

Comments

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Thank you Professor Koide, for the introduction and Professor Luckhurst for this compelling paper. I will endeavor to keep my comments concise. However, I must take a moment to express my appreciation for the stimulating atmosphere of this peace forum, which has been a constant source of inspiration for me over the years. It is a particular pleasure to be among esteemed colleagues from Kyungnam University and the Chinese Culture University. I am delighted to reconnect with you all today.

This paper is relatively short and to the point, but I highly recommend reading it. I hope it will be widely available soon as it raises critical points about the future direction of international relations. I would like to emphasize two significant points from several positive aspects and then I will provide some critical feedback to suggest some improvement.

The first key point to note is the paper's truly global approach to international relations. In recent years, this perspective has somewhat been overlooked. Often, discussions have centered around the top two or five global actors and their dynamics, sidelining the broader global context. This paper reiterates the importance of considering a more comprehensive network of actors and dynamics, which are critical for understanding international politics in its entirety.

Moreover, the global source is also significantly impacted by these changes and must adapt accordingly. This paper provides invaluable insights into the broader implications of recent shifts in international relations. It encourages us to consider the far-reaching consequences beyond just specific actors or nations.

Another crucial aspect of this paper is its concerted effort to transcend the traditional boundaries of theoretical frameworks such as liberal institutionalism, realism, and constructivism. It endeavors to move beyond these silos and initiate a more integrated and nuanced theoretical discourse—a step that is much needed in contemporary scholarship.

It is quite noteworthy that Professor Tamai in today's introduction referred to research from the 1970s by Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane. It is evident that we are living in a different world now than that of the 1970s, and we must move forward beyond the experiences of the Cold War era. This paper's effort to advance the theoretical discussion beyond the limitations of liberal institutionalism, realism, or constructivism is commendable and essential.

The concept of contested pluralism is particularly intriguing and could be one of the approaches to consider when analyzing the multiple forces at play in international relations. The

inclusion of examples in the paper is useful, but they could benefit from more detailed descriptions to clarify their relevance to the central argument.

Despite the keywords 'beyond power and coexistence', I believe the analysis could benefit from a more explicit consideration of power dynamics. The work of liberal institutionalism, for instance, which aims to address the complex nature of power structures, could provide valuable insights.

Furthermore, the notion that the plurality of divergent ideas strengthens international institutions is an intriguing one. However, it's essential to scrutinize the recent role of these institutions, especially in the context of major crises like the Ukraine crisis. The tendency for international institutions to function more as signaling devices than problem solvers in such instances raises valid concerns.

Lastly, the paper's discussion of uncertainty and poly-crisis in international institutions is highly relevant. The prevailing uncertainty may indeed lead nations to adopt more state-centric foreign policies, focusing on individual economic stability rather than global problem-solving. In conclusion, this paper raises many thought-provoking questions and offers a great starting point for further exploration. I look forward to seeing how the ideas presented here will shape the discourse in international relations moving forward.

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1.

It's my honor to have the opportunity to participate in this conference in person first and read the paper of our keynote speaker, Professor Luckhurst, in advance. As he mentioned in his speech, contested pluralism influences both global and regional politics, providing valuable insights into our ongoing discussions and developments in international relations. This includes topics such as international regimes, interdependence, uncertainty, and how contested pluralism impacts shifting authority in East Asian relations.

Contested pluralism emphasizes a relational, process-oriented, and practice-focused approach. It also underscores the importance of transversal and multi-stakeholder perspectives, allowing for a better understanding of the complexity of global politics. At the same time, it affects the forms and content of global governance.

First, I would like to raise the issue of "uncertainty" for further discussion. Decision-makers often find themselves facing uncertain situations, particularly in a post-pandemic world. This forces decision-makers to reconsider their roles and opens the possibility of role transformation (Melo, 2019: 228-9).

