

Regional Factors in Yemen's Integration Reunification

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Abstract: *Among the divided nations after the Second World War, Yemen was the only country which was reunified by integration model. The author believes that this process could be explained not only by the nation's power at the national level and by the international system at the global level, but also in the logic of regional factors at the regional level. This article attempts to analyse two aspects of regional factors in Yemen's integration reunification. The first one is "hard regional factor" such as Regional Big Power. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the regional big power in this issue. The Second one is "soft regional factor" like Regional Multilateral Organization. In the case of Yemen's reunification, the League of Arab States (LAS) is the soft regional factor. After analysis, we can draw a conclusion: "Regional factors affect the divided nation's reunification model". (1) As to the hard regional factor, if both of the divided separates had normal diplomatic relationships with regional big power, it would be conducive to nation's integration reunification. (2) As to the soft regional factor, if both of the divided separates co-operated in a mature regional multilateral organization in Lockean Culture, it would contribute to the integration reunification model. This*

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research will count for China's reunification studies to some extent.

Key Words: *Divided Nation; Integration Reunification; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; League of Arab States; Regional Factors; Yemen*

After the Second World War, some divided nations arose, such as Vietnam, Germany, Yemen and Korea. Unlike other divided nations caused by race, religion and colonial rule, these divided nations have the following common characteristics: before division each of them used to be a unified and sovereign state with the same nation, language and culture; the divisions were caused by the outbreak of the Cold War and hostile confrontations between the US and the Soviet Union; ideological conflicts between capitalism and socialism aggravated the divided situations. After national division, the separate parts were pursuing the national reunification insistently. Among them, Yemen was the only country that was reunified by integration.

Why did Yemen adopt the integration reunification model? As we all know, both intra-Yemen's potential autonomy at the national level and the unbalanced bilateral powers between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War at the global level really affected the divided nation's reunification model.^①

However, we should not ignore the regional factors at the regional level especially in the revolutionary issue like the divided nations' reunification. This article analyses the regional factors in

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Yemen's integration reunification. This research will contribute to China's reunification studies to some extent.

I. Regional Factor: An Angle for Yemen's Reunification Issue

A. Yemen's Reunification Issue

Yemen was reunified by the integration model in 1990. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Northern Yemen became an independent state as the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen in 1918. About fifty years later, revolutionaries were inspired by the Arab nationalist ideology of the United Arab Republic, and the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR, or North Yemen with Sana'a as its capital) was established under the leadership of President Gamal Abdul Nasser on September 27, 1962. After the liberation, North Yemen combined itself with the capitalist camp especially with the US and West Europe. Meanwhile, some nationalist groups in the south of Yemen actively fought against the British colonists in the middle 1960s. With the British withdrawal, the People's Republic of South Yemen (PDSY) was established around the south areas of Yemen on November 30, 1967. Two years later, a radical Marxist wing of National Front (NF) gained the power and changed the country's name to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY, or Southern Yemen with Aden as its capital) on December 1, 1970. Shortly after the new government was formed, the PDRY was tied closely to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. In the late 1980s, in the context of the Soviet forces withdrawing from Yemen and with the discovery of oil reserve across the borders, South Yemen sped up its cooperation with North Yemen. On May 22, 1990, the North and the South were reunited into a single state— the Republic of Yemen (YE, with Sana'a as its capital). Unfortunately, the union was not immediately successful and internal disputes broke out in 1994, resulting in a war which was finally won by the northern forces. Nonetheless, the Yemen reunification in 1990 is

a good example for the integration model study.

B. The Regional Factors in Yemen's Reunification Issue

1) Regional Factors

Why did Yemen adopt integration as its reunification model? At the national level, the co-operation from economy to politics co-led by North Yemen and South Yemen were the key factors for Yemen's peaceful reunification. At the global level, the unbalanced bilateral powers between the US and the Soviet Union and the Soviet's withdrawal from South Yemen were important elements. The divided nation's 'reunification and the model choice are not only affected by the nations' power at the national level and by the international system at the global level. We should not ignore "regional factors" at the regional level especially in the revolutionary issue like divided nation's reunification.

In the historical course of divided-nations' reunification, there are two regional factors. The first one is "hard regional factor" such as a Regional Big Power which means a country with distinguished political, economic and cultural influences, that can determine international relations in a certain area. There are clear and long-term historical interactions between the regional big power and other nations within a region. The regional big power has stronger impacts on neighbors either in a political system or in an economic order, either in a traditional religious or cultural aspect. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the regional big power in the Red Sea area, and it was the hard regional factor in Yemen's integration reunification issue.

