

Chapter 7

The Regionalization of Higher Education in Northeast Asia

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Introduction

Over the past couple of decades, there has been a gradual movement toward the regionalization of higher education in East Asia, as witnessed by an overwhelming increase in cross-border higher education activities in this region (Kuroda and Passarelli 2009). This growing interest in the regionalization of higher education in East Asia can be attributed to a series of factors coming from both inside and outside the higher education community. These factors include (1) a proliferation of regionalism worldwide and increased economic interdependence among countries in East Asia; (2) changing demographics and rapid expansion of higher education systems in East Asian region, in particular, China; (3) advent of the World Trade Organization (WTO) regime and subsequent developments in commodification of higher education; and (4) an expansion of East Asian policy-makers' networks after the Asian financial crisis, through various regional collaboration frameworks, such as ASEAN+3 (Byun and Kim 2011; Chapman et al. 2010; Cheong 2005).

The East Asian region, however, is extremely diverse and complex and does not easily constitute a single political, economic, or cultural entity. Within East Asia, the

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The geographical notion of East Asia as well as Northeast Asia has been defined in many different ways. Following the usage of East Asia and Northeast Asia in previous regional integration literature (i.e., Cheong 2005; Kuroda and Passarelli 2009; Li 2007), in this chapter, Northeast Asia is referred to as the three major Northeast economies of China, Japan, and South Korea, with East Asia covering Northeast Asia, as well as Southeast Asia (comprising the ten ASEAN countries), unless otherwise specified.

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Southeast Asian region is, in many aspects, more advanced in multilateral higher education cooperation efforts and has actually made some progress over the years (see Chap. 5 of this volume). On the contrary, Northeast Asia has not developed, until recently, any meaningful regional collaboration schemes for higher education, despite the fact that intra-regional dependence of higher education systems among Northeast Asian countries has already deepened enough to form a “de facto regionalization of higher education” (Kuroda and Passarelli 2009). In response to these ongoing developments in cross-border higher education and the rising interests in regional economic integration among Northeast Asian countries, however, three core Northeast Asian economies (China, Japan, and South Korea) have recently started exploring the possibilities of closer higher education cooperation. In 2011, these three countries for the first time launched a multilateral student mobility program, called “CAMPUS ASIA” within their region, which they hope to develop further into a more comprehensive higher education cooperation framework within Northeast Asia and beyond. In fact, it is too early to predict whether these new developments will actually lead to the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia, as the process seems to be still in its infancy. However, in order to facilitate more productive policy discussions on higher education integration currently taking place in Northeast Asia, it is necessary to examine some of the critical issues and challenges associated with these developments at this critical juncture.

The purpose of this chapter is to overview recent developments in the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia and to investigate related issues, particularly focusing on China, Japan, and South Korea. To achieve this purpose, the next section will present some crucial features of the three Northeast Asian economies and will show how they currently depend on each other in terms of intra-regional trade and cross-border higher education activities. Section “[Regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia](#)” will present a historical overview of the developments in the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia, with special reference to the recently launched CAMPUS ASIA program. Section “[Issues and challenges](#)” will discuss the implications of the regionalization of Northeast Asian higher education for establishing a wider East Asian higher education community and examine some of the important issues and challenges associated with the regionalization process. Finally, section “[Conclusion: What next](#)” will conclude with the prospect for the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia.

Deepening Intra-regional Dependence Among Northeast Asian Countries

Thickening Economic Interdependence in Northeast Asia

Kuroda et al. (2010) observed, “[b]ehind the concept of the East Asian Community lies a situation where the weight of this region in the world economy is

Table 7.1 Economic profile of the major Northeast Asian countries: share of the world's total (Unit: %)

	Population (2011)	GDP (ppp) (2010)	Merchandising Exports (2007)	Commercial Service exports (2007)	FDI (inflows) (2008)
China	19.3	13.6	9.6	3.8	6.4
Japan	1.8	5.8	4.7	3.8	1.4
Korea	0.7	2.0	2.9	1.7	0.4
C-J-K	21.8	21.4	17.2	9.3	8.3
EU	7.2	18.5	15.9 (2008)	26.9 (2008)	29.7
N. America	5.0	21.5	11.0	15.9	21.3
World	100	100	100	100	100

Source: PRB 2011 World Population Data Sheet (www.prb.org); Global Finance Magazine (www.gfmag.com)

expanding. . . a comparatively more independent economic system that does not rely on the Western economy is forming” (p. 5). To provide some empirical data in line with this observation, we will examine the relative importance of the three major Northeast Asian economies in relation to the world and also investigate how they depend on each other. Table 7.1 presents the economic profiles of China, Japan, and South Korea in terms of their share of the world's total in population, GDP, trade, and FDI (inflow) in 2010.

It is evident from these data that China, Japan, and South Korea are key players in the global economy. These three countries account for over 20 % of the world's population (21.8 %) and GDP (21.4 %), respectively. In fact, the Northeast Asian economy has grown faster than any other region in the recent past and is now equivalent to the economic size of North America and is even greater than EU in terms of GDP (PPP). In addition, the Northeast Asian region represented by China, Japan, and South Korea occupies 17.2 % of the world's merchandising exports, the biggest among the regional blocs in the world economy, although it still lags behind EU and North America in terms of commercial service export and FDI inflows.

In addition, various studies (e.g., Cheong 2005; Seliger 2011; Wong 2005) and statistics have indicated that there has been a growing economic interdependency among the Northeast Asian countries. Table 7.2 shows the changes in trade volumes in terms of both exports and imports among China, Japan, South Korea, and the USA between 2001 and 2010. When we closely examine Table 7.2, the economic interdependence among these three countries is in general increasing, while trade dependence of these three Northeast Asian countries on the USA, in terms of both exports and imports, has decreased over time.

