

Negative Forces at Time-Space Intersections in Northeast Asia

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Abstract

Northeast Asia is among the least integrated yet problematic regions since the Cold War era. Why have economic exchanges in Northeast Asia not synchronized important steps towards an essential integration in terms of functional demands? Why is there neither a single nor a collective leadership consisting of Northeast Asian countries? Why is there never a strong desire for a EU-style regional community or common strategic interests in Northeast Asia? Why is there not a common identity among the Northeast Asian countries although they share many cultural elements? There are many explanations from existing western theories including functionalism, realism, liberalism, constructivism, etc. This article, however, explores the negative forces at the important conjunctures of time and space in Northeast Asia brought by the main players including the U.S. from a perspective of time-space. It also discusses the causes and possible solutions to weaken the negative forces, and gather the positive energy among the Northeast Asian countries so that each time-space intersection becomes an important step towards Northeast Asian regionalism and integration of the area.

Keywords: Negative Forces, Positive Forces, Time-Space Intersection

Introduction

Time and space are the latitude and longitude lines of international relations with continuous interlacement and recombination. They meet at a geo-historical conjuncture, and carry on or expand its legacy to the next space-time intersection. While spatial factors can be positive or negative forces to change the trend of time in international relations, temporal factors can also separate or connect the space among countries. There are spatial-temporal relations among all countries, which affect the other aspects of their relations including those in economic, political, strategic, and cultural areas. The spatial-temporal relations among countries affect their overall relationships depending on various combinations of spatial and temporal factors, for instance, relationships of positive spatial factors plus positive temporal factors, positive spatial factors with negative temporal factors, negative spatial factors with positive temporal factors, and negative spatial factors plus negative temporal factors. Countries in the same region have different bilateral or multilateral relations due to their different spatial-temporal relationships, which affect their attitudes, strategies, and policies towards issues in the region. There are more negative forces than positive ones at the conjunctions of time and space that hinder the occurrence of regionalism and integration in Northeast Asia. Instead of putting bitter war relationships behind as European countries did, the past often ruins the opportunity to form a regionalism in Northeast Asia. When a spatial conflict happens, the countries involved do not try to solve it by using positive temporal

forces such as friendships between peoples and countries in the past and positive future prospects. Instead, negative temporal forces such as incidents and wars come to the fore to make the situation worse. Northeast Asian countries have not been able to work together as a unified entity, nor have they ever tried any actions towards political integration and strategic cooperation. Even in the economic area, there is not a single activity or an organization that includes all countries in Northeast Asia. With the second and third largest economies of the world in the region, Northeast Asian countries can possibly form a community that is stronger than the EU if they can focus more on regional interests than their own. In addition to the negative temporal and spatial forces from within, the U.S. has successfully used the negative temporal forces among Northeast Asian countries to separate them in space. Mature international relations in Northeast Asia depend on positive forces at each time-space intersection from two aspects: 1) of time: reflecting the past, grasping the present, and looking forward to the future; 2) of space: no regional powers but equal members in the area; no military alliances targeting at other members in the region; working as independent countries for the interests of the region; U.S. role in Northeast Asia be limited as an observer or a participant in Asian-Pacific region, and not for the strategic interests of its allies or its own but for general interests of the whole region. The fundamental goal for Northeast Asian countries is to establish positive conjunctures of time and space by replacing the legacies of colonization, “hot” wars, and the Cold-War with normal and new relations among themselves for a long-term peace, overall development of the region, and Northeast Asian integration.

Theoretical Perspectives

As mentioned above, Northeast Asia is one of the hot spots in international relations in the Post-Cold-War era. It is an area that combines economic prosperity and political turmoil. It has a tendency towards economic integration yet a separation of political unity. Countries in the area share many cultural elements yet form no common identity. This paradox puzzles many scholars in the field who interpret the phenomenon with their own justifiable arguments.

