

"Hard to Unite the Strong": Why Is It Difficult to Integrate China, Japan And South Korea?

-- Regionalism as A Perspective

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Abstract

East Asia, as one of the three major regions in the world economic landscape, is rarely led by a core power. Among them, the overall economic level of East Asia's three major countries, China, Japan and Korea, has surpassed that of the European Union, but the level of regional cooperation is extremely limited, which is similar to that of extra-regional powers. The U.S. has an important stake. This paper analyzes the U.S. strategic deployment in the Northeast Asian region and the logic behind it from the theoretical perspective of regionalism: the U.S. is still stuck in the old regionalist thinking, deploying a network of power relations in North-East Asia based on the idea of regional exclusivity, and excluding organizational mechanisms that do not include them. Northeast Asia as a passive object to be manipulated at will, deploying a "selective intervention" strategy to disrupt the China-Japan-ROK alliance; and finally, deploying the U.S. The U.S.-led bilateral diplomacy, which weakens the multilateral diplomatic mechanism in East Asia, underscores the power-first cold war mentality. The U.S. should change the logic of power politics and the primacy of interests, and adopt a new approach of recognition rather than power politics, as the reality and future trend of world regionalization is new regionalism. A mindset of not exclusion, of participation rather than domination, gives dynamism and impetus to regional integration.

Keywords

China-Japan-Korea; Integration; New regionalism; Old regionalism; U.S.

1. INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND QUESTION

Since the end of the twentieth century, North America, Europe and East Asia have been regarded as the three most important regions of the world economic landscape(Giovanni Arrighi, 1996)[1]. East Asia, in particular, has become the centre of the most dynamic capital accumulation process. The establishment of the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) in Europe and North America, respectively, has had a strong stimulating effect on economic development and social progress, which has provided a strong impetus for East Asia's development. We can draw on their experience in seeking breakthroughs in economic development and political security. However, compared with North America and Europe, regional integration in East Asia has been slower to develop.

East Asian regionalism has long been known as "open regionalism" and has evolved into "a geographically generalized and cascading regionalism"(Xiao Huanrong, 2008)[2]. This geographical generalization of regionalism "manifests itself first and foremost in the coexistence of various regionalisms, with the same State participating in several different

regional organizations". This geographical generalization of regionalism "is manifested above all by the coexistence of various regionalisms, with the same country participating in several different regional organizations". But "no single regionalism can represent the true East Asia". Europe and the United States have major powers leading regional organizations, but East Asian regional integration shows a special pattern of radiating outward from the subregion, with core countries Missing, small countries pushing big countries. "ASEAN has been able to stand on its own feet in regional cooperation not only because it is the most integrated subregion in East Asia, but also because it is the largest and most diverse region in the region. reasons for the lack of strategic mutual trust among the major powers and the absence of institutional arrangements for regional cooperation". So, why is the union of the core countries missing in the process of East Asian integration?

The core countries of East Asia are China, Japan and South Korea. China, Japan, and South Korea rank 2nd, 3rd, and 12th in the world, Combined exceed \$24 trillion in 2021, exceeding the total US economy by about \$1 trillion or so. Overtaking the European Union, approaching the United States, and accounting for 2/3 of Asia and more than 1/5 of the world, becoming the main driver of the "Asian Century. Since its inception in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis, the CJK cooperation has included meetings of the CJK leaders, 21 ministerial meetings, more than 70 working-level dialogues and consultations, and more than 100 projects and cooperation mechanisms, covering areas such as economy, environment, health, disaster management, education and youth. Since its establishment in September 2011, the CJSC Secretariat has formally joined this cooperation process, and in 2020 the world's largest free trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), will be signed, with China, Japan and South Korea accounting for around 90% of the GDP of the member countries. In 2021, the trade volume between China, Japan and South Korea will reach 371.4 billion USD and 362.4 billion USD respectively, and the total trade volume between the three sides will exceed 800 billion USD. The economic size and regional importance of the three countries have determined that the cooperation between China, Japan and the Republic of Korea has transcended trilateral cooperation and is of great regional significance, and has a significant impact on the Northeast Asian region. Governance plays a key role as an enabler.

