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## **Institutionalizing Northeast Asia: Challenges and Opportunities**

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## Introduction

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# Institutionalizing Northeast Asia: Challenges and opportunities

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With North Korea going nuclear, tensions increasing in the Taiwan Strait and repeated clashes between China and Japan as well as between South Korea and Japan over territories that are thought to be rich in energy, water or fishing grounds, awareness has been sharpened that there is a pressing need to provide plausible answers to a vital question: how can lasting peace, order, stability and prosperity be achieved in Northeast Asia?<sup>1</sup>

Globalization and China's galloping economy have caused radically different economic growth rates in Northeast Asia, resulting in constant fluctuations in the balance of power among the nations in the region. Northeast Asia – which includes the People's Republic of China (PRC), Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), the Republic of Korea (South Korea), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Japan<sup>2</sup> – is the most heavily militarized region in the world.<sup>3</sup> National security has been the prevailing security paradigm in the countries of the region.

With new emerging threats to security – such as the Asian financial crisis in 1997, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and other health epidemics, international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and trafficking in humans and drugs – as well as problems posed by environmental degradation and disasters, awareness that such threats can no longer be tackled by any country on an individual basis has also increased. The old concept of sovereign independence thus no longer offers satisfactory solutions. Alternative concepts are needed that provide more plausible answers to these newly emerging challenges.

## The concept of regional institutionalism

One concept that seems to offer promise in this particular context is “regional institutionalism”. Here, institutions can be understood as “persistent and connected sets of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations”.<sup>4</sup> Such institutions “may include organizations, bureaucratic agencies, treaties and agreements, and informal practices that states [as well as non-state actors] accept as binding”.<sup>5</sup>

Supporters of regional institutionalism refer to the emerging strength of regional and global players such as the European Union (EU) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the development of world norms (such as human rights and free markets) and the increasing influence of civil society as factors which, in combination, may challenge the still-overwhelming power of the principle of sovereignty in East Asia and have a fundamental impact on the development of a new world order (see the chapters by Higgott and Timmermann, and Job and Evans, in this volume).

In academic discourse<sup>6</sup> the development of contemporary regionalism, in all its different forms, is considered the key to understanding an emerging new world order and structures of global governance. Within this process, the intensification of regionalism should be regarded as an aspect of globalization, rather than refutation or evidence against it.

Originally, regional cooperative arrangements emerged primarily in Europe and Latin America. The “new regionalism” of the late twentieth century, however, saw a rise in regional organizations all over the world in response to the challenges of economic globalization.<sup>7</sup> During this period new regional institutions began springing up, while pre-existing institutions went through internal restructuring and expansion processes, and formerly inactive organizations were revived. Regional cooperation via regional institution building thereby seems to have been perceived as the right “recipe” for nation-states to deal with the progressive erosion of their regulatory and policy-making capacities in a rapidly globalizing world.<sup>8</sup>

## Regional institution building in Southeast Asia

Scholarly interest in regional institution building in East Asia has long been focused on Southeast Asia, with its comparatively advanced institutional structures of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). There are also numerous studies on the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Asia-Pacific Rim. It is only since

the end of the twentieth century that the focus of regionalization studies has been shifting to the issue of bilateral or inter-regional regionalism, with a clear focus on Asia-Europe cooperation.<sup>9</sup>

Within this context, the ASEAN summit in January 2007 provided additional food for thought and analysis. Five agreements were signed pertaining to continuing integration of ASEAN and enhancing political, economic and social cooperation in the region, including the Cebu Declaration on the blueprint for the ASEAN Charter. This declaration, in which a group of eminent persons were entrusted to draw up the new charter, with the particular task of developing a platform for regionally shared values, is especially noteworthy. It represented a long-awaited response to the demands of scholars and activists who have been working hard towards a values-based ASEAN institution with an ASEAN identity, and culminating in an ASEAN regional human rights mechanism. It was signed at the Thirteenth ASEAN Summit in Singapore in November 2007.

Among scholars, practitioners and activists, regionally shared values and norms (as, for instance, those expressed in regional human rights mechanisms) have long been regarded as essential for successful and sustainable regional institution building, with a collective identity as a vital component.<sup>10</sup> In this context it is useful to remember the famous debates of the 1990s on Asian values and identity, and their functions in supporting and shaping the process of ASEAN regionalization.

