

Identity Politics in the Developmentalist States of East Asia: The Role of Diaspora Communities in the Growth of Civil Societies

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Abstract

The present article poses the question about how will East Asia develop regional integration in which China, North and South Korea, and Japan can co-exist peacefully. It tries to demonstrate the importance of the role of the civil societies and diaspora communities of the four countries, especially in guaranteeing a democratic future for the integrated East Asia. The four countries share a common characteristic, *developmentalism* where their system of social reproduction generates state-based identity politics, insurmountable obstacles for any regional integration to materialize. The emergence of new citizen movements after 9.11, 3.11 and the Lehman Shock in Japan are evoked to indicate the possibility of a new anti-hegemonic common front transcending the identity politics of the developmentalist four countries. The cooperation between sedentary citizens and migrant diasporas can lead to a new democracy based on the multi-identity and multi-cultural local initiatives of local citizens. This new democracy will build a self-organized bottom-up global and regional order, replacing the present Westphalian State system, in opposition to the neoliberal order within which the developmentalist states cannot proceed towards regional integration.

Key words: Identity and identity Politics, Developmentalism, Civil Society and Diaspora communities, Civilizationalcrisis, Colonialism and anti-colonialism, Chinese World Order, Neoliberal global hegemony, Industrial democracies, Westphalian States System, New citizenship, Sedentary and migrant citizens, Total-War State project, Social reproduction, Commodification

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1 . Posing a New Question

How will East Asia develop regional integration in which China, North and South Korea and Japan can co-exist peacefully is a question commonly discussed in contemporary Japan. An often posed additional question is the role to be played by the civil societies of the four countries, especially in guaranteeing a democratic future for the integrated East Asia.

This question, generally posed within the context of the now prevailing global order, with its present neo-liberal structure of leadership, does not look into the fact that the regional integration of East Asia has to take place in a rapidly changing world where the domestic structures of the four countries involved, their interaction and their adaptation to the World in transformation, will not be sustainable unless all the actors play their respective role within the web of interacting factors involved in this process of global transformation of our time, in its complexity both on the political-economic as well as on its ecological-cultural levels.

We will have to focus our discussion on the democratic future of East Asia within a narrowly defined macro-historical process in order to grasp the total picture of the regional integration of East Asia in this age of complexity and transformation. The narrowness of the conceptual framework we adopt will necessarily leave unexplored aspects of the reality under study.

Such as the inter-state process of negotiation which will have to be well planned and well implemented in order to enable the emergence of a concrete structure indispensable for regional integration. Recognizing this limitation of the present paper, the author of these lines believe that the approach used in the present paper can open a new line of scientific inquiry which will go beyond a conventional assessment of regional integration and pose new problems about eco-cultural leadership alternatives to the now-prevailing leadership-style in the four developmentalist states of China, North and South Korea, and Japan, where the efforts of the ruling elites of East Asia, with the exception of North Korea, all try to accept and survive successfully within the existing global order by accepting the global neoliberal standards.

The present paper will put the problem faced by the regional elites who ignore the fact that this global order in disarray, and their efforts to adapt to it will create for the region an unsustainable situation which may become the reason for an integration, in an unexpected way for those who can not see the ongoing global crisis and the forthcoming debacle of the global neoliberal order.

2. East Asia within the Civilizational Crisis of Today

We will define in a macro-historical manner the present global crisis, not only as a crisis of the global neoliberal economy caused by the speculative Casino-Capitalist nature of global finance, but also as a civilizational crisis at the end of the West-dominated modernity, characterized by the increasing incapacity to manage the situation on the basis of the Westphalian State system, the technocratic rule of Western universalism which originates in the Enlightenment, and the Imperialist/colonial expansionism transformed in its terminal phase into a global exploitation of the impoverishing sectors in both North and South by their respective enriched sectors forming a global alliance.

In macro-historical terms, the four states of East Asia, or more precisely of North-East Asia, have traditionally been part of Pax Sinica, the Chinese civilizational world. The Western colonial expansion in this region could successfully Westernize, modernize and transform this region only through a process of a three phase colonial-imperialist infiltration. The first phase was the internalization of colonialism through the formation of the reactive-colonial state of Japan which decided to become itself a colonialist aggressor to counteract Western colonialism. The second phase was the bi-polar hegemonic-colonialist division of the world through the Cold War, and the third is the present global colonialist polarization within each state, both in the South and in the North, into a rich sector extracting the surplus from the poor sector.

