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The Politics of ASEAN-EC/EU Development Cooperation

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Mit dem ersten Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Bangkok 1996 sind die fast 20jährigen Beziehungen zwischen der ASEAN und der Europäischen Union um ein weiteres, zentrales Dialogforum bereichert worden. Während ASEM und andere institutionelle Ausprägungen des inter-regionalen Verhältnisses Gegenstand zahlreicher wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen sind, fand jedoch die Kooperation im Bereich der Entwicklungshilfe bisher nur geringe akademische Aufmerksamkeit. Diesem Politikfeld kommt jedoch eine Schlüsselbedeutung zu, da es exemplarisch generelle Aspekte der südostasiatisch-europäischen Beziehungen verdeutlicht. Es kann angenommen werden, daß das ASEAN-EU Verhältnis unter einem Demokratie-Defizit leidet, da gesellschaftliche Akteure von der Gestaltung der offiziellen Beziehungen weitestgehend ausgeschlossen sind. Zumindest im Rahmen der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit hat die Zusammenarbeit aber eine Dynamik entwickelt, an der Vertreter der Zivilgesellschaft einen deutlichen Anteil besitzen. Ferner ist von Bedeutung, daß die ASEAN-Staaten nicht zu Adressaten europäischer Entwicklungshilfe wurden, weil sie entsprechende Zuwendungen gefordert hatten, sondern vielmehr weil ihnen dies von der damaligen EG angeboten worden war.

The holding of the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) in Bangkok on 1-2 March 1996, bringing together leaders from 15 members of the European Union and 10 Asian nations (the 7 members of ASEAN, plus China, Japan and South Korea), has called attention to the nearly two-decade long dialogue relationship between the European Union and ASEAN, which the two organizations declare to be the cornerstone of ASEM.

One aspect of this relationship that has attracted relatively little scholarly attention is development cooperation, one of the forms of joint action identified by the ASEAN-EC Cooperation Agreement, signed in 1980 in Kuala Lumpur (Article 4).[1] This neglect stands in stark contrast to the voluminous literature on EU development assistance to the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and is all the more surprising in view of the flourishing in recent years of scholarly interest in development assistance.[2] While the dearth of studies on ASEAN-EU development cooperation may make sense, in view of the relatively small amounts involved, and of the wider perception that the development of several ASEAN members may soon make ODA

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1 See ASEAN 1989, pp. 434-35.

2 See for example, Breuning 1994, pp. 131-45; Breuning 1995, pp. 235-54; Noël/Thérien 1995, pp. 523-553; Stokke 1996, pp. 16-129. I shall use the terms "foreign aid" and "development assistance" interchangeably.

superfluous, ASEAN-EC development cooperation nevertheless deserves scholarly scrutiny, for both policy and theoretical reasons. The newest members of ASEAN (Vietnam, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia) are at a relatively lower stage of economic development than the organization's current members and are therefore likely to require development aid from the EU and its members.

Beyond this immediate policy concern, examination of ASEAN-EU development cooperation sheds interesting light on the overall nature of ASEAN-EU relations, particularly the relative importance of states and civil society. Official documents contain ritual exhortations to develop people-to-people relations, but in reality only very small groups, and more importantly, only a limited range of categories, participate in the relationship on an institutionalized basis. For example, peasants organizations and trade unions are rarely prominent in this context. One is tempted to say that ASEAN-EU relations suffer from a "democratic deficit". In this context development cooperation offers the opportunity for groups in individual ASEAN countries that are normally excluded from the interstate channels to enter into a direct relationship with the EU.

This paper takes as its point of departure a number of paradoxes that characterize ASEAN-EU development cooperation. Applying Robert W. Cox's "method of historical structures", it goes on to argue that the EC proposal to engage in development cooperation, and ASEAN's acceptance of the offer, constituted a compromise. It represented an attempt to reconcile, on the one hand, contradictory interests that reflected their differing positions in an evolving international division of labor, and on the other, their mutual interests in the maintenance of the international political order. At the outset, development cooperation was not a response to demands presented or pressures exerted by civil society. However, by its very nature, development cooperation has acquired a dynamic partially independent of the interstate relationship and pushed to the forefront the issue of civil society participation in the ASEAN-EC relationship. This will be the object of the third and final section.[3]

I. The Paradoxes of ASEAN-EC Development Cooperation[4]

The first paradox is that development assistance was not originally requested by potential recipient states as a matter of priority and was instead offered by the EC. In its initial contact with the EC, ASEAN was primarily concerned with trade, specifically the loss, following Britain's accession to the EC (1972), of Commonwealth trading privileges enjoyed by Malaysia and Singapore. It is true that at a 1974 meeting ASEAN made an inquiry regarding development assistance, to which the EC responded that the 1972 Paris Summit committed the EEC to development cooperation with non-associated developing countries, including all ASEAN coun-

3 This paper draws heavily on and expands two previous papers by the author 1997a and 1997b, subsequently published in a slightly revised form in Aranal-Sereno/Sedfrey Santiago 1997c, pp. 145-222. I wish to acknowledge the support of the JIIA, which made possible most of the research for this paper.

4 The material in this section is drawn from my earlier piece "ASEAN and EC Official Development Assistance 1976-1995: An Empirical Survey." See also Grilli 1993.

tries.[5] However the ASEAN did not pursue the matter as aggressively as one would have expected.

Perhaps this was not altogether surprising. Though four ASEAN members were still characterized as developing countries,[6] they were not among the poorest of the poor.[7] By the time of the 1980 Agreement, Southeast Asia's rapid industrial growth had become obvious to European observers.[8] This points to another paradox: the granting of development assistance to one of the most rapidly growing regions of the developing world by the EC, at a time when the oil shock and economic crisis had created pressures on European aid budgets.