As the three countries with the strongest overall strength in Asia, China, Japan and Korea are geographically close to each other and share many similarities in history and culture, so why are they Difficult to achieve union? What are the key reasons for this? Although the United States has been the "leading country" dominating the security, political and economic situation in the region since the outbreak of the cold war up to the present day, it has been a "leading country". The status and influence of the United States is not comparable to that of any single country in Northeast Asia. However, the growing willingness of Northeast Asian countries to strengthen independent intra-regional cooperation has prompted the U.S. to question the direction of Northeast Asian integration. The United States is concerned about the process of integration in North-East Asia, which is still in the making, and the doubts about its outcome. In the face of the burgeoning integration process in North-East Asia, the United States is concerned about how this process will affect its interests in North-East Asia. Impact?

2. WHY IT'S DIFFICULT - US STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT IN THE PROCESS OF NORTHEAST ASIAN INTEGRATION: OLD REGIONALIST THINKING

In current international politics, the process of institutionalizing regionalism in Northeast Asia is not yet fully on track, and the countries of the Northeast Asian region are not yet open and(Nair,Deepak, 2009)[3] cooperative. The degree of integration is also very limited. The reasons for this are, of course, the differences in the political systems and ideologies of the North-East Asian countries themselves, but the key to the integration of North-East Asia is the

fact that the countries of North-East Asia have different political systems. Not in China, Japan, and Korea, not in Asia, but in the United States. The U.S. strategic misgivings about the development of Northeast Asian integration and its series of targeted strategic dispositions and policy responses in the post-Cold War era have had a significant impact on the The further deepening of Northeast Asian integration poses a key constraint, and "the United States remains the key to the process of regionalism in Asia". The U.S. has interfered in the China-Japan-South Korea FTA, pressured South Korea to agree to the deployment of the Saud missile system, and intervened in the China-Japan Diaoyu Islands dispute, despite the fact that the world has Entered the phase of new regionalism, but the U.S. still views and interferes with China-Japan-Korea integration with the old, old regionalist mindset.

Regionalism as a doctrine of international relations emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as a doctrine of (Samuel S. Kim, 2004)[4] shared values and The normative concept of a sense of identity refers to "the conscious drive of a Government to regional cooperation". According to Joseph Nye, "an international region can be defined as a certain number of geographically connected States, which are in a certain degree of agreement with each other". The term "interdependence" is used to describe regionalism as "the formation of alliances or blocs of States on a regional basis". In short, regionalism means that regions with close political, economic, cultural, security and other ties should promote the institutionalization of interregionalism. and the establishment of a regional organization or institutional arrangement to create an interdependent, interrelated and somewhat exclusive international Relationship phenomenon.

After the collapse of the Cold War, with the acceleration of globalization and multipolarity, the study of regionalism returned to the forefront of international relations theory and developed into the theory of new regionalism. Compared to traditional regionalism, new regionalism embodies new features: first, openness, if traditional regionalism is a theory with a exclusionary and protective regional trading arrangements, the new regionalism emphasizes inclusiveness, and any person who is willing to accept the rules of a regional arrangement should be able to do so. The second is (Primo Braga et al. 1996)[5] subjectivization, as opposed to the passive object status of the region in the international arena during the period of "old regionalism". Under the conditions of the "new regionalism", some mature regions are beginning to take on the role of a "regional actor" or even a "global actor" in the region. The growing role of these regional entities as strong protagonists in international affairs (Zheng Xianwu, 2007)[6] has also meant that they have come to share common values and common concerns. and accountability, the ability to formulate coherent policies and apply policy instruments at the appropriate time, the ability to negotiate internationally, the ability to have a decision-making process, the ability to make decisions and the ability to make decisions at the appropriate time. Third, to overcome the dilemma of power competition through consultation norms (Yu Haiyan, 2018)[7]. Bridging the asymmetrical and polarized interregional structural divide to create a new, equitable, post-hegemonic world order, by. Negotiated norms. While traditional regionalism emphasizes "balance of power" structures, the influence of China's concept of "community of mankind" has been influenced by the need for a more holistic approach from the beginning. The reality of unity among the religiously heterogeneous ASEAN member states sees the new regionalism gradually embarking on a path that restricts purely power structures. The process of continuously giving power structures a new culture of consultation.

