

Regional Identities and Meso-Mega Area Dynamics in Slavic Eurasia: Focused on Eastern Europe

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The mega-area of the northern half of Eurasia, the former Soviet Union and the East European regions, has changed its face dramatically since the collapse of the communist regimes. Four states in the area, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and GDR, disappeared, and altogether 27 states came into existence. The number would be thirty or more, when including Transnistria (Pridniestr), Abkhazia, Kosovo, and so on, which are not yet recognized as independent states. Following these changes, post-communist regional cognitions are almost chaotic.¹ Research institutes have not yet created any common naming for the area and its regions.² Rather, they have changed the definitions from time to time; initially there was a trend to divide the area into regions to be analyzed separately,³ and recently re-unification of the divided units with a new name, Eurasia, is the fashion. What are the connotations of Eurasia? The answers are again chaotic, because, for one thing, Eurasia greatly deviates from the common understanding, that is, Asia and Europe as the whole continent. Even if we understood it as an academic jargon – namely, Eurasia relates only to the post-communist countries – its coverage is quite different among users. A symbolic example is *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, an academic journal, whose former names were *Post-soviet Geography* till 2002 and *Soviet Geography* till 1992. This journal now ‘features ... geographic and economic issues in the republics of the former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, and the socialist countries in Asia’. The other end of the usage-scale, that is, the narrowest definition of Eurasia, may be the ‘Russian and Eurasian Studies Centre’ at St Antony’s College, the University of Oxford, formerly the Russian and East European Centre till July 2003. The center says in its circulation letter, ‘After covering Eastern Europe for more than a decade of post-communist transition, we decided that the region’s “migration” to Europe was so advanced that it should also migrate within the College and come under the European Studies Centre. We shall continue to concentrate on Russia and move to develop our research on Ukraine, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The new name of the Centre was chosen to convey this geographical coverage, not

¹ ‘... regional studies are challenged by a lack of precise definition as thematic strive to overcome geography. What are the components of a region or regional studies? ... Who are we?’: quoted from Maria Carlson, ‘Old Battles, New Challenges’, *Newsnet: News of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies*, 43:5 (2003), p. 2.

² The cover story of the first issue of *Europe-Asia Studies*, ‘From Soviet Studies to Europe-Asia Studies’ reflects well the difficulty how to name the post-communist domains meaningfully; *Europe-Asia Studies*, 45:1 (1993), pp. 3–6; George J. Damko and Matthew J. Sagars, ‘Post-Soviet Geography’, *Post-Soviet Geography*, 33:1 (1992), pp. 1–3.

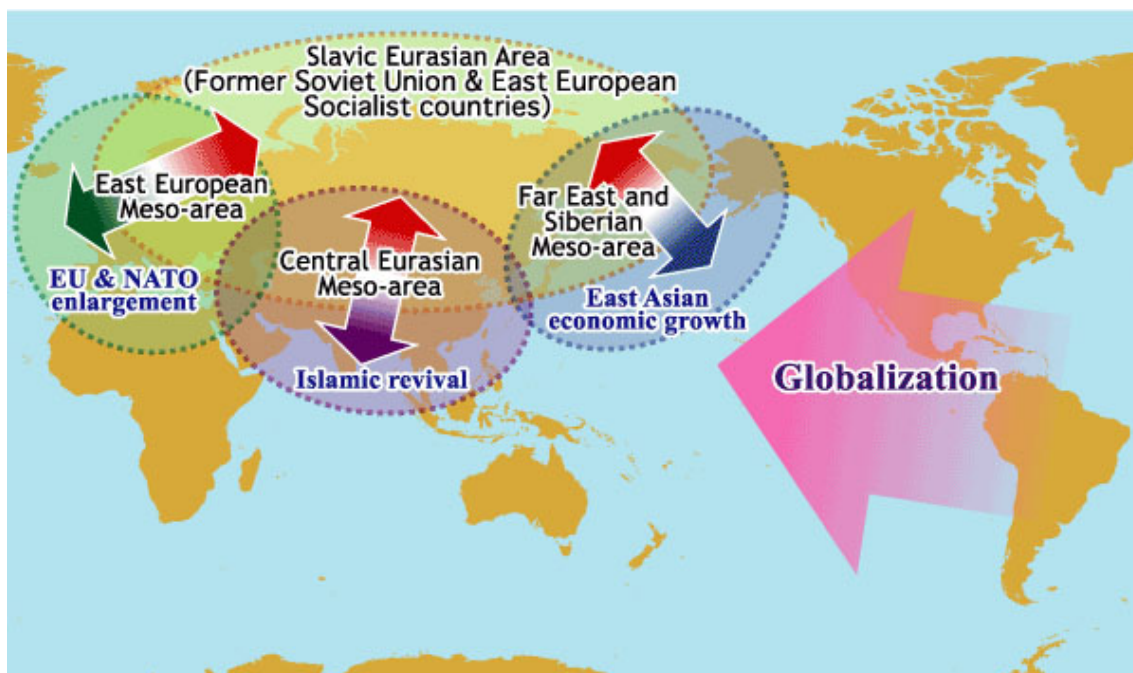
³ Kimitaka Matsuzato, *Chuikiken no gainen nitsuite* [On the Concept of Meso-areas], <http://src-home.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/research-e.html>.

in any way to signal “Eurasianist” leanings!

Compared with these flexible and ‘geographical’ ways of regional perceptions of the mega-area, the ‘disciplinary’ naming of the area seems rather chronological and stiff. Specifically, the new nations and states in the area, though more than ten years have passed since the systemic changes happened, are still called ‘transition’ economies or ‘post-communist’ countries. Though this naming does not help us to perceive and describe the diversity within the area, it clearly suggests the common heritage of the area from the communist past. Indeed, for many cases we could not draw any closer pictures of the emerging political and economic institutions and the behaviors or value systems in the area without taking into consideration the communist legacies.⁴ Besides, the peoples in the area still share an identity based on common experiences in the communist era. This is the reason why the peoples still use ‘we’ when identifying themselves with the former communist camp as a whole even nowadays. We call this bond with the common past of the mega-area as the **institutional identity**. So the institutional identity is, more or less, based on reality. In this context, the terms, ‘transition’ and ‘post-communist’, are still useful. However, the ‘disciplinary’ naming is not sufficient for us, because the diversity within the mega-area has developed more and more clearly. Thus we have to consider not only ‘the region’s “migration”’ but also the regions’ ‘migration’, or **emerging meso-areas** in our terminology. The ‘disciplinary’ naming can suggest only a set of possibilities in post-communist development; that is, market economy and parliamentary democracy. In reality, various regions or sub-regions came into existence in the mega area, such as Central Asia, Caucasia, South Eastern Europe, Central Eastern Europe, Russian Far East, Eastern and Western Siberia. So far, we have no systematic frames how to categorize and analyze these regions and Eurasia.⁵ Instead, the borders of the former states and republics still function for grouping the regions, such as the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the Baltic and CIS countries, or East Central Europe and the Balkans.

