



UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

THE ASIA-EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERSHIP

Empowerment, Norms and Accountability

Silja Keva



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TIIVISTELMÄ

Aasian ja Euroopan parlamentaarinen kumppanuus (ASEP) on kahden vuoden välein järjestettävä Aasian ja Euroopan parlamenttien kokous, joka pidetään hallitustenvälisen Asia-Europe Meeting -kokouksen (ASEM) ohessa. Tämä väitöskirja tutkii ASEP-prosessin kehitystä sen alusta vuodesta 1996 aina prosessin 20-vuotisjuhlavuoteen 2016. Tämä väitöskirja keskittyy ASEP-dialogin kolmeen keskeiseen toimintoon, jotka ovat tässä työssä määritelty seuraaviksi: 1) ASEP tarjoaa paikan parlamentaarille dialogille ja kansanedustajien voimaantumiseksi, 2) ASEP tarjoaa paikan normien diffuusiolle. Tässä kohtaa tutkimuksessa otetaan lähitarkasteluun miten europarlamentaarikot pyrkivät käyttämään normatiivista voimaa kokouksissa ja miten japanilaiset kansanedustajat toimivat normien edistäjinä, ja 3) ASEP voi edistää ASEM:in demokratisoimista tarjoamalla tälle mahdollisuuden laajempaan osallistumiseen ja parempaan tilivelvollisuuteen. ASEP on osa kylmän sodan jälkeisen ajan laajempaa parlamentaaristen toimintojen kansainvälistymistä ja yksi noin sadasta kansainvälisestä parlamentaarista instituutiosta, jotka pyrkivät nostamaan kansanedustajat suoraan mukaan alueelliseen, alueiden väliseen ja globaaliin keskusteluun ohittaen perinteiset kansalliset vaikutuskanavat. Tämä väitöskirja toteaa, että ASEP on kahdessa vuosikymmenessä kasvanut vaatimattomasta alusta vakaaksi prosessiksi. ASEP kuitenkin kärsii useista sisäisistä ja ulkoisista haasteista, joista monet ovat sidottuja koko Aasia-Eurooppa -dialogin epämuodolliseen luonteeseen. Tästä syystä ASEP:in toiminnoista vahvimmat ovat parlamentaarinen dialogi, voimaantuminen ja normien levittäminen kolmannen toiminnon jäädessä heikoksi.

Avainsanat: ASEP, ASEM, parlamentaarinen diplomatia, kansainväliset parlamentaariset instituutiot, normien diffuusio, normatiivinen voima, demokratiavaje, globaalihallinta, tilivelvollisuus, osallistuminen, Japanin ulkopoliittika, Japanin parlamentti

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ABSTRACT

The Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP) is a biennial meeting of Asian and European parliaments held on the sidelines of the intergovernmental Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process. This dissertation studies the ASEP process development from its start in 1996 up to its 20th anniversary in 2016. This dissertation analyzes the parliamentary Asia-Europe dialogue by focusing on ASEP's functions, identified as 1) ASEP as a place for parliamentary dialogue and empowerment, 2) ASEP a venue for norm diffusion, here focus is on Members of the European Parliament and their normative power efforts as well as on Japanese parliamentarians as norm promoters, and 3) ASEP's role in enhancing ASEM's democratization from the viewpoint of broader participation and better accountability. ASEP is part of the post-Cold War phenomenon of an increasing internationalization of parliamentary activities and one of around 100 international parliamentary institutions (IPIs) that aim to engage parliamentarians in regional, interregional, and global discourse more directly, bypassing the traditional national channels of parliamentary involvement in international affairs. This dissertation concludes that ASEP has grown over two decades, from a modest start to a steady process. However, ASEP suffers from several internal and external challenges, many of which are tied to the informal and uninstitutionalized nature of the entire Asia-Europe dialogue process. Therefore ASEP is currently strongest in providing parliamentary dialogue and empowerment to participating parliamentarians and in providing a place for norm diffusion. The third function remains the weakest.

Keywords: ASEP, ASEM, parliamentary diplomacy, international parliamentary institutions, norm diffusion, normative power, democratic deficit, global governance, accountability, participation, Japan's foreign policy, Diet of Japan

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Little did I know in summer 2001, when I travelled to Portugal to participate in a two-week summer school organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation, that Asia-Europe relations would define my professional and academic career for years to come. I have been lucky to have had a chance to engage in Asia-Europe relations both in practise as well as through academic study. I am grateful for the opportunity to be included in 2005-6 in the Ten Years of ASEM research project commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and conducted by the Network for European Studies at the University of Helsinki and later to work in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs's ASEM6 Secretariat organising the ASEM6 Summit in Helsinki 2006. For a recent graduate of Contemporary History it was amazing to participate in the summit agenda preparations and to get to walk among the leaders of Asia and Europe in the backstage of the summit. Later in 2014, thanks to the Parliament of Finland, Suomen Eduskunta, I got a chance to observe the ASEP8 meeting in Italy as part of Finland's delegation in order to see the parliamentary aspect of Asia-Europe relations. These experiences have provided me with valuable insight into my research topic as well as great experiences whether it be spending a magical summer night in Hämeenlinna wearing a Finnish folk costume while engaging in political debate or talking to parliamentarians in the heart of Rome.

First, I want to thank my supervisor Professor Lauri Paltemaa from the Centre for East Asian Studies (CEAS) for his support and insightful guidance during the research process. I want to also thank Dr. Bart Gaens from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs for his help and support when writing this dissertation. I am grateful for my two external reviewers Docent Juha Saunavaara and Docent Hanna Ojanen for their excellent comments on my dissertation. Thank you also to Professor Louis Clerc for his important support during the dissertation process and Docent Outi Luova and Dr. Sabine Burghart from CEAS for their insight and friendship.

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Silja Keva

List of Abbreviations

AEBF	Asia-Europe Business Forum
AEPF	Asia-Europe People's Forum
AETUF	Asia-Europe Trade Union Forum
AIPA	ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Assembly
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APPF	Asian Parliamentary Partnership Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEP	Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership
DP	Democratic Party, Japan
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
G7/8/20	Group of 7/8/20
GRINGO	Government-Run/Inspired Non-governmental Organization
HC	House of Councillors, Japan
HR	House of Representatives, Japan
IPA	International parliamentary association
IPI	International parliamentary institution
IPO	International parliamentary organ
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party, Japan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPE	Normative Power Europe
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PM	Prime Minister
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

UN United Nations
WTO World Trade Organization

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List of ASEP Meetings

1996	ASEP1	Strasbourg, France
2002	ASEP2	Manila, the Philippines
2004	ASEP3	Hue, Vietnam
2006	ASEP4	Helsinki, Finland
2008	ASEP5	Beijing, China
2010	ASEP6	Brussels, Belgium
2012	ASEP7	Vientiane, Laos
2014	ASEP8	Rome, Italy
2016	ASEP9	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
2018	ASEP10	Brussels (host European Parliament), Belgium

List of Original Publications

ARTICLE 1: Keva, S. 2017. “Asia-Europe Parliamentary Dialog: Strong Economics, Strong Politics but What Value?” In *China, East Asia and the European Union*, edited by Harst van der, J. and T. Halbertsma, 233–252. Leiden: Brill.

ARTICLE 2: Keva, S. 2018. “ASEM and the People’s Involvement: A Focus on the Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP).” In *Interregional Relations and the Asia-Europe Meeting*, edited by Gaens, B. and G. Khandekar, 101–129. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

ARTICLE 3: Keva, S. 2017. “Japan in the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Dialogue: Domestic Actors on the International Stage.” *Asia-Europe Journal* 15(3): 283–298. DOI 10.1007/s10308-017-0466-5.

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1 Introduction

This dissertation's objective is to provide an in-depth analysis of the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP), an international parliamentary institution located within the wider context of the Asia-Europe dialogue. ASEP is a biennial meeting of up to 52 Asian and European parliaments, and it is loosely connected to the larger intergovernmental Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) ¹ process. The ASEP/ASEM countries represent 60% of the world population, 55% of world trade and 65% of the world GDP when they come together², making their dialogue an important part of the global discourse, be it on economic, political, security, or social issues. The Asian and European parliaments meet every other year to discuss current political, economic, and sociocultural issues, yet their meetings go largely unnoticed by the wider audience. ASEP is also little known in academic research. A recent review of Asia-Europe relations even concluded that the development of the parliamentary partnership between Asia and Europe could not be analyzed because no information was available (Pelkmans and Hu 2014). Existing research on ASEP has only studied it as a minor part of other themes, be they ASEM's other parallel dialogues, international parliamentary institutions in general, or the EU's external relations. This dissertation, as the first in-depth analysis of ASEP, fills this gap by asking what this parliamentary process is, why it goes so unnoticed, and what functions it serves for whom and how.

¹ ASEM (established in 1996) is a multilevel and multifaceted dialogue process among Asian and European countries that extends from biennial summits between heads of state and government to thematic dialogues and exchanges at multiple levels. ASEM had 53 partners in 2018: 51 countries and 2 international organizations. The partners are Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the UK, Vietnam, the European Union, and the ASEAN Secretariat. The ASEAN Secretariat is not a partner in ASEP.

² The General Secretariat of the Council 2019

This research was inspired by a first-hand observation made by the author in 2005 and 2006 when working at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in the ASEM6 Secretariat: ASEP seemed rather little known, even among the ASEM-related actors themselves. Yet on average, two-thirds of ASEP/ASEM countries regularly send their representatives to ASEP meetings, and the parliamentarians at ASEP4 in Helsinki (2006) were enthusiastic about the meeting. Based on these observations, an early hypothesis was made that, despite the low visibility and awareness, those participating in ASEP must gain some value from it. Finally, a few years later, these early observations resulted in this first in-depth study of ASEP.

1.1 ASEP - Twenty years of parliamentary dialogue

ASEP's history is intertwined with that of the ASEM process. The first ASEM Summit, held in 1996 in Bangkok, was an instant success. Fifteen leaders of the then-European Union (EU) member states and the President of the European Commission met with the leaders of 10 East and Southeast Asian countries, including the then-member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the People's Republic of China,³ Japan, and South Korea. The idea for a new kind of interregional meeting between Asian and European leaders had come from ASEAN, for example Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong had raised the issue two years earlier in Paris. With help from the French government, the European side warmed to the idea. The first meeting was considered groundbreaking: countries across Europe and Asia came together as equals for the first time, shedding colonialism's legacies. ASEM allowed Asia and Europe to fill the missing link of the global triangle of EU-US-Asia relations. In both Asia and Europe, the new connection also alleviated fears of missing out on the economic growth of the other side. Inspired by this new opening, actors of all kinds from both continents were eager to connect with their counterparts and participate in the Asia-Europe dialogue. Hence, civil society actors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) held the first Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) in Bangkok the same year, and the business community gathered together in the Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF) in Paris. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions also called for a link to ASEM, which later materialized as the Asia-Europe Trade Union Forum (AETUF) (Gaens 2008). The beginning of the ASEM-inspired parallel dialogues coincides with the postwar surge of non-state actors' and parliaments' interests in international affairs. This was a time when many new actors were eager to forge links

³ Referred to as China from here on.

internationally and inter-regionally (Šabič 2008a, 255–256; Costa, Stavridis and Dri 2013a, 5–6).

Thus, Asian and European parliamentarians also met within the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP) in Strasbourg.⁴ The idea for an Asia-Europe parliamentary meeting came from the European Parliament (EP), which, motivated by preparations of the first ASEM Summit, approached the speakers of the parliaments of Japan, China, and South Korea and the national parliaments of the ASEAN member states in 1995. In April 1996, 45 members of the EP met with 26 parliamentarians from East and Southeast Asia,⁵ just one month after the ASEM Summit. Although the first ASEP meeting was enthusiastically held, no concrete plans were made for a second meeting. Thus, no ASEP meetings were held in connection with ASEM2 in London (1998) or ASEM3 in Seoul (2000) despite calls by the EP to revive the process. It was only six years (2002) later that the Philippines offered to host ASEP2 in 2002 in Manila, an idea that was supported by the EP. Five national parliaments from the EU member states participated in the meeting alongside the EP in 2002, in addition to six Asian countries, with altogether 38 parliamentarians, four countries send a diplomatic delegation. Two years later (2004), as the host of ASEM5, Vietnam organized ASEP3 in Huế, now with 58 parliamentarians. from 15 countries plus the European Parliament. Interest in ASEP was growing, and nine countries sent a diplomatic representative to observe the meeting. The parliamentarians were now eager to develop the process. They saw themselves as having a complementary role vis-à-vis ASEM and envisioned that parliamentarians would give impetus to the intergovernmental ASEM process. A study group was established to plan a structural framework for ASEP. Two years later at ASEP4 in Helsinki (2006), 27 ASEP parliaments (plus 2 members with diplomatic delegation) and altogether 74 parliamentarians were now present. They adopted the Rules of Procedure (ASEP 2006), which stated the following basic guidelines for the process:

1. ASEP's main objectives are “to serve as a forum for inter-parliamentary contacts, exchanges and diplomacy among parliaments, and to promote mutual understanding among the people and countries of Asia and Europe.” In addition, ASEP intends to “provide a link between parliaments of Asia and Europe and ASEM, and thereby [it intends] to

⁴ The history of the ASEP process is traced in detail in articles 1 and 2.

⁵ Delegations came from China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

make an active parliamentary contribution to the ASEM process and in particular to Summit Meetings.”

2. ASEP membership: “in principle, members of ASEP shall be national parliaments from all ASEM member countries and the European Parliament.”
3. Meeting procedures: ASEP meetings convene biennially, alternating between Asia and Europe before the ASEM Summit. The national parliament of the next ASEM Summit state has the priority to host ASEP. Drafting of the agenda, conduct of business at the meetings, and decisions are by consensus.
4. Communication with ASEM: “The ASEP Declaration approved shall be transmitted to all member parliaments and to the upcoming ASEM Summit.”

Subsequent meetings were held after the adoption of the Rules of Procedure in Beijing in 2008 (ASEP5), which drew 33 countries (only one with diplomatic delegation) and 82 parliamentarians. However in Brussels in 2010 (ASEP6) only 23 parliaments and 54 parliamentarians participated. ASEP7 was organized in Vientiane, Laos in 2012, with 143 parliamentarians from 28 countries⁶. ASEP8 in Rome in 2014 drew the broadest participation so far, with 102 parliamentarians from 40 parliaments. ASEP9 in Ulanbaatar Mongolia in 2016 convened with 77 parliamentarians from 33 countries. The most recent ASEP10 meeting in Brussels in 2018, attracted 86 parliamentarians from 37 countries. In addition to parliamentarians, diplomatic, administrative, and technical staffs attend the meetings, usually making the total number of participants much larger than presented here.⁷ The number of parliamentarians per delegation has been limited by the organizer in most meetings, excluding the host which often participates with larger delegation. Still, these numbers show a growing interest in the process. ASEP meetings are always held a few months before the ASEM Summit.

Even after 20 years, ASEP is still a rather loose process. It has followed ASEM in the sense that it focuses on dialogue and has shunned institutionalization (for ASEM,

⁶ The host Laos was represented by a delegation of 48 parliamentarians.

⁷ The average number of parliamentarians in the five most recent meetings is 92 (2008–2016), and the average number of all participants (including accompanying interpreters and administrative staff) is 175. On average, 64% of ASEM members participated in ASEP meetings during 2008–2016. The average number of parliamentarians in all ASEP meetings between 1996 to 2016 is 78 and of all participants, including administrative and technical staff is 157. The reason why the 2008–2016 is used here as reference, is that the first ASEP1 did not include any national European Parliaments, and the early meetings had also countries with diplomatic presentation only.

institutionalization and lack of ASEM secretariat, see, e.g., Keva and Gaens 2008, 125–126; Gaens 2018, 16). However, ASEP has even less institutional backing (only the staff at the national parliaments assigned to handle ASEP-related issues among their other duties) than ASEM, which has a system for rotating coordinators from Asia and Europe and the network of senior officials from the participating countries' governments. Therefore, the process continues to remain somewhat *ad hoc*, with no activity between meetings. Actively participating members (those who have participated at least six times) from Europe are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the EP; and from Asia are China, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Lao PRD., Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.⁸ More Europeans participate in the meetings held in Europe, and more Asians in the meetings held in Asia. Parliaments send their national delegations to ASEP meetings consisting of 1–3 parliamentarians and some administrative staff. ASEP has no international legal status; it convenes on the parliaments' own initiative, and participation is voluntary for ASEM member countries. The ASEP agenda is very broad and focuses on all major global challenges, ranging from food security to organized crime and from educational cooperation to environmental issues.

The civil society, parliamentary, and trade union fora initially acted outside the official ASEM process, but over the years, they have gradually become part of the wider ASEM process; their aim is to enhance people's involvement in the top-level leaders' meetings and to discuss the ASEM agenda from their own perspectives. The business forum differs from the other fora in that it was initiated by the first ASEM Summit and has been more closely linked to the Summit ever since. AEBF representatives are regularly invited to the summits. The trade unions have also gained better access to the process. Employment and social issues have been discussed since 2008 within the ASEM Social Partners Forum, which is connected to the ASEM Labor and Employment Ministers meetings. The ASEM Social Forum was convened in 2008 and 2010 in Brussels, in 2012 in Vietnam, and in 2015 in Sofia (ITUC 2015; ASEM Infoboard 2018). The Asia-Europe People's Forum and ASEP have remained the most detached from ASEM, the former largely due to its own critical agenda as well as to the diverse views held by the ASEM partners regarding

⁸ Most countries send *ad hoc* delegations that change from meeting to meeting. According to an interviewed Finnish parliamentary civil servant (2013), Finland alone has appointed a permanent ASEP delegation to serve for the full four-year election period of the Parliament of Finland since 2008. More recently, Norway also set up a permanent delegation in 2015 (Stortinget 2015).

civil society participation, as well as their own concerns for being coopted by the process (see e.g. Keva 2008, Bersick 2008, Gilson 2011a). One task of this dissertation is to discuss why the parliamentarians' forum has remained distanced from ASEM.

ASEP has an informal relationship with ASEM.⁹ No responsibilities are defined between ASEM and ASEP, and communication is one-way between ASEP to ASEM through the ASEP Declaration, which is communicated to the ASEM Summit host after the parliamentarians' meeting. The ASEM process only slowly started to recognize the contributions of the parliamentary process. The President of ASEP4 was invited for the first time in 2006 to convey the parliamentarian's message in person to the summit in Helsinki. The next such opportunity came only in 2014 in Milan when the EU hosted ASEM10. ASEP was acknowledged for the first time in the Chair's Statement at ASEM5 in Beijing in 2008. The three parallel meetings (ASEP, AEBF, and AEPF) were invited to the summit at ASEM10 in Milan in 2016 to deliver their messages to the leaders of Asia and Europe 20 years after their commencement.

1.2 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation comprises three published peer-reviewed academic research articles that are brought together under a joint introduction, discussion, and conclusions. This joint publication serves three key functions: First, it provides a chance to introduce and discuss the research setting, data, and research processes in more detail than would have been possible within the individual articles. Second, earlier research and key concepts, which encompass several research fields, are introduced and discussed more extensively. Third, the separate research questions are brought together, making it possible to discuss some of the key issues in more depth and provide an overall synthesis of findings regarding the entire research process by taking the analysis to the next level.

This dissertation starts with the identification of the research gap in the existing literature on ASEP and related issues, as this helps to deepen the research justification for this work. This will be followed by a presentation of the research questions and an introduction to the methods and data. Next will follow a detailed discussion on the key concepts utilized in this study. These concepts form the conceptual framework created for the analysis of ASEP. Before the discussion chapter, summaries of the research contribution of each individual article will be

⁹ The ASEM-ASEP relationship is discussed in detail in article 2.

presented. Finally, the main findings of the dissertation will be discussed with conclusions.

This dissertation is published in both electronic and printed formats. Only the printed version includes the three original research articles according to the guidelines of the *Annales* series of the University of Turku.

1.3 Research gap

This dissertation contributes to important research gaps in several research fields, which will be discussed now in more detail. Together they underscore the importance of this research.

ASEP in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process

Although prolific research is available on the overall ASEM process by scholars such as Lim (2001), Gilson (2002), Dent (2003), Gaens (2008), Bersick et al. (2006), and Gaens and Khandekar (2018), ASEP and the involvement of parliamentarians in the ASEM process remains far less researched. So far, ASEP has only been briefly assessed within the larger framework of the various Asia-Europe dialogues. Gilson (2011a) focuses mostly on the civil society dialogue but takes note of the low parliamentary interest toward the ASEM process. Bersick (2008) has reviewed ASEM's relations with the parallel dialogues, focusing mostly on civil society, in the 2000s when civil society–ASEM relations were deepening due to the Connecting Civil Societies meetings co-organized by ASEM's only institution, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). He regarded this development as an emerging beginning of a democratization process of ASEM, while noting the concerns of the civil society actors themselves over the nature of the development, and noted that the role of parliamentarians is still "low key." Gaens and Jokela (2012) have studied the EP's actions in ASEM and have also studied ASEP in that connection. They note how the EP has exercised an individual oversight role by debating ASEM-related documents and by promoting the development of ASEP. Their analysis of the important early role of the EP in the establishment of ASEP is very accurate. They also suggest that the EP's waning interest in ASEM, as documented in their article, can be at least partly explained by the enhanced role of ASEP. Gaens and Jokela regard ASEP's institutionalization (with the adoption of Rules of Procedure in 2006) and the above-mentioned increased attention to the Asia-Europe civil society dialogue as signs of increasing democratic involvement of different stakeholders to ASEM.

A few other writers also briefly touch upon ASEP. Rüländ and Carrapatoso (2015) review ASEP as part of the European Parliament's foreign relations. They are

quite critical of ASEP's potential and see its contribution as too general. Nuttin (2017, 237), in his review of parliamentary diplomacy in Southeast Asia, similarly calls ASEP "a textbook example of a good intention becoming a low-key event with little substance" and mostly blames it on the lack of institutional structure within ASEP (e.g., its lack of a secretariat).

However, none of these studies has thoroughly and systematically focused on ASEP, instead provide snapshots of the institution. Hence, this research provides the first in-depth systematic analysis of ASEP, its history and its functions, and thus broadens our understanding of not only the parliamentary process but also the overall ASEM process and its relation to the parallel dialogues.

Previous research on ASEM has repeatedly noted that citizens have been excluded from the Asia-Europe Meeting process, which suffers from a lack of input, transparency, and accountability (Lim 2001; Robles 2007; Gilson 2011a; Gaens and Jokela 2012). Gilson (2011a) has provided a detailed analysis of the Asia-Europe People's Forum and its attempts to democratize the ASEM process and ASEM's major impediments in this aspect. Gilson's observations further raised curiosity to study the role of parliaments in ASEM because the existing works do not focus on the role of parliaments in enhancing the people's participation in ASEM.

The lack of earlier research on ASEP raises a few questions: is ASEP simply not important enough to be researched or is the lack of research due to the scantiness of research material resulting from the informality of the process? ASEP and ASEM are both informal institutions focusing largely on dialogue. Because of their informal nature, they produce less research material, as the only concrete outcome of the meetings is the final declaration summarizing the discussions. The earlier works on ASEP have studied the parliamentary process mostly as a side note, and some are based on a rather limited number of sources, perhaps due to the difficult availability. What sets this research apart from earlier works is the use of new and rich primary data and a new kind of conceptual framework, which studies ASEP also beyond the ASEM context. Together the new data and the new approach provide a much broader and deeper view of ASEP as an arena with considerable relevancy. Considering how much the ASEM process has been researched, acquiring a deeper understanding of ASEP and its relations with ASEM helps us understand ASEM and Asia-Europe relations better. Therefore, now in 2019, it is justified to finally look at ASEM and its parallel dialogues from the presently neglected viewpoint of the parliamentarians.

ASEP as an IPI and a venue for parliamentary diplomacy

ASEP is part of a larger, mostly post–Cold War phenomenon of parliamentary affairs internationalization. This trend, and the most relevant literature related to it, is discussed in detail in chapter 2. ASEP can be considered one manifestation of parliamentary affairs’ internationalization and can be called an international parliamentary institution (IPI). So far, ASEP has occasionally been mentioned in the context of research on international parliamentary institutions as an example of interregional parliamentary cooperation; it has also been listed as one of the EP’s international activities (see Kissling 2011; Cofelice 2012; Rüländ and Carrapatoso 2015; Nuttin 2017).

Much of the IPI research has focused on defining and categorizing the existing IPIs (Cutler 2001; Malamud and Sousa 2007; de Puig 2004; Šabič 2008a, 2008b; Kissling 2011; Cofelice 2012). Many researchers have also written on the actual and potential functions of IPIs in democratizing international organizations or regional cooperation processes, enhancing parliamentary work, and providing chances for the promotion of norms (Šabič 2013; Habegger 2010; Kiljunen 2006; Slaughter 2004; Flockhart 2004, 2005; Cutler 2001, 2006).

Earlier research on parliamentary diplomacy and IPIs focuses mostly on European, Latin American, and African examples (e.g., Costa, Dri and Stavridis 2013; Šabič 2008a, 2008b, 2013; Habegger 2010), and only a few studies exist on parliamentary diplomacy in Asian countries or on their participation in international parliamentary institutions. Previous research on IPIs or parliamentary diplomacy in Asia includes Rüländ’s (2013) critical analysis of the ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), which he regards as a democratic façade in front of authoritarian practices at ASEAN.

Parliamentary diplomacy in Asia is studied in Stavridis and Jančič’s (2017) edited volume, which hosts one article on parliamentary diplomacy in China (Wang 2017), one on Japan and Korea (Bang 2017), and one on Southeast Asia (Nuttin 2017). Wang (2017) and Nuttin (2017) note that parliamentary diplomacy in China, and Southeast Asia in some cases, is tightly held in the executive sector’s grip. These articles provide a valuable, although very limited, basis for studying ASEP. Bang (2017) looks at parliamentary diplomacy between Japan and South Korea and sees that their bilateral dialogue is more inter-state than transnational, and at times, it is highly politicized by national issues. In the case of Japan, very little research exists on Japanese parliamentary activity in IPIs. From the available studies, Fujikawa analyzed the role and prospects of international parliamentary institutions in 1999 and Tosawa (2002) has researched Japan-EU bilateral parliamentary relations.

Bang's (2017) article on Japanese-Korean parliamentary diplomacy supports the arguments made in this dissertation on Japanese parliamentarians promoting the government policy in international parliamentary fora. However, these findings, which are based on a much wider and more plural setting than Bang's narrow geographical focus, still challenge Bang's rather tight view of parliamentarians as *de facto* diplomats. Unfortunately, this article was not available at the time of writing the case study on Japanese parliamentarians for article 3, but it has been utilized here in the overall discussion. Finally, Niwa (2010), Deans (2001), and Hughes (2006) have also studied Japanese parliamentary diplomacy within the East Asian region and note that, at times, parliamentarians have had important roles in political relations.

Parliamentarians and norm diffusion at IPIs

Regarding norm diffusion, engagement of parliamentarians in norm diffusion and the IPIs as venues for norm diffusion are noted at a general level in the existing research literature (Slaughter 2004; Flockhart 2004; Habegger 2010; Šabič 2013). A few IPIs have been studied in more detail to analyze their role in the promotion of norms: e.g., the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) (Jaag and Schaerer 2002, paraphrased in Habegger 2010, 196) and the Parliamentarians for Global Action (Šabič 2008a, 267), as well as the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (Flockhart 2004). However, none of the existing literature studies norm diffusion in an interregional setting. Furthermore, while research is conducted on normative power efforts of various nations or actors (e.g., Manners 2002 and Forsberg 2011 on the EU; Kavalski 2013 on China and India; Björkdahl 2013 on Sweden; Heng 2014 on Japan), little literature exists that combines parliamentarians and the use of normative power outside the context of the EP. Rüländ and Carrapatoso (2015, 201) have written on the EP's normative action through its resolutions, which very often deal with human rights and democracy-related issues, especially in Asia. Feliu and Serra (2015) have studied in detail the EP's foreign relations and the tools it uses to influence other countries, especially on human rights issues, but neither have focused on the EP's action in international parliamentary institutions.