Based on the experiences of the EU and other regional integration, Choi (2007) outlines key conditions for the success of regional integration: functional demands, leadership, common exigencies or sharing of strategic interests, and common identity. These four key conditions originated in functionalism, liberalism, realism, constructivism, etc. Functional demands include economic exchanges, rules, and institutions to reduce transaction costs, and removal of barriers and tariff among all countries in the region. Leadership implies “a core area or a small group of committed members among potential integrating countries,” and intergovernmental negotiations. A security community or a group of geographically continuous countries that share strategic interests helps form a regional entity. Common identity is a communal consciousness based on mutual trust among countries of the region. Presently, Northeast Asia does not have any of these four key conditions, therefore regional integration will not happen in the near future.

Functional Demands

Scholars have interpreted why functional demands, leadership, strategic interests, and common identity do not exist in Northeast Asia. The concept of “functional demands” originated in the theory of functionalism that “stresses utility or purpose” (Farlex Dictionary) and applies in the fields of architecture, psychology, and international relations. Literally, “functional demands” means the need for doing something useful. Lacking functional demands for regional integration in Northeast Asia is due to different domestic political economies and national preferences or interests. Although countries with “democratization and economic liberalization,” according to neofunctionalism, more likely support regional integration, in Northeast Asia, however, “even in the most liberal, democratic countries like Japan and South Korea, the state is still highly interventionist; protectionist forces are influential in making foreign economic policies; and mercantilist orientation guides their commercial and industrial policies” (Choi, 2007).

Some scholars distinguish regionalism from regionalization, “regionalism refers to the political process in which states drive cooperative initiatives. Regionalization, by contrast, refers to processes of economic integration” which “are essentially the uncoordinated consequence of private sector activities” (Breslin and Higgott, 2000, in Beeson, 2004). Literally, functional demands are the products of economic integration, or they are the two sides of a coin that happen in the process towards regionalization. In reality, regionalization does not come as a natural result of economic exchange and interdependence. It is determined by “the institutionalization of political cooperation (or regionalism)” (Beeson, 2004) as well as coherence among different domestic systems, economic levels and rules.

Leadership

There is a belief in the literature that successful regional integration needs leadership as with Germany to the EU. In terms of regional leadership in Northeast Asia, scholars’ opinions vary, mainly about Japan or China. First, they argue that Japan could not become the regional leader due to its “narrow economic interests, domestic political paralysis and concern about negative Asian reaction” (Drifte, 1996; in Beeson, 2004), and its status of being under the auspices of U.S. hegemony (Beeson, 2004). Also, “Japan has neither a clear vision for an integrated Northeast Asia nor a capacity or willingness to open up domestic markets to its neighbors” (Choi, 2007). Second, that China cannot be the leader of integration in the region is because of “concerns about the strategic intentions of communist China” (Beeson, 2004), and because it is “not ready for further liberation” (Choi, 2007). Third, that China can be the leader of integration in the region because “China has already assumed a central place as a driver of regional economic activity” (Hale and Hale, 2003; in Beeson, 2004), and “its capacity to shape political and strategic relations” (Beeson, 2004). However, the EU is not the only model for regional integration. In ASEAN’s case, member countries share the leadership, and take turn to call meetings. Northeast Asia can follow the ASEAN model, and do not have to be entangled with leadership identity. Moon (2009) considers cognitive divergence in the geographic scope of integration being problematic. South Korea perceives Northeast Asia as being the primary geographic target for integration, but East Asia for

Japan and the Asian and global context for China. In addition, “neither Japan nor China are willing to assume the costs of providing collective goods for community building.”

