Cultural Waves, Cultural Tourism and Cultural Integration in East Asia

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Abstract

Cultural integration can contribute to substantially reducing international conflicts. In this study, we examine how popular cultural waves and tourism (or cultural tourism in particular) in Japan, Korea and Taiwan have been facilitating multi-cultural integration in East Asia during the last two decades. Japan's popular culture was the first wave to gain momentum in this region during the 1980s and 1990s. Then since the late 1990s, the Korean pop culture has become the major wave through the 2000s. Taiwan and the rest of Greater China are emerging as the next wave generator. The four countries comprising Northeast Asia, including China, have steadily increased tourism and cultural exchanges. These cultural exchanges are extended to Southeast Asia and other regions across the world. However, their intensity and degrees have been somewhat different from each other. Recently, research and discourse about a new East Asian form of cultural regionalism have been proliferating from multiple disciplines. Based on extensive research, we conclude and propose four facilitators or conditions should be met for maximizing benefits of all nations and people involved in these exchanges: well-developed and easy-to-use cyber/social networks, free trade among the involved countries, sustained growth of the middle class, no serious political conflicts among or between the involved countries. In this context, this paper examines the possibility and conditions of cultural hybridization resulting from cultural integration. Several hybrid Asian Waves can emerge if current trends continue, and co-production of cultural products substantially increases as cultural imperialism is collectively avoided.

Keywords: cultural integration, popular cultural wave, East Asia, hybridization, Asian Wave

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Cultural Integration for Reducing Conflicts

Ethnic groups, societies, and states with different cultures, may often be in a serious conflict if the cultural values they have are extremely different from each other, or beyond the point of tolerance. Conflicts result not only from cultural factors, but also by political, economic, ideological factors, and so on. However, culture affects these other factors directly or indirectly so that culture can be regarded as the most influential cause of conflicts.

Surprisingly for some, cultures can also be the main player of conflict resolution. If the cultures are peace-oriented, cultural conflicts are minimized and they contribute as a mediation player for those conflicts that were resulted by non-cultural factors. If the difference between cultures is minor or different cultures are accepted as a beneficial factor to enrich another's culture, or coexistence is possible, conflicts would be minimal.

Through its history, like other regions in the world, East Asia[1] has experienced many inter-state and intra-state conflicts. In recent periods, during the cold war period in particular, the region observed many serious conflicts. As countries in East Asia have successfully achieved economic development, substantial reduction of inter-state conflicts and ethnic conflicts have been observed.

Regional integration mainly strives for economic co-prosperity among the countries in the region, political stability and peace. In East Asia, there have been many attempts to institutionalize regional integration. However, the ASEAN seems to be the only successful institution for Southeast Asians currently. Although there have been proliferating FTAs, these are hardly regarded as encompassing regional institutions, but only piecemeal institutions from the viewpoint of the region as a whole.

The conflict between South Korea and North Korea, Senkaku Islands (Daoyu Dao) Dispute, Dokdo (Liancourt Rocks) Dispute, and the South China Sea Dispute are just a few examples of current inter-state conflicts. As migration of foreign workers and international marriages are increasing, cultural conflicts among different ethnic groups have been increasing in many countries. In spite of diversified religions in the region, religious conflicts are limited.

With this background, this paper discusses cultural regionalism in East Asia. The fundamental issue we pursue here is whether East Asia can realize a modern type of **cultural integration**. If it can, then how? To explore the issue, first, we clarify the concept of culture adequate for our discussion purpose. Second, we discuss approaches to cultural integration. Third, popular cultural waves and cultural tourism, two on-going phenomena, are reviewed for their roles in cultural integration occurring

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[1] In this paper we define East Asia differently than conventional geographic usage. We define East Asia as the sum of Northeast Asia and South East Asia, where Northeast Asia consists of China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan and Taiwan. In this paper, Korea means Korea as a whole or South Korea only, depending on the context. If necessary, instead of Korea, South Korea is used.

in the region. Finally, considerations for the facilitation of cultural integration by these forces are pointed out.