The first phase was started by the most peripheral state of the Chinese World Order, Japan. Japan, became the first developmentalist state, which chose to become itself a colonial power in order to counteract Western colonial pressures. The aggression by this emerging total war state has become a major obstacle to the development of regional integration. The Cold War double colonialism created a second obstacle through the division of Korea and the emergence of a second total war state, North Korea. The third phase of global colonialism was the occasion for the global emergence of the BRICs, including China in East Asia. The post Cold War neoliberal global hegemony of the United States, was an occasion for a third obstacle to regional integration, the neo-liberal emergence of China as a new champion of State development, an eventual counter-hegemon to the United States.

Colonialism, in its different forms, has built in East Asia, at least on the inter-state level, a regional political-economic structure where integration is not at all a natural course among historically friendly states. It requires the successful materialization of three conditions, namely to overcome internal conflict between Japan, a colonialist aggressor state and its targets, it also needs to overcome the solution of North Korea's antagonistic

relations with the global hegemon, i.e. the United States. It requires thirdly a mutual agreement between China, Korea and Japan, to build an equal relationship based on the principles of peaceful co-existence and equal mutual benefit between China and the other three East Asian States. The historical relationship between the ruling State China and its tributary states, Korea, Japan and Ryukyu-Okinawa should not be reproduced by a new hegemonism of the rapidly rising New China. Korea and Japan should be certain that they will not return to their historical state of dependence to the civilizationally dominant State in a time when a post-Western world may "Reorient" itself under Chinese hegemony.

On top of these difficulties there are other causes of pessimism about a regional integration of East Asia. Integration may not be made easier by the fact that the four states composing (North -) East Asia are each unifying themselves by a strong state control over their territories. Their developmentalist state projects provide them with a strong centralizing national identity, strong enough to counteract the internal divisive trends.

3 . East Asia composed by Developmentalist States

The industrial democracies of the West developed in Westphalia a European security system based on a state-citizen security contract. Each of the autonomous nation states, agreed to overcome by this contract their internal oppositions among different identity communities, feudal domains, religious communities, medieval cities, etc., each possessing their-own military force and police. This allowed them to develop a democracy based on individual citizenship. The East Asian developmentalist states did not eliminate their domestic intermediate identity communities by a security contract with their individual citizens who agreed to disarm themselves under the state protection of their security and wellbeing.

Mutatis mutandis, the four states of East Asia are all developmental states competing with the hegemonic industrial democracies. North Korea with its aspiration to become a nuclear power, in both its military and peaceful versions, tries to get maximal concessions from the United States, through a total war state system based on a strong national unification of its people, China uses its economic growth to compete in the neoliberal financial market on the basis of its massive population of cheap labour workers and peasants, Japan and South Korea use their technological knowhow and their benefit as aspirant industrial democracies.

They all exercise their respective competing power to survive within the neoliberal global market. The problem for all of them is that they are not prepared to meet the effects of the global crisis of neoliberal global governance within the rapidly deteriorating global financial system. The civil society in all countries, with the exception of North Korea has

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proven to be an important force eventually capable of redressing the course of the developmentalist project of their respective states, all engaged in their way in the global neoliberal efforts to retard the final crush of neoliberal capitalism.

The four countries involved in the building of a common house of East Asia, are thus following the trajectory of developmentalist states. Adapting themselves, each on their own ways, to the neoliberal rule of the globalizing international system, they fail to prepare themselves to meet the impact of the great transformation which is bound to emerge out of the present global crisis of Western colonialism.

Developmentalism was a reaction to external colonialist threats which allowed the government to impose unity, in face of a common external danger. Still colonialism did not permit the Developmentalism to succeed in unifying completely each national community. It succeeded in dividing each state in East Asia applying their strategy of divide and rule. Korea remains divided, China has Hong kong and Taiwan, even the highly unified Japan has Ryukyu-Okinawa, and the post-developmental stage demands a non-Westphalian approach recognizing different identity communities within each of the states to be regionally integrated, while lowering the borders between them. Such multi-identity, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural civil societies are becoming indispensable for the social reproduction of each nation, which cannot be replaced by the creation of a superficial regional integration.