Common Exigencies or Sharing of Strategic Interests

According to Choi (2007), countries that have experiences of facing common threats or crises often “develop a strong sense of community or common identity.” In Northeast Asia, there are no common threats from outside of the region but threats from within. In other words, Northeast Asian countries do not have common exigencies or common strategic interests. Instead, China, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea often consider each other as threats. For instance, China considers Japan a threat while Japan takes both China and North Korea as threats. There have been incidents between the two Koreas that are factual threats. Choi (2007) thinks that the most serious obstacle to Northeast Asian regional integration is the strategic rivalry between Japan and China. This phenomenon is based on the dynamic temporal-spatial relationship between the two countries, which are close neighbors that had wars followed by territory conflicts, and a switch of power positions in the world. However, the fact that two of the three main countries in Northeast Asia, including Japan and South Korea, have military alliances with a country outside the region respectively, and consider other two members including China and North Korea the imaginary enemies, contradicts the possibility of sharing strategic interests, and is the main cause for not having a common strategy for the region.

Common Identity

Common identity as a key condition of regional integration originates from the theory of constructivism. Contrary to realism and liberalism, constructivism interprets the core aspects of international relations as based on ongoing processes of social practice and interaction, and “the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature” (Wendt, 1999). So the constructive role of social practice and interaction is to develop a collective identity. Favell (2006) explains European identity from perspectives of economic sociology, public sphere, and political field. The common identity of the EU can be understood within a wide range. First, the EU “goes far beyond the removal of trade barriers and tariffs, and the promotion of competition across national borders over products and services. It is developing rules of exchange about common standards, insurance, liability and ownership across borders; health and safety standards; standards of employment practices and workers’ rights; and environmental norms.” Second, the EU is provoking “the emergence of a contestatory public sphere” and “democratization of the EU’s institutional forms” including standardization of European education and the Socrates schemes on identities of European students. Europeanized behavior among ordinary people can be seen in their “engagement in cross-border commerce and transactions” and “cross-national associations and activities.” Third, the EU stresses “the operation of power and ideology in the workings of European institutions.” “It has empowered lobbyists and campaigners of all kinds, and inspired new organizational forms in its own image.”

In conclusion, common identity is an evolution of ideology, behavior, and activity, and a fusion of different yet compatible elements from nations in the same region.

Regionalism, integration, and regional institutionalization are three terms which overlap yet are different. They share the same goal of unifying norms, activities and identities in the region, but with different focuses on cultural, economic-political, and ideological aspects, or functioning as hard power and soft power. They can also be understood as the three steps towards a highly cohesive and coherent Northeast Asia. In terms of the key conditions or premises of regional integration, there might have different models other than that of the EU. For instance, N-N, N-S, S-S are the three categories of regional integration. The constants and variables of different models are not identical. More importantly, the relations between and among the members in a region can also be very different if the factors of time and space are included.

The above explanations of why Northeast Asia does not have any of the four key conditions for regional integration are mainly within the framework of western theories: liberalism/functionalism, realism, and constructivism. These conditions cannot be coexistent since they contradict each other theoretically, not to mention that their theoretical conceptions are inducted mainly from western experiences. This article is not “to invent Asian paradigms of IR that defy Western ones” (Choi & Moon, 2010) but to explain the regional phenomenon in Northeast Asia from temporal and spatial perspectives. There are positive and negative forces or energies working as action and reaction in the process towards Northeast Asian regionalism and integration. Policies and activities of countries in the region as various forces all contribute to this process forward, backward, or turning around.

Temporal-Spatial Relations

“Regionally-based processes of political and economic integration, security cooperation, and even social identification have become increasingly important and prominent parts of the international system” (Beeson, 2004). However, various regions run into different problems and take different patterns in this process. An analysis of a bilateral relationship is usually from a two-dimensional perspective: horizontal range and vertical trace and trend, or temporal-spatial relations between two countries. However, in analyzing trilateral or multilateral relations, it is not enough to use a two-dimension framework to include all related factors. The situation is much more complicated due to the different coordinates of two-dimension. For instance, in a trilateral relationship, there are three coordinates of two-dimension, and in a multilateral relationship, there are multi-coordinates and multi-dimensions. Temporal-spatial relations between any two countries are unique, which is an important factor yet has been ignored in international relations theorizing. To understand every temporal-spatial relationship between any two countries within a multilateral international relationship is an important step as well as the key to understanding the very multilateral relationship. The Six-Party Talks on the North Korea nuclear issue is a good case to elaborate this concept.

