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GREATER CHINA
SJEAA
In this paper, I provide a brief overview of rural-urban migration in China, discuss the employment options available to migrant women, and examine how a small subsection of migrant domestic workers in Beijing negotiate their identities as both migrant workers and as “new urban citizens”. I identify several interesting tropes in the language used by the women in letters and short essays and suggest that each function to situate the “abject” subject of the rural woman in a particular position from which they can lay powerful claim to urban identities. Furthermore, I hypothesize that the act of writing these articles, and of publishing them in a newsletter whose audience consists wholly of one’s peers, opens up possibilities for these women. In this “community”, they are empowered to deploy different configurations of power and to construct a variety of subject positions vis-à-vis the organization, their peers, and urban Chinese society.

Internal migration has been a central issue in Chinese society since the reforms of 1978, which triggered labor shortages in the cities and land reallocation in the countryside. At the same time, they loosened citizens’ personal ties to the household registration system (hùkǒu 户口). Massive influxes of foreign direct investment in this period, especially after Deng Xiaoping’s Southern Tour in 1992, reaffirmed the central government’s commitment to reform and openness and resulted in rapid development of a manufacturing/export sector. From the years 1983 to 1989, 90.7% of all foreign direct investment was concentrated on the coast, with the number dropping to 88.1% between 1990 and 1996. The ability of the Chinese countryside to supply a seemingly endless population of young laborers has been the key determinant in China’s comparative economic advantage as the world’s manufacturing center.

Migration, in classic theories, is driven by “push” and “pull” factors, and Chinese labor migration adheres to this model. The economic development described above was accompanied by the emergence of growing income inequalities: between rural and urban areas and between the less developed central and western provinces and the wealthy coastal areas to the east and south. The national Gini coefficient, a measure of the income inequality within a country, rose from 0.3 in 1982 to 0.45 in 2002, peaking at 0.47 in 2009. This imbalance, combined with increased industrialization of agriculture and a rise in rural unemployment, acts to “push” laborers out of the countryside. Foreign direct investment in the manufacturing sector, on the other hand, “pulls” this labor with relatively high wages and extensive job opportunities.

Current estimates for the number of migrants in major cities range from 100 million in 2000 to 140 million in 2004, and experts expect it to increase to 200 million within roughly the next decade. Upon arrival in the city, however, migrants face a number of new challenges. By choosing – often out of necessity – to work and live virtually as illegal aliens in their own country, migrants throughout the 1990s and 2000s have forfeited the certainty of a rural income and community without gaining access to the benefits of standard housing, childcare, pension funds, insurance, and social stability linked to an urban hùkǒu. Their marginalized status also translates into virtual second-class citizenship. They face social exclusion, job discrimination, lowered self-confidence, sexual and familial tensions related to the distance or dissolution of the nuclear family unit, and the additional...
financial burdens of travel and living costs for the migrating individual. Health risks also increase under urban living conditions in migrant communities, made apparent by more incidents of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS as well as a higher probability of developing work-related conditions.

One sees from this brief overview that the situation of rural-urban migrants has attracted increasing attention from Chinese state and social institutions. However, from the late 1980s until the late 1990s, Chinese research focused primarily on an ungendered and universal “migrant worker”, creating a serious blind spot where issues of sex, gender, and migrant status overlapped. As late as the 2005 United Nations Development Report, scholars failed to address migrants as sexed; at no point do the words “woman” and “migrant” appear together. The nearest the authors come to acknowledging intersecting identities is one paragraph dedicated to the demographic often labeled shuāngchóngruòshì (双重弱势) or “doubly-weak”. Failing to recognize gender as a crucial element of identity ignores the very different social and material conditions of migrant women.

Once the vast minority in the “floating population”, migrant women now constitute a large proportion of all rural-urban migrants. This increase in numbers comes as a response to the rising labor market demand of the service and entertainment sectors and the informal economy. Because these sectors lack strict regulation, migrant women are particularly susceptible to sexual harassment and physical abuse and have been the targets of trafficking schemes that direct unknowing women into sex work or forced marriage. In media representations of migrant women, scholars have remarked on the fetishization and hyper-sexualization of rural female bodies for an urban, middle-class readership. This representation negatively influences migrant women’s self-worth even as it informs the social responses of urban citizens to these laborers. The Chinese media also focuses on the threat to social stability caused by “deviant” practices in migrant communities, frequently conflating migrant status with sex work, drug use, sexually-transmitted disease, and crime. Finally, upon returning to the countryside, migrant women also experience difficulty reintegrating into rural society, finding non-agricultural work, and pursuing marriage prospects.

