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Quiet Transformation from the Bottom: Emerging Transnational Networks Among Non-State Actors in Northeast Asia Community-Building

Seung Youn Oh

In Northeast Asia, an extensive web of informal intra-regional economic and cultural integration coexists with fractious political and security issues that often hinder potential cooperation. The combined experience of colonization at the turn of the twentieth century and the historical remnants of the Cold War led to the regional states developing a strong sense of nationalism and intense commitment to the ideals of Westphalian sovereignty.¹ Traditional security concerns dominate the region, and nation-states remain the focus of most discussions regarding regional

¹Chung-In Moon and Chaesung Chun, “Sovereignty: Dominance of the Westphalian Concept and Implications for Regional Security,” in *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 111.

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integration. These fundamental realities explain the relative lack of formal and institutionalized cooperation among China, Japan, and South Korea.²

Yet, the region is also marked by significant instances of successful democratization and breathtaking economic development. These political and economic achievements have granted a wide range of non-state actors the opportunity to be part of the regional integration process and brought about developmental challenges that require collective action. If analysis of community-building efforts in Northeast Asia is fixated on the level of the nation-state and the central government, then one fails to capture the complex, transnational integration dynamics that are now vigorously at work in the region. In particular, non-state actors—less constrained than national authorities by political tensions and historical legacies—are not only generating a new capacity for regional community-building, they are also strengthening existing forms of regional cooperation.

At the sub-national level, local governments in China, Japan, and South Korea have deepened their inter-city networks through social, cultural, and economic cooperative projects while sharing knowledge about opportunities and challenges inherent in the processes of industrialization and urbanization. At the same time, multinational corporations are expanding their transnational operations in the region through global and regional production networks. Such trans-national commercial linkages raise business actors' interest in regionally collaborative economic policies and political relations.

Transnational “epistemic communities” among scholars, experts, and think tanks have also played a key role in deepening regional cooperation at the ideational level by identifying common issues and proposing shared solutions across borders and issue areas. Civil society actors have become indispensable participants in raising public awareness of various issues transnationally, providing knowledge and expertise for how best to resolve problems, and often acting as pressure groups for the enactment of national and regional-level policies. This wide range of actors has ushered in a new era of regional community-building in Northeast Asia by bringing about

²Kent Calder and Min Ye, *The Making of Northeast Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, *Network Power: Japan and Asia* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1997); Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

quiet transformations below the nation-state level, both in spite of and because of political uncertainties.

This chapter explores how non-state actors in Northeast Asia in both individual countries and at the regional level serve as transnational constituencies and create regional networks to solve shared problems. Northeast Asia—encompassing Japan, China, the two Koreas, Taiwan, Mongolia, and the Russian Far East—consists of countries with a wide variety of political systems and differing levels of economic development. This chapter pays special attention to the networks and coalitions of non-state actors in China, Japan, and South Korea to assess the opportunities and challenges non-state actors face in overcoming the political and historical tensions in one of the least institutionalized regions in the world. I argue that despite the embryonic stage of multilateral networks of non-state actors from these three countries, issue-based and cross-border civil society collaboration has generated a new capacity for reaching consensus about how to tackle common problems and for strengthening regional cooperation. Their operations can bypass “high politics” at the national government level because their agenda does not directly mirror ongoing political tensions. Also, in the face of pressing domestic developmental challenges in issue areas such as energy insecurity and environmental degradation, Northeast Asian countries need support from non-state actors in terms of new ideas, scientific knowledge, field experience, and capacity for mass mobilization. Thus, examining how non-state actors are relevant to building a regional framework in Northeast Asia is both a normative and practical endeavor.

In identifying sources of regional cooperation from a multifaceted perspective, this chapter provides a three-part overview of non-state actor networks for transnational community-building efforts in Northeast Asia. The first section begins with a discussion of the emergence of non-state actors and their roles in regional community-building. The second section identifies the nature and characteristics of networks developing among various non-state actors in the region by examining case studies of cross-national activism and cooperative projects undertaken by local governments and civil society. In so doing, I suggest that inter-city and cross-border networks among non-state actors tend to focus on a single issue and be more effective in addressing non-traditional security problems. Non-state actors’ participation in community-building is not completely immune to underlying political dynamics in the region, and is often constrained by state-society relations in various countries. Nevertheless, this

chapter concludes with the argument that non-state actors' participation in regional community-building allows the concept of an East Asian Community to move past an elusive dream to a reachable possibility.

UNDERSTANDING THE MULTILAYERED FORCES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION

An Emerging Space for Non-state Actors in Northeast Asia

This chapter begins with the recognition that non-state actors in Northeast Asia do not constitute a single category and that trans-border interactions among non-state actors are not all part of one coherent movement. Rather than imposing a variety of idealized definitions that are fraught with analytical confusion, this chapter conceptualizes non-state actors as a broad spectrum of organizations that coexist in the space between the nation-state (represented as the central government) and the market. Non-state actors are defined here with respect to the degree to which they operate autonomously based on shared values and goals, as opposed to mirroring the priorities set by nation-states or the market. Hence, this sector includes not only civil society groups (such as nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], professional organizations, and think tanks), but also some sub-national government actors (such as local governments or networks of like-minded government officials who often act in a civilian capacity).

From a cross-regional perspective, Northeast Asia has lagged behind Southeast Asia, where various non-state actors have institutionalized their cross-national collaborations and successfully gained access to policymaking through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) from as early as the 1970s.³ While it got off to a slower start, Northeast Asia

³Soon after its founding, ASEAN began incorporating non-state actors and non-security related matters in its regional program and formulating regional objectives. In 1972, active business sector involvement in many of ASEAN's economic integration initiatives resulted in the establishment of the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASEAN-CCI)—the main vehicle through which the business community communicates its concerns on regional economic issues to ASEAN. ASEAN-CCI played a key role in the creation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in the early 1990s. (Paul Bowles, "ASEAN, AFTA, and the 'New Regionalism,'" *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (1997), 219–33; J. L. Tongzon, *The Economics of Southeast Asia*, 2nd edition (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing

witnessed a rapid expansion of regional collaborations during the 1990s and 2000s, with Track II dialogues on East Asian Community Building, inter-city collaboration, and civil society activism. These partial successes in state-to-state diplomacy created meaningful links between societies that previously had only tenuous connections—links that would ultimately generate new opportunities for individuals and civil society organizations to operate and interact autonomously without direction from the state or market forces. This emerging space for non-state actors to play vital roles in community-building needs to be seen in the context of changing inter-state relations at the macro level, as well as the political and economic changes taking place in the domestic politics of respective countries in the region.

First, major geopolitical changes and several financial crises have prompted East Asian countries to move toward regional integration. In the post-Cold War era, the intense ideological and political competition among nation-states subsided and was supplanted, to some extent, by dialogues between new players regarding transnational integration. Conversely, the end of the Cold War also brought bilateral political and historical tensions to the surface, which had been suppressed under the geopolitical rivalry between the First and the Second World War. The tensions emerged from hyper-nationalism, territorial disputes, and the

Ltd., Inc, 2002), 182; Alexander Chandra, “The Role of Non-state Actors in ASEAN,” in *Revisiting Southeast Asian Regionalism*, ed. Focus on the Global South (Manila: Cor-Asia, Inc, 2006), 71–81. ASEAN’s most active knowledge networks have been established in the field of forestry, such as the Regional Knowledge Network on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG Network) established in October 2008 as well as the Regional Knowledge Network on Forests and Climate Change. For more details, see Lorraine Elliott, “ASEAN and Environmental Governance: Strategies of Regionalism in Southeast Asia,” *Global Environmental Politics*, Vol. 12, No.3 (2012); Nicholas A. Robinson and Koh Kheng-Lian, “Strengthening Sustainable Development in Regional Inter-Governmental Governance: Lessons from the ‘ASEAN Way,’” *Singapore Journal of International and Comparative Law* 6 (2002); Paruedee Nguitragee, “Negotiation the Haze Treaty: Rationality and Institutions in the Negotiations for the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (2011).