This paradox is arguably comprehensible in the context of EC development assistance policy. The latter had been characterized by tension between regionalists (who gave priority to former European colonies in Africa) and globalists (who were in favor of a more truly global policy responsive to the needs of the developing countries). The shifting balance of influence between the two resulted in the launching in 1976 of a program of financial and technical aid, with an extremely modest allocation of 20 million units of account (about $ 25 million) for all non-associated developing countries (i.e., Latin American and Asian countries).[9] It is doubtful whether consideration of ASEAN's concerns alone was decisive in the decision to launch this program. More likely it was the outcome of combined pressures from non-associated states in Asia and Latin America.[10]

Nevertheless, within the budgetary limits imposed by the priority given to the ACP, ASEAN's share of the aid budget for non-associated countries has always been disproportionate to its demographic weight or even to its development needs. To be sure the more populous countries of South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh), received the bulk of EC assistance to non-associated countries: about 42%, or 1137.62 million ECU) between 1976 and 1991 (last year for which comparative statistics are available). Yet a comparison of the percentages of assistance reveals that the 3 ASEAN countries (Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand) and the organization received 17% of commitments between 1976 and 1991, whereas the entire Latin American group, composed of nearly 20 countries, received less than twice as much (29%).[11]

5 See ASEAN (1989), pp. 469-470 (paras. 3 and 4).

6 A report published by the European Parliament in 1976 noted that most of the ASEAN countries were characterized by "relatively low per capita gross national product, rapid population growth, poorly developed economic and social infrastructures, lack of diversity in agricultural production, communication difficulties, nascent industries, heavy dependence on foreign investment, and considerable vulnerability to international sectoral or general crises".

7 See Akrasanee 1982, p. 13.

8 A French observer noted the following estimations of the growth rate of ASEAN member countries between 1970 and 1980: Indonesia 7.5%; Malaysia, 8%; the Philippines, 6.2%; Singapore, 14.4%; and Thailand, 4.5%. See Ordonnaud 1984, 1984, p. 31.

9 See Grilli 1993, pp. 60, 79-80.

10 The latter was equally, if not more, frustrated, over the EC's inability or unwillingness to enter into a sustained dialogue with it. For an overview of EC-Latin American relations, see Grilli 1993, pp. 225-70; Ayuso 1996, pp. 147-64 and Núñez Jiménez 1995, pp. 47-62.

11 See COM (94) 541 final (02.12.1994), pp. 19-21. Between 1976 and 1980, commitments of 55.96 million ECU or about 17.35% of total commitments to non associated countries for the period, were

The EC requirement that aid should be directed towards the poorest developing countries (Indonesia, the Philippines and, until the 1990s Thailand) and to the poorest sectors (in practice the rural areas)[12] could be adduced as explanations for the relative importance of ASEAN countries among the non-associated countries. Over the period under study most major EC projects have been in support of agriculture or otherwise located in the countryside. Commitments for irrigation, rural production and services, or integrated rural development represent over half (55.67%) of total commitments to the ASEAN member states. There has been scarcely any industrial project in Asia in general, in marked contrast with the greater prominence of the industrial sector in Latin America. Nor have there been major economic infrastructure projects.[13]

If development cooperation in practice involves only a subset of ASEAN members, we may ask whether the relationship is really one involving the two regional organizations. The ASEAN Declaration of 1967 expressed the willingness of its members to cooperate with regional organizations having similar aims and purposes (Art. 7). For its part the EC has always felt that it has a "natural vocation" to support efforts at regional integration in developing countries, through assistance to economic integration schemes, sectoral bodies covering a number of countries, and regional projects.[14] However, the 1981 Regulation provided that participation in regional projects would be considered only as a "subsidiary" form of action, a provision that set limits to the scope for EC support to ASEAN regional projects.

In practice ASEAN-EC regional development cooperation projects have been limited to 1.23% of total EC funding to ASEAN between 1976 and 1995 and were concentrated on fishing and forestry. The EC Commission attributes this low percentage to the difficulty of formulating development projects, or rural projects, for the region as a whole.[15]

However with ASEAN as an organization, economic cooperation has gradually acquired greater significance. In 1985, the ASEAN-EC Ministerial Meeting held in Bangkok defined new orientations for regional projects, which henceforth were to focus on the industrial and service sectors as well as in sectors where EC technical assistance and input could make valuable contributions. Emphasis would be placed on interregional collaboration programs, establishing strong linkages and long term relations between the institutions and agencies of both regions.[16] The 1994 ASEAN-EC Ministerial Meeting identified as the three main areas of economic cooperation between the two organizations the improvement of scientific and technological po-

made to three ASEAN members and the organization. In the following periods the figures rose to 178.44 million ECU, or about 21.4% of total financial commitments for 1981-85; 202.59 million ECU, or 16.8% of total financial commitments for 1986-90.

12 Council Regulation (EEC) No. 442/81, of 17 February 1981 on Financial and technical aid to non associated developing countries, Art. 3, para. 1 in: *Official Journal of the European Communities* (OJEC), No. L 48, 21.February 1981, p. 8; Council Regulation (EEC) No. 443/92, Art. 4, in: *OJEC*, No. L 52/1.