I see the subject “migrant woman” in China as discursively confined to three primary positions: the factory worker, the sex worker, and the domestic worker. All three positions are understood vis-à-vis their location in patriarchal power dynamics. Studies of migrant women factory workers indicate that they live in secluded dormitories, have very limited hours of rest, and – as a result of the migration patterns typical of factory workers – interact mostly with family members or friends from their home villages. The paternalistic management structure of the factories further holds them to very similar, “traditional” moral standards as those in their home villages, curtailing workers’ opportunities to investigate their urban surroundings even on their rare days off. Finally, many of the factory complexes in southern China are located in the exurbs of large cities, where the (lack of) infrastructure and surroundings belie the location’s not-so-distant rural past. This social and spatial isolation from the city severely limits women’s opportunities to enter into urban society.

Women working in the service sector or in restaurants and hair salons, for example, may experience a similar lack of familiarity with the city and with urban citizens – despite inhabiting a more central urban space. Their workday is usually structured by an omnipresent and omnipotent employer who probably also provides housing, allots free time, and acts as an intermediary between migrants and the city government. This type of service work is particularly sensitive because it often melds with or covers for sex work – escorting, entertainment and prostitution.

Originally arranged through informal ties of blood-relations or place of origin, employment in domestic work is infamously difficult to regulate and thus often fraught with labor and human rights abuses. Recently, several non-governmental organizations have been established to directly address the needs of women
migrants. Some scholars have argued, however, that such groups only partially (or ineffectually) address the material needs of migrant women while re-inscribing them in the employment sectors deemed appropriate for their gender (women’s work) and class (levels of education and culture), more generally referred to by the mysterious and all-encompassing term sùzhì.17

Domestic work is unique among the other subject positions occupied by women migrants in that it necessitates close contact with urban culture. However, as many feminists of color have noted, the increased contact involved in domestic work does not imply (and sometimes undermines a priori) any improvement in social status; while it requires that the worker be in close proximity to the family that employs her, she may still be excluded from it, occupying the liminal location of the “intimate Other”.18

The female worker must familiarize herself with her urban surroundings in order to successfully complete her work but rarely gains opportunities to freely utilize this knowledge. Her excursions beyond the neighborhood may occur only when accompanied or permitted by her employer. Living conditions may or may not be an improvement to those normally available to females, but constant interaction with urban citizens does give some mediated insight into urban culture, public goods and services, and “modern” (market) values. The “boundary work” of the domestic worker – or the process through which she constructs and contests differences between herself and her urban employer – is both necessitated and enabled by this proximity.19

Organizing Migrant Women

The Fuping School (富平学校), a subsidiary of the Beijing-based nonprofit Fuping Development Institute, provides a migrant women’s social support network. The School recruits rural women, largely from Gansu province in northwest China, and arranges for them to migrate to Beijing. Once they arrive in the city, they participate in a training program for several weeks and then are placed in clients’ homes by school administrators to do domestic service work. Sociologists and social workers determined that isolation and alienation play the greatest role in migrant women’s “failure to adapt” to urban culture and their “weakness” to exploitation; therefore, the establishment of NGOs directly responding to this need for migrant women’s social integration was a natural response. In order to provide a social support network for the workers and to “realize the self-development of workers in the city”, the Hùzhù Group (互助小组) was formed in 2005. The name Hùzhù expressed the ideal that its employees and the domestic workers will mutually aid each other in their process of self-development, learning from each other through formal activities and informal social interactions. Its founding marks the height in popularity of several similar organizations scattered throughout China. I’ll discuss the largest and most visible of these, Nóngjiānǚ magazine’s Migrant Women’s Club, in a later section.

