Northeast Asia’s Stunted Regionalism

Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization

This book paints a comprehensive picture of the pursuit of regionalism across Northeast Asia in the fifteen years following the cold war. In each of six periods, it identifies the main dynamic of regionalism and the problems that slowed regionalism’s advance. It examines the evolving strategies of four countries – China, Japan, South Korea, and Russia – emphasizing the importance of bilateral relations while keeping in mind the globalizing U.S. role. By focusing on debates in each country, most of which have been little covered in English, the book demonstrates how suspicious neighbors and clashing strategies have undermined aspirations for regionalism. While false starts keep giving way to fresh hopes, only by learning the lessons of this transitional era will regionalism be placed on a stable footing. These include embracing globalization more fully while using regionalism for balance, working together in integrating North Korea while recognizing South Korea’s pivotal role, compromising to allow China and Japan to share leadership, and focusing on a long-term vision of Northeast Asia.

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