With the rapidly growing Chinese economy during this period, the share of trade in both Japan and Korea with China has drastically increased in terms of exports and imports. For instance, South Korea's imports from China rose from US\$ 31.4 billion or 9.4 % (of South Korea's total imports) in 2001 to US\$ 50.1 billion or 16.8 % in 2010. The share of South Korea's exports to China also increased to US\$ 117.2 billion or 25.1 % in 2010, up from US\$ 18.1 billion or 12.1 % in 2001. The

Table 7.2 Intra-regional trade among China, Japan, and South Korea: 2001–2010 (unit: billions of US dollars, % in parenthesis)

Country	Year	Exports to				Imports from					
		CH	JP	KR	USA	All	CH	JP	KR	USA	All
China (CH)	2001	–	44.9 (16.9)	12.5 (4.7)	54.4 (20.4)	266.1 (100)	–	42.8 (17.6)	23.4 (9.6)	26.2 (10.8)	243.6 (100)
	2010	–	121.0 (7.7)	68.8 (4.4)	283.8 (18.0)	1,578 (100)	–	176.7 (12.7)	138.3 (9.9)	102.7 (7.4)	1,396 (100)
Japan (JP)	2001	31.0 (7.7)	–	25.3 (6.3)	122.5 (30.4)	403.4 (100)	57.8 (16.6)	–	17.2 (4.9)	63.8 (18.3)	349.3 (100)
	2010	149.5 (19.4)	–	62.4 (8.1)	120.5 (15.6)	769.8 (100)	153.2 (22.1)	–	28.6 (4.1)	69.1 (10.0)	692.6
Korea (KR)	2001	18.1 (12.1)	16.5 (11.0)	–	31.4 (20.8)	150.4 (100)	13.3 (9.4)	26.6 (18.9)	–	22.4 (15.9)	141.1 (100)
	2010	117.2 (25.1)	28.3 (6.0)	–	50.1 (10.7)	467.7 (100)	71.5 (16.8)	64.3 (15.1)	–	40.6 (9.6)	425.1 (100)

Source: United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (comtrade.un.org)

Note: Modified and updated from Wong (2005)

Figures in parenthesis are exports to and imports from foreign countries as the percentage shares of the total exports and imports of each country concerned

same pattern can be observed between Japan and China. For China, the share of trade with Japan and South Korea also substantially increased in terms of total trade, while, percentagewise, remained either fairly stable for Korea (exports, 4.7 = > 4.4 %; imports, 9.6 = > 9.9 %) or even decreased for Japan (exports, 16.9 = > 7.7 %; imports, 17.6 = > 12.7 %).

For all these Northeast Asian countries, however, the trade volume in terms of exports to and imports from the USA, at least percentagewise, has sharply decreased during the same period (China 20.4 = > 18.0 %, Japan 30.4 = > 15.6 %, Korea 20.8 = > 10.7 on the export side and China 10.8 = > 7.4 %, Japan 18.3 = > 10.0 %, Korea 15.9 = > 9.6 % on the import side). These data clearly indicate that, despite the fact that Northeast Asian countries still heavily rely on exports to countries outside the region (e.g., the USA), intra-regional trade has played an increasingly important role for these countries' economies. Currently, China is the most important trade partner of Japan and South Korea in terms of both exports and imports.

Size and Growth of Cross-Border Higher Education in Northeast Asia

As was illustrated in the previous section, the interdependence of the Northeast regional economy has grown substantially over the past decade. If we closely examine recent developments of cross-border higher education activities in this region, we can observe a similar trend in the area of higher education as well. This section describes some of the recent developments in cross-border higher education in East Asia, in particular, among the three Northeast Asian countries, following these two categories: (1) intra-regional student and faculty mobility and (2) interuniversity partnership agreements and collaborative degree programs.

Student and Faculty Mobility

Table 7.3 shows the international student flow among East Asian countries over the past 10 years. The data indicate that during this period, most East Asian countries, with few exceptions, experienced growth to varying extents in recruiting international students within their territories, which demonstrates growing student mobility in this region. In particular, since 2000, international student enrollments at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Korea and China have increased at a remarkable pace compared to other countries in East Asia. For instance, the number of international students in Korea increased almost 15-fold, from 3,373 in 2000 to 50,030 in 2009. The growth in international student enrollments at China's HEIs was even more astounding, albeit lower than Korea's growth rate, where 186,034

Table 7.3 Trends in international student flow of East Asian countries: 2000–2009

	Inbound			Outbound		
	2000(A)	2009(B)	B/A	2000(A)	2009(B)	B/A
China ^a	52,150 ^a	238,184 ^a	4.57	140,501	511,763	3.64
Japan	59,691	131,599	2.20	59,294	45,130	0.76
Korea	3,373	50,030	14.83	70,991	125,725	1.77
C-J-K	115,214	419,813	3.64	270,786	682,618	2.52
Indonesia	n/a	5,388(08) ^b	n/a	32,081	32,402	1.01
Malaysia	18,892	41,310(08) ^b	2.19	40,457	54,253	1.34
Philippines	3,514(99)	2,665 ^b	0.76	5,396	9,738	1.80
Singapore	n/a	40,401	n/a	20,570	19,631	0.95
Thailand	1,882(99)	16,361	8.69	19,059	24,803	1.30
Vietnam	622	4,207	6.76	9,144	43,677	4.78
ASEAN	19,514	64,543	3.31	126,707	184,504	1.46
USA	475,169	660,581	1.39	39,822	53,541	1.34

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics unless otherwise specified

Note: In calculating the sum of ASEAN countries, only those countries for which both 2000 and 2009 data are available are included

^aThe Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2000–2009

^bGlobal Education Digest, 2011

additional international students were admitted at Chinese HEIs within a period of 10 years. Similar trends were observed for outbound student mobility. China sent 511,763 students abroad in 2009, representing almost a fourfold increase, despite already having 140,501 students sent abroad in 2000, while Korea sent 54,734 more students abroad than it did in 2000. Such data suggest that, for the most part, international student mobility over the past 10 years has grown faster, in terms of growth rates and absolute numbers, in the Northeast Asian countries than countries in other subregions of East Asia (e.g., Southeast Asia represented by the ASEAN countries).