North Korea issue, among other causes. These conflicts interfered with the opportunities for cooperation unleashed by the end of the Cold War and greatly complicated the regional integration process.⁴ In spite of these contradictory tendencies, the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis served as a critical juncture that called for collective mobilization in the region.⁵ East Asian countries shared a feeling of resentment toward—and humiliation in the face of—outside pressure, as well as the need to protect their distinctive form of capitalism that differed from that of Europe or North America.⁶ Various Track II dialogues on Korean Peninsula issues among a community of intellectuals, academics, and experts preceded the establishment of formal intergovernmental organizations in the region and played an instrumental role at the ideational level.⁷ For example, the East Asia Vision Group was created in response to the proposal for a Northeast Asian regional community by South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung in 1998, which served as one of the region's most extensive and comprehensive nongovernmental processes and facilitated the establishment of the East Asian Summit in 2005. East Asian community-building efforts were further consolidated by the states and non-state actors that have responded to North Korean nuclear proliferation for two decades and by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis.

Second, at the domestic level, democratization and industrialization opened political opportunities whereby civil society organizations became prominent sources of ideas and actors involved in regional community-building. For the democratic countries of Japan and South Korea, civil society has been an integral part of the democratization process

⁴Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁵Vinod K. Aggarwal, and Min Gyo Koo, ed. *Asia's New Institutional Architecture: Evolving Structures for Managing Trade, Financial, and Security Relations* (New York: Springer, 2008); Calder and Ye, *The Making of Northeast Asia*.

⁶Richard Higgot, "The Asian Economic Crisis: A Study in the Politics of Resentment," *New Political Economy* Vol. 3, No. 3 (2007); Paul Bowles, "Asia's Post-crisis Regionalism: Bringing the State Back In, Keeping the (United) States Out," *Review of International Political Economy* Vol. 9, No. 2 (2002); Richard Stubbs, "ASEAN Plus Three: Emerging East Asian Regionalism?" *Asian Survey* Vol. 42, No. 3 (2002): 445.

⁷T. J. Pempel, ed., *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

—raising public awareness and calling for government accountability regarding critical social problems.⁸ In the authoritarian country of China, social organizations exist as either professional associations or government-organized NGOs, which express their views on social affairs within highly regulated and constrained operational parameters set by the party-state.⁹ China has, nevertheless, experienced an explosion of grassroots political activity.¹⁰ Regardless of regime type, successful economic development of Northeast Asian countries depends on confronting common challenges with shared expertise and collective action. For example, port cities—including China’s Dalian, South Korea’s Inchon, and Japan’s Niigata—face risks from climate change, particularly from rising sea levels.¹¹ Other examples include energy insecurity, urban sprawl,

⁸Muthiah Alagappa, *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Sunhyuk Kim, *The Politics of Democratization in Korea* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); Charles Armstrong ed., *Korean Civil Society: Civil Society, Democracy, and the State* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2002); Robin M. LeBlanc, *Bicycle Citizen: The Political World of the Japanese Housewife* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1999); Kim Reimann, “Building Global Civil Society from the Outside In? Japanese International Development NGOs, the State, and International Norms,” in *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, ed. Frank J. Schwartz and Susan J. Pharr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Yasuo Takao, *Reinventing Japan: From Merchant Nation to Civic Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁹Fengshi Wu and Wen Bo, “Nongovernmental Organizations and Environmental Protests: Impact in East Asia,” in *Routledge Handbook of Environment and Society in Asia*, eds. Graeme Lang and Paul Harris, (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2014); Fengshi Wu, “New Partners or Old Brothers? GONGO in Transnational Environmental Advocacy in China,” in *China Environment Series 5*, ed. Jennifer L. Turner (Washington, DC: ECSP, 2002).

¹⁰Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Elizabeth Perry and Merle Goldman, ed. *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Peter Ho and Richard Edmonds, ed. *China’s Embedded Activism: Opportunities and Constraints of a Social Movement* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

¹¹Peter Hayes and Richard Tanter, “Global Problems, Complexity, and Civil Society in East Asia,” in Peter Hayes and Kiho Yi, ed. *Complexity, Security, and Civil Society in East Asia* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015).

environmental degradation, migration, disaster management, and financial vulnerability. These issues transect multiple states in the region and are hard to tackle, let alone resolve, at the level of single countries. Due to their agility and dense networks, non-state actors have unprecedented opportunities to both discuss regional affairs and propose specific solutions to common challenges.

Lastly, if democratization and industrialization opened the door for non-state actors to become an integral and indispensable part of regional governance, the development of information technology and social media has made the walls between borders porous and ushered in a remarkable new era of information sharing. A combination of globalization, privatization, and the Information Technology (IT) revolution enabled rapid development in communication methods and the free flow of information, which in turn allowed for the rise of transnational networking among professionals and the narrowing of the gap between experts and the public. One example of this last phenomenon comes from the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability, a nongovernmental policy-oriented research and advocacy group. The institute launched an information network called Nautilus Peace and Security Net (NAPSNet) in 1993, which covered key areas of research and policy work including nuclear deterrence, energy security, and climate change in the Asia-Pacific region. Through this information network, people can share expertise, propose ideas to resolve problems on the basis of shared scientific beliefs, and create and maintain social institutions that respond to problems.¹²

Information technology has provided alternative sources of data that cannot be found in the mass media or official propaganda of each country. For example, since 2007, the American Embassy in Beijing started to publish its PM_{2.5} Air Quality Index (AQI) on Twitter; since then, several smartphone applications have made the data user-friendly, providing an alternative to official data published by the Chinese Ministry of

¹²Peter Hayes, Wade Huntley, Tim Savage, and GeeGee Wong, “The Impact of the Northeast Asian Peace and Security Network in US-DPRK Conflict Resolution” (paper presented at Internet and International Systems: Information Technology and American Foreign Policy Decision-making Workshop, Nautilus Institute, San Francisco, December 10, 1999).