⁴ See, for example, Kimitaka Matsuzato, ‘From Communist Boss Politics to Post-Communist Casiquismo: the Meso-elite and Meso-governments in Post-Communist Countries’, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 34 (2001), pp. 175–201, and his other related papers; James Toole, ‘Straddling the East-West divide; Party organization and communist legacies in East Central Europe’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 55:1 (2003); Osamu Ieda, ed., *Transformation and Diversification of Rural Societies in Eastern Europe and Russia* (Sapporo, 2002); Osamu Ieda, ed., *The New Structure of the Rural Economy in Post-Communist Countries* (Sapporo, 2001); Osamu Ieda, ed., *The Emerging Local Governments in Eastern Europe and Russia, Historical and Post-Communist Developments* (Hiroshima, 2000).

⁵ Katharine Verdery’s ‘regionalization’ likely suggests a trend of regions’ migration. See her ‘Post-Soviet Area Studies?’, *Newsnet: News of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies* 43:5 (October 2003), pp. 7–8.



The purpose of this paper is to create concretely a new methodological terminology to analyze the emerging regions, or meso-areas; changing regions both in regional perceptions and in political and economic institutions. Our main object to be interpreted by the new terminology is the post-communist meso-areas emerging in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, or the **Slavic Eurasian Mega-area** in our geographical definition. The mega-area is a changing unit, whose regions have shared the Soviet type of political and economic institutions, and an identity as well in its active and passive senses. The mega-area is, though the communist regime collapsed, still a unit combining meso-areas on the basis of institutional identity, and it likely remains a unit, though it may be looser and looser in the future. At the same time, we aim to review the current regional divisions based on the state borders from a new perspective of meso-areas. We aim also to temper the new terminology so that the terminology of meso- and mega-areas would help us to understand better any areas and regions in the world which are changing their identities under regional or global integration.⁶

In this paper, firstly, we will define the key concept, meso-areas, by regional integration, institutional identity, self-identity, and external identity. Then, in the second half of the paper, we try to generalize the notions of meso- and mega-area. The notions were initially invented in order to understand systematically the changing and reorganized Slavic Eurasia, but, supposing that the notions could be useful beyond the area, we formulate the dynamics of meso- and mega-areas in a general setting. Finally, synthesizing the notions, we

⁶ See Mie Ooba, 'Kyokai-kokka to tiiki no jiku ron [Border States and Spatial Definition of Areas]', *Leviathan* 26 (2000), pp. 99-131. This essay tries to conceptualize the changing identities of some countries (Japan and Australia) under the pressures of regional-global integration in the Asian-Pacific area.

find that they could de- and re-construct the modern unilateral perspectives of the world regions.

Meso- and Mega-Areas in Slavic Eurasia

Institutional Identity and Regional Dis- and Re-integration

A meso-area is a changing part of a mega-area in its regional perceptions and institutions. This change happens when the mega-area diminishes its centripetal forces and/or is challenged by an external momentum, such as an economic-political integration by a neighboring region, a cultural influence, an economic expansion, or an impact of globalization. A meso-area is, therefore, a product of the relatively weakening mega-area. At the same time, it premises that the mega-area still sustains the centripetal force sufficiently enough to keep the meso-areas under its visible or invisible hands. In other words, meso-areas stand on the balance between the centripetal force of the mega-area and the external momentum.

The centripetal force on a meso-area is embodied by factors such as political and economic institutions, experiences, pattern of behaviors, and ecosystems. These are the **institutional identity of the meso-area**, which is shared by the other meso-areas in the same mega-area. We can call this identity as *Sein*. In contrast to this, a common external momentum functions as *Sollen* in a meso-area. For example, in the case of the relations between the East European meso-area and Western Europe, the EU norms, *Acquis Communautaire*, are *Sollen* for the candidate countries to accept and to implement in order to be members of the EU. The set of market economy and parliamentary democracy is also a norm, but is not a specific *Sollen* to EU membership. It is a general *Sollen* in the global integration.

The East European Meso-area, although mentioned often here and in the following as an example, is not regarded as typical. It is rather a unique case, where dis- and re-integration is carried very systematically and comprehensively. The reason why the region is taken for our examples is that it would clearly show us an intensive and condensed course of meso-area formation. The European integration, additionally, seems very social, compared to other dis- and re-integrations in Slavic Eurasia, namely, the East Asian integration toward the Siberia and Russian Far-East Meso-area is restricted to the economy, and as for Central Eurasia (Central Asia, Caucasia, and a part of the southern Russian Federation), the external momenta are individual and multiple, for example, Islamic, South Asian, and Chinese factors are mixed in this meso-area. Other meso-areas may be supposed according to the meso-area formulation presented later in this paper.

A meso-area is a field where the momenta of the two different dimensions, *Sein* and *Sollen* meet and interact with each other, and this meeting and interacting provides dynamism to the meso-area. Due to the dynamism, the meso-area's spatial borders are variable. For instance, again the East European Meso-area under the integration pressure of Western Europe is the case. The eight countries – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic,

Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia – will have full membership of the EU in May 2004. Then the second candidate group consisting of Romania and Bulgaria may become member countries in the near or medium future, and potentially Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia-Montenegro, and even Ukraine, Belarus⁷ and Moldova⁸ can be candidates of EU membership in the distant future. Moreover, we have no definite reasons to eliminate possibilities for Caucasian countries to enter the EU in the more distant future, though Russia will less likely realize its membership of the EU. In any case, the essential point here is that the reach of EU integration pressure and the people's will for EU membership – a new regional self-identity as Sollen – is changeable and flexible. Actually the pressure and the self-identity are interactive. As a consequence, the East European Meso-area is elastic enough to change its borders, and thus the meso-area is not necessarily identical to the current candidate countries for EU membership. A meso-area is applicable for this kind of flexible unit that may vary its shape in accordance with the changing identities. Sollen is a will of human beings, without which no new regional identities could be evoked, and is reflected in self- and external regional identities. Therefore, meso-areas inseparably relate to cognition of the peoples in the concerned regions.