The Hùzhù Group provides three types of services or activities in their mission to “allow migrant women better adapt to urban life”.20 First, they plan educational opportunities, inviting experts in fields as varied as theater, linguistics, women’s health, and computer skills. These events last anywhere from a single afternoon’s lecture to a several-week long course and are simultaneously seen as pedagogical practices and as social functions by workers, volunteers, and students alike. They may also be repeated several times in one year, particularly if they are single-day events that a worker can conveniently attend on her day off. Second, the Hùzhù Group encourages the women to explore Beijing, both by organizing group tours of the city’s parks, museums, and historical landmarks and by providing small stipends that offer financial support for groups of workers to organize their own outings. At each of these outings, a variety of Hùzhù Group workers, volunteers (often university social work students), and domestic workers may attend. While the migrant women see these trips as opportunities to socialize and relax during their days off, the organization has additional expectations that this activity be “useful”. It compels them to actively develop communication skills through games, or to develop life skills, for example by completing assigned map-reading tasks within a park. These activities are supplemented by “independent sightseeing” times, when the women’s social interactions take the fore.
Third, the Hùzhù Group Newsletter collects, reports on, and communicates these efforts to a migrant audience. As the primary mode of structured communication between the school and current/former students now working in Beijing households, it serves three purposes whose values shift depending on the goals of the author and the reception of the readership. At its simplest, it informs and explains; schedules, contact information, and friendly reminders about current and future events are scattered throughout the publication. The editors also provide information from external sources — for example, the bus routes to well-known parks and museums and important information about how to take advantage of urban public services. By providing certain kinds of information, the newsletter teaches and disciplines.

The focus on facts about the Olympics reflects the newsletter’s goal to engage a very real desire, in the context of Beijing’s hosting the 2008 Games, to engage with material authored by migrant women. The content consists of articles, stories, and letters written by the domestic workers themselves, as well as the material in the báiwèixiāng, a collection of recommendations, requests, and what we might in American pop culture call “shout-outs”. The textual space provides a venue for workers to contact their former classmates or to reestablish relations with other workers they may have met at one of the activities.

In the sections below, I would like to analyze the specific language and purpose of migrant-authored material. The content of the writing provides provocative examples of the domestic workers’ rejection of the static, stereotypical “migrant woman” identity present in popular Chinese discourse. Using explicit redefinition and contestation and implicit positioning and critique, the text deconstructs various narratives of migrant women’s identities and experiences, allowing us to imagine how they locate themselves in the “in-betweeness” of migrant identity in post-socialist China. I conclude by suggesting that the form or practice of this writing, enacted in the delimited space of the textual product and against a context of actual social interaction between author and audience, ultimately permits these negotiations to further complicate the category of “migrant women”.

I Am Not That Name

I will start with a genealogy of relevant labels, which will help clarify the relationship between government policy stances towards migration and the terms that proliferate in the media and in popular culture. The common phrase nóngmìngōng (农民工) refers generally to all rural workers who engage in dàgōng (打工), that is, who work for a wage outside the dānwèi (单位) system established during the Mao era. Even given the collapse of the dānwèi system in contemporary China, and corresponding high rates of structural unemployment, socially acceptable occupations generally exclude xiàoshígōng (小时工), or “hourly wages”. Because these work opportunities exist almost exclusively in rapidly-developing urban areas, migrants leave the countryside en masse, despite the active presence of governmental barriers to movement and to changes in household registration. In this way, someone who leaves behind his/her hometown to earn an income, becomes a member of the liúdòng rénkǒu (流动人口) or “floating population”, and comes to embody transiency and instability. The two common derivatives of nóngmìngōng – dàgōngmèi (打工妹, “working (little) sister”), and dàgōngzǎi (打工仔, “working (little) son”) – are more specific. They indicate not only transiency and rurality, but also gendered and aged bodies. Dàgōngmèi found a particularly open reception in the media and in official discourse during the 1990s. In recent years, particularly given the emphasis on gender mainstreaming in government and Women’s Federation projects, two new neutral terms have evolved, dàgōngzhē (打工者, “someone working [at odd jobs]”) and wài lái wùgōng rényuán (外来务工人员, “external working staff”). These terms eliminate the pejorative gendered connotations of earlier appellations but retain the emphasis on transiency or “outsider” status. Of the two, the latter has yet to find a place in everyday language, but
remains in the relatively inaccessible world of official documents and scholarly articles.

