of Education in 2016 to establish a 'Taiwan Chair'. This has been an opportunity for these universities to build on their expertise in the field of cultural studies, political studies, and economic studies. For Ghent University, the establishment of their 'Taiwan Chair' was the logical continuation of the already existing academic cooperation (in scientific research, and student and staff exchange) with some major universities in Taiwan. The four parties agreed that the coordination of the 'Taiwan Chair Project' would be with Ghent University.

The 'Taiwan Chair' of comprises an educational and a scientific component. While at Ghent University, the Taiwan fellow program teaches a course on EU – East Asia relations (with a focus on Taiwan) during the first term of each academic year at Ghent University, the second term of each academic year is centred around the organization of an international academic workshop on a topic related to East Asia, with a focus on Taiwan. The workshop rotates yearly between the universities of Ghent, Groningen, and Göttingen. Participants to the workshop are staff of the U4 Network universities, invited colleagues from Taiwan and elsewhere, and students of the U4 Network universities.

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After the first workshop, held in Ghent in the academic year 2016-2017 on the topic of the ‘Maritime Territorial Disputes in the Asia Pacific Region’, the topic of the next workshop organized at the University of Groningen in the academic year 2017-2018 was ‘EU Foreign Policy and the Response from East Asia’. The publication is the outcome of this workshop.

Relations between the European Union (EU) and East Asian states and organisations have long been under-researched. Over the past ten to fifteen years this gap has been closing as research activities intensified and publications accelerated. Now there is a solid body of literature on the relations between the EU and East Asia, including analyses of broader political aspects (Men, 2014; Chen, 2016; Gaenssmantel, 2014; Midford, 2012), the economic dimension (Snyder, 2010; Frenkel & Walter, 2017; Winkler, 2008; Garcia, 2010; Marx et al., 2014), as well as more specific issues like public diplomacy, normative influence, or cultural relations (Su, 2016; d’Hooghe, 2011; Hosoya, 2012; Odgaard & Biscop, 2008; Reiterer, 2014). Despite this welcome dynamism in research on EU-East Asia relations, what has not yet been studied systematically is how East Asian states have responded to EU approaches, whether they have readily followed EU initiatives or instead proposed (or even imposed) their own parameters for cooperation, whether they share and support EU interests and ideas or see them with suspicion, and so forth.

To a certain extent this gap is related to the fact that generally the East Asian response has not been very substantial. This in turn is linked, at least in part, to the political realities of East Asia. The region has been marked by the massive presence of the United States, as well as the role played by dominant regional actors, first and foremost the People’s Republic of China (the PRC). In addition, various regional hotspots dominate the foreign policy agendas of East Asian states, for instance the Korean peninsula, territorial disputes in the South China Sea, cross-straits relations, the historical shadows over Japan’s relations with its neighbours, and so on, and the EU has not been able to convince its partners in East Asia that it can play a meaningful role on those issues. Despite its massive economic relevance, politically the EU remains a far-away entity that struggles to find resonance for its ambitious East Asian agenda.

This problem has already been addressed by some scholars who coined the term “expectation deficit” (Michito, 2008; Zhang, 2016: 464; Chen, 2016: 789). In stark contrast to the classical capabilities-expectations gap (Hill, 1993), where limited capabilities imply that the EU cannot deliver on excessive expectations,

Asian actors seem to have developed only very limited expectations *vis-à-vis* the EU, apparently because they do not perceive the EU as an entity that has much to offer in terms of their priorities in regional and international affairs.

The aim of the workshop in spring 2018, organized in cooperation with National Taiwan University, was to expand our understanding of East Asian reactions to EU policies towards the region. At the core of most contributions lay one major East Asian actor: the PRC. This is not surprising, of course, and for several reasons. Firstly, as a rising power with an increasingly active foreign policy agenda, the PRC has attracted more political and scholarly attention in recent years than its neighbours. Secondly, the PRC can be considered an exception in that it displays less of an expectation deficit than other actors in the region. In fact, it has shown considerable interest in engagement with the EU, and it has also been quite explicit in its expectations towards this partner. The focus has been mostly on economic issues, like market economy status or trade defence more broadly, but it has by no means been limited to these (Holslag, 2011). Also, episodes of attempted engagement with the European integration project on the part of the PRC pre-date the beginning of the policies of reform and opening up (Gaenssmantel, 2014). Lastly, the PRC is the East Asian nation with which the EU has had the most active agenda of engagement with (Breslin, 2010: 4).

As a result of the PRC-focus in most of the papers presented at the workshop, this special issue concentrates on Chinese responses to EU foreign policy, rather than adopting the broader East Asian framework. This is an advantage, of course, in that the object of study is more narrowly delineated. In addition, the PRC's prominence amongst emerging powers, including as a leader on certain issues (Hopewell, 2017), implies that the findings may have significance beyond bilateral EU-PRC relations. This being said, we think that a broader East Asian view would still be worthwhile, and we hope to be able to address this in follow-up projects.