Environmental Protection.¹³ Another fascinating example of the Internet's ability to empower the public comes from "Safecast"—an international, volunteer-driven organization that has provided radiation information to the public following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear meltdown in Japan. Safecast empowers the public by monitoring, gathering, and sharing information on environmental radiation and other pollutants from Fukushima and providing an alternative to government data. In South Korea, Energy Justice Action has hosted live Internet broadcasts everyday giving detailed accounts of the Fukushima incident to the public while also providing information about South Korea's own energy policy and nuclear export strategy.¹⁴ Northeast Asian countries' especially high Internet penetration rates mean that both the public and civil society have an inexpensive way to communicate with parties in and outside the region.¹⁵ As of 2014, 91% of the total population in Japan, 84% of the population in South Korea, and 50% of the population in China has access to the Internet, which provides an important foundation for potential network-building efforts in the region.¹⁶

¹³These tweets on air quality can reach a growing audience via third-party smartphone apps that have found a way to circumvent China's blocking of Twitter. These apps include the Beijing Air iPhone app (iphone.bjair.info) and the China Air Quality Index, which show the official data released by China's Ministry of Environmental Protection and data from the U.S. Embassy. The apps also allow users to share images depicting current air quality and screenshots with friends via social media platforms such as Weibo (a social networking alternative to the Facebook and Twitter, which are blocked in in China). Moreover, there are also websites such as Beijing Air Pollution Real Time AQI, which presents air pollution data on hundreds of cities across China in order to promote transparency regarding air quality data.

¹⁴See movie.energyjustice.kr; <http://energyjustice.kr/zbx/>.

¹⁵Kenji Kushida and Seung-Youn Oh, "The Political Economies of Broadband Development in Korea and Japan," *Asian Survey* Vol. 47, No. 3 (2007).

¹⁶"Percentage of Population Using the Internet in Japan from 2000 to 2014," last modified, <http://www.statista.com/statistics/255857/internet-penetration-in-japan/>; "Percentage of Population Using the Internet in South Korea from 2000 to 2014," last modified, <http://www.statista.com/statistics/255859/internet-penetration-in-south-korea/>; "Percentage of Population Using the Internet in China from 2000 to 2014," last modified, <http://www.statista.com/statistics/255136/internet-penetration-in-china/>.

Conceptualizing Multi-level Regional Community-Building Efforts

In Northeast Asia, policy areas that were once the indisputable domain of state actors and formal public authorities have increasingly become part of a shared “policy commons” due to the emergence of non-state actors and the increasing complexity of the region’s economic and social problems.¹⁷ While states remain important participants in regional affairs, they are no longer the only driving forces behind policy formation at the ideational and operational levels. The boundaries between the state and society—as well as those between the public and private sectors—have become blurred, and efforts to build a regional framework are occurring in three distinct (if overlapping) spheres.

In the first sphere, state-driven integration efforts have resulted in formal government organizations such as ASEAN Plus Three, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the East Asia Summit. In the second sphere, a variety of informal “Track II” channels foster conversation on economic, political, security, environmental, and other transnational issues and have routinely brought together regional leaders to lay down the groundwork for the creation of formal organizations. In this second layer of building a Northeast Asian regional framework, “epistemic communities”—defined as networks of professionals with recognized expertise in specific issue-areas and the authority to define their policy goals—are also essential, as they develop shared principles, causal beliefs, and social discourse and practices.¹⁸ The Boao Forum for Asia and Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity, which are headquartered in China and South Korea respectively, stand out as examples of the most extensive and comprehensive transnational and multi-sectoral networking processes. They were initiated by private actors (scholars and universities) in partnership with local governments and later went on to draw support from the central government.¹⁹ They regularly convene leaders from the government, businesses, and academia to exchange views informally with the goal

¹⁷Jon Pierre and B. Guy Peters, *Governance, Politics, and the State* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 4–5.

¹⁸Peter M. Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,” *International Organization* Vol. 46, No. 1 (1992).

¹⁹Kiho Yi et al., “The Implications of Civic Diplomacy for ROK Foreign Policy,” in Peter Hayes and Kiho Yi ed., *Complexity, Security, and Civil Society in East Asia* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015).

of expanding cooperation in various policy areas. Another example comes from the framework of ASEAN Plus Three: The Network of Northeast Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT), which generates new and creative regional policy ideas on energy, telecommunications, and financial issues.

The third sphere is the realm of civil society, which consists of NGOs, regional advocacy groups, and professional and business associations. Non-governmental and non-profit in their orientation, civil society actors share universally accepted norms and values which empowers them to forge regional cooperation through major networks that incorporate state actors as well as the general public. The depth of connections in non-state actors' transnational coalitions and networks means these groups can share high-quality information and often overcome barriers at the level of high politics; moreover, these strong connections have allowed non-state actors to expand their domain of activities, change local policies, and affect regional politics. Actors in this third (civil society) sphere are especially good at three things: (1) initiating discussions on sensitive issues and generating transparency; (2) creating links with grassroots organizations, mobilizing people, and organizing collective action; and (3) finding solutions for complex problems. In sum, they can "fill structural 'holes' between other networks by spanning borders or boundaries, thereby creating networks of networks enabling other organizations to communicate in ways otherwise thought impossible."²⁰ Non-state actors complement the functions of the nation-state and create a feedback loop of knowledge and regional integration that enhances Northeast Asia's long-term economic and political stability.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSNATIONAL COALITIONS AMONG NON-STATE ACTORS IN NORTHEAST ASIA

Impact of State-society Relationships

Many comparative studies on East Asian regional integration have confirmed that the varying political systems and regulatory environments in each country affect the way in which the state-society relationship develops, which in turn impacts the framework through which non-state actors are connected to other actors and the extent to which they are part of the

²⁰Hayes and Tanter, *Global Problems, Complexity, and Civil Society in East Asia*, 76.

polymaking process.²¹ The changing nature of state-society relationships shapes transnational network-building among non-state actors in two important areas: (1) their ability to reach a consensus on goals and policy preferences, and (2) their ability to operate independently of state interest and still have the potential to influence the policymaking process.

First, non-state actors need to reach a consensus on both shared problems and policy choices before they can collectively mobilize their financial and human resources. Since non-state actors operate under different political structures and developmental phases, this first step is often challenging.²² For example, the air pollution and acid rain originating from China's rapid industrialization have been big concerns for both Japan and South Korea, as they are located downwind from China. Their vulnerability prompted various governmental and non-governmental actors to create regional and sub-regional environmental frameworks and programs.²³ Conversely, not only does the Chinese government often attempt to avoid being regarded as a source country, but Chinese non-state actors tend to concentrate on domestic environmental issues before addressing cross-national concerns.²⁴ As a result, Northeast Asian countries struggle to find common ground on the pollution issue, identify specific countries' responsibilities, and articulate conclusive scientific solutions, creates obstacles to developing and implementing effective solutions. For example, Japan, South Korea, and China voiced differences on air pollution and deforestation during the meeting of the Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation in 2000. Consequently, the organization's

²¹Wu and Bo, *Nongovernmental Organizations and Environmental Protests: Impact in East Asia*; Miranda A. Schreurs, "Problems and Prospects for Regional Environmental Cooperation in East Asia," in *Advancing East Asian Regionalism*, ed. Melissa Curley and Nicholas Thomas (New York: Routledge, 2006); Celeste Arrington and Sook-Jong Lee, "The Politics of NGOs and Democratic Governance in South Korea and Japan," *Pacific Focus*, 2008: pp. 75–96.

²²Hayes and Tanter, *Global Problems, Complexity, and Civil Society in East Asia*.

²³Moreover, Japan and South Korea are both motivated by economic interests to sell environmental technologies to China. Peter Hayes and Lyuba Zarsky, "Environmental Issues and Regimes in East Asia," *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 6 (1995), 283.

