The Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs (SJEAA) is dedicated towards addressing compelling issues in the East Asian region in a manner accessible to a general audience. SJEAA showcases undergraduate and graduate work on East Asia in all academic disciplines from leading universities both in the United States and from abroad. Copies of the SJEAA are distributed to East Asian studies departments and libraries across the nation.

If your department, library, or organization is interested in subscribing to the SJEAA, please contact us at sjeea-submissions@lists.stanford.edu. Subscription is free and editions come out twice a year. For more details, please visit our website at http://sjeaa.stanford.edu.
Executive Board

Editors-in-Chief
Geoffrey Miles Lorenz    Katie Salisbury

Business Manager
Crystal Yuan Zheng

Editorial Board

China  Tsung-yen Chen    Kristina Yang

Japan  Ben Dooley

Korea  Josephine Suh    Albert Rhee

Southeast Asia  Kjell Ericson

Assistant Editors

Tony Wan    George Wang
Crystal Yuan Zheng
Christine Peng    Yo-Yo Shuang

Production Board

Wesley Chaney    Tony Wan
Editors-in-Chief Emeritus

Josephine Lau
Phillip Y. Lipscy
Junko Sasaki
Dinyar Patel
Victorien Wu
Andrew MacDonald
Stella Shin
Shameel Ahmad

Faculty Advisory Board

Gordan Chang  History
Phillip Y. Lipscy  Political Science
Jean Oi  Political Science
Daniel Okimoto  Political Science
Gi-Wook Shin  Sociology
Andrew Walder  Sociology

Special Thanks To

Shornestein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University
Associated Students of Stanford University
Center for East Asian Studies, Stanford University
# Table of Contents

## Voices

- **Tony Cheong Wing Wan**
  *CCP 17th Party Congress*
  - Page 10

- **Tsung-yen Chen**
  *Soft Power Rules in East Asia*
  - Page 13

## Greater China

- **Sarah Huber**
  *Should the World Bank Continue Lending to China?*
  - Page 20

- **Chiara Park Terzuolo**
  *Opera and Politics*
  - Page 34

- **Ashton Liu**
  *Workers in Protest*
  - Page 46

## Korea

- **Suk-Hyun Lee**
  *From Multilateralism to Bilateralism*
  - Page 60

- **Jung-Yul Kim**
  *Anti-Americanism as an Expression and Evidence of Democratization*
  - Page 73

## South East Asia

- **Brian Bernards**
  *Ambivalent Boundaries*
  - Page 88
The Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs has now entered its seventh year of publication. In that time, it has witnessed the tragic human consequences of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, traced the geopolitical fallout of continuing North Korean brinkmanship and testified to the horrific cost of the 2003 epidemic maelstrom that came to be known as SARS. Its pages have also borne witness to the emancipation of an unprecedented number of people from the shackles of poverty, discussed increasing pan-Asian cooperation through regional institutions like ASEAN and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and debated Beijing’s triumph in its bid to host the 2008 Olympics. This issue brims with an astonishing breadth of analysis that the Journal has come to exemplify, showcasing at an international level both undergraduate theses and doctoral papers from leading institutions around the world.
In 2008 East Asia witnessed a deadly cyclone in Myanmar, followed by international pleas to its military government to allow relief workers into the country, a massive 8.0 earthquake in Sichuan which resulted in both widespread outrage over shoddy construction and a national effort to aid quake victims in China, threats from North Korea to restore facilities used to produce plutonium as its notorious leader, Kim Jong-Il, was hospitalized after suffering a stroke, the ousting of Thai Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat by protestors barricaded in Suvarnabhumi International Airport, the highly anticipated and controversial Beijing Summer Olympics, and finally the international repercussions of the U.S. financial crisis contribute to economic slumps in Japan and South Korea.

The articles in this edition of the Journal examine issues of political repression, collective organization, cultural expression, economic stability, and national and ethnic identity—all of which remain very relevant matters in this diverse and expansive region.

With the support of our editorial board, staff members, and contributors from around the world, the Journal continues to grow into a springboard for thoughtful and original discussion of the many pressing problems faced by East Asia in the 21st Century. We invite you to continue contributing to the conversations that take place within and beyond these pages, and to provide new insight on the compelling East Asian issues of our time.

Geoffrey Lorenz & Katie Salisbury

Editors-in-Chief, Winter 2009
The 17th Party Congress, held in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, is a momentous event for the political leadership that has taken place approximately every five years since 1969. It sums up the achievements of previous years and outlines broad objectives for the coming ones. Previous congresses have set the course for dramatic changes in political currents with significant socioeconomic implications, such as the onset of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the subsequent arrest of the Gang of Four, and the rehabilitation of reform-minded leaders such as Deng Xiaoping. Since the 15th Party Congress, the emphasis has been shifted to address the social consequences of rapid and sometimes uncontrolled economic growth, on issues such as the corporate restructuring of state-owned enterprises. At stake is the Chinese Communist Party’s commitment to the socialist ideology that it was founded upon.

Most intriguing for party members and observers alike is whether or not the Communist leadership underwent any dramatic shuffling that would signal the rise or fall of important personnel. But compared to that of the 16th Party Congress in which there was a dramatic turnover in leadership, the personnel reshuffling in the 17th Party Congress can be considered somewhat tame. On the final day, the congress elected a new Central Committee of 204 members that reappointed Hu Jintao as the Chairman and Wen Jiabao as the State Council premier. Analysts point to the rise of Xi Jinping, and to some extent, Li Keqiang, into the Politburo Standing Committee as the most significant outcome of the political shuffling. They are considered to be the current choice of successors to Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, respectively. Xi Jinping’s accession to the Politburo Standing Committee without prior service is taken as evidence that “the Party leadership is using the precedent of Hu Jintao’s preparation to succeed Jiang Zemin as the pathway for Xi’s succession to Hu himself.”

Xi Jinping is considered by some as a “princeling” with reliable communist bloodlines from his father Xi Zhongxun, a prominent veteran with ties to Deng Xiaoping. He also possesses extensive academic and bureaucratic qualifications. In addition to a law degree, he has also earned a degree in chemical engineering from Qinghua University and engaged in postgraduate studies in Marxist theory. He has extensive government experience in Fujian, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, as well as military experience in the Central Military Commission Central Office.

Li Keqiang had previously been considered the likely successor to Hu Jintao. He earned a PhD in economics from Beijing University, and despite doubts over the “authenticity” of this degree (it was granted from a part-time executive “night school” program) he has been accredited with developing,
in 1991, a groundbreaking theory about China’s economy. The Li Keqiang-Wen Jiabao team may help push forward Hu Jintao’s plans for extended economic development, and according to Barry Naughton, “the premier and the executive vice-premier are both clear reformists and attuned to further reform…we now have a dynamic duo of reformist leaders who can share responsibility and drive forward an ambitious agenda.”

Though both these leaders possess significant academic qualifications, their different work experience and background are worth nothing. Li Keqiang built his career from humble origins, and climbed the ranks through political work in Henan and Liaoning. He also served as a member of the Secretariat in the Communist Youth League, which happens to be Hu Jintao’s political power base. On the other hand, the “princeling” Xi Jinping oversaw significant economic growth during his time in Zhejiang, and was later appointed Party Chief of Shanghai. According to Cheng Li, Li presents himself as more of a populist leader, while Xi is seen as representing the interests of entrepreneurs and the middle class. It will be interesting in the coming years to see how these contrasting political experiences affect policymaking agendas.

The most significant amendment to the Party Constitution in the 17th Congress was the adoption of Hu Jintao’s “scientific development concept,” which has been pushed since 2003 and aims to address increasing social instability stemming from perceived excesses of economic development. It signaled Hu’s determination to pursue a more balanced economic approach, specifically focused on curbing the excessive consumption of limited natural resources, damage to the environment, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Also significant was a reference to the need to “boost democracy at intra-Party and government sphere and expand democracy,” and to facilitate a more balanced growth and increased wealth in poorer western regions that have so far been left out of the picture.

Hu’s continued emphasis on reforms, development, and economic growth is significant, for it comes at a time that has witnessed the emergence of what some have called the “New Left,” who critique privatization and “Westernization” as a major cause of current social inequalities and the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. New Left critics, some of whom are retired, but still influential, senior cadres, argue that reforms have “gone badly off track,” and that shady practices in the restructuring process of state-owned enterprises, such as asset stripping and manager buyouts, have threatened to compromise the government’s claim to a stable, harmonious society.

Interestingly, Joseph Fewsmith has suggested that Hu’s concept of a harmonious society is now being used by the ‘New Left’ to criticize reform and opening up. On the other side of the New Left are those who believe that social inequalities exist because reforms have not been thorough and complete. They warn that any attempt to pause reform for the sake of balancing economic disparity would have dire consequences for the future. In light of this debate, Hu’s “scientific development concept” and support for ongoing “reform and opening up” are considered by some analysts as his support for the latter argument. Indeed, it has been argued that China’s booming economy and increasing revenues can provide a stronger fiscal base
that can provide urgently needed fiscal resources to impoverished areas. But the issue remains of how the present and future leadership will navigate complex political currents and balance center and local interests to ensure that this redistribution of wealth will occur. In essence, for a government whose legitimacy largely rests on economic growth and permitting individuals to amass wealth, how will the leadership get the rich to offset the expenses of the poor?

ENDNOTES

1 Alice Miller, "China’s New Party Leadership." *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 23, p. 6
2 Barry Naughton, "China’s Economic Leadership after the 17th Party Congress." *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 23, p. 7

TONY WAN

Tony Wan is second-year M.A. student in East Asian Studies at Stanford University. He received a B.A. in History with Honors from University of California, San Diego. He is an avid photographer, and pursues a wide range of academic interests, from frontier and ethnicity issues in late-imperial and early-modern China to contemporary state-society relations in the post-Mao era. He is currently researching changes in minority education in Xinjiang during the Republican era.
Attracting allies through cultural exchange and economic interdependence, what Nye refers to as “soft power,” is becoming increasingly important for states around the world. This thinking is increasingly influencing not only East Asian governments, but also their citizens. Based on the importance of economy and trade, states use soft power to attract others, making them alter their policies. For example, Taiwan has used economic incentives to secure votes from third world countries in support of its application to several international organizations despite Chinese opposition. In East Asia, the ideological and military power that dominated strategic thinking in cold war era no long satisfies the state’s needs.

The shift of thinking is reflected in two recent presidential elections in East Asia. Taiwan and South Korea both advanced democratic development in the past three decades. Parties that symbolize progress together overwhelmed conservative parties in the last four presidential elections held by either South Korea or Taiwan. However, in December 2007 and March 2008, respectively, both electorates in South Korea and Taiwan signaled their increasing preference toward their leadership focusing on developing economic power, recognizing that both incumbent parties should stop using ideology or military conflicts to hijack voters’ selections. Political appeals should not be adopted to ruin each state’s economy.

Divergent Implications of Political Forces

In 1987 and 1996, respectively, South Korea and Taiwan ended decades of autocratic rule and began practicing representative democracy. Before then, non-party forces continuously challenged the autocracies, forcing them to hold free and fair presidential elections. In 1997 and 2002, South Koreans elected Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun to lead the country. Both were seen as liberal forces of progress and reform. Taiwanese people first in 2000 and again in 2004 elected opposition leader Chen Shui-bian, who promised to reform his autocratic, corrupt and outdated predecessors of the Nationalist Party (KMT).

However, these two progressive forces in Taiwan and South Korea possess different perspectives on critical political issues. Rick Chu, one of the foremost experts on Northeast Asia in Taiwan, points out that post-war anti-communist conservative leaders in South Korea oppose improving their country’s relationship with North Korea and the agenda of unification. On the contrary, conservative leaders in Taiwan, immediately after being overwhelmed by the Chinese communist party, strongly opposed the communist regime of Mainland China and foresaw an imminent opportunity to eradicate...
it; nevertheless, this stance has changed over the past decades, and now the KMT seeks to embrace communist China and hopes for eventual reunification. While the progressive force in South Korea appeals to unification with the communist regime in North Korea, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan maintains a preference for seeking independence. Political agendas held by progressive parties in both cases successfully helped secure presidential posts.

Kim Dae-jung’s “Sunshine Policy” and Roh Moo-hyun’s opposition to the U.S. government’s tough foreign policy toward North Korea both earned recognition from South Korean voters. Immediately proceeding the 1997 and 2002 elections, both candidates proposed an end to the political burdens passing down from the Cold War era and also evoked anti-American sentiment pervading Korean society. Chen Shui-bian, representing the DPP in 2000 and 2004 elections, appealed to Taiwanese nationalism in order to generate a strong sense of antagonism toward Beijing’s authority. He emphasized issues such as the potential annexation threat from Mainland China and ethnic hostility between mainlanders and islanders in order to bring down the conservative KMT. These issues can be traced back to unsolved post-Cold War issues that caused deep enmity across the Taiwan Strait. Obstacles caused by different reasons allowed conservative parties in both countries to manipulate divergently, which might potentially generate different kinds of political appeals held by progressive parties. Unfortunately, leaders in both countries were unable to realize their promises during the election campaigns. The public started to blame their “progressive reformist” incumbents for the economic recession. Therefore in 2007 and 2008, both electorates voted for rising political stars that were nurtured under former autocratic regimes.

Economic Issues Gain Momentum

Under Kim and Roh’s administration, the South Korean economy was not substantially invigorated. Rick Chu points out that South Korea began a problematic rapid accumulation of huge amounts of short-term foreign debt, already surpassing the scope of similar problems that arose during the 1997 Asian financial crisis. A large part of this debt was borrowed from Japanese banks. Consequently, South Korea would be hit greatly if the Japanese yen appreciates in the future. Another trouble arises from rampant underground economy, which accounts for about half of South Korea’s GDP, that has emerged since 1980. Economic health therefore remains vulnerable. Borrowing a huge amount of Japanese yen to supply an underground economy has further drained away legal and healthy economic activities in South Korea. An immediate example of the consequences is Korean college tuition that is on a par with that of Japanese universities, despite a South Korean per capita income equaling only half of Japan’s. After graduation, those “social freshmen” have to pay back their education debts, endure exorbitant rental rates manipulated by speculators, and endure real purchasing power stagnation. This fragile macroeconomic structure has alarmed many financial experts, who warn that another financial crisis might emerge. Complaints about increasing South Korean commodity prices prompted Lee Myung-bak’s victory, with promises to reinvigorate South Korea’s economy.
During his time as mayor of Seoul, Lee successfully restored Cheonggyecheon stream, which runs across the heart of the city. His efficient and effective improvement of the once dingy and intractable gutter problem has earned him great respect throughout the country. People considered Lee a CEO with guts and resolve capable of reversing South Korea’s economic predicament. Lee also discarded the pro-North Korea stances of his two predecessors, promising to abolish the Ministry of Unification and stop unconditionally aiding and supporting North Korea at the expense of souring relations with United States and the government’s coffers. Restoring friendly relations with the United States became one of the most prominent planks of Lee’s platform. On the contrary, Chung Dong-young, former Minister of Unification and Lee’s electoral opponent, had promised to maintain the sunshine policy toward South Korea’s northern communist neighbor despite the policy’s poor reception by the Bush administration. Despite Chung’s appeal to economic issues that lay along similar lines as Lee’s, the political burden of his North Korean policies obfuscated his focus on economy. It is pretty obvious that South Koreans, after suffering ten years of economic stagnation and decades of political standoff with North Korea despite spending a large amount of budgets to aid North Korea, gave Lee a chance, and expected him to practically to bail them out of economic troubles.

Meanwhile, under eight years of DPP administrations, appeals to political division and cross-strait relations have lost their momentum, therefore allowing economic issues to come to the fore. During the election, the DPP accused KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou of holding “permanent resident” status and questioned his loyalty to Taiwan. The policy of forging a common market with Mainland China has also aroused people’s suspicion that as ties become closer, it will become harder for Taiwan to resist China’s political and economic domination. Less than a week before Election Day, China’s severe repression of Tibetan protestors further frightened Taiwanese regarding closer relations with Beijing. With these political disadvantages, many experts estimate Ma to win by only a slim margin. However, he won the election by a sixteen percent margin of about 2.2 million votes.

According to official statistics, aside from a short-term economic downturn when DPP first came into power, economic performance under the DPP's eight-year rule seemed to be normal. In terms of economic statistics, the KMT’s accusations of economic backslide, pay-level stagnation, and widening gaps between the rich and the poor were all untenable. Only two plausible criticisms, a climbing unemployment rate and constraints on cross-strait trading policies, are supported by facts. In the period of Chen’s rule, unemployment rate has indeed climbed, but has remained at an unremarkable level (around 4%). Even though Chen’s administration still imposed certain constraints on Taiwan’s investment in China, the investment volume has been growing in huge amounts that have catapulted Taipei into the ranks of Beijing’s major trading and investment partners. Even so, several corruption scandals involving the First Family and Chen’s cronies have greatly harmed Chen and the DPP.

The media, though often ignored by the
outside world, should be considered a critical factor in this swift change in Taiwanese politics. There are seven 24-hour news channels in Taiwan. Of those, only two are friendly to DPP and the remainder consider themselves the government’s “supervisors,” and therefore severely criticized First Family corruption and magnified DPP wrongdoings and an impression of economic downturn. The KMT used this opportunity to argue that the DPP agenda of Taiwanese independence would greatly harm the island’s economic strength. Ma asserted that an open policy toward China would help Taiwan take off in the near future. The impression of economic deterioration, corruption scandals, and several verbal gaffes by government officials led people to distrust Chen and his party. Consequently, the KMT has overwhelmingly defeated DPP in local elections in 2005, the legislative and presidential elections of 2008.

New Challenges Under Old Troubles
The outcomes of both elections signal changes of people’s political expectations. Political remnants of the Cold War have stopped determining electoral results in the past decade. In a comparatively peaceful world, people have begun to care most about economic development. The Chinese government hopes to politically survive as long as possible by maintaining high economic growth. The Japanese government strives to reform the bulky bureaucratic system, injecting more elements of competitiveness and efficiency into Japan’s society. People in Taiwan and South Korea have chosen leaders who appealed to economic development. In just five months, however, the approval rating of South Korea’s new president has dropped to less than 30 percent. Meanwhile, whether or not Taiwan’s new president can realize his promise under increasingly opaque cross-strait relations remains to be seen. Though economic appeals successfully put both new presidents in power, they cannot avoid those critical political issues that concern the world while reviving the economy. Real challenges are just starting to ferment.

ENDNOTES
1 The idea of “soft power” mentioned here comes from Joseph Nye’s book “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.” In Nye’s word, soft power “is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. (p.x)” In this sense, successful economic development of a state can attract other states to comply in exchange for economic benefits, such as investments, trades or experiences. Soft power is also used as an opposite idea of “hard power” which powerful states adopt military coercions or economic sanctions to force other states to comply.
2 The progressive force mentioned here refers to Kim Dae Jung’s Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) and Roh Moo-hyun’s Uri Party (or “Our Open Party”). Although Roh was seen as the successor of Kim, he left the MDP and formed the Uri Party. Kim’s MDP in 2008 has merged with the United New Democratic Party to form the United Democratic Party. Political parties in South Korea reshuffled all the time and the life of a certain party couldn’t survive in a long period. Therefore, it is more appropriate to target a leader and his affiliates as a certain type of group, rather than the party.
TSUNG-YEN CHEN

Tsung-yen Chen is currently a MA candidate in East Asian Studies at Stanford University. He served as the China Section editor from 2007-2008, and is now the editor-in-chief of Stanford Journal of East Asian Studies. He is a native of Taiwan and received his BA in 2003 from National Chengchi University. Tsung-yen’s current research focuses on Asian international relations, especially the development of regional organizations.
Figure 2
Annual Military Expenditures in Five of China's Neighboring States
China is often used as the poster child of the international development community. Its peaceful rise to reclaim its historical place among the world’s great economic powers has both heartened and puzzled economists the world over. The impressive statistics describing China’s economic advance—over 9 percent annual GDP growth since the opening of the economy in 1978—are undeniably attributable to a multitude of factors: domestic and foreign, public and private, natural and engineered, capitalist and socialist. That China has lifted “over four hundred million people out of poverty in 20 years” is so oft quoted that its meaning has rather dulled. But expressed in another way, poverty reduction in China has accounted for over 75 percent of the poverty reduction in the developing world in the past 20 years.

China’s controlled version of a market economy is still rife with problems, but it is a far cry from the China of the Great Leap Forward (da yue jin) in the late 1950s, when mass starvation resulted from a misguided obsession with industrial production. The sustainability of China’s growth certainly requires the involvement of the international community, but in what manner and on what level? Its success sharply delineates the contrast with those countries that continue to lag far behind, especially in Africa. International development assistance is limited economically and, perhaps more importantly, politically. The resources of the World Bank are no exception. Hence, it is fair to ask: should the World Bank still be lending money to China?

This paper will first look at continuation or cessation of current World Bank lending in China from three technical Bank-focused perspectives: the mandate of the Bank set out in the Articles of Agreement, the unofficial graduation policy of the Bank, and recent examples of countries that have graduated from Bank lending. Many may deem these analyses inconclusive because they rely on the validity of the Bank’s mandate, the validity of the Bank’s past interpretation of it, or the similarity of past situations in other developing countries to China today. Hence, it is necessary...
to discuss whether there are more important theoretical arguments that override mandate, policy, or past practice. Most of the discussion will relate to lending by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD or the “Bank”), since China graduated from International Development Association (IDA) lending after fiscal year 1999.³

**World Bank Lending in China**

The World Bank began lending to China in 1981, with $100 million disbursed under both the IBRD and the IDA. IBRD loans were halted following the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4, 1989; however, they soon resumed in 1991. IBRD lending flows to China peaked in the mid-1990s with $2.37 billion disbursed in 1995.⁴ Since then loan disbursements have fallen to $1.03 billion, although China was still the fourth largest borrower from the Bank in 2005.

Though disbursements to China have shrunk in recent years, this is in large part due to the shrinking size of the overall Bank portfolio, and the exposure limit of $13.5 billion of outstanding loans for any one borrower (increased to $14.5 billion in FY2006).⁵ China still receives the largest share of total loans to Asian countries. Although China received no new IDA disbursements after 1999, it continued to make principal and interest payments on outstanding IDA loans. As of year-end 2004, China had $10.7 billion outstanding in IDA loans, which is almost as much as it had outstanding in IBRD loans at $11 billion.⁶ The loss of the IDA window placed a strain on relations between the World Bank and the Chinese government, since at that time China’s per capita GDP was below the cutoff line and 200 million of its people were still living below the World Bank poverty level of $1 per day. Following the loss of IDA funding, the Chinese government limited World Bank lending

---

**IBRD and IDA Commitments to China by Fiscal Year**

![IBRD and IDA Commitments to China by Fiscal Year](chart)

*Source: Data from World Bank*
to poor provinces and social sectors because such loans were unsustainable under IBRD terms. Under the IBRD’s beneficiary repayment system, the beneficiaries of loans were required to pay for the financing.\(^7\)

Recently, cooperation between the IBRD and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has attempted to simulate the terms of IDA lending in order to “remain engaged in social sectors and poverty projects.”\(^8\) The DFID grant is administered through a trust fund and used to prepay a portion of the IBRD loan periodically over the life of the project. This program began with the Tuberculosis Control Project in 2002, which provided the Chinese government with a $104 million loan at a 2 percent interest rate.\(^9\) Subsequently, in 2003 a $100 million loan for the Basic Education in Western Areas Project was similarly funded to produce an effective 2 percent interest rate over a term of 20 years.\(^10\) The merit of this program will be addressed later.

