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## **Public Support for Regional Integration in Northeast Asia: An Empirical Test of Affective and Utilitarian Models**

BYONG-KUEN JHEE

**ABSTRACT.** Using data from the Global View 2004 survey, this research examines the extent to which the idea of creating a regional community in Northeast Asia is supported by Korean citizens, and investigates the determinants of public support for this novel idea. It finds that both widely adopted affective and utilitarian models of public support for regional integration have critical limitations in accounting for the proposed regional integration in Northeast Asia. It shows that security-related utilitarian factors have the greatest explanatory power. Finally, it is suggested that enhancing cooperation with China and Japan in unraveling security problems is necessary to initiate regional integration, especially in Northeast Asia.

**Keywords:** • Regional integration • Northeast Asia • Regional community  
• National identity • Affective model • Utilitarian model

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Many have argued that the creation of a regional community like the European Union (hereafter the EU) in Northeast Asia, which would include China, Japan, and South Korea, is an interesting idea but is still far-fetched, due to the notable economic and political disparities in the region, coupled with the still-strong memories of Japanese colonial rule in the early 20th century.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, worthy of note that recently increasing economic interactions and cultural exchanges in the region have facilitated a number of academic discussions on the idea of creating a regional community.

To evaluate the validity of this idea, it is first necessary to determine how citizens of the region support this novel idea. There is no doubt that the opportunity structure of political elites in their initiation of regional reconciliation and integration, even under the communist rule of China, relies principally on the width and the strength of public support for it. Recent studies regarding the regional

cooperation and integration of Northeast Asian countries, however, have not clearly elucidated the demand side of the notion, despite the “wave of scholarly enthusiasm” in support of regional integration (Jones and Smith, 2007: 167).

This research is premised on an exploration of the extent to which the notion of creating a regional community in Northeast Asia is supported by Korean citizens, which may ultimately determine the feasibility of the proposition. Drawing on prior research into public support for regional integration in Europe and other regions, the present research also assesses the determinants of public support for the creation of a regional Northeast Asian community. More specifically, it analyzes the Global View 2004 survey of the East Asian Institute, and evaluates the veracity of two existing models which elucidate the origins of public support for regional integration: namely, the affective model and the utilitarian model.

The results of the study indicate that both widely adopted affective and utilitarian models of public support for regional integration harbor critical limitations in accounting for such Northeast Asian integration. Affective factors, i.e. cultural openness and educational attainment, as well as conventional utilitarian factors, i.e. ideologically leftist orientation, the weaker job positions of blue collar workers, and positive attitudes toward foreign workers, exert little impact on public support for the creation of a regional Northeast Asian community. It is, however, worthy of note that security-related utilitarian factors, including opposition to the military actions of the US toward North Korea, negative perceptions regarding US unilateralism, and the positive evaluation of the roles of China and Japan in the resolution of the nuclear weapons crisis, promote positive attitudes toward the creation of a regional community. On the basis of these findings, the author claims that the determinants of public support for regional integration are constrained by issue salience as well as region-specific political contexts.

This article is comprised of several sections. The next section summarizes and assesses the current debate over the feasibility of creating a regional Northeast Asian community. The discussion then assesses the prior models which explain public support for regional integration. Section 3 explains the research design, and section 4 reports the test results. Finally, in conclusion, the findings of this research are summarized and their implications are discussed.

## **1 The Current Debate over the Creation of a Northeast Asian Community<sup>2</sup>**

With regard to the issue of creating a regional Northeast Asian community, two contradicting views compete. These views can be characterized as optimistic and pessimistic. The optimistic view, which is drawn principally from liberal perspectives, has pointed out that the increasing economic and cultural exchanges occurring between the three countries in this region have formed a strong foundation for future regional integration. Some of them may argue that even the political integration of the region is achievable if socialist China accelerates political reforms in conjunction with rapid economic marketization.

On the other hand, similarly to the earlier pessimistic view of the regional integration of Europe, strong suspicions remain regarding the feasibility of the creation of a Northeast Asian community. The negative expectation regarding the forging of a future community in the region, which can overwhelm the optimistic view, arises principally from a variety of historical, economic, and political

conditions in each country (Jain, 2006; Lee, 2004; Munakata, 2006; Yang, 2005). For example, Jain (2006: 1) argues that “historical rivalries” and “great diversity – of historical and cultural background, levels of economic development and political systems – alongside weak politico-strategic ties” tend to hinder the development of a regional community.