Culture is a difficult concept to define as indicated by the existence of more than 100 conceptual definitions (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Thus, the concept we present here may not necessarily be the best but nevertheless useful for our discussion in this paper. Culture is: A set of intangible and tangible views of the world and interpretations of life, based on which the principles of living are derived, taught, inherited and shared by a group of people. Different groups of people may have different cultures. Depending on the nature of their culture, different cultures may cause conflicts or harmony between them.

The process and result of the confluence of different cultures is called cultural integration in the broad sense. There are three distinguished phenomena in terms of cultural integration: Cultural integration in the narrow sense, multiculturalism, and cultural hybridization. Cultural integration in the narrow sense is the exchange of cultures or interaction between cultures without losing the essence of each one's own culture. Multiculturalism is the coexisting of different cultures within a society as they are. Multiculturalism is similar to cultural integration, but different in that cultures are not necessarily exchanged. Cultural hybridization involves the mixing of cultures so that a new hybrid culture emerges, while some elements of the original culture are lost and new elements are added or created.

Like water, cultures are fluid and moving with persistent molecular and large scale interactions within the culture itself and with outside cultures. Cultural hybridization requires a cultural mixing or mingling much like the flows of rivers sometimes merge. When cultures overlap like rivers merging, resistance or barriers to external flows may exist. If they are not powerful enough to completely block external flows while protecting local culturees from being overwhelmed by external contacts, cultural hybrid or cultural mixing occurs (Hassi & Storti, 2012). It is often observed that inter-regional cultural hybridization is a byproduct of globalization, where external and internal flows of cultures interact to create a third kind of hybrid culture.

This paper focuses on the implications of East Asia's pop-culture waves and cultural tourism on its recent cultural integration. It is assumed that with all other things being equal, increasing consumption of a foreign popular culture or inbound cultural tourism from another culture implies that the foreign culture is well accepted by the local people, which means that acculturalization may be greater than any sense of xenophobia or cultural conflicts by these local people against the foreign culture.

A fundamental question occurs. Will these spread of popular cultural waves eventually result in a popular cultural hybridization in East Asia? The same question arose for the cultural tourism industry in East Asia. We examine how pop culture waves and tourism in general, and cultural tourism in particular in Japan, Korea and Taiwan, have been facilitating multi-cultural hybridization in East Asia during the last two decades.

Waves of Popular Culture and Cultural Integration

Although Japanese pop culture swept over East Asia in the 1980s, nowadays other waves of popular culture such as Taiwan Wave (Tairyu), the Korean Wave (Hallyu), Hong Kong Wave, etc. are also spreading over East Asia. Among these, the Korean Wave is the most peculiar one.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Japan's popular culture gained momentum as the first wave in East Asia. Even before this period, it had already been rapidly and widely spreading over the region and beyond. Hong Kong and Taiwan also gained high popularity in the 1980s and 1990s, respectively. Since the late 1990s, Korean pop culture has become the major wave through the 2000s. Including the earlier starters, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Greater China could be the next wave generator. The four countries comprising Northeast Asia, including China, have steadily increased cultural exchanges and tourism among themselves. In particular, these cultural exchanges have been extended to Southeast Asia and other regions across the world.

Recently, research and discourse about East Asian cultural regionalism have been proliferating in the literature. Shim introduced the discourse of the role of the Korean Wave as a cultural hybridization facilitator in East Asia (Shim, 2006, 2011, Yum & Shim, 2016). In particular, Shim (2017) claims that the Korean Wave phenomenon has been offering an alternative to Western cultural imperialism across Southeast Asia. According to Shim, this was possible thanks to such factors as cultural proximity and appearances between Korean and Asian peoples. Korean pop culture has gradually spread over Southeast Asia and Korean cultural products contributed to the regional cultural hybridization through "complex cultural processes and practices", making people aware of their sociocultural conditions and their hidden potential.