From 1981 to the present, the sectors in China receiving the most funding (including IBRD and IDA loans) were rural development and transportation, each with approximately 25 percent of total funds. Lending in China has retained a strong emphasis on infrastructure (transportation, energy, mining, and telecommunications), accounting for 52 percent of lending between 1998 and 2002, while total World Bank lending for this sector has decreased. Environmental spending has risen from nothing in 1990 to 8 percent of loans between 1998 and 2002. Human development lending in China has fallen over time to an average of 8 percent in the 1990s, while Bank-wide lending for human development rose to 23 percent.\(^11\) As of December 31, 2004, the breakdown of ongoing project lending was as follows: transportation at 31 percent, urban development (including environment and water) at 25 percent, rural development at 22 percent, energy at 15 percent, and human development at 6 percent.\(^12\)

During the 1980s and most of the 1990s, the World Bank focused on lending for projects in the coastal regions of China. The gap between rural and urban/coastal incomes began to grow in 1990, and, as a result, the World Bank has become increasingly interested in lending to interior regions, which accounted for 56 percent of lending between 1998 and 2002. Despite this shift, lending to interior regions has declined in absolute terms over the past 10 years as overall lending to China declined. Lending to poor provinces has been constrained by China’s beneficiary repayment system, ineffectual fiscal transfers of a decentralized government, and political sensitivities. The Bank has never been asked to fund a project in Tibet, one of China’s poorest provinces, because of political tensions.\(^13\)

**Lending Mandate of the Bank**

The Bank’s mandate for lending is spelled out in its Articles of Agreement. The two most relevant aspects to the topic of this paper are in the clauses addressing the purpose and conditionality of direct Bank lending. Among the purposes of the IBRD set out in Article 1, only one explicitly mentions direct lending of IBRD funds: “when private capital is not available on reasonable terms, to supplement private investment by providing, on suitable conditions, finance for productive purposes out of its own capital, funds raised by it and its other resources.” With respect to conditionality, Section
4(ii) of Article 3 states that the IBRD will extend loans to a member when it is “satisfied that in the prevailing market conditions the borrower would be unable otherwise to obtain the loan under conditions which in the opinion of the Bank are reasonable for the borrower.”

Is it the case that private capital is not available on reasonable terms to China? The growth of private capital flows into China over the past 25 years has been tremendous. Annual foreign direct investment (FDI) has grown from nothing in 1981 to $60.4 billion in 2005, and China has become the second largest recipient of total FDI worldwide. The chart below shows FDI and World Bank loans as percentages of China’s GDP from 1990 to 2000, with World Bank lending consistently below 0.5 percent while FDI ranges from 4 percent to 7 percent for most of the 1990s. In 2005, FDI was 2.7 percent of GDP ($2.23 trillion), while Bank lending was 0.05 percent.

![Image of GDP chart](source: Figure from World Bank)

China’s total foreign debt, including public and private foreign debt, has increased from $55.3 billion in 1990 to a forecasted $307.6 billion by the end of 2006. The ramp-up in short-term debt can be seen as a combination of banks and firms taking advantage of low short-term foreign interest rates and some speculation about appreciation of the yuan. The Chinese government itself does not engage in long-term borrowing because of its huge current account surpluses and FDI inflows, which have led to a tremendous stock of foreign reserves. Reserves totaled more than $821 billion at the end of 2005 and are predicted to be over 300 percent of total external debt stock by the end of 2006.
Currently, China is accumulating a vast amount of foreign assets and foreign capital through both increasing FDI and its huge current account surpluses. In 2005, China reported a current account surplus of $161 billion, which, added to FDI, amounts to an annual inflow of well over $200 billion. Next to this, the scale of World Bank lending at a mere $1 billion is truly insignificant. Even if the World Bank would like to lend more, its total lending worldwide through the IBRD for fiscal year 2005 was only $13.6 billion. Additionally, its lending to China is limited since China already has $11 billion of the $14.5 billion exposure limit outstanding. The IBRD has made an agreement with China based on a 2003 policy that allows it to continue to lend to a country that has reached its exposure limit, provided that arrangements are made to ensure that net exposure to the borrower does not increase. However, this agreement has yet to be activated.

In 2000, the Meltzer Commission found that 70 percent of the World Bank’s non-aid resources (IBRD loans) over the last seven years have gone to 11 countries that “enjoy easy access to the capital markets.” Between 1993 and 1999, China received 12 percent of all IBRD loans, while maintaining an investment grade credit rating. The US Treasury Department, in its response to the findings of the Meltzer Commission, stated, “the private capital that is available [to middle-income countries] comes with interest rates that are prohibitive for development programs.” While this may be true for some middle-income countries, it is clearly not true for China.

The People’s Republic of China has a sovereign issuer rating of A-, which is four notches into investment grade territory. China has been rated investment grade since 1992. External debt spreads have been low and stable for the past several years. So far in 2006, the spread of China’s sovereign debt over US Treasuries has remained between 50 and 60 basis points.

Considering that the IBRD, as an AAA-rated institution, can borrow funds at slightly above the rate of Treasuries of comparable maturities, and that they typically add a 50 basis point spread to cover administrative costs and operating expenses, it appears that World Bank financing might actually be slightly more expensive than Chinese sovereign debt. As a result, Chinese interest in World Bank loans has declined over time. To incentivize China to borrow more, concessionary programs such as the DFID program described earlier are becoming more popular. The concessional nature of these loans seems to contradict the World Bank’s decision that China no longer qualifies for concessional lending through the IDA. Not surprisingly, this trend has been appreciated by the Chinese government, who had previously noted that the costs of Bank loans were “increasingly uncompetitive with other financing sources.”

While there is clearly some subjective leeway in the interpretation of “reasonable” terms for borrowing, it would be hard to say given the data that Chinese access to and terms of private borrowing are not extremely reasonable.

**Graduation Policy of the Bank**

When a country passes a specific GNP per capita threshold ($5,225 at 2000 prices), the Bank analyzes the country’s readiness for graduation from Bank assistance by focusing on
two aspects: “(i) whether the country has access to external capital markets on reasonable terms, and (ii) the progress the country has made in establishing economic and social institutions.”

Graduation then takes place five years after the income threshold has been passed. During the pre-graduation period, countries progress through more and more stringent borrowing terms that shorten the maturity and grace period for loans. In 1997 numbers, the schedule was per capita GNP of $1,505 or less for 20-year IBRD terms, $1,506-$3,125 for 17-year IBRD terms, and $3,126 or more for 15-year IBRD terms.

Following graduation, the IBRD will provide technical assistance on a fee basis, and IFC eligibility continues for several more years. Graduation does not imply that development is complete, but rather that financial assistance is no longer justified relative to demands from other members given the Bank’s limited resources.

The graduation policy of the World Bank does take into account the specific circumstances of each country, and, in light of this, the IDA cut off China’s access to soft loans before China had passed the maximum per capita income threshold of $925 at 1997 prices. In 1999, when China’s eligibility for IDA funding ended, its GDP per capita was $861. With regard to the conditions for lending under IDA, its Articles of Agreement state in Section 1(c) of Article 5 that “the Association shall not provide financing if in its opinion such financing is available from private sources on terms which are reasonable for the recipient or could be provided by a loan of the type made by the Bank.”

China has clearly not passed the threshold for graduation consideration, since its GNP per capita for 2004 was $1,290. Income growth is expected, but per capita levels will remain low for the foreseeable future, rising to $1,689 in 2007. China has certainly made a tremendous amount of progress in establishing economic institutions, such as the development of securities markets, the creation of intellectual property laws, bank recapitalization and regulations, and the creation of consumer credit bureaus. Recent progress in establishing social institutions has been on a somewhat smaller scale, but there have been significant results. Adult illiteracy fell from 37 percent in 1978 to less than 5 percent in 2002, and the infant mortality rate fell from 41 deaths per every 1,000 live births in 1978 to 30 in 2002. However, rural development remains a major problem, with very uneven education and healthcare spending between urban and rural areas.

According to the unofficial graduation policy of the Bank, it appears that China should continue to receive Bank financial assistance, since its per capita income has not reached the cutoff. Moreover, it could be argued that China’s social institutions have not made sufficient progress to warrant graduation.

Graduation of Other Developing Countries from IBRD Lending

Another way to assess China’s readiness for graduation from IBRD lending is to compare their economic situation with that of other countries that have recently graduated from IBRD lending. Here we focus primarily on per capita GDP and sovereign credit rating at the time of graduation. In March 2004, Slovenia became the first former Soviet transition economy to graduate from...
borrower status to donor partner at the World Bank. In the year prior to its graduation in 2003, Slovenia’s per capita GDP was $14,248, and its sovereign debt in early 2004 was rated AA for local currency and A+ for foreign currency obligations. Slovenia’s foreign currency rating has since been upgraded to AA-. In April 2005, the Czech Republic decided to officially stop borrowing from the World Bank. In fact, they had not received any new commitments since 1997, or any disbursements since 2000. In 2004, their per capita GDP was $10,516. The Czech Republic is currently rated A for local currency and A- for foreign currency obligations with a positive outlook added in November 2005.

In 2002, the World Bank reported that Hungary had entered into pre-graduation arrangements and had unofficially ceased borrowing from the Bank. Although Hungary’s per capita income ($4,800 in 2001) was slightly under the cutoff line, they proceeded with the pre-graduation process due to “the progress Hungary has made in completing the transition agenda and its favorable access to capital market finance.” At the time Hungary was rated A+ for local currency obligations and A- for foreign currency obligations. Hungary is currently rated A- for all obligations, with a negative outlook added in January 2006.

With the publication of the 2003-2005 Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Poland, the Bank announced that “while Poland’s per capita income is below the threshold at which discussions on formal graduation would normally commence, the Polish authorities wish to regard this as a pre-graduation CAS.” Poland’s per capita GDP in 2002 was $5,179. At the time of this announcement in 2003, Poland had an A local currency rating and a BBB+ foreign currency rating. In November 2003, Poland was downgraded to A- for its local currency debt, and since then its ratings have remained stable.

First of all, it is clear that China’s current foreign currency credit rating of A- is comparable to that of each of these countries at their graduation: two notches below Slovenia, the same as the Czech Republic and Hungary, and one notch above Poland. While China has been at investment grade since Standard & Poor’s started rating it in 1992, it only reached the A- level in July 2005. The Czech Republic has been rated A- since 1998, and Hungary has been rated A- since 2000. Even Poland, which is currently rated below China, has been BBB+ since 2000, while China only achieved a BBB+ rating in 2004. (China was rated BBB+ in 1997, but received a negative outlook in 1998 and was downgraded in 1999). Overall, while China’s rating is comparable, it has held it for a relatively shorter period of time, and China’s current per capita GDP is at a much lower level.

Perhaps the experience of these eastern European countries is a bad comparison for China. Korea may be a better reference point for China than these transition economies, but Korea’s graduation tells the same story. When Korea ceased borrowing from the Bank in 1995, it had a foreign currency credit rating of A+ in early 1995, upgraded to AA- in May 1995, making it two to three notches above China’s rating today. Additionally, it had sustained an A+ rating since 1989. The most recent prior year’s per capita GDP was $11,588 in 1994.

In sum, while its current credit rating is
Certainly competitive with other recent graduates of IBRD lending, China has in general sustained its current credit rating for a shorter period of time. This may indicate that China has not had the chance to develop the depth and reliability of capital market access that the other recent or soon-to-be graduates have. Additionally, China’s per capita GDP of $1700 in 2005 is clearly not at the level of any of these countries.

Theoretical Arguments For and Against Lending to China

Now we turn from the technical arguments about what the rules stipulate and how the system normally works, to theoretical arguments based on subjective interpretations of what the World Bank should be doing. These arguments are based on many different goals—what is best for the development of the country in question, what is best for the world as a whole, the furthering of an economic or social ideal in general, or maximization of the return on scarce assets.

Those in favor of continued lending to China tend to focus on reports published by the World Bank itself, while those opposed follow the basic arguments of the International Financial Institutions Commission, i.e., the Meltzer Commission, and its members and advisors. The arguments of the Meltzer Commission are generally not focused on China per se, but China does present one of the easier, and to them one of the most blatant, examples of the unfortunate but increasing irrelevance of the World Bank in lending to middle-income countries.

Numbers of Impoverished People

One of the arguments most often advanced for why the Bank should lend to China in particular, and middle-income countries (MICs) more generally, is the large number of people still living in poverty there. 80 percent of the people living in developing countries also live in MICs, and not low-income countries. Similarly, 70 percent of the people living in poverty in developing countries live in MICs as well. China still has 18 percent of the world’s poor, with 150 million people living on less than $1 per day. Leaving differences in the precise definition of “poor” aside, it is undeniable that a huge number of people are living very impoverished lives within MICs, including China. However, the question remains whether World Bank lending should be contingent on the presence of impoverished people, whatever their number.

Desmond Lachman of the American Enterprise Institute asks, “If poverty alone were a valid reason for World Bank lending, why is the Bank not lending to the US, whose poverty problem has become all too visible after Hurricane Katrina?” It is true that the US government’s failure to allocate adequate resources to New Orleans has led to many people, even a year later, living in condemned houses blackened with mold because they have no other options. The comparison with the US is a bit extreme, however, since the poor in the US are likely much better off than the average rural Chinese farmer and have access to a wider array of domestic resources. Poverty is a symptom of many complex problems—social, political, and economic—and poverty reduction requires substantial domestic commitment, effort, and time. It is questionable whether it is right or even efficient for an institution with increasingly limited
resources to attack a symptom rather than focusing its energy in countries where it has significant sway over the root causes of the problem—economic development and policy reform.

*Lending Brings Policy Reform*

The World Bank has undoubtedly had great influence on the policy development of many emerging economies through both technical and financial assistance. The World Bank’s role in helping China implement market economy reforms with development lending has been dramatically described as “drawing the Communist nation out of its insularity and propelling it onto the center-stage of the global economy.” While this gives rather short shrift to the tremendous internal dynamics of China’s economic transformation, it does reflect a not uncommon perception of policymakers and journalists in the US. This argument would undoubtedly have been more convincing 10 to 20 years ago. In fact, the former Premier Zhao Ziyang rejected the State Planning Commission’s 7th Five-Year Plan on the basis that it did not conform sufficiently to the 1985 World Bank report on China’s long-term development options.

However, the power of the World Bank to influence the policies of a particular country declines as a country becomes more economically and technologically advanced, i.e., as they become richer and the knowledge differential shrinks. As a World Bank Operations Evaluation report states, “in the early 1980s the knowledge gap between the World Bank and Chinese experts was analogous to that between a university professor and a primary school student.” But by the 1990s, the ranks of Chinese policymakers swelled with skilled technocrats, and the consequent influence of the World Bank declined.

Adam Lerrick adds that if the Bank’s policy advice is good, countries then should not have to be “paid” to accept it. Otherwise the Bank, and multilateral financial institutions more generally, would be the “only consultants in the world who pay their clients to take their advice.” However, this erroneously assumes that borrower governments are at all times rational actors interested in bringing about a market economy in the same fashion as the Bank would like them to. Nouriel Roubini argues that knowledge transfer is sometimes “embodied” in the lending activity, as management techniques may be integrated with FDI, and that the separation of the two is not always possible.

With China, it is clear that the country is moving towards a market economy, but it is equally clear that its plan is much more gradual than the course many developed countries would like it to pursue. While a World Bank-issued implementation plan may be successfully pushed in a small country with limited fiscal revenues and little or no access to capital markets, it is difficult to argue that China has any reason to listen to the World Bank unless it believes the Bank’s policy ideas are sound and applicable to the Chinese economy. While as Roubini says there may be some embodied knowledge transfer in Bank lending, it creates at most a marginal effect compared to the advice associated with the finance provided by China’s trade partners and foreign private investors.

*Targeting Under-Served Sectors of the Population*

Advocates of continued lending to China state that Bank lending can target specific sectors of the
population that may be ignored by the national government, particularly, the rural populations of western China. The western regions of China lag behind the coastal regions in benefiting from advances in the educational system, infrastructure, and productivity (particularly, agricultural techniques, rural industry, and access to credit). As measured by the Gini index, the income gap between the western regions and the coastal regions has grown from 28 percent in 1981 to 41 percent in 2006. However, this gap does not describe the differences between a growing region and a stagnating one. Both regions have grown tremendously, but the coastal region has grown at a higher rate. The World Bank regional office in China has stated that “urban and coastal areas are growing annually at near double digits while growth in rural areas and some interior provinces is closer to 4-5 percent.” The Economist Intelligence Unit calculated that income growth in rural areas averaged 6.2 percent in 2005, while urban income growth averaged 9.6 percent.

As sensible as it seems to try to mitigate the widening income gap with targeted assistance, it is difficult to know the ultimate end use of a given loan, and whether a project would have been undertaken with or without Bank assistance. As the Meltzer Commission report states, “the fungibility of money eliminates any link between Bank financing and specific projects or promised policy changes.” Additionally, the data for current Bank projects in China show that only 2 of its 88 current projects were funded below the level of the central government.

World Bank reports show concern that without continued IBRD lending to China, many socially desirable projects would not be financed because of their low profitability and lack of interest from the private sector. However, this argument neglects to consider the point that IBRD loans to such projects are guaranteed by the Chinese government, so that the risk is, in actuality, only sovereign risk. With China’s sovereign credit rating, it seems unlikely that the government would be unable to find private lenders willing to finance whatever projects the government should choose given a sovereign guarantee. The Meltzer Commission report states, “the private sector is prepared to finance socially desirable projects with limited cash flow, if the government guarantees to service the debt, as it does when countries borrow from the development banks.” Lerrick described this more vividly at a Center for Global Development symposium, saying that with a sovereign government guarantee, private sector investors “don’t care whether you’re vaccinating Indians in the Amazon or you’re building nuclear weapons.”

**Funds During Crises**

The Bank may provide a more steady flow of funds during times of financial crisis than private investors, whose goal is profit maximization rather than long-term development. The US Treasury Department noted that the Bank may be well-positioned to help countries “avoid unnecessary contractions in fiscal expenditures, restructure banks and other financial institutions, and minimize the adverse impact of the crisis on the poor by strengthening social safety nets.” While the global marketplace generally recovers quickly,
during the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, more investors pulled out and stayed away longer than usual. These arguments may indicate that the Bank has a role to play in China in mitigating financial crises.

Yet, even if the Bank could lend a sufficient amount to “avoid fiscal contractions” in the Chinese economy (which it cannot), their intended role is not that of a crisis lender like the IMF. Second, restructuring of the banks and other financial institutions is undoubtedly important to give confidence to foreign investors and decrease the magnitude of capital flight during crises, but the Bank has so far failed to add significant value in this area and, as covered above, it is unclear that their advice needs to be packaged with their rather meager financial assistance in order to be implemented. Similarly, with respect to social safety nets, protections for the poor that are sustained through financial crises require tremendous domestic commitment and funding, and it is unclear whether Bank funding would make much difference. Finally, due to its conservative capital controls, China was not much affected by the Asian financial crisis, and it receives such large private flows that a pull out of private money could not be compensated for by Bank lending.

National Security Concerns

While many reasonable arguments have been advanced for why China no longer needs Bank assistance, the recent wave of protectionism in the US has also spawned some less well thought out but equally popular reasons for cessation of Bank lending. The Chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the US House of Representatives, Duncan Hunter, recently stated that the US needs to be “vigilant” about the scale of World Bank lending for fear that it will free up cash for the Chinese government to spend on military expansion initiatives and bids for US companies, such as Unocal and Maytag last year. It is true that one can never know the true net effect of the disbursement of a Bank loan. It is also possible that a government may apply for assistance for a rural sanitation project for which funds have already been allocated and then use the Bank funds to arm a new regiment of the infantry. This being said, the scale of World Bank lending relative to Chinese government revenues ($330 billion in 2004) is of such a minimal nature that it is rather difficult to believe that it would make the difference in China’s attainment of political or economic dominance.

Safe Loans Fund Risky Loans

Some argue that the World Bank benefits from lending to China because it reduces the risk of its overall portfolio. The reliable stream of interest payments from China help fund riskier loans to other less developed countries as well as to help fund the IDA grant window. There is great debate over this particular point of whether lending to China generates a net gain or loss.

The Bank charges the same interest rate to all borrowers regardless of their credit risk (a somewhat questionable practice from the point of view of both incentive structures for borrower countries and the Bank’s portfolio risk management). The lending rate is generally the Bank’s own AAA cost of funds plus a spread to cover administrative costs of around 50 basis points. Johannes Zutt, the Bank’s program coordinator for China, recently
stated that the Bank “does not lose any money on China, it does not subsidize China.” This accounting fails to consider both the cost of the risk that member governments bear by guaranteeing the World Bank and the opportunity cost of the Bank’s paid-in capital, retained earnings from investment, and callable capital of member governments.69

The income that the Bank earns and transfers to the IDA is primarily generated from investing the paid-in equity capital of its members and accumulated retained earnings. Lerrick points out that if the Bank’s income was derived from lending activities, we would see a constant net margin over time from a fixed spread between its borrowing and lending rates. In actuality, we see an income stream that fluctuates with interest rates, demonstrating the fact that the Bank’s income stems from returns on its investments, which also fluctuate with interest rates rather than returns on lending.70 Hence, we see no evidence that lending to China funds loans to riskier countries, but rather that the World Bank’s investment portfolio and member country guarantees funds both.

**Conclusion**

Since the pool of economic resources and the degree of political cooperation for international development is limited, it is vital to weigh the net results of World Bank lending to middle-income countries, in particular China. China has access to a huge amount of capital, both foreign (through FDI, exports, and capital markets) and domestic (tax revenues and bank deposits of savings), and at very cheap rates. No matter how advanced the Chinese economy becomes, how much living standards rise, or how low the percentage of those living on less than a dollar a day falls, China will still have a huge number of poor people in absolute terms, simply because it is the most populous country in the world. While we may not agree with their allocation of capital among domestic concerns, we cannot hope to constrain China to follow economic prescriptions by offering loans with uncompetitive interest rates and extensive conditions that amount to 0.5 percent of their annual inflow of foreign capital.

The analysis of this paper indicates that while the unofficial graduation policy and recent graduation practice of the World Bank do support continued lending to China, the mandate of the World Bank as set out in the Bretton Woods Articles of Agreement and the majority of current development arguments offer very little support for continued lending. The idea that funds could be put to better use in places aside from middle-income countries like China has been stated by the Bank itself: “Much of aid continues to go to middle-income countries that do not need it. It is possible to make aid more effectively targeted to poor countries…” While it is easy to ride the coattails of rapid and sustained GDP growth in China as a way to realize massive poverty reduction, there is serious work to be done in low-income countries that have little or no hope of private capital flows and whose domestic economies are stagnating or even regressing. In low-income countries, economic development as a means of poverty reduction is truly difficult and severely constrained, and it is there that the World Bank has the most to offer.
END NOTES

1 Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile: China (2006).
6 World Bank, China at a Glance (September 2005).
8 Ibid.
14 Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report: China (March 2006).
16 Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Data.
17 IMF International Financial Statistics.
18 Economist, Country Data.
20 There may be somewhat less room for maneuvering than $3.5 billion because the $11 billion is from 2004, while the $14.5 billion exposure limit is as of 2006.
21 Moody's Investor Services, Analysis.
22 Meltzer Commission Report, Chapter 3.
25 Standard & Poor’s, Sovereign Ratings History.
29 Ibid.
30 Economist, Country Data.
31 World Bank, China at a Glance (September 2005).
32 Standard & Poor’s, Sovereign Ratings History.
34 Economist Intelligence Unit, China: Country Report.
35 CIA World Factbook.
36 Economist, Country Data.
37 Standard & Poor’s, Sovereign Ratings History.
38 Economist, Country Data.
39 Standard & Poor’s, Sovereign Ratings History.
41 Standard & Poor’s, Sovereign Ratings History.
43 Economist, Country Data.
44 Standard & Poor’s, Sovereign Ratings History.
46 Standard & Poor’s, Sovereign Ratings History.
47 Ibid.
48 Economist, Country Data.
54 Ibid.
57 World Bank, China: Quick Facts.
59 Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report: China.
60 Meltzer Commission Report, Chapter 3.
Sarah Huber

Sarah Huber is a senior associate at McKinsey & Company, serving financial institutions on strategic questions. Her primary interests are in financing sustainable development. She has worked in the US, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and is currently living and working in Mexico City. Sarah graduated from the Columbia School of International and Public Affairs with a Master’s in International Finance & Policy in 2006, and has a Bachelor’s degree from MIT in Management Science. She studied abroad at Beijing University and speaks Chinese and Spanish at an intermediate level.
Beijing opera, known as jingju, has a long and illustrious history beginning in the late 1700s (although other forms of opera had been present since circa 713 AD mid-Tang Dynasty). The art form changed very little until the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). During those turbulent ten years, traditional Beijing opera was banned and replaced by five “modern revolutionary Beijing operas” known as yang ban xi. Although also called Beijing opera, these new creations were, in effect, the complete opposite of traditional opera. The traditional form is purely an artistic endeavor that focuses on the interpretative talents of the actors; in contrast, yang ban xi are meant to serve as political education. Although art and politics have gone hand in hand for centuries, the remarkably single-minded use of all arts as propaganda during the Cultural Revolution is at times difficult to grasp.