As Katzenstein (2020) proposed, "protean power" and the impact of actors in an environment characterized by unpredictability and uncertainty (Hymans, 2020: 410), especially when past actions do not provide a reliable foundation for future actions (Katzenstein et al., 2018: 80). In such situations, actors may opt for being "protean power" rather than "control power," which means responding improvisationally or innovatively in unpredictable contexts, with actors unable to anticipate outcomes, leading to a relinquishment of control (Katzenstein et al., 2018: 82). This results in a form of "shape-changing power" (Katzenstein, 2020: 481). In other words, calculations are not solely based on material resources or national capabilities, as structuralists might argue, but rather, they are guided by specific intentions depending on the region and the situation and lack a clear directionality (Katzenstein, 2020: 493).

Professor Luckhurst's concept of contested pluralism shares similarities with these ideas and provides a more in-depth exploration of various relationships, including the aforementioned changes in relations and authority. This is a significant contribution to the academic field because mainstream IR studies often overlook the "unknown unknowns." For instance, Ann Hironaka, in her book "Tokens of Power," points out that great powers often enter conflicts overconfidently, while real-life situations are not always rule-based games but are filled with unexpected capabilities (Hymans, 2020: 412).

However, as Jacques Hymans notes, some actors, when faced with "momentous decisions," may prefer to stay in the realm of empty risks rather than venture into uncertainty. In cases of leaders who disregard uncertainty, their decisions are primarily influenced by the concept of national identity and nationalism, which may lead from feelings of fear or confidence, causing them to believe that their decisions are correct (Hymans, 2020: 415). Therefore, how can we infer that under contested pluralism, as the author suggests, populism does not make cooperation and coexistence more difficult to achieve?

2. The Problem of Governance

As Professor Luckhurst pointed out, "Pluralism helped sustain interdependence through cooperation, e.g., multilateral cooperation on the global financial crisis, SDGs, UNFCCC/climate," and it has led to the decentralization of authority, creating a multiplex world. It has also heightened the sense of distrust.

In this era, the differentiation of traditional state roles, the weakening of security providers, and even challenges like hybrid warfare have given a new significance to security. It is no longer about large-scale armies and deterrence, but rather, it involves various crisis management models influenced by capital and geopolitics, resulting in regional disparities (TASAM, 2022).

Furthermore, factors such as great power competition, artificial intelligence, space, and nuclear capabilities have created multifaceted missions. However, international consensus is decreasing, which increases the likelihood of risks. Wolfgang Ischinger mentioned five "losses" at the 2019 Munich Security Conference:

- (1) A seismic change in political power, where existing powers lose their influence.
- (2) A lack of "common truth," as the influence of multifaceted media and social networks erodes mutual trust.
- (3) The cessation of the monopoly on legitimate force (by states and the United Nations), resulting in the dispersal of the capacity for harm, which can be exploited by non-state armed groups and terrorists (in cyberspace).
- (4) The digital era has given rise to hybrid threats and forms of warfare that lack territorial interests, manifesting as covert tactics (proxy wars), making conflict prevention more challenging.
- (5) Conflict resolution methods: Information, energy, the internet, and financial sectors can be used as weapons, with only the European Union remaining committed to global unity (Werther-Pietsch, 2022: 118).

In this context, the international community avoids direct intervention in conflicts because the underlying causes are often unclear. Instead, they employ "smart power" and low-threshold interventions using information warfare as an effective deterrent (Werther-Pietsch, 2022: 119). Under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic and the confrontation between democracies and authoritarian regimes, all major powers are seeking their new positions, entering a new era of "balance of power." The international community will likely strive to avoid large-scale conflicts and deter irrational actors from making "unintended mistakes" (Werther-Pietsch, 2022: 120-1).

In the context of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, SDGs, and related issues, what is demonstrated is a form of "human-centric" approach, emphasizing collaborative crisis and conflict management. Professor Luckhurst's views seem to align with this, but the issue I'd like to raise for discussion is whether this represents a more efficient international regime, as you mentioned, where "the South" play a more substantial role. Or, does it imply Northern countries retreating from the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), leading the international community back to the aforementioned era of the "new BOP," or even the beginning of a "new Cold War"?