Through ASEP to Japanese Studies

As noted above, this dissertation discusses parliamentarians' international activity at IPIs in terms of norm diffusion. The key contribution in this regard is the case study on Japan, which illuminates parliamentarians' activities at ASEP. The case study, however, also provides an important research contribution to Japanese Studies. While ample literature exists on Japanese foreign policy and its main actors

(Takamine 2015; Hook et al. 2012; Shinoda 2007), existing scholarship on the National Diet of Japan has paid rather little attention to the international role of the legislature. Some researchers, such as Niwa (2010), Deans (2001), Hughes (2006), and Bang (2017), have noted that while the parliamentarians' official role in foreign affairs may have been limited, individual parliamentarians or groups of them have occasionally held important roles in foreign affairs through parliamentary diplomacy. This research on ASEP not only provides more information about the international activities of the National Diet of Japan, but it also studies how the Diet members are involved in the promotion of Japan's foreign policy objectives and norms. Simultaneously, this analysis adds to the general study of parliamentarians as international actors engaged in processes of norm diffusion.

While studying the activities of the Japanese Diet members, this research complements the existing research on Japan's participation in the Asia-Europe dialogue, which has thus far concentrated on the intergovernmental ASEM process. Tanaka (1997) has shed light on Japan's challenges with the early ASEM process and the exclusion of the US, its key ally. Gilson (1999) has shown how the ASEM framework allowed Japan to take a leadership role in East Asia without actively promoting it as such. She later followed up on Japan-ASEM relations, along with Hook, Hughes and Dobson in their books on Japan's international relations (2001, 2005, and 2012), and with her other work on EU-Japan relations (Gilson 2011b). Others, such as Hosoya (2012) and Frattolillo (2013), briefly take up Japan's ASEM relations in the context of Japan-EU relations, but not from the parliamentary point of view. Most recently, Gaens (2014) has identified three main ways Japan has utilized ASEM: to drive its economic interests, to engage the rising power of China, and to promote its idea of inclusive regionalism. This research reinforces these findings by showing that similar trends are also visible in the parliamentary dialogue.

1.4 Research questions

This dissertation will focus on three major research questions that connect the published articles and take the analysis to the next level by conceptualizing the findings and anchoring them deeper in the research literature. Together, these questions form a synthesis of all the published articles, which are discussed here for the first time as a whole in this dissertation.

As a historically informed qualitative study within the field of Asian Studies, the main contribution of this work is to produce new knowledge and understanding of an understudied issue—ASEP. Nevertheless, the findings of this study aim to add a

valuable contribution to the theoretical discussion in terms of providing new ideas for future theory building.

The main objective of the research is to discuss what are the key functions of ASEP and how do they function. Each research question focuses on one function. The justification for the three functions arise both from the existing research literature, where similar functions have been raised as some of the key elements of IPIs (see Šabič 2013; Habegger 2010; Kiljunen 2006; Slaughter 2004; Flockhart 2004, 2005; Cutler 2001, 2006), and from the analysis itself, which has indicated that these are the most relevant functions for ASEP, which, as noted later, lacks formal responsibilities. They are also loosely attached to ASEP's self-declared duties as defined in the ASEP Rules of Procedure. The conceptual framework will discuss these functions in more detail.

The first research question asks how ASEP functions as a place for interparliamentary dialogue and parliamentary empowerment.

The second question asks how ASEP functions as an organizational platform for norm diffusion. This function is studied from three perspectives: First, both direct and indirect diffusion of parliamentary norms is analyzed. Second, it looks at how the European Parliament attempts to employ normative power at ASEP. Finally, the focus will zone in on the level of individual parliamentarians with the case study on Japanese parliamentarians. How do Japanese parliamentarians, who are not formal foreign policy actors, act in ASEP? What is their relation to foreign policy norms and related norm diffusion at ASEP? What kind of identity they adopt at ASEP?

The third research question looks at the role of ASEP in addressing the perceived democratic deficit of ASEM. This is the third function identified for ASEP by the author. Here, special attention will be given to the parliamentarians' role in providing accountability and participation vis-à-vis ASEM.

The timeframe of this research is the first 20 years of the ASEP process, from 1996 to 2016. This period is sufficient as it provides an opportunity to study ASEP from its rather modest beginnings to its current, more consolidated form. The timeframe also includes the development of ASEP-ASEM relations and shows how ASEP has slowly moved inward from the outskirts of the Asia-Europe dialogue and closer to the ASEM Summits.

1.5 How are the articles interlinked?

Each article in this dissertation is an individual piece of work, published either in an edited volume (articles 1, 2) or in an academic journal (article 3). Article 1 was written for an edited volume entitled "China, East Asia and the European Union –

Strong Economics, Weak Politics.” Therefore, it is focused on mapping and analyzing the scope and nature of the ASEP dialogue from 1996 to 2014 while considering whether the above-mentioned, very common mindset of weak politics and strong economics in Asia-Europe relations actually holds true in ASEP. The second article focuses on the ASEP-ASEM relationship; it discusses the role of parliaments in global governance and considers the potential of ASEP in reducing the perceived democratic deficit of ASEM. This article also provides a more in-depth analysis of ASEP’s internal challenges. The final article focuses on the parliamentarians by studying one participating country, namely Japan. The choice of Japan as the case study is discussed in the next sub-chapter.

As this is an article-based dissertation, there is some overlap in the articles. Because the articles are written over a span of four years, it is inevitable and also expected that the author’s understanding and knowledge about the research topic has increased during the research process. The research objective and questions have thus also evolved over time. Issues that are only briefly raised in the first articles have been discussed in more detail in the following articles and in the discussion part of this dissertation. Such key issues are the concept of norm diffusion as well as ASEP’s role in enhancing the democratic elements of ASEM through participation and accountability. For example, the discussion regarding norms at ASEP in this dissertation utilizes data analysis conducted for articles 1, 2, and 3, but rearranges those findings into clearer entities and anchors them more firmly in the theoretical debate in order to provide a more in-depth analysis.

1.6 Methodology, methods and data

Next, the methodological approaches and choices will be discussed and the primary data introduced.

1.6.1 Methodological approach

This research was started within the disciplines of Asian Studies and Contemporary History. Asian Studies as part of Area Studies in general are often multidisciplinary works which combine disciplinary studies with in-depth understanding of an area.

In the postmodern approach, history writing is as a narrative in which past and present are intertwined and the knowledge of the past is considered changeable (Munslow 1997). In other words, historical research is a construction based on the knowledge, assumptions, and interpretations made from the researcher’s point of view (Vuolanto 2007, 307, 310). This research, however, is more a historically

informed work, because the main focus is not on writing the history of ASEP but rather discussing its functions. While studying the role of norms in international relations (IR) during the research process, this work has aligned with the social constructivist approach of IR. This will be discussed in more detail in the conceptual framework, but let it be noted here that many key scholars of this approach are based in the broader philosophical position known as critical realism. According to critical realism, our knowledge of the world is socially produced and historically, socially, and culturally situated, making it contextual, limited, and fallible. According to this critical epistemological idea, the world is studied in relativist terms; however, the approach simultaneously holds to the ontologically realist idea of the existence of a real world, of which it is possible through scientific methods, be they empirical methods, conceptual analyses, or theoretical abstractions, to construct a more accurate understanding and get closer to reality with knowledge that is relatively justified (Patomäki and Wight 2000; Clark 2012).

The critical realist approach fits with the interpretivist approach of history research, as both acknowledge the relativist character of knowledge. In other words, the author's analysis is an interpretation, develop through constantly developing dialogue between the studied phenomenon, its contexts, the researcher and her contexts.

1.6.2 Methods and data

Moving on to methods and data, this qualitative study aims to understand the phenomenon and its characteristics in order to create a concise presentation of it and to place the findings in a larger context (historical, sociopolitical, etc.) as well as within relevant existing research (see Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 105; Vuolanto 2007). The main primary documents are the parliamentary meeting reports from ASEP meetings produced by the Diet of Japan during 1996 to 2016.

Content analysis of parliamentary reports

The key method of this dissertation is content analysis. After a careful reading of the primary documents conceptualization has been used to treat, categorize, and analyze the data. This means that with a systematical treatise of data, the fragmented pieces of information are combined and funneled into more treatable concepts that finally form the research outcome (Vuolanto 2007, 304–307; Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 109–116). In practice, this is a systematic listing and categorization of data retrieved from the used parliamentary reports and final declarations. This highlights what the parliamentarians have said, what kinds of issues they have raised, what kinds of

issues are negotiated at the final declaration drafting sessions, and what is finally included in the approved final declaration. The listing and categorization were done in order to identify chronological, thematic, or actor-specific developments regarding themes discussed at ASEP, ASEM-ASEP relations, or the development of the interests of individual actors such as the EP and Japan especially in terms of their engagement in norm promotion and norm appropriate action. In addition, participants have been listed and analyzed by country, status (parliamentarian, diplomat, civil servant), and in the case of Japan and to some extent also the EP, by their political party and whether they represent opposition or ruling party. This was done to find out the composition of ASEP participants.

The primary data consist of parliamentary reports written and compiled by civil servants from the parliaments of Finland and Japan and by the members of the European Parliament. After a thorough search among ASEP countries, it was found that hardly any parliamentary meeting reports of the process are available. This makes ASEP a rather peculiar international institution, but reflects well its informal, process-like character.

The most comprehensive set of reports were published by the National Diet of Japan and are publically available at the Tokyo National Diet Library. The reports are detailed Japanese-language transcriptions (approximately 70 pages each, about 750 pages total) published after each ASEP meeting and include summaries or detailed transcripts of the following activities: coordination meetings held on the eve of each ASEP meeting, plenaries, thematic workshops, and drafting sessions of the final declaration held at the meeting. Presentations of the Japanese participants are always included in full text, as are most opening and closing speeches and workshop reports, whereas presentations by other participants in plenaries or thematic workshops are mostly summarized. The reports also occasionally include invitation letters to the ASEM meetings as well as short overviews of the history of ASEP and ASEM. Other activities of the Japanese ASEP delegations outside the meeting are also sometimes documented. These documents have been assessed through external and internal source criticism. While the reports may carry national/regional and personal motivations and interpretations (especially the summaries of other countries' speeches) as they are produced by one country, their overall style aims to be objective, without any strong subjective reviews of the meeting. The Japanese reports cover the time frame 1996 to 2016, covering thus meetings from ASEP1 to ASEP9.

Reports from the European Parliament and the Parliament of Finland form the second key source of primary data. The EP delegations have written separate reports on four ASEP meetings (years 2001, 2004, 2008, 2012) and reported briefly on three

others (years 2006, 2013, 2014). The existing EP records are public and online. Three internal reports from the Parliament of Finland were received to be used as background information. Compared to the Japanese reports, the reports from Finland and the EP are mainly meant for internal use; they are much shorter summaries of the meetings and include often subjective reviews of the meeting results, sometimes highlighting individual achievements. Together, these three groups of primary sources provided a comprehensive picture of the ASEP process.

ASEP Declarations published by host parliaments were used to map the meeting agenda and scope of participants. Additionally, four meeting hosts have published separate ASEP reports (ASEP4 2006, Helsinki; ASEP6 2010, Brussels; ASEP7 2012, Vientiane; ASEP9 2016 Ulaanbaatar) that paint a more elaborate picture of the agenda and schedules and provide English-language summaries of the plenaries and workshops. These are public documents aimed at a wider audience, which sometimes carry the host's motivations to portray the particular ASEP meeting as successful as much as possible. The Chairman's Statements of ASEM Summits and key ministerial meetings have also been studied. While most ASEM documents are easily accessible through the ASEM Infoboard website (maintained by the ASEM-affiliated Asia-Europe Foundation), the final declarations of the early ASEP meetings are not. The report of ASEP1 (1996) was received from the archives of the European Parliament. The Japanese reports proved useful again, as they included all ASEP documents since 1996 (as Japanese language translations).

Conceptual framework as an analytical tool

To assist the analysis a multidisciplinary conceptual framework basing on relevant theoretical discussion from Political Science, International Relations, and Japanese Studies was created. The conceptual framework is a unique construction formed specifically for this particular research, combining the relevant concepts and theories from earlier research through critical analysis and thus providing definition and justification for the particular research now at hand. The conceptual framework provides the context for the research, and a set of analytical tools necessary to create a critical discussion between the research topic and the existing knowledge. In other words it is the theoretical basis of the research (Maxwell 2005, 39–41). The conceptual framework was built simultaneously with the data analysis: the data were approached with the help of the chosen concepts but not exclusively through them. Those concepts also helped identify and build the research questions, and it also helped identify relevant instances from the primary data and place the findings into a wider research context. The novelty of this conceptual framework is, that it integrates new approaches to the study of ASEP in a way that has not been previously

done, following what Maxwell (2005, 40) regards as a sign of a productive conceptual framework. Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework in detail.

Finally, through contextualization of the data (Vuolanto 2007, 307; Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 105), the findings are placed in their larger theoretical, historical, and sociopolitical contexts.

This dissertation utilizes an abductive research approach, which means that existing research and its interpretations and concepts are used to assist and guide the formation of research questions as well as the analysis itself (Vuolanto 2007, 307–308; Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 99, 109–116). The abductive approach lies between data-oriented induction and theory-oriented deduction. This means that existing concepts and theories provide support for the findings made from the data without limiting the analysis. In other words, findings from the data can also influence the selection of analytical tools, the concepts, develop them or even provide new concepts. The abductive approach resonates with the hermeneutic circle, which describes how knowledge and understanding develop during the research process through a movement of constant development between individual elements and their whole taking place at several levels (Vuolanto 2007, 310; Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009, 35). In this work, one such concept was empowerment. The idea that participation in IPIs enhances the parliamentarians' ability to carry out their duties had been discussed in earlier research, but the term empowerment had not been used. During data analysis, it became clear that the way parliamentarians, from various backgrounds, talk and participate in the interparliamentary dialogue and international and global governance, is an example of parliamentary empowerment. Thus, this concept was added as one key element of the conceptual framework. Another concept that was added to the conceptual framework from the data, was normative power and the parliamentarians' possible role in supporting normative power of the government. Existing research on IPIs has only discussed norm promotion at a more general level.

Case study method on Japan's participation in ASEP

The case study method was used to study Japan's participation in ASEP. The study on Japan is an exploratory case study that aims to provide new knowledge about a little-known issue: parliamentarians' norm-related behavior in the context of international parliamentary institutions. An exploratory case study adds knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon without actually aiming for generalizable knowledge, e.g., new theory, yet. An "exploratory case study investigates distinct phenomena characterized by a lack of detailed preliminary research" and often deals with emerging topics (Streb 2012), as in the case of parliamentarians' norm-related

behavior. Exploratory case studies are useful in identifying and defining early hypotheses to be used in later studies on the matter (Streb 2012; Yin 2009).

Japan was selected as the case study for the following reasons: it is an active and long-term member in ASEP and has an established democratic parliamentary government. Furthermore, research already exists on Japanese parliamentarians' international action in terms of parliamentary diplomacy outside the field of international parliamentary institutions. Finally, exceptionally good and illustrative data on Japan's activities in ASEP was available, making Japan the best option for a case study on ASEP delegates. This research does not intend to regard Japan as a representative of any particular group, e.g., an Asian country, but rather as just one ASEP member country. The information gained through the case study provides new knowledge of parliamentarians' international action that may, with future complementary comparative studies, advance our understanding of parliamentarians' behavior in general while providing new knowledge on the international activities of Japanese parliamentarians too.

Interviews for background information

While interviews are often regarded a useful data acquisition method, for this research, historical documents such as meeting documents and reports provide a better basis for the reconstruction of the process than interviews. The reason is, that ASEP has been going on for two decades with constantly changing delegations, each participant has experience of only one meeting. Thus, interviews were mainly used to provide background information and to complement and strengthen the textual data, especially in the early stages of the research. On a few occasions, as indicated in the text, data received from interviews are used as primary source material when that information was relevant but could not be found elsewhere.

To acquire a deeper understanding of the overall ASEP process, ASEM-ASEP relations, and ASEP-civil society relations, a total of six ASEM- and ASEP-related civil servants, politicians, and civil society actors were interviewed. These were semi-structured interviews, about one hour long, that were conducted either in Finnish or English during 2013 and 2015. The interviewees included one Finnish parliamentary civil servant, one member of the parliament, two civil servants from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and two Finnish civil society actors engaged in the Asia-Europe civil society process. In addition, a former member of the European Parliament and the head of an ASEP delegation was interviewed by email. Furthermore, informal talks were held with one parliamentary civil servant from Finland, one Finnish civil servant from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and one Nordic diplomat working within the EU on ASEM-related matters. Finally, to find

out more about ASEP's relations with civil society and AEPF-related actors' views on ASEP, six high-profile civil society actors who had been engaged in the Asia-Europe dialogue for years were contacted, but only two responded, saying they hardly knew ASEP at all.

For the case study on Japan, the most recent ASEP participants from the Diet of Japan were contacted by email and/or fax and were sent a Japanese-language questionnaire, but only one response was received, which leaves an opportunity for future research. The respondent was a senior Diet member who had lengthy experience with parliamentary diplomacy from several IPIs. Still, it can be argued that the detailed meeting reports provide a more accurate picture of the parliamentarians' actions than their own recollections from a single meeting, which may have occurred several years prior.

Participant observation for better understanding of the meetings

This dissertation also uses participant observation from the 8th ASEP meeting in Rome (2014), in which the author participated as part of the delegation of the Parliament of Finland. This built on the earlier participation in ASEP4 in Helsinki (2006), when the author participated in the parliamentary meeting as a civil servant of the ASEM6 Secretariat from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Participant observation is a good research method for “opening up new areas of inquiry to collect a wider range of data” and the help the researcher to ask the relevant questions as well as “gaining an intuitive understanding” of the data (Guest, Namey and Mitchell 2013, 80). For example meeting documents, as noted above, may be written in a way that portrays the author in a good light, participant observation may help to see beyond that.

Participation in the two ASEP meetings (and especially ASEP8 in 2014) provided a chance to see the proceedings and atmosphere of the meetings and to make observations of participants, speeches at plenaries, and informal meetings during coffee and lunch breaks. It also provided a chance to talk informally with parliamentarians to ask about their experiences and ideas regarding ASEP. This participatory observation provided valuable background information and a better tools to place the findings from the documents into the real-life setting. Participatory observation at ASEP4 in 2006 provided the initial idea and hypothesis for the whole work. Participation at ASEP8 in Rome 2008 helped to understand the characteristics of ASEP meetings, the difficulty in organizing a meeting that is very *ad hoc* by nature, the limited possibilities for dialogue in the plenaries and the importance of bilateral side-meetings among delegations.

Newspaper analysis to map ASEP's visibility

Finally, the primary data also included a set of newspapers that were used to review ASEP's visibility in the former host countries during the meetings organized by their national parliament. These were used for article 2, in which ASEP's visibility was analyzed as a factor showing the low general priority of ASEP even among host parliaments. This newspaper review covered the online versions of the major dailies in those ASEP countries which had hosted an ASEP-meeting between 2006-2016. Key search words (ASEP, Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership) were entered into the search engine of each online newspaper to find out how whether the ASEP meeting was reported in the local media. The newspapers were: *Helsingin Sanomat* for ASEP4 in Helsinki, the *People's Daily* for ASEP5 in China, the *De Standaard* for ASEP6 in Belgium, the *Corriere Della Sera* for ASEP8 in Italy, and *the UB Post* for ASEM9 in Mongolia.¹⁰ The newspaper review was conducted in order to see whether the ASEP-meeting was covered by the media of the organizing country. The hypothesis was that visibility would be low, and turned out to be the case as discussed in article 2. Even the leading media from the host parliament's country rarely reported on their own ASEP meeting.

Strengths and limits of the data

The data's strength lies in the details of the Japanese reports, which provide a rare view into past meetings and even into the closed sessions. Its weakness is that some nuances and information may have been lost in translation from the original language to Japanese and also through the Diet staff's summarizing process. On top of that, something may have been lost or misunderstood when translating the text into English for the purpose of this dissertation. The Japanese reports, as noted, provide full transcripts of presentations and interventions made by the Japanese delegates, but most presentations made by other nations are only summaries—sometimes very brief—in Japanese.

The Japanese reports of the closed drafting sessions during which the ASEP partners negotiate and agree on the final declaration provided quite detailed information on the critical issues discussed by the partners. Still, this information is not entirely comprehensive because some transcripts of the ASEP declaration drafting sessions provide what seem to be complete records of all proposed amendments, but some clearly report only the Japanese amendments and the reactions to those. The Finnish and the European Parliaments' reports focus mostly

¹⁰ It was not possible to gain access to the leading newspapers in Laos for ASEP7 (Vientiane Times or Laotian Times).

on issues relevant to themselves. The Finnish and EP reports, when compared to the Japanese reports, reflect stronger national motivations as they tend to focus more on Finland's or the EP's own activity at the ASEP meeting, sometimes highlighting the national interests. Both the Finnish and the EP reports may be motivated to enhance their own parliament's role and interest in ASEP cooperation, Finland as host of ASEP4 and EP as the original initiator of the process.

Reflexivity

The researcher's subjectivity plays a role in the research process (Evans 1999, 214). The author of this dissertation has both academic and professional engagements with the topic. As a Master's student in 2001, the author participated in the ASEF University Summer School organized by the ASEM-related Asia-Europe Foundation. Later in 2005 and 2006, she worked as a researcher in a four-member research group at the University of Helsinki to study the first 10 years of ASEM from a European perspective. That research was commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The research team collaborated closely with a similar research group in Asia, which focused on Asian perspectives of ASEM and was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Together, these studies provided recommendations for ASEM's next decade, which were later incorporated into the Helsinki Declaration on the Future of ASEM, which was adopted at the ASEM6 Summit in Helsinki in 2006. After completing the research project, the author joined the ASEM6 Secretariat at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland to work on the agenda preparations of the Helsinki Summit. She returned to academic research in 2013 with a plan to focus on ASEP. Thus, the main research work for this dissertation has been conducted during 2013–2018.

While working on ASEP as a researcher, the author has been in contact with the Parliament of Finland and has been invited to participate as a researcher in two consultative meetings between the Finnish ASEP delegation and representatives of several ministries to discuss Finland's Asia-Europe policy on a more general level. In 2014, as a member of the Finnish delegation, the author participated in the ASEP6 meeting in Rome to observe the meetings and talk informally with parliamentarians during breaks. Finally, the author has been invited on three occasions to talk about ASEP research in ASEP-related seminars and briefings that have been organized or co-organized by the Parliament of Finland.

The engagement with ASEM has provided the author with a deeper understanding of the larger Asia-Europe process, but it is clear that working inside the process also creates challenges. While participation in the actual negotiations and preparations regarding the ASEM6 summit agenda and meeting practicalities

provided the author with detailed information and understanding, it also created a personal involvement, which may pose challenges when critically assessing ASEM and ASEP. However, more than 10 years have passed since she has worked with the ASEM process as a civil servant, so there is already quite a temporal distance from the experience. As noted by Glesne and Peshkin (1992, quoted in Maxwell 2005, 45), the researcher's "subjectivity is the basis for the story that I am able to tell." It is a strength, something to capitalize on rather than be afraid of.

The personal connection to the researched topic provided the initial interest towards ASEP and the realization, as already mentioned, that despite the fact that ASEP is rather unknown, it has continued to attract parliamentarians for over two decades. During the research process, the author's experiences have helped to analyze how ASEP functions as a place for complementary bilateral parliamentary meetings, how norm diffusion takes place and how ASEP and ASEM meetings are conducted.

1.7 Limitations of the research

Currently, the research is mostly based on textual documents, and the conducted interviews provide complementary information. A comparative study on parliamentarians from several different countries could provide an interesting opportunity in the future to deepen the understanding of their views on empowerment, norm diffusion, and accountability. Finally, it can be questioned whether ASEM and ASEP are good cases for studying the democratic deficit of global governance since both are such informal institutions.¹¹ A more established international organization, perhaps, would have provided a clearer case for analysis. However, as argued, even with its limitations, the ASEM-ASEP combination is relevant in its own right due to the sheer size of the process. Furthermore, the ASEM family provides an interesting and possibly increasingly relevant forum for inspection, with one more concession: In light of the current global political environment, in which established international organizations and regimes are increasingly challenged due to more inward-looking international action by major powers such as the United States, informal fora might gain preference as an arena for global governance in the future, as argued by Creutz (2017). Furthermore, the importance of the Asia-Europe dialogue could be actually increasing in the current atmosphere of political polarization and increasingly inward-looking US politics (Gaens 2018, 16).

¹¹ For more on ASEM's institutional infrastructure, read Keva and Gaens 2008.

2 Conceptual Framework

This chapter introduces the conceptual framework of the research. The concepts discussed here provide the key analytical tools necessary for the critical scrutiny of the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership as conducted in the articles as well as in the discussion part of this dissertation. This chapter is divided into three parts according to the three research questions on the functions of ASEP.

First, the parliamentarians' international engagement is discussed in order to define the necessary concepts for studying ASEP as a place for parliamentary dialogue and empowerment. Here, terms such as parliament, parliamentary involvement in international affairs, parliamentary diplomacy, and international parliamentary institutions (IPIs) will be discussed, and ASEP and ASEP member countries are placed in context. This will be followed by a discussion on how earlier research has studied the involvement of IPIs and parliamentarians in norm diffusion. This set of concepts creates a framework for analysis of ASEP as an organizational platform for norm diffusion, normative power actors, and finally, parliamentarians as norm promoters. In this context, it is also necessary to introduce the National Diet of Japan, its role in Japan's foreign affairs and policymaking, and its key foreign policy norms because these are needed in order to provide context for the case study.

Finally, the third set of concepts relates to IPIs as the parliamentary response to the perceived democratic deficit of global governance. Here, also the earlier research on the Asia-Europe Meeting's (ASEM's) democratic deficit will be discussed in order to analyze ASEP in this context. Together these three focus points provide a conceptual framework for the study of the functions of ASEP.

2.1 Parliamentary engagement in international affairs

“A parliamentarian as an international actor remains a contradiction in terms,” noted Šabič (2008a, 267), a leading researcher in the field of internationalization of parliaments. His comment shows the paradox that while the main task of a national parliament deals with its domestic legislative duties, a new international role,

especially since the end of the Cold War, has been emerging for parliaments and parliamentarians. Yet, despite growing interest, the international role is still limited. Before discussing how parliaments engage in international affairs and foreign policy or how they participate in international and global dialogue and governance, a short definition and reasoning for the word “parliament” is presented.

2.1.1 Parliaments, congresses, diets, etc.

Parliament, assembly, diet, and congress are some of the many terms used to refer to the various institutions that participate in ASEP.¹² These institutions differ not only in name but also in the way they function. ASEP members represent a wide variety of institutions, which fulfill somewhat different roles and duties in the domestic field and possess different powers to exercise those duties, as will now be discussed.

How can a varied group like this be defined? Norton’s (2013, quoted in Martin et al. 2014, 1) general definition of a “body created to approve measures that will form the law of the land” encapsulates the main task of parliaments: legislation. Martin et al. call this the broadest possible definition. Other key functions identified for legislatures include creating a linkage between citizens and government, representing constituents through mechanisms such as elections, control/oversight over the executive, removal of the executive, budget control, and policymaking (Kreppel 2014, 85–87).

While “legislature” is a commonly used useful umbrella term (Martin et al. 2014), in this work, the word “parliament” refers to the ASEP member institutions and the word “parliamentarian” to the individual ASEP participants as representatives and members of their own national legislature. This is because it is the term that is most commonly used in the ASEP context. It is also generally used in other international contexts, for example by the Inter-Parliamentary Institution (IPU),¹³ and it aligns with concepts such as parliamentary diplomacy and international parliamentary institutions. The ASEP Rules of Procedure from 2006 define its members as the “national parliaments from all ASEM member countries and the European Parliament.” Due to the wide variety of ASEP members, parliament needs to be understood very broadly, and in this context, it covers assemblies, diets, congresses, etc., from various governmental systems and environments, as will be discussed later. As there are no criteria for ASEP membership other than that the parliament

¹² See Martin et al. (2014, 1) for a more detailed introduction to the etymology of the terms.