However, despite the reality and the expectation of the future of mankind to be a new regionalism, the United States is still interfering in Northeast Asia within the framework of the old regionalism. (a) Integration: Deploying a North-East Asian network of power relations with a strong ideology of regional exclusivity, excluding organizational mechanisms that do not include them; depending on how the network is organized. Northeast Asia is a passive object to

be manipulated at will, deploying a strategy of "selective intervention" to interfere with the alliance of China, Japan and South Korea; finally, power comes first. The United States, with its Cold War mentality, deployed the United States-led wheel-and-spoke bilateral diplomacy and weakened the multilateral diplomatic mechanism in East Asia. The process of integration in North-East Asia has been seriously hampered by the intervention of the United States.

2.1. Power relations network strategy: the strong idea of regional exclusivity in the United States

With the end of the cold war, the United States became the sole superpower that dominates the world. How to use its superpower to maintain its "leading position" in the world in the long run has become the core of its national interest and the The Basis for Formulating External Strategies. Since China, Japan, and Korea are not only the pillars of Asian economic development, but also play a very important role in global economic development. Therefore, the United States attaches great importance to the strategy of deploying a network of power relations in Northeast Asia, which was proposed by scholar Anne-Marie Slaughter, who argues that "in a decentralized 'networked world' or 'multi-node world,' the hierarchical structure of international society is gradually being replaced by networked structures" and that "(Cho Myung-ho, 2018)[8] it is no longer relative power, but centrality in increasingly dense global networks" that is The key to maintaining American hegemony.

The important role of networking is that "if at the nodal point of multiple ad hoc combinations formed under different interests, it is able to work with other interests Stakeholders and important forces that establish connectivity will be the most powerful states." In other words,(Anne-Marie Slaughter, 2009)[9] whoever holds the central nodes of alliance networking has the absolute power advantage in the region.

To this end, the United States has adopted a series of institutionalized means to facilitate the formation of a network of democratic alliances in Northeast Asia. For example, the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK "2+2" meetings of foreign ministers and defense ministers have been expanded into a U.S.-Japan-Republic of Korea trilateral meeting, using the TPP and FTA to promote the formation of a democratic alliance network in Northeast Asia. Economic level to bring the U.S., Japan, and South Korea closer together, improve the lack of ties between U.S. allies, and network the U.S., Japan, and South Korea alliances in order to The multi-dimensional system is fixed. At the same time, beware of the formation of regional mechanisms in Northeast Asia that are not conducive to U.S. interests and that hold back cooperation in Northeast Asia and maintain the Northeast Asia Regional Cooperation "State of Fragmentation"(Li Kaisheng, 2014)[10].

The United States has thus constructed a self-centered network of power relations to deploy, and although the United States is not an East Asian country in the geographical sense, given that the its vital interests and influence in East Asia, instinctively repulsed by a regional architecture that did not include the United States. The first expressions of exclusionary East Asia can be traced back to Malaysia (particularly Mahathir Mohamad) in 1991 A proposal for an East Asian Economic Group (EAEG) was made. The U.S. resents the fact that it is not included in this model of regional cooperation, and is therefore trying to block its(Tanaka A, 2007)[11] establishment. The integration of Northeast Asia, on the other hand, would promote China, Japan and South Korea to embrace each other, and the United States feared that the association of three powerful countries would exclude itself.

