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War and Peace in East Asia: Avoiding Thucydides's Trap with China as a Rising Power

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Abstract

Many have noticed the rise of China and warned of underlying danger to regional stability in Northeast Asia leading to global instability. A discourse about whether China and the U.S. will fall into the so-called “*Thucydides's Trap*” has begun. Some observers are concerned that the active maritime military action of China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, South China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait may lead to unexpected conflicts between China and other Northeast Asian actors with eventual US-China confrontation. I present some conceptual elaborations of “*Thucydides's Trap*” from both a scientific realist view of causal depth and a deeper form of neoclassical realism in international relations with appropriate historiography. I offer evidence from recent history of Northeast Asian international relations that the trap is avoidable but avoiding it requires important confidence building measures. The neoclassical realist considerations of internal politics of key actors shows an overwhelming consensus regarding peaceful conflict resolution via a grand strategy of cooperation with some

conflicts that can be resolved through negotiations in good faith. While a full blown theory of Thucydides's Trap within the broader framework of power transition theory is still to be worked out, this work can also be seen as a step in that direction. Although detailed analysis of the best available current historical evidence from Northeast Asia within a critical neoclassical realist(CNR), or more detailed critical transneoclassical realist(CTNR) paradigm shows that the so-called "*Thucydides's Trap*" is not inevitable, recognizing the actual opportunities and constraints in order to escape the trap has hardly begun. Since the consequences of an actual war are so severe, both conceptual analysis of sovereignty and power based on realist principles and applied consequentialist reasoning offer strong arguments for finding credible means to avoid the trap. This chapter points to some feasible steps in light of a careful reading of recent history of Northeast Asian relations and offers a tentative scientific realist conceptualization of the "*Thucydides's Trap*." In particular, the CNR theory based analysis already shows the limitations of the structural neorealism on which Mearsheimer explicitly and Allison implicitly base their arguments about US-PRC rivalry and tensions. Using the causally deeper CNR approach and the concrete case of tensions in Northeast Asia, the present work can be seen as a necessary step in the direction of developing an applicable theory of "*Thucydides's Trap*" with sufficient causal depth and analytical reach within a yet broader and more useful global theory. This effort will be a further step towards building a complexity theory based multiplex cooperative new global order, or CTMNGO combining constructively a critical transneoclassical realism(CTNR) with global and regional cooperative institution building for our genuine planetary common good.

Keywords: National Interest; Critical Neoclassical Realism(CNR); CTNR; Complexity Theory-based Multiplex New Global Order(CTMNGO);US-PRC Relations; Northeast Asian International Relations; Thucydides's Trap; Scientific Realism; China's Foreign Policy, US Grand Strategy

1. Introduction

As the introduction to this book explains, within the evolving international system, the challenges posed to the dominant powerful states by those that manage to achieve significant economic and military growth informs many important debates about the causes and consequences of war, the prospects for peace, the nature of alliance politics, and the durability of international political order. It is perhaps fair to point out in this light that real and perceived threats posed by rising powers serve as the principal framework of contemporary American national security policy in an era of “great power competition.” Here, within the broad umbrella of the long established power transition theory, I take up the challenge of understanding the complex relations between the US as the dominant power and China as a rising power---actually an already risen power--- within a critical neoclassical realist framework.

Scholars such as Graham Allison have noticed the rise of China and warned of underlying danger to regional stability in Northeast Asia and even global instability (Allison 2017). The COVID-19 induced global crisis has, if anything, brought more out into the open the tensions in US-China relations.¹ Even before this crisis, rogue actors like North Korea which had been repeatedly launching ballistic missiles and conducting nuclear tests with no significant opposition – perhaps even tacit support from China – seemed to confirm the fear of instability and ultimately a US-China armed conflict. A discourse about whether China and the U.S. will fall into the “*Thucydides’s Trap*” has not lost its relevance by any means. Some academics are concerned that the active maritime and air military action of China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands (disputed islands claimed by China, Taiwan, and Japan), South China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait may lead to unexpected conflicts between China and other Northeast Asian actors with eventual US-China confrontation.²

However, the situation on the ground is rich in its ambiguities and complexities. Without ignoring the current tensions, one can point to the open diplomatic channels between the US and PRC . Both the countries also participate in many international

¹ A recent Zoom conversation between Graham Allison and Kishore Mahbubani illustrates this point well: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4L3gF-sLXc>

² It should be emphasized that “*Thucydides’s Trap*,” as Allison himself admits, is more of a metaphor than a theoretical term. See also Kirshner (2019)’s criticisms of Allison, in particular with regards to interpreting Thucydides. However, for IR theory itself as opposed to an exegesis of Thucydides’s great work, the debate, we think, can be put within the power transition theoretical problematic. See the following articles for some theoretical notes in this direction within both IR and GPE via a modified version of *neoclassical (critical) realism* and *a non-relativist comparative constructivism* consistent with *scientific realism*. Khan (2013, 2017, 2018) and Khan and Patomaki (2013).

organizations ranging from the UN to various international trade and financial organizations. Taking the DPRK as an extreme case, even under President Trump, three summit meetings between Chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea Kim Jong-Un and the President of United States (U.S.) Donald J. Trump took place. At least both leaders were willing to meet in person, though not much progress was made. In addition, China and Japan also have been mending their relations. They finally signed the "maritime and air communication mechanism" in May 2018. Due to interdependence and intensified exchanges in multiple spheres in the global setting between the US and PRC, it is clear that their conflicts and cooperation will be evolving in a complex manner. As Zhao (2019, p. 501) argues, despite the Sino-U.S. trade war, "[n]either the U.S. nor China can afford to disengage from the other" and "[c]ompetition does not mean confrontation, much less war."

This chapter will provide some methodological and theoretical reflections on the concept "Thucydides's Trap" with respect to its applicability to Northeast Asian tensions among PRC and its neighbors. I conclude that the concept is applicable but there are some problems in the efforts to apply it so far. The variables selected so far empirically to analyze the Northeast Asian tensions have not been probed in depth. This leads to the problem of causal depth in explanations and predictions in international relations in general and for explanations and future scenarios for the Northeast Asian tensions in particular. Consequently, I argue that the idea of causal depth needs to be applied carefully in order to locate more fundamental and in-depth variables related to the Northeast Asian tensions and potential future conflicts with the PRC in this region.