¹³ IPU (2018a) membership is defined as follows: “Every Parliament constituted in conformity with the laws of a sovereign State whose population it represents and on whose territory it functions may request affiliation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.”

represents an ASEM partner country, using the term parliament does not account for whether the representatives are elected in free elections, whether the parliament has a meaningful role in legislation, etc.

The ASEP member parliaments form a diverse group. Concerning the political environment, the European side of ASEP draws together a rather uniform group of democratic countries from Europe (European Union member states, plus Norway and Switzerland), but there is a much more varied group from Asia¹⁴. It represents the entire political spectrum from democracies (Japan,¹⁵ South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, India, Mongolia, and Indonesia) to countries where democracy is challenged in many ways (Thailand and Singapore) (Lam 2014, 17–18) and finally to authoritarian one-party systems (China and Vietnam), which are not democratic. Thus, although ASEP countries have parliaments, not all ASEP partners are democracies. ASEP parliaments function in different political environments. In the Freedom in the World Report (2015)¹⁶ issued by Freedom House, 15 of the 51 ASEP countries are labelled “not free”¹⁷ and 6 as “partly free”.¹⁸

While a parliament is generally understood as an essential element of a democratic state to facilitate people’s participation in the running of shared issues, parliaments also exist in countries that are not democracies and do not fill the minimal definition of an electoral democracy: “people can choose and replace their leaders in regular, free, and fair elections” (Diamond 2009, 22).¹⁹

Lam (2014, 14) notes that in Asia, parliaments are a fairly new political element, and while they imitate their Western counterparts to some extent, many are distinctly different. He continues that democracy often exists only in the form of elections, and the actual power of the parliament often remains weak, although formally it may be endowed with powers usually related to parliamentary democracy,

¹⁴ In ASEP dialogue, the terms “Europe” and “Asia” are generally used. For Asia, partnership covers not only East, Southeast, and South Asia but also Australia and New Zealand and finally Kazakhstan and Russia.

¹⁵ Japan was the first Asian country to establish a parliament, in 1889.

¹⁶ The Freedom in the World report analyzes the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, the functioning of the government, freedom of expression and of belief, associational and organizational rights, the rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House’s rating “free” indicates liberal democracy (Diamond 1999, 12)

¹⁷ Brunei, Cambodia, China, Laos, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

¹⁸ Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Singapore.

¹⁹ It should be noted that there is no single definition of democracy available, and discrepancy exists between what is considered a democracy from a normative theoretical point of view and what exists in reality, even within the most developed liberal democracies (Diamond 1999, 7, 17).

e.g., oversight of the executive branch. From the Asian countries labeled as “not free” Myanmar did not participate in ASEP until 2012, after the assembly was reopened in 2011, although Myanmar joined ASEM already in 2004. Brunei also started participating in ASEP in 2008, although it had joined ASEM in 1996. The last legislative elections in Brunei were held in 1962.²⁰

Finally, members in ASEP come from presidential and parliamentary systems and others, which means that they have different mechanisms at their disposal, e.g., regarding their relationship with the executive. There are governmental systems that can be categorized as parliamentary (such as Finland, Germany, Japan, Mongolia, the United Kingdom, and Sweden), in which the parliament elects the prime minister and cabinet, and the executive branch is responsible to the parliament, which can remove the cabinet from power. There are semi-presidential systems in which the executive branch of government is accountable to the parliament (France, Russia, and Romania) and presidential systems (Cyprus and the Philippines) in which the legislature and the executive are separate and the legislature has more limited means of removing the executive. Furthermore, there is also an absolute monarchy in Brunei, where legislators are appointed by the Sultan without elections (IPU Parline 2018b). Finally, there are communist one-party regimes (China, Laos, and Vietnam) in which the ruling (Communist/Socialist) party remains supreme over the parliament (Lam 2014, 17–18). In addition, there are both unicameral and bicameral parliaments among ASEP participants.

2.1.2 Three levels of engagement in international affairs

The executive branch of government has the main responsibility for foreign policy²¹ in planning and execution. Yet in recent decades, international relations are no longer the exclusive prerogative of the executive (Stavridis 2006, 25), and the executive has become increasingly accompanied by parliaments in the international arena (Malamud and Stavridis 2011, 101). Parliaments are not the only new actors, as many kinds of international networks of actors have emerged from all sectors of

²⁰ Parliaments in authoritarian states were long considered unimportant to study, as they were merely regarded as supportive institutions of those in power. However, the more recent research on authoritarian systems notes that many authoritarian rules increasingly willingly favor parliaments to “maximize the benefits of continued rule or increase regime stability” (Schuler and Malesky 2014, 676). This is because a parliament can provide legitimacy, a place to arrange public debate and get information about the needs of the people for the purpose of policymaking and to tie down the possible opposition as Schuler and Malesky (2014, 680–683) summarize recent research.

²¹ Foreign policy can be understood as “all the policies adopted by a state in relation to the outside world” (Berridge and Lloyd 2012, 154).

society (NGOs, cultural sector, trade unions, juridical sector) (Slaughter 2004; Stavridis 2006, 25). The key reasons behind the growing variety of international actors are generally identified as the postwar—and especially the post–Cold War—trends of democratization, parliamentarization, regional integration, and finally, globalization. These developments have led to parliaments and many other actors increasingly dealing with issues directly linked to global phenomena, even in their daily work (Malamud and Stavridis 2011, 102; Hill 2003, 261). In other words, many of today’s challenges have simultaneous local, regional, and global dimensions (Šabič 2008b, 84). Šabič (2008b, 85) goes so far as to argue that “globalization practically forces parliamentarians to become international actors if they wish to defend the interests of their local constituencies.” Cutler (2001, 226) has noted that today’s world is networked more horizontally than hierarchically, making it possible for different kinds of actors, including parliaments, to interact internationally. Finally, technological innovations also facilitate easier access to international affairs for all kinds of actors (Stavridis 2002, 2). In conclusion, the norm of parliamentary involvement limiting to mainly domestic affairs is fast evolving.

Malamud and Stavridis (2011, 101) offer a three-level categorization on how parliaments in general engage in international affairs: 1) by influencing governmental foreign policy at the domestic level, 2) through parliamentary diplomacy, and 3) through international representative parliamentary bodies. While the first channel deals with national political procedures, the latter two take the parliamentarians from the domestic sphere directly into the international arena. This categorization is useful for the conceptual framework as it provides a rare and clear categorization and distinction of the different channels of engagement and influence parliaments and parliamentarians can have on international affairs. Many works focus on national channels such as parliamentary committees on foreign affairs and pay little attention to parliamentary activity at the international level (see e.g., Laundry 1989; Hill 2003; Raunio 2014). One comprehensive account of parliaments’ engagement in international affairs through both domestic and international channels is Beetham’s (2006) “Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century,” while written by a Professor Emeritus of Political Science, is a more practically oriented guidebook to parliaments. Finally, there are many works analyzing solely parliamentary diplomacy and/or IPIs (e.g., Habegger 2010; Stavridis 2006; Cofelice 2012). Finally, Malamud and Stavridis’ (2011) categorization also has room for both formal and informal engagement, be they at the national or international level. The following sections discuss these three ways in more detail.

2.1.3 Through domestic channels

National parliaments influence their country's foreign policy through the domestic parliamentary institutions available to them. The depth and scope of this parliamentary function differs from country to country, but parliaments are generally engaged in both foreign policy-related legislation and in debating the general lines of foreign policy process through parliamentary institutions such as foreign affairs committees. Hearings with ministers or relevant stakeholders are also organized to discuss foreign policy with the government's executive sector. Parliamentary consent or ratification is also usually needed for international treaties. Finally, parliaments approve the overall state budget, which includes that of foreign affairs (Laundy 1989, 46; Hill 2003, 256–257). The level of parliamentary influence on policymaking can vary significantly, from the strong policymaking role of the United States Congress to policy-influencing parliaments such as Finland, which primarily reacts to policies coming from the executive (Wiberg 2006, 162; Hill 2003, 253). A recent case from the United Kingdom in which the House of Commons voted against British military intervention in Syria in August 2013 shows a historic occasion where the parliament made a significant influence on government foreign policy (Kaarbo and Kenealy 2014).

Nuttin (2017, 239) notes that in Asia, “very few parliaments have the power to oversee their country's foreign policy, which remains firmly in the hands of the executive.” Even in India, often called the world's largest democracy, the Standing Committee on External Affairs of the lower chamber of the parliament cannot debate foreign policy-related issues except for budget approval. China's constitution grants the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee the ultimate authority over what is called diplomatic power, but *de facto* power is still exercised by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, its Standing Committee, and other relevant actors who design the overall diplomatic policy (Wei 2008, paraphrased in Wang 2017, 254).

Parliamentary involvement in foreign affairs has its problems. Laundy (1989, 45) notes that parliaments, as the people's representatives, are “entitled to be informed of developments in the international field, to debate government policies and action, and initiate their own investigations of international issues...”. Still, the management of foreign affairs has tended to be less open to parliaments than other policy sectors because foreign policy has been seen as an area demanding secrecy, discretion, quick action, or national unity difficult to achieve among political parties (Raunio 2014, 543; Hill 2003, 282). Furthermore, parliaments themselves have often refrained from halting treaties or questioning foreign affairs budgets, even when they have the

formal power to do so (Hill 2003, 254). On the one hand, this may be because the parliament in general is prone to government-led policymaking and delegates foreign affairs to the executive branch of government. Or the parliament has simply failed to control the government and is unwilling to complicate matters at the late stage, e.g., by refusing to ratify a treaty (Raunio 2014, 543–544²²). On the other hand, governments have been argued to insulate themselves from parliaments when they act in international institutions and thus leave little chance for parliaments to influence (B. Rittberger 2005, quoted in Rittberger and Zangl 2006, 83).

2.1.4 Through parliamentary diplomacy

Parliamentary diplomacy bypasses the national channels of influence and engages parliamentarians directly with other international parliamentary, governmental, or civil society actors. Malamud and Stavridis (2011, 101, 104) define parliamentary diplomacy broadly as a parallel parliamentary channel to the official state-to-state diplomacy of the executive sector. Weisglas and de Boer (2007, 93-94), two practitioners from the Dutch House of Representatives, define parliamentary diplomacy as “the full range of international activities undertaken by parliamentarians in order to increase mutual understanding between countries, to assist each other in improving the control of governments and the representation of a people and to increase the democratic legitimacy of inter-governmental institutions.” This broad definition is very fitting for this research as it describes the different sides of parliamentary diplomacy vis-à-vis the individual parliamentarians and legislatures, and it also takes into account the wider objectives of the people’s representation and improved legitimacy. Yet, this definition lacks the many international contacts parliamentarians have with non-state actors, as it focuses on the country level. Bajtay (2015, 8) sees parliamentary diplomacy echoing the wider, more recent understanding of diplomacy such as that of Kerr and Wiseman (2013, 4), who describe diplomacy not as “the exclusive activity of sovereign states” but more as a “process of communication and representation that facilitates social interaction between all human beings.”²³

²² Raunio (2014, 543–553) does not completely agree with the traditional view of weak parliaments and sees that the US and many European legislatures are actually more powerful in foreign policy than usually understood.

²³ Various definitions of diplomacy exist. See Berridge and James (2003, 62–63). The traditional and stricter view of diplomacy describes it as the “conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of officials based at home or abroad.”

Malamud and Stavridis (2011, 103-106) describe how parliamentary diplomacy includes a wide variety of activities, such as visits by parliamentary delegations, interparliamentary meetings, and friendship groups. It reaches a wide array of actors, from other parliaments to civil society, business, and government representatives of other countries. Parliamentary diplomacy can be formal or informal, it may be led by parties or individual parliamentarians, and it may be conducted secretly or openly. Finally, it may be conducted with or without the government's blessing. Parliamentarian engagement in peacebuilding, conflict prevention activities, and election monitoring in other countries are also forms of parliamentary diplomacy.

Stavridis (2002, 7-9) notes that there are different views on whether parliamentary diplomacy should be close to governmental or not. He reports that some see parliamentary diplomacy to have "exploratory nature to reach peoples and institutions that official channels cannot reach, at least not formally and openly." And, that parliamentary diplomacy and governmental diplomacy can work together, as parliaments can sometimes help by promoting national interests more subtly. Stavridis himself sees that the actual value of parliamentary diplomacy, however, is its distinctiveness from state-led diplomacy. Similarly Fiott (2011) notes that being too close to the government is not necessarily desirable for parliamentary diplomacy.

Parliamentarians are not diplomats and are therefore not restricted by their government's foreign policy, which gives them more flexibility as noted by Beetham (2006, 172-173):

a diplomat is an envoy of the executive branch and represents the positions of the State. Members of parliament, however, are politicians who hold political beliefs which may or may not coincide with their respective country's official position on any given issue. This allows parliamentarians a margin of flexibility that is denied to the diplomat.

Hill (2003, 257) argues similarly that parliamentarians should consciously avoid getting too close to government diplomacy since they need to retain their obligation to engage the executive in critical dialogue.

It seems these arguments paint a rather idealistic picture of parliamentary freedom. The following analysis of the Japanese parliamentarians shows that this is not as clear-cut but rather a balancing act for the parliamentarians. Also the influence of party discipline and the fact that parliamentarians come from the ruling party or party coalition or from the opposition is lacking from these arguments.

It has been claimed that it may be easier for parliamentarians than for diplomats to engage in dialogue in delicate conflict situations or human rights violations (Šabič

2008a, 259). Cutler (2006, 82–83), who has studied Central Asian parliaments, sees that “parliamentary diplomacy represents an important middle ground between the traditional level of interstate diplomacy and...transnational cooperation amongst grassroots non-governmental organizations” and that international parliamentary cooperation can be especially useful in areas where civil society and NGOs are underdeveloped and politically controlled. This seems to be a fitting argument for the analysis of ASEP and is explored in more detail in article 2.

Informal relations play a key role in politics in many Asian countries (Fukui 2000, 1–14). Japanese parliamentarians are active in unofficial and informal parliamentary diplomacy with their colleagues from neighboring parliaments and have had important roles at times when official relations have been strained. When relations between Japan and the People’s Republic of China were normalized in 1972, Japan had to cut its official ties with the Republic of China (Taiwan). Parliamentary groups such as the Japan–ROC Diet Members Consultative Council, established by pro-Taiwanese politicians from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 1973, have become essential channels for political contacts and dialogue in the absence of official relations (Niwa 2010, 2008; Deans 2001).

Parliamentary diplomacy, however, also has its challenges: periodic elections inhibit continuity and complicate the long-term importance of personal contacts. Domestic politics form the mainstay of parliamentary work, and the public may be uninformed of the parliamentarians’ international actions (Kissling 2011, 32). Together, these lead to situations in which parliamentarians have limited resources (funding, time, and expertise) for international action (Malamud and Stavridis 2011, 106; Šabič 2008b, 82–83). International travel is often easily dubbed “parliamentary tourism” (Herranz 2005). Time and effort focused on areas and issues outside the domestic sphere may also be considered irrelevant for re-election by both the public and the parliamentarians themselves (Weisglas and de Boer 2007, 97–98).

Parliamentary action can sometimes also be harmful (Malamud and Stavridis 2011, 105). The individual parliamentary diplomacy in Japan of politician Kanemaru Shin²⁴ in 1990 vis-à-vis North Korea reportedly complicated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ attempts to create coherent foreign policy at the time (Hughes 2006, 467).²⁵

Thus, parliamentary diplomacy is based on both informal and unofficial foundations such as personal contacts, but there are also various institutional

²⁴ Chinese, Korean, and Japanese names are written last name first throughout this dissertation.

²⁵ The end of the Cold War was seen to open new possibilities in diplomacy. LDP politicians, especially from the Takeshita faction, took individual diplomatic action in the early 1990s to normalize relations with North Korea, assumedly with the hope of gaining financially (Hughes 2006, 470–472).

foundations that provide a more formal and even a more official background for parliamentary diplomacy, such as parliamentary friendship groups and interparliamentary meetings, the latter of which will be discussed next in more detail.

2.1.5 Through international parliamentary institutions (IPIs)

The various international parliamentary institutions (IPIs) are one key channel for parliaments and parliamentarians to interact internationally and to conduct parliamentary diplomacy. The concept was first introduced by Heinrich Klebes in the late 1980s to describe all interparliamentary bodies (Šabič 2008a, 257). These bodies vary immensely in size, geographic and/or thematic scope, objectives, legal status, mandate, and finances. For example, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is global in its reach, whereas the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat) is interregional, like ASEP. Many IPIs are organized regionally (i.e., the Latin American Parliament [Parlatino], the African Parliamentary Union [APU], and the ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Assembly [AIPA]) or thematically (i.e., the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & International Monetary Fund [ParlNet]). Many IPIs have some degree of ties to an international organization²⁶ with specified channels of communication, rights, and responsibilities (e.g., the European Parliament or the Andean Parliament), and some work closely with, albeit institutionally separate from, a certain international organization (e.g., NATO Parliamentary Assembly).

The number of IPIs has increased especially since the end of the Cold War, but their history dates back to the 19th century. The first international parliamentary institution was the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which was established in 1889 on the initiative of two parliamentarians, William Randal (UK) and Frédéric Passy (France), with the idea that the IPU could help solve conflicts between countries (Zarjevski 1989, paraphrased in Costa, Stavridis and Dri 2013a, 5). Beginning as a group of individual parliamentarians years ago, the IPU has developed into the main international parliamentary institution with speculation over its potential to become a parliamentary arm of the United Nations (Šabič 2008b, 79). Other early IPIs include the Nordic Inter-Parliamentary Union from 1907 (now the Nordic Council, established in 1952) and the Empire Parliamentary Association (1911) of the British dominions and colonies (renamed in 1948 as the Commonwealth Parliamentary

²⁶ “International organization” is understood in this dissertation as an organization where states are the primary actors; in other words an international governmental organization (see Rittberger and Zangl 2006, 5–9).

Association) (Cofelice 2012, 4). The number of IPIs increased after WWII as a consequence of several factors: a general demand emerged in Europe for greater transparency in international politics (Šabič 2008a, 260), and, simultaneously, the processes of democratization, decolonization, and the Cold War juxtaposition fueled regional integration in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. These integration processes often included a parliamentary element by the 1970s (Costa, Stavridis and Dri 2013a, 5–6).

The biggest increase in the number of IPIs, however, started after the end of the Cold War (Šabič 2008a, 255–256). Costa, Stavridis and Dri (2013a, 5–6) note that the role of the parliament changed from being an “internal” element of regional integration, which brought legitimization and a democratic dimension to the integration process, to a more independent international actor along the lines of “new regionalism” (see Hettne 2003 on new regionalism). They also have observed a third stage of interregionalism, in which IPIs play a role in the globalized world. According to Kissling (2011, 10) about 100 IPIs currently exist.

If many earlier IPIs were part of regional integration processes and thus a top-down initiative, the more recent IPIs represent an increasingly bottom-up approach in which parliaments and parliamentarians themselves have initiated action. This is the context of ASEP, too. Initialized by the EP, a parliamentary actor, ASEP was set up in 1996 in the spirit of new regionalism, which recognizes the initiatives of all kinds of actors to engage in international affairs. This was also the time of post-Cold War and postcolonial enthusiasm to create new international links—interregional in this case—and to start new relationships with a clean slate.

2.1.6 Definitions of IPIs - ASEP as an IPI

Many efforts have been made to define what IPIs are and what they do. According to Šabič (2008a, 258), whose broad definition is widely quoted, IPIs are

institutions in which parliamentarians co-operate with a view to formulating their interests, adopting decisions, strategies or programs, which they implement or promote, formally and informally, in interactions with other actors, by various means such as persuasion, advocacy or institutional pressure.

Šabič’s definition is useful for this research because of its broadness, which also encompasses the activities of the ASEP process. The same is true for Cutler’s (2006, 83) much-used definition, which adds to Šabič’s by clarifying the different

procedures that describe how participation in IPIs may be constituted. Cutler says an IPI is

an international institution that (1) is a regular forum for multilateral deliberations on an established basis of an either legislative or consultative nature, (2) either attached to an international organization or itself constituting one, (3) in which at least three states or transgovernmental units are represented by parliamentarians, (4) who are either selected by national legislatures in a self-determined manner or popularly elected by electorates of the member states.

Much of the earlier literature on IPIs has been focused on their categorization (see, e.g., Cutler 2001; Malamud and Sousa 2007; de Puig 2004). The three following efforts are widely used to categorize IPIs. First, Šabič (2008a, 258, based on Klebes 1989) divides IPIs into two subcategories according to their relationship to international organizations: those attached to one are called international parliamentary organs (IPOs)²⁷, and those that function on their own are called international parliamentary assemblies (IPA). IPOs have specific responsibilities and powers vis-à-vis the parent organization (e.g., oversight, consultative, budgetary, legislative). The second and much larger category of IPAs, however, usually has no direct leverage on the intergovernmental process and decision-making²⁸. ASEP arguably belongs to this latter group of IPA as ASEP has no defined responsibilities or powers vis-à-vis ASEM. While ASEP is part of the wider ASEM family and is recognized as the parliamentary dimension of the intergovernmental ASEM process, the relationship is complicated as ASEM is not an international organization, and their relationship remains very loose.

Second, Cofelice (2012, 12–17) offers a more detailed categorization in which IPIs are categorized according to the powers they possess: First are the parliamentary organs such as the European Parliament (EP), which has co-legislative powers. Second are the parliamentary organizations with deliberative and consultative powers, and third are the transnational networks of parliamentarians with lobbying and confidence-building functions. Cofelice also notes that IPIs in the third group often function similarly to NGOs or interest groups as they lobby and exert influence on governments and their parliaments. This last note is very useful when analyzing ASEP; despite being part of the ASEM process, ASEP was established on the initiative of the parliamentarians themselves and despite the recommendations and

²⁷ e.g. European Parliament, Panafrican Parliament (attached to African Union)

²⁸ e.g. NATO Parliamentary Assembly

parliamentary message conveyed through the declaration and possible short message delivered at the ASEM Summit, ASEP mostly remains distanced from the ASEM process and could mostly act through lobbying. Cofelice (2012, 13) categorizes ASEP as an international parliamentary institution that could potentially acquire some powers, and he calls it an emerging interregional parliamentary forum. It can be argued that ASEP is already an established process in itself after 20 years of cooperation; however, it can be said that ASEP's relationship to the ASEM process is only slowly emerging. Only in recent years have ASEP and ASEM come a little closer together, as article 2 discussed in detail. Furthermore, the interregional characteristic is not very concretely emphasized in the organizational aspects of ASEP (e.g., regional coordination or consultations before meetings do not exist), and each member is just represented by its own parliament while the EP represents the EU. Cofelice is correct to not place ASEP in his category of international parliamentary institutions because ASEP has none of the formal powers he lists for IPIs (supervisory, budgetary, co-legislative, and consultative). Considering the very loose format of both ASEM and ASEP, it seems very unlikely that ASEP could ever develop anything other than a possible consultative relationship vis-à-vis ASEM. Cofelice does not explain the use of the word "forum," but it seems to reflect the unpermanent character given to ASEP.

Third, Kissling (2011) categorizes IPIs according to their legal status by studying whether they act under national laws or have an international status either as a self-standing international organization or as part of one. She introduces four groups, from the least to the most developed: 1) interparliamentary government-run/inspired non-governmental organizations (GRINGOs), 2) issue-related interparliamentary network GRINGOs (e.g., Parliamentarians for Global Action), 3) more official international or regional parliamentary organizations with an "international personality sui generis" (e.g., Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly EuroLat, AIPA), 4) international parliamentary specialized agencies (NATO Parliamentary Assembly), and 5) parliamentary organs of international or regional organizations (OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, European Parliament, Pan-African Parliament). Kissling (2011, 54) has categorized ASEP in the first group as a "slightly institutionalized" interparliamentary GRINGO. She sees that ASEM provides issues for ASEP, which in turn provides recommendations for ASEM, thus referring to an issue providing function. Other IPIs in this category include the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and G8 Speakers' Conference, among others. Kissling's definition is fitting in the sense that ASEP does take inspiration from the governmental ASEM process and has a loose format with no legal status. Kissling emphasizes the legal status of IPIs, so ASEP's—and especially ASEM's—

ambiguous form leads her to the conclusion that ASEP cannot qualify as an organ of ASEM “as long as ASEM is only a loose dialogue and not an international organization” (Kissling 2011, 54). Furthermore, she seems to imply that membership is individual in GRINGOs, whereas the participants in more formal organizations (the previously mentioned groups 3–5) are dispatched as official delegations of national parliaments (Kissling 2011). Here, Kissling’s placement of ASEP in the GRINGO category is misleading. ASEP membership is not individual; instead, parliaments dispatch delegations that vary in format from *ad hoc* to permanent. Certainly, ASEP cannot be an organ of ASEM, at least not in the formal way the other parliamentary organs are attached to their host organization. However, it can be said that ASEP belongs to the “ASEM family.” So, in a sense, ASEM and ASEP are two dialogues that have grown together because of their common focus and history, but because of the informal character of both, it is difficult to develop a more formal relationship. Thus, ASEP could be in category three, international or regional parliamentary organizations. This group covers a range of actors that are similarly stand-alone as ASEP, but have some emotional or working-level ties with a governmental organization. Kissling (2011, 16) notes, that in these institutions parliaments, as part of the state, “feel themselves represented or feel that the people is represented internationally or regionally by these organizations”. This holds for ASEP too, where membership is based on national parliaments and not on individuals and participants, while they are not elected ASEP participants of their nation, they feel they are representing their country.

ASEP should be called an international parliamentary institution or an international parliamentary assembly (as defined by Šabič 2008a, 258). Trying to fit ASEP in the more narrowly defined categories is interesting and as an exercise reveals a lot of information about the characteristics of this institution, but the above examples show how difficult it is because of ASEP’s loose format and particularly because of the special characteristics of ASEM.

As noted above very few of the more than 100 IPIs have significant decision-making, legislative, consultative, or deliberative powers. As this research is about ASEP, which does not have any formal powers, the focus is on the more informal functions that all IPIs, including ASEP, have. These are functions that are not formally agreed upon, as e.g. legislative function would be, but rather functions that materialize despite the lack of formal agreement.

From the analysis of the existing IPI research and based on the analysis of ASEP, the following main categories have been created for this dissertation: 1) enhancing the capabilities of parliamentarians to perform their duties, 2) IPIs as venues for norm promotion, and 3) IPIs as providers of democratization for international and

global governance. These functions and the related existing discussion will be introduced in the following sub-chapters in more detail.

Other possible function for study could have been that of agenda provider and lobbyist. Through the final declaration, ASEP provides issues and recommendations to the ASEM agenda. These informal functions were left out of the focus of this dissertation, because it would be very difficult to show concretely whether issues discussed at ASEP have been picked up by ASEM precisely for the reason that they were mentioned in the ASEP declaration. Before moving on to the three key functions, the challenges IPIs face in their action will be shortly raised.

The limitations of IPIs are similar to those mentioned in the connection of parliamentary diplomacy, such as parliamentary tourism and limited resources. Other limitations, as discussed by Šabič (2008b, 82–83), include discontinuity (due not only to interval elections and changing delegations but also to the lack of follow-up between meetings), low publicity, undisciplined agenda setting, and lack of finances at both the IPI level and in national parliaments' own funds for international cooperation. There is also a difference in the interest level and personal engagement of parliamentarians. All these factors limit the actual contribution of IPIs and restrict their possibility to carry out long-term relations and work. Thus, Habegger (2010, 199) has argued that IPIs are seldom able to achieve their goals. Also, Slaughter (2004) has noted that IPIs, which she calls "legislative networks," are rather weak but can have long-term influence, e.g., in regional cooperation or international relations.