The articles re-grouped in this special issue address two core dimensions of EU foreign policy, and thus of Chinese responses to it, namely economic and normative power. The debate on the EU, or its predecessor, the European Community (EC), as economic power dates back to the first attempts at conceptualizing it as a new type of actor (or power) in international relations. Thus, Duchêne's famous contributions on "civilian power Europe" relate to the economic dimension of the EC's activities towards the outside world, and similarly Sjöstedt's early discussion of European actorness in international

affairs also includes, necessarily one is tempted to add, a review of joint economic policies (Duchêne, 1973; Sjöstedt, 1977). At the core of the EU's economic power is the enormous single market and the effect this has on the EU's interactions with international partners in the realm of trade. While the basic mechanism is quite intuitive, it is still useful to further differentiate between power "in trade" and "through trade" (Meunier & Nicolaidis, 2006; Meunier & Nicolaidis, 2011). The EU as a power "in trade" exchanges access to its huge market for market access abroad for EU exports, whereas it exercises power "through trade" whenever it tries to use trade tools to pursue goals outside of the commercial realm, in particular the external diffusion of its own standards and norms (Meunier & Nicolaidis, 2006: 910). However, the extent to which the EU can exercise power in international negotiations also depends to a considerable extent on the internal decision-making norms (Meunier, 2001). Economic power can also be connected to what has been termed "market power", namely the ability to externalise "market-related policies and regulatory measures", which can be traced back to the single market at the core of the EU, and the related expertise and policy-making procedures (Damro, 2012: 686-690).

The idea of the EU as a normative power was first launched by Manners, with a focus on its "ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international relations" (Manners, 2002: 238). Since then, this conceptual innovation has inspired much further scholarship. While Manners emphasized the EU's "normative difference," in that it has built a normative agenda from its own historical experience that is extremely close to that of the United Nations (Manners, 2002: 240-241), others have questioned the purity of normative motivations. Laidi, for example, has emphasized that norms reflect preferences (2008: 51). Rosamond has developed a more general critique of distinguishing normative from "strategic" motives behind external action, allowing also for a more interest-guided use of normative power (Rosamond 2014, pp.135-137). One might add that the idea of the EU's promotion of its normative agenda "through trade," as claimed by Meunier and Nicolaidis (2006), also relativizes Manners' insistence on the point that normative power does not depend on the instrumental use of other, harder, forms of power (2002: 242).

In this collection, Bart Dessein's contribution can be related to the debate about normative power Europe. The EU has been promoting norms and values also towards the PRC, including, for example, through the bilateral human rights dialogue or cooperation projects with a normative dimension, like on village governance, and more broadly the PRC has been the target of policies advancing

Western normative precepts, such as in the context of the Washington Consensus. Dessein shows that the PRC has responded with its own normative agenda, with the ideas of a “harmonious society” and a “harmonious world” at its centre. However, this is not primarily a reaction to the European and broader Western normative programme, but instead based on China’s history as a Confucian society and as the centre of the *tianxia* logic of regional governance. In terms of the EU’s normative power, this means that it is not simply faced with contestation or even negation, terms that would still imply a mechanism of influence, but instead with a fully independent alternative proposal for a normative order. This may foreshadow a shrinking space for the EU’s exercise of normative power in world affairs.

The article by Catherine Li addresses an issue that has been at the core of the PRC-EU economic relations, namely that of the PRC’s status as a non-market economy in the EU’s trade defence investigations, and its recent replacement in related EU regulations by an obligation to show significant market distortions, which is no longer relevant for the PRC alone. It can be linked to the economic power of the EU, in the sense of both power in trade and market power. In a broad sense, it can be interpreted as a question over how much the PRC is ready to concede in order to avoid this specific type of restriction on access to the EU market for its producers (Gaenssmantel, 2012: 63). At the same time, the question relates to the EU as market power as well, in that it is concerned with the degree to which the PRC is ready to conform to EU definitions of what constitutes a market economy with no price distortions. The entire debate unfolds in the context of international trade law. Li shows how the shift in EU regulation has triggered a debate over what kinds of obligations there are for members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) that can be derived from treaties and from the PRC accession protocol. She comes to the conclusion that there is indeed room for the kind of procedures envisaged by the new EU rules, although in practice their conformity to WTO law can only be established on a case-by-case basis. While this leaves open how ongoing political and legal disputes surrounding this issue will be resolved, it shows that international trade law not only represents a tool for the EU’s exercise of market power (Damro, 2012: 695-696), but can also limit its scope.

Astrid Pepermans analyses how the PRC has been able to replace the EU as the world’s largest textile exporter since its accession to the WTO and the phase-out of the Multi-Fibre system in 2005 that had been agreed on in the Uruguay Round. This illustrates a general development of the past 20 years or so, namely a global shift of the centres of economic growth, from advanced industrialised economic to the so-called emerging economies. This has unavoidably

meant a curtailing of the EU's power in trade, even though, as the article points out, the EU has been able to turn the increasing competition to its advantage, modernise its textile sector and thus weather the Chinese challenge to some extent. Pepermans also shows that the most difficult moment for the European textile industry had been right after the end of the textile quota system in 2005, thus further underlining that WTO rules constitute constraints for the EU.

The contributions to this special issue cannot lead to any definitive conclusions on the PRC's response to economic and normative power in EU foreign policy, not least because the response continues to evolve in step with the PRC's ongoing rise, and its developing domestic and international political agenda. Two points do seem to emerge, however: first, the PRC's response creates constraints for EU foreign policy, and second, the existing global order, for example in the form of the WTO and its rules, continues to constrain both the EU and the PRC. Aside from this, we hope that the articles presented here can help to inspire further research on how Asian actors position themselves vis-à-vis the EU, and that such research can help us to understand where the two regions, and global order in general, are headed.

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