Ryoo (2009) claims that the Korean wave is an indication of new global and local cultural transformations. "This phenomenon especially signifies a regionalization of transnational cultural flows as it entails Asian countries' increasing acceptance of cultural production and consumption from neighboring countries that share similar historical and cultural backgrounds, rather than from politically and economically powerful others".

Otmazgin is perhaps the most active contributor to the literature of cultural regionalism in the context of East Asia (Otmazgin, 2013, 2014, 2016). His view is summarized as follows:

- Urban middle class people in East Asian countries are the main consumers of popular cultural products.
- Producers of cultural products and the media in the region are increasing collaboration.
- The majority of the people in the region share similar cultural values
- Cultural assimilation, confluence and hybridization in popular culture have been increasing
- Cultural regionalism should be highlighted.

Hong & Chen (2017) have a broader and deeper view on cultural regionalism in East Asia than Otmazgin. They explored whether an integrated Asian popular culture that

emerges from the interactions between supply and consumption of cultural products, will eventually form a new East Asian cultural space. They claim that East Asia, based on its region-wide successful economic development and cultural interactions, will form a new transnational cultural space, sharing common values for the coming age. Interaction or circular reinforcement between regional economic integration and regional cultural integration is also emphasized. The essential view is that the hybridization of popular culture will deepen and intensify the development of the cultural integration in the region. In this process, the role of cultural entrepreneurs and learning are emphasized.

The influence of a pop culture wave is not confined to popular culture only. In fact, it encourages the consumption of related cultural and non-cultural products and services, such as tourism and so on. For example, a Korean daily newspaper, Choi (2017, December 1) reported the following: In Japan, the third largest cosmetics market in the world, the wind of K-Beauty blows strongly. In 2016 Japan imported 182.65 million USD of color and skincare cosmetics from Korea, the highest amount from Korea in Japanese history. In 2017, over a 10 percent increase was expected. A Japanese newspaper reported that this is the third Korean Wave invasion to Japan since the first K-Drama boom in 2003 and K-Pop boom by SNSD and Big Bang in 2010. These phenomena are not only for Japan, but for East Asia as a whole.

Of course, there are criticisms, worries and negative repercussions about the Korean Wave, just like the Japanese Wave before. Korean performers and producers are well aware of these, and are careful not to upset the sensitivities of local people. Especially, producers try to adjust content to the local situation and culture, by remaking a co-production with local producers and performers, and other kinds of collaboration. As a typical means of cultural hybridization, co-production in the popular culture has been increasing in East Asia. The authors Otmazgin & Ben-Ari (2013) report various co-production cases of films, dramas, pop songs, etc., in the region. Cultural entrepreneurs who combine aesthetic values with economic values are the core players in collaboration through interaction, networking and learning for market creation and expansion.

The fact that the popularity of the Korean Wave continues to increase implies that the positive effects far exceed the negative effects. In this paper we reemphasize that the phenomena happening in the popular culture in the region are not confined in the popular culture only. It represents the phenomena happening to the East Asian culture as a whole. For example, in tourism the similar phenomena are happening. Popular culture and tourism, for example, are reinforcing each other in the region.

The role of media and information and communication technology (ICT) is crucial for cultural hybridization. We may even say they are the most important facilitators. Through an interview survey of foreign students studying in Korea, Kim, Yun & Yoon (2009) found that "the Internet has become the hybridized space where, without synthesizing differences, the students could manage complex interactions of cultural norms and values and could carry out an uninhibited cultural navigation amid the distinct yet connected zones".

Cultural Tourism and Cultural Integration

Tourism is one of the most important industries in the 21st century. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010), over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. East Asia and the Pacific have been particularly fast in the world's emerging regions, with a rapid 6% average annual growth since 2000. This observation is also applicable to the more recent period.

The world tourism model has shifted from recreational tourism, to cultural tourism, to creative tourism, while they are not mutually exclusive. As the subset of recreational tourism, cultural tourism is concerned with a traveler's engagement with a country or region's culture -- specifically the lifestyle and history of the people, their art, architecture, religions, and other elements that shape their way of life.

