



Politics in Asia

GEO-POLITICS IN NORTHEAST ASIA

Edited by
Akihiro Iwashita, Yong-Chool Ha
and Edward Boyle



Geo-Politics in Northeast Asia

Geo-Politics in Northeast Asia focuses on the dynamics of Northeast Asia as a region. The chapters in this book offer a nuanced approach for understanding the geo-politics of this strategically critical area of the world.

Focusing on China, Japan, Russia, and the Koreas, as well as the involvement of the United States, the contributors to the volume offer a timely and critical analysis of Northeast Asia. They collectively emphasize the different scales at which the region holds significance, and particularly note how the region is often granted significance by local political forces as well as national interests. Borderlands and sub-regions are especially important in this perspective, and the contributors show both how regionalism influences the people living in these areas and how they in turn shape the political priorities of states. At the same time, the worsening of relations between Japan and the Koreas and the increasing assertiveness of both China and Russia make it essential to understand the dynamics of the region, as well as how they have changed during and following the Trump era.

Geo-Politics in Northeast Asia is essential reading for students and scholars of Political Geography, International Relations and Strategic Studies, as well as for those with a research focus on Northeast Asia, or the wider Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions.

Akihiro Iwashita is a professor at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University. His research focuses on the Sino-Russian borderlands and on the Japan-Russia “Northern Territories” issue. He has authored and edited several books and numerous articles, notably *Japan’s Border Issues: Pitfalls and Prospects* (Routledge, 2016) and *A 4,000 Kilometer Journey Along the Sino-Russian Border* (Slavic Research Center, 2004). He served as Coordinator of Border Region in Transition XII Conference (Fukuoka-Busan: 2012) and as President of Association for Borderlands Studies (2015–2016). He has received many grants and fellowship, including at the Brookings Institution’s Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies (2007–2008), and prizes, such as IBRU’s 2nd Milefsky Award (2019), the 24th Regional Publication Prize (2011), and the 4th Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Prize (2007). He was also nominated for the *Asahi* Newspaper’s 6th Osaragi Jirō Prize for Commentary (2006).

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**In memory of Tsuneo Akaha and Ulises Granados Quiroz,
two wonderful scholars of Northeast Asia, and persistent
advocates for the region.**



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Prologue

Layering Up the Region, and This Project

This book explores regional integration and community building in Northeast Asia. Interest and excitement regarding these possibilities for the Northeast Asian region peaked in the 1990s, largely due to the heightened hopes that existed for a new international and regional order in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the enlargement of NATO and the reshaping of the EU. This euphoria about an impending “new world order” was naturally carried over and applied to Northeast Asia as well. Most of the authors in this collection, who began their research careers in the 1990s, participated in the expectation that Northeast Asia would develop a regional order along the lines of the European community emerging at the other end of the Eurasian continent.

In the event, however, our hopes and dreams were destined to be dashed, as these kinds of confident predictions were replaced with frustration at the stagnation of democratization in China and absence of reform in North Korea. Looking back at this period from the standpoint of today, over twenty years later and with Northeast Asia more fractured than ever, it seems as though the 1990s were a special and exceptional period. That decade seems something of a mirage now. Thirty years later, it is an appropriate time to ask what happened to this Northeast Asia of the 1990s. Exploring this issue does mean not just reinterpreting the history of the region but also seeking to discover a way to overcome the challenges which Northeast Asia and the world are experiencing today.

Why, then, do we now feature Northeast Asia, when events of the last thirty years appear to have merely highlighted its failure? First, the configuration of the region has dramatically shifted since the 1990s. Nobody then could imagine the extent of China’s regional presence today. Few of those who discussed the region in the 1990s would have anticipated that North Korea would survive and, in certain respects, thrive. Who, indeed, could have anticipated a US President like Donald Trump, with a policy towards Northeast Asia that appeared disinterested and whimsical by turns? Back in the 1990s, how many people would have confidently forecasted the alliance currently developing between Russia and China against the United States? As relations between Japan and South Korea fall to their lowest point since the war, it is clear that the structure of the region has

altered significantly over the past thirty years, and this must be accounted for in any autopsy conducted of earlier hopes for the region.

Second, beyond the contested issues of interstate relations, challenges to the region as a whole have continued to develop. Maritime conflicts in the region, in the Okhotsk, the Japan and East China Seas, and in the Pacific Ocean, are greater risks than any potential benefits from cooperation in the fishery, environmental, security fields. Nuclear competition within the region could be accelerated by North Korean's build-up of its arsenal, enriching the possibilities for catastrophic missteps. While economic interdependence has developed beyond national borders, the region still lacks integrative mechanisms to manage this. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic has led all the states in the region to pull down their shutters to the outside world. This suggests that we should pay attention not only to the behavior of individual states but also to the region, as it appears to be moving in lockstep even in the absence of formal cooperation.

Third, in parallel to these two tendencies, there have been important developments in sub-regional interaction through and beyond national borders. Particularly, sub-regions and cities located along national borders and facing outwards to the world have developed their own advantageous geographic positions through economic and human/cultural relations. During the Cold War, in Northeast Asia as elsewhere, such borderland locations were designated as frontlines or fortresses. However, these former bastions have frequently transformed into gateways facilitating the movement of people and material across national borders, reflecting in a small way the openness and transparency that was expected for the region as a whole in the 1990s. Local trade and tourism in such spaces have emerged as for resources for economic growth and, in turn, developing relations across the border itself, a process that has occasionally contributed to the improvement of state-to-state relations.

We consider these three important regional trends, concerning the state, the region, and its sub-regions (and particularly its borderlands), as being of central importance to analyzing the region, and they structure our analysis accordingly. The details of this collection's key questions and the analytical approach used to tackle them will be given in the Introduction, written by my co-editors, while Chapter 1 will provide an overview of thirty years of Northeast Asia in order to set up the detailed case studies offered in the remainder of the collection.

This book project is the outcome of a combination of personal and institutional efforts. Most of all, the project would not have been possible without the passionate commitment of Professor Akihiro Iwashita of the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University. Professor Iwashita initiated the development of border studies in Japan, a field that has expanded steadily in recent years. This project has developed as a new field of application for border studies, drawing our attention to dynamics in border areas and their significance for the future of Northeast Asia. Incorporating this approach provides a unique opportunity to locate clues for understanding the future of Northeast Asia and beyond. Reflecting on the region from its borders allows for the recovery of positive signs of

cooperation which would not be visible or significant to conventional international relations theories. It is precisely the spontaneous and lively cooperation across various borders in Northeast Asia which eventually led the editors of this volume to question the conventional, dim view of the future of Northeast Asia and to start thinking seriously about a different trajectory of regional development from that of Western Europe.

Professor Iwashita's long-term vision for the vitality of the region along its borders inspired me to initiate the Northeast Asia Community Building Consortium in 2011. Scholars from South Korea, Japan, China, Russia, and the United States all participated in order to seek to institutionalize regional cooperation, such as through the Institute for Northeast Asia Community Building. The Consortium was a timely development, given the then-upcoming Vladivostok APEC Summit, and it featured several rounds of discussions that focused on the importance of the Russian Far East for the future of Northeast Asia. Although short-lived, the Consortium raised critical questions regarding the direction of change in Northeast Asia. The region is characterized by different patterns of industrialization and modernization, not only between the Northeast Asian states themselves but also in comparison with the West. Meanwhile, the role of colonialism and imperialism here also does not map neatly onto the European experience. The Consortium, therefore, raised important questions regarding how different paths of modernization can and will affect the future course of cooperation among countries in Northeast Asia.

The individual vision and commitment displayed in the production of this collection could not have been realized as a research project without institutional support. First of all, this book project is an outcome of the Northeast Asia area studies project initiated by National Institutes for the Humanities (NIHU) in Japan in 2015. NIHU is an institution that has long been interested in the future of area studies, including Northeast Asia, and it sponsored several umbrella conferences. At the kick-off symposium in Osaka in January 2016, Professor Iwashita organized a session on the "Rediscovery of Northeast Asia," which provocatively challenged us to reflect on why Northeast Asian states have not seen the emergence of cross-border cooperation. This provided the framework within which to study new dimensions of Northeast Asian regionalism across the six-year term of the project.

A follow-up conference was held in December 2016, in Kokura, part of city of Kitakyushu. In addition to the support from NIHU, the cooperation of the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, the Center for Asia-Pacific Future Studies at Kyushu University, and the University of Kitakyushu was vital for providing the resources and energies required to make the conferences successful. It is through these conferences that the main themes of this book were developed and communicated with our fantastic contributors.

The core question that this book raises is how to understand the future of Northeast Asia. This collection looks to focus on the distinctiveness of regional patterns of development, particularly when compared to Western Europe. This book urges scholars and practitioners to pay greater attention to the multiple

layers at which the Northeast Asian region is brought into being, including the micro-level changes that are rarely featured in conventional studies of Northeast Asia. The volume also sheds light not only on the realignment of the region's states but also on the shifts which have occurred in sub-regional interaction beyond those state's borders, in order to indicate possible paths for overcoming pessimistic views regarding the region's future.

It is also worth mentioning that Northeast Asia has undergone tremendous changes during the preparation of this book. Most important is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the impact of this is by no means restricted to Northeast Asia, it is remarkable to note that the pandemic further highlighted the importance of the questions that this book raises. As has occurred elsewhere, the pandemic has revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of the region in coping with the seemingly resilient power of the virus. On the one hand, countries in the region have been doing rather well in managing the pandemic situation, and sometimes better than other regions. On the other hand, the region has once again been reminded of the fact that when faced with a crisis like the pandemic, there exist no institutional mechanisms for cooperation at the regional level. This volume concludes by discussing issues relating to the pandemic and their significance for the future of the region, and these questions will inevitably remain as subjects for future discussion.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, after this manuscript had been submitted to the publishers. With its actions, Russia promises to fundamentally undermine international norms, such as the peaceful resolution of disputes and the non-use of force, which are generally accepted by states in the contemporary world.

The invasion has dramatically raised fears in Europe, to the point that a second Cold War is being mentioned, but Northeast Asia is also not immune from the effects of Russia's actions. The Russian-Ukrainian war promises to have a chilling effect on regional integration, and to further widen existing fault lines. The region's dependence on external states for its security has traditionally restricted the possibilities for regionalism, despite the excitement generated by the end of the Cold War and ensuing globalization in the 1990s. The war promises to entrench the divides between states based upon their domestic political systems. This will complicate the situation around the Korean Peninsula, rendering the denuclearization of North Korea all the more difficult.

Already, during its 11th Emergency Session, the United National General Assembly voted on March 24 to adopt a resolution entitled *Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine* which explicitly noted Russia as the aggressor. While 140 countries voted for the resolution, China was one of 38 which abstained, while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea joined Russia as one of five countries to oppose the resolution. Northeast Asia therefore may become a region upon which Russia will increasingly lean in the future.

This volume has obviously not been able to reflect such recent developments, but readers will be able to understand the background as to why China and

North Korea have supported Russia in the current conflict. Furthermore, this grouping of Northeast Asian states is likely to line up opposite a loose alliance of the United States, South Korea, and Japan, in a rerun of the first Cold War. The book therefore serves guide our debates over how we might position Northeast Asia in this latest transformation of the international order.

Yong-Chool Ha

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Introduction

Geo-Politics in Northeast Asia

Akihiro Iwashita and Edward Boyle

Northeast Asia today is largely thought about in relation to the security concerns of its constituent states. In this book, however, the importance of these issues is analyzed and filtered through the lens provided by Northeast Asia as an area of study. We refer to this approach as geo-politics in order to highlight the contested political claims made regarding a loosely defined area of the world, or “geo.” In this Introduction, we will detail the importance of this framework for understanding Northeast Asia as a region, highlight the significance of the hyphen in both separating and linking the twinned terms of geo and politics together, and show how this approach is distinct from “geopolitics” in either its classical or critical variants.

A Region Misplaced: Northeast Asia After Thirty Years

In the early 1990s, Northeast Asia, the area of the world centered on the Korean peninsula and incorporating, at a minimum, parts of China, Russia, and Japan and others, was viewed as the most dynamic region of the globe. Driven by the extraordinary economic growth of Japan during the 1980s, and with the Asian Tigers following closely in her developmental state footsteps, the region emerged from a period of Cold War tensions in the early 1980s into one of liberalization. In the Soviet Union, perestroika was instituted, while Japan’s economy and currency markets were also internationalized following the Plaza Accords. South Korea innovated politically, experimenting with “democratization” at home and “northern diplomacy” abroad, and China maintained its “reform and opening up” policy as it sought to manage its economic growth. The opening of the following decade appeared to mark the Korean peninsula’s transformation from site of conflict to birthplace for regional cooperation. South Korea established formal diplomacy with the Soviet Union and China, North and South Korea simultaneously acceded to the United Nations, and North Korea appeared on the verge of normalizing relations with the United States and Japan. As in Europe, the conclusion of the Cold War in Northeast Asia brought with it visions of a Northeast Asian community which could materialize and expand to encompass Taiwan, Mongolia, and even the West Coast of the United States across the Pacific Ocean.

Indeed, the post-Cold War transformation initially appeared to herald regional integration, as cross-border flows of capital, people, and goods expanded massively. Investment and cooperative networks utilized Japan and Korea as hubs to expand into China and the Russian Far East. Emblematic is the Conference on Northeast Asian Development, held in 1990 in Changchun, which announced the Greater Tumen Initiative as a transnational developmental program to operate at the heart of Northeast Asia's revitalization. Subsequently adopted by the United Nations Development Program, the Initiative sought to foster sectoral economic cooperation between North Korea, China, Mongolia, South Korea, and Russia, whose spill-over effects would foster peace and security between former ideological foes. These kinds of special economic zones, frequently created through cross-border cooperation between local administrations and non-governmental organizations, were anticipated to provide the basis for more comprehensive regionalization.

These global transformations, and the regional policy responses they engendered, were also reflected at a more local level as the Cold War came to a close. Consequently, ideas of an integrated Northeast Asia community were functioning at a variety of scales. International relations among the region's constituent states, which were conceptualized as extending to encompass the United States and Mongolia, would be complemented through sub-regional zones of economic integration and a multitude of local interactions across national borders,¹ collectively constituting a new form of "network power" that would tie the region together.² The region's growing economic interdependency, therefore, fostered expectations that increasingly permeable borders would improve relations between neighboring states.³

Academics and practitioners both in the region and from further afield were widely predicting the transformation of this formerly contested space into an economically integrated and democratic region. Such utopian visions were common. The former Governor of Russia's Maritime Province, Vladimir Kuznetsov, predicted in the early 1990s that the Sino-Russian borderlands would become similar to US-Canadian one through the implementation of the open-access plan for "Greater Vladivostok."⁴ The distinguished Japanese historian of the region, Haruki Wada, would write about the imminence of a "Northeast Asian common house"⁵ in the early 2000s. Chinese researchers belonging to China's Northeast region such as Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang provinces published their own visions for Northeast Asian regional cooperation, including around the Tumen River, while certain research institutes in South Korea wanted to use special economic zones and cross-border mobility as leverage for South-North economic cooperation.⁶

The genesis of this book is in this period. The book's authors, at least the majority of them, vividly remember their shared hopes for regional cooperation and community building in the early 1990s. It was widely expected, as Yong-Chool Ha details in his Prologue, that the hyper-securitized Cold War environment of Northeast Asia would follow in Europe's footsteps and rapidly thaw out, as holes were slowly punched in the autocratic and ideological walls that had

bordered these states off from one another. Historians placed emphasis on the importance and imminence of overcoming historical and historiographical conflicts, and of fostering dialogue and reconciliation, while foreign policy research circles paid close attention to the prospects for a post-Cold War strategic realignment in the region. For regional analysts, economic interdependence developing out of China's "reform and openness" and the Soviet "transition" from socialism were seen as crucial. In Japan, the city of Niigata on the Japan Sea Coast initiated the Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia (ERINA), which actively promoted the establishment of a Special Economic Zone that ringed the Sea of Japan, bisecting national borders and incorporating the Russian Far East, Chinese Northeast, North Korea, and the eastern coast of South Korea.⁷ Sub-regional cooperation was one of the keys for sharing the Northeast Asian "commons." Even some US researchers, particularly living in the west coast approaching Asia via the Pacific Ocean, shed light on more cooperative links with Northeast Asia.⁸

It was not just in relation to Northeast Asia, of course, that the ending of the Cold War and lifting of restrictions on the movement of goods and capital across national boundaries was sufficient to spur confident predictions of a "borderless world" and the "end of the nation state."⁹ Nevertheless, for Northeast Asia in particular, initial optimism for the region rapidly gave way to despair and ultimately led to its apparent disappearance as a viable regional vehicle. This remains a difficult phenomenon to date, for while it is true that security issues have continuously plagued the region, North Korea's plans for nuclear enrichment and missile development, somewhat counter-intuitively, also fueled community discussion. The Six-Party Talks for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in the 2000s, consisting of the two Koreas, China, the United States, Japan, and Russia, offered a forum promising a broader and more comprehensive Northeast Asian regional security integration. Nevertheless, a focus on the region's inherent security issues appeared to undermine Northeast Asia's viability as a community of states able to push for closer integration. These include North Korea's persistence in pursuing nuclear weapons rendering the Six-Party talks a dead letter, Japan and North Korea remaining divided on issues of abduction and compensation, maritime boundary conflicts haunting Japan, South Korea, and China, and Russia's increasing marginality to the region.

It is this apparent absence of a viable community of states willing to engage in multilateral cooperation which appears to have overwhelmed earlier expectations regarding regional integration. From the mid-2000s onwards, the idea of Northeast Asia was itself increasingly replaced within official discourse by a series of alternative geographical imaginations, such as a reconceptualization of "East Asia" (suggesting the exclusion of Russia more and the redirection of the region towards Southeast Asia), "Greater Eurasia" (integrating the Russian Far East into central Russia and reorienting the continent towards Europe) or the "Indo-Pacific" (which in practice looks to develop a coalition of democratic, maritime states in opposition to a certain state on the continent). As time passed, the physical area and conceptual discourse of Northeast Asia were increasingly ignored. Already in 2010, in their paean to the existence of an inherently vibrant

and coherent region operating beneath the national level, Kent Calder and Min Ye were notable in making a positive case for Northeast Asia. However, their argument that cross-border policy coordination and transnational cultural linkages could overcome national security concerns had not been borne out by events since the book's publication.¹⁰

Notable events of the last few years, including the dramatic upsurge of national populism and the emergency measures introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, have emphasized the fragility of regional initiatives in not just Northeast Asia but also worldwide. It is valid to ask, therefore, why it is necessary that we look to study Northeast Asia as a region again now. The answer will be developed over the course of this volume, but we wish to emphasize at the outset that examining Northeast Asia as a region grants us perspectives which remain obscured by other means of analyzing this area of the world. We refer to that approach here as being concerned with Northeast Asia's geo-politics, the significance of which we shall elaborate on in the next section. The following section asserts the history and importance of understanding Northeast Asia as a geopolitical region, before we summarize the individual contributions of the chapters to the volume. The concluding section reiterates the importance of Northeast Asia's geo-politics for understanding the present and future of this region.

Classical Geopolitics and Northeast Asia's Geo-politics

The title of this collection invokes the geo-politics of Northeast Asia, rather than its geopolitics. The insertion of a hyphen is a deliberate one; our use of the term does not merely signal a variant spelling of the more common geopolitics. The understanding of geo-politics that we adopt in this collection and the term's applicability to Northeast Asia does build upon the great revival and interest in geopolitical understandings of the world and the effort which has been made since the 1980s to revive and critically engage with geopolitical ideas, but here we wish to signal some productive differences from what are generally understood to constitute geopolitical perspectives on the region.

This is because it is classical geopolitical perspectives which have increasingly come to characterize both academic and policy engagement with this corner of the world. As resignation regarding the possibilities for Northeast Asia as a community set in, it created the impression that Northeast Asia was destined to be a space of interstate contestation. Consequently, state perceptions of their security interests would determine the limits of cooperation that could be envisaged for the region. These security interests are understood with reference to geopolitical understandings of Northeast Asia, with the region serving as a stage for contestation between states. International relations between these states were irrevocably shaped by great-power competition, the rise of China, and the hegemonic contest between continental and maritime powers. Reading the region through such realist, state-centered lenses creates the impression that Northeast Asia is destined to be characterized by competition and division, and that the geopolitics that matters is that associated with the security concerns of its composite states. This

over-determines the region as a site of conflict, for the contesting geopolitical visions of these states, and most notably those of China and the United States, are presented as irreconcilable, and thus efforts at community building are adjudged naïve and inherently futile.¹¹

Such geopolitical framings of Northeast Asia reflect, and frequently regurgitate, ideas associated with the early-twentieth-century thinkers credited with the emergence of the concept, the likes of Mackinder, Mahan, Ratzel, Kjellen, and Spykman.¹² The classical geopolitics with which these thinkers are associated provides a vision of the world shaped by the intra-imperial competition of the early twentieth century, based upon a naturalized understanding of states as ranked into hierarchies. This worldview is characterized by a struggle for survival in which “successful” states expand their domain, while those which fail to adapt are destined for extinction.¹³ An individual state’s geopolitical prospects shift in response to changes in its spatial situation, which would be frequently driven by technological or institutional changes altering the meaning of its geography.

Under the post-Cold War conditions which prevailed in the 1990s and early 2000s, expectations existed regarding the possibilities for the development of an integrated globe superseding disputes between nations. The dream of a Northeast Asian community was expressed in just such an environment, which largely ran along the well-worn tracks associated with earlier periods of interest in liberal-institutionalism, interdependence, and theories of international integration. The fragmentation that became apparent in various regions of the world after 2010 allowed for the ideas and thinkers associated with classical geopolitics to be once again dusted off in order to explain the artificiality of regionalisms and inevitability of conflict within them. Therefore, when looking to understand the reasons for the “failure” of Northeast Asia, it is tempting to explain this in terms of such classical geopolitical ideas. Nevertheless, the various transformations experienced in Northeast Asia between the 1990s and the present, the ones analyzed by the chapters in this collection, were not determinative of that outcome, irrespective of whether they contributed to community building in Northeast Asia or not. For that reason, it is necessary to develop a perspective which goes beyond the blinkers provided by classical geopolitical analysis in order to understand the particularities of Northeast Asia as both a regional idea and an actual region of the world.

Thinking about the geo-politics of the region moves us beyond an understanding of regional politics as reducible to the perceived security interests of its constituent states. In pointing to the insufficiency of geopolitical explanations, we are building upon the legacy of critical geopolitics, which began to criticize such grand geopolitical narratives in the 1980s. This critical move was most comprehensively developed in the work of Gerald Toal, who drew upon Foucault’s notion of “bio-power” to highlight the importance of “geo-power,” and the authoritative writing of the earth conducted through geography.¹⁴ In this collection, we will seek to productively build upon Toal’s critical geopolitics¹⁵ in order to articulate three factors we see as crucial to the geo-political framework developed here to better understand the Northeast Asia region. These are

(1) the implicitly co-constitutive relationship between political spaces and political power. While it is power which brings political spaces into being, space enables this power of creation; (2) the analysis of regions must question the positivist assumptions embedded within the assumed objectivity of geopolitics and consider its affective dimensions; and (3) the mutability of spatial scales, and consequently the operations of political power, must be traced through multi-layered spaces such as region, state, and sub-region. These three factors are not independent but collectively transform how we understand the performance of politics in the region.

Geo-politics provides us with a flexible framework within which to understand how Northeast Asia functions as a region. In invoking Northeast Asia as a geo-political question, we would particularly highlight two issues of particular significance. First, the Northeast Asian geo-politics whose significance we assert here does not reject the importance of power politics in influencing the regional order. The region's constituent state actors are crucial determinants of politics in the region, as the chapters in the first section of this collection, in particular, will amply demonstrate. At the same time, a focus on geo-politics recognizes that the regional politics with which we are concerned are not reducible to the behavior of these states. Here we are really concerned with how Northeast Asia is practiced in the region itself, a specific, if ill-defined and contested, portion of the "geo" materialized at scales of political activity that run from the local to those affecting the region as a whole.

This is related to our second motivation for emphasizing the term geo-politics over that of geopolitics, which draws upon the "crisis of the hyphen" that Marco Antonsich noted for Europe's nation-states.¹⁶ Antonsich argued the hyphen represented the "increasingly problematic convergence between nation and state" in Europe.¹⁷ Here, it is deployed to highlight the gradual reduction of regional space to the behavior of state actors in analyses of Northeast Asia over the past thirty years. While the period in which a new future was anticipated for the Northeast Asian region, from the late-1980s to the 2000s, was characterized by attention also being placed on a variety of sub- and non-state actions, recent years have seen a notable reversion to state-centric analyses, which understand the region exclusively in terms of the security (perceptions) of these states. The adoption of geo-politics, with the region and what occurs there being both linked and separated by a hyphen, shows the problematic nature of this convergence of state and region. It also highlights Northeast Asia as a punctuated space, granted potential conceptual and geographical unity despite being riven by irreconcilable divisions between its constituent states. The significance of this regional dimension, in general and in the case of Northeast Asia, will be reflected upon in the next section.

Region as Geo-political Subject

The analytical focus of this book on a region rather than individual states allows us to reflect on its geo-politics. Northeast Asia provides a more amorphous subject to slot into views of the world drawn from "nowhere" than national states,

with the putative certainty of their spatial extent inscribed into the map. By contrast, the notion of Northeast Asia lacks the conceptual and geographical solidity associated with the national states of this world. Furthermore, as has been already noted, Northeast Asia is primarily understood as a stage for geopolitics, rather than as an actor within them.

This reflects a situation in which the borders of the current Northeast Asian region remain somewhat ill-defined, and political contestation over Northeast Asia is not clearly demarcated by the national boundaries of its constituent states. Although analyses of Europe, for example, also frequently focus on the contested question of the region's external boundaries, this is related to discussions surrounding the institutional structures through which Europe finds political reflection—most obviously today, the European Union. It is through institutions that something as amorphous as a continent and region of the world, one made up of many tens of national states, becomes open to being analyzed as an international actor and in relation to other national states. The EU, therefore, works to grant Europe a geopolitical, and indeed geo-political, existence in much the same way as states.¹⁸ In a similar manner, in Southeast Asia, the “imagined reality” of the region¹⁹ enabled the post-Cold War emergence of a variety of organizational processes, epitomized by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to grant it an institutional coherence, with the result that fairly clear limits to the region are able to be demarcated. As Ha and Iwashita detail in Chapter 1, it is not only with these two regions that Northeast Asia is able to be compared. Whatever part of the world is adopted as a point of comparison, however, it is the case that the significance of that particular portion of the geo is not to be found in an absence of conflict and contestation among the state's which constitute the region. In this respect, Northeast Asia is a region like any other.

Indeed, when the region's origins are considered, Northeast Asia, in contrast to the institutionalized tributary relations between the “Sinicized states” of East Asia, represents a space characterized by a struggle between its constituent states to define and defend their territories. We can date the beginnings of its modern iteration to the appearance of the Russian state as an international actor at the eastern end of the Eurasian landmass. From the late-seventeenth century onwards, Northeast Asia develops a space of imperial competition between this interloper and East Asia's international society. Competition descended into conflict on numerous occasions, most notably around the turn of the nineteenth century and again towards middle of the twentieth. Conflict was accompanied by the movement of vast numbers of people into and around Northeast Asia, as Japanese increasingly migrated to the continent, to Korea, Shanghai, and the Russian Far East, where they were joined Chinese and Koreans as well as the various peoples of the Russian Empire.²⁰

However, following Japan's failure to shape the region and the Second World War, Northeast Asia became another site of Cold War competition between the United States and Russia. Japan was placed under the protection of the United States, whereas the Korean Peninsula was divided, fought over, and split into two states. Competition over Korea has characterized Northeast Asia as a region, and

as this volume also make clear, is still central to the region today, even if its scale and impact are being transformed (see Figure 0.1). The Cold War contest shaped lives even in the absence of open conflict. Many of the region's diaspora populations had been weaponized as instigators of or justifications for imperial advance, so after 1945 efforts were made to erect hard borders throughout the region. Mobility within Cold War Northeast Asia was largely halted between the socialist (Soviet Union, China, North Korea) and capitalist (Japan, South Korea) blocs and seriously curtailed by each state at its borders. Of course, this did not mean the absolute disappearance of movement. Military confrontation between China and the Soviet Union in the late-1960s reduced cross-border interactions, but prior to this, exchanges between the two regimes had been extensive. Although little traveled across the Ceasefire line that divided North Korea and South Korea after 1953, ferries and flights linked Japan and South Korea, while Niigata and Sakaiminato were "gateways" to North Korea, whose northern borders with both China and the Soviet Union also remained porous.

Ultimately more significant, however, was economic circulation within the capitalist bloc. Attention to Northeast Asia can be dated to when South Korea and Taiwan showed signs of following Japan's economic trajectory towards the end of the 1970s. This promoted an interest in the regional conditions which made such growth possible²¹ and led neighboring states to seek to utilize this dynamism in order to kick-start their own moribund domestic economies through the development of cross-border linkages. This goal motivated both Gorbachev's Vladivostok Initiative of 1986, which emphasized the place of Russia and Mongolia in discussions of the region's future, and the United States' increasing economic and security interests in the region. The formerly hard borders which had characterized Northeast Asia were well on their way to crumbling by the end of the 1980s, after which the end of the Cold War accelerated the process, as detailed at the beginning of this introduction.

By the early 1990s, then, Northeast Asia was the regional vehicle through which Mongolia, Northeast China, and the Russian Far East were to be integrated with Japan and Korea.²² In stark contrast to the general impression of Northeast Asia's regional failure, this integration has proceeded at a tremendous pace. Regional economic interdependence between Japan, South Korea, and China has expanded rapidly. Although both the Russian Far East and North Korea are dependent on China rather than integral to the region, and there are sectoral and other fluctuations,²³ the volume of goods and people (until early 2020 in the latter instance) moving across the region's international borders is vast. In that sense, the integration anticipated with the collapse of the Cold War system has come to pass. However, this integration remains at the level of material infrastructure and has not been translated into improved political relations between the region's states, or the occasion to develop regional institutions. Northeast Asia's states continue to struggle to actualize the integration promised by ever-expanding economic interdependence.

Key for this collection is that its attention to geo-politics places the focus on the different political scales at which this Northeast Asia region holds significance.

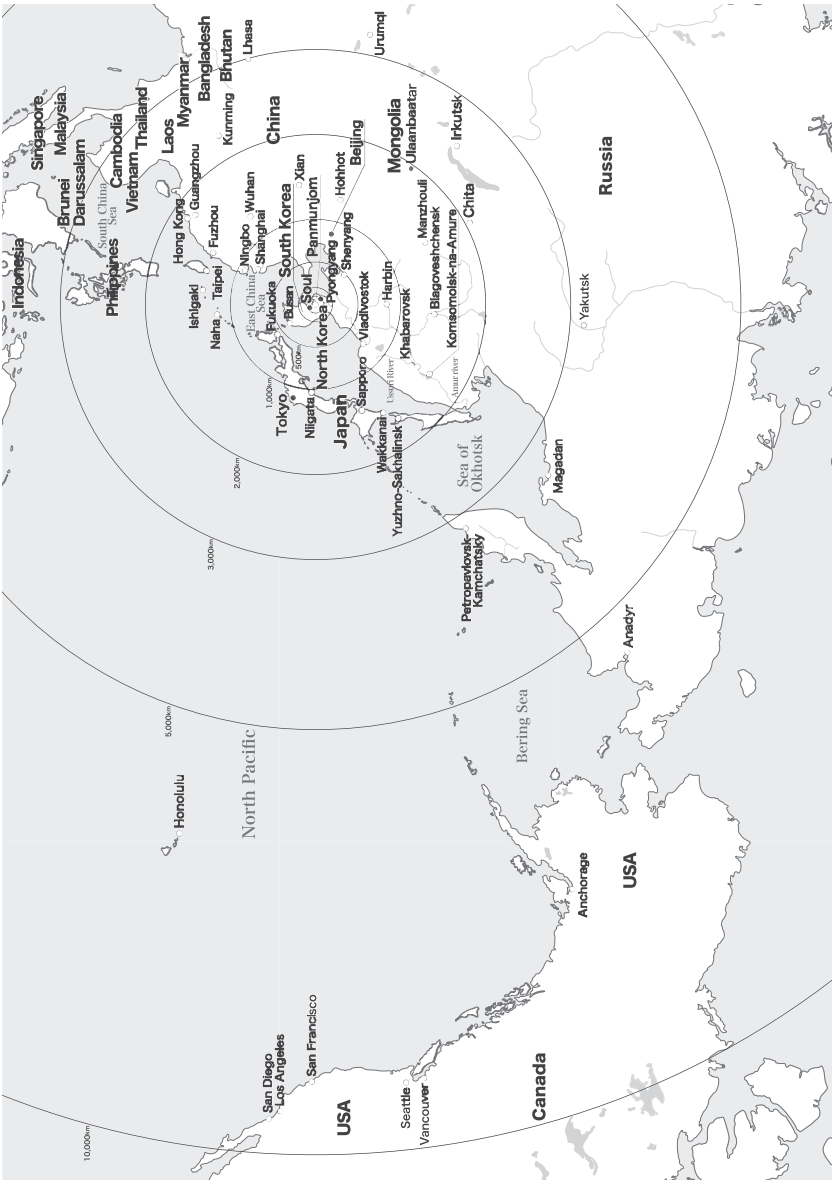


Figure 0.1 Scaling Northeast Asia's Geo-politics: Flipped map of the region, centered on the Korea Peninsula

It is the relation between the different scales which constitute Northeast Asia—from the state level up to the regional and global levels, and down through the sub-regional, provincial, and local levels is crucial for analyzing various trends reshaping the region. The chapters in this collection highlight the ways in which macro/micro realities are frequently distorted by states themselves. By foregrounding these shifting scales, we grant greater attention to local political life and identify within it the driving forces determining “big” regional developments, largely overlooked in previous work on the region. This adds a new dimension to other regional and sub-regional studies, tracing issues through the varied scales at which they impinge on the region and its imagination. Looking up from the contested spaces that exist between the states of the region to the region itself enables us to assert how they shape not just interstate relations but also the character of the region as a whole.

Outline of the Chapters

Our focus on geo-politics features a number of phenomena necessary for analyzing the Northeast Asian region, highlighting the importance of Russia, and focusing on Japan’s perspective on this multiscalar region through an analysis of international relations, low politics and borderland developments, and regional legal, economic, ideational, and societal trends. Although it is not comprehensive in its coverage of Northeast Asia, with both Taiwan and Mongolia conspicuously absent, this should be considered a challenge and provocation for the future.

In Chapter 1, Yong-Chool Ha and Akihiro Iwashita draw on the geo-political perspective outlined in this Introduction in order to provide an overview of the historical background of the region and point to the various issues which are seen as plaguing it into the present. This sets the stage for the chapters which follow, which are divided into three parts focusing on distinct scales at which the region operates in Northeast Asia. Part I, “Reconsidering Geo-Political Pathways,” examines the ongoing reconfiguration of power relations in the region. Chapter 2 by Yoshifumi Nakai analyzes the “Transformation of China,” focusing on its post-1990 transformation from a Northeast Asian regional power into a global one. Nakai highlights how as the United States began to perceive China’s global reach as a threat, China responded by demonstrating that its capacity now extended to other parts of the world, with its influence running through Central and Southeast Asia to Europe. Northeast Asia, Nakai argues, has a minor role for China today, although both economic and security concerns keep it engaged in this region. The American response is the subject of Chapter 3, in which Yasuhiro Izumikawa examines the “Impact of the Donald Trump Presidency” in order to trace out his impact on regional integration. As is well known, Trump’s unilateral approach toward the world (“American First”) also made its effects felt among Northeast Asian countries, while Japan and, to a lesser extent, South Korea endeavored to maintain Trump’s support, China and Russia developed their relationship against a background of an increasingly erratic US administration. Izumikawa also follows the current US president Joseph Biden’s new

policies toward Northeast Asia and concludes with a balance sheet of Trump's impact. The US engagement with Northeast Asia, like China's beyond it, guarantees that Northeast Asia's security contestation is not restricted to states operating in the region. This is emphasized in Chapter 4 by Mitsuhiro Mimura on "Crises for North Korea," which analyzes North Korea's domestic issues and the ructions it causes in the rest of the region. Mimura reminds us that Northeast Asia remains centered around the Korean peninsula and that the prospects for the region as a whole remain dependent on developments at its heart.

Part II, on "(B)ordering Society and the Region," examines people's lives at various levels at and beyond the sovereign space of the region's states. In Chapter 5, "Maritime Challenges," Yuji Fukuhara provides a comprehensive overview of the competition over fishing grounds among Japan, South Korea, China, and North Korea. The seas of Northeast Asia have been complicated by the region's adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Territorial disputes here predate UNCLOS but have been turbocharged by it. However, the author proposes modest measures to overcome this situation, setting out how agreement over these spaces in between could refract through levels of political competition in Northeast Asia. Chapter 6, by Norio Horie on "Chinese Land Deals and Migration," also provides a more positive outlook on the region's contested edges by examining the Sino-Russian borderlands. Focusing on largely unnoticed but positive interactions between Russian and Chinese locals, the chapter reminds us that interstitial relations matter for international ones. In Chapter 7, "Developments at Border Islands," Naoki Amano analyzes the regional "edges" of countries and focuses on the Japanese examples of Okinawa and Sakhalin. Applying the notion of a "phantom border," Amano deftly details how perceptions by locals of their relations with the state have implications for regional politics and identity. Further work in this area will help us to think about the regional order from the bottom-up.

The chapters in Part III on "A Shared Future?" provide us with a series of lenses through which to think holistically about the region as a whole. In Chapter 8, on "Competing Sovereignty Regimes," Mihoko Kato analyzes the operation of sovereignty in the region, how its varied conceptions structure competition, and the inherent dynamism these differing understandings grant Northeast Asia. Kato distinguishes the core of sovereignty for the region's countries and concludes that understanding differences may be key for future community building. Shinichiro Tabata's examination of "Economic Integration" in Chapter 9 attempts to discover clues in the economic sphere for the possible integration on Northeast Asia. The spatiality of economic planning is shown by Tabata's attention to its regional characteristics and expression in foreign direct investment schemes and outcomes across Northeast Asia. Political alignments are also at stake. In Chapter 10, David Wolff highlights the region's features as being "dynasties, corruption and hostage taking," which he points to as providing a lowest common denominator in searching for the possibility of regional identification. Chapter 11, by Naomi Chi, looks at the "Politics of (Mis)Trust" that pervades the region, drawing connections between social and psychological issues as they manifest themselves both within and between the societies of Northeast Asia. The question of how to deal

with questions of “division and inclusion” at various scales has pervaded several of the chapters, and Chi’s work emphasizes that working to fill in social cracks along and across national borders is crucial to developing new movements towards community building in Northeast Asia.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, Akihiro Iwashita and Edward Boyle point towards some possible future directions for Northeast Asia’s countries and its people. Accepting the history of contest in the region does not mean acceding to its contemporary expression and representation through recourse to realist geopolitics, hard sovereign walls, and international competition. The idea of a Northeast Asian region also retains significance as a space within which cooperation is able to be conceived. The final chapter, therefore, identifies the imperative of retooling this myth of Northeast Asia in order to create a regional community within which co-existence in the face of manifold challenges, including fresh ones like Covid-19, is possible.

The chapters in the volume collectively emphasize the continued relevance of territory, international boundaries, and sovereignty claims for understanding the politics of the world today.²⁴ Northeast Asia is frequently characterized by its territorial disputes, border issues, and contested sovereignties, and this characterization does not merely reflect relations between states in the region but impinges onto the imagination of the region itself. At the same time, however, the collection demonstrates that Northeast Asia cannot be understood solely as an arena of conflict, or as a space whose character is determined by the antagonistic relations existing between the national states making up the region. The discursive and political space of Northeast Asia is constructed out of these geo-political challenges to the sharp international boundaries characteristic of the geopolitical imagination. This collection expands the possibilities of Northeast Asia out beyond the contested elements between the region’s states, pointing to regional political patterns operating above and below the national level in this particular portion of the geo.

Notes

- 1 Kevin G. Cai, *The Political Economy of East Asia: Regional and National Dimensions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
- 2 Peter Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, eds., *Network Power: Japan and Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
- 3 Tsuneo Akaha, ed., *Politics and Economics in Northeast Asia: Nationalism and Regionalism in Contention* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).
- 4 See Kenji Horiuchi, *Rosia Kyokutochiikino Kokusai Kyoryokuto Chiho Seifu: Chuo-Chiho Kankeikarano Bunseki* [International Cooperation and Local Government in the Russian Far East: Analysis on the Central-Local Relations] (Tokyo: Kokusai Shoin, 2008). The idea has a longer history, of course, see Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- 5 Haruki Wada, *Tohoku Asia Kyodo no Ie: Shin Chiikishugi Sengen* [The Common House of Northeast Asia: Manifesto for a New Regionalism] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2003).
- 6 Hisako Tsuji, *The Tumen River Development Programme: Its History and Current Status of as 2004* (Niigata: Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia, 2004) <https://www.erina.or.jp/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/0404e.pdf>; Honda Kenkichi et al., *Hokuto Ajia Keizaiken no Keisei: Kannihonkai Keizai Koryu* [Formation of Northeast Economy Zone: The Japan Sea Rim Economic Exchanges] (Tokyo: Shinhyoron, 1995).

- 7 On ERINA, see the following website: <https://www.erina.or.jp/en/>
- 8 The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR), based in Seattle (U.S.), was one of the leading institutions for covering Northeast Asia, including Russia's presence in the region, in the 1990s. In Washington D.C., its significance can be measured by The Brookings Institution's Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies (CNAPS). This book shares their views concerning the Russian impact on the region.
- 9 As advocated by the Japanese "business strategist", Kenichi Ohmae. The books have arguably had a greater significance as "straw-man" arguments for borderless globalization, but they were significant publications nevertheless.
- 10 Kent Calder and Min Ye, *The Making of Northeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010). While the authors narrate the efforts made for regionalism and institution-building in Chapter 1, however, Russia is largely excluded. Here we consistently make the case for the importance of incorporating Russia firmly within Northeast Asia.
- 11 Samuel S. Kim, *The International Relations of Northeast Asia* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004); T. J. Pempel, *The Economy-Security Nexus in Northeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2015); Gilbert Rozman's series "Strategic Thought in Northeast Asia" (five volumes from 2006–11, Springer).
- 12 Particularly, interest in Mahan's ideas regarding the inevitable conflict between land and maritime states is currently experiencing yet another revival in the region, and not only in China. See also Nakai's chapter.
- 13 See for instance Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy And Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1998); Robert. D. Kaplan, "The Geography of Chinese Power: How Far Can Beijing Reach on Land and at Sea?" *Foreign Affairs* 89:3 (2010): 22–41; Maxim Trudolyubov, "Russia's Catastrophic Geopolitics," The Russia File blog, April 20, 2022: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/russias-catastrophic-geopolitics>
- 14 Toal parses "geo-power" as the "ensemble of technologies of power concerned with the governmental production and management of territorial space," see Gearoid O'Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 6.
- 15 In its most recent iteration, this refers to, first, the geopolitical field, for which critical geopolitics provides a more expansive and open conception of power structures; second, geopolitical cultures, and the emotional and affective foundations for strategic thinking; and, third, the geopolitical condition, with emerging technologies constantly changing how geopolitics is experienced, understood, and practiced. See Gerald Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest Over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
- 16 The authors thank Paul Richardson for reminding them of this connection.
- 17 Marco Antonsich, "On Territory, the Nation-State and the Crisis of the Hyphen," *Progress in Human Geography* 33:6 (2009): 789–806, 790.
- 18 While also serving as an institutional vehicle with which the geopolitical visions of its member-states either conform or confront, as seen most obviously with BREXIT.
- 19 Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London: Verso, 1998), 8.
- 20 See Edward Boyle and Akihiro Iwashita, "Bordering and Scaling Northeast Asia," *Asian Geographer* 38:2 (2021): 119–138.
- 21 Bruce Cumings, "The Origins and Development of the Northeast Asian Political Economy: Industrial Sectors, Product Cycles, and Political Consequences," *International Organization* 38:1 (1980): 1–40.
- 22 Gilbert Rozman, "Flawed Regionalism: Reconceptualizing Northeast Asia in the 1990s," *The Pacific Review* 11:1 (1998): 1–27.
- 23 With South Korea's recent diversification away from Japan following the latter's imposition of export controls in July 2019, hardly the epitome of community.
- 24 Klaus Dodds, *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

1 Debunking the Myth of Northeast Asia

Yong-Chool Ha and Akihiko Iwashita

Viewed as a region, Northeast Asia remains a discordant patchwork, a series of monotone political entities awkwardly stitched together to create a blanket that covers little of substance. The Introduction to this volume has emphasized the sense of disillusion which surrounds Northeast Asia today. This stems not only from the absolute failure of Northeast Asia to develop the institutions of regionalism and thus a political framework within which community building can flourish. It is also because of the relative failure of Northeast Asia is understood in comparison with other regions, not just worldwide but also in Northeast Asia's Eurasian neighborhood.

These regional failings have become a truism over the past decade, at least, but here we wish to, if not falsify this perception, at least qualify it somewhat. This chapter asserts the importance of a different perspective with which to understand regional changes to Northeast Asia. The main contention it offers is that progress in community building in Northeast Asia should not just be understood as being reflected in the emergence or otherwise of a better-integrated region, or by comparison with other integrative regional projects elsewhere in the world. While always maintaining a comparative perspective, it will emphasize that the historical context in Northeast Asia constitutes the basis for a more rounded understanding of where Northeast Asia stands today in terms of integration and community building. A closer attention to these regional geo-politics, rather than merely their geopolitics, offers opportunities to view the region in a more positive fashion.

Relational Regionalism and Its Problems

It is frequently remarked how Northeast Asia has made very little progress in terms of regionalism. When this absence of progress is contrasted with the utopian visions of the 1990s, one reason often mentioned for the failure of Northeast Asia's regional longings is the fact that the region suffers from a "Cold War structural continuity." That is, while the collapse of the Soviet Union initially drew the air from ballooning regional security issues in the 1990s, creating the space within which expansive regional dreams were able to be envisaged and developed, subsequently the increasing importance of China along with China's

material and ideological support for North Korea has fostered the preservation of the region's Cold War contours. Northeast Asia continues to be divided down the middle. Russia's recent re-engagement with the region, indeed, is predicated on its ability to slot neatly back into this bifurcated alliance structure, in which the various states of Northeast Asia are forced onto one side or the other of an absolute security divide, which is constantly reinforced through a series of ongoing security issues affecting the region. These include North Korea's persistence in pursuing nuclear weapons rendering the Six-Party talks a dead letter, Japan and North Korea remaining divided on the abduction issue, and the maritime boundary conflicts dividing Japan, South Korea, Russia, and China. Seemingly as a result of this fundamental security divide, Northeast Asia is today only imagined, a region without a community.

As the Introduction has suggested, this situation is an anomalous one in the face of regional developments in Europe and Southeast Asia. In both of these regions, formerly riven by interstate rivalries dramatically exacerbated by the ideological fault lines of the Cold War, the period since the 1990s has seen the development of institutional mechanisms for integration. Notably, compared to Southeast Asia in the post-Cold War period, "progress" in Northeast Asia has been slow. Despite an even greater regional diversity in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion, Southeast Asia has achieved a considerable level of interdependency between its constituent political units. Nevertheless, despair regarding Northeast Asian integration and its community prospects is not only over the region's inability to give rise to a European Union at the eastern littoral of the Eurasian continent, instead reflecting the fact that even in comparison with other regions Northeast Asia lags behind. We would quickly highlight here the examples of North America and South Asia.

In North America, while national borders in the region are unchanged, economic interdependence has been significantly developed through frameworks like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This has remained the case despite the tough and sometimes isolationistic words expressed by the likes of former US President Donald Trump (see also Izumikawa's chapter here). It is widely recognized that Mexico has become such an integral part of US economy that the United States cannot live without Mexico. Along with such deepening economic relationships, of course, the region is obviously facing a whole host of challenging issues, including cross-border challenges such as immigration, environmental issues, disaster management, and infectious disease control. These frequently impact upon national relations between the United States and Mexico, in particular, but have not yet significantly affected the implementation of regional integrationist frameworks predicated on mutual dependence and integration.

A more relevant case for Northeast Asia is perhaps that of South Asia, which may provide a more suitable comparison than its Southeast Asian neighbor. Here, the end of the Cold War did not fundamentally alter an awkward equilibrium that largely pertained between India, in the region, and China, beyond it, but disputing India's border along almost the entire length of the Himalayas. The uneasy equilibrium between the two was based on an underlying agreement that neither

side wanted the situation to deteriorate. The stability of this arrangement was, though, increasingly disrupted by China's engagement with other South Asian nations, which undermines India's claims to regional hegemony. Yet, despite this openly fractious regional structure, South Asia's states have managed to develop and operate a potential vehicle for integration, in the form of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Established in 1985 with its headquarters in Kathmandu, the organization has contributed little to high political issues in the region, such as the Kashmir disputes. However, in providing a forum for the region's states to meet, and at one point even seeking the gradual incorporation of Afghanistan, it has arguably offered a more effective institutional framework than Northeast Asia has achieved to date.

In comparison with these areas of the world, in which ideas of regional integration have not been successfully realized, Northeast Asia's failings are still apparent but less severe. It is in relation to the great regional exemplar of Europe, of course, that Northeast Asia's regional deficiencies becomes stark. This comparison gives rise to the pessimism now characteristic of invocations of Northeast Asian community building. The most frequently mentioned differences between Europe and Asia are the extent to which historical problems are resolved, the degree of common cultural heritage between the societies of the region and the intensity of nationalism which is present there.¹ Given that it is the last of these, or at least the behavior of the states with which it is associated, which defines the prominence of the other two, and it is clear that state behavior in the region is widely considered as the primary impediment to an integrated regional future.

Clarifying differences based on comparisons between Europe and Northeast Asia serves an important purpose in suggesting the problems and obstacles that should be overcome in the future of Northeast Asia.² What is problematic, however, is that these comparisons may provide an overly bleak prognosis for Northeast Asia's future. They do so because of their over-emphasis on the states of the region, which leaves little room for considering the detailed analyses of internal and external dynamics which are relevant to the emerging regional order in Northeast Asia. A clear example of this is nationalism: rampant nationalistic fervor in a country is generally viewed as a serious barrier to building integration. Various types of nationalism have been mentioned in this context, including defensive nationalism, historical nationalism, sentimental nationalism, aggressive nationalism, state nationalism, and open nationalism.³ However, such studies on nationalism have become a labeling game without much substance. Frequently, survey results are used to justify certain labels. Despite the various labels which have been appended to different types of nationalism emerging in Northeast Asia, and the many studies that address the issue of nationalism, there has been little real progress in understanding what the nature of nationalism in the region has been, and the effects different types, level, and dynamics of nationalism have on the project of Northeast Asian regionalism. This is in contrast to the European case where the achievement of regional integration in spite of the presence and operation of various types of nationalism is well-documented.⁴

In short, the unintended consequences of comparing the present status of Northeast Asia with other regions are serious in that they do not raise appropriate questions unique to Northeast Asia, or supply answers which have serious implications for the nature of the regional order in Northeast Asia. To formulate such questions, it is essential to correctly understand the status of the Northeast Asian regional order for *particularities* of the region to be understood in comparison with what is occurring elsewhere.

Northeast Asia under the “Cold Peace”

Great-Power Rivalry in the Region

States are granted overwhelming significance in the analysis of the Northeast Asian region because of its “Cold War structural continuity,” which draws attention to both the persistence of security issues between the region’s constituent members and the role of security concerns in drawing external powers into the region. Nevertheless, despite the surfeit of security concerns felt by the region’s constituent states, the post-Cold War era has given way to a nervous “cold peace” rather than the outbreak of open conflict. This highlights that focusing solely on the failings of the region by comparison with more integrated areas of the world fails to capture the significance of the region itself.

Examining the region’s states cannot explain the curious “cold peace” that characterizes contemporary interstate relations in Northeast Asia. It is argued here that these states must be understood as parts of the region, a region that itself has its own contested geography and history. A brief historical review and analysis of the Northeast Asian region may therefore provide clues to answering this question. The nationalism which supposedly structures the interactions of these states with one another today does not operate within a vacuum but has been conditioned by the prior history of state interaction and the subsequent interpretation of those interactions, which shapes how the region’s states view both each other and the region as a whole.

Therefore, to explain how these interactions shape regional behavior in the present, we need to know how they ordered understandings of the past. It is generally recognized that Northeast Asia has experienced a series of different regional orders since the mid-nineteenth century. The evolution of a Northeast Asian regional order can be divided into four periods: (1) the region’s development as a borderland operating in the interstitial spaces between East Asia’s traditional tributary system-based order. The Russian advance into the consciousness and territories of East Asia’s states fostered the emergence of this region down to 1840, when the Opium War occurred; (2) the era of imperialism and international struggle over the region, which ran from 1840 to 1951, and saw efforts by Russia and Japan successively, in collaboration and competition with external powers, to dominate this regional space; (3) the Cold War era, initially an extension of superpower competition between the United States and Soviet

Union, that would be complicated, although not reduced, by the Sino-Soviet split, before the collapse of the Soviet Union signaled; and (4) the emergence of the post-Cold War region, which may be formally said to have begun in 1991.⁵

Each of these four periods has been characterized by security contestation between internal and external states to the region, although these designations are themselves put into question by the process of contestation. As for Russia at the outset of our periodization,⁶ so for the United States today, involvement in this regional space has consistently incorporated external states into the regional order. China was the hegemonic power prior to the Western imperial advance into Asia in the nineteenth century, and Japan became a regional hegemon after she defeated China and Russia around the turn of the twentieth century. However, the region has more often been characterized by quests for hegemony than its realization. During the Cold War period, Northeast Asia became a focal point of contention between the capitalist and communist blocs until the 1970s, after which two triangular relationships developed. Japan and South Korea entered an alliance relationship with the United States, while North Korea played a game of equidistance between China and the Soviet Union. Under the power balance that developed between these triangles, open military conflicts were avoided down to the end of the Cold War, although the region's states were repeatedly involved in conflict outside of the region.

The end of the Cold War brought about a unipolar system where the United States, the *status quo* power, emerged as a regional hegemon. Under such a regional structure, Northeast Asia entered the post-Cold War peace. This unipolar world, and moment of American hegemony, did not last long, however. With rapid economic growth and increasing military potential, China has emerged as the new great power in the region to the extent that it competes with the United States in Northeast Asia. As a rising power, China is not in a position to change the rules of game on its own but is increasingly challenging US hegemony in security and economic matters. Given the increasing tension between the two superpowers, the regional order continues to reflect an increasingly unstable peace.⁷

This unstable peace has been further challenged in recent years by North Korea's nuclear development. While the United States, China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea are adamantly opposed to the full nuclearization of North Korea in principle, a consensus on how to approach North Korean nuclear issues has not been established due to different interests in and positions on North Korea. This absence of consensus reflects the fact that, at a regional level, all the countries in the region are extremely sensitive to sovereignty issues. The fact that North Korea and South Korea have not yet become judicially "normal states" contributes to states and societies in the region being extremely sensitive with regard to sovereignty issues. Ironically, the incomplete-ness of state sovereignty in much of the region has made it extremely difficult to bring about territorial changes, due to each state's determination to demonstrate its absolute authority. Superpower competition and this sensitivity to sovereignty in Northeast Asia are the main reasons for the unsettled nature of the peace in the region.

Fractured but Effective: Behind the Response to Covid-19

While this somewhat frigid peace continues to be maintained, Northeast Asia has also drawn international attention recently because of the efficient and effective management of the Covid-19 pandemic in many countries in the region. China was the first country that had to struggle with the virus's rapid spread when the outbreak started in Wuhan in late-2019 and responded by moving aggressively to contain the virus. Both Taiwan and South Korea have at different times been praised for their proactive policies towards the challenge posed by the pandemic. The record in Japan has been more mixed, while Russia's response draws little interest, but the Far East of the country, at least, remains largely unaffected. Northeast Asian countries appear to have managed Covid-19 better than countries in the rest of the world.⁸

Why has Northeast Asia relatively been more successful in preventing the spread of Covid-19? Several factors can explain the successful management of the pandemic in Northeast Asia, particularly in the low rate of the spread of the virus and the death toll of patients. For example, Northeast Asia's states are largely characterized by the maintenance of tight controls over their international borders, at least partially because of the ongoing insecurity felt within the region. Although the transnational flows of people and economic interdependence in the region have rapidly developed for the past twenty years, all of Northeast Asia's states retain the ability to close their borders against the outside world, irrespective of their level of economic development. Obviously, China and North Korea have been stricter than Japan and South Korea in terms of border control, but Japan, in particular, has been remarkable amongst the G7 for its willingness to suspend the entry of foreigners into the country. Domestically, the focus is on the relative control of states over their societies as a factor in the success of policies seeking to contain the virus. In countries such as Japan and South Korea, these policies are not enforced in the same way as those undertaken by China and North Korea, but societal cohesion is widely recognized as having been important in managing the pandemic. Both Japan and South Korea are notorious for "domestic tuning pressure" and "volunteering agreement." South Korea and Japan did not resort to the enforcement of control measures like those seen in Europe and China, but their citizens did not resist their governments' instruction and agreed to largely comply with *de facto* lockdowns on their own volition.

As the preceding paragraph suggests, Northeast Asia is notorious for its rigid maintenance of state sovereignty (see Kato in Chapter 8 on this). Even as "globalization" became the watchword in the rest of the world, Northeast Asia was recognized as one of the areas backsliding with regard to loosening traditional state-centered understandings of sovereign rights. However, it is interesting to note that the strong sense of sovereign rights prevalent in the region is clearly key to the success of its states in managing the spread of Covid-19. This does not only apply to the Covid-19 issue. The good track record of Northeast Asia in deterring terrorism is another example to consider when reflecting on positive developments in the region. Looking at the Northeast Asian region as a whole, it

is remarkable that the “cold peace” which has been maintained in the post-Cold War era has not only been between its states. These states have also been effective in maintaining security within their borders, too.

This is not because of the stability of the order, or because of an absence of military flare-ups. Nor are the countries of the region necessarily free from terrorism; both China and Russia have experienced and brutally responded to separatist sentiments in Xinjiang and Chechnya. While these societies are therefore not immune from terrorism, little of it occurs in relation to Northeast Asia. Of most significance within the region has been China’s harsh repression of Hong Kong’s democracy movements and signaling towards Taiwan, but it is not yet clear how this will affect the region’s coherence (hints may be found in Chapter 10 by Wolff). Despite these actions, and worsening US-China relations, the region remains currently cool enough for peace to be maintained. One may also cite North Korea as a terrorist state, but North Korea is not terrorist in the manner of Al-Qaeda or other terrorist groups, which do not control clearly bounded territories or belong to international organizations, including the United Nations. More than a hundred countries have established diplomatic ties with North Korea, although Japan and the United States are not among them. North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and missile tests are also obviously destabilizing for regional security, but its behavior has not yet resulted in the outbreak of open conflict.

This maintenance of peace, both domestically and between states, has been possible despite the absence of much coordination between state parties in the region. While efforts have been made to establish regional institutions, or simulacra of them like the Six-Party Talks discussed later, they have not taken hold. As such, most regional dynamics have been bilateral in nature. This applies not only to diplomatic relations. Information flows are restricted within the region, and consequently societal engagement remains largely bilateral, too, as do economic exchanges (shown by Tabata in Chapter 9). The inability of the region’s states to resolve their territorial issues shows that bilateral negotiations do not correlate with effective resolution. Yet, despite all these problems, there is little conflict in the region, either between its states or within them. This applies even to the “irrational” state of North Korea, whose manipulation of bilateral dynamics was shown during the Trump years. This absence of conflict is thus a key feature of the Cold War peace in Northeast Asia. The dream we had in the 1990s dissipated, but relations within the region itself have frozen in place to constitute the “cold peace” of the post-Cold War period—a paradoxical peace.

Development, Security, and Northeast Asia’s Future

An “Asian Paradox”?

The dreams of the 1990s were founded on the establishment of exchange across borders which had previously been impenetrable. Although the broader hopes to which this gave rise have proved ephemeral, the phenomena of increasing

economic integration have only become more pronounced as time has gone by. However, when this economic reality is considered in relation to the region's security situation, it has been asked whether this constitutes a particular puzzle for the Northeast Asian region—that is, whether it represents an “Asian paradox.”⁹ The “Asian paradox” refers to a situation in which increasing economic interdependence is present despite the absence of any fundamental change in the region's security situation. To be specific, the situation is seen as constituting a paradox because of the fact that, within Northeast Asia, the value of intra-regional trade among the members of the region is over 50% of their total trade volume, which is close to the level of inter-regional trade which exists among EU member states. Obviously, however, in Northeast Asia, there has not emerged an equivalent regional framework or security institution.