It is, however, notable that neither the optimistic nor the pessimistic attitude toward the creation of a regional community clearly negates the notion that increasing economic interdependence promotes grounds for regional integration. As a corollary, many researchers have made a variety of suggestions to advance economic collaboration between these countries and strategies to initiate the process. For example, Suhun Lee (2006: 168), Chairman of the Presidential Committee on the Northeast Asian Cooperation Initiative of Roh Moo Hyun’s administration, proposed intensifying cooperation in the field of energy supply, in the manner of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which may exert a “spill-over effect.” Other propositions include reaching free trade agreements (FTAs) with China and Japan, creating the Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) and the so-called “Silk Road of Iron,” and promoting regional commodity and communication networks, as well as cultural exchanges.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the rapidly developing debate regarding the feasibility of the creation of a Northeast Asian community and a series of suggestions for translating this novel idea into reality, it appears that no systematic effort has been made to examine how citizens of the region perceive it. It appears certain, however, that any strategic move toward the creation of a regional community will be inevitably constrained by citizens’ evaluation of the idea (Putnam, 1988). At least in principle, politicians in democracies are made responsive to public demands via the electoral process. As Slomczynski et al. (2003: 504) have claimed, public support matters, as it shapes the “scope and pace” of regional integration. Furthermore, as Ehin (2001: 33) argues, even after the attainment of membership of a regional community “further integrative reforms ... depend on public endorsement.”

As Golob (2003: 361) argued, it is necessary for foreign policymakers to risk their legitimacy in going beyond the “barriers erected by historically held and sacred ideas of sovereignty, security, and national identity that make certain choices unavailable as ‘normal’ policy options.” If so, would political elites in Northeast Asian countries take risks that might threaten their legitimacy? The existing literature provides limited clues to understanding this puzzle, due to the limited efforts made thus far to identify public attitudes that constrain the choices regarding the creation of a regional community.<sup>4</sup>

## 2 Theories of Public Support for Regional Integration

Several strands of theoretical and empirical studies examining the determinants of public support for regional integration have been developed, in particular those predicated on the experience of European regional integration. Some have focused on affective support, which emphasizes the influence of cognitive mobilization, political values, and national identity (Cichowski, 2000; Deflem and Pampel, 1996; Inglehart, 1970a, 1970b; Janssen, 1991; McLaren, 2004; Risse et al., 1999; Seligson, 1999; Slomczynski et al., 2003), whereas others have focused on utilitarian support motivated by factors including the expected costs and benefits of integration, ideological positions, partisanship, the

vulnerability of social groups, and government performance (Ehin, 2001; Gabel 1998; Gabel and Whitten 1997; Mahler et al., 2000; Mennis and Sauvart 1975; Sanchez-Cuenca, 2000).<sup>5</sup>

Since Inglehart's (1970a) seminal work was published, subsequent studies have developed diverse models of public support for regional integration. For Inglehart, cognitive mobilization, which refers to "the increasingly wide distribution of the political skills necessary to cope with an extensive political community," is a crucial aspect of social mobilization. He assumes that "one must become aware of it [a political community] before one can develop a sense of commitment" (p. 47). His research has demonstrated that education, an indicator of cognitive capability, promotes public support for regional integration.

Inglehart also developed a model of political value orientation to elucidate the origins of public support for regional integration. He claims that citizens who focus on material values tend to be less interested in international affairs, including the issue of regional integration, than those with postmaterial values, and that they are also less likely to support regional integration. Subsequent studies, including Janssen (1991) and Gabel (1998), have evaluated the validity of Inglehart's political value hypothesis, but have failed to locate robust evidence to support it.

It should be noted that not only postmaterial values but also democratic and pro-capitalist values have become the focus of a great deal of attention from several scholars for their plausible impact on public support for regional integration, particularly in non-European countries. For example, Cichowski (2000) found that such transition-related political values as public attitudes toward democracy and a free-market economy have a robust impact, according to her analysis of surveys compiled in five post-communist countries: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia. Slomczynski et al. (2003) also presented similar empirical test results from an analysis of survey data from post-communist Poland compiled in 1998: pro-democratic and pro-capitalist values tend to promote public support for European integration. In a similar vein, Seligson (1999) has shown that "satisfaction with the functioning of democracy" has a robust positive impact on public support for Latin American economic integration.