²⁴Yasumasa Komori, "Evaluating Regional Environmental Governance in Northeast Asia," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* Vol. 37, No. 1 (2010).

proposed Core Fund did not materialize and the original plan for joint research projects could not be implemented.²⁵

Second, the extent to which non-state actors can operate independently significantly affects the nature of their mobilization. Without such autonomy, their proposals will mirror domestic political priorities or be driven by state preferences. Northeast Asian countries are known as “strong states” with hierarchical state-society relationships (in spite of whether they are democratic or non-democratic). In identifying “network-style integration,” Peter Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi deliberately paid little attention to non-state actors outside of the market and instead noted how hierarchic state-society relationships stunted the development of horizontal and associational communities in the region.²⁶ Although they are still considered to be state-centered rather than society-centered, both Japan and South Korea have gradually developed into “embedded states” by strengthening the liberal nature of the state’s relationships with other social actors through economic and political liberalization.²⁷ The Chinese system, meanwhile, is characterized by party-state dominance, where the state exerts significant control over the activities of societal associations. There has been a notable increase in the number of NGOs in China since the late 1990s, but their activities remain highly regulated and operate within the parameters set by the government. In addition, an increasing number of these NGOs are becoming so-called government-organized NGOs (GONGOs), which are coopted into the system and constrained from autonomous social actions.²⁸ Their agenda and activities are shaped,

²⁵Whasun Jho and Hyunju Lee. “The Structure and Political Dynamics of Regulating “Yellow Sand” in Northeast Asia,” *Asian Perspective* Vol. 33, No. 2(2009).

²⁶Katzenstein and Shiraishi.

²⁷Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Chung-In Moon and Rashmi Prasad, “Networks, Politics, and Institutions,” in *Beyond the Developmental State: East Asia’s Political Economies Reconsidered*, ed. Steven Chan et al. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998).

²⁸Jessica C. Teets, *Civil Society Under Authoritarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Hidetaka Yoshimatsu, *The Political Economy of Regionalism in East Asia: Integrative Explanation for Dynamics and Challenges* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Fengshi Wu, “New Partners or Old Brothers?.”

affected, and guided by government authorities at the central and regional levels. Civil-society actors also often make conscious decisions not to use strategies that mobilize collective resistance due to daunting political pressure, the high prevalence of surveillance, and the hidden constraints they endure on a daily basis.²⁹ Overall, the state-society relationship not only affects the types, viability, and effectiveness of non-state actor coalitions, but also critically depends on the contours of domestic politics.³⁰

Additionally, the government's attitude toward public pressure can affect the opportunity structures non-state actor movements encounter and can shift the balance in state-society relationships.³¹ When the ruling party is more willing and able to respond to public demands, non-state actors encounter fewer hurdles to accessing the policy-making arena. When the ruling party is more resistant to public demands, however, non-state actors can still overcome barriers created by domestic political structures by obtaining project funding and greater visibility through transnational networks; regional non-state actors tend to have more success in advancing these goals when international organizations prioritize a certain agenda as a critical global political issue.³² Non-state actors can further influence the direction of domestic policy through external pressure imposed on the central government—the so-called boomerang effect. This will be demonstrated in the case study section through the examples of how the

²⁹Fengshi Wu and Kinman Chan, "Graduated Control and Beyond: The Evolving Governance over Social Organizations in China," *China Perspectives* Vol. 3 (2012); In China, there has been a clear disconnect between NGO-centered advocacy and mass-based protests.

³⁰Miranda A. Schreurs, "Problems and Prospects for Regional Environmental Cooperation in East Asia," in *Advancing East Asian Regionalism*, ed. Melissa Curley and Nicholas Thomas (New York: Routledge, 2006).

³¹Mary Alice Haddad, "Paradoxes of Democratization: Environmental Politics in East Asia," in *Routledge Handbook of Environment and Society in Asia*, ed. Paul Harris and Graeme Lang (New York: Routledge, 2014).

³²Thomas Risse-Kappen et al, *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures, and International Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995).

transnational anti-nuclear movement affected domestic nuclear power plant development in Taiwan and other East Asian countries.³³

Patterns of Cross-National Coalition-Building

Caught between their aspirations for building multilateral cooperation and constraining political realities, transnational coalitions among non-state actors in Northeast Asia have developed two main characteristics: (1) greater focus on non-traditional than traditional security issues and (2) more bilateral than multilateral forms of collaboration. First, transnational networks among non-state actors are more likely to emerge around non-traditional security issues where the interests of international organizations, nation-states, and non-governmental actors converge—such as the environment, human trafficking, disaster relief, and other developmental challenges. Although traditional security issues such as territorial disputes or nuclear proliferation are dominated by nation-state actors and complicated by national interests, non-traditional security areas allow actors with various interests to reach agreements regarding the sources of problems, potential solutions, and policy preferences due to the transnationally shared nature of the issues. The universality of norms and values underlying human security issues, for example, resonate powerfully in the minds of the general public. Moreover, non-traditional security issue areas often motivate state actors to ask for technical and logistical support from non-state actors including academics, experts, and “soft elites” (that is, networks of like-minded government officials who often act in a civilian capacity). This kind of a specific issue-focused network can be a double-edged sword, however. Without a central entity acting as a hub to manage various cross-national participants, cross-national networks can be short-term

³³Examples of this are commonly seen in Southeast Asia, where foreign governments and development banks support NGO projects and empower them to foster democratization and influence national policy concerning environmental protection and biodiversity. In Indonesia, the U.S. Agency for International Development created a trust fund to provide long-term support for Indonesian NGOs working on biodiversity issues that include politically sensitive issues as land reform, government transparency, and forest management. For details, see Laura B. Campbell, “The Political Economy of Environmental Regionalism in Asia,” in *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region*, ed. T. J. Pempel (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

phenomena that fade away once a specific issue is tackled or because transaction costs increase to unsupportable levels due to overlapping projects and minimal coordination.

Another characteristic of non-state actor cooperation in Northeast Asia is the predominance of bilateral initiatives over multilateral ones. Unlike official top-level meetings, discussions of regional initiatives among non-state actors tend to be event-based and location-specific. A non-state network often begins with a certain group's experience in one country, and then expands to bilateral coordination that includes actors at various cross-national levels, rather than starting out on a multilateral basis. Depending on the level of accountability, institutionalization, and organizational strength, the shape of the transnational coordination and collaboration takes one of two different forms: networks or coalitions. Networks involve spontaneous and functional processes, often serving as a prelude to coalition-building over time. Coalitions, meanwhile, are tightly coordinated and dense organizational networks with more clearly defined agendas for joint actions and more commonly shared goals. Effective network- and coalition-building can improve efficiency by allowing organizations to address multifaceted issues that are larger than any one of their particular missions and achieve a broader purpose than could be accomplished by any single organization. Coalition-building also reduces duplication of efforts and costs, minimizes unhelpful competition, and magnifies issue visibility.³⁴

Japanese or South Korean civil-society actors tend to initiate mostly bilateral collaborations, while Chinese civil-society actors are usually incorporated at some point later in the process. Japan occupies a unique position in the region as a highly industrialized country that contributes to regional development through its Official Development Assistance (ODA). Prefectural and municipal governments serve as important initiators and constituencies of ODA projects, and local NGOs actively participate as well. Such networks of collaboration complement the Japanese central government's intention of using the ODA as a channel for diplomacy. Chinese NGOs and social actors may not initiate transnational collaboration, but they are important participants at the operational level. Unlike the limited role played by NGOs, however, sub-national Chinese governments

³⁴Helen Yanacopulos, "The strategies that bind: NGO coalitions and their influence," *Global Networks*, 5 (2005).

maintain relatively strong autonomy at the local level so they can build inter-city networks by bypassing Beijing's control and opening up opportunity structures for non-state actor coalitions to penetrate into China, as will be discussed in the following case study section.