In addition, it is worth noting that the tremendous growth in East Asian student mobility during the first decade of the twenty-first century was almost exclusively driven by intra-regional student mobility within these three Northeast Asian countries where China, without a doubt, played a critical role. As Table 7.4 shows, although outbound mobility to English-speaking countries, in particular to the USA, is still prevalent for all three countries, the number of international students from the two neighboring countries drastically increased between 2000 and 2009, albeit in varying degrees. Students from the two neighboring countries represent around 80 % of the total international student population in South Korea and Japan, while in China, about one-third (33.5 %) come from the other two countries. Japan and South Korea are the main regional providers, and most of their foreign students are from within the Northeast Asian region, mainly from China. In this respect, South Korea and Japan are competing with each other to recruit Chinese students in their HEIs. Japan's main sources in 2009 are China (79,394), South Korea (24,850), and three Southeast Asian countries (Vietnam 2,895, Malaysia 1,956, and Indonesia 1,143) albeit negligible compared to those from China and South Korea in terms of

Table 7.4 Top 5 feeder/destination countries for Northeast Asian Countries in 2009

Country	Inbound		Outbound ^b
	Top 5 feeder countries		Top 5 destination countries
China (CH)	[2009]	[2000]	[2009]
	① Korea 64,232(27.0 %) ^a	① Korea 16,787(32.2 %) ^a	① USA 124,225(24.3 %)
	② USA 18,650(7.8 %) ^a	② Japan 13,806(26.5 %) ^a	② Japan 79,394(15.6 %)
	③ Japan 15,409(6.5 %) ^a	③ USA 4,280(8.2 %) ^a	③ Australia 70,357 (13.8 %)
	④ Vietnam 12,247(5.2 %) ^a	④ Indonesia 1,947 (3.7 %) ^a	④ UK 47,033(9.2 %)
	⑤ Thailand 11,379(4.8 %) ^a ≡ KR + JP 79,641(33.4 %)	⑤ Germany 1,270(2.4 %) ^a ≡ KR + JP 30,593 (58.7 %)	⑤ Korea 39,309(7.7 %)
Japan (JP)	[2009]	[2000]	[2009]
	① China 79,394(60.3 %)	① China 28,076(47.0 %)	① USA 28,783(45.4 %)
	② Korea 24,850(18.9 %)	② Korea 18,237(30.6 %)	② China 18,650(29.4 %) ^a
	③ Vietnam 2,895(2.2 %)	③ Malaysia 1,956(3.3 %)	③ UK 3,871(6.1 %)
	④ Thailand 2,193(1.7 %)	④ Indonesia 1,143(1.9 %)	④ Australia 2,701(4.3 %)
	⑤ Malaysia 2,147(1.6 %) ≡ CH + KR 104,244 (79.2 %)	⑤ USA 1,077(1.8 %) ≡ CH + KR 46,313 (77.6 %)	⑤ France 1,847(2.9 %)
Korea (KR)	[2009]	[2000]	[2009]
	① China 39,309(78.6 %)	① China 1,182(35.0 %)	① USA 73,882(39.0 %)
	② Mongolia 1,621(3.2 %)	② Japan 613(18.2 %)	② China 64,232(33.9 %) ^a
	③ Vietnam 1,456(2.9 %)	③ USA 195(5.8 %)	③ Japan 24,850(13.1 %)
	④ Japan 989(2.0 %)	④ Russia 77(2.3 %)	④ Australia 6,796(3.6 %)
	⑤ USA 758(1.5 %) ≡ CH + JP 40,298(80.5 %)	⑤ Vietnam 62(1.8 %) ≡ CH + JP 1,795(53.2 %)	⑤ UK 4,277(2.3 %)
USA	[2009]	[2000]	[2009]
	① China 124,225(18.8 %)	① China 50,281(10.6 %)	① China 15,409(22.4 %) ^a
	② India 101,563(15.4 %)	② Japan 43,270(9.1 %)	② UK 14,343(20.9 %)
	③ Korea 73,832(11.2 %)	③ India 39,084(8.2 %)	③ Canada 8,310(12.1 %)
	④ Canada 29,209(4.4 %)	④ Korea 38,026(8.0 %)	④ France 3,544(5.2 %)
	⑤ Japan 28,783(4.4 %)	⑤ Canada 21,735(4.6 %)	⑤ Germany 3,239(4.7 %)

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics unless otherwise specified

^aThe Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2000–2009

^bGlobal Education Digest, 2011

absolute amounts. Korea's main feeder country is definitely China (39,309), while China's are South Korea (64,232), USA (18,650), and Japan (15,409), followed by Indonesia (12,247) and Germany (11,379). Although there were some fluctuations in the composition of the top 5 sending countries for China, Japan, and South Korea between 2000 and 2009, the other two neighboring countries were, without a doubt, main feeder countries for the HEIs in these three countries. This clearly shows the emergence of a triangular pattern of student exchanges among China, Japan, and South Korea during this period. Despite the massive outbound flows of Northeast

Asian countries to the USA, however, relatively few students come from the North America to the Northeast Asian region, particularly to Japan and Korea.

Compared to an astounding increase in the aforementioned student mobility, teacher mobility in South Korea, Japan, and China seems to have shown a rather modest increase over the past decade. Since a complete set of comparative data on this topic is not yet available, one can only grasp some parts of the overall picture by compiling the best available national or institutional statistics, collected separately by individual countries or institutions. In the case of Korea, the number of foreign professors working at HEIs has more than quadrupled over the past 10 years, from 1,387 in 2002 to 5,964 in 2012, as shown in Table 7.5. While a vast majority of the foreign teaching staff was from English-speaking nations, such as the USA and Canada, professors hailing from China and Japan have also increased in number. As of 2012, Chinese and Japanese professors make up 8.8 and 6.9 % of the overall foreign teaching staff, respectively, at Korean HEIs. It is worth noting that the number of Chinese professors has jumped more than five times over the past 10 years.