National identity is another interesting factor which has gained much attention in the literature on regional integration. Deflem and Pampel (1996), for example, have attempted to examine whether national identity, which is defined as the "subjective representation of allegiance toward one's country," persists or decreases as "issues beyond national borders" increase in significance in European countries (p. 121). Their empirical test results, using data from surveys of 15 countries between 1982 and 1992, have shown that no substantial changes in public support for European unification have occurred, as a result of the persistent importance of national identity, regardless of the emerging postnational identity. Similarly, McLaren (2004) has attempted to examine whether the "threats that the European Union (EU) poses to long-established national identities" affect individual support for regional integration. She showed that "the fear of loss of national identity due to integration" bears no significant impact on public attitudes toward the EU. Hooghe and Marks (2005) compare the influences of economic calculus and communal identity on public support for European integration, and find that the latter has greater explanatory power.

Alternative explanations for the affective support models have focused on the impact of relatively short-term costs and the benefits to citizens attendant on regional integration. This instrumental approach operationalizes several indicators, including GDP growth, inflation, unemployment, trade benefits, and budgetary return at the national level, and personal economic assessment, partisan orientation, job types, and the evaluation of the incumbent government and the EU at the individual level, thus showing their significant impact (Ehin, 2001; Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993; Gabel, 1998; Gabel and Whitten, 1997; Mahler et al., 2000; Sanchez-Cuenca, 2000). They found that public support is profoundly related to the benefits from regional integration at both the national and individual levels.

Gabel (1998), for example, assesses the impact of education, postmaterial value priority, occupational skill, income, spatial proximity to the border region, partisan orientations, and positive attitudes toward the government. His empirical test results, which utilized Eurobarometer surveys from 1978 to 1992, indicate that utilitarian appraisal, partisan orientations, and support for the government tend to influence public support for regional integration, whereas cognitive mobilization and political value orientations do not. Gabel's (1998) most interesting finding was the existence of a significant disparity between original and later EU members in the "sources of variation in support": cognitive skills and postmaterial value orientations exert a positive impact on public support for regional integration in original member states, but a negative or zero impact in later member states. This result implies that elites have more chances to "manipulate public opinion" in later member states.

### 3 Research Design

#### *Hypotheses*

This research includes several hypotheses drawn from various regional integration theories. These hypotheses commonly attempt to examine the manner in which affective and utilitarian attributes of respondents affect public attitudes regarding the creation of a regional community. The hypotheses are grouped as follows: postmaterial value, cognitive mobilization, and utilitarian.

*Hypothesis 1: Citizens with a high level of cultural openness are more likely to be favorable to the creation of a regional community.*

*Hypothesis 2: Citizens with a high level of educational attainment are more likely to be favorable to the creation of a regional community.*

As Inglehart (1970a) argued, postmaterial values may promote both postnational identities and regional integration. Cultural openness is known as an indicator of postmaterial values. Many critics of the creation of a regional community in Northeast Asia have demonstrated that strong antagonisms and cultural differences constitute profound barriers. Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that those who are more culturally open may tend to favor the creation of a regional community.

As noted previously, the cognitive mobilization hypothesis suggests that an awareness of regional affairs is necessary, even if it is not sufficient, to raise public support for regional integration. Inglehart (1970a), however, also emphasized that educational attainment does not automatically promote regional integration. According to him, "the content of the messages" obtained from school and mass

communication matters. In Northeast Asian countries, educational programs are frequently criticized for their nationalist orientation. For example, public school programs in Korea have long been criticized for their nationalist approach, which excessively emphasizes China's long dominance of the Korean peninsula until the 19th century, and the humiliation under Japanese colonial rule during the early 20th century. In this context, therefore, it remains a matter of controversy as to whether a high level of education can promote positive perceptions of Koreans toward their neighboring countries and, ultimately, public support for the creation of a regional community.

*Hypothesis 3: Citizens on the ideologically left side are more likely to be unfavorable to the creation of a regional community.*

*Hypothesis 4: Blue collar workers and farmers are less likely to be favorable to the creation of a regional community.*

*Hypothesis 5: Those with a positive attitude toward foreign workers are more likely to support the creation of a regional community.*

*Hypothesis 6: Those who believe that Korea practices fair trade with China and Japan are more likely to support the creation of a regional community.*

By way of contrast with the hypotheses previously drawn from affective models, Hypothesis 3 to Hypothesis 6 are predicated on the established utilitarian models mentioned earlier regarding the origin of public support for the creation of a regional community. Hypothesis 3 assumes that politically left-wing citizens believe that the creation of a regional community represents international capitalist interests in exploiting more surplus value from poor countries.<sup>6</sup> In addition, for them the creation of a regional community facilitates international capital movement, exacerbates job insecurity, and ultimately subordinates the labor class. Therefore, politically leftist citizens are generally expected to be less amenable to the creation of a regional community.