Next, the three key functions of IPIs relevant for this research are discussed in detail.

2.2 IPIs empowering parliamentarians

Many scholars see that IPIs have the potential to enhance parliamentarians' work, both internationally and domestically. Kiljunen (2006, 250) argues that access to new information and knowledge can enhance their capability to fulfill their national mandate. Also, Habegger (2010, 197, 200) sees that access to new and possibly even alternative sources of information can translate into improved oversight at home, especially in matters related to foreign policy. In other words, parliamentarians gain better access not only to dialogue and agenda-shaping at the international level, but they also become better equipped in their main mandate at the local level. Also, Cofelice (2012, 13) notes how IPIs enhance parliamentarians' ability to deal with international issues at home.

Slaughter (2004, 237) sees that collaborating in an international setting with parliamentarians from other countries may help to broaden the horizons of

individual legislators. Kissling (2011, 32) notes that international cooperation with peers may make parliamentarians more considerate of the “common good” instead of focusing only on national interests. Conversely, Šabič (2008b, 84) raises a similar argument to Scully (2005, 77–87): members of parliament cannot necessarily be expected to put national interests second since they are primarily national politicians. Slaughter (2004, 105) adds that it may be difficult for parliamentarians to view international issues other than through domestic interests.

This dissertation uses the word “empowerment” to illustrate how participation in international parliamentary institutions has the potential to support the developing roles of parliaments and parliamentarians, not only their domestic roles but also their emerging role in international relations. The concept of empowerment originated from psychological literature (e.g., Rappaport 1984, quoted in Zimmerman 2000, 43-44), which identifies it as a process in which “people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives.” The concept has also been widely used to study civic participation. Zimmerman (2000, 44, 58) has studied empowerment at the organizational level and notes that it “may include organizational processes and structures that enhance members participation and improve organizational effectiveness for goal achievement.” He continues that “participation, control, and critical awareness are essential aspects of empowerment” and notes that “at the individual level of analysis, these factors include a belief in one’s ability to exert control” as well as an involvement in decision-making. At the organizational level, this means organizational settings “that provide individuals with opportunities to exert control and organizational effectiveness” to achieve wanted goals. This aspect links well with this chapter’s discussion on the different ways the democratic deficit of international or global institutions has been addressed with, e.g., possibilities for parliamentary participation in international dialogue. However, control at the international level, which will be discussed later, is limited. While some organizations do provide even concrete ways for parliamentarians to control international and global agenda-making, ASEP’s informal relationship with ASEM is greatly challenged in this aspect. Still, the term “empowerment” is useful as it reflects both the individual parliamentarians’ potential transformation from a disadvantaged position to a position where they have increasingly more opportunities, knowledge, and awareness to participate in international affairs, and it also reveals the organizational level in which the IPIs can function at the international level.

The word “empowerment” has not been used in IPI literature to describe the benefits of international parliamentary cooperation, although similar individual level benefits have been identified (e.g., Kiljunen 2006). Cofelice (2012) and

Malamud and de Sousa (2007) use the term briefly when noting how the acquisition of concrete powers, such as consultative or co-legislative (vis-à-vis the international organization they are attached to), empower IPIs as organizations.

The following section provides a more detailed discussion of how the interaction of parliamentarians at IPIs turns these arenas into platforms for norm diffusion.

2.3 IPIs as organisational platforms for norm diffusion

This sub-chapter discusses IPIs and parliamentarians within the context of norm diffusion at the international level. This is an area in which several authors have seen IPIs serve an important role (see Šabič 2008a, 2013; Flockhart 2004; Weisglas and de Boer 2007; Delputte 2013) and the parliaments as legislators have a unique position (Habegger 2010; Flockart 2005). First, definitions for norms, norm diffusion, and norm promotion are presented, and the parliamentary engagement in these has been viewed in earlier literature. Through this connection, the term “normative power” will be introduced, as the following analysis on ASEP will later touch upon parliamentarians’ involvement in normative power ambitions at ASEP. Then the focus will zone in on the role of norms in national foreign policy, and a special focus will be placed on Japan, the case study. This provides a basis for the analysis of Japanese parliamentarians as international actors who both promote and follow foreign policy norms. Finally, the necessary context for the case study will be presented with a discussion on Japan’s formal foreign policy process and the involvement of the National Diet of Japan in international affairs.

2.3.1 What are norms and norm diffusion?

While norms can be understood in different ways, this dissertation has adopted the constructivist understanding regarding norms within the context of international relations (IR). Social constructivism is a broad approach gaining popularity especially in the post-Cold War era study of international relations. The shared idea of this approach is to challenge the realist IR focus on material elements such as military power and argue that they alone do not determine interests or relations, but it is the ideational elements people attach to them that have the most significance (Flockhart 2012; Wendt 1995, 73). Thus, the approach emphasizes that “world politics is “socially constructed,” which involves two basic claims: that the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material..., and that these structures shape actors’ identities and interests, rather than just their behavior,” as argued by Wendt (1995, 71–72).

In addition to the material elements, there are many so-called social elements, such as rules, symbols, or language that only exist through human agreement and within their social contexts. The social facts include both formal rules and less formal norms, both of which affect actors' behaviors (Flockhart 2012, 82–84). Norms are intersubjective standards of “appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” that carry a sense of “oughtness” and “shared assessment” for behavior (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 892). Björkdahl (2002, 15) notes that norms include collective expectations among actors concerning the appropriate behavior of an actor in a certain context or identity. Norms regulate behavior by providing limits for appropriate and inappropriate behavior, but they also may control, e.g., over state policy, by defining interests (Katzenstein 1996, 18–29).

Norms provide a cognitive map for appropriate and inappropriate behavior for actors with a certain identity. Identity is the actor's “understanding of self, its place in the social world and its relationship with others. The social context, as well as historical, cultural, and political contexts influence the construction of the agent's identity (Flockhart 2012, 87; Wendt 1999, 224–244). An agent can have multiple identities linked to the actor's place in the social structure, but some may be more important than others (Wendt 1999, 230–231). The promotion of certain norms further strengthens the normative identity of the agent (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 191). Identity is not only about self-perception but is also an intersubjective entity because part of it lies in how others see the actor (Wendt 1999, 224).

Finally, identities are not personal, but rather are social and relational and “defined by the actor's interaction with and relationship to others.” Thus, they are “dependent on the actor's interaction with others and place within an institutional context.” Identities may change, especially because of an identity conflict that may lead to the renegotiation of the identity as noted by Barnett (1999, 9–10). In addition, while agents may try to act according to their identity, that may not always happen because much depends on the context in which they act. Sometimes, behavior can also be based more on habit than on an actual evaluation of appropriate behavior (Flockhart 2012, 86).

“Norm entrepreneurs” are agents (individuals, groups of people, institutions, states) who call attention to or create issues they consider significant; thus, they have a role in the emergence of new norms. They possess strong ideas about proper or desirable behavior and aim to change the existing norms toward a direction they deem more appropriate (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 896–897). Björkdahl (2013, 325–328) notes that norm entrepreneurship is “about shaping the agenda,” as agents bring certain issues into the discussion, advocate a certain problem definition, and present new ideas to solve the issue. Also, the term “norm-maker” is often used. This

is an “an actor with a strong commitment to a particular norm or set of norms and a will to advocate these norms to bring about normative change” (Björkdahl 2012, 82). In this research, the term “norm entrepreneur” or “norm promoter” are used interchangeably.

The “life cycle of norms” illustrates the three stages of development an idea must go through before it becomes an internalized international norm. In the first stage, norm emergence, norm entrepreneurs try to convince enough actors to support the new norm. If a critical mass is reached, the norm enters its second stage when actors who have already embraced the norm try to persuade others to adopt it. When a norm has been internalized in the third stage, it becomes a matter of fact and no longer attracts public attention, and change of behavior has been achieved. Many ideas never reach the end of the cycle, as they fail to attract a critical mass of followers. Norms can be domestic, regional, or international, and their processes are often intertwined (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 893).

How are norms recognized? We can see evidence of norms indirectly because they “prompt justification for action and leave an extensive trail of communication among actors we can study” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 892). As Björkdahl (2002, 13) points out, studying how actors “talk about norms is important, if not more important, than how they act” because norms are transmitted through language.

This research uses the term “norm diffusion” to define the multifaceted process of norm transfer from norm-makers and promoters to norm-takers. Checkel (1999, 85) has used as a basis this general definition of diffusion as “the transfer or transmission of objects, processes, ideas and information from one population or region to another”. Björkdahl (2012, 84-87) focuses on direct and indirect norm diffusion, which are relevant for this research too. She notes that diffusion can take different forms, from being conscious or unconscious, active or passive, or direct or indirect. Indirect norm diffusion refers to a more passive process in which norms are imitated or mimicked without active promotion because they appeal to the norm-taker perhaps as a “model to be imitated”. Direct norm transfer relies on the active efforts of the norm-maker to introduce, promote, and get acceptance of its norms often through negotiation. In both cases, norm diffusion is by nature communicative and interpretive, a negotiation in which the norm and its content and meaning may change over time (Björkdahl 2012, 84-87). The norm-maker may frame the promoted norm as morally persuasive, “the right thing to do” and through agenda-shaping, norm-negotiation and coalition-building aim towards institutionalization (e.g. through UN) finally achieving internalization of the norm (Björkdahl 2013, 328-333).

The term “norm-taker” refers to the agent that adopts the norm, usually through selection from various norms and by fitting the norm to the local context (Björkdahl 2012, 83). To describe the internalization and adoption of a new norm among the norm-takers, several concepts have been introduced. Socialization refers to how a new norm is adopted through a relationship in which norms and ideals are transmitted from one actor to another. This can either be an unbalanced situation where norms of the more powerful are adopted by the weaker actor (Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990, 289, 90) or because states see that abiding by international norms increases their legitimacy as international actors (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 902–903). Furthermore, peer or domestic pressures and a desire to fit in with others may also be important drivers behind internalization. Finally, image building and a search for esteem are also identified as factors (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 902–903). Adopting a certain set of norms can indicate the acceptance of a norm community and can demonstrate a belonging to it (Björkdahl 2012, 83). Flockhart (2005, 50, 52) notes that the “successful outcome [of norm internalization] is much more likely in cases where there is a small ideational distance” between the actors. Also, timing is important—a critical juncture (e.g., end of crisis or conflict)— may be important for norm adoption. Although adoption of a new norm carries the expectation of changed behavior, it is difficult to tell why and to what extent agents have actually changed their thinking and/or action (see Flockhart 2004, 366). Thus, as Björkdahl (2002, 13) argues, how actors talk about norms is equally as important as how they act. Looking at how agents talk about norms reveals internalization before action. By looking only at actions, one cannot recognize norms before they are being acted upon.

Diffusion may take place at organizational platforms, which bring different actors together (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 899–900). Many issue-specific platforms are formed especially to promote a particular norm in the world among non-members (e.g., Greenpeace), but existing international organizations are often used to promote a variety of norms among the members (e.g., the UN), as international organizations provide important possibilities for interaction among members. Scully (2005, 77–87) warns that the idea of institutional socialization through an organizational platform should not be understood too simplistically. He notes in his study on the European Parliament that the members of the European Parliament, contrary to many presumptions, are not “empty vessels” who become socialized by pro-EU and pro-integration ideas when they join the EP. Instead, they remain independent political actors who tend to hold onto their own views. He concludes that socialization is more successful if it helps individuals achieve their own goals; a mere contact is not enough. As noted by Finnemore and Sikkink, actors within an international institution may not share the same meaning for the same

norms with similar significance (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 899–900). On a somewhat similar note, Acharya (2009, 4), who has studied the diffusion of norms in the context of ASEAN, emphasizes that international norms are not necessarily internalized unchanged, but are often localized to fit into the existing local ideas and norms. He criticizes the often prevalent bias that concentrates on the struggle between the “*good* global norms (championed by mainly Western norm entrepreneurs)” and the “*bad* local beliefs and practices (mainly in the non-Western areas).” He highlights the role of the local agents and challenges the idea that the processes of socialization would be a one-way teacher-subject relationship. Also, Björkdahl’s (2012) above-mentioned view supports this idea of the norm taker not as a passive adopter but rather as an active, selective agent.

In the case of ASEP, there are simultaneous passive and indirect as well as active and direct norm diffusion processes going on. In the discussion chapter, these processes will be analyzed in detail. Attention will be placed on the kinds of norms being diffused and by whom and how. The primary focus is on norm diffusion processes instead of internalization; norm diffusion is better reflected from the primary data. Next, the concept of normative power will be introduced, as the coming analysis, especially of the EP’s action in ASEP, requires a discussion of the topic.

2.3.2 Normative power

Manners (2002) first coined the iconic term “normative power” to describe the distinct characteristics of the EU.²⁹ He presented this new view, alongside military and civilian power, by introducing normative power as ideological power or power over opinion. For Manners, normative power is ultimately the ability to define what is considered normal. For the EU, this means the promotion of norms based on core values of the union: peace, liberty, human rights, rule of law, and democracy (Manners 2002, 253, 242³⁰). They are listed in the EU’s key documents (see, e.g., Treaty of Lisbon, article 1), and promoting these values outside the EU is a core principle of its external agenda (as noted in the Treaty of Lisbon, article 21). Furthermore, the EU is also committed to promoting multilateralism (Stumbaum 2015, 332).

²⁹ The concept Normative Power Europe (NPE) is often used in this context. See, e.g., Forsberg (2011). In the early 2000s, the idea of a new kind of ideational power supported by economic but not by military leverage was particularly relevant and reflected the post-Cold War international context.

³⁰ Manners (2006, 46) emphasized the universal character of these norms based on the same values that are also generally acknowledged as universally applicable within the United Nations.

Normative power is a complicated concept, not least because of the multiple meanings “norm” and “power” entail. Forsberg (2011, 1190) notes that “normative” can be understood both “as a principle of right action” or as something that is “normal” or “standard.” There is no one definition of power, but Morriss (1987, paraphrased in Forsberg 2011, 1190) introduced a well-known version that sees it as “the ability to affect”. However, in the English language, it can also be a term used for a powerful actor. Thus, normative power as a concept can refer to the ability to cause an effect (and thus to define “what passes as normal”) or as doing the right thing, but the term itself can also refer to an actor using that power, according to Forsberg (2011, 1190). In this dissertation, Forsberg’s view of normative power as an ideal-type construction is used. Forsberg argues that no actor possesses all of the features identified for normative power (but may employ some of them) and that the EU is currently closest to the ideal-type.

Forsberg (2011, 1191) argues that normative power has different features: normative identity, normative interests, normative behavior, normative means of power, and normative outcomes. He points out that these do not presuppose each other, and an agent may not have all of them. Forsberg argues that a normative identity is not only about self-understanding, which is strong with the EU, but as Kavalski (2013) also notes, normative power is also about getting others to recognize one’s normative identity. Forsberg (2011, 1191) continues that normative interests are perceived to be different from strategic interests and that the EU has followed norm-based behavior on a number of occasions, even when it has been strategically less beneficial, but this distinction, however, is not always that clear. The EU’s China relations have been considered less normative, as more weight has been given to strategic economic interests (Pan and Michalski 2017). Tocci (2008, 6) argues that it is actually meaningless to differentiate normative goals and strategic interests as they are largely intertwined. Next, Forsberg (2011, 1191) refers to normative behavior as action that is in line with norms, for example, behavior that is based on multilateralism in international affairs. The use of a normative means of power refers to powers other than those from military or economic means, although this too is often mixed, as the EU uses both normative and economic power. Finally, normative power can be seen as the ability to achieve normative outcomes or normative changes in others’ behaviors. While the EU has a track record of such outcomes (enlargement policy), it has been difficult to achieve concrete results in many cases, e.g., with dialogues with China (Forsberg 2011, 1194; for China see Pan and Michalski 2017).

In the recent decade, with the global focus shifting towards Asia and China, the relevance of EU’s normative approach and contribution has been questioned (see Gaens, Jokela and Mattlin 2012). At ASEM, the EU has been criticized for

inconsistency in terms of promoting its core values, inconsistently economically strong and strategically important partners, such as China, were treated as equals by avoiding sensitive issues but small Myanmar was made the focus of human rights debate in the forum. Yet, dialogue and avoidance of confrontation may have been the right tools that have kept the dialogue going (Gaens and Jokela 2012, 160).

Similarly Tuominen (2013, 214) notes that the NPE is a product of its own time and has been viewed to be in need of re-evaluation with the changing international context and redistribution of power in the 2010s, when the EU's principles of universal values and emphasis for multilateral approach are faced with an increasing focus on sovereignty and state-based action.

Finally, Forsberg (2011, 1196–1198) distinguishes four different mechanisms for norm diffusion by a normative power. First, through persuasion, normative power relies on argumentation, rhetoric, shaming, and attraction to persuade others to follow its norms. Second, a normative power can invoke norms by appealing to normative commitments written in international agreements. In the case of the EU, the normative commitments in its external agreements are a rule, and violations may lead to sanctions. Third, normative power is about shaping the discourse of what is normal. Such a function has also been described by Manea (2009), who has studied the EU-ASEAN dialogue. Because of that dialogue, the ASEAN (even if reluctantly) has become engaged in the human rights discussion in a way that has resulted in regional normative dialogue and identity building on human rights issues. Finally, the fourth mechanism is when normative power is diffused by the power of example. A normative power is about standing as a model for others. The EU as a role model for other regional integration projects is a prime example of this. Forsberg, as discussed, connects this mechanism with socialization, where through group pressure or emulation, different features are copied or learned and adopted (Forsberg 2011, 1198). Forsberg's definition of normative power mechanisms is used to study the dynamics of the EP's norm diffusion taking place at ASEP drafting sessions.

While much of the discussion on normative power has focused on the EU, with the Normative Power Europe concept, the debate on defining normative power and normative foreign policy has stretched outside the realms of the EU, and ideas originating from the EU context have also been befitted elsewhere. The identification and promotion of certain norms becomes a strategy to influence the world (Björkdahl 2013). While normative power is generally attached to countries with strong international status, whether through economic, political, or military power, smaller states may also be successful in norm promotion. This makes the promotion of a certain norm or norms a foreign policy objective, according to Björkdahl (2013),

who has studied Sweden's promotion of conflict prevention and human rights in the UN and EU. De Zutter (2010, 1107) argues that an actor who diffuses its norms to others is a normative actor in a sense and adds that the diffused norms may not be universal as in the case of the EU. Sjursen (2007, paraphrased in Tocci 2008, 4) also argues that in a way, all international powers can be seen to aspire to a normative foreign policy, as they all try to influence norms in international relations.

China has been seen as an actor that exerts its normative power through relationships, in contrast to the EU's rules-based normative emphasis (Kavalski 2013). In other words, instead of applying abstract norms to practical cases, China prefers to define concrete obligations case by case in its relationships with others (Womack 2008, 265). And rather than providing a clear "model" for others like the EU, China seems to have taken an approach where it shows examples of alternative ways of doing things, thus representing "the other" from the EU (Breslin 2011). ASEAN, albeit a much weaker global actor than the EU or China, has been seen as an "inclusive normative power" that tries to influence its powerful neighbors (especially China and the United States) by inclusion and accommodation and by stressing its core norms, such as non-interference in domestic issues (He 2016); and while pursuing only "subtle and constrained" normative power, it has succeeded in engaging with its partners on its own terms (Allison-Reumann 2017). Heng (2014) sees that Japan has exercised its normative power by providing pragmatic solutions for global issues such as climate change (Japan's normative power efforts will be discussed further in the section on Japan's foreign policy). Russia (Romanova 2016) and India (Kavalski 2013) have also been identified as normative power advocates. This dissertation will focus on the EU and Japan action at ASEP.

In conclusion, this research combines elements from more general aspects of norm diffusion and from the more specifically identified mechanisms of norm promotion attached often to normative power efforts. First, this research looks at the relatively unconflictual diffusion processes at ASEP in which norms, especially those related to parliamentary activities, are diffused among parliamentarians both indirectly and directly through argumentation, leading by example, and information sharing. In this dissertation, this is considered peer-level diffusion and socialization among parliamentarians. Secondly, norm diffusion will be viewed as a more power-emphasized process, one that is more active and direct. Using Forsberg's (2011) analysis on the norm diffusion mechanisms of normative powers, this dissertation will study especially the EP's demonstration of normative power interests through persuasion, argumentation, shaping of discussion, shaming, standing as example and written commitments. Finally, Japanese parliamentarians activities at ASEP are studied from the perspective of norm promotion.

2.3.3 Parliamentarians and norm diffusion

Parliamentarians are engaged in norm promotion and diffusion in their domestic policy work. For example, parliamentary speeches can be regarded as indicators of norms of the society (Boekle et al. 1999, 27). IPIs, however, provide a place for members of parliament to participate in international dialogue and norm promotion. IPIs as entities have been known to promote a certain norm set, either alone or in collaboration with other IPIs or with international organizations, NGOs, companies, or other groups (Šabič 2013, 31). For example, the Parliamentarians for Global Action strongly promoted disarmament and were engaged in the creation of the International Criminal Court (Šabič 2008a, 267). Thus, they perform a similar function as the previously discussed international organizations in promoting certain norms (Coleman 2011).

Furthermore, parliamentarians working at IPIs have often been regarded to hold a double mandate, through their national and international role (Habegger 2010, 190), which can further facilitate the flow of ideas from global to local levels and vice versa; thus, they can impact the promotion of norms both ways. Working and communicating in an international setting can impact the attitudes and values of individual legislators, which in turn can influence their deliberations in their own national parliaments (Slaughter 2004, 237) and influence their views on international cooperation too (Habegger 2010, 197). Flockhart (2005, 52) has noted that the involvement of domestic decision-makers, the political elite, is important because without them, it is impossible to incorporate a new norm at domestic level. Research on the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) shows that its participating parliaments, especially those from the former socialist countries, have used its documents as models for their national legislation (Klebes 1998; Jaag and Schaerer, 2002, both paraphrased by Habegger 2010, 196) and have thus adopted Western democratic norms. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly has similarly contributed to the internalization of democratic norm sets among the former socialist states in Europe at a time when those Western norms became attractive and filled the ideational vacuum that had emerged with the collapse of the Soviet system, creating a critical juncture that is important in the norm adoption process (Flockhart 2004).

A parliament is a key element of democratic government; thus, it can be expected that parliamentarians promote norms related to democracy. Parliamentarians often emphasize the idea that those from undemocratic countries or countries in which democratic government is only emerging can benefit by socializing with their colleagues from established democracies (Malamud and Stavridis 2011, 105). For

example, the European Parliament sees IPIs as a way to promote democratization (EP 2011). This idea is supported also by Beetham (2006, 173) who argues

tend to bring a moral dimension to international politics that transcends narrow definitions of the national interest, particularly in their principled support for democracy and human rights.

In the discussion part of this dissertation, the active promotion of parliamentary norms in ASEP will be discussed. What are parliamentary norms? From a narrow perspective, party discipline could be considered a parliamentary norm, because it influences parliamentary work but is outside the formal rules of procedure (see, e.g. Crowe 1983). However, in this dissertation, the focus is on the core issues, albeit to a varying degree, of most parliaments. These issues are based on the previously listed key functions of parliaments: legislation, representation of people, creation of a citizen-government link, and control/oversight over the government (Kreppel 2014, 85–87). While at the domestic level these functions are regulated by formal rules and mechanisms (e.g., legislative process, elections, vote of confidence, etc.) with various versions from country to country, and while they are not strictly norms, at the international level, they do not have a similar formal status outside a few developed IPIs. Yet, because these functions are at the core of parliamentary work, they also provide guidelines for the appropriate and expected parliamentary action at the international level. Thus, they are called “parliamentary norms” here. These norms define the appropriate role of parliamentarians as representatives of people, legislators, actors who create a link between people and governments, and actors with an interest and an obligation to oversee governments both domestically and abroad. The discussion provided at the beginning of this chapter on the developing international outreach of parliamentarians illustrates the development of parliamentary norms beyond the national realms.

The EP has been called the EU “loudspeaker” for basic democratic and human rights and for using what Feliu and Serra (2015) call a “normative voice,” especially in the field of human rights issues. Since early 1980, the EP has actively raised awareness of human rights violations around the world through its instruments by making resolutions and reports, by organizing committee hearings, and by awarding the Sakharov Prize to an individual or organization working for human rights, to name a few. The EP actively holds the EU dedicated to human rights issues in its external relations, either by rallying the “human rights clause” to be included in aid and other agreements (incorporated since the early 1990s) or by reviewing agreements and refusing its assent to external agreements made by the Council.

While many of the initiatives aimed at protecting human rights have originated from political groups belonging to the left wing of the EP (Greens, European Free Alliance, Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left), Feliu and Sierra (2015, 15, 24-25) note that the “EP’s well-known position as an outstanding upholder of human rights would not be possible without a clear consensus among different groups and political sensibilities” and the dedication toward a normative agenda has been rather evenly spread among the parliamentarians.

As an integral part of the EU, the EP is here viewed as the closest example of the ideal-type normative power, in parliamentary terms. Rüländ and Carrapatoso (2015, 213) see that there is a “division of labor in the EU’s foreign policy” that actually delegates normative issues to the EP. The Parliament is reviewed to have more leeway in this area as it is not as directly involved in international negotiations as the other EU institutions, which tend to employ a more pragmatic *realpolitik*.

Thus, the EP consistently takes up human rights and other fundamental rights in dialogues with its partners and uses its tools (the Committee for Foreign Affairs, the resolutions, interparliamentary delegations, electoral missions) to try to influence other countries and promote the European model (Feliu and Serra 2015). The EP established in 2008 the Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy (OPPD), with the aim of supporting new and emerging democracies beyond the EU (OPPD 2018).

The effects of the EP’s action in Asia have received mixed reviews. While the EP has effectively worked to bring forth human rights violations and assist opposition or minority groups in Asia, it has according to Rüländ and Carrapatoso (2015, 213) also unintentionally strengthened the division of views between the EP and the authoritarian Asian governments, some of which accuse European parliamentarians of meddling with their internal affairs. Furthermore, EP legislators have had the tendency to see the EU as a model to be exported (Costa and Dri 2014, paraphrased in Rüländ and Carrapatoso 2015, 213), which many in Asia have reviewed as lack of understanding of different social and cultural contexts. In the discussion chapter, the EP’s attempts to exercise normative power in ASEP will be discussed with examples.

2.3.4 Case Japan: norms and foreign policy

While some governments hold normative ambitions to the level that they can be regarded as normative international powers, according to the constructivist foreign policy approach, all foreign policy is influenced by norms. Norms influence foreign policy actors who strive toward appropriate policy conduct supported by their

identity as international representatives of their countries (Boekle et al. 1999). Norms “help states to decide what their interests are” and “help states to make sense of the world that surrounds them” (Houghton 2017).

Foreign policy norms are institutionalized at the domestic level through socialization within the dense environment of various actors and institutions engaged in “defining, interpreting and reinterpreting different kinds of norms” (Katzenstein 1996, 20). Through what Boekle et al. (1999) call societal socialization, actors assume the norms of appropriate behavior within the given identity. While norms related to foreign policy are socialized at the society level, politicians, through their careers (both domestic and international), internalize a more specific set of behavioral expectations for actors representing their countries internationally. While foreign policy actors try to act according to their identity and the norms important to them, their actual behavior also depends on the situation and its context. In other words, behavior can change from context to context, agents do not always follow their identities or related norms, and action may also come from habit (Flockhart 2012, 86). In the case of Japan, Katzenstein (1996, 18–29) claims that the following factors enforce the institutionalization of social norms: high importance is given to public opinion in politics, government attempts to influence public opinion through control over school textbooks and mass media, and mass media among the public is pervasive.