In addition, Northeast Asian integration may impact U.S. relations with other existing multilateral arrangements in the region, such as APEC, ASEAN multilateral mechanisms such as the Regional Forum, which are not only pan-Pacific (i.e., include the United States), but in which the United States has a powerful influence. Therefore, the United States has always viewed these organizations as powerful tools for pursuing policy objectives in Asia. Based on China, Japan and Korea may become a strong economic engine, the United States is concerned that the

establishment of the Northeast Asian integration mechanism will have a negative impact on other Asian organizations. Causing an impact.

2.2. Strategy of "Selective Engagement": Treating Northeast Asia as a Passive Objective

The strategy of "selective engagement" is a broad strategy of maintaining "concentrated superiority" in "key areas" to deter potential adversaries. American scholar Robert J. Art is the main advocate of this strategy, he "advocates the United States' Major political and military resources are concentrated in areas of importance to the United States, namely, its location in the Western Hemisphere, Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf region" and (Robert J, 2005)[12] to maintain a "concentrated advantage in key areas, contributing to a 'balance of power in favor of the United States' and a 'deep peace'" (Cho Myung-ho, 2012)[13]. In order to actively counterbalance China and control Northeast Asia, the U.S. maintains political and military dominance in Northeast Asia to deter opponents, such as The establishment of a strong Northeast Asian base complex centered on bases in Japan and Korea, and the stationing of large numbers of combatants in Japan and Korea; in order to obstruct the Construction of China-Japan-South Korea FTA, playing the "Diaoyu Islands" and "Sade" cards.

The most obvious U.S. intervention in Northeast Asia is its direct involvement in the Sino-Japanese Diaoyu Islands issue (Liu Xuelian, 2018)[14]. From the strategic goal of maintaining U.S. leadership in Northeast Asia, the strategic balance of power in the U.S. favor is the strategic balance between China and Japan. Status. The U.S. regularly uses the Diaoyu Islands issue as a strategic grip to keep China and Japan in a state of equilibrium. But with the rapid rise of China, China and Japan are on the verge of a strategic imbalance. This state of affairs means that without external intervention, it is difficult for China and Japan, by virtue of their own trajectory, to return to the once Lebanese-American The United States' "rebalancing strategy in the Asia-Pacific region" is, therefore, different from the previous "offshore balance" strategy. Therefore, unlike the previous "offshore balancing" strategy, the United States "Asia-Pacific rebalancing" strategy is inevitably one that favours intervention.

Faced with the inevitable transfer of power between China and the U.S. in Northeast Asia, the best path between China and the U.S. is to "face up to the fact that the other side has a certain amount of power. leadership, learning to share power and co-leadership", yet the United States still chooses (Ling Shengli, 2015)[15] a strategy of "selective engagement" and is not only committed to "leadership, learning to share power and co-leadership", but also to "selective engagement". "Use the dominant position of the United States to establish and consolidate a unipolar hegemonic world in which the United States holds an overwhelmingly dominant position", while at the same time resolutely "restraining Challenging tendency of other countries to try to seek hegemony". The thinking behind it is that the US holds absolute hegemony and sees the countries of the Northeast Asian region as passive pawns to be manipulated.

2.3. U.S.-led bilateral wheel-and-spoke diplomacy: power-driven Cold War consciousness first

Since the end of World War II, the United States has dominated the shaping of the regional security order in East Asia. However, in contrast to its support for European multilateralism, the United States has maintained a bilateralist position in East Asia By establishing separate one-on-one bilateral security relationships with allies such as Japan and South Korea, we have created a U.S.-centered wheel-and-spoke bilateral security structure. With this bilateralist arrangement, the United States controls its East Asian allies and exercises a long-term strategic containment of China.

