

## Traditions of Unorganized Regionalism in Northeast Asia

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**Abstract:** This paper drew attention to the tradition of interactions among states in Northeast Asia. Since the end of cold war, the interactions tend to be promising in economic but be alarming in security issues. It is unique that states in Northeast Asia involve in several multilateral interactions with outsider states but are lack of experience in establishing intra-regional organization. Regional cooperation elsewhere refers to existing formal regional organization to manage regional conflicts and problems, but in Northeast Asia for many centuries states have been experienced with domination interaction by big powers both from states in the region and outside the region which act as hegemon. Hegemonic pattern has been a tradition of intra-regional interaction among Northeast Asia states. To analyze the above problem, the concepts of regional integration and hegemony would be explored and used as base to explain the problem rose.

**Keywords:** regional integration, hegemony, NEA's Way

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Northeast Asia (NEA) countries are states in sub regional of Asia Pacific which have high dynamic of interactions, especially of economic and military. It is hard to define its geographical boundaries of the region because it is related to complex political contexts. But, for the purpose of analysis in this article we define the Northeast Asian countries is limited to Japan, China, North Korea, and South Korea. Other countries, such as Russia and Mongolia are regarded as periphery because their interactions in the region are not as intensified as those of the core countries. Chinese Taipei is not included because this country has sovereignty problem with main land China and is not viewed as an independent political unit.

Post-cold war era witnessed changing of interactions between and among states around the world, including in Northeast Asia. Major changes in Northeast Asia which can be observed are changes in economic and security issues that involved the core countries. The presence of US military forces in Northeast Asia, uncertainties of Japan international roles, the emergence of China as regional power both in economic and military, and nuclear development of North Korea have changed the constellation of the region.

Besides core and peripheries countries, Northeast Asia has been the region of contesting sphere of influence between the two superpowers before and after the end of cold war. The presence of US and Russia, formerly USSR, becomes external factors which their roles in the region determine in shaping patterns of conflict and friendship among states in the region. American support toward South Korea, for instance, makes situation of the Korean peninsula increase its tension instead of calm and peaceful. North Korea increases its frequency of nuclear experiments to show its power capability. So does American support to Chinese Taipei makes China claim of its sovereignty over Taiwan becomes international issues, not merely regional one.

In military and security issues, the Northeast region is dominated by two dangerous issues which can threaten international peace, namely Korean peninsula conflict and China claim of sovereignty over Chinese Taipei islands. Wonwoo Shin (2019) calls it as Inter-Korean conflict between North and South Korea and Cross strait between China and Chinese Taipei. Inter-Korean conflict should be hindered as the conflict is viewed to become nuclear war because North Korea refused to be inspected by IAEA and the country continues to make experiments of its new weapons. In 2017, Pyongyang

stated that Hwasong-12 missiles have been tested and it is claimed to cover 4500 km (2,800 miles) and is capable of reaching US military bases in Guam. North Korea has also developed Hwasong-14 with maximum coverage of 8000 kilometers (New York can be the target) and its testing of Hwasong-15 which can reach a height of 4,500 kilometers, ten times of international space station height.

United States involves not only in inter-Korean conflict but also in Cross Strait conflict. Beijing insists of there is only one China and Chinese Taipei is an integral part of China. This insistence is supported by consensus 1992 between CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and KMT (Kuomintang). But in reality, the concept of one China is interpreted differently by Beijing and Taipei. Consequently, tension between two political entities has not ended. If government elected in Chinese Taipei is DPP (Democratic Progressive party) and President Tsai insists that Chinese Taipei is an independent state, Beijing will send its forces to unite Chinese Taipei islands under mainland China sovereignty. (Maizland, 2021) If Beijing uses its force to unite Chinese Taipei under its control, the United States will be involved in the conflict because the US is supplier of military equipment to Chinese Taipei in order to defend itself in dangerous situation. (Reuter, 2022)

In economic sphere, Northeast Asia is a region where “Asian Tigers’ states are located. China, Japan, and South Korea are role model of economic growth which can be imitated by third world countries. Inter-regionally, interactions of the three countries are impressive one. In the decade of 1990s, Japan and South Korea adopted capitalism system and became production and investor states that developed regional economic. Before covid-19 spread around the world, China economic growth was projected as high as 6.5% in 2017 and 6.3% in 2018. In 2016, actual economic growth was 6.7%. (<https://www.worldbank.org/in/news>).