The main argument I advance is that using a deeper form of (critical neoclassical) realist theory of international relations from a scientific realist methodological perspective, it can be shown that the relation between the rising and the status quo powers though fraught, need not lead to an all out devastating war in the nuclear age. Clearly, there are and will be tensions in the US-PRC relationship. But developing the idea of "*Thucydides's Trap*" within the context of a deeper form of realism will allow for outcomes other than all out war.

Among the places of possible conflicts between the U.S. and China according to Allison, are the Taiwan straits, the Senkaku/ Diaoyu Islands, and Korean Peninsula. Hence, examining Allison's three war scenarios in Northeast Asia can offer valuable insights. Moreover, I analyze alternative variables and specifications accounting for the Northeast Asian states' strategic choices toward China and the U.S. based on the idea of causal depth. Northeast Asian states' strategic choices will determine whether there will be peace or conflict in the future, and thus are a big part of the larger US-China "*Thucydides's Trap*" riddle.

I begin in the next section with some methodological remarks to clarify my

approach in general and particularly, my conceptualization of “*Thucydides’s Trap*.”

2. Some Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

2.1: Thucydides in light of modern scientific realist epistemology and ontology:

In the analysis below, I try to follow – as meticulously as possible – a sound historiographic tradition by relying on sources from three languages – Chinese, Japanese and English – and in this section in particular, a fourth, namely, classical Greek in interpreting Thucydides’s methodology of *causal depth* in modern nuanced realist philosophy of science terms. However, as E.H. Carr (1961) points out in his famous discussion---based in part on classical realism³-- in *What is History?*, no historian can cover all the sources exhaustively, esp. in writing current history which is history in the making even as one tries to write an up to date account. There is an inevitable residue of interpretative incompleteness if not serious ambiguity. A reasonable solution – following Carr and others in the same school – is to try our best to take into account contrary evidence in our narrative in an analytical way. Here the scientific realist perspective of causal depth assessment through causal comparisons of historical processes is important. It may come as a surprise to those who have not read Thucydides carefully that this ancient Greek historian was fully aware of the modern scientific realist distinction between superficial causes and deeper causes in explaining historical processes. Of course, he does not use our modern epistemological and ontological vocabulary.

In Book 1, Thucydides states clearly enough:

To the question why they broke the treaty, I answer by placing first an account of their causes of complaint and points of difference, that no one may ever have to search for that [the causes] from which the Hellenes plunged into a war of such magnitude. The [relatively] deepest [truest] cause, I consider to be the one that was rarely mentioned in public [discussions]. I conclude that the Athenians, because they had grown in power and terrified the Spartans, made war [nearly] inevitable (Thucydides 2003, I.23.5-6).

There are modern interpretative issues regarding the exact meaning of key words and phrases such as *alethestate prophasis* and *anankasai*. We have given both the strict lexicographic meaning of *alethestate* as truest and the modern interpretation consistent with scientific realism as *the (relatively---more strictly, comparatively via a causal comparison) deepest*.

Likewise, we would add the qualification “nearly” to inevitable as the correct

³ Carr’s *Twenty Years’ Crisis* is historiography in the classical realist, “*Thucydidesian*” mode.

contextual translation/interpretation of *anankasai*. Since this paper is not about an exegesis of the text of Thucydides but rather it is about the power rivalry and transition in East Asia, we will use our interpretation of the “*Thucydides’s Trap*” as a conceptual apparatus that helps us to understand what factors might create grave tension in power relations in Northeast Asia that could possibly but not inevitably lead to a regional war that could develop into WW III. Clearly, the stakes are high.

2. Critical TransNeoclassical Realist Theory(CTNR) , US Grand Strategic Thinking and US-China Rivalry

CNR or in more detailed unambiguous way CTNR, attempts to overcome some of the limitations of both Realism and its Neoclassical variety. Our specific CTNR theory is explained in more (causal) depth and detail below. Some scholars of US Grand Strategy in the Asia-Pacific(Green,2019) see strategy as rooted in something fundamental. We might call it “... U.S. opposition to any other power exercising “exclusive hegemonic control over Asia or the Pacific” (p. 5). Insulated by oceans from destructive great-power struggles abroad, and with weak neighbors, the US after the civil war pursued first counter-hegemonic and then hegemonic strategies in Asia and other regions.

To his credit, Green identifies five recurring historical tensions in U.S. grand strategy toward Asia: (1) the elevation of Europe and other theaters over Asia, (2) the swings from a continental China-focused policy to a maritime Japan-focused policy, (3) the question of whether to draw the U.S. forward-defense line closer to Asia or closer to Hawaii, (4) competing interests in self-determination and universal values, and (5) the struggle between free trade and protectionism. In our further analysis, we will see that many of these issues persist .

As an academic discipline, many like to define international relations as a subject matter to study ‘politics between states’. This framing stresses the external relations of states so much that it often overlooks the domestic political dynamics of states. Classical realists highlight actors’ struggle for power and dominance vis-à-vis others in

the international system and neorealists view it as the logic of an anarchical global structure. However, foreign policy of a state is not disconnected from domestic political dynamics. Even when drawing from ancient texts, the scholars of classical and structural realism failed to grasp the internal dynamics at play for determining external course of action of state actors. Especially in the twenty -first century when countries are more connected than ever, the domestic-external divide in regional and global politics appears to be superfluous and unwarranted.

Although classical realists like to draw inspiration from Thucydides's description of the Peloponnesian war, their reading of Thucydides misses some crucial points. "This "realism" neglects the distinction between what is honorable in Athens- pride in democratic character though also dominion—and subsequent, blind pride, involved in slaughter and decline" (Gilbert 1999: 161). Sole focus on Hobbesian rivalry of a "perpetual and restless desire for power after power, that ceaseth only in death" (Hobbes 1946: 80) also misses a warning from Morgenthau that "a man who was nothing but a 'political man' would be a beast, for he would be completely lacking in moral restraints" (Morgenthau 1951: 14). It is in this context Gilbert (1999) argued that "international-relations theory during the Cold War mistakenly emphasized science at the expense of ethics; it also sought a misguided reduction of a common good to *power* and denied the *potential* peacefulness of democracy" (Gilbert 1999: 110). After the Cold War too, in the name of maintaining hegemony in the international system, we have seen how the classical realist calculations of power, devoid of ethical considerations, led to major foreign policy blunders.