Hypothesis 4 also follows the interest-based utilitarian approach. It has been demonstrated amply that blue collar workers and farmers are the most vulnerable groups in a society to the wave of regional integration. The expected negative impact on their job security may reduce favorable attitudes toward the creation of a regional community. Hypothesis 5 also posits that securing jobs is a critical concern of citizens. Therefore, those who hold favorable views toward foreign workers are also more likely to support the creation of a regional community in Northeast Asia.

The above hypotheses have suggested that the economic changes expected to be attendant on the creation of a regional community may also affect public attitudes toward regional integration. It is, however, worthy of mention that not only personal and egocentric but also sociotropic features of citizens may influence public attitudes toward the creation of a regional community. In other words, citizens of the region may be concerned about the effects of regional integration on the national economy, as well as personal economic gain or loss. Trade is an important and widely perceived indicator of national economic conditions. Therefore, the public's assessment of the trade relationship with China and Japan may influence their attitudes toward those countries as partners within a regional community. Hypothesis 6 claims that those who perceive China and Japan to be fair trade partners with Korea will tend also to support the creation of a regional community with those countries.



*Hypothesis 7: Citizens who oppose the unilateral military actions of the US are more likely to be favorable to the creation of a regional community.*

*Hypothesis 8: Citizens who perceive US unilateralism to be a latent threat are more likely to be favorable to the creation of a regional community.*

*Hypothesis 9: Citizens who believe that China and Japan have an important role in resolving the North Korea nuclear weapons crisis are more likely to be favorable to the creation of a regional community.*

It should be also noted that the creation of a regional community is expected to change not only the economic but also the security circumstances of a region. Therefore, the function of a regional community as an institutional tool for the augmentation of national or regional security may constitute an important source of political support for the citizens of the region. The North Korea nuclear weapons crisis, territorial disputes over Tokdo and the Diaoyu islands, and the increasing public demand for the resolution of such issues in Northeast Asia may overwhelm economic issues in determining public opinion regarding the creation of a community in this region.

As compared with the decreased security issues inherent in Europe, the increasing salience of the security issues of the Northeast Asian region and the consequential public need for regional cooperation in the resolution of regional security issues support the introduction of three additional hypotheses. Hypothesis 7 to Hypothesis 9 aim to examine how the security-related functions of a regional community influence public attitudes in Korea.

On the basis of these premises, Hypothesis 7 proposes that those who oppose the general military stance of the United States toward North Korea, which many feel could cause a second Korean War, are also more likely to support the creation of a regional community. It has been widely reported that the United States would, without South Korea's approval, not shy away from taking military action, including bombing Pyongyang, to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, since North Korea's attempt to develop nuclear weapons in the early 1990s. Within this political context, the citizens of Korea appear to believe that the unilateral military actions of the US severely threaten their national security. In a similar fashion, Hypothesis 8 claims that those who feel that US unilateralism is an important threat to national security in the future are also more likely to support the creation of a regional community. For them, multilateral cooperation with other countries through the establishment of a regional community is an effective preventive measure against US unilateralism.

It is also important to note that public support for the creation of a Northeast Asian regional community may arise not only from its value in countering US military intervention and unilateralism, but also from the expected positive role of other participants in the resolution of current security issues. Hypothesis 9, therefore, claims that Koreans' positive evaluation of the roles of China and Japan in the resolution of the North Korean nuclear weapons crisis increases the likelihood of public support for the creation of a regional community.

#### **4 Data and Research Design**

This research adopted the Global View 2004 survey compiled between July 5 and July 16 in 2004. The Global View project was a first ambitious attempt to assess



systematically the manner in which citizens of Northeast Asian countries perceive the idea of creating a regional community.<sup>7</sup>

### *Variables*

This research utilized as a dependent variable data regarding public attitudes toward the Northeast Asian regional community. The Global View 2004 survey asked respondents several questions associated with regional integration in Northeast Asia. Most of all, it asked respondents whether they believed that “South Korea, China, and Japan should take a similar path to the European Union” (see Appendix A). If a respondent preferred to take a path similar to that of EU regional integration, the dependent variable was coded as 1; it was otherwise coded as zero.