The second one is "soft regional factor" like a regional multilateral organization (RMO), which infers an inter-governmental alliance and a series of rules and institutions involving neighborhood countries (Fawcett, 1995:11). On the one hand, RMO is a kind of organization. It contains a specific number of nations within a region, which have joint historical backgrounds, similar languages, the same cultural experiences and common interests. On the other hand, RMO

is certain means of rules. Different stage of the RMO develops different international social culture (Campbell, 1992:4). In the Hobbesian culture, there are no formal rules and institutions, and all the countries consider others as "enemy". In the Lockean cultural pattern, participants in the international community are willing to communicate with others in a platform, and regard others as "competitors". The Kantian culture is based on a role structure of friendship. Relative to "enemy" and "competitor", the concept of "friend" is under-theorized. Friendship is a role structure in which disputes will be settled without war or the threat of war (Wendt, 2005:298). In the case of Yemen's integration reunification, the League of Arab States (LAS) is the soft regional factor. With the development of LAS, the states of the Red Sea region were in the international community with the characteristics of Lockean's cultural pattern, which contributed to Yemen's peaceful integration model.

2) Regional Factors in Yemen's Division

Yemen's division was caused by complex factors. At the global level, it was US-Soviet bi-polar confrontations and capitalism-socialism conflicts that caused Yemen's division. During the Cold War, the Middle East was the most important battlefield between the two poles, ranking second only to Europe (Fisher, 1997: 943-944). Since the Red Sea was the heart of Middle East, any country that took control of it would occupy the main gateway and the direct connection channel between the two poles (Wenner, 1991:166). In this geopolitical situation, North Yemen and South Yemen were pushed to the forefront of US-Soviet confrontations. Yemen's division was difficult to avoid. At the national level, Yemen's division was caused by totally different political institutions, intensely military conflicts, and endless steam of economical and social disputes between the north and the south. Since the 19th century, the Ottoman Turkey and the United Kingdom had implemented colonial policies in north - and south Yemen, resulting in tremendous differences in fields of political

orientation, economic patterns and social structures (Wenner, 1991:165). In addition, religious tribal disputes aggravated the intense situations between the two sides, which made it difficult for Yemen's integration.

Apart from the global and national factors, regional factors were also very important in the issue of Yemen's division. Regional factors were reflected in two aspects. As to the hard regional factor, Yemen's division was closely related to the intervention of the regional big power Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia was the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula and was reluctant to see another powerful neighbor rising up. If Yemen had been reunified, its military power would be greatly strengthened, and its total population would exceed Saudi Arabia's. Saudi Arabia would have had to directly face a strong competitor nearby, and would not only lose its traditional advantages of the Red Sea, but also would have had a dangerous intimidator in the field of national security (Guo, 2004:274). Territorial disputes between Saudi Arabia and Yemen were also a continuing source of tensions especially after the discovery of oil. As a conservative country believing in Islam, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia worried that either North Yemen with a capitalist regime or South Yemen with a Marxist regime would pose a threat to its domestic traditional beliefs. In order to maintain its political, economic, religious and cultural interests in the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia supported the monarchists and the conservatives in both North and South Yemen in their early establishments. In the late 1970s, Saudi Arabia devotedly supported North Yemen and gave strong backing to tribal forces in South Yemen, in order to fiercely fight against South Yemen. Saudi Arabia's interference had greatly deepened the division of Yemen.

As to the soft regional factor, the Hobbesian culture in the Middle East and Red Sea region was an important extra environment for Yemen's division. After the successful revolution in North Yemen, Egypt and Saudi Arabia engaged in Yemen's civil conflicts for their

own interests. The civil war lasted eight years. One side was the new republicans supported by Egypt which sent about 70,000 soldiers to North Yemen in session based on a five-year Treaty of Military Prevention, and controlled the plains and large towns of Yemen. The other side was the royal family forces backed by Saudi Arabia. The royal factions were entirely composed of armed tribes stationed in the mountains and jungles of Yemen (Peng, 2004: 387). Egypt and Saudi Arabia once tried to form a peace talk for the warring parties in 1965, but failed. In February 1966, when the United Kingdom announced that its troops would withdraw from southern Yemen in 1968, both Egypt and Saudi Arabia plotted to fill this vacuum. Then they intensely increased intervention in the Yemen's issue. The civil war in North Yemen would not cease because of the external powers' intervention, which led North Yemen to miss the opportunity of effective co-operations with southern Yemen's revolution forces and the chance of the nation's reunification. Yemen's division was generated by both hard and soft regional factors. The same was true for Yemen's integration reunification process. This paper analyzes the hard and the soft factors respectively in the following.