A number of internationally and domestically embedded norms have been identified in Japan. This dissertation utilizes the division made by Hook et al. (2012),³¹ which identifies between domestically and internationally embedded norms. A central, domestically embedded norm for Japan is antimilitarism, as enshrined in its 1947 Constitution. This has shaped Japan’s postwar pacifist identity and guided its foreign policy (Katzenstein 1996). The antimilitarist norm has enjoyed wide public support in Japan to the present day, which has constrained the LDP as the key ruling party from making changes in Japan’s defense-based military

³¹ A great deal of literature exists on the study of Japan’s foreign policy from various approaches ranging from realism, liberalism, and constructivism to policymaking studies, each providing different outlooks on who and what drives, motivates, and influences the country’s foreign policy. In the eyes of earlier researchers, Japan was often regarded as an anomaly from the international relations point of view, as it did not fit the realists’ view on the maximization of military power (Waltz 1993). More recently, this view has been increasingly challenged, and Japan is instead seen as a “calculating international actor” that “carefully constructed its international strategy in the past by choosing from the various options available to” it at the time (Hook et al., 2012, 35)—in other words, a normal state (Hook and Dobson 2007, 13).

capabilities until very recently. The antimilitarist norm prompted many to view Japan as an abnormal state (e.g., Waltz 1993³²) as it does not completely fulfill the realist view of a state's international relations and foreign policy, which emphasizes the rationalist maximization of military and economic power. The idea of normalizing Japan, in other words reestablishing military forces with offensive military capabilities, is not new, but it has been entertained in the ruling LDP party since its beginning in 1955. However, in recent years, with the changing security environment in East Asia (a rising China and a more aggressive North Korea) and the weakening of pacifist opposition, antimilitarism has been increasingly challenged by the right-wing branch of the LDP, which has risen to power under the leadership of Prime Minister Abe. The second Abe administration (since 2012) has further accelerated the debate on changing the constitution.

Antimilitarism is closely linked with another domestically embedded norm. The economist norm has prioritized economic success over security issues in the postwar society. Here, Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato was the main norm entrepreneur; his famous economic plans (e.g., an income doubling plan) advanced Japan's quick transition to the world's second-largest economy by 1968. Finally, the developmentalist norm has driven Japan since the late 19th century to catch up with the Western industrialized powers with state-led export policies (e.g., Hook et al., 2012, 67).

Domestically embedded norms have directed Japan's international orientations and foreign policies, creating tensions between the domestic antimilitarist and economist policies and the international demands placed on Japan, often demanding a more proactive international role (Hook et al., 2012, 68).

The key internationally embedded norm in the postwar period stemmed from Japan's bilateral relationship and security treaty with the US. The norm of bilateralism has sometimes restricted Japan's foreign policy, as there has been pressure at times to follow the US policy, sometimes even to the extent that it has raised questions regarding the independence of Japan's policymaking (Jain and Inoguchi 1997). At the same time, the close security relationship allowed a postwar Japan to focus on economic rehabilitation and build what was to become the world's second-largest economy, while the US would guarantee Japan's defense. The key entrepreneur of this norm was Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru. The relevance of the bilateral norm was questioned briefly around the end of the Cold War, but it was reinforced especially by Prime Minister (PM) Koizumi Junichirō and by Japan's

³² For a detailed analysis of the development of the abnormality debate, read Hagström (2014).

support of the US-led war on terrorism in the early 2000s. PM Hatoyama's (Democratic Party of Japan, DPJ³³) attempt in 2009–2010 to refocus foreign policy toward East Asia and create a more balanced relationship with the United States did not weaken the profound power of this norm (Hook et al., 2012, 65), which has been reinforced again by PM Abe's second administration (2012–).

Japan's economist norm has had important repercussions for the country's foreign policy. Often intertwined with a technological orientation, this norm has identified a number of non-political areas for Japan to contribute in the international arena (Endo 2007, 51–53). The idea of separating political and economic issues (*seikei bunri*) is a guiding theme of the economist norm with the Asian neighbors and has served to circumvent the difficult historical issues stemming from Japan's aggression over Asia in the 1930s and 1940s (Hook et al., 2012, 67, 205). Economism has also influenced Japan's actions at the interregional level between Europe and Asia. For example, in the ASEM cooperation, Japan has emphasized "material interests" (Gaens 2014, 198), and in the global governance structures, it has mainly focused on the economy (Endo 2007, 51–53).

A more comprehensive international contribution was expected from the world's second-largest economy toward the end of the 20th century. PM Nakasone's plan in the mid-1980s to make Japan an international country turned into a discussion of Japan's concrete international contribution (*kokusai kōken*) in the 1990s (Mochizuki 2007, 7). The 1990–1991 Gulf War was a turning point, as Japan's inability to participate in the handling of the crisis with more than just check book diplomacy became the target of international criticism. A more active Japan started to make a stronger presence in international multilateral fora such as the UN, World Bank, G8, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The norm of internationalism carries the idea of proactive participation in international society through multilateral global institutions such as the UN, even in the form of overseas peacekeeping operations. At the same time, Japan's decisions to dispatch SDF troops abroad has diminished the power of the antimilitarist norm in foreign policy and has allowed a more proactive role (Hook and Payne, 2007, 17).

The norm of Asianism (Hook et al., 2012, 65–66) in Japan's foreign policy implies the country's interest in strengthening regional economic and security linkages in Asia; that is, turning toward Asia. In fact, different ideas of Japan's orientation to Asia instead of the West and early notions of Asian unity and integration had flourished already in 19th-century Japan. But as pan-Asianism took

³³ The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) was a centrist party in Japan from 1998 to 2016. The DPJ was the ruling party from 2009 to 2012.

a nationalist and hegemonic turn in the 1930s and 1940s with Japan's colonialization of Asia, the term disappeared from public discourse for a while (Saaler 2007). The Asia focus re-emerged as Japan approached Southeast Asia in the 1970s under the guidance of the Fukuda doctrine with the objective of strengthening Japan's ties with the area by pledging a peaceful approach, which differed from the devastating experiences throughout Japanese occupation in World War II (Sudo 1992). At the end of the Cold War, Japan became increasingly interested in building better relations with its Asian neighbors. However, due to a difficult historical legacy and regional tensions, Japan shied away from regional initiatives that focused exclusively on Asia, such as proposals for financial arrangements between ASEAN member states and China, South Korea, and Japan in early 1990 (proposals were made by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir bin Mohamed, and Japan was planned to have a lead role in the framework). However, the ASEAN+3 framework was established a few years later as the first exclusively Asian formation. Japan has often opted for a dual approach in regional relations, promoting a broader Asia-Pacific community instead of Asian-only formations (Mochizuki 2007, 17–19). This approach included Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. A crucial element for Japan is the engagement of China into regional and international multilateral frameworks, as they aim to both engage and thus stabilize China as well as contain it (Hook et al., 2012, 173). The postwar norm of Asianism, or Asia-centeredness (Endo 2007, 53), also refers to its tendency to act as a bridge (*kakehashi*) between East Asia and the West. Japan has taken the initiative to act as a spokesperson for East Asia, e.g., in global fora such as the G7/8 by communicating with other Asian countries before and after the summits (Hook et al., 2012, 65).

Endo (2007, 53) raises one more relevant norm: the multilateralization of a bilateral issue. This foreign policy norm is related to Japan's attempts to raise awareness of the abductions of 17 Japanese nationals by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s³⁴. This is an unsolved bilateral issue that has high domestic importance for Japan. Japan often frames the abduction issue as part of the wider regional security crisis related to North Korea and tries to gain international visibility and pressure for the issue. This norm is included here because it is relevant for the analysis in article 3, even though it does not hold similar weight to the earlier introduced norms.

³⁴ Japan views the abduction issue as top most important issue with North Korea. Of the 17 abductees, 12 have not yet been returned by North Korea, which claims that eight have died and questions whether the remaining four never entered North Korea. Japan sees the matter as a human rights violation and demands a full report of all cases and return of all abductees to Japan before normalization of relations with North Korea is possible (Diplomatic Blue Book 2018).

Japan's normative power ambitions

As noted earlier, countries or regional entities may adopt a role as a norm entrepreneur, making the promotion of a certain norm or set of norms a central part of their foreign policy. Heng (2014) notes that Japan lags behind the EU as an ideational leader but has instead assumed the role of trouble-shooter or problem solver that can offer transferable technological solutions related to climate norms. Thus, Japan exerts normative power by offering official development aid to projects related to mitigating climate change, promoting sustainable development, and creating and spreading innovative technologies. Zupančič and Hribernik (2014, 117) see that Japan exerts normative power within the concept of human security.³⁵ Japan has taken the lead in mainstreaming the concept and developing its implementation through peacebuilding and peace brokering, especially in Southeast Asia. Another area of normative advocacy concerns Japan's various regional initiatives for East and Southeast Asia. Japan was active in the 2000s and 2010s in proposing and establishing various regional cooperation strategies for the area. Thus, it advanced cooperative norms, for example, in the context of security of the Asian seaways (Zupančič and Hribernik 2014, 122–123). The most recent initiatives have highlighted a values-based approach whereby Japan has assumed the role of forerunner in democracy and good governance in Asia. Initiatives such as “the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity,” advocated by Foreign Minister Asō Tarō, or the “values-oriented diplomacy,” promoted by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō in 2006, were also seen as attempts to contain China by uniting like-minded democratic countries surrounding it (Gaens 2014, 201). In other words, it was a combination of normative as well as strategic aspirations.

Asplund (2018) sees Japan as having successfully used normative power with the idea of the rule of law at sea through the use of its official development aid in Southeast Asia. However, Asplund notes that Japan's normative approach in terms of spreading other universal values such as democracy and human rights and tying those to aid in the area is far less enthusiastic than the EU's. Yet, the EU and Japan are often called partners in values (Hosoya 2012).

Japan's foreign policy processes and actors, as well as its key foreign policy norms introduced here, provide a context for the analysis conducted in article 3 and in the

³⁵ The first comprehensive definition of human security was introduced in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report in 1994. Broadly speaking, human security means “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want” in seven categories (economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, political security [UNDP 1994]).

discussion part of this dissertation, which further details how Japanese parliamentarians promote and are affected by norms in their activity at ASEP.

Diet of Japan in international relations and foreign policy

Next, the context in which Japan's foreign policy is conducted is introduced from the point of view of the formal and informal processes existing, taking the role of the National Diet in consideration. In addition, the Diet's international relations will be also introduced.

Japan is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government. The National Diet (*Kokkai*) is bicameral, comprising the more powerful Lower House (called the House of Representatives, *Shūgiin*, 465 seats) and the Upper House (called the House of Councillors, *Sangiin*, 242 seats). The National Diet has generally not been considered a powerful player in Japanese politics for many reasons: 1) the traditionally powerful role of the bureaucracy, 2) the long majority rule of the Liberal Democratic Party in the Diet (served as single government party during 1955–1993 and with coalition parties during 1994–2009 and 2012–), and finally, 3) the weakness of the Diet institutions (see Baerwald 1974; Pempel 1974; Neary 2004). Therefore, it has been suggested that the Diet is unable to exercise the central role that the Constitution actually endows it: “The Diet shall be the highest organ of state power, and shall be the sole law-making organ of the State.” This is not the full picture of the Diet, however; more recent research shows that the National Diet is more than just a ceremonial institution of the political system of Japan; instead, it is an important political arena in which political groups from the ruling party, its factions, and the opposition parties interact with each other and influence the government's policymaking (Richardson 1997, 127–151).

Richardson (1997, 127–151) calls the National Diet of Japan a “moderately activist parliament” that comes close to the deliberative or law-influencing legislatures of Britain and France. The Diet mainly processes bills introduced by the Cabinet and the bureaucracy, but it has been considered more activist than some other similar institutions: compared to the 97% success rate of government bills in the British parliament and the 82% in France, the success rate is lower in Japan. Even in the 1980s, the heyday of the LDP, the success rate was only 74%. This means that many of the Cabinet bills are amended, postponed, or sometimes even abandoned, often with the help of member-initiated counter bills coming from the opposition. Much of the Diet's power lies in its procedural tactics. Diet committees manage the progress of the legislation, and as the sessions tend to be short, the timing and duration of the legislative process become important. Informal intraparty and interparty processes are a significant part of the Diet's power. Fukumoto (2000) notes

that the opposition parties, which are excluded from behind-the-scenes preparations, can and do actually influence important issues in the Diet by withholding deliberation and delaying the process of the bill through the Diet, thus forcing the ruling party or party coalition to compromise. Conversely, for various reasons, the LDP has had to be ready to compromise with the opposition in order to stay in power (Noble 2011, 250). Still, Diet members have limited resources in terms of staff to work on policy and legislation initiatives (Kingston 2011, 97).

Japan's foreign policy is managed by its Cabinet, according to its 1947 constitution (Article 73). As head of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister represents the country in international summits and makes decisions about major foreign policy issues. Although the Prime Minister nominally has the leading role in foreign policy, the role of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and the Cabinet Secretariat were strengthened after the administrative reforms of the late 1990s. Koizumi Junichirō was the first prime minister to utilize the new setting, and he managed to adopt a more proactive top-down policymaking role (Shinoda 2007). Current Prime Minister Abe Shinzō has also exercised a strong approach in foreign policy to some extent (Pugliese 2017).

The Minister of Foreign Affairs controls the day-to-day running of foreign policy. The Cabinet and Prime Minister are subject to the National Diet of Japan's oversight, and the Prime Minister is obliged to report to the Diet on foreign relations (Article 72). The Diet indirectly engages in making and implementing foreign policy; it deliberates foreign policy-related bills and budgets, approves treaties, can submit questions to the government, and adopt resolutions. Both Houses of the Diet have their own standing committees on foreign affairs, which pre-examine foreign policy-related bills and treaties before the decision-making plenary sitting. The committees can discuss, arrange open hearings, invite experts, interested parties, or government officers to report, and pose questions to a minister, senior deputy minister, or a parliamentary secretary. The committees can also submit bills of their own related to foreign affairs. Diet members may also be included in intergovernmental meetings if decided upon by the government (IPU Parline Japan 2015ab).

Foreign policy planning occurs within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the intraparty bodies of the ruling party (the most important being the LDP's Policy Affairs Research Council and the General Council) and, increasingly, the Prime Minister's Office. The main responsibility has been with the MOFA in the postwar period because Cabinets were reshuffled sometimes even yearly, and inexperienced politicians have often been put in charge of ministries that made them dependent on the expertise of the powerful civil servants, which made it difficult for politicians to really impact the policymaking of their ministry. Until the early 2000s, the actual

scrutiny and coordination of policy initiatives were conducted by the ministries' top bureaucrats before the Cabinet meetings, and the Cabinet took the decision as advised by the ministries' civil servants (Takamine 2015; Hook et al., 2012; Shinoda 2007). Takamine (2015) illustrates how the MOFA gradually started to lose some of its postwar foreign policy domination to the LDP in the 1980s and 1990s, and the wider public became more interested in issues related to foreign policy and official development assistance, partly due to the shock caused by the Tiananmen protests in China in 1989.

When a bill comes to the Diet committees, which include the opposition politicians, it has already been cleared by the ruling party/parties in a way that leaves them less room for influence (Inoguchi 2008, 126). As long as the conservative LDP was in the ruling position, the rather disunited opposition parties could not conduct any serious debate or challenges to the foreign policy (van Wolferen 1989, 31; Noble 2011, 250). The LDP has also had to take its ideas to the coalition partners for approval since losing power in 1993, making the decision-making process somewhat more pluralistic (Shinoda 2007). Finally, the nature of the LDP as a "catch-all" party means that while the main overall foreign policy line has highlighted the importance of a bilateral relationship with the US, there has also been the occasional heated internal debate on different views of Japan's foreign policy approach (Hook et al., 2012, 52–52). Despite the internal debate and chances for intraparty opposition against the prime minister and the cabinet, party discipline in Japan is strict when it comes to voting in the Diet, and Diet members rarely vote against their own party (Curtis 2004).

Cooney (2007, 181–183) argues that the Diet has been increasing its foreign policy role at the expense of the MOFA and that the younger Diet members' awareness, interest, and capability in foreign policy have especially increased. When the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) seized power in 2009, it rallied to make politicians more responsible for policymaking and tried to issue several reforms aimed at reducing the bureaucrats' role in the decision-making process (Noble 2011, 257–258; Hook et al., 2012, 49).

The Diet conducts its own international relations in addition to the previously explained channel that allows the National Diet to influence the domestic foreign policy process. The Diet has various bilateral dialogues and friendship groups with other countries' parliaments. It participates in various international parliamentary institutions besides ASEP (*kokusai giin kaigi*): the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, member 1908–1939, 1952–present day), the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organisation (since 1999), the Parliamentary Meeting on the Occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (since 2009), the annual dialogues

between the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (since 1974), the G20 Speakers' Consultations, etc. (Sangiin 2015). The National Diet also participates in parliamentary dialogues in Asia. Many such dialogues have started quickly, right after the initiation of official governmental relations. For example, a parliamentary dialogue with the Southeast Asian countries started in 1979, after the official Japan-ASEAN relations were formed in 1977. Similarly, Japan's proposal to start the Asian Parliamentary Partnership Forum (APPF) in 1991 came soon after APEC³⁶ had taken off in 1989. Dialogue with South Korea was already informally started in 1968, briefly after the normalization of relations (1965). Fujikawa (1999) has noted that as the international community was demanding a stronger international contribution from the government of Japan, parliamentarians also needed to be more proactive through the international parliamentary institutions. Tosawa (2002, 48) has researched Japan-EU bilateral parliamentary relations and has noted that the countries are compatible partners because both have a strong role in trade but a weaker role in international security issues.

Individual Diet members are involved in various informal diplomatic relations with politicians and parties from other countries, and parliamentary diplomacy (*giin gaikō*) has been actively conducted, especially vis-à-vis Japan's neighboring countries. This kind of activity has had a prominent role at times when Japanese diplomacy with its neighbors has been at a crossroads (see Niwa 2010, 2008; Deans 2001). These groups have provided "pipes" of communication that have allowed Japan to continue active, private, economic relations with Taiwan, despite the government's official commitment to the One China policy (Deans 2001, 152, 159). Deans also notes that the division between "public" and "private" has a different and more complex and fluid understanding in Japan than in the West, which allows issues to be simultaneously handled through informal and formal politics. Bang (2017, 285) has even argued in a recent study that if Japanese parliamentarians are sometimes almost *de facto* part-time diplomats as he sees them, they should receive training for it. This idea, which sounds useful from the viewpoint of utilizing parliamentarians for diplomatic purposes, does challenge the idea of parliamentary independence from the government and compromises what Stavridis (2006, 8) argues to be the value of parliamentary diplomacy—its distinctiveness from governmental diplomacy. Bang (2017, 280) is, however, concerned that the Japanese-

³⁶ The APPF has considered itself to be the legislative branch of APEC, although the two institutions have no official ties (APPF 2018).

Korean parliamentary dialogue should not be overwhelmed by intergovernmental politics.

2.4 IPIs and the democratic deficit in global governance - accountability and participation?

This sub-chapter provides the necessary conceptual and theoretical basis for the analysis on ASEP's third function as a potential provider of participation and accountability. First, the concept of a democratic deficit in global governance will be discussed, and the roles of parliaments in diminishing the problem will be debated. Finally, the more specific concepts of participation and accountability will be presented, and the existing literature on ASEM's democratic challenges will be introduced.

2.4.1 What is the democratic deficit?

Governance beyond the state level has changed dramatically in recent decades. Traditional international governance, in which nation-states interact in intergovernmental organizations, has become challenged by a much broader web of interactions called global governance. Various non-state international and transnational actors and networks of actors are increasingly joining the many agenda-, norm-, and rule-setting processes occurring at multiple levels (Brühl and Rittberger 2001, 2; Armstrong and Gilson 2011, 2). Global governance as a term is difficult to define, and no single definition³⁷ is available. Karns and Mingst 2010, 5-21) see that it comprises formal and informal international structures and mechanisms (such as intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations), international rules, laws, and agreements (on issues such as human rights, trade, arms control), norms (such as following ratified treaties in practice), regimes (such as nuclear weapons proliferation), *ad hoc* groups and arrangements (G7/8/20), and private and public-private governance (e.g., international accounting standards). The actors within these governance schemes include states, subnational and local

³⁷ A classic but still much-used definition was made by the Commission on Global Governance in 1995: "Governance is the sum of many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest" (The Commission on Global Governance 1995).

jurisdictions, transnational and transgovernmental networks, international organizations, NGOs, experts and epistemic communities, and multistakeholder actors and multinational corporations. This dissertation uses the term global governance institutions to refer to the various actors (as just described) involved in activities with global reach.³⁸

The growing weight of global governance has prompted increasing debate about whether global governance and democracy are compatible and whether the same mechanisms that are used at the state level and below to oversee those in power is possible and/or desired. More and more issues are discussed and decided far from the citizens and national parliaments within global governance. Many of these institutions are regarded as so powerful that small member states may have little leverage to look after their citizens' interests in them. Furthermore, only a handful of states comprise many key institutions that hold influential roles, such as G7/8 (Scholte 2011a, 2–3).

The highly visible and vocal series of transnational public protests against international organizations, such as the World Bank in the late 20th century, have demonstrated that the organizations were not responding to public concern over these institutions' accountability (Fox 2003). Representing a parliamentary view, the IPU also stated in 1997 that “democracy must also be recognized as an international principle, applicable to international organizations and to states in their international relations” and that “the principles of democracy must be applied to the international management of issues of global interest [...]” The Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations recommended similar ideas in 2004 (United Nations 2004, 8–9). Many international organizations, such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), have built channels for people's involvement (see Patomäki and Teivainen 2003). The UN grants consultative status for NGOs (United Nations 2018). In informal frameworks, which have become increasingly lucrative for big actors (e.g. the US) (Creutz 2017), building such channels of influence is even more difficult, as will be shown in this research.

While many note that global governance lacks accountability mechanisms similar to national and local governments' (Scholte 2011a; Grant and Keohane 2005), there are different views regarding whether democratic norms and state-level mechanisms of participation and accountability should be discussed beyond the state level. Some researchers consider the idea of expanding democracy to international organizations difficult, as there no demos beyond the state level (Dahl 1999). Many,

³⁸ The term is also used by Scholte (2011a).

however, have recognized that global governance, in both its entirety as well as many of its individual parts (organizations, networks, dialogue forums, NGOs, businesses), suffers from a democratic deficit (e.g., Bexell et al., 2010, 85–86). While the democratic deficit can be understood in various ways, such as how an organization may be undemocratically run from within, this dissertation focuses on it as how an organization is run vis-à-vis the public (Charnovitz 2003, 48–50). Marchetti (2012, 30) defines the democratic deficit as how far the citizens are from the international organization. When they are far, people have little capacity to demand accountability from a distant actor who still might have a profound effect on their daily lives.

The views on how to diminish the democratic deficit are diverse. The mainstream view highlights the role of states in addressing accountability. This approach emphasizes better transparency and scrutiny, first at the national level to allow citizens to oversee their governments' foreign policy action, then at the international level by integrating civil society actors into international organizations to allow scrutiny and the flow of information, and finally through institutional reforms by the international organizations (McGrew 2002, 158–61, paraphrased in Habegger 2010, 189; Väyrynen 2005, 185). Furthermore, the broader participation of civil society is seen as providing the democratization of global governance, as civil society involvement has the potential to give a voice to different stakeholders who can distribute information and education, generate public debate, and increase organizational transparency (Scholte 2011a, 7; Karns and Mingst 2010, 250–251; Tallberg and Uhlin 2011, 213). The supporters of cosmopolitan democracy hold another kind of vision. They support the building of a completely new kind of system of global democracy altogether and a democratization of all governance at all levels (McGrew 2002, paraphrased in Habegger 2010, 198).

Returning to the mainstream view discussed above, which recognizes the democratic deficit and considers wider civil society participation as a means of enhancing the accountability of global governance institutions, Charnovitz (2006, 366–367) notes that “it is the consultation itself that makes the contribution, not the quantity of NGO support obtained”; that is, the interaction needs to be real, not just a decorative or rhetorical exercise if it is going to enhance the legitimacy of the forum. Sometimes civil society actors may choose not to participate but instead, they hold their own parallel meetings besides intergovernmental summits. Gaining access to decision-making fora and effectively influencing policymaking is difficult, yet staying outside can also have its advantages. It may be easier to raise publicity for issues outside the government's agenda in one's own forum, and it may be easier for smaller NGOs to use their voices because they might not gain access to the

intergovernmental fora alone; finally, actors can avoid the danger of being co-opted by governmental action (Armstrong and Gilson 2011, 7).

Furthermore, it has been noted that the broader civil society involvement in international/global organizations is not without problems because NGOs have their own challenges with accountability, representation, and transparency (Scholte 2011a, 7; Karns and Mingst 2010, 250–251). Scholte (2011a, 7) notes that while a wider involvement of actors (he focuses on civil society) has the potential to improve accountability of global governance, the matter is not that simple. Consultations can become rituals with little actual policy change, or focus might be given to proportionally small matters or actors.

This dissertation will focus on accountability and participation because, as noted above, they are considered the key issues within the democratic deficit debate. Before discussing these in more detail, the debate will be briefly presented in the Asian, ASEM, and parliamentary contexts.

2.4.2 Democratic deficit debate in Asia

The idea of democratic deficit and the democratization of international organizations and institutions rests on traditionally Western norms of democratic governance, yet demands for more democratic governance beyond the state level have also occurred, for example, in Southeast Asia around the ASEAN framework. Acharya (2003, 375–382) notes how the democratization processes in Southeast Asia (the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, and Indonesia) in the 1980s and 1990s created more pressure from the region’s civil society actors as well as international actors on the democratization of regional processes and the development of “more open and rules-based regional institutions.” This has slowly resulted in what he calls “participatory regionalism”³⁹ in Southeast Asia. Acharya (2011) continues that developments related to civil society participation vis-à-vis the ASEAN remain slow and results are “elusive.” The ASEAN People’s Assembly (APA) was active in 2000–2009, bringing together civil society groups and think tanks (government-backed), yet its role in the ASEAN was minimal.⁴⁰ The ASEAN Civil Society Conference has

³⁹ The concept comprises two elements: first, a more relaxed attitude by governments toward the principle of noninterference in domestic issues and a more open and broad discussion and decision-making regarding regional issues; second, a deeper cooperation of state-led regionalism and the emerging regional civil society (Acharya 2003, 381).

⁴⁰ Acharya (2011) points out that the development of more participatory regionalism in Southeast Asia is challenged by the following factors: democratization in Southeast Asia is volatile, civil society actors

convened since 2005, but also with little real influence toward the ASEAN (Gerard 2013). Gilson (2011c, 135) notes that many states and regional groups (ASEAN), however, are increasingly identifying a bigger role for the non-governmental sector and better inclusion of NGOs in policymaking and implementation. The other Asian regional forum, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC⁴¹), is a much looser and less active regional actor than the ASEAN. SAARC has been criticized by civil society groups as inaccessible to people,⁴² and NGOs have established their own parallel pressure group called “People’s SAARC” (Wolf and Casaca 2014, 180–181).

No similar established regional cooperation framework such as the ASEAN exists for East Asia. Cooperation has mostly occurred through the ASEAN+3⁴³ meetings or the somewhat irregular trilateral summits (China, Japan, and South Korea) since the 2000s. Therefore, the more general attitudes in East Asia toward the broader civil society participation within the state-society relationship will be introduced here. As for Japan, the academic community largely considers Japanese civil society to be apolitical. The national not-for-profit organizations mostly work at the grassroots level under strong government shaping (Pekkanen 2006; Ogawa 2009). However, largely due to international pressure, the government has taken a more welcoming approach to a broader civil society participation in international developmental projects since the early 1990s (Reimann 2003, 298–316). The civil society scene is more politicized in contemporary South Korea. Social movements have shown themselves to exert influence on the government and to challenge it on a variety of issues (Hong 2011; Koo 2011). The Chinese government’s view is that what they call “societal organizations” should be working with the state, not against it, and the two should aim for positive interaction. Civic action is regarded as both useful and threatening by the government, which limits its contributions mostly to non-political and less threatening areas (Chen 2012, 30–39, 88). Thus, the relations of many Asian NGOs with their governments may also bring forward issues concerning representation and accountability, as many NGOs might, in fact, be closely connected to the government (Kim 2004, paraphrased in Gilson 2011a, 222; Alagappa 2004).

mainly remain national, the ASEAN’s recent institution building is reinforcing the principle of sovereignty, and finally, China’s strengthening role in Asian regionalism creates uncertainty (cited with permission from the author, January 18, 2017).