This pluralism of identities is also necessary in view of the massive influx of foreign migrants forming diaspora communities with specific identities. This is why a democratic future following the present developmentalist statehood requires the development of a multi-level hierarchy of identities among overlapping identity communities, quite different from the State/individual Westphalian security contractual system.

Including East Asia, the global neo-colonial world order has polarized the Westphalian state system into two types of competing states, on the one hand, the hegemonic industrial democracies, composed by North America and Europe (with Japan admitted as an honorary white country) which consider the democratization of other states in the non-Western world as a civilizational mission, thus combining internal democratic governance with international neo-colonial expansion. and on the other, the counter-hegemonic developmentalist states., defined as late-comer modernizing states mobilizing all their national capital to one end, acquiring state-power able to compete with the western industrial democracies. To be precise, the latter developmentalist states can be subdivided into the anti-democratic developmentalist states like Libya, and the ones which aim at becoming part of the industrial democracies, like Japan, the Republic of Korea and China.

The global leadership conflicts take a variety of forms. Politically the United Nations

provides them with an arena within the Westphalian state system. Economically, the World Economic Forum assumes the new function of neoliberal global governance. New political economic regional organizations assume another new role in the development of regional integrations of different forms. And all kind of conflicts, military-political, social-economic, and identity political cultural conflicts. This third sector is called by some analysts as a new-middle-age world, where the global governance and the state-based decision-making cannot impose their hegemonic domination.

As mentioned above, the present international system is in crisis, a crisis of the last phase of the Modernity built under Western hegemony. The emergent counter-hegemonic social forces will have to develop a new global order internalizing the positive universal values of Modernity as well as international institutions based on the Westphalian state system model but transforming Western modernity into a multicultural universal hegemony beyond the national identities of existing states, including the developmentalist states.

4. Coalition of Sedentary and Migrant Citizens in East Asia

This is where a new citizenship model will have to be constructed following the gradual deterioration and the deconstruction of the individualistic citizenship model based on the security contract between the states and the citizens Westphalian state. This deconstruction is inevitable due to the failure of the exogenous imposition of Western individualism. Although the hope to modernize the western way still exists in the four states in very different manners, it is no more possible to keep an illusory hope to follow the West in building a civil society composed by individual citizens imitating the Western Enlightenment model. The developmentalist states, not only in East Asia but especially there, are now transformed into arenas of identity politics due to the polarization of rich and poor local communities and the globalization of migration results everywhere in a direct encounter of different identity communities, within and between the developmentalist states of the region. This encounter takes different forms, cultural, political and economic, but in all cases put always into question the developmental racism of each developmentalist states, and close the road from enlightened absolutism to individual citizenship which paved the way to democratic modernity in the West.

To take the case of Japan, the combination of 911, 311 and the Lehman - Shock have polarized the Japanese civil society between the supporters of the Developmentalist Total War State Project and those who oppose it. 911 strengthened the support of a Total War State project to control suspicious foreign migrants, and the support to American military bases in Okinawa. It also triggered-off a variety of Counter-hegemonic citizen movements

against an unconditional support of Japan to the United States by the Ryukyu-Okinawa sedentary and indigenous citizens of the annexed Kingdom of Ryukyu, as well as a movement in support of the migrant worker communities, with the support of local citizens in mainland Japan especially concerned about the violation of their rights to live in peace, reproducing their identity.

The Lehman Shock was the occasion of an anti-poverty movement of local sedentary citizens, and also a joint campaign of local sedentary citizens with the migrant communities suddenly facing massive loss of jobs, and involuntary return to their home country where a job-less situation was waiting them, such as was the case of the Japanese-origin Brazilian migrant communities, in different parts of Japan. These people-based counter-hegemonic manifestations was however unable to change the developmentalist trust of the majority of Japanese citizens who supported the financial policies of the Government, in alliance with the corporate sector to allocate funds in support of big industries which bankruptcy would lead to the default of the Japanese economy, while forcing sedentary and migrant citizens to a life devoid of job guarantee.