Japan economic growth showed to be stable and optimistic at the rate of 1.9 in 2017, but in 2018 the growth had been affected by decrease of China economic so that Japan economic growth was under 2%. However, the growth was increase in 2019 at the rate of 2.1%. (Andriani, 2019; Statistical Handbook of Japan, 2021). South Korea showed the same tendency as Japan show in three years before pandemic. South Korea economic growth was at the rate of 3.2% in 2017, 2.7% in 2018, and 2% in 2019. (2019 Annual Report, 2020). Meanwhile North Korea showed the lowest economic growth than those of neighboring countries. North Korea economic growth showed minus of 3.5% in 2017, minus of 4.1% in 2018, but in 2019 the growth did increase of 0.4%. (KBS World Indonesia, 2020)

The three Asian tigers have become orientation of economic growth since the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, like Japan which was regarded as an engine of growth of flying-geese formation model of development. In this formation of development, Japan was in the top of the formation (lead-geese) which was followed by newly industrializing countries, such as China, South Korea, and Singapore; developing countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei; and under developing countries, such as Cambodia, Lao, and Myanmar. (Kojima, 2000: 2). Since the decade of 1990s, Japan has been an important actor in supplying money and other incentives needed by other Asian countries during their process of development, including that of China. Japan agency of aid management and investment, ODA, manage money to invest in East Asia countries and Southeast Asia which is more than total amount of foreign aid and investment from the US, Canada, and European countries. (Palmer, 1991: 120). This pattern of economic growth changed in the end of cold war, where China looked itself as a new power in the region both economically and militarily. Consequently, the pattern of flying-geese should be modified to accommodate China position as leader in the region.

Based on *supra* discussion, economic interactions among Northeast Asian countries in the early of 21<sup>st</sup> century can be said as promising, but if we see actions of North Korea in testing its nuclear weapons and China threaten on Chinese Taipei, the interactions are military alarming. Since the end of World War II to early of 21<sup>st</sup> century, patterns of alarming interaction intertwined with patterns of promising interaction. Northeast Asian countries, both cores and periphery ones, dragged outside power, like the US, to involve in Northeast so that they resolute their conflicts in manner of bilateral and multilateral. ASEAN and the UNO are the parties that are involved in making conflict resolution in Northeast Asia. But, the tension and deterrence are being their choices and attitudes in order to show their intention to subjugate others.

Since the end of world-war II, there have been no formal institutions as arenas to manage relationship among states in Northeast Asia. This region is left behind other region in establishing regional institution. Its neighboring region, for example, established ASEAN more than 50 years ago. States of south Asia have their regional institution of SAARC. ASEAN and SAARC even though as not too integrated as European Union, can be seen as arena or instrument or forum where its members are able to discuss regional problems, to seek formulae to handle their conflicts, and to unite goals and objectives among them. Compare to other regions, Northeast Asia is a unique region because of its high dynamics that is shaped by its promising economic interactions for regional and world economic growth and its alarming military interactions as well as there is no formal institution as a forum of regional cooperation. Kim Jangho (2005: 40) in his writing about Northeast Asia states that the interactions among states in the region show two dominant paradigm of International Relations applied, that is liberalism in economic interaction and neorealism in the interaction of security and military affairs.