The women in the Hùzhù Group explicitly engage with various social constructions of gendered migrant identity by both embracing and refuting the labels to which they have been attached in the popular press. Bāomǔ (保姆), for example, combines the character for “protection” with the character for “mother” to achieve the familial (but inferior) “nanny”.25 This appellation has been in use for decades and, since the beginning of large-scale migration in the 1980s, has specifically referred to rural women who work in urban households. This term continues to have a presence in popular newspapers, evidenced by headlines that note, in one case, a rise in “green bāomǔ” in the run-up to the “green” 2008 Olympics.26 However, as a term historically conferring both inferior status and rural identity, it has come under frequent contestation by those it claims to encompass. Meng Yanna asserts that “to be a bāomǔ absolutely does not make one less than a person. It is neither shameful nor disgraceful”.27 She embraces the word, seeking to void it of negative meaning and redefine and reappropriate it for herself. Meng Juqin, on the other hand, resolutely refutes the term and its history. She proclaims, “[I] am certainly not what people used to call a bāomǔ, not a ‘servant’.”28 This negation allows her to locate herself in a new and potentially resistant subject location – undefined but nonetheless markedly distinct from that of the former bāomǔ. The two opposing views of this common name give some insight into the contestation and redefinition of migrant women’s identities.

Recently, the professionalization of service work and the neutralization of occupational descriptions have taken form in some migrant workers’ destination industries. For example, in the restaurant industry, the term fúwùyuán (服务员) or “server” gradually replaced the slightly pejorative xiǎojíe or “Miss”. The appearance of the term jiāzhèng fúwùyuán (家政服务员) literally “domestic service worker”, mirrors this trend of low-skilled labor becoming regulated, professionalized, and (in theory) normalized. Both the editors of the Hùzhù Group newsletter and the workers themselves use jiāzhèng fúwùyuán in abstract and formal contexts but refer to domestic workers in the individual first- and second-person as jiēmèimén (姐妹们) or “sister(s)”. Despite the word’s gendered meaning, it lacks both an indicator for age (it is literally the composite of “older sister” and “younger sister”) and for outsider status. For that reason, as well as for reasons of simplicity, I take it up as well – though only after careful consideration. One reason for this caveat stems from a reluctance to homogenize migrant women workers. As I noted above, the word jiēmèi lacks overt negative components; on the contrary, it implies an idyllic egalitarianism. This connotation, a vestige of the socialist feminist rhetoric prominent during the Mao years, made jiēmèi popular in agricultural brigades and factory cohorts as a sisterly and less formal alternative to comrade (tóngzhì),29 and thus ignores the very different locations occupied by working women. Furthermore, as I will discuss later, the subject positions of the Iron Girls have been, like most socialist relics, “discredited, ridiculed, and negated” by the contemporary Chinese desire to create modern gendered subjects.30

In the texts I use here, the women’s narratives highlight the techniques that they use to position themselves in contrast to not only their family in the countryside or their employers in the city, but also to each other. Though they often write from the standpoint of “us” migrant women workers, identified by the collective women jiēmèimen (我们姐妹们), they also take advantage of internal differences such as age, education level, and employment status. Jiang Dongmei says, “Even though I’m only a domestic worker, my work is regular, legal, and deserving of respect”.31 Here she compares her position to that of many other women migrants, and indicates in this statement what she is not: job-jumping, unstable, illegal, shameful. In short, she does not engage in sex work, an occupation that government and public discourses simultaneously construct as a morally corrupt, illegal threat to a “harmonious society”, and as the natural domain of rural women and their unmanageable, unscrupulous, even uncivilized sexualities.32 In another contrast that marks dif-
Migrant Women Writing In

“Beijing is Also My Home”
(běijīng yěshì wǒ de jiā 北京也是我的家)

One implicit claim to identity in the texts can be seen in the women’s particular attention to the geographic spaces in Beijing and to movement between them. In their accounts of the activities, some of the women locate the destination in geographic terms. Jingshan Park is textually located in the center of the capital, while Yiheyuan (the Summer Palace) is located in the northwest suburbs. The writers identify meeting places for the activities by the name of the gate, for example Donggong Gate at the Summer Palace, and by the proximity to the bus stop. Riding public transportation figures dominantly in many narratives, as the bus system is one of the most accessible of public goods in urban China and becomes a critically important system of knowledge for everyday life movements in a city as vast as Beijing. By claiming geographic familiarity, by situating themselves in spatial relations to popular destinations, the women insert themselves into an urban field in which they are actors, at the center. Placing themselves in the geographic space of the parks also allows them to elaborate upon and interact with a wide-ranging group of tourists of which they are now a part. The city is no longer merely a destination for migrants, but a destination for Chinese from “all over the world” (wǔhúsìhǎi 五湖四海) as well as for foreigners. In this context, social and spatial interactions with foreigners in particular take on the significance of interactions with, on the one hand, other “outsiders”, and on the other hand, a symbolic global community.

