

博士論文（要約）

Proceeding in Hardship:

**The Process of Institution-Building and the Evolution of
China-Japan-South Korea Trilateralism**

（困難の中を進む：日中韓三国協力の制度化建設）

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論文の内容の要旨

Thesis Abstract

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In recent decades, the development of trilateral institutions among China, Japan and South Korea (thereafter referred as CJK) has begun to take shape. The three countries initiated the first independent Trilateral Summit mechanism in 2008, and jointly established the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat in 2011 with the aim of providing administrative services and think-tank-style advice to the three governments. The institution building of CJK trilateralism has been structured by a pyramid “summit-minister-working level” pattern, with over 20 ministerial consultation mechanisms established in a wide range of fields.

This study endeavors to explore three sets of research questions with respect to the development of CJK trilateralism, that is, the reason for its emergence, the reason for its fluctuations, and the three countries’ respective policy towards the advancement of trilateral institutions. This research begins with a perspective that sees the China-Japan-South Korea triangle as a newly-established and independent unit of a multilateral framework in East Asia, rather than a part of broader regional framework – the ASEAN Plus Three.

The dominant theoretical approach that explains international relations in East Asia has been neo-realism, and liberal and constructivist approaches provide alternative theoretical foundations in explaining the trend of regionalism. This research adopts an eclectic approach and creates the analytical framework based on a structural analysis of trilateralism. Among varying forms of

multilateralism, trilateralism has the least number of member actors and marks a point of juncture between bilateralism and multilateralism. This dissertation adopts a two-way approach and argues that trilateral groupings have structural strengths on one hand, and limitations on the other. This study sees the rising shared interests among the three countries and the pattern of power distribution in Northeast Asia as two basic facilitating and restraining structural factors that shape the functioning of CJK trilateralism. More importantly, it also examines another two factors – common exogenous crises and political leadership – as important contingent variables that affect the evolution of CJK trilateralism

This study considers CJK trilateralism as it operates on three levels - functional cooperation/low politics, trade politics and high politics. My argument is that the making of CJK trilateralism can be seen as a new tide of institution building efforts among existing regional architectures in East Asia. The critical juncture approach acts as a key to elevating the utility of CJK trilateralism, and as an important catalyst that has led the three countries' governments and political leaders to reconsider and remake their policy. The convergence of political will from the three countries occurred during common exogenous crises. This crisis-driven approach seems to work well across the fields of low politics, trade politics, and high politics. However, I argue that the crisis-driven approach is unsustainable if lacking consistent supports from political leaders. Once these common problems and crises have dissipated, CJK trilateral cooperation at these three levels has achieved significantly different levels of success.

This study favors a dichotomous approach as between its examination of functional trilateralism and political-diplomatic trilateralism. Trilateralism in areas of pragmatic cooperation and non-traditional security are proved to be solid and fruitful, and less subject to fluctuations in the nations' political relationships. However, the outcomes of trilateralism have been less convincing in fields of trade issues and high politics. CJK Trilateralism has been overwhelmingly subject to fluctuations when its embedded bilateral relations change, and cooperative outcomes within a trilateral grouping are prone to being diluted by bilateral approaches. CJK trilateralism at diplomatic levels remains limited to an extension of the China-Japan bilateral relation rather than a mature form of multilateral arrangement.