

BOOK REVIEWS

Diplomacy in Japan–EU Relations: From the Cold War to the Post-Bipolar Era

Oliviero Frattolillo

London: Routledge, 2013, 150 pp

EU–Japan Relations, 1970–2012

Jorn Keck, Dimitri Vanoverbeke and Franz Waldenberger, (eds)

London: Routledge, 2013, 352 pp

The European Union and Japan are, respectively, the world's leading and third largest economies by gross domestic product (GDP) and, when combined, make up one-third of global GDP. They are major trading partners and key actors in contemporary international politics, represented in all major international fora and participants in key security agenda, from peacekeeping to various multilateral security structures. And yet there remains very little scholarship on this important bilateral relationship. It is refreshing, therefore, to see the simultaneous publication of two volumes on Japan–EU relations. Oliviero Frattolillo's single-authored book offers a concise retelling of the history of relations between Japan and the EU, aiming to recapture as it goes the principal milestones in their history with a focus on the three elements of the context of a changing international system, 'pragmatic nationalism' and 'identity discourse'. Indeed, these concepts provide the core of his conclusion but would have made an excellent structuring device for the entire book. He chooses instead to divide

the book into two parts: looking first at the ‘international environment’ on their bilateral relations and then at the idea of ‘mediating actorness and culture’ in their dialogue. In contrast, Keck *et al.*’s much longer, edited, volume brings together practitioners of diplomacy alongside academics to cover much of the same ground. It is divided into three parts: taking an historical overview, examining case studies, and looking to the future. The case studies of Part 2 include several historical events and the third part tells us very little about the changes to which Japan and the EU have had to respond in more recent times. Whilst both books, then, offer a concise retelling of history, it is a shame that neither fully engages with the period of EU–Japan relations since the start of the new millennium.

Frattolillo’s work is comprehensive in providing a narrative of events up to the end of the 1990s. Given his focus on the actorness of the parties involved, it would have been useful to see the author’s interpretation of how Japan wrestles with its own internal economic and political demons and how it deals with an EU that faces more internal challenges than at any other moment in its history. Frattolillo could have begun his work with the theoretical discussion he leaves until the end and, in that way, could have framed his own interpretation of motivations and structural challenges faced by Japan and the EU, respectively. Instead, it reads as a slightly disjointed work and never really gives the reader a full understanding of the very idea of ‘diplomacy’ he is trying to explore and of the meaning of the various concepts he claims in his Conclusion to have investigated. He opens Part 1 with two chronological chapters looking at the years from 1951 to 1979 and 1980 to 2011, respectively. The work is written from the perspective of Japan, and these chapters offer a useful recounting of the structural impediments faced by a postwar Japanese government and population. Unfortunately, the section on the 2000s is very brief, and we are only given a glimpse into, for example, the ‘breaking point’ he observes with the Iraq War of 2003. Chapter 3 introduces a focus on the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) to which both Japan and the EU belong. However, although Frattolillo implicitly suggests that ASEM offers a vehicle for the transmission of the values shared by Japan and the EU, he fails to explain the nature of this transmission or to demonstrate, in fact, how ASEM represents an extension of Japan–EU relations beyond the rhetoric of its Japanese and European participants. The final substantive chapter on ‘actorness and theoretical divides’ sits rather uneasily alongside the narrative of history that has gone before. However, at its heart is a

valuable and interesting starting point for a discussion about security interests and how the EU and Japan function as security actors today, which would have been better served without the theoretical reflections he inserts at this point. Similarly, he could have located Japan–EU relations within their broader contexts, and he needed to convince the reader exactly how and why ASEM and the ASEAN Regional Forum are ‘important’ security frameworks in Asia. As he goes on to posit, perception and self-perception play an important role in mediating relations, and it is arguably the case that one of the enduring problems for Japan–EU relations is that neither side regards the other as its central foreign policy interlocutor.