II. Hard Regional Factor "KSA" and Yemen's Integration Reunification

The hard regional factor in Yemen's integration reunification was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the regional big power in the Middle East and Red Sea region.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, commonly known as Saudi Arabia, is the largest Arab country of the Middle East. It is bordered by Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates on the east, Oman on the southeast, Yemen on the south, and Jordan and Iraq on the north and northeast. The Persian Gulf lies to its northeast and the Red Sea to the west.

The current kingdom was founded by Abdul-Aziz bin Saud, whose efforts began in 1902, and culminated in 1932 with the proclamation and recognition of the Kingdom of Saudi. Its government took the form of an Islamic absolute monarchy. Saudi Arabia is a rich country because it has the world's largest oil reserves and is the world's largest oil exporter. Oil accounts for more than 90% of its exports and nearly three quarters of the government's revenues.

A. KSA and Yemen's Separate Parts

1) KSA and North Yemen

The relationship between Saudi Arabia and North Yemen had experienced two stages: from hostility to friendship. When the Yemen Arab Republic was founded in 1962, Saudi Arabia opposed strongly this new republican regime and gave all-out support to its royal family forces. As a result, a five-year civil war broke out at the beginning of North Yemen's establishment (Guo, 2004: 181). With the changes of regional political environments, the Saudi government finally had to officially recognize North Yemen, and established diplomatic relations with it in July 1970. From 1973 to 1974, in the occasion of the border war between the north and the south, Saudi Arabia donated 25 million US dollars to North Yemen for its military equipments and economic construction. In addition, the Saudi promised to increase 50% of these financial assistances each year (Stephen, 1985:167). In August 1975, Saudi Arabia announced the provision of substantial assistance loans and oil resources for North Yemen, the total of which valued up to US \$2.5 hundred million. In the late 1970s, in order to enhance the national autonomy and get rid of its heavy dependence on Saudi Arabia, North Yemen tried to improve diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and strengthen co-operation with other neighbors (Middle East Intelligence Survey, 1977: March 16). Despite having some disputes with North Yemen, Saudi Arabia still had maintained a good strategic cooperation with it because of the Soviet Union. In 1981, Ali Abdullah Saleh the top leader

of North Yemen visited Saudi Arabia, and signed the "Resolution on the Middle East peace" and the "Fahd Plan", aiming to safeguard the security of the Red Sea (Legum & Shaked, 1982:270). Both of them together agreed that they would jointly deal with the border war, and maintain the integrity and security of national boundaries (*Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily*, 1982: April 21).

2) KSA and South Yemen

The relations between Saudi Arabia and South Yemen were complicated. They had endured stages from friends to enemies and back to friends again. At the beginning of South Yemen's foundation, Saudi Arabia provided a large amount of financial assistance. In 1976, the two countries officially established diplomatic relations. Saudi Arabia promised to offer \$US one hundred million worth of economic aids for South Yemen's economic contribution (*Arab Report and Record*, 1976: March 16). Subsequently, Saudi Arabia announced its intention to build an oil pipeline network near the Strait of Hormuz where there was the very important gulf of South Yemen. In return, South Yemen highly praised Saudi Arabia's aid and sincerely appreciated its support (*US Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 1976: December 1).

Unfortunately, this good relationship did not last long. In the later 1970s, Saudi Arabia and South Yemen fought against each as the relationship between the Soviet Union and Saudi Arabia deteriorated. In October 1977, the North Yemen President Hamdi was assassinated on the eve of his visit to South Yemen for Yemen's reunification conference. South Yemen was accused as the killer by Saudi Arabia (Novik, 1979: 83-94). At the end of 1977, both Saudi Arabia and South Yemen recalled their ambassadors. Soon after that, a border military conflict broke out between the two sides.