In order to assess public support for the creation of a regional community in Europe, a question from the Eurobarometer has been extensively adopted: “In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe?” (Gabel, 1998; Janssen, 1991). Some may argue that the measurement is problematic, due to the ambiguity inherent in a united Western Europe. It should, however, be noted that the development of a reliable measure of public support for an imagined regional community is quite difficult, due to its generally indeterminate form. To minimize such a problem, the Global View 2004 survey presented the example of the EU prior to inquiring about respondents’ attitudes toward the creation of a regional community. Unfortunately, however, this has apparently not obviated the issue of weak reliability, as respondents may not have sufficient information regarding the specific “path to the EU.” Furthermore, the wording of the measure may not allow us to compare the levels of public support for the creation of a regional community with other regions.

To evaluate the postmaterial value hypothesis, cultural openness was adopted as an independent variable. Cultural openness is a good indicator of postmaterial values and goes beyond national identity. This variable is expected to promote public support for the creation of a regionally integrated community. In order to evaluate the cognitive mobilization hypothesis, educational attainment was utilized. Those who graduated from university were coded as 1, and all others were coded as zero. Citizens who had graduated from university were expected to exert a positive impact on the dependent variable.

Five independent variables, including respondents’ self-placement regarding their ideological positions, job types (blue collar or farmers), job security, and Korea’s trade status with China and Japan, were utilized to assess the utilitarian hypotheses. Ideological positions (0~10: left = 0, right = 10) were expected to exert a positive impact on the dependent variable, whereas blue collar workers (= 1) and farmers (= 1), who are unsecured in a regional community, were expected to exert an opposing effect. Positive evaluations of Korea’s fair trade with China and Japan (1~3: 1 = unfair, 3 = very fair) and job security (= 1), measured with the rejection of expelling illegal foreign workers, were also expected to promote support for the creation of a regional community.

Respondents’ opposition to military actions by the United States toward North Korea without the approval of South Korea (= 1), the seriousness of possible threats from US unilateralism over the next ten years (1~3: 1 = not important, 3 = critical), and the evaluation of the roles of China and Japan in resolving the North Korea nuclear weapons crisis (1~8: 1 = not at all, 8 = critically important)

were used as independent variables. These national security-related variables were expected to exert a positive impact on the dependent variable. Finally, three control variables were also included: income (1~8), male (= 1), and age groups (below 40 = 1, between 40 and 49 = 2, above 50 = 3). Income was expected to exert a positive impact on the dependent variable because high-income earners may have a greater cognitive capability to understand foreign affairs and may feel less threatened by regional economic integration. Males were expected to exert a positive impact because males normally evidence higher levels of political interest, whereas age was expected to have a negative impact because the old are more attached to national identity than to postnational, regional identity. See Appendix A for further explanations regarding the operationalization of each variable.

### *Model Specification*

In each model, the respondents' support for the creation of a regional community was used as the dependent variable for the acquisition of estimates. As the dependent variable was dichotomous, the following logistic regression model was adopted:

$$U_i = \alpha + \text{Affective}_i \beta + \text{Utilitarian}_i \gamma + e_i$$

In the above equation,  $U_i$  is defined as a function of the affective and utilitarian attributes of a respondent or a future regional community,  $\alpha$  is an intercept,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  are the notations of the coefficients, and  $e_i$  is a notation for the error term. *Affective<sub>i</sub>* represents citizen  $i$ 's level of cultural openness and educational attainment. *Utilitarian<sub>i</sub>* represents self-placement of ideological position, four economic variables, i.e. job types (farmer, blue collar), job security, and the evaluation of Korea's trade status with China and Japan, and three national security-related variables, i.e. opposition to US military actions toward North Korea, the degree of possible threats stemming from US unilateralism, and the expected roles of China and Japan in the resolution of the North Korean nuclear weapons crisis. Three control variables – income, male gender, and age – were omitted from this equation.

## 5 Results

To what extent do Koreans support the creation of a regional community like the EU in their own region? According to the Global View 2004 survey, approximately 66 percent of Koreans supported this idea. Using the 1995 Eurobarometer, Sanchez-Cuenca (2000: 155) reported that only about 22 percent showed negative attitudes toward the speed of regional integration in 15 European countries. Using the 1996 wave of the Latinobarometer, Seligson (1999: 138) demonstrated that less than 60 percent of the citizens of 17 Latin American countries supported the notion of economic integration. However, it should be noted that those figures were obtained from diverse surveys with different questions, and thus they are hardly comparable. We can say only that Korea has a moderate level of public support for the creation of a regional community in Northeast Asia, which relies on the region-specific contexts under which the issue of regional integration can be discussed.