During the Cultural Revolution, traditional Beijing opera transformed into an intensely political, revolutionary form. This article details that transition and offers a view of modern revolutionary Beijing opera or yang ban xi from both a political and artistic viewpoint. The history of the genre, its role in the Cultural Revolution with particular emphasis on the values and ideals it promoted, and the implementation of Social Realism and its effects on the performance of opera in China are discussed at length. Finally, the author examines several of Jiang Qing’s Eight Model Works with regard to both artistic and ideological content.

In the past, opera played a significant role in Chinese life at all levels of society. For this very reason the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) chose to use it as an instrument of propaganda. This article explores why the specific medium of opera was chosen and subsequently altered during the Cultural Revolution, and what ideals the yang ban xi convey alongside its role within society. Furthermore, this article attempts to give a well-rounded view of yang ban xi by not only examining the operas in a political context, but also by exploring the themes, values, and ideals they presented to the public.

**Opéra as a Tool for Political Mobilization**

Revolutionary operas were first performed in Yenan in 1938, where Mao stationed his wartime headquarters. These operas were very different from traditional Beijing opera because they were rough and experimental. They lacked the polish of the traditional genre: highly stylized acting,
powerful, nasal singing, elaborate costumes, and the portrayal of very specific role types. The crude prototypes of the later yang ban xi were meant to reflect the revolutionary atmosphere of Yenan. The plots focused on the issue of the Japanese invasion and the struggles of the CCP army. The Northwest Front Service Corps performed the first three operas and sought to improve their performances by taking inspiration from Beijing opera. The actors wore traditional costumes and the CCP military leaders portrayed in the opera displayed the painted face of Jing actors, all while employing the traditional stylized manner of acting. This patchwork of old and new forms exemplifies the youth and novelty of the genre. Later, during the heyday of revolutionary opera, references to traditional Beijing opera were considered unacceptable, even a crime.

The Northwest Front Service Corps performances were not as effective as Mao Zedong wanted them to be. The role of art in politics was very important to his plans and, thus, he established the Lu Xun Institute, where students could study theories of various arts and strive to create better artistic works for the people. The theater department was particularly successful after it altered a well-known Beijing opera, the Fisherman’s Revenge, by using contemporary costumes but keeping almost everything else intact. This technique of “filling the old bottle with new wine” was well accepted by the public, which could relate to the familiar story. Mao was impressed and donated his own salary to create the Experimental Beijing Opera Troupe. This group, along with the 120th Division Opera Troupe, became the official opera companies of the CCP. These experimental operas cannot truly be considered a new art form, but rather limited efforts at propaganda. Still, they played an important role in the development of the later yang ban xi, for they “established theoretical and practical approaches to the problem of creating a Chinese socialist theatre.”

After 1940, interest and support for revolutionary opera waned and many troupes returned to performing traditional operas. This sparked an intense debate among political leaders, artists, and CCP theoreticians about the value of traditional Beijing opera. One side accused the art form of being the “product of a feudal society, a reflection of the old political and economic ideologies, a reactionary art, and that it had neither positive meaning nor political function in the new society” and argued that it should be replaced by revolutionary art forms. The other side viewed Beijing opera as a cultural asset of immense historical importance that Chinese citizens greatly enjoyed, and thought that it should not be altered.

These debates were soon quelled. During the Yenan Talks of 1942, Mao expressed his strict views on literature and art. At this time, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was still but a dream. Yet, while still hiding from the Kuomintang (KMT) in the caves of Yenan, Mao was already advocating the necessity of political orientation in all arts. During the famous “Talks at the Yenan Forum of Art and Literature,” he described an outline for the political application of opera. He based his ideas on those of Vladimir Lenin. According to Lenin’s view of art in a socialist state, culture is divided by class and presents a particular political outlook to each respective class. In the hands of the “feudal powers” (such as the preceding Qing dynasty), art served as a weapon wielded against the proletariat. However,
in a socialist state, where the “masses” were the most important component, art could be used to reach and then uplift its audience to a greater level of moral behavior. Naturally, only behavior in accordance with the views of the reigning political powers would be considered morally acceptable. In his opening speech, Mao described the purpose of the meeting: “to make art and literature a component of the whole revolutionary machine, to make them a powerful weapon for uniting and educating the people, and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and to help the people fight with one heart and one mind.” These new, somewhat severe views imported from the CCP’s Soviet allies attracted the attention of many intellectuals, who as a result flocked to Yenan. Once there, they began creating works aimed at capturing the hearts of ordinary Chinese and to convince them of the necessity of overthrowing both foreign and bourgeoisie enemies. Because the Yenan Talks occurred during the Rectification Campaign, when many CCP members were being denounced, most thought better of challenging Mao’s theories. Thus, for the next forty years the Yenan Talks became the guidelines for all Chinese art forms. This meant that revolutionary art forms were the only acceptable form. Classical language was banned because it was largely incomprehensible to ‘the masses’ (those who were not part of the bourgeoisie), the audience to whom Mao was pandering. Ancient art and literature, which had survived for centuries, became something that had to be molded into a new, revolutionary form. To imbibe this new “mass culture,” scholars were sent into the countryside to work alongside peasants and learn from them.

With these guidelines in mind, intellectuals immediately set about creating new revolutionary art forms, and opera was no exception. New Beijing operas, such as A Story of Refugees, were performed to great popular acclaim. These works dealt with current issues, such as the CCP’s battles against the KMT and the consequences of the Japanese invasion. However, it was Driven to Join the Liangshan Rebels that was truly influential for the future of opera in China. It was neither completely modern nor completely traditional, but was a new opera based on an old story. The success of the opera lay in its use of symbolism. The opera is about an upstanding military officer, who represents the ordinary people that are being oppressed by the Kuomintang. The playwright, Yang Shaoxuan, focused on the class struggles and social background of the hero. This was very much in keeping with Mao’s artistic ideals, and he highly praised the opera. The success of Yang’s work brought about an avalanche of “newly written historical plays,” and most Beijing troupes added them to their repertoire. During the civil war, opera was the main form of entertainment for military troops, and any work with a plot favorable to CCP ideals was more likely to be popular. Beijing opera, however, still had dramatic changes waiting for it once Mao finally triumphed in the Chinese civil war and founded the PRC in 1949.

Within a few years, the new leaders set about making changes in the lives of ordinary Chinese people. The Standing Committee for Theater Reform was created in 1952, and was directly controlled by the Ministry of Culture. This group was charged with assuring the use of theatre as a weapon of the ‘revolution’ and bringing about change in the still intensely traditional world
of opera. They immediately published a list of twenty-six “forbidden operas,” all of which had contents the Party found objectionable. This ban had little effect, though, and performances of the popular operas continued, despite pressure from the authorities. During this creatively fluid time, new operas were written, old plays were revised, and western stage practice began to influence the performance of opera. Revisions were usually made by the Standing Committee for Theatre Reform, although sometimes they were made by actors themselves before the plays could be officially censored. Anything that seemed backward or that insulted the proletarian class was altered. This included dialogue, plot, and characters. These new, altered plays can be considered a transition stage in between traditional and revolutionary opera. The changes can be seen not only by the removal of stage conventions considered superstitious, but also by alterations in backdrop and lighting. Also, more stage props appeared (although the visible stage hands used in traditional opera were discarded), and the orchestra moved from its traditional location on stage to being hidden behind a curtain. Rudolf Wagner notes that many of the plot and performance techniques of yang ban xi were developed in the late 1950s by the Shanghai Peking Opera Ensemble, including the technique of san tuchu, a forerunner of the “three stresses.”

The greatest blow to Beijing opera came a decade later in the form of Jiang Qing, Mao’s fourth wife. She was an actress who had performed in one of the earliest revolutionary operas, The Song Hua River. For the first ten years of her marriage with Mao, Jiang Qing was little more than a housewife. It was not until the 1960s that she appeared on the political stage and began supporting her husband’s stance on the arts by becoming the standard-bearer for the revolution in proletarian literature and art. During the “National Festival of Beijing Opera on Contemporary Themes” in 1964, she made a speech entitled “On the Revolution of Beijing Opera.” In it she declared, “It is unconceivable that, in our socialist country led by the Communist Party, the dominant position on the stage is not occupied by the workers, peasants and soldiers, who are the real creators of history and the true masters of our country. We should create literature and art which protect our socialist economic base.” The following year, an ill-fated opera, Hai Jui Dismissed From Office, made its appearance. The lead character, Hai Jui, was a Ming official who struggled with the Emperor on issues of social reform. Unsurprisingly, he was removed from office in the opera’s conclusion. The opera, moreover, was a blatant allegory meant to criticize Mao for dismissing his Minister of Defense. During the Cultural Revolution the playwright of this opera, Zhou Xinfang, was charged with slandering Mao through his depiction of the Jiajing Emperor. Jiang Qing, in collaboration with Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan who would later become part of the infamous Gang of Four, wrote an article attacking this ‘evil’ play that was published in the Wen Hui Daily. This seemingly small act was considered the very beginning of the Cultural Revolution. The CCP placed a partial ban on traditional opera based on the notion that “when revolutionary operas had
been well accepted on stage, then some traditional operas could be reintroduced, as long as they were carefully selected for educational meaning. This policy of compromise did not last long.

One could write ad infinitum about the millions persecuted during the Cultural Revolution, all the authors and artists who were purged, and the cult of personality that sprung up around Mao. Naturally, traditional Beijing opera was of little use to him. It was aesthetically pleasing, but it did not in any way motivate the audience to support his ideas. In May of 1966, Mao put Jiang Qing in charge of the newly created Cultural Revolution Group, which allowed her to exercise all the power she had been accumulating through the years. She had been working on the creation of four yang ban xi or “model works,” which where meant to be examples for all opera troupes to follow. During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, all traditional art forms were banned. Initially, only Jiang Qing’s eight approved works were allowed to be performed. Five were “modern revolutionary Beijing operas,” a new form of opera that retained some of the musicality of traditional Beijing opera, but employed completely different staging techniques and themes: Sha Jia Bang, Red Lantern, Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy, Rain on the White Tiger Regiment, On the Docks. Two of the works were ballets, the Red Detachment of Women and the White-Haired Girl, and the final work was the Sha Jia Bang Symphony. Although the term yang ban xi encompasses all eight works, it will be used in the rest of the paper to indicate the new revolutionary form of Beijing opera itself. The ban, which was enforced in 1966, was a tragedy for the art form, but the destruction it wreaked did not end there. Well-known figures in the arts were also persecuted and killed. Their ‘crime’ in the opera world, more often than not, was having performed traditional opera before the Cultural Revolution.

Besides the fact that traditional Beijing opera had “negative social influences,” since it did not support Mao’s political struggles, it also posed problems to communist atheism because it brought ghosts and gods to the stage as avengers of wrongdoings. Party officials believed that “themes of this kind would not only create favorable impressions of ghosts and gods but also divert the attention of the oppressed people away from their present plight and lead them to place their hope in an afterlife. Instead of actively engaging in class struggle, the people would tend to indulge in fantasy.” The Party saw traditional opera as a way of sustaining old superstitions and the inequalities of feudalism. The solution to this problem was to change the art form into an instrument of the Party. Music, plot, actors, and lighting were all changed to support approved themes, but often the heroes of revolutionary operas were so exaggerated that audience members could not relate to them. Revolutionary heroes always act heroically, and they think only of the good of the Party. Since all other plays were banned, audiences had no choice but to watch the yang ban xi, and therein lay the power of the revolutionary operas.

To popularize revolutionary operas, a campaign that required all actors to learn them and maintain their “high standard” was initiated in 1969. Opera troupes were required to copy Jiang Qing’s model operas to the letter. What is more, this did not apply exclusively to the large Beijing opera companies, but also to regional theatres and
non-opera troupes as well. The traditional role of the pre-1949 leading actor-manager was handed over to communist officials, bringing all opera artists under their supreme control. The goal of the revolutionary opera was to disseminate themes of class struggle, and to revere the greatness of the leader and denigrate his political enemies. The Maoist heroes always won, the enemy was always defeated, and the ‘essence’ of the traditional art form was lost. In the early 1970s, after the wave of popularization had passed, five new revolutionary works were created. Four were operas—Fighting on the Plain, the Red Detachment of Women, Song of the Dragon River, and Azalea Mountain—and one was a ballet, Song of Yi Meng Mountain. Although they were artistically comparable to the original revolutionary works, they carried little political weight and, as a result, were never popularized as Jiang Qing’s yang ban xi were. Also, Madame Mao had already achieved her political goals through the eight model works and did not want to spend time developing new operas. This shows the importance of politics in the success of revolutionary operas. Guang Lu points out that, “in contrast with the natural development of traditional Beijing opera, yang ban xi was concocted for political purposes.”

**Traditional and Revolutionary Opera: A Stylistic Comparison**

While revolutionary and traditional Beijing opera may share similar musical styles and narrative themes, the two forms are very different in essence. Traditional Beijing opera is essentially a form of entertainment, and it was the primary source of entertainment for both peasants and scholars. It served a series of social functions, but attempting to change society or social structure was not one of them. Traditional Beijing opera is a highly idealistic art form that seeks free expression through the perfection of its artistic forms. Thus, the many topics of Beijing opera plots are also idealistic and often have themes about perfect love or friendship and heroes with righteous motives even though they themselves may be imperfect. Its penchant for stylization is a refinement and exaggeration of real life and, thus, cannot “go back” to real life. As we have already discovered, however, the CCP demanded that the source of inspiration for art come from the realities of life and that it should “motivate people to love Mao Zedong, the Party, socialism and their socialist country.” This theory of art, known as Social Realism, was in direct conflict with the idealism that had long driven traditional Beijing opera. During the Cultural Revolution, China’s ancient cultural traditions were suddenly suppressed and replaced with the eight yang ban xi. These operas were drastically different from traditional ones and were considered “political education,” not a mere diversion.

Revolutionary opera was theme-centered. It was often performed by very talented, classically trained actors and actresses, yet their performances were always less important than the theme or message of the play. Famous actors were mostly employed so that their reputations would support the operas’ political themes, and even primary characters could not display their skills. This was mostly due to the types of characters portrayed. While one can easily imagine an imperial concubine dancing and demonstrating her skill with “water-sleeves” (the long flowing sleeves worn by certain traditional
characters that require great skill to move correctly), the same cannot be said for a CCP secretary or oppressed worker. A great deal of talent was wasted in the revolutionary operas, particularly for actors cast as villains. Because they portrayed negative characters, they were always dwarfed on stage and made the object of ridicule. Also, each opera troupe was assigned only one play to perform. Actors could not broaden their repertoire as had been the case with traditional opera. Jiang Qing called this *shì nian mo yī xi*, which translates as “spending ten years refining one play.” This system made acting skills even less important, which is why amateur groups, even in the far provinces, could perform *yáng bān xi*.

Revolutionary operas always have a contemporary theme, usually centering on the Chinese communist revolution, Sino-Japanese War, or reconstruction era. Human emotions are not at the centre of the plot; instead, the plot usually focuses on Maoist themes and topics such as class or armed struggle. Although most traditional cultural values were abandoned, a few were retained and given a different interpretation. Traditional opera places great importance on values such as humanity, family love, and brotherhood, while revolutionary operas stress comradeship. Loyalty to family or the emperor changed into loyalty to the Party and Chairman Mao. In traditional Beijing opera romance is a central theme. Love is lauded as a sacred feeling, and the portrayal of love is very important to traditional opera since so many plays revolve around it. Whether it be comic, as in *Picking Up the Jade Bracelet*, or tragic, as in the *Hegemon King Parts with His Favorite*, love is universally appealing and one of the most significant human emotions. The plots of revolutionary operas, however, are completely devoid of romantic love. In the *Red Lantern*, the central characters are the Li family, made up of Granny Li (who has no husband), her adopted son Li Yuhe (who has no wife) and his adopted daughter Li Tiehmei. These individuals are not related by blood, but are, nonetheless, a family united in the struggle against the Japanese. Similar examples of lacking significant others or love interests are found in all *yáng bān xi*, even if the original work contained a romantic theme. During the Cultural Revolution, class struggle was the all-important goal, and under this system people were only able to relate to others as an ally or enemy. Guang Lu notes, “this is why in every *yáng bān xi* play, there are always some very ferocious enemies, contrasting sharply with the non-existence of lovers.”

The characters of revolutionary operas are completely different from their traditional counterparts. They do not fit exclusively into one category, and female characters often take on *wusheng* or warrior roles that were traditionally reserved only for men. While traditional Beijing opera has a plethora of sub-roles, in *yáng bān xi* the characters are broadly divided into ‘good’ and ‘bad’. Because romantic love was banned from the stage during the Cultural Revolution, certain roles (e.g., *guī mén dān*, private-quarters woman) were simply left out. The same held true for scholars and heavenly beings, as they challenged the Party’s anti-bourgeois and atheistic views respectively. Consequently, there cannot be a real comparison between the role types and traits exhibited in these two divergent forms. The full painted face lost its significance because there were no longer any
matching role types, and, therefore, no reason to use it. Some of the make-up practices remained the same; positive characters continued to be made up in warm colours, while negative characters were shrouded in darker, cooler colors.

Costumes in traditional Beijing opera are very elaborate and visually important, as they communicate social status, role type, and rank. These costumes were remnants of the old feudal system and challenged Jiang Qing’s imposed values of revolutionary realism, so they were suppressed. Many characters performed in clothes they would wear in real life and did not wear headpieces—something very strange for audiences familiar with traditional opera. The Japanese soldiers in the Red Lantern wore Japanese uniforms and communist characters, in order to encourage a proletarian aesthetic, wore basic but very neat costumes.

Traditional Chinese culture places a great deal of importance on harmonious relationships. This is obvious in traditional Beijing operas, where filial piety and obligation to family and friends are recurring themes. Even the impressive martial arts displays in traditional opera are not meant to create hostility towards the ‘evil’ faction, but simply to display the incredible martial and acrobatic skills of the actors. Such scenes are visually intense, but make for light-hearted and often amusing performances. This is not the case with yang ban xi, where the recurrent themes are those of enmity, class, and armed struggle. We need only look at some of the arias from the Red Lantern, which have titles such as “Let Hatred Sprout in My Heart” and “A Debt of Blood Must Be Paid in Kind.” Such themes contradict basic Confucian values that have been integral in the formation of Chinese society.

The heroes of revolutionary operas even contradict the traditional view of human nature; they are god-like supermen and women who have no human flaws or needs. In traditional opera, there are no perfect human heroes. Even the gods and sages are intensely human, and they often make mistakes, get drunk, pick fights, and have feelings. This helps explain why audiences could not truly relate to the characters in yang ban xi, and why it rapidly disappeared after the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Beijing opera is traditionally performed on a bare stage with full lighting and only a table and two chairs for props. Because early theatre troupes had to perform at least ten scenes from different plays at each performance location, it would have been impossible to change the set each time. Instead, concepts of time and space were expressed through acting, leading to the current stylized tradition. Compared with traditional Beijing opera, yang ban xi was quite innovative. Stage scenery and lighting took on great importance due to revolutionary realism. In addition to more physical stage props, stage designers also used images projected onto a large blank curtain to create colourful backdrops, which were used to express the themes of the opera, but usually not in terribly subtle ways. For example, at the end of Raid on the White-Tiger Regiment, when the heroic soldiers are cheering their victory, a large image of Mao’s head was often projected on the screen. Lighting was used in a manner similar to make-up, with positive characters bathed in warm colored light and evil characters featured in cold colors to further emphasize their respective roles. Bright, warm colors always highlighted the central character.
Jiang Qing’s denunciation of most aspects of traditional Beijing opera forced revolutionary opera to be innovative. *Yang ban xi* had to disregard what had been widely accepted as the status quo and find its own artistic expression, much of which feels unnatural. Traditional Beijing opera conventions were developed through the course of centuries, thanks to input from both actors and audiences. This exchange resulted in an art form that was greatly appreciated and suited to the tastes of the population. In the case of revolutionary operas, neither actors, audiences nor natural evolution helped to create the genre. Thus, long time opera fans did not accept revolutionary innovations. This later led to conflicts between conservatism and innovation, as audiences became more suspicious of change because it was forced upon them. Though *yang ban xi* is identified as Beijing opera, it has very little in common with traditional drama. Both actors and audiences believe *yang ban xi* are far too extreme to fit the category. Yet, it is technically called “modern revolutionary Beijing opera.” The reasoning behind this choice of name was purely political. It was not until the early 1960s that Jiang Qing began making contributions to the PRC. In order to establish her name, she had to do something radical. The stated purpose of the Cultural Revolution was to eradicate traditional or “feudal” culture, so Mao put Jiang Qing in charge of revolutionizing literature and art. By drastically altering Beijing opera, the most representative traditional Chinese art, she impressed Party members as well as the public.

**An Anomaly in the Pattern**

Upon examination of the five original *yang ban xi* operas, it becomes obvious that there is one, *Red Lantern*, that is unlike the other four. By examining this particular anomaly, we can learn more about the elements used to construct a ‘true’ revolutionary opera, and which particular elements create the aforementioned unnaturalness. Jiang Qing was heavily involved in the creation of all of the four operas except *Red Lantern*. This opera was different from the other eight model works and was the most popular of the *yang ban xi* thanks to its sensible plot and artistic appeal. While still a revolutionary opera, Jiang Qing’s “three stresses”—stress the positive figures, stress the principal heroic characters, stress the central figure—were not taken to an extreme, making the opera more natural than the others. The story itself is very moving, and its less frequent use of political slogans adds to its appeal. Although Li Yuhe is the main character, his mother and daughter are also central characters, and they are all meant to represent the Chinese working class. Setting the opera during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) was another reason for its success. Those who had not taken part in or suffered during the war themselves learned about the Chinese victory in school; hence, everyone could relate to Li Yuhe and his family. Even the most political arias, which lauded Mao and the CCP, sounded plausible to the public. Many of the songs in the *Red Lantern* are considered the best among all of the *yang ban xi* musical scores, mainly because of the artfully set lyrics and music. Li Yuhe’s character is successfully portrayed through his arias. He expresses revolutionary heroism as well as concern for his family, which is shown here in his most popular song:
I drink the wine mother gives me at parting,
I’m filled with courage and strength.
Hatoyama is giving a feast to make “friends”
with me,
Even a thousand cups I can handle.
The weather is treacherous, with sudden wind
and snow,
Be prepared always for unexpected changes,
Dear Tieh-mei.  

Yuhe is much more human than other revolutionary opera heroes. He is approachable, yet still considered a perfect representation of the proletarian hero by the Party. Li Tieh-mei is also a popular character because she is determined to finish her father’s mission. This desire is somewhat Confucian, in that it shows a large degree of filial piety. Still, it is tempered by the theme of loyalty to the Party. Her arias are also beautifully written, and were very popular with audiences. They artfully portray her determination to help the cause for which her father lost his life. Her final song reflects the feelings of the people during the Second Sino-Japanese War:

I burst with anger when I think of the foe!
Repressing my rage I grind my teeth…
Biting my hate, chewing my rage,
I force them down my throat,
Let them sprout in my heart.
I’ll never yield, I’ll never retreat. 

To support Maoist themes, the “three stresses” were used to excess in all yang ban xi. The reason behind the more moderate use of the “three stresses” in the Red Lantern is clearly due to the fact that Jiang Qing did not oversee the opera’s entire creation process. A great deal of the work was left to A-Ja, a director who refused to give up entirely on true art as the force behind opera. He was later imprisoned for omitting the “three stresses.” But by that time it was too late for Jiang Qing to drastically change the opera due to its popularity. This does not mean that the yang ban xi were never altered, though. Madame Mao always made sure that the works reflected Mao’s theories, and when he became particularly concerned with armed struggle, the endings of some of the operas were changed to suit this new concern. Daniel S. P. Yang notes, “the New York Times once reported that Chiang Ching [sic] used up ‘two tons of paper’ revising On The Docks, a modern Peking opera about the dock workers of Shanghai.”