This is viewed as a paradox because it defies International Relations theories such as neo-functionalism, which is based on the spill-over idea which assumes positive impact of economic interdependence on security issues. However, a closer look at the economic development pattern in Northeast Asia gives a clue as to the origin of the “Asian paradox.” Asian modernization is based on state-led late industrialization. One of the motives of late industrialization comes from the sense of backwardness and thus inferiority. As such, the most important goal late industrialization seeks to achieve is a desire for recognition and status in the international community. If this is well understood, there is nothing paradoxical about the “Asian paradox”; it is instead to be expected that the achievement of economic development would be accompanied by a fanatical attention to the rights of the state. Rather than calling the current developmental stage in Northeast Asia a paradox, what is needed is an effort to understand the international implications of this domestic economic agenda.

Issues related to the Asian paradox raise two important intellectual challenges. The first is how to understand the historical trajectories of Northeast Asia and its states based on detailed historical and comparative understandings of economic and political developments in the region, rather than simply applying Western intellectual frameworks to its states. This relates to the second challenge, which is how to understand the behavior of those states beyond the application of international relations (IR) theories. Instead of deploying such theories and comparing the Northeast Asia that emerges with the Western experience, the paradox needs to be understood as one stage of a long-term historical path that Northeast Asia has been treading based on its own historical, cultural, and politico-economic memories and developments. This needs to be factored into efforts to approach Northeast Asia as a region. The question of sovereignty considered in relation to the “Asian paradox” poses serious intellectual challenges for approaching and understanding Northeast Asia, for instance. The fact that countries in the region are still determined to maintain absolute sovereignty over increasingly porous state territorial boundaries under globalization highlights the need for fresh approaches to sovereignty in order to accommodate such behavior.

Based on the history and developmental patterns in Northeast Asia, conventional wisdom often argues that the main source of change to the regional order

is most likely to come from state elites in different countries and changes from the bottom will be secondary. The reason for this is that it is widely accepted that modernization in Northeast Asia was initiated by the states rather than society. Also, the experience of the Cold War in which states monopolized security decisions without leaving much room for society should be taken into consideration. Development in North Korean nuclear issues represents a case where state initiatives are critical, while dynamics in border areas can be understood as a case of change from the bottom. While the state retains primacy, however, it is clear that the region must be layered up at multiple scales, including at that of international relations between states. It is here that Northeast Asia confronts its biggest obstacle right at its center, in the form of North Korea.

Regional Security Going Nuclear

The Korean peninsula has been a focal point of Northeast Asian security since the late nineteenth century. The Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) could be considered as having constituted Korean wars prior to the Korean War (1949–1953), as they were conflicts featuring major powers involved in competition for influence on the peninsula. As such the situation in and around the Korean peninsula is a barometer for security in Northeast Asia. Following the end of the Cold War, the situation on the Korean peninsula has hardened, and the conflict between North Korea and South Korea remains a symbol of this frigid post-Cold War peace.

This does not mean that nothing has changed, though. South Korea has undergone tremendous changes and become a bastion for democracy along with Japan and Taiwan in Northeast Asia. On the other hand, North Korea has been struggling for survival since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the international socialist community in the early 1990s. North Korea opted for nuclearization as a way to secure its survival. North Korea's nuclearization effort resulted in the further internationalization of the peninsula, leading to an awkward equilibrium there. One good example of this is that despite intermittent interactions between North and South Korea, the status of division basically has not changed much. Instead, the major powers and international agencies have maintained a close watch over the progress in North Korea's nuclear programs.¹⁰

In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that North Korea's nuclear issues have been dominant on the peninsula for the last 25 years or so. Success or failure in the resolution of North Korean nuclear issues would have serious implications for regional security. If efforts to denuclearize North Korea fail, voices in South Korea and Japan calling for nuclearization will become louder. Northeast Asia would descend into a competitive race of nuclear acquisition, which would be the least desirable outcome for the region. At the same time, a failure to denuclearize North Korea increases the likelihood of open military conflict. The United States seems unlikely to permit a full-fledged nuclear weapon delivery system to exist in North Korea and thus may launch preemptive strikes. The

results of such military attacks on North Korea will be disastrous for the entire region, engrossing its states in an unwanted armed conflicts and causing inconceivably high human casualties.

Given these terrible potential consequences, it is imperative to collect international wisdom to realize the goal of denuclearizing North Korea. There have, of course, been efforts to do so, most notably the Geneva Framework in the 1990s and the Six-Party Talks in the 2000s. The reasons for the failure of these efforts are numerous and cannot detain us long here.¹¹ Most relevant is the unwillingness to negotiate on the part of North Korea and international structure within which negotiations took place. The main reason why North Korea was reluctant to negotiate is quite clear. North Korea's goal was to pretend that they are willing to negotiate to earn time and material benefits. What enabled North Korea to take such a strategy was the international structure in which negotiations proceeded. For example, the internal structure of the Six-Party Talks was such that it enabled North Korea to play off one group of the countries (the United States, South Korea, and Japan) against the other (China and Russia). Beyond these factors, there was a lack of urgency on the part of the United States and China, although for different reasons. China considered non-nuclear factors more important, while the United States thought it would take considerable time for North Korea in developing delivery systems which can reach US mainland.

It is only recently that the United States has recognized the rapid progress in North Korea's nuclear development and a sense of urgency regarding the potential of North Korean missiles reaching the US mainland. As a result, North Korea has begun to attract increasing pressure to denuclearize from the United States. In fact, the United States has publicly stated that there is the possibility of military strikes against North Korea to dismantle nuclear facilities and has been putting increasing pressure on North Korea through unprecedentedly harsh sanctions. This situation ironically has brought about new opportunities for negotiation between the two sides.

New Tides for Reconciliation

Under such structural conditions, North Korea took advantage of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, held in South Korea in February 2018, and offered an unusually concessionary posture toward South Korea and the United States, such as a willingness to discuss denuclearization, the suspension of nuclear activities and proposals for summit meetings with South Korea and the United States. Much skepticism, pessimistic views, and uncertain projections have been issued regarding the prospects for successful summit meetings and negotiations between the United States and North Korea. However, the situation may be different this time, due to both the level of nuclear development and economic conditions in North Korea. North Korea is likely bullish given their level of nuclear development, but also wary (especially given the Soviet lesson) that they have to start

planning on systemic reforms as feeding the population with nuclear weapons remains a challenge.

This rare situation brings about new opportunities among the countries in the region. The negotiation process will be a protracted one but must incorporate the complicated task of opening up and modernizing North Korea's economic system. This long process will inevitably involve South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia, as well as the United States. It is likely to create new opportunities for cooperation between South Korea and Japan and bring about new opportunities to build regional security and economic institutions. Much intellectual work and cooperation is required to negotiate visions, strategies and policies able to take advantage of this new opportunity. A critical question in relation to North Korea's denuclearization is how to understand the macro power structure among the big powers and the roles and functions that middle powers can play. At the macro level, the current and future status of Sino-US relations will have a serious impact. Sino-US relations have gone through different stages with different characteristics. The relationship has been affected by China's development and self-perception of their status and role in world politics. Up until the early 2000s, China perceived itself as being a developing great power with modest goals and ambitions but that has altered since the 2008 economic crisis. It now demonstrates increasing self-confidence and a greater willingness to project its power and influence. At present, China perceives itself as engaged in strategic competition with the United States and anticipates that in the next two to three decades it will develop a strategic balance with, and economic superiority over, the United States.

The process of North Korea's denuclearization will be greatly affected by the nature of Sino-US relations. Even assuming some kind of resolution can be achieved while these two powers compete within one another, Northeast Asia as a region would be divided by great-power competition, a far cry from building regional institutions. On the other hand, if the process of denuclearization unfolds under Sino-US cooperation, it would be much easier to develop regional cooperation. It is in this connection that the roles of Japan, Korea, and Russia are extremely important. Cooperation among middle powers to ease great-power tension may alter the character of the region. Therefore, these middle powers need to start thinking about their roles and functions in the process of North Korea's denuclearization in order to bring about cooperation and build regional institutions. Otherwise, the region will face intensified competition among its states. This is especially the case at the role of the United States in the region will come under renewed scrutiny if there is a resolution to the North Korean nuclear question. The three middle powers need to start thinking about different ways of engaging themselves individually or collectively in reforms to North Korea's system. In order to do so, it is vital that they think about how to relieve tensions and improve communications amongst themselves, not only between their governments but also at a broader level. This is essential to respond to the multitude of other problems which afflict the Northeast Asian region, including the fact that great-power competition in the region is by no means limited to the Korean Peninsula.

Interstitial Spaces

Northeast Asian Seams in Sea and Sky

Northeast Asia, unlike the Eurasian continent, is a littoral region embracing both terrestrial and maritime zones. As the introduction has noted, the region constitutes a classic space for geopolitical contestation in which land and sea powers contend. The United States has been the most active sea power in the Asia-Pacific region since the end of World War II, which decisively marked the end of both Great Britain's naval hegemony and Japan's attempts to challenge it. In recent years, however, the rise of China has extended out into the oceans, with the superpower-in-waiting increasingly determined to decisively affect what is occurring in its surrounding waters. Consequently, the post-Cold War era has seen the emergence of serious conflicts over the extent of state control exerted over the waves. Questions of maritime demarcation were not unknown in the nineteenth century,¹² and the United States and Soviet Union contested these waters during the Cold War. It was common during that era to understand the Northeast Asian region in terms of opposition between the continental land powers of Russia and China, and the maritime powers of Japan and the United States, with Korea, caught in the middle.¹³ However, recent years have shown that China and Russia are also maritime states, and ones that, even prior to the promulgation of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1994, sought to expand their "sovereignty" out over the oceans. The People's Republic of China, for instance, proclaimed its Law of the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone in 1992, and in recent years both countries have been increasing their presence in the Arctic and Bering Seas (Russia) and South and East China Seas (China).¹⁴

The significance of this for the stitches running between the monotone colors of state space within the region is clear. Northeast Asia has become a region in which power politics are unfolding in both the terrestrial and maritime sphere. Given the novelty of these maritime power games in Northeast Asia, issues related to the ocean, such as securing free and safe passage and maritime military strategies, are becoming more serious. Already under UNCLOS, formerly open seas are being enclosed, with the possession of islands allowing states to claim a 200 nautical mile EEZ, extendable out to 350 nautical miles by claiming an extension of the continental shelf. This has led to the following complex issues: (1) maritime territory is fundamentally distinct from its terrestrial counterpart, impossible to enclose through fencing or other means and to materially halt the entry of others (in this connection, see also China's behavior in and increasingly strident claims over the South China Seas); (2) unlike on land and in the air, the right of free passage means that maritime space is not able to be absolutely incorporated into state territory, while on the other hand, the exclusivity proclaimed over maritime economic zones differs between countries (and may include restrictions on research and drills by foreign nations, as well as fishing—see Fukuhara's chapter on this); (3) the baselines for maritime territory differ between countries, and

there is an absence of consensus over their boundaries when EEZs and continental shelf claims overlap (while the median line remains the dominant understanding, factors like historical rights, in the case of EEZs, and natural extensions for continental shelves, are also emphasized); and (4) the looseness in the definition of what constitutes an “island,” from which maritime territory may be claimed (Article 121 of UNCLOS specified that an island is a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide, and must be able to sustain human habitation or economic life, but as the judgment issued by the ICJ in response to the case brought by the Philippines over the South China Sea in June 2016 strictly defined human habitation and economic life,¹⁵ then many of the features hitherto claimed as “islands” should really be considered “rocks” unable to possess maritime territory or EEZs).¹⁶

The connection of these developments with the re-assertion of territorial disputes in the region has been extensively analyzed, but there is little doubt that contestation over such choppy waters has made the international situation in the region more complicated, with power politics increasingly able to be asserted interchangeably, on both sea and land. The seas of Northeast Asia—Okhotsk, Japan, and East China—currently see sovereignty disputes over four islands (or rocks!): between Japan and Russia over the Northern Territories, Japan and Korea over Takeshima (Dokdo), Japan and China over the Senkakus (Diaoyu), and China and Korea over the Socotra Rocks. In addition to its seas, the atmosphere above Northeast Asia’s states is also becoming a major point of contention, fostering further great-power competition in the region. This is visible in disputes over Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in recent years. Established to protect unauthorized violations of a state’s airspace, ADIZs are not the project of an international legal regime between the region’s countries but a means for individual states to unilaterally proclaim their authority and establish borders above the region, as well as through it.¹⁷

The region’s “cold peace” was initially dependent on the maintenance of the territorial settlement associated with the bipolar order, when the United States and Soviet Union were dominant within the postwar system. However, those borders being guaranteed by either the United States, including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, or Russia has been complicated by the rise of a China strategically committed to neither. In the absence of recognition from other states, ADIZs are unilateral borders that look to claim atmospheric real-estate, functioning as ill-defined frontiers for the proclaiming state. The entry of foreign aircraft into such zones is not a *legal* issue but is increasingly resulting in the scrambling of military aircraft and warnings to not enter that airspace. In Northeast Asia, as a result of the United States’ control of the skies, Japan and South Korea had both established ADIZs, but China for many years accepted the United States and Japan’s claims to control airspace right up until to its own (notably up to the coastline of Zhejiang province). In 2013, China suddenly proclaimed its own ADIZ to a point south of Japan’s Goto Islands and covering the disputed Senkakus. It requested that all foreign civilian aircraft traversing this airspace notify China of their flight plans. Initially, US and Japanese airlines protested this

measure but have ultimately come to comply. This area of the sky remains subject to overlapping ADIZ claims of Japan and China, and these kind of atmospheric frontier conflicts are fast becoming the norm in the region.

The danger for the region is that these multiplying frontiers of state competition are not functionally identical and will, therefore, not be resolved through the same rules. The history of maritime competition in the region suggests that time is required before competition stabilizes into a new series of norms. During the Cold War period, the United States claimed the free use of oceans, while the Soviet Union tried to enclose marine waters against US intentions. It is known that differences between the United States and the Soviet Union were resolved when the Soviet Union acceded to the division of the oceans between the United States and the Soviet Union. Currently, the prospects for a revisionist China to accede to continued US dominance, or conversely for the United States to accept that China's rise alters the rules of the game, appear remote. In the absence of some agreement, the seas and skies of Northeast Asia are likely to remain choppy, to say the least.

Border Stitching

The Military Demarcation Line running across the Korean Peninsula shows the potential and limits of cross-border exchange for regional relations. This most heavily securitized border in Northeast Asia was not immune to the general post-Cold War trend for increased mobility for material, capital, and labor across national borders. Following South Korea's "Sunshine Policy" (1998–2008) towards North Korea, two North Korean Special Economic Zones were established adjacent to the demilitarized zone (DMZ), a Tourist Region for Mount Kumgang (2002) and at the Kaesong Industrial Complex (2004). Both have been hostage to wider relations between North Korea and South Korea, with the former effectively mothballed since 2008 and the latter subject to shutdowns in 2010, 2013, and from 2016. However, even when operational, these failed to live up to the political hopes invested in them from the South Korean side, existing as zones of cross-border interaction bordered off from the wider North Korea economy. This simulacrum of trans-border connectivity appears to show that while border porosity is affected by national policies, the impact of such examples of connectivity on the region's borders is outweighed by security concerns. In this respect, Korea serves as a microcosm of regional issues.

As a result, scholars involved in studying Northeast Asia tend to ignore changes going on between its constituent states at the micro level. This is understandable given the seriousness of structural constraints, such as great-power competition and the assumptions of absolute sovereignty, which sets effective limits on the scope for changes at the sub-regional level. However, the cultural and social impact of economic globalization is generally only discussed at the inter-state level. As such, changes at inter-city levels or in border areas have not drawn as much attention. Local interactions stemming from the crossing of the borders have developed, although much of this has received little attention following

the disappearance of the 1990s discourse on sub-regional zones and community building in discussions on Northeast Asia.¹⁸

The previous section highlighted both the increasing tensions that characterize interstate relations in the Northeast Asian region and the multiplying fields within which these tensions exist. However, such frictions also give rise to efforts to manage or ameliorate such disputes. One example of this in the maritime sphere is the emergence of “joint development areas” that have been demarcated between Korea and Japan (to the north of the Oki Islands, and including Dokdo/Takeshima, as well as the area of sea which is south of Jeju Island and west of the Goto Islands), Japan and China (around Tokara and to the west of the Amami Islands), Japan and Taiwan (to the north of Ishigaki, including the Senkaku Islands), and South Korea and China (in the Yellow Sea, and including the Socotra Rocks). The disputed continental shelf between Japan and Korea to the west of the Goto Islands is also part of this “joint development area.” While indicative of the absence of clarity regarding the contested spaces between states, the emergence of such areas shows the importance of regularizing relations at more local levels.

The part of Northeast Asia in which the benefits of regularizing relations are clearest is the Sino-Russian borderlands. Since the 1990s, the border area in the Far East has demonstrated the mutually constitutive role of improved international and local relations. By comparison with the Cold War era, the 4,000-kilometer borderlands running between the states constitutes a completely different landscape.¹⁹ Particularly, on Chinese sides, many facilities, hotels, and parks are available for tourists, who are able to enjoy, or were, at least, prior to Covid, an assuredly post-conflict present all along the Sino-Russian border. The starkest example of this interstitial *bonhomie* is at Bolshoi Ussuriysky (in Russian)/Heixiazi Island (in Chinese), on the junction of the Amur and Ussuri rivers, formerly disputed between the two countries but open to tourists since 2017. The 350-kilometer square island was divided by China and Russia as a fifty-fifty solution to the long years of territorial dispute. Russia had controlled the entire area but handed half of the island to China after signing an agreement in 2004.²⁰ To the surprise of everybody, the area has become a flourishing tourist spot and representative of wider Sino-Russian relations.

The spaces between Northeast Asia’s states are contested ones, reflecting the absence of regionally integrative institutions able to manage or define relations between its constituent states. Nevertheless, these contests between the region’s states may also prove generative of broader cooperation taking place in new and expanding fields. What requires greater attention is those developments which are able to jump scales from the local to the region and beyond.

Concluding Remarks

Northeast Asia is in flux, and the sources of that flux are numerous. Northeast Asia is buffeted by security and economic events, even before the Covid-19 crisis. It was also undergoing domestic political and economic changes. The patterns

of its modernization are taking a different path from that of Europe with different countries in the regions changing in different ways and at different speeds. Northeast Asia will certainly tread different paths to regional order from Europe. The so-called Asian paradox is no longer a paradox when the distinctive, if not unique characteristics, of the region, are properly taken into account.

Understanding the distinctiveness of Northeast Asia requires a different approach, such as the geo-political framework which is adopted in this collection. Relying on international relations theories borrowed from the West is not enough to understand the complexity involved in Northeast Asia. Comparative history, politics and economic history is a must to understand the background and international implications of domestic changes. At the same time, taking both macro and micro levels of the region into account, as mentioned in the Introduction, is necessary, all the while keeping an eye on the interaction between region-wide power politics and changes at the sub-regional or borderland levels. A macro conceptual approach needs to be combined with a micro-behavioral approach, which accounts for the specificities of the region in their analysis of its contemporary political realities.

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Part I

**Reconsidering
Geo-Political
Pathways**



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2 The Transformation of China in Northeast Asia Since 1990

From Regional Power to Global Power

Yoshifumi Nakai

This chapter is about China's role and behavior in Northeast Asian geo-politics.¹ What have been the main goals of China? How and why has China committed to geo-politics in Northeast Asia? Does China's growing "power" matter? It will be argued here that China's geo-politics in Northeast Asia has gone through four stages. This was an evolutionary process of policy changes. It was evolutionary not so much in the sense that those changes happened gradually over the generations. Rather, critical changes happened in the political environment of Northeast Asia first, and next, China adapted to the changes in the environment. The sequence of events mattered. The initial choice narrowed the field of succeeding policy options. In this sense, these stages were path dependent.²

China survived turbulent years. The Chinese people had the will and capability to adapt to the changing environment. China was also lucky. It could learn from the experience of the other nations. Step by step, China succeeded in distancing itself from the nexus of Northeast Asian geo-politics. Getting out of this cage, China could fly freely over Asia and the world looking for new frontiers and markets. A socialist regional China has become a capitalist global power.

Chairman Mao tried to make China a dominant player in Northeast Asian geo-politics. Deng Xiaoping then changed the goal. Deng's goal was to become a dominant regional power in Asia. In the 2000s, post-Deng leaders changed the goal again. Xi Jinping disclosed the new goal in 2012. In his inauguration speech as General Secretary of the Party, Xi declared that China's goal was to become a global superpower.

Has China's roughly seven decades of experience in Northeast Asian geo-politics mattered? This chapter finds that China's commitment to Northeast Asian geo-politics did matter. China learned a precious lesson: how to leave socialism without much fuss and how to implement capitalism without much pain. The lesson remains valid today.

Four Stages of China's Economic Development

The first stage began in the early 1950s when China participated in Northeast Asian geo-politics as a regional socialist power. The Chinese Northeast (Dongbei, former Manchukuo) became a testing ground of China's construction of

socialism. The management of Soviet-China relations became a priority for China's new leaders. During the Korean War, the Chinese Northeast became a base for both the North Korean and Chinese armies. After the death of Stalin in 1953, Chairman Mao tried to catch up with the Soviet Union and began a series of radical socialist programs. The failure of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 and the subsequent hardship of the general public did not change Mao's conviction in socialism. The Chinese economy and society remained socialist until Mao's death in 1976.

The second stage began in 1978, when Deng Xiaoping visited Japan and the United States. Deng meant business. He wanted real "détente" with Japan and the United States. Both sides were to begin economic and cultural exchanges. Deng made the necessary "adjustments" in foreign policy. He shelved the territorial dispute with Japan, declared that China would seek peaceful unification with Taiwan, and began a negotiation with Great Britain on the peaceful handover of Hong Kong's sovereignty. Détente with the East strengthened China's position against the Soviet Union. Also, détente brought economic resources into China.

While China was busy engaging with its East, Northeast Asia was left behind. The Soviet Union remained a threat to China. Brezhnev's military intervention into Afghanistan in 1979 made China believe that the Soviet Union was seeking hegemony in Eurasia. Northeast Asia was pushed to the margin of China's diplomatic initiative until 1985, when Gorbachev showed up.

The Chinese Northeast, therefore, remained a backwater of post-Mao China. In the 1980s, Deng and his associates resuscitated the Chinese version of the New Economic Policy (NEP). Large and poor provinces such as Sichuan, Hunan, Fujian, and Guangdong were the direct beneficiaries of the NEP. A domestic power shift was happening inside China. Coastal provinces such as Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Shandong, and Shanghai were becoming the new centers of commercial activities. In the 1980s, the Chinese economy started growing. By the end of the 1980s, China had become one of the rising economic powers in Asia, together with Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan. The Chinese Northeast as well as Northeast Asia failed to develop at the same pace. Their dominant mode of production remained socialist, and they resisted change under the banner of anti-capitalism.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union by the end of 1991 marked the beginning of the third stage of China's economic transformation. In January 1992, Deng Xiaoping visited South China, to Shenzhen and Zhuhai, two special economic zones (SEZs) in Guangdong Province. There, Deng declared that China should run a full-scale market economy. To Deng, the time was ripe for change. The threat from the North had disappeared all at once. The Soviet Union had collapsed because its economy had stagnated.³ Economic development was the heart of the matter. He forced the party leaders to choose between the Soviet-like socialist economy and the Hong Kong-style capitalist economy.⁴ The Chinese leaders, after a long hesitation for six months, complied and chose the latter.

Now all the leading cadres had to operate in the market economy. Hong Kong moved fast. Soon after Deng's talk, foreign direct investment (FDI) began flowing into Guangdong Province from Hong Kong. Overseas Chinese who lived in

Hong Kong, South East Asian countries, and Taiwan took their chances. They were independent, fast-moving, and bold risk-takers. In the 1990s, the Chinese economy grew so fast that its gross domestic production (GDP) tripled in ten years.⁵ So did all those risk-takers' profit. Double-digit growth continued for twenty years.

In this third stage, Northeast Asia played a limited role. There were no SEZs in Northeast Asia. Guangdong and Hong Kong were far away. There were not many overseas Chinese in Northeast Asia. No city in Northeast Asia had a group of independent, fast-moving, and bold risk-takers. Russia was busy with its own problems at home. South Korea showed up as a rising regional power. North Korea hung on as a troublemaker.

China's economic success made Northeast Asian geo-politics less important. China's survival was no longer dependent upon the management of Northeast Asian geo-politics. Chinese leaders found that the engagement with their East, Japan and the United States, and with the West, the European Union (EU), made China richer and safer. Détente with the East helped China to expand its economic transactions with two emerging economic powers in Asia, South Korea and Taiwan.

The changes in the security environment in Northeast Asia also helped China's decoupling from Northeast Asian geo-politics. Brezhnev's Russia was the major threat to China until his death in 1982. In 1985, Gorbachev began to revise the Soviet foreign policy with his "new political thinking."⁶ His visit to Beijing in May 1989, the normalization of relations, and the agreement on the Eastern borders in 1991 dramatically decreased the likelihood of military confrontation. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and succeeding confusion in the former Soviet bloc, including North Korea, changed the key assumptions of Northeast Asian geo-politics in favor of China.

After 1991, Northeast Asian geo-politics was no longer the same game. The Soviet-China contention ceased to be an important issue. China's dominant position became apparent as the Chinese economy kept on growing in the 1990s.

China entered the fourth stage in 2001 when it joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). This was the time the post-Cold War hegemon, the United States, came to face serious challenges. At the time of global crisis, China's low-key diplomacy paid off. China became a "strategic partner" and later a "stakeholder" of the United States.⁷ President George W. Bush chose to engage China for his "war against terrorism."⁸ The wars dragged on and so did the US engagement with China.

In 2008, China hosted the Beijing Olympic Games and in 2010 a Shanghai World Expo. While the world economy was suffering from the aftereffects of the 2008 Lehman Shocks, the Chinese economy expanded fivefold in terms of the GDP after 2000 and surpassed Japan in 2010. China became the second-largest economy in the world, second only to the United States. China not only recovered from a global depression but also became a global superpower, even if its influence remained partial compared to the United States.⁹

In the 2000s, the structure of Northeast Asian geo-politics began to change. The number of participants increased. Putin's Russia returned to Northeast Asian

geo-politics after a long absence. The two Koreas started playing independent roles and so did the former republics of the Soviet Union in Central Asia. Northeast Asian geo-politics has become, in short, a continuous multi-player game, in which the players must consider not only their own power but also the relative strength of all the other players.¹⁰ This was a key difference from earlier stages.

China Means Socialism: First Stage, 1950–1976

During this stage, the key player was Chairman Mao Zedong. Mao got stuck to the Soviet Union and Northeast Asia. China fought two wars in Northeast Asia, the Civil War and the Korean War, and won both. The Soviet-Chinese Axis then was more than a “convenience”¹¹ for the Chinese leadership headed by Chairman Mao. The Cold War in Asia was in full swing and the newly founded two People’s Republics, PRC (China) and PRK (North Korea), became allies of the Soviet Union.

China’s three Northeast provinces, Heilongjiang, Qilin, and Liaoning, had long borders with the Soviet Union and North Korea. Before the mid-seventeenth century, the Chinese Northeast was the motherland of the Manchu dynasty. For most Han Chinese living to the south of the Great Wall, the Chinese Northeast was only loosely “Chinese.” Its population was mostly composed of barbarians and nomads of various origins.

Imperial Russia entered into Northeast Asian geo-politics during the nineteenth century. The Russian army invaded the Chinese Northeast and pushed national borders south. In the late-nineteenth century, Imperial Japan joined the race. Right after the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, most of the major powers at that time, including the United States, joined the military intervention against the Red Army in Siberia.¹² Since the establishment of the Manchukuo in 1932, the two major powers, the Soviet Union and Imperial Japan, became the dominant players of the Northeast Asian geo-politics. The defeat and retreat of Imperial Japan in 1945 opened Northeast Asia to new players, both the Nationalist and Communist Chinas, both North and South Korea, and the United States. By 1949, Nationalist China dropped out.

Every participant in Northeast Asian geo-politics knew the strategic importance of the Chinese Northeast. In August 1945, the Soviet Red Army came down from the North, easily defeated the remnants of the dispirited and disorganized Japanese Army, and quickly occupied two major ports on the Liaodong Peninsula, Dalian and Lüshun. Stalin took sweet revenge for Imperial Russia, which had conceded these two ports and the southern half of the Chinese Eastern Railways to Japan as a result of their defeat in the Russo-Japan War forty years ago. The Soviet forces did not leave these two ports until 1954, a year after Stalin’s death and the Korean War cease-fire.

Soon after the Soviet forces conquered the Chinese Northeast in 1945, both the Nationalist and Communist forces rushed to go there. Occupation of the area was essential for victory in the coming war. The Chinese Northeast was equipped with modern infrastructures, such as buildings, dams, roads, and railroads.

Besides, the Chinese Northeast had abundant natural resources and heavy industry, such as coal mining, iron and steel, and electricity generation, mostly built by the Japanese. Citizens in major cities were well educated and some of them spoke two or three languages. The Chinese Northeast was, in short, an ideal place for the military and heavy industry. That was why the Chinese Northeast became the first battleground of the Chinese Civil War.

Right after the surrender of Japan, the Americans helped transport Nationalist forces in China's Southwest to the Northeast using their airplanes. The United States wanted the Nationalist forces to beat the Communists and build a pro-US government in China. But Mao's forces ended that prospect. The Communist Fourth Field Army, led by General Lin Biao, defeated the Nationalist armies in the Chinese Northeast. The Communist Second Field Army, whose political commissar was Deng Xiaoping, kicked the Nationalist forces out of the Chinese Mideast and eventually out of China.

Kim Il Sung came out as a guerrilla leader in the Chinese Northeast during the Sino-Japanese war. Although the actual facts of his career remain dubious, he became a leader of North Korean military forces. When his forces were nearly defeated by the UN's intervention in the early stages of the Korean War, Chinese volunteer forces led by General Peng Dehuai crossed the Yalu River from a base in the Chinese Northeast.¹³ The Chinese forces pushed UN forces back to the 38th parallel, the present demarcation line. Kim Il Sung failed to unify Korea as he wished. Mao, on the other hand, succeeded in securing the vulnerable Eastern flank against any future US aggression.

The UN forces stopped short of using nuclear weapons and conducting massive strategic bombing in the Chinese Northeast. Truman did not dare to take the risk. He and his advisors had to consider the risk of Soviet retaliation, possibly with nuclear weapons. Stalin had just succeeded in testing the USSR's first atomic bomb in 1949. Open conflict with the Soviet Union could generate World War III, which nobody wanted.

In 1953, China began its first five-year plan. "Learn from the Russian brothers" became a catchphrase of the time. The Soviet government sent a group of engineers and experts to the Chinese Northeast. They built large-scale industrial complexes there. Through these investments, the Soviet leaders wanted to keep economic, if not political, influence on a disobedient Chairman Mao. Throughout the 1950s, the Chinese Northeast became a showcase of socialist construction and cooperation. The two alliances, the Soviet-Chinese and the Soviet-North Korean, constituted the two pillars of security against imperialist aggression from the East and the South.

Then came the Soviet-China rift. Mao paid little, if any, respect to Khrushchev, both to his personality and to his policies.¹⁴ Mao did not endorse Khrushchev's anti-Stalin campaign. Mao predicted that such a campaign would damage the legitimacy of socialist governments everywhere. Mao was right. Soon Poland and Hungary stood up against Soviet rule. The Soviet and Chinese leaders got bogged down in a series of confrontations, first, over the Marxist orthodoxy, and second, over the transfer of nuclear technology, and finally, over disputed border territory between the two nations.

Chairman Mao started wiping out any trace of Soviet influence in China. He scrapped the ongoing Soviet style five-year plans and initiated a much more ambitious Great Leap Forward campaign in 1958. Khrushchev could not deal with the Chinese.¹⁵ Khrushchev's attempt to bring China into line with Moscow backfired. Khrushchev took away economic assistance and refused to give nuclear technology. Mao's anger was understandable.

Khrushchev's downfall in 1964 did not change Mao's antagonism against the Soviet leadership. Mao denounced Brezhnev's "détente" as a copy of Khrushchev's shameful idea of "peaceful coexistence with the West." Mao insisted that no compromise was allowed in the class struggle against the bourgeoisie. Any compromise with the West deserved, therefore, the label of counter-revolutionary.

During the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), any association with Khrushchev or Brezhnev became a taboo. Every reformist policy of the Soviet Union, including the NEP in the early 1920s, was criticized as being "revisionist." Reformist leaders, such as Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, were accused by Mao as "revisionists, capitalist-roaders, and China's Khrushchev." According to radical Maoists, Liu and Deng had committed two kinds of crimes. First, they initiated a revisionist agricultural policy, the Chinese version of NEP, in the 1960s when China faced serious starvation. Second, Liu and Deng tried to limit the authority of Mao by initiating a campaign against his personality cult. The Chinese economy must be self-sufficient, the radical Maoists contended. China succeeded in conducting its first nuclear test in 1964, and in that same year, Chinese scientists discovered large reserves of crude oil in Heilongjiang province. The Northeast's economic prospects looked good.

The Chinese Northeast became a model of economic self-reliance and a stronghold of anti-revisionist, anti-Soviet radical nationalism. The long national borders in the Chinese Northeast became a modern-day Great Wall. This time the enemies in the North were not Northern Barbarians but the Soviet revisionists.

The prospect of Soviet aggression from the North kept bothering Chairman Mao. Mao's harsh and belligerent accusation of the Soviet leadership roused the residents in the bordering zones to take direct action. A series of military clashes happened in the bordering zones. The largest clash, a full-scale military battle that killed 60–70 soldiers on both sides, happened in the border zone on the Damansky (Zhenbao) island on Ussuri River in March 1969.¹⁶ Soviet Premier Kosygin and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai met at Beijing Airport in September 1969. They must have talked of immediate cease-fire. The fighting stopped but the tension remained. In October, China started moving city dwellers out of town.

The Damansky Incident made Mao search for the best policy against the Soviet Union. Defense Minister Lin Biao took responsibility for designing a military option. He came up with an old-fashioned "People's War," which would mobilize city dwellers and endure the deadly nuclear attack for a long time. Mao looked like he preferred this option. The Party Congress in April 1969 elected Lin Biao sole Vice-Chairman of the Party and called him a true comrade in arms of Chairman Mao, a synonym of an anointed successor.

Premier Zhou Enlai, however, came up with another option. His was a traditional tactic in triangular relations: your enemy's enemy is your friend. Zhou found a channel of communication into the Nixon administration. Nixon was desperately looking for a way to withdraw US forces from Vietnam. If China agreed to withhold its support to Vietnam, the US withdrawal from Vietnam could happen swiftly and smoothly. China and the United States had a common enemy—the Soviet Union. Nixon was well known for his anti-Communism—that turned out to be an asset for secret diplomacy. Both countries could justify their moves as non-ideological and realistic deal-making that maximized their national interests.

Mao evidently chose Premier Zhou Enlai's option. The Zhou-Kissinger talks took place with Mao's endorsement. In September 1971, Lin Biao mysteriously disappeared. Later, Mao disclosed to Nixon that Lin Biao and his associates had tried to assassinate Mao, failed and fled to the Soviet Union, and on the way all of them had been killed in a plane crash. In February 1972, President Nixon visited Beijing and talked to Chairman Mao. Although the official press of both countries praised the meeting as "historic," mutual animosity and distrust did not disappear overnight. The Mao-Nixon meeting certainly broke the tip of huge ice. But the Vietnam War kept on raging. Taiwan's Nationalist government was shaken but did not budge.

Despite the lack of substance, the Mao-Nixon meeting produced the impression of a diplomatic breakthrough. Chinese diplomacy came back after a long break. Mao proved he could still lead the nation despite his deteriorating health and added an extra credential to his Great Leader status. It must be Nixon, not Mao who paid a visit to the former adversary. For Mao, it was a matter of central importance that the president of the most powerful nation came to see him. Zhou won the favor of Mao and became a frontrunner of the successor race. Although his sickness prevented him from becoming supreme leader, Zhou succeeded in reappointing his trusted subordinate, Deng Xiaoping, to the central party posts.

Nixon, on the other hand, needed a diplomatic breakthrough to boost his reputation for the coming reelection. His campaign promise was the withdrawal of the American forces from Vietnam. He hoped to talk China into a gradual disengagement with Vietnam. The risk of such a deal was not high compared to the political gain he might receive. His choice of Henry Kissinger, a Harvard professor of international relations, as his personal envoy, turned out to be effective. Both Nixon and Kissinger became instant heroes and their so-called secret diplomacy became a model of modern diplomacy.

In stark contrast, Soviet-China relations remained tense. Mao's close associates, the so-called the Gang of Four, including Mao's wife Jiang Qing, began criticizing Lin Biao as a Soviet agent. Moreover, Mao's design of "allying with the US in order to control the USSR" suffered a serious setback.¹⁷ Nixon's visit to Moscow in May 1972 was less dramatic but more successful in substance than his Beijing visit. Brezhnev's visit to Washington D.C. in June 1973 marked the peak of the US-Soviet détente. Mao puts the blame on Zhou and the Foreign Ministry. At the Party Congress in August 1973, Premier Zhou Enlai himself

leveled accusations against the Soviet leadership. Evil Russians must be preparing a surprise attack against China, which must remain alert against a Soviet attack, Zhou contended.

In 1973, Mao's health rapidly deteriorated and the power struggle behind the scenes in Beijing intensified. Zhou must have paid much attention to Brezhnev's speech in Tashkent in September. Zhou could have taken initiative for the normalization of relations with the Soviet Union. Zhou was under attack, however, and had little chance to talk to the ailing Mao. Chinese diplomacy came to a standstill again. Talks with Kissinger over the normalization and the status of Taiwan stalled. Jiang Qing and her associates began the "Anti-Lin, Anti-Confucian campaign" in early 1974, a semi-open attack on Zhou Enlai.¹⁸

Japan offered timely help. Japan's normalization of diplomatic relations with China was a by-product of the Mao-Nixon summit. Japan's neutrality in the Soviet-Chinese contention helped Zhou and Deng. Japan also had no diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Both of the Japanese leaders, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei and Foreign Minister Ohira Masayoshi, spent some years in China during the war and witnessed the atrocities there. They also knew what China needed most and were ready to provide un-tied money to China. Zhou and Deng could use that money for the reconstruction of the national economy. Tanaka and Ohira expected that timely assistance could improve the image of Japan among the Chinese general public.

Zhou made sure that the monetary assistance from Japan looked like a loan, an investment for the future. China would not beg for help. Japanese bureaucrats devised a way to divert the government-sponsored low-interest loans (Official Development Assistance, ODA) to China. In 1979, China received the first ODA from Japan amounting at US\$2.6 million. In the 1980s, China received US\$ 482 million a year on average. In the 1990s, the average annual amount had reached US\$12.6 billion. Starting from zero, China came to take a lion's share of the total Japanese ODA in ten years.¹⁹ Both Japanese bureaucrats and ordinary citizens understood the political imperative for such a large-scale assistance to China. ODA to China was *de facto* compensation for wartime atrocities. Japanese business leaders promoted the idea that helping China's modernization was a moral duty of every Japanese.

Mao passed away in September 1976 and the power struggle was resolved a month later. Japanese investment and ODA started flowing into China. Large cities in the Chinese Northeast, such as Dalian and Shenyang, former colonial cities of Japan, were major recipients. This time Japanese business people did not bring the armed forces with them. They did not have to do so. They were welcomed.

China Means Business: Second Stage, 1978–1989

The key player at this stage was Deng Xiaoping. Deng focused his attention on China's East and left Northeast Asia behind. Deng's visits to Japan in October 1978 and to the United States in January 1979 marked the beginning of this second stage. At this stage, radical changes happened first in China and

then in the Soviet Union. The promoters of these changes called their efforts “reform.” These changes and the rising power of Japan and South Korea made Northeast Asian geo-politics in the 1980s dynamic and complex. The foundation of Northeast Asian geo-politics, namely the Cold War structure started shaking in the mid-1980s and collapsed in 1989.

First, China tipped the balance of power (BOP) in Northeast Asia. Deng Xiaoping engaged, first, with Japan, and next with the United States. The center of gravity started moving to the East. Then Gorbachev became the supreme leader of the Soviet Union in 1985. He began a rapprochement with Europe and quickly built a working relationship with the West. By the mid-1980s, Northeast Asian geo-politics came to have two centers of gravity: one was Moscow and the other Beijing.

The normalization of relations in May 1989 between China and the Soviet Union did not shorten the distance between these two centers. After the Tiananmen Incident in June 1989, the split became clearer. Deng not only sacked reformist leaders but also halted political reform. People’s Liberation Army (PLA) did not “liberate” anyone. Instead, they killed demonstrators, cleared Tiananmen Square, and arrested the “anti-government insurgents.” Most of them were China’s young elites. Gorbachev, on the other hand, not only let Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries become independent but also intensified his *perestroika* (reform) of the Soviet political system. China was moving into diplomatic isolation and political conservatism. In contrast, the Soviet Union was on the road to liberal democracy, or so it appeared.

Now let us look into how and why China changed its commitment to North-east Asian geo-politics.

Economic Policy

China’s per capita gross national income (GNI) in 1980 was around US\$220 and the national gross domestic production (GDP) was US\$191 billion.²⁰ After thirty years of ruthless pursuit of Maoist socialism, China remained a big poor nation. Its per capita GNI belonged to the category slightly above mass starvation. Mao did not seem to mind. To Mao, being poor and innocent was good for revolution. Deng thought otherwise. Socialism must make people wealthy and happy. People must eat well in socialism.

Deng’s NEP worked well again. In the 1980s, the Chinese NEP performed much better than in the 1960s. The last time China was on the verge of mass starvation.²¹ This time the Chinese peasants were in much better shape. In the 1960s, the peasants blindly followed the directives of Chairman Mao. By now, the Chinese peasants had learnt that Mao’s mass-mobilization campaign almost ruined their lives. They also came to know that Deng’s NEP saved them from starvation in the 1960s. Now Mao was dead and Deng was still alive. Good news for the peasants.

In the 1960s, Mao detected the danger of the NEP, just like Stalin did forty years ago. Mao tried to weed out such a “tail of capitalism” during the Cultural

Revolution. But he failed. Unlike Stalin, Mao did not eradicate the peasants as a class. Mao did not relocate the large number of peasants to Siberia. Instead, he sent those young cadres who lacked “revolutionary experience” to the northern wilderness (Beidahuang) in the Chinese Northeast.²² Also, Mao sent young radical Maoists, the so-called Red Guards, out into the countryside. The number of those sent-down youths and cadres was around 16 million, roughly corresponding to the number of Russians who were sent to the gulags in Siberia.²³ As a result, the peasants stayed alive clinging to their patches of land, while the young revolutionaries perished in the countryside.

In the 1980s, Deng made the original NEP more powerful and attractive to the peasants. The government raised the purchasing price of crops. The land lease period to the peasants was extended from 15 to 30 years.²⁴ Deng also initiated new ventures. China began a joint venture project with Japan in Shanghai, built four SEZs in Fujian and Guangdong, and let its smallest administrative unit, villages and townships, organize and operate small-scale enterprises (Village and Township Enterprises, VTEs).

In order to implement these new initiatives, Deng revived most of the pre-Cultural Revolution party structure. The Chairman of the Party was abolished and the central committee of the Party was reinstated as the core decision-making body. The Standing Committee of the Central Committee and the Politburo were also reinstated. The Party Congress would be held every five years and the new leaders were to be elected by all the party members.

Deng appointed young and competent cadres to the top positions of the Party and the government. Deng knew those cadres who had worked in the countryside and tested the NEP policies in the 1960s. Premier Zhao Ziyang had worked in Guangdong and Sichuan provinces as the Party Secretary. Politburo member Wan Li was the Party Secretary of Anhui province. These provinces were badly damaged by Mao’s radical agricultural policy. Now, these provinces were showing healthy growth due to the NEP.

The Chinese Northeast played a limited role in this stage of China’s economic recovery. In the 1980s, Chinese Northeast was timid and slow in the introduction of the market economy.²⁵ Many industries were state-owned. There was little incentive for the local cadres to implement the NEP. Such a reform was likely to jeopardize their vested interests in the region.

The Chinese Northeast also had competitors. Deng chose Shanghai as a location of the first China-Japan joint venture, the Baoshan Steel Mill. Deng’s choice of Shanghai made sense in terms of both geo-politics and economics. Deng wanted to move China’s industrial center to Central China. Shanghai was an international city from its founding and had a large hinterland along the Yangzi River. Shanghai was also the home ground of Deng from the Civil War years. Shanghai’s neighboring provinces, such as Zhejiang and Jiangsu, were traditional centers of commercial and political activities. The economic and political potential of Shanghai and the Yangzi Delta overwhelmed that of the Chinese Northeast.

Deng built all four SEZs in Southern provinces. Three were in Guangdong and one in Fujian. Deng’s intention was clear. He wanted to entice investment from

Hong Kong and Taiwan. Once they built factories in the SEZs, their business could be profitable because they could enjoy tax-free status and low labor costs. China could earn indirectly from such operations. Chinese workers could receive a cash income, and local governments could pocket local expenses.

In the 1980s, however, SEZs did not grow as fast as Deng had expected. SEZs faced strong opposition from conservative Party officials. The majority of the Party central did not want to take a risk. The market economy was like a dose of opium smoke, so they believed. It could relieve the pain for a while but it would paralyze your body and put you to death. The right choice for China was, the conservatives argued, the restoration of the socialist economy of the pre-Cultural Revolution years. Chen Yun, an orthodox Marxist economist who was in charge of the economy in the 1950s, for example, argued that the market economy must be confined within the framework of socialism. A capitalist bird should be allowed to fly only inside the cage of socialism.²⁶

Deng could not brush off this opposition. Deng owed his political comeback to those Party elders. He had to listen to them. Deng might have wished to build a large SEZ near Shanghai. He managed to build, instead, small SEZs in the periphery of remote provinces. They were far away from the political center, Beijing. They were also far away from the socialist center, the Chinese Northeast.

The other economic initiative of Deng, the formulation of village and township enterprises (VTEs) worked much faster than the SEZs. When the Chinese government officially allowed villages and townships to organize and operate small-scale enterprises in 1983, most of the localities already had their local markets. The Chinese NEP, which had been going on since the late 1970s, had brought the market economy into the Chinese countryside. Both the local governments and cadres were looking for a chance to expand their business. Soon various kinds of VTEs appeared all over China.²⁷ They grew fast in the regions where there were no large state-owned industries. The VTEs grew much faster than their competitors, the state-owned enterprises.

The Chinese Northeast was left behind in this new economic initiative. The top runner in the race of socialist construction turned out to be a slow runner in the race of capitalist production. The VTEs appeared and became active in the Chinese Northeast, too. But the VTEs in the Chinese Northeast had to live in the shadow of the large state-owned enterprises. The old model of socialist production died hard.

After ten years of efforts of “reform and opening,” China’s GDP in 1988 was essentially double that of 1978. The Chinese economy showed a respectable growth, about 8% annually in those ten years. This was no small accomplishment. China was, however, far from being stable. The state-sector’s inefficiency became apparent and the Chinese Northeast’s contribution to the Chinese economy was declining. But the dominance of the state sector was not likely to come to an end as long as China stuck to socialism. The income gap was widening among provinces and people. In terms of the per capita GNI, US\$330 in 1988, China still belonged to the category of a very poor country. China needed a breakthrough. It came later but with a high price tag.

Foreign Policy

In 1982, China made “comprehensive adjustments”²⁸ in its foreign policy. Comprehensive adjustment meant, in a Chinese political lexicon, a comprehensive revision or reversal of the Maoist doctrine. Deng’s assumptions and revisions were as follows:

- The world was heading towards peace, not war. Mao was wrong.
- China should seek lasting peace so that it could earn time to modernize its military and economy.
- China should pursue an independent foreign policy, should not form an alliance with anyone, and should pursue the reduction of armed forces.
- China should respect other nations’ sovereignty regardless of their ideology and social structure.
- China should promote economic cooperation with the West and Japan and should join various international organizations.
- China should apply the principle of “one country, two systems” to Hong Kong; China should seek peaceful unification with Taiwan.

These adjustments meant Deng retained a firm grip over China’s foreign policy. The Party endorsed what Deng had done since the death of Mao in 1976. Deng stepped down from the top positions and his young successors, Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang and Premier Zhao Ziyang, took over diplomacy. Deng was, however, still quite active in diplomacy. Premier Zhao disclosed that Hu and Zhao “consulted with Deng” on crucial foreign policy issues.²⁹ Deng played a central role in a series of negotiations with British Premier Margaret Thatcher over Hong Kong’s future status.

Deng also made necessary “adjustments” in the policy toward the Soviet Union. At the Party Congress in September 1982, Deng pointed out three necessary conditions for the normalization of relations with the Soviet Union. They were the reduction of the Soviet forces in the border areas and in Mongolia; the end of the Soviet military assistance to Vietnam; and the retreat of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan.³⁰

Deng dropped all the ideological rhetoric against the Soviet Union from his proposal. Gone were the days when the Russians were condemned as revisionists, socialist-imperialists, and hegemonic-war mongers in Eurasia. Now the Soviet Union’s economic potential mattered most. A Chinese researcher at the governmental think tank, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), stressed in 1987 that Soviet-China trade had great potential and that the growing economic interactions should benefit both parties.³¹

Despite signs of insecurity in Northeast Asia, diplomatic dialogue between the Soviet Union and China began in 1983 and continued. South Korea was the victim of the violence: the Russian shooting down of the Korean passenger jet in September 1983 and the North Korean bomb attack on the South Korean delegation in Rangoon in October.

Gorbachev intended to stabilize the turbulence in Northeast Asia with his “New Political Thinking.”³² Paying more attention to “economic rationality” in Soviet foreign policy was what Gorbachev meant. That was exactly what South Korea and China wanted. Gorbachev’s speech in Vladivostok in July 1986 confirmed that certainly he meant business. The double rapprochement, one between South Korea and the Soviet Union, and the other between China and the Soviet Union, proceeded quickly. In February 1987, China and the Soviet Union resumed talks over their disputed territories. The previous talks had been held in 1978. It turned out that this time both sides were serious.

However, stability in Northeast Asia ended abruptly in 1989. Deng had to take care of the massive demonstrations in Beijing and Shanghai. Gorbachev also faced the mass revolts in East Europe and in the Baltic countries. Economic cooperation in Northeast Asia made lots of sense for both China and the Soviet Union. It also made lots of sense in the early 1950s. In both cases, Northeast Asia failed to become a model of economic cooperation. Something was missing: a mechanism that could withstand a lack of political support from the central government. This was the market mechanism of capitalism, which Deng found not in Northeast Asia but further south.

China Dumps Socialism: Third Stage, 1990–2000

Deng and his successors, Party Secretary Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji, were the key players in this stage. They took advantage of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, changed China’s economic and foreign policy, and helped China “muddle through” the post-Cold War turmoil.

Let us review the major events in this stage and see how China adapted to these events.

- 1 *The June 1989 Tiananmen Incident turned out to be a business chance.* The economic sanctions by the Western powers backfired. China became a high-risk high-return market for venture capitalists and overseas Chinese (Huaren). A massive inflow of FDI occurs via Hong Kong and Guangdong booms. Guangdong replaces the Chinese Northeast as a new engine of the Chinese economy. This powerful engine drove the Chinese freight train to the world market.
- 2 *Watershed events in the period from 1989 to 1991 helped China muddle through the post-Tiananmen troubles.* In August 1989, a mass exodus occurred in East Germany. In November, the Berlin Wall crumbled. Europe, not Beijing, became the center of historic changes. All the media crews of the world rushed to Europe for live coverage. The Cold War was ending. The magnitude of the end of the Cold War was larger than that of the Tiananmen Incident.

In August 1990, the Iraq army attacked Kuwait and occupied its major oil fields. Five months later, in January 1991, the United States and *ad hoc* allied forces began the Gulf War. China did not veto the anti-Iraq resolution

at the UN Security Council. That decision allowed the formulation of multinational allied forces. China sacrificed its old ally, Iraq, for immediate diplomatic gains. Soon after the end of the Gulf War, major European countries loosened their economic sanctions against China. China also succeeded in normalizing relations with its old enemies, Saudi Arabia and Israel, at the same time.

Japan also offered timely help. Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu visited Beijing in August 1991 and promised the continuation of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to China. China, in return, emphasized friendship and goodwill. China decided to shelve nasty questions of territory and history, just for a while. China officially invited the Japanese emperor and empress in October 1992. Deng made the decision with “strategic consideration” in mind.³³ The visit and hearty welcome won the hearts and minds of ordinary Japanese citizens. Japanese investment kept flowing into China at an accelerated pace.

While Prime Minister Kaifu was still in Beijing, the news of Gorbachev’s house arrest arrived. Deng watched carefully the unfolding of events in Moscow. At first, the *People’s Daily*, mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), showed indirect support to the coup leaders, quoting the full text of their statement. The following day, the tone of reporting became non-committal. When the failure of the coup became apparent, *People’s Daily* insisted that China’s policy was, from the very beginning, of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Russia.³⁴

Deng and his fellow party elders had doubted the prospects for Gorbachev’s reform when it began in the late 1980s. Now their doubts turned to conviction. No perestroika and absolutely no glasnost should be allowed in China. China must seek another means to survive. In November 1991, China joined the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) together with Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) and Hong Kong (Chinese Hong Kong). Although APEC was not an official international organization, the admittance of Taiwan into a regional body as an equal partner was a great concession. China would do anything to avoid a Soviet-like crisis.

- 3 *In order to break economic sanctions by the west, Deng took his Southern Trip in January 1992.* He had a clear message in mind, “Reform or Die.” His “reform” meant the full adoption of the market economy. The timing was crucial. The conservatives in the CCP were quite dispirited by the collapse of the Soviet Communist Party in 1990. The dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 devastated the morale of CCP cadres. They were scared and overwhelmed.³⁵ The demise of Gorbachev was good news. But they had to think of the meaning of Boris Yeltsin as the new leader of Russia. Chinese cadres watched Boris Yeltsin on a tank during the Moscow coup. They also watched Yeltsin declare the dissolution of the Soviet Communist Party. They were hurt further by the fact that the Soviet Communist Party with some 20 million members evaporated without any organized resistance. Deng hit the right moment for change. Those cadres who hesitated to reform must

“change their brain” in order to survive. If you did not take up market economy immediately, you would surely be sacked.

- 4 *South Korea took advantage of China's diplomatic isolation.* The Chinese Northeast had around 2 million Korean residents. They could work as intermediaries between China and South Korea. China-South Korea trade had much brighter prospects than China-Russia or China-North Korea trade. Moreover, China could disrupt diplomatic relations between Taiwan and South Korea. Normalization talks between China and South Korea picked up pace. In August 1992, they formalized their relations. On the same day, Taiwan terminated its diplomatic relations with South Korea. China took over the business with South Korea. The trade and investment between these new partners rose sharply in the following years.
- 5 *North Korea was a victim of Deng's new initiative.* North Korea's double balance diplomacy collapsed in 1991. South Korea's economic success was apparent. By contrast, North Korea remained a poor, despotic, desperate, and isolated country in the eastern periphery of Northeast Asia. Mass starvation broke out. North Korea was a remnant of the Cold War, like Albania in Europe. Now China was about to abandon North Korea. Kim Il Sung was apparently quite unhappy and told Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen that he must go his own way.³⁶ Later in 1993, it turned out his own way meant the development of atomic weapons. North Korea's first atomic test happened in 2006. North Korea remains a dangerous time bomb in Northeast Asian geo-politics.
- 6 *In order to break its post-Tiananmen isolation, China engaged in the so-called "All Dimensional Diplomacy."* Since 1990, China normalized diplomatic relations with neighbors in Asia and former enemies, such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, and South Korea. The hidden target of this diplomatic initiative was the United States. Deng made it clear that China must improve relations with the United States.³⁷ The United States had become the only hegemonic superpower after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. China must not confront the United States. Instead, China should improve relations with allies of the United States and let them withdraw the economic sanctions they imposed on China at the time of the Tiananmen Incident. This tactic worked well. In November 1993, President Jiang Zemin met President Clinton in Seattle at the APEC summit. In May 1994, the United States dropped most of the sanctions against China. Soon the China-US trade surpassed that of Japan.

During the turbulent years from 1989 to 1991, Deng issued short directives to the Party Central. At the time of Deng's southern trip, these directives were compiled into a sixteen-character guideline for China's foreign policy.³⁸ The guideline was composed of four four-letter phrases. Each phrase roughly meant: Observe (the situation) carefully, Do not confront (the United States), Hide your real intentions, and Do what you can and should. The directives were vague and general like a Confucian text. It left room for re-interpretation by his successors. Jiang Zemin emphasized the

second directive, Do not confront (the United States). Jiang justified China's growing engagement with Japan and the United States as the realization of Deng's directives.

- 7 *The reelection of Boris Yeltsin as the President of Russia in July 1996 opened the door for the new relations between Russia and China.* Both sides started calling their new relationship a "strategic partnership." The true meaning of the term was unclear. But the economic benefits of such a partnership were clear. Russia could export to China crude oil, natural gas and advanced weapons. China could use the partnership with Russia as a counterbalance to the United States. Russia joined the so-called Shanghai Five, a group of five countries, Russia, China, and three Central Asian nations, in April 1996, and rejoined the updated version of the Shanghai Five, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June 2001.
- 8 *In order to implement the "reform and opening" policy at home, Deng appointed Zhu Rongji, the mayor of Shanghai, to Vice-Premier in 1992, and eventually Premier in 1997.* Zhu worked as an "economic czar" and succeeded in making the Chinese economy "market friendly." During his tenure of ten years, Zhu replaced most of the socialist economic structures with capitalist ones. Market mechanisms overtook economic planning. Macro-economic control replaced state planning. Chinese conservatives found fault with Zhu. Back in 1957, Zhu had been expelled from the Party as a "rightist" who opposed Mao. They could not criticize Zhu this time, however, as Zhu had the full backing of Deng, and the Chinese economy was showing spectacular growth.

The Chinese economy grew 14% a year on average in the 1990s. China's GDP had reached US\$1,030 billion in 1998, three times larger than the figure in 1990. China's per capita GNI reached US\$800, a clear indication that China was no longer a poor nation. China was becoming rich fast. Conservatives wanted to be rich, too, like everyone else.

Zhu's reform had two kinds of impact on the Chinese Northeast. One was negative, the other positive. One of the first jobs of Vice-Premier Zhu was the restructuring of the large state-owned industry in the Chinese Northeast. The Chinese Northeast's transition to a market economy did not go smoothly. The remnants of socialism, in other words, the yoke of history, struck back. Zhu Rongji had to build a corporate finance system, downsize the old and huge state-run enterprises, and fire those local cadres who knew nothing about market economy. Zhu practiced all those methods of restructuring in the Chinese Northeast. As a result, some of the state-owned industry improved efficiency and started making profit. On the other hand, there were losers of the restructuring. A large number of local cadres, factory managers, and workers lost their comfortable jobs.

There was also positive impact. Zhu stopped subsidizing local government. As a result, all three provinces in Chinese Northeast had to find new sources of income. Heilongjiang started trading with Russia and Liaoning with South Korea. The cross-border trade in these two provinces grew

rapidly. Qilin province was not so lucky, as its next-door neighbor was North Korea. Despite this disadvantage, the Qilin-North Korea trade also began to show signs of gradual but steady growth. The market economy started creeping into North Korea, though slowly, from South Korea and China.

- 9 *Despite these positive developments, Northeast Asia failed to become a center of economic development.* The spoiler was North Korea. The 1994 North Korean Nuclear crisis was both a warning shot and a sinister sign. China dealt with this matter through its problem-solving diplomacy. From beginning to end, China behaved like a concerned balancer. China convened the Six-Party Talks, agreed on the setting up of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), and paid off North Korea with cash and food. Soon after the crisis, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji enticed North Korea's new leader, Kim Jong Il, to introduce market mechanisms into North Korea. But Kim did not dare to take the risk. Kim knew well that such market reforms would surely jeopardize his dictatorship.
- 10 *Deng passed away in February 1997.* In the 1990s, China kept a low-key posture toward the United States and kept on encouraging economic and social engagements. There were twists and turns in the US-China relations throughout the 1990s.³⁹ But, one thing was clear by the time of Deng's death in 1997: China had accomplished what Deng had promised five years before. China had not only survived the Tiananmen Incident and the collapse of the Soviet bloc but also became a great regional economic power in Asia.

Five months after Deng's death, in July 1997, China recovered the sovereignty of Hong Kong. The handover ceremony proceeded smoothly without any disruption. In October, President Jiang Zemin paid an official visit to Washington DC. After the Jiang-Clinton summit, Jiang declared that China and the United States agreed to seek a common goal of "strategic partnership." Jiang's message to the world was clear. Now, China had established diplomatic parity with the United States.