On the other hand, neorealism, Gilbert (1999) argued, "makes a theoretical point of ignoring democratic regimes and other domestic political structures as important variables in international system" (Gilbert 1999: 150). In line with this framing, neorealism justifies American support of authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships abroad in the name of stabilizing the regional and international system, ignoring the domestic political dynamics. Gilbert (1999) further contends that "shaped by repressive American policy and a sometimes plausible, but misguided, philosophy of science- logical positivism and, in social science, behavioralism- however, neorealism as well as that version of the democratic-peace hypothesis that ignores American "interventions" against other democracies, offers ideology, not science" (Gilbert 1999: 151). The lessons from the wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan guide us to think that neorealist emphasis on just the external international structure can be a trap if the domestic dynamics are not taken into account.

Neoclassical realism is a relatively recent theoretical trend which seeks to bridge the gap between external and internal dynamics of international relations. Gideon Rose, who coined the term, argued that “understanding the links between power and policy requires close examination of the contexts within which foreign policies are formulated and implemented” (Rose 1998: 147). Thus, the premises of neoclassical realism take domestic and state levels of analysis into consideration, not just the international systemic level of analysis. This helps us reorient our focus to the basic definition of foreign policy that it is an “area of politics which bridges the all-important boundary between the nation-state and its international environment” (Wallace 1971: 07).

To understand how states respond to internal and external changes in the policy making realm, neoclassical realists argue that it is essential to understand unit level intervening variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and domestic state structure (Rose 1998: 152). When we look at US-China rivalry in the twenty first century, it is wise to recall George Kennan’s warning from the past century that “these attacks (claims that the United States ‘lost China’) were an early part of the wave of anti-communist hysteria which was to become known as McCarthyism- an episode of our public life so disgraceful that one blushes today to think of it” (Kennan 1984: 165). Although we left behind the Cold War era three decades ago, some still want to espouse the wrong historical analogy between China and the Soviet Union to stoke fear of a tense global rivalry. In a *Foreign Affairs* article titled ‘Xi Jinping is not Stalin’, McFaul argued that the “U.S. foreign-policy makers must resist the impulse to check every Chinese move around the world” (McFaul 2020).

In order to make sense of the recent changes, it is important to understand the Chinese domestic variables as well. Analysts contend that the domestic appeal of nationalism led China to become increasingly assertive abroad. Zhao argued that “enjoying an inflated sense of empowerment supported by its new quotient of wealth and military capacities, and terrified of an uncertain future due to increasing social, economic and political tensions at home, the communist state has become more willing to play to the popular nationalist gallery in pursuing the so-called core national interests” (Zhao 2013: 535). However, this does not necessarily imply that China will be a hostile global player. China also has stakes in the international system and would not necessarily benefit from creating chaos .

China does aspire to possess a more powerful position in the international system. However, this should not be interpreted as “either-or” competition for the leading role

in the global order. From a neoclassical realist perspective, Schweller observed that “the future may well resemble President Xi Jinping’s proposal for a ‘new type of great power relations’ (*xinxing daguo guanxi*) ...China and the United States should share global leadership as equals and break a historical pattern of inevitable confrontation between rising and established powers” (Schweller 2018: 25). From the US point of view, rather than espousing antagonistic policy position, reaching a *balanced threat perception* would be important in this regard.

The political rhetoric of “America First” signals a growing and deeper sense of nationalism. However, when dealing with an influential actor like China, such hubris can only hasten American decline. A hot war would not benefit any actor and in this context, it would be wise to pay heed to what US Secretary of State John Quincy Adams famously advised about not going “abroad in search of monsters to destroy” (Adams, 1821). While there is overestimation of Chinese threats to the US, Benjamin Herscovitch observes soberly that “no armies are being launched into battle, no civilians are being slaughtered, and no cities are being reduced to rubble” (Herscovitch 2017: 18).

Drawing from lessons of ancient Greek history and other contemporary examples, we also see that neoclassical realism helps us understand that hubris in domestic political structure can lead to adopt imperialist adventures abroad that can be counterproductive. In this chapter, I show drawing from the case scenarios of Taiwan, North Korea and dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu island that Thucydides’s trap can be avoided if domestic and regional dimensions are deeply analyzed and appropriate policies are implemented. The following sections analyze both domestic and international factors to avoid Thucydides’s trap in Northeast Asia, with the caveats that if there are knee-jerk reactions from both sides, they can fall into the trap. The optimistic scenario flows from our effort to contribute towards building a complexity theory based multiplex new global order, or CTMNGO. As illustrated above, CTMNGO will combine constructively a critical neoclassical realism(CNR) with global and regional cooperative institution building.

3. Thucydides’s Trap: Some Subtleties in Light of Modern Scientific Realist Methodology and the Requirement of Causal Depth

There are some more subtle points about reading history with an eye for causal

depth in understanding “*Thucydides’s Trap*.” We mention two that will be helpful in our analysis below.⁴

The first point is both historical and analytical. One of David Hume’s great insights was to recognize that while events were observable, their putative underlying “causes” were not observable. What were observable such as spatial contiguity, temporal succession etc. turned out in his analysis not to be causes at all but the prejudices of our thinking. The incisiveness of Hume's empiricist analysis which found that there was no causality beyond the empirical regularities observed led Kant to declare that it was Hume who awakened him from his “dogmatic slumber.”

Kant’s awakening produced the classic “*Critique of Pure Reason*” where Kant attempted to rescue causality by arguing that by his transcendental deductions causality along with universality, necessity etc. needed to be conceptualized as “categories of our mind.” In the twentieth century, the logical positivists rejected the Kantian solution and embraced the Humean position albeit with typical flourishes of symbolic logic that was developing at an accelerated pace in the 1920s. Thus logical positivists such as Hempel or Carnap eschew causal language wherever possible. If cause is mentioned at all, it is to be understood as part of an empirical law or law-like statement. Hempel’s deductive nomological model is the most rigorous and elegant example of this practice.