13 Rudner 1992, p. 14.

14 COM (88) 715 final (16 January 1989), pp. 38-39, see Luaba Lumu 1990.

15 COM (87) 588 final (27 November 1987), p. 36.

16 Ibid., p. 36.

tential (for example, through the creation of regional technology enters); assistance to trade and investment enabling activities, and promotion of business-to-business cooperation.[17] The first economic cooperation projects were initiated in the period 1984-87, when 9.94 million ECU were committed (6.59% of total commitments). The proportion of economic cooperation in total financial assistance has risen steadily, reaching nearly a quarter of the total in the most recent three-year period (1992-95). If we keep in mind that only half of the original ASEAN members (Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, later reduced to the first two), meet the criteria for receiving development assistance, then we realize that economic cooperation enables the EU to provide some form of assistance, no matter how small, to the other countries and thus to argue that it cooperates with all the ASEAN members.[18]

The institutionalization of the ASEAN-EU relationship also appears to substantiate the claims of cooperation between two regional organizations. Both partners point with some pride to the circumstance that the 1980 Cooperation Agreement was the first agreement of its kind signed by the EC with a group of developing countries, while the EU is ASEAN's oldest dialogue partner. The dialogue in all areas of cooperation is carried out through the ASEAN-EC Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) and the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), which meet at intervals of approximately 18 months.

These meetings have served primarily to lay down the general priorities of development cooperation. At the 1980 AEMM in Kuala Lumpur, ASEAN and EC established as priorities, food production, storage and distribution, water utilization, transportation and communications, and education and training.[19] The 1994 AEMM in Karlsruhe identified the foci of development cooperation to be poverty alleviation, human resource development, health and family planning, the promotion of the role of women, respect for human rights, and the environment and sustainable development.[20] However, once priorities have been laid down, implementation of bilateral development projects is subject to very little scrutiny by both organizations. To be more exact, it is only the EC, represented by the Commission, that acts as an organization; its development partner is always an individual ASEAN member, rather than an ASEAN institution. No participation of the direct recipients of development assistance in the decision-making or implementation process was provided for in the 1980 ASEAN-EC agreement. Though in retrospect the omission is surprising, it was consistent with the spirit of EEC Council Regulation 442/81, which only mandated that the EC "should take account of the economic principles and priorities" established by these countries and "the preferences and wishes expressed by recipient countries." The Regulation referred consistently to the role of recipient

17 Joint Declaration, The 11th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM), para. 11.

18 Economic cooperation constitutes the exclusive form of cooperation between the EU on the one hand, and Brunei and Singapore, on the other. It is quantitatively more important in the Malaysian case than development cooperation; and its importance has been increasing as development cooperation with Thailand is being phased out.

19 See ASEAN 1989, pp. 424-428 (Art.4, para. 3) and ASEAN 1989, pp. 429-32 (para. 19.c.).

20 Joint Declaration, 11th AEMM, 1994, para. 16.

"countries", (i.e. governments) and failed to identify other potential partners of the program.[21]

In sum, ASEAN and the EC engaged in development cooperation without excessive enthusiasm on the part of the recipient organization, several of whose members were by that time experiencing the most rapid growth rates in the developing world. While aid to the ACP continued to receive the lion's share of the EU aid budget, ASEAN, given its demographic weight, benefited disproportionately among the non-ACP. Since development assistance was focused on the poorest states and sectors, ASEAN-EC development cooperation became less and less an interregional relationship between two organizations and took on the character of a relationship between an organization on the one hand - the EU - and individual countries, on the other. Finally development cooperation, at least as provided for in the ASEAN-EC Cooperation Agreement, was primarily an intergovernmental undertaking, with practically no provision for the involvement of the direct recipients of the aid.

These paradoxes undermine claims of exemplary development cooperation between two regional organizations. In the next section I argue that these paradoxes make sense if development cooperation is understood as a compromise, a response to contradictory pressures emanating from both the national and international levels that simultaneously created opportunities and imposed constraints on both organizations and their members.

II. Development Cooperation as an Interstate Compromise

If scholarly studies of ASEAN-EC development cooperation have been few and far between, theoretical analyses of the relationship are virtually non-existent. The heightened interest in relations between both organizations and between Asia and Europe makes this omission less and less acceptable.

The major theories of international relations (realist, liberal and radical) provide analytical frameworks for a critical examination of development cooperation. This is not the place to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.[22] Suffice it to say that most variants of these approaches suffer from common failings. First they privilege one level of analysis at the expense of others. For example, realist theories, which focus on the international level of analysis, see development assistance as an instrument wielded by the US and the USSR in Cold War competition and are unable to explain why neutral or middle-range states (not to mention international organizations like the EC) also provided development assistance to developing countries. Liberal theories analyze foreign aid as an extension or projection of domestic welfare policies, but will be hard pressed to account for the impact on development assistance policies of changes in the international system. Secondly, the conceptualization of the relationship between the political and the economic tends to be problematic. As expected realist theories lay stress on the political motivations un-

21 Council Regulation (EEC) 442/81, Arts. 4 and 10. The omission was remedied in Council Regulation (EEC) no. 443/92 (25 February 1992) (see art. 3).

22 See Stokke 1996, pp. 16-129. I have made a modest attempt to assess these theories. Robles 1997b.

derlying development assistance policies, while Marxian or neo-Marxian theories interpret the latter as a means of promoting capitalist interests.

I believe that Robert W. Cox's method of historical structures offers avenues for resolving these dilemmas and incorporating their partial insights into a broader framework.[23] At the very outset, Cox distinguishes three levels of activity, and by the same token, levels of analysis - production, forms of state and world orders. The configuration of these activities constitutes a historical structure, which not only imposes constraints on actions of state and non state actors but also creates opportunities for them. This means that ASEAN and EC development cooperation must be conceptualized as a relationship shaped by a particular configuration of production, form of state and world order.