A careful study of U.S. interests and hegemonic preferences reveals that U.S. hegemonic management is centered on its "wheel and spoke" diplomacy, which seeks to: Preserve the

existing security dilemmas and patterns of regional disputes that give them meaning and justification. As a "control operation", US hegemony has been effective in managing regional conflicts, but not necessarily in seeking comprehensive, sustainable solutions(Mastanduno M, 2002)[16] Thus, the United States preference for bilateral alliances over any multilateral or regional project is not only the result of unstable security politics in the region. And because of the advantages it provides for its grand strategy.

That the main problem with the current security structure in Northeast Asia is the excess of the United States-led wheel-and-spoke bilateralism in the region. Absence of multilateralism. In the context of wheel-and-spoke bilateralism, the lack of an interconnected network of bilateralism among core countries, particularly between the United States, China and Japan, has led to a lack of multilateralism. The tension between the United States and the United States itself makes the security situation in the region very risky and unpredictable. In fact, this security structure and situation is precisely what the United States would like to see.

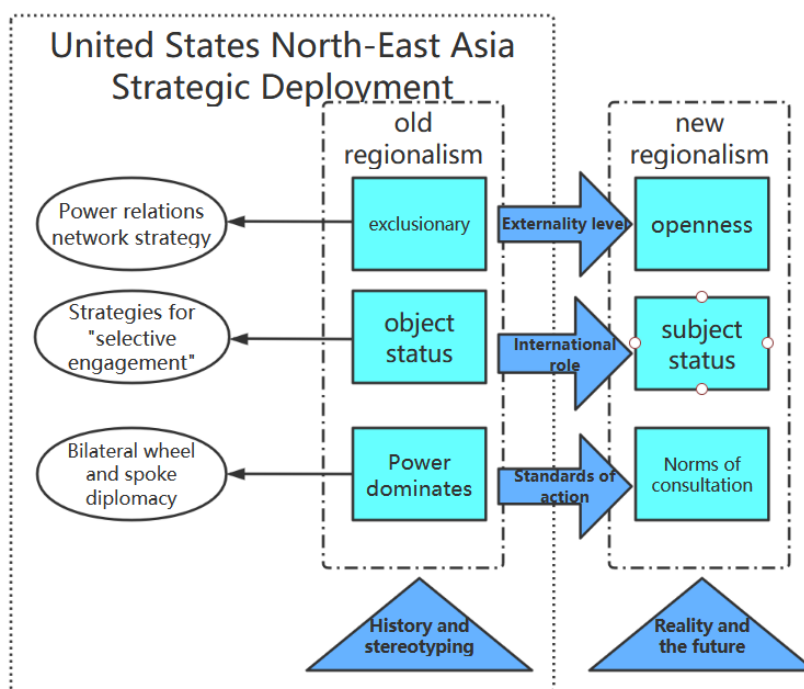


Figure 1. U.S. Strategic Deployment in Northeast Asia from a Regionalist Perspective

Objectively speaking, the role of the United States in North-East Asian integration is twofold, but its current stance and approach are at odds with its policy objectives. Many contradictions: the U.S. subjectively unwilling to exclude itself from the Northeast Asian market, but objectively frequently obstructing the construction of the China-Japan-Korea FTA rather than active participation in building; desires stability in East Asia to advance its own interests, but is comfortable with the need to maintain bilateral alliances. The Korean Peninsula and Diaoyu Islands issues have been dragging on for a long time; they want China to integrate into the international community and take on more international responsibilities, but they are afraid of China's strength. Such a contradictory approach has already constrained The United States has played a constructive role in Northeast Asian integration, and with the rapid development of global regionalism, East Asian regionalism will enter into an accelerated phase. At this stage, regional integration will be a general trend that is not dependent on the will of the United States.