Regional Self-Cognition

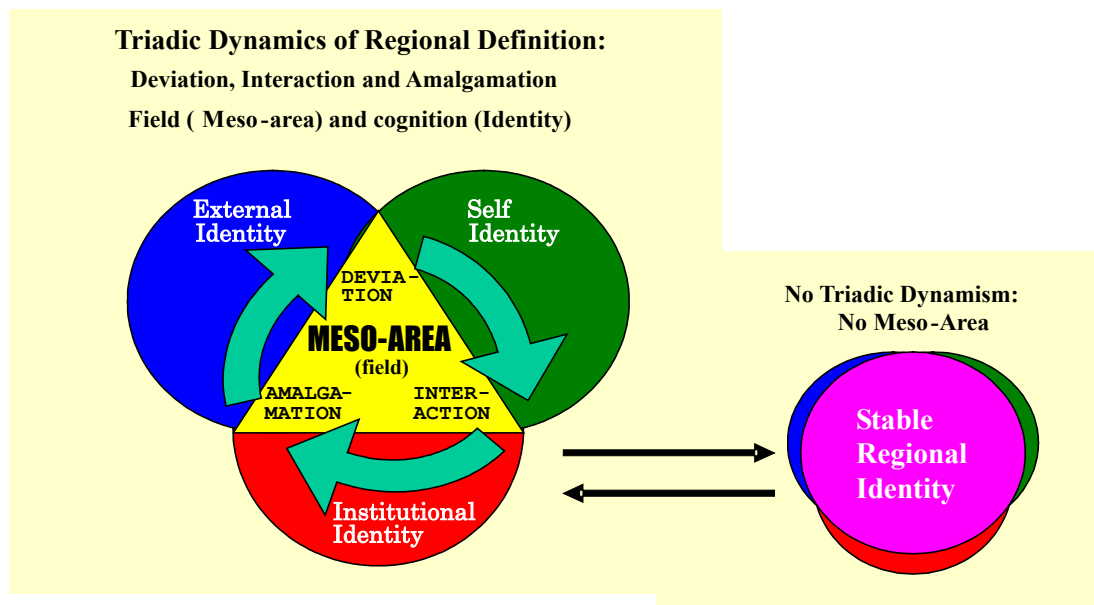
As seen above, meso-areas are a regional notion to be defined substantially (that is, institutional identities) on the one hand, and also a perceptual notion to be identified by the peoples in the related regions, especially including the neighboring peoples (that is, perceptual identities). Therefore, essential for a meso-area is how the people recognize their own region firstly (self-identity), then, secondly, how its external or neighboring regions recognize it (external identity).⁹ The peoples in Eastern Europe, for example, changed their regional self-perception from 'Eastern Europe' to

⁷ See Uladzimer Rouda, 'The Reserves of the Policy of Soviet Populism in Modern Belarus', presented at the international symposium 'Emerging Meso-areas in the Former Socialist Countries: Histories Revived or Improvised?' held from 28–31 January 2004 at SRC, Hokkaido University. This Belarusian author suggests EU as 'the third way for a more suitable' alternative than the union with Russia.

⁸ See S. White and I. McAllister, 'Moldova and the Politics of Meso-Areas', in Kimitaka Matsuzato, ed., *Emerging Meso-areas in the Former Socialist Countries: Histories Revived or Improvised?*, Slavic Eurasian Studies No. 7 (SRC, Hokkaido University, 2005), pp. 93–112.

⁹ Asian studies, especially Southeast Asian Studies in Japan have had many surveys and theoretical essays on regional identities from the perspective of cognition, including regional self-cognitions; for example, Toru Yano, ed., *Tonan Azia gaku no shuho* [*Methodology of Southeast Asian Studies*], Series of Southeast Asian Studies, 1 (Tokyo, 1990), including Toru Yano, 'Chiikizo wo motomete: soto bunmei to uchi sekai [Quest for New Images of Areas: External Civilization and Internal World]', pp. 1–30; Takeshi Hamashita and Noboru Karashima, eds., *Tiikishi toha nanika* [*What Is Regional History*] (Tokyo, 1997), including the editors, "'Chiiki no sekaishi" no shiten to houhou [Perspectives and Methodology for the "World History of Regions"]', and Takeshi Hamashita, 'Rekishu kenkyu to chiiki kenkyu [Historical Studies and Area Studies]'. Nevertheless, few works have been done, relating the interactions among various perceptions on regional identities.

'Central Europe' at the beginning of the systemic changes.¹⁰ Their 'Central Europe' is not one which really existed in history, such as the Mitteleuropa of Nazi Germany in the Inter-war period or the Habsburg Empire before WWI. The post-communist Central Europe was, first of all, a statement that they rejected 'Eastern Europe' as it had been inseparable from the socialist experience. Instead, the people wanted to be Europeans, or West Europeans. 'Return to Europe' was their pronouncement at that time. However, the new self-cognition, 'Central', implied another clear self-understanding, that is, that they were not yet full members of Europe due to the institutional identity. Thus the Central European identity reflected their perceptual location, which was neither Eastern nor Western; precisely speaking, no more Eastern, but not yet Western.¹¹ 'Central Europe' is typically a meso-area self-identity, constructed by the relations between the past and current reality (institutional identities) and the future belonging to be realized (perceptual identities).



'Central European identity', replacing the former identity of Eastern Europe in the initial stage of the post-communist era, was widely accepted among the peoples in Eastern Europe and in some parts of the former Soviet Union as well. However, its substantial uniformity became very suspicious in the following stages of post-communist development, because the region began to experience different courses inside. For instance, ways of nation-building,

¹⁰ See Timothy G. Ash, 'Does Central Europe Exist?', and other essays in *The Use of Adversity, Essays on the Fate of Central Europe* (New York, 1990), pp. 179-213.

¹¹ Gusztáv Molnár, 'The Geopolitics of EU-Enlargement', *Foreign Policy Review* 1 (2002), pp. 39-45.

manners of response to the systemic changes, membership of European integration such as NATO and EU were different from each other's. A considerable change could happen in the political and economic institutions. As a result, Central European identity was challenged both internally and externally. Consequently, divided perceptions began to shape according to the institutional realities; for example, 'Central East European Countries (CEECs)' related to those countries which have adjusted themselves in a *good* student manner for adaptation of the EU norms. Some other countries, however, which were regarded as *problematic* students in their Europeanization or EU-nization, were labeled as South East Europeans – a sophisticated name for the Balkans – or under-developed reformist countries – those CIS countries whose systemic transformation was going on but very slowly or stagnantly, such as Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova.¹² Central Europe, after all, became less useful as the common name for the regional identity of 'No more Eastern but not yet Western'.

The post-communist East European Meso-area identified itself as 'Central Europe' at the initial stage of the post-communist developments, then given various sorts of self- or external naming in accordance with the changing perceptions, has fluctuated its geographical coverage between the two ends: Western Europe, the *Sollen*, and Eastern Europe, the *Sein*. Floating perception is a basic feature for meso-area identities, but 'No more Eastern but not yet Western' remains as the common regional identity for the East European Meso-area. Other meso-areas share a floating type of regional identity between their specific *Sollen* and the common *Sein* of the mega-area. With this common ambivalent consciousness, the peoples throughout the mega-area still identify themselves collectively as 'we'.