With the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union, the diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and South Yemen warmed up. In 1980, the South Yemen foreign minister

visited Saudi Arabia. This was seen as a significant beginning of diplomatic action by the foreign media (*US Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 1980: April 2). Soon after that, Saudi Arabia provided South Yemen economic aid of about US\$ 6 million (*US Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 1980: July 1). In the event of the South Yemen floods in March 1982, Saudi Arabia announced US\$ 5 million worth of relief supplies to it (*An-Nahar*, 1982: April 12), which in time prevented South Yemen's economy from collapse. In July 1983, the two countries re-exchanged ambassadors and normalized their bilateral relations after a lapse of five years (*Middle East Economic Digest*, 1983: August 4).

B. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Integration Reunification Process

1) Transitions of KSA's Attitude toward Yemen's Reunification

The warming relations between Saudi Arabia and South Yemen and the normal diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and North Yemen, created good external environments for Yemen's integration reunification. Saudi Arabia once had been a persistent opponent against Yemen's reunification. As a conservative kingdom believing in Islam, Saudi Arabia worried about the new ideological and social systematic threats that might either come from North Yemen or from South Yemen. So it was not hard to understand that in the early establishment of North Yemen and South Yemen, Saudi Arabia strongly supported monarchists and conservative forces in the two countries and fiercely opposed any anti-Arab monarchy governments surrounding it.

When South Yemen formed an alliance with the Soviet Union in the middle 1970s, Saudi Arabia implemented a hostile foreign policy to South Yemen. It increased a large number of economic and military aid to North Yemen and gave strong backing to rebel forces in South Yemen. As a regional interference factor, Saudi Arabia's actions made Yemen's situation more complicated and chaotic. In the first and

second Yemen border wars, Saudi Arabia fully supported North Yemen and held a negative attitude towards Yemen's reunification process.

However, changes occurred in the early 1970s. Saudi Arabia's attitude towards Yemen's reunification became a different one because of the improved relations between Saudi Arabia and South Yemen. Late in the second Yemen border war in February 1979, Saudi Arabia gradually reduced its military aid to North Yemen in favor of seeking a balance between the north and the south. Saudi Arabia acted as an active mediator in the cease-fire talks, and provided effective recommendations and frameworks for Yemen's peaceful reunification.

2) Saudi Arabia's support to Yemen's Integration Reunification

In the late Cold War, the Soviet Union's expansion in the Middle East caused Saudi Arabia's tensions and worries. At this time, the most important strategy of Saudi Arabia was to exclude the Soviet's influence in the Red Sea region. As for Saudi Arabia, drawing South Yemen to the anti-Soviet camp was a very important foreign policy. Saudi Arabia did not oppose Yemen's reunification any more. On the contrary, in order to integrate Yemen into its allies, Saudi Arabia gave tacit consent to Yemen's peaceful reunification and largely supported bilateral conversations and communications within North Yemen and South Yemen (Remnek, 1980:36).

In the 1980s, the close relationship between Saudi Arabia and North Yemen cooled down because North Yemen had a strong intention to become more independent. At the same time, the diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and South Yemen had been improved gradually. On this background, Saudi Arabia implemented a balance foreign policy between the south and the north, and encouraged the two sides to co-lead political and economic co-operation. Saudi Arabia's changing attitude toward Yemen provided a flexible and effective regional environment for Yemen's integration reunification.

In 1981, when North Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh visited South Yemen, a Supreme Council of Yemen reunification was set up. It was operated by the top leaders of two sides and aimed to strengthen economic, cultural and educational exchanges between them. Saudi Arabia highly appreciated this communications and exchanges. In 1985, when Ali Abdullah Saleh met South Yemen leader Gamal Abdel Nasser in Aden, they successfully reached an oil project agreement in the field of the Marib oilfield in North Yemen and Shabwah oilfield in South Yemen. Saudi immediately provided financial aids and technical supports in time. After Yemen's successful reunification and its establishment with a new national name, Saudi accepted Yemen's new government and gave a round of applause to Yemen's integration reunification.

III. Soft Regional Factor: League of Arab States and Yemen's Integration Reunification

The soft regional factor in Yemen's integration reunification is the League of Arab States (LAS) , the regional multilateral organization in the Middle East and the Red Sea region.

The LAS was established in 1945 with its original seven member states such as Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, and Yemen (as an observer) . Now it has 22 members in the Middle East.

The LAS is a voluntary association of independent countries whose peoples are mainly Arabic speaking. It is involved in political, economic, cultural, and social programs designed to promote the interests of member states. Its stated purposes are to strengthen ties among the members, coordinate their policies, and promote their common interests.