The narrative motifs discussed above call into question typical constructions of migrant women as (absolute) Outsiders, as ontologically part of a “floating population” uprooted from ties to land and geographic space, particularly when that space is identified as “rural” and therefore as “peripheral to” the urban center. Their claim to space becomes powerfully symbolic in, and perhaps possible only because of, its context in Beijing – one of China’s financial hubs, a powerful player in global relations, the capital of the People’s Republic of China, and the historical center of Chinese imperial cosmology.

In a similarly implicit move to claim recognition as a modern citizen-subject, the women focus attention on the historic and nationalistic objects, placing themselves in the same physical and literary space with these cultural artifacts and figures. Because Chinese society often criticizes “migrant women” for their indifference to and general lack of education, or wēnhuà (文化), this tactic establishes authority for the writers to know, to speak about, and to be trusted as consumers and producers of knowledge. The historical significance of many of the “scenic spots and historical sites” (míngshènggǔjì 名胜古迹) of Beijing plays a dominant part in the narrative accounts of many of the women, where talking about them, often with a familiarity reminiscent of a tour guide, provides migrant women with the chance to share through narration their knowledge of the city and their embrace of “culture”. In her account of a tour of the Summer Palace, Ge Li traces the history of the park from imperial summer home to casualty of the Second Opium War to renovated symbol of imperial largesse. Another worker, Cao Jing, offers detailed descriptions of the different bridges, temples, and pavilions scattered throughout the grounds, with names that recall historical events or literary turns of phrase. Other sites of significance appear across Beijing, for example Beihai Park’s White Tower or the tree in Jingshan Park where the Ming emperor Chongzhen hung himself in the face of encroaching Manchu armies. In recounting a visit to the botanical gardens, a volunteer notes the reaction of the jiēmèimen 街边门 upon seeing Cao Xueqin’s and Liang Qichao’s houses, suggesting they were “filled with deep respect” and “bowed deeply”. In these accounts, not only
do the women occupy textual space with these symbols of culture, but they also take on the authority of experience, of having been there.

Many women also weave a tinge of nationalism into the narratives. On a trip to the national science museum, Lü Yani finds that the presentation of Chinese technological advances “reflects the trajectory of [her] country’s economic development”.41 Gong Liping marvels at the beautiful artisanship and ornate decorations in jewelry, porcelain, and stone carving from the Tang and Song dynasties, noting that this gave her the opportunity to appreciate “the profundity of China’s culture and the intelligence and talent of the Chinese people”.42 The selection of wax figures at the history museum includes Liu Hulan, a peasant girl who the CCP immortalized as a revolutionary hero, and who makes a strong impression on Shi Xiaoshan.43 Other figures in the museum, and the Monument to the People’s Heroes in Tiananmen, emphasize national political (that is, Communist) figures such as Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai.44 One young woman places specially bought fresh flowers on the tomb of “Grandfather Mao” (Máo yéye 毛爷爷) to express her affection and respect towards him.45 It is interesting that in many of these accounts, the focal figures not only played a large (or, in the case of Liu, well-elaborated) role in the founding of the People’s Republic, but were also themselves born or raised in rural areas. A final quote directly valorizes the worker–peasant: in describing the complex engineering and massive scale of the Stone Boat at the Summer Palace, Cao Jing says that it “expresses the intelligence of Chinese working people and their inexhaustible creativity”.46

As I have shown, the language used by many writers reference a shared history of the Chinese state and a shared experience of Chinese culture, which grounds a further claim to equal citizenship and an implicit rejection of outsider status. This claim in particular calls into question the assumptions or comparisons we might try to make in the global context and in transnational migration phenomena. While internal migration in China resembles transnational migration in some respects, notably with reference to linguistic and human capital differences, in other respects the specificities are crucially different. Being Chinese allows migrant workers and urbanites to share cultural constructions of national identity that rely primarily on identification of historical figures and familiarity with historical cultural production. As Lan Pei-chia records in her interviews with Mr. Tang, a Taiwanese employer of domestic workers, “the distinction is not that clear” when employer and employee are of the same nationality.47 In other words, the “discourse of ethnic exclusion” that justifies the low wages and deferential attitudes expected of domestic workers cannot be deployed as easily by urban Chinese when their workers are themselves (rural) Chinese.48