In contrast to the empiricist tradition, the scientific realists have always – although not always equally clearly or forcefully – emphasized causal explanations. In the 19th century, Darwin himself was an exponent of this view as a close study of his 1836-1844 notebooks reveal. Huxley was, as usual, much more forthright and pugnacious than Darwin. For example, in Huxley, one reads:

any one who is acquainted with the history of science will admit, that its progress has, in all ages meant, and now, more than ever, means, the extension of the province of what we call matter and causation, and the concomitant gradual banishment from all regions of thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity (Huxley 1894, Vol.1, pp. 158-9).

What is significant here is that Darwin, as Dennet has most clearly pointed out, more than any other scientist before him articulates and exemplifies a causal approach to scientific explanation by appealing to both non-observable and deep underlying causal processes (Dennett 1995). However, even if we grant that the notion of cause is not problematic – it actually is still controversial among the philosophers⁵ although specification of causal mechanisms in terms of non-observable entities whose causal

⁴ For a more complete discussion of causal depth we refer the reader to Khan 2008 and Miller 1987.

⁵ See Salmon 1993.

effects are in principle observable will be accepted by most scientists as a practical way to proceed⁶ – the question of how to choose from among a list of alternative causes still remains.

Our second point is a further elucidation of depth as priority and depth as necessity and apply this idea of causal depth to advance a deeper form of realism to assess the US-PRC tensions. The relevant claim for our approach to *Thucydides's Trap* concept in this paper is that historiography can use a similar causal depth approach pioneered in ancient Greece by Thucydides. We then demonstrate throughout the rest of our paper how this approach can help us understand the complexities of power transition in Northeast Asia in current historical terms.

The essential idea of causal depth⁷ as a selection criterion for explanations is that among the rival theoretical explanations for a given phenomenon, the deepest explanation – deepest compared to its rivals at the time – is to be chosen provisionally as the “best”(“approximately true”) explanation. This is the way the entire history explicated by Thucydides in his great book throughout but particularly in Book 1 can be understood. We can also explore the modern methodological relevance of Thucydides's approach and give a more accurate theoretical account of the Trap via the case study of US-China rivalry in Northeast Asia. To put the methodological issues in a modern context, we can turn to Miller. As Miller puts it:

Suppose a list of causes fits an appropriate standard causal pattern and accurately describes factors sufficient under the circumstances to bring about the effect in question. It may still fail to explain because those causes lack sufficient depth. Roughly speaking, a cause is too shallow to explain why something occurred if it is just one of the ways in which another cause, as intimately connected with the effect, produced the latter. In the slogan version of the causal theory of explanation, such causes are excluded by the requirement that “underlying” causes be described. Actually, “not underlain” would be the more accurate, but absolutely ugly term, since the question is whether one cause is undermined by another.

More specifically, a cause, X, helping to bring about Y, is too shallow to explain why Y occurred if a cause, Z, of Y undermines X in one of two ways: (a) If X had not occurred, Y would have happened anyway; Z would have produced some causal substitute for X, bringing Y about in some other way.

I will label the depth that X lacks, and Z may have here, “depth as necessity.” (b) Z is a condition

⁶ There are some worries in physics about quantum causality and particularly non-locality after Bell's inequality was used by Aspect to show that non-locality did exist at the sub-atomic level. However, given the existence of “decoherence” at a larger scale level of our world, this may not be such a problem. For the social world there still remains the problem of mind-body identity vs. panpsychism and the role of consciousness and meaning that phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches emphasize. However, I believe that at the present state of our knowledge such issues are not resolvable, and we should be open-minded about alternative modes of explanations in the social sciences. Here, clearly the attention is restricted to the set of causal explanations that can be compared meaningfully.

⁷ See also Wilson (1994) and Wendt (1998, 1999, 2000, 2001).

in which Y arose that caused Y, and caused it, in part, by causing X; Z is causally prior to X yet, also, too intimately related to Y to be bracketed as a remote cause. I will refer to this aspect or depth using the label “depth as priority (Miller 1987, p. 88).”

Without going further,⁸ the above may be sufficient to establish our methodological point that our approach to possible “*Thucydides’s Trap*” in US-China rivalry will use the concept of causal depth in order to offer a deeper causally appropriate realist analysis of this case. It will be found that the trap is not inevitable when a causally deeper approach is followed.⁹

In addition, we rule out methodologically a purely deterministic approach. This, too, is consistent with the most recent advances in the realist philosophy of science. Substantively, a sophisticated version of realism and power transition theory would be consistent with our approach in this paper. Since its introduction by Organski¹⁰, the power transition theory has generated a vast theoretical and empirical literature. We cite some of the most prominent recent contributions here. It is relevant to point out that the recent critical literature does acknowledge the need for a nondeterministic analysis while paying careful attention to the actual points of tension between the rising and the status quo powers.¹¹

It should be emphasized that the Harvard “*Thucydides’s Trap*” Project led by Professor Allison has studied 16 salient cases of conflict scenarios. The case files included as an appendix to Allison (2017) show that although the majority of the cases resulted in wars, there are some that did not. In fact, there are four cases in the case files that fall in this category. Thus, empirically at least, there seems to be a 25 percent *prima facie* probability of avoiding “*Thucydides’s Trap*.” Of course, without rigorous

⁸ See Khan (2008) for a fuller discussion. See also Khan (2013, 2017, 2018) for a fuller contextual discussion in terms of the various versions of realist theories in international relations, and analysis of Northeast Asian power relations.

⁹ This approach is consistent with the recent results in both dynamic noncooperative and cooperative game theoretical results that offer various mechanisms for avoiding the globally harmful Nash equilibria.

¹⁰ Kugler, Jacek and A. F. K. Organski. *The War Ledger*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1980 and Kugler, Jacek and Ronald L. Tammen, et al. *Power Transitions*. New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2000.

¹¹ Some relevant recent work – without being exhaustive can be cited here: Benson (2007); Busmann and Oneal (2007); Clark (2011); De Soysa, Oneal, and Park (1997); Efird, Kugler, and Genna (2003); Eminue and Ufomba (2011); Güneçlioğlu (2017); Harris (2015); Kim and Gates (2015); Lebow and Valentino (2009); Lee (2015); Lemke (1997); Lemke and Tammen (2003); Lim (2014); Rauch (2017a); Rauch (2017b); Sanjian (2003); Sciubba and Toft (2014); Toft (2007).

statistical modeling, this should not be stressed too much. But given Thucydides's and our modern scientific realist position regarding causal depth, a deeper theoretical and empirical investigation might reveal qualitatively the plausibility of the *tensions and conflicts but no war scenario*. In the remainder of the paper we try to demonstrate this by considering a part of the US-China confrontation, namely in Northeast Asia. We show that despite tensions that – as Allison correctly notes – can lead to war, there are cooperative tension-reducing moves available with a historical footing. Thus the probability of a non-war outcome in the 21st century with or without a complete power transition in Northeast Asia is not as low as some may fear. This analysis does not try to answer the question of whether other scenarios in other parts of the world, or increasing trade tensions can lead to a war. We turn briefly to this issue in the concluding section. Finally, while a full blown theory of “*Thucydides's Trap*” is still to be worked out, our work can be seen as a step in that direction.