### Discourses on Asian values and human rights: Vehicles for identity building and regional institutionalization

Initially, the discussion of Asian values and human rights mainly focused on the quality and efficiency of different development models. Some government élites from Singapore and Malaysia opposed (for example, in *Foreign Affairs*) the Western understanding of democracy and human rights that they felt was to be imposed upon their states. To underline the risks of simply transferring Western values to Asian countries, they pointed at the increasing moral decay of Western countries, exemplified by growing public apathy and rising crime rates. To their understanding, such factors were responsible for the decay of the West. They thought that in Asia, limited individualism and strong work and savings ethics, as well as taking responsibility for one's personal life through focusing on the family, led to the development successes of the 1980s and early 1990s. The problem with that argument, however, was not only the woolly meaning of those values. More problematic was the attempt to justify authoritarian states with their restrictions on political and civic rights

such as freedom of opinion, and bans on political parties and political activities. According to these governing élites, socio-economic rights had priority, and political and civil rights had to wait until their societies were ready for them. Western, mainly American, reproaches were regarded as either interference in their national affairs, envy of their development successes or attempts to substitute former colonial imperialism with new values imperialism.

This debate between Western and Asian élites lasted until the middle of the 1990s. With the beginning of the Asian financial crisis in July 1997 the situation changed. It is important to note, however, that the deliberate use of the variables “identity” and “values” in such inter-regional discussions was as important for inter-regional demarcation as for the process of regional unification.

Looking at the Asian values debate of the 1980s and the Asian economic crises of the 1990s, there are interesting similarities with the human rights and values discussions between Western and communist countries in the 1970s. In those debates, led within the Helsinki process, human rights arguments were used to legitimize different political and economic systems and demarcate East and West. They were thereby also taken up into the realm of security politics. Very similarly, political and academic élites rhetorically differentiated Asian and Western values and identity some 20 years later.

Such processes also reveal the importance of discourse. Identity does not develop by itself, but *in discourse with the social environment*. Thus the institutional frames of reference for such discourses, for example regional conferences like ASEAN and now also the East Asian Summit, gain in importance. This contrasts with the views of critics who refer to such conferences as mere “talking shops”.

A particularly interesting example, because it is directly related to the Cebu initiative for the ASEAN Charter, is the ASEAN Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism that formed in 1996, following the Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, 1993. This (quasi) non-governmental working group triggered a regional institutionalization process that involved setting up national working group offices in several ASEAN countries, organizing regular regional meetings, providing expert counselling and at least informally contributing to the agenda setting of national and regional government meetings.<sup>11</sup> Their continuous efforts seem to have had some impact on the process of developing the ASEAN governmental initiative for a regional values platform (mentioning human rights) announced during the ASEAN summits in Cebu and Singapore in 2007.

Beyond the identity issue, the ASEAN approach reflects an important shift in thinking from the traditional national security paradigm towards

a more comprehensive human security framework, including long-embattled values and human rights issues.<sup>12</sup>

The governments of the Southeast Asian subregion have realized that in order to meet current and future challenges successfully, they need to cooperate more closely and go beyond former limits and (self-)restraints. However, is (sub)regional institution building also the right recipe for Northeast Asia?

### Challenges and opportunities for regional institution building in Northeast Asia

The institutionalization of Northeast Asia has been widely regarded as impossible.<sup>13</sup> The reasons for this situation are complex and closely intertwined. A particular “set of conflicts” is considered to be the major impediment to regional institution and identity building in Northeast Asia.

#### *Challenge One: Solving a simmering “set of conflicts”*

##### *Conflict over regional territories fuelled by debates on Japanese wartime atrocities*

Long-lasting disputes over regional territories that promise to ensure access to oil, gas, water and fishing grounds have been interlinked with public disputes about Japan’s role in the Second World War, and further fuelled by rising nationalism in Japan and China. Annual visits to the Yasukuni shrine by the former Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, poured additional oil on to the fires of these conflicts. China and the Koreans, major victims of Japanese pre-war expansionist politics, consider such visits and the glossing over of Japanese war atrocities (such as the Nanking massacre or the “comfort women” issue) as attempts to white-wash Japan’s past and even glorify its wartime history. In return, China and the Koreans face criticism about creating a “victim” identity for political convenience: political concerns raised over historical issues are strategically used to pursue their economic interests (for details see Berger and Harris in this volume).