This article will discuss how tradition of conflict resolution occurred in Northeast Asia. If ASEAN has the ASEAN way as a norm or code of conduct in settling internal and external problems of ASEAN, what norms are developed in interactions among states in Northeast Asia? To analyze the above question, we will explore integration concepts and forms of regional organizations as base for regional cooperation. The article is divided into four parts, namely introduction which discuss research background and research question; second part is literature review to explore integration concepts and regional organization; third part consists of discussion and analysis of the problem raised in research question; and at the end part is conclusion of the discussion.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Regional Integration (Regionalism)

In the study of International Relations, one dominant approach on how to handle conflict and cooperation in order to create peace and prosperity is developed by liberal thinkers, both classical liberal's and neo liberal ones. One of its great proponents of liberalism, Immanuel Kant, in his magnum opus of *Perpetual Peace*, stated that if countries around the world apply a form of republican free democratic system, international peace can be established. (Stean, et.al, 2010: 27)

Post world-war II many regions tried to establish regional organization as a forum for dialogue between states in the region and for uniting their power in challenging common enemies. In Western Europe, the US and its allies established security alliance of NATO and in Eastern Europe, USSR and its allies established Warsaw Pact. There was SEATO in Southeast Asia and ANZUS in Asia Pacific. All of the organizations mentioned above are based on security or military dimension. Besides that, there are many organizations that do not concern with security and military affairs, such as ASEAN, SAARC, OAU, OAS, and in the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century there were APEC, NAFTA, ARF, and so on.

The emergence of many regional organizations is regarded as an effort to manage many problems arises between states in the region. For regionalism proponents, regional cooperation is regarded as an alternative between reality and hope, which is reality of anarchism in relationship between states and hope of integrated global societies in the future. Regional integration is a moderate option that can be chosen states in the same region by considering proximity of geography, cultural, easy of economic and political transactions. Intra-regional relation can easily be formed with economic transactions of trade and benefits of economic cooperation will spill over other segments of interactions in accordance with the time goes. (Coulombis & Wolfe, 1990: 297; Haas, 1974: 221)

European countries have great experiment concerning how effective regional organization in dealing with conflict resolution and increasing common prosperity. Five European states began with cooperation in trading coal and steel under ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) and recently it evolves to Union of 25 states with many organization agencies which manage many areas of cooperation. (Alcock, 1998 : 249). Founding fathers wishes that how to avoid the next great war which made European collapsed in the future. An organization of coal and steel was viewed as starting point to make a broader cooperation in the future. Michael Haas, a proponent of liberalism state that neighboring states which geographically side by side tend to make war twice double possibility than those states that are far from each other. But if the states integrated in a supranational organization, then the possibility of outbreak of war can be reduced. (Haas, 1974 : 221).

Ideas of regionalism have been challenged by proponents of realism and globalism. Realists believe that states will be guided by their national interest than by regional interest. As stated by Gilbert Rozman, regionalism in Northeast Asia failed to establish because states in the region prefer their nationalism options to solve the problems in region than sacrifice their little interest in order to gain benefits which can be received from economic integration. (Rozman, 2004 : 2). Besides nationalism, regional integration has been criticized by supporters of universalism. Regionalism is viewed as having little impact to international peace because it tends to be closed-block. For proponents of universalism, international peace can not be divided regionally or peace by peace, but only be achieved at global level. (Coulombis and Wolfe, 1990 : 297).

In regional integration, organizational aspect are something that embedded to. This mean that cooperation in the region will give positive effect if there is formal organization. States of Northeast Asia involve in many multilateral cooperation with states outside the region, but they lack of experience in establishing regional organization among themselves

### 2.2. Hegemony

Ideas of hegemony refer to Antonio Gramsci concepts that is developed from the idea of domination from dominant class over dominated class. hegemony as developed by Gramsci is idea that was derived from Marxism. Gramsci developed the idea before Russian revolution of 1917. In his writing of *The Prison Notebook*, written when he was in jail, Gramsci stated that hegemony as a description of the power of bourgeois class, as strategy of labor class to take over the power. This concept is developed and applied broadly in many academic fields. Alex William stated that :

*The concept of hegemony since Gramsci has taken a path of increasing universality of address through an accompanying increase in abstraction. The increasing scope of the concept, in terms of the range and complexity of political phenomena within its reach, has enabled new political struggles to be given coherence and meaning. The concept of hegemony has developed to think how power in socio-political-economic systems operates, considering such systems as consisting of multiple interacting component parts (from different sectors of the state apparatus to political parties and social movements) with self-organizing dynamics, intricate hierarchical or stratified emergent structures, and multiple potential configurative possibilities.* (William, 2020 : 86)

As a concept, hegemony sometimes is confused with empire, world leadership or domination. Differ from concept that have meaning of control of subjugation, Gramscian hegemony stress on the importance of ideas in subjugation of one party to another. Exercise of control is not only by physical power and force, but also implementing by spreading ideas and introducing norms to agree (consensus relationship). To control with stressing on consensual relationship is based in understanding concept of hegemony.