In 1990, at the time of Yemen's integration reunification, with almost half of a century of developments, the LAS had become a useful and effective forum for member states to coordinate their policy

positions and deliberate on matters of common concern, settling some Arab disputes and limiting conflicts. So the political culture in the Middle East was the semi-Lockean culture in which actors considered others as friends.

A. The LAS and Yemen's Separate Parts

1) The LAS and North Yemen

The Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen was a founding member of the League of Arab States. After the establishment of the Yemen Arab Republic, North Yemen maintained a neutral attitude toward the LAS, but actively supported the national independence movements against colonial aggressions announced by the LAS. When the British army invaded the southern border of Yemen in December 1956, the Yemen's anti-British struggles were supported by the LAS countries. The Political Committee of the LAS immediately made a severe condemnation against the British aggression in Yemen. With the help of the LAS, Yemen filed a complaint to the United Nations, and asked the UN to impose sanctions against the UK and to take effective measures to stop the British invasion.

In the 1970s, with the support of Saudi Arabia, the LAS launched comprehensive cooperation with North Yemen. When North Yemen President Ghashmi was murdered in 1978 and the North-South Yemen border war broke out in 1979, the LAS froze economic and diplomatic relations with South Yemen at the request of Saudi Arabia and North Yemen (Stephen, 1985:87). In the early 1980s, an earthquake occurred in North Yemen and thousands of people were killed. The LAS countries immediately donated various kinds of relief materials such as food, medicine and tents totaling US\$ 13 million (An-Nahar, 1985: April 12), and called on Western countries and international organizations to provide assistances to Yemen. In addition, the Economic Commission of the LAS gave North Yemen substantial financial and technical assistances for its economic reconstruction after the disaster. From then on, the LAS and North Yemen maintained a good cooperative

relationship.

2) The LAS and South Yemen

South Yemen joined the LAS after its independence as a British colony, and signed economic partnership agreement with the LAS members. South Yemen supported the national independence movements and opposed the Israeli Zionist action with the LAS countries in the mid-1970s. In the late 1970s, as South Yemen formed a strategic alliance with the Soviet Union and adopted a hostile policy toward the Gulf countries, it was excluded from the LAS (Aspaturian, 1980:17). In June 1978, the LAS launched sanctions against South Yemen and froze the political, diplomatic and economic relations with it, because South Yemen had planned the assassination on the North Yemen President (Shi, 2006:47). South Yemen made a rapid response to the LAS, declaring that the LAS's resolutions were illegal, invalid, and needed to be revised (Stephen, 1985 :88). The relations between LAS and South Yemen fell to the bottom.

In the early 1980s, when the South Yemen leader Nasser came into power, he began to implement more pragmatic policies toward the Arab countries despite opposition from the Soviet Union. South Yemen sent diplomats to visit neighboring countries, seeking to improve bilateral relations. It also agreed to participate in the foreign ministers meeting of the LAS. Besides, Nasser promised that South Yemen would like to reduce half of the Soviet Union experts if Arab oil-producing states would provide necessary aid to South Yemen (*US Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 1980: May 1). On the occasion of flood in South Yemen in 1982, the Arab countries donated US \$13 million worth of goods for it (Arafat, 1983:4). On the eve of Yemen's reunification, South Yemen had already improved relations with the LAS, and had strengthened co-operation with it in fields of political, economic and cultural communications.

B. The LAS and Yemen's Integration Reunification Process

1) Two Yemens' Relations inside the LAS

All the members of the LAS are based on Arab nation as the main body of the country. Most people in these countries believe in Islam, use the Arabic language, and have a unified culture and customs. Since Yemen is an Arab country, the common national identity made the LAS an important communication channel for the two Yemens (Swanson, 1979:76). The Alexander Protocol of the LAS clearly stated: if differences and conflicts arose between members, resolutions made by the Council of the LAS must be obeyed and implemented; in any cases should the members of the LAS not use force to resolve disputes; the Council of the LAS should be considered as a coordinator to make reconciliations between the hostile parties in case of the outbreak of war.