That these five revolutionary operas highly accentuate the values of salvation and friendship can be attributed to their military nature. These two themes are closely related and could be interpreted in communist philosophy to demonstrate that “comradeship is the cornerstone of salvation.” The security of one’s family, an important value in traditional opera, is not mentioned. The security of the Party is considered much more important, as one must give all for the common good. Accomplishments are not personal, but rather collective. Revolutionary opera always stresses the fact that the hero succeeds thanks to the aid of the people and the teachings of the Communist Party. National security is also a common theme due to the Sino-Japanese War and the conflicts between the KMT and CCP. These clashes were still fresh in the people’s minds and were used as an influence for the Party’s benefit.
The heroic characters of revolutionary operas must be loyal, courageous and capable individuals. Loyalty is praised above all, and, although used in different interpretations, is found in the heroes of both traditional and revolutionary opera. This is due to the social and political importance of opera in both eras; the art form was used by both governments to influence the audience’s thoughts and to promote behavior that it deemed acceptable. The degree to which these ends were sought differs greatly. While all of the yang ban xi were created with this idea in mind, the themes of traditional operas cover a greater range of subjects, and, thus, there is a larger degree of free thought involved. Family is not an important value for revolutionary operas, and, more often than not, the subject is not even mentioned. One slight exception is the aforementioned opera, Red Lantern, where there is some degree of familial affection. Mostly, the family is seen as a group of comrades united in struggle. Yang ban xi are a political creation and are not concerned with the interests, worries, or emotions of people—subjects that are essential to traditional opera.

Conclusion

Traditional Beijing opera can be considered to be an expression of Chinese culture in its highest form. Its function as a medium for entertainment, as well as moral and historical instruction, made the art form greatly loved by people of all classes. For this very reason it was chosen to portray Mao’s ideals and altered to the point where it could no longer be considered Beijing opera. In his introduction to the book The Red Pear Garden, Richard E. Strassberg comments, “modern revolutionary Beijing Opera dispenses with traditional Confucian motivations like filial piety, righteousness, and loyalty in favour of a comprehensive sense of hostility,” and understandably so. While traditional Beijing opera evolved over the course of centuries, catering to the tastes of its audiences, revolutionary opera had a very brief gestation period and was created with a single goal in Jiang Qing’s mind: to glorify the Communist Party and Mao Zedong and convince the rest of China to obey them. She wanted to show that the only way the proletariat could rise and defeat their class and foreign enemies was through the Party.

Mao Yu Run, a musician who lived through the Cultural Revolution, writes, “we were indoctrinated with the belief that ‘Mozart is nothing. Beethoven is nothing; they all belonged to the past ages, having nothing in common with the great proletarian masses!” Music has been used throughout history and the world to support political causes and portray personal beliefs. The sheer scale of the yang ban xi during the Cultural Revolution, however, sets it apart from all other examples. For the entirety of China to be restricted to eight ‘plays’, without allowing space for individual interpretations, is a stunning thought. The ban on all music and art, with the exception of the model works, gave those behind the creation of the yang ban xi immense power and control over viewers. The sudden change in opera from fantastical entertainment to unimaginative propaganda and education was a brutal shock for Chinese audiences. The very gesture of removing traditional opera demonstrated the clout of Jiang Qing and her accomplices. This sent a message to the entire country that the Communist Party and
Mao Zedong had the power to control all aspects of life and tradition, even those that had continued, unbroken, for over a thousand years. Although many Chinese, particularly in the countryside, continue to think of Mao with great fondness, musicians cannot help but shudder at the idea of such a creatively repressed society.

ENDNOTES

1. The main role types are: Dan (female role), Sheng (male role), Chou (clown role) and Jing (painted face). Each Jing character has a unique painted face associated with it. The colours and shapes used all have specific meanings and allow the audience to gain immediate insight about the character.


5. In Liangshan Heroes of the Water Margin, a military officer is tricked by a villain who attempts to seduce his wife. The military officer is forced to kill the villain, flee, and then join the Liangshan Mountain rebels.


12. Lu.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.


17. The Red Lantern: Railway switchman, Li Yuhe, member of the Chinese Communist Party, is an experienced underground worker, whose mother and adopted daughter also seek to free China from Japanese forces. He accepts the Party's task of delivering a secret code to the guerilla detachment in the Cypress Mountains. He is arrested as result of his betrayal of a traitor, Hatoyama, the chief of the Japanese gendarmerie, tries to get the secret code through threats and subterfuge. Yuhe, with courage and wisdom, eludes all of Hatoyama's schemes. Finally, Hatoyama kills Li Yuhe and his mother Granny Li. His daughter Tiehmei, led by the Party and helped by the people, finally succeed in sending the secret code to the Cypress Mountains.

18. Lu.


CHIARA PARK TERZUOLO

Chiara Park Terzuolo is a junior from Lawrence University, graduating in 2009 with a BA in East Asian Studies and minors in Japanese and Ethnic Studies. A musician at heart, her main academic interests relate to East Asian ethnomusicology in all its aspects, Native American powwow culture, traditional East Asian martial/religious practices, and travel writing.
Why do people protest? This fundamental question has puzzled numerous scholars, including resource mobilization and network theorists. Both approaches are practical but potentially limited ways of analyzing social movements. Examples of collective action in Chinese history conflict with both theories. Workers in the May Fourth Movement of 1919 mobilized in large numbers in solidarity with regional associations, whereas the structure of work units inhibited worker mobilization during the Tiananmen protests of 1989. Neither an analysis of resources and incentives, as emphasized by resource mobilization theory, nor a quantitative analysis of network ties, which often characterizes network theory, can fully explain the differences in worker mobilization.

This paper examines the influence of networks on social movement mobilization in a way that expands the existing literature. Obligations and coercion, as well as resources and information, characterize the multiple and opposing networks analyzed here. These forces comprehensively reflect the multifaceted nature of human interaction. The cases chosen in this study illustrate that mobilization is not the result of material incentives or the culmination of a greater number of social ties, but of a specific type of network. Enabling networks, or those that allow for communication among groups, facilitate widespread mobilization. Constraining networks, or those that only allow for communication within a single group, limit mobilization. Two social movements, the May Fourth Movement (Shanghai 1919), and the Tiananmen Protests (Beijing 1989) exemplify these concepts.

**Methodology**

Process tracing is an effective method for specifying both the potential causes as well as the relationship between those causal agents and observed phenomena. This is especially important when examining the cases in this study, as the various and often nuanced factors that
influence mobilization must be weighed carefully against each other. Strong similarities—namely, political system, migration patterns and economic grievances—between the cases make them apt for comparison. As these similarities act as control variables, I examine how the cases vary on the independent variable (type of network) and on the dependent variable (labor mobilization).

Theory and Hypotheses

Charles Tilly defines mobilization as the “process by which a group goes from being a passive collection of individuals to an active participant in public life.” From the perspective of a social movement, we can examine why individuals become “active” and directly contribute to a movement, and why others decide to remain “passive” by not participating. Various theories, most notably resource mobilization theory and network theory, have attempted to explain mobilization. Resource mobilization theory argues that mobilization is a process involving material resources and incentives, while network theory traces the interpersonal and structural ties that lead individuals to mobilize.

Resource mobilization theorists emphasize the change in availability of resources as the catalyst of mobilization. Resources can include those that allow movements to function (i.e. money and facilities) as well as those that allow movements leverage over their opponents (i.e. strategies and expertise). While resources enable movements, the lack of resources inhibits mobilization, and thus often necessitates outside forces to supply those resources.

The emphasis on selective incentives stems from Mancur Olson’s argument on the “free-rider problem.” In short, he argues that social movements pursue collective benefits or goals that will benefit the group. Enjoying these benefits is not contingent upon a member’s direct participation in the movement’s protest efforts. Therefore, every movement faces the potential threat of “free-riding,” in which members enjoy the collective benefits resulting from a movement’s efforts while not participating in those efforts themselves. If this problem persists, movements will have a hard time mobilizing participants to achieve their goals. In order to minimize this problem, movements should offer selective incentive-benefits contingent on movement participation. Olson describes all movement participants as rational, self-interested individuals unwilling to act towards the collective interest unless it is in their self-interest to do so. Therefore, regardless of social or economic background, actors must be coaxed under a system of selective incentives to invest their time and resources into a movement in order to work towards a collective interest.

Resource mobilization theory is, of course, not without its critics. In assuming that individuals are rational actors and therefore motivated by material gain, it also assumes that actors treat interpersonal relations in a similarly calculated manner. However, if one finds that individuals are willing to forfeit personal gain for the benefit of or solidarity with a given community, then Olson’s free-rider argument becomes problematic when examining mobilization. This has prompted some scholars to modify the assumptions of resource mobilization by expanding the notion of incentives to allow for non-material benefits.

Network theory, in response to the limitations
of traditional resource mobilization theory, explains mobilization by analyzing preexisting personal and organizational ties. A network requires two components, one cognitive and the other structural. The cognitive element involves a shared goal or identity, and the structural form implies that those who share this goal are members of an organization or group.

Much of network research emphasizes two key variables. Centrality is the extent to which a single actor or group can control exchanges among network members, and segmentation is the number of steps necessary to reach any given point in the network from another. Most theorists place great value on interconnected networks (those with low segmentation), but there is substantial disagreement over the value of centralization. However, the quantifying of individual and group ties to a network has brought about criticism that network theory assigns causal value to network ties before analyzing the nature of those ties. In response, scholars have proposed alternative ways of analyzing networks. Roger Gould, for example, proposes that network theorists identify the influence of network ties before tracing network patterns.

Lilly Tsai’s study of the role of informal networks in local Chinese governments illustrates the importance of studying networks in China. She argues that in political systems lacking formal institutions that allow for public input, moral obligations implicit in informal networks can induce leaders to provide public goods. Her study indicates that solidarity groups in China can influence members to pursue goals that benefit the group as opposed to solely pursuing personal material gain.

Here we examine mobilization through the role of networks in a way that expands on traditional network theory by allowing for networks that can both leverage and facilitate mobilization. Networks offer not only material and non-material incentives, but also contain coercive elements that can compel, encourage or constrain mobilization. In addition, different networks can oppose and interact with each other. Therefore, if a network inhibits mobilization, the existence of another network can potentially overcome the confining factors of the initial network.

Here, movement mobilization is examined through the presence of different networks. The independent variable is the type of network present. These can be either enabling or constraining. The key difference between the two is the ties shared with other groups. Enabling networks allow for exchanges and interactions both within a group and between different groups. Constraining networks allow for interpersonal ties within a group, but do not facilitate interactions with other groups. The dependent variable is mobilization, operationalized by quantifying the number of participants mobilized in a social movement. Because I examine urban movements with millions of potential participants, mobilizing large numbers of participants is a feasible task for any major movement. In such an environment with an abundance of potential recruits, social movements that reach potential activists through social and familial networks are severely limited in their recruitment abilities.

These variables prompt the following two hypotheses. By connecting actors from different groups, enabling networks lead to significant mobilization. In the absence of enabling networks,
constraining networks limit mobilization because they restrict actors’ protest options.

**Case Studies**

Two cases in particular serve to validate this hypothesis: the May Fourth Movement of 1919 in Shanghai, and the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests in Beijing. In each case, the protest movement involved large segments of society, including not only workers, but also students and intellectuals. In such cases, social movements have more general appeal and worker mobilization cannot be simply explained by the obvious appeal of a workers’ movement to workers. By selecting movements with general bases of support, structural factors that contributed to mobilization can be better examined. These cases represent the full range of networks and resulting mobilization examined in this study. Shanghai had both constraining and enabling networks, resulting in significant mobilization, whereas Beijing only had constraining networks that resulted in sporadic worker mobilization. In addition, these movements share other important similarities that operate as control variables: urban migration patterns, political environments, and economic grievances.

This study specifically examines factory workers. In any given society, workers occupy a similar structural position. As wage earners, they are not the most destitute members of society. However, among all wage earners, their status is lower than that of the elite and middle classes. As a result, worker mobilization cannot be a direct result of their social status, as it neither grants them elite privileges nor marginalizes them. In addition, the environmental factors specific to workers are relatively constant. Workers usually associate within the context of a factory or union. These common qualities make workers useful subjects for studying mobilization.

**Control Variables**

In each case, the cities experienced an influx of workers during the period leading up to the protests. In Shanghai, instability and economic hardship in the countryside drew a large number of peasants into the city looking for work in the factories. The urban population grew from 1.2 million in 1910 to 2 million in 1915, and eventually reached over 3 million in 1930.16 Throughout the 1980s Beijing also experienced a population increase. In the early 1980s economic liberalization policies resulted in a rise in urban industries’ demand for low-wage rural labor. This demand coincided with the dismantling of collective farms, which prompted many rural workers to come to the cities for work. In the late 1980s the government responded to dramatic inflation by cancelling construction projects and closing rural enterprises.17 Although urban demand for rural labor declined in this period, this did not inhibit rural workers from entering the cities, and many continued to migrate from the countryside to the cities in search of work. China’s total population grew 12 percent in 1990, from 1,008,175,288 in 1892 to 1,133,682,501, and the urban population as a percentage of the whole population increased by 6 percent from 1982 to 1990.18 The population of migrant workers reached one million by 1988 and continued to grow.19 The number of workers in urban state-owned enterprises also grew. The aggregate number of state workers increased from
89.9 million in 1985 to 103.5 million in 1989 in all major urban centers. Therefore, the urban populations experienced similar trends in worker migration in both cases. Subsequent patterns of movement participation cannot be reduced to the numerical presence, or lack thereof, of workers.

In both cases, China’s political system was closed and had a recent history of brutal suppression. Prior to the 1919 movement, republican China was led by military strongman Yuan Shikai. Under his rule, all of China endured brutal censorship and repression. Attempting to undermine political rivals, Yuan took control of the media and executed thousands on sedition charges. With his extensive influence, Yuan also used the military to quash political dissent in the south. After Yuan’s death, Duan Qirui came to power. By holding significant control over both the military and the parliament through one of the most influential political factions, the Anfu club, he was able to dominate national politics. In the 1980s China was still recovering from the Cultural Revolution, a period that witnessed the purge and imprisonment of those labeled as “class enemies.” The Chinese government also forcibly repressed several smaller uprisings in the 1980s and maintained strict control over the flow of information both within China and between China and other countries. These events occurred within the context of a closed political system and since each movement was preceded by repression, every participant realized the risks he or she assumed in protesting.

Another important similarity between the cases is the existence of economic grievances arising prior to the movements. After the collapse of the imperial system in 1911, China witnessed its “Golden age” of capitalism. As a hub of international activity, Shanghai became the most important center for China’s economic development. In addition, the onset of World War I preoccupied foreign industries that had previously dominated Chinese markets with wartime production, giving Chinese industries an opportunity to grow. While an unregulated market and weakened competition benefited businesses, it did not bode well for the workers. These workers labored under harsh conditions and received limited pay as contractors took commissions from their wages and the cost of living rose. Fluctuations in the exchange rate resulted in the devaluation of the copper currency, causing a steady increase in the cost of rice and other essentials. In many urban centers, prices increased between fifty and one hundred percent. The cost of salt increased from 3¢ in 1902 to 7¢ in 1911, and rice prices rose from $1.80 in 1904 to $2.80 in 1911.

Beijing workers in the 1980s experienced similar conditions. By the late 1970s and into the 1980s, China began to liberalize its economy. However, by the late 1980s price reforms had caused massive inflation. Inflation rose from 7.3 percent in 1987 to 18.5 percent in 1988, and increased again to 28 percent in early 1989. Housing prices, for example, rose from 213 RMB per square meter in 1987 to 290 RMB in 1989. This information shows that Shanghai and Beijing workers were both being disadvantaged by economic trends, and thus stood to gain from collective action. Subsequently, variations in mobilization patterns must be due to other factors.

Labor in Shanghai:
The May Fourth Movement of 1919

The May Fourth Movement began as a response to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Under the terms of the treaty, German possessions in the Chinese province of Shandong were given to Japan instead of returned to China as many had hoped. This upset intellectuals who had eagerly awaited the changes that Wilsonian ideals had promised following the end of the war. In response, students and intellectuals marched in protest of the government’s decision to sign the treaty. These events led other groups, most notably workers, to join the movement, organize strikes and boycott Japanese goods.

Factories acted as constraining networks. The physical constraints of the factories limited worker interactions to those within their workplace. This was especially true in sectors such as manufacturing and in cotton mills where workers ate, slept, and lived within the confines of the factory. Within the factory there were also strong disincentives to protest. Foremen developed patron-client relationships with the workers, offering them protection in return for obedience. By deviating from the expectations of this relationship, a worker could expect severe retribution. Not only did workers risk punishment within the factory, they might also be blacklisted by contractors throughout the city if they challenged the factory.

The enabling networks present were “native place” associations. Social networks and ties during late imperial China were formed over shared qualities such as family lineage, participation in the civil service exam, and place of origin (“native place ties”). However, native place and regional ties later became more than just a source of personal identity; these networks also became a basis for social and political activism. Native place ties linked individuals though shared communities, religion, and economic relations even when removed from their geographic origin.

During the nineteenth-century, rising rural unrest drove many into urban centers, a process that gave rise to the widespread formation of native place associations. The combination of lacking natural resources, rising inflation, ecological degradation, population expansion, and institutional corruption caused widespread unrest throughout imperial China. State administration did not extend below the county level, and the government relied on a class of unregulated middlemen for tax collection. These clerks and runners were free to levy high taxes on the peasantry and retain what was not taken by the state. As a result of these pressures, a number of rebellions erupted, including the White Lotus rebellion, Taiping rebellion, Nian rebellion, and the Boxer rebellion at the turn of the century.

Violent unrest in rural society drove many into the cities in the late nineteenth-century. In Shanghai, these early migrants banded together according to regional ties and formed native place associations. They often formed gangs and secret societies that participated in smuggling operations and the opium trade, but this trend changed when business elites began to migrate to the city and establish native place associations. The infusion of the business elite into regional organizations in Shanghai resulted in a close relationship between native place associations and industry. While foreigners owned many of the contemporary industries, unfamiliarity with the local language made foreign enterprises dependent on native
place associations for contracting labor. Laborers were recruited to a factory by one of two means. Escaping the hardships of the countryside, many migrants traveled to Shanghai and sought refuge with those from the same hometown. A contractor recruiting workers who share a similar background would help the migrants find work. In return for a sum of money, the contractor would offer employment, protection, and shelter. Alternately, contractors would return to their own native town and recruit young workers from families desperate to earn additional income. These workers were brought to the city, and, usually for a fee, were given food, shelter, and employment.

Members of a native place association received numerous benefits. Aside from providing employment and other basic necessities, native place associations operated temples, schools, and operas, and ensured financial support during difficult times. As one was expected to return to one's hometown in preparation for death and burial, one of the primary services native place associations offered was the assurance of a proper burial. This system produced patron-client relations within native place associations, in which the contractor supplied for the needs of the workers in exchange for their loyalty.

Native place associations also connected workers to another group: the students. Students from outside Shanghai who came to the city for university were often active members of native place associations. Some students were also strong advocates of reform in these regional associations, arguing for change in the exclusive nature of the decision making process therein. Their demands included increasing welfare projects and lowering membership fees. In order to increase their influence over conservative members in native place associations, reformers mobilized large segments of the working class in support of their reform agenda. The shared interest developed between students and workers within native place associations indicates the strong ties between the two on the eve of the May Fourth Movement.

A number of questions arise concerning workers' involvement in the movement. Because Japanese and other factories would have been directly hurt by the higher cost and lower quality of non-Japanese goods, why were the factory owners unable to prevent workers from striking? How did these workers overcome the confining force of the factories, where we can assume the factory owners, especially the Japanese ones, opposed the boycott and strikes? What role did native place ties play in mobilizing workers?

During the movement, workers were mobilized through their ties to other worker and student groups. As part of the strike movement, worker teams were established to visit workers and convince them of the necessity of collective action, while literate workers formed teams to publish posters, handbills, banners, and newspapers. Rallies sponsored by native place associations protested the arrest of students and the actions of the government and brought together large groups of students and workers. While these efforts certainly spread information of the strike, one cannot assume that information alone persuaded the millions of migrant workers in Shanghai to forego their wages in support of these explicitly political goals. In fact, the boycott and strikes were not just encouraged but coerced. Previously, boycotts had
been used to discipline deviant members of an economic community, but as it was imposed on an entity outside of the native place associations during the movement, coercive measures were used to ensure strict adherence. Individuals unfaithful to the movement were publicly denounced and ousted from the regional community.\textsuperscript{45} This strategy cultivated a sense of solidarity by offering strong incentives for conformity; exclusion from the group meant losing one’s source of employment, giving up burial privileges, and being ousted from one’s primary social group.

Estimates of worker mobilization range from 60,000 to 90,000.\textsuperscript{46} However, rough calculations this high must be viewed with skepticism as they were made by supporters and participants of the movement. A more conservative estimate comes from police records. In the area of the city called the International Settlement, police estimated that some 24,000 industrial workers joined the movement.\textsuperscript{47}

Network theory’s approach is insufficient to explain mobilization in the May Fourth Movement. In this movement, the quality rather than quantity of ties was important. In a historical study of workers during the movement, Bryna Goodman argues that although connections existed between native place associations and other formal organizations, native place associations were the only groups able to independently engage in the boycott movement and labor strikes.\textsuperscript{48} The danger of using traditional network theory’s approach is that it would assign causal value to the networks between workers and other formal associations, when in fact native place associations were able to mobilize workers independent of other organizations. A resource mobilization theorist might argue that selective incentives in the native place associations were the cause of mobilization in 1919. However, this ignores the selective incentives existing within the factories as well. The existence of rival incentives both to mobilize and not to mobilize indicates that another factor implicit within the networks must also have determined mobilization. Because both enabling and constraining networks have material incentives, it must have been the obligations fostered by mutual protection in native place associations that facilitated worker mobilization.

\textbf{Workers of Beijing: The Tiananmen Protests of 1989}

In the spring of 1989, the death of former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Hu Yaobang, prompted Beijing residents to gather in Tiananmen Square to mourn his death. This event facilitated public speeches in the square denouncing the corruption and policies of the government. The group attracted an increasing number of students, who formed an organization dedicated to challenging corruption within the government and the current economic reform policies. Workers’ involvement was marked by weak organization and low turnout.

The constraining network was the work unit. The establishment of the People’s Republic of China fundamentally altered the relationship between state and society. Networks based on a common lineage or place of origin were minimized as the state penetrated Chinese society even below the county level.\textsuperscript{49} The household registration system implemented by the new government greatly limited geographic mobility and effectively reduced
the importance of ties outside of the immediate geographic region. This period witnessed the decline of regional associations, while the socialist work unit provided many of the benefits that native place associations once offered. China’s communist government created work units that offered both security and welfare to workers. These units were inspired by the Soviet model, but they were not exact replicas. Work units appealed to communist ideology and offered an incentive for workers, who had become accustomed to the benefits of regional associations, to join the socialist cause.

Work units have two major functions: control and welfare. In a survey of work units, Ruan Danqing finds that the benefits that a majority of workers enjoy include: meal halls, showers, health care, child care, travel options, financial assistance, and job security. As the state has replaced the market as the center of resource allocation, the work unit has become the distributor of these goods. However, only as a member of a work unit can one enjoy these privileges. Work units also control the documents needed to apply for housing, travel, and other benefits. The degree of control work units afforded the state has been documented by Henderson and Cohen, who worked and lived in a Chinese hospital unit. Their account attests to the strong degree of control exercised by the state over work units even during the reform period. They describe all major aspects of life such as employment, job transfer, marriage, childbearing, and education as regulated or monitored by the state. Even minor endeavors such as watching a movie had to receive state endorsement. Under this system, if an individual were to be suspected by the state, the state would have several powerful means of coercion that it could use against that individual.

In addition, Party secretaries also had a strong presence within the units. They were one of the top authorities in the work unit, with the power to approve appointments and promotions, and act as a liaison between the workers and higher officials. Their position not only granted them considerable leverage over workers, it also allowed them to supervise the workers’ activities.