A self-identity of a meso-area, therefore, has no strict correlations with the institutional reality. Thus the East European Meso-area may cover any post-communist countries, which not only will have EU membership in 2004, but also may have it in the future, or only want to have it someday in the distant future. As a matter of fact, on the basis of the institutional identity, the difference between the divisions within the East European Meso-area is still in a phase of beginning, so the divisions within the Meso-area are relative. For example, some analysts consider that the CEECs are now consolidating their transition to EU membership, and South East European countries, on the

¹² It seems very difficult to name and categorize – eventually analyze – these countries commonly. 'The outsiders' is given for the post-Soviet countries, which have 'no immediate prospect of membership of the EU', and 'for the foreseeable future they will constitute a borderland between full members of the European family and the rest of the Eurasian landmass', in S. White, I. McAllister, M. Light and J. Löwenhardt, 'A European or a Slavic Choice? Foreign Policy and Public Attitudes in Post-Soviet Europe', *Europe-Asia Studies* 54:2 (2002), p. 181. The idea of 'the outsiders' and 'borderland' can be overlapped with the conceptualization of the changing regions, meso-areas. 'Near abroad' can be also a close notion, in a sense, to a meso-area in its Russian political usage. See, for example, relating the Diaspora question, Andrei Edemsky and Paul Kolstoe, 'Russia's policy towards the Diaspora' in Paul Kolstoe, ed., *Russian in the Former Soviet Republics* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1995), p. 259.

contrary, still remain in a transition in which the nation-building can be an issue, and to be completed in time. However, the status law established in 2001 by Hungary, one of the CEECs, was scandalous enough to demonstrate that the process of nation-building or new nation-building was still a national and regional agenda for Hungary both politically and diplomatically. Moreover, the conflicts on the law between Hungary and its neighboring countries and between Hungary and the EU resulted in consolidation of the meso-area identity on both sides, the EU members and the candidate countries. The public statement of the Hungarian government below, released just after the negotiations with the EU over the question of public assistance by the law for private commercial companies, is a good example to the 'No more Eastern but not yet Western' identity of the meso-area.

'It was repeatedly required in the negotiation with the EU that we should respect the disciplines of fair competition. However, on this issue there were misunderstandings and controversies, and we might continue exchanges of opinions regarding the legal principles; namely, they should be concerned with the questions; for example, how indispensable the assistances to local industries were for the aim of preserving the national minority, or how contrary the assistances were against the fair competition. I will not explain this in details now. At any rate, we have accepted, *for peace*, the requirement to delete the related article of the draft, which clearly prescribed assistance to commercial companies'.¹³ (Italicized by the present author - O. I.)

This statement shows an ambivalent attitude, a floating identity, between the norms to be implemented for EU membership - here, fair competition in the market economy - and the reality or the institutional identity - preferential and anti-market assistance to the Hungarian minorities abroad. What is more essential is the connotation of 'for peace': namely, it means eventual neglect against the EU norm, since the Hungarian government inserted an additional phrase into the final draft of the law, which is de facto a revival of the deleted phrase.¹⁴ This ambivalent self-perception and behavior stimulated the EU to recognize Hungary as 'not yet European', that is, the EU's external identity toward the East European Meso-area; 'No more Eastern but not yet Western'. This regional identity will very likely survive EU membership of the East European candidate countries both internally and externally.

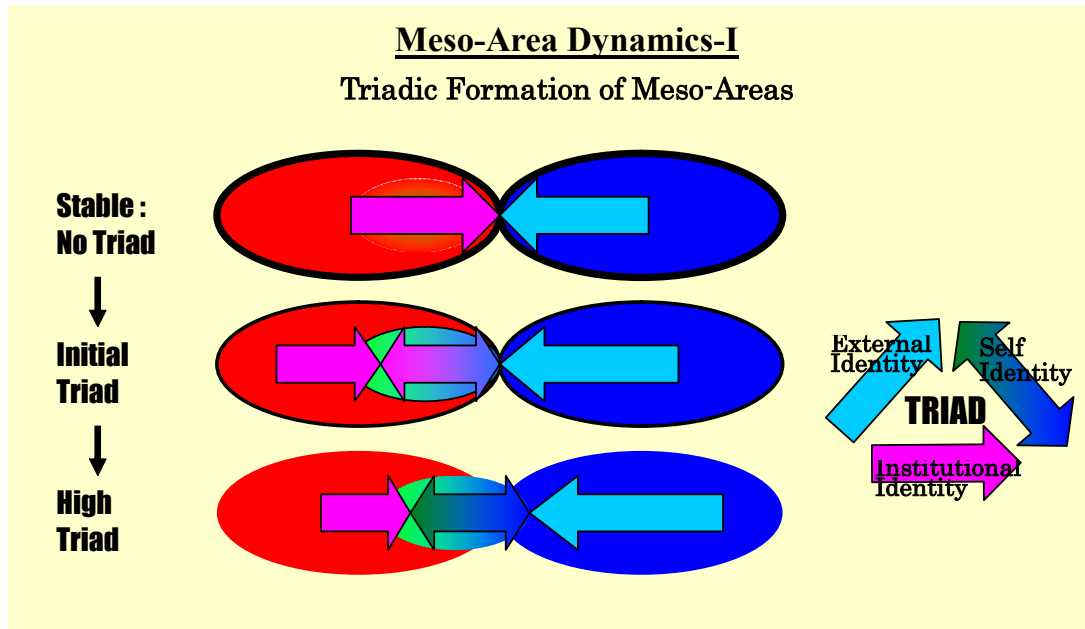
Regional Identity and External Cognition

We may give up drawing clear-cut borders of meso-areas if introducing perceptual identities, that is, factors of Sollen or desire, into regional definition. However, spatial divisions of areas have never been objective. In fact, objective areas have never existed. They have been created according to external perceptions. Needless to say, for example, the post-war Eastern Europe and Western Europe, that is, the East-West division of Europe

¹³ The statement of Zsolt Németh, 'Hungarian Vice-Foreign Minister', at the press conference on 13th June 2001: www.kum.hu

¹⁴ The second sentence of the 18th article of the Status Law.

was constructed by the imperialist view of politics in the Cold War. Geographically or historically we have no categorical reasons to separate Greece, Turkey, Austria, the Baltic countries, Finland or other countries in the western part of the former USSR from the East or Central European region. Another case outside Slavic Eurasia is South East Asia. This area is well known for its colonialist naming, that is, the regional notion was created from the remaining parts other than the major Asian regions, which had been also made up by the imperialist divisions of the world. The world areas reflect directly the unilateral worldview of Orientalism. It is another problem that a colonialist unilateral cognition of areas has a crucial influence on the emerging regional self-identities; thus the East Europeans, for example, adjusted their identity to communist Eastern Europe, and then shared the concept of the communist camp in general.¹⁵ External regional identities are not necessarily coincident with the institutional identity of the meso-area or with the regional self-identity, either. The essential difference between the imperialist regional identity and the post-communist one is interactivity between the external and self perceptions in making the post-communist regional identity, and a working interactivity between the external and self-identities is fundamental for the formation of meso-areas. A regional identity is an interactive product of self- and external perceptions, mutually influencing each other's construction of regional identity, and a regional identity is remarkable when any side of the perceptions begins to change with or without new developments in the institutional realities.