In the practice of international politics, hegemony is implemented by making cooperation without annexation and control over territories. Assent and acceptance from dominated class is used in implementing hegemony. The assent and acceptance is achieved from socialization of idea or values of hegemon that is regarded as right, proper and rewarding. (Agnew, 2005 :16). Dimension of application power instruments both hard and soft power, and dimension of strength or weakness of state's capability, if the two dimensions combined will result in four patterns of control as follow : empire (strong state-hard power), neo-empire (weak state-hard power), hegemony (strong state-soft power), leadership (weak state-soft power). (Agnew, 2005 : 22). Consequently, the practice of hegemony politics should be supported by state's capabilities of strong one but implemented mostly by instruments of soft power.

Different definition of hegemony is developed by Baipai and Sahni. According to Baipai and Sahni, various meanings of concept of hegemony can be grouped into realism, liberal-institutionalism and social-constructivism thoughts. In realist tradition, hegemony come from the tradition of Hellenic military subjugation, when dominant powers deploy their military capabilities in order to get power over other party. Hegemony in liberal-institutionalism is defined by focusing on cooperation and interdependence issues in economic world. In this liberal context, Charles Kindleberger proposed hegemonic-stability theory where the core of this theory is that system of liberal economic world and open needs the existence of hegemon or dominant power. Meanwhile, in social-constructivism hegemony is the problem of control other's idea and thought, so that they are agreed and accept as dominated party. (Baipai and Sahni, 2008 : 94)



In this article, the concept of hegemony will be used to explain patterns of subjugation by dominant powers in Northeast Asia. The region of Northeast Asia can be viewed as backward region in establishing regional cooperation. Northeast Asia states actively involved in various regional and multinational organizations outside the region, but they are lack of experience in building intra region cooperation. History of interactions among the states of Northeast Asia has been dominated by patterns of hegemony. Model of hegemony has been used as tradition for centuries, although pattern of old hegemony was mainly exercised by conquer and occupation over territories. This pattern is different from hegemonic interaction in the 21st century where hegemon powers in Northeast Asia use hard and soft power as their pillars of power.

### 3. METHOD

This article focuses its analysis on interactions among core states of Northeast Asia since the end of cold war to early of 2020 when pandemic covid-19 spreads around the world. The limitation is needed because discussion about economic growth will change rapidly and significantly in the year of 2020. By issues, this article focuses on interactions between states concerning security and military issues and economic issues. These two issues are very important in the context of interactions among states in Northeast Asia.

The analysis used in this article is a descriptive qualitative one in order to see phenomena in the Northeast Asia region. Descriptive analysis is necessary to describe phenomena intra region and extra region in detailed manner, and the qualitative analysis is used because this method is valid enough to analyze actions, behaviors, and attitudes of the states. States which have different system in politics and social order are more difficult to compare and quantify in order to see their similarities. That's why qualitative method is used.

Qualitative method is viewed as an interpretive epistemology which stresses on dynamic system, constructed, and progress of social realities. This assumption is true because qualitative method depends on searching vast data resources and analyzing them prudently and then interpreting them. By doing so, subjective experience of researcher can be explored and it will enrich its description and the analyses are more comprehensive and interesting.

### 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Proposals for Cooperation & Restrains

As mentioned above that Northeast Asia has two hot-spots that threaten international peace, namely inter-Korean conflict and Cross-Strait conflict. States surrounding Northeast Asia and the pacifists are worried that there will be war in the region. Therefore, there have been many proposals for establishing regional cooperation as mean to manage these conflicts. Since Gorbachev era to early 21st century, the proposals have been rejected. More rejected proposals than accepted ones. Each state has its own approach and perspective as well as attitude on the proposals.