The discussion regarding regional integration in Northeast Asia has progressed under conditions very different from those pertaining in Europe. First, the creation

of a regional community in the region remains a novel idea. As Eichenberg and Dalton (1993: 509) have suggested, therefore, citizens may regard regional integration as a “remote object ... a vague part of ‘foreign policy’ that is less rooted in information and experience.” The novelty of the idea in this region may constrain information regarding the consequences of regional integration, and may ultimately reduce the positive responses of the public toward regional integration (Ehin, 2001: 33; Slomczynski et al., 2003: 507).

Second, the strong nationalist traditions of these Northeast Asian countries may produce limited public support for regional integration. As many have argued, the harsh experience of Japanese colonial rule in the past will not be readily forgotten in the two victimized Northeast Asian countries, China and Korea, and the existing antagonism toward Japan remains deeply embedded in Northeast Asian societies. In addition, the economic and political disparities among Northeast Asian countries and the consequent lack of regional identity may also serve to reduce public support.

What, then, determines Koreans’ positive attitudes toward a Northeast Asian regional community? Table 1 shows the impact of independent variables on the support for the creation of a regional community in East Asia. The test results failed to reject the null hypotheses of both the postmaterial value hypothesis and the cognitive mobilization hypothesis. Cultural openness, a measure of postmaterial value, exerted no statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. Furthermore, educational attainment also exerted no significant effects on the dependent variable.

Among six utilitarian variables, only the evaluation of Korean trade status with China and Japan had a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. Those who viewed trade relations with the two neighboring countries in a positive way were more likely to support the creation of a regional community. Other variables, however, showed no notable associations with public support for the creation of a regional community. Ideology exerted no statistically significant

TABLE 1. *Determinants of the Creation of Regional Community in Northeast Asia*

Variables	Public support
Cultural openness	0.16 (0.15)
Education	0.15 (0.17)
Ideology	-0.07 (0.04)
Agriculture <sup>a</sup>	<b>2.12</b> (0.75)**
Blue collar	-0.12 (0.20)
Job security (attitudes toward foreign workers)	0.13 (0.15)
Fairness of trade with China and Japan	<b>0.51</b> (0.08)**
Income	0.04 (0.06)
Age	0.11 (0.11)
Male	-0.21 (0.15)
Constant	-0.64 (0.49)
Observations	990

*Notes:* Standard errors in parentheses.

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%.

<sup>a</sup> agriculture with forestry and fisheries.

*Source:* Global View 2004.

impact on the dependent variable. Furthermore, the variable exerted an effect in the opposite direction from that expected. Blue collar workers, job security, and income exerted no statistically significant impacts on the dependent variable.<sup>8</sup>

The test result for farmers was counterintuitive. Farmers were expected to be less likely to support regional integration owing to their weaker position as compared with other social groups in the era of regional integration. However, the test results indicated that farmers were more likely to support the creation of a regional community. Farmers in Korea may not perceive the creation of a Northeast Asian community as a plausible threat to their economic activities, but may regard it as an ideal type of regional community. Finally, three control variables, i.e. income, male gender, and age, exerted no statistically significant effects on the dependent variable.

These findings indicated that existing models that emphasize various affective and utilitarian factors have critical limitations in accounting for public support for regional Northeast Asian integration. The widely adopted affective or utilitarian variables exerted no consistently significant impact on the dependent variable. The nil impact of those variables was presumed to be reflective of the immaturity and short-lived nature of the discourse regarding the creation of a regional community in Northeast Asia. Public support for regional integration in the region is hardly driven by the conventionally adopted affective and utilitarian factors. The positive impact of farming as a vocation also showed that Koreans do not fit into the existing models that have explained public attitudes toward the creation of a regional community. Farmers in Korea remain naive regarding the issue of regional integration.

Table 2 reports the test results obtained using the national security-related variables: respondents' opposition to US military action without South Korea's approval, expected threats from US unilateralism, and the roles of China and Japan in the resolution of the nuclear weapons crisis. The test results for the variables employed in Table 2 were not substantially different from the findings reported in Table 1. Being farmers and the positive evaluation of fair trade status with China and Japan exerted positive effects on the likelihood of supporting the creation of a regional community. Other variables, such as cultural openness, educational attainment, ideology, blue collar, job security, income, age groups, and male gender, had no statistically significant effects on the dependent variable.<sup>9</sup>

It is, however, worthy of mention that national security-related variables exerted statistically significant effects on the dependent variable. Those who oppose military action by the United States against North Korea were more likely to support the creation of a regional community. Those who believe that US unilateralism may become a critical threat were also more likely to support the creation of a regional community in Northeast Asia, as were those who perceive that China and Japan are taking important roles in the resolution of North Korean nuclear issues.