4. Examining Allison's War Scenarios ¹²

“*Thucydides's Trap*” approach is based on an argument, excerpted from Thucydides' comment, that “It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable.” Allison argues that the rise of China and the fear in the U.S. created the similar dilemma and lists five war scenarios. However, are China and the U.S. really that close to war? Based on our first argument, this section examines three “most likely” war scenarios in Northeast Asia listed by Allison and indicates the problems with these scenarios. The discussion aims to demonstrate that the argument of inevitable war between the U.S. and China is based on superficial causal analysis and there is not enough solid empirical ground to support the argument.

To briefly describe these three scenarios: China attacks Taiwan for its declaration of independence and the U.S. protects Taiwan against China; China and Japan have conflict over Senkaku/ Diaoyu Islands and the U.S. sends troops according to the US-Japan mutual defense treaty; the death of Kim Jong-un leads to civil war, South Korea, the U.S., and China all intervene and collide in North Korea. The shared characteristic in these three cases is that the longstanding security arrangements with Northeast Asian states drag the U.S. into Chinese-Taiwanese, Chinese-Japanese, and Korean Peninsula conflict (Bosco 2013). However, the background information used regarding the political, social, military situation in Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea has been limited, somewhat shallow and misleading. This leads to a shallow form of causal analysis making these the war scenarios less credible to the historically and contextually aware

¹² The work in this section draws heavily from my joint work with Dr. Yang in Taiwan (Khan and Yang 2019)

analysts than they appear to be to the less historically informed.

4.1 The Case of Taiwan

The first problem with this war scenario is that it overemphasizes the connectivity between Hong Kong's political movement and Taiwan's sovereign status. Indeed, the majority of Taiwanese feel sympathetic towards the Hong Kongese for the deteriorating political condition in Hong Kong and thus support them in their fight for their freedom and basic rights. However, unlike Hong Kong, which is a part of China, most Taiwanese, including most Kuomintang (KMT, also Chinese Nationalist Party) politicians and supporters who generally support the unification with China, view the Republic of China (ROC) as an independent country and themselves as its citizens who are not governed by the People Republic of China (PRC). Thus, even if "Xi orders the Chinese military to do what it did in Tiananmen Square in 1989" (Allison 2017, p. 173) to crush the protests in Hong Kong, Taiwan would not declare independence.¹³ Actually, Taiwanese public's attitude toward the ongoing 2019 Hong Kong anti-extradition bill protests demonstrate that many Taiwanese think that Hong Kong is a part of China after it was returned to China in 1997 and have no faith in the slogan "One nation, two systems." This protest might make many Taiwanese to have concerns regarding intensifying further relations and economic integration with China and change their voting behavior in presidential election in order to avoid pro-unification politician; however, declaring independence is very unlikely.

The second problem is that it underestimates Taiwan's need for survival through accommodation. At the governmental level, most politicians in Taiwan, whether from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) or the KMT understand Beijing's bottom line is "not to declare independence." Moreover, it is impossible for Taiwan to declare independence without U.S. promise of sending troops to protect Taiwan against China. In the societal level, the general public in Taiwan is pragmatic enough to understand that declaring independence is an impractical move and would irritate---indeed push to the brink--- the strategists in Beijing.

We are not arguing that there is no possibility of crisis but argue that this scenario needs some revisions. For example, if the political polarization in Taiwan becomes more serious, and elects a pro-independence or pro-unification radical president, such a pro-independence radical president might declare independence and China might

¹³ Declaring independence here means to establish a new country under the name of the republic of Taiwan.

attack. Likewise, a pro-unification radical president might declare unification and cause critical resistance from Taiwanese public and China may use this as a rationale to interfere.

4.2 The Conflict over Senkaku/Diaoyu Island

The first problem is that it neglects the fact that China and Japan have signed “Maritime and Air Communication Mechanism” to avoid this scenario. Both sides understood the need for a mechanism for crisis management and for reducing the possibilities of crisis motivated both sides to enter into negotiations. Hence, the priority of both sides for years was the early commencement of the operation of the mechanism (MODJ 2017, p. 368). However, the negotiations were delayed, postponed, and cancelled because of several political frictions over Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Moreover, the previous gridlock was whether the document should clarify precisely—perhaps too precisely—the target area of the mechanism. Prudently, eventually the problem of target area was put aside. Two states finally signed the mechanism on May 9, 2018, which helps to solve the crisis mentioned in the scenario.

The second problem is that it exaggerates Japan’s normalization of state by translating it unrealistically and unwisely into inflexible militaristic moves.¹⁴ Allison states that Japan’s politics “have become increasingly militaristic in recent years” by emphasizing conservative Japanese politicians’ strident discourses about revising the pacifist constitution imposed on their country by the U.S. (Allison 2017, p. 176). Indeed, Abe Administration lifted the taboo on the right of “collective self-defense” and Abe as Prime Minister has advocated revising the pacifist constitution. Although Abe’s measure on lifting the taboo was questionable, the right of “collective self-defense” is exerted by every country in the world. Moreover, in the draft of constitutional amendments by the Liberal Democratic Party (*Jiyu Minshu To*, 2012), LDP suggested the addition of three points into Article Nine: recognizing the rights of self-defense, recognizing the rights to possess a defense force and articulating the obligation and rights of a defense force, and emphasizing the defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity. These changes are not that uncommon in other states’ constitutions. Not to mention that the process of constitution revision in Japan is very difficult and even if LDP can pass the draft in the Diet, it still needs a majority vote in favor of constitutional revision in a national referendum. It is true that the shift of security policy in Japan since 2000s has been a great leap considering it was previously a taboo to discuss security policy in Japanese political circle and society in the Cold War Era and there was political controversy over sending the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF) to join

¹⁴ As Maslow (2015, p. 740) indicated, “Normalization” refers to “the departure of Japan from its postwar pacifist posture toward an increasingly active role in international relations, including the use of military force.”

the United Nations Peacekeeping operation in 1990s. However, Japanese conservatives still struggle to justify JSDF's legal status in Constitutional revisions rather than advocating militarism.