⁴¹ SAARC was established in 1985. Members are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

⁴² Dawn (28.7.2007). “Civil society groups seek observer status: SAARC meetings.”

⁴³ ASEAN+3 brings together the ASEAN countries and China, Japan, and South Korea.

2.4.3 ASEM's democratic deficit

The debate about the democratic deficit of global governance structures concerns not only international organizations but also the less institutionalized dialogue process such as the ASEM. This is because, despite its informal characteristics, ASEM has a global reach through its wide membership and broad agenda and can perform significant functions even if formal decisions are not made at ASEM. Gilson (2011b, 211) notes that ASEM's wide range of dialogues and activities on a variety of globally relevant topics (arms control, development, health, food, environment and human rights, and trade and investments) make it more than just a talking shop but rather "a forum in which decisions are formulated". ASEM has been characterized as providing functions with global significance in terms of identifying issues for the global agenda, facilitating decision-making, and shaping international norms and global standards. Dent (2003, 229–230) considers ASEM to have potential "multilateral utility," meaning that it can provide support and contribute to the stability of the global system and global multilateral institutions. Gilson (2002, 100) notes that ASEM provides a "minilateral function," one that allows smaller groups to cooperate on issues within the framework of multilateral institutions. Finally, Gaens (2015a, 9–10) notes that ASEM contributes to global governance by "acting as a political catalyst" that assists cooperation at other levels.

ASEM has been criticized for having failed to effectively influence the global agenda (Dent 2003, 235), yet its steadily increasing membership shows that it has remained relevant (Gaens 2015b, 66).

A democratic deficit that is possibly even bigger than in many other intergovernmental institutions has been identified in ASEM. This is mostly because of ASEM's informal nature (Gilson 2011a, 211; Gaens and Jokela 2012, 153). Gilson (2011a, 219) notes that while "the rhetorical need to recognize and consult with civil society...has become a *sine qua non* of global governance proceedings," the structural challenges complicating their actual involvement remain noteworthy. These challenges, such as the lack of both formal communication channels and of the systematic inclusion of parallel fora to agenda-planning and the summits, keep the people excluded from the process. As Robles (2007, 35) notes, those affected by the ASEM process are largely excluded from it.

In this dissertation, the focus will be on ASEM's democratic deficit from the viewpoint of the larger parallel stakeholder dialogues, especially the parliamentary forum. ASEM, however, is home to an array of smaller thematic dialogues and initiatives that also engage various stakeholders in the Asia-Europe dialogue, ranging from school children to academics, bureaucrats, activists, and artists often through

the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). These dialogues, however, provide only an indirect input to the ASEM summits compared to the parallel dialogues that aim to influence the ASEM leaders directly.⁴⁴ Furthermore, a study of those dialogues is less fruitful from the parliamentarians' point of view because their participation in the dialogues is next to zero⁴⁵, making ASEP the foremost channel for bringing the legislators' voices into the process.

2.4.4 Democratic deficit and IPIs

The debate on decreasing the democratic deficit concentrates mostly on the distance from people and civil society actors to international and global instances, yet parliaments are often similarly excluded, apart from a few previously discussed IPIs that are tightly connected to their parent international organization. Rittberger notes that governments can “insulate themselves” from the control of the national parliaments, as policymaking in international organizations is distanced from the parliaments. When policies made by international organizations come to the parliaments, they have fewer possibilities left to influence (Rittberger 2005 quoted in Rittberger and Zangl 2006, 83).

The World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments declared in 2000 that national parliaments should be more involved in the international debate because it is ultimately they who convert the global agenda into domestic law (IPU 2005, 2). The Inter-Parliamentary Union (2006) sees that IPIs help to overcome the democratic deficit by combining stronger parliamentary oversight at the national level with participation in existing international parliamentary organizations and assemblies at the international level. A panel of eminent persons led by the former president of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, also advised the United Nations on civil society relations in 2004 in the following manner: While the substance of politics has quickly globalized, the process of politics is still national in essence because its key elements—elections, parliaments, and political parties—mainly function at the national level and only have a limited bearing on global governance (United Nations 2004).

⁴⁴ Dialogues include the Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights, Asia-Europe Environment Forum, Asia-Europe Energy Policy Forum, ASEF Journalists' Seminar, ASEF Public Health Network, ASEF Classroom Network, ASEF Cultural Policy Dialogue, ASEF Higher Education Workshops, ASEF Unplugged – Conversations on the Arts in Asia and Europe, etc. (ASEF 2018).

⁴⁵ Based on a review of recent key ASEF-organised seminars conducted by the author on the ASEF website in 2018.

Habegger (2010, 199–200) argues that IPIs can open up political processes that often are conducted behind “closed doors.” They can create dialogue and enhance transparency between government representatives and parliamentarians through consultations, provided that such exist between the IPI and the international organization. Habegger (2010, 191) adds that IPIs need to have institutional links to the intergovernmental organization for flow of information, consultation, and involvement of parliamentarians in decision-making in order to contribute toward a better democratic governance. However, very few IPIs fulfill such requirements. As noted, many of the parliamentary networks can only act through lobbying in a manner very similar to NGOs (Cofelice 2012, 15). Also, ASEP has a very loose connection to ASEM, and its message is mainly transmitted through the ASEP Declaration issued at the end of each meeting, while the ASEP representative is nowadays invited to the ASEM summit to convey the message of the parliamentarians, it is difficult to study the effectiveness of this interaction.

Furthermore, some IPIs are more critical toward intergovernmental institutions, while others have taken a less critical and more supportive role (see, for example, the earlier discussion on AIPA). However, it has been noted that these tendencies can change over time, and an IPI can develop a more critical position (Rüland 2013; Costa, Stavridis and Dri 2013b, 240).

2.4.5 Accountability and participation beyond national level

The democratic deficit concept is connected to the development of democratic norms, which are assuming new forms due to the increasing weight of global governance (see Castiglione 2007). Karns and Mingst (2010, 31) note that accountability is essentially about account-giving: “reporting, measuring, justifying, and explaining actions.” Or, as Scholte (2011a, 16) puts it, accountability comprises “processes whereby an actor answers for its conduct to whom it affects.” Bovens (2008, 14, paraphrased in Karns and Mingst 2010, 32) notes that accountability gives legitimacy to public officials and public organizations and bridges the gap between those who govern and those who are governed.

Accountability at international and global levels has been handled through internal accountability mechanisms of international organizations (the organization is accountable to the member governments) (Keohane 2006, 79; Grant and Keohane 2005, 29). However, this kind of accountability has been seen as remote to citizens who may be affected by the decision-making at this level (Bexell, Tallberg and Uhlin 2010, 88). Thus, an increased demand exists for more effective accountability, which would be exercised by different and more timely checks and balances (instead of after

the fact) through transparency, better control and input by the citizens, and finally, stricter international and global standards. The concept of accountability, from more traditionally vertical to horizontal, is expanding, and it encompasses a much wider group of actors (such as NGOs) as providers of checks and balances within its sphere (Castiglione 2007).

As a result of this debate, international organizations are increasingly involved in two kinds of accountability: accountability through delegation and accountability through participation; that is, internal and external accountability. The first is accountability that occurs after the fact, holding the power yielders accountable afterward, and it refers to the previously discussed more traditional understanding of international organizations' accountability. The latter is more preventive, as interaction between those holding power and those affected by their decisions already occurs at the time decisions are made through direct participation. International organizations have mainly used accountability through delegation. For example, World Bank officials are accountable to member governments; however, this internal accountability can be considered weak and insufficient because the organizations may still lack external accountability to those affected by their actions (Keohane 2006, 79; Grant and Keohane 2005, 31; Scholte 2011b). It is mainly external accountability that creates concern for the democratic deficit and the distance between ordinary citizens and the executives in international organizations. Therefore, for example, the World Bank also conducts consultations and has contact with NGOs and parliamentarians to enhance its external accountability more directly with those influenced by its decisions. That is, external accountability can be enhanced through more open information sharing with the wider public, adherence to and oversight over commonly agreed standards, and finally, different sanction mechanisms, which are the most difficult area to achieve at a global level (Keohane 2006; Grant and Keohane 2005). ASEM is internally accountable through the delegation of power in each member government from this perspective. However, ASEM's external accountability remains low because of the lack of connection with those who may be affected by its policy efforts discussed at ASEM.

Gilson (2011a) has studied ASEM's accountability problems with the help of Scholte's (2011b, 17–18) definition of the accountability of global governance institutions: such institutions can “be accountable to the extent that it is transparent to those affected, consults those affected, reports to those affected and provides redress to those who are adversely affected.” In other words, Scholte says that it comprises transparency, consultation, evaluation, and correction. Gilson (2011a, 211), who focuses mainly on the ASEM–civil society dialogue, notes that ASEM faces challenges in all four areas of accountability and argues that as it participates in global

governance in an informal, non-binding fashion, it becomes even more difficult to recognize “who is accountable to whom, for what and how?” Gilson (2011a, 212–222) further notes that, in terms of transparency, ASEM permanently suffers from low public visibility and operates mostly “behind closed doors.” Public consultation also remains limited, as many of those who are impacted by the ASEM agenda cannot directly participate in the preparation, execution, and follow-up to the Summit meetings. The business community (through the AEBF) and the trade union (ASEM Trade Union Forum) have established access to the process, but civil society has not. Furthermore, Gilson shortly notes that public evaluation by the parliaments remains weak, as national parliaments do not perform follow-up on ASEM. However, the civil society community has placed pressure on ASEM through AEPF. Finally, for the last dimension, which is correction, Gilson notes that, due to ASEM’s special character, national governments would not be sanctioned because of their ASEM activity or inactivity and that the process is mostly managed by unelected national civil servants. However, she discusses the many issues in which the AEPF and the Asia-Europe trade unions have demanded the correction of ASEM’s neo-liberal agenda, and sees that these actors have the potential to influence the ASEM agenda by raising issues, meeting with ASEM related politicians etc., despite lacking any formal power. Gilson mentions the EP’s limited role in the process and briefly considers the Asia-Europe parliamentary dialogue, but her analysis focuses on the civil society actors’ efforts to increase ASEM’s accountability.

While Gilson’s (2011a) evaluation of ASEM’s accountability provides an interesting framework, it is somewhat too detailed for the study of such an informal process as ASEM. The earlier mentioned concepts of external and internal accountability provide a clearer starting point on which to build by reflecting on Gilson’s findings in the discussion of this thesis. Others besides Gilson have also commented on ASEM’s accountability issues. Gaens and Jokela (2012, 153) note that ASEM’s closed-door summit meetings decrease its transparency and accountability. Rüländ already warned in 2001 (28) that ASEM dialogues receive very little feedback from the grass roots represented by national parliaments or civil society; that, in turn, undermines the legitimacy of its fora. Articles 1 and 2 detail the difficult history of ASEM’s recognition of civil society and parliaments.

As noted earlier, there is a wide understanding that better participation of various stakeholders to the international and global governance institutions are seen as a key way of diminishing the democratic deficit and of increasing the accountability of such institutions (McGrew 2002, 158–61, paraphrased in Habegger 2010, 189; Väyrynen 2005, 185; Scholte 2011a, 7; Karns and Mingst 2010, 250–251; Tallberg and Uhlin 2011, 213). Participation and accountability have been seen as

interlinked concepts as better participation strengthens accountability (Bexell, Tallberg and Uhlin 2010; Grant and Keohane 2005).

Who, then, gets to participate and how? In electoral representative democracies (the most common form of contemporary democracies), participation is indirect and occurs through the delegation of power to the elected members of parliament. Moving up beyond the domestic level, the right to participate in international organizations is again handled through delegation and indirect representation. A seat at the meetings is reserved for the representatives of states tasked with handling international relations with the mandate granted to them through the national system of delegating power. In democratic states, it is clearly stated who has the right to participate in decision-making over common issues, what the procedures for participation are (e.g., elections), and who can hold those with power and how (see e.g. Tallberg and Uhlin 2012)

This is not the case beyond the state level because there are no clearly defined public or demos currently available, and it is difficult to define who the affected persons are. Furthermore, there are no global procedures or clear sets of standards through which those with power could be held accountable (Grant and Keohane 2005, 33–34; Scholte 2011b).

This long line of delegation and indirect representation of citizens at the international level has been questioned, as discussed earlier, as the impact of international institutions on citizens has increased, with more and more issues being decided jointly beyond the national level (Bexell, Tallberg and Uhlin 2010, 86). Arguments of a participatory gap, which refers to the broader public being left outside the dialogue and decision-making, have emerged (Rainicke and Deng 2000, paraphrased in Brühl and Rittberger 2001, 23). This gap could be at least narrowed by the representation of global civil society in international organizations (Brühl and Rittberger 2001, 35). While parliamentarians mandate as representatives of the people is strong, it becomes thinner at the international level, apart from a few special parliaments such as the EP. Therefore in this dissertation, a parallel line will be drawn between the participation of civil society organizations and parliaments. Civil society organizations act outside the government, and international parliamentary institutions, while part of the government, are far less connected to the international or global agenda and decision-making. This dissertation studies parliamentary participation from the outset, that a broader participation of stakeholders can be seen as a democratizing element as it leads to wider involvement and transparency (Scholte 2011a, 7; Karns and Mingst 2010, 250–251; Tallberg and Uhlin 2011, 213). Furthermore, the involvement of parliamentary institutions will be considered in this work, in the same way as O'Brien considers civil society actors' international

involvement, that is, as an expansion of the range of participation and as a complementary channel for influence (O'Brien 2000, quoted in Bexell et al. 2010, 86).

For ASEM, the participation of civil society or parliaments has been problematic since the beginning. Article 2 in this dissertation discusses in more detail how ASEM was originally regarded as a high-level meeting and was very slow to open up to civil society, trade unions, and parliamentary dialogues (see also Yeo 2003, 3; Robles 2007, 35). The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF, established in 1996) was considered sufficient to link the high-level process with the grassroots. The parallel dialogues, however, have slowly entered the ASEM process as the accompanying articles showcase. Robles (2007, 35) sees that, despite European rhetorical support for better civil society inclusion (the EU Commission's recommendations to include civil society and social issues in the process), European partners have actually been reluctant to include the AEPF because of its critical stance toward the EU's economic agenda. Furthermore, while the civil society forum's political agenda on human rights, rule of law, and democracy are consistent with the EU's, it does conflict with many of the Asian countries' views. According to Robles (2007, 35), this dual problem has prevented the AEPF from receiving a place in the process. On the other hand, AEPF has also wanted to avoid the danger of being suffocated by ASEM while ensuring that social issues are included in the agenda, even if from the outside (Bersick 2008, 250). Furthermore, AEPF's representativeness has been questioned, as it can be viewed a self-selected group of NGOs focusing on topics not necessarily shared by all actors in the field (Pelkmans and Hu 2014, 10).

This conceptual framework and the research conducted by the author will be synthesized in the analytical discussion presented in the discussion chapter. Next, the published articles with their main research contributions will be summarized.

3 Overview of the Included Articles

This chapter provides the overview and main findings of the three original research articles upon which this dissertation is based.

3.1 Article 1: Asia-Europe parliamentary dialogue – strong economics, strong politics but what value?

The purpose of this article in this dissertation is to outline the history of ASEP and to map and discuss the development of the ASEP dialogue by introducing the main topics and discussing the main characteristics of the dialogue and its challenges. This article is published as a book chapter in an edited volume, “China, East Asia and the European Union – Strong Economics, Weak Politics?”⁴⁶ The book’s aim was to analyze the traditional view regarding the EU’s one-sided interest toward Asia’s economic opportunities and its absence from the political challenges in the area, such as the regional territorial issues in the South China Sea and nuclear threats by North Korea, as well as the EU’s inability to secure a seat in the East Asia Summit (van der Harst and Halbertsma 2017, 2). The chapter presented here focuses on the viewpoint of the parliamentary dialogue by analyzing the evolution of the parliamentary dimension of the Asia-Europe dialogue from 1996 to the present day. The research is based on official ASEP declarations, ASEP meeting reports by the European Parliament, the Parliament of Finland and the Diet of Japan, along with expert interviews with three ASEM-/ASEP- related civil servants and one parliamentarian from Finland. ASEP is defined in the context of international parliamentary institutions. The main focus of the article is to analyze the evolution of the ASEP dialogue. Finally, the value of the dialogue is evaluated from the viewpoint of the individual participants, parliaments, and the ASEM process in general.

Four key themes are identified from the analysis of the ASEP dialogue. First, the partners initially planned to focus mostly on economic dialogue, but politics and even security issues were actually raised from early on. Second, since 2006, the

⁴⁶ Published by Brill and edited by Jan van der Harst and Tjalling Halbertsma 2017

parliamentarians' focus has shifted toward broad global challenges that also include political dimensions. This reflects a sharpening of the ASEP agenda. Discussing global issues such as climate change or food security is increasingly relevant for parliamentarians as these issues eventually appear in one format or another in the domestic agenda/policymaking. It is noted that, in the Asia-Europe dialogue, the parliamentarians' political dialogue is not weak, but has been entwined in the dialogue since 1996. Third, the dialogue balances the interests of democratic and authoritarian countries. Issues related to human rights and democracy form an area where perspectives collide due to the vast diversity of the participating countries. This is often evident in the drafting sessions of the final declaration when texts relating to human rights, democracy, or good governance are discussed. Fourth, the interests of advanced and emerging or developing economies tend to clash when discussing world trade. This shows again in the drafting sessions, where the final declaration is formulated to satisfy all countries. These two factors, political and economic diversity, create a constant balancing act, which in turn also brings up sensitive issues to be discussed at ASEP.

This article argues that the ASEP dialogue has evolved from separate political, economic, cultural, and security topics to cover global challenges whose multifaceted natures are highly relevant to parliamentarians. Issues related to climate, environment, and nutrition touch the everyday lives of people and also appear in national parliaments' domestic policymaking. Parliamentarians tend to look at economic issues from a broad perspective and often link them with social aspects or global challenges such as sustainable development. It may also be noted that parliamentarians use ASEP as a platform to introduce issues that individual parliamentarians or countries see as important; hence, the ASEP meetings have an important information-sharing function that further reinforces the parliamentarians' ability to act internationally as well as nationally.

This article discusses whether ASEP as an IPI can stimulate the development of shared norms and values and argues that, while such a function exists, it is difficult to measure its success because only individual parliamentarians, who also change regularly, participate in ASEP meetings. However, it should be noted that drafting the final declaration supports the norm-setting function.

The article concludes that political dialogue is neither weak nor missing from the Asia-Europe dialogue at the parliamentary level, but the focus of the dialogue has changed to cover global challenges that also have meaning for parliamentarians in their domestic role. Yet, the quality and value of the dialogue are questioned, and it is argued that its main value currently lies in the parliamentary contacts, socialization, and norm-setting functions that ASEP provides for the participants.

The parliamentarians' dialogue brings much less value to the ASEM process due to the weak links between ASEP and ASEM. Finally, it is noted that it would be more beneficial for ASEM to include the parliamentarians who are already increasingly involved more effectively in the global debate in the ASEM process.

3.2 Article 2: ASEM and the people's involvement – a focus on the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP)

The purpose of the second article is to discuss ASEP from the point of view of the people's participation in ASEM. This is a book chapter written for the edited volume, "Interregional Relations and the Asia-Europe Meeting."⁴⁷ The book's aim is to review Asia-Europe interregional relations after the first 20 years to scrutinize the current situation and look to the future by suggesting possible new directions. This article builds on previous research and further develops many of the initial observations made on ASEP-ASEM relations and now looks more deeply into ASEP's role in ASEM's perceived democracy deficit, and it analyzes the different challenges and functions of ASEP in more detail.

This article assesses the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership from the following perspectives: its role/potential in the people's involvement within ASEM, its contacts with the ASEM summits, and its functions for national parliaments and parliamentarians. The article asks whether ASEP can provide a channel for the people's involvement in ASEP, whether the parliamentarians are influencing ASEM, and the current purpose of ASEP. Who benefits from the parliamentary dialogue and how?

The article begins by introducing ASEP and ASEM and follows with a discussion on the perceived democratic deficit of global governance institutions such as ASEM. Attention is given to accountability and participation as key elements for democratization beyond the state level. Parliamentary responses to global governance are discussed and the IPIs' role in reducing the democracy deficit is introduced. ASEM's challenges with accountability are studied by building on Gilson's work (2011a). Gilson concentrates more on the role of the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF); hence, the contribution of this article is an assessment of ASEP in this context. The argument is that ASEP is not completely outside the ASEM family, where Gilson places AEPF. ASEP is closer to ASEM than AEPF but not as well linked as the business community through the AEBF. This article argues that

⁴⁷ Published by Palgrave Macmillan and edited by Bart Gaens and Gauri Khandekar

ASEP, as a parliamentary forum representing national parliaments as part of the government, has thus been easier for the ASEM process to accept. The argument is based on the following observations: parliamentarians are not very critical about the shortcomings of ASEM. All ASEP meetings have been addressed since 2004 by high-level presentation/participation from the prime ministerial or ministerial level from the host country, while AEPF meetings in Asia have faced some serious organizational problems. Finally, ASEP was already invited to the ASEM summit in 2006, but AEPF was not invited until 2014. ASEP is less controversial than AEPF in terms of participation. As elected representatives of the people, parliamentarians can, to some extent, be seen as representatives of the people, even when the strength of their mandate at the international level is thin. Many of the ASEP delegates are not elected through democratic elections, and ASEP is not a representative parliamentary body as such. They are still considered representatives of their parliaments and their countries at ASEP, although without any official mandate.

The analysis then moves on to ASEP's internal challenges. Here, several challenges are identified, including varying ambition levels to develop the process itself or to enhance participation and accountability in ASEM, which is mainly due to the diversity of political systems among its partners. It is noted that the same diversity also provides possibilities for dialogue, even on sensitive issues, to promote the democratic values that many partner countries find important, and it even has the potential for norm shaping. The article argues that ASEP suffers from a vicious circle of discontinuity, low priority, visibility, and lack of internal coordination mechanisms. Some partners have tried to develop the internal coordination of the process, but due to the low level of overall ambition these attempts have failed so far.

The article discusses ASEP's functions, from the perspective of vertical and horizontal. The former deals with the limited oversight and influence ASEP has vis-à-vis ASEM. The latter discusses how ASEP participation empowers parliamentarians and parliaments at the more horizontal level.

The article concludes with the thought that ASEP has provided a middle ground for the Asia-Europe dialogue between the intergovernmental, people-to-people, and NGO levels. ASEP, being less controversial and vocal, has been easier for the ASEM family to accept among its diverse group of ASEM partners. While ASEP has become more institutionalized and has managed to move closer to the ASEM process, there has been very little actual deepening of ASEP-ASEM relations, and ASEP is in danger of becoming a "decorative" IPI of ASEM instead of a "reactive,"—let alone a "proactive"—one. ASEP's main value still lies in the benefits it brings to the individual participants and parliaments due to these shortcomings. ASEP would, in principle, be equipped to reduce the democratic deficit of ASEM and increase its

accountability, as ASEP provides a direct link to the people of the ASEM countries through their elected representatives. ASEM's accountability could be enhanced through consultations with parliamentarians, who could also perform evaluations of ASEM processes. Deeper contacts could also help ASEM partners send more ASEP-related issues to the national debates of parliaments and thus strengthen ASEM's visibility and weight. ASEP and AEPF could complement each other in this way as they drive toward the same objective: better involvement of people and their views in the ASEM process.

3.3 Article 3: Japan in the Asia-Europe parliamentary dialogue: domestic actors on the international stage

The third article presents the basis of the case study of parliamentarians as international actors. This article was published in the *Asia-Europe Journal* (Springer) in 2017. Its focus is on Japan's participation in the process. Building on knowledge accumulated in the previous articles, this article now focuses on parliamentarians from a single member country. There are three main research questions: How are Japanese Diet members acting at the international level? Are they speaking for themselves or for Japan? How are the Diet members engaged in the process of norm promotion?

This article provides a short historical overview of Japan's participation in ASEP after providing overviews of IPIs, Japan's ASEM history, and the role of Japanese Diet members in national policymaking processes. Following is a detailed analysis of the Japanese Diet members' activities in ASEP from 1996 to 2016.

This article argues that Japanese Diet members promote norms at ASEP on three different levels. First, they promote norms that support Japan's interests in a manner that is rather consistent with those of Japan's official foreign policy actors', for example promoting Japan's interests in food security issues and having a tendency to multilateralize its bilateral issue with North Korea regarding the abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. Japanese Diet members aim to portray Japan as a responsible economic leader, especially for Asia, and have promoted the government's many proposals for regional cooperation there, again following Japan's foreign policy norms. Diet members' speeches also reflect the importance of both engaging China and containing it; that is, they are following Japanese foreign policy's key postwar norms. Furthermore, it is argued that the Diet members support Japan's normative power on issues related to climate change, sustainable development, and food security.

Second, Diet members promote their own personal or party agendas, which may challenge that of the government along with its norms. This shows that the parliamentarians are not merely mouthpieces of the government, but they bring variety and even discord to Japan's message. However, it is noted that going against the government line or exceeding its norms is not easy, and there were only few of such clear cases. Nevertheless, parliamentarians often raise their own projects, especially if they concern less sensitive issues.

Third, the Japanese Diet members promote norms of parliamentary empowerment and parliamentarians' participation in international affairs. These are norms that aim to enhance Diet members' ability to oversee the Asia-Europe agenda in Japan and promoting them can help to empower parliamentarians from other countries too; in their own way, they strengthen the currently weak evaluation of ASEM.

This article argues that while Japanese Diet members are exercising their freedom of speech at ASEP, they still mostly tend to promote Japan's interests, but the presence of opposition politicians adds some dissonance to Japan's message. Their actions, while demonstrating personal or party interests, still follow the governmental agenda and resemble the norms visible in Japan's governmental activity in global and Asia-Europe relations as identified in existing research. While promoting Japan's interests, the Diet members also support Japan's normative power and influence legislators from its key partner countries. Finally, it is noted that while parliamentarians may speak for themselves, they negotiate for Japan when the final declaration of the ASEP meetings is drafted.

4 Discussion on ASEP's Functions

ASEP has developed in 20 years' time from an informal, one-off meeting between a few European and Asian parliamentarians to a regular process with biennial meetings of around 90 parliamentarians, on average. The general view at the beginning of the Asia-Europe dialogue was that its strength was in its focus on economic issues, based on the fear that sensitive questions (such as human rights) would complicate the new relationship (Pelkmans 1997; Yeo 2003; O'Brien 2001). Nevertheless, ASEP meetings discussed international political and security issues and took note of human rights issues from the beginning, as presented in article 1. From 2006 onward, ASEP's agenda shifted its focus toward global challenges such as climate change, economic crises, food security, and sustainable development. These are all topics that have both global and local dimensions as well as important political, security, economic, and sociocultural linkages and are thus highly relevant for parliamentarians to discuss as national lawmakers.

ASEP has managed to stay interesting enough to attract a reasonable number of parliaments, on average over 60% of ASEM countries. Still, even the more active ones give little attention to ASEP on their websites, and ASEP has minimal visibility in the media, as noted in article 2. Furthermore, this dissertation shows that the process has internal challenges, meaning they arise from within ASEP's membership and institutional aspects, and external challenges, meaning those related to ASEP's relations with the ASEM process. ASEP parliaments represent the very ends of the political and economic spectrum, from the richest countries to the poorest and from the most stable democracies to some of the most restrictive regimes. The differences in terms of values and norms sometimes make finding common ground difficult for the members as noted in the accompanying articles. However, it is argued here that the members' political diversity also presents advantages as it exposes parliamentarians to new information and views, forces them to discuss difficult questions and provides possibilities for acquiring new understanding and insights as well norm diffusion, as discussed later in more detail.