These results appear to reflect changing security circumstances in the region in the post-Cold War period, most notably the declining reliance of South Korea on the United States (Wu, 2004; Ye, 2008). The Asian financial crisis of 1997 and the Six Party Talks have facilitated multilateral security cooperation in the region. Declining bilateralism has facilitated the convening of a variety of security-related institutions, including ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Committee on Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which fills the "organization gap" in Northeast Asia (Calder and Ye, 2004; Chung, 2000).

TABLE 2. *Determinants of the Creation of Regional Community in Northeast Asia*

Variables	Public support
Cultural openness	0.06 (0.15)
Education	0.06 (0.18)
Ideology	-0.06 (0.04)
Agriculture <sup>a</sup>	<b>2.07</b> (0.75)**
Blue collar	-0.20 (0.21)
Job security (attitudes toward foreign workers)	0.16 (0.16)
Fairness of trade with China and Japan	<b>0.51</b> (0.09)**
Income	0.02 (0.06)
Age	0.09 (0.11)
Male	-0.19 (0.15)
Military actions of the US to North Korea (NK) without Korea's approval	<b>0.55</b> (0.19)**
Threats from unilateralism of the US	<b>0.41</b> (0.12)**
Roles in resolving NK's nuclear weapons crisis (China and Japan)	<b>0.26</b> (0.07)**
Constant	<b>-3.91</b> (0.75)**
Observations	990

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses.

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%.

<sup>a</sup> agriculture with forestry and fisheries.

Source: Global View 2004.

As a result, the United States has become a reluctant possible member of the future Northeast Asian community. According to the Global View 2004 survey, approximately 68 percent of respondents replied that they (strongly) favored the exclusion of the United States from the possible regional community. The weak support for US participation in the regional community appears to correspond to President Roh Moo Hyun's efforts to establish an independent diplomatic position with the United States during his term.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

This research has shown, first, that the creation of a regional community in Northeast Asia is supported by Koreans to a moderate extent. The immaturity of the idea and the presence of profound nationalism may explain the limited level of public support. Secondly, this research has shown that two affective variables, i.e. cultural openness and educational attainment, and the majority of utilitarian variables, i.e. ideology, job types, and job security, exert no statistically significant impact on public support for the creation of a regional community. Only sociotropic evaluations of the fairness of trade with China and Japan exert a significant positive impact on public support for the creation of a regional community. Thirdly, and most interestingly, national security-related utilitarian variables, i.e. opposition to US military actions toward North Korea, the degree of the expected threat from US unilateralism, and the evaluation of the roles of China and Japan in the resolution of the nuclear weapons crisis, consistently promote public support for the creation of a regional community.

First, these findings theoretically verify the critical limitations of the existing models, which are based principally on European experiences, in accounting for the origins of public support for the creation of a Northeast Asian regional community. The determinants of public support for regional integration vary across nations over time. In Korea, which is often referred to as the last front of the Cold War, the continuing security issues associated with pacifying North Korea's attempts to generate nuclear weapons and regional military competition appear to overwhelm the impacts of affective and economic issues on public attitudes toward the creation of a regional community. A regional community is an instrument for regional collective security rather than economic prosperity for Koreans. For them, the resolution of current security issues may be significantly more sensitive and valuable than other goals, including furthering the economic development they have already achieved over the past few decades.

Second, the Northeast Asian community is a multilateral security regime with neighboring countries, which is generally not amenable to the traditional US foreign policy which has focused expressly on bilateral relationships with South Korea and Japan. The utilitarian values of a regional community in the promotion of collective security systems and multilateral cooperation most robustly explain the variances in public support for the creation of a Northeast Asian community.

Third, the dominant influence of security issues on public support for the creation of a regional community in Korea implies that the augmentation of cooperation with China and Japan in the unraveling security problems is necessary for the initiation of integration within the region.<sup>11</sup> The active role played by China in the Six Party Talks as a mediator in resolving the nuclear weapons crisis, which promoted positive public attitudes among Koreans toward China, provides a good example of how regional cooperation in dealing with security issues is important to raise support for regional integration, particularly in Northeast Asia. In that sense, the exclusive reliance on the promotion of transnational economic or cultural activities may work against the creation of a Northeast Asian regional community.