Interuniversity Partnership Agreements and Collaborative Degree Programs

Behind the growing volume and intensity over the past decade of student and teacher mobility in the Northeast Asian countries lies increased interuniversity exchange agreements and cross-border collaborative degree programs among the HEIs in this region (Kuroda and Passarelli 2009). According to Kuroda and Passarelli (2009), based on MEXT (2007), while partner universities of interuniversity agreements signed by Japanese universities were evenly distributed across the region in the early 1990s, they saw a drastic gain in the East Asian region since the mid-1990s. This intra-regional growth is largely attributed to the hike in academic exchange arrangements made between Japanese universities and Korean/Chinese universities. For example, Japanese HEIs' interuniversity agreements with Chinese HEIs accounted for 42.3 % of the total agreements signed in 2006, while Japanese interuniversity agreements with Korean HEIs represented 24.2 % in that same year. Until 2006, Japanese universities have signed 6,058 exchange agreements with universities in the Asian region, in contrast with 2,463 pacts with those in Europe and 2,708 in North America.

A similar trend can be observed among Korean universities. As an example, the number of academic exchange agreements at Korea University (KU), one of the leading universities in Korea, has increased by more than 350 % from 257 in 2005 to 840 in 2012, notably with institutions in English-speaking countries, such as the USA, Australia, and Canada (Table 7.6). Over the same period, however, KU has also drastically increased its agreements with universities in Japan to 62 and has signed 8 more pacts with HEIs in China. These data indicate that, as of 2012, Japan

Table 7.5 Top 5 countries of origin for foreign professors at Korean HEIs

Country of origin	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	Index of change (2002 = 100)
USA	582 (42.0 %)	786 (45.3 %)	974 (38.3 %)	1,359 (39.6 %)	2,052 (41.4 %)	2,927 (49.1 %)	503
Canada	255 (18.4 %)	293 (16.9 %)	496 (19.5 %)	656 (19.1 %)	834 (16.8 %)	903 (15.1 %)	354
China	99 (7.1 %)	114 (6.6 %)	218 (8.6 %)	331 (9.6 %)	448 (9.0 %)	525 (8.8 %)	530
Japan	166 (12.0 %)	202 (11.6 %)	278 (10.9 %)	316 (9.2 %)	381 (7.7 %)	411 (6.9 %)	248
UK	41 (3.0 %)	48 (2.8 %)	93 (3.7 %)	139 (4.1 %)	243 (4.9 %)	330 (5.5 %)	805
Total	1,387 (100 %)	1,737 (100 %)	2,540 (100 %)	3,432 (100 %)	4,957 (100 %)	5,964 (100 %)	430

Source: Education Statistics Yearbook in Korea, 2002–2012 (<http://std.chedi.re.kr/index.jsp>)

Note: Foreign faculty members in all Korean HEIs including 2–3-year junior colleges; the numbers include relatives abroad with a foreign nationality

Table 7.6 Interuniversity agreements signed by Korea University by countries of partner institutions: 2005/2012

Rank	Country of partner institutions	2005		2012		Growth	
		No. of agreements	%	No. of agreements	%	No. of agreements increased	Index of change (2005 = 100)
1	USA	56	23.6	264	31.4	208	471
2	Japan	38	16.0	62	7.4	24	163
3	China	33	13.9	41	4.9	8	124
4	Australia	13	5.5	30	3.6	17	231
5	Canada	10	4.2	25	3.0	15	250
Total		257	100	840	100	603	354

Source: Korea University Portal (portal.korea.ac.kr)

and China have joined the USA as countries with the most number of exchange programs with KU.

Collaborative degree programs, though still limited, have also been gradually expanding among universities in the Northeast Asian region since 2000. The latest data on this issue, presented by Yuki et al. (2011), is based on survey data conducted by Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute (JICA_RI) on approximately 300 leading universities in the East Asian region and shows that collaborative degree programs¹ offered by Northeast Asian universities are still largely centered around Western universities, including 28.9 % in North America and 25.8 % in Western Europe (Table 7.7).

Collaborative degree programs with schools in Northeast and Southeast Asia is at 19.2 % and 17.9 %, respectively. By country, the USA leads the pack with 82 universities offering collaborative degree programs with schools in Northeast Asia, followed by 29 institutions in France and 25 in England. At the same time, the robust exchange of academic programs by 34 Malaysian universities, 22 Chinese universities, and 16 Korean universities with other schools in the Northeast Asian region may be interpreted as a potential expansion of educational collaboration in the region. In the case of Japanese universities, only six of which offer collaborative degree programs with HEIs in Northeast Asia, while a total of 116 universities offer similar types of degree programs with HEIs in Southeast Asia, signaling a possibility of further expansion in educational cooperation with East Asian institutions outside the Northeast Asian region.

To summarize, the data presented in this section suggest that, since the early 2000s, cross-border higher education activities in Northeast Asia have drastically increased and currently form “a certain degree of de facto integration” of higher

¹The definition of “cross-border collaborative program” in JICA_RI Survey 2009/2010 is “[i]nstitutionally produced or organized with cross-border university partnership by at least two institutions in two countries or more.” This includes, for instance, double/joint, twinning, and sandwich programs and does not include conventional student exchange programs and branch campuses (Yuki et al. 2011).

Table 7.7 Regions and countries of partner universities for cross-border collaborative degree programs operated by 300 leading universities in East Asia

Respondent	Partner region	Partner country
Northeast Asia	North America (28.9 %)	USA 82, Malaysia 34, France 29
	Western Europe (25.8 %)	UK 25, China 22, Korea 16
	Northeast Asia (19.2 %)	Australia 15, Hong Kong 13, Indonesia 12, Canada 9, Germany 9, Singapore 8, Japan 6, Netherlands 5, Others 3
	Southeast Asia (17.9 %)	
	Oceania and Pacific (5.4 %)	
Southeast Asia	Western Europe (34.1 %)	Japan 116, USA 105, Australia 92
	Northeast Asia (22.4 %)	France 73, UK 42, Netherlands 26
	North America (19.6 %)	Germany 21, Belgium 12, Sweden 12, China 10, Malaysia 9, New Zealand 8
	Oceania and Pacific (17.5 %)	Canada 7, Thailand 6, Indonesia 5
	Southeast Asia (4.0 %)	

Modified from Yuki et al. (2011)

Note: Total $N = 1,048$; Northeast Asia $n = 318$; Southeast Asia $n = 572$

education in this region. This growing interdependence of higher education systems in Northeast Asia is leading toward the development of a more concrete regional higher education cooperation framework in Northeast Asia. The next section further explores this issue.