The 311 Earthquake, especially the explosion of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plants was an occasion for a polarization of the Japanese public opinion, between the hegemonic project putting an emphasis on the reactivation of Japanese economy rather than on the reduction of the human insecurity of the victims of tsunami and of radioactive fallout of the nuclear plant explosion. Popular campaigns for the support of the victims were organized both by sedentary citizens and migrant groups. A series of large-scale anti-nuclear plants manifestations mobilized ten of thousands of participants, their activities were internationally supported by citizens sharing information hidden to the Japanese public by the mass media through Facebook and other SNS systems.

The 311 Earthquake and the explosion of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plants were an occasion for three post-developmental projects to emerge out of the citizen movements, one was a political economic project to transcend the developmentalist high growth policy continuing to use nuclear electricity. A second was an ecological project to develop local eco-cultural communities reorganizing the top-heavy industrial development ignoring the need to co-exist with nature, which is magnanimous but terrible when challenged by developmentalist technocrats with their exploitative planning sacrificing everything to increase national power and wealth. A third was a realization that life and its diversity must not be demolished by a civilization which ignores cultural diversity. This project link sedentary and migrants citizens in reevaluating the diversity of eco-cultural local wisdom in Japan and in the communities of origin of the migrant workers.

5. Towards a New Regional Order Based on a New Citizenship

911, 311, and the Lehman Shock were all used by the Japanese developmentalist technocrats to redress and strengthen the Japanese economy, sacrificing migrants from Islamic countries, victims of Tsunami and hibakushas, as well as citizens in the destitute sectors, sedentary and migrants. Those affected in the three situations of high human insecurity learned to help each other in situations where the developmentalist state did not extend any help nor support. They are now, sedentary and migrant alike, beginning to search for an alternative to the developmentalist state.

This alternative is no more Western, Modern and dedicated to the commodification of everything as had become the objective of the developmentalist state in the neoliberal global arena of merciless competition. This is a new model of citizenship, no more in contractual relation with the state, but rather in search of an alternative to the exploitative state which was unable to control nature, or satisfy the non-Western youth. Traditional capitalism itself is losing interest in the global market turned into a mega-casino. This is where a new model of counter-hegemonic citizens is emerging, in place to the citizen bound by its security contract with the state.

This emerging model of citizenship will not be based on individualism and universalism as the citizens of the Westphalian states. The new citizenship will have to be based on multiple identities, combined according to the principle of subsidiarity, and strongly anchored into an eco-cultural local community as a matrix of endogenous intellectual creativity. The new citizenship will also include migrants with their multi-local livelihood. A new-citizen should be both attached to her or his native community but also to the community she or he enters as foreigner. This multi-local communitarian approach will, especially, have to be open to the massive input of various identity groups whose demand for recognition will have to be satisfied. Democracy in this situation will have to replace the standardization of identities forced upon the citizens of the developmentalist states, taking into account the need to be based on both the local sedentary citizens and the mobile migrant citizens.

The new democracy evolving out of a common anti-hegemonic front, composed by sedentary and mobile citizens, will follow the example of many macro-historical situations of social transformation that were the results of the interaction and cooperation between sedentary and nomadic groups. This is where we can recall the Islamic world described by Ibn-Khaldun. The identity politics which is intensified by the neoliberal selection of winners and losers in the global financial competition will play a major role in the process of regional integration of East Asia. The peaceful coexistence and the equal common

benefit among the different migrant and sedentary communities is likely to become a precondition of any sustainable alternative orders replacing the now moribund but surviving neo-liberal global order. A multi-identity and multi-cultural local-dominated self-organized bottom-up order will have to be built by sedentary and migrant citizens, in opposition to the neoliberal global order and to the developmentalist states in it. This multi-layer regional order will have to become the building blocs of a new multi-cultural world order, inheriting the positive universal values of Western enlightenment, integrating them in the context of a multi-civilizational global system made sustainable by its isomorphism with the ecological and cultural diversity among local communities with specific combinations of multiple identities.