Still, the partners' diversity affects ASEP's development. With such a varied group, countries are not likely to give leadership to one or a few countries as that could send the process in unwanted directions. This is evident from the inability to draft a common strategy for better internal coordination or a better role vis-à-vis ASEM, as noted in article 2. Therefore, ASEP still lacks coordination and continuity, which sent it into a vicious circle of discontinuity, low priority, and low visibility. The 2006 Rules of Procedure provided clarity on membership, meeting procedures, and the purpose of ASEP, but they failed to provide ASEP with tools to coordinate the process between meetings. Even after 20 years, the meeting still continues to more or less start anew each time; no coordination exists between meetings, nor is there a designated person or group to represent ASEP, facilitate dialogue with ASEM or with other parallel dialogues, or participate in the civil society consultations organized by ASEP between 2004 and 2010.⁴⁸ The fact that most parliamentarians only participate once at each meeting means that the experience and knowledge do not stay inside the ASEP process. This further amplifies discontinuity because it becomes difficult for the ASEP meetings to collectively follow up on previous meetings' discussions or on ASEM between meetings. This does not only hinder debate on the Asia-Europe agenda but also the building of momentum for institutional development within ASEP. Furthermore, ASEM's modest interest toward utilizing the input of ASEP and the other parallel dialogues in a more effective way has given the parliamentarians little incentive to develop the process further, as discussed in article 2. Thus, ASEP parliamentarians do not seem to consider ASEM and ASEP to be central enough to use their resources. This is also reflected in the small priority given to ASEP in terms of Internet visibility on parliamentary websites, fluctuating participation, and the low number of initiatives made to develop the process further. Still, it can be argued that even with these limitations, ASEP performs functions that provide value for the participating parliamentarians, parliaments, and the ASEM process. Next, the functions of ASEP will be analyzed in detail.

⁴⁸ Observation of the meeting preparation of ASEP8 in 2014 showed that preparations were made last minute. Similarly, parliamentary sources noted that preparations for ASEP11 in Brussels 2018 were similarly ad hoc and last minute.

4.1 ASEP as a forum for parliamentary dialogue and empowerment

After 20 years of operation, ASEP provides a meeting place and dialogue venue for parliamentarians to discuss global and Asia-Europe issues, very much along the lines of what was stated in the ASEP Rules of Procedure in 2006. Despite ASEP's shortcomings, this is important because this is the only place for Asian and European legislators to meet in this scope. Other international parliamentary institutions that bring together Asian and European parliamentarians are either bilateral between individual European and Asian countries, are conducted by the EP with individual Asian countries or regional actors (ASEAN), or they are much larger international meetings within the IPU or WTO, etc. For Asian and European parliaments, ASEP provides a place for interparliamentary debate where parliamentarians raise awareness on issues they deem important, for example, Finland raising the issue of having access to clean water at ASEP8 in Rome 2014 (participant observation).⁴⁹ ASEP participants are also exposed to different views on shared challenges, as in the case of world trade in which developing and developed countries hold different priorities, as discussed in article 1. Hearing different views may broaden their understanding, just as in other international parliamentary institutions (see Kiljunen 2006, 250; Cofelice 2012, 13; Slaughter 2004, 237). Sometimes the information can be quite new to the audience, as it reportedly was when Finland presented Arctic issues at ASEP7 in 2012 for the first time.⁵⁰ Another example of information sharing is the presentations of invited experts on climate change at ASEP4 (2006) and world economic governance structures at ASEP6 (2010). Thus, parliamentarians do not only become more aware of different views but also gain more knowledge. As identified in the accompanying articles, ASEP participants repeatedly talk about the importance of taking the Asia-Europe agenda to their home parliaments; ASEP provides them with a place to obtain information about the Asia-Europe agenda, the ASEM process, and the global agenda that they can use in their work at home. ASEP parliamentarians also call on each other to use their oversight role in their own government. This can better equip them to oversee issues related to global challenges, in line with views from the literature (Kiljunen 2006, 250; Habegger 2010, 197, 200; Cofelice 2012, 13).

⁴⁹ Providing access to clean water is one of Finland's key official development cooperation objectives, and Finland works with water issues in, e.g., Vietnam (The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2018).

⁵⁰ Interview with Finnish parliamentary civil servant (2013).

This dissertation argues that better oversight at home carries over, albeit from a distance, to ASEM as well. Parliamentarians who have participated in ASEP, can be expected to be more alert to ASEM and Asia-Europe related issues in general. This is important because ASEP's own resources to oversee ASEM remain limited due to the ad hoc nature of the meetings and the limited communication with ASEM, as noted in article 2.

Finally, as already noted in article 1, ASEP-meetings provide an important opportunity to carry out bilateral meetings between parliamentary delegations during lunch and coffee breaks. This is especially valuable for small countries, with limited resources, as they can meet with several parliaments during one meeting. Based on participant observation at ASEP8 in Rome 2014, the bilateral meetings served an important opportunity to strengthen existing relationships between parliaments through a face-to-face meeting or a chance to launch new relationships in an informal and practical way. In addition, based on the observation, that there were some empty seats during plenaries, it can be assumed that some meetings took place at the expense of the plenary participation.

Thus, ASEP as an IPI empowers parliamentarians to perform their evolving role in the domestic field, where they are increasingly faced with international matters. Participation in ASEP also empowers parliamentarians to assume their emerging roles as international actors, and allows them to gain more awareness, knowledge, networking possibilities, and chances to influence the international and global agenda. They become better equipped to work at the international level at other IPIs. This is important to all parliamentarians, who in general have more limited leverage on international dialogue and agenda-making, but it is especially beneficial for parliamentarians from countries where the role of the parliament is challenged or emerging. Enhancing the oversight role of parliaments is a uniting topic among parliamentarians, which e.g. China and Japan have taken up at ASEP (article 1 and article 3).

This empowerment of parliamentarians regarding their own personal capabilities and the capabilities of their legislatures brings us to the next function: ASEP as an organizational platform for the diffusion of norms. By raising the importance of parliamentary responsibilities such as oversight, parliamentarians are not only empowering themselves and their parliaments, but they become norm promoters for newer international parliamentary norms. These norms support international interparliamentary dialogue and participation in international and global governance with distinct parliamentary roles as representatives of people and overseers of governmental action. The next sub-chapter will discuss the diffusion of

the parliamentary norms as well as of other norms, some of which are more sensitive, for example, norms related to issues such as human rights, democracy, and media.

4.2 ASEP as an organizational platform for norm diffusion

Now, ASEP's function as an organizational platform for norm diffusion is discussed. While this function is not explicitly recognised in the ASEP Rules of Procedure, the objectives to encourage parliamentary exchanges and deepening understanding between Asian and Europe are broadly speaking also in the heart of norm diffusion: interacting, learning, debating and trying to influence others.

There is a complex norm diffusion process taking place at ASEP. In the plenaries, parliamentarians raise important agenda issues and share practices and ways of doing things. This is regarded here as verbal norm diffusion through argumentation, persuasion, and information sharing, in which all participants take part, each promoting various norms important to them, be they of world trade, responses to climate change, or developmental issues. The host especially can have an important role as the theme of the meeting is largely in the hands of the host. For example, as described in article 1, when Vietnam was hosting ASEP3 in 2004, the developing countries' views on world trade were highlighted, as Vietnam itself was preparing for its 2007 WTO membership at the time. This general norm diffusion will not be further elaborated here because a comparative study of different actors' interests, identities, and foreign policy ambitions is beyond the scope of this research. Instead, attention is given to two more narrow cases of norm diffusion: the general diffusion of parliamentary norms and the more specific normative power ambitions of the European Parliament. Finally, parliamentarians' behavior at ASEP is analyzed through the exploratory case study on the Japanese delegation in order to provide food for thought on further studies on parliamentarians engagement in norm promotion.

4.2.1 Diffusion of parliamentary norms

As discussed in the attached articles, one often repeated set of norms is the parliamentary norms. These include the more traditional ideas of parliamentary oversight, parliaments' legislative role at the domestic level, and a newer norm of parliamentary engagement and oversight at the international level. These issues are generally agreed upon by all participants. As shown in article 1, at ASEP7 in Vientiane, the parliamentarians collectively emphasized their own roles in overseeing their governments' fiscal policies and state budgets and at ASEP6 in 2010

(Brussels), a Chinese delegate urged the parliamentarians to use their oversight over their governments to adopt laws and measures to stabilize the financial markets. Similarly, at ASEP8, a Vietnamese representative noted how parliaments exercise the oversight of government policies (Shūgiin 2014). These examples show how norm diffusion processes at ASEP are direct and active and are performed through oral presentations in which the parliamentarians remind each other about the importance of parliamentary oversight and their own role in enforcing it. However, it can also be a more indirect process in which norms are diffused through the power of example when parliamentarians from countries where they have a strong role stand as examples for others. For example, when the President of ASEP4, Mr. Paavo Lipponen, was invited to the ASEM6 summit to address the leaders for the very first time in ASEM history, it was, at least publicly, presented as something normal without highlighting the remarkability of the issue too much.⁵¹ This can be seen as an indirect diffusion of norms through example. Inviting the ASEP President to ASEM supported the involvement of parliamentarians in ASEM dialogue and global dialogue in general. A few years later, Finland provided assistance to Laos in organizing ASEP7 in Vientiane (2012) and suggested a similar invitation of the head of ASEP7 to the coming summit, this time with a somewhat more direct transfer attempt.⁵² While the idea was rejected, it still showed the trial of norm promotion. Finally, on a more general level, simply by participating in the activities of an IPI, parliamentarians become engaged in a norm diffusion process in which the norm of parliamentary participation in both foreign affairs as well as international and global governance is strengthened and legitimized as a normal part of parliamentary obligations.

As the above example of Finland and Laos shows, parliamentary norms are promoted by norm entrepreneurs from an established democracy aiming to diffuse a democratic norm of participation to parliamentarians of a socialist country whose parliamentarians have a limited political role in their own country. However, parliamentarians coming from countries such as China and Vietnam also promote the importance of parliamentary oversight. This is a sign of showing their desire to identify as parliamentarians—to belong to the club—even when their own political position in their home government is limited. Such comments also show a desire to strengthen their own identity as parliamentarians who value the norm of the

⁵¹ According to a Finnish civil servant from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland's initiative originally came from Mr. Paavo Lipponen himself, and it did not encounter much objection among the ASEM partners. Finland did not, however, suggest extending the invitation to AEPF due to sensitivities attached to the civil society forum in ASEM.

⁵² Interview with Finnish parliamentary civil servant in 2013.

parliamentary oversight of the executive sector of the government. This can be seen as a process in which participation in ASEP assists empowerment of parliamentarians.

In conclusion, parliamentary norms are diffused both directly and indirectly at ASEP, through argumentation, persuasion, peer-level support, and leading by example and by indicating what would be the right thing to do, following the arguments of Björkdahl (2012; 2013) and Forsberg (2011).

This diffusion process has the potential to influence how parliamentarians themselves see their political identities, not only as domestic actors but also as international ones, and it may also influence their roles in general in international relations and global governance. Thus, this can be seen as a case of agenda-shaping, in which international parliamentary dialogue and parliamentary participation in international affairs and global governance are promoted as a norm. While the diffusion of parliamentary norms seems to present a rather unconflictual diffusion and socialization process among the parliamentarians as there is no disagreeing discussion on this at ASEP, one important reservation must be made. While parliamentarians do support the idea of gaining a wider role internationally, the already raised fact that ASEP has not yet demanded a stronger role in ASEM must be noted. Why does the dialogue not lead to higher priority of ASEP within the ASEM family? There are a couple main reasons behind this: First, the partners are highly varied politically, and while they support the same norms, they may have different interpretations and place different weight on the parliamentary norms. This is typical for organizational platforms as already noted. Second, ASEP's informal character and dialogue-focused rationale combined with its internal and external challenges make it more difficult to find a common ambition in promoting norms related to parliamentary participation in international dialogue and even global governance within ASEP and vis-à-vis ASEM. At ASEP, any coalition-building seems to take place mostly on the spot, as the following examples with the EP and Japan show, and there is currently no pre-negotiation even among the European delegations. As discussed in article 2 and later on in this dissertation, the overall ambition level to develop ASEP's position vis-à-vis ASEM is low.

4.2.2 European Parliament and normative power

The second diffusion process studied here is much more power-emphasized. These are demonstrations of normative power ambitions at the final declaration drafting sessions. In these sessions, active and direct norm diffusion takes place by recognized normative power agents. At plenaries and panels, participants mostly give pre-

written presentations, and there is a rather small possibility for free discussion. The places with somewhat more discussion are the closed sessions dedicated to drafting the final declaration. This is the place where the representatives need to agree on issues mentioned in the declaration. As discussed in the accompanying articles, the declaration is the only public document showing the stance of the parliamentarians on current issues; it is a negotiated document, which forces the participants to find a consensus on issues they disagree on. While many of the amendments are technical or uncontroversial, texts on politically sensitive issues such as human rights, democracy, rule of law, and freedom of media are often among those needing the most negotiation. At the drafting sessions, parliamentarians engage in norm diffusion by trying to get verbal commitments to values and norms they hold important. Here, especially the presence of countries identified as having normative power ambitions becomes most visible.

Focus is placed on initiatives and amendments brought up by the EP because it is a known normative power advocate and active in ASEP. As presented in article 1, at ASEP5 in China in 2008, the EP wanted to include notions of the freedom of media and access to the Internet in the final declaration. This dissertation argues that the EP was trying to get a written commitment from the Chinese host regarding the importance of free media and the Internet. While ASEP documents are inconclusive and thus do not bind the actors to any action, they can still be seen as textual commitments of an important political actor group to a certain norm that could be invoked later at least on a rhetorical level. In the end the statement was rather watered down as, upon Chinese request, it included a reference stating that the media must be subjected to national laws. At the same meeting, the EP also supported other actors' initiatives regarding norms it considered to be important, e.g. when Japan suggested more far-reaching statements on human rights violations. China objected to the strong wording, and condemning human rights violations was changed to respect for human rights. Outside the drafting session, the EP also raised China's human rights situation, the Tibet policy, and negligence toward labor laws at the panel discussion, thus using shaming along the lines of Forsberg's (2011, 1196) normative power mechanisms. On the other hand, at ASEP4 in Helsinki, the EP supported China's and Indonesia's initiative to drop a text on democracy, with rule of law and human rights being the key values for peace and stability on the grounds that the text was too technical (Shūgiin 2006), showing that the aim of the drafting session is to create a coherent and readable document, and compromises sometimes need to be made.

While the dialogue may not result in change over the short-term, it still engages the participants in the dialogue and a process of norm diffusion and can lead to a

shaping of norms or the adoption of new norms in the long-term. As argued by Manea (2009), even if the level of the human rights dialogue is superficial at best, interaction over human rights issues does force the other side, albeit reluctantly, into dialogue. In the case of ASEP, this means that parliamentarians become engaged in dialogue on sensitive issues at the international level. This refers to what Forsberg (2011, 1197) calls defining and shaping the discourse of what is normal. In other words, making discourse on human rights issues is a normal part of inter-parliamentary dialogue too. Through such exercises the EP is also standing as an example, demonstrating how parliamentarians actively participate and initiate dialogue on sensitive issues such as human rights and employ active and direct normative power advocacy.

At ASEP2 in 2002 in Manila, the EP organized an exceptional exercise in ASEP context: a session where the EP's draft resolution on the Commission's newly issued communication, "Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnerships," was discussed with Asian participants to hear their views on the EU's Asia strategy. China took strong opposition toward references to human rights violations in Asia, saying that the draft response to the communication was interfering in other countries' domestic issues. Also, references to Taiwan-China relations were opposed as contradictory to the one-China policy. The Chinese and South Korean delegations saw that the EP document lacked true partnership. As South Korean representatives noted, the report only listed the challenges of the so-called "unstable continent" without noting the possibilities the region might offer, and it viewed Asia as something that needs to be enlightened. Singapore supported China's view (Shūgiin 2002). This was an interesting example of engaging parliaments in a concrete way in high-level discourse on European Asia policy; however, the ensuing dialogue also showed the noted problems that the EP may encounter with its often normative agenda in Asia.

At other ASEP declaration drafting sessions, the EP has also initiated plans to develop the role of ASEP by suggesting better ASEP coordination, as noted in article 2. This reflects the promotion of parliamentarians' involvement in international affairs and the democratization of global governance structures.

Finally, the EP strongly supports multilateralism as well as the EU's foreign policy ambitions by advocating for the EU's participation in the East Asia Summit. At ASEP8 in Rome 2014, this was raised by Head of EP delegation Member of the European Parliament Nirj Deva (from UK) who wanted the ASEP declaration to endorse the EU's participation in the East Asia Summit. The argument was made using powerful language and manner that was aiming to shame ASEP participants for their exclusive attitude toward the EU. Deva argued that in today's world

“parliamentarians should be inclusive towards each other” and showed his disappointment that this disagreement was taking place at a meeting which he had considered to be a “place for friends”. Finally, the EP’s dissenting opinion regarding paragraph 38, from which the suggested reference on “possible future EU’s participation in the East Asia Summit” had been deleted, was marked in the final declaration (participant observation at ASEP8; Shūgiin 2014).

The EP’s action at ASEP clearly showed its the normative agenda, which is based on the EU’s key values. The EP delegates at the most critical meeting in Beijing (2008) came largely from the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats/European Democrats) and the Socialist Group in the European Parliament (6 out of 10), but only two came from the Group of Greens/European Free Alliance, which traditionally strongly emphasizes human rights issues. This shows wide support for the normative agenda within the EP across party lines. Most members also act in the various EP delegations for relations with East, Southeast, and South Asian countries, and two are from thematic committees. One member was from the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (EP 2008).

In conclusion, it can be argued that the EP is a normative actor which uses normative power mechanisms such as persuasion, argumentation and shaming as well as means that aim to get written commitments to norms that could possibly be later invoked.

Without comparative research among other ASEP parliamentarians, it is difficult to comment on the possible normative power ambitions of other delegations. The main target of the EP’s normative action is China. The normative power of China has been regarded as particularistic and relationship-based (as argued by Breslin 2011; Kavalski 2013; Womack 2008) and is thus more difficult to assess based on declaration drafts conducted in a multilateral setting. The EP case discussed above makes this kind of study easier, as getting verbal commitments to norms is one of the EU’s key normative power mechanisms. Furthermore, the Chinese delegates come from the National People’s Congress, which is in de facto guidance of the Communist Party on diplomatic power (Wei 2008, paraphrased in Wang 2017, 254); in other words, they are expected to promote the interests of the Party and refrain from independent action. With this background and the above-mentioned examples of the Chinese reaction, e.g., to the EP’s and Japan’s human rights-related interventions, it could be argued that Chinese parliamentarians are multiplying the normative power of the Chinese government. However, more research is needed on the matter for further conclusions. Of the other ASEP members recognized for their potential normative powers, India and Russia have been far less visible in ASEP up to this point, and the ASEAN is not speaking with one voice at ASEP.

This discussion on parliamentarians as multipliers of normative power will be continued in the next sub-chapter, which discusses the Japanese parliamentarians activities in norm promotion.

4.2.3 Japanese parliamentarians as norm-appropriate representatives of Japan?

Next, the findings from the exploratory case study on the Japanese parliamentarians' activities at ASEP will be discussed. The case study shows that Japanese parliamentarians are active internationally, are interested in Asia-Europe relations and global issues, and they want to participate in international dialogue. Their behavior at ASEP shows that they adopt an identity that is here defined as an international representative of Japan. Based on that identity they aim to promote Japan's foreign policy agenda. While doing so, they follow the norms identified for Japan's foreign policy and finally become multipliers of Japan's normative ambitions. This, however, is not their only identity, as they also are parliamentarians and members of their respective parties, which sometimes creates a conflict situation.

First, as discussed in article 3, the Japanese parliamentarians promote key themes of Japan's governmental foreign policy: inclusive Asian regionalism (e.g., PM Koizumi Junichiro's 2002 plan for an East Asian community⁵³), global (and regional) food security (e.g., an initiative called Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment [PRAI] in developing countries), regional and global financial stability, climate change, and sustainable development and human security. The parliamentarians raise Japanese interests when discussing North Korea's nuclear armament by raising the unresolved bilateral issue between Japan and North Korea caused by the abduction of Japanese nationals in the 1970s and 1980s into North Korea, thus framing the issue not only as a nuclear crisis but as a wider human rights violation. These are issues that the government of Japan also drives in the regional, international, and/or global arena.⁵⁴ When parliamentarians raise these issues, they support and advance the government agenda. Thus, Japanese parliamentarians act similarly to Japan's official foreign policy actors from the executive sector.

⁵³ PM Koizumi presented the idea in Singapore January 2002. The community would have included ASEAN, Japan, China, Korea, Australia and New Zealand reflecting Japan's long-term tendency to aim for larger frameworks, which expand beyond East and Southeast Asia. The plan started a conceptual rivalry between Japan and China over cooperation approaches in the area (Soeya 2010).

⁵⁴ These issues are discussed in more detail in article 3. The discussion is based on earlier research on, especially by Endo (2007), Hook et al. (2012), Gaens (2014), and Tamaki (2015).

The analysis shows that the parliamentarians not only support issues that are of interest to Japan, but they also behave consistently with the norms identified for Japanese foreign policy action. In other words, the parliamentarians' action is norm-appropriate. This is visible in how they focus on economic and technical issues, how they highlight Japan's Asia-centeredness, how they raise issues that aim toward the engagement with and containment of China, and how they multilateralize Japan's bilateral issue with North Korea, which aligns with the foreign policy norms of Japan as defined by Endo (2007), Hook et al. (2012), Gaens (2014), and Tamaki (2015).

Thus, the case study on Japan shows that while parliamentarians are not the formal foreign policy representatives of Japan and have no formal mandate to speak for Japan abroad, they still tend to support Japan's foreign policy in a norm-appropriate way. This means that parliamentarians are socialized into Japan's foreign policy norms and hold an identity that supports these norms. It is argued that they assume the identity of Japan's international representatives. While parliamentarians are not trained diplomats, they are part of the society as politicians and engaged in the norm-defining and interpreting institutions and become thus socialized into the political (including foreign policy) norms of the society (as supported by Boekle et al. 1999; Katzenstein 1996, 20). The identity of the actor is rooted in the social, political, and historical context in which the actor is based as discussed earlier in the conceptual framework. At ASEP meetings, parliamentarians are regarded as representatives of their national parliament. The ASEP Rules of Procedure state that ASEP membership is held by the parliaments of ASEM countries. Thus, it can be argued that the delegates' role already transcends beyond the partisan level, and parliamentarians identify more as international representatives of their parliament than as party members. Furthermore, because of ASEP's international agenda, some of the discussed topics may not always have direct contact with the daily agenda of the politicians; it is perhaps easiest and safest for the parliamentarian to adopt the government view. And as noted in article 3, while the representatives have the freedom to speak their minds, they are briefed by the MOFA on recent issues in Asia-Europe and ASEM relations.

Numerically half the 24 Japanese delegates have come from the ruling party (12) and the rest (12) from different opposition parties (see appendix 1). While the number of opposition representatives seems rather high, the reason is that during the early ASEP meetings (ASEP1-4) Japan used to send larger delegations of three to four persons, but in the more recent meetings (since ASEP5) the delegations are on average of two persons. Furthermore it is important to note that the Head of Delegation gets the most important speech slot and also directs the delegation in the declaration drafting session.

Those ASEP delegates from the ruling party or party coalition can be expected to more or less share the objectives of the government agenda, and supporting the government is rather clear for them as party discipline is somewhat strict in Japan. The participant in the drafting session of the final declaration is the head of the delegation. This person has come from the ruling party in all other meetings but 2008 (DPJ⁵⁵), 2012 (LDP) and 2016 (DP). The LDP has been the ruling party during all but two meetings (2010 and 2012, when DPJ formed the government).⁵⁶ This analysis shows that the behavior of the opposition party representatives does not differ much from that of the government parties, except in a few explicit cases in which party or personal identity was stronger (presented below). As ASEP is a place where legislators from many of Japan's key political and economic partners meet, it is a place where lawmakers can try to influence their foreign colleagues to adopt policies favorable to Japan.

Interestingly, Japan's agenda during ASEP6 (2010 in Brussels), when DPJ was historically in power, did not profoundly differ from the agenda of meetings led by LDP. For example according to the Diet documents on the Brussels meeting, Japan did not participate in drafting over a human rights text, although those were important to DPJ at the time. Of Japan's two-person delegation, one was from DPJ (Morimoto Tetsuo, independent) and one from the LDP (Kondō Mitsue, LDP/Independent). At ASEP7 in Vientiane 2012, the DPJ was still in power, but ASEP delegation was headed by LDP representative (Fujii Motoyuki, HC) and accompanied by Hirayama Koji (People's Life First Party, HC).

However, it would be wrong to see Japanese parliamentarians as *de facto* government diplomats who should be given diplomatic training, as Bang (2017) argues. The analysis in article 3 (and briefly in article 1) shows that some Japanese opposition parliamentarians do raise contradicting views or challenge national norms. At ASEP5 (2008), well-known human rights advocate Konno Azuma (DPJ, HC)⁵⁷ voiced exceptionally strong views for human rights and democratization in a way that exceeds Japan's usual broad but discreet (Hook et al. 2012; Dalpino 2007;

⁵⁵ The DPJ were the majority in the House of Councillors, where the delegation came from.

⁵⁶ The *ad hoc* delegations, alternating between the two houses, are mostly led by the LDP (with the exception of the DPJ in 2008 and 2010 and the Democratic Party in 2016), but politicians from other parties, including opposition parties, are regularly included. Over the years, 12 delegates have come from the party in the government at the time and 12 delegates have come from various opposition parties.

⁵⁷ Konno Azuma was a member of the Japanese Amnesty Diet Members Association (Wikipedia 2018) and publicly called for the release of Aung San Su Kyi from house arrest by the Myanmar government on the Burmainfo.org Youtube channel (2018).

Yokota and Aoi. 2000) approach. At ASEP3 in 2004, Fujii Hirohisa (DPJ, HR) took the opportunity to explain Japan's decision to send Self-Defense Forces to assist in the Iraq War in a way that showed his and his party's opposing view on the matter. At ASEP3, Ikeda Kankō (HC) from the Communist Party of Japan condemned the capitalist obsession with the unlimited pursuit of profits spread by globalization and creating problems around the world (Shūgiin 2004), showing a strong party identity in his speech.

Furthermore, parliamentarians raise themes that are of interest to themselves, often projects they have been personally involved in, which diversifies the agenda, as discussed in article 3.

These findings are supported by previous research on parliamentary diplomacy and flexibility and are in line with Beetham's (2006, 172–173) argument on parliamentary freedom of expression as compared to that of government diplomats. Thus, IPIs such as ASEP can be used by parliamentarians as fora where difficult policy questions can be explained and personal or party agendas can be promoted even when they challenge the national norms. Still, as the Japanese case shows, such occasions were rather few. It seems difficult for parliamentarians to go against the government, even when they have the prerogative to do so. As expected and as evidenced by the Japanese example, politicians from the ruling party tend to follow the government agenda, and if somebody deviates from it, it is most likely an opposition politician. The above-mentioned parliamentarians assumedly had a strong party identity and followed the appropriate behavior linked with their party line. It must be noted here that in Japan, as argued by Reed (2011) political parties are regarded ideologically as rather weak, with the exception of a few divisive issues (defense) or a few parties (e.g., the Communist Party of Japan).

Thus, it is argued that in the international field, the Japanese parliamentarians' party identity is there but is weaker than their being international representatives of Japan. While half the delegates have come from the opposition party, there were only few clear cases of contradicting views further hinting toward the stronger position of the international representative identity.