Keck *et al.*’s work begins with a chapter by Franz Waldenberger providing a general overview of the history of bilateral relations until 1982 and is followed by a chapter on trade history by Michael Hardy, which records some interesting empirical events. Ralf Möhler and Jan Van Rif pick up the story in 1983, where Hardy leaves it, and demonstrate how Japanese export moderation prevented the collapse of European industries. Following this chronology, Keck then offers three chapters to examine trade and political developments between 1987 and 1995. Chapter 3 examines how between 1987 and 1990 saw a maturing and broadening of relations; Chapters 4 and 5 examine political relations alongside this, showing how new initiatives, closer cooperation, and greater institutional agreement further cemented their relations into the mid-1990s. Richard Wright picks up the baton from 1996 to 2000 and illustrates the ‘slow consolidation’ of this short period, whilst Albrecht Rothacher reviews the strategic partnership and summitry of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In this section, there is a lot of empirical detail, but it would have been useful to get a sense of the significance of the EU–Japan relationship and the changing nature of the challenges faced by its constituent members. In this regard, I find the second half of Moreno Bertoldi’s chapter to offer the most relevant and original material for examining Japan–EU relations today. He focuses on Japan’s lost decade and euro-yen tensions and hints at the severe yet common problems faced by both Japan and the EU in the coming decades, including ageing populations and the need for stability in financial markets. In Part 3, had Michael Reiterer and Dimitri Vanoverbeke been tasked with addressing these future oriented issues, the overall contribution of the volume would have been enhanced significantly. In the event, they continue the reflections principally on the historical periods, although Reiterer’s exposition of the security challenges they both

face offers an important starting point for discussing this often-neglected element of EU–Japan relations. Between these two parts are the case studies. Many of them retain the historical focus: Ralph Wilkinson’s chapter on Japan’s Tax Liquor Law, Christopher Kendall’s work on automobile trade, Rothacher’s reflections on market access, and Möhler’s work on agriculture are all interesting and detailed examples of the difficulties faced by Japanese and EU negotiators in the 1990s. More compelling, however, is the chapter by Hardy and Ruprecht Niepold on cooperation in science and technology, in which they bring relations into the 2000s and show how this often-neglected field provides rich and important opportunities for the future of Japan–EU cooperation. Georg Jarzembowski’s brief chapter on parliamentary exchanges also hints at the important and developing role of European Parliament vis-à-vis third countries like Japan, but does not explore it here in any great depth. In essence, this book offers a relevant point of departure for understanding Japan–EU relations today and sets out the likely agenda for the medium- and longer-term development of this bilateral partnership.

Today, Japan and the EU are not only significant trading partners. The EU has political representation as an actor in its own right across the world; it is strongly active within international bodies like the United Nations and World Trade Organisation and represented through two of its member states in the UNSC. It is also undergoing a crisis of confidence in terms of the international role of the euro, its own expansion and how to balance widening and deepening; and internal wrangles about what this means for its own member states. All of these factors have implications for its relations with third countries, including Japan. For its part, the Japanese economy suffered a ‘lost decade’, or ‘lost two decades’ as some observers claim, from the collapse of Japan’s bubble economy through to the effects of the 2008 global financial crisis. Internal political challenges have been exacerbated by the need to respond to an increasingly belligerent China, pressing concerns about energy security and climate change and doubts about the future of its fundamental relationship with the United States. Looking beyond the United States, trying to balance China, and seeking alternative energy supplies means that Japan is keen to diversify its foreign policy. In recent years, the Japanese government has embraced concepts like ‘soft power’ and ‘human security’ and sought new multilateral approaches for resolving regional problems. In these pursuits, the EU is an important real or potential partner. Against this background, both of these books are welcome additions to the

small pool of scholarship in existence that examines Japan–EU relations. They also provide an excellent outline of the areas in which much more, empirically driven and theoretically grounded, research is needed to investigate the contemporary challenges facing Japan–EU today.

Julie Gilson

University of Birmingham (UK)

Email: j.a.gilson@bham.ac.uk

doi:10.1093/irap/lcu016

Advance Access published on 27 October 2014

Economic Diplomacy: Japan and the Balance of National Interests

Maaïke Okano-Heijmans

Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2013, xx + 209 pp

Okano-Heijmans's *Economic Diplomacy* powerfully presents how regional and global strategic factors have formulated Japan's economic diplomacy, while also considering how domestic business interests have impacted it. In particular, the book analyzes continuity and changes in Japan's economic diplomacy since the 1990s. The major cases – 'green' environmental and energy policies and Japan's diplomacy toward North Korea – are drawn from the two extremes on the spectrum of economic diplomacy between the 'business end' and the 'power-play end'. The former involves cooperative efforts by business and government to maximize business opportunities, and the latter involves the strategic goals of a government. The analysis is based on the theories of economic diplomacy and related fields, as well as an extensive survey of empirical materials related to the selected case studies of Japan, including both English-written and Japanese-written ones, thus contributing to the understanding of economic diplomacy in general and that of Japan in particular.

In Chapter 1, Okano-Heijmans makes it clear that 'economic diplomacy is defined in terms of means' (p. 26), which includes not only coercive economic instruments but also non-coercive ones. In general terms, the author defines economic diplomacy as 'the use of political means as leverage in international negotiations, with the aim of enhancing national economic