3. Discussion on East Asian Cooperation and Coexistence

Regarding this section, I would like to share my perspective on the developments following the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):

Xi Jinping's speech at the 20th CPC National Congress includes several key points:

- (1) The overall strategic objective still prioritizes economic development.
- (2) Similar to what Professor Luckhurst mentioned regarding the importance of perception, China's perception is that changes in the external environment necessitate policy adjustments. The themes of the 20th Congress did not prominently feature peace and development as they did in the past, nor did they reiterate an "optimistic and positive assessment of the future." Instead,

the emphasis remains on critiquing Western hegemony (Xinhua, 2022).

Furthermore, unlike the past "strategic opportunity period," the 20th Congress's report acknowledges that the challenges are unprecedented and the world view has become more inward-looking, emphasizing the challenges and complexities of the new era (Zhang, 2023: 9). Therefore, ensuring internal stability becomes a top priority. A "heightened sense of crisis and bottom-line thinking" is necessary, and self-reliance and self-strengthening in technology are emphasized (Xinhua, 2022).

(3) Building a new development pattern and an actively open strategy, embracing a community of shared human destiny.

Xi Jinping continues to prioritize the "dual circulation" approach. He emphasizes ongoing openness and a strategy of mutual benefit. China "adheres to the correct direction of economic globalization," "actively participates in the reform and construction of the global governance system, practices the global governance concept of consultation, contribution, and shared benefits," and "promotes the development of global governance towards a more just and equitable direction," while also advocating for a community of shared human destiny (Xinhua, 2022).

(4) No change in overall foreign policy, but slight adjustments in its role.

The 20th Congress has not altered China's commitment to world peace, its strategy of openness to the world, and the pursuit of mutual benefit. China continues to play an active role in the global governance system, multilateralism, and the promotion of the world order under the United Nations system. It opposes unilateralism. All of these factors demonstrate that the 20th Congress has not changed China's long-standing foreign policy (Zhang, 2023: 6).

However, there have been subtle changes in China's national identity. Scholars have noted that in the 20th Congress report, while it mentioned once that "China is a major developing country," it emphasized the importance of developing relationships with developing countries four times. In contrast, it mentioned great powers and responsibilities more frequently (Zhang, 2023: 10-11).

During the second collective study session of the Central Political Bureau, Xi Jinping further outlined the new development pattern, emphasizing the need to "accelerate the pace of self-reliance and self-strengthening in technology to address foreign 'chokeholds'." Therefore, China must consolidate its strength and take the lead in critical technological domains. The so-called new development pattern prioritizes industries such as "networks, digital industries, emerging industries, filling gaps in weak industries, and upgrading traditional industries." The emphasis remains on autonomy and control, while also sustaining the development of the Belt and Road Initiative and the dual circulation strategy (Xi Jinping, 2023a).

On October 10, 2023, the CCP released a white paper titled "Building 'Belt and Road': A Major Practice for Constructing a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind." It first emphasizes that "China belongs to the world." In addition to continuing the emphasis on

historical Silk Roads and peaceful development, it reaffirms China's support for economic globalization and a multipolar world. It reflects Xi Jinping's increasing emphasis on the term "community of shared future" in recent years. It also showcases Xi Jinping's discourse as a leading advocate of development cooperation, the Belt and Road Initiative, and a global win-win narrative, which bridges China's relationships with foreign countries. As discussed earlier, this narrative has shifted from emphasizing neighboring and developing countries in earlier partnership relationships to a broader, more globally relevant concept of a shared destiny (Guo Wenping, Sun Maogai, 2023: 115-6). Essentially, this is an expectation of China's role as a major power.

China still emphasizes "consultation, construction, and sharing." However, there is a sense of responding to Western criticism in terms of ideology and objectives. In terms of ideology, there is an emphasis on "openness, green development, and integrity." Regarding objectives, the focus is on "high standards, sustainability, and benefiting the people" (People's Daily, 2023). The significant differences from the past lie in "anti-corruption" and "high standards." These aspects have emerged in post-20th Congress discourse as a response to Western criticism of China's attempts to use opaque and lower-standard contracts and negotiations. These criticisms have been alleged to impact the politics of countries along the Belt and Road, create debt traps, and influence the political objectives of those countries (Wang, 2018). This discourse reflects a return to the original commercial considerations of the Belt and Road Initiative, rather than geopolitical strategic considerations.