China Goes Global: Fourth Stage, 2001–the present

Deng's two successors, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, were the key players at this stage. Hu modified Deng's foreign policy directives so that China could extend its trade beyond Asia. The modification happened in 2009, the seventh year of his ten-year term as President. Subsequently, Xi Jinping began his own term with a clear departure from Deng's foreign policy directives. Xi not only stopped using Deng's foreign policy directives but also replaced them with his own. Xi declared to the world that the new goal of China was to become a global superpower. In order to reach that goal, Xi headed West, beyond Northeast Asia.

Hu Jintao initially followed Deng's foreign policy directives, just like his predecessor, Jiang Zemin. Both of them were handpicked by the CCP elders and were endorsed by Deng. Their ultimate mission was to keep the economy growing and protect the dictatorship of the CCP. In the 2000s, however, Deng's

foreign policy directives began to show their age. First, President Hu and his fellow leaders felt that Deng's foreign policy directives were too humble and passive. What China needed now was a more forward-looking and aggressive posture. So they added an adjective in front of the second phrase of Deng's directives. Now, Deng's directives took a slightly different form: "Keep a low-profile and positively promote national interests."

President Hu had a good reason to be confident enough to revise his master's will. In the early 1990s, Deng's low-key diplomacy was necessary to duck threats from the West, and above all, the United States. Now, such a low-key posture was no longer needed. China had become strong and nobody was threatening China. When George W. Bush was first elected President in December 2000, the United States sought to harden its stance toward China. However, this all changed after 9/11. Now, "engagement" with China returned to the top of the to-do list of the White House. China was no longer a "competitor" or a "threat" for the United States. China became a "partner" of the United States. Together they would fight in the war against terrorism. In 2005, the status of China was elevated to a "stake holder."

Secondly, Deng's foreign policy directives simply ignored Russia and Northeast Asia. Deng's assessment in 1992 that the Soviet Union collapsed because of the bad economy turned out faulty. It was not that simple.⁴⁰ In the 2000s, Putin's Russia made a comeback on the stage of Northeast Asian Geo-politics. This time, Russia was no longer on the verge of collapse. The Russian economy started growing in 2000 largely due to its rising profits from energy exports.⁴¹ President Putin had solid political support at home.

Russia and China resumed talks over the disputed territory on their borders. About 80% of the border disputes had already been settled in 1991. The remaining 20% was the heart of the disputes. In January 1997, Russia and China agreed on a scheme of resolving territorial their issues. Both sides agreed to respect a generalizable principle, the so-called 50/50 scheme.⁴² The final agreement was reached in October 2004. Russia and China put an end to their historic dispute over territory once and for all. The border deal confirmed that Russia and China became real "partners" as equals.

Rapprochement with Russia encouraged China's "positive" diplomacy. China no longer needed to deploy the majority of its armed forces in the Chinese Northeast along the border with Russia. China could concentrate on the modernization of its Navy. China wanted to have a strong Navy in order to protect its sovereignty over Taiwan and South and East China Seas. Moreover, Chinese trade networks had spread all over the world.⁴³ Just like the United States, Germany, and Imperial Japan in the nineteenth century, China became an earnest believer and practitioner of Mahan's theory of maritime expansion.⁴⁴ China began its ambitious plan of building a modern Navy in 1992. In the 2000s, the Chinese Navy had become a blue water navy equipped with nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers.

Russia also found that its "strategic partnership" with China made a lot of sense, both for its security and for its economy. Russia joined the SCO in 2001

hoping that the SCO could offset the US presence in Central Asia. When Xi Jinping declared the initiation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2014, Russian President Putin showed his support immediately and came to Beijing to attend the inauguration ceremony in 2017.

Thirdly, China's economic performance since the early 1990s largely made Deng's directives obsolete. When Deng formulated his directives in 1992, the Chinese GDP was US\$427 billion. At the time of his death in 1997, the Chinese GDP almost doubled to 900 billion. When Hu Jintao modified Deng's directives in 2009, the Chinese GDP had reached 4,600 billion, more than ten times that of 1992.⁴⁵

Besides its size and magnitude, the Chinese economy had evolved into a globalized economy with Chinese characteristics.⁴⁶ In 1992, China had three major trade partners: Japan, the EU, and the United States. China joined the WTO in 2001. Since then, the whole world became the market for Chinese merchandise. In the 2000s, China became the largest trade partner of more than 130 countries. In the 1990s, Hong Kong was the largest conduit of FDI into China. In the 2000s, tax havens in the Caribbean came to compete with Hong Kong. In the 1980s, Japan was the major investor to China with its ODA. In the 1990s, overseas Chinese and risk-taking business people in Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and Hong Kong grabbed a golden opportunity. They invested in the lucrative untapped market of Guangdong. Soon, fund managers in London, New York, Frankfurt, and Tokyo followed. In the 2000s, all kinds of money, such as oil dollars, hedge funds, pension funds, and venture capital, flew into China.

Lastly, Deng's directives became a burden for those Chinese who wanted to expand their activities overseas. The Chinese Navy had good justification for this expansion. They had to protect China's Sea-lanes, which now stretched from the East and South China Seas to the Indian Ocean. They also had a holy mission, the liberation of Taiwan. The Maritime Affairs Agency demanded their share of activities. They needed extra budget and modern vessels in order to protect China's maritime interests in the East and South China Seas and in the Western Pacific. Soon after President Hu modified Deng's directives in 2009, the Navy and the Maritime Affairs Agency expanded their operations "positively." Yet government agencies were not the only actors who wanted "positive diplomacy." Chinese business people and enterprises, both private and state-owned, wanted to expand their business abroad. The global economy needed global protection.

Conclusion

First, let us summarize why China left Northeast Asia. Next, let us review, in the present tense, how Xi Jinping deals with Northeast Asian geo-politics. Lastly, let us look at the prospects for Northeast Asian geo-politics in the future. What kind of role would China be likely to play?

There are three reasons why China departed Northeast Asia. First is security. From the mid-1950s, Northeast Asia had been a battleground for the China-USSR rivalry and friction. China took a defensive posture against the superior

ground and air forces of the Soviet Union. Until the mid-1980s, when new leaders took power both in China and in the Soviet Union, the strategic stand-off continued. When the Soviet Union dissolved at the end of 1991, the threat from the North disappeared. Since then, there is a little reason why China has to commit itself to a power game in Northeast Asia.

Second is the economy. China-Soviet friction prohibited economic cooperation. For both China and the Soviet Union, economic dependence meant weakness. Economic self-sufficiency was the ground rule in Northeast Asia until the late 1980s. When Deng Xiaoping tried to introduce the market economy into China, he chose Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, the so-called Four Little Dragons in Asia, as his role model. To Deng, there was little to learn in Northeast Asia.

Third is North Korea. North Korea remains an independent and unpredictable player of Northeast Asian geo-politics. North Korea can spoil China's ambition to become a global superpower in two ways. First, North Korea does not need China's nuclear protection. Second, China's powerful tool of market economy does not seem to work. China's commitment to Northeast Asia, therefore, is likely to remain passive and conservative, seeking to preserve the *status quo*.

Now, let us turn to how Xi Jinping deals with Northeast Asian geo-politics today. As he became China's new leader, Xi Jinping signaled a clear departure from Deng's directives. Xi declared openly that his goal was the realization of the "Chinese Dream," that was, the "Great Restoration of the Chinese People."

Ironically, it was the remarkable success of Deng's directives that made this departure possible and even look natural. By the time of Xi's inauguration in 2012, China had become the second-largest economy in the world, behind only the United States. To Xi, Deng's directives had completed their historic role. China had become rich. China was now entering a "new era." Making China great and strong is Xi's ultimate aim. Xi's goal is to first catch up with the United States and then surpass it.

So far, Northeast Asian geo-politics plays a secondary role in Xi's drive to become a global superpower. Xi's grand design, the so-called BRI, is inherently ambitious. Its two routes stretch from China, across the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Central and South Asia, the Near East and African continent, and finally to Europe. According to this plan, China heads to the West, largely bypassing Northeast Asia.⁴⁷ Northeast Asia may become a mid-way point on the BRI's Northern route. But that is not important. The final destination of both the Northern and Southern routes of BRI is Europe. Xi intends to revitalize EU-China economic interactions so that China can avert the conflict with its East, and the United States, in particular.

It is worth noting that the two BRI routes carefully avoid hot spots of US-China contention. Those spots are the Chinese Northeast, the two Koreas, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the South China Sea. Xi invited everyone to the BRI Summit in Beijing in May 2017, including Japan, India, and the United States.⁴⁸

So far, however, Xi Jinping still maintains one of Deng's directives, that is, "do not confront with the United States." His patriotic rhetoric is one thing. His

behavior in the international stage is another. This dichotomy is common in the Chinese politics. Chairman Mao condemned the US imperialism harshly until the days before he met Henry Kissinger. There is also another continuity. Despite drastic changes in their domestic and foreign policies, no successor of Chairman Mao ever challenged the dominance of the CCP.⁴⁹ Only Mao challenged and weakened the Party. Deng made the Party richer, and Xi made the Party stronger.

Xi has another reason why he behaves discreetly in the international stages. He wants to impress the world as a great leader of a great nation. Xi's "positive" or "assertive" diplomacy has been successful in impressing the world. Xi's commitment to global issues, such as a borderless economy, the environment, and global warming, offered a clear contrast to the Trump administration's negligence of international commitment. Trump helped Xi become a world leader, at least in his diplomatic outlook.

Will China pay greater attention to Northeast Asian geo-politics in the near future? This author's answer is negative, for three reasons.

Firstly, China faces no threat in Northeast Asia. Russia ceased to be a threat in 2004. The Russia-China border has remained peaceful since then. China thinks that the major challenges come from East and Southeast Asia. China, thereby, should be ready for major or minor conflicts in the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and the Western Pacific.

North Korea is likely to spoil peace in Northeast Asia. China must keep watching Kim Jong-un carefully. If he makes reckless moves, the United States and its allies are likely to intervene. China must avoid such a danger. North Korea is, however, not a direct threat to China. South Korea and Japan are the main targets of North Korea's missiles. China can work as an intermediary among contending parties. If Xi succeeds in soft-landing North Korea, he will certainly get international acclaim for his peace-making efforts.

Secondly, Northeast Asia's economic potential is too limited for China. Siberia used to be an attractive market for Chinese migrant laborers in Chinese Northeast. However, these days the large cities in central and south China offer better-paying jobs. Similarly, natural resources in Siberia and the Chinese Northeast used to be a good reason why the Chinese Northeast became a center of heavy industry, but more recently the Northeast Asia cities which have grown most dramatically are ones like Shanghai, Tianjin, Ningbo, Qingdao, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. Cross-border trade in Northeast Asia did expand rapidly, benefiting those border provinces and districts. The overall contribution of those Northeast Asian economic activities was small, however. Large cities in the coastal provinces have been the main driving forces of the Chinese economy in the past. They are likely to remain so as the Chinese economy "goes global" at an accelerated pace.

Thirdly, Xi Jinping does not have a theoretical or ideological framework that would justify China's commitment to Northeast Asian geo-politics. Mao could present his own version of socialism. Deng shifted his attention from Northeast Asia to the East and South. Deng justified his shift based on his doctrine of "reform and opening." Xi's Han-nationalism is not likely to work as a catalyst for cross-border cooperation. Rather, his "Chinese Dream" and the "Great Restoration of

the Chinese People” will antagonize China’s neighbors and adversaries anywhere. Xi’s nationalism embodies the present nature of socialism in China. Mao radicalized socialism, Deng revised it, and Xi nationalized and domesticated it.

The playing field of Northeast Asian geo-politics is getting crowded right now. Each player has different positioning in mind. Russia’s positioning is that of a “Eurasian nation.”⁵⁰ Russia represents a large stretch of landmass which connects West and East. South Korea’s positioning is that of a typical nation state in Asia. It depends upon the United States for its security. It will do business with anyone, though. North Korea’s positioning is that of a poor and isolated nation at the Eastern end of the Eurasian Continent. It must hang in there until someone pays attention.

In this setting, China’s aloofness and non-commitment in Northeast Asian geo-politics is a great relief for all, except North Korea. China happens to be in this position by default. Once Xi Jinping decides to commit to Northeast Asian geo-politics, the guiding principle and the rule of the game he is likely to apply are naked expansionism and outdated Han nationalism. Nationalism is contagious and destructive. It did not work in the past. It won’t work in the future, either.

Notes

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3 The Impact of the Donald Trump Presidency on Northeast Asia

Yasubiro Izumikawa

How did the Donald Trump administration conduct policies toward Northeast Asia? How did its policy influence Northeast Asia's regional dynamics? Ever since the beginning of his presidential campaign, Donald Trump attacked the foreign policy establishment that had sustained the post-World War II internationalist US foreign policy for both Republican and Democratic administrations. As he gained more "on-the-job training" in foreign policy after moving into the White House, his foreign policy increasingly diverged from the traditional US policy of advocating free trade, alliance commitments, and multilateral institutions. Thomas Wright, a foreign policy specialist at the Brookings Institution, argued in January 2016 that Trump's worldview, characterized by a zero-sum view of international trade, disdain for US allies, and a high regard for dictatorial leadership, had been quite stable despite the prevalent perception of his unpredictability, and predicted that his worldview would guide his foreign policy in the event of his victory in the presidential election.¹ As discussed later, his foreign policy record proves that Wright's prediction was correct.

Many foreign policy experts characterized the consequences of Trump's diplomacy as a crisis of US credibility, the weakening of the post-World War II international order, and the abdication of US hegemony.² While I generally agree with these assessments, this study aims to go beyond such abstract notions and analyze more concretely how President Trump's policies influenced Northeast Asia. In doing so, I intend to examine the impact of his presidency on Northeast Asia's regional order and regionalism in Northeast Asia or in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific more broadly.

In the next section, I overview the development of regionalism in Northeast Asia, and East Asia more broadly, and analyze how the United States had influenced regional dynamics before the Trump administration.³ I then discuss how President Trump conducted policies toward Northeast Asia during his presidency and analyze how his policies influenced Northeast Asia's regional dynamics. I conclude this chapter by explaining how the exit of President Trump and the birth of the Biden administration, which almost certainly will take a more traditional foreign policy approach, may influence Northeast Asia in the future.

History of Asian Regionalism and the Role of the United States

Although steady efforts had been made to promote regional mechanisms in Asia during the Cold War, it was only during the waning days of the Cold War that Asian regionalism began to attract attention from scholars and policy-makers.⁴ The initiative that caught the most attention was a proposal made in 1990 by the (then) Malaysian former Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad to create the East Asian Economic Group (EAEG). Since this proposal did not include the United States, Washington expressed concern that it could become a regional bloc aimed at excluding the United States.⁵ Dependent heavily on the United States for both its economy and security, Japan deferred to the United States and did not respond favorably to Mahathir's proposal. Since Japan's membership was an indispensable element for the EAEG, it did not materialize.⁶

Soon after the end of the Cold War, prominent political scientist Aaron Friedberg lamented the absence of viable multilateral institutions in Asia.⁷ Pointing out that neoliberal institutionalists regard such institutions as a key to peace and stability of regions, he predicted that East Asia would become more prone to conflicts in the post-Cold War period.⁸ Since then, the layers of regional institutions have developed. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), although established in 1989, held its first summit level meeting in Seattle in 1993. In 1994, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was established as the first region-wide multilateral framework through which security issues are discussed.⁹ Unlike the case of EAEG, the United States supported the creation of these institutions. In the case of the APEC, the Clinton administration intended to use it as an instrument to open the other members' markets and promote US exports to the region. In the case of ARF, US officials, such as the then Deputy Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye, were concerned about the problem pointed out by Friedberg and encouraged the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to take the lead in creating a multilateral forum that would supplement, not replace, the existing security system of US alliances.¹⁰

A turning point for Asian regionalism came in the second half of the 1990s, with the Asian Financial Crisis. When the solution for the crisis presented by the International Monetary Fund, under strong US influence, proved utterly inadequate, states in the region, including Japan, became frustrated. In response, Japan proposed in September 1997 to create an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF), to deal with future financial issues in the region independent of US influence. However, Japan's initiative met strong opposition not only from China but also from the United States, concerned that a regional mechanism excluding itself could dilute its influence and the international monetary fund's (IMF's) presence.¹¹ This failure did not stop Japan and others from seeking a regional framework even without US participation. Later in 1997, the ASEAN invited the leaders of China, Japan, and South Korea to join its annual summit in Kuala Lumpur, which became the first summit meeting of the ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN+3). This became the first East Asian regional framework of which the United States

was not a member.¹² Based on this platform, the member states agreed in 2000 to create the Chiang Mai Initiative, a network of bilateral currency swap agreements to deal with short-term regional liquidity problems.

Subsequently, out of the ASEAN+3 initiatives, the East Asia Summit (EAS) evolved and held its first summit meeting in 2005. Its original members included the ASEAN+3 members, Australia, India, and New Zealand. Three non-ASEAN+3 members were included because some members, Japan in particular, insisted on their inclusion as a means to dilute the influence of China in the institution.¹³ Although the United States had not originally participated in the EAS, it took a first step to join it by signing the ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in 2009, and President Barack Obama attended the EAS summit for the first time in 2011.¹⁴

As this description makes clear, the development of Asian regionalism centers around Southeast Asia, covering varying geographic areas ranging from East Asia, the Asia-Pacific, and the Indo-Pacific.¹⁵ In contrast, initiatives to promote regionalism in Northeast Asia lag far behind those centered around Southeast Asia, or they did not survive long. The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), created as a result of the 1994 North Korean-US Agreed Framework with the membership of Japan, South Korea, the United States, as well as others, ceased to exist because of the revelation of North Korea's covert pursuit of nuclear weapons after the 1994 agreement. The Six-Party Talks, which emerged originally as a forum to address North Korea's nuclear and other problems but was expected to develop into a viable institution, has become dormant because no end is in sight for North Korea's nuclear and missile development. Attempts to promote trilateral cooperation among China, Japan, and South Korea have been made, with the trilateral summit meeting launched in 2008 and the trilateral free trade negotiation announced in 2012.¹⁶ However, these initiatives have not made much progress to date.

Describing this series of initiatives shows how the role of the United States in promoting Asian regional frameworks has varied. In some cases, such as the EAEG and the AMF, the United States overtly blocked regional initiatives which it feared could weaken US influence in the region. In other cases, such as APEC and the ARE, the United States encouraged regional initiatives which it viewed as useful and supplemental for pursuing US interests in the region. Finally, in those cases, such as ASEAN+3 and the original EAS, of which the United States is/was not a member, the United States avoided overtly interfering with their formative processes but relied on its allies, Japan in particular, to ensure that its interests would not be harmed.

This was the state of affairs with regard to Asian regionalism before President Trump's inauguration in January 2017. During the presidential campaign, President Trump had expressed strong skepticism about multilateral institutions. Thus, it should not be a surprise that he did not express an interest in any of the frameworks noted earlier, as shown by the fact that he did not participate in the EAS for three years in row, from 2018 to 2020.¹⁷ Rather, President Trump damaged one regional initiative, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), from which

he quickly withdrew in accordance with his campaign pledge. The only exception may be the so-called “Quad,” consisting of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, which is regarded as a significant piece of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy. However, President Trump himself did not seem mindful of this emerging but fragile framework, and the US attempts to strengthen it were often hampered by President Trump himself.¹⁸

The fact that President Trump completely neglected Asian regionalism does not mean that his policies had no impact on Northeast Asia. Later, I explain President Trump’s policies toward Northeast Asia and then analyze how they influenced its regional dynamics.

Trump’s Northeast Asia Policy and Its Impact

This section explains how the Trump administration conducted policies toward Northeast Asia. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Mr. Trump repeatedly made remarks that alarmed US and foreign experts on East Asia, such as advocating Japan’s and South Korea’s development of nuclear weapons, expressing admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin, and declaring to designate China as a currency manipulator on the first day of his presidency. Despite such shocking rhetoric, the Trump administration’s handling of Northeast Asia policies in his first year in office reflected more continuities than changes from previous administrations. Around the end of 2017, however, the Trump administration began to adopt foreign policies that drastically diverged from those of its predecessors—such a tendency continued escalating until the end of his presidency.

2017: The Year of Relative Calm

On December 2, 2016, President-elect Trump held a telephone conversation with Taiwanese Premier Tsai Ing-wen, shocking China, which had taken for granted the US commitments to the principle of “one China.”¹⁹ Soon after his inauguration, President Trump signed an executive memorandum directing the withdrawal from the TPP on January 23, 2017. For many observers of international relations in Northeast Asia, these actions were ominous signs for what was to come under his leadership.

However, the Trump administration’s policies toward Northeast Asia in 2017 were characterized more by continuity than by change in general. Toward Japan, he distanced himself from his own campaign rhetoric that was reminiscent of the anti-Japanese sentiments frequently observed in the 1980s and established a cordial relationship with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.²⁰ The US-Japan joint statement on February 10, released during Abe’s formal visit to the United States, emphasized that “the U.S. commitment to defend Japan through the full range of military capabilities, both nuclear and conventional, is unwavering,” and affirmed the applicability of the US-Japan security treaty to the Senkaku Islands, the islets disputed between China and Japan.²¹ On the issue of bilateral trade, the two allies agreed to establish a dialogue headed by Vice President Mike Pence

and Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso. When President Trump visited Tokyo in November, he met the families of Japanese citizens believed to be abducted by North Korea and reaffirmed working closely with Japan to resolve the abductee issues.²²

In China, President Trump held a telephone meeting with the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Xi Jinping on February 11 and reaffirmed the US commitment to the “one China” principle.²³ President Trump then met Xi on April 6 and 7 during the latter’s visit to the United States and agreed to work closely to resolve bilateral trade and other issues.²⁴ Soon after their meetings, the U.S. Department of Treasury decided not to designate China as a currency manipulator, despite President Trump’s earlier campaign promise to do so. It should be noted, however, that President Trump ordered a missile launch against Syria, which had allegedly used chemical weapons against its citizens, when Xi was in Florida for a meeting with the president. This decision was interpreted as a not-so-tacit signal to Xi that China should exert more influence over North Korea on the latter’s nuclear and missile programs so that Pyongyang might avoid a military conflict with the United States.²⁵ Trump also showed his respectful attitude toward the Chinese leader when he later visited Beijing in November, affirming that he would not pressure Xi on trade issues and that both states continue cooperation to resolve North Korea’s nuclear and other issues.²⁶

With regard to Russia, the Trump administration took several initiatives that were more punishing toward the Kremlin than the actions taken by the Obama administration, although President Trump did not hide his warm attitude toward Putin. President Trump signed a bill, passed with overwhelming support by the US Congress, which made possible additional sanctions against Russia over its 2016 election interference and intrusion into Ukraine.²⁷ In December, the Trump administration announced a plan to provide Ukraine with “lethal” weapons, a decision that Russia hawks within the US Congress and security experts praised.²⁸ These actions taken by the administration disappointed Russian officials, who had earlier expected an improvement in Russia-US relations under Trump.²⁹

The Trump administration’s most conspicuous Northeast Asia policy in 2017 was its increasing pressure toward North Korea, but even this policy reflected the consensus among security policy experts that the United States should pressure North Korea by coordinating policies not only with its allies but also with China as much as possible. President Trump’s occasional harsh rhetoric toward Pyongyang, like calling North Korean leader Kim Jong-un “rocket man” or threatening Pyongyang with his “fire and fury that the world has never seen,” alarmed experts about an increasing danger of an accidental military clash with North Korea. In addition, Victor Cha, the former senior director of Asia policy under the second George W. Bush administration, revealed that the Trump administration was seriously considering the so-called bloody nose strategy, a limited military attack to force North Korea to give up its nuclear and missile programs, warning that such a strategy would risk a full-scale military clash in the Korean Peninsula.³⁰ However, it should be noted that these actions, which seemed excessively coercive, forced China to become more serious than before in pressuring North Korea,

inducing North Korea's change of attitude toward the Trump administration as discussed later.

The absence of radical departure from the traditional Northeast Asia policy in President Trump's first year was probably because he, who had had no experience in public office, had to rely on the "adults in the room," or officials who had government experiences or traditional worldviews, to conduct foreign policy. They included Secretary of Defense James Mattis, National Security Advisor to President Herbert McMaster, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. These and other experienced officials were able to constrain President Trump from behaving based on his own instincts and preferences.³¹ On economic and trade policy, National Economic Council Director and former CEO of Goldman Sachs Gary Cohn prevented protectionists such as National Trade Council's Director Peter Navarro from exerting influence over President Trump.³² On Russia, Congressional Republicans still maintained relative independence from President Trump and were able to force him to take hard actions against Moscow.

From 2018 to 2020: Escalating "Trumpism" in Trump's Northeast Asia Policy

Around the end of 2017, President Trump began to shift gear in foreign policy. This happened as President Trump removed the "adults in the room" one after another. Secretary of State Tillerson resigned in March 2018, National Security Advisor McMaster and National Economic Council's Cohn did so in April. Finally, Secretary of Defense Mattis resigned in December. John Bolton, who inherited McMaster's position, was also dismissed in September 2019. President Trump appointed loyalists or other individuals who would not get in his way to key positions within the executive branch. In addition, President Trump increased his clout over congressional Republicans by solidifying his popularity among GOP electorates. These factors allowed him to take bold, or even unprecedented, foreign policy actions without fearing backlash from his own party.

One of the most outstanding departures from traditional US policy toward Northeast Asia was policy toward China. In December 2017, the Trump administration issued the US national security strategy document, in which it named China, as well as Russia, as a "revisionist power."³³ In the following month, the administration released a summary of the *2018 National Defense Strategy*, which dubbed China a "strategic competitor," and accused it of "seek[ing] Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and the displacement of the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future."³⁴ On March 22, the US government announced an imposition of additional 25% punitive tariff on imported goods from China worth US\$60 billion, starting a series of "tariff wars" vis-à-vis China. While this trade war attracted strong attention globally, Vice President Mike Pence delivered at the Hudson Institute in October 2018 a speech, which was regarded as the Trump administration's declaration of confrontation with China in a variety of fields such as military, high-tech industry, religious, and human rights realms.³⁵

The spread of Covid-19 into the United States and the world further hardened the Trump administration's attitude toward China in the final year of the Trump presidency. President Trump, although he repeatedly dismissed the seriousness of Covid-19, blamed China for its initial failure to contain the disease, calling the new coronavirus the "China" or "kung fu virus." He also alleged, without strong evidence, that the virus was intentionally or accidentally leaked from China's virus research facility in Wuhan. In June and July, top officials such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, National Security Advisor to President Robert O'Brien, made a series of speeches blaming China for a variety of problems, such as cybertheft, human rights, and aggressive behavior in the South China Sea.³⁶

In contrast with his hardening approach to China, President Trump completely reversed his policy of "maximum pressure" toward North Korea in 2018. North Korea, which had been conducting a series of nuclear and missile tests in the previous year, took advantage of its participation in the Winter Olympic Games held in South Korea and allegedly conveyed its intention to begin negotiations with the United States.³⁷ In response, President Trump stunned the world, possibly even North Korea, by announcing on March 8, 2018, his plan to hold a summit meeting with Kim Jong-un. The Kim-Trump meeting, the first North Korean-US summit meeting in history, was ultimately held in Singapore on June 12, resulting in the signing of a joint declaration, which was heavily criticized as overly vague and short on specifics. Since then, President Trump continued publicly his praise of Kim Jong-un and expressed his optimism for a successful resolution of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs despite the lack of progress in subsequent bilateral negotiations. He held the second summit meetings with Kim on February 27 and 28 in Hanoi, Vietnam, but failed to reach any agreement.³⁸ President Trump held another surprise meeting with Kim in Panmunjom on June 30 during his visit to South Korea.³⁹ Although this meeting led to the reopening of the stalled North Korean-US negotiations, no meaningful progress was made subsequently. When North Korea conducted several short-range missile tests, probably in order to express its frustration and to force the US side to accept Pyongyang's demands, President Trump expressed that he did not mind North Korea's launching of the missiles that would not reach the United States.⁴⁰ Such statements, needless to say, overlooked the US defense commitments to Japan and South Korea, which were within the range of North Korea's short-range and mid-range missiles.

While trying to maintain working relations with North Korea without meaningful progress on the latter's nuclear programs, President Trump hardened his attitude toward South Korea. It was well known that he had been critical of the US-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) finalized under the Obama administration.⁴¹ In January 2018, the US government began to renegotiate with South Korea on the bilateral FTA, and by the end of March Seoul had agreed to accept additional clauses more advantageous to the United States on the exchange rate and car trade. During this negotiation, the US side allegedly threatened to withdraw or reduce US troops deployed in South Korea unless Seoul accepted the US demands.⁴² On the issue of host-nation support for the

US troops in South Korea, Washington and Seoul continued negotiations even after they had reached an interim agreement to increase South Korea's annual payment from US\$830 million to US\$ one billion. In the process, it was reported that the US side had demanded to raise South Korea's payment by fivefold.⁴³ Although it was reported that the United States withdrew this demand when South Korea expressed its intention to purchase more US-made weaponry and to dispatch South Korean fleets to the Strait of Hormuz, Secretary of State Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Mark Esper contributed a joint opinion piece to *The Wall Street Journal* on January 17, 2020, demanding further increases in South Korea's military contributions.⁴⁴

The Trump administration also tried to pressure Japan on both trade and security issues. In May 2018, the United States announced to impose an additional 25% tariff on cars and their parts imported from Japan. Using this issue as a leverage, the United States got Japan to enter negotiations on trade issues in September 2018. In the end, Japan agreed to reduce tariffs for more than US\$ two billion worth of US beef and pork, the same access that Japan granted to the signatories of the so-called TPP-11, reached after the Trump administration withdrew from the original TPP.⁴⁵ With regard to host-nation support, the Japanese media reported that the Trump administration conveyed its demand that Japan increase the payment fourfold or fivefold in 2019.⁴⁶ The Trump administration's tactics toward Japan were not as overtly coercive as those toward South Korea, but its behavior made the Japanese government's claim hollow that Abe's personal relationship with President Trump helped Japan avoid the same fate facing South Korea.

The Trump administration's overall policy toward Russia, one might argue, was the most consistent among its policies toward major players in Northeast Asia. It criticized Russia alongside China in the 2017 national security strategy and 2018 defense strategy documents.⁴⁷ The Trump administration also continued imposing sanctions on Russia regarding the latter's cyberattacks, election interference in 2016, assassination of a former Russian spy exiled in Britain, and aid to the left-wing, anti-US government in Venezuela. On October 20, 2018, the Trump administration also announced its intention to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the 1987 landmark arms control agreement symbolized the waning of the Cold War.⁴⁸ Even though the administration mostly kept a confrontational approach to Russia, President Trump frequently made remarks favorable to Putin and even made decisions that benefitted Russia. It is well known that his personal involvements in pressuring the Ukrainian government to find "dirt" on Hunter Biden, a former board member of a Ukrainian gas company and a son of the Democratic Party's presidential candidate Joseph Biden, stemmed from his insistence that not Russia but Ukraine interfered into the 2016 US elections. President Trump's out-of-the-blue decision to withdraw US forces from northern Syria in October 2018, abandoning the pro-US Kurds who fought the Islamic State on the ground, facilitated the Syrian government forces, supported by Russia, to extend their reach into the region.⁴⁹

Not all of the radical changes in the Trump administration's Northeast Asia policies from 2018 to 2020 originated from President Trump's personal beliefs and creeds. For instance, its departure from the previous US administrations' China policy was not merely a product of his own personal view but also a reflection of the reassessment of the US policy by the US government as a whole.⁵⁰ It also reflected the worsening view of China in a broader policy community in and beyond Washington, DC. However, the Trump administration's frequent use of tariffs, coercive bargaining toward US allies on various issues, and the 180-degree reversal of approach to North Korea cannot be adequately explained without factoring in his own judgments. To use the jargon of foreign policy analysis, the Trump administration's shift toward more radical, unconventional foreign policies toward Northeast Asia reflected the decision-making process in which the top leader's personality and worldviews became an increasingly important determinant.⁵¹

The Impact of President Trump's Northeast Asia Policies on Regional Dynamics

How did the Trump administration's policies described earlier influence regional dynamics in Northeast Asia and East Asia/the Asia-Pacific more broadly? On the one hand, President Trump's policies prompted regional players to more effectively promote regional frameworks. Its most symbolic example is the conclusion of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), or the so-called TPP11. When President Trump withdrew the United States from the TPP, many experts believed that the agreement was dealt a fatal blow. Instead, the remaining signatories, Japan in particular, stepped up efforts to salvage the agreement and overcame various obstacles to enact the CPTPP in March 2018.⁵² President Trump's mercantilist approach also facilitated the conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a multilateral free trade agreement consisting of ASEAN states, Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, and South Korea, in November 2020.⁵³ Japan had been somewhat ambivalent toward the RCEP before 2017 because it had feared the framework might increase China's economic clout in the region while its economic benefits for Japan would be limited.⁵⁴ After President Trump took office, Japan became more willing to accept the RCEP, in order partly to maintain momentum for regional free trade and partly to remain "in the game" vis-à-vis China, to which other Asian states might turn increasingly because of the Trump administration's mercantilist approach. In the past, the ineffective leadership or indifference of the United States motivated regional players to seek multilateral regional institutions, such as the ASEAN+3, that exclude the United States. Similar dynamics explain the births of both CPTPP and RCEP. In these cases, however, US allies and security partners stepped up their efforts to maintain the existing regional order until a next, more internationalist US president could bring the United States back into the region.

On the other hand, the Trump administration's policies led to an increasing fluidity of the existing regional order and widening cleavages in Northeast Asia.

First and most evidently, the US-China rivalry has intensified, escalating tension in the region. Escalating tension is most observable in the Taiwan Strait, where the Chinese and the US military could clash over the defense of Taiwan. Since President Trump's inauguration, the United States has continuously upgraded its relations with Taiwan, making a series of arms sales and improving the quality and quantity of official contacts with Taiwan.⁵⁵ This angered Beijing, which has escalated its military pressure over Taiwan, conducting military exercises targeting Taiwan and repeatedly intruding into Taiwanese airspace. On the economic front, President Trump expressed that he would not mind an economic "decoupling" from China, whereas China sought to keep its access to high-tech goods and markets abroad. Such bilateral tension can exert divisive pressure over Northeast Asia, putting US allies and partners in undesirable situations where they may have to choose sides.

In addition, Trump's harsh anti-China policy induced Beijing to approach Russia, which in turn responded favorably to China's overtures. Both states have deepened their strategic cooperation since 2017, upgrading the level of their military cooperation and conducting joint military exercises in both Europe and Asia.⁵⁶ China and Russia have also invigorated their respective approaches to drive a wedge between Japan and the United States. China, probably in order to avoid a US-Japan common front against itself, softened its approach toward Japan tactically. Russia, for its part, raised its hurdles toward Japan to resolve the outstanding territorial disputes over *Hoppo Ryodo*, or the Northern Territories, probably in order to pressure Tokyo to distance itself from Washington.⁵⁷

The strategic environments in the Korean Peninsula have become more fluid, and a regional framework to deal with the issues there has become much harder to create than ever before. The most significant cause for such fluctuation was President Trump's North Korea policy. Ironic as it is, President Trump's initial "maximum pressure" policy toward North Korea succeeded in soliciting more cooperation than before from China, which feared a military clash between the United States and North Korea, to pressure Pyongyang. Such a strengthened coalitional pressure over North Korea was at least a contributing factor to North Korea's decision to ready itself for negotiations with the United States. However, President Trump's sudden shift toward accommodation with North Korea destroyed the coalition. China, chronically fearful that North Korea might develop close relations with the United States and turn against itself, must have keenly learned the danger of cooperating with the United States in pressuring North Korea. Probably because of this, China quickly embraced North Korea, with Xi Jinping holding as many as five meetings with Kim Jong-un since Trump's first announcement to meet Kim in March 2018.⁵⁸ Japan, which had coordinated its policy with the United States to exert pressure on North Korea, had no choice but to seek direct contacts with North Koreans once Trump opened a dialogue with North Korea. By the end of the Trump presidency, the trilateral cooperation among South Korea, Japan, and the United States was completely gone.

Uncertainly regarding the future of South Korea's security increased as well. President Trump's coercive approach to Seoul on the range of issues, such as

the US-South Korea FTA, host nation support, and the US defense commitments, alerted South Korean citizens to the high price that they must pay for the alliance with the United States.⁵⁹ The Trump administration's indifference to the deteriorating South Korean-Japanese relations resulting from historical issues, such as comfort women, and South Korea's withdrawal from the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) have revealed that the United States might abandon its traditional role of bridging Tokyo and Seoul.⁶⁰ Under such circumstances, a vocal opinion came publicly from close aides to South Korean President Moon Jae-in that South Korea might be better off shifting away from the alliance with the United States and promoting security cooperation with China, which no doubt would welcome such a development.⁶¹ South Korean public opinions still support the US-South Korean alliance, and the possibility of South Korea's dealignment from the US-centered security framework in Northeast Asia is not yet high.⁶² However, certain combinations of South Korea's domestic political situations and isolationist/unilateralist US foreign policy may have deteriorating effects on the existing security alignments surrounding the Korean Peninsula.⁶³

How do these developments collectively influence regional momentum in Northeast Asia? While the Trump administration's indifference to the US alliances and its mercantilist economic policies stimulated regionalism within East Asia/Asia-Pacific, as seen in the cases of the CPTPP and the RCEP, Northeast Asia experienced further divisive dynamics and the escalation of tensions. It should be noted that this trend emerged when a more profound strategic shift occurred in East Asia/Asia-Pacific: the southward shift of the center of security gravity.⁶⁴ While China's material capabilities continue to grow, its maritime expansion is directed toward the East and South China Seas. In response, the United States, Japan, and Australia have become more focused than before toward the maritime region ranging from the Indian Ocean through the Strait of Malacca and South China Sea and then to the Taiwan Strait and East China Sea.⁶⁵ The other side of the same coin is that Northeast Asia as a geopolitical region may become less significant than before, at least relatively speaking. This relative decline in Northeast Asia's strategic importance may discourage regional players and the United States from developing a meaningful regional approach. Therefore, truly significant stimuli, either or both security and economic incentives, would be required to invigorate Northeast Asia's regionalism, which Gilbert Rozman had already called "stunted" fifteen years ago.⁶⁶

Conclusion: The Future of the United States and Northeast Asia

In the November 2020 presidential election, President Trump was defeated by Democratic candidate Joseph Biden, and his presidency ended in January 2021, four years after he had entered the White House. If he had won the election, his conduct of foreign policy might have drifted farther away from the post-World War II US foreign policy, with much more dire consequences on Northeast Asia's

regional order. But will his (at least temporal) exit lead to the return of internationalist US foreign policy? How will President Biden's foreign policy influence Northeast Asia, and East Asia/Asia-Pacific more broadly?

President Biden has been consistently advocating a multilateral and internationalist approach since the 2020 presidential campaign.⁶⁷ At the same time, several foreign policy analysts have argued that various US public opinion polls indicate that the American people do not necessarily support isolationism or abandoning US leadership in the world.⁶⁸ If President Trump's personal beliefs and worldviews were the determining factor for his administration's foreign policies, his departure would enable the Biden administration to get back on track to assume leadership in the world with relative ease.

However, it would not be easy for the Biden administration to erase Trump's legacy in and beyond Northeast Asia. First of all, the core tenet of US policy toward China underwent a complete transformation during the Trump presidency from engagement to confrontation, and the hardened approach to China is expected to continue even under the Biden administration as it enjoys a rare bipartisan support in today's divisive domestic politics. Furthermore, Mr. Trump's rhetoric of "America First" and skepticism toward international commitments has been accepted by a significant portion of conservative politicians and citizens and exerts constraining effects on how President Biden conducts foreign policy.⁶⁹ Unfortunately, the societal foundation that made US leadership in the world after World War II has been further eroded by Mr. Trump's constant attacks on traditional US foreign policy, and, therefore, President Biden needs to navigate carefully through a shaky domestic ground to re-establish the pivotal US position in Northeast Asia and beyond. It is of course possible for the Biden administration to find an equilibrium in terms of domestic and international politics and to re-engage in Northeast Asia effectively. Even if the Biden administration can do so, the strategic picture that it faces, however, will be far different from what the pre-Trump US presidents had faced, with a far-stronger China, a more aggressive Russia, a more nuclear-armed North Korea, and more complicated South Korea-Japanese relations, etc.

Under such circumstances, it is hard to foresee whether Northeast Asia may somehow regain regional momentum, manage at least to maintain relative stability, or become a playground of power politics and rivalry. One important determinant, as discussed earlier, is the future of US policy toward Northeast Asia, and how successful the Biden administration may be in eradicating Trump's legacy in the near-term. Another determinant is China's future, which is outside the scope of this analysis. The other key determinant, however, is how the other regional players handle Northeast Asia's intra-regional relations. If they merely follow the logic of the emerging strategic rivalry in the region, Northeast Asia will be more divided, more dangerous, and further lose its value as a geopolitical sphere. This outcome can be avoided only if they can conduct diplomacy creatively to facilitate US re-engagement into Northeast Asia to maintain momentum for regional economic prosperity and to persuade China that it is in its own interests to play by established rules and norms.

Notes

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- 2 Hitoshi Tanaka, “The Crisis of US Credibility in East Asia,” *East Asia Insights*, October 2019. Accessed December 10, 2019: <http://www.jcie.or.jp/insights/201910.html>; Thomas G. Otte, “The Waning of the Postwar Order: Historical Reflections of 2016 and the Emergence of a Twenty-First Century World Order,” in *Chaos in the Liberal Order: Trump Presidency and International Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Robert Jervis, Francis Gavin, Joshua Rovner and Dianna L. Labrosse (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 158–171; Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *The Empty Throne: America’s Abdication of Global Leadership* (New York: Public Affairs, 2018); Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon, *Exit from Hegemony: The Unraveling of the American Global Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Richard Haas, “Present at the Disruption: How Trump Unmade U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 99:5 (September–October 2020): 24–34; Ishaan Tharoor, “Trump and Pompeo’s Campaign of Diplomatic ‘Vandalism,’” *The Washington Post*, January 13, 2021. Accessed January 25, 2021: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/01/13/trump-cuba-yemen-challenge-biden/>
- 3 This author is well aware that in today’s Asia there are many other regional mechanisms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). However, since this study focuses on the role of the United States in Asian regionalism, it does not include those regional institutions that center around China-Eurasia or the Indian Ocean.
- 4 As for earlier efforts by Australia, Japan, and South Korea to promote regionalism in Asia, see Mie Oba, *Ajia-Taiheiyo Tiikikeisei beno Dotei: Kyokaiokoka Nichi Go no Aidentiti Mosaku to Chiikishugi* [*Path toward the Formation of the Asia-Pacific Region: Japan’s and Australia’s Quests for Identity and Regionalism*] (Kyoto: Minerva Shobo, 2004); Yang-hyeon Jo, *Ajia Chiikishugi to Amerika: Betonamu Sensoki no Ajiataiheiyo Kokusaikankei* [*Asian Regionalism and the United States: International Relations of the Asia-Pacific During the Vietnam War*] (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2009).
- 5 In response to such a concern from outside and within Asia, the EAEG concept was later modified to the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC).
- 6 Takashi Terada, “The United States and East Asian Regionalism: Inclusion-Exclusion Logic and the Role of Japan,” in *A Pacific Nation: Perspectives on the U.S. Role in the East Asia Community*, eds. Mark Borthwick and Tadashi Yamamoto (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2011), 137–138. Accessed October 1, 2021: <http://www.jcie.org/researchpdfs/PacificNation/Terada.pdf>
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- 8 Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).
- 9 ARF consists of Australia, the member states of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China, India, Japan, North & South Korea, Russia, the United States, and others. Taiwan is not included.
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- 12 Kent Calder posits that the establishment of ASEAN+3 was “a critical juncture” for regionalism in East Asia. In this author’s view, his argument has not proved accurate. Kent Calder and Min Ye, *The Making of Northeast Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).
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- 15 Mie Oba, “Further Development of Asian Regionalism: Institutional Hedging in an Uncertain Era,” *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 8:2 (2019): 3–4.
- 16 Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), “Nichi Chu Kan Sangookukan Kyoryoku [China-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Cooperation]” and “Nichi Chu Kan FTA [China-Japan-South Korea FTA].” Accessed April 23, 2021: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/jck/index.html#section1>; <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/fta/j-jck/index.html>
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- 18 Josh Rogin, “The Trump Administration Had a China Strategy After All, But Trump Did Not Follow It,” *The Washington Post*, January 15, 2021. Accessed January 27, 2021: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/the-trump-administration-had-a-china-strategy-after-all-but-trump-didnt-follow-it/2021/01/14/846e97d4-56ad-11eb-a817-e5e7f8a406d6_story.html
- 19 Mark Landler and David E. Sanger, “Trump Speaks Taiwan’s Leader, an Affront to China,” *The New York Times*, December 2, 2016. Accessed December 1, 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/02/us/politics/trump-speaks-with-taiwans-leader-a-possible-affront-to-china.html>
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4 Crises for North Korea and Its Neighbors

Mitsubiro Mimura

Northeast Asia has been greatly influenced by the presence of the United States and its foreign policy on/around the region since the end of World War II. It is vital for us to analyze any phenomena in the region even after the Cold War period. Nevertheless, Donald Trump's US presidency, as Chapter 3 illustrates, brought about a new dynamic to Northeast Asia. Particularly, the US-DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, hereinafter referred as "North Korea") summit between Trump and Kim Jong-un was a historic event that no one had forecasted. Its occurrence represented that there had been a shift in the perception of North Korea held by the United States, namely North Korea's transformation from a "weak and failing state" into "serious threats to US security." US President Joseph Biden, succeeding Trump, has also defined North Korea as a country with "nuclear programs that present serious threats to American security and the security of the world."¹ Though he seems not to accept the Trump administration's foreign policy, North Korea could enjoy new conditions for survival and transformation even under the Biden administration.

China has also been a decisive factor for North Korea's survival game. In this context, the US perceptions of China as either a "partner" or a "competitor" in Northeast Asia are analyzed in this chapter. The image of China held by the United States has also undergone a dramatic change in response to the latter's "rise," as was shown in Chapter 2. In the early post-Cold War period, the US expectation for China was that it would become a more liberal and market-oriented society, but this has not come to fruition. The current US public's views on China have become much worse than a decade ago. The Biden administration has inherited the perspective of its predecessor as regards China. China, in turn, feels it has little room for compromise with the United States and appears to be seriously preparing for a possible confrontation in many fields, such as high technology, information technology, or telecommunication.

The circumstances of neighboring countries need to be considered when reflecting on the new orientation within US foreign policy. President Trump tried to withdraw US military power even from traditional allies like the Republic of Korea (hereinafter referred as South Korea) or Japan, in order to reduce its military expenditure. While this was not accomplished and Biden has announced

his intention to restore more traditional modes of cooperation, these efforts have had their impact on Japan and South Korea, encouraging them to reflect on what would result in the event of “gradual independence” from the United States, or at least to increase their defense budgets.

It may be true that the Biden administration has placed great weight on relations with its allies, but it is also the case that the United States has requested that they involve themselves more aggressively in regional issues, such as the threat to Taiwan from across the Strait. This threatens to force these allies into political and military contestation with China, despite the latter being an indispensable economic partner for them. Against this backdrop, any policy changes which occur in South Korea and Japan could serve as new conditions for North Korea’s survival and development.

Considering the systemic drift of interstate relations in Northeast Asia, the chapter first outlines the US (un-)changing policy on North Korea and China; second, outlines scenarios for North Korea’s survival and development; and, finally outlines present and emerging challenges for the future of not only North Korea but also South Korea and Japan as US allies in the region. While the geopolitical perspective of this volume makes great play of the importance of Russia and Japan in the region, it seems likely that neither Russia nor Japan will be decisive factors in shaping North Korea’s future in the region. Therefore, to clarify the analysis offered here, in this chapter, I drop Russia and only consider Japan as a US ally, rather than an independent actor.²

The US foreign policy shift and North Korea

North Korea as “an enemy” to be destroyed

In the United States, President Trump took office on January 20, 2017. In the midst of the US presidential election, Mr. Trump had talked about a possible meeting with Mr. Kim Jong-un and said,

That I can tell you. If he came here, I’d accept him, but I wouldn’t give him a state dinner like we do for China and all these other people that rip us off when we give them these big state dinners. We give them state dinners like you’ve never seen. . . . We should be eating a hamburger on a conference table, and we should make better deals with China and others and forget the state dinners.³

In March 2017, the National Committee on American Foreign Policy (NCAFP), which has been involved in a number of track 1.5 (pro-governmental) diplomacy meetings, announced that it had planned to invite Choe Son Hui, a bureau director of the North American Bureau of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, North Korea. According to the *New York Times*, the U.S. Department of State contacted NCAFP on the morning of February 24, 2017, to inform them that visas had been issued for Choe Son Hui for preparation of nuclear negotiations, but a few hours later the visa issuance decision for her had been cancelled.⁴ Subsequently, President Trump stopped using the word “dialogue” and continued

to criticize North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launch tests and nuclear tests with strong words.

On September 19, at the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, President Trump remarked,

The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea. Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime. The United States is ready, willing and able, but hopefully, this will not be necessary. That's what the United Nations is all about; that's what the United Nations is for. Let's see how they do.⁵

In response, Chairman Kim Jong-un released the following statement, "Whatever Trump might have expected, he will face results beyond his expectation. I will surely and definitely tame the mentally deranged U.S. dotard with fire."⁶ President Trump made North Korea, which used to be a "weak and failing state"⁷ that would eventually collapse into "the enemy of the United States." However, the harsh mutual blame was not beyond the verbal war but, rather, would be an omen for further unexpected events between the two countries. Despite its remarkable nuclear armament, the United States could no longer harass North Korea just by exercising its power.

"Threats" can be negotiated

The North Korean government firmly announced a statement on "completing the state nuclear force"⁸—thanks to the successful test-fire of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) on November 29, 2017. At the same time, North Korea showed its willingness for reconciliation. On January 1, 2018, Chairman Kim Jong-un announced in his New Year's Speech that North Korea would join the Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.⁹ These two surprising developments upturned existing Northeast Asian alignment at a stroke. The United States and South Korea, in turn, agreed to delay military exercises for the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang on January 4, 2018.¹⁰ Both Koreas resumed high-level talks on January 4, 2018, and finally agreed that North Korea would join the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang.¹¹ This process was accelerated. North Korea sent two figures to South Korea to attend the Winter Olympic Games—Kim Yong-nam, the chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly, and Kim Yo-jong, the first vice department director of the central committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), the sister of Chairman Kim Jong-un. On March 5, 2018, South Korea reciprocally dispatched a special envoy to North Korea. Both Koreas agreed to have the 3rd Inter-Korean summit talks at the end of April. The North asked the South to mediate the US-DPRK summit talks.¹² On March 8, 2018, President Trump accepted Chairman Kim's invitation.¹³ What a huge achievement they achieved in such a short time!

China was also engaged in the reconciliation process. Chairman Kim Jong-un visited China between March 25 and 28, 2018, meeting President Xi Jinping in order to discuss events during the visit. The 3rd Inter-Korean summit talks were held in the Southern part of Panmunjom on April 27, 2018, and was the first visit by a North Korean leader to the south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ). Chairman Kim Jong-un visited Dalian, China, between May 7 and 8, 2018, and met President Xi Jinping. On May 27, 2018, the 4th Inter-Korean summit talks were held on the northern side of Panmunjom after the US-DPRK summit talks were cancelled by President Trump on May 25, 2018.¹⁴ After South Korean President Moon Jae-in played a role as a mediator, the first US-DPRK summit talks were eventually held in Singapore on June 12, 2018. Both parties agreed to release a joint statement.¹⁵ Chairman Kim Jong-un visited China between June 18 and 20, 2018, and met President Xi Jinping. President Moon Jae-in visited Pyongyang and Mt. Paektu between September 18 and 20, 2018, and the two leaders of Korea signed a joint declaration on September 19.¹⁶ The defense ministers of both Koreas signed a detailed agreement on military domain on that day.¹⁷

Chairman Kim Jong-un visited Beijing between January 8 and 9, 2019, and met President Xi Jinping. The second US-DPRK summit talks were held between February 27 and 28, 2019, in Hanoi, Vietnam. Both parties were unable to reach an agreement. President Xi Jinping visited Pyongyang between June 20 and 21, 2019, just before he visited Osaka for the APEC summit meetings. He even contributed an article to the WPK gazette, *Rodong Sinmun*, on June 19, 2019.¹⁸ President Trump's sudden visit to Panmunjom and talks with Chairman Kim Jong-un occurred on June 30, 2019. President Trump crossed the Military Demarcation Line and stepped in the Northern part of Panmunjom, which is North Korean territory, to meet with Chairman Kim Jong-un. The two leaders agreed to start a working-level discussion. The relations between the United States and North Korea were dramatically reformulated at a stroke, moving beyond a simple "friend-enemy" dichotomy. Moving forward, the prospect of more realistic and businesslike negotiations beckoned.

Denuclearization of North Korea

US-China relations as an interplay

The Biden administration finished a review on North Korean policy in late April 2021.¹⁹ White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced, "Our goal remains the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, with the clear understanding that the efforts of the past four administrations have not achieved this objective."²⁰ She also said, "Our policy will not focus on achieving a grand bargain, nor will it rely on strategic patience." This means that the Biden administration cannot go back to "strategic patience" because North Korea's nuclear program and missile program represent an "imminent threat" to the United States. This is the political legacy of the Trump administration on North Korean policy.

Kwon Jong Gun, director general of the Department of U.S. Affairs of the Foreign Ministry of the DPRK, released a statement on May 2, 2021, stating, “the U.S. will face worse and worse crisis beyond control in the near future if it is set to approach the DPRK-U.S. ties, still holding on the outdated policy from Cold War-minded perspective and viewpoint.”²¹ North Korea still has a chance to negotiate with the United States on the nuclear and missile issue but that will start with working-level talks, not at a summit meeting. It is unclear whether the United States understands that North Korea thinks the first step towards building a new relation between North Korea and the United States and that of denuclearization are concurrent conditions. If the United States demands that North Korea abandon its nuclear and missile programs while not making any effort to build new relations with North Korea, this would be totally unacceptable for North Korea because this is an indication of the “US’s anti-DPRK policy.” It is one of the uncertain factors that would determine US-DPRK relations.

Then, what matters most for US-China relations regarding North Korea? China is now a bigger actor for the United States regardless of its status, “friend” or “enemy,” or “partner” or “competitor.” The United States has criticized not only China’s economic policies and institutions but also its political system, religious policy, Taiwan policy, foreign policy (the “Belt and Road Initiatives,” etc.), marine advancement, and internal political interference in domestic politics (particularly in election intervention).²² Vice President Mike Pence under the Trump administration delivered a speech that was critical of China in October 2018.²³ The US congress also shares a similar view, according to an official report in November 2018.²⁴ A working report released by the Hoover Institution, consisting of 33 scholars, on November 29, 2018, warned that the Communist Party of China would look to control the public opinion of the United States, its allies, and friendly nations secretly for its own profit.

The US conception of China drastically changed from simply a “disappointment” into a sense of “impending crises” for US interests. The shift let the United States adopt more preventative and aggressive measures to contain China. The US-China “trade wars” in economic terms is now becoming a fierce competition between political systems. China, at the beginning, seemed to cooperate with the United States such as reinforcing economic sanction measures with the United States against North Korea.²⁵ In contrast, China’s current attitude toward the United States is relatively cool and tends not to accept US authority in the region. Particularly in regard to the economy, China critically mentions that the United States itself devalues the dollars through Quantitative Easing (QE).²⁶ It may be that China is jealous because the US dollars as an international key currency could be valuably added by domestic issuance. However, continuing the QE forever must be impossible, as China rightly says. For politics, China’s assertion of full sovereignty over Hong Kong 27 years earlier than scheduled faces fiery international condemnation.²⁷ This naturally led to the US’s revocation of Hong Kong’s special status.²⁸ However, in China’s understanding, the current international law system and order have not been consistently followed. China considers the order as a means of justification utilized by the UK and other

European great powers in order to legitimate their invasion of Asia. This is clearly visible in Britain's extraction of China's concession of Hong Kong and part of Kowloon Peninsula as the result of the Opium War. Therefore, while occurs in Hong Kong may be a "bad matter," but it is certainly a "lesser evil" than European aggression against China. Nevertheless, such one-sided actions will cause a serious confrontation between the United States and China.

China's anticipation of modifications to the "extreme" policy of the Trump administration by the new Biden administration was largely in vain. "We're in a competition with China and other countries to win the 21st Century," President Biden said to a standing ovation.²⁹ The new administration took over a major part of Trump's competitive policy on China. In this sense, China must respond to US policy not by compromising but by confronting it.

As far as China has predominantly cooperated with the United States on the North Korean nuclear and missile issue by putting together severe sanctions against North Korea, it has been receptive to the requests of the United States on the issue. However, China's commitment to applying pressure to its North Korean ally, as the US demands, is no longer feasible in the near future. China's abandonment of this policy and return to its pro-North Korean position offsets the US pressure on China and presents chances for North Korea to be a part of a broader *China-bloc* or *Eurasian-bloc*.

Scenarios for denuclearization

Considering the background outlined earlier, we can identify two options for a North Korean contribution to the "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." Needless to say, it is probable that North Korea just refuses to denuclearize. However, this may not remain a feasible position in the long run. Even China and Russia would not allow North Korea to remain a pseudo-nuclear country forever. Both countries have acquired nuclear weapons as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). They firmly not only reject North Korean nuclear armament but also understand well the necessity of spending more time on its denuclearization owing to its long-term confrontation against the United States since the Korean War. This means that the Chinese and Russian acceptance of North Korean nuclearization is only ever tentative and predicated on the final disposal of its nuclear weapons. They have not recognized the eternal status of a nuclearized Korea in principle.

The author here presents two plans for North Korea to denuclearize. What is offered here are a pair of ideotypes, and if denuclearization ever actually came to pass, North Korea's choice might be a hybrid of these two plans. The main reason for North Korean nuclear armament is as deterrence against the United States. Therefore, as already noted, here the attention is on the four primary actors of the United States, China and South Korea in addition to North Korea. Japan might contribute economically, but its role is limited as far as Japan faces serious bilateral issues, such as the abduction and wartime compensation issues, in its policies towards the Korean Peninsula.

These plans focus on US foreign orientation toward North Korea and the power relations between the United States and China. Particularly, it reviews whether China would think of North Korea as a collision point or as a cooperative issue in the near future, as the latter is currently working for China. Nonetheless, relations with the United States have been a high priority for both North Korea and China. Especially for the former, it is critical for its survival how China is to treat North Korea in the context of a heavier US presence in Northeast Asia. China has not necessarily been an absolutely reliable ally for North Korea. China, expressing its “friendship” with North Korea officially, once joined UNSC sanctions against North Korea to cooperate with the United States and has been enthusiastic about the implementation of the resolution since 2016. In fact, China’s behavior has been dangerous for North Korean survival because of its heavy economic and transportation dependence on China. North Korean leaders never fully rely on China and would welcome a chance to exit from the deadlock anytime if possible. The chapter reflects this reality in its presentation of two simplified scenarios later. The real policy choice seems to be a balanced or hybrid development incorporating elements of both orientations.

Plan A means a relatively “fast denuclearization process” backed by the United States, South Korea, and Japan. In this optimistic scenario, North Korea would exit from being “the enemy of the United States” and become an “ordinary developing country” through a relatively transparent denuclearization process. Reconciliation with the United States could bring opportunities to gain membership into various international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization or International Monetary Fund, and development financial institutions such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Asian Development Bank or Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Inter-Korean relationship might develop rapidly on the premise of maintaining the *status quo*. Inter-Korean economic cooperation would also receive positive support from former Western bloc countries such as the United States and Japan. Conflicts over Inter-Korean relations within South Korea would be eased. Thus, South Korean political stability would increase, especially in North Korea related matters.

In this scenario, North Korean economic growth rate would increase through its transition to a market economy, including permitting privatization of the means of production. Self-employment and private companies would be systematically allowed, and economic activity in the private sector would become more active. The con of this scenario is that liberalization of society undermines the foundation of the regime. The quicker its economy develops, the more pressure the regime would receive from society. Through severe competition between state-owned and private sectors, problems such as unemployment, corporate bankruptcy or incomplete social welfare and safety nets would emerge as social issues. Should the regime fail to take measures against these social problems, disappointment among the people might cause societal instability.

Plan B involves the denuclearization process in which North Korea would slowly change over several decades as part of the new regional order for Eurasia, which would be gradually formed by China and partly by Russia. North Korea would

try to transform itself into an “ordinary developing country” over time, overcoming the pressure of the United States. The Inter-Korean relationship would have more obstacles than Plan A because it is likely to be difficult to deepen cooperation between the two Koreas due to the US-South Korea relationship bottleneck. Instability would continue to characterize South Korean politics and perpetuate discord regarding North Korean policy. The transition to a market economy in North Korea might start more than a decade later because the improvement of relations with the United States would precede gradual reform, as seen with Chinese economic reforms between 1978 and 1991 or *Doi moi* (restoration) of Vietnam after 1986.