**Tabel.** *Proposals for Cooperation*

No	Proposed by	Proposed form of cooperation	Membership	Goal	Restraint
1.	Mikhail Gorbachev (1986)	Five Powers Regional Security Conference	USA, USSR, Japan, china and India	Discussion on security issues in Asia Pacific	USA, Japan and South Korea rejected it because it would deteriorate Western supremacy in the region.
2.	Roh Tae Woo (1989)	Consultative Conference for Peace in Northeast Asia	USA, USSR, PRC, Japan, North and South Korea	In order to lay a solid foundation for durable peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia	Rejected by Pyongyang karena mencurigai usulan itu akan mengisolasi Korea Utara dari USSR dan China
3.	Joe Clark (Canada Foreign Minister)	NPCSD (North Pacific Cooperative Security	USA, USSR, PRC, Japan, North and South Korea	Intermittent exploratory dialogue for reducing tension in avariety of policy	Opposed by USA due to Bush administration's preference for conducting security politics in the

	(1990)	Dialogue)		areas, including environment, population movement and growth and human right	region through its existing bilateral defence treaties
4.	Gareth Evan (Australian Foreign Minister) 1990	CSCA (Conference for Security and Cooperation in Asia)	USA, USSR, PRC, Japan, North and South Korea	As a mechanism for generating dialogue over territorial disputes and on how to prevent naval arm races from degenerating into open warfare	US rejected for the same reason as that of NPCSD
5.	Taro Nakayama (Japan Foreign Minister) 1991	ASEAN-PMC and Dialogue Partners	ASEAN Members, USA, Canada, Japan and ROK	Discussion and formation of new approach to resolve security issue in Asia Pacific	ASEAN states rejected because at the same time ASEAN PMC was intended to discuss trade and investment issues
5.	Kim Young-sam (President of ROK) (1994)	NEASED Northeast Asia Security Dialogue	Northeast Asian Countries	As a mechanism dialogue NEA countries	failed to gain support for its agenda from domestic and external parties
6.	Park Gyun-He (President of ROK) 2015	NAPCI (Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative)	Northeast Asian Countries (DPRK is not participating but was encouraged to join)	to build trust by accumulating a practice of multilateral dialogue and cooperation	Still on going

Sources: *Tow, 1992 : 14-16 and Sang-Hyun, 2015*

Beside above proposals, there are many other proposals that involve bilateral and multilateral Northeast Asia countries and other states outside the region (see Aggarwal and Koo, 2009 : 5). Many proposals that involve Northeast Asia countries have been operating such as APEC, ASEAN Plus Three, ARF, etc. These operating proposals, are not directed and initiated to settle the core problems of Northeast Asia, mainly on Inter-Korean and Cross-Strait conflicts.

#### 4.2. Patterns of Control by History

Along its history, Northeast Asia region have witness and experienced the interaction of subjugation and domination. Powerful states in the region and outside of the region compete to be a hegemon, at least leader one to control and manage the region affairs. Since First World War, Second World War, Cold-War, post-Cold-War, post financial crises untill post terrorist attack 9/11, the Northeast Asia region is in the position to be hegemonized.

Japan was a great power which has exercise its military and other instruments to conquer and occupy Northeast and Southeast Asia territories. Japan have a great intention to build an informal-empire which was known as Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACS). Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Matsuoka Yosuke proposed this concept on his speech on August 1944 and state that the establishment of GEACS was main goal of Japan foreign policy. This goal set Japan as regional controller which would absorb all kind of resources from Northeast and Southeast region in order to establish a region of common prosperity under control of Japanese government. This idea is intended also to expel Western colonial powers that had taken power on Asia for centuries. The United Kingdom, The Netherland, France and United States should be expelled from the region. Before using its coercive instruments, Japan have operated instruments of propaganda to make Asian people realize the importance of Asian leader and not European one. To support its hegemony in Asia Pacific, the military government of Japan also operate the machine of propaganda (flyer, film, pamphlete, puppet play/wayang, etc) to socialize values of Japanese goodness such as hard-work, discipline, obedient and respect to emperor.