APPENDIX A. *Selected Questionnaire of Global View 2004*

Variables	Questionnaire	Coding
Creation of a regional community	Many European countries have become "borderless" and integrated into a regional community, the European Union. Do you think East Asian countries including South Korea, China, and Japan should take a similar path?	No = 0, Yes = 1
Cultural openness	In the era of globalization, South Korea should be open to foreign culture.	Disagree = 0, Agree = 1
Fair trade*	In general do you think that South Korea practices fair trade or unfair trade with the following countries (China and Japan)?	Unfair trade = 0, Fair trade = 1
Job security	All illegal foreign workers should be expelled from South Korea.	Disagree = 0, Agree = 1

(Appendix A Continued)

*(Appendix A continued)*

Variables	Questionnaire	Coding
US military actions	Suppose North Korea continues to develop nuclear weapons. Please select whether you would support or oppose the United States using military force to destroy North Korea's nuclear weapons capability under each of the following circumstances: UN approves, allies approve, SK opposes.	Support = 0, Oppose = 1
US unilateralism	I am going to read you a list of possible threats to the vital interest of South Korea in the next 10 years: US unilateralism.	Not important = 1, Important but not critical = 2, Critically important = 3
Security role*	How would you evaluate the role of each of the following countries (China and Japan) in resolving the North Korean nuclear weapons crisis?	Not important at all = 1, Important somewhat = 2, Important = 3, Critically important = 4

*Note:* \* Respective scores of fair trade with China and Japan are combined to create an index of "fair trade" (0~2). The same calculation method is adopted to create the index of "security role" (0~8).

## Notes

1. Geographically, Northeast Asia includes China, Japan, the two Koreas, and Mongolia (Kim, 2005: 112). Mongolia is not addressed in this study, owing to its limited economic and political role in the debate over regional integration in the region.
2. It is difficult to specify the scope and the shape of an imagined regional community. However, the current debate over the regional community in Northeast Asia commonly assumes that it might take the form of an EU-like polity in which member states, including China, Japan, and Korea, and possibly Mongolia, would achieve highly integrated economic and political systems. The Northeast Asian community might differ from a regional security regime that would possibly allow more states, such as the United States and Russia, to join. This research follows such a conventional conceptualization of a regional community.
3. In a similar vein, Shioya (2006: 195) suggests multilevel cooperation, including the areas of the environment, transportation and communication (highways, railroads, the Korea–Japan tunnel), and energy (natural gas pipelines). According to him, individual economic development may not guarantee "sustainable development" in Northeast Asian countries.
4. It should, however, be noted that survey-based studies on public support do not directly cover the "elite–mass linkage" (Inglehart, 1970b: 764).
5. Mahler et al.'s (2000) terminology to differentiate between the affective and utilitarian approaches is borrowed here. They claim that the affective approach relies on "feelings of generalized loyalty ... and sympathy for the idea of European integration," whereas the utilitarian approach is predicated on a "calculation of tangible benefits derived from integration."
6. Here, the self-placement of ideological position is classified as a utilitarian factor whose influence on public support is predicated on a rational expectation of the costs and benefits from the creation of a regional community (Mahler et al., 2000: 431).



7. The specific survey methods of the Global View 2004 are as follows: "A multi-stage quota sampling strategy was employed. In the first stage, South Korea was divided into 15 regions and a sample size was assigned to each region based on population size. In the next stage, respondents were chosen to correspond with the known age and gender distribution within each region" (ICPSR 4135 codebook, iv).
8. The significant influence of sociotropic support for the idea of creating a regional community showed that Koreans have difficulty in identifying the effect of regional integration on their individual lives, which promotes egocentric support.
9. No multicollinearity problem has been detected in the models of Tables 1 and 2. VIF (variance inflation factor) is less than 1.33, whereas Tolerance is greater than 0.71.
10. Using the Ordinal Logistic Regression, it is examined whether those variables included in Table 2 affect their attitudes toward the exclusive creation of a regional community without the US (not reported here). The test results show that those who graduated from university, those who place their ideological position on the "left" side, and those who oppose US unilateralism are more likely to support the exclusive idea.
11. This does not mean that political leaders in Korea should give priority to the security issue. Rather, it asserts that taking a comprehensive approach to the creation of a regional community is necessary, but the weight of each issue emerging in the process of regional integration is to be assigned on the basis of the particular contexts of a given region.

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