The LAS played an important role in communication between North Yemen and South Yemen. The Yemen border war in 1972 ended by the mediation of the LAS. When the two Yemens could not reach a consensus in the new country's name before reunification, Libyan leader Qaddafi, one member of the LAS, suggested using "the Republic of Yemen", as North Yemen gave up the word "Arab" and South Yemen abandoned the word "Democratic". At the time of the Israeli invasion in Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon, in 1982, as the only two countries that sent representatives to Lebanon, South Yemen and North Yemen participated together in the struggles against Batesitan organizations (Stephen, 1985:196). In the framework of the LAS, South Yemen and North Yemen were recognized as a special political entity in the eyes of the Arab world and the international society. In turn, all these had contributed to the Yemen's integration reunification.

2) Yemen's Reunification inside the LAS's Rules

Since South Yemen and North Yemen cooperated with each other according to rules of the LAS, the Lockian culture in this region contributed to Yemen's peaceful reunification. As to the economic integration cooperation, an agreement of economic integration within

the LAS members were reached at the Economic Commission's fourth meeting of the LAS in June 1957, and both the north and the south participated in it. The Economic Council of the LAS provided necessary financial and technical assistance for oil project co-operations between the South and the North. In addition, this Council had passed a resolution to establish a common market within the LAS countries, in order to promote free movements of population, capital and goods, to achieve uniform tariff policies, and to realize the economic integration around the region step by step.

As for the political integration co-operations, the LAS acted as a mediator in the two Yemen border wars, and played a role as a promoter in the Yemen's reunification. When the first border war broke out in 1972, a mediation group led by the deputy secretary of the LAS visited Sana'a and Aden, making a final decision that the two parts agreed to withdraw 10 km from the border (Guo, 2004: 227-228). With the LAS mediation, a ceasefire agreement was reached and the Cairo Agreement Two was signed by the two sides, which provided a base for Yemen's peaceful reunification. When the second border war broke out in 1979, under the pressure of the LAS, South Yemen stopped attacking North Yemen and gradually withdrew from the border (Halliday, 1982:49). Urged by the Oversight Committee of the LAS, a summit meeting between the South and the North heads was held in Kuwait, and a breakthrough reunification agreement was reached, aiming to realize the national integration reunification within a year (*US Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 1972: November 29).

IV. Conclusion

All the resources above help us see the fact that the divided nation reunification and its model choice are not only affected by the nation's power at the national level and by the international system at the global level, but are also affected by the regional level.

In all, we can draw some conclusions between regional factors and the integration reunification model. (1) As to the hard regional factor, if both the divided nations had normal diplomatic relationships with a regional big power, it would be conducive to the nation's integration reunification. (2) As for the soft regional factor, if the divided states had cooperated in a mature regional multilateral organization in the Lockean cultural pattern, it would contribute to the integration reunification model. Then we can prove the research hypothesis and draw a conclusion: "Regional factors affect the divided nation's reunification model." This will count for China's reunification studies to some extent.

China is a country that has not been reunified completely yet. "One Country, Two Systems", the reunification policy of the mainland is similar to the peaceful integration model. Based on the research findings of the "regional factor and reunification model", we can deduce current regional factors' effects in the process of China's reunification in the following points. First, Japan the regional big power is the hard regional factor in China's reunification issue. However Japan does not play a positive role in this process. With Japan seeking to shed a half-century of pacifism and reassert itself in world affairs, and China acquiring vastly larger economic and military might, relations between the two are as tense as they have been at any time since World War II. At the same time, Japan- Taiwan ties blooms. Japan severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan in the 1970s in deference to Beijing's "one-China" principle. But lately, Japan has been less particular about its rule of maintaining a careful distance. Japanese leaders had for the first time jointly with US declared protection of the Taiwan Strait a "common strategic objective" in 2006 (Failoa, 2006: March 24). In the second place, as for the soft regional factor, since there is no a mature regional multilateral organization in East Asia area until now, the mainland and Taiwan Island are outside the RMO. The interactions between the two sides are not constrained by the

RMO rules.

In order to promote the nation's peaceful integration reunification, the mainland government should pay much attention to regional factors in the cross-strait situation. At the level of hard regional factor, China needs to improve its diplomatic relations with Japan, and change these abnormal situations of closely developing economic ties and political tensions. At the level of soft regional factor, the mainland government needs to establish a mature regional multilateral organization in East Asia. For China's integration reunification, in order to promote the reunification process by the RMO's norms and rules, it is useful to give Taiwan some international space in the region and include it into the framework of the RMO. In short, all these regional implementing polices will contribute to the peace and stability of the cross-strait relations and could promote the "One Country, Two Systems" integration reunification process.

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