The third problem is that it overestimates the JSDF's combat experience. In Allison's scenario, a Japanese JSDF captain, "fearing for his ship's safety, downs one of the low-flying Chinese fighters (Allison 2017, p. 178)." We found this episode is very unlikely to happen, unless Chinese fighters approach and almost or already hit the ship. Even after a series of reforms on laws related security institutions lifting several taboos, JSDF still under strict legal regulation narrowing circumstances of use of weapon.¹⁵ Regarding the action against violation of territorial airspace, according to Article 84, Self-Defense Forces Law, "The use of force that falls under Article 36 (self-defense) or Article 37 (averting present danger) of the Penal Code is allowed as part of necessary actions to make aircraft land or withdraw from the territorial airspace of Japan (MODJ 2017, pp. 464-5)." In addition, in other statutory provisions related to the use of weapon, similar description that "[t]he use of weapons shall not cause harm to persons, except for cases falling under Article 36 (self-defense) or Article 37 (averting present danger) of the Penal Code" were repeatedly emphasized. Thus, the possibility is low for a Japanese JSDF captain to shoot down a fighter simply because of its low-flying move.

Similarly, this scenario needs some revisions. For example, Japanese government further lifts taboo on the use of weapon, JSDF increases its oversea training and combat experience in the multilateral exercises with US troops, several accidents already caused by Chinese fighters, the Japanese JSDF captain shooting down fighters is an ultranationalist, etc. Otherwise, Chinese fighters already attack Japanese ship or occupy the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

4.3 Conflict over North Korea

Among the three war scenarios in Northeast Asia, North Korea scenario is more likely to happen, because when facing a regime with low transparency and shaken legitimacy, it is hard to predict this regime's next move. Thus, North Korea's unpredictability might produce US, South Korean, and Chinese misperception and war then becomes possible. As Jervis argues, "misperception often plays a large role" when war occurs (Jervis, 1988, p. 675). However, we might still ask several questions: Even if North Korea is under civil war, will China be able to send special troops to North

¹⁵ Gady (2015)'s remark, "the JSDF are so adverse to violence that when a machine gun went off by accident, it made national headlines," which was in a commentary entitled "Toothless tiger: Japan Self-Defence Forces," demonstrated JSDF's lacking experience in military conflict and use of weapon. See also Yabe 2008.

Korea, stabilize the civil war, and install a puppet regime? Would South Korea attack North taking advantage of its civil war without noticing China and would the US agree to participate in this action? If the goal of both China and the US is to stabilize Korean Peninsula and not to occupy the territory of North Korea, why will they not negotiate for a better solution? For example, both China and the US could help South Korea to unify Korea Peninsula and the US would then agree to withdraw from Korea.

5.. China and the US---Realist Skepticism and Warning regarding Hot War

We also should raise the question: before things escalate to war, is there any way for the US and China to stop war? First, the shared premise in these three scenarios is that the US is dragged into a conflict with China. Thus, the fundamental problem is why Washington does not request Taipei, Tokyo, and Seoul to back down or why Washington does not negotiate with Beijing through diplomatic channels, while Washington definitely has capability to do so. Second, Beijing probably would accept Washington's mediation, because Beijing would not benefit from war. Considering Beijing has spent more of its budget to maintain social stability than simply creating a skyrocketing military budget, war probably is not a good choice for Beijing. Although war might ignite nationalism and gather domestic support especially when a state is attacked by other states, attacking others or being dragged into a war might not have the same response.¹⁶ Moreover, if the relative power of China is increasing while that of the U.S. is declining as many have observed, why would China take the risk to challenge the U.S. now in this nuclear age, and not wait for the U.S. to decline? Third, as Allison mentioned, the form of modern war is changing, the U.S. and China can suppress and challenge each other through trade war, technology war, cyber war, diplomatic struggle, without launching a hot war. In fact, the geopolitical rivalry seems to be moving in that direction.

Indeed, Allison's war scenarios aim to alarm all the states involved by indicating the worst case situation and thus these scenarios are not for creating deterministic inevitable outcomes. Therefore, we argue that if Allison's argument is (mis)interpreted by the hawks in the US and in Northeast Asia that war is inevitable between China and the U.S. ---and he has listed *five war scenarios*---, then questioning the plausibility of these scenarios will indirectly provide evidence according to scientific realism to support the counterargument that although the U.S. and China will maintain power

¹⁶ In 2017, "Xia Ke Dao" (侠客岛), a WeChat public account maintained by the overseas edition of the *People's Daily*, published an article to criticize North Korea being ungrateful. This article not only recognized the reality that North Korea launched the attack on the South and China was dragged into Korean War for the first time, but also stated that China paid enormous cost including hundreds of thousands of death and long-term confrontation with the US.

struggle in political, diplomatic, economic dimensions, there is only a low probability for the actual outbreak of a hot war.

However, as careful scholars like Mearsheimer have pointed out, the tragedy of great power rivalry is that states can preempt a hopeless war even when timely negotiations might have prevented it. More cogently than Mearsheimer, realists like Morgenthau, Gilbert---even structural realists like Waltz and more recently the neoclassical realists---have pointed out the ultimate futility of wars between great powers. Morgenthau and Glibert interpret Thucydides also as a moral realist who provides (indirect) arguments for a consequence-based or consequentialist argument against devastating wars.

6. Analyzing Northeast Asian responses through causal depth and scientific realism

From the examination of these three war scenarios, we can observe that the problems in scenarios at bottom resulted from limited understanding or even understanding phenomenologically at the descriptive level the complex causal picture with regards to Taiwan, Japan, or South Korea. Though it is understandable that Allison's main interest is to analyze Sino-U.S. relations, the missing of background information of the political, economic, societal, historical situation in Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea led to the so far unconvincing war scenarios. Consequently, this shallow treatment of East Asian history, political economy and politics has fundamentally reduced the credibility of the argument that when a rising power causes fear in an established power, the rivalry escalates toward war. Thus, based particularly on our second argument, we have tried to analyze what are the deepest causes that dominate the relatively shallower aspects of Northeast Asian States' strategic response to China and the U.S. via a scientific realist causal depth approach.