In Java Island, Indonesia, for example, Japan colonial rule explore precisely special characters of Javanese people in order to get their support on Japan control over them. There were five aspects identified by Japanese colonial to make Javanese obey the ruler. Harley Matthew states that :

*Five sections are specified according to primary sources from Java; “administration, literature, music, fine arts, performance arts (theatrical plays, dance, and film). Who would fill these roles would be determined by a few factors, specifically their anti-Dutch sentiments, their personalities, skills in public life, popularity, and various other categories of interest when building these military-sanctioned propaganda machines”*

(Mathews, <https://library.tamucc.edu/exhibits/s/hist4350/page/propaganda>)

Japan colonial rule had prepared to build hegemonic area in Asia long before it attacked Pearl Harbor. A Navy research committee reported that in 1939 Japanese conquer should be accepted by native people, Japan would unite Moslem people, would cooperate with Thailand, conquered Hong Kong and would make it united with China, and to support the Philippine independence that would be used as supporting base of Japanese economy and military. (Beasley, 1987: 234).

Defeated from allied powers in World War II, Japan ended its dream to establish East Asia Co-Prosperity Community as informal empire in Asia. But, it didn't mean that Asia region was free from big powers domination. Post World War II world, international politics was colored by ideological competition between the US and the USSR in broadening their sphere of influence around the world, including Northeast Asia region. Response to the context of post - World War II, Japan made a security alliance with the US and China was under the USSR orbit of socialism. Meanwhile, Korean peninsula was competed between China and the US so that the peninsula was divided into two states, North Korea and South Korea. After freed from Japan colonialism at the end of World War II, states of Northeast Asia entered the era of hegemonic competition between the US and the USSR. The two superpowers used all of their foreign policy instruments and capabilities to maintain their supremacy in all regions, including Northeast Asia. America was security guard of Japan, South Korea, and Chinese Taipei. The USSR strengthened its position by forming Moscow-Beijing Axis; even in 1962 the axis was broken. The USSR supported Kim Il Sung government of North Korea and made a coalition of 'war water' with Vietnam.

In the era of cold war, Japan emerged as an economic giant. With US security umbrella Japan didn't think about its security, but focused on economic development and technological innovation. In the decade of 1980s Asian countries witnessed Japan as leader in flying-geese pattern of economic development. Paradigm of flying-geese (gankō keitai ron) was introduced by Kaname Akamatsu, a Japanese economist who published his work in the Journal of Development Economics in 1960. Flying-geese paradigm was economic growth paradigm which operates on the base of division of labor and comparative advantage. In this pattern, Japan was lead-goose, followed by NICs, Newly Industrializing Countries of South Korea, Chinese Taipei, Singapore, and Hong Kong, and behind them were ASEAN countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, and at the last row were China, the Philippine, and Vietnam. (Kojima, 2000: 376-377).

Flying-geese pattern of growth was a model of development with top-down line model on which Akamatsu stressed on technological transfer as an incentive of economic growth and formation of multinational enterprises as actors of production and distribution goods and services. As a lead-goose, Japan had made technological transfer to its neighboring states, established concentric circle of investment where South Korea and Chinese Taipei were the inner-circle and Southeast Asia countries and China was its outer circle. (Aggarwal & Koo, 2009: 3).

In the beginning the US as Japan's ally supported interaction pattern of flying-geese model in the hope that the model of growth set Japan as leader, the follower countries would be open market economies and the US would gain many advantages from this model. But in progress America insisted that Japan contribute to common security budgeting because Japan takes advantage from this model. Japan enjoyed its economic growth and the leader in the burden of the US as security guard.

The end of ideological conflict of 1999 brought significantly change of interaction pattern of Northeast Asia countries. The demise of the USSR has changed pattern of economic and political interactions of Northeast Asia. America became unchallenged power which freely moved to all over

the world. In John Ikenberry opinion, the US strategy in Asia is not by isolating China as competitor power, but applied engagement strategy, reassurance of allies, and building regional organization. This strategy was implemented by President Barrack Obama with two purposes directed to China, namely to catch China into the net (enmesh China) and to create counterweight coalition to balance China's rise. (Ikenberry, 2014: 55)