These power structures have strong implications for mobilization. Mayfair Yang argues that work units fuse together state and society. This dual character embodies the opposing interests of the state and civil society, substantially reducing the latter as it is traditionally understood. What results is a diluted and weakened civil society. Similarly, Brantly Womack argues that this integration of state and society results in consensus politics because permanent employment and the consistency of human interaction make workers adverse to public confrontation. However, Elizabeth Perry criticizes these arguments for assuming a necessary dichotomy between state and society. She argues that by conceptualizing a unitary state and undifferentiated society, one runs the risk of ignoring some of the more nuanced aspects of Chinese history, especially during the reform period of the 1980s. If one accepts this criticism and tries to specify the relationships within a work unit as one between workers and the Party secretaries, one might arrive at a conclusion similar to Andrew Walder’s, which describes a clientist pattern of authority in which Party secretaries use material and career incentives to maintain worker loyalty.

Worker mobilization in 1989 happened largely
by chance. Many workers witnessed the student demonstrations in early spring. Sympathetic workers tried to join the protests, but were rejected by the student leaders and ushered to the west stand at Tiananmen to observe the demonstration. It was there that a few labor activists met and decided to form the Beijing Workers Autonomous Association (BWAA). While this became one of the leading worker protest organizations, the number of workers involved was minimal. Although this organization claimed to have thousands of supporters, accounts from student participants estimate the number of active members as low as two dozen. Other accounts from activists and participants estimate that the total number of protesting workers ranged from ten to thirty.

Aside from the small extent of worker mobilization, Zhao Dingxin’s research makes another conclusion about worker mobilization: workers who mobilized did so under the leadership of work units. This point illustrates the importance of network ties. In the protest movement of Shanghai, ties across worker groups allowed for greater mobilization. This was absent in Beijing. While curious workers could observe the demonstrations and even form their own protest groups, there was no existing network that allowed these worker-activists to mobilize other groups. His conclusion gives credence to the argument of socialist work units as a forum for civil society. However, the absence of enabling network ties limited mobilization to a social movement. Ching Lee’s survey of worker protests in the post-reform period confirms these findings. She argues that in the absence of inter-factory ties, widespread and effective worker protest only occurs when an external force “fans the flames of networking across work units.”

Proponents of network theory would argue that more interpersonal ties or group ties could have facilitated worker mobilization. However, workers already shared personal ties with individuals in their own work unit and worker-activist protest organizations did associate with student protesters. Clearly, it is not the mere existence of ties that facilitates mobilization. In contrast to what resource mobilization theorists might predict, this outside injection did not result in mobilization. Protesting workers received significant outside help from student activists in the form of making banners, writing pamphlets, fundraising, and organizing protests.

Unlike in Shanghai, Beijing workers were unable to overcome these social constraints and mobilize alongside students and other workers because of the lack of enabling network ties. Since the few workers who mobilized did so in solidarity with the leadership of their work units, the case of this protest supports the argument that socialist work units act as a source of political activism. However, this type of activism arose sporadically. The lack of network ties prevented the spread of political activism among workers and limited mobilization.

Conclusion

The protest movements of Shanghai and Beijing illustrate the causal role of networks in mobilization. Because of the presence of enabling networks, workers in Shanghai were able to mobilize in great numbers and collaborate among labor and other social groups. In contrast, worker
mobilization in 1989 was limited by the absence of enabling networks. As indicated by worker protests in Beijing, the government’s greater penetration into Chinese society had a major influence on social activism. Chinese society has since undergone vast reforms and continues to face rapid changes. The question of whether this trend will change is open to interpretation. If workers continue to be marginalized by economic reform, continued controls over work units may have similar effects on mobilization. However, as labor becomes increasingly mobile, the role of native place identity and loyalty may again rise to the forefront of collective action after years of dormancy.

ENDNOTES

1 Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 205-08.
10 Maryjane Osa, Solidarity and Contention (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 15.
27 Smith, Cattle, 30.
29 Zhao, Power, 127.
30 Zang, "Urban," 69.
31 Wilsonianism espoused the idea of self-determinism and denounced imperialism. Accordingly, following the war China would be able to determine its own political structure free from foreign influence and its territorial integrity would be respected. For more, see Charlotte Furth, "Intellectual Change: From the Reform Movement to the May Fourth Movement, 1985-1920," in An Intellectual History of Modern China, ed. Merle Goldman and Leo Ou-Fan Lee
Ashton Liu is currently attending the Inter-University Program at Tsinghua University. He received his BA in Political Science/International Relations from Carleton College in 2008. He also presented the original version of this paper for distinction at Carleton College in May 2008. His primary research interests include East Asian history, comparative politics, and social movements.
외잎 정원
In October 2002, a nuclear crisis erupted on the Korean peninsula after James Kelly, the Assistant US Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, visited Pyongyang and alleged that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) had a uranium enrichment program. This was the second North Korean crisis, following the first that occurred in 1993-1994. To resolve the issue, North Korea, China, and the United States held a trilateral discussion in Beijing in April 2003, which led to the first round of Six-Party Talks later in August. However, the Six-Party Talks did not go well because of fundamental disagreements between Washington and Pyongyang. The US insisted that North Korea unconditionally abandon its nuclear program, while North Korea demanded that first the US drop its “vicious, hostile policy.”

On September 19, 2005, the fourth round of Six-Party Talks resulted in a Joint Statement decreeing that North Korea would abandon all existing nuclear weapons and nuclear development programs. However, just after signing the Joint Statement, the US announced that it had taken measures to freeze illegally obtained North Korean funds at Banco Delta Asia (BDA), located in Macau under Chinese sovereignty. North Korea strongly criticized the US and refused to participate in further Six-Party Talks until the BDA issue was resolved, arguing such action demonstrated US hostility. With no significant changes in the American position, North Korea carried out missile and nuclear tests in 2006. The deadlock caused by BDA funds lasted more than a year.

Talks resumed in the months following each of these bilateral negotiations, and the parties present reached two important agreements: “Initial Actions for the Implementation of the September 2005 Joint Statement” (February Agreement) and “Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement” (October Agreement). In these, North Korea agreed to declare all of its nuclear programs and to disable its Yongbyun nuclear facilities by the end of 2007. In return, the other parties agreed to cooperate by providing energy as well as economic and humanitarian assistance to the DPRK. Given North Korea’s previous missile test in July 2006 and its subsequent nuclear test in October, these agreements signified much-needed progress.

This paper will examine key questions regarding the negotiation process that led to the 2007 agreements: (1) Why did the US negotiating strategy change from pushing China to act as a mediator to holding bilateral talks with Pyongyang? (2) Why did China accept the political burden of hosting the Six-Party Talks? and (3) What were North Korea’s perceptions of the Six-Party Talks and of China as a “mediator”?

Changes in US Policy towards North Korea

“I welcome the agreement announced today at the Six-Party Talks in Beijing. Today’s announcement reflects the common commitment of the participants in the Six-Party Talks to realize a Korean Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons.”

Exactly three years before making the above statement, President Bush met Democratic challenger John Kerry in a debate and declared that Kerry’s position on negotiations with North Korea “made me want to scowl.” Bush said that Kerry was advocating a naive and dangerous policy of offering to conduct bilateral negotiations with Pyongyang, in conjunction with the Six-Party Talks on North Korea’s nuclear ambitions. “That’s what President Clinton did,” Bush asserted, “and guess what happened: [Kim Jungil] didn’t honor the agreement.” Yet in 2007, Bush welcomed the October Agreement, as demonstrated in the above statement. In fact, prior to the October agreement, the US and North Korea held bilateral talks in Berlin that led to the “Initial Action Plan” in the February agreement of 2007. The October agreement also resulted from bilateral talks in Geneva in September 2007, which Bush had previously rejected. What instigated this abrupt change in US policy?

The Initial Foreign Policy of the Bush Administration

After the 9/11 attacks and the rise of neo-conservatives (neocons) in the Bush administration, many changes occurred in US foreign policy. The administration declared a “war on terror,” and asserted its right to retaliate with nuclear force even in the case of non-nuclear attacks on US territory and on its allies. Prior to 2001, the American nuclear weapons doctrine had called for using nuclear weapons only in response to a nuclear attack by an enemy. The Bush administration also “ballyhooed the doctrine of ‘preemption’, which all previous presidents had sustained as an option rather than a dogma.” Such rhetoric effectively declared an offensive foreign policy against rogue states. The White House defined rogue states as those that:

1) brutalize their own people and squander their national resources for the personal gain of the
rulers; 2) display no regard for international law, threaten their neighbors, and callously violate international treaties to which they are party; 3) are determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction, ... 4) reject basic human values and hate the United States and everything for which it stands.\textsuperscript{9}

The institution of harsh foreign policy towards North Korea, a country branded part of the “axis of evil” by Bush, seemed inevitable. Not surprisingly, direct talks with Pyongyang became a taboo, especially during Bush’s first term. Neocons, who went as far as to consider regime change against Kim Jungil, distrusted “Clinton-style bilateral talks.”\textsuperscript{10} Instead, they believed that the international community had to pressure Pyongyang through the means of multilateral talks. The Bush administration also tried to take North Korea’s nuclear issue to the UN Security Council (UNSC), asserting that North Korea posed a threat not only to the US, but also to the international community. In addition to that rationale, some conservatives in Washington believed it was unlikely that “either China or Russia could long withstand a determined campaign for Security Council action without fatal damage to their own prestige in counter-proliferation policy.”\textsuperscript{11} However, contrary to their expectations, China and Russia participated in only two resolutions motivated by the DPRK’s missile and nuclear tests in 2006, and in neither case were they willing to sanction the use of force against North Korea.

The Bush administration also did not want to unilaterally shoulder the political and economic burden of direct negotiations with Pyongyang. As a superpower, the US could lose face and international respect by dealing directly with Kim’s tyrannical regime. Some observers noted that Bush’s personal, visceral dislike of Kim Jungil might also have been a factor in his decision not to engage Pyongyang in diplomatic talks. In 2002, Bush described Kim as a “pygmy acting like a spoiled child at a dinner table [who was] starving his own people.”\textsuperscript{12}

**Shifts in US Policy**

In late 2006, Washington’s attitude towards North Korea underwent an unexpected change. After witnessing North Korea’s nuclear test, the US decided to initiate bilateral talks—a decision the Bush administration did not want to make and which still frustrates neocons. Three challenges facing the Bush administration prompted this policy change: (1) limitations of unilateral sanctions against North Korea, executed without cooperation from China and Russia, both veto-wielding members of the UNSC, and from South Korea, the North’s second largest trading partner, (2) harsh opinion against failed US foreign policy and the departure of influential neocons from the administration, and (3) desire to achieve a positive outcome in North Korea, differently from in Iraq, during Bush’s last two years in office.

First, Washington encountered limitations in putting pressure on North Korea because South Korea, China, and Russia, all having influence on Pyongyang, were never eager to commit to sanctions initiated by the US. After the adoption of a UNSC resolution on Oct. 15, 2006, Bush sent Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to each of the three countries to persuade them to strictly enforce UN sanctions, but their responses were not resolute enough to satisfy the US.\textsuperscript{13} Even as China and Russia agreed on the UN resolutions and reaffirmed their support for the denuclearization of
North Korea, they continued to emphasize “firm and also appropriate actions” and “a strong and cool-headed reaction.” In particular, Russia made its pro-North Korea position evident by sending a special envoy, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Losyukov, to Pyongyang on October 13, 2006, and by supplying North Koreans with 12,800 tons of grain in humanitarian aid. Russian President Vladimir Putin argued that pressuring North Korea with heavy-handed policies could serve as an obstacle to solving the nuclear problem. Meanwhile, the Chinese special envoy who had been sent to Washington reportedly urged Secretary Rice to accept bilateral talks in order to solve the BDA problem, and to lift sanctions against North Korea in order to bring it to the table. Although China showed its wrath when it stated that “the DPRK ignored universal opposition of the international community and brazenly conducted the nuclear test,” calling for “the UN’s strong measures against North Korea,” these words did not necessarily mean China would endorse Washington’s heavy-handed policies. Under these political conditions, the US appeared to judge unilateral policy by sanctions and pressure as untenable.

Some observers claimed that China would not push North Korea to a desperate situation because of its own interests, even though it had applied some sanctions after the nuclear test. For instance, the Congressional Research Service argued that China views the Korean peninsula as vital to its strategic interests - that Beijing values North Korea as a buffer between democratic South Korea and the US forces stationed there, as a rationale to divert the US and Japanese resources in the Asia Pacific toward dealing with Pyongyang and less focused on the growing military might of China, and as a destination for Chinese foreign investment and trade. China also had concerns about the North Korean refugee problem, which would only be exacerbated by the collapse of Kim Jungil’s regime. For these reasons, Washington concluded that China would never actively join sanctions against the DPRK, sanctions which would be ineffective without the support of China and Russia.

The South Korean government’s position, which held the North Korean issue as a “national problem” to be dealt with in the framework of its Peace and Prosperity Engagement Policy (or Sunshine Policy), was another obstacle to US sanctions. Seoul’s statement just after the North’s nuclear test contained a warning against the North and no mention of ‘dialogue’, while several within the South Korean government even discussed participation in the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Yet, despite being the biggest benefactor and second largest trading partner of North Korea, South Korea concluded it could do very little. At most, the supply of rice and fertilizer, and the sale of lots in the Gaesung industrial complex in North Korea could be suspended. Notwithstanding the UN resolution and criticism of South Korea’s diplomatic failures, Seoul still did not wish to fundamentally change its Sunshine Policy because it believed that it had substantially improved relations between the two Koreas. It also maintained the view that the US had partly incited the nuclear test by failing to adhere to prior agreements. These sentiments can be inferred from high-ranking officials’ comments. Lee Jongsuk, Minister of Unification, argued, “I can’t agree that the North conducted the test because of the
Sunshine Policy,” and that “the Mount Geumgang tour and Gaesung industrial complex, projects in the Engagement Policy, should be excluded from the sanctions category.” Meanwhile, Prime Minister Han Myungsook said, “I think the US’ unilateral sanctions and consistent financial pressure may have been a factor in the incident.” Against this backdrop, Secretary Rice failed to achieve concrete results when she visited South Korea with the purpose of calling for the implementation of the UN resolution. Although Rice pressed Seoul to participate in PSI and indicated funds from the Gaesung and Geumgang projects could be used for producing WMD, South Korea ultimately avoided giving a direct response. Foreign Minister Ban Kimoon defended the South Korean position, along with explanation provided by South Korean President Roh Moohyun, and stated at a joint conference that “The Gaesung industrial complex is efficient in reforming and opening North Korea, and the Mount Geumgang tour is also largely significant. I believe the US is also well aware of this.” At the time, the New York Times, pointing out South Korea’s decision not to join the PSI, reported “fresh doubts about Washington’s drive to punish the North for its nuclear test.”

Secondly, the Bush administration needed to make a breakthrough with the North Korean issue amid rising criticisms of US foreign policy during the November 2006 mid-term elections. American citizens and the Democratic Party demanded “a comprehensive review of American policy toward North Korea.” The Iraqi quagmire, the Middle East crisis surrounding Israel, and Iran’s nuclear program seemed to make Washington think twice about their stance on North Korea. The reduced influence of neocons caused by their departure from the administration, most prominently symbolized by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s resignation, was also an important factor. However, not all hardliners walked out of the Bush administration. Vice President Dick Cheney, a key figure among neocons, still had tremendous influence over foreign policy in the White House. The BDA issue, which was still in question, was raised three days after the September Joint Statement in 2005, and an alleged nuclear trade connection between Syria and North Korea was brought up after the October Agreement in 2007. These incidents suggested a continued struggle between neocons and moderates in the White House. What is more, advice from former officials with neocon beliefs never stopped. For instance, John Bolton, an arms control official during Bush’s first term and later the US Ambassador to the UN, raised the contention that the October Agreement “violates the basic Reagan arms-control lesson of ‘trust but verify’ . . . [it] is potentially very embarrassing to the Bush administration.” However, Bush gave credit to Rice concerning the North Korean issue, in spite of criticism from the neocons.

Finally, with the clock running out on Bush’s presidency, the Bush administration, bogged down with the Iraqi quagmire, wanted to achieve positive results at least in North Korea if not in Iraq. The US had to take into account voices against US foreign policy not only from domestic critics, but also from the international community. The New York Times reported, “For Mr. Bush, bogged down in Iraq, his authority undercut by the November elections, any chance to show progress in peacefully disarming a country that detonated a nuclear test just four
months ago could no longer be passed up.”

For these reasons, Bush entered a new phase of diplomacy in order to resolve the deadlock over North Korea. From Bush’s initial comment about ending the Korean War during the US-South Korea Summit in November 2006 to the February Agreement achieved in bilateral talks in Berlin to the October Agreement following face-to-face talks in Geneva, it can be seen that US policy has certainly changed. Moreover, it seems to have started working. The *Washington Post* describes the current “awkward” phase of the Bush administration as follows:

*US officials have suggested that Chinese pressure on North Korea after its nuclear test a year ago had changed the dynamics of the negotiations. But Asian diplomats say Bush’s shift is what helped break the deadlock. A Chinese official said this week that China’s role was minimal compared with the US decision to finally engage in bilateral talks.*

It is ironic that no party wants to take credit for the progress in the Six-Party Talks.

**China Decides to Host the Six-Party Talks**

*The Process of Trilateral and Six Party Talks*

After the second nuclear crisis, Washington and Pyongyang continuously confronted each other over the form of talks that would take place between them. Colin Powell, then Secretary of State, visited China in February 2003 and persuaded President Hu Jintao to pressure Pyongyang to accept multilateral talks. China had previously urged the US to accept bilateral talks; the first nuclear crisis had been resolved bilaterally, and China felt that the US and North Korea were still the key players in resolving the problem.

On March 7th, 2003, after Secretary Powell’s visit, the US repeated its position to China. The US affirmed that it would reject direct talks with North Korea and called on China to persuade Pyongyang to go along with the US. According to the *New York Times*, the very next day China pressured Kim Jungil to accept multilateral talks and dispatched high-ranking Chinese official State Councilor Qian Qichen to Pyongyang. For a short period during the same month, China also stopped oil shipments to North Korea to signal its seriousness.

Finally, trilateral talks were opened as a preliminary step towards multilateral talks. In the talks, China withdrew its initial position, saying that the important thing was not the form of the talks but the content. Furthermore, China attached a condition to hosting negotiations: that informal bilateral talks between Washington and Pyongyang be held under the umbrella of the multilateral forum. It was a compromise to meet conflicting demands from the US and North Korea. The *Washington Post* reported that the US reluctantly accepted informal one-on-one talks with North Korea during the Six-Party Talks because of China’s insistence. Despite this effort, however, China still heard complaints from Pyongyang that it stood entirely on the US side.

**Why Did China Accept the Political Burden of Hosting the Six-Party Talks?**

We can conjecture three reasons for China’s decision to accept the political burden of hosting the complex and potentially risky Six-Party Talks: (1) Washington’s pressure on Beijing, (2) China’s calculated strategy to improve relations with the US, and (3) China’s desire to improve its image in the international community.
To the Bush administration, China was perceived as “the most efficient conduit” because it had the most powerful leverage over North Korea. Washington consistently pushed Beijing to draw Pyongyang into multilateral talks. The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said of the effort, “Beijing’s decision to engage full-time with the Korean conundrum has come only after Washington’s tough, credible insistence that if North Korea’s nuclear weapons development cannot be ended peacefully, other methods will be used.” What the other methods would be was open to interpretation. Donald Rumsfeld claimed in 2003 that it implied diplomatic pressure to change Kim’s regime, not a military solution. However, many people, especially South Koreans, interpreted it to mean the use of military force. South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun, who was deeply concerned about the possibility of US attacks against North Korea, said, “Nobody can force us again to endure the hardships of war. We already suffered through the Korean War and achieved present day South Korea from its ashes. I believe the US will respect the reality of the situation.” After Bush’s September 2002 announcement of the Doctrine of Pre-emptive Strikes against the “axis of evil,” a close adviser to Roh told Bush administration officials that if the US attacked North Korea over South Korean objections, it would destroy the alliance between the US and South Korea.

China made several considerations in gauging its potential gains and losses. Its main concern was the political burden it would have to bear in case of failure. Victor D. Cha, former Director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council, pointed out, “China’s reputation depends on its ability to bring about nuclear disarmament in North Korea.” Despite the risk, however, China still decided to make its debut as a mediator in this highly unpredictable situation. Three motivations guided China’s strategic calculus.

First of all, there was no excuse for China to refuse requests from the US to act as a mediator, as it had repeatedly declared support for a “denuclearized Korean peninsula.” It could not bypass debates between Washington and Pyongyang because of its perceived political and economic stature, and declining to mediate the conflict would have been incongruent with its long-held stance of opposing North Korea’s nuclear development.

Secondly, Beijing needed to improve its relations with the US. The two had been alienated over issues such as the “friendly fire incident” in the Chinese embassy in 1999, the US Missile Defense (MD) plan, and the US reconnaissance plane incident in 2001. Yet America remained China’s largest trading partner and an important factor in Chinese economic development. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, China also came to see the “war on terror” as an opportunity to collaborate with the US. China could build a positive relationship with the US by joining “war on terror” policies, and at the same time, use such policies to solve domestic conflicts caused by separatism, such as the Tibetan and Uighur desire for national self-determination.

In this context, Beijing was able to transform unwanted pressure from the US regarding the Six-Party Talks into a well-timed opportunity to make a placatory gesture.

Finally, Beijing had an Achilles’ heel over human rights violations, exemplified by the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989. At present, China
is investing significant resources into improving its national image by, for example, hosting the 2008 Olympics and 2010 World Expo. Although hosting talks concerning North Korea's nuclear ambitions had risks, it also had the potential to benefit China's image as a significant and responsible member of the international community. Meanwhile, some Chinese analysts predicted that the Six-Party Talks could function significantly to resolve contradictions between existing and newly formed security regimes, drawing established bilateral alliances such as the US-Japan and US-South Korea alliances into a new multi-security regime.

Special Envoy Diplomacy

China’s favorite method of communication with Pyongyang is through “special envoy diplomacy.” Dai Bingguo, Vice Foreign Minister of China, visited Kim Jungil as a special envoy from President Hu Jintao and persuaded Pyongyang to join the multilateral talks in July 2003. Kim Jungil agreed to attend on the condition that Russia be included as a member. The second phase of Six-Party Talks were held just after Wang Jiarui, head of the Chinese Communist Party’s International Department, went to Pyongyang as a special envoy in 2004. In February 2005, Wang traveled again to Pyongyang to probe Kim’s intentions after North Korea announced it would acquire nuclear weapons and that it would leave the Six-Party Talks indefinitely. In July 2005, President Hu sent Tang Jiaxuan, Chinese State Councilor, to see Kim Jungil, a visit which became a stepping stone towards reaching the September Joint Statement.

After the DPRK’s nuclear test, Tang visited Bush on October 12, 2006, and seven days later met with Kim Jungil. Tang returned to Hu with a statement from Kim, “We have no plans for additional nuclear tests, [and] are willing to return to Six-Party Talks on the condition that financial problems be solved.” Reportedly, Pyongyang and Beijing made a deal that China would try to persuade the US to accept Kim Jungil’s demands in return for North Korea’s return to the Talks. The demands included ending the BDA problem, lifting UN sanctions, and resolving the nuclear problem through the Six-Party Talks. Additionally, Pyongyang and Beijing agreed on expansion of aid from China, and on close cooperation with each other.

North Korea’s Perception of the Talks

Why Did North Korea Accept Multilateral Talks?

Prior to the 2003 trilateral talks, North Korea insisted that negotiations over its nuclear program only take place with the US, and not on a multilateral basis. A spokesman for the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued, “China will play a role as the host giving the place for the talks, and fundamental issues concerning the nuclear problem will be solved only with the US.” North Korea’s basic position was that it had a legitimate right to develop nuclear weapons because of the nuclear threat posed by the US. As a result, discussion of the nuclear issue could only be had with the United States. Meanwhile, the DPRK’s reason for denying multilateral talks, namely, “internationalization of the North Korean issue,” appeared to be related to the Iraq War. Around the time of the Iraq invasion, North Korea repeatedly insisted that they would “never follow any decision of the United Nations Security Council,” and maintained that even if
they did “sincerely respond to the disarmament demand by accepting so-called inspection from the US, it would not prevent a war, but rather spark it.” In short, after observing the collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime, Pyongyang concluded that the US could take steps to justify reinforcing sanctions against the North, and eventually induce the collapse of Kim’s regime via the UNSC or multilateral pressure.