Recreational tourism in general, and cultural tourism in particular, increases the understanding and interaction with other cultures. Often there are cultural conflicts between tourists and the local hosts and residents. However, in the Case of cultural tourists, they generally respect the destination's culture and the local people's way of living, so that cultural conflicts are minimized compared to recreational tourists. Furthermore, cultural tourism facilitates cultural exchanges and learning, which is favorable for cultural harmonization and even for cultural hybridization.

Empirical literature on the favorable effect of cultural tourism on cultural integration is scarce. We simply assume here that *ceteris paribus*, the positive effects on cultural exchange or acculturalization result in increasing trends of tourism. Statistically controlling the effects of other factors such as increasing income and political factors, however, is very difficult, if not impossible.

The degree of cultural hybridization by tourism between the three countries - Korea, Taiwan and Japan - is hard to measure statistically. During the period from 2009-2017, the trends of inbound tourists between these countries have shown steady increases as indicated in Table 1, although there were some temporal disruptions.

Table 1. Trends in Inbound Visitors by Country (Thousand person)

	Japan		Korea		Taiwan	
	Korean	Taiwanese	Japanese	Taiwanese	Japanese	Korean
2007	2,600.7	1,385.3	2,236.0	140.1	1,164.4	222.3
2008	2,382.4	1,390.2	2,378.1	320.2	1,084.9	247.8
2009	1,586.8	1,024.3	3,053.3	380.6	999.0	164.2
2010	2,439.8	1,268.3	3.023.0	406.4	1,078.5	213.8
2011	1,658.1	994.0	3,289.1	408.2	1,293.0	239.7
2012	2,042.8	1,465.8	3,518.8	548.2	1,432.3	259.1
2013	2,456.2	2,210.8	2,747.8	544.7	1,420.1	348.1
2014	2,755.3	2,829.8	2,280.4	643.7	1,633.6	525.0
2015	4,002.1	3,677.1	1,837.8	518.2	1,625.9	655.9
2016	5,090.3	4,167.5	2,297.9	833.5	1,894.2	881.2
2017	7,140.2	4,564.1	2,311.4	925.6	1,898.9	1,054.7

Sources: Arranged by the authors from the following original sources: Japan Tourism Agency, Tourism Whitepaper, Korea Tourism Organization, Taiwan Tourism Agency

The disruptions in 2008 to 2010 in Japan and Taiwan seem due to the global financial crisis and disruptions in 2011 and 2012 in Japan are due to the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 1, 2011 in Japan. The setback of tourists from Japan to Korea since 2013 seems due to diplomatic disputes between Korea and Japan's Abe Government, although there is a weak sign of recovery. The minor fall of the tourist number from Taiwan to Korea in 2013 and 2015 seem due to economic factors in Taiwan. The tourist numbers as outliers are shown with gray marks in the table.

Unfortunately, we cannot distinguish the number of cultural tourists out in the table. All that we can say is that, with the assumption of *ceteris paribus* and that the growth rate of cultural tourists is at least the same as or higher than the growth rate of the total tourists, we can say the trends in cultural tourists between these three countries have been increasing. This may imply cultural tourism has been affecting more positively than negatively in cultural interactions between tourists and locals.

Waves of popular culture have a positive influence on cultural tourism, and vice versa. According to a poll conducted by the Korea Tourism Organization in 2017 (Bernama, 2017, November 2)), more than half of 3,199 foreign tourists from China, Japan, the United States, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore to South Korea chose their destination for the influence of the Korean Wave. Allowing multiple choices, 55.6 percent of the tourists picked South Korea after watching TV dramas and films. Another 36.8 percent said they chose South Korea after watching travel programs on TV. The poll also said 28.4 percent made their decision based on postings on social networking services, while 26.5 percent chose South Korea by recommendations of their acquaintances. Introductions and reviews on travel-related internet sites influenced 24.4 percent of the visitors. After arriving in South Korea, 67.2 percent of people indulged in shopping. 52.1 percent enjoyed food-related activities, 51.3 percent visited cultural and historic sites, followed by nature-related activities at 36.4 percent, relaxation at 20.8 percent, festivals and performances at 11.7 percent and the Korean Wave-related activities at 11.5 percent. This poll vividly shows the influence of a popular culture on tourism. Not only in the Korean case, but

also many reports confirm the influence of cultural experience on tourism activities and the increasing popularity of cultural tourism (OECD, 2009).