Within a culture that has historically incorporated elaborate structures and rankings of its citizens, most recently in the class rhetoric of socialism, to be without recourse to an identity (and thus, without access to the unquestioned use of its discourse) can be extremely unsettling.49 By “floating” from rural to urban life, migrant women abandon access to the Mao-era idealized identity of the (impoverished, hard-working) peasant, and seek instead to adopt the Reform-era ideal of the cultured consumer. As Yan Hairong notes, however, the attempts of women to regain the use of Communist ideology and to manipulate the relationship between themselves and images of Communist figures increasingly fail to resonate in Chinese society. The Communist Party leaders have rehabilitated Mao as a talented man (tiāncái 天才) who was “70% good”,50 but otherwise have repudiated most Maoist values, including and especially those bestowed upon manual labor. Association with the socialism of the pre-reform period tends to mark those once-vaunted concepts, categories, and bodies as inefficient, underdeveloped, and lazy. The worker – agricultural even less than urban – no longer holds an exalted position in Chinese society, having been replaced by intellectuals, entertainers, and above all, successful entrepreneurs.

“After You Go Out to Work, Will You Look Down on Your Home?”

A final narrative tactic utilized by the women in their negotiations of identity compares their experiences across the rural-urban binary, in some cases supporting the dominant view of the
modern city and the “backward” countryside, but in other cases problematizing and even subverting the value assumptions made about both places – and people. The first edition of the Hù-zhù newsletter poses the question to its readers, which I have used for the title of this section: “After you go out (to the city) to work, will you look down on your village?” I will analyze each of the responses, showing that the complexity of approaches as well as the often-simultaneous embrace and repudiation of the assigned categories of rural and urban work together to indicate the instability of this identity.

1. Liu Haiying, in her response, refuses the oversimplified, zero-sum construction of the rural-urban divide by acknowledging that she has “learned”, has “changed” herself during her time in Beijing, but that this does not preclude a love and respect for her family and friends in the countryside. In fact, “even though my village is backwards”, she says, “there [I] can still decide for [myself] when to work”, and can enjoy the “beautiful landscape”. She takes up negative rhetoric about the countryside, but inverts the conclusions, creating a pastoral environment that can be positive and fulfilling for herself and other working women.51

2. Yang Hongying remarks that the “hygiene” of her village cannot compare to the city’s cleanliness, but at the same time that her village has “blue skies”, “unpolluted water”, and pure and fresh vegetables. She reacts explicitly to the challenges Reform-era “openness and development” brings to urban Beijing – overcast skies and toxic air pollution, the foulness of the city’s waterways, and dumplings made of cardboard. Yang uses the spatial and the social interchangeably, as the spaces and bodies are constitutive of one another. The unquestioned unhygienic state of the village results from the individual shortcomings of rural people, while the environmental disasters of the city stem from corporate greed, structural inefficiency, and unbridled capitalism. Essentialist assumptions about rural and urban characteristics remain unchanged, but the valence of the values placed upon them shifts. This voicing of critical awareness, then, has the power to destabilize hegemonic state discourses of modernity and progress.52

3. Du Xiaoxiong emphasizes the positive aspects of the countryside over the negative, but does so by a parallel privileging of the progressive over the static in her image of the rural. She begins her letter by voicing traditional rural Chinese opinions towards daughters – that they are transient members even of their own households, for example, or that they should remain at home caring for family members instead of seeking education.53 However, she later emphasizes that the countryside itself is in a state of change, of development, from these “feudal” (read: sexist54) beliefs toward modern ideas of equality and cultural and economic capital. Now, her “little brother and little sister are both going to school” in a countryside that is in the process of “improving its level of culture” and, with her help, “gradually increasing its wealth”.55