A key to the moderately enthusiastic attitude of ASEAN toward the initiation of development cooperation may be found in the transformation of production in these countries, reflected in shifts in trading patterns with the EC. In the 1960s individual ASEAN members adopted export-oriented industrial policies that stressed production of labor-intensive finished goods (such as clothing) or labor-intensive components within intra-industrial specialization (for example, electronics, machinery parts and some fabrics). Since ASEAN countries' domestic markets were insufficient to absorb their production, Western Europe and North America offered alternative markets. In the decade (1968-77) preceding the Cooperation Agreement, the share of semi-manufactured and manufactured products in ASEAN countries' exports to the EC had doubled from about 25% to 50%; moreover such products constituted a larger proportion of ASEAN countries' exports to the EC than their exports to the rest of the world.[24] Although raw materials continued to be important in ASEAN-EC trade, economists anticipated that they would continue to need guaranteed access to EC markets. This need was all the more pressing because ASEAN imports from the EC were concentrated in manufactured products (machinery and transport equipment, chemicals and basic manufactures). In other words, export-oriented industrialization in ASEAN generated an increased demand for sophisticated manufactured products from the EC, translating into an ASEAN deficit in its trade with the EC.

In the early 1970s the EC formulated a scheme of trade preferences (GSP, or Generalized Scheme of Preferences) intended for all developing countries. However, statistics revealed that in 1978 preferential imports of EC from ASEAN countries amounted to only 3% of the total EC imports of GSP products.[25] In the first few years of GSP operation, the share of ASEAN countries' trade that qualified for preferences was higher for agricultural products than for semi-manufactures and manufactures, a result that was contrary to the original idea of using trade preferences to facilitate access of developing country exports of manufactured products in developing countries. To complicate matters the EC distinguished between sensitive and

23 Cox's most important essays have been published in *Approaches to World Order*, see Cox 1996 and Cox 1987.

24 In the following paragraphs I rely on Langhammer 1982, pp. 10-51, and Akrasanee 1982, pp. 125-193.

25 Langhammer 1982, p. 141.

non sensitive goods, which could be agricultural (e.g. cocoa butter, canned pineapples) and industrial (e.g., textiles and clothing). ASEAN exports classified as sensitive were subject to quantitative ceilings, beyond which the EC reimposed tariffs. These ceilings were criticized for being inadequate compared to the export capacities of the developing countries. Not surprisingly, ASEAN exports of goods classified by the EC as non-sensitive were most likely to receive preferences than sensitive goods, but the impact of preferences in the latter case was diminished by the fact that the margin of preference was very small. To sum up, the impact of the GSP on ASEAN trade with EC seems to have been limited, and was certainly more modest than the former preferences enjoyed by Singapore and Malaysia before UK entry into the EC.[26] It was therefore to be expected that from the initial contacts with the EC, and throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, ASEAN repeatedly insisted on the need to improve market access for its members' exports: removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers; tariff reclassification and simplification of administrative procedures; improvement of the EC's GSP; and consultations in case the EC considered measures that could have an adverse impact on trade.[27]

The EC attitude was fundamentally shaped by the impact of what was then thought to be a mere "recession" triggered by the oil shock and what we now know to be a world economic crisis. As Robert Cox has pointed out, the origin of the crisis lay in the conflict of social and political forces at the three levels of production, state and world order.[28] At the level of production, the developed countries, which had experienced nearly three decades of growth, were now confronted with stagnant or declining growth rates, accelerated inflation, increased unemployment, and huge balance of payments deficits.[29] In response to the crisis of production, competition among the developed countries for world market shares intensified.

In Europe there was a growing sense that part of the difficulties was attributable to the successful pursuit of export-oriented strategies in the Third World based on foreign investment, low costs and active state intervention.[30] In order to control market penetration by newly industrializing countries (including Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines), the EC imposed protection schemes in sensitive sectors, where competition would be most likely to generate unemployment in the EC (agriculture, textiles and clothing, steel, shipbuilding). The exports of ASEAN countries most likely to be affected by EC protection schemes were in agriculture (for example, vegetable oils) and in textiles and clothing. Clearly, because of the constraints resulting from the crisis of production in Europe, the EC room for maneuver to improve access for ASEAN manufactured exports was quite limited.

26 Ibid., pp. 141-154.

27 See ASEAN 1989, p. 426, (paras. 21-24).

28 Cox 1987, pp. 273-306.

29 For the OECD countries, the rate of inflation was on the average 2.7% in the first half of the 1960s, 3.7% from 1967-183, and 7.9% in 1973. The unemployment rate, which varied between 0.7% (Germany) and 5.5% (Italy) in the period 1964-73, rose to a total of 6% in the OECD countries in the following period. GNP growth rate averaged 5% between 1960 and 1973, fell to 0.3% in 1974 and became negative in 1975 (-1.3%). The OECD countries' balance of payments surplus of $5 billion in 1973 became a deficit of $33 billion in 1974. See Mossé 1980, pp. 9-28.

30 For example, Grjebine 1980, pp. 155-165; see also Onida 1980, pp. 92-96 and Valenza 1980, pp. 238-247.

On the other hand, contradictory pressures at the level of world order militated in favor of an EC gesture in the direction of ASEAN. The Bretton Woods system was being undermined by OPEC's action in quadrupling oil prices, followed by Third World attempts to wield commodity power in support of demands for a new international economic order. The Third World challenge led many observers to believe that the North/South divide was displacing East/West opposition as the axis of international relations. In this changing world order, Western Europe's inability to guarantee access to strategic raw materials in developing countries through military power made it particularly vulnerable. It is not a coincidence that the European Parliament delegation stressed that the EC imported a number of strategic commodities from ASEAN countries (e.g., oil, rubber, tin, iron, bauxite, nickel, manganese, chromite, and zinc).[31] Equally important, if not more so, the ASEAN countries' continued economic growth would make them attractive markets for the EC, thus contributing to the solution of the unemployment problem in Europe.[32]