There are also negative effects of leisure tourism in general, and cultural tourism in particular, on local cultures. The cultural products on the markets are often not authentic but disguised. Local cultural heritages may lose authenticity. However, genuine cultural tourists tend to enjoy authentic cultures and the positive effects far exceeding the negative effects in most cases. In East Asia, there have been many cultural conflicts. Especially the ratio of internal cultural conflicts have been much higher than that of other areas and the ratio of inter-state (i.e. international) cultural conflicts have been much lower than other areas in the world except for the Cold War period (Croissant & Trinn, 2009). This observation implies that in order for cultural tourism in East Asia to contribute to conflict resolution in the region, it should not trigger intra-stae cultural conflicts.

Necessity and Direction of East Asian Cultural Integration

We are concerned with the form of cultural integration going on in East Asia, whether it is a just cultural integration in the narrow sense, or multiculturalism or cultural hybridization. All three forms seem to be happening, but the axis is gradually moving toward the last, i.e., cultural hybridization. Several reason for this are pointed out:

- Cultural change is dynamic and hybridization is the most dynamic form.
- East Asia is a dynamic region, changing fast in many dimensions. Culture is one of them.
- Changes are interactive and reinforcing. Culture is not an exception.
- East Asia shares a wide range of similar cultural values already.
- Asian people in general and East Asian people in particular have the aspiration to be regarded as having a non-inferior culture, if not a superior one in the world.
- Cultural regionalism based on a cultural hybridization is interactively reinforcing other kinds of institutional regionalism.

The case of ASEAN renders many useful implications. ASEAN is the only comprehensive institution for regional integration in East Asia, although it covers only South East Asian nations and invites three East Asian countries - China, Japan and Korea - as observers in the name of ASEAN plus Three (APT). Its grand plan towards 2020 includes the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Plan, which shows the goal and reliability of ASEAN cultural regionalism as well as East Asian cultural regionalism (Vejjajiva, 2015).

What are the expected benefits of the cultural hybridization in the region? First of all, it can reduce culture-based conflicts and other kinds of conflicts as well in the region. It is a well-known fact that under one culture, less conflicts are happening than multi cultures because similar cultural values are shared among the constituency. Second, it will enhance the soft power of East Asia as a whole in the world. Third, it will also increase the economic benefits to the region.

If the social costs of cultural conflicts are outweighed by the benefits of cultural integration, as we pointed out in Section I, it is safely said that cultural regionalism in

the form of hybridization is a desirable course in East Asia. However, there are several conditions that need to be satisfied for the achievement. Four facilitators or conditions should be met for maximizing benefits of all nations and people involved in this process.

First, well-developed and easy-to-use cyber/social networks and media should be provided. Although we focused on the role of cultural wave and cultural tourism in this paper, in fact, we should also acknowledge that the role of media and information and communication technology (ICT) is crucial for cultural dissemination and hybridization. In fact, without these, popular cultural waves in East Asia could not have spread so fast in and beyond the region. Thus, their role should be strengthened. Some countries in the region need rapid improvement of ICT infrastructure.

Second, more free trade among the involved countries facilitates cultural integration. For example, FTAs include agreements on IPRs, which facilitate technological transfer and cultural transfer as well. The same observations are also applicable to tourism. Economic regionalism and cultural regionalism are interactively reinforcing each other.

Third, not only the growth of the middle class should be sustained, but also the income of people should be more equitable in each country. Cultural exchange or hybridization among only urban middle classes can be a cause of cultural conflicts within a country, in addition to economic conflicts. The spillover effects are effectively working when the income level among groups in a country is relatively equal.