In terms of the content related to "anti-corruption," the white paper emphasizes that "building the Belt and Road considers anti-corruption as an internal requirement and a necessary condition." However, in specific content, it only mentions that "all parties should work together to improve the construction of anti-corruption legal systems and mechanisms, deepen the alignment of anti-corruption laws and regulations, pragmatically promote international anti-corruption cooperation, firmly oppose all types of corruption and other international criminal activities, and continue to combat corrupt practices...while adhering to Chinese laws, as well as local laws and international regulations" (People's Daily, 2023). Interpreted in context, this response still does not fully address Western criticisms regarding the transparency of bidding processes but rather responds with the establishment of rules.

In the design of the "high standards," the white paper emphasizes "aligning with international advanced rules and standards...first piloting and then promoting, advocating for participating parties to adopt rules and standards suitable for their own circumstances and follow a development path that conforms to their own national conditions" (People's Daily, 2023). However, when examining the content, even though it emphasizes international advanced rules and standards, it still suggests that each country should adopt rules suitable for its own circumstances. This seems to lack substantial concessions compared to initiatives like the CPTPP, which aimed for a 99% reduction in tariffs for 99% of goods (Jiang, 2021).

The white paper underscores China's contributions, essentially reiterating its contributions to people's livelihoods, economic globalization, and global governance, especially in multilateral governance and cultural influence. This statement is in line with the fundamental assumptions of a change in China's worldview after the 20th Congress. It emphasizes that the world is entering a period of new turbulence and change, characterized by intensified great power competition, ongoing geopolitical tensions, Cold War thinking, zero-sum thinking, unilateralism, protectionism, hegemonism, populism, technological revolution, industrial transformation, peace deficits, development deficits, security deficits, and governance deficits. Individual countries use the concept of "national security" to "decouple and break chains" in the name of "risk mitigation," disrupting the international economic and trade order and market rules. They advocate for equality and partnership relationships (People's Daily, 2023). This highlights the continuity of China's policies, which continue to target the United States and the West, even positioning China as a developing country and potentially hindering North-South cooperation with developed countries (Wang Shunwen, Lin Yiling, 2022).

In particular, during the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan and South Korea pledged to further cooperate on security issues. Additionally, Australia, India, Japan, and the United States have discussed cooperation in areas such as digital technology, undersea cables, and maritime infrastructure. Moreover, the emphasis on cooperation with Southern countries suggests ongoing competition regarding the Belt and Road Initiative. These factors collectively indicate that the "Democratic Alliance" has transitioned from "sitting and talking" to "standing up and acting" (Ikenberry, 2023).

These signs serve as a significant warning for China, indicating that it faces an increasingly encircled external environment, combined with domestic economic challenges. Consequently, China may adopt a more assertive foreign policy in response. For example, the previously mentioned shift towards emphasizing values and ideological aspects or the 103 sorties of military aircraft disturbing Taiwan's operations is meant to convey a message and maintain the Chinese Communist Party's existing "bottom-line thinking." While China is willing to cooperate, it is not afraid of conflict and is waiting for potential changes in U.S. presidential elections in the future. However, goodwill is continually extended to Belt and Road countries, attempting to emphasize China's role in peaceful development and a community of shared destiny, emphasizing a multipolar world order and avoiding situations where nations are forced to choose sides.

Furthermore, China continues to invest in technology innovation, particularly in industries related to semiconductors, new energy, computers, and biomedicine (Mankikar, 2023: 8). To address domestic economic pressures and domestic pushback, the education system is emphasized as the forefront of ideological work. When selecting leaders among the 24 members of the Political Bureau, those with "capabilities" in technology-related areas such as space, nuclear power, and the environment are prioritized. For example, among the 24 members, Ma Xingrui and Yuan Jiajun are experts in space projects, Li Ganjie and Chen Jining have master's

degrees in nuclear engineering and doctoral degrees in environmental engineering, and Zhang Guoqing previously worked at China North Industries Group Corporation, the country's largest defense industry group. Yin Li is a health expert. Among the members of the Central Committee, 29 members come from the academic field of technology and engineering (Mankikar, 2023: 12). In summary, China's new development pattern primarily aims to counter the West and nurture talent in scientific research while reducing foreign dependencies.