The emergence of China's economic and military in Northeast Asia and Pacific has been the object of debate at academic and practice levels. For more than 30 years of post-cold war, China gradually emerged with its economic initiatives and used its military instruments to strengthen its position in Northeast Asia and Asia region. Post-cold war brought a broader space for China to play its role as hegemon in the region, as mentioned by Yu Xintian:

*“ ..... It is impossible for China to be the dominant power in the traditional sense. Because of the background of globalization, it is impossible for China to exclude any big power from entering the region and playing its role. China has no choice but to cooperate or coordinate with big powers or small or medium-sized countries. China puts forward the policy of 'peaceful development road', not only because China has suffered greatly from invasion and humiliation historically, or that China possesses a noble and peaceful cultural tradition, but because the changing times and situation make it possible for China to be accepted by the world only by selecting that path”.* (Yu Xintian, 2008 ; 138)

The rise of China has been gradually seen as an avoidable fact. Traditional partners of the US, Japan, South Korea, and Australia which used to seek the US guardian, gradually move closer to China. (Ikenberry, 2014: 51). Consequently, Northeast Asia region witnessed the emergence of great power which can be hegemon in the region.

The emergence of new power in Northeast Asia has been predicted soon after the collapse of the USSR. Denni Roy in his writing 'Hegemon on the Horizon?' in International Security (1994) predicted the danger of China's rise. This worry is based on two reasons. First, China realized its growing economic capabilities, while Japan's capability to support or increase its economic leverage is in doubt. After the collapse of the USSR, China has fewer restraints than Japan to develop its military capabilities. Second, the stronger China will undermine foundation of peace in the region. Domestic characteristics of China will endorse in using its forces in pursuing its objectives. (Roy, 1994: 149-150)

What is stated by Roy is more or less a fact. China threatens to Chinese Taipei to not claim independence with a risk of open conflict with the US is a proof that China is self- confident enough in facing Washington-Taipei alliance. China also made maneuvers in the islands of Paracel and Spratley in order to show to claimant states China's capabilities if Spratley and Paracel problems will be resolved by other ways beyond China's favor. To support its claim on Spratley and Paracel islands, China uses not only its navy power but also non-conventional ways. In 2016 China denied decision of permanent court of arbitration in its conflict with the Philippine on South China sea. China uses non-conventional ways, such as charm, largesse, bribes, and blackmail in order to reach the result of competition in accordance with China's favor. (see Kumah, 2020: 35)

In economic, China insistence to revitalize its trade route of silk road which has been existed since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC is regarded as its ambition to unite economic development area in Asia, Europe, and Africa. This ambitious project was stated by President Xi Jinping in 2013 and today it is known as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

### **4.3. Pattern of Interaction Tradition of Unorganized Regionalism**

Based on above discussion, the relation between Northeast Asia states is a domination one, - a dominant rule and dominated rules. Comparing to other regions which manage conflicts and problems in regional organization, it seems that it is too difficult to form regional organization in Northeast Asia. Many initiatives have been proposed but unfortunately they have been failed and disappeared. When new proposals were raised with new initiatives, they were also unsuccessful. Consequently, there is no regional organization existed in the region.

Some analysts show that domestic characteristics of Northeast Asia states are main factors that they never form regional organization. (Rozman, 2004; Kim, 2005). Domestic factors endorse more



nationalistic pride so that states in the region refuse to think and sacrifice for mutual benefit of the region. High level of nationalism is caused by the history of conflict and domination alternately between big powers in broadening their influence in the region. (Kim, 2005: 46).

The history gives important lesson to the states of Northeast Asia on how to survive among big powers that threaten them. As stated by proponent of realism, one way to survive in anarchical situation is to strengthen its own power and capabilities. Nationalism and distrust among Northeast Asia states are too strong so that every initiatives to form regional cooperation and organization is failed to exist. Gilbert Rozman states that:

*Regionalism failed when each of the six countries active in NEA succumbed to nationalism that blocked the way to trust and cooperation, but the responsibility for failure is not equally shared. At the beginning of the 1990s it was assumed that all actors in NEA were prepared to make at least the minimum sacrifice necessary in return for substantial benefits from economic integration and other regional ties.* (Rozman, 2004 : 2)