Considering the side effects of a rapid transition to a market economy, Plan A may be more advantageous to the common public for Northeast Asia. However, Plan B is more acceptable for the concerned countries that have vested interests in North Korea. The reasons are as follows.

Plan A is an ideal scenario at a glance, as it would naturally give North Korean citizens welfare through economic development. This might be true economically but ignores the complicated political issues that have accumulated over its long history of isolation in Northeast Asia. The rapid denuclearization of North Korea could turn it into a “last frontier” to be developed in the region but reincarnate the given factors under the Cold War period. If the United States were no longer an enemy, what would happen in North Korea? Everything, repressed and justified under the quasi-war regime, would explosively appear in its society. One serious issue would be privatization (private ownership) of the means of production, which would permit the development of private capital. In addition, infrastructure for rapid economic development in North Korea requires vast and various fields: complete and public statistics, financial reform for international monetary system, membership in international institutions, participation in regional free trade regimes such as RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) and CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership), juridical framework for guaranteeing the foreign direct investment (FDI), intellectual property protection, contribution to environmental conservation including the regulation on carbon dioxide emissions and so on. North Korea also would have to work with international organizations and foreign governments to educate and dispatch its human resources overseas.

Undoubtedly, when North Korea starts market reform, changes the economic environment, and receives FDIs, the economy would develop rapidly. It could pave the way for widening foreign economic activities within the territory, from China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and Europe, and for breaking the “wall” between them and the local people. The civic information access between North Korea and other countries such as via the internet (currently prohibited) would be drastically improved, even if with limitations like in China. Ordinary Korean citizens could go abroad and live there under the new situation. What would happen to them? Some information would reach local people even if the authorities try to do block them. The myth of the Kim family including the fiction of their birth story (Jong-un was born as a son of a Korean mother in Japan and “returned”

to his hometown later) would be debunked and the truth of the “Korean War” such as North Korea’s aggression on the South would be revealed. Most of the local people would realize the fake histories played up by the WPK. The author is not sure of North Korean political stability in the future if the legitimacy of the Kim family is doubted. Chairman Kim Jong-un is very sensitive about aspects of his family’s history, and policy here has remained unremittingly harsh. The fifth round of the 14th Supreme People’s Assembly, held on September 28 and 29, 2021, adopted a law guaranteeing youth education in the DPRK, which is said to enforce the younger generation’s learning of *Juche* ideology and the “right” Korean history. This seems to indicate the maintenance of tight control over society by the North Korean government and the WPK.

Plan B is an incrementalism scenario. It would allow for North Korea’s gradual economic development under China’s supervision and its initial internationalization through a framework such as the “The Belt and Road Initiative.” This scenario would not bring about a drastic change to the current social control system in North Korea, if it follows in the footsteps of China’s and Vietnam’s experiences. On the basis of this scenario, the North Korean political system would continue accompanied by gradual reform through market mechanisms. It is said that even China has recently tended to control its civic economic activities more tightly and strengthen state power over the market, which, of course, should be in North Korea’s favor. Nevertheless, China’s economic “socialist” principle is still the market economy. Therefore, the process for market reform should be a must even if slower under governmental control. The periods of 1952–1970 in Japan and 1960–1980 in South Korea were also under strong governmental control, but their light industries enabled the introduction of civic initiatives. Without this, neither country would be as developed today. In this sense, these two countries’ experiences may be seen as relevant for future North Korean development, in addition to those of China and Vietnam.

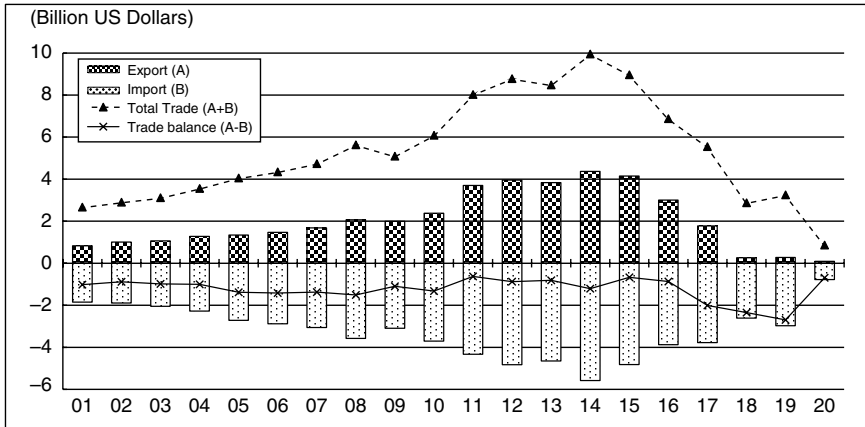
Dual crises for North Korea and the US allies

Classical crises for North Korea

The 70-year path of North Korea revolves around its historical confrontation with the United States. From the very beginning of the Korean War, the United States has imposed economic sanctions against North Korea. The first sanction passed by the United States dates from June 28, 1950, just three days after the Korean War started.³⁰ Since then, North Korea has suffered from US sanctions. After the Cold War was over, the dominant view on North Korea in the United States was that the North Korean regime was on the verge of collapse.³¹ North Korea was always interested in having bilateral talks with the United States, but their dream was not realized until the beginning of the Trump administration.

Since then, reinforced economic sanctions under the UNSC Resolutions and by the United States have brought about a large decline in North Korea’s trade. In Table 4.1, a noticeable deterioration in exports can be seen in 2018. This

Table 4.1 Foreign Trade of North Korea



Source: *ERINA hokuto ajia deta bukku [Databook on Northeast Asia] 2019*

is mainly because of UNSC Resolution 2371 (2017), 2375 (2017), and 2397 (2017). A sharp decline in exports can also be seen in imports in 2018. This is partly because of North Korea's lack of foreign currency and partly because of UNSC Resolution 2397 (2017), which not only prohibits import from North Korea in various sectors but also exports to North Korea in a lot of goods (all the items that belong to 72 to 89 in the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS Code) with minimal exceptions).

Looking at these figures, it can be said that truly effective economic sanctions against North Korea started in 2017. Now North Korea is fighting a long-drawn-out battle. This is the biggest struggle for North Korea economically. However, people in North Korea are used to living with sanctions. About 98% of the history of North Korea after the founding of the DPRK in September 1948 has been under some sort of economic sanctions. Even though economic sanctions after 2017 are qualitatively different from those before, they may seem almost the same for most ordinary people. In this sense, confrontation against the United States over nuclear and missile issues has brought a real crisis to North Korea economically. However, in the feelings of the people, the crisis seems to be a very familiar one which they have experienced for more than 70 years. So, economic sanctions against North Korea are not as destructive than they are politically. It is not decisive until North Korea runs out of foreign currency reserves entirely.

New crises for North Korea

From the beginning of the Trump administration, President Trump tried to bring about US-DPRK bilateral talks. The first US-DPRK summit talks on June 12, 2018, represented a historical success of North Korean diplomacy not seen since the founding of the DPRK on September 9, 1948. However, that day was also

the beginning of new crises for North Korea. The two parties agreed to establish new relations and to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. President Trump also stated at a press conference following the summit talks that he wanted to send US troops in South Korea back home. Since the armistice of the Korean War, the United States has been a “familiar” enemy for North Korea. Whenever something wrong happened in North Korea, it was because of “U.S. Hostile Policy toward DPRK” or “the aggressive nature of U.S. imperialism” even when the real reasons were domestic ones or reasons other than the United States. If North Korea were to establish diplomatic relations with the United States, which has been advocated since the early 1990s or if the armistice agreement were to be replaced with a peace treaty, it would be a magnificent diplomatic victory for North Korea. North Korea would gradually free itself from being “the enemy of the United States” and enter a process of becoming “an ordinary developing country.” However, the great victory might bring other crises to the North Korean regime domestically—the loss of a “beloved” enemy.

A post-Korean-war North Korea would be in a process of becoming “an ordinarily developing country,” with a per capita nominal GDP of around \$1,200. North Korea is surrounded by big neighbors: China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea—all these countries have membership of G20. If North Korea were to grow its economy by 10% for twenty years, their nominal GDP per capita would become \$8,072. If the average growth rate were 15%, that would be \$19,639. In order to overtake South Korea, North Korean economic growth rate would have to maintain at least a 20% economic growth rate for twenty years. Maintaining rapid economic growth is the only way to beat South Korea economically. Looking at the examples in Vietnam or China, a decrease in growth rate is found through nature at every stage of economic reform. If North Korea were unable to grow as its people wishes, the United States or “American Imperialism” is not to blame, meaning the WPK and North Korean government would be responsible. The economic growth rate becomes a major base of legitimacy for the regime. This would be one of the new crises for North Korea.

In order to maintain economic growth, North Korea would have to decide to have its economy linked with the capitalist world market. Transition to a market economy is inevitable in the long run, and its economic policy would be altered. North Korea would have to redirect its economic policy—which would require saying farewell to an independent national economy based on the revolutionary principle of self-reliance and concentration on areas of comparative advantage. Reform of the economic system is tough work. Even for China, the most successful transition example, there are many matters left undone. Economic instability brings about political instability. Economic reform without political reform cannot last for a long time.³² This would be another new crisis for North Korea.

Two allies' old/new challenges

For neighboring courtiers, especially Japan and South Korea, a situation in which North Korea becomes uncontrollable should be avoided. However, the status of the armistice on the Korean Peninsula was generally stable through the Cold War.

There was no major breach of the cease-fire agreement along the 248-kilometer military demarcation line (MDL), and major military conflicts were engaged at sea where a line of division is not set in the cease-fire agreement. The most dangerous period was between 1996 and 2000 when North Korea suffered from the Arduous March, a period of severe famine.

Another crisis was brought by the Trump administration, which took a strong position against North Korea, indicating the possibility of military action. On August 15, 2017, South Korean President Moon Jae-in emphasized in his “liberation day” speech that there should be no war in the Korean Peninsula anymore and only the Republic of Korea could take decisions regarding military action on the Korean Peninsula.³³ In Japan, warnings through the national early warning system (J-ALERT) started to provide alerts when North Korea launched ballistic missiles which flew over Japan.³⁴ Although Japan is within range of North Korean middle range missiles, test firing of ICBMs by North Korea has not greatly affected the safety of Japan.³⁵

However, new challenges would occur under different circumstances. In 2020, at a press conference on June 12, President Trump announced, “We have, right now, 32,000 soldiers in South Korea, and I’d like to be able to bring them back home.”³⁶ While greeted with disbelief, Trump appeared to be serious: he also desired the withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces not only from South Korea but also from Germany and Japan.³⁷ A former U.S. Ambassador to Germany said the same thing in an interview to a German newspaper in mid-June 2020. Japan officially stopped the Aegis Ashore deployment plan on June 21, 2020.³⁸ These two moves may be just a coincidence but if not, President Trump’s desire to withdrawal of US forces will influence the security environment in Northeast Asia in the future.

Unlike his predecessor, President Biden has re-emphasized the importance of allies. The way the Biden administration values the ability of Japan and South Korea is whether the two countries are useful in confronting China. Through the Japan-US summit talks and the South Korea-US summit talks, Japan and South Korea were obliged to support US policy towards China as well as that towards Taiwan. China is a neighbor to these two countries and a very important economic partner. Therefore, Japan and South Korea have to choose the United States on the surface to assure security cooperation from the United States.

For South Korea, “a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula” seems to be perfect. It would weaken South Korean national interests if domestic political and economic confusion continues to prevent the path to a deal with North Korea. “Reunification” should be a good thing, but another problem is foreseeable on the horizon. South Korea is a non-nuclear state demanding that North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons. Compared to Japan, South Korea has a comparatively long history of considering economic cooperation policies towards China and/or Russia since the Lee Myung-bak administration.³⁹ However, a precondition for these policies is a stable alliance with the United States. While it seems at the moment that the Biden Administration takes more into account its allies in East Asia than the Trump Administration, the sudden withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces from Afghanistan showed that the Biden Administration has

inherited policies of withdrawing U.S. Armed Forces from the last administration. If the United States turns the cease-fire agreement of the Korean War into a peace treaty, the United Nations Command in Korea and the United Nations Command-Rear in Japan will cease to exist. This could weaken the current status of the US-ROK alliance and may lead the United States to review its security assurance policy towards South Korea. It would be a new crisis for South Korea. Would South Korea improve its relations with North Korea, China and Russia to hedge its own security risks?

Japan has given more priority to Japan-US relations in diplomacy. Japanese policy towards Northeast Asia has tended to reflect US policy except for its economic policy towards China and Southeast Asia. If US influence declines in Northeast Asia, Japan has to pay more attention to its neighbors in Northeast Asia in diplomacy and security issues. Japan announced the abandonment of the plan to deploy the Aegis Ashore ballistic missile defense system just after President Trump suggested the possible withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces from allied countries, including Japan. Beyond the expenditure of stationing the U.S. Armed Forces in Japan, Japan will have to discuss and fix the issue of collective self-defense, which stem from a treaty that unilaterally requests the United States to defend Japan, without requiring a reciprocal obligation by Japan. This represents a new possible crisis for Japan.

President Trump's thinking on the withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces undermined the atmosphere of trust toward the United States. Bureaucrats in Japan and South Korea did not have to call into question the stability of the alliance. Instead, bureaucrats in both countries have to make alternative arrangements in preparation for the small possibility of the withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces. This increases the "alliance retention costs." If the Biden Administration improves relations with North Korea without achieving the complete abandonment of its nuclear and missile programs, that might give a tremendous shock not only to Japanese bureaucrats but also to Japanese civil society. These new mental gymnastics could lead Japan to rethink its relations with the United States.

Conclusion

In Northeast Asia, the presence of the United States has been taken for granted for over 70 years. Even China did so before the Trump administration started its anti-China campaign. North Korea welcomed the behavior of the Trump administration at first, in anticipation of establishing good and stable relations with the United States. As the conflict between the United States and China became more serious, North Korea discovered that there might be an option for something resembling plan B mentioned earlier; development without total fealty to the United States on denuclearization, through greater dependence on China.

The prospects for US policy towards Northeast Asia are still uncertain. Given that the Biden administration inherits Trump's legacy, a US withdrawal from Northeast Asia could be realized to save on both tremendous expenditures and losses in human resources. The US attitude towards China is now largely bipartisan. If China survives US pressure over the next few decades, the future picture

of Northeast Asia will likely be totally different from today. Neighbors of China in Northeast Asia—the two Koreas, Japan, Mongolia, and Russia—have to play a game for its survival and development under China’s dominance. South Korea may be forced to choose between the United States and China for both economic and national security. Japan will be put in a difficult position, too, as it needs to make its alliance with the United States more unilateral.

Finally, for North Korea, if it can decide by itself, plan B appears beneficial in the short term. This is because it avoids any risk of plan A, such as critical damage to its society brought about by radical changes to its economic and political system. However, plan B also forces North Korea to conduct its economic reform under Chinese supervision. China is already a perfect market country, dealing with others on international capitalist principles. This just means taking incremental steps but no one knows whether North Korea could be as successful with this as China was. In addition, plan B suggests that under Chinese hegemony in Northeast Asia, North Korea would become more subordinate to its greater direct neighbor as in ancient times. Is the possible loss of independence really acceptable for North Korea?

My analysis is as follows: North Korea prefers plan B without China’s dominance. This means that plan A also serves as a way for getting an improved plan B. North Korea would pretend to cooperate with South Korea, Russia, Japan, and other Southeast Asian countries in order to offset plan B’s negative effects. The questions are: then, how can North Korea, under “denuclearization,” be accepted by its neighbors as a member of Northeast Asian “family”? How will the US treat with North Korea and what will be the role of allied countries such as Japan and South Korea under such circumstances? North Korea itself would swing between the two plans. If plan B works well and, as a consequence, North Korea avoids legitimacy crisis through market reform, then would it turn its policy towards plan A, to gain benefits more rapidly in cooperation with South Korea or others? The process of denuclearization of North Korea under such a scenario would take place not in a divided camp but as a collective good for Northeast Asia’s common future. Here may be a real chance to minimize the nuclear risk of North Korea and reshape the future order of Northeast Asia. The puzzle as analyzed in this chapter could only be resolved as an issue of regional dialogue and collaboration.

Notes

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5 Maritime Challenges to the Northeast Asian Region

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“The sea is vast and large. The moon rises there, and the sun sets there.”¹ This is a line from a popular children’s song in Japan. Viewed from the land, the sea is indeed vast and extends infinitely to the horizon. However, it suddenly becomes narrow when it is an area for human use, that is, as fishery grounds, when we look down on the sea from the sky. This is true for the seas between Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and China such as the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea. If you went fishing there with a selection of measuring devices, you would encounter various invisible boundaries, including territorial waters, exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and the common waters called “halfway and provisional waters.” You would also face blockades by competing fishing boats from different coastal countries and run across fishing traps and abandoned fishing equipment. This is the reason why conflicts often arise in narrow sea areas because of the fisheries belonging to different countries.

From the viewpoint of the fishers who directly work on these seas, the conflicts surrounding the seas not only have physical risks of competition, but they also bring out the psychological threat of the “law of the jungle.” Wooden boats and small vessels cannot compete with steel ships and larger vessels. Such small-scale fishing methods face a challenge from larger and highly technical ones: small fishing boats have been deprived of a chance for using good resources and forced to move to other fishing grounds. This naturally causes chains of fishery conflict, which I call a “billiard ball collision” in this chapter.

When a fishery continues to grow as an industry with high priority for one country, *laissez-faire* is the basic policy for that country. Once it is in decline, a state usually intervenes by adopting somewhat protective and tight regulations to control resources while abandoning the previous policy toward the fishery by reducing the number of fishing boats. In short, fishery conflicts are essentially fighting over turf, and are governed by the law of the jungle. Particularly in narrow seas, whenever a country has strong fishing power, its fishing boats dominate the fishing grounds. A new, stronger power would usually expel an old, failing power.²

In the seas of Northeast Asia, Japan had strong fishing power and overwhelmed other countries for a long time until the 1970s. From the 1980s to the

2000s, South Korean fishing power grew and Japanese fishing boats were gradually driven out of the competing fishing grounds. Now, Chinese fishing power overwhelms other neighboring states, and Japanese and North and South Korean fishing boats are forced to move to other fishing grounds. In this sense, historically the turf battle has been won and lost by these countries at various times. However, the decline in the hegemony over fishing does not necessarily correlate with the decline in a country's power itself. Expansion and reduction of fishing areas often reflect fluctuating management capability by concerned parties. It makes the problem more complicated.

Under these circumstances, the countries (pretend to) work on bilateral negotiations in order to protect their fishing and fishers. However, since fishing is a turf battle, such negotiations tend to fall into zero-sum games. Negotiators naturally would make concessions and seek a point of compromise, in order to avoid a turf battle. As a result, the stakeholders gain different fruits even in one country: some fishers may get benefits to keep exclusively a rich fishery zone, while others may not because of the loss of their privilege in the zone.

In other words, the central government would not necessarily guarantee an administrative decision about fisheries based solely on the local fishers' claims; rather, it pursues national interests to ignore the voice of the fishers. The fishery problem should be analysed not only in terms of international state-to-state relations but also in terms of domestic administrative decision-making and local geo-politics.

Considering the context that can be often observed in international fishing relations (hereafter referred to as "border fishing"), this chapter clarifies the current conflicts over fishing grounds, particularly in the areas from the western part of the Sea of Japan to the East China Sea (Figure 5.1).³ In so doing, it will shed light on the reality of these sea areas from four perspectives: turf battle (conflictual situation), billiard ball collision (movement of fishing ground, and control of fishing), entanglement with territorial disputes (connection with the territorial disputes over Takeshima/Dokdo and the Senkaku Islands), and international politics (influence of the agreements regarding international fishing, and political and diplomatic relations between the parties involved in the fishing conflicts). Then, it will see commonalities and characteristics of some of these fishing conflicts in Northeast Asia and consider ways in which the conflicts in these areas could be overcome.⁴

Finally, it should be noted why the chapter does not analyse Russia. It may seem natural to extend this analysis to cover the Okhotsk Sea and the northeastern Sea of Japan east of Yamato Bank where Japan and Russia (the Soviet Union) have engaged in rivalry over the fishery. However, Japanese-Russian relations and the fishery regime have been incommensurable with other Northeast Asian cases. This is because both countries have yet to sign a peace treaty and to reach any agreement on the maritime demarcation of their borders because of the territorial dispute (the so-called Northern Territories). However, the chapter will return to this topic in the conclusion.

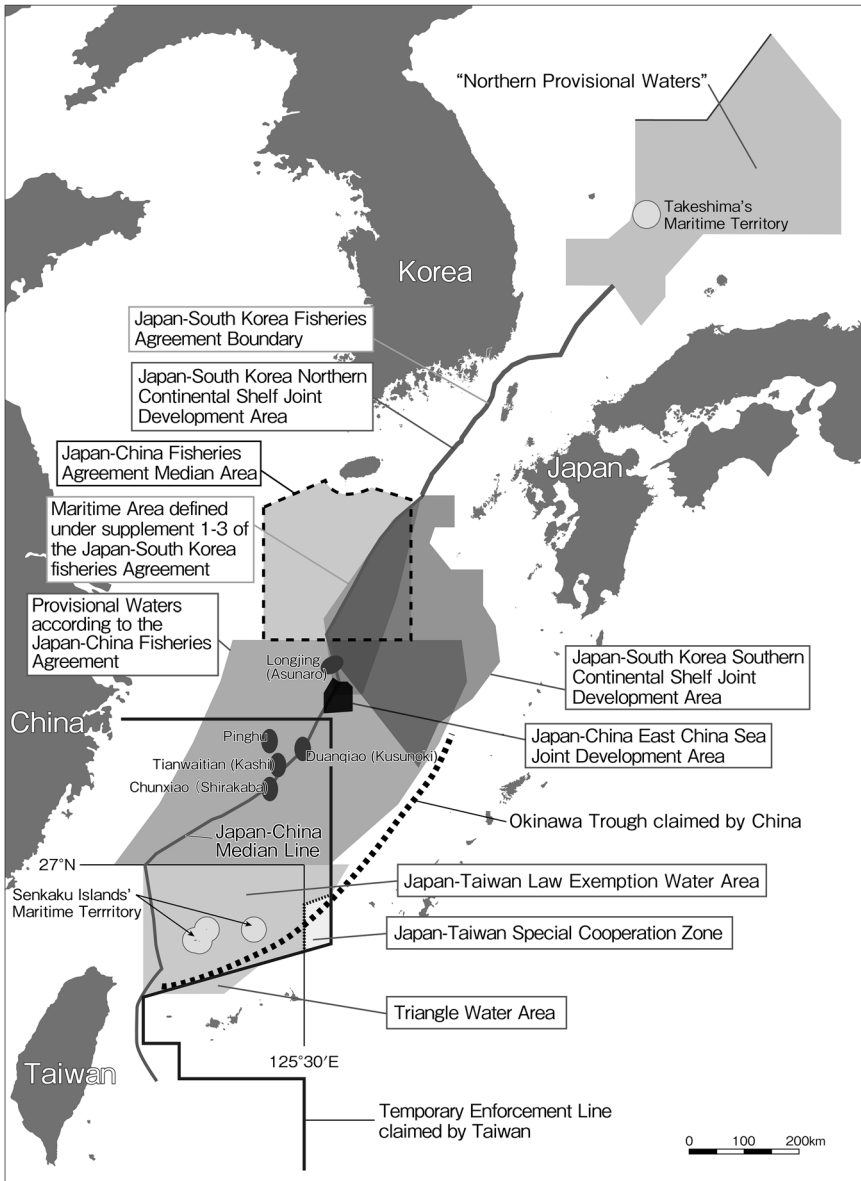


Figure 5.1 Complex and Contentious Fishery Arrangements in Northeast Asia's Seas

The Current Conflict over Fishing Grounds between Japan and South Korea

Japanese-South Korean Competition over the Sea of Japan

As mentioned earlier, in the seas of Northeast Asia, especially in the Sea of Japan (East Sea), South Korean fishery power grew in the 1980s and the fishing power relationship between Japan and South Korea completely reversed in the 1990s. Corresponding to this change, South Korean offshore fishing boats had already made appearances in the Sea of Japan in the 1970s, and from the latter half of the 1980s to the 1990s, there were many instances of South Korean boats fishing illegally in Japanese EEZ. Nowadays, the power of South Korean fishing boats has been in decline, yet they still operate in Japan's EEZ, crossing the border.⁵ In addition, Chinese fishing boats, which are rapidly increasing in number, and Taiwanese fishing boats, that have been driven out of the South Seas, have also made appearances—the Sea of Japan is now surrounded by the fishing boats of the Northeast Asian nations. From Tables 5.1–5.3, we can see the cross-border operations by South Korean fishing boats. While the number of foreign fishing boats inspected or captured by the Japanese Fisheries Agency has been in decline,⁶ the number and contents of the illegal fishing equipment confiscated by Fisheries Agency have not changed much.

The conflicts over fishing grounds between Japan and South Korea concentrate on three sections of the so-called Northern Provisional Waters (the grey area in the upper-right of Figure 5.1) between the two countries. They are particularly severe in relation to three sections: over the Yamato Bank, the waters north of Oki, and the Hamada Triangle. Among them, in the waters north of Oki and the Hamada Triangle, conflicts have occurred due to the rivalry between Japanese trawl fishing boats and South Korean crab pot and bottom-set gill-net fishing boats, mainly over snow crabs. South Korean fishing boats for pot fisheries (snow crab, Japanese Babylon, and conger) and bottom-set gill-net fishing used to operate in Japan's EEZ. However, since the provisional waters were established by the New Japan-South Korea Fisheries Agreement (coming into effect in January 1999),⁷ they

Table 5.1 Number of Foreign Fishing Boats Inspected by the Fisheries Agency

<i>Year</i>	<i>S. Korean</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Taiwanese</i>	<i>Russian</i>	<i>Total</i>
2014	68	6	3	3	80
2015	91	13	6	1	111
2016	67	14	3	2	86
2017	3	19	0	2	24
2018	9	3	0	2	14
2019	6	0	0	2	8
2020	1	0	0	0	1

Source: *Reiwa 2 nen no Gaikoku Gyosen Torishimari Jisseki ni tsuite* [About the Record of Foreign Fishing Boat Control in 2020], Fisheries Agency (2020). Accessed March 31, 2021: <https://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/j/press/kanri/210312.html>

Table 5.2 Number of Foreign Fishing Boats Captured by the Fisheries Agency

Year	S. Korean	Chinese	Taiwanese	Russian	Total
2014	7	5	2	0	14
2015	6	3	3	0	12
2016	5	1	0	0	6
2017	1	4	0	0	5
2018	5	0	0	1	6
2019	1	0	0	0	1
2020	1	0	0	0	1

Source: *Reiwa 2 nen no Gaikoku Gyosen Torishimari Jisseki ni tsuite* [About the Record of Foreign Fishing Boat Control in 2020], Fisheries Agency (2020). Accessed March 31, 2021: <https://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/j/press/kanri/210312.html>

Table 5.3 Illegal Fishing Equipment Confiscated by the Fisheries Agency

Year	Number of Cases	Gill Net (km)	Longline (km)	Fishing Pots (piece)	Fish Catches (tons)
2014	20	22	0	1,486	9.8
2015	21	40	2	1,783	15.8
2016	14	0.3	0	1,939	36.7
2017	24	10	42	3,022	28.6
2018	26	0	4	2,040	14.7
2019	37	7.5	0.9	3,125	19.0
2020	22	0	–	1,457	12

Source: *Reiwa 2 nen no Gaikoku Gyosen Torishimari Jisseki ni tsuite* [About the Record of Foreign Fishing Boat Control in 2020], Fisheries Agency (2020). Accessed March 31, 2021: <https://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/j/press/kanri/210312.html>

were forced out of Japan's EEZ and moved to the fishing grounds north of Oki and the Hamada Triangle. As shown in Table 5.3, many instances of the confiscation of illegal gill nets and fishing pots have occurred in these areas, and South Korean fishing boats continue to dominate and monopolize the fishing grounds in these areas, since they operate in convoys. Even if their fishing equipment is in place, Japanese trawl fishing boats from the Hokuriku and Sanin regions are still able to operate, because they use different fishing methods. However, they refrain from doing so in order to avoid causing damage to South Korean fishing boats. In this sense, too, the domination and monopoly are normalized. And the fact that this is a competition of fishing boats with different fishing methods makes it difficult to coordinate resource management, dispose of abandoned fishing equipment, and alternate operation. In 2015, a mechanism for “public-private deliberation” regarding these water areas was set up (and met four times in 2015, and once in 2018) but up until now no agreement has been reached.

The area around the Yamato Bank is particularly chaotic, however. There are conflicts between Japan and South Korea, since Japanese boats for crab pot fishing

and South Korean boats for crab and Japanese Babylon pot fishing compete with each other over tanner crabs, and Japanese and South Korean squid-fishing boats compete against each other for flying squid. As we have seen in Table 5.3, many of the confiscated illegal fishing pots are from this water area. Japanese fishing boats cannot place fishing pots unless they remove illegally placed fishing equipment first, as they use the same fishing method. This makes it difficult for Japanese fishing boats to go fishing. However, since Japan and South Korea use the same fishing method, if the cleaning of the seabed and alternate operation are properly arranged, the conflict could be resolved. In fact, at the “Japan-South Korea Negotiations of Non-Governmental Fishers’ Organizations” held in the 2000s, both sides did make encouraging progress on these issues.

Challenges by North Korean and Chinese Fisheries

Currently, a more serious issue in the Yamato Bank area is the domination of the fishing ground by North Korean and Chinese fishing boats. In 2013, the world experienced a poor catch of squid, causing a substantial increase in its price. North Korea took advantage of this opportunity and tried to promote its fishing industry, which included the fishing of flying squid. In his New Year’s Address in 2014, Kim Jong-un mentioned the fishing industry, which is quite rare, and made clear that he would encourage modernization of fishing boats and fishing equipment, fishing by scientific methods, and aquaculture in the sea.⁸ From then on, faced with pressure from the larger fishing boats supported by the state for modernization, even the smaller fishing boats of North Korea and wooden boats operating in coastal areas started fishing in Yamato Bank, an area they were familiar with. However, it is illegal for North Korean fishing boats to operate in the Northern Provisional Waters, which include 45% of the Yamato Bank area.⁹ Therefore, the Japanese Fisheries Agency issued eviction warnings to more than 5,000 North Korean fishing boats in 2018, when foreign fishing boats dramatically increased in the Yamato Bank area, and to more than 4,000 boats in 2019 (see Table 5.4). In addition, few North Korean wooden boats are equipped with measuring devices, such as sonar and GPS, and this causes further problems, since there is a risk of border violation and collision. On the other hand, while Japanese regulations require its offshore fishing boats to be a maximum of 200 tons, Chinese are operating with larger fishing boats of 500–1,000 tons and dominate the catches. In this sense, the problem of North Korean fishing boats can be seen as that of quantity (the number of boats), while the problem of Chinese fishing boats is that of quality (the amount of fish caught). Under these circumstances, the Fisheries Agency also issued eviction warnings to more than 100 Chinese fishing boats in 2018 and to more than 1,000 boats in 2019. However, since Chinese fishing power is immense, and given China does not set a TAC (total allowable catch) for flying squid, meaning that Chinese fishing boats catch them without limitation, the disorder in this maritime area has become even more serious.¹⁰

Table 5.4 Number of Eviction Warnings issued by the Fisheries Agency at Yamato Bank

<i>Year</i>	<i>Eviction Warnings (use of water cannons)</i>	<i>Breakdown by Country</i>
2016	3,681	
2017	5,191	
2018	5,315 (2,058)	North Korean 5,201 (1,986), Chinese 114 (72)
2019	5,122 (1,590)	North Korean 4,007 (1,171), Chinese 1,115 (419)
2020	4,394 (782)	North Korean 1 (0), Chinese 4,393 (782)

Source: *Reiwa 2 nen no Gaikoku Gyosen Torishimari Jiseki ni tsuite* [About the Record of Foreign Fishing Boat Control in 2020], Fisheries Agency (2020). Accessed March 31, 2021: <https://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/j/press/kanri/210312.html>

Thus, while the Yamato Bank, which is partially included in the Northern Provisional Waters, is an area of water controlled by Japan, it is surrounded and exploited by the fishing boats of other Northeast Asian countries. Behind this is the influence of the pressure from Chinese fishing boats in North Korea's waters in the western part of the Sea of Japan. From October 1977 to December 1993, Japanese fishing boats operated in this area under popular-level fisheries agreements between Japan and North Korea (and even until 2006, Japanese boats for crab pot fisheries operated through private contracts). However, North Korea concluded the China-North Korea Fisheries Agreement in 2004 and opened this area of water to Chinese fishing boats. It is not clear how this water area is managed now, but according to a survey by the South Korean government, by selling its fishing rights for squid to Chinese fishing boats, North Korea earned US\$30 million in 2016.¹¹

In this water area, the number of Chinese fishing boats, too, suddenly increased after the worldwide poor catch of squid and the substantial increase of its price in 2013, mentioned earlier. Because catches of fish also expanded rapidly, North Korean fishing boats operating in offshore and coastal areas were forced to go out further into the waters of the Yamato Bank. Furthermore, the impact of Chinese fishing boats operating in North Korean water area also hits the offshore fishing boats of the eastern coast of South Korea. Not only did catches of flying squid decline dramatically, but also the export of flying squid from China to South Korea increased greatly, and the market was taken over (Table 5.5). Therefore, in October 2019, the South Korean government decided to provide a loan of 11.2 billion won as an emergency measure to save squid fishing off the coast of the East Sea (the Sea of Japan). In particular, the livelihood of fishers of Ulleungdo has been severely damaged, and when the author visited Ulleungdo in the summer of 2019, a representative of a local fishers' association lamented that they may have to give up business.

Moreover, the pressure on North Korean waters is linked to the advancement of South Korean offshore fishing boats to the Yamato Bank, as well as the

Table 5.5 Catches of Squid off the East Coast of South Korea and the Export of Squid From China to South Korea

2000	2005	2010	2015	2017	2018
226,000 tons	189,000 tons	159,000 tons	155,000 tons	87,000 tons	46,000 tons
Export of Squid from China to South Korea: 8,815 tons in 2014→69,889 tons in 2018					

Source: Kim Yunbae, “Ulleung-do Ojingeo Eohockryang Byeondongteukjjing mit Ulleung-do Ojingeo Yeongyesaneop Baljeonbanghyang [Catch Fluctuation Characteristics and its Related Industry Development on Ulleungdo],” *Je 19 Hoe Ulleung-do Ojingeo Chukjje Ginyeom Symposium [The 19th Flying Squid Festival Memorial on Ulleungdo]*, Ulleung-gun [Ulleung], August 5, 2019, 20–32

Table 5.6 Quotas for North and South Korean Boats in Primorsky Krai’s EEZ

North Korea	
2018	Number of boats: 59, Squid: 9,000 tons, Saury: 200 tons, Anchovy: 200 tons (Walleye Pollack: 1,500 tons [approximately])
2019	Not issued
2020	Not issued
South Korea	
2019	Squid: 5,600 tons, Blowfish: 70 tons
2020	Number of boats: 70, Squid: 4,900 tons (onerous, 110 dollars/ton), Blowfish: 70 tons (onerous, 90 dollars/ton)

Source: “Dai 29kai Kan Ro Gyogyo Iinkai: Kosho Daketsu [The 29th South Korea-Russian Fishery Committee: Success of the Deal],” *Rosia Gyogyo News Headline [Russian Fishery News Headline]*, Hokkaido Kisen Gyogyo Kyodo Kumiai Rengoukai [Hokkaido Fisheries Cooperative Association]. Accessed March 31, 2021: <https://blog.goo.ne.jp/kisenren-white/e/92bea33ffaf2b96830618faac7ca6561>

movement of South and North Korean fishing boats towards the Russian EEZ of the Maritime Territory (which serves as a refuge for North Korean fishing boats chased out of the Yamato Bank). This is indeed like a billiard ball collision. The quotas for North and South Korean fishing boats in the Russian EEZ of the Maritime Territory are shown in Table 5.6. However, permission has not been issued to North Korean fishing boats since 2019 (as of March 2021), because many administrative and criminal lawsuits had been brought against their illegal operations by 2018. Thus, in the Russian EEZ, 3,754 crewmembers of North Korean fishing boats were detained and prosecuted due to illegal operations in 2019 alone.¹²

Rivalries in the East China Sea

The waters from north of Tsushima to off the coast of the Goto Islands is an area where Japan’s EEZ and South Korea’s EEZ face each other. There, Japan and South Korea are in conflict because Japanese boats engaged in long line tiger puffer (fugu) fishing and South Korean boats engaged in long line fishing for cutlass fish compete with one other. In these waters, there are many instances

of inspection, capture, and confiscation of illegally placed fishing equipment, as presented in Tables 5.1–5.3. Therefore, the Japan-South Korea Joint Fisheries Committee, which was set up by the New Japan-South Korea Fisheries Agreement, has repeatedly discussed fishing in these waters. As a result of these discussions, there have been some agreements, such as the permission for fishing in each other's EEZ, a hotline system for alternate operations in Japan's EEZ (only in the water area east from 130 degrees of east longitude), and a reduction in the numbers of South Korean long line fishing boats. However, they have not been very effective. Since July 2016, negotiations have been deadlocked, and any fishing in each other's EEZ has been halted.

Under this situation, the South Korean fishing industry has suffered significant losses, with its total losses sustained for the 45 months from 1 July 2016 to 31 March 2020 is estimated to be 232.3 billion won. Therefore, the National Federation of Fisheries Cooperatives (NFFC), South Korea, held a meeting in May 2020 and decided to encourage the South Korean government to restart the Japan-South Korea Joint Fisheries Committee. While the South Korean government provides a fuel subsidy for those fishing boats which cannot enter Japan's EEZ, and thus have to travel to different, more distant, fishing grounds, it is far from making up their losses. In these waters, Japan's attitude toward the mutual use of EEZs has been stubborn, and the key to negotiations progressing will be how well South Korean fishing boats can voluntarily prevent troubles in Japanese EEZ, and how well South Korea can reduce the number of long line fishery boats (by 20%).¹³ However, South Korea also looked to make up for the loss of access to Japan's EEZ elsewhere. As a result of fishery negotiations between South Korea and China, South Korean long line cutlass fishing boats are allowed to operate in China's EEZ (in 2020, the quotas were set at 1,400 boats and 56,750 tons of catch). And the period of their operation may be extended for a further fifteen days. If the damage to South Korea's fishermen is indeed mitigated by this arrangement, the suspension of the mutual use of Japan and South Korea's EEZs may be prolonged.

This reflects the fact that Japan's stubborn stance towards Japan-South Korea talks is not only down to the fishing situation in these waters but reflects auxiliary factors. Namely, in 2015, the Japanese government filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the South Korean government for unfairly restricting the import of marine products from eight prefectures in the Tohoku and Kanto regions in the wake of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant accident. At the WTO Panel, which is equivalent to the first round of court proceedings, Japan's claim was accepted and South Korea's measures were judged to be unfair. However, in April 2019, the Appellate Body of the WTO reversed the decision of the Panel. In other words, South Korea's restrictions were confirmed as appropriate. This has hardened Japan's attitude regarding mutual EEZ use in this area of the sea as well. On the South Korean side, the chief of the relevant government agency spoke at the National Assembly, stating that Japan-South Korea talks had stagnated because Japan was demanding too much in regard to the territorial rights of Takeshima. Currently, therefore, one party is reluctant to

negotiate or compromise, and the other party is trying hard not to take responsibility for the stagnation of the talks by offering excuses. In such a situation, the prospect of restarting negotiations is bleak, let alone the possibility of resuming mutual fishing in each other's EEZ.

These conflicts over fishing grounds between Japan and South Korea are, of course, competition over the narrow seas between them. However, we can see that behind these conflicts there are also fishing boats which are kept out of other water areas, or forced to move to different fishing grounds due to pressure, and these ongoing processes make it difficult for the situation to be managed or controlled by bilateral negotiations alone. Nevertheless, if bilateral negotiations are held and certain agreements reached, and these agreements are put into action, it is likely that the conflicts between Japan and South Korea could be significantly mitigated for waters such as those north of Oki and in the Hamada Triangle, as well as in the area from the north of Tsushima to off the Goto Islands. However, this cannot be done because of these issues are also entangled with territorial disputes and affected by international politics.

The New Japan-South Korea Fisheries Agreement was concluded while the territorial dispute over Takeshima remained unsettled, and thus the Agreement did not seek to define the border between Japan's and South Korea's EEZ. The new agreement excluded large South Korean trawlers and saury fishing boats from operating off the coast of Hokkaido and established instead the vast Northern Provisional Waters, which are far larger than the overlapping zone of Japan's and South Korea's EEZs. As a result of this international negotiation, the offshore trawler fishers of Tottori Prefecture and Hyogo Prefecture have suffered losses. For them, it would be more beneficial to define a borderline and expand Japan's EEZ, even if it meant giving up Takeshima. On the other side, for Korean fishers, the result of the negotiation was fruitful. That is because if the Liancourt Rocks (Takeshima) were ultimately determined to be either Japanese or South Korean territory, they would lose access to a large fishing ground in the western part of the Sea of Japan.

Irrespective of this, the New Japan-South Korea Fisheries Agreement was regarded as unpatriotic in South Korea, and those involved in the negotiation were removed from their posts. That is because this agreement did not define the EEZ starting from Takeshima. However, South Korean fisheries industry saw the benefit of the Agreement, and under their cooperation, South Korea has made adjustments to its fleet and reduced its size by 744 boats. In other words, in practice, South Korea did more or less manage to separate territorial issues and fisheries issues and respond positively to the New Agreement (the Japan-South Korea Fisheries Agreement) when it was initially concluded in 1998 (coming into effect in 1999). Nevertheless, after the enactment of "Takeshima Day Act" in 2005, the territorial dispute was reignited, and its entanglement with fishing issue became deeper. At that point, the government of South Korea again took up the issue of defining the border, which had been shelved for a while, and in June 2006 they adjusted their claimed borderline from the line between Ulleungdo and the Oki Islands to the line between Takeshima and the Oki Islands.

In response to this, the Japanese government also moved the base point of its EEZ from the Danjo Islands to Hizen Torishima (an uninhibited island) which is located in the sea 30 km northwest of the Danjo Islands. In these narrow seas, not using an uninhibited island as the base point for EEZ claims was a calm and wise decision, and in line with the standpoint of the fishing operators. The actions of South Korea, influenced by the territorial dispute, and then Japan's response to Korea's actions have ultimately led bilateral fishery cooperation and coordination into a cul-de-sac.

Current Conflicts over Fishing Grounds by Japan with China and Taiwan

The waters around Japan, including the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea,¹⁴ were dominated by Japanese fishing boats until the 1970s, as recounted earlier. However, in the early 1980s, Chinese fishing boats (Danish trawlers) began to advance into the waters north of Kyushu, and in the second half of the 1980s, they were operating in convoys in this area. In the 1990s, as Japanese trawl fishing west of 128°30'E declined, the gap was filled by Chinese fishing boats. In the 2000s, Chinese fishing power came to exceed even South Korean power, becoming the largest by number of fishing boats and fish catches and overwhelming others with its scale. This Chinese domination continues today.

As shown in Figure 5.1, between Japan and China, a series of provisional waters and halfway waters were established under the Japan-China Fisheries Agreement.¹⁵ The common waters between Japan and China occupy a large area of the East China Sea, and that is because in most of the East China Sea, they have not been able to reach an agreement and define the respective extents of their EEZs. That is to say, Japan insists that the EEZ should be defined along the line which is an equal distance from the coastlines of Japan and China, that is based on a distance criterion, while China insists that it should be defined taking into account the continental shelf that is adjunct to the land, that is based on the theory of natural extension—the gap between these conflicting views has not been filled.

Among these common waters, in the provisional waters, the Japan-China Joint Committee for Fisheries (established by the Japan-China Fisheries Agreement) assigns quotas for each country in accordance with their performance. In the fishing season of 2016, Japanese quota was 800 boats and 109,250 tons of catch, and the Chinese quota was 17,347 boats and 1,644,000 tons of catch. The terms of this agreement clearly show that there is a huge discrepancy in fishing power between Japan and China. In this water area, Japanese large and medium size round haul net-fishing boats and many Chinese fishing boats compete against each other for fishing resources, such as horse mackerel, mackerel, sardine, and squid. In a situation in which Chinese fishing fleets dominate the fishing grounds due to the gap in fishing power, Japanese round haul net-fishing boats are fighting lone battles. Yet, recently, fishing conditions have been rapidly deteriorating in this area of water, and some fishing boats avoid going there and have moved to fishing grounds off the Sanriku Coast and the east coast of Hokkaido. In the

provisional waters, Japanese boats for trawl fishing (west of 128°30'E) were also operating. However, they have been driven out due to competition with Chinese fishing boats, and now they are operating on a small scale in Japan's EEZ, in the sea between the halfway waters and the east coast of Kyushu.

The Japan-China Fisheries Agreement also permits mutual operation in each other's EEZ, and the terms of the operation were defined through negotiations (Japan-China Joint Committee for Fisheries). The quota for Japan's EEZ in the 2016 fishing season was 290 boats and 8,720 tons of catch (of these, 50 boats and 3,520 tons were for squid fishing). Although the quota in China's EEZ would have been roughly the same, stocks were poor and the water was too crowded with Chinese fishing boats, so in reality no Japanese fishing boats operated in the area. There has been no quota set since the 2017 fishing season, due to a breakdown in negotiations. Meetings of the Japan-China Joint Committee for Fisheries have not been held after the preparatory meeting in October 2018. In other words, Japan is currently not negotiating with either South Korea or China over fisheries agreements. Since Japan's fishers have not been operating in the other parties' EEZs, there is no incentive for them to resume negotiations.

There are also conflicts between Japan and China over fishing grounds around the Senkaku Islands. This was treated as the high seas under the Japan-China Fisheries Agreement, meaning that neither nation would apply its laws and regulations to citizens of the other country. Conflicts are essentially between Japanese pole-and-line fishing boats and trawlers from the southern part of Kyushu (Kumamoto, Kagoshima, and Okinawa), and Chinese coral fishing boats, so they concern different fishing resources. There has been trouble in this area, such as Japanese fishing boats keeping away or not operating in the area because of the abandoned fishing equipment for coral fishing. Furthermore, in these waters Japanese patrol boats and Chinese coast guard vessels confront each other, while Chinese fishing vessels look to access and fish the seas in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands, making it difficult for Japanese fishing boats to operate. Thus, thanks to the contestation in these waters, in recent years, Japanese fishing boats have largely been unable to fish west of Taisho-To, the easternmost of the Senkaku Islands.

As for the conflicts over fishing grounds between Japan and Taiwan, they concern the water area established by the so-called Japan-Taiwan Popular-Level Fisheries Arrangement of April 2013.¹⁶ The Japan-Taiwan Popular-Level Fisheries Arrangement was initiated by the Japanese government, which was concerned with the joint protest by China and Taiwan against the "nationalization" of the Senkaku Islands undertaken by the Japanese government in 2012. The Prime Minister and Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs led negotiations and reached an agreement with Taiwan. The fishers of Okinawa Prefecture could have been severely affected, and they demanded that Japan's EEZ be used as a baseline for negotiating fisheries arrangements between Japan and Taiwan. However, their demand was rejected, and the relevant water areas were established mostly in accordance with the provisional law enforcement line claimed by Taiwan. As shown in Figure 5.1, the Japan-Taiwan Popular-Level Fisheries

Arrangement established a Law Exemption Water Area and a Special Cooperation Zone between Japan and Taiwan. The former is an area where neither Japan nor Taiwan's fisheries-related laws are applied. In the latter area, although laws are applied, both sides respect each other's operations and attempt to keep order. In other words, in the latter area, the application of Japanese law (and its fishing regulations) is left ambiguous out of consideration for Taiwanese fishing boats.¹⁷

The Law Exemption Water Area includes the so-called Triangle Water Area, a good fishing ground where tuna fish pass when they migrate. In this Triangle Water Area, there had been conflicts between the tuna long line fishery boats of the Yaeyama Islands of Okinawa Prefecture and those of Yilan County, Taiwan. Japanese and Taiwanese fishing boats have different rules for operation, such as the direction of casts and distances between boats (Japanese fishing boats cast towards the south and north and maintain 3 miles' distance between boats, whereas Taiwanese fishing boats cast east and west and maintain a mile between them). Worried about the possible damage to expensive long lines, the long line fishing boats of the Yaeyama Islands are moving to different fishing grounds in neighboring water areas. In the Special Cooperation Zone, too, there have been conflicts between tuna long line fishing boats of Japan's Miyazaki and Okinawa Prefectures and those of Pingtung County, Taiwan. Here, too, trouble emerges because of differences in the rules of operation for each side's fishing fleets.¹⁸

These various fishing conflicts between Japan and China, and Japan and Taiwan have emerged in recent years. For Japan and China, this has occurred in a situation in which there is a discrepancy of fishing power between Japan and China, thanks to the fact that the vast common water areas are established in the *de facto* high seas and such areas are controlled in accordance with the principle of flag-state jurisdiction. These conflicts are also caused by the fishing zones being established through arbitrary fisheries arrangements rather than being based on EEZs, something we also see in the Taiwanese case.

In both cases, though, behind the establishment of these fishery zones exists the territorial dispute. Between Japan and China, the Senkaku Islands to the south of their provisional waters, that is the water area south of 27 degrees' north latitude, is treated as the high seas, where fishing is permitted for both parties. This area is, therefore, not governed by agreements between the two countries. On the other hand, agreements between Japan and Taiwan do not define Japan's EEZ as taking into account the Senkaku Islands, and the area is treated as a Law Exemption Water Area. That is to say, both the Japan-China Fisheries Agreement and the Japan-Taiwan Fisheries Agreement are bilateral agreements which are made possible by ignoring the existence of the Senkaku Islands, even though they are otherwise claimed to constitute Japan's "inherent territory." The Agreements also hide the fact that Japan has consistently had effective control over the Senkaku Islands. This situation has triggered conflicts over fishing grounds. In a sense, Japan has been forced to open up these fishing grounds by the fishing power of China, and through its receptiveness to Chinese and Taiwanese claim that although sovereignty is "ours," controversies and disputes should be shelved, while benefits and development should be shared.

Characteristics of Conflicts Over Fishing Grounds

In the previous sections, this chapter clarified the present situation regarding conflicts over fishing grounds in waters running from the western part of the Sea of Japan to the East China Sea. Table 5.7 summarizes the nature of these conflicts by conceptualizing them in one of the following ways: as turf battles, billiard ball collisions, entanglements with territorial disputes, and international politics.

Table 5.7 Conflicts Over Fishing Grounds in the Western Part of the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea

1. Japan and South Korea (+North Korea and China)

<i>Fishing Grounds (Water Areas)</i>	<i>Turf Battle</i>	<i>Billiard Ball Collision</i>	<i>Territorial Disputes</i>	<i>International Politics</i>
North of Oki/Hamada Triangle	Snow crabs: Japanese trawl fishing boats vs. South Korean crab pot and bottom-set gill-net fishing boats	It happened because of the displacement of South Korean crab pot and bottom-set gill-net fishing boats by the Japan-South Korea Agreement (Northern Provisional Waters).	Fishing boats enter into this area, because EEZs are not defined due to the territorial dispute. Fisheries negotiation and coordination have been made difficult because they affect the territorial dispute. (When the agreement was concluded, South Korean negotiators were purged as being unpatriotic.)	EEZs have not been defined as required by the international ocean regime. (This area will be Japanese EEZ, no matter if it is defined by Japanese claim or South Korean claim.) Negotiations for fishing arrangements could be made difficult by other bilateral problems.

<i>Fishing Grounds (Water Areas)</i>	<i>Turf Battle</i>	<i>Billiard Ball Collision</i>	<i>Territorial Disputes</i>	<i>International Politics</i>
Yamato Bank	Red snow crab: Japanese boats for crab pot fishing vs. South Korean boats for crab and Japanese Babylon pot fishing. Flying squid: Japanese squid-fishing boats vs. South Korean squid-fishing boats vs. North Korean squid-fishing boats (wooden boats) vs. Chinese round haul fishing boats	Conflicts occurred between Japanese, South Korean, North Korean, and Chinese fishing boats by the Japan-South Korea Agreement (Northern Provisional Waters) and China-North Korea Agreement (East Sea area of North Korea). Japanese fishing boats moved to Japanese EEZ. North Korean fishing boats, afraid of crackdown, moved to the Russian EEZ of the Maritime Territory.	Fishing boats enter into this area, because EEZs are not defined due to the territorial dispute. They are not relevant to the operation of North Korean and Chinese fishing boats.	EEZs have not been defined as required by international ocean regime. (This area will be Japanese EEZ, no matter if it is defined by Japanese claim or South Korean claim.) Negotiations for fishing arrangements could be made difficult by other bilateral problems.

(Continued)

Table 5.7 (Continued)

<i>Fishing Grounds (Water Areas)</i>	<i>Turf Battle</i>	<i>Billiard Ball Collision</i>	<i>Territorial Disputes</i>	<i>International Politics</i>
North of Tsushima–Off the Coast of the Goto Islands	Tiger puffer and cutlass fish: Japanese long line fishery boats vs. South Korean long line fishery boats	It happened because of Japan–South Korea Agreement (mutual use of the EEZs). Japanese fishing boats moved to Japanese EEZ.	Fishing boats enter into this area, because EEZs are not defined due to the territorial dispute. Fisheries negotiation and coordination have been made difficult because they affect the territorial dispute. (When the agreement was concluded, South Korean negotiators were replaced for being unpatriotic.)	EEZs have not been defined as required by international ocean regime. However, they use the borderline of northern continental shelf between Japan and South Korea as a makeshift border between their EEZs. Negotiations for fishing arrangements could be made difficult by other bilateral problems.
2. Japan and China				
Provisional Waters	Horse mackerel, mackerel, sardine, squid, etc.: Japanese round haul fishing boats vs. Chinese round haul fishing boats	It happened because of the Japan–China Agreement (control under the principle of flag-state jurisdiction). Chinese convoys dominated the fishing grounds, and Japanese fishing boats partly moved to off the Sanriku Coast, the east coast of Hokkaido, and the east coast of Kyushu.	Not relevant.	EEZs have not been defined as required by the international ocean regime. (If defined by Japanese claim, the area will be split in half. If defined by Chinese claim, most of the area will be Chinese EEZ.)

<i>Fishing Grounds (Water Areas)</i>	<i>Turf Battle</i>	<i>Billiard Ball Collision</i>	<i>Territorial Disputes</i>	<i>International Politics</i>
The Senkaku Islands	Bottom fish, coral, etc.: Japanese pole-and-line fishing boats and long line fishery boats vs. Chinese coral fishing boats	It happened because of excluding the area from the Japan-China Agreement. Japanese, Chinese, and Taiwanese fishing boats refrain from operating, because of the abandoned fishing equipment and intrusion by warships.	This area was excluded from the agreement in order to avoid touching the territorial dispute.	If defined by Japanese claim, the area will be Japanese EEZ. If defined by Chinese claim, the area will be Chinese EEZ. In the wake of the “nationalization” of the Senkaku Islands, there have been a dramatic increase in the entrance and incursion by Chinese warships. China strengthened the authority of the State Oceanic Administration, while setting up Coast Guard and nationalizing its areas of jurisdiction.

3. Japan and Taiwan

Triangle	Bluefin tuna: Japanese long line fishery boats vs. Taiwanese long line fishery boats	It happened by Japan-Taiwan Agreement (law exemption water area). Japanese Fishing boats moved to off the coast of Yaeyama, in order to avoid troubles caused by differences in the rules of operation.	The fishing grounds were opened in order to prevent China and Taiwan to collaborate on the territorial issue.	Japan-Taiwan arrangement was settled as a popular-level fisheries agreement. Negotiations for fishing arrangements are not affected by other problems between Japan
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(Continued)

Table 5.7 (Continued)

<i>Fishing Grounds (Water Areas)</i>	<i>Turf Battle</i>	<i>Billiard Ball Collision</i>	<i>Territorial Disputes</i>	<i>International Politics</i>
				and Taiwan, but the agreement was reached by arrangement first, then rules for operation, by conceding to Taiwan, in order not to aggravate the territorial dispute.
Special Cooperation Zone	Tuna: Japanese long line fishery boats vs. Taiwanese long line fishery boats	It happened by Japan-Taiwan Agreement (special cooperation zone). Japanese Fishing boats moved to the neighbouring water areas and southern open seas, in order to avoid troubles caused by differences in the rules of operation.	The fishing grounds were opened in order to prevent China and Taiwan to collaborate on the territorial issue.	Japan-Taiwan arrangement was settled as a popular-level fisheries agreement. Negotiations for fishing arrangements are not affected by other problems between Japan and Taiwan, but the agreement was reached by arrangement first, then rules for operation, by conceding to Taiwan, in order not to aggravate the territorial dispute.

Source: This table was created by the author using the following sources: Hamada and Sasaki, *Gyogyo to Kokkyo*; Chisako Masuo, "Chugoku Kaiyo Gyoseino Hatten: Minami Shinakaiheno Implication [Development of Chinese Maritime Administration: An Implication for South China Sea]," *Ajia Kenkyu* [*Asian Studies*], Vol. 63, No. 4, October 2017, pp. 5–23; Yuji Fukuhara, "Takeshima/Dokdo Shuhen Kaiiki-NiKan Zantei Suiikiwo Meguru Gyozyo Funsono Ronten [Fishery Zone Conflict in Japan-Korean Provisional water surrounding Takeshima/Dokdo]," *Gyogyo Keizai Kenkyu*, [*Fishery Economy Studies*], Vol. 60, No. 1, January 2016, pp. 33–42

In all of these conflicts over fishing grounds, compromises have been sought in the form of bilateral or popular-level agreements. Such compromises reveal the differences in the rules of operation or discrepancies in fishing power. Behind

these compromise agreements, however, are territorial disputes over Takeshima and the Senkaku Islands. The disputes remain unsettled, and because of this, EEZs have been left undefined, although they are required by the international law of the sea. This leads to another commonality in all these conflicts, that is that territorial disputes have been hindering the progress of negotiations, and they are used as an excuse for the breakdown of negotiations. Furthermore, where the mutual use of EEZs was permitted, such arrangements have been suspended now because one party's waters are dominated by another party's fishing boats, due to the relative discrepancy in fishing power and the stagnation of negotiations to regulate this situation.

Referring also to Table 5.7, let me summarize the features of the different forms of conflict over the fishing grounds. Firstly, turf battles refer to how there have been discrepancies in fishing power between China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan (China the most powerful and Japan the least). In general, powerful nations try to secure large fishing grounds and to take full advantage of the areas defined by the agreements. On the other hand, weaker nations try hard to protect their operations by securing the areas defined by agreements and their own EEZs by regulations and control. This general structure applies to all fishing conflicts in any water areas, irrespective of fish species and fishing methods.

Secondly, in a billiard ball collision, there are two kinds of fishing grounds. One is that of the fishing grounds where pre-existing rivalries have been intensified by agreements or arrangements. Another is the fishing grounds where conflicts occurred as a result of any agreements or arrangements. In either case, power discrepancies have affected the situation, and the fishing boats of weaker nations have been forced to move to other fishing grounds. Furthermore, regardless of fishing power, those fishing boats unable to go fishing due to the breakdown of negotiations or a crackdown also have to move to different fishing grounds. However, these boats often operate illegally, thus causing further conflicts.

Thirdly, from the perspective of the entanglement with territorial disputes, the nature of the conflict differs depending on whether the waters in question include disputed territories (i.e. Takeshima and the Senkaku Islands). There are disputed waters between Japan and South Korea that do not include disputed territory, and the entanglement of disputes in these waters with territorial disputes manifests itself indirectly, so that any disagreements in fishery negotiations and coordination are easily connected to territorial disputes. However, precisely because the connection to the fisheries is rather indirect, such engagements result in uncompromising stances. Therefore, states try to avoid direct negotiations and expect the parties concerned to negotiate with each other. Nevertheless, even when the concerned parties reach an agreement, this may often be violated, and all forms of negotiation end up entering a cul-de-sac. Although the waters between Japan and Taiwan include disputed territory, the entanglement with the territorial dispute is indirect. However, while the fishing ground was opened to avoid touching the territorial dispute, when negotiating to define the rules of operation, the shadow of the territorial issue hangs over the talks. On the other hand, in the water areas where Japan and China are involved and which do not include disputed territory,

there is no entanglement with territorial dispute. However, around the Senkaku Islands, Chinese fishing boats and official vessels have come into Japanese territorial waters and the contiguous water areas in the wake of Japan's nationalization of the islands and the 2010 collision incident. This has led to ongoing confrontations between Japanese patrol boats and Chinese coast guard vessels in this area, making it impossible to operate fishing boats in these waters. This is a case where direct influence can be observed.