The shifting East-West balance also seemed to demand a European approach to ASEAN. Following European decolonization in Southeast Asia, the state of the international system generated relations of "mutual ignorance" between the EC and the ASEAN. US domination of Latin America and Asia pushed the EC to concentrate its development assistance on African countries, linked to Europe by the former colonial relationship. In Southeast Asia, pro-Western states were preoccupied by strategic changes in the regional order, highlighted by the withdrawal of Britain east of Suez and US military involvement in Vietnam. ASEAN was a response to these problems as well as an effort to resolve territorial and political conflicts (e.g., Malaysia-Indonesia, Malaysia-Philippines, Malaysia-Singapore) among states whose recently achieved sovereignty was open to challenges from their neighbors. In this international and regional order Europe did not appear to have a role to play.

The end of East-West détente, symbolized by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, conferred a more explicitly political significance on ASEAN-EC relations. The transformation in the international system had its parallel in Southeast Asia, where tension between pro-Western ASEAN states and the Communist countries of Indochina had been intensified by the US military defeat in Vietnam and the unification of the latter.[33] The tension between the two blocs in Southeast Asia came to a head with the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. Since Vietnam granted its Soviet ally access to former US naval bases in that country,[34] several ASEAN countries linked the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia to the Soviet threat. The movement of Indochinese refugees also subjected the ASEAN countries of refuge (Thailand and Malaysia) to economic, political and social strains. Vietnam was accused of using refugees as a political weapon to destabilize the ASEAN countries.[35]

The tension in Indochina prompted the EC to recognize ASEAN in 1978 as "a factor of stability and balance [that] contributes to the maintenance of peace in Southeast

31 European Parliament Doc. PE 43.643/final, p. 11, para. 17.
32 European Parliament Doc. PE 62.798/fin. (9 February 1980), p. 6, para. 4.
33 European Parliament Doc. 181/76 (PE 43.643/fin. p. 11, para. 14.
34 Cayrac-Blanchard 1982, pp. 370-392.
35 Yamane 1982, pp. 505-526.

Asia."[36] The Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had put on the AEMM agenda issues for which each organization could appeal to the other for support.[37] Throughout the 1980s ASEAN and EC consistently deplored the armed intervention by foreign powers against two non-aligned countries in Asia, "which has as a common denominator the imposition of will on small independent states by foreign powers through the use of force in open violation of international law, thereby threatening international peace and security."[38] Each organization pledged its support for the other's plan for resolving the particular problems that interested it - total withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan and Cambodia and the exercise of self-determination for the peoples of these two countries.

However, when ASEAN sought international support for a speedy resettlement of Indochinese refugees in order to relieve the pressures on countries of refuge in Southeast Asia, the EC response was generally cautious, as it feared having to bear a significant share of the cost and the burden of resettlement.[39] The impossibility of modifying the GSP and the Common Agricultural Policy to meet ASEAN trade demands,[40] made it appear that financial cooperation was "the most necessary instrument of an overall cooperation policy."[41] Development assistance appeared as a modest, though tangible, expression of EC's support for the ASEAN position on Kampuchea and of the EC's appreciation for ASEAN backing of the EC approach to Afghanistan; a contribution to strengthening ASEAN's ability to resist external threats; and a compensation for any disappointment caused by the EEC's inability to respond to ASEAN's demands for improved market access.

ASEAN's acceptance of the offer of development assistance should be interpreted in the context of its efforts to change the structure of economic relations among its members. ASEAN members were conscious that this structure, inherited from the colonial past, was characterized by low intraregional trade and a marked extraregional orientation of the individual members' trade. The victory of North Vietnam over the South in 1975, to the extent that it set the stage for competition between the capitalist and socialist models in Southeast Asia, gave a new impetus to intra-ASEAN economic cooperation. But the undertaking was fraught with difficulties.[42] Not even having its own secretariat until 1976, ASEAN had no capacity to conceptualize economic cooperation projects. More serious than the institutional weakness were the fundamental divergences among members as to the goals of economic cooperation, with some states (Singapore and the Philippines) urging a free trade area as the ultimate objective, while others (e.g. Indonesia) favored more cautious forms of cooperation. The 1976 Bali Summit approval of ASEAN Industrial Projects was a

36 See ASEAN 1989, pp. 424-25 (para. 8); ASEAN 1989, p. 430 (para. 13).

37 See ASEAN 1989, p. 438.

38 See ASEAN 1989, p. 438 (para. 3), See also ASEAN 1989, pp. 446-47 (paras. 6-19); ASEAN 1989, pp. 452-53 (paras. 7-15); ASEAN 1989, p. 459 (paras. 2-4); ASEAN 1989, pp. 464-465 (paras. 7-8); ASEAN 1991, pp. 55-57 (paras. 6-16).

39 On the EC position, see Yamane 1982, pp. 523-524.

40 European Parliament Doc. PE 43.643/fin., pp. 19-20, paras. 3 and 4.

41 Ibid., p. 21, para. 9, p. 24, para. 15.

42 This paragraph is based on Suriyamongkol 1988, pp. 51-81.

compromise that ran into nearly insurmountable difficulties. The slow pace of intra-ASEAN economic cooperation, which was after all the declared objective of the organization, demonstrated a lack of political will that contrasted with the members' interest in relations with the EEC.[43] Official development assistance from the EEC would be one tangible proof of the value of regional cooperation and of the organization's ability to procure benefits for its members by joint action vis-a-vis the rest of the world. The decision to engage in development cooperation was primarily one taken by states in response to the changing structure of opportunities and constraints in the international order. Practically all ASEAN states being ruled at the time by authoritarian regimes, it is not surprising that civil society was largely unrepresented in this interstate dialogue. Gradually the voices of civil society would make themselves increasingly heard, as the relationship deepened in the 1980s and the 1990s.