OVERVIEW OF EMERGING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISMS IN NORTHEAST ASIA

A number of factors have motivated Northeast Asian states to make the “3Es” of economic growth, environment protection, and energy security-shared regional priorities. Geographic proximity makes Northeast Asian countries environmentally interdependent, and the region's heavy dependence on imported fossil fuels makes energy security a matter of survival. Increasing public outcry over pollution and resultant health problems has also challenged political legitimacy and sustainable economic development. Environmental activism has been an integral part of democratic transition in Japan since the 1960s and in South Korea since the 1980s; recently, even non-democratic China has faced increasing levels of environment-related protests and litigation.³⁵ Internationally shared norms on environmental protection and countries' desire to develop alternative energy sources as a zero-carbon alternative to fossil fuels give non-state actors the opportunity to forge region-wide initiatives. This section reviews two major ways in which non-state actors operate in Northeast Asia: (1) providing substantive support to state actors and (2) providing alternative policy options that work against states' interests.

Case Study Part 1: Collaborative Work at the Multilateral Level

Intergovernmental environmental cooperation in Northeast Asia is largely a product of the 1990s post-Cold War era.³⁶ The 1992 United Nations

³⁵In both 2014 and 2015, the Chinese population's top concern has been the environment. “Corruption, Pollution, Inequality Are Top Concerns in China,” last modified September 24, 2015, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/09/24/corruption-pollution-inequality-are-top-concerns-in-china/>.

³⁶Yasumasa Komori, “Evaluating Regional Environmental Governance in Northeast Asia,” *Asian Affairs: An American Review* Vol. 37, No. 1 (2010); Hayes and Zarsky, “Environmental Issues and Regimes in Northeast Asia,” 283 et passim.

Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also known as the Rio Earth Summit) was the major catalyst that prompted Northeast Asian governments to create regional and sub-regional frameworks for environmental cooperation. The Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO-ASIA) launched in 1991 encompasses the broader Asia-Pacific region, while three other collaborative forums have been established specific to Northeast Asia region—the Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation (NEAC) in 1992, the North-East Asia Subregional Program for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) in 1993, and the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) in 1999.³⁷

Along with these processes, networks among non-state actors such as local governments and civil society networks play a critical role at the ideational and operational levels by convening and supporting epistemic communities that share an understanding of sustainability problems in each country. For instance, TEMM gave funds to the Korean Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM), a national-level NGO coalition started in 1993, to coordinate nongovernmental cooperation across borders.³⁸ KFEM has become the largest environmental NGO in Asia, with over fifty local branches across the country and 150,000 registered members as of 2014. It worked with bird-watching groups in Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong to form the Northeast Asia Black-faced Spoonbill Network to promote information exchange and coordinate conservation efforts in 1996. In 2002, KFEM became the Korean chapter of the

³⁷Some issue-specific programs have also been established. In 1994, China, Japan, South Korea, and Russia adopted the Action Plan for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP) to manage the coastal and marine environment in the Yellow Sea and the East Sea/Sea of Japan. In 2001, the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) was formally established after several years of preparatory negotiations. More recently, some projects to address the problem of dust and sandstorms (DSS) have also been launched. Recently established transnational organizations include the regional dust technical support plan (DSS-RETA), the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Project (YSLME), and remote air pollution in Northeast Asia joint research (LTP).

³⁸Wu and Bo, *Nongovernmental Organizations and Environmental Protests: Impact in East Asia*, 105–19.

international environmental federation, Friends of the Earth, and has since been visible on the stage of global environmental politics.

Local governments also serve as a critical component of cross-border, inter-city network-building with their counterparts at the sub-national level. Located strategically between central governments and local civil society organizations, they can develop projects without being interrupted by political agendas at the central government level and provide necessary resources and a degree of accountability to civil society organizations within given local boundaries.³⁹ The Japanese city of Kitakyushu's close collaboration with the Chinese city of Dalian on establishing an environmental model zone offers a fascinating example. Kitakyushu, in the Japanese state of Fukuoka, once had a notorious reputation as a highly polluted industrial area, but it is now known as a leader in industrial pollution control and the movement toward a zero-emission society.⁴⁰ The local government of Kitakyushu proposed the creation of a Dalian Environmental Model Zone as a pilot project when Chinese State Councilor Song Jian visited the city in December 1993, while persuading the Japanese central government to make the plan an ODA-funded project.⁴¹ From December 1996 to March 2000, the Kitakyushu government collaborated closely with Dalian in sharing expertise on technology, administrative operations, city planning, and transferring the requisite pollution control technology and management practices.⁴² This subnational network's ability to bypass Tokyo and Beijing allowed the project to develop quickly without being interrupted by political agendas at the central government level. Notably, both governments brought otherwise unconnected actors together—such as engineers, environmental experts, city officials, local businesses, and grassroots groups. The Kitakyushu

³⁹Schreurs, "Problems and Prospects for Regional Environmental Cooperation in East Asia," 2006.

⁴⁰"From a 'Gray City' to a 'Green City,'" last modified 2015, https://www.city.kitakyushu.lg.jp/english/file_0064.html.

⁴¹"From a 'Gray City' to a 'Green City,'" "Official Development Assistance (ODA): 8. Efforts in Environmental Conservation," last modified, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/summary/1998/8.html>.

⁴²Hayes and Tanter, *Global Problems, Complexity, and Civil Society in East Asia*; Yasuo Takao, *Reinventing Japan: From Merchant Nation to Civic Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Initiative for a Clean Environment was adopted at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Meeting (UNESCAP) in September 2000, and the Kitakyushu Initiative Network was founded in 2001 to promote regional cooperation among cities regarding environmental cleanup information.⁴³ By January 2010, more than sixty-two cities from eighteen countries in the Asia Pacific Region had joined the network, exchanged information, and carried out pilot projects.⁴⁴ rean cities of Cheongju, Daegu, Jeju, Jeonju, and Pohang.

Subnational cooperation between the cities of Hiroshima, Japan, and Chongqing, China, serves as another example.⁴⁵ Participants included the five Ko These two cities signed a friendship agreement in 1986 and began environmental cooperation in 1990 through which Hiroshima dispatched technical advisors and trained personnel to Chongqing. This inter-city network expanded to the higher state-government level between Hiroshima prefecture and Sichuan province, creating the Sichuan Province Joint Environmental Protection Project in 1993. Environmental cooperation between Japan and South Korea is not at the level of Japan-China cooperation in terms of quality or volume. The reason for this gap is that yen loans and grant aid from Japan to South Korea recently stopped because the latter's economy has graduated from the stage that requires foreign assistance. Nevertheless, there is a trend toward environmental cooperation between Japan and South Korea through cross-border developmental zones.

Transnational social and economic ties among local authorities in Northeast Asian countries go beyond environmental collaboration—including in the steadily deepening ties among geographically proximate localities surrounding the Pan-Yellow Sea (or East China Sea). In this region, grassroots-level economic integration has taken place in the form of cross-border developmental zones such as the Tumen River Development Area, the Japan Sea Rim Economic Zone, and the Bohai-Yellow Sea Rim Development Project. Local governments have made extensive efforts in

⁴³“Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment,” last modified, <http://kitakyushu.iges.or.jp/>.