There are complicated temporal-spatial relations among the six countries involved in the Six-

Party Talks. First, each country has its temporal-spatial relations with the other five countries respectively, for instance, North Korea has different temporal-spatial relations with the U.S. from those with China or Russia. Second, each country has its temporal-spatial relations with the other five countries as a unit, which means that an individual country's behavior during the whole process reflects its temporal-spatial relations with the whole group. Third, the six countries can be divided into two groups within the framework of the Cold War: the U.S., Japan, and South Korea as one group, and Russia, China, and North Korea as the other. To expect the same attitude and measure towards the North Korea nuclear issue from the other five countries is neither possible nor reasonable, although they have agreed on denuclearization as the general goal of the talks. For instance, North Korea and the U.S. were temporal enemies, and North Korea is one of the countries among the American so-called "Axis of Evils." Spatially, they are far apart. But the temporal-spatial relationship between China and North Korea is opposite. China and North Korea used to belong to the same camp of communism. China stood on the North Korea side fighting with the U.S. during the Korea War. Spatially, China and North Korea are connected. Based on their respective temporal-spatial relationships with North Korea, it is inevitable that the U.S. and China have different attitudes and take different approaches to the nuclear issue of North Korea. The impact on China is more direct and critical, and China could potentially become the victim of a nuclear disaster. During all rounds of the talks, the Japanese public had grown increasingly concerned about Japan's problems with North Korea, most especially with the abduction issue (DiFilippo, 2006). In terms of relations between one member and the other five countries as a group, North Korea is in the position of being the target of the rest where as China can play the role of facilitator working among all the six members. From North Korea's standpoint, its intention to develop nuclear weapons is mainly "for both survival and bargaining leverage" (Moon, 2012 B). But if six countries are divided into two opposite groups, and argue for their own strategic interests based on the Cold War mentality, they would present totally different pictures. China and Russia would always support North Korea, and be opposite to the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. It is more reasonable to make judgment based on temporal-spatial relations between and among six parties than on one dominating western theory.

During an interview with the Asia Centre of E.U., Professor Moon Chung-In from Yonsei University compared attitudes on the denuclearization between Beijing and Washington. Moon thought that after the third nuclear test of North Korea, China's behavior seemed rather passive. Beijing did not take any independent punitive measures against Pyongyang except complying with the UN sanction resolution on North Korea such as banning the shipping of commodities and materials on the UN sanction list and suspending banking transactions. In contrast, the U.S. maintained that talks could resume when North Korea showed some decisive action towards denuclearization (Bondaz, 2014). However, in making such a comparison, the temporal-spatial relationship between China and North Korea, and that between the U.S. and North Korea, have to be included. Overall, these two temporal-spatial relationships have almost nothing in common as mentioned above. Temporally, China and North Korea belonged to the same camp during the Cold War. The two countries had kept friendly relations during the Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-II

governments. China supported North Korea's fighting with the U.S. in the Korea War. China has always insisted on resolving international conflicts through dialogue and negotiation, especially in the situation in which Pyongyang "remains wedded to its stance of 'conditional denuclearization,' or dismantlement based on mutual respect," meaning that "Washington lifts its hostile policy towards North Korea" (Bondaz, 2014). To the U.S., North Korea is a former enemy and a present one of the evil axis. Spatially, China is next to North Korea. It is to China's interests to have a peaceful neighbor. Once a war happens, it will inevitably affect China, whereas the U.S. homeland is unlikely threatened for its geographical location. However, the U.S. has an obligation to protect its two allies that neighbor North Korea. While including the temporal-spatial relations between China and North Korea, and between the U.S. and North Korea, we can make more comprehensive comments on the issue.