As scholars researching international regimes or interdependence often conclude, the roles of hegemony or great powers are still crucial in shaping a new international regime. Only after such regimes have been formed can they potentially serve to restrain great powers and facilitate coexistence and cooperation. Therefore, I would like to discuss whether both the United States and China still perceive confrontation as their primary focus. As I mentioned in my recent book, "Neoclassical Realism and Turkish Foreign Policy," international systemic factors still appear to be the major determining variables. However, present-day leaders are influenced by factors such as leaders' images and perceptions of threats. Given this, in the face of an uncertain future, is there a genuine opportunity for East Asia to establish a new regime for cooperation, or is it merely a slogan?

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Nurturing Trilateral Relations in East Asia: South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan

Introduction:

The global order is undergoing fundamental changes, and predicting the future accurately is challenging due to a multitude of intertwined factors. Dealing with crises on multiple levels, which manifest in various forms, is also a formidable task.

The paper provides an intriguing look into the concept of *contested pluralism* and its effects on international relations, with a particular focus on East Asia. *Contested pluralism*, as described in the paper, plays a pivotal role in the trilateral relations within East Asia. The diverse perspectives within this partnership offer both opportunities and challenges. Indeed, in an era marked by shifting global dynamics and contested pluralism, trilateral relations in East Asia hold significant promise and challenges.

The trilateral partnership between South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan warrants closer examination as it unfolds in a region with intricate historical, political, and economic dynamics. So, I will try to dissect the contested multilateralism's implications, challenges, and potential pitfalls.

1. The Ambiguity of Shifting Global Order:

The paper portrays a shift in the global order with the inclusion of previously marginalized actors, particularly from the Global South. However, it seems necessary to address the ambiguity surrounding the effectiveness of such a transition. That being said, does a more diverse global stage necessarily lead to better decision-making, or does it complicate the process with conflicting interests?

2. Complexity Amidst Opportunities:

Contested pluralism, as described, undoubtedly brings both challenges and opportunities. The critical perspective lies in questioning the potential for chaos in the face of diverse voices. In particular, the trilateral relations among South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan are intrinsically tied to historical complexities. The legacy of colonialism, territorial disputes, and unresolved historical issues often cast a shadow over these relations. A critical perspective demands that these historical grievances be addressed with diplomacy and sensitivity, acknowledging the importance of historical reconciliation in building trust.

3. Multilateralism's Efficacy:

The paper highlights the role of multilateral organizations as forums for diverse actors to engage in dialogue. However, is it safe to say that these organizations are equipped to effectively handle the cacophony of voices, or that they often lead to diplomatic standstills and diluted outcomes?

4. Uncertainty and Crises:

The paper acknowledges the increased sense of uncertainty in international relations due to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. In a time when decisive global action is needed, heightened uncertainty can lead to delayed responses and missed opportunities. With regard to regional security, the trilateral partnership assumes greater significance. South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan share common concerns about North Korea's nuclear ambitions, as well as broader regional security dynamics. A critical examination of their collective security efforts is essential to ascertain their effectiveness and readiness for emerging threats.

5. Global South's Influence:

While the paper celebrates the rising influence of the Global South, it misses the opportunity to critically evaluate the motives and consequences of this newfound power. How do these actors use their influence, and what are the implications for regional and global stability? Furthermore, does the Global South's ascent align with democratic values and human rights, or does it risk perpetuating inequalities?

6. The Complexity of Interdependence:

Contested pluralism's relationship with interdependence deserves a closer look. As interdependence grows, so does the potential for mutual vulnerabilities. Critical analysis must consider how these vulnerabilities can be exploited in an environment of contested pluralism, potentially leading to a different form of power play. Regarding economic interdependence, it forms a critical facet of these trilateral relations. Each nation possesses unique strengths and contributions to the regional economy. South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan's collaboration can foster innovation, economic growth, and regional stability. However, we need to identify potential imbalances in this economic interdependence and ensure it benefits all parties. Diplomatically, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan each navigate complex relationships with major global powers. Engaging with the United States, China, and other regional actors requires careful consideration of national interests and collective goals.