Besides nationalism, the involvement of outsiders, the US and Russia, as global powers in Northeast Asia make the problems in the region more complicated. Both two hot-spots of the region, inter-Korean conflict and cross-strait conflict, drags the US involve in the conflicts. Ikenberry stated that after the demise of the USSR the US maintains its involvement in the region and asks China to join the US cooperation net, but China wants Northeast Asia to be free from outsider interferer. (Ikenberry, 2014: 56)

Since the beginning from one era to others, hierarchical relations have been traditions and customs in state interaction in the region. The model of interaction is not new pattern of behavior among states in the region. Feng Zhang argued that the relations between Northeast Asia states are not in the form of hegemony but in the form of hierarchical and this pattern can be traced back to Ming dynasty. (Zhang, 2015: 7).

From historical experience of domination in Northeast Asia, the pattern was step by step viewed as tradition and custom as well as attitude of the states in responding their interactions. From one hegemon to the others, from Japan hegemony to outside competitors of the US and the USSR, recently Northeast Asia sees the rise of China as new hegemon. This is the pattern of regulation in Northeast Asia. The experience like this pattern that will be existed if there are problems of economic and security in the region. Resolutions of conflict or problem settlement are exercised by non-mutual position, not by dialogue as equal partners.

Issue of inter-Korean conflict, for example, North Korea is hardly directed to negotiation. North Korea prefers to show its nuclear ability to talk with South Korea. So does cross strait conflict. From the beginning China will use its force if Chinese Taipei declares its independence. Several dialogues to resolve inter-Korean conflict have been done, especially on North Korea nuclear program, such as six party talks (6PT) that comprise North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, US and Russia. After many talks since 2003, 6PT failed to reach agreement because North Korea left the talks. (ACA, 2022)

Pattern of conflict resolution as discussed above shows that it is difficult to apply dialogue as equal partners between states in settling the problems in Northeast Asia. The dialogue as equal partners has not been customized in Northeast Asia, although it is common in neighboring region of Southeast Asia (ASEAN) and in European region. States with authoritarian regime, such as Japan in pre-war era, North Korea, and China nowadays don't settle conflict resolution with respect of other parties as equal counterparts. They see the others as enemies. Their developed tradition is an attitude and behavior of dominating in order to create hegemony. In this situation, the involvement of external big powers, like the US and Russia, does not make the problems more ease, but more complicated. North Korea does not show openly how its strategy to be hegemon. Its nuclear tests are regarded as reaction to stubborn attitude of the US on North Korea which insists that North Korea follow norms and rules created by the US. This description is more or less similar to that of non-interference principle of ASEAN, the ASEAN's Way. Similar to that of ASEAN, we can call the pattern of interaction in Northeast Asia as the NEA's Way.

There is important and interesting proposal of regional cooperation on states interaction in Northeast Asia. Among core states, South Korea is the most democratic regime, but militarily the weakest state in the region. It is viewed that South Korea does not have ambition to be hegemon or even leader in the region. It is interesting, however, those initiatives of cooperation multilaterally both in Northeast Asia and Asia Pacific are proposed by South Korea leaders. (See the table above). This fact needs to be explored further on how democratic is linked to tradition of cooperation in the situation of mutual position.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Northeast Asia is the most dynamic region in economic and security interactions. The rapid growth of economic among core states in the region has not been accompanied by conducive security condition. Consequently, Northeast Asia is a hot spot region which can explode anytime. Strong norms and behavior among states in Northeast Asia are their intention to dominate and establish hegemonic regime. This is what we call the NEA's way, a model of tradition to resolve the problems even though the problems have not been resolved and Northeast Asia region is still in position of alarming in security issues.

Besides negative view, positive attitudes have been shown by South Korea. South Korea, the most democratic state in the region has many initiatives to create regional cooperation. It has proposed several constructive initiatives even though the initiatives have been rejected and the regional organization in Northeast Asia has not been established yet.

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**Citation:** Ambarwati & Subarno, Siti Hajar. "Traditions of Unorganized Regionalism in Northeast Asia" *International Journal of Political Science (IJPS)*, vol 8, no. 1, 2022, pp. 10-20. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2454-9452.0801002>.

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