##### *Conflicts over access to natural resources – Energy, water and fishing grounds*

Access to natural resources has become a vital issue for all countries in this region (see Ohta and Harris in this volume), but especially for China and Japan. China surpassed Japan as the world’s second-largest petroleum consumer in 2003, and has become the second-largest energy

consumer after the United States. Before China (and, let it not be forgotten, India) started its current path of development, Japan was the second-largest energy importer after the United States. As the second-biggest economic power in the world (if the European Union is counted as one player, Japan would rank as number three), Japan is still the world's fourth-largest energy consumer. But China's hunger for energy resources is now matching Japan's, and it is obvious that this increasing demand is leading to growing competition for ownership of energy resources and access to territorial areas with promising natural resources. Almost as a side-effect, this has also caused competition between Japan and China at the international diplomatic level – for instance, in their development initiatives in energy-rich regions of the world.

Increasing demand for energy has contributed to turning long-time simmering conflicts into open conflicts, and sometimes even fiery clashes.

#### *The Senkaku/Diaoyutai conflict*

One such territorial conflict over energy access is the discussion between Japan and China about the islands of Senkaku (Japanese) and Diaoyutai (Chinese). This territorial conflict has been going on for almost 40 years, but in 2004–2005 the debate on the islands reached a climax, with China sending a nuclear submarine into the so-called “exclusive economic zone” (EEZ) near the controversial islands in November 2004. In response, the Japanese government issued a public declaration in February 2005 that emphasized its official possession of the Senkaku Islands, referring to existing treaties that had repeatedly been acknowledged by the US government.<sup>14</sup> This again caused China – which had additionally been angered by repeated references to “Taiwan” in Japanese/US military documents and declarations – to send a message to Japan warning it to back off or “take full responsibility”.

#### *The Takeshima/Dokdo conflict*

A similar dispute has been going on between Japan and South Korea over the Takeshima/Dokdo Islands. Since 1954 the islands have been inhabited and guarded by South Korea's coastguard. Slowly but continuously, South Korea has been supporting its claim by expanding infrastructure on the islands. In spite of several Japanese protests, this issue only really boiled up in 2004,<sup>15</sup> when large hydrocarbon deposits were found around the islands. Japan thereafter renewed its claim of ownership of the islands. This governmental claim was strongly supported by a growing group of conservative right-wingers in Japan who stressed Japan's entitlement to former colonial areas of its imperial past. The situation further deteriorated in 2005, the official “year of friendship” between Koreans and Japanese.<sup>16</sup> When the Shimane Prefectural Assembly

in Japan decided to designate 22 February as “Takehshima Day” in order to reiterate Japan’s territorial claim to the Takehshima Islands, the atmosphere reached its negative climax.

The intertwinement of territorial issues with historical events was stressed again when Shinzo Abe was elected Japanese Prime Minister on 26 September 2006. With Junichiro Koizumi out of office, Chinese state media expressed their hope for an improvement in Sino-Japanese relations. Soon after, the new prime minister was invited by the Chinese Premier, Wen Jibao, for an official visit to China. This invitation to China was the first issued to a leading Japanese politician in years, and it signalled a turning point from the Chinese side. However, when Shinzo Abe argued in the Diet on 6 October 2006 that the 14 convicted war criminals enshrined at Yasukuni were not war criminals under domestic Japanese law, but had been tried for crimes against peace and humanity – concepts that had been created by the Allies after the war and forced upon Japan as loser of the war<sup>17</sup> – he caused new uproars in China and the Koreas.

Abe’s comment was only the most prominent among a number of similar comments that had previously been made by other Japanese politicians. The devastating impact of such remarks on public opinion in China and Korea had already been felt in 2005 with a consumer boycott of Japanese goods, culminating in outbreaks of violent protests against Japanese enterprises.