Nevertheless, North Korea participated in the multilateral talks that it had strongly denounced. Why did it do so? We can consider three factors: (1) pressure from China, (2) emergent perception of the Iraqi situation, and (3) deep doubts about the US government’s real intentions. Pyongyang seemed to face heavy pressure from China, although the diplomatic rhetoric was concerned with “mediation.” When the second nuclear crisis occurred, it was reported that China warned Kim Jungil, “even if there is an attack from the US because of the nuclear arsenal development, China will not help or intervene like it did in the Korean War.” China further clarified that it would continue to keep 1961 mutual defense treaty obligations, but that it did not guarantee automatic intervention in any war caused by North Korea’s nuclear issue. Often, China went as far as to mention that the treaty was nothing but a scrap of paper. Since the 1990s, Beijing has insisted that security by military alliance is an outdated Cold War concept. Instead, it has emphasized “cooperative security” as an alternative, focusing on preventive diplomacy and trust building. Regarding the nuclear test, China’s UN ambassador, Wang Guangya, commented, “for bad behavior in this world no one is going to protect them,” which implied a weakening relationship between the two countries. China’s pressure on North Korea did not end at the level of rhetoric or mere intimidation—it put real sanctions on the DPRK, which depended on China for most of its fuel and food imports.

Moreover, Kim Jungil appeared to change his mind after watching Iraq’s regime collapse in only three weeks. Pyongyang’s final acceptance of multilateral talks seemed to come from the judgment, “time is not on our side anymore.” Go Yuhwan, a professor at Dongguk University in Seoul, said, “although the North used a brinkmanship strategy—the withdrawal from NPT in January 2003—expecting one-on-one talks with the US before the Iraq War, Washington’s response was cold.” Therefore, North Korea, which had a genuine fear of “the US threat,” participated in the multilateral talks, expecting Washington to solve the nuclear problem through diplomatic means.

Lastly, North Korea, denounced as part of the “axis of evil,” seemed to accept the multilateral discussions as a channel for determining the US’s real intentions. In this regard, Alexandre Y. Mansourov, a former Russian diplomat in Pyongyang, described Kim’s intentions:

Here is Kim Jung-il’s game plan in Beijing. Treat the Chinese intermediaries as a pro-American party at the talks, which should be viewed as a two against one boxing match. Give both, the PRC and the United States, advance notice about pending initiation of reprocessing operations. Tie down Washington at the negotiation table and buy time for military build-up at home. Watch for the talks as an early warning about possible American’s attacks. Last, frame the United States in a way delegitimizing any US unilateral military action against the North in the eyes of the international community.
North Korea's Recognition of China as “Mediator”

As Mansourov mentioned above, North Korea had reason to think of China as a pro-American party, since over the past decade, China, which arguably possesses the second largest economy in the world, consistently refused to provide its North Korean ally with more than subsistence level aid designed primarily to keep Kim Jungil’s regime alive but on a very tight leash. Igor Rogachov, a member of the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of Russia, said, “China accepted the US’s demand as an international principle and this destroyed Beijing-Pyongyang relations. And the Chinese policy to make the best use of the US also accelerated the alienated relationship.” In this regard, a US Congressional Research Service report described the discord between China and North Korea as more severe than ever before:

*Several issues have arisen to cause friction in the Sino-North Korean relationship. These include: Chinese exasperation at the DPRK’s failure to reform its economy; Pyongyang’s prevarication over the nuclear and peace treaty issues; the nuclear standoff with the United States and Pyongyang’s possession of nuclear weapons; Growing economic and political rapport between Pyongyang and Taipei; The North Korean refugee problem on the China-DPRK border; and Pyongyang’s missile testing prompting Japan to acquire a Theater Missile Defense system.*

In this context, China’s positions—“no protection from an attack by the US” and “denuclearization of the Korean peninsula”—seemed to signal a betrayal of the China-North Korea alliance formed after the Korean War. In the eyes of Pyongyang, “not rejecting the US” or “standing on the US’s side” could all be understood as an act of treachery. North Korea’s unhappiness with China was expressed in critical comments such as, “Some dishonest forces in the international community are joining the US in its moves to increase pressure upon the DPRK over the nuclear issue.” Baek Namsoon, the DPRK’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, also revealed a strong distrust of China, saying, “We could not give a signal for the missile test in advance to China, which is a partner of the US.”

Nevertheless, it still remains in question whether the Chinese position was sincere or not. “No protection” could have been a bargaining strategy intended to pressure Pyongyang, while “denuclearization” might have only been a rhetorical or placatory gesture toward the international community benefiting China’s national image. Only Kim Jungil may know whether Beijing used its position as a bargaining chip or not.

It was, however, difficult for North Korea to ignore China’s demands because its economy depends so heavily upon China. Therefore, North Korea took advantage of its position by persuading the US through China. It was an application of the Korean maxim, “if you can’t avoid it use it.” Pyongyang finally accepted multilateral talks on the condition of having bilateral talks (formal and informal private discussions) with the US. It was a compromise with the US through China. When the US and North Korea once again collided over the BDA issue, China mediated between Washington and Pyongyang in order to resolve the standoff. China arranged a secret meeting in Beijing on October 31, 2006, which led to the second phase of the fifth round of Six-Party
Talks in December 2006. Pyongyang seemed to appropriately respond to the Chinese “carrot and stick” strategy, and also to play the nuclear game with the US by using its alliance relationship with China. Meanwhile, North Korea demonstrated its displeasure with China by notifying China only twenty minutes before the October 2006 nuclear test, while it gave Russia a two-hour notice. Gordon Flake, Executive Director at the Mansfield Center for Pacific Affairs, explained:

This nuclear test’s target was not the US, but China and South Korea. Washington already thought that the North had nuclear weapons. The nations that showed the strongest stance against nuclear weapons were China and South Korea. The strategy that North Korea used was to pressure the two countries and expect them to persuade the US to relax the sanctions.

Conclusion

US policy towards North Korea had been controlled by hard-liners and was aimed at making Kim’s regime collapse, which would remove another member of the “axis of evil.” However, amidst a miserable defeat in mid-term elections, demand for a review of foreign policy, a weakening of neocons’ power, the Iraqi quagmire, a swing of pendulum against Bush’s “go-it-alone” style, and non-cooperation from neighboring countries all triggered a change in the Bush administration’s policy. So far the change seems to have been in the direction of progress.

Witnessing the collapse of Iraq, Pyongyang, which seemed genuinely afraid of US attacks, ultimately came to the multilateral table. It was led by China’s implicit and explicit pressure, anxiety over Washington’s intentions, and the necessity of achieving a diplomatic resolution. As a result, North Korea expected sanctions would be lifted, that it would be removed from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, and that normal relations with the US would be established. North Korea used Chinese influence directly and indirectly toward achieving these goals. Undoubtedly, the Bush administration’s political difficulties made these goals more feasible for Pyongyang. The new phase of diplomacy between Washington and Pyongyang is a dramatic departure from the situation of only two years ago in which North Korea conducted a nuclear test. The Chinese participated in multilateral talks as a host and mediator for the sake of improving its relationship with the US as well as its international image and political influence. China now appears to enjoy the position of a responsible member of the international community.

As of the end of 2007, the North Korean nuclear negotiations have shown some progress. The question that remains is in which direction and for how long disagreements will continue. Nobody knows whether the Joint Agreement of the Six-Party Talks will follow the suit of the second Agreed Framework, which failed in the end. In fact, the crux of the problem lies in the lack of trust between the US and North Korea. The key to a complete, successful resolution to the nuclear issue lies in substantial actions rather than words. When the US guarantees the security of North Korea, and in turn, North Korea abandons its nuclear program, a dangerous and tedious game of chicken will finally come to an end.
ENDNOTES

1 The Clinton administration considered a preemptive strike against North Korea in the Pyonggang area where the nuclear facilities were located, but it was stopped by former President Jimmy Carter, who went to Pyongyang and met with President Kim Il-Sung in 1994. The US and North Korea signed the “The Agreed Framework” in October 1994, and agreed to freeze the development of nuclear facilities in exchange for economic assistance. Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman and Robert Gallucci, Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis (Brookings Institution Press, 2004).

2 The Six-Party members include North Korea, South Korea, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia.


4 The US Ministry of Treasury imposed sanctions on Macao’s Banco Delta Asia (BDA), which froze an estimated $25 million of North Korean funds. The dispute occurred in September 2005 when the US alleged that the funds were linked to money laundering and counterfeiting rings. For more than a year, North Korea refused to participate in the Six-Party Talks until it could access the frozen funds.


19 CRS, The North Korean Economy.

20 The Sunshine Policy, initiated by former South Korean President Kim Du-Joong in the late 1990s, is a doctrine towards North Korea that pursues peaceful cooperation for eventual Korean reunification.

21 “Lee Jong-Suk’s Belief Went Through,” Newsmaker, October 23, 2006; PSI is an international regime led by the US to interdict the transfer of banned weapons, WMD, and weapons technology, etc. South Korea has rejected direct participation in PSI, stating that such a move may lead to a dangerous escalation of events, causing a renewed conflict between the two Koreas.

22 Ibid.; Jong-Gu Yun, “PM Han The Engagement Policy Failure to Prevent the Nuclear Test,” Dong-A Ilbo, October 11, 2006.

23 Ibid.


29 “BDA issue is now clear that the evidence was skimpy and that the sanctions were specifically designed to destroy the September Joint Statement.” Bruce Cumings, “Bush, Chinese Official Agree on Strong Measures on North Korea,” Agence France-Presse, October 12, 2006.


31 CRS, The North Korean Economy.

32 The Sunshine Policy, initiated by former South Korean President Kim Du-Joong in the late 1990s, is a doctrine towards North Korea that pursues peaceful cooperation for eventual Korean reunification.

33 “Lee Jong-Suk’s Belief Went Through,” Newsmaker, October 23, 2006; PSI is an international regime led by the US to interdict the transfer of banned weapons, WMD, and weapons technology, etc. South Korea has rejected direct participation in PSI, stating that such a move may lead to a dangerous escalation of events, causing a renewed conflict between the two Koreas.

34 Ibid.; Jong-Gu Yun, “PM Han The Engagement Policy Failure to Prevent the Nuclear Test,” Dong-A Ilbo, October 11, 2006.

35 Ibid.


41 “BDA issue is now clear that the evidence was skimpy and that the sanctions were specifically designed to destroy the September Joint Statement.” Bruce Cumings, “Bush, Chinese Official Agree on Strong Measures on North Korea,” Agence France-Presse, October 12, 2006.


43 CRS, The North Korean Economy.

44 The Sunshine Policy, initiated by former South Korean President Kim Du-Joong in the late 1990s, is a doctrine towards North Korea that pursues peaceful cooperation for eventual Korean reunification.

45 “Lee Jong-Suk’s Belief Went Through,” Newsmaker, October 23, 2006; PSI is an international regime led by the US to interdict the transfer of banned weapons, WMD, and weapons technology, etc. South Korea has rejected direct participation in PSI, stating that such a move may lead to a dangerous escalation of events, causing a renewed conflict between the two Koreas.

46 Ibid.; Jong-Gu Yun, “PM Han The Engagement Policy Failure to Prevent the Nuclear Test,” Dong-A Ilbo, October 11, 2006.

47 Ibid.


53 “BDA issue is now clear that the evidence was skimpy and that the sanctions were specifically designed to destroy the September Joint Statement.” Bruce Cumings, “Bush, Chinese Official Agree on Strong Measures on North Korea,” Agence France-Presse, October 12, 2006.
Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, China has been the North’s largest trading partner and supplier of concessional assistance through subsidized trade and direct transfers. North Korea reportedly gets about 70 percent of its imported food and 70-80 percent of its fuel from China. Carin Zissis, “China’s Relationship with a Nuclear North Korea,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, October 24, 2006. China’s economic aid to North Korea is immense. It is difficult to figure out the real amount due to the deficiency of exact data. China promised $2 billion in aid in October 2005. CRS, “North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Development and Diplomacy,” January 3, 2007. According to World Food Plan (WFP), food aid from China exceeded 575,000 tons in 2005 and 92 percent of it was provided to the North.

In the future, she plans to work for an INGO. She was a reporter for a Korean daily newspaper in Seoul for 5 years and covered political news, especially North Korean issues, during this period. Her academic interests include Northeast Asia political issues, relations between the two Koreas, and nonproliferation regime.

SUK-HYUN LEE

Suk-Hyun Lee received her BA in Journalism from Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul, Korea in 2000, and an MA in International Studies from the University of Washington in 2008. In the future, she plans to work for an INGO. She was a reporter for a Korean daily newspaper in Seoul for 5 years and covered political news, especially North Korean issues, during this period. Her academic interests include Northeast Asia political issues, relations between the two Koreas, and nonproliferation regime.
How can anti-Americanism—the expression of opposition to or resentment against the United States—be associated with democratization? The United States has often been a champion of democracy. While it certainly has its limitations, the tradition and principle of democracy has been present in American politics since the New England town hall meetings of the colonial period. An analysis of contemporary South Korean (hereafter Korean) politics, however, suggests that anti-Americanism has been an expression of the country’s democratization.

Anti-Americanism is a diverse phenomenon that fluctuates according to its cultural and political context. Simply put, it signifies resentment against the US, but its precise nature differs in each society. Varying clashes in the realm of culture, ideology, values, and policy make each society’s manifestation of anti-Americanism unique. Given this multilayered and complex nature of anti-Americanism, this paper does not attempt to discuss the entire spectrum of Korean anti-American attitudes. Rather, it focuses on the most visible strands of Korean anti-Americanism, which also happen to have strong correlations with democracy in Korea.

We will first look in detail at how anti-Americanism in Korea in the 1980s arose as an expression of the demand for democratization. In this time period, the public increasingly perceived...
the US as conspiring with the authoritarian regime, and thus inhibiting democratization. Meanwhile, renewed anti-Americanism after 2000 provides evidence of democratic consolidation in Korea - most notably the maturing status of democratic pluralism, freedom of speech, civil society, and civic participation. The recent surge and popularization of anti-Americanism specifically indicates a changed political culture, wherein the youth has emerged as a political force and broader changes have occurred in Korea’s national identity.

South Korea’s Pro-American History After 1945

The US was overwhelmingly popular among the Korean people after Korea was liberated from Japan in 1945. After decades of oppressive Japanese colonial rule in the early 20th century, the US was seen as a liberator to a majority of Koreans. In 1948, after a three-year trusteeship, the US acted as a firm supporter and sponsor for the government of the Republic of Korea (South Korea). Two years later, the US’s positive image was greatly enhanced when it became the country’s principal defender against North Korea during the Korean War. Pro-American sentiment persisted for decades, as the US provided a security umbrella against the North while supplying substantial military and economic aid to the South. As a result, anti-Americanism was, for the most part, dormant or nonexistent in the 1950s and 60s. To most Koreans, “the United States was more than a friend; it was a savior of their nation.”

The public’s overwhelming support for the US was still evident in the 1970s when President Carter proposed a withdrawal of troops from South Korea. Many Koreans, concerned that national security would be undermined by the withdrawal, opposed the proposal. From their point of view, US forces in Korea (USFK) served as a protector against the North. Widespread pro-Americanism was also visible in protests against the authoritarian Korean President Park Junghoo, who took over the country in a military coup in 1961 and ruled with an iron fist until 1979. Dissidents wanted a constitutional democracy modeled after that of the US. Their pro-American feelings, therefore, had deeper origins than the public’s widespread appreciation of the US as a defender of Korea. Their affinity for America included a respect for the US’s democratic political institutions and practices, and some dissidents were even confident that the US would support their protests for democracy.

Anti-Americanism in the 1980s as a Direct Expression of Democratization

Public resentment against the US, however, began to build in the 1980s. During this era, once prevalent pro-American sentiments dissipated, paving the way for anti-American sentiments. After President Park’s assassination in 1979, many expected democratization to occur. Even though a large proportion of the Korean public revered Park and his policies, they still harbored a desire for democracy and a direct presidential election. Such hopes faltered when army general Chun Doohwan instigated a coup in 1980. He soon made himself the President and, like his predecessor, ruled the country as a dictator.

During the Chun administration, anti-government protests increased dramatically. Chun, unlike Park, was unpopular throughout his presidency. While Park was respected and well liked...
by the public for his successful economic policies, Chun merely preserved the status quo. He was often chastised for his government’s strict control over society, which was even more unjustified without significant improvements in quality of life. As a result, violent clashes between protestors and the police became a common sight in Seoul, and struggles between civil society and the government intensified. Civil rights activists from student, labor, and religious organizations were at the forefront of this movement. They called for an end to Chun’s authoritarian rule and for democracy. For this civil rights movement, democratization meant the practice of direct presidential elections, a political process that Koreans had been deprived of since the early 1960s.

Thus, anti-Americanism that grew in the 1980s was directly related to pro-democracy movements. The two were concurrent movements, often led by the same individuals or civil society groups. These actors were disillusioned by the US’s reluctance to promote democracy in Korea and with its support of the authoritarian Chun regime. Throughout the years of pro-democracy protests, Washington not only remained silent, but legitimized Chun by acknowledging him as an important strategically. While President Chun clamped down on pro-democracy protests with violent and unconstitutional measures, including torture, President Reagan refused to become involved in Korea’s domestic concerns.

In May 1980, students, professors, and other activists in the southwestern city of Kwangju protested against the government. They were dissatisfied with both the martial law that was declared after President Park’s assassination and the illegitimate coup instigated by President Chun. The protest quickly turned violent when Chun sent his special warfare troops and demonstrators responded with weapons acquired from armories. The uprisings lasted ten days, with Chun violently ending the civilian protest. The government estimated about “164 civilians and 23 soldiers and policemen died, [while] the opposition claims that as many as 2000 died.” The incident is a sore subject for many Koreans and images of the crackdown—the presence of tanks and machine guns in the city and the beating of civilians by soldiers—are still ingrained in the memory of the Korean public.

The Kwangju uprising was a pivotal point of anti-Americanism in the 1980s because it made the US a complicit supporter of the Chun regime. Many Koreans, even today, believe that the US played a role in the government’s repressive actions in Kwangju. According to the military arrangement between the two countries, Korea’s armed forces were under the command of the Korea-US Combined Forces Command (CFC), which is headed by the American Commander in Chief, Combined Forces Command (CINCCFC). Therefore, many Koreans subscribed to the logic that the US had either implicitly endorsed or actively supported Chun’s suppression of the Kwangju incident.

However, scrutiny of the issue shows that the special warfare troops sent by Chun were in fact beyond the jurisdiction of the CFC, and hence, beyond the control of the CINCCFC. In other words, US military commanders in Korea were unable to prevent Chun’s use of violence in Kwangju. Unfortunately for the US, anti-Americanism involves misperceptions, as Korean
pro-democracy activists of the time were not aware of this technicality. This “myth of US responsibility” spread throughout the Korean psyche in the 1980s and classified the US as a cohort of the ruthless President Chun. While the US may blame the Korean public for their ignorance, failure to provide the Korean public with correct information lies with the US.

President Reagan’s continued support of President Chun reinforced Korean anti-Americanism. For Reagan, who held a staunch anti-communist foreign policy platform, South Korea was an important strategic partner in containing the Soviet Union. Given the high levels of instability involved in the process of democratization, Reagan saw Chun “as the only possible alternative for South Korea.” Despite Chun’s illegitimate rise to power, the US eventually granted its support by accepting his visit to the US in 1981. Koreans became disillusioned with the US when President Reagan chose to turn a blind eye to Chun’s repressive policies. Unlike the dissidents of the 1970s, the dissidents of the 1980s “came to believe that the US was using their country for its own strategic purposes and that all the talk about democracy and human rights was just rhetoric.” The image of the US as an inhibitor of Korean democracy peaked in this time period.

The direct link between anti-Americanism and desire for democratization became obvious during the last years of President Chun’s rule. From 1985 to 1987, not only did pro-democracy, anti-Chun demonstrations intensify, but “radicals began to target American citizens and institutions such as the Chamber of Commerce and the US Information Agency.” Korean contempt toward the US government translated into contempt toward everything American. The emotional public began to associate American people, products, and values with the US government’s support of authoritarianism, and anti-Americanism and pro-democracy movements went hand in hand during this period.

After years of pro-democracy movements, the authoritarian government finally conceded to the democratic process in 1987. It engaged in a series of negotiations with the opposition political party and agreed on constitutional reforms and a prompt presidential election. During this transition process, the US played an important, if minor, role. While the US at first adopted a neutral position on the proposed election, it began to favor democratization as another period of martial law became imminent. While public demonstration and the level of anti-Americanism alarmed the Reagan administration, calculations derived from the fall of Marcos in the Philippines had a decisive impact on the US’s decision to support Korean democracy. After witnessing citizens toppling an authoritarian regime in the Philippines without bringing chaos to the country, the US saw the merit of supporting democracy abroad. As a result, it began to support the proposed reforms for democracy in Korea.

The US was thus supportive of democracy in 1987, but public opinion does not credit the US with much influence. Korean democracy is both “mass-ascendant” and “self-induced.” It is “mass-ascendant” because civil society, rather than the elites, constituted the key agent in the political transition, and it is “self-induced” because foreign actors were not significantly involved.
democratization was achieved independently, at a time when the US had stepped aside throughout decades of anti-authoritarianism and pro-democracy movements. In fact, civil society groups were the critical catalysts and the initiators of democratic transition. The US’s refusal to promote democracy in South Korea combined with its blind support of two authoritarian regimes transformed anti-Americanism into an expression of democratization in South Korea during the 1980s.

**Anti-Americanism in the 2000s as Evidence of Democratic Consolidation**

If anti-Americanism in the 1980s can be interpreted as an expression of democratization, anti-Americanism in the 2000s can be described as evidence of democratic consolidation. In other words, the anti-American movement in recent years is proof of the maturing status of Korean democracy. A healthy democracy involves much more than a direct presidential election, which was the key goal of the 1980s pro-democracy movement in Korea. True democracy requires robust civil participation in politics, where both political and civil rights are respected. While many remnants of 1980s anti-Americanism remain, the more recent strand of anti-Americanism is vastly different from its predecessor. It targets a wider range of issues, such as the social disruption caused by US military forces and the Bush administration’s initial hawkish rhetoric towards North Korea. At the same time, it has spread to the wider public, instead of being confined to radical protestors as it had been in the 1980s. While Korea today is far from a model democracy, its democracy has consolidated significantly since 1987. An examination of anti-Americanism in the context of freedom of speech, the emergence of a left leaning party, the solidification of civil society, and the public’s growing concern over national interest demonstrates this progress.

Greater freedom of speech after the Chun administration’s downfall has allowed for the growth of anti-Americanism. Prior to 1987, expressions of hatred or opposition against US troops were “actively and systematically suppressed” by four decades of authoritarian rule.\(^1\) Given the strategic importance of US forces, coupled with substantial bilateral aid from the US, Korean leaders chose to suppress anti-American sentiments through legal, though often repressive, methods. The government did not want to forego benefits from the US because of anti-American public opinion. President Chun strongly implemented this policy with the 1980 National Security Law. According to Article 7 of this law, “anyone who had written or disseminated materials criticizing the South Korean government or the presence of US armed forces in South Korea was punishable by imprisonment.”\(^2\) By framing anti-Americanism as a threat to national security, the government restricted the public’s expression of anti-Americanism. As a result, several anti-American protesters became political prisoners, who were released only after the 1987 transition.

Since the 1980s, however, freedom of speech in Korea has advanced significantly. With the end of authoritarian rule, the Korean government lifted its censorship of anti-Americanism. Although the National Security Law and its validity are still in debate, its enforcement has dwindled since 1987, rendering the law largely insignificant. Today, the risk of imprisonment from proclaiming anti-
Anti-Americanism

American slogans is almost non-existent. This change in the legal sphere has directly influenced social perceptions of anti-Americanism. As a result of democracy and free speech, the Korea-US alliance is no longer a taboo subject. Since 1987 people have begun to feel more secure and confident about expressing their opinions on the US and its policies.