3. WHAT TO DO - RESPONSE STRATEGIES IN CHINA, JAPAN AND KOREA: NEGOTIATED NORMS REPLACE POWER STRUCTURES

The United States, with its old regionalist thinking, regards North-East Asia as a passive object to be manipulated at will, rejects organizational mechanisms that do not include it, and deploys it. The U.S.-led bilateral diplomacy in the wheel-and-spoke format is designed to "ensure that the United States (Ma Rongsheng, 2007) [17] plays the role of regional order-keeper and balance of power in East Asia..., prevent the emergence of emerging powers that challenge its regional leadership." The U.S. position is necessarily to prioritize its own interests, and China, Japan and South Korea are simply its way of maintaining the strategic balance in the Asia-Pacific and maintaining its position of world dominance. Pawns, China, Japan and South Korea are neighbors who cannot be moved, and in this context, the three countries should put aside their power disputes and move toward a consultative norm.

Traditionally, Northeast Asia is more known for power struggles and geopolitical games between major powers. Compared to the EU and NAFTA, Northeast Asia has a low proportion of intra-regional trade, which is not so much due to the weak correlation between the industrial structures of China, Japan and Korea. Rather, it is due to factors other than economic rationality. In 2019, a trade dispute between Japan and South Korea erupted and the two countries sanctioned each other, resulting in a lose-lose situation. The ending, on the contrary, illustrates the objective existence of this close connection. Statistics show that in 2018, the combined GDP of China, Japan and South Korea totaled \$20.2 trillion, and the U.S. GDP is comparable, at 24% of the global GDP. China is the largest trading partner of Japan and South Korea, and Japan and South Korea are the second and third largest trading countries of China. If China, Japan and South Korea can form a close cooperative relationship, it will surely unlock huge economic potential.

The most important aspect of the reconstruction of the (Xu Jilin, 2017) [18] new Northeast Asian order is a shift in thinking from an imperial order to a communal order, from hierarchical dominance order to a flattened and egalitarian order, from a central dominant order to a polycentric interactive order, de-imperializing and de- (c) Centralization and de-hierarchization. The fundamental role of power structures in the construction and maintenance of the regional order cannot be denied, but the distribution of power itself is ambiguous. It cannot explain all the major changes that have taken place in the regional order. The exercise and restraint of State power is much more malleable than the objective nature of changes in power structures between States. This is where the value of norms of consultation lies: in the construction of new connotations of power, in the improvement of attitudes and ways of exercising state power, and in the development of new forms of power within the existing flexible and consultative norms can be a catalyst when power structures and the use of power by some States can create volatile regional situations. A vital force for regional progress.

The impact of the neo-coronavirus pneumonia epidemic (Zhang Yuyan et al. 2020) [19] provides an opportunity to further rationalize the close ties between China, Japan and South Korea, and to adjust to the new conditions compared to the rest of the world. In part, Northeast Asia was the first to experience the epidemic, and the most effective and efficient prevention and control measures were taken. This is due to the excellent foundation of cooperation between China, Japan and Korea in the field of public health, especially the institutional framework for cooperation, which has been in place since the outbreak of the epidemic. On the other hand, the cooperation mechanism among the three countries in public health emergency preparedness and response is relatively mature and can be shared in the first instance. Information and timely and effective protective measures. The effect of years of cooperation and practice has been fully reflected in the prevention and control of the new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic. Proof. In the midst of this new coronavirus epidemic, in which the GDP of the three countries has

fallen extremely rapidly, the three countries should put aside their political and historical disputes and work together in good faith, with an eye on the national Economic development and the normal life of nationals.