The Senkaku conflict during that time poured more oil on to the flames of anti-Japanese demonstrations in April 2005, as did the release of history books for (some) middle schools in Tokyo which left out important facts regarding Japan’s role in the Second World War. Japanese public opinion towards China turned equally sour, reaching its negative climax<sup>18</sup> in December 2005 when the Japanese Foreign Minister, Taro Aso, said, with unusual frankness, that China’s double-digit military growth for 17 years, its lack of military transparency and its possession of nuclear weapons posed a threat to Japanese security.<sup>19</sup>

#### *The conflict over the Kuril Islands/northern archipelago*

A third territorial conflict, simmering between Japan and Russia since the end of the Second World War, concerns the ownership of the four islands at the northern tip of the Japanese archipelago, the so-called Kuril Islands: Shikotan, Habomai, Etorofu and Kunashiri. They have been regarded as being of strategic military relevance, and have rich fishing grounds. The lack of resolution to this dispute has meant that, as of today, no peace treaty has been concluded between Russia and Japan.

The set of conflicts outlined above have widely been regarded as a substantial impediment to regional institution building in Northeast

Asia. They also clearly illustrate the need for Japan and China, as the biggest economic players in the region, to settle their issues first if regional institutionalization in Northeast Asia is to translate into sustainable development.

*Challenge Two: Facing a shifting balance of power through de facto economic regionalization*

China's rise is fundamentally altering the balance of power in the region, and with new threats emerging – and more and more non-governmental actors joining the political game – there has been a shift towards institutionalizing Northeast Asia. This shift has two parents.

Apart from the simple, but urgent, need for peaceful resolution of territorial conflicts, the business community<sup>20</sup> has urgently pushed for stronger regional economic and financial cooperation. The Asian financial crisis of 1997, which highlighted the full power of complex global economic intertwinement, proved to be the watershed. Pempel, Weiss and Iida, for instance, argue in their political and economic analyses in this volume that *de facto* or market-led trade and investment integration in East Asia has already reached a state of regionalization that, quoting Iida, “is unprecedented in the history of this region”. Higgott and Timmermann point to the consequence of this *de facto* economic trend: the relationship between the United States and East Asia is becoming more economically symmetrical, with the result that the bilateral strategic architecture is gradually being dismantled. They argue that this *de facto* economic regionalization should not be seen as distinguished from, but rather interlinked with, *de jure* state-led regionalism. This will require positive thinking about regional leadership issues.

*Challenge Three: Taking up the issue of leadership while managing the United States*

At this point, finally, the role of the United States as a geographically extra-regional but economically and politically coining power needs to be taken up for discussion, because it was the United States that for half a century rendered any regional leadership ambitions of the PRC and Japan impossible.

In the case of the PRC, regional leadership was obstructed for ideological reasons, with the “Taiwan” issue also being a continuous thorn in the flesh of US-Chinese relationships. In the case of Japan, regional leadership ambitions were obstructed as a result of particular debilitating historical circumstances. Japan, defeated in the Second World War and urgently needing to rebuild the country and its economy, committed itself

to the principle of “comprehensive security” which allowed it to focus on economic recovery and performance while being protected by the US security shield (see Tsuchiyama in this volume).

With China’s economic rise, and the resulting economic and financial flows, the situation has changed fundamentally. Regional neighbours Japan and the Republic of Korea have decided to jump on the bandwagon instead of trying to hold out against China’s booming development. They have progressively turned towards China, with its lower production costs and import and export opportunities.<sup>21</sup> In this process, the PRC has taken over the former US position as the biggest trading partner of both Japan and South Korea.

It will therefore be up to China and Japan, as the biggest economic powers in the region, to decide on how to deal with this leadership issue.

### What form will regional institutionalization take in Northeast Asia?

As a result of the aforementioned developments, the question is clearly no longer *if* regional institutionalization will take place, but rather *what form* it will take, who the drivers (and spoilers) will be and which path they will pursue. Within this context, a closely related question is: do such trends in the economic sector have the potential to spill over into other sectors?