6.1 U.S. alliance System

Japan, South Korea, Taiwan have all been allies or partners of the U.S. since the era of Cold War. While the U.S. has over time adopted a *strategic ambiguity* toward Taiwan, the U.S. most likely would not abandon its security commitments to Japan and South Korea especially as long as there are U.S. troops in these two states. Although the alliance system might drag the U.S. into conflicts as Allison argues, it might also play a role in regional stability. Despite Allison's three scenarios in Northeast Asia, security environment in Northeast Asia has been relatively stable since the end of the

Korean War.¹⁷ Japanese and Korean policy makers constantly contend that the American alliance system has contributed to the regional stability in Northeast Asia. Posen (2003) also argues that this is so because of U.S. military predominance as well as the belief by many governments in Asia that U.S. military prowess has been a stabilizing force in the region, the states in East Asia have not pursued to counterbalance the U.S.

The existing alliance system reassures Japan and South Korea (sometimes Taiwan) to bandwagon with the U.S. and restrains their choices to bandwagon or hedge with China. Thus, in this sense, the strategists in PRC have concluded that it is reasonable for China to criticize the U.S. to maintain this alliance system, the product of cold war, and argue the purpose of the alliance system is to contain China.

However, it does mean that these three states are not able to cooperate with China fully. Indeed, South Korea has been swinging back and forth between China and the US. Taiwan had intensified economic exchanges under KMT administrations more than under other administrations . Even Japan, which has constantly emphasized the role of US-Japanese alliance, chose to restore its relation with China and both sides have agreed to intensify the economic cooperation. Thus, if the U.S. does not provide enough security guarantee or continues to make endless demands on its allies---at least according to the perception of these allies, as inside observers have contended ---, then these allies or partners might choose to bandwagon with China and turn their backs on the U.S.

6.2 The Structure of Asymmetrical Interdependence

The trade dependence on China might play a role in Taiwan and ROK's response to US-China rivalry, while Japan is relatively less dependent on foreign trade than Taiwan. China may turn its increasing economic capability to political influence and encourage or force states with high trade dependence on China to adopt policies that accommodate Chinese interests. Economic retaliation on South Korea over its deployment of THAAD system was a good example that demonstrated China's attempt to alter South Korean security policy.

On the US side, some observers and analysts have noticed this problem. U.S. defense department's report *Assessing and Strengthening the Manufacturing and Defense Industrial Base and Supply Chain Resiliency of the United States* indicated that there was a significant trade asymmetry between the China and American allies in the Indo-Pacific and China is leveraging "its asymmetric trade dominance to project soft power (USDOD 2018, p. 38)." The U.S. then launched a trade war on China which

¹⁷ Refer to Pempel 2010; Solingen 2007; Alagappa 2003; Cha 2007; Goh 2007-2008; Kang 2003.

might weaken Chinese economic and technological capability, at least for a short period of time. However, if Washington continues its constant complaints and pressures allies and potential partners to concede to the US in bilateral trade at the same time, it might leave these states with no other choice but to align with China economically to form an anti-U.S. network.

6.3 Different Value Systems Argument

Different value systems in authoritarian and democratic states might also determine states' strategic choices toward the U.S. and China. Democratic states in this region, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, benefit from the existing US-led liberal world order (which, of course is now threatened by the US itself) and believe in freedom of speech, universal human rights, and rule of law. On the other hand, authoritarian states like China and North Korea, still reject rule of law, suppress freedom of speech and human rights, and believe that the existing US-led liberal world order impedes China's rise or North Korea's survival. The Communist Party of China's peaceful evolution theory shows that the fundamental fear of authoritarian regime is that liberal values would undermine its regime legitimacy and result in its regimes' collapse, repeating what happened to Eastern European states in 1989.

Xi's removal of the *two-term limit* on the presidency was an alarm bell for many who expected that China would eventually democratize in the wake of its economic success. The violation of human rights, such as Xinjiang re-education camps and arresting human rights lawyers, and suppression of freedom of speech, arresting or abruptly dismissing outspoken liberal intellectuals, further demonstrated that China was stepping back to a more authoritarian path. Some decision makers and the public in democratic states are concerned that a rising China would bring changes to existing liberal order and impose its value system to other states.¹⁸ Although China's exercises of soft power might aim to reshape China's images in democratic states and international society, some attempts to influence other states' domestic politics adversely generate negative effects (Cave, 2017). These moves further arouse democratic states' apprehension which might motivate democratic states to support the U.S. continuously. However, it does not mean the U.S. will gain democratic states' support spontaneously. If the U.S. does not have enough resolve to maintain liberal international order and acts like a childish hegemon, instead of an "invited hegemon," the U.S. would lose its attraction for other democratic states.¹⁹

¹⁸ Walker and Way (2016)'s article reveals this anxiety vividly.

¹⁹ The term "invited hegemon" is borrowed from Lundestad's article that claims that the U.S. was invited by European countries to play a more active role in the international affairs after the Second World War. See Lundestad (1986).

6.4 Historic Legacy Argument

Historic legacy is the most underestimated but unchangeable underlying cause. There are two types of historic legacy. The first type of historic legacy surrounds the interpretation of the Japan's imperialist history. Since 1980s, Japan's domestic right wing nationalist leaning reinterpretation of its colonial rule over South Korea and Taiwan and invasion of Asia from 1930s to 1945 has caused--- predictably--- regional political controversies. Accordingly, China and South Korea constantly accuse Japan of whitewashing colonial and invasion history. This is the so-called "history issue." Substantively, this history issue includes Japanese government allowing an ultra-nationalist version of history textbook; Japanese politicians' visit to Yasukuni Shrine; controversies regarding Japanese government's apology--- or really a lack of a sincere apology--- for invasion and colonial history; unsolved problems like compensation to wartime (forced) laborers and comfort women; Japanese politicians' discourses to reinterpret or deny invasion history. Moreover, the patriotic education campaign in China and the reemergence of Chinese popular nationalism further escalates "history issue" to a more sensitive status and inflames anti-Japanese sentiments in PRC. When history issue recurs in China, even the foreign policy toward Japan becomes the target of criticism at home. Even if China and Japan have pragmatically restored and consolidated bilateral relations, the fundamental problem has still not been solved. The history issue might occur again when Japan makes another attempt to tone down its imperialist history in order to break the taboo shaped by post-war peace constitutional structure and transform itself into a "normal"--- in reality aggressive--- state. Needless to say, China does not reject a militarily independent and powerful Japan. Most Japanese politicians are aware of the status of Sino-Japanese relations. Unless the domestic politics in Japan moves in a more pacifist direction, the current Japanese moves to the right will continue to be the main obstacle to those Japanese politicians who ponder the strategic choice of bandwagoning with China.