Fourthly, when seen from the perspective of international politics, all water areas have been influenced by international trends, since the background to the emergence of such conflicts was the shift to the 200-nautical mile system required by the international ocean regime under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, apart from the waters running from the north of Tsushima to off the Goto Islands, involving Japan and South Korea, EEZs in the region remain undefined, and fishing conflicts occur as a result of setting non-cooperative common waters called halfway or provisional waters. When looking at individual areas of water, those of the Senkaku Islands, and the Triangle and Special Cooperation Zones, concern the security of Japan, the United States, and China and thus can be affected by global international relations.¹⁹ On the other hand, there are water areas, such as Yamato Bank, where there is no multilateral agreement, and the fishing boats of more than three nations compete against each other, which leads to conflict, which may reflect regional international relations affecting the situation. Furthermore, in the waters between Japan and South Korea, and in the provisional waters between Japan and China, the trend of bilateral relations directly affects negotiations occurring over future fisheries arrangements.

Thus, this inherently trans-border fishing taking place in Northeast Asia involves in a complex set of conflicts which reflect the commonalities and distinct characteristics of the individual fishing grounds themselves. The question which remains is how we can possibly resolve these conflicts.

Maritime Challenges in Northeast Asia

The fishing order in the sea of Northeast Asia has been established by bilateral agreements and popular-level arrangements of neighboring nations across the sea. In other words, there is no multilateral agreement involving three or more nations. Furthermore, since the control and resource management by these bilateral agreements and popular-level arrangements are loose, and they are compromising agreements which do not take into account the differences in the rules of operation between the parties, the nature of fishing conflicts has been shaped by differences in fishing power, as summarized in the previous section.

Considering these points, one may assume that measures such as the creation of a new multilateral treaty or agreement, the modification or renewal of the existing bilateral agreements, or rectification of power inequality in access fishing grounds could solve conflicts over fishing grounds. However, these are probably unrealistic measures. We have to think about measures which take into account the fact that

existing agreements, structures, and power relations cannot be easily changed. In order to do so, we would therefore need to see some changes in thinking.

Firstly, one change involves seeking solutions for fishing conflicts by giving priority to the fishers' point of view, that is that as long as they can operate safely, they are fine.²⁰ Secondly, we need to change the thinking of the concerned parties and start cooperating to stop any further deterioration in the situation and thus for the moment put aside efforts to actively improve it. The states and regions of Northeast Asia should calmly calculate the losses caused by fishing conflicts. Here again, losses should be calculated from the fishers' point of view, and the negative impact of the efforts of the region's states to defend their honor be clarified. While it may be argued that territorial issues must be taken into account, this clearly does not prioritize either the fishers themselves or efforts at reaching a compromise and thus offers no basis for negotiations.

Then, if only prevent the further deterioration of the situation, Japan and South Korea, Japan and China, or Japan and China and South Korea could enter into negotiations for an Agreement for Safe Operation. The sole purpose of this agreement would be to jointly crack down on IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated) fishing boats and other illegal operations in the common waters, which have been set through the various fishing agreements existing between Japan, China, and South Korea, and to punish them in accordance with the laws of each nation. This would be the first step in making non-cooperative common waters into cooperative waters. In general, the more powerful nation exerts a stronger influence on the formation of any fishing order. Therefore, when planning measures for fishing conflict resolution, its framework must be one which the most powerful fishing power, China, can accept. After developing cooperation through arresting the further deterioration of the situation, the countries could move on to cooperate for the improvement of the situation.

This cooperation for improvement also needs to be based on measures which have precedents, or which can be mutually beneficial. For example, Japan is relatively weak in terms of fishing power but possesses comparative advantages in the technology of fishing and fish detection. In these fishing areas between Northeast Asia's states, the fishing boats of other nations gather in fishing grounds where Japanese fishing boats are operating with their fish detectors, and this has contributed to further competition. Taking advantage of this strength, it may be possible to offer fish detection information by encouraging all fishing boats operating in the common waters and Japan's EEZ to be equipped with an automatic identification system (AIS), as is now occurring for the water areas defined between Japan and Taiwan. This would make it easier for the Japanese fishing industry to control these waters, and to assert its fishing power, yet would allow the fishing boats of other nations to operate more effectively. This could be extended to South Korea's and China's EEZ, and they could each use an AIS code agreed upon through negotiations. If this could be universalised, fishing boats which fail to use AIS may be punished under the Agreement for Safe Operation. While this kind of cooperation is certainly a challenge in Northeast Asia, when restricted to fishery operations it is at least conceivable.

Conclusions

This chapter has clarified the present situation of border fishing in Northeast Asia. It summarized the nature and characteristics of the conflicts over fishing grounds and sought ways in which such conflicts could be overcome. The fishing boats of the Northeast Asian nations, whose fishing powers are clearly disproportionate, compete against each other for fishing grounds in the “narrow seas” between them. The boats which have been kicked out of these areas are forced to move to quieter areas of their own country’s waters, or to other fishing grounds in Northeast Asia. However, even after these moves, they are met with another billiard ball collision. The seas of Northeast Asia have developed in this contested way because of the actions of the Northeast Asian countries themselves, and behind many of the problems are the incentives to assert national advantage in the process of transition to the 200-nautical mile system required by the international ocean regime, as well as in the region’s territorial issues. The territorial disputes not only affect the surrounding sea areas but also have negative impacts on all bilateral fisheries negotiations and coordination. Furthermore, territorial disputes are directly linked to security, and international politics over this issue also makes fisheries negotiation and coordination difficult. To summarize, we have appraised the immediate situation of fishing conflicts in the water areas of concern to this chapter. As a modest measure to overcome this situation, I have proposed an attempt to establish the Agreement for Safe Operation between Japan, China, and South Korea, which places emphasis on fishers’ point of view and seeks to prevent the further deterioration of the situation, rather than to improve the situation.

The agreement should be opened to Russia in the near future. Although this chapter did not analyze Russia for the reasons mentioned in its introduction, under the current situation, Japan and Russia have made little progress in concluding a peace treaty (despite the enthusiasm of Shinzo Abe’s recent administration for resolving the territorial dispute with Russia). However, Japan and Russia have had unique bilateral agreements operating even when the waters between them are not officially demarcated. The Japan-Russian agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Fishing Operations for Marine Living Resources has, since 1998, allowed the Japanese local fishery to work within a designated area of twelve nautical miles around Kunashiri Island (an island that Japan claims as its own territory). The agreement did not specify which nation had sovereignty over the island and its territorial waters. Japan and the Soviet Union also had a *civilian* pact on kelp farming near Kaigara Island (another island claimed by Japan) in the 1960s, letting Japanese coastal residents collect kelp under Soviet jurisdiction. Those deals, still working though facing fresh challenges today, cleverly bypassed the state sovereignty issue and prioritized fishery interests despite the presence of such bilateral challenges.²¹

Of course, Japan and Russia should reach a kind of friendship treaty (if a peace treaty is difficult) or an official deal on the bilateral maritime arrangements first. However, the old agreements, intended to be provisional until the conclusion of

a peace treaty, have already existed for several decades and could provide suggestions for the proposed Japan-China-Korea safe operation regime.

Additionally, it would be worth considering the incorporation of Russia because of that country's own struggle with IUU fishing boats and other illegal operations in its own Maritime Territory of Primorsky Krai. The Northeast Asian countries clearly share a common interest in managing the environment. The Japan-Russian version of safe operations is an effective example of what Japan can offer Russia in return for Japanese fishery operation under Russian control. This has the potential to turn into a new framework whereby Russia could adopt more sophisticated Japanese fishery techniques to develop multiple safe operation regimes in the common seas of Northeast Asia. Incorporating Russia in the Northeast Asian maritime regime on the basis of shared fishery interests would establish the foundations to build a "common house" in the region.

The Japanese children's song quoted at the beginning of this chapter, *The Sea*, ends with the following lines: "The sea floats the boats/I would like to go to foreign countries." We have to take some steps in order to make it possible for people floating in boats to go to foreign countries safely and operate there.

Notes

- 1 "Umi", or the Sea, is a children's song in Japan. Lyrics by Ryuha Hayashi, Music by Takeshi Inoue.
- 2 Fishing power is usually determined by such factors as the number of fishing boats and fishers, the size and performance of the fishing boats, the scale of fishing fleets, the haul, and the water areas they operate.
- 3 See also Akihiro Iwashita, *Japan's Border Issues: Pitfalls and Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2015), IV.
- 4 Previous research on the border fishing in the sea areas from the western part of the Sea of Japan to the East China Sea include: Chikashi Kataoka, "Nichi Chu Kan Gyogyo Kankeishi I [History of Fisheries Relationships Among Japan, China and Korea I]," *Nagasaki Daigaku Suisan Gakubu Kenkyu Houkoku [Bulletin of the Faculty of Fisheries, Nagasaki University]* 87 (2006): 15–27; Chikashi Kataoka and Akari Nishidai, "Nichi Chu Kan Gyogyo Kankeishi II [History of Fisheries Relationships among Japan, Chian and Korea II]," *Nagasaki Daigaku Suisan Gakubu Kenkyu Houkoku [Bulletin of the Faculty of Fisheries, Nagasaki University]* 88 (2007): 137–159; Noriko Watanabe, *Nihon Kinkai deno Gyogyo-kyotei no hatasu Yakuwari to Kadai [Roles and Challenges of Fishery Agreements in Waters Around Japan: Comparative Analysis of Fisheries Conditions in the Disputed Waters]*, PhD thesis (unpublished), Tohoku University, Tohoku University Repository, 2016), March 24, 2017. Accessed March 31, 2021: <http://hdl.handle.net/10097/00120399>; Takeshi Hamada and Takafumi Sasaki, *Gyogyo to Kokkyo [Fisheries and Borders]* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2020). Kataoka considers the historical development of the post-war border fishing across Northeast Asia by focusing on "the relationship between states," "fishing power=fishing interests," and "the trend of international ocean regime." This perspective was useful for the present study. Watanabe defines the water areas around the four Northern Islands, Takeshima, and the Senkaku Islands as contested waters. She compares these three with each other in terms of the present situations and the development of fisheries agreements regarding them, the contents of the agreements, and the current state and issues of the contested waters, and considers the possibilities for

the maintenance and management of fishing resources in these three contested waters. Hamada and Sasaki deal with the sea areas such as the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea as a part of Japanese deep sea fishing, and discusses in detail the history of fishing since Japanese found their way into these sea areas by also taking into account bilateral relations, such as the changes in international ocean regimes and territorial disputes. The present chapter sheds light on the current situation of the border fishing in the sea areas shown in Figure 5.1 from four perspectives. This reveals the commonalities and characteristics of the conflictual situation, and considers ways in which the conflicts could be overcome.

- 5 By the new Japan-South Korea Fisheries Agreement, Japan and South Korea are permitted to fish in each other's EEZ through the agreement talks. However, after the talks reached a deadlock in July 2016, this mutual permission has been suspended. Therefore, it is now not allowed for South Korean fishing boats to operate in Japan's EEZ (Likewise, Japanese fishing boats are not allowed to operate in South Korean EEZ, but there have been almost no reported cases of such operations). Japan and South Korea continued the agreement talk even after July 2016, but it has been on hold since June 2018.
- 6 As Table 1 shows, the number of on-site inspections of South Korean fishing boats declined dramatically from 2016 to 2017 (and beyond), and this was due to the fact that, as noted in note 6, South Korean fishing boats have been unable to operate in Japan's EEZ since July 2016. In other words, the Korean presence has decreased dramatically since the number of operations itself has become so small.
- 7 For an outline of the New Japan-South Korea Fisheries Agreement, see "Nichi Kan Gyogyo Kyotei [Japan-South Korea Fisheries Agreement]," *Gendai Chisei-gaku Jiten* [*Encyclopedia of Contemporary Geo-Politics*] (Tokyo: Maruzen Shuppan, 2020), 714–715.
- 8 *Rodo Shimbun* [*Workers Newspaper*], January 1, 2014.
- 9 Since the part of Yamato Bank located outside the Northern Provisional Waters is mostly included in the Japan's EEZ, it is illegal for foreign fishing boats (including North Korean and Chinese) to operate in this area too.
- 10 In 2020, eviction warnings and use of water cannons against North Korean fishing boats in Yamato Bank area fell to zero. It may be assumed that this is because: they moved from the Yamato Bank area, which is regulated strictly, to the EEZ of the Maritime Territory of Russia; fishing has been restricted or restrained due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the operation of Chinese fishing boats came to be prohibited in the North Korean area of the East Sea (the western, North Korean part of the Sea of Japan) and North Korean ships are now operating in this area. On the other hand, eviction warnings and use of water cannons against illegally operating Chinese fishing boats have dramatically increased. The reasons for the appearance of many Chinese fishing boats are unclear, yet it may be possible that they moved from the North Korean sea area.
- 11 *Nichi Kan Suisan Keizai Shimbun* [*Fishery Economy Daily*], August 19, 2020.
- 12 This number is more than fourteen times as many as the total of 260 people from 2014 to 2018. It may be possible that it was due to that in this area, the total number of days North Korean fishing boats operated in the squid fishing season (from May to December) of 2020 decreased dramatically (in the total of 6,600 days, about 95% decrease from the previous year).
- 13 The South Korean government plans to reduce the number of boats operating by more than 100 in 2021, in anticipation of a recovery of fishery resources in their coastal areas, and as a response to the halting of entries into Japan's EEZ. By February 2021, voluntary applications for boats to be scrapped had not reach the planned number (only 62 boats), and the government then decided it would reduce just reduce the number of boats by 62, in eight different classes. Long line fishing boats operating in areas adjacent to the coast would be reduced to just 24.

- 14 The ocean of the Northeast Asia had shifted fully to the 200-nautical mile system by the first half of the 2000s, and in this sense it is necessary to pay attention to the fishing ground disputes in the Yellow Sea under the China-South Korea Fisheries Agreement. That is because overwhelmingly powerful Chinese fishing boats are causing problems of illegal operation in the South Korean EEZ in the Yellow Sea. For example, in this water area, 195 Chinese fishing boats were seized, and 6,348 boats received eviction warnings in 2019. Since the author could not conduct fieldwork as planned, and has not been able to collect information to illustrate the realities, this chapter does not cover the present situation of the fishing conflicts in the Yellow Sea, which will be discussed in a future paper.
- 15 As for the details of the Japan-China Fisheries Agreement, see “NiChu Gyogyo Kyotei [Japan-China Fisheries Agreement],” *Gendai Chiseigaku Jiten [Encyclopedia of Contemporary Geo-Politics]*, 716–717.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 718–719.
- 17 Now, Japan and Taiwan are operating in the defined areas, based on the rules agreed in the “The Third Meeting of the Eighth Japan-Taiwan Fishery Committee” held in April 2019. In particular, in the special cooperation zone, they are to operate under Japanese rule north of 26 degrees north latitude, and under Taiwanese rule south of 26 degrees north latitude, taking into account the differences in their rules. Nevertheless, as for this rule, it is stated that when tuna fishing starts, Japan will “request the rule to be applied,” while Taiwan will “take it into consideration,” and the situation remains ambiguous.
- 18 In order to avoid these troubles, they set the Rules for Avoiding Trouble in Long Line Tuna Fishery, based on the Agreement mentioned in note 27. One of its centerpiece rules is the use of AIS (Automatic Identification System) by Taiwanese fishing boats, based on the common codes.
- 19 Negotiation for the Japan-Taiwan Popular-Level Fisheries Arrangement was started by Japan “taking into account American intention to avoid tensions in East Asia, and after the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected China-Taiwan cooperation in favour of its relationship with Japan and the US in February 2013, and reached an agreement. See Hamada and Sasaki, *Gyogyo to Kokkyo [Fisheries and Borders]*, 292–293.
- 20 Hamada and Sasaki, *Gyogyo to Kokkyo [Fisheries and Borders]*, 363–364. The authors of this book maintain that “as for border waters, we need to reconstruct our perspective of the problems from the viewpoint of ‘fishers,’ not the ‘state.’” They argue that “as fishers living by fishing in the border waters, their task is to mutually understand each other beyond the states,” and “it is, regrettably, the only path to the future available for the ‘fishers’ . . . the last approach left for the ‘problematic waters’” (*Ibid.*, 364–365). The present author strongly agrees with this view and supports it.
- 21 See Noriko Watanabe, “Security of Japanese Fishermen and Russians in the Disputed Waters” [Focusing on the Four Northern Islands], *Journal of Human Security Studies* 5:1 (2020): 59–81; Alexander Bukh, *These Islands Are Ours [The Social Construction of Territorial Disputes in Northeast Asia]* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), 24–57; Iwashita, *Japan’s Border Issues*, 64–68.

6 Chinese Land Deals and Migration in the Russian Far East

Positionality Changes in the Borderlands

Norio Horie

Russia's reorientation to Asia has been a comprehensive policy accelerated since the 2012 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Vladivostok and has reached the level of geopolitically projecting a Eurasian power beyond political rhetoric.¹ As Korolev described, Russia's reorientation to Asia consists of two interrelated aspects. The first is the development of the Russian Far East and Siberia, and the second is the strengthening of cooperation with East Asian countries.

Russia's reorientation to Asia brought much attention to agricultural investment in the Russian Far East. Agriculture in Russia had long been abandoned since the collapse of the USSR; however, the recent attention of governments to food security in both Russia and Asian countries and growing concern about the vast arable land in Russia for agricultural production have caused the Russian Far East to become a new frontier for agricultural investment.² Chinese, Korean, and Japanese agribusiness investments have already taken their first steps in managing agriculture in the Russian Far East. Growth in Russian food exports to Asian countries shows a positive trend, and agribusiness in the Russian Far East is becoming a part of Russia's strategic reorientation to Asia, especially to China.

This chapter focuses on two oblasts—the Amur Oblast and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. China is the only partner for these two oblasts, not only in agricultural investment but also in international cooperation in the trade of their agricultural products and the labour for its production. Vast arable lands are located in the borderlands. Although Chinese investment in agriculture is crucial for the regional development perspective in these two districts, Chinese investment in agriculture often alarms local authorities and media as being associated with massive inflow or informal inflow of Chinese workers and their informal activities in business, especially in land deals, in the Russian Far East.

Increasing trust between China and Russia has been discussed by many scholars; however, claims to the contrary also appear in land deals and migration when we zoom in on these resource peripheries. Chinese agricultural investment is officially welcomed and encouraged by both China and Russia. At the same time, it is also true that Chinese investment in land deals is often translated to

mean Chinese expansion.³ The shared memories of a “Chinese threat syndrome” among those who have explored Russia’s “frenemic” attitudes on China are still alive. However, we still do not know how these alarmist translations reflect local conflicts found within the agricultural sector and among local stakeholders.

The concept of positionality Eric Sheppard introduced⁴ allows us to describe how different entities, people, and places are relationally positioned with respect to one another in time and space; therefore, it aims to explain the relational situatedness of particular places. Political science debates on the Russian Far East tend to describe this positionality based on the indirect or direct connectivity between Moscow and the Russian Far East, or between Moscow and Beijing. Closer spatial human connections among local authorities, local residents, local and foreign workers, and business organizations across the border are also important for describing the exceptionality or peculiarity of the region.

This chapter focuses on two dimensions of the socio-economic conflicts in the Amur Oblast and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast: the first is land deals by the Chinese, and the second is the presence of Chinese agricultural workers in these districts. Using the concept of positionality change, this chapter contributes to the recent discussion on Sino-Russian relations from a more local perspective and economic sector-specific views to emphasize the multi-layered stakeholders’ locally distinct relational positioning. In doing so, I believe that we can explore more complex observations regarding the negative and positive impacts of the Chinese on agriculture in this region and their impact on regional development.

Theoretical Approach to Local Positionality Changes

Geographically, the borderland areas are mostly periphery rather than core. The evolving economic landscape has attracted economic geographers who have attempted to model local economic trajectories shaped by connections with other places, not only by local conditions.⁵ They share a focus on positionality changes that illustrate “how different entities are positioned with respect to one another in space/time.”⁶ The interests and preferences of economic actors in a local area are shaped by their socio-spatial positions.⁷ This does not mean that they are shaped not only by local conditions but also by connections with other places across borders. The local assemblage emerges at the intersection of a variety of actors. Therefore, the local positionality is a “relational attribute, reflecting unequally empowered connections and interactions with other differently positioned subjects.”⁸ It is reasonable that resource peripheries and borderlands have been the subjects of research for economic geographers who focus on local positionality changes (or shifts), where they can find good examples of connections and interactions between variously positioned stakeholders.⁹

The Jewish Autonomous Oblast and the Amur Oblast are remote from the core, not only because they are far from Moscow as the center of the Russian political and economic hierarchy but also because they are remote from Pacific Ocean ports, such as Vladivostok, Nakhodka (Primorsky Krai), Vostochny (Primorsky Krai), and Vanino (Khabarovsk Krai), which are gateways to international

(multinational) communications which impact the economy and people's mobility. Although these two oblasts are remote from international ocean gateways, they face China by land. Adjacency to China gives these two oblasts unique characteristics—strong dependence on China in terms of trade, investment, and labor; cultural and ethnic concerns of people regarding China; increasing local political volatility politicizing the Chinese impact on their socio-economic situations; and quasi-state monopolies of resources are sources of changes and conflicts found within the strategic resource sectors in these oblasts.

Resource peripheries require local modelling that recognizes the peculiarities of their industries, emphasizing the varied institutions and their intricate intersections that govern and, ultimately, produce products from the resources, and the acceptance of endemic conflicts and instability within the industry. This approach employs a stakeholder theory to emphasize the role of stakeholders in remapping the positionality of the periphery. In the borderlands of the Russian Far East, it is often pointed out that stakeholders have divergent interests in their projects. Natalia Ryzhova used a “power triad” to explain how state representatives (i.e., politicians and bureaucrats) use regulation to pursue rent seeking when they share the rent with their counterparts in competing with other stakeholders in the borderlands of the Russian Far East.¹⁰ Mikhail Alexseev used the logic of the “tragedy of the anticommons” to show that Moscow's practice of dispersing investment to satisfy the interests of multiple federal and local stakeholders in the Russian Far East has contributed to the anticommons effect.¹¹ Tat'iana Zhuravskaya described how Chinese firms are centered in the social network to organize logistics and the retail of vegetables and fruits in Chinese markets in Blagoveshchensk while linking with Russian and Central Asian firms.¹² As these researches show, the Russian Far East borderlands are characterized by multi-layered interactions of stakeholders to capture their rent, protect their interests, and make their living.

I employ the concept of positionality changes to analyze the relational situatedness in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast and the Amur Oblast because of the fact that farmlands and the agricultural sector characterize the borderlands as a resource periphery; this economic sector-specific characteristic of land use for agriculture easily invokes hostile or friendly attention among federal and local stakeholders against their counterparts across the border. The hostile or friendly attitudes of various stakeholders in the region are messy, depending on their interests. We are required to identify the individual interests of stakeholders in agricultural land use, which give impact on positionality of the borderlands.

Trevor Barnes and Roger Hayter proposed four institutional forces that must be understood regarding resource peripheries: industrialism, regulationism, environmentalism, and aboriginalism. Industrialism shows the organization of the resource economy by private capital.¹³ Regulationism means the regulatory effects at the federal and local levels on the operation of resource production and deals. Environmentalism refers to the effects on resource production of environmental non-government organizations. I excluded environmentalism from my observation because I could not find enough strong stakeholders (e.g., local

non-government organizations) to lead environmental interests in the borderlands we focus on. Aboriginalism means the increasing role of native people in treaty rights, resource ownership, and use, which I translated as local residents who engage in agriculture and land ownership in the borderlands. In this chapter, the stakeholders as related to land deals and the introduction of Chinese workers are federal and local authorities, as representatives of regulationism; Chinese investors and Chinese migrant workers, as representatives of industrialism; and local residents, as representatives of aboriginalism. The main exogenous stakeholders are Chinese investors and migrant workers. This chapter examines each stakeholder's reactions and behaviors in Chinese land deals and their labor migration.

Land Deals in the Borderlands: Regulationism for Rent Seeking

It took a long time for agriculture and farmland to become a major interest of the Russian government. After the collapse of the USSR, the position of agriculture drastically declined in the national economies of the new states. Therefore, agriculture and farmland did not catch the interest of foreign investors for a long time. Only in the mid-2000s did foreign investors start to explore land acquisitions in Russia.¹⁴

Russia has vast available arable lands and, therefore, can attract foreign investors to accumulate arable lands for agricultural production. Millions of hectares are said to be lying fallow in Russia; using fallow land, Russia has the potential to feed an additional 450 million people.¹⁵ The geographical division between the European and Asian parts of Russia reasonably indicates the directions of their dependence on investors. European investors tend to invest in Black Earth in the European part of Russia, whereas Chinese and Korean investors tend to be active in Siberia and the Russian Far East. As a manifestation of the Russian government's goal of developing their grain production (especially wheat and maize) as a strategic export commodity, Russia exported wheat to more than 90 countries, the largest of which were Egypt and Turkey. Azov Port, facing the Sea of Azov, is well equipped and a key port for exporting Russian wheat. On the other hand, the main product of Siberia and the Russian Far East is not wheat but soybeans. More than 90% of cropped areas are occupied by soybeans in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, and the Amur Oblast was the top producer of soybeans in Russia. The Deputy Minister of Economic Development stated that Russia was ready to deal with investors in Asian countries for the long-term lease of farmland, adding that the land resource is equally valuable as hydrocarbon.¹⁶ Local political elites in the Russian Far East also claim that international cooperation in the borderlands between Russia and China should be developed further. Therefore, Chinese investment and technological support for the regional development of agriculture are welcomed. However, the sector-specific characteristics of agriculture always raise the following dilemma: Chinese investment in the Russian Far East requires large investments in land. Therefore, they need to accumulate land

for their agricultural production. Chinese land investment often spurs a discussion of *land grabbing* that harms the sovereignty or integrity of the territory.¹⁷

Oane Visser defined the term *land grabbing* as “the large-scale acquisition of land or land-related rights and resource by a corporate, non-profit or public buyer for the purpose of resource extraction geared towards external consumers (whether external simply means off-site or foreign).”¹⁸ The term *land grabbing* (or *land grab*) has often been discussed with the old historical connotation of the aggressive plunder of land employing military arms or capital to expand one’s territorial governance of power. Recently, however, the term has been applied to the global rush of corporations or countries to buy or lease farmland abroad for their food, energy, and water security.¹⁹

In aggressive terms, Russia can deny land grabbing by foreign investors in its territory. Although foreign investors can acquire farmland through their Russian subsidiaries with a Russian share of more than 50%, they cannot buy the land alone. Therefore, the option of lease transactions without changes in ownership is promising for foreign investors.²⁰ Large-scale land accumulation by Western investors has already been seen in Russia; however, they have no critical conflict with the Russian landowners and farmers.

As many researchers have described, farmland ownership in Russia is very fragmented.²¹ In the early years of transition, most farmland was privatized from collective and state farms to ownership by rural individuals through the distribution of paper certificates of shareholding the land. As a result, more than 80% of farmland was transferred to collective ownership.²² Moreover, shareholders could not withdraw their land allocation, and their land remained in joint usage by the former collective farms.²³

According to Aleksandr Demidov, most of the rural small landowners in the Amur Oblast cannot become real owners of their land because of the complicated and expensive procedure for registering land plot property rights.²⁴ Their nominal land ownership can be a source of rent for leasing but cannot be a source for future investment in their own private agribusiness projects. Considering their private profit through leasing their land, there is no space for raising any conflicts of interest between investors and small landowners. Nominal shareholders are now pensioners and public workers in villages, and their economic interests are to obtain rent from the lease of their shared land.²⁵ Their private plots are located outside the farmland. The spatial dispersion of the borderlands to urban areas with insufficient rural infrastructure that harms market access discourages small landowners from establishing private farms, although recent state programs aim to support small private farms.²⁶ In this sense, the interests of local small landowners and private farmers are not addressed in the discussion of land deals. The position of local small landowners and private farmers is passive in land deals.

Natalia Mamonova and Visser noted that rural social movement organizations in Russia are highly embedded in the state and are characterized as “state marionettes” that do not represent the interests of rural residents.²⁷ It is said that land grabbing was carried out through different schemes, ranging from the purchase of land share certificates from each landowner to legal, semi-legal, and

illegal collective farms²⁸; however, there is little evidence to show that large-scale land deals by foreign investors are protested due to conflicts of interests between investors and local farmers.

It is difficult to study the situation empirically due to their transactions' lack of transparency. This is not only the case in Russia. The scarcity of robust data on global land deals is a problem widely perceived by policy-makers, researchers, and the public. The Land Matrix Initiative established a database on large-scale land acquisitions globally, and their data collection is highly dependent on company sources (annual reports, corporate presentations, and media releases about stock exchange listings), media reports, research papers, or policy reports.²⁹ Visser and Max Spoor also employed web-based and media research to identify land deals in Russia.³⁰ In the Russian Far East, Chinese and Korean investors are the major investors in land deals. In the Amur and Jewish Autonomous Oblasts, foreign investors are *de facto* solely limited to Chinese. The language barrier and their lack of transparency prevent us from figuring out the acreage they control in the Russian Far East as Visser and Spoor did.

Although it is difficult to show comprehensive figures of Chinese land deals, some researchers have shed some light on these deals. Chinese agribusiness holds 380,000 ha of agricultural land in Russia, most of which (approximately 80% of the total) is operated by companies in Heilongjiang.³¹ The biggest foreign-financed company focusing on broad-acre agricultural production in the European part of Russia is Black Earth Farming Ltd,³² which is listed on the Stockholm Exchange. It holds 246 thousand ha in Kursk, Lipetsk, Voronezh, and Tambov, including 218,000 ha of owned and co-owned land. Organizations with foreign capital, almost all of whose capital is estimated to rely on the Chinese, control 27,000 ha of farmlands in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (23% of the total land sown in the oblast).³³ In 2009, Chinese farmers had 36 projects and occupied 53,000 ha in the Amur Oblast, although official statistics in Amur Oblast counted only 7 Chinese projects in the 2000s.³⁴

There are some reasons for northeast Chinese investors to expand their agricultural investment in Siberia and the Russian Far East. The northeast region of China shares some common features with the Russian Far East agriculturally. As the Chinese northeast accounts for the production of more than 41% of China's soybeans, crop patterns are similar between northeast China and the Russian Far East. Northeast China and the Russian Far East depend on mechanized large-scale farming for crop production. Based on these common features and the fact that the geological proximity between the two regions decreases transportation costs, northeast China's agribusiness is highly motivated to engage in agriculture in the Russian Far East. Furthermore, rent for arable land is significantly cheaper than that in China, which stimulated a "Farm Rush" by Chinese to the Russian Far East.³⁵

Chinese large-scale investment in agriculture often provokes negative reactions in the Russian periphery. The government of Zabaykalsky Krai signed an agreement with a private Chinese company to lease more than 115,000 ha of farmland for a term of 49 years; however, this agreement has been criticized by political

elites. Igor Lebedev (deputy director of the State Duma and a member of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)) mentioned that the LDPR group in the State Duma claimed this issue to be an important geopolitical problem, warning that in 20 years, the governor of Zabaykalsky Krai would be Chinese, and its territory would become part of China.³⁶ This deal was called a scandal for the governor of Zabaykalsky Krai, leading to his resignation in February 2016.³⁷ It has been said that anti-Chinese attitudes in Russian society concerning land grabbing³⁸ have provoked several protest movements against Chinese land deals that were reported by the Russian media,³⁹ triggering negative public reactions among Russian bloggers. In a 2015 opinion poll, 50.3% of respondents estimated that the land deals meant the Chinese were preparing to colonize Siberia and wage war against Russia; 40.8% of respondents agreed that the deals would result in the degradation of Russia's farmlands and cause ecological disasters.⁴⁰

This critical situation regarding Chinese land deals in Zabaykalsky Krai involved Alexander Levintal, the then Governor of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. He shared this concern over the Chinese threat and warned that 80% of the farmland in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast was controlled by Chinese investors, legally or illegally.⁴¹ Contrasting sharply with Levintal's attitude toward Chinese investment was that of former governor Alexander Vinnikov, who emphasized the importance of attracting and enjoying the benefits of Chinese investment in agriculture.⁴² As Svetlana Mishchuk pointed out,⁴³ the authorities in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast had felt positively about the role of Chinese workers and farmers in agriculture until 2014. Until 2014, the then governor Aleksandr Vinikov had actively promoted Chinese investment in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. Governor Alexander Levintal was appointed in 2015, and the situation changed slightly. His attitude to Chinese farming in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast turned out to be negative.

Contrary to the negative attitudes of the local authorities, Federal authorities remained positive on this issue. For example, Alexander Galushka, Minister of the Development of the Russian Far East, rejected the myth of Chinese territorial expansion through their investment in land.⁴⁴ In this sense, in spite of the Federal authorities' positive commitments concerning Chinese participation in agriculture, the changing stances of local authorities changed the positionality of the borderland in a negative direction that exaggerated the Chinese threat.

The question is whether critical situations in the borderlands are really provoked by conflicts of interest of local stakeholders in land deals. Despite local political resistance or reluctance to deal in land with Chinese investors in the borderlands in the Russian Far East, the local mass media has not well reported how Chinese land accumulation has overridden the interests of local people or communities.

Ryzhova, once based in Blagoveshchensk, viewed Chinese land deals in the Amur Oblast as a negative consequence of the informal scheme of land distribution controlled by local administrations. The evidence for her analysis came from 12 interviews: one Russian representative of an agribusiness firm, two Russian farmers who have a joint business with Chinese farmers, six Russian farmers, two

Chinese farmers, and one official. Therefore, her evidence helps to articulate the positions of the local government, local farmers, Chinese farmers, and workers in the discussion of Chinese investment in farmlands and agriculture production in the Amur Oblast.

Ryzhova stressed Chinese farmers' informal acquisition, usage, and management of farmlands. Chinese farmers' access to farmlands is described as informal. But the informal scheme of land distribution to tackle barriers set by the government is the origin of their informality.⁴⁵ The access to farmlands is very complex in Russia, and it strongly requires sensitive communication with local governments and their agencies, because local administrations control the distribution of administrative rent for access to land. Moreover, Russian landowners often derive profit from their land property without doing any business on their land. Not only Chinese but also local farmers, therefore, have much trouble gaining access to new agricultural land and expanding their land for agriculture. Only Russian farmers who can claim or defend their position in their local governments are motivated to demand restrictions on more competitive Chinese farmers' activities.⁴⁶ In a triad of power regarding access to farmlands, Chinese farmers are vulnerable, and they have no way but to find informal solutions to do their business in cooperation with Russian landowners or Russian farmers.

Contrary to the strong regulationism in the Amur Oblast, local stakeholders, including local administrations, local farmers, and local media, position rather harmoniously with Chinese land deals and farming in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. Ivan Zuenko, a researcher based in Vladivostok who conducted semi-structured interview research in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast in 2014, positioned Chinese land deals and farming there as a positive consequence.⁴⁷ Zuenko's evidence came from five interviews with a local official (on the level of a raion in Russia, a municipal district), a local journalist, a Chinese farm worker, a Russian farmer, and a local entrepreneur. The local official highly valued soybean production by Chinese farmers because Chinese farmers adapt well to the requirements of the local government. Chinese farm workers are essential for farming in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast because of their lower wages, higher qualifications, and loyalty to the work. Russian employers complain about time-consuming administrative procedures required to introduce Chinese seasonal workers. Chinese farmers are described in his article as positioned harmoniously to the local government and local farmers.

Local stakeholders in farms and enterprises are also positioned harmoniously to Chinese farmers in his article. It is interesting that the position of local officials is very positive to Chinese farmers. It is not certain how the turnover of the governor in 2015 in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast has impacted their positions because the new governor's position is slightly negative towards Chinese land deals and Chinese workers. The position of the local media is also very positive towards Chinese farmers. The local media reported that the Jewish Autonomous Oblast had a record soybean harvest "thanks to Chinese peasants" and also quoted the head of the administration of the Leninsky District in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast as saying that inviting Chinese tenants is the only way to

attract any investment to this depressed territory.⁴⁸ The overall positive positions of all stakeholders in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast are unique. This is also supported by Mishchuk.⁴⁹ She conducted interviews of local government officials and business experts and showed that both stakeholders were positive about the introduction of Chinese workers into the oblast and believed that it would not lead to local unemployment.

When we focus on Chinese land deals, the positionality of the borderlands can be remapped by strong regulationism. The local authorities often change their political attitude to Chinese land deals, and local administrations have much possibility to pursue rent seeking in land deals. The local landowners and few local farmers share the rent seeking with the local authorities in land deals. Chinese farmers are vulnerable and stay out of the game for rent seeking. Only the informal solution to access farmlands remains.

The question is raised why regulationism in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast is moderate and open to Chinese land deals. Chinese land deals in the Amur Oblast may not be “land grabbing” for soybean production, but rather for the vegetable production that does not require large-scale land deals. Ryzhova’s case studies are mostly based on the reactions to vegetable production. When I conducted my fieldwork in the Tambov region of the Amur Oblast,⁵⁰ an agronomist told me that soy fields were well maintained and managed by agricultural organizations in the Amur Oblast, but there were still enough accessible lands for Chinese investors and farmers in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. This suggests strong regulationism is formed by harder accessibility to farmlands.

The Logic of Agricultural and Migrant Workers in the Borderlands

The peculiarity in the borderlands of the Russian Far East comes from the fact that agriculture and land investment are always accompanied by the introduction of the investor’s ethnic workforce. Korean agribusinesses in Primorsky Krai also share “an ethnic-oriented approach spanning aid for ethnic Koreans.”⁵¹ The Korean government, business circles, and NGOs placed a high priority on their policy of assisting and employing ethnic Koreans in the Russian Far East.⁵² Korean investment in agriculture in the Russian Far East is said to promote assistance to ethnic Koreans in the Russian Far East. North Korea has goals of promoting their labour exports and securing a stable food supply. Both countries have interests in agriculture in the Russian Far East, both politically and economically.

According to Visser and Spoor, Chinese and Korean investments in farming in the Russian Far East are often made at the initiative of their state or provincial authorities.⁵³ Additionally, Chinese and Korean investors tend to bring in their own workforce, including their ethnic minorities, to the Russian Far East. The motivation to use their own ethnic workers is not peculiar to Chinese investors in the Russian Far East. Contrary to these tendencies, Western investors tend to transfer their technologies and managers to the host countries and do not raise migration problems in the European part of Russia where they invest. Therefore,

large investments in farmland do not necessarily cause a large inflow of foreign workers.

Kazuko Takaya, a Japanese specialist on Chinese agriculture, conducted a case study that provided contradictory logic against the rumor of Chinese massive inflow into farmlands in the Russian borderlands.⁵⁴ Due to the recent mechanization of agriculture, Chinese local governments in Heilongjiang Province are motivated to ease their local agricultural labor surplus. However, soybean production does not technically require large numbers of workers. Therefore, Chinese investment in soybean production does not, in principle, cause a large inflow of Chinese workers to the Russian Far East. One case study showed that a local Department of Agricultural Development Plan in Heilongjiang Province under the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture organized four farms for soybean production and assigned approximately 200 workers to the Russian Far East. Takaya suggested that these farms did not ease the surplus of labor, and their business motivation did not lie in easing it but in acquiring land resources to increase their sales in Russia. Vegetable production, which is a rather labor-intensive sector, is often organized by private Chinese farms in the Russian Far East and does not require large-scale land accumulation. Therefore, Chinese land investment in soybean production is not directly accompanied by a large inflow of Chinese workers, and Chinese vegetable production is not accompanied by their large-scale control of the land.

Land for large-scale crop and soybean production used to be located in the suburbs or remote areas away from the city. Such areas do not have sufficiently dense populations and face chronic shortages of labor. Soon after land deals in Zabaykalsky Krai were criticized by the public, a Chinese private company, Hua'e Xingbang, announced that 75% of all farm jobs would be reserved for locals; however, it is not certain whether they can be provided with sufficient workers there. Before the Chinese company became the subject of harsh criticism over land grabbing by the public, the Chinese company had once insisted on the need for Chinese workers to work on the rented farmland due to the fact that the local force was inadequate for the work.⁵⁵ Ioffe (2005) also pointed out that many rural unemployed workers are simply unemployable because of chronic alcoholism.⁵⁶

The Amur and Jewish Autonomous Oblasts have suffered from outflows of their population. For example, the Leninsky District (Raion) in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast has 24 local settlements populated by only 19,496 locals for 6,000 km². This district has a low population density—three residents per square kilometer. Their land, 132 km away from Birobidzhan by highway and facing the Chinese border, is mainly used for agriculture. The Oktyabrsky District shares the same geographic conditions and has 15 local settlements populated by only 10,178 locals for 9.4 thousand km² with a population density of 1.59 residents per square kilometer. This district is also a borderland with a checkpoint, the Amurzet, which is accessible to China. The Leninsky and Oktyabrsky Districts have mainly maintained their positions as leaders of soybean production. They are mono-production districts—more than 92% of their agricultural land is used to produce soybeans. Maintaining this soybean production requires agriculture

workers; however, their low population densities and relatively low wages do not attract local workers in these districts or cities in the oblasts. According to Mishchuk (2016), who once was based in Birobidzhan, the Jewish Autonomous Oblast demonstrates “a catastrophic lack of labor resources,” and “the use of Chinese migrant workers has been considered one of the main ways to retain agriculture in the oblast.” Therefore, local residents are absent in the local labor market.

The Amur Oblast took a bold step when it imposed a zero quota for work permits for Chinese farm workers in 2013. Even in 2011, before the zero-quota policy against Chinese agricultural migrant workers, the Amur Oblast did not issue many work permits to agricultural workers. The use of work permits is an official instrument for demonstrating the demand for foreign workers by local economic actors and for regulating the flow of foreign workers. Therefore, it shows the economic needs of local economic actors and the attitude of authorities in the region.

I examined the allocation of agricultural labor permits in the Amur Oblast, the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, and Primorsky Krai (Table 6.1). The results show that, in 2011, not only were no permits granted to unskilled workers, but also work permits were issued to just 111 workers in the agricultural sector, excluding forestry, in the Amur Oblast. This is an extremely small number, considering that 6,630 work permits were issued that year for foreign workers in the agricultural sector in Primorsky Krai, and 1,403 work permits were issued in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast.

An examination of the occupations in which Chinese workers were to be employed shows (1) the high demand for skilled workers in crop and vegetable

Table 6.1 Occupations and Foreign Agricultural Workers in the Borderlands in 2011

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Amur Oblast</i>		<i>Jewish A. Oblast</i>		<i>Primorsky Krai</i>	
	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Share (%)</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Share (%)</i>	<i>Number of workers</i>	<i>Share (%)</i>
Senior managers	1	0.9	15	1.1	50	0.8
Engineers and technicians	0	0	46	3.3	264	4
Interpreters	0	0	56	4	40	0.6
Cooks and salespeople	0	0	41	2.9	66	1
Skilled crop and vegetable producers	45	40.5	442	31.5	4330	65.3
Skilled dairy and livestock producers	35	31.5	117	8.3	352	5.3
Builders and assemblers	0	0	66	4.7	308	4.6
Mobile operators	30	27	620	44.2	108	1.6
Unskilled workers	0	0	0	0	1112	16.8
Total	111	100	1403	100	6630	100

Source: Compiled by the author from application data on the distribution of work permits approved by the government of the Russian Federation

production in all districts, (2) the higher demand for skilled workers by dairy and livestock producers in the inner border region than in the outer border region, and (3) the significantly higher demand for tractor drivers in the inner border region than in the outer border region. Contrary to the Amur and Jewish Autonomous Oblasts, Primorsky Krai did not hesitate to allow economic stakeholders to introduce unskilled agricultural workers from China. These results suggest that not only the authorities but also the enterprises in the Amur and Jewish Autonomous Oblasts have serious reservations about *officially* demanding or introducing unskilled Chinese workers.⁵⁷ At the same time, local companies have a strong demand for skilled workers in crop and vegetable production and the dairy and livestock sector, which have serious deficits in these borderlands. Therefore, local economic stakeholders in the borderlands are strongly positive toward demanding foreign skilled workers.

In 2011, 139 organizations in all economic sectors were allowed to introduce foreign workers in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. The total number of work permits granted for these organizations was 6,107. Among these organizations, 26 organizations can be estimated as Chinese or partly Chinese investments. They introduced 1,481 foreign workers. Domestic organizations introduced 40.9 foreign workers per organization. Foreign organizations introduced 57.0 foreign workers per organization. From these facts, it is not completely fair to claim that Chinese investment results in the introduction of more Chinese workers than introduced by Russian organizations. Whether they are Chinese or not, producers demand Chinese workers, especially skilled workers. The problem does not come from China but from the fact that rural sustainability is at risk in the borderlands without investment and labor supply from the outside.

Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that the inflow of foreign workers is linked to the increase in unemployment. Mikhail Khavinson pointed out using quantitative and qualitative research in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast that business experts and representatives of local governments also suggested that there is no link between the increased numbers of foreign workers and increased unemployment numbers locally.⁵⁸ At the same time, they claimed that labor shortages would lead foreign partners to lose interest in working in the region.

The chronic shortage of local labor and lack of skilled workers in rural areas necessitate flexible seasonal workers across the border from China. As Sheppard (2013) described in the case of Pilbara, the emergent geography of labor connecting local resources in the periphery can reshape the socio-spatial positionality of communities and trigger national debate. However, as I have described earlier, Chinese workers do not cause local unemployment that harms the interest of the local people. Local economic stakeholders cannot solve the local shortage of labor without introducing foreign workers. When Chinese workers do not come, the Amur Oblast has no alternative but to introduce North Korean workers.⁵⁹

Labor shortages and a deficit of highly skilled workers are acute problems in agriculture. These problems come from structural problems in rural areas

inherited from the Soviet time, including growing farm debt and the deterioration of farmlands as a consequence of the reduced application of fertilizers and farm de-mechanization. These problems led to insecurity and a low quality of life with lower wages for farm workers in the rural areas of Russia. Rural sustainability is now at risk in Russia, which accelerates out-migration from rural areas. Out-migration from rural areas has been a consequence of the low quality of life and isolation from the core region in Russia, and it has had a long-term negative impact on the availability of labor, the quality of farm management, and the vitality of villages.⁶⁰ For example, Sergey Solovchenkov suggests that local people in the villages of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast have been abandoned.⁶¹ They have limited possibilities for meeting their basic needs in local settlements. One of the most serious discrepancies is the fact that the number of agricultural enterprises in the villages has decreased significantly in recent years, and a significant number of enterprises continue to exist only formally, without actually carrying out any activities. Therefore, locals in the region must leave their homes and travel to the cities in Khabarovsk, Birobidzhan, and Komsomolsk-on-Amur to obtain temporary jobs. To avoid trips between their homes and their workplaces, they abandon their homes and migrate to the cities. Liudmila Bondarenko conducted 5.6 thousand rural household surveys in 29 federal subjects and identified the main reasons for rural households to leave their settlements for the cities including low wages, lack of jobs, and lack of the condition for obtaining a profession and carrier enhancement.⁶² This demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining communities and human resources in rural areas.

The Russian government has supported rural areas with a series of state assistance programs, not only to renovate infrastructure and housing in rural areas but also to give private farms an opportunity to catch up with the market since Putin came to office; however, a strong dependence on household labor on private farms without mechanized production, the special dispersion of urban centers, and insufficient infrastructure to make market opportunities accessible have caused successful households to be a distinctive minority.⁶³ According to Solovchenkov's research in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, 81% of respondents answered that no enterprise could provide jobs for local village residents, and only 8% of village residents consented to work in agriculture.⁶⁴ They are "absentees" in the borderlands. Solovchenkov has conducted further research in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast that shows the majority of local village residents claim job creation and restoring agriculture in rural areas (62% of the respondents).⁶⁵ Their attitude to Chinese migrant workers is not hostile; 66% of them claim that the impact of Chinese migrants on the development of their communities is positive or not tangible. Only 23.7% of them claim it is negative, while only 7.2% of them have some conflicts in their daily communications with migrants. Moreover, 80.4% of them have no conflicts with migrants in their daily life. The earlier research shows that local residents in rural areas are neither hostile to Chinese business and migrants nor friendly toward them. They are "absentees" and calm in discussion of Chinese business expansion in the borderlands.

Conclusions

Leonid Blyakher noted that regional authorities could attract the attention of the central government so as to protect Russia's Far Eastern political governance from the Chinese "monster."⁶⁶ Natasha Kuhrt also mentioned that the local governors' negative reactions to Chinese land deals in the Amur Oblast remind us of reactions in the 1990s, such as those of the former governor of Primorsky Krai, Yevgeny Nazdratenko, as a bargaining "chip to extract greater financial concessions from the center."⁶⁷ These views show that local authorities often use the menace to Russia's territorial integrity to induce Moscow to foster their regional development.

Under Putin, there is not much space for local governors to bargain with the center because their appointment and missions are on the behest of the Kremlin, and local governors survive when they can manage their districts in terms of local welfare and economic growth in accordance with the Kremlin's perspective.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, academic discussions on Sino-Russian relations make this local political reaction evidence of a kind of Chinese threat. However, these views provide no evidence of conflicts of local interest and also provide no evidence of Kremlin support for their anxiety. Bullish sentiments by local authorities in the borderlands can attract the public and can be provoked by the public. However, it is uncertain that these public reactions actually reflect local stakeholders' interests.

Chinese land deals in the borderlands do not harm the interests of local residents, because they are absentees. Rural nominal landowners do not work on their land and have no initiative for deal lands. In fact, they are passive in land deals. Therefore, aboriginalism is not a cause to fight against Chinese land deals, and they cannot positively or negatively remap the positionality of the borderlands. Only local farmers who can share rent with local administrations are competitive with Chinese farmers. Local farmers as industrialism may fight against Chinese land deals to protect their position in the borderlands mainly in vegetable production.

Land deals for soybean production require a large scale of land accumulation, and soybean production is well mechanized and, thus, does not require local workers. Skilled workers are invited from China due to the lack of local skilled workers. Local residents do not see the Chinese presence in the borderlands as a negative and have no hostility toward the Chinese. Informal activities of Chinese farmers are often discussed in vegetable production, but this is the only solution for Chinese farmers to conduct their business in the scheme of local stakeholders' rent seeking. Therefore, Chinese land deals in the borderlands do not matter, and the Chinese informal solution to conduct their business does not matter. The crux of the matter is that the agricultural land for soybean production can easily turn to be a local resource to encourage strong regulationism and their rent seeking activities to prevent foreign investors from conducting business in the borderlands due to the absence of local residents.

Recent discussions on borderland studies between Russia and China focus on the mistrust between both sides of the border. This mistrust comes from the

Russian refusal to accept visible Chinese success on their own land and is further stirred by the economic and political symmetries of the two countries.⁶⁹ It has provided convenient excuses “to blame the other side for the lack of progress or the existence of perceived or real obstacles to investments or cooperation.”⁷⁰ These excuses are often reinforced by the contrast between the poor agricultural landscape abandoned by the state on the borderlands in the Russian Far East and the well-maintained agricultural landscape cultivated by Chinese farmers on the side of Chinese borderlands, seen over Amur River from Russia. Chinese farmers’ investment in soybeans in the Russian borderlands does not necessarily signify a politically motivated plunder of Russian land by the Chinese, which is harshly reminiscent of the China threat syndrome in the 1990s.

This chapter does not provide evidence that Chinese investment in soybean production on the Russian borderlands is “good” or “beneficial” but does demonstrate that there is no clear evidence to show Chinese farmers engage in conflicts with local residents (aboriginalism) and are motivated to obtrude their spare workers for their soybean production in the Russian side. Irina Hofman and Peter Ho warned us not to think in term of simplified metaphors whether Chinese land-based investments be “win-win opportunities” or “neo-colonial, expansionist land grabs.”⁷¹ Positionality of the borderlands in the Amur Oblast and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast is quite unique. Vast arable land remains for investment, but it is hard not only to find “win-win opportunities” for local stakeholders in agriculture but also to find the local conflicts that make the borderlands contested. It is also true that positive positionality shifts to pursue “win-win opportunities” in soybean production with Chinese investors (and the other Asian investors) are also possible when they employ a more realistic approach to make the best use of their agricultural land for their regional development.

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7 Exorcising Phantoms

Development at Border Islands in Northeast Asia

Naoki Amano

In this chapter, I will propose a theory to explain the historical and present situations of border islands in the Northeast Asian region and apply that theory to two particular cases. One of the geographical characteristics of Northeast Asia viewed from Japan is that each country is bordered by islands. Sakhalin and Kuril Islands constitute the border with Russia, the Liancourt Rocks (*Dokdo* or *Take-shima* Island) and Tsushima Island with South Korea, and the Senkaku Islands with China. Okinawa's islands also constitute a border with China, while being historically beyond the borders of mainland Japan. These islands, which I would like to call *border islands*, have been the cause of the territorial disputes which disrupt international relations in Northeast Asia today.

One of the features of these border islands is *uneasiness*. The uneasiness of border islands refers to the unstable status or functions of the islands and the complex identities of the islanders themselves. This uneasiness stems from the historical bordering/de-bordering/re-bordering process which plays out on border islands. The central government can include or exclude border islands into the area claimed by the state, depending on national security priorities and an ongoing cost/benefit analysis of their value. The geo-political strategy of the central government can make border islands into fortresses or as sacrificial pieces to be deployed for defending the mainland. If an empire aims at further expansion, the islands themselves can function as bases for imperial actions or just as stepping-stones. The uneasiness of border islands can affect the identity of the island people.¹

In this chapter, I would like to improve the border island concept, which has been inspired by a theoretical framework associated with *phantom borders studies*. According to Sabine von Löwis, phantom borders are “political borders, which politically or legally do not exist anymore, but seem to appear in different forms and modes of social action and practices today.”² Building on this phantom border theory, I aim to devise a method of historical research on border islands. As stated later, the key point is the effects of this on border island development, or the way in which the state continues to *discipline* border islands. In the first and second sections, I will reconsider the phantom border theory and try to develop a method that makes border studies diachronic. In the following sections, I will

conduct two case studies as a comparative analysis, examining the contemporary history of Sakhalin oblast and Okinawa prefecture.³

Many of the historical borders in Northeast Asia are too animated to be seen as mere phantom borders, as the territorial disputes among these islands are still flaring up. However, Russians in Sakhalin oblast think that the dispute with Japan has already been resolved, and that the historical border “does not exist anymore.” Nevertheless, they are made to feel “uneasy” by their historical experiences and the legally unresolved territorial dispute. In other words, phantoms still haunt the Russo-Japanese border islands. On the other hand, although the US-Japanese border on Okinawa legally does not exist anymore, this phantom border continues to affect Okinawans’ political attitudes. I believe that a comparative analysis of the historical experiences of these border islands will cast a new light on phantom border studies from Northeast Asia.

Historicizing Border Studies

Cases from Central-Eastern Europe

Border studies tend to analyze current situations and examine borderlands in the present. Of course, this is a very important attitude, but I think that it is necessary to develop a theoretical framework to analyze the history of borderlands. Phantom border theory fulfills this function. Phantom border studies, a new trend in border studies, have been particularly focused on in Germany and Central Europe, that is, the former Eastern European countries. Researchers began to study Central Europe’s phantom borders in the beginning of the 2010s.⁴ Since there are many historical borders that do not exist now, inside or outside of the present national borders, they are suitable places to watch how phantom borders influence political behavior.

Jarosław Jańczak points out that you should take note of structural and normative dimensions to find phantoms. The former focuses on objectively existing differences in economic development levels, economic models, infrastructural density, closeness to markets, and so on. The latter pays attention to norms and values resulting from historical experiences, such as the political traditions of the empire formerly occupying territory, or the displacement and re-settlement of populations after World War II. According to Jańczak, “the former is not the same as the latter, but forms the context for a specific type of development of political culture.”⁵ I agree with him in that analyzing how the structural and normative dimensions are correlated should be the focal point of phantom border studies.

Phantom border studies are influenced by path dependence theory.⁶ Both theories share the idea that “history matters.” It is critically important to devise a method to analyze the current situation from a historical viewpoint. In various case studies, the phantom border theory as well as path dependence theory have been shown to be very useful in finding specific facts that history has some influence on present people’s behavior.⁷ However, they do not necessarily succeed in analyzing historical processes.

More recent work on phantom border studies seems not to take the view that “history matters.” A research group led by Béatrice von Hirschhausen published a paper titled “Phantom Borders in Eastern Europe: A New Concept for Regional Research” in 2019.⁸ They stress that the interaction between spatial imagination, spatial experience, and spatial design should be fundamental to phantom border studies in order to avoid deterministic explanations. They, therefore, adopt a constructivist approach. Their interest is in how people performatively imagine and design their historical spaces, called phantom spaces. This is more in line with sociology, far from historical research.

However, we have not yet been able to recognize how areas are haunted by phantom borders. If history really matters, we have to discover the secrets, or the historical processes of the “psychic” phenomena: why do some historical experiences haunt local populations, while others do not? In other words, we have to develop a theory to historicize border studies.

Exorcising Phantoms

To historicize phantom border theory, or to make it diachronic, I would like here to introduce another theory and synthesize it with phantom border theory. That is internal colonialism. It was popular in the 1970s and now seems to be out-of-date. However, as Stephen A. Royle says, it is useful to analyze island economic history from the viewpoint of internal colonialism.⁹ According to Michael Hechter, the point of internal colonialism is: (1) officials from the core of the country make up the elite strata in peripheral internal colonies, so local people’s wishes cannot be reflected in local political decision-making; (2) internal colonies exclusively supply raw materials to the core, so the pattern of development is dependent and complementary to the core; (3) the trend of migration to internal colonies depends on the economy of the homeland; and (4) settlers in internal colonies can have a different identity from citizens in the homeland, even if they are identical in ethnicity.¹⁰

In order to investigate the history of border islands, it is important to understand that the course of internal colonization is a reversible process because, as stated earlier, the status of border islands is unstable and ambiguous. They may be incorporated into or excluded from the homeland at the wishes of their political or economic core. Border islands can be politically internal but economically external at the same time, and vice versa. In other words, the process of internal colonization should be analyzed from two different but correlated viewpoints: political and economic. The economic course is examined as the process of being colonized. The process of being colonized makes border islands economically dependent and complementary to the core. On the other hand, the political course is considered to be the process of being internalized, which means politically incorporating border islands into homelands. These processes may be reversible, and they do not always coincide with each other.

In my opinion, the process of being politically internalized has four phases: being domesticated, nationalized, disciplined, and militarized. These processes are distinct, but they do not necessarily happen step by step. In the process of

being domesticated, peripheries that had been governed outside the law of their homelands are incorporated into its legal system. In the second phase, people living in these peripheries are nationalized by an assimilation policy or settlement from the homeland. Through this process, people become part of the country. The process of being militarized means that the central government occupies peripheral land, making use of the land as military bases for further expansion or for the defense of their homeland.

When it comes to historicizing the phantom border theory, the most important phase is the process of *discipline*.¹¹ This process means that a border island is being made “naturally our land” and formed as an internal colony by internalization and colonization. The main point in analyzing this process is to understand how and why the islanders start to recognize their land as a natural part of their country. It is not a “natural” course, as it reflects the sovereign power exercised by the central government. The central government exercises its sovereign power and disciplines the internal colony, which makes the islanders in the colony see their island as a natural part of the country. In other words, the sovereign power tries to exorcise the phantom border.

Development is the key factor in disciplining border islands. Central governments develop border islands, rendering the islands similar or equal to the mainland. There are two aspects in the equalization of border islands: physical and cognitive. The principal aim of the physical equalization is to modernize border islands: to improve social infrastructure and to make it possible for the inhabitants to live in the same style as the people in the mainland.

Border islands are (re)bordered and incorporated into a national territory. However, this incorporation is generally not a positive experience for the islanders themselves. Islanders have different cultures, languages, and ways of life that look strange, primitive, and less advanced to the people of the mainland. Seeing the modernized lifestyles of the mainland peoples, the islanders can recognize themselves as primitive and less advanced. The sovereign power tries to modernize and enlighten this newcomer population and to let them consider themselves as the same citizens as the people of the mainland. This is the cognitive aspect of equalization and is the goal of disciplining border islands.

The development of border islands is essentially nothing but colonization by sovereign power. However, they must avoid any acts that look like obvious exercises of their power. They try to disguise development as being of benefit to peripheral border islands. Thanks to these benefits, islanders come to trust their governments and identify themselves with the homeland, driving away the memory that their island was once outside or excluded from the mainland. Disciplining a border island by developing it, sovereign powers attempt to erase islanders’ memory of their historical experiences of being bordered/de-bordered (excluded)/re-bordered, in order to “heal” the uneasiness of border islands, that is, to exorcise phantom borders. In sum, in order to historicize phantom border studies and to make them diachronic studies, it is necessary to research the history of border islands being developed and analyze changes in islanders’ political behavior toward the sovereign power.