Negative Temporal Forces

Countries in the same region inevitably need to communicate, coordinate, and cooperate in many areas. International relations are contacts between diverse social-economic systems, conflicting political ideologies, and varied cultures horizontally, which are resulted from divergent historical experiences. This means that international relations are contacts between regional or cross regional nations with different historical accumulations, which can act either positively or negatively but often as negative temporal forces in international relations. There are plus and minus historical accumulations among countries, especially between neighbors or among nations in the same region. Neither all minus historical accumulations turn into negative temporal forces nor all plus historical accumulations turn into positive temporal forces in international relations.

The history of China-Japan relations includes both friendship and rivalry. Since the normalization of diplomacy between the two countries, there are more economic cooperation and cultural exchanges than political rivalry and military fights. During the early years of Chinese reforms, Japan provided China enormous ODA (Takamine, 2006; Lincoln, 2007). For instance, between 1992 and 2000, Japan was the number one donor of ODA to China with the amounts from twice to five times as much as that from the number two donor, Germany, and amounted to 50~75% of the total ODA China received from western advanced countries. Japan's ODA to China including grant aid, technical cooperation and yen loans helped China's reform in cash and technology greatly, which can be a positive temporal force to China-Japan relationship, especially when a spatial conflict happens. It does not mean that China should sacrifice its national interests but that China can bring the above-mentioned positive temporal force into the atmosphere of negotiation and argument. Instead, however, China often re-mentions or reemphasizes the wars between the two countries and what Japan did to China during those wars. There are so many TV series with an Anti-Japanese War theme, which does not stress the positive aspects from history but an ethnic hatred towards another nation for what happened seventy years ago. In doing so, it sustains the negative temporal force of war in the China-Japan bilateral relationship including the relations between two peoples. Whereas in the EU, although there have been many wars among the

main EU countries, historical accumulations have not turned into negative temporal forces towards the formation of regional integration. One important reason is that most European countries accepted Germany's apology for its criminal behavior during the wars.

Among other historical accumulations in Japan's relations with China and Korea that often become negative temporal forces include the Yasukuni Shrine Visits, Comfort Woman, and the Nanjing Massacre. Japan has a right to raise questions on these issues, but only from a historical perspective after receiving an understanding from countries of its victims during the war. If the process of questioning is perceived as only providing defensive arguments for what it had done during the war, it would turn historical research and cultural discussion into negative temporal forces in Japan's relations with its neighbors. It might be the time that Japan lifts its SDF and becomes a normal country. But it is better that Japan's actions be understood by countries within the region than to be supported only by the U.S. In the case of the historical textbook issue, it can be also turned into a positive temporal force if the textbooks tell the historical facts with an objective view based on the data from all countries involved.

The U.S. is the biggest western democratic country with leadership skills in international relations. It has brought positive elements to the economic and political development of the world. However, it has not always acted as a positive force in regional and global integration. As Pempel (2010) points out, "The most powerful vertebrae in the spine of the Asia-Pacific's current security architecture remain America's bilateral alliances." In other words, the U.S. uses historical accumulations in Northeast Asia to its own advantages, and has turned some historical accumulations into negative temporal forces towards relations among Northeast Asian countries and regionalism and integration in the area (Lincoln, 2009). As a historical accumulation of the Cold War, the U.S.-Japan Alliance has existed for more than sixty years. Although it has added the element of democracy to advocate its legitimacy, U.S. intentions are to use Japan to counterweight China, especially a rising China, to support U.S. armies in logistics and information, and to help the U.S. in deploying troops to some potential trouble spots (Wang, Ni, & Yu, 2008). Among Japanese politicians, there are two different attitudes towards the U.S.: 1) Leaning towards the U.S. to be protected from the rise of China; and 2) Keeping an equilateral triangle relationship among Japan, the U.S., and China. However, in order to reach military and political normalization, Japan needs U.S. support under the frame of the U.S.-Japan Alliance (Wang, Ni, & Yu, 2008) although it is a negative temporal force towards its relations with China and North Korea, and Northeast Asian regionalism. In 1997, the U.S. and Japan gave a report on U.S.-Japanese Defense cooperation in response to the end of the Cold War and the growth of North Korean missile technology, which expended the role of Japanese military from the domestic to the Asian arena. On Oct. 8, 2014, officials from the two countries announced an interim report on the revision of U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines to "reflect the global nature of the U.S.-Japan Alliance," to emphasize trilateral and multilateral security and defense cooperation with regional allies and partners," and "to prevent the deterioration of Japan's security in all phases, seamlessly, from peacetime to contingencies" (Garamone, 2014). In addition to the U.S.-Japan alliance, the Korea War has been always a negative temporal force to Northeast Asia and its regionalism and integration. For instance, in