This newfound freedom of speech is linked to increased freedom of the media as well. Much like public opinion, the media was systematically suppressed and controlled by the authoritarian regimes prior to 1987. With democratic principles in place and press restrictions subsiding, the media has emerged as an active agent spreading anti-Americanism. With the rise of Internet media and Korea’s attendant advanced information technology infrastructure, the public is able to receive unconstrained expressions of anti-Americanism from a variety of media sources.

While the recent wave of Korean anti-Americanism indicates expanded free speech and media in the country, it also reflects the emergence of a diverse political spectrum and corresponding multi-party system. Historically, a leftist party has been absent from the formal political scene in Korea. When the United States Military Government (USMK) governed Korea from 1945 to 1948, it eliminated all leftist political parties. The USMK, in the process of nation building, laid the foundations for future pro-American, anti-communist, and capitalist regimes. As a result, the leftist party was either banned or harassed until the 1990s, and its leaders often ended up in prison or exile. What is more, the anti-American movement in the 1980s failed to capture the hearts and minds of the majority of the Korean public because of its radical tendencies. It was “heavily influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology,” which was hugely unpopular because of its communist inclinations.

The radical individuals that led these movements thus failed to institutionalize their ideology into the formal political process. The recent rise of anti-Americanism since 2000, however, signifies a legitimate rise of the moderate left.

In the 2002 presidential election, candidate Roh Moohyun won “on the hitherto absent political platform of greater equality in [the] American relationship.” Although neither a radical socialist nor a communist, President Roh had a moderate inclination to the left. The election year of 2002 was a pivotal year in terms of anti-Americanism. During that year Korean nationalism and confidence rose as a result of its national soccer team’s unexpected success in the World Cup, jointly hosted by South Korea and Japan. At the same time, the public was enraged with a tragic traffic accident caused by a US armored vehicle that claimed the lives of two Korean middle school girls. While the incident was clearly an accident, the US government reacted poorly with an unapologetic attitude. Such mismanagement led to an unprecedented candlelight protest. The image of thousands of people congregating in downtown Seoul with candle lights sent a powerful anti-American message. To some extent, Roh had the advantage of formulating his platform at the height of anti-American sentiment.

More importantly, Roh’s success reflected the rise of democratic pluralism in Korea. His victory on an unprecedented anti-American platform indicates a “diversification and democratization of issue areas in public policy.” During the
authoritarian years, leftist ideology was largely excluded from the mainstream political process. In contrast, the popularity of recent anti-Americanism and Roh’s victory in 2002 show that diversifying public opinion is coming to be reflected in the formal sector of Korean politics. In this respect, Anti-Americanism, provides powerful evidence of a new range of competing ideas that was absent in the authoritarian era. Through this emphasis on legality and respect for the democratic process, civil society has become a convincing anti-American force in the eyes of the larger public.

Today’s anti-American civil society groups are also distinct from those in the 1980s in the issues they address. They are concerned with the misconduct of US soldiers and societal problems caused by US bases in Korea. After democratization, a range of issues related to the US bases emerged. Previously suppressed grievances regarding the economic decline of towns hosting US bases, environmental damage caused by those bases, and constant physical and sexual harassment of civilians by US soldiers surfaced in political debates, due to civil society activism. The new civil society groups are therefore progressive: “not just anti-something but for something.” They act as agents of social change, trying to convert their anti-American sentiment into real policy.

The increasing level of tactical sophistication among Korean civil society groups reflects their developing organizational capacity. In contrast to the civil society groups of the 1980s that were “heavy on rhetoric and light on empirical research and analysis,” the new groups are engaged in “expert investigation of problems, comparative analysis with other countries, and institutional measures for redress.” New forms of activism have empowered these entities and made them significant political actors. Also, the level of
cooperation among civil society groups in the context of anti-Americanism has been impressive. Although many of these entities have independent and even competing agendas, anti-Americanism has served as motivation for these entities to form collective movements.\textsuperscript{29} While there is no guarantee that these organizations will maintain a strong coalition for a sustained period of time, they nonetheless reflect a growing social trust in Korea's consolidated democracy. Their collective influence is likely to continue as long as the US ignores their demands on specific issues.

Korean civil society's political role has grown in stark contrast to that of weaker political parties. Despite years of democratic consolidation, political parties have not matured as civil society has and tend to rely on personalities rather than long-term policy platforms. As a result, Korea's political contours change rapidly before and after presidential elections. Before an election, parties split or merge, as candidates who lose in the primaries often form their own parties or side with an opposition party. This particular phenomenon was highlighted in the 1997 election when President Kim Daejung collaborated with Kim Jongpil. This collaboration gave Kim Daejung a significant number of votes from Kim Jongpil's home province. The move, however, perplexed many because Kim Jongpil was the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), a government organization that for years had harassed and imprisoned Kim Daejung and his followers while he was an active opponent against President Park. Similar confusions rise after presidential elections when congressional representatives of the losing party switch their allegiance to the new President's political party. With political parties continually failing to live up to public expectations, civil society groups have become the preferred channel of public opinion, often compelling the government to institute reforms.

In addition to the growth of civil society, anti-Americanism reflects the rise of citizen and public concern over Korea's national interests. In the authoritarian years, the public was mostly barred from the political process, policies regarding national interest being decided by authoritarian governments which resisted any challenge to its policies. Recent anti-Americanism, especially in the context of civil society activism and public concern over sovereignty, indicates a new public involvement in the national interest. Yongshik Bong calls this form of anti-Americanism \textit{yongmi}: a pragmatic approach towards the relationship with America.

Bong claims that \textit{yongmi} results from the Korean public's "concrete assessment of Korean national interests."\textsuperscript{30} He argues that Korea's anti-American sentiment results whenever the public perceives US policies as being in conflict with Korea's national interest. Bong adds that Koreans, particularly youths, are sensitive to fluctuations in North Korea-US relations because a belligerent North Korea poses a grave personal danger to ordinary South Koreans whom American policymakers do not care to empathize with. In other words, US involvement in North Korea's nuclear issue ultimately influences "their personal interests and national security."\textsuperscript{31} This was the case in early 2000, when tensions between South Korea and the US escalated over policy issues regarding the North. As mentioned above, South Koreans
were uneasy about the US’s hard-line policies. Many thought that the US was pushing an unpredictable North Korean government to an excessive degree. Any significant instability in North Korea, whether it be the internal collapse of the North Korean regime or an aggressive military explosion, could critically endanger South Korean security. South Koreans, therefore, disapproved of how US policies engaged North Korea at the expense of South Korean interests.

Anti-Americanism in Korea’s Changing Political Culture

The newly popularized anti-Americanism must be understood in the context of Korea’s changing political culture. While successful democratization in 1987 marked a significant transition in Korean society, other factors, such as demographic and economic changes, influenced its political culture as we see today. Anti-Americanism is a result of these changes and reflects the present state of Korean political culture.

The rise of anti-Americanism since 2000 has occurred concurrently with a widening generational gap. To put it simply, the younger generation is more anti-American while the older generation is more pro-American. This difference can be attributed to the different upbringings of the two generations. The older generation witnessed the US role in the Korean War as well as its security and economic assistance throughout the Cold War years. Even though the Cold War structure fell apart in the late 1980s, the older generation continues to consider the North as a security threat and the US as a defender against such threats. In contrast, the younger generation “grew up in a matured democracy and pluralized society.” Not only did they enjoy relative economic prosperity, but they also lived through peaceful periods when political and civil rights were respected and there was not an immediate threat from the North. This experience has made them feel freer to oppose US policies and decisions. The younger generation, therefore, has a different frame of reference in perceiving the US. The older generation tacitly consents to the unequal patron-client Korea-US relationship, but the younger generation demands that Korea be treated as an equal. The rise in recent anti-Americanism can be attributed to the rise of the youth as a significant political force. Even though Korea’s Confucian tradition may assign lower status to younger people, it has not stopped them from becoming a significant political force in Korea.

Besides the generational gap, anti-Americanism also stems from Korea’s changing conception of its national identity. Post-democratization Korean history has been tumultuous. Rapid economic development, institutionalized democracy, the 1988 Olympics, the 1997 financial crisis, and the 2002 World Cup have all changed how Koreans see themselves. In world systems theory, Korea is now a middle power that lies between the core and periphery. In the world economy, it is a model for growth; its reputation was solidified by its success in the 1990s as well as its quick recovery from the financial crisis. Such progress has changed Koreans’ perception of their nation, further prompting a redefinition of their identity vis-à-vis the United States. Previously, the Korea-US relation was heavily asymmetrical. With the US holding much of the military and economic resources Korea
Anti-Americanism

needed, the US was regarded as a patron and an “older brother”. Today, Koreans demand a revision of the Korea-US relationship. They feel humiliated by the US government’s presumption of Korea as a client state and demand that the US recognize Korea as an equal. Anti-Americanism, therefore, can be explained as a consequence of the clash between Korea’s changing self-perception and the US’s previous perception of Korea.

Anti-Americanism in the context of Korea’s changing conception of its national role has been apparent in debates over two issues: the US military presence in South Korea and reunification with the North. After years of changing political culture, Koreans want more sovereignty and less US interference. Some anti-American activists are discontent with the US military presence in Korea. While they are angry at the frequent damage caused by US soldiers and bases, they are more concerned that the American presence infringes upon Korea’s sovereignty. Their argument can be understood in terms of the conventional definition of a state: an entity that monopolizes legitimate forms of violence over a certain territory. It is believed that Korea falls short of this definition because of the US military presence, that without a military independent of the US, Korea cannot enjoy complete sovereignty. But not all people with anti-American sentiments subscribe to this view. Many who hold generally unfavorable views on the US acknowledge the importance of the US military presence. This clash on the issue of the US military, however, is likely to continue as long as some people see the presence of US bases and Korean sovereignty as incompatible.

Much like the US military presence, many anti-American activists regard the North Korean problem as a domestic issue. Many South Koreans view North Koreans as blood brothers and see unification with the North as a primary national goal. This mindset, in fact, has been institutionalized in the South Korean government, in the form of a Ministry of Unification existing independently of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The gap between South Korean and US opinion on the issue of North Korea has been one of the most significant sources of Korean anti-Americanism. A view of the North that incorporates it into a larger Korean culture has become increasingly popular after the end of authoritarian years. While previous dictators clearly defined the North as an enemy, later Presidents, especially Kim and Roh, perceived the North amiably and advanced several reconciliatory measures. Many South Koreans wish to achieve inter-Korean reconciliation without outside interference, and they often see the US and its hawkish policies as obstacles to this goal.

Disagreement over North Korea became significant in the early years of the Bush administration. After the historic North-South summit in 2000, many Koreans were optimistic about the future of North-South relations. Such optimism quickly faded when President Bush assumed office. In its first term, the Bush administration often chastised the North over its nuclear policies. Most notably, President Bush labeled the North a member of the “axis of evil,” a declaration that was unwelcome to both the North and South. In the context of South Korea’s amiable perception of the North, the US was infringing upon Korea’s sovereignty and its policies toward North Korea.
The Future of Korean Anti-Americanism

Some changing and unchanging aspects of Korean society allow for certain predictions regarding the future of Korean Anti-Americanism. In terms of change, significant progress on the North Korean nuclear problem has been made over the past year. As a result, the tension in trilateral relations between the North, South, and the US has subsided significantly. While their success is still to be determined, the Six-Party Talks have resulted in a diplomatic solution to the North’s pursuit of nuclear weapons. Given that the North Korea-US clash has been a significant source of anti-Americanism in South Korea since early 2000, progress in nuclear diplomacy and the prospect of North Korea-US rapprochement may soothe South Korean anti-American sentiments.

Moreover, the ambivalent nature of Korean anti-Americanism guarantees that it will be limited to reactions on specific issues rather than conflict over basic values. The Korean people are ambivalent in their attitude toward the US, some viewing military bases in Korea unfavorably, but coveting American higher education, for example. Despite pervasive anti-American protests in the early 2000s, long lines for visas in front of the US Embassy in Seoul remain. One can also easily imagine the widespread presence of Nike shoes in the demonstrations as well. Meredith Woo-Cummings argues that Korean anti-Americanism is different from conventional European anti-Americanism because there are no cultural clashes between Korea and the US. She claims that “[the two] cultures are still too wide apart to develop the truly intense loathing that comes from intimate knowledge of each other.”

Given the cultural gap between the two societies, Korean anti-Americanism will continue to be limited in its scope.

The US military presence in Korea also has the potential to appease Korean anti-Americanism. Despite its aforementioned problems, the US military is arguably beneficial to Korea’s national security, given the unpredictable nature of its neighbors and the high level of mistrust amidst them. The US, likewise, benefits from its presence in South Korea. The country is a strategically key location for overseeing uncertainties in the Taiwan Strait, North Korea, and parts of Southeast Asia, and military bases there help further the goal of balancing powers in East Asia. Therefore, the bases are in the interests of both Korea and the US, and are likely to remain. If Korean and US policymakers address the societal problems caused by US soldiers and bases, the larger portion of the Korean public will appreciate their presence.

Conclusion

When looking at the past few decades in South Korea, the link between anti-Americanism and democracy is clear. In the 1980s, anti-Americanism was an expression of public resentment against the US’s support of authoritarianism. Pro-democracy activists regarded the US as an inhibitor of Korean democracy. In recent years, anti-Americanism has served as evidence of democratic consolidation - the rise of anti-Americanism since 2000 shows that Korea’s democracy has matured, especially in comparison to the 1980s, and recent reemergence of anti-Americanism provides insight into Korea’s changing political culture. Both a generational gap and conceptions of a new national identity explain how anti-Americanism has become more popular
in recent years.

Whenever anti-Americanism appears in Korean society, the power of public opinion is tested. To what degree is public opinion heeded by policymakers? How does the US react? How does South Korea react? Do governments simply ignore public expressions of anti-Americanism? While the Korean government reacted to the public’s pro-democracy movement in the 1980s by meting out repressive policies, we have yet to see the American response to the recent anti-American movement in South Korea. How the US reacts to South Korean discontent, especially issues raised by civil society groups, will be key in determining the future of Korean anti-Americanism.

ENDNOTES

3 Chung-in Moon, 142.
5 Ibid.
6 Sunhuyk Kim and Wonhyuk Lim, "How to Deal with South Korea," the Washington Quarterly 30 (2007): 75.
9 Kim and Lim, 75.
10 Drennan, 292.
11 Shorrock, 1201.
12 Shin, 794.
15 Shorrock, 109.
16 Kim and Lim, 73.
19 Sung-Han Kim and Heather Dresser, ROK-US Alliance: How to Envision It? (paper presented at a conference hosted by the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security and the American Enterprise Institute, 2003), 8.
21 Shin, 791.
22 Ibid.
23 Steinberg, x.
24 Katharine H. S. Moon, 137.
26 Chung-in Moon, 140.
28 Ibid., 237.
29 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 164.
34 Ibid.
37 Woo-Cummings, 58.
JUNG-YUL KIM

Jung-Yul Kim is currently a senior in Macalester College, majoring in Political Science. In 2008, he spent three months researching at the International Crisis Group, Northeast Asia office. His academic interests include democratic theory, US foreign policy, and international organizations. He can be reached at jungyul.kim@gmail.com.
In July 1965, the Malaysian military forcibly resettled nearly 8,000 people of Chinese descent into five temporary settlements in Sarawak’s First Division in a campaign known as Operation Hammer. Two years later, between October and November of 1967, another campaign of forced resettlement targeted primarily rural Chinese on the island of Borneo. This second campaign became known as the Demonstrasi Cina, or “Chinese Demonstration,” during which Dayak paramilitary groups in West Kalimantan violently evicted nearly 55,000 rural Chinese from their homes with the support of the Indonesian military. The evicted fled to the west coast of the island.\(^1\) Belying its relatively bland title, the Demonstrasi Cina resulted in hundreds of deaths.

Despite differing levels of violence between the two campaigns, these operations shared several similarities. First, they were both responses to attacks from communist insurgents operating with help from the Malaysian-Borneo side. The period of Konfrontasi, or “Confrontation,” an extremely tense and sometimes violent political standoff between Malaysia and Indonesia from 1963 to 1966, was extremely heated and symbolized a national line of defense for both states. Second, both campaigns targeted people of Chinese descent based on the assumption that ethnic Chinese were potential backers of the insurgency since the communist insurgents were predominantly, though not exclusively, of Chinese background. Both the Malaysian and Indonesian militaries employed and manipulated aboriginal forces in Borneo, a strategy that promoted ethnic...
divisions among local populations. British and Malay military counterinsurgency forces used Ibans as guides and scouts, while Indonesian military forces collaborated with Dayak headmen to call into being specific Dayak modes of violence. Finally, both operations were carried out during times when the People’s Republic of China was believed to be providing tacit support to insurgents. These last two points provide reasons for why the Malaysian and Indonesian states perceived insurgents as a simultaneously internal and external threat to their national sovereignty and territorial integrity. In Operation Hammer and Demonstrasi Cina, ethnic identities and designations were conflated with national and political loyalties. This conflation may be contextualized within a long history dating back to the colonial era in Southeast Asia, when colonial powers divided ethnicity into categories of native and non-native for the purposes of state administration.

In postcolonial Malaysia and Indonesia, the dominant discourse of ethnicity and race evolved out of British-Dutch colonial distinctions between indigenous and non-native ethnic groupings. Colonial governments borrowed the terms bumiputera (sons of the soil) in Malaysia and pribumi (roughly meaning inlander) in Indonesia to manage colonized populations and enforce political and economic divisions of labor. These bumiputera-pribumi divisions engendered tensions that would spill over into the postcolonial era and play central roles in Malay and Indonesian imaginings of the nation. The delineations of these native and non-native categories reflected arbitrarily defined lineages, most significantly those of Cina (Chinese) and Melayu (Malay), two labels with the greatest power to “unite and divide” identities in Southeast Asian history. During the late imperial era of the 19th century and the rise of nationalism in the 20th century, Cina earned the designation of “outsider,” while Melayu was deemed to represent “insiders.” While the Melayu lineage came to dominate the national imaginings of the Malaysian and Indonesian states, the groups classified as Cina felt compelled to identify themselves as transnational Nanyang or South Seas Chinese.

When extended to the Indonesian and Malaysian territorial claims in Borneo, however, the logic of native and non-native categories does not hold up as easily as in the administrative centers on Java and peninsular Malaysia. The island of Borneo itself captures the ambivalence of the boundaries between native and non-native. From the British and Dutch colonial regimes with somewhat similar racial policies toward a diverse local population to the modern Malay and Javanese nation-states that rule from afar and whose dominant political elite constitute an ethnic minority on the island, Borneo continues to represent a frontier of sorts. What is defined as native and non-native in Borneo complicates the delineation of the terms along national lines from the two political centers. Therefore, a study of the two campaigns of resettlement in Borneo during the late 1960s illustrates the ways in which ethnicity is defined as well as how ethnic violence is carried out.

The notion of ethnicity as a boundary is vital to this study. It is important to think of the ethnic markers involved—in this case, Nanyang Chinese, Malay, Iban, and Dayak—more as a part of the formulation and maintenance of ethnic boundaries than the safeguarding of cultural identity.
Brubaker argues that ethnic groups should not be thought of as “bounded groups,” but as a kind of event that “happens.”

“Ethnopolitical entrepreneurs,” which can refer to states and their various branches, such as law enforcement agencies and armed forces units, as well as political parties, ethnic associations, social movement organizations, churches, newspapers, radio and television stations, and so on, catalyze this event. Brubaker explains how ethnopolitical entrepreneurs operate: “By invoking groups, they seek to evoke them, summon them, call them into being. Their categories are for doing—designed to stir, summon, justify, mobilize, kindle, and energize.”

One of the most effective strategies for group formation is “deliberate violence,” an option all the more enticing to ethnopolitical entrepreneurs who have easy access to the mechanisms and manpower capable of violence. This study of the two Borneo campaigns and their historical backgrounds demonstrates that it is precisely the ambivalent nature of ethnicity and its entanglements with national and political classifications that leads states to conflate these various classifications through the repressive enforcement of their boundaries. The exclusion of Nanyang Chinese from national participation through the enforcement of native and non-native boundaries has prompted a sense of shared victimization that cuts across national borders. Articulated in literature published outside the nation-state, such as the Taiwanese publications of Sino-Malaysian authors Zhang Guixing and Chen Dawei, this sense of shared victimization has also served to construct alliances across ethnic boundaries and challenge state delineations of ethnicity.

Reinforcing Borders: Konfrontasi

Konfrontasi, the confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia from 1963 to 1966, provides a critical backdrop to the resettlement campaigns and violence perpetrated against Nanyang Chinese communities in Borneo in 1965 and 1967. During Konfrontasi and its aftermath, the Sarawak-Kalimantan border was not only a national symbol, but also the site of national and political struggle, a struggle that would play out in ethnic dimensions.

Konfrontasi was rooted in the birth of the Malaysian Federation. After Malaya gained independence in 1957, the new political leaders drew up plans for the incorporation of the former British colonies of Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah) into the Malaysian Federation. Between 1957 and 1963, the British military aided the new government in its efforts to quell scattered communist rebellions in Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo that opposed incorporation into the Federated States. In September 1963, while Brunei became an independent Islamic state, Sarawak and Sabah were officially incorporated into Malaysia. Communist insurgency organizations continued to wage guerilla warfare in Sarawak and Sabah into the following decade. In Sarawak, these organizations focused their demands on access to employment, land tenure, and citizenship—issues that predominantly affected the Nanyang Chinese community. This marked the Sarawak communists as a predominantly Cina organization, even though for years they had tried with limited success to reach out to rural and economically disadvantaged Iban communities through incentives like agricultural
By 1961, the Malaysian state’s plans in Borneo became apparent to the Indonesian government. With the support of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), President Sukarno denounced the joint Malaysian-British action as imperialist. In 1963, he officially declared a policy of confrontation known as Konfrontasi. During Konfrontasi, Malaysia sought to defend and reinforce the Sarawak-Kalimantan border in order to prevent Indonesia from incorporating the former British colonies into its own territory. Defending this border was an extremely difficult task. The border was a somewhat arbitrarily defined (and thus highly vulnerable) line spanning 1,000 kilometers over rugged mountain terrain and tropical rainforest. The collaborating British-Malay forces recruited border scouts from the local Iban population who were responsible for border surveillance as well as guiding security forces. The Ibans were also recruited to help guide the counterinsurgency forces across the border into the PKI’s West Kalimantan stronghold.

The two major concerns of the Malay state in implementing the Operation Hammer resettlement campaign in 1965 related directly to the perceived internal and external threats posed by Konfrontasi. While the Sarawak communist insurgency, which was reportedly receiving support from Indonesia, constituted an internal threat, bands of armed Indonesian PKI on the border posed a distinct external challenge. With the 1965 coup and subsequent counter coup that overthrew Sukarno and led to the extermination of the PKI on Java and Bali, and the subsequent end of Konfrontasi in early 1966, the communist insurgents on the Sarawak side of Borneo turned their attention to guerilla warfare against the Indonesian military. As of late 1965, the Indonesian military had driven these insurgents into the jungle. According to Charles Coppel, these insurgents were “an unintended legacy” of Konfrontasi and now “found themselves in opposition to both the Indonesian and Malaysian governments.”

In September 1967, a joint Malaysian-Indonesian border security agreement was expanded to allow military personnel to cross the two nation’s borders when in “hot pursuit” of insurgents. The agreement was based on the logic that the communists showed “no respect for boundaries” and that their increased strength on one side of the Sarawak-Kalimantan border would have “direct consequences on the other.”

The “hot pursuit” of this “unintended legacy” of Konfrontasi would become a major factor in the anti-Chinese violence in West Kalimantan of 1967.

**The Operation and the Demonstration: Attack, Counterattack, Resettlement**

The plan for Operation Hammer was drawn
up as a response to an attack that occurred on June 27, 1965—approximately 30 insurgents in “Indonesian style jungle green uniforms with various types of headdress” attacked the 18th Mile police station in Sarawak’s First Division. In addition to stealing weapons and destroying the station’s communication link with headquarters in Kuching, the insurgents opened fire on six police officers, killing four and wounding two. While retreating, the insurgents also killed local Nanyang Chinese farmers and shopkeepers who refused to help them or who were considered government supporters or informants. None of those arrested during the campaign, all of whom were Nanyang Chinese, took direct part in the 18th Mile killings. Rather, they were arrested for providing information or for acting as guides to the insurgents, a position relatively akin to that of the Ibans in the counterinsurgency.