¹⁵ Miklós Szabó, *Politikai kultúra Magyarországon* (Budapest: Medvetánc Könyvek, 1989), pp. 225–251; Osamu Ieda, 'The Zigzag Way of Thought of a Hungarian Populist', *Japanese Slavic and East European Studies* 18 (1998), pp. 115–128.

Formulation of Meso- and Mega Area Dynamics

Meso-area Dynamics

Taking the factors above into consideration, we can re-define the regions in a general setting, in contrast to the world areas reinforced by the unilateral perceptions in the 20th century. Our regional definition is based on **dynamics of the triadic identities**; that is, deviation, interaction, and amalgamation among self-, external, and institutional identities. We call this the **triadic dynamics of meso-area**.

Hypothetically we formulate the triadic dynamics as follows;

- 1) A regional cognition is stable when the institutional and self-regional identities correspond to each other. At this stage, an external identity or integration may exercise an influence on the other identities very restrictively. (No triadic dynamism, no meso-area)
- 2) A stable regional identity is based on a common value system between the self- and institutional identities in the region internally, but externally a common value may induce a triadic dynamism. In other words, a region eventually has no external identity when no value systems are shared by both of the peoples in the region and in its external world. Or, the opposite, a meaningful external cognition premises a common value system at any level with the residents in the region. (Stability of regional identities)
- 3) A region may have not single value systems; therefore it may have multiple identities. Thus, a region can have different regional identities at the same time in accordance with their corresponding external identities. (Multiple identity)
- 4) A regional cognition is to be de- and re-constructed if some considerable change happens in any of the three identities, resulting in deviation among the triadic identities. (Initial triad)
- 5) A meso-area emerges when all of the triadic identities begin to change under a new internal or external momentum, and the meso-area exists as long as the triadic dynamics works among the changing identities. (High triad)
- 6) Meso-areas emerge differently depending on different self- and external identities within one mega-area, though the initial institutional identity is the same. (Various triad). Below we suggest a typology relating to the Slavic Eurasian Meso-areas.
 - A) Intensive (communal) integration: the East European type of triadic dynamism. A societal membership is essential in this triad, and the membership requires the meso-area to accept the political, economic, social, and cultural criteria. Therefore, the interaction in the triadic dynamics should be high, and this process may need a long duration to complete the implementation of the comprehensive criteria. The intensive integration may result in a new community of the regions.

- (Communal type)
- B) Systemic integration: the Far Eastern and Siberian type of triadic dynamism. Economic relations are essential in this triad, and the interaction and amalgamation are high, though selectively. Namely, the integration is not inclusive over the other spheres of human and societal activities. This integration may bring about an economic system among the regions. The duration can be relatively short to make up the system due to the incomprehensive feature of the integration. (Systemic type)
- C) Extensive and individual (network) integration: the Central Eurasian type of triadic dynamism. A network membership is essential in this triad, and the membership requires the meso-area to accept the political, economic, social, and/or cultural criteria, though not communally, but individually. Because of the individuality of integration, the interaction and amalgamation is not necessarily high, at least superficially, and the integration process is not clear, though the triadic dynamics can bring about an extensive formation of networks among the regions. The duration can be short to make up the networks due to the individual feature of the integration. (Network type)¹⁶

These types of triad are inductive and hypothetic; therefore, they are not exclusive or comprehensive at all.

- 7) Multiple regional identities may not generate single triads (multiple triad)
- 8) Triadic dynamism does not necessarily result in a new region (final triad);
- A) A meso-area may go back into the original mega-area due to greater deviation, insufficient interaction, minor amalgamation, and a strong institutional identity. (backlash triad)
- B) A meso-area may be basically absorbed into the external integration due to sufficient interaction, minor amalgamation and strong external identity enough for disappearance of the specific regional identities of the meso-area (transitional triad).
- C) A meso-area may remain as a meso-area for a considerable duration due to greater deviation and insufficient amalgamation (transformational triad). In this triad a new regional identity may engender among the various peoples in the meso-area.¹⁷

¹⁶ Tomohiko Uyama, 'From Bulgharism through Marrism to Nationalist Myths: Discourses on the Tatar, the Chuvash and the Bashkir Ethnogenesis', *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 19 (2002), pp. 163–190.

¹⁷ For example, the Baltic peoples and the former East European peoples have had no significant common identity, and we may also talk about no mutual perceptions within the Baltic republics to be shared as a solid regional identity in the Soviet and earlier eras. However, a common status for EU membership, that is, the *candidate countries*, and the communist past

(A meso-area identity)