III. Development Cooperation and Civil Society

Development cooperation, by its very nature, transcends the purely intergovernmental sphere and spills over into civil society. The issue of civil society participation in this field must be tackled, because, as contemporary democratic theory reminds us, decisions taken by states and/or international organizations (in this case ASEAN and EC) have outcomes that "stretch" beyond their frontiers.[44] The concept of civil society is useful precisely because it enables us to raise the question of democracy in development cooperation. As the Commission of the EU itself recognizes, the latter gives it the opportunity to establish contacts with some of the poorest and most marginalized sectors or classes in the developing countries, groups that are normally absent from the more formal channels of cooperation. From the point of view of civil societies in ASEAN countries, development cooperation expands the scope of a relationship that was at the outset predominantly interstate.

The implications of civil society for participation are disputed by neoconservative, liberal-pluralist and critical-theoretical conceptions, which give importance to different groups and ascribe divergent, if not contradictory, roles to each of them.[45]

For neoconservative ideology, NGOs include profit-making institutions such as micro-enterprises, credit associations, private corporations and bankers' associations. They serve to create a civic culture that can restrain the potential excesses of the state. Neoconservative support for NGOs is intended to weaken the power of the state and contribute to the sustainability of IMF-WB structural adjustment programs. The underlying values of this conception are self-interest, hard work, flexibility,

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43 According to the United Nations Team that presented a program for economic cooperation, "one of ASEAN's leading economic ministers was more interested in ASEAN's relations with the EEC than in relations within ASEAN itself." The minister referred to was the Minister of Trade of Indonesia, which was the most reluctant country to envision a free trade area for ASEAN. The Minister was successful in convincing other members to establish a special coordination committee for relations with the EEC in 1971, in organizing the ASEAN members' ambassadors in Brussels into an ASEAN Brussels Committee in 1972, and in initiating contacts with the EEC. As one author put it, the speedy achievement in this area contrasted markedly with the dilatory response to the various proposals for intra-ASEAN economic cooperation. Suriyamongkol 1988, p. 81.

44 See Held 1991, p. 204.

45 The following paragraphs are summarized from Macdonald 1994, pp. 269-274.

freedom of choice, private property, patriarchy and distrust of state bureaucracy. The liberal-pluralist conception equates NGOs with interest groups, in that both act as intermediaries between the unorganized masses and the state. The NGOs function to counterbalance the power of the authoritarian state. Liberal pluralism emphasizes individual political participation in cross-cutting associations, but it does not examine class, gender or international structures that constrain representation of political interests in the state.

In contrast to the first two, the critical-theoretical conception seeks to define the nature of civil society based on its relation to capitalist production and stresses class contradictions within civil society itself, which persist in spite of the hegemony of one class over another. Political action aims to form a coalition that can challenge capitalist hegemony; consequently business organizations are not considered to be elements of civil society.

References to civil society were conspicuously absent from Council Regulation (EEC) No. 442/81 on financial and technical aid to non-associated developing countries, which applied to EC assistance to ASEAN. In the same spirit the 1980 ASEAN-EC Cooperation Agreement made no provision for consultation with representatives of civil society: the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) established by the Agreement and charged with the task of promoting and reviewing the cooperation activities between the two parties (Art. 5) was a purely intergovernmental body. The commission in Council Regulation (EEC) No. 442/81 was rectified by the 1992 Council Regulation (EEC) No. 443/92, where the recipients of aid and partners in cooperation were identified as going beyond States and regions to include "decentralized authorities, regional organizations, public agencies, local or traditional communities, private institutes and operators, including cooperatives and non-governmental organizations."[46] The recent Green Paper on relations between the EU and the ACP countries, which still account for the bulk of the EU's development aid budget, noted the need for active participation by non-governmental bodies, the private sector and other representatives of civil society (academic circles, cooperatives, development NGOs and environment NGOs, consumer associations, etc.).[47] However in the ASEAN case the failure to renegotiate an agreement has meant that the omission in the Cooperation Agreement has not been legally remedied.

Nevertheless representatives of civil society have over the years emerged as vital partners in ASEAN-EC development cooperation. These are the European Parliament, European development NGOs, and development NGOs in the ASEAN countries. If we are to judge by the Philippine experience, many NGOs that are involved in ASEAN-EU development cooperation are staunch advocates of the critical-theoretical conception of civil society. From their perspective, the present practice of development cooperation still reflects the predominance of liberal and neoconservative approaches. In particular the role of actors (particularly NGOs) that see themselves as agents of radical social change is largely indeterminate.

46 *OJEC*, No. L 52/2 (27 February 1992), Art. 3.
47 European Commission 1997, p. 26.

Underlying NGO demands for participation is the idea of accountability - the idea that the donor must answer to the people for whom the assistance is intended. Any potential loss of efficiency due to wider NGO participation may be compensated by a stronger feeling of ownership of a project that will in the long run increase the participants' commitment to its success.[48] Participation may be limited to a contract of services, where NGOs are contracted for specific services. A more embracing concept, compatible with the critical theoretical approach and favored by the NGOs themselves, would cover participation in all aspects of development assistance, from planning to evaluation.[49] Elsewhere I have already tackled the demands of Philippine NGOs for participation in different phases of the project cycle.[50] The following remarks will complete this earlier study by focusing on the role of different actors in policy formulation.