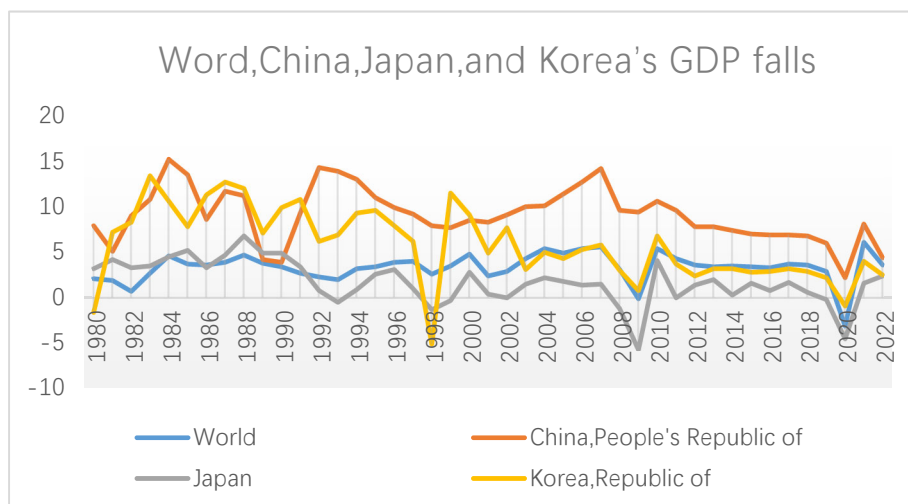


Figure 2. China, Japan, and South Korea's GDP falls amid the neo-crowning epidemic (Source: IMF, as of September 18, 2022)

https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/WEOWORLD/CHN/JPN/KOR

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The world today is moving towards a new regionalism as a future trend, but the United States is still treating Northeast Asia with the old regionalist mindset. Integration. Deploying a network of power relations in North-East Asia with a strong ideology of regional exclusivity, excluding organizational mechanisms that do not include them; seeing North-East Asia as a Deploying a strategy of "selective intervention" to interfere with the China-Japan-ROK alliance as a passive object to be manipulated at will; and finally, the power-first Cold War. thinking, deploying U.S.-led wheel-and-spoke bilateral diplomacy, and weakening the multilateral diplomatic mechanism in East Asia.

However, in the context of deepening globalization and the retreat of the Cold War, the world will move towards a new regionalism, with North-East Asia as the new integration organization of the future. The potential for cooperation is enormous, and this new crown epidemic is an opportunity to take a different path from that of regional organizations under the products of the old cold war. First, openness and inclusiveness, actively interacting with any country that is willing to accept the rules of the regional arrangement, as opposed to the fears of the United States. Towards a closed and exclusive path; secondly, there will be a move towards subjectivization, with a mature North-East Asian region with "regional actors" and even "regional actors". The role of the "global actor" is increasingly playing a strong principal role in international affairs, which also means that it will be increasingly difficult for the United States to be a "global actor". manipulation of the East Asian region; and finally, the search for negotiated norms to overcome the dilemma of power competition, as the new regionalism gradually moves towards a system that limits pure power. structure, a process of continuous empowerment of the power structure and a new culture of consultation.

At present, the United States is a key impediment to Northeast Asian integration, but with the rapid development of global regionalism, East Asian regionalism will become a major force in the region. As it enters the stage of acceleration, regional integration will be a general trend that does not depend on the will of the United States. In the long run, the United States should make

an in-depth adjustment of its East Asian policy and increase its involvement in and shaping of the region. It should reposition its role in the region and change the logic of interests and power politics to one of recognition rather than exclusion, and participation rather than power politics. A dominant mindset gives vitality and impetus to regional integration. We should consider the autonomy of the countries in the region and seek the identity and recognition of East Asian countries' role in Asia through self-restraint. The positive role of China's rise in maintaining economic prosperity and regional stability in Asia.

The new regionalism is both a realistic trend and a theory, and as a theory, there is certainly some idealism in it, but as a realistic An important response to the question "How do nations fit into the world?", building a bridge between national-nationalism and globalism. An interconnected bridge, while ideal, has no shortage of new paths for regulating national and global influence. Based on my capacity, I can only construct a rough analytical framework to explain the U.S. contribution to the process of building Northeast Asian integration. logic of thought, more questions remain to be explored in depth: are there still other structural factors, such as the blockage of China-Japan-South Korea integration? Where is the key identity of North East Asia? How strong is the new regionalist theory in explaining this problem?

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