4. On the surface, the letter by Liu Xiong also upholds the dominant value discourse of the rural–urban, backward–modern binary. She describes her village as “poor”, “backward”, without either knowledge or culture, and of “low quality”, in opposition to a “brilliant” city full of tall buildings, wide streets, and cars. But immediately following these characterizations, Xiong insists that because she (and many others like her) are at work “outside”, the village too now has the potential for tall buildings, wide streets, and cars. But in these latter two accounts, as in the former, assumptions of essential rural characteristics remain. Here, though, they are vulnerable to change, to contestation, and to transformation into the valorized urban. Furthermore, the responsibility and agency for this change lies with people, in bodies, especially the working bodies of migrant youth. Jackson has argued that this sense of agency has been constructed by government discourses to maintain the increasingly blurred boundaries between rural and urban, backwards and modern.57 However, the writing examined above seems to indicate a desire for and possibility of eliminating those boundaries altogether.
Writing in another edition of the newsletter, Chen Ling situates herself as both insider and outsider to the city when she talks about her hope to “wait until 2008, then invite my mother to come visit this vibrant city. We can live for a few days like urban people”. It is ambiguous whether she situates herself as an “urban” person in this scenario, or whether she sees herself more as an intermediary, positing at least some level of familiarity with the “urban”, in marked distinction from the distant rural represented by her mother. Bai Junhua claims that, in fact, there is no visible difference between her “working sisters” and urban women, that they “are not a bit less fashionable than Beijing women”. This is a very important and assertive response to assumptions that migrant women are obviously or essentially differentiated – by attitude or by attire – from their urban(e) counterparts. The women explode the idea of a core identity that constitutes a “migrant woman”, or a set of characteristics that unifies a wide variety of rural spaces, and instead argue that migrant bodies can take on “material markers” of the urban, sophisticated, feminine subject, changing or improving along the same trajectory as rural villages.

**Quality Control**

A conflation of spaces and bodies in the Hùzhū newsletter, especially in the latter section, results in the contrast between the rural and the urban becoming simply a matter of perspective, or passive progress. It obscures a very real uptake of neoliberal rhetoric around the individual and masks how discourse about “human quality”, or *sūzhì* (素质), emphasizes individual responsibility and agency and precludes questioning structural or systemic inequalities, e.g. wage differentials, underfunded education, and employment discrimination. *Sūzhì* is measured in the moral, social, and cultural aspects of the domestic workers’ experiences. As Tamara Jacka has indicated, this discourse justifies inequality on the basis of personal – rather than structural – shortcomings. Individuals who fail to improve their moral quality are seen as backward, lazy, and lacking. These same deficient characteristics also describe rural individuals, especially rural women, who are by definition “of low quality” and therefore undeserving of equal treatment as full citizens. The impulse to “develop the self” places responsibility for poverty alleviation and development squarely on the shoulders of the individual.

A primary component of the *sūzhì* discourse is the “Four Selfs” campaign, promoted since 1983 by the All-China Women’s Federation, which encourages women to empower themselves by advocating not only “self-respect” and “self-confidence”, but also “self-strengthening” and “self-creating”. The editors of the Hùzhū newsletter incorporate this concept of empowerment into their allegorical tales, beginning one edition of the newsletter with the following lesson: “We may think about whether or not we’ve sacrificed, but if only you put your heart into your work, and do it well, you will naturally […] attain your goals”. Similarly, whether one succeeds or not depends on one’s heart and one’s patience, not one’s job or family background.

The women show that they have in turn internalized the slogan, deploying it to mobilize themselves and their peers. This myth of meritocracy upholds the possibility of achieving equality if only one works hard enough and has been adopted by many of these women as an emancipatory, progressive hope. Liu Haiying opens a later essay by talking about the need, among all the new ideas that come with “arriving in the vibrant city and feeling its happiness”, to first appreciate the chance to be in the city. Migrant women in Liu’s view must take advantage of their time in the modern urban environment to pursue “self-development” in order to erase the lingering marks of the rural. She cautions that migrant women must not “lose direction”, but must “diligently struggle” to overcome the difficulties they will naturally face. Zhou Ji encouragingly echoes this call to work: “Raise your spirits, and let’s work together!” Only Pu Linrui dissents, responding to the discourses of rural migrant women’s “low quality” by saying, “You cannot divide people into high or low, worthy or lowly. There is only good and evil”. While she disrupts the progressive narrative of moving from lowly rural to the worthy urban, she nonetheless continues to rely on essential, individual moral qualities that fail to address the larger structural challenges to equality.
An Uneven Platform: The Function of the Newsletter in the Fuping Community