⁴⁴Toshizo Maeda et al., “Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment FINAL REPORT,” Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, 2010.

⁴⁵Nicholas Thomas, *Governance and Regionalism in Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

creating sister-city and friendship-city relationships since the 1990s.⁴⁶ In 2003, there were 266 sister-city relationships between China and Japan. By 2005, that number had jumped by nearly 20% to 313—notwithstanding the much-publicized national-level tensions over Japan’s World War II Yasukuni Shrine.⁴⁷ In 2016, Japan had the world’s most sister-city linkages with China with 214, while South Korea ranked third with 125.⁴⁸

Such inter-city networks in Northeast Asia have fueled the discussion on expanding inter-urban networks to include the largest cities and regions in China, Japan, and South Korea. In 1991, the BeSeTo (Beijing-Seoul-Tokyo) cooperation initiative gained international recognition, followed by mayors of the three cities signing a memorandum of cooperation in 1995.⁴⁹ Even though the formal BeSeTo initiative remains in the planning stages, initiatives launched by the three cities themselves have provided specific ideas on how to face shared developmental challenges such as urbanization and rapid industrialization. In 2007, a three-year review among Japan’s National Institute for Research Advancement, the Korean Research Institute for Human Settlements, and China’s National Development and Reform Commission produced “The Joint Proposal for Promotion of the Realization of the BeSeTo Corridor Vision—Toward Sustained Development in the Northeast Asia Region.”⁵⁰ The report suggests establishing transportation and knowledge corridors as well as information highways across Northeast Asian cities. Other proposals include promoting inter-city urban corridor development over the Shenyang-Yanbian section of the BeSeTo corridor (within China), the Nampo-Pyongyang section (within North Korea), and the Incheon-Seoul section (within South Korea). Despite frequent national-level tensions in Northeast Asia, local governments have collaborated toward achieving

⁴⁶K-H. Yang, “International Cooperation of Local Governments among Northeast Asia, Especially Focused on Maritime Networks.” Paper prepared in proceeding of OECD-MLTM Joint Seminar during the OECD Study Mission to Seoul, Gwacheon, Korea, October 2008.

⁴⁷Calder and Ye, *The Making of Northeast Asia*.

⁴⁸“List of Countries with sister-city relationship with China” <http://www.cifca.org.cn/Web/WordGuanXiBiao.aspx>.

⁴⁹Hieyeon Keum, “Globalization and Inter-City Cooperation in Northeast Asia,” *East Asia* Vol. 18, No. 2 (2000).

⁵⁰Hayes and Tanter, *Global Problems, Complexity, and Civil Society in East Asia*.

certain shared goals. Globalization and liberalization has certainly increased the role of cities as agents of cross-national cooperation and the exchange of capital, labor, information, and technology.

Case Study Part 2: An Alternative Outlet in the Competition with State Actors and Multinational Companies

Nuclear power plants and nuclear waste present serious challenges to Northeast Asia's environment and its energy policies. With the combination of increased national competition for oil and gas among fast-growing Asian nations and the negative environmental impact of carbon emissions, many states in the region view nuclear power as a matter of survival, both in terms of meeting growing energy demands and promoting environmental security. Government plans to designate permanent nuclear plants or waste repositories often face considerable (and sometimes violent) domestic and regional opposition. Debates over nuclear power policies and programs in Northeast Asia and worldwide reached a fever pitch following the "Triple Disaster" of March 2011—when the northeast region of Japan suffered from a devastating 9.0 magnitude earthquake and massive tsunami waves up to 41 meters that took the lives of nearly 20,000 people, and the subsequent nuclear meltdown of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactors. Even after this disaster, however, Northeast Asia continues to rely heavily on nuclear energy. As of January 2016, China has the world's largest nuclear energy program, with thirty existing nuclear reactors, twenty-four reactors under construction, and a firm commitment to build forty more reactors in the future. Taiwan has six operating nuclear reactors and two advanced reactors that were under construction, but are now suspended. South Korea has twenty-four nuclear reactors that produce 30% of the country's electricity and plans to make that percentage reach 70% by 2029. Additionally, South Korea wants to export its nuclear technology to countries including Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia—with a goal of selling eighty reactors worth \$400 billion by 2030.⁵¹

While governments and leading power companies look for ways to endorse the benefits of nuclear energy, anti-nuclear organizations and

⁵¹"World Nuclear Power Reactors & Uranium Requirements," last modified January 1, 2016, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Facts-and-Figures/World-Nuclear-Power-Reactors-and-Uranium-Requirements/>.

residents from potentially affected local communities have organized counter-movements both domestically and cross-regionally. The No Nukes Asia Forum (NNAF) represents the most extensive and substantial effort—an Asia-wide civil society network striving for military and civil denuclearization in Asia.⁵² In 1992, NNAF was created by South Korean antinuclear activist Won-Shik Kim, along with the support of 1354 individuals, 177 organizations, and a steering committee of 100 members.⁵³ Since then, NNAF has provided a platform for many participants from various Asian countries to engage in publishing relevant information and campaigning for alternative policy options to resolve nuclear power issues.

The NNAF not only disseminates alternative information transnationally to counter pro-nuclear government propaganda, but it also organizes “counter-conferences” to pro-nuclear gatherings. Japanese government officials and companies have taken the lead in promoting nuclear power plants in neighboring countries by organizing various conferences and inviting engineers from Asian countries to study the Japanese experience. In October 1996, the Japanese city of Kobe hosted the 10th Pacific Basin Nuclear Conference, which was jointly sponsored by the Atomic Energy Society of Japan and the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum, under the auspices of the American Nuclear Society and the Pacific Nuclear Council. As a forum among nuclear societies and associations from around the Pacific Rim, this conference included workshops and fieldtrips that advanced the uses of nuclear energy and promoted the construction of nuclear power plants in the region. In response, the Japanese committee of the NNAF organized the “Pacific Basin No Nukes Conference” during the same month in Kobe to provide a venue for anti-nuclear discussion.⁵⁴ In March 2012, the NNAF organized another anti-nuclear conference in Seoul, South Korea, to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Fukushima disaster. This took place one week prior to the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, which hosted 58 world leaders from 53 states, as well as

⁵²“No Nukes Asia Forum Japan,” <http://www.nonukesasiaforum.org/jp/index-e.htm>.

⁵³“No Nukes Asia Forum Korea,” <http://nnafr.blogspot.com/2012/02/history.html>.

⁵⁴“Asia: Nuclear Industry, Opponents Meet in Kobe,” last modified November 13, 1996, <http://www.wiseinternational.org/nuclear-monitor/461/asia-nuclear-industry-opponents-meet-kobe>.

international organizations such as the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency. “Counter-conferences” help NNAF raise public awareness and influence political discourse, as the NNAF concludes these conferences by issuing action plans on each country’s nuclear development status and making joint statements on regional developments, such as Japan’s plan to export reactors to Indonesia and China, and Japan and North Korea’s plans to produce plutonium.