7. Future Concerns:

The paper concludes on a note of optimism, envisioning a future of cooperative approaches to global challenges. However, we must also consider the darker side. How can cooperative approaches thrive when actors with diverse interests and often conflicting objectives occupy the global stage? A myopic view may lead to naivety in addressing the complex realities of contested pluralism. The future of trilateral relations between South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan hinges on cooperation. As the global order evolves, these nations must adapt to seize opportunities for growth, innovation, and security.

8. Conclusion

While contested pluralism undoubtedly ushers in a new era of global politics, its impact is far from unilaterally positive. A critical perspective highlights the need for caution, diplomacy, and comprehensive evaluation of its implications. Only through critical scrutiny can we navigate the complex and evolving landscape of international relations effectively.

South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan's trilateral relations are emblematic of the intricate dynamics at play in East Asia. Historical complexities, economic interdependence, regional security, diplomatic considerations, and contested pluralism shape their partnership. A critical perspective is indispensable in ensuring that these trilateral relations develop positively, capitalizing on opportunities while addressing challenges. The evolving global order necessitates a pragmatic and informed approach, allowing these nations to foster cooperation, coexistence, and stability in a dynamic and evolving regional landscape.

Let me finish by briefly touching upon the diplomatic environment facing the Yoon Suk-yeol government of South Korea. The future foreign policy goals of the Yoon Suk-yeol government can be summarized as follows:

1. Enhancing future-oriented value diplomacy.
2. Promoting a Korean-style comprehensive security approach.
3. Reinvigorating mutually beneficial economic cooperation on a global scale.
4. Strengthening foreign policy in the realm of advanced technology innovation.
5. Taking a leadership role in emerging diplomacy.

To establish the cornerstone for relatively unrestricted multilateral security cooperation amidst the U.S.-China strategic competition, all in all, it is crucial to strengthen bilateral and trilateral cooperation with significant middle powers in the Indo-Pacific region, such as Japan, Australia, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

First and foremost, there is a need to actively promote trilateral cooperation between South Korea, Indonesia, and Australia, often referred to as KIA. Given Indonesia's economic growth and its role as a prominent ASEAN nation, combined with the economic and military capabilities of Australia and South Korea, the East Asian trilateral mechanism has the potential to emerge as a significant security and economic forum in the region.

Another potential avenue involves exploring groupings like South Korea-Australia-ASEAN or South Korea-Australia-Pacific Island Countries within the trilateral framework. As South Korea and Australia engage in joint development cooperation projects in Southeast Asia, the strategic importance of collaborative development initiatives can also extend to the South Pacific, an area gaining increasing prominence. Similar to the regular 'ASEAN Policy Dialogues' conducted by South Korea and Australia, it's worth considering the proposal of a 'South Pacific Policy Dialogue,' resembling South Korea's solidarity with ASEAN, such as the 'Korea-ASEAN Partnership for Peace, Prosperity, and People (KAPPPP),'

Furthermore, the improvement in relations between South Korea and Japan opens up possibilities for a trilateral cooperation framework involving South Korea, Japan, and regional nations. If summit talks between South Korea, China, and Japan resume, a platform like the 'Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS)' can be used to propose various TCS+ arrangements, such as TCS-ASEAN, TCS-Europe, TCS-PIF (Pacific Islands Forum), TCS-SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), and TCS-BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

With the Yoon Suk-yeol government's inauguration and subsequent initiatives like KASI, the 'Indo-Pacific Strategy,' and the 'South Korea-Pacific Island Countries Summit,' expectations for South Korea's comprehensive regional policy have significantly increased. Given the heightened anticipation, it is now time to present concrete implementation plans. The current government has activated a 'Task Force' within the Foreign Ministry to coordinate India-Pacific policies across various government departments. However, it is crucial to secure an independent budget for the implementation of the Indo-Pacific strategy and to streamline the responsible organization. Consideration should be given to establishing a 'control tower' within the National Security Council, and the possibility of creating an 'Indian-Pacific Diplomatic Mission' within the Foreign Ministry should also be explored.