Operation Hammer was patterned after resettlement campaigns carried out on Peninsular Malaysia during the Emergency from 1948-60, in which Nanyang Chinese in rural areas, as suspected supporters of the Malayan Communist Party, were forcibly relocated to “new villages.” In the case of Operation Hammer, over 7,600 Chinese were forcibly resettled to five controlled temporary settlements over a span of three days in July 1965. Those resettled were mostly Sarawak-born and either held legal title to their land or leased it from landowners under “native customary rights.” They were mostly from the Hakka-speaking community of small landholders who, for generations, had cultivated rubber, pepper, and other cash crops. They inhabited Sarawak’s First Division, an area considered to be strongly sympathetic to the insurgency.

Although the Malaysian military’s goal was to cut the insurgency off from a base of local support, their message to those being relocated was that its purpose was to “protect the people from communist atrocities.” Although Operation Hammer was carried out in a relatively “peaceful” manner and did not involve the loss of lives, farmers suffered from the loss of cash crops and livestock. Furthermore, many vacated shops owned by resettled Chinese were looted. Foreigners who saw the temporary settlements described them as “concentration camps.” Justus Van Der Kroef noted that Operation Hammer “unquestionably deepened Chinese resentment” toward the Malay state. The campaign also deepened rifts between the Nanyang Chinese community and the Sarawak bumiputera groups. During the temporary resettlement, a three to six month period, the government began construction of “new villages” or permanent settlements with better amenities. The improvements in living conditions for the Nanyang Chinese fostered resentment among some native groups like the Bidayuh, who felt that “the resettled Chinese were being rewarded rather than punished for their actions.” While the material lives of members of the Nanyang Chinese in Sarawak may have improved over the long term, the campaign further inhibited greater cultural integration and cooperation across ethnic lines.

As in Operation Hammer, one of the key incidents that brought about the Demonstrasi Cina in West Kalimantan in 1967 was a surprise attack by insurgents, which resulted in the deaths of military officers and the theft of weapons. In July 1967, communist guerillas attacked the air force
munitions depot in Singkawang, West Kalimantan, killing four Indonesian soldiers and capturing ammunition and firearms.\textsuperscript{35} The Indonesian army hoped to enlist the support of villagers and civilian militias in West Kalimantan to put down the insurgency as it had elsewhere in the country during its violent purges of the PKI. Yet it encountered trouble trying to garner support among both Dayaks and Nanyang Chinese. Tensions flared, however, when the communists began making successful raids in the area and attacked the Dayak village of Uduk in the interior in October 1967.\textsuperscript{36} Communist bandits had reportedly been terrorizing the countryside and allegedly killed 12 Dayaks.\textsuperscript{37}

Prior to the violence, Nanyang Chinese-Dayak relations in West Kalimantan were described as relatively harmonious.\textsuperscript{38} Having been unable to obtain sufficient information about the communist insurgents in Kalimantan, the Indonesian military sought to leverage growing Dayak antagonism toward insurgents in order to instigate violence against the assumed base of insurgency support. The military thus turned to tactics of psychological warfare that escalated Dayak antagonism and amplified their ethnic dimensions. Army strategists collaborated with Dayak leaders to select certain Dayak cultural symbols and practices, such as that of the Borneo headhunter, to mobilize Dayak militias. This gave rise to what Nancy Lee Peluso calls a “cultural politics of violence.”\textsuperscript{39} The Indonesian military and Dayak leaders conjured up an exotic stereotype from the colonial era and turned it into the basis for imagining a collective, ethnic identity, which served national military strategy. Explanations of the violent outbursts as the inevitable eruption of longstanding ethnic and class tensions fail to recognize the fact that military and Dayak leaders deliberately made ethnicity a part of the discourse. Ethnicity was used to cultivate a group identity and incite violence against non-group members at precisely the time the conflict occurred.

Subsequent retaliation, known as the Demonstrasi Cina, was, according to Coppel, “one final localized but devastating gust of the hurricane” that swept other parts of the country in 1965.\textsuperscript{40} Although the ethnic group was spontaneously conjured up, the violence was not: it was, as previously mentioned, an act carefully coordinated and manipulated through the Indonesian military’s use of ethnicized symbols of violence. Like Operation Hammer, the Demonstrasi Cina occurred over a three-month period, but the scale of violence was far greater. The Nanyang Chinese victims violently evicted from their homes in West Kalimantan totaled over 53,000. Between 300 and 500 were reportedly killed, mostly hacked to death with bush knives or shot with firearms issued by the military.\textsuperscript{41} They were by and large cultivators of irrigated rice land and evicted primarily because they were identified as Cina, regardless of political affiliation or any actual connections to the insurgency. Refugees flooded the coast from the interior, and most of them were never able to return to their homes.\textsuperscript{42} Conditions in the coastal refugee camps were said to be terrible. Reports indicated 1,500 deaths by April 1968, of which most were women and children who died due to lack of food and medical attention.\textsuperscript{43}

When drawing comparisons with Operation Hammer, it appears that the Indonesian military’s plans for resettling Nanyang Chinese communities
in West Kalimantan may have come from contacts with the Malaysian army, which agreed to provide logistical support to Indonesian operations against the local insurgency in 1967. Because of violent excesses, military authorities in West Kalimantan were reluctant to take credit for the forced resettlement as the Malaysian military had in Operation Hammer. Vernon Porritt claims that, in comparison to the Demonstrasi Cina, “resettling 8,000 Chinese in Sarawak was a benign solution.”

Despite the comparable lack of violence during the 1965 campaign in Sarawak, both campaigns can be seen as reinforcing ethnic boundaries. The major boundary was drawn along nativist lines, ultimately serving to inhibit the cultural assimilation and ethnic integration of the so-called native and immigrant populations. Just as the Sarawak-Indonesian border was reinforced as part of nationalizing the island of Borneo, so too was resettlement enforced as a means of ethnicizing the land.

The Ethnic-Nation Conflation: Nanyang Chinese as PRC Communists

By targeting specifically ethnic Chinese communities, Operation Hammer and the Demonstrasi Cina were directly related to antagonistic relations with the People’s Republic of China (PRC). In both cases, Nanyang Chinese were seen as co-conspirators of the PRC. Yet many of them had been living in Malaysia and Indonesia for generations. They remained Chinese only insofar as they were denied citizenship, were segregated from natives based on lingering colonial racial policies, and perhaps chose an identity based on an emerging sense of Chinese nationalism. Nanyang Chinese were thus the targets of violence, forcible resettlement, and deportation.

There is an obvious muddling of ethnicity and nationality here, but this misinterpretation can be easily explained with reference to the various modes in which nations are, to borrow from Benedict Anderson, “imagined.” Nationalisms, or ways of seeing the nation, are “modular”—they follow a certain set of generic conventions and are capable of being transplanted to a wide range of “social terrains.” In Indonesia and Malaysia, nationalism merged with a social terrain that, as in most postcolonial spaces, was deeply inscribed with the lasting racial and ethnic ideologies of the colonial state.

Like bumiputera and pribumi concepts of the native, the idea of a distinct Chinese identity in Southeast Asia also has its roots in the colonial era following the establishment of Western-ruled enclaves by the Spanish and Dutch. The Spanish and Dutch sought to regulate commercial activity and trade, and assigned economic and political functions according to indigenous and non-indigenous categories. Thus, it became difficult for people of Chinese descent to maintain a “culturally ambivalent” creole status between native and immigrant populations. Dutch colonial census-makers, for example, displayed an “intolerance of multiple, politically ‘transvestite,’ blurred, or changing identifications.”

A native versus non-native dichotomy, however, has not always operated in Southeast Asia. Creolized societies, which are composed of the progeny of intermarriages between immigrants from China and indigenous peoples,
often functioned as “intermediate social systems” between local and colonial power in Southeast Asia. These communities experienced different fates depending on the policies of the colonial governments or the nations that replaced them. The Mestizos in the Philippines were absorbed into the native population; the Baba Malays, during the rise of distinct ethnic nationalisms in the early 20th century, were forced to assume status as Cina, while the Peranakan Indonesians continued to exist as an “ethnic group apart.”

50 The varying fates of creolized societies were the result of often contradictory colonial and national policies of assimilation and segregation. Countries like Thailand and the Philippines, which focused more on policies of assimilation, saw a much greater integration of Chinese diasporas into the local population. Assimilation, like segregation in Malaysia, was also an enforced policy that included periods marked by anti-Sinicism. 51 For Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia, assimilation has always been a “partly coerced, partly voluntary strategy.”

52 In Indonesia and Malaysia, hostilities toward Nanyang Chinese resulted from the conflation of ethnicity with a host of economic, political, and religious issues. 53 As the background to the events in Borneo in 1965 and 1967, this series of confluences seem to feed the more general conflation of ethnicity with nationality. This conflation is due in part to the rise of Chinese nationalism in the early 20th century. Indeed, much of the funding and support for Sun Yat-sen’s 1911 Revolution in China came from the monetary and ideological support of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. 54 What is more, the institution of local Zhonghua schools by the KMT (the Nationalist government in China), which offered instruction in the newly standardized Mandarin, as well as the establishment of Chinese language presses across Southeast Asia fostered a sense of nationalism among Nanyang Chinese communities that were traditionally divided by dialect and region. 55 This newfound nationalism gave people a sense of a “unified, historically rooted community.” 56 While the rise of nationalism may have reformulated Nanyang Chinese perceptions of “homeland” within a national framework, for many Malays and Javanese, it “hardened attitudes toward those newly viewed as outsiders.”

57 In Peninsular Malaysia, nationalism was predominately ethnicized, which produced an ethnically polarized social sphere; Malays embodied the “ethnic nation,” while Nanyang Chinese and Indians were considered outsiders. 58 The major difference in Indonesia was that a sort of civic nationalism, as opposed to an overtly ethnic nationalism, had to be articulated in order to include large numbers of ethnic and religious minorities. 59 Indonesian nationalists, consisting primarily of the Javanese elite, perceived a separate nationalism articulated along separate ethnic and linguistic lines as subversive, like that perpetuated by the Zhonghua schools or the Nanyang Chinese press. As in Indonesia, Malaysia would encounter a similar situation when trying to spread its vision of the nation to an ethnically diverse Borneo, where the Malays were neither the majority nor native. Thus, the Malay-dominated government found the colonial legacy of the bumiputera category there useful as a strategy to divide and conquer.

50 Once the PRC was perceived as meddling in Indonesian-Malaysian relations, the strategic
conflation of ethnicity with national and political loyalties had severe consequences for Nanyang Chinese communities in Borneo. In 1961, China allegedly agreed to give Sukarno “a free hand” to carry out Indonesian designs on the Malayan archipelago. It was at this time that Malaysia stepped up its military campaign against the Sarawak communists by targeting what they believed was its base of support in rural Nanyang Chinese communities. The Nanyang Chinese in Sarawak were generally much poorer than their peninsular counterparts, and support for the communists among Nanyang Chinese youths in the 1960s was usually due to dissatisfaction over access to employment, land tenure, and Malaysian citizenship. Under such conditions, many members of the insurgency found inspiration in Maoist doctrine. Captured insurgents from both sides of the Sarawak-Kalimantan border reportedly carried Chairman Mao’s Little Red Book. True or not, such reports could only further the ethnicity-nationalism conflation.

During this period, many of the captured Nanyang Chinese members of the Sarawak insurgency were deported to China for repatriation. Deportation was certainly not limited to Borneo alone; an estimated 10,000 Nanyang Chinese were repatriated from Malaya during the official period of Emergency from 1948 to 1960. In the wake of the breakdown of Sino-Indonesian relations following the 1965 countercoup, Suharto’s New Order government also undertook a repatriation policy. Anti-PKI violence was, for the most part, ethnically neutral, victimizing a vast number of PKI-affiliated, non-Chinese as well. In fact, most of the violence during the chaos of 1965 occurred in Java and Bali, where Nanyang Chinese did not constitute a significant proportion of the population.

Alleged PRC involvement in the September 30 coup, however, led to mass protests at Chinese embassies, presses, and schools. As Van Der Kroef notes, suspicion about PRC involvement in the coup “seemed to fall on the whole Chinese minority in Indonesia and ever more restrictive control measures were imposed on the movement, residence, location, or business dealings of its members.” In areas where demonstrations took place, such as Makassar and Medan, politically non-affiliated Nanyang Chinese, such as pedicab drivers and street vendors, were also deliberately attacked.

Prior to the Demonstrasi Cina in West Kalimantan, insurgency operations were officially viewed by the Suharto government as a “campaign of subversion” instigated by communist China. Nanyang Chinese, as a local minority grouping, were not only perceived as linked to communism, but also assumed to harbor national loyalties to the PRC. While the rupture in Sino-Indonesian relations may have been a political game of propaganda and misinformation carried out by both sides, it had real consequences for Indonesian Nanyang Chinese. They were driven from their homes and placed in emigrant camps where conditions were brutal. Many were slated for repatriation to China without their belongings. The military moved 5,000 Nanyang Chinese living near the Sarawak border to the provincial capital of Pontianak for repatriation to China. Regarding the conditions in the emigrant camps there, Van Der Kroef notes that...
Subsequent deportees among the Chinese in Indonesian Kalimantan reportedly complained that haphazard implementation of, and even official confusion in, citizenship regulations had not permitted them to opt for Indonesian nationality where they lived, even if they had wanted to do so, and that now, after having lived peaceably for years, and sometimes even decades, in West Kalimantan, they were being treated as enemy aliens.\footnote{71}

This conflation of ethnicity with political orientation and nationality, situated within its larger historical context, is the crucial element to understanding the anti-Chinese violence and resettlement campaigns in Borneo in 1965 and 1967.

Articulating Victimization: Crossing the Ethnic Boundary

In Borneo, the hegemonic discourse of ethnicity in terms of native and non-native categories combined with the experience of repressive resettlement campaigns have forced a significant portion of the island’s population to disidentify with the nation-state. Instead, Nanyang Chinese imagine themselves as part of a transnational community spanning much of Southeast Asia. Yet just as the labeling of Malaysian and Indonesian nationhood in terms of native and non-native categories is problematic, so too is the notion of a singular, transnational category called the Nanyang Chinese. History has demonstrated that the integration of people of Chinese descent into a local cultural, national, and socioeconomic milieu has taken extremely diverse forms throughout Southeast Asia. The term Nanyang Chinese conjures up a panorama of stereotyped images: seafaring immigrants and indentured coolies working in tin mines and on rubber plantations to middle-class merchants, wealthy business magnates, and community leaders of native-place guilds. The interests of members belonging to these various socioeconomic classes and native-place, dialect associations became historically entangled in those of colonial powers, local elites, landholders, peasants, and state administrations. One way in which the Nanyang Chinese have transcended these differences is through a certain sense of shared historical victimization that cuts across colonial and national divides, such as the Sarawak-Kalimantan border in the case of the 1960s resettlement campaigns. In the last section of this paper, the category of Nanyang Chinese is called into question through an examination of Nanyang Chinese literature.

If exclusion from national participation and shared victimization for the Nanyang Chinese has forced the construction of transnational, ethnically based alliances, then it must also be asked whether this exclusion may also provide a condition for the imagining of trans-ethnic alliances obscured by the dominant national narrative. While certain vernacular literatures have provided the vehicle for the predominant national imagination, others may be seen as challenges to that same narrative, even as they are marginalized by it. The evocation of shared victimization in Zhang Guixing’s Herds of Elephants, a contemporary work of fiction, can also be read as an attempt to cross the ethnic boundary historically delineated by the Malaysian nation-state. Zhang is from Sarawak, but he now lives in Taiwan, one of the only places where Chinese language literature written by Malaysian authors has significant access to publication and literary awards. In Taiwan, Zhang has been compared to

---

97

BRIAN BERNARDS

SOUTHEAST ASIA
the likes of world literary giants such as Gabriel García Márquez, William Faulkner, and Joseph Conrad. He is most well known for his Rainforest Trilogy, which consists of three novels about his former homeland of Malaysian Borneo.72

Growing up in Sarawak in the 1960s, Zhang witnessed many momentous events: guerilla warfare against the colonial British in the struggle for national liberation, Sarawak’s absorption into the Federated States of Malaysia after independence in 1957, operations by the Malaysian state and British military against the communist insurgency in Sarawak, and state campaigns targeting the Nanyang Chinese population through disadvantageous economic policies and forced resettlement. All of these events form the backdrop to Herds of Elephants (Qun xiang), the second installment of the Rainforest Trilogy, in which the author details the rise and fall of the Sarawak insurgency through the story of Shicai, a young boy of Chinese descent. This literary example articulates a sense of shared victimization not simply in terms of how it transcends national boundaries, but also in relation to how it crosses historically delineated ethnic boundaries. What is more, the novel is a personal story of Shicai’s family’s involvement in the communist movement, his interactions with an Iban friend who works with him in the timber industry, and his search for the diminishing elephant herd on the island of Borneo.

In the passage highlighted below, Shicai’s Iban friend invites him into the community longhouse where he is shown the skull of a Nanyang Chinese member of the communist insurgency. While the image of the skull could be said to exploit and exoticize fables of Iban headhunting traditions, it has a different symbolic meaning that connects the two young characters. For the boy’s Iban friend, the skulls on the wall represent Iban achievements; however, these are relatively insignificant compared to the large-scale massacres of the Iban people committed by the British, the Malay state, and the predominantly Chinese communists with their contending claims to Sarawak and its resources.73 For the protagonist, however, the image of the skull triggers the historical memory of violence against Nanyang Chinese in Southeast Asia. The Iban friend explains to Shicai, most often referred to in the novel simply as “the boy,” the reasons his people’s historical struggles against groups perceived as invaders:

“There are three main reasons my people lost in the battle against tyranny: the first is weaponry, the second is my people are scattered, and the third is other ethnic groups and people from outside, especially Malays. Although the Chinese did not support them, they still behaved like wild beasts, just like the communists.”

The communists. The boy scanned the skulls on the wall for one with a “communist countenance.”

“Compared to the countless massacres of my people at the hands of the British, these few achievements by my people don’t really amount to much.”

Massacres. Great massacres. In 1603 the Spanish massacred more than 20,000 Chinese people on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. In 1740 the Dutch massacred more than 10,000 Chinese people on the banks of the Kali Angke. And in 1969 there were the anti-Chinese riots in Kuala Lumpur – who knows how many Chinese perished then?”4
This fictional sequence is very provocative, for it posits two visions of a shared experience of massive violence. The first vision, in which ethnic Chinese spread across vast geopolitical spaces and history are imagined as collective sufferers of state violence, is transnational but united through ethnicity. It conceives of Nanyang Chinese as one unified group, which can be understood as the result of state enforced ethnic boundaries. Ethnic boundaries, as evidenced by the Malaysian and Indonesian campaigns in Borneo in the 1960s, also cut across international boundaries in similar ways. The second vision, which links the historical memories of atrocities committed against Nanyang Chinese and the Ibans in Sarawak, is trans-ethnic but united through locality. This vision attempts to connect the corresponding victimization of Nanyang Chinese and Ibans across the arbitrarily enforced ethnic boundaries. Moreover, it can be understood as a response that challenges state-defined notions of the ethnic versus the indigenous which prevent, or perhaps disrupt, the formation of inter-ethnic alliances and hybrid cultures. Zhang reveals that the realization of a shared experience of violence, manipulation, and censorship through the reinforcement of ethnic boundaries may be the starting point for crossing those boundaries. Unfortunately, as Zhang demonstrates, the imagining of inter-ethnic alliances that transcend native and non-native categories in Sarawak is a vision excluded from the national arena and can only be articulated from afar.

Conclusion
In summary, Operation Hammer and Demonstrasi Cina arose out of the contestation over national space and the general conflation of ethnicity with national loyalties and political orientation. This conflation is best understood by tracing the tradition of dividing ethnicity into categories of native and non-native back to the British-Dutch colonial era in Malaysia and Indonesia. The arbitrariness of the native/non-native delineation as well as the conflation of ethnicity and nationalism was amplified when extended by both the Malaysian and Indonesian governments to reinforce ethnic boundaries in Borneo in the 1960s. Repression and violence used by state military campaigns to secure ethnic boundaries contributed to the transnational imagining of the Nanyang Chinese as a distinct group linked by a shared experience of victimization. Exclusion from national participation has also offered the possibility for re-imagining local alliances that transgress the imposed native/non-native boundary. As in the literature of Zhang Guixing, however, such examples must still be articulated from positions and discursive arenas outside Malaysia.

ENDNOTES

3 Peluso, 106. Dayak is the general term ascribed to Borneo’s many aboriginal ethnic groups still used by the Indonesian government. Formerly referred to as Sea Dayaks, the Ibans, who reside primarily in Sarawak and West Kalimantan, are one of the groups subsumed by the Dayak label.
The exception of course is the sultanate state of Brunei Darussalam.

This interpretation follows Fredrik Barth’s definition, which claims that it is the “ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.” See Fredrik Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969), 15. While the “cultural matter” within an ethnic category is continuously subject to change and boundaries may be porous, they still persist overtime. It is precisely during times of conflict that contending claims to power—they political, military, religious, economic, or even cultural organizations—strategically raise up and seek to maintain the ethnic boundary.


As noted below, Zhang Guixing is the renowned author of a Borneo “Rainforest Trilogy,” Chen Dawei is the author of many poetry collections, including the most recent, Approaching the Ramayana (Kaojin Luomoyanna, 2007), which discusses the multicultural and multi-religious environment of the author’s hometown of Ipoh.


Porritt, 45.

Porritt, 56.

Porritt, 66.

Porritt, 78.

Van Der Kroef, “The Sarawak-Indonesian Border Insurgency,” 251.

Peluso, 113.

Coppel, 145-147.

Peluso, 106. Apparently, a ritual of “passing a red bowl” to call allies to war was carried out before the violence. Along with symbols of headhunting traditions, this ritual would be reinvoked in 1997 to invoke Dayak violence against the Madurese, who, ironically, had moved in to the land in West Kalimantan vacated by the Chinese three decades earlier.

Coppel, 145.

Peluso, 113.

Coppel, 145; Peluso, 113.

Van Der Kroef, “The Sarawak-Indonesian Border Insurgency,” 264 fn.57.

Coppel, 146-147.

Porritt, 90.

Van Der Kroef, “The Sarawak-Indonesian Border Insurgency,” 257.


Anderson, 166.

G. William Skinner, Creolized Chinese Societies in Southeast Asia, in Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1996), 78; Coppel, 11. Most of the Peranakan, roughly 85 percent, are found in Java in areas close to elite power.

Daniel Chirot, Conflicting Identities and the Dangers of Communism, in Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe, eds. Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 15; Coppel, 13. Coppel also notes that whereas the Chinese in Indonesia may trace their descent in the local context back a dozen generations, studies have found that in Thailand most of the Chinese merged with the Thai population by the fourth generation.


Coppel, 28.

Norman Owen, et al., The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005), 255.

Coppel, 9.

Chirot, 14.

Ibid., 8.

Lim and Gosling, 306.

Chirot, 20.
Brian Bernards is a Ph.D candidate in the Asian Languages and Cultures department at UCLA. With the support of grants from Fulbright-Hays and the Pacific Rim Research Program, he is currently conducting dissertation research at the National University of Singapore’s Asia Research Institute. His scholarly interests include modern Chinese and Southeast Asian literature and postcolonial studies.
The Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs accepts papers from a wide variety of disciplines including, but not limited to, international relations, political science, economics, history, sociology, anthropology, literature and art.

Article submissions can focus on any topic pertaining to East Asia. Our work is roughly divided into the following sections:

Greater China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan)
Japan
Korea
South East Asia

Submissions should be between fifteen and forty double-spaced pages in length. We encourage both undergraduates and graduates to submit their theses for consideration (either chapters from their work or condensed versions reflecting the page limitations).

Submissions and inquiries should be sent via email to:
sjeaa-submissions@lists.stanford.edu.

Please follow submissions guidelines posted at http://sjeaa.stanford.edu/submissions.html