Regionalization of Higher Education in Northeast Asia

Emergence of Regional Higher Education Cooperation Framework in Northeast Asia: A Historical Overview

There are currently two different paths leading toward the regionalization of higher education: (1) top-down regional and governmental cooperation frameworks fostered frequently by supranational organizations like the EU or ASEAN, and (2) - bottom-up initiatives through cross-border higher education activities at the institutional and individual level, and through the establishment of voluntary university associations, such as the Association of East Asian Research Universities (AEARU) or the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) that aim to construct a new regional university collaborative network.

As we have shown in section “[Deepening intra-regional dependence among Northeast Asian countries](#)”, the bottom-up initiatives at the institutional and individual student levels are already quite widespread in Northeast Asia. In this sense, the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia has so far been driven more by market forces rather than by government-led initiatives. The critical issue here is whether these heightened levels of interdependency among HEIs and student mobility in this region can actually lead to more systematic or institutionalized higher education cooperation frameworks that will ultimately contribute to the regionalization of higher education in East Asia (Kuroda and Passarelli 2009).

Contrary to Southeast Asia where ASEAN has played a pivotal role in developing regional identify and systematic higher education cooperation frameworks over the last couple of decades, there is no regional body comparable to ASEAN in Northeast Asia to be able to take a multilateral approach. This is probably due to several intertwined factors having shaped the complex geopolitical situation in Northeast Asia: (1) the political tension among countries in Northeast Asia during and even after the Cold War era, (2) emerging rivalry between Japan and a newly emerging giant China, and (3) the complicated historical legacies between China, South Korea, and Japan, in particular, of the first half of the twentieth century (Chapman et al. 2010; OECD 2004a). For these reasons, in Northeast Asia, discussions on regional higher education integration started only within the last 10 years or so. In particular, to avoid this delicate geopolitical situation in Northeast Asia, at the beginning, these discussions usually took place in a much broader context, such as ASEAN+3 or East Asian Summit (EAS) where ASEAN in most cases played an important mediating role.

The first critical momentum to facilitate close cooperation among these three countries was brought on by the East Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s. The crisis has provided East Asian economies with a new perspective on regional cooperation, which actually introduced several significant government-led regional integration processes in East Asia. For instance, in response to the crisis, the leaders of China, Japan, and South Korea were unofficially invited to the ASEAN’s 30th anniversary, which paved a way for forming the ASEAN+3 mechanism. Through this newly created mechanism, all three major Northeast Asian countries participated in the discussions, for the first time, on intra-regional higher education cooperation in a much broader regional context of East Asia. The importance of higher education cooperation in East Asian countries has since then been actively discussed at ASEAN+3 meetings and sometimes in an even broader context, such as EAS that started in 2005 and that expanded its membership further to Australia, New Zealand, and India. Some of the most important recommendations and declarations emphasizing the role of East Asian higher education cooperation from various regional processes involving China, Japan, and South Korea are summarized in Table 7.8.

However, the most dramatic change in the development of higher education cooperation framework in Northeast Asia was brought about by the establishment of the Trilateral Summit meeting among the leaders of China, Japan, and South Korea. Not surprisingly, as was the case with the initiation of discussions on

Table 7.8 Major recommendations and declarations emphasizing the regional integration of East Asian higher education involving China, Japan, and South Korea

Regional process	Attention to higher education
EVAG (East Asia Vision Group) Prospect report in 2001	To work together with cultural and educational institutions to promote a strong sense of identity and an East Asian consciousness and to promote East Asian studies in the region through cooperative programs, teaching or languages, establishment of networks; expanding the ASEAN University Network (AUN) to the rest of East Asia and profiting by existing bilateral initiatives between ASEAN and China, Japan, and South Korea (EVAG recommendations, Section 5 “Social, Cultural, and Education Cooperation” points 98 and 100)
ASEAN+3 leaders’ declaration at the 7th ASEAN+3 Summit in 2003	To promote lifelong learning programs; credit transfer systems; scholarships and exchange programs for students, faculty, and staff; research and development cooperation; “centers of excellence,” including e-learning; and curricular development as bases for common regional qualification standards among interested centers/institutions (Recommendations adopted in the area of education)
Kuala Lumpur Declaration at the 1st East Asian Summit in 2005	To enhance people-to-people exchange aimed at developing a “we feeling”; to encourage the sharing of ideas through greater interactions between students, academicians, researchers, artists, media, and youths among countries in East Asia; to conduct regular exchange of intellectuals, members of think tanks, religious personalities, and scholars, which will benefit from East Asia and the world through deeper knowledge and understandings so as to fight intolerance and improve understanding among cultures and civilizations (Articles 6, 7, 8)

Sources: Kuroda and Passarelli (2009) and Yepes (2007)

Note: Modified from Yepes (2007)

establishing an East Asian Community at ASEAN+3 a decade ago, the development of a leaders’ network among the three Northeast Asian countries was again the most important factor in accelerating recent talks on the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia. The Trilateral Summit meeting, involving exclusively China, Japan, and South Korea, first took place in 2008. Since then, these three core countries in Northeast Asia have met annually under the formal institutional framework of the China-Japan-Korea Trilateral Summit (the Trilateral Summit hereafter). This shows that these three countries consider, on top of the greater ASEAN+3 option, the Northeast Asian option as one viable regional scope for more fruitful regional cooperation.

Seen from European experiences, however, the success of regional integration is dependent on the development of a true regional identity. This point was well stressed by then Japanese Prime Minister Hatoyama’s proposal of establishing an “East Asian Community” at the 2nd Trilateral Summit meeting held at Beijing in

October 2009 and which was again reflected as a key item in “the Joint Statement on the Tenth Anniversary of Trilateral Cooperation among the People’s Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea,” adopted by the leaders of the three countries (Yonezawa and Meerman 2010). The Joint Statement says that “we have agree [d] . . . [to] continue to conduct exchanges among all sectors of the three countries, particularly friendly youth exchanges and exchanges among universities. . . . [to] consider establishing a long-term mechanism for youth and media exchanges, encourage academic institutions and local authorities, and promote closer trilateral cooperation in areas such as . . . education. . . .” (retrieved 7 Nov. 2011, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/jck/meet0910/joint-1.pdf>).