The second type of historic legacy is the ideologically divisive history of individual states. The ideological history of Korea and China (Taiwan) was manipulated by partisan politics. Political parties manipulated historic memory to form or consolidate the rule by certain national or ethnic identity. Through such identity politics, groups mobilize political support for particular parties with particular ideologies and policies. Identity politics in the plural sense are even more complicated in Taiwan (He 2014). Because Taiwan was colonized by several great powers in the history due to its geographically peripheral location in in East Asia, parts of Taiwanese people lean towards the project of constructing a Taiwanese identity, different from a monolithic Chinese identity. People with Taiwanese identity tend to believe that too

much tilting to China not only would lose for them the achievement of democracy, but also they would be colonized again by China which means the Taiwanese would lose their own perceived identity and political independence. Identity politics influence citizens' perception toward China and the U.S. The pro-China Taiwanese are enthusiastic about China's rise and tend to choose China over the U.S. with the expectation that China will replace the U.S. and become ruling power in the world, while citizens with Taiwanese identity prefer to keep distance from China and expect America to play the role of "savior." In the case of South Korea, the progressive group emphasizes engagement with North Korea, relatively distrust the US, and expect China would play a constructive role in changing North Korea. On the other hand, the conservative group in South Korea prefers to strengthen relations with the U.S., has troubling concerns about the rise of China, and deeply distrusts North Korea. Of course, there are differences in individual leaders (Shin, 2012). For example, Park Geun-hye belongs to a conservative group but emphasizes intensifying relations with China.

In sum, although historic legacy seems less important than military or economic factors, it does play a role in determining domestic politics and foreign policy preference.

Overall, the causes---both shallower and deeper kinds of causes, one might add---above influence now and will influence in the future these states' strategic choice toward the U.S. and China and these strategic choices will determine the future of this region. If most states chose to align with the U.S. and strengthen the existing alliance system, the existing alliance system would play a role in deterring and containing China's rise. If these states chose to bandwagon with China and cause the collapse of alliance system led by the U.S., it might hasten the decline of the U.S. The most dangerous situation is that the U.S. will not be able to detect that the system of alliance is not intact and misjudge that the allies would support it if the US chooses to launch a preemptive war on China.

7. Conclusions

It should be underlined that a full blown theory "*Thucydides's Trap*" is still to be worked out. Using the causally deeper realist approach and the concrete case of tensions in Northeast Asia, our work can be seen as a necessary step in the direction of developing an applicable theory of "*Thucydides's Trap*" with sufficient causal depth and analytical reach. Our discussion pinpoints the limits of the metaphor of "*Thucydides's Trap*" by revealing that variables dominating the conflict or cooperation in East Asia are far more complicated than the simple metaphor of "*Thucydides's Trap*" would indicate. Our conceptual elaboration of "*Thucydides's Trap*" is helpful in

identifying deeper aspects of realism and to move away from a claim that is frequently made in narrating the Northeast Asian power transition. This claim regarding inevitable conflict leading to war is mainly based on the changes in distribution of power in a naïve “realist” mode of thinking.²⁰ However, as we show this naïve approach is far from even classical realism and ignores the requirement of causal depth. Consequently, this naïve approach also overlooks various relevant variables, such as existing alliance system, bilateral economic structure, value system, and Northeast Asian historic legacies. A closer in-depth look with appropriate historical evidence from Northeast Asia leads to a set of more nuanced and less deterministic conclusions.

Overall, our relatively deeper conceptualization and consequentialist historical analysis of Northeast Asian situation demonstrates that the distribution of power between the U.S. and China alone cannot explain the changes in regional relations. Northeast Asian states are also important actors playing a role in shaping the future relations between the U.S. and China. What strategies these other Northeast Asian states will choose, how they will interact with each other and with the U.S. and China, and how the U.S. and China will respond to them, may change the future of regional dynamics and international order.

As pointed out in the introduction and the methodology sections, our analyses above point to the possibility of avoiding “*Thucydides’s Trap*” in Northeast Asia – a major flash point in the US-China relations; but this still leaves open other possibilities of falling into the trap. For example, scenarios like worsening trade war, possible collision between the U.S. and PRC warships in the South China Sea, drive towards independence in Taiwan, possibly PRC-Japan tensions escalating, instability in North Korea and conflicts in other parts of Asia, Africa or even Latin America could set off sparks and an accelerating dynamics towards war. Hence there is no room for complacency.

However, the analysis here does open a cautiously formulated pathway to a different future from the realism culled from European nation state rivalry based great power politics. In the final analysis, this paper points to some feasible steps in light of a careful reading of current history of Northeast Asian relations and our attempt to offer a tentative scientific realist conceptualization of the “*Thucydides’s Trap*.” In particular, the CNR theory based analysis already shows the limitations of the structural neorealism on which Mearsheimer explicitly and Allison implicitly base their arguments about US-PRC rivalry and tensions. Using the causally deeper CNR approach and the concrete case of tensions in Northeast Asia, the present work can be

²⁰ As should be evident from our discussion, Allison(2017) is not a naïve realist when it comes to analyzing history and international tensions from European and North American history. However, we think he would agree that he has used *Thucydides’s Trap* in an illuminating but metaphorical manner without developing a full blown theory.

seen as a necessary step in the direction of developing an applicable theory of “*Thucydides’s Trap*” with sufficient causal depth and analytical reach within a yet broader and more useful global theory. This effort will be a further step towards building a complexity theory based multiplex new global order, or CTMNGO combining constructively a critical neoclassical realism(CNR) with global and regional cooperative institution building for our genuine planetary common good.

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