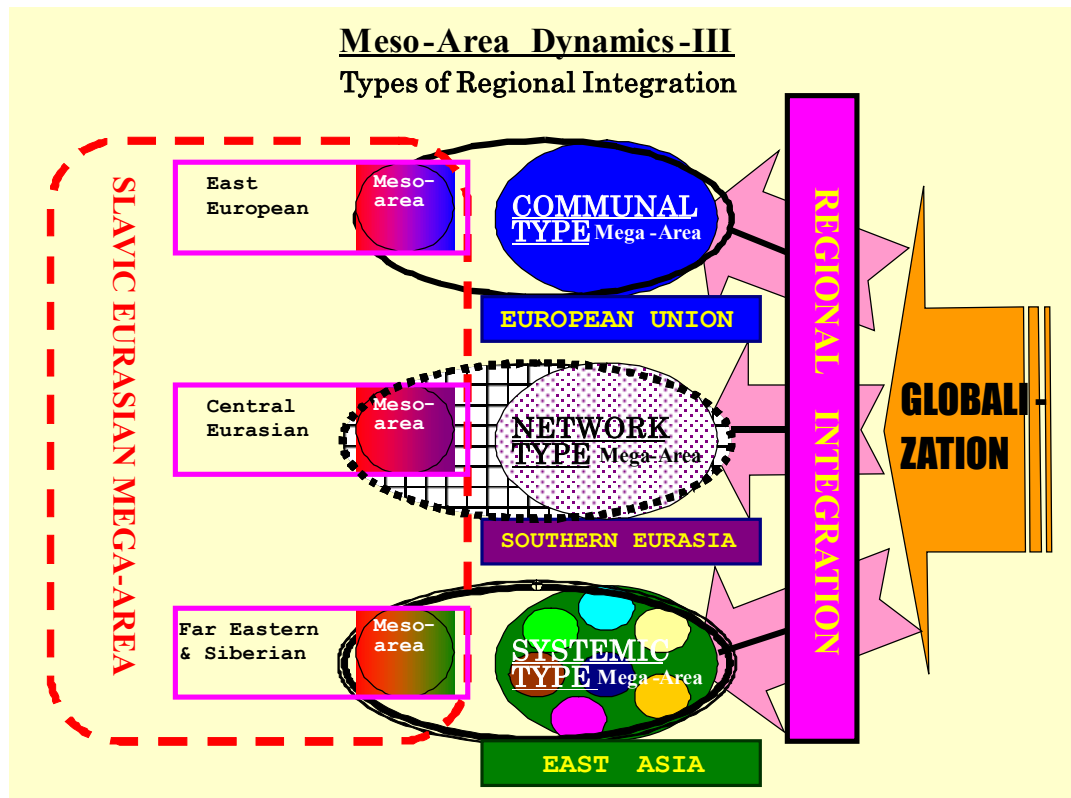
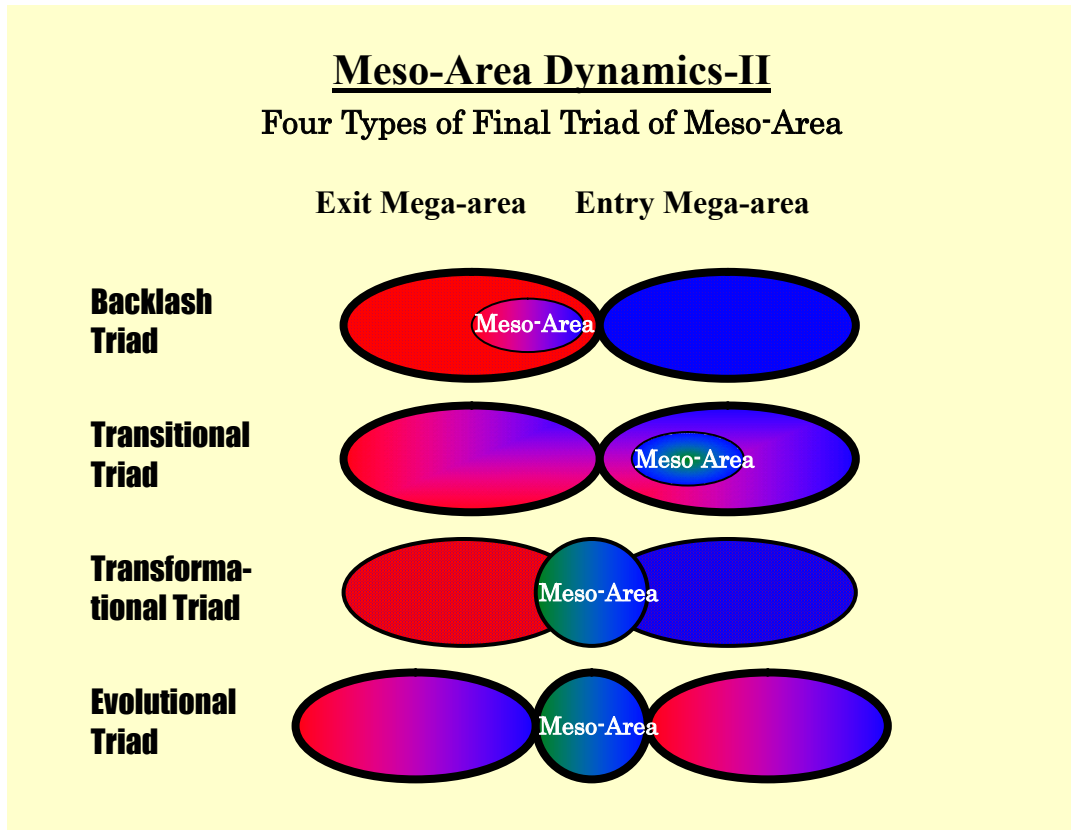
- D) A meso-area may grow into a new region through sufficient interaction and considerable amalgamation enough to create a unique regional identity (evolutional triad).
- 9) A mega-area can be identical with a single meso-area.
- 10) External momenta are generated by globalization and regional, economic, cultural, and other integration.
- 11) Requirements of external integration can be coincident with that of globalization, such as market economy, parliamentary democracy, World Trade Organization membership, and so on. In reality, however, the connotations of the requirements often deviate essentially from the original understandings, or their local implication and implementation is significantly different from each other's.
- 12) Globalization prevents triadic meso-areas from backlash, but it does not necessarily dismantle areas and regions. Rather it works to de- and re-construct areas and regions in accordance with the single value system throughout the world, resulting in not only a transitional but also a transformational or evolutional triad.

Mega-area Dynamics

A mega-area emerges when a meso-area is emerging in it. Therefore, a mega-area is a companion notion of meso-area. At the same time, a pair of meso- and mega-areas must be complemented by emergence of another mega-area, which has external momentum on the meso-area. We call the former mega-area '**exit mega-area**', and the latter '**entry mega-area**'. In other words, an emerging meso-area is accompanied by a pair formation of mega-areas. These mega-areas work just as the plus-minus electrodes in the triadic dynamics of meso-areas, and their functions – that is, the institutional and external identities in the meso-area – can be convertible from each perspective of the mega-areas. From the viewpoint of the exit mega-area, namely, the institutional identity is less and less substantial or more and more reminiscent in the process from the initial to the high triad of the dynamics of meso-areas. This process, however, seems opposite from the perspective of the entry mega-area; that is, the institutional identity of the exit mega-area seems as an external identity for the entry mega-area, and the external identity for the exit mega-area functions as no other than the institutional identity for the entry mega-area. In this reversed perspective, the institutional identity of the entry mega-area becomes more and more substantial, or less and less normative along with the diminishing momentum of the exit mega-area. This reversibility is important all the more, when the exit and entry mega-areas may convert their positions on the way of the winding triadic dynamics. In brief, we understand the exit and entry

(the institutional identity) create the common regional identities among the peoples in Baltic and East European countries. How consistent is the meso-area identity depends on the type of triadic dynamics.

mega-areas not as discrete categories but a transferable notion. The transferability may extend availability of the notion.