addition to the U.S.-Japan Alliance and the U.S.-South Korea Alliance, there have been military exercises between Japan and the U.S., between South Korea and the U.S. or among all three of them. Under the action of the negative temporal forces, Northeast Asia is divided, so are the Six-Party-Talks, which directly block the formation of Northeast Asian regionalism and regional integration.

In conclusion, negative temporal forces are irritants or even gunpowder to deteriorate or destroy the environment or atmosphere of regionalism and regional integration. The U.S. skillfully uses historical accumulations especially through establishing alliances with two of the three important Northeast Asian countries. In doing so, the two allies from Northeast Asia are always close to the U.S. but centrifugal to the region they belong to. However, in the trend towards regionalization, there has been “an overall decline in America’s capacity to shape regional developments” (Pempel, 2010). “A continuing American hegemonic presence might not be the Northeast Asian destiny and new avenues need to be deliberated on” (Choi & Moon, 2010). The horizon of new avenue may have started to appear, for instance, the relationship between China and South Korea has gradually removed negative temporal forces from the Cold War and the Korean War, and has moved in a positive direction and towards institutionalization, including actively preparing for establishing the FTA between them.

Negative Spatial Forces

Beeson (2004) states that the driving force for the EU initiative “was a consequence of both the Cold War generally and American foreign policy in particular.” Europe’s role in the new international system changed from the center of world order to one of the regions. Thus, the spatial relations among European countries are very different from those among Northeast Asian countries. First, European countries face problems or deal with issues more or less as a region. In other words, European countries deal with international affairs or the U.S. as a collective unit, not as individual countries. On the contrary, countries in Northeast Asia deal with important issues as individual nations, including dealing with the most influential country outside Northeast Asia, the U.S. This leaves space for negative forces to act among Northeast Asian countries. Second, in the case of ASEAN + 3, China, Japan, and South Korea have joined this extra-regional community as individual countries with different transactions and paces, and North Korea has not been part of this process. Third, members of Northeast Asia have separately participated in extra-regional organizations or even military alliances, for instance, Japan’s mentality of moving away from Asia and joining the West, U.S.-Japan military alliance, and its high consistency with the U.S. in international affairs. In addition, South Korea also has a military alliance with the U.S., and China’s strategic relationship with Russia that has a spatial conflict with Japan. Western Europe formed NATO as a regional organization or spatial security cooperation “in the face of perceived threats from the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies” (Pempel, 2010). Different from U.S. alliances with Japan or South Korea, NATO is a regional organization, and to a certain extent, with a direction towards regionalism. Another example is the participation of Trans-Pacific Strategic

Economic Partnership Agreement or the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). TPP focuses on opening up more markets to participating countries for their goods and services, and setting up labor standards, and rules on environmental commitments, and intellectual property rights, including the transparency and consistency of the regulatory environment. In this case, TPP is a process to meet the shared functional demands among member countries. But again, Japan is the only Northeast Asian country currently in the process of joining. Fourth, Northeast Asian countries do not actively support each other on important actions beneficial to regional integration. For instance, when Japan raised a proposal for establishing an East Asia Community in 2009, China hesitated to give a positive response. In case of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank established on October 24, 2014, there are 21 countries that responded to China's initiative and joined the AIIB. But neither Japan nor South Korea participated in this event (Li, 2014). All the above-mentioned factors have become negative spatial forces to the formation of functional demands in the region.