In this area, civil society representatives seem to be secondary actors. The European Parliament (EP), the only organ of the EC/EU to be directly elected by universal suffrage (since 1979), has had an enduring interest in North-South questions. Throughout most of the period covered, the main obstacle to more active EP intervention in ASEAN-EC development cooperation was its institutional weakness. The EP was not even informed by the Commission and the Council of Ministers that negotiations were taking place for the negotiation of the ASEAN-EC Cooperation Agreement, a circumstance that the EP deplored.[51] The EP has not been in a position to ensure that its proposals for increased aid to the non associated states would be heeded by the other EC institutions. The reason is that the program for non associated states was only a small part of the 20-30% of non-compulsory expenditures in the EC budget, for which the EP could propose increases.

The EP has consistently supported EC development cooperation with ASEAN. In 1975, five years before the signing of the Cooperation Agreement, a delegation that visited the ASEAN expressed the belief that the EC could make a contribution to the ASEAN countries' economic development and to regional integration; found that ASEAN was eligible for financial cooperation; and urged that the EC begin as quickly as possible to implement financial and technical aid projects. The EP recommended that because of the wide disparities in income among the ASEAN countries, aid should be concentrated on the poorest countries.[52] Since EC ODA to ASEAN was from the very start integrated into the program for non-associated states, the EP's insistence over the years that the EU budget for the program be increased indirectly has indirectly benefitted ASEAN. To take an example: it was the EP that poured 20 million Ecu into the 1976 budget for cooperation with the non-associated states after the EC's finance ministers had removed this from the budget.[53]

48 Cabardo, p. 3.7. Stokke believes that ensuring greater participant of the recipient in ODA is the most important challenge facing ODA. See Stokke 1991, p. 51; see also Swantz 1992, pp. 104-120.
49 Cabardo, pp. 3.6-3.7.
50 See Robles 1997a.
51 PE 62.798/fin., p. 11.
52 European Parliament Doc. PE 43.643/fin, p. 15, para. 26; p. 24, para. 15; p. 26, para. 18.
53 Schmuck 1988, pp. 185-187; PE 43.643/fin., p. 24, para. 15.

We have been unable to uncover evidence that at the time when ASEAN and the EC were negotiating the Cooperation Agreement, European NGOs or NGOs from ASEAN lobbied actively in favor of development assistance or that the European Parliament sought out the inputs of European or Southeast Asian NGOs. However when consulted about the draft of the 1980 Cooperation Agreement, several members of the EP (MEP) criticized the relatively minor place accorded to development cooperation in the Agreement and the absence of any financial commitments on the part of the EC (in contrast to the Lomé Agreements with the ACP countries). As one member pointed out, even had the entire amount for assistance to the non- associated states gone to ASEAN countries, it would still have been insufficient to meet their needs. That the Agreement was being concluded at all, according to one perspicacious MEP, could be explained by political considerations, primarily the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.[54] In a resolution adopted in 1992, the EP warned that increased assistance to Central and Eastern European countries should not lead to a reduction in EC aid to ASEAN. Specific reference was made to the situation in the Philippines, where natural disasters had aggravated the situation, and whose land reform program deserved increased EC assistance.[55] On present EU development cooperation policy, the EP is divided. As expected, left-wing MEPs are critical of the trends in policy that reflect greater reliance on the market and the private sector.[56]

This critical view is shared by Western European NGOs working in ASEAN.[57] Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to get detailed information about the NGOs and their activities. European development NGOs, regardless of their region or area of specialization, are covered by rules laid down by the European Commission. In the past NGO projects could only be funded for a maximum five year period and up to 50% of the total cost. In practice, the EC contribution averaged 150,000 ECU per year per project; only in exceptional cases could the contribution amount to 500,000 ECU. At least 10% of NGO contribution had to come from private sources. The Development Directorate of the European Commission acknowledges NGOs as indispensable partners in development cooperation; indeed as one Commission civil servant put it, a progressive development policy is only possible in cooperation with NGOs.[58] European NGOs, for their part, recognize that the Commission's development directorate is the most hospitable to NGOs of all European institutions.[59]

54 Schmuck 1988, p. 201.

55 European Resolution A 3-0119/92, 10 April 1992; of European Parliament Directorate General for Research W-6 (12-1993), Annex XI, paras. 37 and 42.

56 At a conference held on 12-13 March 1995 in Amsterdam between European and Philippine NGOs, MEP Maartje Van Putten of the Socialist Party of the Netherlands and MEP Wilfried Telkammer of the German Green Party expressed dissatisfaction with the EU's development cooperation policy and did not expect that it would contribute significantly to fighting poverty in the developing countries. See Pagsanghan et al.1995, p. 5.

57 See for example, Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Union 1995 and 1996.

58 Ryelandt, cited in: Wiener Institut für Entwicklungsfragen und Zusammenarbeit (1993), p. 2. The rules governing activities of European development NGOs are summarized on the basis of this source.

59 Hanan 1996.

The fact that EC ODA was launched much later than EU aid to ACP and that the volume of EU aid to ASEAN is modest leads us to surmise that EC NGOs will have started operations later in the ASEAN countries than their counterparts working in ACP countries, will be less numerous, will be involved in fewer projects than in other regions,[60] and will receive limited funding.[61]

We know even less about the development NGOs in the ASEAN countries that co-operate with the EC and European NGOs. Most of the information we have been able to find is gleaned from accounts of development projects in the Philippines. We may suppose that like their European counterparts, the Southeast Asian NGOs involved in EU development cooperation projects differ widely among themselves and from country to country.[62] From the Commission's point of view the multiplicity of NGOs complicates attempts to assess their claim to represent sectors of civil society. In 1994, responding to NGOs inquiries, the EU Commissioner for Asia affirmed that NGO participation was not indispensable in development cooperation, to the extent that NGOs were intermediaries between the target groups and the donor. If the Commission could target recipients directly, then it would do so.[63] The Philippine NGOs ascribe this attitude to the EC Commission's reluctance to deal with organizations that tackle such politically sensitive issues as social equity, militarization, human rights and agrarian reform and are therefore more likely to come into conflict with the recipient state.[64] To avoid being obliged to make assessments that would inevitably be challenged by the NGOs, the Commission has sometimes been tempted to organize its own base of support. Unsurprisingly this strategy has been resisted by local NGOs, who point to duplication of effort and wasting of resources.