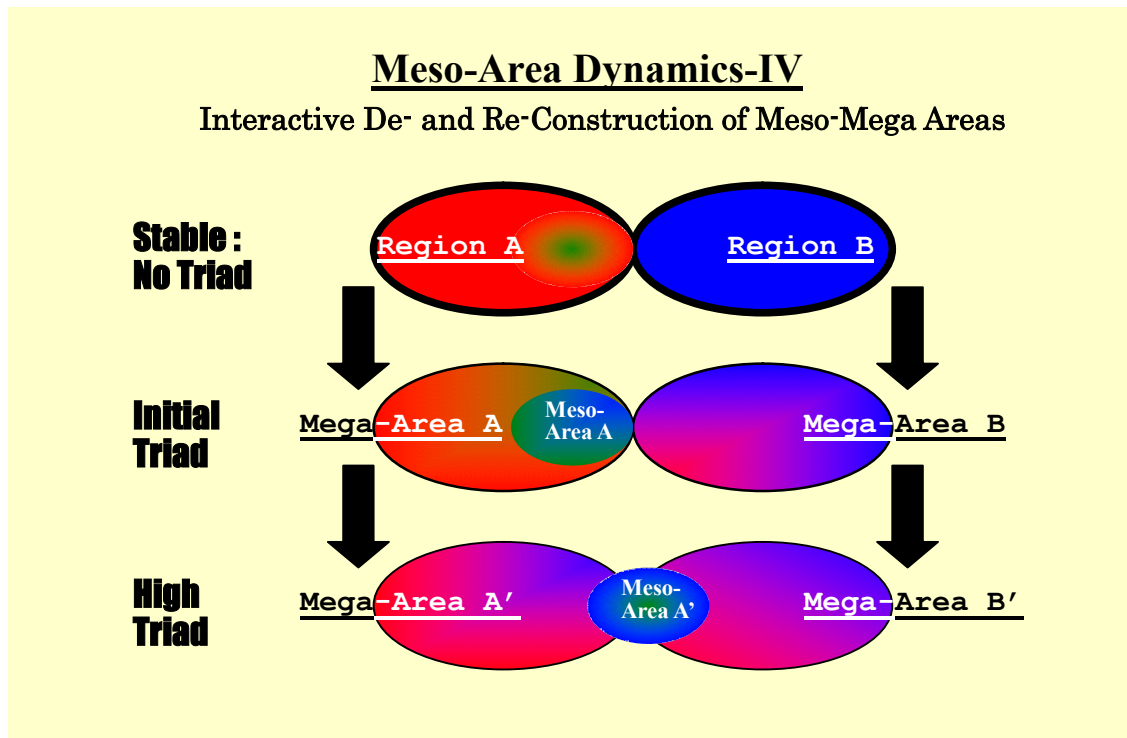
Taking into account these relations among the three elements – meso-area, exit mega-area, and entry mega-area –, we formulate the **triadic dynamics of mega-area** on the basis of the meso-area dynamics as follows;

- 1) No mega-area exists when no meso-areas emerged.
- 2) An emerging meso-area is accompanied by a pair of mega-areas; one is an exit mega-area, to which the meso-area has belonged, and the other is an entry mega-area, which exercises external momentum on the meso-area. These are the actors of the dynamism of the mega-area, and they correspond to the Triadic identities of meso-area. (Triadic Mega-area)
- 3) Triadic dynamics of the mega-area emerge differently depending on the triadic dynamics of the meso-area. (Various Triadic Mega-area)
- 4) A mega-area can be constructed entirely as a new domain. (Imagined Triadic Mega-area)
- 5) Multiple triadic dynamics can emerge in a meso-area when plural external integrations work on the meso-area at a time. (Concentrative Triadic Mega-area)¹⁸
- 6) Multiple triadic dynamics can emerge in an entry mega-area when the entry mega-area exercises integration momenta not on single meso-areas. (Expansive Triadic Mega-area)
- 7) Multiple triadic dynamics can emerge in an exit mega-area when not single meso-areas emerge in the exit mega-area. (Lethal Triadic Mega-area)
- 8) Triadic dynamics of a mega-area terminates differently depending on the final triad of the meso-area (Final Triadic Mega-area);
 - A) Due to the backlash triad of the meso-area, the exit and the entry mega-areas superficially return to the original positions where the regions have been before, however, the triad may have caused and the potential triad may cause some changes in their regional identities, and these changes may induce a new triadic dynamism in the regions. (Backlash and Potential Triad of Mega-area Dynamics).
 - B) Due to the transitional triad of the meso-area, the domain of the entry and the exit mega-areas changes noticeably. Moreover, the identities, the less visible features, of the regions have also changed in both of the meso- and mega-areas due to the interaction and amalgamation in the triadic dynamics. (Transitional Triad of Mega-area Dynamics)
 - C) A triadic mega-area remains for a considerable duration, due to the transformational triad of the meso-area. Under the duration

¹⁸ See Yaroslav Hrytsak, 'On Sails and Gales, and Ships Driving in Various Directions: Post-Soviet Ukraine as a Test Case for the Meso-Area Concept', in Kimitaka Matsuzato, ed., *Emerging Meso-areas* (n. 8), pp. 42–68, as a good case for this in the geographic, Rus', Pole, Habsburg, and Soviet external identities in the Ukrainian Meso-area identity from the historical perspective.

the exit and entry mega-areas may change their own regional identities by the impact of the triadic dynamism in the meso-area. (Transformational Triad of Mega-area Dynamics)

- D) Due to the evolutionary triad of the meso-area, the exit mega-area diminishes its domain, and cannot help changing its regional identities, internally and externally. The entry mega-area, on the other hand, though remaining spatially as it has been, may have to review its regional self-identity because of the changing inter-regional relations due to the new region out of the triad. (Evolutional Triad of Mega-area Dynamics)
- 9) Globalization or the world systems are phenomena or effects of an expansive triad of mega-area dynamics. (Global Triadic Mega-area)
 - 10) An exit mega-area may have experienced a triadic dynamics of mega-area as an entry one, and an entry mega-area, on the contrary, would experience a triadic dynamism as an exit one in the future. (Vicissitudinous Triadic Mega-area)
 - 11) The positions of mega-areas, namely, exit and entry, are convertible in accordance with the process of the triadic dynamics of a mega-area.