In the area of higher education, this agreement had an immediate impact on the ongoing movement toward establishing a common regional framework to encourage student exchanges among the Northeast Asian countries. To implement this agreement, the governments of the three countries set up a “Joint Expert Committee for Promoting Exchange and Cooperation (Joint Expert Committee hereafter)” to discuss and develop guidelines to support exchange programs among universities in China, Japan, and South Korea. On May 29, 2010, in Jeju, Korea, the leaders of China, Japan, and South Korea convened again at the 3rd Trilateral Summit Meeting and agreed on the early realization of the CAMPUS ASIA program, the Asian version of European ERASMUS program.

At this Summit, the leaders of the three countries also adopted a “Trilateral Cooperation VISION 2020,” articulating “[w]e share the common recognition that by presenting specific goals and visions to be achieved through cooperation by 2020, our future-oriented comprehensive cooperative partnership will be more solid” (retrieved 7 Nov. 2011, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/jck/summit1005/vision2020.html>). Some of the measures proposed in the vision document were:

- To contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of universities and nurturing qualified human resources through exchange programs, such as credit recognition and joint degrees. To this end, the China-Japan-Korea Committee on Promoting Exchange and Cooperation among Universities will continue to be convened.
- To promote cooperation among quality assurance agencies in China, Japan, and South Korea and jointly prepare a guideline in order to enhance exchanges among universities.
- To consider a concrete policy package to facilitate the exchange of prospective students. Meanwhile, to further promote trilateral educational cooperation, we will make full use of meetings to facilitate the establishment of a ministerial meeting mechanism (MEXT 2011).

These two historic documents at the Trilateral Summits have so far been the most high-profile and comprehensive agreements on higher education cooperation among the three Northeast Asian countries, which finally resulted in the CAMPUS ASIA program. It is the first and most concrete multilateral student exchange initiative taken by the Northeast Asian countries, which have high potentials to

be further developed into a more comprehensive regional higher education cooperation framework in this region.

CAMPUS ASIA: New Regional Higher Education Cooperation Framework in Northeast Asia

CAMPUS ASIA is a new multilateral student mobility program initiated by the three Northeast Asian countries. The primary goal of the project is to promote cooperation among HEIs and to develop mutual understandings by institutionalizing various exchange programs (e.g., student exchange program) between universities, which will in the long run contribute to the establishment of a broader East Asian Community (MEXT 2011).

CAMPUS ASIA was first initiated by South Korea and Japan, with China later deciding to join in. On the Korean side, the policy idea of a multilateral student mobility program first appeared in March 2009 in Korean Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST, hereafter) document presented at the National Brand Committee chaired by the President of the Republic. It says, “in order for Asia to be a world leader, it should promote mutual understanding and develop ‘we feeling’ among Asian countries by implementing an Asian version of the ERASMUS program called ‘CAMPUS ASIA’ [author’ translation – original in Korean].” This idea was adopted by the President and then proposed as an official agenda for the 2nd Trilateral Summit in October 2009. The core element of this idea at this stage was to develop double and joint degree programs with Asian countries as an important means of upgrading Korea’s higher education (Moon 2010). On August 2009, MEXT sent a delegation to the Korean Ministry of Education to discuss higher education cooperation between the two countries. Until then, it seemed like a typical bilateral collaboration effort because China did not pay serious attention to the formation of this multilateral cooperation program at the beginning. A critical turning point was, however, made at the 2nd Trilateral Summit Meeting held in Beijing. Then Prime Minister of Japan, Hatoyama, emphasized the importance of a university exchange program among China, Japan, and South Korea and proposed establishing an intergovernmental expert committee to discuss quality-assured student exchange programs (Yonezawa and Meerman 2010).

Based on this proposal and subsequent agreements made by the leaders of the three countries, the intergovernmental expert committee composed of a total of 18 experts (6 per country) was created and gathered several times to discuss and prepare the guidelines for the proposed exchange program, with the help of two working groups (one on a pilot exchange program and the other on quality assurance). The Joint Expert Committee reached a basic agreement on (1) the proposed guidelines for promoting student exchange among the three countries and (2) a pilot implementation plan for CAMPUS ASIA at the 2nd expert committee in Beijing in December 2010 and which finally confirmed its contents at the 3rd committee in Jeju, Korea, on May 2011.

The guidelines clearly articulated the role of such important stakeholders as universities, governments, quality assurance agencies, and industry representatives in order to promote quality-assured cross-border higher education activities, ranging from implementing credit transfer and grade assessment to recognition of academic qualifications among universities in different countries. Some of the important measures recommended in the guidelines include (1) establishment of a comprehensive, coherent, and transparent quality assurance framework and encouragement for relevant universities to participate in the exchange programs (for governments); (2) establishment of an internal quality assurance system, effective implementation of the exchange program, and good services for exchange students (for universities); and (3) maintaining clarification and visibility of procedure and seeking common standards and joint evaluation (for quality assurance agencies) (MEXT 2011). It is worth noting that the guidelines were prepared under the principle of respecting each participating country's unique education system and policies. Therefore, to implement student exchanges among universities in these three countries, participating universities in one country should not be bound to the other countries' policies nor to other participating universities' education style or exchange program content (MEXT 2011).

The CAMPUS ASIA program will be implemented through a small-scale pilot program over the next 3–5 years, starting from 2012. Based on the implementation plan summarized in Table 7.9, a joint call for a pilot program proposal was announced in May 2011, and ten consortiums were selected through a two-stage evaluation process (one by each country and the other by a joint trilateral evaluation).

The final list of ten winning consortiums, which includes a dual degree consortium in international studies and public policies comprising three flagship universities from the three participating countries (Seoul National University in Korea, Peking University in China, Tokyo University in Japan), was made public on 30 October, 2011 in Korea. The three governments hope that, like the ERASMUS program in Europe, these ten consortiums can serve as a channel through which national/regional cultures and values will communicate more effectively with each other. The Korean government will provide a participating Korean university in the selected consortiums with KW 224 million per year. Based on the information accumulated through this pilot stage, the program will be further expanded in terms of scale and coverage of the countries (MEXT 2011).