In the following sections, I will examine the actual processes of disciplining border islands in Sakhalin oblast and Okinawa prefecture.

Sakhalin as a Border Island

Developing Sakhalin Oblast

Sakhalin oblast, a federal subject of the Russian Federation, comprises the island of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. However, until the end of World War II, all of the Kuril Islands and the southern half of Sakhalin Island belonged to the Empire of Japan. At the end of the war, the Soviet army occupied these Japanese territories, and the Soviet authorities declared all the islands Sakhalin oblast. Japan continues to claim the southern four Kuril Islands (Habomai, Shikotan, Kunashir, and Iturup) as its territory, collectively referring to these islands as the Northern Territories. This disagreement between Japan and Russia is known in Japan as “the Northern Territories dispute.”¹²

As of January 1, 2020, the population of Sakhalin oblast is 488,257, over 95% of which lives in the island of Sakhalin itself. Over 40% of the oblast’s population is concentrated in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk city, the administrative center of Sakhalin oblast. This city is known as one of the richest cities in the Russian Federation. The average monthly income of the city’s residents is 96,000 rubles (US\$1,438), the second highest after Moscow. However, the wage disparity among the oblast’s population is growing: only a quarter of them earn more than 50,000 rubles (US\$749); just about 20% earns more than 10,000 rubles a month. Many of these rich people work for oil companies. On average, they draw a salary of 225,315 rubles (US\$3,375) per month, three times the average.¹³

The Sakhalin oil fields began to be intensively developed after the collapse of the USSR. There are two main projects, called Sakhalin 1 and Sakhalin 2. The former began producing oil and associated gases in 2005, and the latter succeeded in exporting natural gas in 2007. In 2012, the pipeline was opened from the island to Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, which has allowed Sakhalin oil to be carried more easily to the continental part of Russia. Thanks to huge profits from natural resources, Sakhalin oblast has increased its tax revenue by 17 times in the first 15 years of the twenty-first century.¹⁴

Not only population but also oil money concentrates in only a handful of people in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Doctors, teachers, and civil servants in the city earn only a third of oil company employees. Such highly educated people are frustrated at this disparity, and some local intelligentsia have criticized the situation as colonialist.¹⁵

By contrast, the first decade after the collapse of the USSR saw far less economic development in the Kuril Islands. The federal government arranged its first ten-year plan for the Kuril Islands economy in 1993, but only 26% of the programs was carried out. The economic situation in the islands was on the verge of catastrophe. Humanitarian aid from international organizations and Japan helped the Kuril people survive this critical situation. The islanders relied on the neighboring country more than their own government.¹⁶

The appearance of Vladimir Putin changed the situation. The second ten-year plan (2007–2015) doubled the first plan's budget, and the budget of the third plan (2016–2025) increased by four times over that of the second plan. Significantly, Sakhalin oblast covered 45% of the expense of the third plan, while the federal government covered 40%. The oblast had covered only 6% of the first and second plans. A vast amount of oil money enabled the oblast, under Governor Oleg Kozhemiako, to distribute profits beyond Sakhalin Island.¹⁷

Disciplining the Border Islands

How has development disciplined Sakhalin oblast? Have Russian authorities succeeded in healing the uneasiness of these border islands? The presidential and gubernatorial elections showed the islanders' political attitudes and the effects of disciplining.

Figure 7.1 shows that President Putin achieved smaller percentages in Sakhalin oblast than the total percentages in every election. Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk citizens voted for Putin less than the oblast percentages in every election. They also voted for the governors less than the other oblast people (Figure 7.2). The severe economic disparity in the oblast capital has made the inhabitants less supportive of the authorities.

The effects of development and the economic gap are also reflected in the political behavior of Uglegorsk citizens. Uglegorsk city is located on the western side of Sakhalin Island. There are huge deposits of coal along the western coast

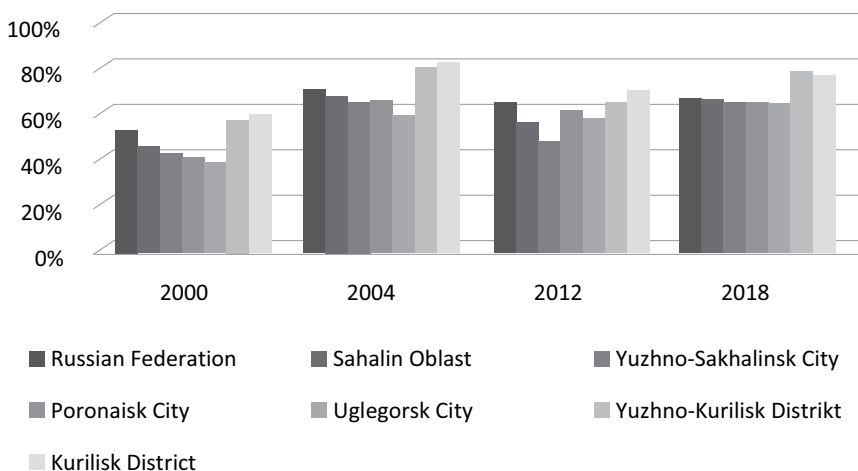


Figure 7.1 The Percentages of Putin's Votes in the Presidential Elections 2000–2018

Source: Izbirateľ'naia komissiiia Sakhalinskoi oblasti [Election commission of Sakhalin oblast]. [<http://www.sakhalin.izbirkom.ru/arkhiv-vyborov-i-referendumov/>]; Sakhalin. Info. July 2, 2020. Accessed February 1, 2021: <https://sakhalin.info/news/191673>

Note: The percentage of 2020 shows the results of the 2020 Russian constitutional referendum

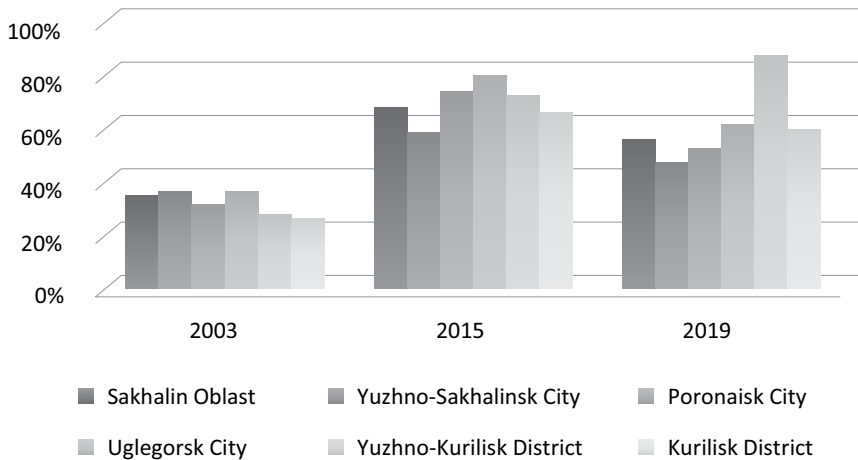


Figure 7.2 Votes in the Gubernatorial Elections of Sakhalin Oblast 2003–2019

Source: Izbiratel'naiia komissiiia Sakhalinskoi oblasti [Election commission of Sakhalin oblast]. Accessed February 1, 2021: <http://www.sakhalin.izbirkom.ru/arkhiv-vyborov-i-referendumov/>

Note: The names of the governor-elects are as follows: Ivan Malakhov in the 2003 election, Oleg Kozhemiako in the 2015 election, and Valerii Limarenko in the 2019 election. Governor Aleksandr Khoroshavin was appointed by President Putin in 2007 and reappointed by the Sakhalin oblast assembly, not by elections

of the island, while deposits of oil and natural gas lie in the eastern side. Uglegorsk, meaning “coal city,” enjoyed prosperity from coal mining before World War II while under the rule of the Japanese Empire. The population of the city named *Esutoru* was larger than that of the administrative center *Toyohara* (present Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk).

The rapid growth of the oil industry in the twenty-first century has totally changed the economic balance between the west and the east of the island. Both central and oblast governments continue to focus on the development of the eastern side, while they do not pay attention to the old coalmine cities. The population of Uglegorsk has decreased by half since the collapse of the Soviet Union. You can enjoy a pleasant drive on a well paved beautiful road along the eastern coast, while you have to reach Uglegorsk after a long hard drive on an unpaved bad road along the western coast. According to Figure 7.1, the Uglegorsk people cast fewer votes for President Putin (except for 2012 election) than the people of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and Poronaisk, a major city in the eastern coast. This reflects the twenty-first-century history of developing and disciplining the border island.

By contrast, you can see the successful effects of development and disciplining in the Kuril Islands. President Putin won 80.79% in the Yuzhno-Kurilisk district (the islands of Habomai, Shikotan, and Kunashir) and 82.91% in the Kurilisk district in the 2004 election, although he had gained only about 50% in both districts in his first 2000 election. In the following two elections in 2012 and 2018,

the people in these islands, or the Northern territories, supported the president in greater numbers than the people of Sakhalin Island.

The results of the gubernatorial elections in the Kuril Islands also reflected the process of development. The oblast administration under Governor Malakhov shared just 6% of the total budget of the first ten-year plan. The people of the Kuril Islands seemed to regard themselves as discarded by the neighboring island, which resulted in less than 30% of votes for Malakhov. However, A. Kozhemiako and his successor V. Limarenko, whose oblast administration budgeted considerable expenditure for the third development plan for the Kuril Islands, attracted greater support from the islanders, especially from the people of Habomai, Shikotan, and Kunashir (the Yuzhno-Kurilisk district).

The oblast authorities insist that the island of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands are inseparable parts of Sakhalin oblast, but the results of the elections show that there is a large gap in political attitudes, or the effects of disciplining, between the islands. In spite of the administrative claim, *Sakhalintsy* (the people of Sakhalin Island) and *Kuril'chane* (the people of the Kuril Islands) believe that each of them lives in an individual part in the oblast. They do not recognize themselves as being islanders together. You can also find differences in political opinions on “the Northern Territories dispute.”

People of Shikotan Island answered a poll in 1993 that 83.4% of the islanders agreed with the delivery of their island to Japan. However, according to a public opinion poll in 2019 by Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM), 93% of the Kuril islanders opposed to the delivery of any parts of their islands to Japan, and 86% of them think that the territorial dispute with Japan has already been settled unalterably.¹⁸ On the contrary, in a poll for a local newspaper in 2018, about 40% of students at Sakhalin State University in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk approved of the delivery.¹⁹

In sum, disciplining Sakhalin oblast resulted in the widening of a gap between the island of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. You can see more clearly how the development and disciplining divide the people border islands in the case of Okinawa prefecture.

Okinawa as a Border Island

Re-bordering Okinawa Prefecture

The defeat in World War II re-bordered the southern peripheral islands of Japan as well as the northern islands. Okinawa prefecture was de-bordered from Japan and governed under the rule of the US armed forces until 1972. In that year, Okinawa was re-bordered and returned to Japan. However, the third re-bordering does not mean that Okinawa prefecture was totally removed out of the US Army's control. Fifteen percent of Okinawa Island continues to be bordered off for the local population by fences and occupied by US military bases, which constitute territories lying outside of Japanese jurisdiction, although inside its

national borders. These historical experiences may be too vivid to be referred to as insubstantial phantoms.

After Okinawa returned to Japan, the main sector of the economy targeted for development in Okinawa has been tourism. The income from tourism exceeded the income related to the US bases in 1978 and comprised about 10% of the prefecture's gross income. To make Okinawa an attractive island and tempt tourists, improvements were made to various social infrastructures. Big capital from the homeland poured into these border islands, following ten-year developmental plans designed by the central government. These public works also created many jobs for Okinawans. The more Okinawans engaged in public enterprises, the more dependent they were on homeland capital and the more deeply they were colonized.²⁰

Disparities in social infrastructures were noticeably reduced by the end of the twentieth century. In 2002, 30 years after the reversion of the islands, the Japanese government designed a new plan. The plan was named "Okinawa Promotion Plan" and was not a developmental plan. The Okinawa Development Agency, a national administrative organ, was abolished at the same time. The period of development was thought to have ended. Now, Okinawa has been declared an integral part of Japan. However, were the border islands disciplined? Were the phantom borders exorcised?

The biggest incident after reversion affecting Okinawan political orientations was the 1995 Okinawa rape incident. Three US servicemen of the Navy and Marines kidnapped a 12-year-old Okinawan girl and raped her on September 4, 1995. The US Navy and Marines rejected the extradition of the service members in accordance with the US-Japan Status of Force Agreement. Although they were only handed over on September 29, more than three weeks after the incident, the initial rejection and the delay fueled the anger of the Okinawans, because that clearly showed the extraterritoriality of US military bases in Japan. Inhabitants in the border islands thought that they continued to be excluded from mainland Japan.

On October 21, about 85,000 Okinawans held a rally to protest against the rape incident and their colonial situation under the Japan-US alliance regime. The rally was held in Ginowan City, which is location of the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. The Okinawans wanted true independence and claim the return of the islands, which continued to be beyond their control. The movement against the Japan-US alliance regime involved the whole Okinawa. It is called "All-Okinawa" movement.

It is said that the peak of the All-Okinawa movement was the gubernatorial elections in 2014. It was not the election of the candidates by conservative forces versus progressive forces. It was the battle of a conservative candidate versus a former conservative candidate. The latter, Takeshi Onaga, carried the election and defeated the former governor, Hirokazu Nakaima. However, has the All-Okinawa movement really re-bordered Okinawa and succeeded in totally uniting the border islands?

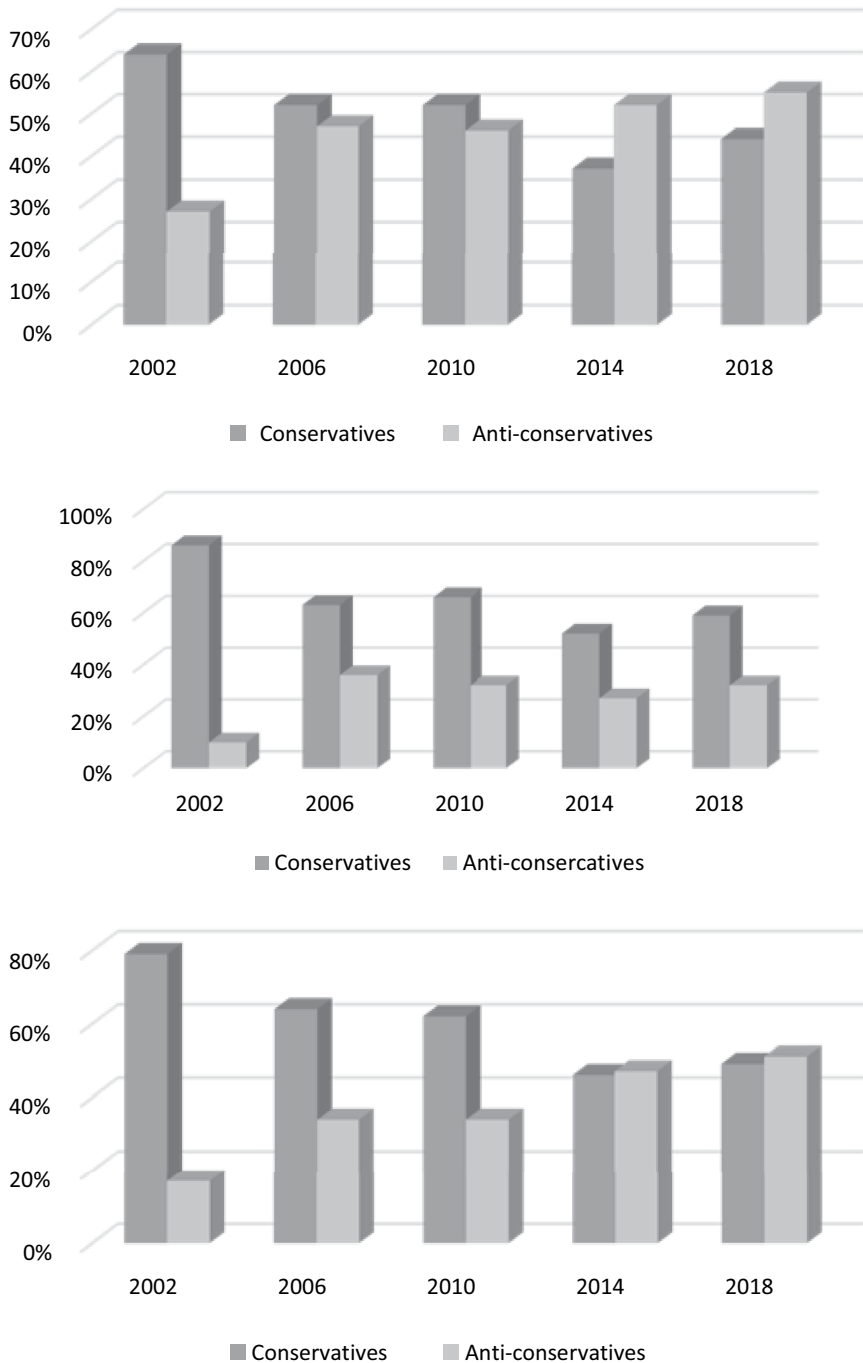


Figure 7.3 Votes in the Gubernatorial Elections of Okinawa Prefecture 2002–2018. (a) Okinawa Prefecture. (b) Izena Village. (c) Kin Town. (d) Yonaguni Town. (e) Taketomi Town.

Source: The Election Administration Committee of Okinawa Prefecture. Accessed February 1, 2021: <https://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp>

Note: Anti-conservatives means progressive candidates in 2002–2014 and All-Okinawan candidate in 2014–2018

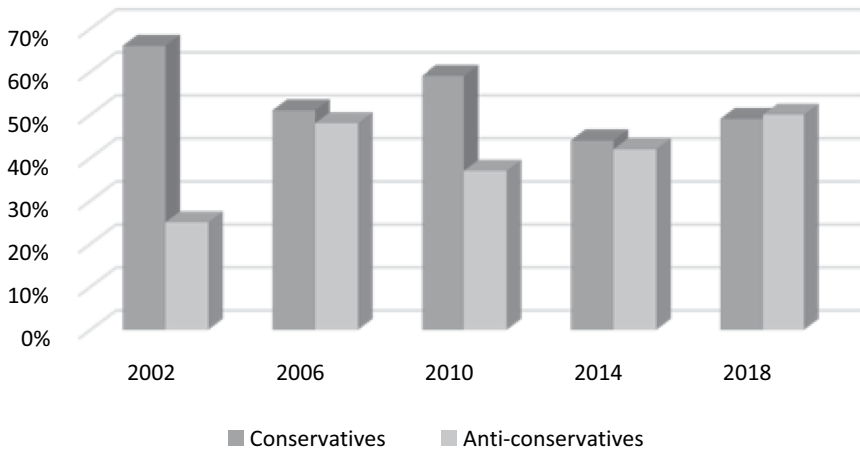
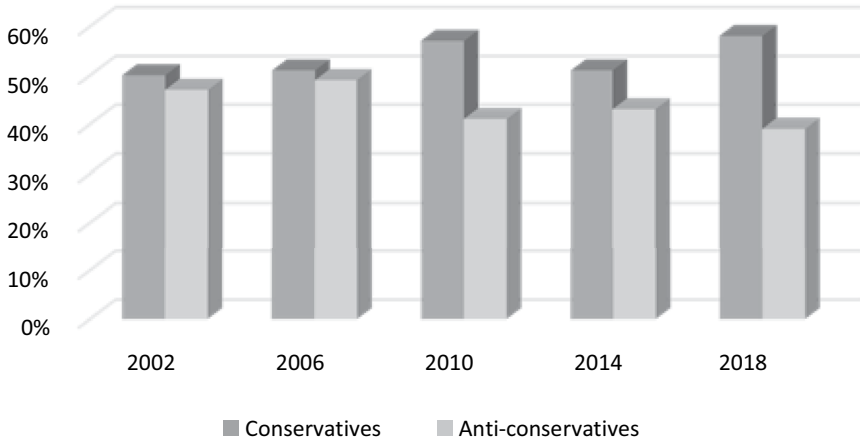


Figure 7.3 (Continued)

Dividing and Ruling Border Islands

The All-Okinawa movement seems to be a revival of the phantom borders between Okinawa and mainland Japan. The efforts to exorcise the phantoms by the sovereign power look to have failed. However, this is not necessarily the case. It is not only the Okinawans but also the Japanese government that has changed its strategy since the 1995 rape incident. Since that incident, the government's strategy has been to divide and rule its border islands.

The change was caused by the establishment of the so-called Shimada meeting in August 1996. It was a private advisory body of the Chief Cabinet Secretary, which was officially named "The Meeting for discussion about the cities, towns and villages where the US Military Bases are located in Okinawa." It was often called "Shimada meeting" after the name of the chairperson, a famous economist, Haruo Shimada.

Before the Shimada meeting was established, the Okinawa Development Agency negotiated with Okinawa prefecture to make developmental policies. However, the meeting opened another channel. The meeting made it possible for the central government to have direct contact with each Okinawan municipality and to offer them developmental subsidies without the prefecture's mediation. As you know from the meeting's official name, the government aimed at maintaining the US bases in Okinawa. The subsidies were provided intensively with northern municipalities on Okinawa Island, where a new base is going to be built around Henoko Bay. In 2007, the Ministry of Defense also designed a new subsidy plan given directly to cities, towns, and villages where the bases are located.²¹

You can see the new governmental strategy for development of the borderlands as, what is called *divide et impera* (divide and rule), which is a classic imperial technique for governing colonies. This enabled the sovereign power to discipline each town, city, and village, which helped to split the All-Okinawan movement and to re-border lands inside Okinawa prefecture.

Generally, conservative and anti-conservative candidates have won the gubernatorial elections by turns since the comeback to Japan. In the twenty-first century, the first three elections were won by the conservative candidates and the last two by the anti-conservative, or All-Okinawan candidates: Takeshi Onaga in 2014 and Denny Tamaki in 2018. These All-Okinawan candidates gained more than 50% of votes in total and achieved landside victories, especially in cities. Tamaki gained more than three-hundred and sixty thousand votes, the biggest number of votes ever.

However, if we analyze the local trends in detail, the particularistic disciplining strategy had a considerable effect on the islanders' political behavior. The residents in Izena Village continued to strongly support conservative candidates in the 2014 and 2018 elections. Izena Village is one of the main targets of the particularistic disciplining strategy. The residents earned a large income depending on the construction of various facilities for tourists.²²

By contrast, the residents of another municipality of the northern part of Okinawa Island, Kin Town, supported the All-Okinawan candidates in the last

two elections, although they had always supported the conservatives since reversion to Japan. The new trend of political behavior was caused by the unsuccessful development of the site of the Ginbaru Training Area, which the US Marine Corps returned to Kin Town in 2011.²³

The conservative candidates tend to gain more votes in many remote islands. In the Miyako and Yaeyama areas, consisting of five municipalities, attention should be paid to citizens' political behavior in the Taketomi and Yonaguni islands. The conservative candidate was victorious by a wider margin in Yonaguni in 2018 than in 2014. In 2016, Yonaguni Town decided to allow for the construction of a Ground Self-Defense Force base to stop the decrease in population. Only 1,600 people lived in the town in 2010, although more than 6,000 people had inhabited Yonaguni right after the end of World War II. Owing to the establishment of the base, the population has increased by more than 400 people. This seems to have affected the electoral result.

The situation in Taketomi Island is worth paying attention to. The elected Onaga received less votes than Nakaima in all of the municipalities in the Miyako and Yaeyama areas in the 2014 election. However, the elected Tamaki gained more votes in Taketomi in 2018. Taketomi Town developed "A Basic Plan for Ocean Policy" in 2011. No other municipalities have designed such a plan. Taketomi town decided to design the plan because they thought that the developmental policy by the central government did not meet their local demand. The failure in development caused a decrease in the number of tourists. Thanks to their plan, the town's population and the number of tourists have been increasing. More than five hundred thousand tourists visit the island inhabited by about 4,000 people every year, which has made the people less susceptible to the sovereign's blandishments.²⁴

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have proposed a method for researching the history of border islands. Inspired by phantom border studies, I have introduced the concept of disciplining and exorcising phantom borders through development. Improving various social structures, sovereign powers try to modernize their islanders' life and equalize it to that of homeland people. This development may enrich islands economically, but this does not matter to the mainland government. It matters whether the benefits of the development allow islanders' uneasiness to be healed and make them obedient subjects to their country or not. If the process of development and healing, or disciplining border islands, erase the islanders' memory of being re-bordered/de-bordered and exorcise the phantom borders, the sovereign powers achieve their geo-political goal. I have called the method of investigating the exorcising process "historicizing border studies."

The case studies of Sakhalin oblast and Okinawa prefecture showed that this strategy to discipline border islands was applied. Sovereign powers and economic cores do not necessarily need border islands totally disciplined. They use their power and money to develop and discipline some parts of the border islands,

as long as their effects meet the interests of the mainland. The actual tactics of disciplining border islands, or *divide and rule*, are classic techniques for empires to control colonies.

This means that sovereign powers try to banish historical memories and exorcise imperial phantoms through imperial methods of ruling colonies. The continuous imperial geo-politics has not totally bridged the disparity between the border islands and the homeland. Indeed, the colonial way of disciplining can remind the islanders of their historical experiences of forcible exclusion by the former empire. The uneasiness of border islands therefore cannot be completely healed, and phantoms continue to haunt Northeast Asia.

Notes

- 1 Naoki Amano, "Karafuto as a Border Island: In Comparison with Okinawa," *Eurasia Border Review* 10:1 (2019): 3–19.
- 2 Sabine von Löwis, "Phantom Borders in the Political Geography of East Central Europe: An Introduction," *Erdkunde* 69:2 (2015): 99.
- 3 Okinawa prefecture consists of Okinawa island and other islands, 26 islands of which are inhabited. Sakhalin oblast includes the island of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. An oblast is a type of administrative division of the Russian Federation.
- 4 Béatrice von Hirschhausen, et al., "Phantom Borders in Eastern Europe: A New Concept for Regional Research," *Slavic Review* 78:2 (2019): 368–369.
- 5 Jarosław Jańczak, "Phantom Borders and Electoral Behavior in Poland Historical Legacies, Political Culture and their Influence on Contemporary Politics," *Erdkunde* 69:2 (2015): 129.
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- 7 See the German journal *Erdkunde* 69: 2. It focuses on phantom border studies and includes many valuable case studies.
- 8 von Hirschhausen, et al., "Phantom Borders in Eastern Europe," 368–389.
- 9 Stephan A. Royle, *A Geography of Islands: Small Island Insularity* (London: Routledge, 2001), 137–140.
- 10 Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 15–43.
- 11 I use the term "discipline" as Michel Foucault's usage. See Michel Foucault, *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
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- 15 Naoki Amano, "Sakhalin / Karafuto: The Colony between Empires," in *Borders and Transborder Processes in Eurasia*, eds. Sergei V. Sevastianov et al. (Vladivostok: Dalnauka, 2013), 119–121.

- 16 Larisa V. Dragunova et al., eds., *Sakhalinskaia oblast' v dokumentakh i faktakh 1992–2000 gody* [Documents and Facts of Sakhalin Oblast in 1992–2000] (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk: Sakhalin oblastnaia tipografiia, 2017), 96–98.
- 17 Federal'naia tselevaia programma, “Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitie Kuril'skikh ostrovov (Sakhalinskaia oblast') na 2016–2025 gody” [Federal Special Program “Socio-economic Growth of the Kuril Islands (Sakhalin Oblast) in 2016–2025], 4.
- 18 Mikhail S. Vysokov, “Sakhalin i Kuril'skie ostrova: khroniki XX stoletia [Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands: A Chronicle of 20th Century],” *Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk*, October 27, 2000; “Territorial'nyi vopros' na rossiisko-iaponskikh peregovorakh: mnenie zhitelei Kuril'skikh ostrovov [“The Territorial Dispute’ in Russo-Japanese Negotiations: A Poll among the People of the Kurils Islands],” *VTsIOM*, January 31, 2019. Accessed February 1, 2021: <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/territorialnyj-vopros-na-rossijsko-yaponskikh-peregovorakh-mnenie-zhitelej-kurilskikh-ostrovov>
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Part III

A Shared Future?



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8 Competing Sovereignty Regimes Within Northeast Asia

Mihoko Kato

It may sound strange to focus on the term “Northeast Asia” as a geographical concept since the strategic interests of the major regional powers have shifted to the southern part of Asia. China¹ has taken an assertive stance towards territorial disputes in the South China Sea since the beginning of the 2010s, which has exacerbated tensions between China and the Southeast Asian countries in question. China has claimed a borderline, named the “nine-dash line” since 1953, in the South China Sea, together with indisputable sovereignty over the islands, the adjacent waters, the seabed, and subsoil within the line. China’s unilateral attempt provoked the disapproval of the coastal states and drew in the return of external powers. In particular, both Japan and the United States have facilitated the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” since the latter half of the 2010s. Today, the US-China rivalry is largely shaping the contours of international politics in the region.

As contrasted with the Southern part of Asia, America’s deprioritization of alliances was prominent in the northern part of Asia during the Trump administration (January 2017–January 2021, see Izumikawa’s chapter for more details), while the Sino-Russian strategic joint action has become more visible there. In the northern part of Asia, where China, Japan, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), the Republic of Korea (ROK), Taiwan, and Russia neighbor each other, tensions have also been rekindled over territorial disputes and the nuclear and missile issues of the DPRK. One of the most remarkable aspects of this region, called “Northeast Asia” in this chapter, is the lack of an effective security cooperation mechanism among regional actors, even after the end of the Cold War bipolar system. Instead of stunted regionalism,² the US-led alliance networks have played a certain role to maintain the Asia-Pacific regional security order in adapting to changes in international security conditions, such as the DPRK’s nuclear threat and the rise of China. Russia as well as China did not seek to challenge the role of the US-led alliances in this region until the beginning of the 2000s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union until the beginning of the 2000s, Russia was considered to have been removed from East Asia and to have been excluded from the configuration of any Regional Security Complexes in Asia.³

However, there are some signs of change. Firstly, the United States itself is going through a period of doubt about the continued benefits of US overseas commitments as a result of fatigue with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the economic slowdown since 2008.⁴ In particular, the Trump administration sought to force the ROK and Japan to pay not just the cost of keeping American military troops stationed abroad but also part of the bill for core US military operations.⁵ Secondly, both China and Russia have strengthened their military cooperation after the annexation of Crimea and also their assertions of territorial sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the Northern Territories/South Kurils, respectively. Russia's Aerospace Force and China's Air Force carried out a joint air patrol for the first time over the Sea of Japan in July 2019. Thirdly, unlike the United States, Putin's Russia has actively promoting a "Turn to the East" policy, especially since the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 (see also Horie's chapter in this collection). While foreign policy experts in Moscow have claimed that there is no alternative to good-neighborliness and friendship with China for the Russians,⁶ external observers on Russia's Asia policy have pointed out that the "Sinocentric" orientation of Russia's foreign policy has reduced Russia's room for maneuver in Asia and has seriously limited Russia's ability to diversify its political economic and security ties with other Asian States.⁷

Given the security environment over the past five years in the region, it can be said that Russia's foreign policy options in Asia have expanded under its strengthened political and security ties with China. In terms of the territorial disputes, Japan changed its claim of four islands to two islands as a result of almost thirty meetings between Abe and Putin. Additionally and on the Korean Peninsula, Moscow has restored relations with Pyongyang to the level of having a summit between Putin and Kim Jong-un. What do these signs and realities mean to the existing regional security order in Northeast Asia? At the beginning of the 2000s, Barry Buzan expected that, barring extreme behavior by either China or the United States, something like the existing configuration in Asia is potentially quite stable over a time span of a few decades. One of the reasons for this expectation was that the Asian international subsystem is dressed in Westphalian clothes, but it is not performing according to a Westphalian script. Rather, in this region, a Sinocentric and hierarchical form of international relations has survived within the culture of East Asia, which subvert the expectation of balancing as the normal response to a threat and power imbalance in a Westphalian system and to replace it with the weaker powers' bandwagoning.⁸

The aim of this chapter is to examine the prospect of the regional security order in Northeast Asia, to which Russia has returned, and determine what the bottlenecks to regional cooperation are. Later, the chapter first focuses on the links between sovereignty and regional security issues to investigate the source of these "bottlenecks." For countries facing either territorial disputes (Russia and Japan, the ROK and Japan, China and Japan) or longstanding division (China and Taiwan, the DPRK and the ROK), respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty operates as a norm considered vitally important to these states' national security goals. The first section discusses the characteristics of the sovereignty issues in

the existing regional order. The second and third sections focus on the impact of the strengthened partnership between Russia and China on the regional security order.

Overview of Sovereignty Issues in Northeast Asia

This section starts by defining the term *sovereignty*. According to Bull, the term sovereignty, which was asserted by states or independent political communities, has been used in two different ways.⁹ Domestically, states assert internal sovereignty, which means supremacy over all other authorities within a particular portion of the earth's surface and a particular segment of the human population. We call this "domestic sovereignty." Internationally, they assert "external sovereignty," which means not supremacy but independence from outside authorities. This explanation gives us a classical and fundamental understanding of the sovereignty norm. However, Bull's explanation overlooks a state's capacity to control movement across its borders.

Krasner, a leading realist theorist on the concept of sovereignty, pays attention to the diversified usage of the sovereignty norm. He argues that there are at least four different types of "sovereignty": domestic, interdependence, international legal, and Westphalian sovereignty.¹⁰ In particular, he focuses on international legal and Westphalian sovereignty, arguing that both are characterized by organized hypocrisy.¹¹ On the one hand, the basic principle of Westphalian sovereignty, the autonomy of domestic structures, has frequently been compromised of intervention in the form of coercion or imposition by more powerful states or through contracts or conventions that have involved invitations for external actors to influence domestic authority structures.¹² On the other hand, international legal sovereignty, which principally means the extension of recognition to juridically autonomous territorial entities, has been violated as well.¹³ Krasner emphasizes that norms of sovereignty and the practices in action have been decoupled throughout history. This chapter focuses on the contradictions of sovereignty norms and how regional states, in particular Russia and China, utilize these contradictions in their foreign policy.

It is not difficult to find a case that creates a gap between sovereignty norms and practices in action in Northeast Asia. Given that the Chinese Communist regime was not recognized by the majority of Western countries from 1949 until Beijing was recognized as the only legitimate representative of China by the United Nations (UN) in 1971, it is obvious that the states or independent political communities that need recognition do not receive it immediately or naturally. The decision over whether to recognize a state usually depends on the consequences desired by rulers. The earlier case meant that Taiwan lost its international legal sovereignty as the sole representative of the whole of China by adopting the resolution of Taiwan's withdrawal from the UN. Consequently, while Taiwan drifted into diplomatic isolation after its withdrawal from the UN,¹⁴ it maintained *de facto* independence from external actors even after the mutual defense treaty between the United States and the Republic of China (Taiwan)

expired in December 1979 as a result of the establishment of US-China diplomatic relations. Instead, the US Congress enacted the Taiwan Relations Act in which the United States declared it would provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character and maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people of Taiwan.¹⁵ In fact, the United States has been committed to Taiwan's national security through an unofficial alliance until today,¹⁶ by which Taiwan could prevent the potential exercise of force by external actors. Thus, Taiwan lost its international legal sovereignty to represent the whole of China because of the US-China rapprochement; however, the United States established an alternative arrangement to maintain peace and stability in the Western Pacific as well as Taiwan's Westphalian sovereignty in practice.

A loss of international legal sovereignty entails the problem of entry to international organizations. In terms of the multilateral framework in the economic field, Taiwan achieved full membership in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) given its status as "Chinese Taipei" and the World Trade Organization (WTO) given its status as "Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu (Chinese Taipei)." However, Taiwan has not gained membership to the security cooperation frameworks, such as the ASEAN regional forum, because of China's opposition. China is concerned that Taiwan's formal participation in international organizations would imply that Taiwan is not part of China. More recently, under the situation of the global fight against Covid-19, Belize and other countries that have had diplomatic relations with Taiwan formally proposed Taiwan's observer status at a meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO); however, the observer status was not approved due to the pressure by China.¹⁷

One of the remarkable facts in Northeast Asia is that issues regarding divided nations, territorial disputes, and weapons of mass destruction have not escalated into large military conflicts nor provoked intervention from external actors at least since the end of the Cold War. According to Krasner, the norm of Westphalian sovereignty can be compromised as a result of intervention and invitation.¹⁸ The former is usually implemented through coercion or imposition under the condition of power asymmetry (e.g., the United States and its allies' war against Iraq in 2003, the Georgia-Russia war in 2008, the NATO-led coalition airstrike in Libya in 2011, Russia's annexation of Crimea and military operations in eastern Ukraine, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022). In Northeast Asia, power asymmetry is prominent between the two sides in confrontation: the DPRK and the United States over nuclear weapons and China and Taiwan over domestic sovereignty. In the former case, the possession of nuclear weapons and the maintenance of the military alliance with China have certainly prevented military intervention by the United States. Moreover, the three major powers—the United States, China, Russia—have been in favor of the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions concerning sanctions against the DPRK since its first nuclear test in 2006 rather than the application of military pressure, although there has been dissonance regarding the level of sanctions.

This is firstly because both the United States and neighboring countries prefer to maintain the *status quo* in the regional security order rather than destabilize the region. In terms of the latter case, while Xi Jinping claimed that if Taiwan were to agree to unification, its rights would be ensured by the “one country, two systems” framework, as with Hong Kong in January 2019, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen promptly rejected the Taiwanese version of “one country, two systems” as a basis for negotiation.¹⁹ The tensions over domestic authority and control have been intensifying between China and Taiwan since Tsai took power. The Trump administration strongly backed the Tsai administration by signing the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act for the purpose of supporting Taiwan’s diplomatic relations.²⁰ For the past forty years, its quasi-alliance with the global power, the United States, has been a deterrent force against China; however, at the same time, dependence on the United States is always fraught with risk of involvement in the US-China rivalry.

Finally, the gap between the principle of sovereignty and reality can also be seen in the practices of domestic sovereignty. According to Moon and Chun, “compromised sovereignty” occurs when countries voluntarily compromise part of their domestic or external sovereignty for the sake of practical national interests, for example, a partial concession of domestic sovereignty in order to ensure national survival in the face of external threats.²¹ As a result of its defeat in World War II, Japan renounced war as a sovereignty right of the nation through the adoption of the peace constitution, called a concession of military sovereignty.²² The ROK also partially conceded its military sovereignty by transferring wartime operational control to the United States. While Moon and Chun emphasize that compromised sovereignty is useful in reducing the probability of conflicts through alliance, balance of power, and military deterrence,²³ Chun also pointed out in his recent article that the incompleteness of sovereignty of both Japan and the ROK has complicated the bilateral relationship.²⁴ Both Japan and ROK have sought to achieve full sovereignty in their relations with the United States. For instance, Former Japanese Prime Minister Abe sought to achieve the first revision of the postwar Constitution, while he was the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) chief.²⁵ In particular, he reiterated the need to clearly state the constitutionality of the Self-Defense Force in war, thus renouncing Article 9, which prohibits Japan from maintaining land, sea, and air forces. While Japan’s restoration of military sovereignty would remind the Korean people of imperial rule, reunification of the DPRK and ROK could become a threat to Japan’s national security.²⁶ In this context, Chun argues that Japan and Korea have never recognized each other as fully sovereign states.²⁷

Views of the Revisionist Powers on Sovereignty Practices

The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy called Russia and China revisionist powers that seek to shape a world antithetical to US values and interests.²⁸ These two countries expanded their territories in the 2010s, and over the past seven years, China has created seven artificial islands in waters demarcated by the

“nine-dash line,” which was unilaterally asserted by China. Furthermore, Russia recognized Crimea’s secession from Ukraine and its reunification with the Russian Federation as a constituent entity as a consequence of the referendum in Crimea in March 2014. Indeed, both countries’ behaviors are unilateral violations of the Westphalian sovereignty of the coastal countries in the South China Sea and Ukraine, respectively. This raises two questions. Do these two revisionist countries support each other’s positions on sovereignty issues? Will these two countries engage in revisionist behaviors, such as violating sovereignty in Northeast Asia? This section considers the former issue, while the latter issue is examined in the next section.

China’s Response to the Crimean Issue

While the United States and EU responded to Russia’s violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty by imposing severe economic sanctions against Putin’s cronies and key sectors of the Russian economy, most Asian countries showed less enthusiasm for adopting sanctions against Russia, despite the US push for its Asian partners to support sanctions.²⁹

Among non-Western countries, the position of China, as a core member of both BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and SCO as well as Russia’s key strategic partner, on Russia’s actions in Ukraine has drawn international attention. In March 2014, the UN held two voting sessions on the March 16 referendum in Crimea and Sevastopol. China abstained from both of them. The Chinese permanent representative to the UN explained the reasons for China’s abstention at the General Assembly before the voting session, stating that an attempt to push ahead with the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) vote on the draft resolution would only further complicate the situation.³⁰ He also said,

China always respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. . . . At the same time, we noted that foreign interferences are also a significant factor giving rise to violent clashes on the streets of Ukraine and resulting in the crisis in the country.³¹

China’s abstention from voting implies that it wanted to avoid becoming openly caught between Russia and the West over the Ukraine crisis. Russia tried to justify its reunification of Crimea on the grounds of “self-determination.” Meanwhile, the United States and EU dismissed the Crimean referendum as invalid, denouncing Russia’s annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol as undermining Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Firstly, from the standpoint of “noninterference,” which is a key principle of China’s foreign policy, China could not side with either Russia or the West. In the context of its own internal politics, the Chinese government was concerned about sending the wrong signal to Tibet and Xinjiang if China supported Russia’s aggression in Crimea. Concerning the ethnic minority riots in Tibet and Xinjiang, Beijing blamed the incidents on

separatists operating outside of Chinese borders while at the same time stating that the Crimean referendum was an internal matter of Ukraine. From China's point of view, the Western countries' condemnation of the referendum could also be interpreted as interference in domestic affairs. Secondly, China, moreover, viewed with suspicion the fact that the United States and EU hold a double standard when deciding whether to support or oppose secession movements in the post-Soviet space.³²

Russia's Attitude Toward China's Sovereignty Issues

In terms of territorial disputes in the South China Sea, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zakharova stated, "Russia is not a party to any SCS territorial disputes, and will not be drawn into them. Neither do we intend to take anyone's side."³³ When the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague announced there was no evidence that China historically exercised exclusive control over the waters or resources in July 2016, Xi Jinping rejected the PCA's ruling, which backed the Philippines' claim. To this, Putin expressed his support for Beijing's position regarding the PCA's ruling itself while confirming Russia's principled position of noninterference.³⁴ Right after the PCA judgment was announced, the annual military drill between China and Russia was conducted in the South China Sea off the coast of Zhanjiang, far from any disputed islands. While China's side clearly intended to refute the judgment by the PCA and apply pressure on the respective countries asserting their sovereignty over the disputed islands, the experts pointed out that Russia's side disapproved of conducting exercises in the East China Sea and South China Sea due to the overtly strong political connotations.³⁵

According to Lo, while Russia was once content to do the bare minimum, subscribing to the "one-China" policy vis-à-vis Taiwan and Tibet, it now leans toward Beijing in areas where it was previously neutral, such as maritime sovereignty in the South China Sea.³⁶ Russia adheres to the one-China policy and recognizes the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate government of the whole of China. Under the Putin administration, Moscow and Beijing have reiterated the one-China policy in a joint statement and official press comments.

In 2006, when Putin visited Beijing for a summit with Hu Jintao, the two leaders confirmed in a joint statement that Russia would "not establish official relations with Taiwan or official exchanges," "oppose any form of Taiwanese independence including *de jure* independence," and not accept "Two China" or "One China, One Taiwan." They also stated, "Russia opposes Taiwan joining the UN or other international organizations that only sovereign nations could join" and claimed that Russia "will not sell weapons to Taiwan." Putin and Hu shared the same view on the respect for the state sovereignty norm. The joint statement mentioned that the two sides supported each other's policy to safeguard national sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity. Under the Xi Jinping administration, Moscow reiterated support for the one-China policy by a briefing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the eve of the regime change in Taiwan on May 19, 2016.

Regarding the Crimean issue, China did not join the multilateral economic sanctions against Russia and expressed support for neither Russia nor the West. By doing this, it avoided sending the wrong signal to separatist movements as well as damaging its partnership with Russia. While Russia conducted its annual naval drill in the South China Sea, it has emphasized that the drills were not directed against any third party. Russia also strived to protect its political and economic interests in Southeast Asia, particularly its relations with Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia.³⁷

Probing Behaviors Related to Cleavage in Northeast Asia

This section examines whether China and Russia will engage in revisionist behaviors in Northeast Asia. Would-be revisionist powers need to know how deep the leading states' power reserve is and how spendable its power assets are to remain the dominant power in the region before taking some action to challenge it.³⁸ One of the strategies would-be revisionist powers have taken historically is what might be called "probing."³⁹ According to Grygiel and Mitchell, there are three purposes of probing.⁴⁰ First, a probing state aims to check whether the rumors of its rival's weakening are true. A probe is a test to elicit a response from the targeted power(s). Second, the state that engages in probing behavior wants to avoid a direct military clash with the existing hegemonic power. Third, the state's objective is to achieve a low-cost revision of the existing regional order. The following paragraphs examine a collective provocation act by Russia and China from the light of "probing" and consider why, when, and where it has happened in Northeast Asia.

On July 23, 2019, when the dispute over Japan's export control against the ROK was most tense, the ROK reported that a Russian warplane had violated the ROK's airspace above the East Sea (Sea of Japan) near the ROK's easternmost Dokdo (Takeshima) islets, provoking the ROK Air Force to fire a warning shot.⁴¹ According to the ROK, the incident came right after two Tu-95 Russian bombers and two Chinese H-6 aircraft entered the ROK's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) without prior notice earlier in the day; the two Russian bombers then allegedly trespassed into the air defense zone in the afternoon.⁴² According to the South Korean media, this was the first time that a foreign military plane had violated Korea's territorial sky and the ROK responded with warning shots.⁴³ Furthermore, it was the first time that Russian and Chinese aircraft had simultaneously entered the ROK's ADIZ. On that day, the ROK's Foreign Ministry summoned acting Russian Deputy Chief of Mission, Maxim Volkov, and Deputy Foreign Minister Yoon Soon-gu protested against the violation of the ROK's airspace. Additionally, Chung Eui-yong, director of Cheong Wa Dae's National Security Office, requested that Nikolai Patrushev, the Russian Secretary of the Security Council, take appropriate measures.⁴⁴ The ROK also summoned Chinese Ambassador Qiu Guohong and sent a warning.⁴⁵

The air area, where Russian and Chinese bombers flew simultaneously on July 23, 2019, included the air area of three countries' ADIZ (China's, Japan's,

and the ROK's). Japan also claimed that this included Takeshima, although the airspace above Takeshima is not included in its ADIZ. Japan's Air Self-Defense Force could only scramble fighter jets against intruders to its ADIZ.⁴⁶ Therefore, in terms of the airspace violation by a Russian warplane, Japan lodged a protest against Russia's airspace violation as well as the ROK's warning shot through diplomatic channels.⁴⁷ According to the former Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yoshihide Suga,⁴⁸ Japan urged Russia not to repeat its airspace violation. The ROK's response to Japan's action was that it could not accept the Japanese statement because the islets belong to the ROK.⁴⁹ On that day, the Japanese Ministry of Defense announced the violation of airspace and its ADIZ to the public.

In the evening of that day, Russia's Defense Ministry announced that Russia's Aerospace Force and China's Air Force had carried out joint air patrol for the first time that day in the Asia-Pacific region.⁵⁰ The joint patrol involved Tu-95 MS bombers on Russia's part and H-6K aircraft on China's part. As for the incident, the Russian Defense Ministry stressed that the joint flights were not directed against the third countries. Aside from this, they also mentioned that the flights were performed as a part of the implementation of provisions of the military cooperation plan for 2019. The Russian Defense Minister also claimed that other countries' borders had not been violated.⁵¹ In Moscow, the ROK's military attaché was summoned and received a protest against the illegal and dangerous behavior of South Korean pilots, who crossed the flight route of Russia's Tu-95 MS.⁵² The claims made by Russia reflect its position of not recognizing any claim by a state to set up its ADIZ. It should also be noted that Russia officially expressed opposition to the ROK's protest and had no reaction to Japan's claim.

This incident reveals that sovereignty disputes occurred over not only the islets and marine resources but also the airspace above Takeshima/Dokdo. What is the goal of Russia and China? In *Krasnaia Zvezda*, the official newspaper of the Ministry of Defense, Evgeny Podzorov indicated that Russia did not recognize ADIZ, as it had no legal basis; therefore, they claimed that Russian warplanes could keep flying as they had been doing in accordance with international rules.⁵³ Vassily Kashin, an expert in Russian-Chinese military cooperation, pointed out that Russian involvement in Pacific operations alongside their Chinese counterparts cast the prospects of a possible conflict in the region in a different light. He said that this development significantly increased the PLA's striking capabilities, which would, in turn, require the United States to take certain costly steps in response.⁵⁴ Those comments seemingly strove to elicit a response from firstly the United States and its allies through outright provocation. The incident happened not where the US presence is strong but at the outer limits of Japanese and South Korean control. This is an example of typical probing behavior conducted to test the interaction and cooperation among the United States, the ROK, and Japan.

The incident occurred at the time of an emerging split within ROK-Japan-US cooperation in terms of military intelligence. Japan and Russia concluded the first military agreement, the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), in November 2015, which allowed more seamless intelligence regarding the DPRK's activities among the ROK, Japan, and the United States.

However, this also faced a crisis of termination as a result of the escalation of the Japan-ROK row over problems related to wartime forced labor. Until the beginning of the 2020s, the Japan-ROK confrontation regarding the territorial sovereignty dispute over Takeshima/Dokdo expanded to multiple areas of competition, including the historical perception gap, trade war, the failure of a fishery agreement (since 2016), and the renewal issue of GSOMIA. Around the same time, Chinese and Russian defense officials agreed to begin talks on a new military agreement that would update the 1993 agreement in the field of military cooperation and joint exercises to build a normative-legislative foundation.⁵⁵ While Russia's comments were more provocative, as mentioned earlier, the Chinese government showed a restrained response to media reports about the incident.⁵⁶

Conclusion

As realist theorists have pointed out, there may be a gap between sovereignty norms and reality, and this is observable in Northeast Asia. In the case of China-Taiwan relations, Taiwan has maintained *de facto* independence through *de facto* recognition by and an unofficial alliance with a global power, the United States, since 1979. However, the lack of international legal sovereignty and the continued struggle over domestic sovereignty against China have prevented Taiwan from formally participating in government-to-government organizations, particularly security- and policy-related frameworks. Otherwise, struggles over domestic sovereignty are seen among not only divided nations (China-Taiwan, DPRK-ROK) but also allies (the US-Japan-ROK). For the past few decades, on the one hand, the violation of Westphalian sovereignty has been prevented through the function of the existing regional order based on the US-led alliances. On the other hand, in the 2010s, demands for full sovereignty—particularly by China, the DPRK, and Japan—as well as America's apathetic attitudes toward allies have decreased the predictability and stability in the regional security environment.

In terms of the “revisionist” states' stance on the sovereignty issues in Northeast Asia, both Russia and China principally have taken a neutral position and have maintained the strategy of nonintervention in each other's internal affairs. Given the condition that both sides cautiously avoid involvement in each other's sovereign issues, Russia and China are as yet to take joint action to settle territorial issues in Northeast Asia. Instead, they have engaged in probing behaviors, which involved testing how effectively the US-led alliances function and how each state responds to violations of sovereignty at the periphery of the region, where the costs of probing were more manageable. The probing was jointly conducted by China and Russia when tensions between the ROK and Japan reached the highest level for the past three decades. It can be said that the function and durability of the regional security order led by the United States and its allies are now being tested by both inside and outside pressures presented by Russia and China. Given the previous contexts, Russia's propensity to stand with China would reinforce a polarity and amity-enmity in the regional security order.

It is considered that probing is low-intensity behavior not intended to create direct conflict with the dominant power in the region.⁵⁷ However, to eliminate bottlenecks in regional cooperation, all members of Northeast Asia should relax their assertive tone to the sovereignty issues.

Notes

- 1 This chapter refers to the People's Republic of China as China and the Republic of China as Taiwan.
- 2 The term "stunted regionalism" was originally used in Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Trust in the Shadow of Globalization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- 3 According to Barry Buzan, since most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters, that is to say, "Regional Security Complexes (RSCs)" (Barry Buzan, "Security Architecture in Asia: The Interplay of Regional and Global Levels," *The Pacific Review* 16:2 (2003): 144). He argued that the ending of the Cold War and the superpower withdrawal from Southeast Asia allowed China to expand its presence in the region and put ASEAN on shaping an ASEAN-based regional security regime, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). As a result, Southeast Asia effectively merged its security dynamics with Northeast Asia to form a single East Asian RSC (Buzan, "Security Architecture in Asia," 148). Russia was an original member of the ARF; however, Russia was not included in the Northeast Asia RSC since Russia was a dwindling military force. Additionally, Sino-Russian relations were a limited partnership since it was weakened by Russia's tilt towards the United States after September 11, 2001 (Buzan, "Security Architecture in Asia," 161).
- 4 Jakub J. Grygiel and A. Wess Mitchell, eds., *The Unquiet Frontier: Rising Rivals, Vulnerable Allies, and the Crisis of American Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 28–29 (Kindle version).
- 5 Hiroyuki Akita, "Trump Demands Japan and South Korea Pay for Nuclear Umbrella," *Nikkei Asia*, February 4, 2020. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Comment/Trump-demands-Japan-and-South-Korea-pay-for-nuclear-umbrella>
- 6 Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), 136.
- 7 Marcin Kaczmarski, "Russian-Chinese Relations and Russia's Turn to Asia," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 41 (2020): 111–123.
- 8 Buzan, "Security Architecture in Asia," 170.
- 9 Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 8.
- 10 Westphalian sovereignty refers to the exclusion of external actors from authority structures within a given territory. International legal sovereignty refers to the practices associated with mutual recognition, usually between territorial entities that have formal juridical independence. Domestic sovereignty refers to the formal organization of political authority within the state and the ability of public authorities to exercise effective control within the borders of their own polity. Finally, interdependence sovereignty refers to the ability of public authorities to regulate the flow of information, ideas, goods, people, pollutants, or capital across their state borders. See Stephen Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3–4.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 220.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 The number of countries that have official diplomatic relations has decreased since Taiwan's withdrawal from the UN. As of June 2020, 15 countries out of 193 UN members have official diplomatic relations: Tuvalu, Palau, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Eswatini, Guatemala, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Nicaragua, Haiti, Paraguay, Belize, Honduras, Saint Lucia, and the Vatican.

15 Taiwan Relations Act, 22 U.S. Code §§ 3301–3316. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/chapter-48>

16 It should be noted that the Act is not a treaty between states but U.S. domestic legislation. Therefore, if China uses force against Taiwan, the government of the United States has no treaty obligation toward the Taiwan government to protect them. See Frank Y. Chiang, "State, Sovereignty, and Taiwan," *Fordham International Law Journal* 23 (2000): 977–978.

17 Francesca Regalado and Alex Fang, "U.S. Slams WHO and China for Excluding Taiwan from Key Meeting: Pompeo Accuses the Global Agency of Playing 'Politics While Lives Are at Stake,'" *Nikkei Asia*, May 19, 2020. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Coronavirus/US-slams-WHO-and-China-for-excluding-Taiwan-from-key-meeting>

18 Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, 20.

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23 Ibid., 135.

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27 Ibid.

28 The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, December 2017. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

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- 31 Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China, "Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi after Security Council Voting on the Draft Resolution on Ukraine," March 15, 2014. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/regionalhotspots/europe/oc/t1140296.htm>
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- 50 “Chto izvestno ob intsidente s camoletami RF i Iuzhnoi Korei nad Iaponskim morem [What Is Known about the Incident with Russian and South Korean Aircraft over the Sea of Japan],” *TASS*, July 23, 2019. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/6691974>
- 51 According to several media sources, Russia seemed to change its attitude toward the incident in a short time. Yoon Sang-hyun, chairman of the South Korean Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, said that Maxim Volkov had told him about Russia’s “regrettable” feeling over the incident. Immediately afterwards, however, Russia repeated its position that none of its planes violated South Korean territory and that South Korean fighter jets threatened its planes with “unprofessional maneuvers”. See Kim, “Russia Wants Probe.”
- 52 “Chto izvestno ob intsidente s camoletami RF [What Is Known About the Incident With Russian],” *TASS*.
- 53 Evgenii Podzorov, “Vperbye letchiki dvkh stran vmeste patrolirovali nad Tikhim okeanom [For the First Time, the Pilots of the Two Countries Patrolled Together Over the Pacific Ocean],” *Krasnaia Zvezda*, July 24, 2019. Accessed November 5, 2021: <http://redstar.ru/vpervye-rossijskie-i-kitajskie-lyotchiki-sovmestno-patrolirovali-nad-tihim-okeanom/>
- 54 Vassily Kashin, “Joint Russian-Chinese Air Patrol Signifies New Level of Cooperation,” July 30, 2019. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/79587>
- 55 Aleksei Nikol’skii and Ivan Safronov, “Moskva i Pekin obnovliaiut soglashenie o voennom sotrudnichestve [Moscow and Beijing Update the Agreement on Military Cooperation],” *Vedomosti*, July 23, 2019. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/articles/2019/07/23/807055-moskva-pekina>
- 56 Beijing announced that the joint air patrol was one of the cooperation activities and was implemented in the framework of the military cooperation plan for 2019. See “Minoborony Kitaia zaiavilo, chto prodolzhit sovmestnye operatsii s Rossiei [China’s Defense Ministry Said It Will Continue Joint Operations with Russia],” *TASS*, July 24, 2019. Accessed November 5, 2021: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/6695707>
- 57 Grygiel and Mitchell, *The Unquiet Frontier*, 48.

9 Economic Integration in Northeast Asia from the 1990s

Shinichiro Tabata

The past three decades witnessed the dismantling of the socialist economy and the rise of emerging economies, which has had a significant influence on Northeast Asia as well as the world as a whole.¹ We should remember that the opening-up of the Russian and Chinese economies to the outside world was launched at the beginning of the 1990s, and both emerged as regional powers at the beginning of the 2000s. In this chapter, I intend to answer the following two questions. First, how far has economic integration proceeded among Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea (henceforth, Korea) over the past three decades? Second, what has been the advancement in economic relations between these three countries and Russia in this period? By answering these two questions, I would like to examine whether economic cooperation or integration among these four countries has advanced significantly in the past three decades, before considering the future prospects for the region. In the following section, I analyze foreign trade data among these countries. It is followed by the analysis of oil and gas trade relations. After that, I examine data of foreign direct investment (FDI) among them.

Foreign Trade Relations

In terms of foreign trade relations among China, Japan, and Korea, their integration peaked in the mid-2000s. The share of Japan and Korea in China's exports considerably decreased from 23.6% in 1995 to 10.2% in 2019: more than halved (Table 9.1). The share of imports decreased as well. On the contrary, for Japan, the share of trade with China and Korea almost doubled in the same period in both exports and imports. With respect to Korea, while the share of intra-regional trade for exports has increased, the share for imports remained at a high level. Interestingly, the share of China in Korea's exports and imports increased considerably, while the share of Japan decreased considerably. I calculated the share of intra-regional trade among China, Japan, and Korea by summing up trade volumes of these three countries. The share of both exports and imports had increased until the mid-2000s but has decreased since then. In 2019, its level returned to approximately the same level in 1995.

Table 9.1 Foreign trade relations among China, Japan, and Korea, in percent

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2019
Share of Japan and Korea in China's trade						
Exports	23.6	21.2	15.6	12.0	10.4	10.2
Imports	29.8	28.8	26.9	22.6	18.9	16.7
Share of China and Korea in Japan's trade						
Exports	12.0	12.7	21.3	27.5	24.5	25.6
Imports	15.9	19.9	25.8	26.2	28.9	27.6
Share of China and Japan in Korea's trade						
Exports	20.9	22.6	30.2	31.1	30.9	30.4
Imports	29.6	27.8	33.3	32.0	31.2	30.8
Share of intra-trade among China, Japan, and Korea						
Export	16.0	17.0	20.2	19.4	16.1	16.0
Import	22.0	24.2	27.6	25.2	23.2	21.2

Source: Compiled by author from ITC, *TM*, and UN

Table 9.2 Share of Northeast Asian countries in Russia's foreign trade, in percent

		1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2019
Export	China	4.3	5.1	5.4	5.0	8.2	13.4
	Japan	4.1	2.7	1.5	3.1	4.3	2.7
	Korea	1.0	0.9	1.0	2.6	3.9	3.9
	Total	9.3	8.7	7.9	10.7	16.4	20.0
Import	China	1.9	2.8	7.4	17.0	19.2	22.2
	Japan	1.6	1.7	5.9	4.5	3.8	3.7
	Korea	1.1	1.1	4.1	3.2	2.5	3.3
	Total	4.6	5.5	17.3	24.7	25.5	29.2

Source: Compiled by author from FCS

With respect to Russia, its foreign trade relations with these three countries in Northeast Asia have constantly strengthened mainly due to the dynamic increase in trade between Russia and China. The share of these three countries in Russia's trade has increased tremendously since the beginning of the 2000s (Table 9.2). Their share in Russia's exports increased from 8.7% in 2000 to 20.0% in 2019 due to the increase in oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports. Their share in Russia's imports grew more dramatically from 5.5% to 29.2% in the same period owing to the expansion of automobile and other consumer goods imports, which was mainly brought about by China—China's share increased from 2.8% to 22.2% in this period. In fact, the share of Japan in Russia's exports and imports has stagnated since 2010.²

These observations are confirmed by calculating trade intensity indexes (Table 9.3).³ If this index for export (XI_{ij}) is higher (or lower) than 1, the share of country j in exports of country i is larger (or smaller) than the average share of country j in exports of all countries in the world. The higher this index, the closer the export relations from country i to j .