At ASEP the parliamentarians present their individual speeches and presentations at the plenaries or thematic sessions. This is a place where a parliamentarians speak rather freely and presenting one's own views or interests is easier. However, parliamentarians also participate in the drafting of the final ASEP declaration. As already noted, while inconclusive, such documents are a presentation of values, norms and interests of important political actors, and the arguments or commitments written in them could be invoked rhetorically later on. As showed in article 3, this the place where parliamentarians tend to follow the national line

closely. Japan's interests regarding the Korean Peninsula are carefully safeguarded, Japan's concerns for financial stability in Asia or WTO negotiations are repeated and food security issues mentioned. The clear exception comes from 2008 when DPJ's Konno who raised human rights violations taking place in Asia at the drafting session. However, Konno did not go against Japan's values but only stretched the normal practice that Japan has followed in ASEP on human rights and Myanmar – related issues. Thus article 3 came to the conclusion that the Japanese parliamentarians may speak for themselves but they negotiate for Japan.

Finally, Japanese parliamentarians also hold the identity of a parliamentarian. As discussed in article 3, they promote democratic norms that support parliamentary practices, parliamentary empowerment, and participation in international affairs. As one of the few democracies in Asia, Japan has an opportunity to support democracy and the development of parliamentary practices in the area in this way. As the National Diet itself has been seen to suffer from limited leverage in policymaking, empowering parliamentarians to engage in the international agenda can be considered important also for the parliamentarians themselves.

Are the Japanese parliamentarians norm promoters? The findings show that they are engaged in the promotion of various norms that are derived from their different, simultaneous identities. Their interaction with other parliamentarians is laden with attempts to raise and promote issues they deem important in this context. While doing so, they also follow Japan's common foreign policy norms.

But, how are the parliamentarians norm promotion efforts related to Japan's overall normative power efforts? The government of Japan has been identified as having normative interests, as discussed earlier in issues related to climate change, sustainable development, human security, and North Korea as well as democracy and human rights. Thus, if parliamentarians support the government agenda, they also become multipliers of Japan's normative interests at the parliamentary level when they promote norms important for Japan. Sometimes, the presence of opposition parliamentarians and the parliamentary freedom to choose the topics that parliamentarians want to raise brings plurality or even possible dissonance to the message.

While this case study provided new information about the Japanese parliamentarians' action at ASEP, as an exploratory case study, it also delivers food for thought for further studies on parliamentarians as international actors and norm promoters. The findings support the earlier discussed observations that external relations are no longer the privilege of the executive sector and that parliamentary diplomacy can provide a parallel channel to state-to-state diplomacy reaching audiences, in this case, parliamentarians of Japan's key trade and political partners

(except for the US), that diplomats cannot. The idea parliamentary diplomacy should be distinctly different from governmental diplomacy seems difficult to achieve because a portion of IPI participants always represents the views of their national government's ruling party or party coalition. Parliamentary diplomacy is thus linked to governmental diplomacy, but that does not necessarily diminish its value. Instead, parliamentary diplomacy has many faces, and by government politicians, it can be different than that of opposition politicians. Of course, parliamentary diplomacy should retain its parliamentary character, meaning that the parliamentarians pay attention to issues that are in line with parliamentary norms, and they approach international issues in a way that highlights the view of legislators and people's representatives. This was also noted by Stavridis (2002, 8), who sees that parliamentary diplomacy should have a democratizing element and a real dialogue among parliamentarians.

In conclusion, this analysis makes the early suggestion that parliamentarians tend to advance many of the interests and norms that are important to their governments. They are likely to follow the government line in many cases, but compared to governmental diplomacy, their message is diversified due to the following factors: politicians come from different parties with varying agendas, and opposition politicians are often included; parliamentarians may also bring up issues of interest to themselves. In other words, parliamentarians use their parliamentary freedom. Furthermore, there are many cases in which parliamentarians might not have strong expertise or opinion, so leaning toward the government view and expertise might be a safe solution, especially when written commitments are in question.

This interaction between legislators can be a useful addition to the official diplomacy when trying to push for favorable policies internationally, but it can also work against the government if the legislators criticize their own governments' actions in front of an international audience. Parliamentarians balance between representing their government and their own views.

Finally, the characteristics of parliamentary diplomacy most likely differs between IPIs. ASEP is an IPI to which parliamentarians are sent to represent their national legislatures; this is reflected in the meeting procedures and in the parliamentarians' speeches. While this mandate is rather thin from legal point of view, in this kind of institutions parliaments feel they are represented internationally as noted by Kissling (2011, 16) too. Thematically oriented IPIs in which parliamentarians participate in their individual capacity may raise more ambitions to drive a personal or party agenda.

4.2.4 Could ASEP be a normative actor?

Finally, a few more words about ASEP and norm diffusion. While the above-mentioned cases show normative ambitions being promoted at ASEP, it must be noted that even the more controversial debates usually fail to move forward from the level of sharp statements to more constructive dialogue, mostly because the declaration drafting session is not the place for in-depth dialogue; there is no time in the meeting nor space in the declaration text. Still, it is argued that such exercises are important as they repeatedly force the participants to hear each other's views and to find at least some common ground. According to the interviewed Japanese senior parliamentarian (2016), this is not easy but a rather difficult exercise. ASEP engages parliamentarians in dialogue on norms, and as Björkdahl (2002, 13) notes norms are promoted as well as developed through dialogue. Finally, parliamentarians' double mandate in IPIs, both as representatives in their national parliaments at home and abroad, facilitates the flow of ideas and policies between global and local levels (Habegger 2010, 190), which can contribute to the internalization of norms at domestic levels. Thus, dialogue at ASEP will eventually translate to other fora as well, having the potential to act as a political catalyst, as noted in the case of ASEM by Gaens (2015a, 9–10).

While ASEP provides a venue for norm diffusion, it has rather few changes to become a normative actor like the previously studied IPIs (Parliamentary Assemblies of NATO and OSCE), which have become venues themselves, where a rather clear norm set has been transmitted from one party to another during a time of critical juncture (Flockhart 2004; (Klebes 1998, paraphrased by Habegger 2010, 96). This is because ASEP handles a multitude of topics and has a large and diverse membership; thus, it lacks a clear single common norm set into which partners should be socialized. Instead, ASEP is a place where a multitude of norms is being promoted, but ASEP itself is not a normative actor that would speak with one voice.

4.3 ASEP and the democratic deficit in ASEM

Next, the third function identified for ASEP will be discussed. This function is currently less effective than the first two. This analysis will discuss the state of parliamentary participation and consider why and how this function could be enhanced against the earlier discussed arguments that global governance institutions such as ASEM suffer from a democratic deficit and should be more open to parliamentarians and the people. The interlinked concepts of participation and accountability will provide the basis of this discussion.

4.3.1 ASEP and ASEM – broader participation?

ASEP's second self-defined objective is "to provide a link between parliamentarians of Asia and Europe and ASEM, and thereby to make an active parliamentary contribution to the ASEM process and in particular to Summit meetings" (ASEP Rules of Procedure 2006). While this text is rather vague and lacks a clear reference to any formal participation or two-way interaction between parliaments and the ASEM, it still refers to the notion that parliamentarians should take part in the Asia-Europe dialogue and have a chance to contribute to the highest summit level. It also carries the idea that ASEP is representing the Asia-Europe parliamentarians in ASEM. In other words, ASEP is the parliamentary forum of ASEM in its own, rather loose, way.

As discussed in the introduction and in article 2, it can be said that ASEM has now accepted ASEP and other stakeholder dialogues in the ASEM family by allowing them to address the ASEM summits directly, both in Asia and Europe, in a way that is become a permanent element of the summit. While formal participation is important as it means recognition and provides practical access to ASEM leaders at the summit,⁵⁸ it is still rather superficial and only applies to the actual summits. Furthermore, the representatives of the dialogues cannot stay in the summit to mingle with the leaders after their presentations.⁵⁹ Without any set joint agreements on channels of communication, ASEP's and other parallel dialogues' chances to participate in agenda-making is limited and depends on the interest and willingness of each summit host. The nascent democratization process that was anticipated in the 2000s did not carry on and failed to cover parliamentarians and the initially civil society consultations were suspended within a few years. The ASEM Social Forum meetings, started in the late 2000s, are important but focus mostly on employment issues. Finally, as already noted, the various thematic dialogues (many organized by ASEP) do not cater to parliamentarians, nor do they provide a sector-wide, geographically comprehensive input as ASEP and the other parallel dialogues do.

The ASEM partners agreed on the Chair's Statement at the ASEM11 Summit in Ulaanbaatar (2016) to work toward "further involvement of relevant stakeholders," and they emphasized the need to engage civil society in the process to enhance ASEM's visibility and relevance for the people (parliaments were not mentioned). This matter was not raised at ASEM12 in Brussels 2018 (ASEM12 2018). It seems that, so far, ASEM is finding it difficult to move beyond the rhetorical level of recognition.

⁵⁸ As noted by an interviewed Finnish AEPF activist (interview conducted by the author in 2015).

⁵⁹ Information confirmed by a diplomat working with ASEM in EEAS for the author in 2018.

Heidi Hautala, Vice-President of the European Parliament and host of ASEP10 in Brussels 2018 addressed the ASEM Summit on the 18th of October 2018 with a statement that summarized the parliamentarians' agenda and their concern over the governments' action on climate change as well as multilateral and rules-based global cooperation. She reminded the ASEM leaders that they should not overlook the role of parliamentarians because "when it comes to implementing actions, you will most probably need parliamentarians to pass the necessary legislation." This time, the ASEP meeting lacked a high-level address from the host government (in this case, the EU). Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, had been invited to address the parliamentarians' meeting, but she was unavailable reportedly due to scheduling issues. This was sharply criticized by Hautala in her presentation at ASEM12 (European Parliament 2018).

The accompanying article 2 deals with the relationship between ASEP and the intergovernmental ASEM process and shows that the parliamentarians' process has been somewhat easier for ASEM to accept than the Asia-Europe People's Forum. Based on Gilson's (2011a) categorization of ASEM's outsiders (AEPF) and insiders (ASEF, AEBF, AETUF), it is argued that ASEP, while acting mostly on its own, has received a warmer welcome from the official ASEM and should thus be considered more as an insider in the process (see figure 1). This argument is based on the following factors, presented in article 2: First, ASEP was originally convened by the European Parliament, which is part of the EU, and it therefore links ASEP more closely to ASEM. Second, ASEP is composed of parliamentarians who belong to the realm of the state, regardless of the governmental or political systems of the country and who thus have a more legitimate role as representatives of the people, in contrast to civil society groups. Third, ASEP has received high-level recognition by the ASEP host governments and has not experienced problems in participating in meeting preparations. These findings support Cutler's (2006, 82) argument that interparliamentary cooperation can act as a middle ground for international contacts below the state level, especially for countries where the civil society action is less developed or politically restricted. For example, the ASEAN has had an integrated parliamentary assembly since the 1970s, but a civil society forum only since 2000. Finally, ASEP has been rather uncritical in terms of agenda and policy recommendations and less demanding in terms of better accountability than the civil society dialogue, and thus, ASEP has potentially been "easier" than the AEPF from ASEM's viewpoint.

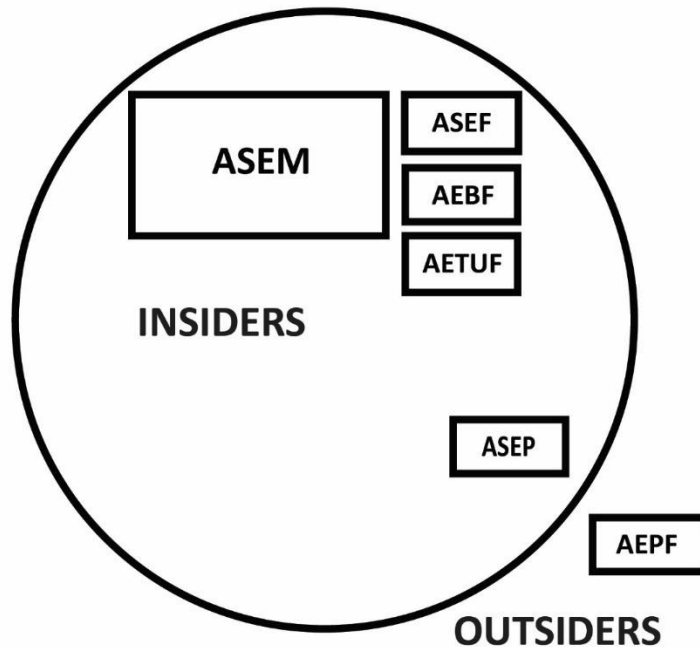


Figure 1. Insiders and Outsiders. Keva 2018

ASEP, as a representative of the people's interest, is less complex in terms of legitimacy than the AEPF. Parliamentarians are elected representatives of the people in their home countries, whereas NGOs represent only certain stakeholders and may suffer from a lack of transparency and limited accountability. However, the legitimacy of the ASEP parliamentarians can also be questioned. Not all the ASEP parliamentarians have been elected fairly. Parliamentary fora can be representative if the delegations are composed so that they reflect the domestic political powers. However, this is not always the case in ASEP, as the delegations are usually very small (1–2 persons per parliament).

This dissertation argues that the less critical parliamentarians may have been included to ASEM process earlier, had there not been the critical civil society process. However, ASEP may not have been able to realize very deep relations with ASEM because of the low level of motivation among its partners and because of its institutional weakness, which make it difficult for ASEP to create a coherent strategy. The limited opening of the ASEM process has not occurred because of the parliamentarians, but as Gilson (2011a) notes, that is mostly because of the AEPF.

Furthermore, it may be possible that any ideas about bringing ASEP closer to ASEM would raise questions about making ASEP a more developed international parliamentary organ of ASEM, similar to the ones discussed earlier in this work, which would mean a much heavier infrastructure for ASEM, something that many ASEM partners may not want to see.

4.3.2 ASEP and ASEM – better accountability?

Keeping ASEM accountable is not formally listed as an objective of ASEP in the 2006 Rules of Procedure. And as shown in the attached articles, ASEP has a weak track record in pushing for better accountability of ASEM. ASEP is not well equipped to undertake this function because it has no formal position to do so, it lacks resources, and ASEM has not been pursuing such a relationship very actively.

ASEM's internal accountability is handled through a delegation of power within the national governments; the appointed civil servants prepare the meetings, and most importantly, the elected political leaders participate in the summits. Citizens have the possibility to hold the participating politicians accountable through elections, according to the idea of internal accountability (see Grant and Keohane 2005). This link, however, is long. It is difficult for citizens to know what has been discussed at ASEM, and the little information that comes is mainly presented after the fact.

In terms of external accountability, meaning a more direct participation by e.g. civil society actors or parliaments, ASEM is challenged, as these groups have limited access to summits and the preparation processes. This issue is unclear in many ways because, the parallel dialogues' relationship with ASEM is not concretely defined, as shown in the ASEP context in article 2. Without the institutional links, set responsibilities for oversight, or channels for consultation, ASEP as a parliamentary institution seems to have little possibility to reduce the external democratic deficit of ASEM. On the other hand, ASEP has not clearly demanded to change the situation, either. Thus, transparency through consultation and better flow of information are lacking, and the ASEM process continues to be conducted behind closed doors. ASEP parliaments are thus left with one-way communication by sending their message to the summits and calling attention to ASEM-related matters at ASEP or at home in their own parliaments. It can be argued that ASEM-ASEP consultations would allow parliamentarians to be more involved in the preparation process, which would enhance transparency. This would provide better opportunities to evaluate the ASEM process and its agenda-making in more detail. Now, parliaments must depend on their own governments' information activities for ASEM-related

information, and evaluation largely depends on the interests of individual participants, most of whom change from ASEP meeting to meeting, as already noted. Closer dialogue could also help ASEM governments channel ASEM-related topics to the national parliaments' debates and vice versa, which would enhance ASEM's transparency and visibility⁶⁰ and could ultimately enhance its weight. While civil society and trade union actors have managed to place pressure on the ASEM agenda as Gilson (2011a, 212–213) notes, ASEP has not been very demanding in its pleas. The parliamentarians have just called each other to examine the ASEM process, as article 2 noted.

Closer dialogue or consultations would require ASEP to have some kind of representative or leadership, even for practical communication needs. A Standing Committee was initiated by the EP at ASEP8 in Rome 2014 as a body that would most likely consist of the past, present, and future ASEP host. The EP's initiative did not yet envision the formation and duties of the Standing Committee in detail, but it could be tasked to carry on the agenda from meeting to meeting to represent ASEP between meetings vis-à-vis ASEM and perhaps even undertake regular consultations between ASEM and ASEP. The committee idea was raised again by the EP at ASEP9 in Ulaanbaatar 2016, with the explanation that a committee could review the ASEM process. The EP tried to highlight the importance of the matter, as this could help to broaden the parliamentary activities in ASEM and wished to have discussion over the topic, which would possibly require adjustment of the Rules of Procedure. Russia noted that more consideration was needed and that setting up such committee required consideration also at the governmental level, not only by parliamentarians. China noted that ASEM did indeed need better visibility, as the EP had argued, but that setting up a similar parliamentary committee, that for example the WTO had (as had been suggested by the EP), was complicated and long process. The final declaration only noted the parliamentarians "wish to study the possibility of reviewing the ASEP rules to ensure appropriate continuity in the work of ASEP aimed at following up the multiple ASEM ministerial meetings and other activities held between the Summits." (ASEP9 2016).

Two years later in Brussels, the EP-hosted ASEP10 did include in the final declaration the "establishment of mechanisms empowering its members to have more regular contacts, in order to provide a better parliamentary follow-up of ASEM-related activities" as well as "a structural dialogue between executive level and

⁶⁰ Visibility was listed as a reform area at ASEM11 2016 in Ulaanbaatar (ASEM Chair's Statement 2016). For more on ASEM's visibility issues, see Lai (2018).

the parliamentary dimension, which needs to fully play its scrutiny role.”(ASEP10 2018).

The question of creating new mechanisms for accountability inevitably raises concerns about whether such systems would threaten has been described as ASEM’s uniqueness and stronghold; that is, its informality, lack of heavy institutions, and focus on dialogue (Gaens 2015b, 74). Would creating more formal consultations between the ASEM and the parallel dialogues endanger the informality of the process? It must be noted that the possibility of turning ASEP into a representative body in ASEM, similar to those discussed earlier under the categorization of IPIs, is not discussed here because such development cannot be considered realistic based on the history of low ambition toward more institutionalized forms among the ASEM partners.

In conclusion, ASEP’s third function, providing better accountability for ASEM, is mostly a potential function. ASEP could facilitate people’s participation through Asia-Europe parliamentarians if ASEM and ASEP would have more set institutional links between each other, e.g., through the Standing Committee. Enhanced participation could lead to better external accountability, at least through enhanced possibilities for participation, more transparency, consultation, and evaluation. An enhanced parliamentarian’s input would strengthen the people’s voice in ASEM. Based on Zimmerman’s (2000) idea of organizational settings of empowerment, better participation and control by parliamentarians vis-à-vis ASEM would also further enhance the empowerment of parliamentarians to handle international and global issues.

Finally, it should be questioned whether ASEP can solve ASEM’s democracy deficit problems alone. Together, the parallel dialogues provide different angles for people’s participation and for better horizontal accountability. AEPF, on the one hand, provides a grassroots approach that allows many even smaller civil society groups to participate in the Asia-Europe dialogue, and it has been successful in creating a space for Asia-Europe civil society from scratch (Bersick 2008, 245). ASEP, on the other hand, could provide people’s participation through their elected representatives, who have an important role in transmitting the Asia-Europe agenda to national legislation and policymaking as legislators. ASEP, AEPF, and AETUF are not competing but are complementary fora with a similar objective: to increase the people’s involvement in ASEM. As argued by Väyrynen (2005, 184–185), no single solution exists to fill the democratic deficit because the democratization of global governance requires different processes.

5 Conclusions: Where is ASEP Now?

This dissertation is the first systematic research on the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership. It has looked at ASEP's history, development, and its relations to the ASEM process. This research has provided new information and understanding of the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership in particular and the ASEM process in general. The existing definitions of ASEP have been sharpened and corrected and the location and role of ASEP within the ASEM family has been explained.

While doing so, our understanding of informal, seemingly unimportant IPIs, has now new dimensions. While earlier research has pointed out that IPIs can be viewed as platforms for norm diffusion and a few studies have showed empirical research on such process, this is the first study to study how parliamentarians from a single country engage in norm promotion as well as norm-appropriate action at an IPI and also the first one to research parliamentarians' engagement in normative power advocacy. Also this is one of the few existing studies to analyse Asian parliaments involvement in IPIs.

As the main objective of the study, three key functions for ASEP have been identified and analyzed: ASEP as a platform for parliamentary dialogue and empowerment, ASEP as a platform for norm diffusion, and finally ASEP's potential role in diminishing ASEM's democratic deficit. While this is not an exhaustive list, these functions were chosen because highlight how even an informal, non-decision-making, loosely attached IPI performs important and potentially effective functions.

Among the three key functions the strongest are the first two: ASEP as a provider of parliamentary dialogue and empowerment and ASEP as a place for norm diffusion. The participating parliamentarians and parliaments gain opportunities for parliamentary empowerment, perhaps develop broader views on global issues and parliamentary work, and acquire international contacts and experiences.

Moreover, they engage in norm diffusion at the international level and can thus participate in the international and global debate and agenda-shaping, which may also influence decision-making at home. Furthermore, ASEP is a place where new parliamentary norms of international engagement are being promoted and diffused

both actively and directly as well as passively and indirectly. Participating parliamentarians are thus engaged in norm diffusion process supporting the participation of parliamentarians in international dialogue and global governance as people's representatives.

This dissertation also showed that parliamentarians engage in normative power efforts. The analysis showed how delegation of the European Parliament engaged in normative power advocacy in ASEP when driving the EU's core values. Apart from the promotion of human rights and democracy, their efforts promote and normalize parliamentary engagement in international, active norm promotion even on sensitive issues. This research provided new insight on the European Parliament's action and also provides a reference point for future studies on other parliamentarians.

Parliamentarians engagement in norm promotion was also studied through the case study on Japanese parliamentarians. This research argues that they seem to adopt the identity of international representative of their country and mostly follow their country's foreign policy norms and international agenda and interests. In other words they become multipliers of Japan's normative power efforts. Behind this finding are an array of issues ranging from characteristics of Japanese politics to general the institutional setting of ASEP, where parliamentarians represent their national parliaments in a way that strengthens the identity of international representative of their country. Still, their message is more plural, participants choose sometimes projects that are of interest to themselves, or in some cases even stretch or contradict the government norm or view and thus follow what is called here their party identity. The presence of opposition politicians may bring more plurality to the message. Finally, the parliamentary identity of the delegates is clearly visible as many actively promote parliamentary norms. This exploratory case study thus provided an interesting aspect for further research on the international activities of parliamentarians in general. However, more comparative research among many parliamentary delegations would be needed for more far-reaching conclusions.

The third function, diminishing ASEM's democratic deficit, is currently the weakest of ASEP's functions; the value that ASEP could bring in the form of wider participation and better accountability, together with other parallel dialogues, is weaker due a variety of reasons both internal (arising from ASEP) as well as external (arising from ASEM). Despite the many challenges, Asia-Europe parliamentarians are providing their parliamentary contribution and participating in the summits, but in limited fashion. ASEM should recognize the parallel dialogues and their contributions in a new way, but based on their track record over the first two decades,

it seems unlikely. Hence, it is the individual parliamentarians and parliaments who benefit most from ASEP at the moment.

Thus, ASEP is currently a “decorative” IPI for ASEM, recognized mostly rhetorically. It has rather little influence or role in the ASEM process at present. That is, it is part of the ASEM family, but it is a family that does not have close relations among its members. Instead of remaining a decorative IPI with only a one-way relationship with ASEM, ASEP should aim to be at least a “reactive” one, as coined by Costa, Stravridis and Dri (2013b, 240). Or, better yet, it should be proactive with its stronger own parliamentary input to the ASEM leaders. This is difficult to achieve, however, given the limited institutional resources, its wide variety of members, and ASEP’s other challenges, such as low priority and visibility and the informal character of the whole ASEM. Also, the EP’s persistent efforts to develop the role of ASEP have proceeded slowly. It remains to be seen how this will develop and whether the leaders’ summit will pick these initiatives up in the future.

While this research is mostly focused on one international parliamentary institution the ASEP, it connects to a much larger phenomenon that has great importance in contemporary global politics. This is the changing environment of global governance. On the one hand, ASEP is connected to growing demands of better accountability and wider participation in global governance institutions, many of which have already opened some new possibilities for parliamentarians, as well as civil society actors, to participate in international and global dialogue. On the other hand, this research topic is connected to the recent criticism and challenges the formal intergovernmental organizations have received, the withdrawal of the United States 2017 withdrawal from the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) being a very recent example. When formal frameworks of governance are challenged, informal frameworks may be the ones gaining more significance. As shown here with ASEM, in informal frameworks, the challenges of participation and accountability are even greater and the inclusion of e.g. parliamentary representatives is more difficult.

ASEP, as well as ASEM, bring together Asia and Europe and thus provide a place to strengthen the bilateral relationship, not only at the leaders’ level but also at parliamentary level, which is increasingly important during times when the third key global player, the US, is showing inward-looking attitudes.

While this study contributes to filling several gaps in academic research, it has also opened many interesting avenues for future research. A survey- and interview-based research project would provide valuable information on the parliamentarians’ own views on ASEP or their own role as international actors and norm entrepreneurs.

In the coming years, ASEP will continue to create possibilities for the parliamentarians to engage in Asia-Europe dialogue, contacts, empowerment and norm diffusion and in a modest way function as a parliamentary dimension to ASEM. In the current political and economic global atmosphere with polarizing views, confrontation, inward-looking attitudes, and even a global democratic crisis, such encounters are increasingly important and it remains to be seen how the partnership will develop in its third decade and how will it be received by ASEM.

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7 Appendix

Japanese Delegations to ASEP, 1996 -2016

ASEP1 1996 (Ruling party coalition at the time: LDP, JSP, NPS)

- Harada, LDP, HC, HD
- Yoshimura, LDP, HC
- Yoshida, Heiseikai, HC
- Kubo, NFP, HC

ASEP2 2002 (Ruling party coalition at the time: LDP, Kōmeitō, NCP)

- Motegi, LDP, HR, HD
- Nōno, LDP, HR
- Otsuka, DPJ, HC
- Hosokawa, DPJ, HR

ASEP3 2004 (Ruling party coalition at the time: LDP, Kōmeitō)

- Kosugi, LDP, HR, HD
- Kimura, LDP, HC
- Ikeda, CP, HC
- Fujii, DPJ, HR

ASEP4 2006 (Ruling party coalition at the time: LDP, Kōmeitō)

- Yanagisawa, LDP, HR, HD
- Ryū, DPJ, HR
- Inaba, LDP, HR

ASEP5 2008 (Ruling party coalition at the time: LDP, Kōmeitō)

- Konno, DPJ, HC, HD

- Nomura, LDP, HC

ASEP6 2010 (Ruling party coalition at the time: DPJ, PNP, SDJP)

- Morimoto, DPJ, HR, HD
- Kondo (LDP, HR)

ASEP7 2012 (Ruling party coalition at the time: DPJ, PNP)

- Fujii (LDP, HC), HD
- Hirayama (PLP, HC)

ASEP8 2014 (Ruling party coalition at the time: LDP, Kōmeitō)

- Suzuki (LDP, HR), HD

ASEP9 2016 (Ruling party coalition at the time: LDP, Kōmeitō)

- Naoshima (DP, HC)
- Miki (LDP, HC)

Total of ruling party delegates: 12

Total of opposition party delegates: 12

GRAND TOTAL: 24

CP Communist Party
 DP Democratic Party
 DPJ Democratic Party of Japan
 HC House of Councillors
 HD Head of Delegation
 HR House of Representatives
 JSP Japan Socialist Party
 LDP Liberal Democratic Party
 NCP New Conservative Party
 NFP New Frontier Party
 NPS New Party Sakigake
 PLP People's Life First Party
 PNP People's New Party
 SDPJ Social Democratic Party Japan

Sources: Sangiin jimukyoku 2016, 2013, 2008, 2004, 1996;
 Shūgiin 2014, 2010, 2006, 2002.

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