Issues and Challenges

Will the Northeast Asian region become a more coherent regional bloc of higher education integration in the near future? If so, what implications does this have for the establishment of a broader East Asian higher education area? Many observers (e.g., Kuroda and Passarelli 2009; Mok 2011) have argued that, as opposed to what has happened and is happening in Europe, the developments of regional higher

Table 7.9 Pilot implementation plan of CAMPUS ASIA program

Item	Implementation plan
Target	Both undergraduate and graduate programs
Application unit and process	A consortium made by at least three universities from China, Japan, and South Korea; application will be made at the level of departments or colleges, submitted through the participating universities, and to the Ministry of Education in each participating country
Duration of period	One year as a principle; no less than 3 months in any case during the pilot stage (recommended)
No of exchange students	Built-in mechanism to balance the inflow/outflow of students based on the reciprocity principle; 100 students per year (for a 1-year exchange basis) to and from the other two countries; privately funded or participating university-sponsored students are not included in that number
Language	To be decided by each consortium autonomously
Financial support to students	Students pay tuition to their universities at home, NOT to the institutions to be exchange abroad; support for airfare will be decided autonomously by the home country, while all other costs (e.g., housing) will be covered by the host countries The host country will provide a maximum of 100 (on a 1-year basis) inbound students by principle, with the minimum support level on par with its government-funded scholarship students (recommended)

Source: MEXT (2011)

education cooperation and its related institutions in East Asia can only be called nascent at the moment as the majority of these agreements and institutional frameworks are either very shallow or rather subregional. For instance, Evans (2005, as cited in Mok 2011, p. 20) argued that regional agreements for higher education cooperation in East Asia, such as the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, might comprise just “little more than talking and becoming familiar with one another” (p. 211). There is not anything like the European Union or the Bologna process in East Asia. In addition, the government-level efforts in East Asia are currently taking place at a subregional level through agreements between neighboring states rather than as at a pan-regional level as in Europe. For instance, ASEAN countries reached a consensus in 2003 to establish an ASEAN community by 2015, and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization–Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED) recently began discussing an even more ambitious idea of creating a Southeast Asian Higher Education Area (SEA-HEA) within its own region. In parallel, Northeast Asia has also initiated a CAMPUS ASIA program within its own regional boundary (Aphijanyatham 2010; Kuroda et al 2010).

Why is this the case in East Asia? The underlying reasons behind the present situation need to be understood. First of all, East Asia is complex and diverse.²

²In relation to cross-border higher education, the East Asian region can be classified as several interlocking subregions with each having certain distinct characteristics, *though some overlap more than one group*: (1) developed nations with a strong domestic capacity but active as importers, particularly of English-language education (Japan and South Korea); (2) developed or intermediate nations with inadequate domestic capacity, active as both importers and exporters

There is less common cultural, linguistic, and religious ground in the East Asian region than in Europe. This extreme diversity poses various challenges in regional integration in East Asia that would be difficult to settle at least in the short time period. In addition, contrary to Europe, there is no powerful supranational body able to accelerate a multilateral approach. ASEAN, EAS, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) do not have the capacity enough to forge a strong consensus that cuts across national agendas (OECD 2004a).

For these reasons, any substantiated policy frameworks so far aimed at the integration of higher education systems in East Asia were initiated first at the subregion level on the assumption that (1) higher education cooperation frameworks at the subregional level would create better opportunities for countries in the subregion to take full advantage of geographical proximity and more intimately shared cultural and educational heritage of neighboring countries, and (2) once they matured, these subregional cooperation frameworks would ultimately contribute to the formation of a Pan-East Asian higher education community. It seems this approach is very efficient and somewhat inevitable at least for a while, given the huge diversity and developmental gaps currently existing in various subregions in East Asia. From this viewpoint, the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia can also be interpreted as a first step or a building block of forming a greater East Asian higher education area.

Northeast Asian countries share an intimate cultural and educational heritage and historical affinities and developmental experiences (Chapman et al. 2010). In addition, from a more practical perspective, significant complementarities exist between China, Japan, and South Korea. For instance, in the case of South Korea and Japan, they have a strong domestic capacity to provide higher education as domestic enrollment rates in these countries have continued decreasing in recent years due to the decline of college age students. On the contrary, in China, domestic capacity is currently way behind to meet the drastically increased social demands for higher education (OECD 2004a). To redress this imbalance between demand and supply of higher education systems in Northeast Asian countries, closer regional higher education cooperation is inevitable. It can provide both resources and markets to each other.

However, while promoting the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia, the governments of the Northeast Asian countries are likely to face some tricky issues at hand, such as a leadership issue over the region, the evolving nature of market-driven cross-border higher education provision in this region, and most importantly the issue of quality assurance and recognition.

First of all, the geopolitical situation in Northeast Asia is much less conducive to the regionalization of higher education than the situation in Europe or in Southeast

(Singapore, Hong Kong, China, and Chinese Taipei and Malaysia); (3) intermediate nations with inadequate domestic capacity active as importers while actively undeveloped as exporters (China, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia); and (4) relatively undeveloped nations, characterized by both low domestic participation and weak demand for cross-border education (Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar) (OECD 2004a, p. 139).

Asia. Political and territorial conflicts remain unsettled, and regional factors driving regional integration seems far more complicated in Northeast Asia (Seliger, 2009). A rivalry competition between newly emerging China and Japan will continue with neither completely dominating the integration process. South Korea is situated between two world great powers and bordered by the hostile North Korea. A lack of a single clear leadership or coordinated dual leadership might prevent the Northeast Asian region from forming a truly coherent regional bloc in the area of economy as well as higher education. Therefore, in the future, both China and Japan can either attempt to lead the regionalization process or to prevent it, allowing some room for South Korea, situated in the middle, to be able to take some mediating roles to play as a catalyst for accelerating the process of regionalization in Northeast Asia.