Inference of Meso-Mega Area Dynamics

Formulating the meso- and mega-area dynamics in the previous sections, we have a basis to infer its implications from the triadic relations as follows;

- 1) Parallels of integration in meso- and mega-areas: A meso-area is an objective to be integrated into a mega-area. In this respect, we may have a deduction on the correlation between the types of the triadic dynamics of the meso-area and the institutional identities of the entry mega-area. Namely, what generates the external momenta in the triadic dynamics of the meso-area is identical with none other than the patterns of integration in the entry mega-areas themselves. We may call it membership in the region. Regarding the Slavic Eurasian Meso-areas, the formulation of this parallel is as follows; ¹⁹
 - A) The communal type of triadic dynamism in the East European Meso-area corresponds to the societal membership in the EU Mega-area which requires the members to accept the political, economic, social, and cultural criteria.
 - B) The systemic type of triadic dynamism in the Siberian and Far-Eastern Meso-area corresponds to the selective economic integration of the East Asian Mega-area which requires the members to accept the systemic economic relations in the regions.
 - C) The network type of triadic dynamism in the Central Eurasian Meso-area corresponds to the network membership of the South Eurasian Mega-area which requires the members to accept the political, economic, social, and/or cultural criteria, though not communally, but individually.
- 2) Reversibility of meso- and mega-areas: meso- and mega-areas are theoretical and relational categories, not primordial notions. A meso-area can develop into a mega-area, and an evolutionary triad of meso-area may stimulate the region even to grow into a mega-area. This can happen through the way of the expansive triadic dynamism of mega-area. For instance, communist Russia had been a mega-area in the twentieth century, following the evolutionary triadic dynamics of meso-area in the capitalist European and the imperialist Russian Mega-areas in the nineteenth century. Another case in contemporary Eurasia is South East Asia. The region was created through a concentrative triadic dynamics of mega-area, including

¹⁹ See the paradoxical developments of the modern state system in Western Europe; Takao Sasaki, 'Kokusai sisutemu, kokusai shakai to chiiki sisutemu, chiiki shakai: Chuiki ken gainen wo megutte [System and Society; International Contra Regional: Reflections on the Concept "Meso-Area"]', presented at the SRC Forum of Regional Studies and Meso-areas on 26th November 2003, Hokkaido University. The paper suggests that 'international public goods' provide the basis to Europe for the societal integration beyond the solid modern state system, though the system was created in Europe. On the contrary, no other regions than Europe have developed 'international public goods' sufficiently. The implication of this thesis is that the East Asian economic integration, for example, can develop to the communal type of regional integration with a great difficulty, and thus it rather remains a sub-system under the solid state system. This contrast between Europe and Asia can be an economic and political background of the meso-area typology.

the Chinese, European, Japanese and American Mega-areas, and now the region is emerging as a mega-area through the expansive triadic dynamism, involving the neighboring countries and regions (from the ASEAN to the enlarging ASEAN).

The East European Meso-area would develop into a unique region after a long winding process of transitional, transformational, and evolutionary triadic dynamics due to the great cleavage symbolized by the difficulties to implement 'the 31 chapters of *Acquis Communautaire*',²⁰ and then the region would develop further to a mega-area, inducing surrounding regions on the basis of 'No more Western, rather Central European or Eurasian' identities. Or, what seems more likely to happen is that, while the meso-area is de- and re-constructed in accordance with the EU norms, de-EU-nization of the EU is brought about by the eastward enlargement of the EU. Namely, the triadic dynamism of the EU Mega-area, preparing its expansion of the membership, has changed its internal basic features. For example, the rule in decision-making of the EU changed fundamentally from the parity system among the member countries to the efficiency and hegemony discipline.²¹ If the mega-area enlarges further toward such regions as the south and east Mediterranean regions, the Black Sea region, the Middle East region, it might result in a totally new region with an identity of, for example, 'Not only European, but also Eurasian - or No more European, but Eurasian'.

- 3) Eurasian dynamism: Due to a range of meso-areas emerging in the Slavic Eurasian Mega-area since the collapse of the communist regime, today's Eurasian Continent consists of various mega-areas, linked and intermediated by the meso-areas. Therefore, any regions in the continent now interact cooperatively or competitively as the actors in the triadic dynamics of the meso-mega areas.

This multiple and comprehensive dynamism in the Eurasian continent necessitates collaborations among the regional studies, such as East Asian, South East Asian, South Asian, Islamic, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, European, North American, Slavic Eurasian Studies, and so on, because, otherwise, regional studies could not draw any actual realities or persuasive interpretations on the regions, and rejuvenate the regional studies in accordance with the changing Eurasia and the world as well.

- 4) Interactive formation of the world: The triadic dynamics of meso- and mega-areas may interpret the inter-regional relations in

²⁰ Csaba Tabajdi, 'The Re-formulation of the Central European Thought', *Foreign Policy Review* 1 (2002), pp. 22-28.

²¹ See the Treaty of Nice amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts;
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/search/search_treaties.html

contemporary international relations and in world history as well in a different way from the unilateralist ones, such as Orientalism, dependence theory, the world system of modern capitalism, the colonial division of world areas, and so on. The triadic dynamics, instead, introducing the dual perceptual identities as the crucial and interactive factors in the formation of regional identities, could be a new cognitive framework to understand the regions (meso- and mega-areas) in the context of bilateral or multilateral interdependency. In other words, the emergence of meso-areas is an agency to cause a chain of changes in regional identities not only of meso-areas but also of mega-areas. Thus even the centers and the suzerains, or, in our terminology, the entry mega-areas, also change their own regional identities in effect of the meso-area formation, since the triadic dynamism de- and re-constructs the regional identities of both meso- and mega-areas. Thus the modern European identity was, in our understanding, nothing but a counter-creature, when the Orient and the world areas were constructed by the European Mega-area; in brief, not 'modern Europe' created the world areas, but the world meso-areas invented 'modern Europe'. In the changing contemporary world, the global power requires the regions to acclimatize themselves to the market economy and parliamentary democracy as the normative identities, thus inducing Triadic dynamics throughout the world. The global triadic dynamism, in turn, brings about global issues out of regional or local issues of the meso- and exit mega-areas, or vice-versa, for example, human security, cross-border migration, socio-regional divisions, and environmental problems,²² and due to the concentration of these issues onto the entry mega-area in a natural effect of the triadic dynamics, the mega-area is more, or at least as much seriously threatened in its security over the lands and peoples as the meso-areas are threatened. This is the reality in the triadic dynamics with which the new identities are to be created regionally and globally as well. It is very likely that the new regional and global identities would be rather reluctant from 'Free Movement of Good and Persons', though the initial momentum of the triadic dynamism was the introduction of the free market system throughout the world. According to our formulation of the possible finals in the triadic dynamics, namely, among backlash, transition, transformation, and evolution, the global triad seems to be headed to one other than the expected one, transitional. At any rate, the most important and significant actors in our dynamics are the

²² See the interactive functions of the self- and external cognitions for inventing the historical identities of the regions, for example, Go Kato, 'Minzoku shi to chiiki kenkyu, tasha heno manazashi [Ethnography and Area Studies: Looks Towards "Others"]' in Toru Yano ed., *Chiiki kenkyu no shuho [Methodology of Area Studies]* (Tokyo 1993), pp. 104-106.

perceptual cognitions in the emerging identities; namely, the wills of human beings, and their interactivity in the triadic dynamics. Briefly, not the global power creates the world regions, but the meso-areas are inventing the future of global power and global identities as well.