A study by the US American Congress Research Service from April 2005 (that is, partly before the conflicts on history and territories between Japan and China heated up again) found the first indicators of such a trend. The authors conclude that “deepening economic cooperation has already increased the costs of disrupting economic and financial activity in Northeast Asia, by a military or other crisis”; that the process, as such, is “self-motivating, self-perpetuating, and self-sustaining”;<sup>22</sup> and that “the magnitude of the economic flows is affecting relations at other strata of interaction, such as stronger cooperation on political disputes between Japan, China and South Korea”<sup>23</sup> (see Weiss in this volume).

On the other hand, increasing economic competition between Japan and China may cause additional conflict. In trade, for instance, China and Japan have long complemented each other, with Japan as a high-tech power and China as a provider of cheap goods; but China is now increasingly becoming competitive in the high-tech sector. Also, the issue of intellectual property rights is vital to Japan, which wants the topic to be discussed within the framework of the WTO. Japan still tends to emphasize the advantages of China’s rise, but Japanese government representatives cannot always hide their unease. This was best exemplified in

a remark by the Japanese Trade Minister, Shoichi Nakagawa, who publicly admitted, “Yes, I am worried . . . It’s a scary country.”<sup>24</sup>

To international observers, China’s rise as an economic powerhouse and its growing role as a regional political power – combined with its non-transparent military spending policy – give reason to watch China’s policy carefully (see Takagi in this volume).

In an attempt to avoid being perceived as a threat, China has been trying to emphasize its policy of a “peaceful rise” by starting diplomatic initiatives in the region – for instance, acting as mediator in the Six-Party Talks on North Korea’s nuclear disarmament<sup>25</sup> (see Kikuchi, Lee and Aoi in this volume).

With health epidemics, human trafficking and environmental degradation, so-called “soft” issue areas have become the centre of attention and made their way into security discussions. The issue of refugees and migration, for instance, has been a thorn in the flesh of otherwise friendly relations between North Korea and China (see Akaha and Etkin in this volume).

Steps towards institutionalization, therefore, seem to have gained acceptance and accelerated beyond the economic sphere of interaction. This process is further enhanced by the increasing involvement of non-governmental actors. As unpopular as non-governmental actors may be among government representatives, human trafficking, environmental degradation and disasters among others are challenges that reach beyond national borders and the capabilities of individual national governments. Consequently, the emerging importance of civil society and its potential role in meeting such challenges are vital (see Lee, Aoi, Ohta and de Prado in this volume).

Closely related to such trends has been the wide acceptance and popularity of the “human security” concept in East Asia (and elsewhere) that best captures such developments, and sees a good chance that these aforementioned developments can provide the long-sought-after ground for overcoming the traditional security focus and pave the way for regional institution building in Northeast Asia (see Job and Evans in this volume).

The complexity of issues shaping the situation and perspective of Northeast Asian regional institutionalization has been the organizing logic for the approach and structure of this volume.

## Approach and structure of this volume

The process of organizing this volume started out with the ambitious idea of providing an overall approach and definitions equally satisfactory to

all authors. During a workshop discussion in Tokyo, 20–22 September 2005, it became evident, however, that not only the judgements of the situation but also the perspectives on regionalization in Northeast Asia were very dependent on the topic, as was the problem of which countries to include in individual analyses. Thus, to several authors, the focus on Northeast Asia as a (sub)region comprising only Japan, the PRC, Chinese Taipei, South Korea and North Korea seemed artificial, and they demanded a more open approach for analysis when needed.

Similarly, the definition and understanding of “institutionalization” and “integration” proved tricky in some cases, this time depending on the scientific perspective of the authors – that is, whether authors were coming from political science or economic backgrounds.

In order to overcome such difficulties and provide a common ground and framework of reference, firstly all authors were asked to address four guiding questions with regard to Northeast Asia, in light of their particular areas of expertise.

- Do the theory and practice of regional institutionalization provide plausible answers to the specific challenges of Northeast Asia?
- What are the premises and prospects of such processes in Northeast Asia?
- Which steps have to be taken?
- Have the processes of globalization paved the way for regional institutionalization in Northeast Asia and made what many observers deem seemingly “impossible” finally possible?

Secondly, in response to the variety of challenges and opportunities for institutionalizing Northeast Asia, and taking into consideration the academic and intellectual challenges for analysis as well as remembering UNU’s mission to provide a platform for academic exchange and policy development on issues of global concern, it was decided to subdivide the volume into two major parts.