The emergence of this new type of order, local, national, regional and interregional will be composed by a non-Westphalian type of citizenship described above. This will help develop in East Asia a new regional identity shared by citizens of China, the two Koreas, and Japan. This regional identity will be built on top of local community identities, subsumed under national identities, recognizing divergent identities within them, renouncing on their demand to make national identity the only legitimate identity under the now prevailing developmentalist state hegemony. This is where the role of migrants in cooperation with sedentary citizens will become essential, since the migrant communities are already composed by multi-identity citizens. In their multilocal livelihood, they live in the local communities they have migrated into as well as in their communities of origin.

6. Some Remarks on the Potential Role of Diaspora Communities

The diaspora communities in the developmentalist states, specifically in East Asia, are the only free spaces in these states where a “homo novus” can emerge with all the necessary conditions for the emerging counter-hegemonic agency indispensable for the building of the post-Westphalian global and regional order as proposed here. This is so because of the identity structure of the Westphalian states now in crisis, and the newcomers in the civil societies, the migrant workers affected by the feminization and the informalization of contemporary migration.

The developmentalist states, especially Japan, but also the other States in East Asia, have developed a system of social reproduction combining education, media, and other cultural institutions, to reproduce a passive citizenship docile to the authoritative decisions of the ruling elite and the technocrats in their service. The migrant communities often called diaspora communities, resemble the Jewish diaspora communities of the Roman time, in their exclusion from Roman citizenship, discriminatory but favorable to their capacity to have an “objective” critical look at the Empire. The same happens with the

migrant communities in the developmentalist states, everywhere in the world including East Asia.

The citizens with multi-local livelihood are playing a double role, negative for them but positive for their communities of origin and destination. Overseas Koreans in Japan, for example, are caught between Korea and Japan and are often treated as not true citizens of both countries. Yet they are the ones who created a "Kanryu" boom, a boom of Korean drama and music among the Japanese youth, by translating the scripts of Korean films into Japanese. The North Korean migrants in Japan have been contributing to the economic development of their home-country, and to the opening of North Korea to the outside world.

The existence of diaspora communities of migrants will help the future East Asian regional integration to be open to outside world internally present through the migrant communities they are now in the process of integrating into their new civil society. The existence of diaspora communities from other parts of East Asia, is in the present situation, where developmentalist states are only concerned by the reproduction of their national identity with its "glorious past", the victims of discriminations originating in the colonialist past. This is so especially in Japan with the Korean diaspora (especially from North Korea). The counter-hegemonic alliance between sedentary citizens and migrant citizens will have to turn this situation of human insecurity into a situation where the repentant citizens of Japan can transform Japan into an anti-colonialist nation. The cooperation between the Japanese citizens and over-seas Koreans in the fight against the Japanese Government refusal to compensate with the victims of its state-based slavery of "comfort women" is an example of what the sedentary and migrant citizens can achieve by uniting their efforts against the monic developmentalist forces.

The East Asian diaspora communities in the four countries of East Asia has also a role to play in building a social capital common to the four countries by their socio-economic activities. They include the informal sectors rejected by the developmentalist states, where the cooperation between the informal sectors rejected by the developmentalist states, where the cooperation between the criminal organizations of the East Asian countries develop highly insecure trafficking activities. In spite of this antisocial aspect of the informal sectors, the diaspora communities develop a capacity of social promotion, and are already providing foci of multi-identity, multi-cultural families and communities. They are the informal sectors also beginning to develop fair-trade exchanges, i.e. equal mutual benefit exchanges, economic as well as cultural. Under the joint efforts of the sedentary and migrant citizens, the East Asian diaspora communities in the four member states of East Asia will become the foci of intellectual creativity where the Chinese, Korean and Japanese cultural specificities will mix and may enrich the Region

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with new forms of arts and life-styles.

With these additional remarks on the diaspora communities and their potential role in the elaboration of a new multi-cultural citizenship in East Asia, we conclude this presentation, which aim is simply to open a new field of inquiry and action to create a Common Home of East Asia based on a new type of citizenship with the capacity to replace the hegemony of the developmentalist states in East Asia.