Second, the NNAF provides a platform for connecting activists from Asian nations to coordinate campaigns against existing and planned nuclear power plant sites. NNAF’s responses to Indonesian and Taiwanese nuclear development programs offer great examples. Indonesia’s Nuclear Power Act in 1997 and BATAN (Badan Tenaga Nuklir Nasional, or National Nuclear Energy Agency) faced dynamic resistance from districts that were suggested as potential sites for nuclear power plants. One of the most notable instances of resistance came from the Jepara District of Central Java, where broad-based civil society actors were empowered through their trans-national networking with NNAF.⁵⁵ The Japanese anti-nuclear advocacy group known as the Muri-Muri Campaign Committee sponsored the visit by two Indonesians (Nuruddin Amin, a local leader in the Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama, and Nur Hidayati, a climate and energy campaigner for Greenpeace South-East Asia) to Japan and South Korea in July 2007 to tell representatives of both governments not to support Indonesia’s nuclear power plans.⁵⁶ In Japan, the two Indonesian representatives met with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry,

⁵⁵Achmad Uzair Fauzan and Jim Schiller, “After Fukushima: The Rise of Resistance to Nuclear Energy in Indonesia,” *German Asia Foundation* (2011).

⁵⁶The “Muri-Mur” Committee is comprised of No Nukes Asia Forum Japan, Friends of the Earth Japan, Citizens’ Nuclear Information Center, Japan Congress Against A- and H-Bombs, Greenpeace Japan, and NINDJA (Network for Indonesian Democracy, Japan). For more details, see “Indonesian Anti-Nuclear Activists Deliver Messages to Japanese Government,” last modified July 5, 2007, <http://www.cnic.jp/english/topics/international/murijul07/murimr5jul07.html>.

and Hitachi, the main nuclear power plant maker in Japan.⁵⁷ In South Korea, Nuruddin Amin held a one-person protest in front of the Korean Electric Power Company to bring attention to the involvement of its subsidiary group, Korean Hydro Nuclear Power, in Jepara's proposed nuclear power plant.⁵⁸ On another occasion, the NNAF invited seven Thai citizens to the 2011 NNAF Annual Forum (three local villagers from proposed sites of nuclear power plants, one anti-nuclear activist, and three journalists) six months after the Fukushima nuclear crisis. In tandem with the World Conference against A and H Bombs, these Thais learned about the Japanese experience after the Fukushima disaster while also sharing concerns about Thailand's power development plans with other participants.⁵⁹

Such cross-national anti-nuclear advocacy efforts can lead to actual policy changes. Even though efforts by anti-nuclear groups to halt the construction of the fourth nuclear power plant in Taiwan in the late 1990s initially failed, anti-nuclear activists gained new momentum as a result of the NNAF pressuring the country's new Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) president, Chen Shui-bian, to honor the party's anti-nuclear stance following the 2000 election. NNAF not only supported a march in Taipei in May 2000 that mobilized around 2000 demonstrators, but it also organized a trip for Japanese city councilors from Kashiwazaki City—a metropolis with the same type of nuclear reactors as Taiwan—to the site of

⁵⁷METI officials took the attitude that responsibility for the project rests entirely with the Indonesian government. They acknowledged no responsibility in regard to the safety of any plant constructed by Japanese companies in Indonesia and said that Japanese law does not include safety requirements for exports of nuclear power plants. Nor did they acknowledge any obligation to consider the wishes of the local population. On the other hand, JBIC's environmental and social guidelines place importance on the participation of stakeholders, including local residents and local NGOs affected by the project. Toshiba and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries refused to meet the Indonesian visitors.

⁵⁸Fauzan and Schiller.

⁵⁹The Heinrich Boll Stiftung Southeast Asia Regional Office (German think tank for Green projects) sponsored the Thai participants. See "No Nukes Asia Forum: Lessons from Fukushima Daiichi for Thailand," last modified October 11, 2011, <https://www.boell.de/en/ecology/climate-energy/no-nukes-asia-forum-2011-13030.html>.

Taiwan's proposed nuclear power plant.⁶⁰ The Japanese delegation and NNAF activists expressed concerns about the safety of the proposed reactor, threats to Taiwan's nuclear power plants from frequent earthquakes, and the Taiwan Power Corporation's crisis-management abilities. The combined efforts of domestic and international actors finally led President Chen to order the Ministry of Economic Affairs to appoint a committee to re-evaluate the project and ultimately halt construction of Taiwan's fourth nuclear power plant in October 2000.⁶¹

In South Korea, President Lee Myung-bak championed a green growth framework that provided a new justification for the country to expand nuclear power at home and pursue export opportunities. In December 2009, a South Korean consortium led by Korea Electric Power Company won a US \$20 billion contract to build four civil nuclear reactors in the United Arab Emirates, prevailing over competitors from Japan's Hitachi and France's Areva. In tandem with this development, the South Korean government announced plans to draw more than 50% of the country's domestic energy needs from the nuclear sector by 2020. After the government's announcement, the Korean Federation for Environmental Movements, an organization with years of experience in anti-nuclear campaigning, began coordinating with the NNAF to gather international support for a campaign against the government's plans. As for China, even though the country's anti-nuclear activists have not accepted invitations from NNAF to join the network, it will be interesting to see what the future holds as the Chinese government and state-owned enterprises aggressively attempt to expand the country's nuclear power plants.⁶²

⁶⁰“Nuclear Plant Activists Get Support from Japan,” last modified May 18, 2000, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/local/archives/2000/05/18/0000036473>.

⁶¹Shu-Hsiang Hsu, “Advocacy Coalitions and Policy Change on Nuclear Power Utilization in Taiwan,” *The Social Science Journal* Vol. 42, No. 2 (2005).

⁶²“DEWA awards first clean coal power plant “Hassyan” in the Middle East to consortium led by HEI and ACWA Power,” <http://acwapower.com/news-home-page/dewa-awards-first-clean-coal-power-plant-hassyan-in-the-middle-east-to-consortium-led-by-hei-and-acwa-power/>.

SHADOW OF THE PAST: FORCES INHIBITING NORTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY-BUILDING

Although transnational coalitions and networks have been on the rise in Northeast Asia, resurgent nationalism stemming from collective memories of a contentious past helps explain the persistence of hostility and mistrust within the region. As Chung-In Moon and Seung-won Suh suggest, healing the pain of the past and creating a positive shared memory are a vital part of fostering shared values and common goals for regional community-building.⁶³ However, politicians and leaders throughout Northeast Asia often manipulate history for domestic political gains or increased diplomatic leverage. Individual countries' strong political and economic achievements reinforce their populations' sense of national pride, distinctive identity, territorial integrity, and historical sovereignty, thereby providing a political justification for assertive nationalist moves.⁶⁴ The Japanese legislature, for example, has changed the country's history textbook standards, facilitating the whitewashing of military atrocities in World War II and evoking a strong nationalist response from both in Japan and in neighboring countries. This creates a vicious cycle of worsening diplomatic ties and deteriorating perceptions of Japan among the publics in South Korea and China—which, in turn, further stokes Japanese neo-nationalism. Renewed island disputes—between Japan and South Korea regarding Takeshima/Dokdo in the Sea of Japan/East Sea and between Japan and China regarding Senkaku/Diaoyudao in the East China Sea—have further hurt the efforts to build the trust needed for regional community-building. Despite being on the same side when it comes to the issue of Japan's colonial history, China and South Korea have had their own dispute over history since 2003, when China's Northeast Project (Dongbeni Gongcheng/Dongbook Gongjeong) claimed that Korea's ancient kingdom of Goguryeo was a peripheral local government in the Chinese Empire. Moreover, ultra-nationalists in Japan, China, and South Korea all

⁶³Chung-In Moon and Seung-won Suh, "Burdens of the Past: Overcoming History, the Politics of Identity and Nationalism in Asia," *Global Asia*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2007).