Another salient geopolitical feature characterizing Northeast Asia is the strong influence of the USA in this region. The USA is “an indirect political and economic factor in Northeast Asian integration” (Seliger, 2008:4). The area of higher education is not an exception for this US influence. As discussed in section [Deepening intra-regional dependence among Northeast Asian countries](#), the main cross-border dynamics in the Northeast Asian region are not confined to countries within the region but rather are greater between the Northeast Asian countries and their English-language providers, in particular the USA. The absolute majority of Northeast Asian students are still choosing the USA as the most favored study destination due to the ever-growing role of English as well as its superior quality of higher education. In this sense, the pattern and the size of cross-border activities between Northeast Asian countries and the USA will inevitably influence the speed and shape of future regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia. Yet, until now, no political consensus has yet emerged as to how this strong interdependence between Northeast Asian countries and the USA can properly be taken into account in achieving a higher education integration in Northeast Asia.

Second, the chapter has attempted to capture some of the features in cross-border higher education activities in Northeast Asia, in particular those among South Korea, China, and Japan. An example of these features includes the governments in Northeast Asia, particularly those of South Korea and Japan, and how they currently place much emphasis on the export performance of their HEIs. In fact, both South Korea and Japan export many similar products to China, including “higher education services,” thereby engaging in fierce competition with each other in the international (student) market. In addition, as aforementioned, both South Korea and Japan have excessive capacities in their higher education systems, as well as an ambition to become a regional education hub in the future. In many respect, as OECD (2004a) rightly pointed out, Northeast Asia is “the world’s laboratory for examining the implications of demand-driven, trade-oriented mobility of people, programs and institutions” (p. 196). In this context, much of the cross-border higher education activities in this region take the form of a full price market exchange. Therefore, a multilateral initiative or framework that emphasizes the development of a mutual understanding among countries in the region may create tensions with a national approach, thereby emphasizing the export function of its

HEIs, which inevitably entails fierce competition between countries. This example clearly demonstrates the possible tensions that exist between cooperation, as the ideal, and competition, as the harsh reality, in the process of regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia.

Finally, it should also be acknowledged that the growth in cross-border higher education will pose many operational challenges because of different languages, the diversity of institutional governance structures, various quality assurance, and funding arrangements among countries (OECD 2004a). Among these, at the center of the operational challenges lies quality assurance and recognition issue. In implementing the pilot program of CAMPUS ASIA, the Joint Expert Committee developed some internationally agreed-upon principles and procedures for quality assurance and recognition. However, much remains to be done to coordinate various quality assurance arrangements implemented by individual countries. In fact, based on the experiences in Europe (OECD 2004b), to develop a region-wide quality assurance mechanism would be very difficult, if not impossible, as authority and competencies with respect to quality assurance of higher education are firmly rooted at the national level. The guidelines developed by the Joint Expert Committee also made this point clear, by stating that “[s]ince the university system in each country possesses unique attributes and features, the guidelines will be formulated such that no one country is bound to another country’s concept of what a university system or university education [should] entail” (retrieved 7 Nov. 2011, <http://www.next.go.jp/english/topics/1306406.htm>). Furthermore, actual criteria, methods, and procedures implemented in individual countries in the region are very diverse, while institutional diversity in the higher education system has continued increasing over time (OECD 2004a). The ongoing international efforts, including ones that were discussed in the Joint Expert Committee, have tried to tackle some of these issues. Yet, there seems to be no easy solutions, as quality assurance inevitably has to touch on sensitive issues, such as the autonomy of individual HEIs and the sovereignty of individual nations.

Conclusion: What Next?

In conclusion, the regionalization of higher education in East Asia takes on complex patterns of bilateral and multilateral relationships among China, Japan, and South Korea; Japan and Southeast Asia; China and Southeast Asia, and so on. It has gradually evolved through the so-called multipolar initiatives (Yonezawa and Meerman 2010), which reveal that the regional higher education cooperation and exchange in East Asia are unfolding simultaneously in several interlocking sub-regions rather than in a single large region. Within this broader regional context, the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia has also continuously evolved over the past decade.

In relation to the regionalization of higher education, East Asia’s extreme diversity and uneven level of economic and higher education development has

made it difficult to achieve a region-wide approach. Therefore, in the near future, neighboring countries in East Asia are likely to continue focusing their efforts on establishing a more solid higher education cooperation framework at a subregional level rather than at a pan-regional level, in the hope that it could contribute to achieving a broader East Asian higher education community in the long run. Broader regional cooperation frameworks, such as ASEAN+3, can in the meantime only serve as a kind of platform to facilitate joint initiatives, for instance, between Southeast and Northeast Asia.

However, to more effectively promote the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia, the governments in this region should first properly deal with some tricky issues at hand, particularly political and territorial conflicts stemming from the complicated historical legacies between China, Japan, and South Korea. During the last year, territorial conflicts in South Korea-Japan and China-Japan rekindled chronic political tensions between these countries and froze all their diplomatic relations. Official visits were cancelled, and ongoing government-backed collaborative efforts were and still are affected heavily by this chilling political atmosphere. One of its such victims includes the CAMPUS ASIA program: as it was initiated and driven mainly by political motivation at the national level, the program's implementation and progress received an inevitable blow as the political drive of participating countries waned. Domestic politics, backed by a growing undercurrent of nationalism, only further exacerbates the diplomatic tensions among the three countries. Particularly during major election seasons, politicians often manipulate national sentiment in order to strengthen their political position at home. Thus, they cite territorial conflicts to serve their own needs, rather than to resolve cross-border disputes. It is against such a backdrop that the future of the regionalization of Northeast Asia will take place.

Within the past year, all three countries have undergone leadership transitions, and thus, we can naturally assume that we are facing a new turning point in Northeast Asian politics. It remains to be seen whether this power transition will prove to be an opportunity or a threat to the current political tensions among the three countries. In this sense, future developments for the regionalization of higher education in Northeast Asia are yet rife with uncertainty. The only thing that can be said for certain is that politicians of the three countries must change their approach toward historical and territorial disputes, if they truly wish to achieve regionalization in Northeast Asia, including the domain of higher education. Collaborative efforts to ease age-old tensions rather than aggravate them will be crucial. In this respect, CAMPUS ASIA, as a softer form of collaboration effort, will be able to serve as a catalyst to rebuild political and diplomatic relationships among the three countries, particularly in situations where political channels of communication in the region are very weak.

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