Ideological differences are the abstract negative spatial forces that functioned as adversaries among Northeast Asian countries. The rise of China is a normal situation in the history of world civilizations. Neighboring a strong country does not necessarily mean facing more pressure or threats simply because it has a different ideology or social system. Whether a rising China becomes a positive or negative spatial force to international relations in Northeast Asia, now and in the future, depends on Chinese diplomacy with countries in the region as well as the psychology of those countries to admit and accept the reality of neighboring a strong China instead of a weak one. Attitudes of cooperation, competition, or confrontation towards a country that was formerly weak but is currently strong, form different forces as actions and reactions to regional integration, and responsibilities are on both sides. European identity originates in ancient Greece and Rome, but the most important elements constructing the European identity are from the work in economic, public, and political fields (Favell, 2006). In building a common identity, in spite of differences in opinions and theories, ideology has not been a negative spatial force preventing European countries moving towards regionalism and integration. The most valuable experience of the EU is that it identifies itself as a region and focuses on common interests so that no forces from extra-region could act as negative spatial energy among its members. The late South Korea President Kim Dae-jung's Sunshine Policy advocates that encouraging North Korea to come out of isolation and end confrontation is better than trying to force it to change (Moon, 2012 A). It could be a positive spatial force if it had come at a right temporal-spatial conjunction.

Effects of the influence of U.S. hegemony and the impact of U.S. order in Northeast Asia have been a negative spatial force to Northeast Asian regionalism and integration, which affected the leadership, common strategic interests and common identity in the region. The U.S. has effectively fractured "the putative region along ideological lines for around fifty years," and "directly (in China's case) or indirectly (in Japan's case) undermined the leadership potential and ambitions of the two most important powers." In addition, the U.S. institutionalized "a series of bilateral rather than multilateral relations across the region," and "made any region-wide cooperation impossible as a consequence" (Beeson, 2004). Pacific Region or Asia-Pacific Region and Northeast Asia are two different geographic concepts. Geographically, the U.S. belongs to the Pacific Region or Asia-

Pacific Region but not to Northeast Asia. The U.S. can play an important role in APEC or TTP, but can neither intervene in Northeast Asian affairs as it cannot intervene in E.U. affairs, nor support one side of adversaries in the area. The U.S.' intervene in Northeast Asia as a negative spatial force has blocked, and will continue blocking regional integration in the area.

Is there any political will among Northeast Asian countries that hinders the formation of functional demands? If their political will is based on self-centered nationalism or self-interests as realism claims, even if they were all liberal democratic countries with advanced capitalist economies, would they be willing to, in the case of Japan and South Korea, fight with interventionism, protectionism, and mercantilism within their domestic systems? Nationalism helps a country to stay together and keep its identity, but an extreme nationalism can be an obstacle to regionalism and regional integration. Choi (2007) made a general comment, "Chinese nationalism has clashed with Japanese and South Korean versions of nationalism. Japanese nationalism strains its neighboring countries. South Korean nationalism towards Japan has flared up quite often in recent years." In another case, Zhang (2012) considers the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) led by the U.S. "a move to weaken East Asian integration and cooperation" as it excludes China and many members of ASEAN, which "could have a negative impact on ASEAN's central role in building an EAST Asian community." Is it out of U.S. political will or national interests, or out of both? Choi (2007) comments, the reaction to regional integration from Japan is "Japan's reluctance to integrate with less developed neighbors" (Choi, 2007). China did not respond to Japan's suggestion on East Asia Community when Japan's Democratic Party was in power. The distinctions between nationalism and political will need a further theoretical analysis.