Table 9.3 Trade intensity index among Northeast Asian countries

			1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2019
China	Export	Japan	2.5	2.7	2.1	1.5	1.4	1.4
		Korea	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.4	1.5	1.5
		Russia	1.0	1.6	1.7	1.1	1.3	1.4
	Import	Japan	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.2	1.9	1.9
		Korea	2.7	3.6	3.9	2.9	2.8	2.5
		Russia	1.6	1.5	1.0	0.6	0.8	1.1
Japan	Export	China	1.5	1.7	2.1	2.0	1.7	1.7
		Korea	2.1	2.4	3.0	2.8	2.6	2.4
		Russia	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8
	Import	China	2.9	3.4	2.7	2.0	1.7	1.7
		Korea	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.4
		Russia	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.8	1.2	0.8
Korea	Export	China	2.4	2.9	3.4	2.7	2.5	2.3
		Japan	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.3	1.2	1.3
		Russia	1.0	0.8	1.4	1.1	0.8	1.1
	Import	China	1.6	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.4	1.5
		Japan	2.4	2.5	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.4
		Russia	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.9	1.2	1.2
Russia	Export	China	1.4	1.4	0.9	0.5	0.8	1.2
		Japan	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.7	1.1	0.7
		Korea	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.9	1.5	1.4
	Import	China	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.6	1.4	1.6
		Japan	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0
		Korea	0.4	0.4	1.4	1.0	0.8	1.1

Source: Compiled by author from ITC, *TM*, and UN

We see that although trade intensity among China, Japan, and Korea is still generally very high (intensity is higher than 2 in most cases), there are some cases where these indexes show a declining trend, including China's exports to Japan (Japan's imports from China), China's imports from Korea (Korea's exports to China), and Korea's exports to Japan (Japan's imports from Korea).

Concerning Russia's relations to these three countries, trade intensity is not high in most cases. There are, however, clearly increasing trends in many cases, including Russia's exports to Korea and imports from China. The trade intensity of Russia's imports from Japan (Japan's exports to Russia) and exports to Japan (Japan's imports from Russia) has been increasing as well, though their level is not high yet. We can say that until 2000, Russia's trade relations with these three countries had been at very low levels: for Russia, Japan, and Korea had been distant countries in the world. Since 2000, trade relations among these countries have increased to "normal" levels. We can easily imagine that if we calculate these indexes for the Russian Far East (RFE), not for Russia as a whole, then trade intensity of RFE with Northeast Asian countries is significantly higher. Unfortunately, trade data of RFE are insufficient and there are many deficiencies in this data.⁴

In order to examine deeper integration among these countries, that is, intra-industry integration, I calculated the Grubel-Lloyd (GL) index, which shows how far intra-industry trade develops between two countries.⁵ The GL index is not smaller than 0 and not higher than 1. If it is closer to 0, this implies that intra-industry trade is less developed. If it is closer to 1, such a trade is more developed. The development of intra-industry trade implies the advancement of value chain or supply chain processes, that is, more integration of a specific industry between two countries.

I calculated GL indexes for machine-building industries.⁶ HS is the international code of a harmonized system for the classification of products. HS 84–87 cover major commodities of machine-building industries. From Table 9.4, we find that there is an increasing trend of GL index among China, Japan, and Korea except for HS 85, that is, electrical machinery, in which the integration was already high in the 1990s. It is notable that there is a significant difference between GL indexes for 1995 and for the period after 2000. This clearly shows the deepening of integration of machine-building industries among these three countries.

Table 9.4 Grubel-Lloyd index of machine-building industries among Japan, China, and Korea

			<i>Between Japan and China</i>	<i>Between Korea and China</i>	<i>Between Japan and Korea</i>
HS84	Machinery and mechanical appliances (parts)	1995	0.28	0.30	0.21
		2000	0.80	0.68	0.69
		2005	0.94	0.65	0.57
		2010	0.88	0.75	0.38
		2015	0.87	0.81	0.54
		2019	0.99	0.85	0.60
HS85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts	1995	0.86	0.84	0.81
		2000	0.97	0.88	0.69
		2005	0.98	0.73	0.78
		2010	0.91	0.80	0.95
		2015	0.68	0.75	0.96
		2019	0.68	0.87	0.80
HS86	Railway, tramway locomotives, rolling-stock, and parts	1995	0.63	0.33	0.80
		2000	0.41	0.80	0.58
		2005	0.80	0.83	0.90
		2010	0.40	0.89	0.69
		2015	0.60	0.77	0.80
		2019	0.86	0.39	0.46
HS87	Vehicles (other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts)	1995	0.34	0.12	0.23
		2000	0.64	0.52	0.37
		2005	0.56	0.15	0.45
		2010	0.31	0.39	0.41
		2015	0.58	0.37	0.78
		2019	0.48	0.98	0.65

Source: Compiled by author from ITC, *TM*, and UN

Table 9.5 Grubel-Lloyd index of machine-building industries of Russia with China, Japan, and Korea

			<i>With China</i>	<i>With Japan</i>	<i>With Korea</i>
HS84	Machinery and mechanical appliances (parts)	1995	0.25	0.01	0.18
		2000	0.79	0.03	0.22
		2005	0.17	0.01	0.12
		2010	0.08	0.00	0.04
		2015	0.14	0.01	0.07
		2019	0.04	0.01	0.03
HS85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts	1995	0.93	0.01	0.01
		2000	0.70	0.04	0.08
		2005	0.08	0.04	0.08
		2010	0.02	0.02	0.15
		2015	0.02	0.04	0.12
		2019	0.02	0.03	0.04
HS86	Railway, tramway locomotives, rolling-stock, and parts	1995	0.99	0.06	0.01
		2000	0.36	0.00	0.44
		2005	0.84	0.60	0.00
		2010	0.57	0.16	0.00
		2015	0.26	0.00	0.00
		2019	0.01	0.29	0.42
HS87	Vehicles (other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts)	1995	0.29	0.00	0.00
		2000	0.39	0.02	0.10
		2005	0.00	0.00	0.12
		2010	0.00	0.00	0.00
		2015	0.00	0.00	0.00
		2019	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: Compiled by author from ITC, *TM*, and UN

In Table 9.5, I calculated the GL indexes of Russia with these three countries.⁷ This table presents that intra-industry trade between Russia and other Northeast Asian countries in machine-building sectors has been low and decreasing. Exceptions were trade between Russia and China, but Russia's GL indexes with China have decreased significantly since 2005, reflecting a growing gap between the competitiveness in machine-building industries of these two countries. Table 9.5 presents the low competitiveness of Russia's machine-building industries. As Yugo Konno argues, Russia's manufacturing industries have some comparative advantages only in relations with former Soviet countries.⁸

Summing up, the economic integration of China, Japan, and Korea in terms of foreign trade has been at high levels and has deepened in this century, although the share of intra-trade among them has somewhat declined since 2010, which reflects the growing presence of China in the world trade, that is, the expansion of China's trade with all countries globally. This confirms the emergence of a "localized economic zone"⁹ in this area which was formed without having an institution of regional economic integration like the EU or NAFTA, as Akio Hosono argues.¹⁰ Concerning Russia's integration in this area, our observation confirms that Russia did join it as one of the large trade partners, although the

type of integration is different from that among the three other countries. Russia joined as a result of the advancement of vertical trade with them, as we will see in the next section.

Trade of Oil and Gas

In this section, I analyze trade data of oil and gas between these countries. We see the growing presence of Russia as an energy supplier in this area, which means a growing reliance of China, Japan, Korea on Russia's supply as well as an increasing dependence of Russia on the market of these three countries. Figure 9.1 demonstrates that the share of Northeast Asia in Russia's exports of crude oil was 1.1% in 2000 and 4.1% in 2005, expanding rapidly to 13.0% in 2010, 26.8% in 2015, and 34.3% in 2019. On the contrary, oil exports to Europe and CIS have decreased in recent years. It is safe to say that Russia has been able to maintain its export earnings from oil, thanks to exports to Northeast Asia. This increase was largely brought about by the development of the Sakhalin oil fields and the construction of the Eastern Siberia–Pacific Ocean (ESPO) Pipeline.¹¹

On the other hand, China's, Korea's, and Japan's dependence on Russia's crude oil has increased considerably in the past two decades (Figure 9.2). In 2019, the share of Russia for China is 15.4%, for Korea—6.3%, and for Japan—5.4%. Note that the share of the Middle East in Japan's imports of crude oil is 88.9% in 2019. 49.1% of Japan's imports of oil from Russia came from the Sakhalin-1 Project, 32.0% from ESPO pipeline, and 18.9% from the Sakhalin-2 Project in 2019 (calculated from METI).

With respect to Russia's exports of natural gas to Northeast Asia, its share is not high, only 8.3% in 2019: the share of Japan is 5.4%; Korea—1.8%; and

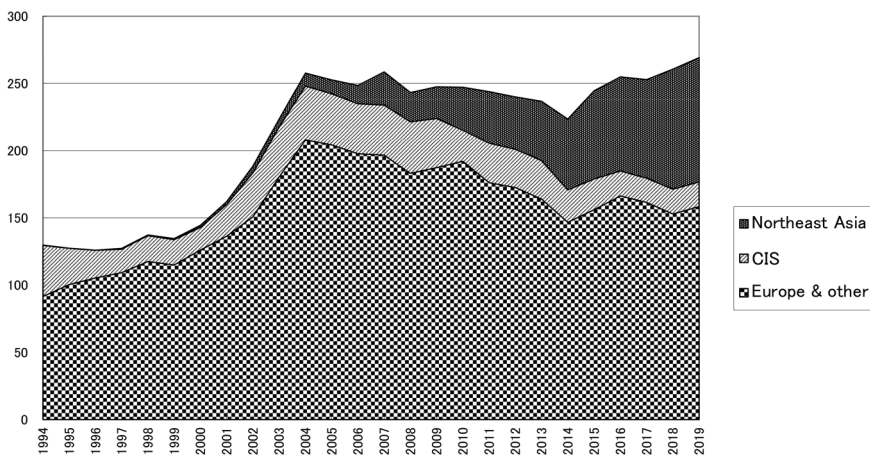


Figure 9.1 Russia's exports of crude oil by destination, in million tons

Source: Compiled by author from FCS

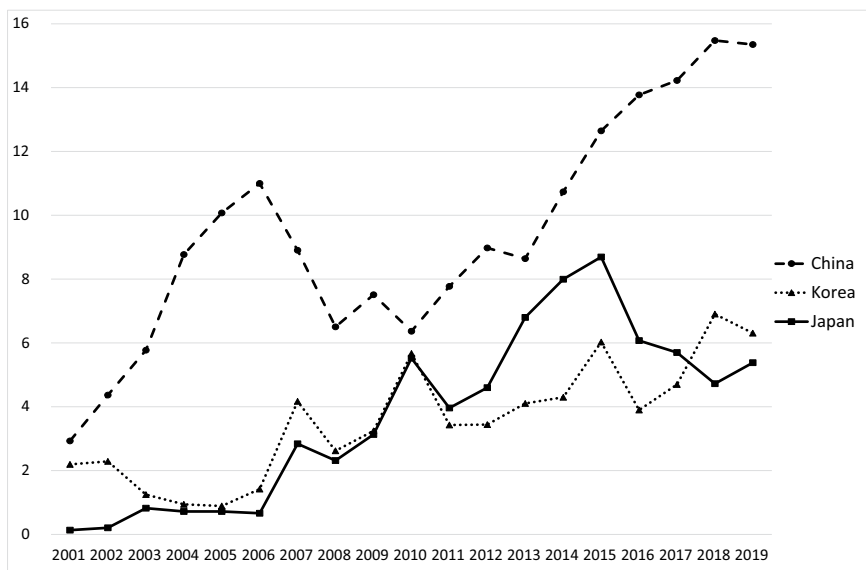


Figure 9.2 Share of Russia in imports of crude oil by China, Japan, and Korea, in percent
Source: Compiled by author from ITC, *TM*

China—1.1% in terms of export value.¹² Nonetheless, Japan ranked sixth among importers of Russia’s gas in 2019. The low share of Northeast Asian countries is explained by the fact that there were no trunk gas pipelines from Russia to Northeast Asia until 2019. Northeast Asian countries began to import Russia’s gas from 2009 when an LNG plant in Sakhalin, the first LNG plant for Russia, was put into operation. Note that Japan, China, and Korea rank first, second, and third, respectively, in LNG’s global imports in 2019 (ITC, *TM*).

As for Japan, Russia already ranked fourth in Japan’s LNG imports, while its share was 8.3% in 2019 (Figure 9.3). Russia’s LNG is slightly cheaper due to its proximity to Japan. In fact, import prices of LNG from Australia, Malaysia, and Qatar were higher than those from Russia by 11–17% on average in the period from 2009 to 2019 (calculated from MOF). With respect to Korea, Russia’s share in LNG imports was 5.5% in 2019 (ITC, *TM*). It is estimated that Japan imported 67.1% of LNG produced on Sakhalin in 2016; Korea—17.0%; and China—2.4%.¹³ Regarding China, the share of Russia in its LNG import was 4.2% in 2019 (ITC, *TM*). It increased from 1.2% in 2017, which points to the significant increase in imports from LNG from the Yamal Peninsula. The share of Russia in China’s imports of natural gas was only 2.2% in 2019, with the dominant share of Australia (24.6%) and Turkmenistan (20.4%). Since the first trunk pipeline from Russia to Northeast Asia, the “Power of Siberia,” was put into operation in December 2019, it is expected that volume of China’s natural gas imports from Russia will increase dramatically in the next few years.

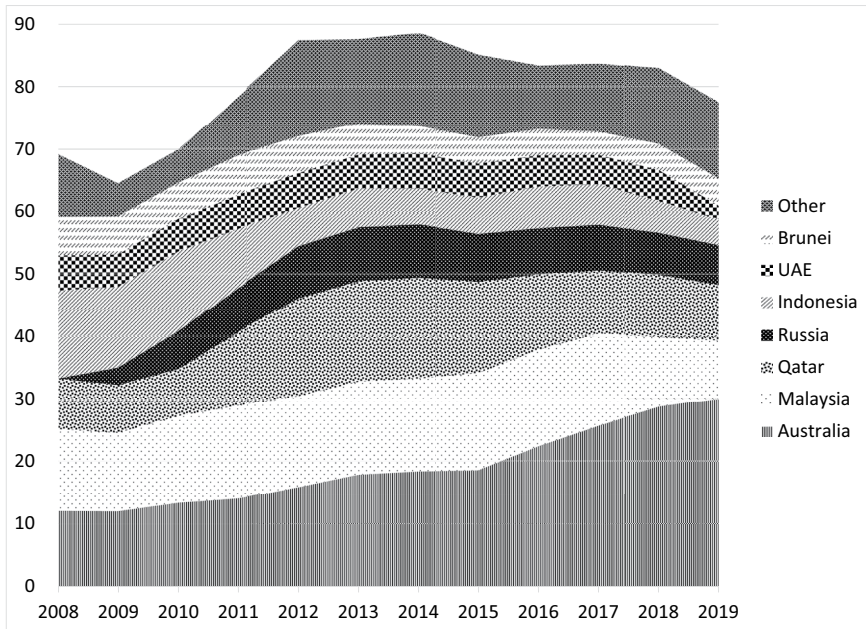


Figure 9.3 Japan's imports of LNG by country, in million tons

Source: Compiled by author from MOF

Foreign Direct Investment

Concerning FDI among Northeast Asian countries, it is hard to find any clear evidence of increasing integration. Table 9.6 presents the inbound FDI into Northeast Asian countries by country of origin.¹⁴ Among China, Japan, and Korea, Japan's share in FDI into Korea and China is significant, while other shares are not so large. As for China, the share of Hong Kong has been dominant. Table 9.7 illustrates the outbound FDI from Northeast Asian countries by country of destination. Among three countries, the share of China in Korea's and Japan's outbound FDI is considerable, but other shares are small or negligible. With respect to China, Hong Kong's share is overwhelming again. As for Japan and Korea, the United States remains an important destination of FDI.¹⁵ The share of the United States in Japan's outbound FDI was 46–48% in the years 1999–2001, but it has decreased thereafter.

The FDI relations of Russia with these three countries have not played an important role. The share of these three countries in inbound FDI into Russia is 1.4% and their share in outbound FDI from Russia is 0.1% at the end of 2018. Cyprus has played a special role in Russia's FDI. Its share in inbound FDI into Russia is 27.4% and that of Russia's outbound FDI is 40.8%. Many Russian companies have registered in Cyprus for economizing on tax payments. We'd better

Table 9.6 Inbound FDI to Northeast Asian countries by country of origin, stock data at the end of 2018, in percent

		<i>Destination</i>			
		<i>China</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Korea</i>	<i>Russia</i>
Origin	China	–	1.2	3.8	0.5
	Japan	5.2	–	25.5	0.4
	Korea	3.6	2.4	–	0.5
	Russia	0.0	0.0	0.0	–
	Hong Kong	51.1	3.3	3.3	0.2
	Cyprus	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.4
	USA	4.0	20.8	15.1	0.8
	Rest of the world	36.1	72.3	52.3	70.2
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Compiled by author from ITC, *IM*, JETRO, and CBR

Table 9.7 Outbound FDI by Northeast Asian countries by country of destination, stock data at the end of 2018, in percent

		<i>Destination</i>								
		<i>China</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Korea</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>Rest of the world</i>	<i>Total</i>
Origin	China	–	0.0	0.3	0.7	55.5	0.0	3.8	39.6	100.0
	Japan	7.5	–	2.4	0.1	2.0	0.0	30.4	57.6	100.0
	Korea	20.2	1.9	–	0.8	4.0	0.0	23.6	49.5	100.0
	Russia	0.1	0.0	0.0	–	0.1	40.8	1.9	57.1	100.0

Source: Compiled by author from ITC, *IM*, JETRO, and CBR

regard investment relations between Russia and Cyprus as domestic transactions rather than foreign investments. In addition to Cyprus, the share of countries which are usually regarded as tax-haven countries is large: the share of Luxemburg in Russia's inbound FDI is 9.9%; the Bahamas—7.9%; Bermuda—6.0%; and Ireland—5.4% at the end of 2018. The high shares of these countries that characterize inbound FDI in Russia have not changed much in the past two decades.

One important reason why we cannot obtain any clear evidence of integration in investment relations among Northeast Asian countries is the existence of tax-haven countries and inconsistency in FDI statistics. FDI statistics do not give us a proper picture of which country invested in a specific country. This is a well-known problem, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) does attempt to discern the ultimate source of FDI.¹⁶ Its results for Russia and China are given in Table 9.8. Although there are significant differences between the data of Tables 9.6 and 9.8, the data reported in Table 9.8 do not demonstrate the critical role of Northeast Asian countries in FDI into

Table 9.8 Ultimate ownership of inward foreign direct investment, stock data at the end of 2017, in percent

<i>FDI in Russia</i>		<i>FDI in China</i>	
USA	8.9	Hong Kong	18.3
Germany	7.5	USA	9.7
UK	7.1	Japan	8.2
Russia	6.5	China	7.8
Netherlands	6.5	Germany	4.9
France	4.5	Singapore	3.8
Switzerland	4.3	UK	3.7
Singapore	2.9	Netherlands	3.0
Ireland	2.7	Korea	2.9
China	1.6	France	2.5
Austria	1.5	Switzerland	2.3
Italy	1.5	Canada	1.6
Sweden	1.5	Taiwan	1.5
Other	14.8	Other	11.9
Unspecified	28.2	Unspecified	18.0

Source: “UNCTAD’s estimate of ultimate sources of foreign direct investment emphasizes Western investment in China and Russia,” *BOFIT Weekly* 35 (2019). Accessed October 1, 2021: https://www.bofit.fi/en/monitoring/weekly/2019/vw201935_2/

Russia and China, except for the slightly higher share of Japan in FDI into China compared with Table 9.6. It is not yet clear why the shares of China, Japan, and Korea are insignificant in FDI into Russia despite the reported large volumes of investment, particularly by China in oil and gas development projects in the Arctic, Siberia, and the Far East.¹⁷ Tokunaga and Suganuma point out that Japan’s investors preferred an indirect FDI scheme into Russia via a third country that reduces business uncertainty and transaction costs in Russia in the face of low market quality and inferior institutional settings.¹⁸

Concluding Remarks

Concerning foreign trade relations, economic integration among Japan, China, and Korea continues to be very strong: it rapidly strengthened in the period down to the mid-2000s. In addition, intra-industry trade developed considerably, implying a deepening of industry integration. This economic integration, however, slightly stagnated after the mid-2000s. In these trends, China has played a decisive role, emerging from one of the developing countries in East Asia in the 1980s to one of the most influential export drivers in the world in the 2010s. It seems that the Chinese economy has already jumped out of the frame of Northeast Asia.

With respect to Russia’s integration with other Northeast Asian countries, we observe a great change from the 1990s to the present. We can acknowledge Russia’s entry to the Northeast Asian market as one of the main providers of oil and gas and as one of the major importers of consumer goods including automobiles and electric appliances. Particularly, it is apparent now that Russia depends heavily

on the Northeast Asian market of oil and gas and that Russia cannot do without exports of oil and gas to Northeast Asia. As for the countries of Northeast Asia, overdependence on crude oil from the Middle East has been a chronic problem. There have always been motivations or intentions on the side of Northeast Asian countries to diversify the sources of oil and gas supply.

In investment relations, we do not have any data that show a deepening of integration of Northeast Asia. There are several reasons for this. First, the United States and the EU still retain dominant positions in the international financial system, including FDI. Second, there is the dominance of such countries as Hong Kong for China, Cyprus for Russia, and other tax-haven countries in FDI transactions. Third, there are deficiencies in FDI statistics which do not accurately indicate providers and recipients of an individual investment.

In the next decade, I expect that economic integration among China, Japan, and Korea will deepen as their respective economies develop further. I cannot foresee any economic obstacles (or political ones) in this direction, although trade frictions do occur from time to time. We have observed that neither political conflicts nor trade disputes prevent overall trade relations among Northeast Asian countries from expanding. On the other hand, there is little prospect that these three countries will form an economic integration system closed to the outside world, since none of these three countries want such a system and they are all oriented for broader economic cooperation beyond the scope of Northeast Asia.

Concerning Russia's joining in this economic integration, I predict further advancement due to the continuing importance of Russia's role as an indispensable oil and gas supplier, as long as these three Northeast Asian countries rely on fossil fuels for their economies. According to the Energy Strategy until 2035 adopted in 2020,¹⁹ Russia aims to increase the share of Asia-Pacific regions in its energy exports from 27% in 2018 to 40% in 2024 and 50% in 2035.²⁰

Sources (Accessed October 1, 2021)

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- FCS (Federal Customs Service, Russia), *Tamozhennaia statistika vneshnei torgovli Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [<http://stat.customs.gov.ru/documents/>].
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- UN (United Nations), *Comtrade (Commodity Trade) Database* [<https://comtrade.un.org/>].

Notes

- 1 In this chapter, I analyze only China, Japan, and Korea as Northeast Asian countries because of the limited capacity of the author. There have been few recent studies focusing on economic relations among these three countries based on statistical data, while there have been more studies dealing with East Asian countries, including ASEAN countries.
- 2 For Japan-Russia economic relations in more detail, See Shinichiro Tabata, "The Booming Russo-Japanese Economic Relations: Causes and Prospects," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53:4 (2012): 422–441; Hirofumi Arai, "Japan-Russia Economic Relations with Emphasis on Energy Cooperation," in *Japan-Russia Relations: Implications for the U.S.-Japan Alliance*, ed. Gilbert Rozman (Washington, DC: Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, 2016), 101–110.
- 3 Trade intensity index is defined as follows:

$$XI_{ij} = (X_{ij}/X_{iw}) / [X_{wj}/(X_{ww}-X_{wi})]$$
 in which,
 XI_{ij} : export intensity index of country i in relation to country j ;
 X_{ij} : export volume from country i to j (w denotes world).
 $MI_{ij} = (M_{ij}/M_{iw}) / [M_{wj}/(M_{ww}-M_{wi})]$
 in which,
 MI_{ij} : import intensity index of country i in relation to country j ;
 M_{ij} : import volume from country i to j .
 Regarding the period after 2005, I used the data reported in ITC, *TM*, which include data of global exports to a specific country and its global imports. Since ITC, *TM* does not provide data before 2000, I used data from UN, which does not include the above-mentioned data. Therefore, I used data reported by a specific country instead: e.g., global exports to China are substituted by import of China from world. Concerning export data from world to world, I calculated sum of reported data of exports by all countries. Since import data of world from world calculated in the same way are significantly smaller than export data from world to world, I used the latter as a substitution for the former.
- 4 For example, not all oil exports through pipelines are registered or recorded in exports of Russian Far East. Most of them are registered in special central customs. On the other hand, exports of oil and gas from Sakhalin are included in Sakhalin's foreign trade.
- 5 GL index is defined as follows:

$$GL_i = 1 - |X_i - M_i| / (X_i + M_i)$$
 in which,
 GL_i : Grubel-Lloyd index of industry i between two countries;
 X_i and M_i : export and import of industry i between two countries.
- 6 When we calculate GL_i between countries A and B, there are some differences between GL_i calculated from trade statistics of countries A and B. This is due to the differences of commodity classifications, accuracy of trade statistics etc. This difference is sometimes significant. In Table 9.4, I use data reported by Japan for the calculation of GL_i between Japan and China and between Japan and Korea. For the calculation of GL_i between Korea and China, I use data reported by Korea. Note that ITC, *TM* and UN database consist of data reported by respective countries.
- 7 In this table, we use data reported by China, Japan, and Korea for calculating GL_i , respectively.
- 8 Yugo Konno, "Roshia no Tai CIS Boeki no Kozo Bunseki [Analysis of Structural Changes in Russia's Trade with CIS Countries]," *Suravu Kenkyu [Slavic Studies]* 55 (2008): 29–59.

- 9 Toshio Watanabe, eds., *Kyokuchi Keizaiken no Jidai: Nurikawaru Ajia Keizai Chizu* [The Era of Sub-regional Economic Zones: Repainting the Asian Economic Map] (Tokyo: Saimaru Shuppankai, 1992), 1.
- 10 Akio Hosono, *Asia-Pacific and Latin America: Dynamics of Regional Integration and International Cooperation* (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Trade Series, 2017), 132. Accessed December 1, 2021: http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/41813/1/S1700439_en.pdf
- 11 Shinichiro Tabata and Xu Liu, "Russia's Energy Policy in the Far East and East Siberia," in *Russia's Energy Policy: National, Interregional and Global Dimensions*, ed. Pami Aalto (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2012), 156–181.
- 12 Calculated from FCS. Data of export quantities are not available.
- 13 Author's estimates based on Russia's LNG production (10.9 million tons reported in *Rossiiskii statisticheskii ezhegodnik* [Russian Statistical Yearbook] (Moscow: Rosstat, 2019) and LNG imports by these countries (MOF; ITC, *TM*). I estimated this for 2016 since LNG production began in the other place of Russia (Yamal Peninsula) from December 2017.
- 14 I use stock data since flow data have fluctuated largely from year to year and do not appropriately reflect the trends of investment relations.
- 15 FDI to Hong Kong by Japan and Korea has not been large, which denies the possibility of large amount of FDI by these two countries through Hong Kong to China.
- 16 Bruno Casella, "Looking through Conduit FDI in Search of Ultimate Investors: A Probabilistic Approach," *Transnational Corporations* 26:1 (2019): 109–146; UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2019* (New York: UN Publications, 2019).
- 17 Similar attempts of estimating "real" volumes of FDI was made by the Eurasian Development Bank. According to its estimate as of the end of 2016, Japan's share in FDI into Russia was increased from 0.4 percent in official statistics to 3.2 percent. The share of these three Northeast Asian countries was estimated to be 5.3 percent instead of the 1.5 percent reported in official statistics. See *EAEU and Eurasia: Monitoring and Analysis of Direct Investments 2017* (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017), 37. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://eabr.org/en/analytics/integration-research/cii-reports/eaau-and-eurasia-monitoring-and-analysis-of-direct-investments-2017/>
- 18 Tokunaga, Masahiro and Keiko Suganuma, "Japan's Foreign Direct Investment in Russia: a Big Return from a Small Opportunity," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 61:3 (2020): 240–265, 249–253.
- 19 *Energeticheskaiia strategiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii na period do 2035 goda* [Energy Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2035], Government Order No. 1523 of June 9, 2020.
- 20 For critical comments on this strategy, see Richard Connolly, Philip Hanson, and Michael Bradshaw, "It's déjà vu all over again: COVID-19, the Global Energy Market, and the Russian Economy," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 61:4–5 (2020): 520–521. As BP's Energy Outlook suggests, the decarbonization process is going at a faster pace than we thought a few years ago (Energy Outlook: Country insight: Russia. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/energy-outlook/country-and-regional-insights/russia-insights.html>). It also depicts a rapid transition scenario in which demand for oil and gas in Russia falls by 39 percent and by 22 percent, respectively, by 2050. But the discussion taking account of this is beyond the scope of this chapter.

10 In Search of Northeast Asia's Least Common Denominator

Regional Issues Through the Lens of Political Culture

David Wolff

Ever since the publication of Lucian Pye's *Asian Power and Politics* in 1985, the idea of regional political culture has gained significant currency. To some extent, our task parallels Pye's, although Northeast Asia is a much more limited area. According to Pye, China, Japan, and Korea all lived through many centuries of Confucian ideals and practice, drinking deep at the same source of received political wisdom.¹ Pye posited that "[i]n practice, Chinese history was one of tensions between family loyalties and official obligations . . . that extended to the boundaries of Chinese civilization."² Clear parallels drawn between vertical family ties and ruler-subject relations implied unbreakable psychological bonds. Asians would only be comfortable in polities exhibiting these traits. The need for father figures doomed democracy in Asia.³

This chapter invites comparisons with a decidedly non-Confucian polity, Russia, as an important member of Northeast Asia, saddling us with complications that go beyond Pye's heavily contested study in historical psychology. But we must accept this challenge, if we hope to find the common ground, however unappealing, on which Northeast Asia can shape a common future. Inspired by political culture arguments, this chapter examines international relations in Northeast Asia in order to discover a least (lowest) common denominator of regional politics. But, before proceeding to a discussion of the shared traits and practices, let us explore the inclusion of Russia in our area of interest.

Russia in Northeast Asia

One direction of inquiry that seems to offer fruitful suggestions is a wide range of research operating under the neologism "neo-traditionalism," especially promising as it has already been applied to two key countries in Northeast Asia, namely China and Russia. On the Russian side, a literature somewhat parallel to Pye's argument appeared in the 1990s under the heading "neo-traditionalism." Theoretical work by University of California, Berkeley, political scientist Kenneth Jowitt and a later article by Harvard historian Terry Martin fleshed out ways in which

socialist informal practices of daily life had reproduced pre-modern traditions of power relations and attendant corruption. As a structural result of a Leninist state displacing the market, neo-traditional similarities between the Soviet case and socialist Asia, including China, Mongolia, and North Korea, could be delineated. Jowitt, an expert on Romania, made use of Weberian categories to argue that Leninist parties amalgamated a variety of organizing principles, both modern and pre-modern, to produce a synthesis that could be quite effective as long as there were specific challenges for which the party could mobilize society. But without such goals, the party cadres would no longer see the difference between organizational targets and personal advancement, leading to a corruption of party discipline, the beginning of the end for the Leninist state.

Thus, for Jowitt, the core of the party's claim to power was its claim to embody revolutionary virtue, a kind of "impersonal charisma." It is this characteristic that puts the Bolshevik party in parallel with Asian polities driven by Confucian concepts of virtue. But there was also divergence, as Bolshevik charisma was ostensibly channeled into a battle of the classes, while Confucian charisma upheld the traditional order. At this level of comparison, both the Chinese and Soviet parties would fit Jowitt's statement that:⁴

The Leninist party and regime is a novel package of charismatic, traditional and modern elements, a recasting of the definition and relation of these three elements in such a way that the Party *combines affective and impersonal elements and appeals effectively if not logically to some persons and groups in a turbulent society.*

(italics in original)

According to Jowitt, this potent and original political mix suffered irremediable damage in the USSR after 1956, with the introduction by N. S. Khrushchev of a (mutual) "peaceful coexistence" doctrine, with loss of goal weakening the routinization of charisma and the USSR descending into ideological contradiction and stagnation. In the end, only Russian nationalism remained and continues into the post-Soviet period. In recent years, the Chinese party, both by the inner logic of one-party illegitimacy and by the outer logic of the Cold War which never ended in Northeast Asia, has been constrained to abandon claims of social justice to focus on nationalist justifications for its ever stricter rule over Chinese society.

Using the same label, "neo-traditionalism," but in a rather different sense, Terry Martin examined the creation of national identities and the shift from self-conscious constructivism (*korenizatsiia*) in the 1920s to primordialism (*narodnost'*) later in the 1930s. But Martin's emphasis is more on the construction of new traditions, rather than on a new form of polity altogether. Nor does Martin put emphasis on the earlier periods.⁵ Nonetheless, his approach is important for us to keep in mind, for it leaves open the door to the creation of a shared political identity in Northeast Asia, one that could build on available building blocks and produce a sense of shared destiny in less than a generation.⁶

There has certainly been a greater sense of parallel developments between Russia and China in the years since Putin's arrival in power brought new vertical structures through which the Kremlin controls Russia. Already in the first months of his tenure, Putin created seven federal super-districts with strict oversight over the many territorial units that had claimed various degrees of sovereignty under the looser, weaker regime of Boris Yeltsin. Putin saw himself as continuing the centralizing legacy of Lenin, Stalin, and Stolypin, in contrast to Khrushchev and Gorbachev. Richard Pipes and George Vernadsky, American historians with roots in Eastern Europe and Russia, have traced these centralizing tendencies even further back.⁷

In this way, we integrate Russia into the analysis of Northeast Asia. Andrew Walder's study of Chinese industrial organization applied Jowitt's conceptualization to Northeast Asia to find that informal practices involving "positive incentives" and "vertical loyalties" were the very means by which Leninist parties cultivated the industrial heartland of socialist societies. Coexistence of various elements that originated in different eras was not exactly what Jowitt had been emphasizing, but it was also most certainly "neo-traditionalism." Although not all countries will exhibit all the traits at any given time, this chapter will argue for the existence of a distinctive, interactive Northeast Asian repertoire.

Kingdoms, Empires, and "Families"

Dynasties

Long before Northeast Asian countries declared themselves to be democracies, they were kingdoms and empires. This legacy promotes strongly centralized regimes, which makes cooperation and compromise more difficult between and among entities committed to maintaining their own prerogatives, not only in the short term but for the next generation as well. Kim Jong-un, Abe Shinzo, and Xi Jinping all are scions of dominant political families in North Korea, Japan, and China, countries with very bad blood between them in the first half of the twentieth century. Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's maternal grandfather, former Japanese Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, helped design the economic and bureaucratic institutions based on which Imperial Japan sought to dominate Northeast Asia during the 1930s and early 1940s. During five years in Manchuria, Kishi conducted a forced industrialization, largely inspired by Stalin's First Five Year Plan and largely manned by Chinese forced labor working under hard conditions. With war underway with China from 1937, there could be no qualms about exploitation, which became ever worse as the Sino-Japanese war dragged on. Kishi's successes on the continent led to his appointment as Munitions Minister. In this position, drawing on his Manchukuo experience, Kishi drafted hundreds of thousands of Korean and Chinese workers into Japanese factories under brutal wartime conditions and discipline. Many of them died. For his efforts in the service of the Japanese Empire, but at the mortal expense of colonial slave labor, Kishi would be designated a war criminal, though neither

tried nor convicted by the American occupiers, and spent three years in prison. But when he re-emerged, he went right back up to the top strata, becoming Prime Minister in 1957.

Kim's grandfather, Kim Il Sung, and Xi's father, Xi Zhongxun, were engaged in a battle to the death with Japanese imperialism. Admittedly, Xi, headquartered in Northwest China for the whole period of the Sino-Japanese war, would not have had too many direct encounters, but many friends died at Japanese hands during a war that claimed 20–30 million Chinese lives. Are the younger generation of leaders full recipients of these bad memories? The vicious anti-Japanese campaign of 2012, just as Xi Jinping was coming to power as supreme leader, suggests that the role of nationalism in leadership selection may be significant. Abe was also known for his nationalist views. Whether they wanted this to be part of their leadership legacy or not, both leaders found themselves at nationalistic loggerheads shortly after coming to power. Kim Il Sung is another story. He fought against Japan from the 1920s, finally retreating into the USSR in 1940, only to return to be groomed for Great Leader of the Korean People, anointed by Stalin himself, the Great Leader of All Peoples. Kim Il Sung's grandson and Xi Zhongxun's son have memories of their generation's place in the long-term regional struggle and their vision of Japan was not lightened by Abe Shinzo's regular comments associating himself with Kishi and Kishi's political views.⁸ Kishi was closely associated with many of the former Japanese leaders enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine about which China and Korea regularly protest.

Interestingly, in South Korea, the descendants of the political-business dynasties have been markedly less nationalistic than their populist opponents. President Park Geun-hye, the country's first female president and daughter of the former dictator General Park Chung-hee, was removed from office in 2017 and recently sentenced to twenty years in jail for soliciting and receiving bribes from some of Korea's largest companies. On the heels of her sentencing, the heir apparent to the Samsung *chaebol* (Korean-style conglomerate), J. Y. Lee was also sentenced to 2.5 years in jail for providing the bribes. Strikingly, the *quid pro quo* for the bribes was President Park's concurrence in a merger that helped Lee solidify control of his father's empire after the elder Lee was sidelined by a heart attack in 2014. The elder Lee had also been convicted twice of bribery but had managed to avoid jail time.⁹ Here we see corruption and dynasty mix both on the giving and the receiving sides.¹⁰

On the surface, President Putin of Russia appears to be a complete exception to the Northeast Asian trend, but his method of rule is also "family-oriented," but not in a dynastic way as among blood relations. Instead, Putin's supporters and top officials function as a "family" in the sense used by criminal organizations, such as the mafia. In exchange for absolute loyalty and occasional tribute, they are blessed by the top leader with incredible economic opportunities. The only predictor of extreme wealth in Russia (the 110 billionaires who hold 35% of national wealth) is whether one was acquainted with Putin before he arrived in Moscow. This category covers many eras in Putin's life from childhood judo partners (ca. 1970s) to KGB and Stasi colleagues (ca. 1980s) to business partners

and neighbors from his Petersburg days (ca. 1990s) establishing new patterns of post-Soviet leadership.¹¹

And Putin himself has fallen into place alongside the Chinese nationalists as increasing homage to Soviet bravery in World War II and Stalin, as the leader in that conflagration, is used to prop up the Kremlin's legitimacy. With a brother who died during the siege of Leningrad, Putin has every right to take up this issue as a family matter.¹² In 2015, Xi and Putin stood side by side on the podium during the ceremonies in Red Square in honor of the 70th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany. In recent years, Putin has also taken on a more strident air in rejecting Japanese demands for the Northern Territories, islands near Hokkaido occupied by Stalin's troops at the end of World War II.¹³

Thus, "ruling houses" in all four countries are caught up in a multi-generational confrontation. Fortunately, the next generation of leaders will have no direct memories of ancestors who hated, slaughtered, and debased each other in the first half of the twentieth century. This gives cause to hope for a break in a long century of bad relations, but only if the intercultural ground can be cleared in which such a hope can grow. This remains a task to be done on the way to a breakthrough in Northeast Asian regional relations. One of the most important "cultural traits" that needs to be addressed and redressed is corruption.

Corruption

Although this topic is best addressed as an Asian-Pacific issue since the coming to power in the United States of Trump, Inc., Northeast Asia is filled with examples of leading families making use of their political leverage to garner fortunes for their families. This is just as true in Russia, as in other Northeast Asian countries, except that in Russia there is only one leading "family," namely "friends of Vladimir Putin." But China is even more salient in this respect. Cadres raised on Leninism clearly recognize that Party administrators in key positions can tilt the board in favor of particular companies. As the Party retains complete control over the commanding heights of finance and infrastructure, there is no sector and no region in which top Party leaders in Beijing will not have the final say on any major project. To guarantee this, the Central Party apparatus kept full control of personnel appointments at state enterprises even as extensive restructuring made many companies look like they enjoyed Western-style corporate governance, so they could be listed on international stock exchanges. Special committees established in Beijing after 1997 made sure that executives in ostensibly private companies would follow Party instructions, instead of market mechanisms, as needed.¹⁴ Those who obeyed would receive massive investment credit, access to real estate and regulatory permissions on an advantageous basis. In short, the conditions for corruption that arise from a poorly defined separation of private wealth and state-controlled perquisites persisted from one anti-corruption campaign to the next.

Insider information makes timely investments easy with winnings going to family members, both immediate and distant, who can reciprocate the favor at

some later date or in some indirect manner. In 2012, the *New York Times* exposed the family wealth of outgoing Premier Wen Jiabao, winning the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting but losing the opportunity to do business in China. This took the form of denials for visas to *New York Times* reporters hoping to work in Beijing and the blocking of the *NYT* website within China. In the same year, *Bloomberg* reporters gathered and published similar materials on the family of Xi Jinping, already anointed as the future top leader of China, but not yet in the saddle. The company's website became inaccessible within the great Firewall by which China "protects" its netizens from damaging information and *Bloomberg* reporters also lost access to China and the Chinese. In 2014, the *Times* reported that corruption was a pattern rather than an exception.¹⁵

At least four families among the nine-man Politburo Standing Committee that ruled the country from 2007 to 2012 each owned or controlled documented assets in excess of USD 150 million, including relatives of Mr. Xi, former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, Mr. Zhou, and Jia Qinglin, the former fourth-ranked party member. Of course, at lower levels of the Party, deeds of corruption are likely to be on a different scale altogether, but the leaders set the tone.

Although the Chinese Communist Party, Wen and Xi all denied the Western media's well-documented allegations, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection's actions in 2014 of setting up a Central Anti-Corruption Coordination Group to broaden and strengthen the battle with corruption suggested that the Western media was at least right in its allegation that corruption was a huge, even ubiquitous, problem throughout China and Greater China. The year 2014 also saw the launch of "Sky Net," a campaign aimed at Chinese who had managed to flee abroad with their corrupt gains.¹⁶

The skills of seamless corruption and family favoritism spill smoothly across cultures. The PRC's approval of Ivanka Trump's increased presence in the Chinese market came just before Xi Jinping sat down for dinner with Ivanka at her father's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. As *The Shanghaiist*, an irreverent Shanghai blog, puts it:¹⁷

During her father's presidency, Ivanka has seen a number of her Chinese trademark applications granted, sometimes with peculiar timing. On the same day that she sat down to enjoy a meal in Mar-a-Lago alongside Xi, her company was granted provisional approval for three new trademarks in China. Only a few days before her father made the peculiar decision to vow to save Chinese phone-maker ZTE from ruin, her brand was granted approval for five more trademarks.

As discussed earlier, under "Dynasties," Korea has also seen several recent corruption scandals at the top with President Park, the daughter of a former President, removed from office after being bribed by the heir to the Samsung corporation.¹⁸ Two of the country's former presidents, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, have served terms for corruption in the 1990s before eventually receiving a presidential pardon.

Although on a much smaller scale, Japanese PM Abe Shinzo and his wife have also recently been under intense scrutiny for favors to friends in the education business. Less controversial are Abe's visits to President Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. In principle, all expenses are covered by the host country, so golf fees, expensive state dinners, and USD 6,000 for flowers calculated to please the Japanese delegation were all billed to the US Government, at a profit for President Trump's enterprise. Abe also rented a small Trump-owned house for his retinue's office needs for USD 1,584/night, thereby generating more revenue for Mar-a-Lago. Abe was widely praised for his use of flattery to avoid attacks on Japan that befell almost all other US allies and possibly delivering these small profits to Trump saved Japan millions, if not billions.¹⁹ Nonetheless, it is a form of corrupt behavior, delivering profits from the government accounts to private interests, in this case those of the US president. Another transnational corruption case involves the Japanese State Minister in charge of casino affairs Tsukasa Akimoto who allegedly received cash payments from a Chinese company hoping to open a casino in Hokkaido.²⁰

Similarly, control of the economic rules of the game makes it possible for top leadership to destroy competitor families by declaring them "corrupt." In this vein, Xi Jinping's new anti-corruption organs have been widely commented on as a tool for eliminating all rivals and disloyal elements.²¹ The BBC has written that in Xi's first five years in power over 1.3 million party members lost their party cards for corruption (less than 2%), including 170 minister and deputy minister level leaders. These top cadres included Politburo members, who had entrenched themselves in "power ministries" and could only be removed by the most drastic methods.

Zhou Yongkang, now serving a life sentence for a raft of corruption charges, had amassed family worth valued at USD 14 billion. His steady rise to the top and flaming crash can be inferred from the following BBC timeline.²²

- 1998:** Becomes party secretary of China National Petroleum Corporation
- 1999:** Appointed party secretary of Sichuan
- 2002:** Appointed member of the Politburo at the 16th Party Congress; becomes minister of public security later that year
- 2007:** Further promoted to member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo—China's highest party organ
- 2012:** His lieutenants begin to get sacked and investigated; he appears with Bo Xilai at Chinese National People's Congress session
- December 2013:** His son Zhou Bin is arrested on corruption charges
- December 2014:** Arrested, expelled from party
- June 2015:** Sentenced to life in prison

The appearance with Bo Xilai, widely seen as a rival to Xi Jinping until his utter disgrace in 2012 and sentenced to life imprisonment in 2013 for charges similar to Zhou's, may well have condemned them both. Concerns regarding political collusion may have been the ultimate cause, but corruption was always the

main charge, although Bo's family wealth seems to have been closer to the USD 150 million range rather than the mammoth-sized Zhou holdings. Xi's ardor in targeting corruption may be admirable, but the elimination of potential political rivals and opponents appears to be a useful side effect. It is also concerning, in general, that so many cases of corruption can be found, suggesting a pattern that may be hard to root out. Since crossing borders and capital flight can make it hard to establish corruption, it is also likely that this Chinese practice has invaded other countries as well.

Putin's "Friendship"

In Karen Dawisha's carefully researched *Putin's Kleptocracy*, one Russian social scientist states that: "Instead of a state implementing the course of a developing country, we have a huge and uncontrolled private structure which is successfully diverting profits for its own use."²³ This is almost the definition of corruption, but it is also a description of post-Soviet privatization, where state property was broken up and sold to those with the best access. Those providing access also reaped huge profits. All charges against Putin having been dropped once he became president suggested the future impunity and immunity of all top politicians and civil servants, who for many years served on the boards of companies, they were empowered to regulate. Meanwhile, Putin's old friends, the truly loyal ones, received immense state contracts or appointments to lucrative positions on companies controlled by the government. Of the 26 top Russian billionaires on Forbes list of the world's wealthiest in 2005, twenty-five were still there in 2010, a remarkable stability based on their absolute and unflinching loyalty.²⁴ Children of the Kremlin elite have also done well, matching their Asian counterparts.²⁵

Let's look at one example. Arkadii and Boris Rotenberg are probably Putin's oldest friends, going back to teenage years on the streets of Leningrad, when they were also judo sparring partners. The brothers have done well since Putin came to power with a joint net worth of USD 3.9 billion according to Forbes 2019. They have been active in construction, receiving billions of dollars in non-competitive contracts for the Sochi Olympics. Their net worth doubled in the years just prior to the Olympics. As Arkadii told the *Financial Times* in 2012:

Friendship never hurt anyone. But I have a great respect for this person and I consider that this is a person sent to our country from God . . . He is a great person and I really do value these relations more than anything else. For me, friendship with this person is most of all a responsibility.

It is very interesting to read how Arkadii clearly references Putin without naming him. This is real clan-style respect. The U.S. Treasury expressed something similar when it sanctioned both Rotenbergs for "acting for or on behalf of or materially assisting, sponsoring or providing financial, material or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of a senior official of the Government of the Russian Federation."²⁶

If we view this through the lens of “neo-traditionalism,” Putin’s Russia shows many of the characteristics of the “patrimonial” state defined by Richard Pipes in his book *Russia Under the Old Regime*. Everything belongs to the “Tsar” as his “patrimony” and he distributes as he sees fit. No Russian can become or stay a billionaire without paying his dues and homage to the Kremlin. Those who have broken with the Kremlin, whether Berezovsky or Khodorkovsky or Browder have lost much of their wealth and the opportunity to make any further profit on Russian territory. Anyone who tries to escape the unspoken contract faces either punitive calculations by the tax authorities or the long arm of the FSB/SVR (KGB) and GRU. Corruption is thoroughly institutionalized and the Russian government reserves its right to expose the corrupt when it wishes to or turn a blind eye.

The importance of corruption in Russian society decides the distribution of Russia’s many billions from resource extraction. It is built into governmental activity, so critics of the government find their natural role as exposers of corruption. Boris Nemtsov, long seen as the most important challenger to Putin until his assassination in 2015, exposed numerous cases of government corruption, including the Rotenberg no-bid contracts in Sochi. Similarly, Aleksei Navalny became famous as an anti-corruption blogger, producing several YouTube exposes that have drawn tens of millions of views. By exposing Dmitrii Medvedev’s billionaire lifestyle, he undercuts the relatively positive image this Putin confidant had held in the media. Further films by Navalny’s “Anti-Corruption Foundation” targeted the families of Putin top officials, Prosecutor-General Iurii Chaika and Putin spokesman Dmitrii Peskov. All had sons who had become rich. Of course, the state is not amused that Navalny has wielded this weapon against them, striking back with three questionable convictions against Navalny for financial wrongdoing and slander.

As an anti-corruption warrior, Navalny is following in the footsteps of Boris Nemtsov, who as early as 2000 declared: “There is a struggle going on over the strategy for Russia. Either it will be crony capitalism with tycoons, corruption, underground deals and social polarization, or it will be a Western-style economy.”²⁷ The choice was quickly made with Putin sidelining the so-called oligarchs and taking control of both the media and petroleum sectors. Once a Deputy Prime Minister and a bright hope for democratic forces, Nemtsov would spend his remaining years chronicling corruption. His reports documented the non-competitive awards on Sochi Olympic construction in which the Rotenberg brothers received contracts totaling more than the total cost of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. He also discovered that the Russian president and prime minister had 26 official residences. As former Minister of Energy in the Yeltsin government, Nemtsov was also able to estimate that Gazprom was being treated as a cash cow for rewarding friends of the Kremlin. Navalny has also targeted the energy sector, the main source of Russia’s wealth, alleging that the pipeline built to bring oil from Eastern Siberia to China (ESPO) cost four billion dollars more than necessary and the funds have simply disappeared (into deep pockets).²⁸ In 2015, Nemtsov was shot dead by a lone gunman on a bridge across the

River Moscow within sight of the Kremlin. In succession, Navalny emerged as the head of the opposition and also as the top anti-corruption blogger, only to face attempted poisoning and a prison term, being served even as I write. Clearly, corruption and politics are deeply intertwined in Russia.

Hostage Taking

A final element in the triad of Northeast Asian political culture behaviors is hostage taking. Again and again, the political news in Northeast Asia has been dominated by hostage taking, a practice with deep roots in regional politics. China, with its ancient history, has the earliest documented cases with different Chinese names for “internal” and “external” hostages. According to one scholarly study, hostage taking was mainly associated with the barbarians of the Northern frontier, the Xiongnu, the Mongolian Yuan, and the Manchurian Qing. Genghis Khan stated clearly that “all surrendering states should send hostages.” The Korean dynasty of Chosoen saw its heir apparently held hostage for seven years after fighting the Qing in 1636 and Wu Sangui, the last loyalist general of the Ming, suffered the death of his hostage son, when he revolted against the Qing.²⁹

Interestingly, Russia shares China’s significant exposure to hostage taking at the hands of the Mongolian invaders. In the Russian case, invasion came a little later with the arrival of the Kipchak Khanate, also known as the Golden Horde, capturing and destroying every city in Russia, except Novgorod, which managed to surrender first.³⁰ After the conquest of the Russian lands, Genghis Khan’s grandson, Batu Khan, founded the Khanate’s capital on the banks of the Volga at the city of Sarai (palace) from whence the Mongols gathered tribute from all of the Russian lands for nearly two centuries. As surety for the tribute and good behavior from Russian princes, the sons of many ruling houses, including the Moscow Grand Princedom, were kept at Sarai, where they learned the political mores of the Mongols, including hostage taking.³¹ Every student of Japanese history knows, as mentioned earlier, about the “rotation” system (*sankin kotai*) by which the Tokugawa Shogunate kept its various vassals under control by holding family members (and an expensive capital residence) hostage at Edo, the capital, at all times. This practice ended with the Meiji Restoration in 1867.

In a twist on this, Stalin would hold top-ranking members of each foreign Communist party captive in Moscow, as potential replacements for leaders who might disobey. For example, after falling out with Japanese Communist Party stalwarts Tokuda and Nosaka, JCP Politburo member Hakamada Satomi was kept in the Soviet Union and sent south to rest up. Later, he would help take the JCP to the Chinese side of the Sino-Soviet split. The hostage not only had been released but also took his vengeance on his captors.

Similarly, Mao’s competitor, Wang Ming, lived long years in Moscow providing analysis of Chinese conditions, waiting for his chance to lead. Finally sent to China in 1937 to encourage the United Front, he quickly fell on hard times. It was difficult to tell if he was more hostage in Russia or in China. After 19 years, he eventually returned to Moscow, where the Sino-Soviet split gave him a final

opportunity to pour vitriol on Mao. His children remained in Moscow, like hundreds of children of revolutionaries from all over the world, who deposited their children at the Ivanovo Interdom, while they fought for a better world. This was a valuable service and support provided by the Comintern for its top fighters, but it could also be seen as a system for collecting youthful hostages. Jiang Jingguo, the son of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), clearly states in his memoirs that he considered himself a hostage during his twelve years in the USSR.³²

Combinations

Although the elements of Northeast Asian politics have been presented one-by-one above, sometimes they interact in meaningful ways. The repertoire of questionable practices not only has been illustrated as elements in national policy but also serve as a transnational agenda. Cross-border flows, such as pollution, the drug trade, human-trafficking, and pandemic, have been widely documented as the dark side of globalization. Later, I present an additional candidate for this list, one compounded from dynasty-building, corruption, and hostage taking.

Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo is the product of Japan's premier political dynasty, having learned respect for his grandfather's successes as a child, while imbibing directly from a retired Kishi the need to "complete the postwar" by reforming the American-inspired constitution. While his father Abe Shintaro was Foreign Minister, Shinzo had opportunity to study both the horror of the North Korean abductions carried out along the Japan (East) Sea coast in the late 1970s and early 1980s and to understand its value as a political issue, one with strong visceral effect. As an official in Prime Minister Koizumi's policy team, Abe played a key role in making the hostage issue central to the first and second Japan-North Korea summits in 2002 and 2004, turning attempts at resolution into long-term blocks in the bilateral relationship and in regional institution building.

That China, Russia, and South Korea will not go along with Japanese emphasis on this issue is understandable from a geopolitical point of view but infuriating for Japanese citizens. That an attempt to regulate this issue by admitting, apologizing, and returning (some) kidnapes led to worse relations with Japan is perplexing and irritating for North Korean leaders. They blame Abe. Corruption is not closely linked here, but Abe's nationalistic urge to use the abductee issue to stir up support for a stronger defense posture (after all, Japan was "invaded" by North Korean spyboats) does go hand in hand with alleged support by Abe and his wife for private schools, such as Moritomo in Toyonaka, Osaka, with patriotic pedagogical agendas. Here we see dynasty, abductees, and corruption in close harmony in one political agenda that of the ruling party and former Prime Minister of Japan.

Another example of these elements fitting together can be drawn from recent Chinese policies. Building on the purges of the 1990s, when the main concern was the strengthening of party discipline to avoid a meltdown similar to the fate of the Soviet Union, Xi Jinping preached anti-corruption from the moment of his ascension in 2012. A new phase began in 2014 with a new campaign and new

anti-corruption organs gradually evolving into the National Supervisory Commission empowered to investigate both inside and outside the Chinese Communist Party, the 90 million people who infiltrate every other organization in China. As in the 1990s, over a million members were purged from posts and the party itself, around 1%. Corruption is widely believed to be endemic, so the Commission has declared that its mission will not end soon. Among the high-ranking cadres brought low were those who headed such powerful and profitable agencies as the Security Ministry and the Oil Ministry. Many top generals have also been axed. If the Xi Jinping loyalists running the hunt for corruption had wanted to prevent the development of any alternative centers of power around existing power agencies, they could not have done better. Unlike Russia, where the hunt for corruption has become an opposition activity, in China, those in power have occupied this niche as well. The timing of China's most recent purges makes clear that it was about solidifying Xi Jinping's control after he succeeded to the top position, linking the concepts of dynasty and corruption.

Going further since 2014, the National Supervisory Commission has also taken charge of operation "Fox Hunt," the pursuit of corrupt Chinese beyond Chinese borders. Since 2017, this operation has taken on a new name, "Sky Net," and has continued the task of identifying corrupt officials and businessmen who placed profits from China abroad and are now living off them outside of China. Sky Net aims to repatriate both the men (and women) and their assets—that they belong to China is an assumption of the whole enterprise, although many of them have foreign passports as well. One China expert notes the linked roles of domestic and foreign corruption in building political reputation: "Xi still has to do something that captures the imagination, so he's gone from hunting tigers to hunting foxes." Both China and Russia have made use of the Interpol Red Notice system to catch their own citizens abroad as well.³³

Since such citizens often have relatives still in China, cross-border corruption can be tamed with hostages. One recent case involved fugitive Liu Changming, a former executive of a state-owned bank, accused of spiriting USD 1.4 billion abroad. When his estranged wife and children visited China to see an ailing grandfather, they found they could no longer leave the country, despite their American passports. The terms "hostage taking" and "human collateral" have been applied to this action, but American diplomatic and congressional efforts have so far proved ineffective in obtaining departure permission for this family.³⁴ A list compiled by Skynet listed 1,032 fugitives—including 134 former officials.³⁵ The Commission has brought back several hundred million dollars so far. This is a drop in the bucket, less than 1% of the estimated trillion dollars in value that is said to have escaped China in the last decade. But it is more than enough for the Commission to claim that it supports itself and should continue.³⁶

Another twist on Chinese hostage taking is the Huawei case. On 1 December 2018, Meng Wanzhou, a top executive of Chinese telecom giant Huawei and the daughter of the CEO, was detained in Vancouver Airport while in transit, awaiting trial for extradition to the United States. Shortly thereafter, China detained two former Canadian diplomats working in China under the National

Security Act of 2015. They are accused of spying. No detailed charges or evidence have been provided, and Chinese government officials have made no effort to deny the linkage between the cases. Here a business dynasty is being supported by hostage taking.³⁷

Not surprisingly, almost all the corruptions are family-related. In the prominent case of former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, the *New York Times* article about him was really more an expose of his business-savvy, gem-loving wife Zhang Beili. She, it appears, was stationed strategically at the intersection of the gem-business and the gem-ministry and managed to spin off several hundred-million-dollar businesses to her closest relatives, also Wen Jiabao's close relatives.³⁸ All over China, all over Northeast Asia, in families great and small, the fine line between taking care of one's family and corruptly favoring one's family is blurred. Hostage taking and dynasty building are also family-related activities. In short, we come back to an emphasis on the family in Northeast Asia.

Concluding Remarks

Maybe we need to reconsider Pye after all, not only to understand political function but also to evaluate the depths of regional dysfunction? Unfortunately, common traits do not necessarily lead to common ground, and the analysis offers little reason for optimism to those who hope for future compatibility among erstwhile enemies. However, we could think of the shared denominators among China, Korea, Japan, and Russia beyond the Confucian line. It allows us to tell more about Northeast Asian community even now with a not-so-constructive orientation. As long as democracy works and develops, even with significant flaws, in some "part" of Northeast Asia, we need not lapse into prone pessimism.