⁶⁴Chung-In Moon and Chun-fu Li, "Reactive Nationalism and South Korea's Foreign Policy on China and Japan: A Comparative Analysis," *Pacific Focus* Vol. 25 (2010).

use social media to form adversarial networks and coalitions, which negate regional community-building efforts.

Nevertheless, the sub-national network that is seeking to forge a positive shared memory among Japan, South Korea, and China has been strengthened in recent years. The best example of this trend comes from the Committee for Common History Teaching Materials of the Three Countries' May 2005 publication of *A History to Open the Future*. This landmark history textbook is a successful counter to the 2001 Japanese Ministry of Education–approved revisionist textbook, which denied the forced sexual slavery of Korean comfort women in World War II and the occurrence of the Nanjing Massacre in 1937.⁶⁵ *A History to Open the Future* focuses on building a more comprehensive understanding of history among the three countries, including their more positive contemporary relationships. The book covers the period ranging from the Japanese occupation of its neighbors, the Pacific War in World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, up until the recent normalizations of diplomatic relations among these three countries.⁶⁶

This book is the result of longstanding efforts among non-state actors, which began in 1992 when universities from the three countries gathered in Yokohama to call for a joint review of history textbooks. The initiative developed into the Joint Japanese-Korean Organization of Historical Research in 2001 with the visionary (and labor-intensive) work by a tri-lateral history writing committee of fifty-three members, most of whom are academics (seventeen from China, thirteen from Japan, and twenty-three from South Korea).⁶⁷ Written in Japanese, Korean, and Chinese, this book was not only widely read in all three countries (with over quarter of a million sales by 2006), but also inspired sister-city campaigns involving twenty South Korean civic groups and fourteen Japanese groups in 2004 and 2005 to pressure Japanese education officials into refusing the Japanese

⁶⁵Hayes and Yi, *Complexity, Security, and Civil Society in East Asia*; Hayes and Yi, *The Implications of Civic Diplomacy for ROK Foreign Policy*.

⁶⁶Lionel Babicz, "South Korea, Japan, and China: In Search of a Shared Historical Awareness," paper presented at the 6th Biennial Conference of the Korean Studies Association of Australasia, Sydney, University of Sydney, 2009.

⁶⁷Zheng Wang, "Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia," *History and Memory* Vol. 21, No. 1 (2009).

Ministry of Education–approved *New History Textbook*.⁶⁸ Despite the difficulty posed by divided memories at the nation-state level, these rapidly evolving networks of non-state actors serve a visionary role in producing an alternative shared history based on mutual research and dialogue. Such subnational ties among non-state actors have often intensified and carried out meaningful underground work precisely *because of*, not *in spite of*, political uncertainties found at the nation-state level. This is how non-state actors slowly create a space for greater citizen participation in regional politics and add resilience to regional cooperation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: NORTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY-BUILDING BEYOND THE ELITE LEVEL

This chapter assesses the role of non-state actors in the process of regionalization and the potential of community-building in Northeast Asia, with a focus on the three main Northeast Asian countries of Japan, South Korea, and China. As author Peter Hayes aptly points out, Northeast Asia is “more of an anti-region than a community”—a place where varying interests, strategies, goals, political constraints, and stages of economic development have made regional cooperation, and institutionalization of such efforts, daunting.⁶⁹ As discussed in other chapters from this volume, Northeast Asian societies’ inability to overcome negative collective memories from the region’s recent past has made state-led integration efforts more difficult. Non-state actors may not be able to change the fundamental distribution of power and resolve the tensions found in “high” politics. Yet it is increasingly clear that non-state actors in Northeast Asia have become an important force in regional community-building as ideational constituencies, operational partners, and constructive challengers to state actors.

In the face of various challenges in state-to-state relations, examining non-state actors’ role in building a regional framework in Northeast Asia is both a normative and practical endeavor. Regional community-building efforts often take hybrid forms that blur the distinction between governmental and non-governmental. Thus, it is vital to identify sources of regional cooperation from a multilayered perspective and make the most of

⁶⁸ Hayes and Yi, *Complexity, Security, and Civil Society in East Asia*.

⁶⁹ Hayes and Tanter, *Global Problems, Complexity, and Civil Society in East Asia*, 36.

how local governments, corporations, non-governmental organizations, policy networks, and epistemic linkages supportive of regional cooperation in Northeast Asia have all worked to move past the distrust caused by intermittent historical controversies. These kinds of strengthened networks and collaborations can go beyond the operational level of creating common knowledge by also inspiring a common vision and a shared discourse of the future at the ideational level. Indeed, Northeast Asia has evolved into a more coherent, identifiable and tightly knit entity than was true before the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. Moreover, as my various case studies demonstrated, non-state actors lend credibility to ongoing regional integration efforts *because of* political uncertainties at the state-to-state level; they drive the quiet transformation from the bottom that will bring the region closer to making the elusive dream of East Asian community-building a reality.

THE TRUMP FACTOR

A combination of global integration and economic liberalization has opened a window of opportunity for the emergence of transnational networks among non-state actors in East Asia. Yet, Donald Trump's election to the presidency of the United States has given renewed urgency to the very question of the benefits of global and regional integration. His victory, coming on the heels of Brexit, reflects the rising tide of populist political parties and assertive nationalism around the world. It is yet too early to figure out the contours of his foreign policy for East Asia, but regional anxieties are surely on the rise. Trump's "America First" worldview has challenged the system of alliances, rules, and norms that have underpinned the United States' leadership of the post-war liberal world order. His presidency could change the strategic face of East Asia, potentially causing a shift in the balance of power as well as aggravating tensions related to hyper-nationalism, territorial disputes, geopolitical rivalry, and historical animosity.

It is not yet possible to predict what Trump's presidency will mean in full for East Asian community-building, but what is clear is that the same level of support that pro-global integration former President Obama has provided for East Asian integration will not come easily. Revitalized transnational coalitions among non-state actors stand at the cross-roads. They could be caught in between tensions among national rivalries or

brought into populist rhetoric and ideas. Conversely, they could mitigate animosity arising from inward looking nationalist policies and social movements as a way to create a space for greater citizen participation in regional politics and generate a new capacity for regional community-building. The strength of subnational ties among non-state actors lies in their ability to overcome the barriers that exist at the level of high politics and to forge shared understandings. They have carried out meaningful underground work precisely *because of*, not in *spite of*, political uncertainties found at the nation-state level. Moreover, Mr. Trump's victory is not going to change the shared nature of environmental challenges and the universality of values underlying human security issues that resonate powerfully in the minds of the general public.

Alternative visions of the world have pressed forward in the variant forms of populism and nationalism, but the answer cannot be a simple rejection of global and regional integration. Ensuring the shared benefits of such integration and addressing subsequent problems calls for *even* broader and deeper transnational coalitions and networks. East Asian community-building efforts have been consolidated through major geopolitical changes and several financial crises. The Trump factor will be another testing ground for the resilience and strength of regional community-building at both the ideational and operational levels.