As Moon (2010) has commented regarding Northeast Asia, "legacies of the Cold War are intricately intertwined with new sources of actual and potential conflicts," and the region "is littered with unresolved territorial disputes, which could flare up into major escalations." Territory conflicts are the concrete negative spatial forces that functioned as adversaries between China and Japan, Japan and South Korea, and South Korea and North Korea. Whenever conflicts happen, it brings back the minus historical accumulation that hinders regionalism especially in the sharing of strategic interests and common identity. Lincoln (2014) suggests a scientific approach to territory conflicts to avoid affection of the negative temporal forces on this type of temporal-spatial conjunctures between many countries including the conflict at the Senkaku-Diaoyu Islands between Japan and China. However, out of nationalism, no countries would respond to this suggestion for the time being.

Negative temporal forces and negative spatial forces do not influence international relations separately. By contrast, they often act together and speed up deterioration of the situation or crisis. There are many such cases in international relations. The Six-Party Talks is one in Northeast Asia that takes the spatial format with many historical memories. The fundamental goal of the Six-Party Talks is to solve the North Korea nuclear issue. In order to maintain the talks as a positive spatial force, it needs wisdom and objectivity to avoid the historical sediment among six countries to be reminded. The Six-Party Talks gathered six countries that have different past, present, and future expectations in the bilateral or trilateral relations among them. As mentioned above, from

the Cold War perspective, six countries are divided into two sides with the U.S., Japan, and South Korea as one side, and China, Russia, and North Korea as the other side. But if the talks are based on negative spatial forces such as territory conflicts between the participating countries, or based on negative temporal forces such as the Korea War, there will never be a positive solution, for the Cold War mentality itself includes both negative temporal and spatial forces in addition to already complicated bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral relations among the six countries.

Timmerman & Tsuchiyama, in *Institutionalizing Northeast Asia: Regional Steps towards Global Governance* (2008) discuss the solutions to problems in Northeast Asia including long historical memories, simmering territorial conflicts, a shifting balance of power, and an uncertain global environment, and advocate the notion of regional institutionalism as a counterweight to the principle of sovereignty. The book defines the concept of regional institutionalization as a broad and sophisticated one, and provides rich empirical evidences in typology, functions, norm setting, historical legacies, security challenges, and processes of identity building. The author of this article agrees that regional institutionalization is the fundamental way to, and the highest version of, regional integration, and a necessary step towards global governance and global integration. However, sovereignty of individual countries in the region is the basic unit of regional institutionalization. When the sovereignty of all members in the region is respected, the sense of individual sovereignty turns into a sense of region.

Conclusion

Countries have unique temporal-spatial relations between and among themselves. Temporal-spatial relationship can be an important aspect in both case study and theorizing in international relations. Natural and geographic relationship between states has had both positive and negative affects on the development of international relations. Geographic locations make it easy to conduct the cultural and economic exchanges and complements between neighbors. But they are also the natural factors and conditions to conflicts and even wars between countries close to each other. Countries should try to avoid bringing up unpleasant historical accumulations and turning them into negative temporal forces to irritate a current spatial conflict. An appropriate attitude for any nation is to focus on the positive side of its temporal-spatial relationship with another nation.

Despite the extended economic exchange and cooperation in recent decades, Northeast Asia has not formed a community as what happened in Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa where regional communities represent the trend of regionalism and integration of the area. There are complicated temporal-spatial relations among Northeast Asian countries and those between these countries and the U.S., which leave gaps for negative temporal and spatial forces acting as reactions towards regional integration in Northeast Asia. Regional integration only happens among politically independent countries that can resist the negative forces of time and space. Only when every member in the region has a sense of region instead of its own nation, will actions in the region including economic, political, strategic, and cultural ones be inclusive to all members in the area. As long as alliances, especially military or other strategic alliances that target other members

of the same region exist, regionalism and regional integration are unlikely to occur. So the keys to Northeast Asian regionalism and regional integration are to abolish any adversary mentality and to release positive energy at time-space intersections in Northeast Asia.

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