Fourth, no serious political conflicts should discourage cultural interactions between involved countries. Political intervention can have positive influence as well as negative influence on the cultural hybridization and development of cultural regionalism. The recent THAAD-related conflicts between South Korea and China are a typical case for this.[2]

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[2] As an economic threat against South Korea's deployment of the US THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense), China blocked market access of major South Korean entertainment activities and business such as popular products and tourism. Some examples are as follows, but not limited to:

- Entertainment:
  Shortly after the THAAD announcement, several events featuring South Korean pop music and actors were suspended or cancelled without any explanation. CCTV banned the airring of popular South Korean TV shows. Other blockings followed suit.

- Consumer Products: In January 2017, China banned sales or imports of some South Korean products such as foods and entire shopping mall sales, especially the sale of products at Lotte Marts in China because Lotte provided the South Korean government with the base land for the deployment of THAAD. Korean car producers in China saw a drastic drop of car sales.

- Tourism: Package tours to South Korea were banned by the Chinese government, which resulted in a significant blow to Korea's tourism. For example, only 254,930 Chinese tourists visited, down from 758,534 in June 2016, a 66 percent drop compared to the previous year. (Meick & Salidjanova, 2017, based on news reports)

Fifth, no cultural imperialism is allowed to emerge. Today, culture is the main element of soft power of a country. Competition among cultures, especially popular cultures may be desirable, but domination of one culture or hegemony is dangerous and harmful to destroy harmonious cultural integration. As discussed by Hong & Chen (2017), considering different abilities and endowments among countries, it is possible that a leader country or a group of leading countries for the venture may emerge. Two contrasting approaches are conceivable: the dominant cultural wave approach and the strategic collaboration approach. In other words, because the distribution of cultural power among countries in the region is asymmetric and skewed, there is a possibility that a dominant player will emerge. If the dominant player would be tempted to exercise cultural imperialism, the nature and process of the new EA cultural regionalism would be problematic. Thus, the formation of strong strategic alliances among countries is the key success factor, although it may require a longer time.

Asia is known for a region where many conflicts occurred in the past. It is obvious that recently cultural regionalism has been solidifying in East Asia. Encouraged by this, we may consider the possibility of cultural integration in the region in the long run, if cultural imperialism is collectively avoided.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the possibility and conditions of cultural hybridization resulting from cultural interaction in East Asia. Culture is like a double-edged sword. It can be a source of cultural conflict, and it can be a driver of cultural harmonization. Since culture is the basis of social life, it can contribute not only to cultural conflict resolution, but also other kind of conflict resolutions. It can be observed that international cultural harmonization through hybridization can contribute to substantially reducing international conflicts.

Three cases of cultural harmonization (peaceful coexistence of different cultures) are conceivable: cultural integration in the narrow sense, multiculturalism, and cultural hybridization. Cultural integration in the narrow sense is the exchange of cultures without losing own cultural elements. Multiculturalism is the coexistence of multiple cultures within a society or a nation. Cultural hybridization is the mixing or mingling of different cultures. In the process of hybridization, some of one's own cultural elements are lost and new elements are obtained. Among these three, cultural hybridization is more effective for cultural harmonization.

However, there are several conditions to be satisfied for the achievement of harmonious cultural hybridization or integration in the broad sense. Based on extensive review and research, we propose five facilitators or conditions for maximizing the benefits of nations and people involved in the cultural integration in the broad sense:

1. Well-developed and easy-to-use cyber/social networks
2. Free trade among the involved countries
3. Sustained growth of the middle class and equitable income distribution
4. No serious political conflicts among or between countries
5. No cultural imperialism or pursuing hegemonic cultural power.

Even if these conditions are met, needless to say, cultural integration in East Asia or cultural regionalism in general, has a long way to go. We never know what would happen in the process, but the history of the last several decades indicates that an optimistic prospect of the future is more plausible.

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