Part I provides a general theoretical starting ground and frame of reference. It tackles issues of overarching concern, including reflections on theory, normative issues and some lessons learnt in a comparative context with the European Union.

In part II authors analyse different topic areas and develop particular policy recommendations related to Northeast Asia. The aforementioned difficulty of agreeing on single definitions of institutionalism, regionalization and so forth, which has also been reflected in many other volumes about regionalism in East Asia,<sup>26</sup> illustrates well that regionalism can no longer be reduced to the idea of territorial politics alone. Instead, regionalism needs to take into account the growing intertwinement of global issues and developments with both needs and interests at the regional and national levels and, accordingly, the demand for issue-related

supra-territorial policy responses to issues such as trade, finance, environment, human rights and human security.

In response to this, the second part of this book is further subdivided into four topic areas: history, ideas and identity; security; economy and finance; and environment, human rights, civil society and human security. Here authors (with varying degrees of optimism and scepticism) discuss the situation and potentials of future regional institution building in Northeast Asia from their particular angle of expertise.

### *The chapters in part I*

Three chapters, by Yoshinobu Yamamoto, Richard Higgott and Martina Timmermann, and Baogang He, serve as a general framework of reference for the chapters which follow. They offer definitions of institutionalism and regionalism, and provide an overview of the scientific debate on regional institutionalism in East Asia (i.e. Northeast and Southeast Asia), with a particular focus on Northeast Asia.

Yoshinobu Yamamoto provides a particular theoretical frame of reference for later authors with his chapter, “Institutionalization in Northeast Asia: Is outside-in regionalization enough?”. In discussing the possibilities of creating multilateral institutions in Northeast Asia, Yamamoto starts by defining the *concepts* of “institution” and “institutionalization” and then proceeds to discuss the *functions* of institutionalization. He develops a typology of institutions and institutionalization before finally applying his theoretical framework to the case of Northeast Asia.

Richard Higgott and Martina Timmermann debate “Institutionalizing East Asia: Learning lessons from Europe on regionalization, regionalism, identity and leadership”. They analyse the prospects for regional institutionalization in East Asia in the early twenty-first century by deliberately choosing the comparative context of Europe, and consider the role of identity building and regional leadership as vital for the future process of institutionalizing Northeast Asia.

The third chapter in part I, by Baogang He, examines the state of normative regionalism and its impact in East Asia. He provides an overview of the historical evolution of the idea of regionalism, and the meanings and variations of Asian regionalism.

### *The chapters in part II*

The section on “history, ideas and identity” contains analyses by Gilbert Rozman, Thomas Berger and Takashi Oshimura.

Gil Rozman, in his chapter “Northeast Asian regionalism at a crossroads: Is an East Asian Community in sight?”, discusses the various

reasons for and challenges standing in the way of the creation of an “East Asian Community”. He demands the acknowledgement of barriers (such as historical factors) as a prerequisite for any successful regionalism, and criticizes an overly strong focus on the functionalist approach while neglecting to close the cultural divide.

Thomas Berger, in “Overcoming a difficult past: The history problem and institution building in Northeast Asia”, explores the possibilities for regionalization by reviewing the underlying nature of international disputes over history issues. Berger traces the evolution of the disputes in Asia since 1945, and focuses in particular on the ways in which disputes over the past have disrupted regional diplomacy and institutional development.

Takashi Oshimura, in “The function and dysfunction of identity in an institutionalizing process: The case of Northeast Asia”, explores options for the creation or further development of a regional identity and discusses the question of how such an identity might contribute to regional institutionalization.

In the next section, following the analyses of historical and ideational causes and the prerequisites for regional institution building, Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, Shin-wha Lee, Seiichiro Takagi, Chiyuki Aoi and Tsutomu Kikuchi analyse the various security challenges and discuss their potential impact on regional institution building in Northeast Asia.

Jitsuo Tsuchiyama raises the question “Do the alliance networks in Northeast Asia contribute to peace and stability? The Japan-US alliance in focus”. Tsuchiyama, who is among the sceptics in this book, discusses the changing roles and rationale of the alliances after the end of the Cold War, with a particular focus on the Japan-US alliance.