Obviously one factor affecting the activities of NGOs is the political climate in the country. Philippine NGOs complain that they are excluded from the formulation of the EU's country strategy, which is carried out only in cooperation with the recipient country. Indeed the strategy itself is not made public as a matter of course, but for the EC this is justified if it is deferring to the wishes of the recipient government. Indonesia was cited as an example of one country that adopts this attitude. Certainly

60 A group of Filipino NGOs that visited Spain was surprised to learn that in that country, there was very little knowledge about the Philippines and Spanish NGOs had only a limited number of projects in the former Spanish colony. It should be kept in mind, though, that Spain became a member of the EC only in 1986. See Pagsanghan et al. 1995, p. 8.

61 One exception appears to be a major program of cofinancing with European and local NGOs for development projects in the poorest rural and urban areas of the Philippines. In the period 1976-1996 funding under this program amounted to 28 million ECU, for some 400 schemes. Since this program operates on a 50/50 cost-sharing basis with European NGOs, the Commission stresses that total resources made available were double the contribution from the EC budget. See Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines 1996, p. 9.

62 In the Philippines there are five major NGO coalitions: CODE-NGO (Caucus of Development NGO Networks), Convergence (Convergence for an Area-Centered People's Development), FDC (Freedom from Debt Coalition), Green Forum Philippines and PAARDS (Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services).

63 Fossati, p. 7.5.

64 Santos 1995, p. 10. Thus, when in the late 1980s the Philippine military accused the EC-funded Aurora Area Integrated Area Development Project (AIADP, 1987-93) of conniving with or supporting the Communist opposition, the EC felt obliged to exclude from participation in the project NGOs that the military classified as "leftist". See Hilario/Jimenez 1992, p. 103.

the Philippines since 1986 has provided a more hospitable environment for development NGOs than Indonesia under the authoritarian rule of Suharto. In Malaysia, when a Dutch NGO wanted to propose a project to combat deforestation, pressure exerted by local authorities on the EU finally prevented the project from being approved.[65] Philippine NGOs also admitted that they had more links with European NGOs than with their counterparts in Southeast Asia.[66] Significantly it was financial support from European NGOS that enabled representatives of Philippine NGOs to travel to Europe in 1995 to meet with their counterparts and the European Commission.[67] On the other hand Southeast Asian NGOs will have to take into account pressures from European partners adopt a more constructive attitude toward the government (a shift from the confrontational stance toward authoritarian rule) while maintaining their autonomy.[68]

Informal channels of communication compensate to some degree the absence of institutionalized dialogue between the EU and civil society representatives. For example, in 1995 a conference in Amsterdam brought together representatives of the Commission, the Philippine Government, and European and Philippine NGOs for a discussion on EU development cooperation policy towards the Philippines. This was followed by a meeting in August 1995 in the Philippines between the Philippine NGOs, the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, and the European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines. Informal contacts have provided the opportunity to Philippine NGOs to convey to the EU the message that agrarian reform and rural development provide the widest scope for poverty alleviation programs in the Philippines, and that agrarian reform can only be implemented effectively with the participation of NGOs and POs (people's organizations) in all phases of the project.[69] Having this in mind, it is not far-fetched to suppose that the EU decision to launch an Agrarian Reform Support Project in 1995 in the Philippines is at least in part a response to these pressures.[70]

Conclusion

The practice of development cooperation in the 1980s and the early 1990s has compensated to some extent the democratic deficit in overall ASEAN-EU relations. In particular, one unexpected consequence of development cooperation is to create a space for a dialogue between the EU and representatives of civil society in individual ASEAN countries and between the latter and their counterparts in the EU. Of course one should not overlook the limits of this contribution. The participation of

65 Vgl. Wiener Institut für Entwicklungsfragen und Zusammenarbeit (1993), p. 10.

66 Pagsanghan et al. 1995, p. 12. The Philippinenbüro in Germany was said to be traditionally linked to the Philippine Left. Ibid., p. 7.

67 The sponsors were CEBEMO (Netherlands), Bread for the World, Novib (Netherlands), ICCO (Netherlands), NCOS, Oxfam UK-I (UK), Helvetas (Switzerland), COSPE, Trocaire (Ireland).

68 At the Amsterdam conference, some European participants reported their impression that Philippine NGOs were beginning to lose their autonomy as a consequence of their decision to collaborate with the government. See Pagsanghan et al. 1995, p. 6.

69 Rocamora/ Esquerra 1995, pp. 17-18.

70 For a brief description of the project, see Delegation of the European Commission in the Philippines 1996.

civil society representatives has not yet been institutionalized, and it is not likely that in the short run the member countries of either ASEAN or the EU will consent to it. In a more somber scenario, an eventual decline in the volume and scope of development cooperation may even cut short the dialogue with civil society. The challenge would therefore be to devise alternative channels making it possible to pursue and deepen the dialogue. Perhaps the repercussions of the recent financial crisis for the populations of ASEAN countries may give a new lease on life to development cooperation and by the same token to the dialogue between civil societies in Southeast Asia and Europe.

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