The lens of political culture discovers new points of comparison among Northeast Asian countries. It suggests that Russia has more intimate affinities with China, Japan, and Korea in some political cultural dimensions. Near-future community making in Northeast Asia is still difficult to imagine, because of wide divergences in regime types and styles, but the commonalities detailed earlier leave room to hope for a communal future. Of course, one should be careful what one hopes for.

Notes

- 1 This chapter does not claim that Confucianism lies at the root of the practices delineated below as common in Northeast Asia. The inclusion of Russia in our *tour d'horizon* should make that abundantly clear. However, the analysis of shared political traits on a regional level has parallels to the Confucianism discourse. There is a ponderous literature, but one could begin from Daniel K. Gardner, *Confucianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Doh Chull Shin, *Confucianism and Democratization in East Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Benjamin A. Elman, John B. Duncan and Herman Ooms, eds., *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam* (Los Angeles: University of California, 2002). An

- earlier work that treated only China, Japan and Korea is Gilbert Rozman, ed., *The East Asian Region: Confucian Heritage and Its Modern Adaptation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).
- 2 Lucian W. Pye (with Mary W. Pye), *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 57.
 - 3 Pye draws heavily on earlier work by one of his mentors in graduate school at Yale, Harold Lasswell, who is generally credited with first applying Freudian psychology to politics, most notably in his pioneering *Psychopathology and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930). Pye's work has had significant impact on U.S. China policy, since two of his students, Susan Shirk and Richard Solomon went to Washington and served as Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State for East Asia in different administrations. Solomon, who wrote his own volume on Chinese political culture, his dissertation monograph based on interviews with Chinese refugees, had greatest impact with his Rand study of Chinese negotiating behavior, studied by generations of US officials. Richard Solomon, *Chinese Political Negotiating Behavior, 1967–1984* (Los Angeles: Rand Corporation, 1985). Originally published in a classified edition, since the materials used for the research were actual negotiating records from Sino-US diplomacy, the study was declassified in 1994, minus about 10% of the material deemed most sensitive.
 - 4 Ken Jowitt, *The Leninist Response to National Dependency* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1978), 50.
 - 5 This contrasts with influential works a generation earlier by historians Richard Pipes at Harvard and George Vernadsky at Yale, in which emphasis was placed on continuities with the Imperial and Mongolian periods.
 - 6 Terry Martin, "Modernization or Neo-traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism," in *Stalinism: New Directions*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 348–367.
 - 7 Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974); George Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953).
 - 8 Fujita Tetsuya, "Memory of Kishi Seen behind Abe's Political Agenda and Calendar," *Nikkei Asia*, July 24, 2015. Accessed October 29, 2021: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Memory-of-Kishi-seen-behind-Abe-s-political-agenda-and-calendar>
 - 9 Choe Sang-Hun, "Questions Hover Over Samsung as Chief Returns to Prison for Bribery," *New York Times*, January 18, 2021. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/18/business/south-korea-samsung-prison-lee.html>
 - 10 For more on the interaction of different cultural practices, see the final section of this article "Combinations."
 - 11 Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 36–103.
 - 12 Vladimir Putin, *First Person* (New York: BBS Public Affairs, 2000), 5.
 - 13 On the collapse of Russo-Japanese negotiations over the disputed islands, see Iwashita Akihiro, "Abe's Foreign Policy Fiasco on the Northern Territories Issue: Breaking with the Past and the National Movement," *Eurasian Border Review* 10:1 (2019): 128–129.
 - 14 Richard McGregor, *The Party* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 46–50.
 - 15 Michael Forsythe, "As China's Leader Fights Graft, His Relatives Shed Assets," *New York Times*, June 17, 2014. Accessed January 14, 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/18/world/asia/chinas-president-xi-jinping-investments.html>
 - 16 Zhang Zhihao, "No Letup in Fight against Corruption," *China Daily*, November 6, 2017, 3. Accessed December 1, 2021: <http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201711/06/WS5a0d2347a31061a738409191.html>

- 17 Sian Jessica Lewis, "It's Magic! Ivanka Trump's Made-in-China Products Somehow Exempt from Daddy's Tariffs: What a Coincydink!" July 11, 2018. Accessed July 18, 2018: <https://shanghai.ist/2018/07/10/its-magic-ivanka-trumps-made-in-china-products-somehow-exempt-from-daddys-tariffs/>
- 18 Choe Sang-Hun, "Samsung Chief Will Return to Prison for Bribery," *New York Times*, January 18, 2021. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://bdnews24.com/business/2021/01/18/samsung-chief-will-return-to-prison-for-bribery>
- 19 Of course, he was also criticized for his five visits to Trump properties. Professor Yujin Yaguchi of Tokyo University stated: "From the perspective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Abe Government, it makes sense to please Trump as much as possible . . . but as a citizen, I don't understand why we have to please the United States Government so much." Here Yaguchi is conflating Trump, who is receiving the corrupt funds, and the US Government which is paying. "For Trump's Japan Trip, Abe Piles on the Flattery. But to what End?" *New York Times*, May 24, 2019. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/24/us/politics/trump-japan-abe-flattery.html>
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- 21 "Top Chinese Officials 'Plotted to Overthrow Xi Jinping,'" *BBC*, October 20, 2017. Accessed September 17, 2018: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-41691917>; "Charting China's 'Great Purge' under Xi," *BBC*, October 23, 2017. Accessed September 17, 2018: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-41670162>
- 22 Yuwen Wu, "Profile: China's Fallen Security Chief Zhou Yongkang," *BBC*, October 12, 2015. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-26349305>; "China Corruption: Life Term for Ex-security Chief Zhou," *BBC*, June 11, 2015. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-33095453>
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- 24 Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 293–294, 333 for Putin escape from prosecution and Duma/Senator/Consul immunities; 336 Table 5 for ministers and deputy ministers sitting on corporate boards; 338–339 for list of Putin friends from various eras and activities, together with an estimate of their net worth or valuable government sinecures. 37 for Forbes billionaires.
- 25 Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 337fn.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 92–93
- 27 *Ibid.*, 265.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 57. The costs may yet be passed on to China. It is no wonder that China has been advisably cautious about investments in Russia, despite Russian requests.
- 29 Yang Lien-sheng, "Hostages in Chinese History," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 15:3/4 (1952): 507–521.
- 30 The mythical city of Kitezh was also saved by being submerged in the lake on whose shores it was built.
- 31 Donald Ostrowski, "The Mongol Origins of Muscovite Political Institutions," *Slavic Review* 49:4 (1990): 525.
- 32 Elizabeth McGuire, *Red at Heart: How Chinese Communist Fell in Love with the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) for a history of Interdom and the Jiang Jingguo statement. Jiang Jingguo did not attend Interdom.

- 33 On tigers and foxes, Steve Tsang, cited in Stephanie Saul and Dan Levin, “Charged with Graft in China, Some Fugitives Are Finding Luxury in US,” *New York Times*, May 15, 2015. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/16/world/asia/china-hunts-fugitives-accused-of-corruption-many-in-us.html>. On the Red Notice system, see William Browder, *Red Notice* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), in which the author’s exposure of corruption at Gazprom, ostensibly making him Putin’s No. 1 enemy, serves as another salient example of the importance of anti-corruption campaigns for the opposition in Russia, as compared to its key propaganda and political role for the state in China.
- 34 Edward Wong and Michael Forsythe, “China’s Tactic to Catch a Fugitive Official: Hold His Two American Children,” *New York Times*, November 25, 2018. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/25/us/politics/china-exit-ban.html>
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- 36 Capital flight has been even more dramatic in the Russian case, but there is no official movement to recapture it.
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- 38 See David Barboza, “Billions in Hidden Riches for Family of Chinese Leader,” *New York Times*, October 25, 2012. Accessed October 1, 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/26/business/global/family-of-wen-jiabao-holds-a-hidden-fortune-in-china.html?mtrref=www.google.co.jp> (Not available in China)

11 The Politics of (Mis)Trust in Northeast Asia

Social Inclusion, Empathy and Reconciliation

Naomi Chi

The year 2020 kicked off like a b-rated horror movie—a global outbreak of an unknown virus that causes severe respiratory disease and potentially death, no cure or vaccine available, and spreads through human contact. While the origin of the virus is still not clearly known, a big cluster started in the city of Wuhan, China, which then spread to various regions in East Asia including Japan, Korea and Taiwan. One of the young staff working for the National Health Command Centre (NHCC) in Taiwan was following the news concerning the rapid increase of patients with an unknown respiratory disease in Wuhan and reported the case to its government as well as contacting the Chinese authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO). While Taiwan enforced strict screening inspections of travelers to and from Wuhan as early as January 2, on January 3, the Wuhan health authorities announced that there had been no human-to-human transmission, but on January 21, the Chinese authorities issued a statement concerning the human-to-human transmission of the virus and consequently put Wuhan under strict lockdown on January 23, almost 3 weeks after the Taiwanese authorities had contacted them.¹ On January 30, 2020, the WHO finally declared the coronavirus outbreak a global health emergency, and furthermore that it is an “‘unprecedented outbreak’ that has been met with an ‘unprecedented response.’”² At this point, WHO chief Tedros Ghebreyesus praised the “‘extraordinary measures’ Chinese authorities had taken and said there was no reason to limit trade or travel to China.”³ The WHO declared the coronavirus a pandemic on March 12.⁴

However, even before this declaration, Taiwan implemented its unique methods of prevention and quarantine, from strict screening at airports, massive testing, quarantine and also closing its borders, while Korea also implemented strict measures such as massive testing (the infamous drive-through and walk-through testing), quarantine, setting up apps for smartphones and tracking people using IT technology as early as January, almost two months before the WHO declared the coronavirus a pandemic. Japan also seemingly successfully contained the virus through its unique methods of “warning” people to avoid the 3Cs (close contact, closed spaces and crowded places) and “requesting” restaurants and entertainment facilities to temporarily close their facilities until further notice.

While all three regions demonstrated their strengths in establishing and implementing measures to contain the virus in their respective countries, the last few months of fighting the coronavirus also clearly highlighted the weakness in this region: the lack of cooperation. First of all, Taiwan is not even a member of the WHO, although it had held an observer status until the inauguration of the Tsai administration in Taiwan. The foreign ministers of Japan and China held a ministerial conference call on April 21, followed by a conference call between the under-secretaries of Foreign Affairs on April 30. Moreover, the foreign ministers of Japan, Korea and China held a ministerial conference call back on March 20,⁵ promising to establish a health ministers' meeting at the earliest convenience, but it was not held until May 15.⁶ The health ministers' meeting started in 2007 and has been held every year since its implementation. The meeting was effective in sharing information during influenza virus breakouts in 2009, and in 2019, ending with the ministers agreeing to establish a hotline for global public health issues. However, some say that the reason for the lack of cooperation seen during the coronavirus outbreak is due to the deterioration of relations among the three countries. Prof. Okonogi of Keio University states that “[i]t seems that the respective governments find it difficult to talk about mutual support and cooperation due to the possible negative reaction from its people, even though there is a framework to cooperate on public health issues.”⁷

What the coronavirus global pandemic has revealed about East Asia is the passivity or even the unwillingness to cooperate even in the face of a global public health emergency. For Taiwan, it is being denied membership to the international organization responsible for international public health that states its objective as, “the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.” The reason for Taiwan being locked out of membership is due to China’s insistence on the “one China principle.”⁸

Against this backdrop, this chapter will attempt to demonstrate that the politics of mistrust is the root cause of the bottleneck in East Asia, that is, between Japan and Korea. In particular, firstly, this chapter will examine the internal and external factors that lead to the mistrust and secondly, attempt to explore ways in which Japan and Korea can “build” trust from the bottom-up, through reconciliation and empathy.

The objective behind this chapter is to examine the social constructs among a more narrowly defined East Asia, that is, Japan and Korea (and to some extent the Republic of China or Taiwan), because they can be considered as “traditional neighbours” that share a long and complex history. Though Russia is an important member of the contemporary Northeast Asian community, however, Russia in some respects does not share a common history nor traditions with the aforementioned countries. Thus, as one of the “closest neighbours” in East Asia, this chapter will mainly focus on Japan and Korea to examine the bottleneck in this region explore a trust-building and/or reconciliation model that could go beyond national borders which could be applied to Northeast Asian community as a whole.

Politics of Mistrust: Internal and External Factors

Political trust is oftentimes defined as, “citizens’ support for political institutions such as government and parliament in the face of uncertainty about or vulnerability to the actions of these institutions.”⁹ Political trust is considered as a pro-democratic value, but it is not a pre-requisite to democracy; rather, skepticism stimulates engagement and people start to judge political institutions by their own merits.¹⁰ It entails the evaluation of the attributes that make political institutions trustworthy, such as credibility, fairness, competence and transparency.¹¹

In East Asia, political trust rates are higher in well-performing authoritarian regimes than in the democratic regimes of the region—however, the standards differ.¹² Authoritarian regimes are judged mainly on their economic performance, whereas democratic regimes are evaluated based on democratic principles. What this suggests is that maintaining high levels of trust in non-democratic societies depends on continuous economic growth, while perceptions of corruption strongly and consistently undermine political trust in democratic regimes.¹³

Liberal peace theory suggests that commitment to capitalist economic development will result in higher levels of market integration, domestic pluralism, and development of rule of law and democracy, and that development of regional institutions to consolidate these gains ensure political and peaceful stability.¹⁴ However, regional integrative agendas in East Asia have not advanced very much.¹⁵ Moreover, over the past few years, East Asia has witnessed a resurgence of nationalism, skepticism towards democratic pluralism, emergence of autocratic leadership and the reactivation of conflicts regarding the historical past and memories between Japan and Korea and China.¹⁶ These undermine and challenge the notion predicted by liberal peace theory that economic interdependence and frequent exchanges of people and goods lead to peace, stability and consequently mutual trust.

Mistrust in Japan and Korea: Internal Factors

While Japan and Korea are economically developed countries, both still have their share of economic, political and social challenges. In both countries, people have become skeptical of their own government’s ability to facilitate growth and at the same time address issues such as precarity, inequality, marginalization and corruption as well as dealing with national/global risks (i.e. the coronavirus pandemic). This section will focus on the domestic challenges that lead to mistrust of their respective governments.

First and foremost, both Japan and Korea suffer from precarity and inequality among the vulnerable categories including the young and elderly. In the last few years, both Japan and Korea have witnessed the increase of the “underclass.” The underclass is sometimes defined as those who are unemployed.¹⁷ For a more concrete definition, they are defined as a group of people living in poverty¹⁸ who are not included in society due to their dependency on state benefits, lack of work ethic, failed morality or rejection of family norms,¹⁹ those who are not involved

in production work or excluded from the labour market system, the young and homeless may also be referred to as the underclass.²⁰ The collapse of the middle class is not a phenomenon unique to the West but also in East Asia. It is manifested in the increase in youth poverty, working poor, bipolarization of class and low-skilled foreign migrant workers.

One of the common features of the underclass is that they are unable to escape from poverty. For example, the passive poor who are long-term welfare recipients (elderly or single mothers), poor youth and migrant workers dependent on precarious work (sometimes involved in underground economy, sex industry or crime), or those who have been traumatized (e.g. the homeless, drifters, substance abusers, those suffering from mental illness). Scholars have tried to put their finger on the causes of the rising underclass in the West; for example, Giddens believes that the underclass are vulnerable people unable to find secure jobs. He sees this as a consequence of the dual labour market, where there are high-paid stable jobs on the one hand and low-paid insecure jobs on the other hand.²¹

In Japan, the relative poverty rate²² is at 16%, second highest among OECD countries.²³ When one looks at the poverty rate for single households, the poverty rate of single males is at 25%, while single females are at 32% (ages 20–64).²⁴ In terms of job categories, 78.8% of men work full-time compared to 44.7% of women who work full-time, while 21.2% of men work part-time compared to 55.3% of women who work part-time.²⁵ When looking at the child poverty rate in Japan, it is at 13.9%.²⁶ There is a strong correlation with the poverty rate of single mothers, which is at 50%.²⁷ Moreover, 36% of single mother households reported that they had experienced food shortages.²⁸ Another set of interesting data is the correlation between poverty and education, as children in the lower socio-economic status (SES) do not perform as well as those in higher SES on standardized tests. Experts say that this may be due to the difference in investment toward private education (cram schools, prep schools).²⁹ Moreover, numbers indicate that children whose parents' income is high have a better chance of going to university.³⁰ While the national average of children going to university in Japan was 73% in 2019, the average for children in single-parent household was 58%, and the average for children with parents receiving social welfare was 35%.³¹

In Korea, the relative poverty rate in 2017 was 17.4%.³² Homelessness has become a serious social issue as the Ministry of Welfare has reported that there are over 11,000 homeless people in Korea.³³ In Korea, the poverty rate of those in the age bracket of 66–75 is at 40%, while those in the age range of 18–25 is at 13.1%.³⁴ These young people and elderly living in poverty often live in small, confined cubicle homes called “Jjokbang” and “Goshiwon” that are no bigger than 6.6 sq. metres in size and rent costing approximately 300,000–400,000 won (US\$300–400). The elderly are often unemployed or work day or temporary jobs to make ends meet, while the young people work in precarious jobs called “platform labour,” which are non-skilled jobs including delivery, domestic work, pet-sitting, chauffeuring and running errands, where labour is achieved through intermediary platforms such as mobile apps.³⁵ Platform workers (agents) work under poor conditions and are excluded from being protected by various

labour laws, including rules on minimum wage, since they are not legally recognized as “workers,” placing them in a blind spot of the social safety net.³⁶ These young people often refer to themselves as “dirt spoons” or born in low-income family—families who have given up on social mobility (this is juxtaposed with “gold spoon” or those born in wealthy families).³⁷ These disenfranchised, despondent youths in Korea feel the “reformist president, who promised to bring social and economic justice, has failed them.”³⁸

Mistrust Between Japan and Korea: External Factors

The year 2019 marked the centennial of the anti-colonial March First Independence Movement, and 7.4 million ethnic Koreans worldwide celebrated the occasion. In Korea, the celebration kicked off with President Moon Jae-in’s speech celebrating the “centennial of the birth of the republic.”³⁹ Ordinary citizens took the streets to celebrate the occasion, including students from the Ewha Women’s University that marched for the recognition of women activists during the independence movement, while the former comfort women living at the House of Sharing held a “memorial service for the victims of Japanese sexual slavery.”⁴⁰ One hundred one years later and after normalizing its relations in 1965, the relationship between the two countries are at its worst.

The relationship between the two countries has no doubt deteriorated in the last decade, mostly due to the longstanding historical and territorial disputes including issues of history textbooks, “comfort women,” forced labour and Dokdo/Takeshima. However, in the last year, these historical and territorial disputes have sparked a new trade war between the two countries.

The trade war started from July 2019, when Japan’s trade ministry introduced new licensing requirements on exports of three chemicals that South Korea needs to manufacture high-tech products such as semiconductors and display panels.⁴¹ Japan claimed that this was necessary to prevent sensitive materials from being shipped illegally to North Korea for military use, but South Korea called the justification groundless and consumers launched a boycott of Japanese goods, from beer to clothing.⁴² Japan further raised the temperature in the trade war by removing South Korea’s fast-track export status, making it the first country to be excluded from Japan’s “white list” of destinations approved for the sale of sensitive materials.⁴³ Many South Koreans believe that Japan’s move was in retaliation for the ruling by South Korea’s highest court in 2018 ordering Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to compensate victims of forced labour and seizing their assets for liquidation.⁴⁴

In a recent opinion poll conducted by the Japanese *Asahi Shimbun* and South Korea’s *Hankook Ilbo* in 2019, 74% of Japanese distrusted Koreans, while 75% of Koreans distrusted Japanese; some 83% of Japanese respondents thought bilateral relations were bad, up from 63% in 2018, while 82% Koreans thought the same, up from 69% in 2018.⁴⁵

Many are concerned that while historical disputes were always dealt with denial or criticism, it remained in the realm of “historical disputes”; however, recent

developments demonstrate that both parties will no longer hesitate to take matters “beyond history.” After the court ruling on forced labour, Tokyo “retaliated” with trade-curbing measures, which then was met with Seoul’s decision to end the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), although Seoul did reverse its decision to extend it in November 2019. The outbreak of the coronavirus halted any action since, but the two countries are back in the ring again as Korea has decided to reopen its complaint over Japan’s trade curb with the WTO.⁴⁶ As Japan and Korea have descended into a vicious cycle of criticism⁴⁷ and “retaliation,” the diplomatic dispute between the two countries is reflected in personal attitude.

Another serious external factor is the excessive attack on each other using information technology, that is, the emergence of fake news in the two countries. The development of information technology and the emergence of the internet as well as social media have changed the way many people learn about the world that they live in. Moreover, social media has had a dramatic impact on the ways we interact with one another. Social media platforms have connected us to one another in new and unprecedented ways. Stories and opinions can gain exposure with speed, giving individuals around the globe continuous access to a near-real-time conversation about both important and trivial matters. However, the emergence of such new technology and media has its share of setbacks, in some cases causing irreversible and detrimental damage. By far, the dark side to social media is fake news. Misinformation/disinformation can influence users, manipulating them for political or economic reasons.⁴⁸

In Japan, the increase of “netto uyoku” or rightist activists in cyberspace is worth mentioning here. There are several infamous groups, such as “Zaitoku-kai” (Citizens’ Group against Special Rights for Korean residents in Japan) and “Shuken kaifuku o mezasu kai” (Citizens’ Group that seeks Recovery of Sovereignty), that have successfully extended their influence with the use of the Internet and social media, as well as Niko-niko dōga (Smile Video) that publicizes their activities. There is also Channeru Sakura (Channel Sakura),⁴⁹ which is a YouTube channel that distributes conservative and nationalistic contents. Such groups and channels are notorious for disseminating disinformation concerning the ethnic Koreans in Japan, comfort women as well as justifying Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910.

In Korea, there is a similar phenomenon that is referred to as “Gukppong”⁵⁰ (meaning excessive nationalism). While the “Gukppong” mentality has accompanied Korean society since the early 2010s, it seems to have become more frequent in recent years and there is a rapid increase in the number of people who are now only praising the country—the “Gukppong” YouTubers are one example. Instead of self-awareness and self-criticism, many are resorting to self-praise and self-satisfaction, and the “Gukppong” want to believe what they say is nothing but the truth. For example, such YouTubers have criticized Japan for “enslaving” their women as comfort women and not taking responsibility of their atrocious actions during its colonial period. Moreover, during the Covid-19 pandemic, many “Gukppong” YouTubers emphasized the “success” of Korea’s measures

against infectious disease and illustrated how the country provided the world a model of contact tracing and mass testing to flatten the curve. They saw such success as an opportunity to appeal to nationalism and posed South Korea's Covid-19 response as "K-bangyeok," (K-anti-infection), which was accompanied by a growing doubt about Japan, as it struggled to combat the virus. South Korea's relative stability in a time of instability fuelled nationalism already present within Koreans.⁵¹

One of the striking similarities is that these groups and channels in Japan and Korea have not only disseminated misinformation but also undermined the achievements that have been made between the two countries. Even though former Prime Minister Abe visited the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine, he continued to support the official apologies of the 1990s, which was a far cry from what the excessive nationalists expected from Abe.⁵² Moreover, in the Korean context, in 2018, the South Korean Supreme Court ordered Japanese firms to provide compensation for wartime "comfort women" and forced labourers; however, in 2021, a Seoul Central District Court dismissed a damages lawsuit brought by a group of former "comfort women" against the Japanese government over their treatment in Japanese military brothels during World War II. The court also urged the South Korean government to make efforts "internally and externally" to resolve the comfort women issue, including diplomatic negotiations with Japan.⁵³

While efforts have been made on both sides, such groups and their activities on social media have undermined the progress that the two countries have achieved.

Reconciliation and Empathy: Possible Solutions?

Reconciliation can be defined in various ways, but the simple definition of the word is the settlement of unbalanced records and restoration of mutual trust.⁵⁴ It is also an agreement for an amicable truce, rapprochement and reestablishment of friendship.⁵⁵ In reality, reconciliation may only be the state of reduced tension in experiential terms,⁵⁶ but what is important in the process of reconciliation is the negotiation and compromise between the victim and the assailant,⁵⁷ and ultimately "forgiveness."

There is a wealth of literature on reconciliation in East Asia, varying from works on coping with domestic trauma (i.e. sexual assault, Cold War wounds), focusing on bilateral conflicts, comparing the East Asian case with Europe, as well as those that take a more normative approach from the perspective of justice.⁵⁸ This chapter does not claim new insight, but another important process of reconciliation that must take place in both Japan and Korea is the reconciliation within each respective country.

In Korea, the reconciliation between the conservative and the progressive camps of society must be prioritized. There is still unresolved animosity between the two camps, including the 4.3 Jeju Massacre (1948–1949), 5.18 Kwangju Massacre (1987) and Bodo League Massacre (1950) where the conservative regime at the time was responsible for killing civilians whom they deemed to be "communist." The recent scandal concerning the Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance

and former “comfort woman” and victim Lee Yong-soo is a prime example of how this domestic cleavage has become detrimental to any progress that has been made in the reconciliation of domestic trauma of sexual slavery. Reactions to this scandal have been polarized between the right and left, especially since the former head of the Council, Yoon Mee-hyang, is a newly elected lawmaker in the country’s governing party.⁵⁹ Many are aware of the interest taken by Japanese conservative nationalists in this affair. The most disappointing aspect of this scandal is that the Korean Council’s leadership has a vested interest in undermining reconciliatory actions that could benefit the former comfort women.⁶⁰

Similar cleavage exists in Japan too, where the nationalistic revisionist right is constantly undermining the liberal left. Nakano argues that “the New Right transformation of Japanese politics—the combined ascendancy of economic liberalism and political illiberalism—is the driving force of contemporary nationalism in Japan.”⁶¹ A prime example of this divide in Japan concerns a former *Asahi Shimbun* reporter, Takashi Uemura, who wrote articles on Kim Hak-sun, the first “comfort woman” to tell her story. These articles were attacked by Japanese nationalists, including Tsutomu Nishioka, who wrote an article in *Bungei Shunjū* accusing Uemura of fabricating the comfort woman story. From the mid-2000s, when the Action Conservative movement (Kodo-suru Hoshu), such as the Citizens’ Group Refusing to Tolerate Special Rights for Koreans in Japan (Zainichi Tokken wo Yurusanai Shimin no Kai, better known as Zaitokukai), arose, online-based criticism of Uemura spread to the streets, taking the form of demonstrations and rallies. In these rallies, Uemura’s name and photo were often used on placards carried by activists, with phrases such as “fabricator” and “traitor.” More than anyone else, Uemura has been the core target of attacks by groups ranging from mainstream conservatives to so-called *Netto Uyoku* (Net Far Right), as a representative symbol of “the evil” of the *Asahi Shimbun*.⁶²

Just these individual cases alone illustrate the difficulty in advancing reconciliation between Japan and Korea, but what is important is that reconciliation takes place not only between the two countries but within each country as well. Neither healing nor reconciliation happens overnight, rather it is a long process that must be continued with tenacity. The next question then is, how should we go about continuing the process of healing and reconciliation? The answer may lie in the idea of empathy.

The idea of empathy is not a new concept; rather, it has been used in the context of trust and confidence building. Empathy is best understood as the capacity to understand another’s view of the world, to walk in another’s shoes and to understand and share another’s experience and emotions.⁶³ On a national level, countries could benefit from “empathy building measures”⁶⁴ with continued bilateral or multilateral dialogues among former and current decision makers, role playing exercises and simulations. On the grassroots level, the activities of one particular social enterprise may be worth sharing. “Hidden Taipei” is a social enterprise working with vulnerably housed people. It is designed after the Unseen Tours in the UK, which also provides tours from a different and unique perspective. Both Hidden Taipei and Unseen Tours support the vulnerably housed individuals to

develop, curate and lead guided walks to different neighbourhoods of Taipei and London, respectively. Both enterprises are not on a poverty tourism agenda, but rather, to show people the historical and cultural quirks in an unusual and entertaining way, linking them to current affairs and social injustice. Such kind of social enterprise could pose as a model for empathy building measures on a more grassroots level.

This is not to take anything away from the efforts that have been made by the two countries thus far. For example, the Kono Statement in 1993, the establishment of the Asian Women's Fund in 1994 which distributed compensation to "comfort women" in Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, the Netherlands and Indonesia, the Murayama Statement in 1995 as well as the 2015 Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Occasion to resolve the "comfort women" issue have been an integral part of the reconciliation process between the two countries. Moreover, the Japan-Korea Joint Declaration of 1998 (between former Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo and President Kim Dae-jung) reconfirmed friendly relations between Japan and South Korea, as well as declared that both countries will discuss the future of Japan-South Korea relations in order to build a new partnership. However, such efforts have become somewhat "forgotten" or have been disguised by the internal and external factors mentioned earlier. Thus, the idea of "empathy" may be a useful tool in order to "pick up where we left off" and further the reconciliation process.

Tentative Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has seemingly had a negative impact on Japan-Korea relations. In a newspaper article on May 19, 2020, a Korean media had accused Japan for disseminating "false" news about the effectiveness of Korean PCR kits and undermining the Korean measures for infectious disease.⁶⁵ Even in a global public health crisis, Japan and Korea could not put their differences aside and accused each other of the "lack" of efficiency and effectiveness towards the pandemic. Moreover, faced with various social and economic issues, political leaders in Japan and Korea have sought to divert people's attention from domestic issues by resorting to nationalistic narratives that conjure up painful memories of the past. In the context of East Asian international relations, scholars such as Jennifer Lind⁶⁶ and Yoshihide Soeya have emphasized the low level of trust Asian states show each other, especially towards Japan, and Soeya argues that this is due to the "perceptual trust gap" and Japan's failure to come to terms with its colonial and wartime history.⁶⁷

However, in both Japan and Korea, the public backlash especially towards the "comfort women" issue was triggered more by the distrust in its own government rather than the distrust towards each other. Therefore, in terms of trust building in East Asia, both Japan and Korea must start to deal with the mistrust that lies within. Moreover, it is crucial to continue the process of reconciliation between and among the East Asian countries, but this chapter has argued that reconciliation must also start from within. In this sense, the mistrust is not only

between and within Japan and Korea but also the case for Russia and China, in which the discontent towards one's own country (internal factors) as well as misinformation or fake news (external factors) greatly affect the sense of trust among and within East Asian countries. To start this process, the concept of empathy is not only a useful but also essential tool to understand each other's different perspectives. Officials, politicians, decision makers, academics as well as ordinary citizens must continue to revisit one's own history and publicize the positive rather than the negative.

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12 Conclusion

Reflecting on Regional Community in Northeast Asia

Akihiro Iwashita and Edward Boyle

Northeast Asia is a disputed region, in both senses. As was set out in the book's introduction, not only is this a contested space, but also the regional framework of "Northeast Asia" is in danger of disappearing today. The current collection brings together research that surveys different aspects of Northeast Asia over the past thirty years and asks what these individually and collectively portend for the future of the region, and for the possibilities of our imagining it as one.

The book's first section analyzed the recent histories of engagement of the United States, China, and North Korea, respectively, with the region, focusing on the significance of their activities for the region as a whole. The second section closely examined the operation of various sub-regions formed along and across borders located in varying geographical circumstances—maritime, terrestrial, and insular—to examine the intersecting patterns of reliance and mistrust felt by residents towards states, society, and broader identities. Finally, the third section provided a multifactor analysis of various issues which affect the region as a whole: understandings of sovereignty, cultures of economic planning, motivations of elite behavior, and societal challenges that afflict both domestic and international relations.

In concluding the volume, this chapter attempts to tie together a number of themes which have run through the book, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of developments in Northeast Asia that relate to sovereignty and space, and thus the possibilities for community. First, the region and its states face a consistent slippage between the ideals of sovereign space and the territorialization of power, stemming from the multi-layered operation of the region in Northeast Asia. Security concerns push the assertion of state sovereignty far beyond borders, through practices occurring deep within the territory of other states. This may be termed the "inside-out" operation of sovereignty. Simultaneously, of course, states experience the operation of external authorities on their own territory, allowing sovereignty to operate from the "outside-in." In Northeast Asia, these cross-cutting operations of sovereignty across borders, beyond the juridical limits of state territory, also apply at the regional level. The boundaries of the region are not themselves contiguous with the juridical lines of its constituent states, and the presence of contestation and absence of institutionalization consequently mean

that the power of its states transgresses the region's limits. Northeast Asia does not restrict or contain the activities of its most important powers, the United States and China, and consequently functions as a particularly dynamic space.

Second, there is the multiscalar presence of the region in its governance. The multi-layered nature of state authority is particularly clear in Section 2, detailing the contestations over the production of borderland spaces between states in the region. Those chapters collectively demonstrated how the actions of local authorities are able to reshape state practices with regard to these sensitive spaces. These borderland contact zones thus contain possibilities of actively contributing to the reshaping of the regional order, and any assessment of Northeast Asia's prospects must take this borderland potential into account, together with those factors which affect the character of the region as a whole, as detailed in Section 3. Later, we set out some of the ways in which these factors come together in shaping the region and offer some suggestions for how they may be managed in order to operationalize the potential inherent in the Northeast Asian region, before the volume concludes by tracing out the effects and legacy of the Covid-19 crisis.

Between State Sovereignty and Regional Space

A Liminal Region

In terms of physical geography, Northeast Asia covers the north eastern portion of the Eurasian landmass, where land meets sea. The region was initially granted definition as a series of continental clashes over state borders and was invested with hopes and dreams for development and prosperity as the hard borders which ran between its states became more permeable with the end of the Cold War. As detailed extensively in this volume, though, a general post-Cold War acceptance of the location of the region's terrestrial borders, and the corresponding increase in cross-border exchange, has not led to a general improvement in relations between states. Nevertheless, this absence of integration was not the result of unchanging geopolitical realities or realist dilemmas. As the Introduction detailed, recognizing China and Russia as maritime powers today renders the tendency to discuss state power in Northeast Asia in terms of a land/sea binary obsolete today. Rather, the region's geography provides a shifting stage upon which state sovereignty and interests are contested in the region, one with global implications, the effects of which, as the chapters by Fukuhara and Amano show, extend right down into the localities between the states themselves.

This regional conflict over the borders of its states has largely shifted in the post-Cold War period from successfully institutionalized terrestrial borderlines to disputes over new spaces. Although many of Northeast Asia's border disputes overlap with Japan's boundaries,¹ most of this recent contestation in the region stems from China's efforts to alter the maritime *status quo*. As was detailed by Ha and Iwashita in Chapter 1, the implementation of UNCLOS has eliminated freedom for maneuver when it comes to establishing maritime borders in Northeast

Asia. In response to the Convention, the regions' states came to consider maritime frontiers as part of their territory and to take proactive measures in order to claim and administer them. This is also the case for another new area of contestation occurring at a different layer of loosely administered space in Northeast Asia—up in the sky. Today, the ADIZs of mainland China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan overlap, elevating regional conflicts over border institutionalization out into the earth's atmosphere.

Northeast Asia's regional border disputes have now developed volume² with the demarcation of state authority awaiting decisive materialization in liquid and gaseous environments. Competition over the demarcation of Northeast Asia's new internal borders in the maritime and atmospheric spheres are issues whose significance is felt beyond the region. The chapters in this collection have revealed the slippage between the assertion and operation of power by its states, in relation to sovereignty, claims to territory, and controls over mobility. This is particularly apparent through the new border disputes which threaten to disrupt the region. That these regional instances of border contestation invoke questions for international norms and their use within global governance emphasizes the fluctuating and amorphous character of the outer borders of the Northeast Asia. Contests between the region's states over their limits are a feature of the Northeast Asia region, but its significance is not confined to there. This is also reflected in how the region's security arrangements operate.

State Sovereignty Versus Regional Security Arrangements

The overlap between the authoritative claims of different states within Northeast Asia, visible in the contested institutionalization of ADIZs in recent years, is also apparent in the how international security operates within the region. Overlaps in the atmospheric sovereignty of the region's states are mimicked through the awkward alliance structure that exists between the United States with Japan and South Korea, respectively, as Izumikawa's chapter demonstrated. In these asymmetric arrangements, one country, dependent for its security on the power of the other, pays a price for its dependence, visible in the provision of military bases and support services for the US forces. Japanese and South Korean claims to sovereignty over these bases are largely nominal, despite their formal presence there being the result of the host nation's agreement. Even outside of the bases themselves, the activities and drills of the US military are not necessarily subject to the host nation's law; sovereignty is limited in practice, not only on the bases themselves but also elsewhere.³ While Japan and South Korea both incessantly proclaim their sovereignty over their own territory, this is unpersuasive given it is premised on limitations that the US presence places upon sovereignty. More significant here, however, is that the operation of these bases on their territory directly influences the structure of the Northeast Asian region beyond the control of the host nation's policy.

By contrast, Russia and China stress maximizing their sovereignty and extent, as Kato has detailed, which results in an asymmetry between them and those Northeast Asian countries allied with the United States. Notably, Russia argues

that while the special situation of US forces in Japan exists, normal relations between the two countries are not possible. China also does not permit either the presence of other forces or zones which would restrict its sovereignty; as Wolff's chapter has shown, the behavior of these two countries has become increasingly alike in recent years. In this volatile mix, North Korea seeks to strengthen its presence through the development of missiles and a nuclear arsenal, as Mimura noted. The asymmetry is worsening the region's particular structural problems, which have seen the reconstitution of Cold War alignments on either side of these security arrangements. However, Russia and China also struggle with the assertion of sovereignty as well. Russia's annexation of Crimea and projection of force into Eastern Ukraine in 2014 were a long way from Northeast Asia but influenced international relations there. Nakai's chapter emphasizes the global reach of China today, but in recent years the PRC has continued to wrestle with the discrepancy between sovereignty and space over Taiwan, and is now struggling to control Xinjiang and Hong Kong as well. These difficulties have also been reflected in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea, where Japan's control of the Senkaku Islands has been gradually guaranteed by the United States.

Technological developments may ultimately result in the ability to administer and manage hard borders in both maritime and atmospheric environments, which may reduce the significance for states of securing their terrestrial borders. At present, however, such spaces remain as the frontline at the edge of states, where they operate as "fortress" borderlands bumping up against their neighbors, but existing as the type of hard national borders associated with an earlier period of Northeast Asian history. Such "fortresses" will remain important in regional security arrangements more generally. As an example, over 70% of US military bases and facilities stationed in Japan are concentrated on the main island of its southern prefecture of Okinawa, close to China and Taiwan.⁴ The overwhelming concentration of military forces here is also a contingent outcome of Northeast Asia's Cold War history, yet it also represents the insecurity and unreliability felt by states towards their insular and marginal spaces, as discussed by Amano, being refracted up into the region's security arrangements, as well as into local interactions taking place in those spaces themselves.

State Sovereignty and Contact Zones

The intersection of state sovereignty with these borderland spaces is another crucial vector for understanding Northeast Asia. Borderlands in much of Asia, including in this region, are understood as social formations, and thus particular spaces, which existed prior to, and have subsequently been shaped by, the imposition of modern borders.⁵ To give the example of Japan, the obvious areas thought about in this connection are its northern and southern prefectures of Hokkaido and Okinawa, but much the same applies to cities like Nagasaki, islands like Tsushima, or island groups like the Ogasawaras, all of which have both a history and culture that notably distinct from that of Japan's metropole. Similar points

could be made about the borderland spaces of China, Russia, and the Koreans: today's borders did not function like modern borders in the past, and the towns and cities that face them are not static either.

What is notable about such places for the state is that they previously functioned as spaces of connections, and that it was these connections that frequently fell victim to the imposition of modern, hard borders in the region after World War II. Borders were effectively imposed through such borderland spaces, dividing local lifeworlds and contributing to the local/national tensions which are so characteristic of these spaces in the region. This not only fostered the state's inherent suspicion of such spaces but also provided them with resources able to be drawn upon in the 1990s, as the region focused its attention on the fostering of connections across national borders. This once again legitimated local discourses of connection across borders and contributed to the increasing attention granted such spaces in the present.

Narrated as contact points along otherwise hard regional borders, such spaces have proved important bellwethers of international relations in the region. Again thinking about Japan, northern Kyushu and Shimonoseki are close to southern Korea, fostering extensive economic, cultural, and administrative links with Busan. Over the last decade, the border island of Tsushima, located approximately 50 km from Busan, became extremely popular with Korean tourists.⁶ The complicated sense of affinity and apathy which Chi detailed for Korean-Japanese relations as a whole is nowhere clearer than in the borderlands between the two nations. In Japan's south-west, too, there were initiatives to develop connections between the Okinawa's southern Yaeyama Islands with Taiwan.⁷ At the other end of the country, Wakkanai in Hokkaido possesses on-off ferry links to Korsakov on Sakhalin, maintaining close economic and cultural ties with Russia. Due to the Northern Territories issue, and Japan's claims to the islands disputed with Russia, the city of Nemuro in eastern Hokkaido avoids referring to itself as a "national border," but as the origin for the "passport/visa-free" trips to those islands, it functions as the point of access to them.⁸ Japan's recent policy, associated with the former Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo, sought to use the promise of cross-border exchange and shared economic development as the means to woo Russia to Japan's position over the islands.⁹

The situation was similar for Russia, China, and the Koreans. Particularly along the Sino-Russian border, the move from détente to total settlement of border issues between them in 2004 is often ascribed to the improvement of relations at more local levels. The crossing points along 4,000 km of river and terrestrial border shared by Russia and China are now largely open and promoted for regional development.¹⁰ Initially planned in the early-1990s, the bridge over the Amur between Blagoveshchensk and Heihe was finally completed in 2019, indicating that exchange between the two countries will continue through various means and at a variety of locations.¹¹ The cities of Dandong and Sinuiju across the Yalu represent China's border with North Korea, but Namyang and Quanhedao (Hunchun) are also significant,¹² while flows from Khasan over the Russo-North Korean border continue.

While the transformation of Northeast Asia's borders from "walls" to "gateways"¹³ has increased economic integration in the region, as developed in Tabata's contribution, yet this has largely remained premised on broader national political relations and goals, rather than regional imaginations. The challenge for the region is that these point-to-point exchanges, or sub-regional connections, do not receive sufficient attention from the state when they discuss the area's multi-connectivity. Certainly, Nemuro with its territorial issues does receive the attention of Tokyo, while Seoul is aware of Dokdo (Takeshima). But this is for national advantage or symbolic defense, rather than capitalizing on the benefits of connectivity in order to foster communication and community. For example, while Shinzo Abe's government expended tremendous political capital on Japan's relations with Russia, there was no interest in supporting the ferry routes to Sakhalin from Wakkanai. Beijing's interest in the efforts of Heilongjiang and Jilin to develop relations with the Russian Far East is sporadic, as Horie's chapter shows. In South Korea, when history or other issues with Japan become prominent, as they did following Korean court rulings over asset seizures and Japan's tit-for-tat removal of South Korea from its list of preferred trade partners in the summer of 2019, the numbers visiting Tsushima decline, and local government exchanges between Fukuoka and Busan disappear . . . the closure of this border predates Covid-19 by six months.

In Northeast Asia, it remains difficult for local cross-border relations to escape the orbit of national political priorities. Of course, such clashes can be forgotten in a heartbeat; kicking up a fuss are a few politicians and the media, irresponsible commentators, and large numbers with no stakes in or connection to the areas' which actually feel the effects of such disputes. However, for the region as a whole, the outstanding issue that remains is how to build up from these local interactions across borders to foster a broader regional community. Doing so would allow such regions of cross-border interaction to retain and develop their own particularities and blur the zones of stitching which run between the states making up the Northeast Asian region.

Reshaping Northeast Asia as and Through Multiscalar Spaces

Ameliorating State Sovereignty

The geo-politics of Northeast Asia involves contestation over the spatial extent of politics. These contests manifest themselves at the edges of both the region's states and the region itself. Our interest in what occurs in these borderlands is our final justification for invoking geo-politics rather than "geopolitics," as the latter largely concerns itself with state actors, and relations between them.

The barrier of sovereignty is a formidable one for Northeast Asian states, as it dictates that the state and its space should as far as possible overlap. The preceding section has shown that competition over the demarcation of the region's internal boundaries is shifting into new spheres. The mistake in the early 1990s

was to assume that the increase in volumes flowing across borders was a prelude to their marginalization, or even disappearance. In fact, it indicated their heightened importance, as shown in their relentless assertion by the countries of the region. Given increasing knowledge of historical connections and greater economic interdependence, such national assertions have come to appear skewed today. The trend towards nationalism visible in history education and territorial consciousness promotes division between citizenries and leads to greater tension between the region's states.

A precondition for the realization of regional community is a recovery of the area's vibrancy, which has been painted over by the monochrome colors of state control. Border areas serve as a litmus test. When state relations sour, the "walls" go up; when they are good, these borders function as "gateways." It is the latter which should be supported, preventing the disappearance of these contact zones. Such borderland spaces exist because of the economic exchange and human mobility at these points of contact, and this connectivity must be fostered by both the region's states and local societies. This develops contact regions as enticing spaces able to be "sold." It is then not necessary for local society to resist the state, but instead take advantage of its position within it. This enables the development of contiguous areas with rich histories of connection across modern state borders. Essential is that the "gateway" functions of the border are taken advantage of by the region, with connections across the border leading to regional exchange and relations.

This mobility must also be promoted more broadly. Presently, all that is operating is bilateral visa regimes between countries. Attention must be granted to operationalizing these multilaterally. For example, if Japan-South Korea or China-Russia visa exemptions were discussed in the appropriate forum, such exemptions and simplifications could be developed, potentially opening up space for the free movement of peoples in the region to be realized. Through the comings and goings of people through such border "gateways," it is possible to transform regional relations, as along the Sino-Russian border. If the notion of borderlands is extended, then urban airports could find themselves functioning as "gateways" to just their cities. The "pre-clearance" that Japan and South Korea put in place for the 2002 World Cup that they co-hosted could yet be revived and extended, linking Seoul, Tokyo, and Beijing.

Searching for a Regional Platform

The problem is that the slippage between the state sovereignty and its spatial extent means that disputes emerge. These include territorial disputes and problems of border demarcation, which in Northeast Asia at present center on islands or maritime areas. Regarding jurisdiction over islands, there is little alternative but to shelve the issues and proceed; both Takeshima/Dokdo and Senkakus/Diaoyu are only considered disputes by one side, so there is no shared basis for an agreement. However, refusing to recognize the dispute's existence is not the

same as refusing to recognize that these disputes have material consequences. It should be possible to construct a framework in which two countries are able to cooperate on maritime issues, even if the term territorial dispute is not used. If it is recognized that maritime frontiers are a kind of borderland increasingly subject to being “walled,” then earlier transformations of Northeast Asia’s borders in “gateways” become relevant here. It will be possible to draw on prior experiences while searching for a uniquely maritime approach.

Important would be a forum to meet and discuss the joint-management of maritime areas currently undertaken bilaterally. Japan, China, and South Korea, as well as Taiwan, all possess legal frameworks and experience of relevance here. The “safe operations” agreement between Japan and Russia also permits the joint utilization of maritime spaces.¹⁴ While difficult to achieve the trade-offs necessary to account for territorial disputes, if the sea is recognized as a maritime frontier whose resources require joint-management, then it should be possible to make progress. Establishing such a cooperative institutional framework for Northeast Asia should be a priority. The tension in Northeast Asia’s waters is related to global challenges, and were some means of cooperation to be found here, it would be extremely important for the international system as a whole. It would also structure the future management of the region’s air-space, too.

In sum, for a Northeast Asian regional community to be realized, it is important that various bilateral programs are able to be consolidated at the regional level. Practically this would make most sense in Vladivostok, given Russia’s ambiguous status in the region and relations with its other participants. Turning Vladivostok’s Eastern Economic Forum into Northeast Asia’s first regional institution is an attractive proposition, given that city’s proximity (imagined or otherwise) with the United States. The city could become a key node untying the knots in the Northeast Asian regional patchwork, and the transformation of the “Conqueror of the East” into the fount of regional community would be a satisfying development.

-----**Northeast Asia Forum (Proposed)**-----

First basket: Regional mobility (people and goods)

Rescaling bilateral agreements to regional regimes

Second basket: Managing maritime space (as a common resource)

Demarcating EEZs/continental shelves, maritime resource policies, environmental protection with airspace to follow.

Third basket: Territorial disputes and security (incl. North Korea)

On a bilateral basis, but with information sharing aimed at confidence building and management, rather than immediate resolution.

Securing Northeast Asia

Northeast Asia's security problems congeal on the Korean Peninsula whose history was shaped by conflict between two regional powers, China and Japan. To this was added Russia in the modern era, and the United States after the war. The Peninsula sits at the center of this Northeast Asia region, and North Korea, in particular, is its biggest obstacle. There is no alternative, but for the United States and Japan to deal with North Korea as a state, but the end of the road remains shrouded in mist. Today, everyone's position is at odds, and there is little appetite to change the current situation. The hurdles for each of the surrounding countries are high, for irrespective of the nuclear and missile issues, China is concerned with border problems,¹⁵ Japan with reparations and resolution of the abduction issue. Yet there will be no Northeast Asian rebirth without a transformation in this contested space between South Korea, China, and Russia, and the seas to its west and east.

The Peninsula forms the region's center, but security imperatives there also shape its edges. Northeast Asia is a region that incorporates the global powers of the United States and Russia. While Russia appears a marginal actor today, despite its central role in the region's emergence, its clear, contiguous involvement is crucial for any institutionalized imaginations of Northeast Asia, even as it promotes friction along specific borders. Compared to the insecurity pervading relations between Japan, China, and South Korea, each of these countries relations with Russia appears relatively placid.¹⁶ Similarly, "a Northeast Asian regional security complex makes sense if, and only if, one treats the United States as a key component of that complex,"¹⁷ as even while it undermines the sovereignty of South Korea and Japan, it guarantees their presence as actors. As long as the United States and Russia are engaged in Northeast Asia, there is no possibility of the region becoming merely another expression of a China-centered vision of East Asia. These two powers keep the region a contested borderland and thus ensure that Northeast Asia will remain a region worth building.

Concluding in a Covid-19 Maelstrom

Being prescriptive in our conclusions is currently a fool's errand, as both the world and region remain buffeted by the impact of Covid-19. Rather than making predictions, therefore, we would like to end here by reflecting on what Covid-19 has shown about Northeast Asia.

The direct effects of Covid-19 on the region have been, first, the closure of national borders and the halting of the movement of people. To different degrees, the restrictions put in place at the region's borders have rematerialized the Cold War "walls" that characterized the region. From experiencing record numbers of international travelers (Japan, for example, saw over 20 million arrivals in 2019, a fourfold increase on five years earlier), the countries of the region have seen movement halted across their borders. The war on Covid-19 has thus also damaged the "gateway" functions of borderland regions.

Second, though, despite early fears, the circulation of goods has held up. While halting the movement of people overseas, domestic consumption by trapped populations has expanded, also driving an growth in trade. However, these effects have been very uneven. The production of meat, vegetables, and daily necessities, as well as cars, has been cranked up, while decreased demand has put a halt to the circulation of building materials. Even within single companies, high-speed ferries have halted, while container vessels are operating at full capacity. Airlines and high-speed railways seeking to hedge for the loss of passengers are promoting the movement of goods instead.

Third, the Covid-19 crisis has effectively put a halt to foreign policy, thanks to restrictions on the movements of heads of state, and the need to focus political attention on resources for combatting the virus. This diplomatic paralysis had both positive and negative effects. A possible benefit was that it allowed for politically problematic issues to be postponed, and for stalled negotiations to be put on ice. A negative one is that it has provided cover for the oppression of domestic populations and interventions overseas, which have been rendered less visible by this paralysis. The pandemic also gave birth to new political tools: mask and vaccine diplomacy. China's provision of masks to a variety of countries in the midst of a global shortage at the outset of the crisis was a clear example of this, and consequently the subsequent contests by states to develop their own vaccines and secure vaccine supplies were rather predictable. China supplying its domestically produced vaccine to the countries of Southeast Asia and Africa is well known, but Japan and others also supplied the Astra-Zeneca vaccine to Taiwan, while judging it too dangerous to use on its own population.

However, Covid-19 did not only have an impact on relations between countries, but it also disturbed their internal constitutions. Within international relations, the Westphalian model, in which states function as a unitary actor, remains dominant, and the internal space of the state is treated as homogeneous. As a number of chapters in this collection have noted, this has been challenged on various grounds, but the distorted picture offered by this understanding of internal homogeneity has been further exposed by the crisis. This is because the virus has also affected the mobility of people within a country's borders. The management of Covid-19 is being conducted spatially, and this involved the imposition of borders and their implementation as necessary to restrict its spread. This internal bordering is occurring at the level of administrative units or urban areas. In Japan, communications in towns straddling administrative boundaries were cut, and there have emerged policies of refusing to deal with people from out of town. Measures in China, for instance, have been even more extreme.¹⁸ This segmentation of internal state spaces has fractured largely homogenous polities, creating difficulties for policy implementation.

Defining the appropriate spatial scale through which to combat Covid-19 has become an urgent issue in all countries, one which saw both the concentration of powers and their uneven application giving birth to new "borders" throughout the supposedly unified space of the nation. As the virus spreads, separating out the infected from the uninfected is necessary, and the process of spatial

differentiation extends down to the micro level. Borders came to cut through community spaces such as households, offices, and other workplaces. However, Covid-19's impacts are not uniform, with its effects on individuals ranging from indiscernible to death. While vaccines reduce the risk to individuals, they are not guaranteed. The end result is efforts to micro-manage human behavior, which ultimately comes to reside in the actions of individuals.

While Covid-19's reterritorialization of politics and geography is underway, the state is being undermined at new scales. What will be the likely effects of this in the future? The classic perils of "geopolitics" may be overcome through the state shifting scales and adopting a dynamic regional approach toward politics, geo-politics, which as this book has shown, may serve as impetus for the reconstitution of communities. At one level, the virus has proved a divider, which has strengthened the functional significance of national borders and fractured the internal space of the nation, but, counter-intuitively, it should be seen as the driving force which will result in new connections and regional reorganization through micro-level self-determination.

Postscript Regarding Russia's War on Ukraine

Russia's February, 2022 military invasion of Ukraine came as both a surprise and a brutal shock. The invasion will be a crucial driver of change in international relations, and despite taking place in Europe is deepening cleavages within Northeast Asia too. China will not condemn or sanction Russia, while North Korea openly voices its support while also taking advantage of the confusion to launch missiles of its own. We would like to conclude here with a brief postscript that sets out what might result for Northeast Asia from the current situation.

First, Russia has generally been assertive to its west, and moderate within Asia. One question is whether a more aggressive posture also comes to be displayed in Asia as well. Could a military offensive across its borders at either China or Japan become feasible? Second, there is the impact on China. The "strategic tension" between Russia and China highlighted by Bobo Lo may have dissipated, but the two empires of Russia and China remain distinct.¹⁹ Maintenance of their quasi-alliance depends on China's attitude. China could continue to support Russia but could also serve as a mediator in the conflict, if not too reluctant to involve itself in Europe's affairs. Also, much depends on whether China considers the crisis as an opportunity to pressure or invade Taiwan, or whether the conflict suggests that China should restrain from such actions.

Third, there is its effect on other states in Northeast Asia. For North Korea, the likely lesson is the importance of nuclear weapons as a guarantee against invasion. North Korea would also welcome increasing confrontation between Russia and the United States. This in turn impacts on Japan and South Korea. Are geopolitical imperatives sufficient to force these two states to repair the cracks in their relationship, and join the United States in opposition to Russia, China, and North Korea. Finally, how will this affect the United States' engagement with Northeast Asia. Is the United States able to confront Russia and China at

opposite ends of the Eurasian landmass, as its diplomacy is buffeted by domestic political conditions?

This collection has generally emphasized the significance of Russia for North-east Asia, for both its conceptualization and operation. However, the invasion of Ukraine may portend the evacuation of Russia from the region. In Japan, for example, exchanges between Hokkaido and Sakhalin have largely ceased, and the gateways that existed in these borderland regions are closing and fortifying again. Superficially, this would suggest that the regional geo-politics emphasized through this collection will be overwhelmed by the return of classical geopolitics, but this should not be presumed. In the 1990s, it was the inability of the Soviet Union and Russian Federation to support its Far Eastern territories which created the conditions for an emergent Northeast Asian regionalism, fostering cross-border integrative measures to replace those which had previously occurred within national states. Over the longer term, Russia's turn to the West may once again lead to the emergence of similar political incentives for this portion of the geo. Borderland activities would again become a crucial source of scarce resources, as they were in the Cold War period and its immediate aftermath. In the case of Russo-Japan relations, disaster relief and any forms of humanitarian contact beyond local fishery cooperation could create cracks in the barriers being rapidly erected between Russia and its neighbors. The recognition and study of geopolitics allows us to remain cognizant of the regional futures able to be imagined out of the turmoil of the present.

Notes

- 1 As shown by one of the authors, see Akihiro Iwashita, *Japan's Border Issues: Pitfalls and Prospects* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).
- 2 Stuart Elden, "Secure the Volume: Vertical Geopolitics and the Depth of Power," *Political Geography* 34 (2013): 35–51
- 3 When we consider the John Agnew's discussion over "absolute sovereignty" and "functional sovereignty," the fiction of Japanese "sovereignty" under the U.S.-Japan alliance is obvious. See John Agnew, *Globalization and Sovereignty* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield., 2009).
- 4 The concentration of U.S. bases on Okinawa cannot be justified from a geopolitical standpoint. According to local opinion, the decision is the responsibility of both the U.S. and Japanese governments. Japan provides Okinawa as a means of having the U.S. force guarantee security to all Japan. However, local people see this as their being sacrificed, and the bases as a "forced burden" imposed from Tokyo. See Tomohiro Yara, "Exploring Solutions to the U.S. Military-Base Issues in Okinawa," *Eurasia Border Review* 3:2 (2012): 119–131.
- 5 Baud Michiel and Willem Van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History* 8:2 (1997): 211–242; Eric Tagliacozzo, "Jagged Landscapes: Conceptualizing Borders and Boundaries in the History of Human Societies," *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 31:1 (2016): 1–21.
- 6 Akihiro Iwashita and Yasunori Hamamatsu, *Kokkyo no Shima: Tsushima no Kankou wo Tsukuru* [*Creating Border Island Tourism: The Case of Tsushima*] (Sapporo: Hokkaido Daigaku Shuppankai, 2014).

- 7 Concerning the details of Japan's borderlands and islands, see the articles in the Special Section edited by Akihiro Iwashita on "Japan's Borders and Borderlands," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 26 (2011): 279–367.
- 8 Yukiko Kuroiwa, "Northern Challenges: The Japan – Russian Border Dispute and Local Voices," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 26 (2011): 3, 283–295.
- 9 Akihiro Iwashita, "Abe's Foreign Policy Fiasco on the Northern Territories Issue: Breaking With the Past and the National Movement," *Eurasia Border Review* 10:1 (2019): 111–132; Paul B. Richardson, *At the Edge of the Nation: The Southern Kurils and the Search for Russia's National Identity* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018).
- 10 Akihiro Iwashita, *A 4,000 Kilometer Journey Along the Sino-Russian Border* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2004).
- 11 Olga Shaglanova, "Northeast Asian Borders: History, Politics and Local Societies," *Senri Ethnological Studies* 92 (2016): 1–10; Fanqi Jia and Mia M Bennett, "Chinese Infrastructure Diplomacy in Russia: The Geopolitics of Project Type, Location, and Scale," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 59:3–4 (2018): 340–377.
- 12 See Adam Cathcart, Christopher Green, and Steven Denney, eds., *Decoding the Sino-North Korean Borderlands* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020).
- 13 Oscar J. Martinez, *Border People: Life and Society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994).
- 14 See Fukuhara's chapter. On Japan-Russian fishery issues, see Ryoichi Honda, *Nichiro Genbashi: Tairitsuni Honron sareta Gyominno Sugatawo Ou [Japan-Russian Site History: In Search of the Local Fishery's Challenges under the Political Turmoil]* (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shimbunsha, 2014)
- 15 Edward Boyle, "Illuminating Edges: Borders as Institutions, Process, Space," in *Decoding the Sino-North Korean Borderlands*, eds. Adam Cathcart, Christopher Green and Steven Denney (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 25–44.
- 16 Russia is a presence in Northeast Asia but its economic interactions with the other states, except China, are minimal. Paradoxically, this means that Russia is potentially in flexible position to cooperate with either Japan or South Korea in the future. We could think of this unrealized potential as an asset for future community building in Northeast Asia.
- 17 T. J. Pempel, "Conclusion: The Uneasy Dance of Economics and Security," in *The Economy-Security Nexus in Northeast Asia*, ed. T. J. Pempel (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 189.
- 18 For just one of myriad examples, Xiaofeng Liu and Mia Bennett, "Viral Borders: COVID-19's Effects on Securitization, Surveillance, and Identity in Mainland China and Hong Kong," *Dialogues in Human Geography* 10:2 (July 2020): 158–163.
- 19 Bobo Lo, *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

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