Shin-wha Lee, in “Northeast Asian security community: From concepts to practices”, puts particular emphasis on the questions of why multilateral cooperation between South Korea, Japan and China is so difficult, and how possible strategies and action plans for cooperation can be developed in the areas of both traditional and non-traditional security.

Seiichiro Takagi, in his chapter “The Chinese approach to regional security institutionalism”, seeks to elucidate China’s approach to institutionalization in the security field. In a step-by-step analysis, Takagi discusses China’s actions and perceptions related to different institutions in the bilateral, subregional and regional realms.

Chiyuki Aoi critically discusses “The Proliferation Security Initiative from an institutional perspective: An ‘outside-in’ institution?”. Aoi suggests that “for the PSI to be genuinely effective, it needs to be transformed from a largely US-initiated, US-driven activity into a more multilateral, universal institution whose ‘outside-in’ potential can then be explored in the context of Northeast Asia”.

Tsutomu Kikuchi joins the security debate with his chapter “Institutional linkages and security governance: Security multilateralism in the Korean peninsula”. Using the Six-Party Talks as a reference example, Kikuchi argues that one effective approach towards security multilateralism in Northeast Asia could be through interlinking existing and new institutional mechanisms.

Whereas the authors of the sections on ideas, history and security strike a rather sceptical chord, we find some cautiously optimistic tunes in the third section, where Keisuke Iida, T. J. Pempel, John Weiss and Stuart Harris discuss different areas of economic, financial and energy cooperation.

Keisuke Iida examines the dynamic trade and investment diplomacy in East Asia. He stresses that not only the role of China but also three other factors need to be taken into consideration for success: “ASEAN integration, economic stagnation and reform in Japan, and acquiescence by the United States”.

T. J. Pempel, in “Firebreak: East Asia institutionalizes its finances”, points to the question of why “a number of new institutional moves suggest that the countries of Asia are becoming more internally cohesive in ways that do not systematically include extra-Asian participants”. Pempel observes that numerous connections across Asia have been developed since the mid-1980s, and that Asia’s previous predisposition towards informality is changing to the direction of more formal and institutionalized connections within the area of finance.

John Weiss looks at “China and its neighbours: Patterns of trade and investment”. Weiss analyses from a particular economic perspective how far the potential economic benefits for the region created by China’s rapid growth will stimulate and support moves towards institutionalization. He rests his analysis on the assumption that closer mutual cooperation between nation-states, as part of the process of institutionalization, requires that closer economic ties are not only mutually beneficial but also need to be perceived as such.

Stuart Harris, in “Institutionalizing Northeast Asia: The energy market”, regards several Northeast Asian energy issues as a potential basis for regional cooperation. He wonders, however, whether gains from cooperation are countered by the political risks that cooperation implies.

The last section in part II contains analyses by Hiroshi Ohta, César de Prado, Tsuneo Akaha and Brian Etkin, and Brian Job and Paul Evans.

Ohta takes up the environmental problem in “A small leap forward: Regional cooperation for attacking the problems of the environment and natural resources in Northeast Asia”. He examines major environment and natural resources (ENR) problems and the current state of regional ENR cooperation in Northeast Asia.

In “Multilevel regionalization through think-tanks, higher education and multimedia”, César de Prado argues that knowledge-enhancing exchanges are helping to construct a soft Northeast Asian regional space embedded in concentric multilevel regionalisms. He concedes that Northeast Asian governments have begun to promote regional think-tank networks of experts from public and private sectors, but demands further strengthening and rationalizing.

The need for creating a knowledge-based civil society in Northeast Asia is exceptionally important in the field of human rights and human migration – topics that are tackled by Tsuneo Akaha and Brian Etkin in their chapter, “International migration and human rights: A case for a regional approach in Northeast Asia”. Akaha and Etkin examine the potential value of a regional approach to protecting the human rights of international migrants in Northeast Asia.

The final chapter, “Human security and Northeast Asia: Seeds germinating on hard ground” by Brian Job and Paul Evans, is deliberately placed at the end of this part of the book. Job and Evans explore the manner in which Northeast Asian states are coming to terms with the challenges of human security. They conclude that “For Northeast Asia, the imperatives of human security may provide a logic for multilateral institutionalism that transcends traditional security dilemmas and, indeed, may lay the foundation for their eventual resolution.”

This conclusion would serve well as a fine last sentence for the whole volume. It will ultimately be up to the reader, however, to decide whether the chapters in this book provide sufficient and compelling arguments to draw a conclusion, whether the chances for regionalization through institutionalization in Northeast Asia exist, and whether and how the various steps suggested by the contributors could and should be taken up in the challenging process of achieving lasting order, stability and prosperity in (and beyond) Northeast Asia.

## Notes

1. Suzuki, Sanae (2004) “East Asian Cooperation through Conference Diplomacy: Institutional Aspects of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Framework”, Working Paper, Institute for Developing Economies, APEC Study Center, JETRO, Tokyo.
2. Due to its bilateral security treaties with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, the United States is deeply involved in the region from a military standpoint; this causes some security scholars to consider the United States as a part of Northeast Asia. Additionally, because of Russia’s growing role in the field of energy security, some analysts also include Russia as a member of the region (see for instance Harris in this volume).
3. See [www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/wmeat9900/18738.pdf](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/wmeat9900/18738.pdf).
4. Keohane, Robert O. (1989) *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, p. 3.

5. Lamy, Steven L. (2001) "Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism", in John Baylis and Steve Smith, eds, *The Globalization of World Politics*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 182–199, Box 9.2. For further details see Yamamoto and Higgott and Timmermann in this volume.
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  11. See Timmermann, note 9 above; Timmermann, Martina (2006) “Regional Community-Building in Asia? Transnational Discourses, Identity- and Institution-Building in the Fields of Human and Women’s Rights”, in Claudia Derichs and Thomas Heberer, eds, *The Power of Ideas: Intellectual Input and Political Change in East and Southeast Asia*, NIAS Studies in Asian Topics No. 36, Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, pp. 202–220.
  12. The process that led to this official inclusion of human rights has been long. It was substantially supported by the working group for an ASEAN human rights mechanism following the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights. For details, see Timmermann (2006), *ibid.*
  13. It was for this same reason that the tentative working title of this volume and the workshop held at UNU and Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo on 20–22 September 2005 was “Institutionalization of Northeast Asia: Making the ‘Impossible’ Possible?”.
  14. “The 1960 US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security applies to territories under the administration of Japan, including the Senkaku Islands. In November 1996, US Assistant Secretary of Defense Campbell stated that the basic position of the US is that the Japan-US security treaty would cover the Senkaku Islands. US Secretary of Defense William Perry reconfirmed this fact on 3 December 1996.” This was repeated on 24 March 2004 by Adam Ereli, deputy spokesman of the US State Department, who said: “The Senkaku Islands have been under the administrative control of the Government of Japan since having been returned as part of the reversion of Okinawa in 1972. Article 5 of the 1960 U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security states that the treaty applies to the territories under the administration of Japan; thus, Article 5 of the Mutual Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands.” Both quotes are available at [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/senkaku.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/senkaku.htm).

15. In 2004 a 10-year, US\$225 million gas exploration project was started south-west of Dokdo by Korea Gas, a state company. Korea National Oil and Woodside Petroleum of Australia started oil and gas exploration in the summer of 2005 north of Dokdo. See [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liancourt.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liancourt.htm).
16. The year 2005 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, as well as the fiftieth anniversary of diplomatic normalization between the two countries.
17. In his view, Japan had been compelled to accept the outcome of the Tokyo Tribunal in order to become an independent nation. "Under Japanese Law, 14 at Yasukuni Not Criminals: Abe", *Japan Times*, 7 October 2006, quoted in Thakur, Ramesh (2006) "Asia-Pacific Challenges for Diplomacy", revised paper of keynote lecture "Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific: Changes and Challenges", delivered at Diplomatic Update 2006, Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, 12–14 November, p. 14, note 32.
18. See Tamamoto, Masaru (2006) "How Japan Imagines China and Sees Itself", *Commentary*, Japan Institute of International Affairs, 31 May.
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