In the sections above, I analyzed in depth the content of the contributions to the Hùzhù Newsletter, seeking to tie together threads of resistance, assertion, and assimilation articulated around the complicated project of situating migrant women’s identities. In ways both subtle and overt, these women’s writings have posited their right to reject and to modify the categories placed upon them by society, creating the possibility for self-definition. Here, I venture that the act of writing points to yet another tactic of negotiation taken up by migrant women. The ways in which the newsletter functions as a means of communication and as a symbol, as well as the disciplinary tone taken in some of the letters, require us to carefully consider the difficulties of assuming any one group’s inner homogeneity. I hold no illusions that this body of texts may be an unmediated example of ideal, united resistance from below. Migrant women writing in to the newsletter locate their subject positions not only in relation to their urban counterparts (their editors, teachers, and clients) and through verbal expression, but also in dialogue with their peers – other migrant women.

The original plan for the Hùzhù newsletter, as outlined in the early editions, was for it to serve as a foundation for a social network. This foundation or “platform” intended to encourage communication among migrant women workers, as a way of allowing them to express “heartfelt words” about their experiences in the city, and to share stories about their lives. It was also to be, according to the editors, a way of letting more people hear the voices of migrant women workers. However, in reality, the Hùzhù newsletter reaches only those students who still work for Hùzhù clientele, or who have left new addresses with the editors and teachers. As I attempt to tease out what this constrained discursive space means for identity formation and negotiation, I’ll also discuss some other publications or organizations that are available to migrant women in Beijing, and compare them as alternate “virtual communities”.

As well as managing the magazine, the Nóngjiānǚ organization also runs the Cultural Development Center for Rural Women and the Practical Skills Training Center. Most importantly, they opened the “Migrant Women’s Club” (Dàgōngmèi zhī Jiā, 打工妹之家) in 1996 to provide legal assistance, psychological services, and social events to migrants (primarily women) in Beijing. This arm of the organization consistently maintains a high level of visibility, from its involvement with international partners and donors like the International Labour Organization and the Ford Foundation to its frequent mention in domestic NGO fora. They have cooperated with, among other nonprofit groups, the organization Hua Dan that aims to use community theater to encourage migrant women to examine issues like discrimination and social and political participation. Like the Hùzhù Group, the Migrant Women’s...
Club publishes a bimonthly newsletter for domestic workers. A brief overview of the 19 issues available on the Migrant Women’s Club website indicates that much of the content is similar. For example, the editors include advertisements for sexual health clinics, provide summaries of past social events, and publish migrant women’s stories, e.g. “My working life”.

Both the newsletters and the Nóngjiānǚ magazine itself operate as a virtual community, whereby reading and writing-in can replace physically attending lectures or taking advantage of social outings. Many women comment that although they have not been able to participate in the activities for various reasons – most commonly, because they have too much work or because their free time does not coincide with the arranged event – they can fully benefit from and can “feel” a part of the activity through the accounts published. The teachers and editors provide didactic and explanatory material, but the women’s published accounts allow the reader to “experience” the pleasure of learning or travel for herself. One woman begins by discussing her excitement at “seeing” some of teachers in a previous edition, highlighting the parallel purpose of the inclusion of photographs in the newsletter. The “mailbox” section of the newsletter mentioned earlier also provides women a way of conversing with their friends and their teachers, for innocent fun yet also, as I will discuss below, for disciplinary purposes.

While I acknowledge that Nóngjiānǚ in general, and the editorial efforts to increase rural and migrant women’s participation in particular, do lead to the creation of a virtual community, this community lacks the substance of the Hùzhù Group Newsletter for two key reasons. First, the magazine is distributed to rural women around China; therefore, the chances of an author’s piece being accepted, and then read by her peer group, are probably quite low. This extensive network of readership may help to bridge regional gaps between women’s experiences (for example, domestic workers from Anhui reading poetry by those from Gansu), but it fails to capitalize on the real-world relationships that are created between authors, editors, and readers in the Hùzhù Group context. Second, and perhaps more abstractly, I would argue that Nóngjiānǚ, with its emphasis on rural women’s experiences, may not reflect the changing and contested identities that migrant women claim in the Hùzhù newsletter.

Perhaps, then, the Migrant Women’s Club newsletter could provide this service? The materials provided online, if supplemented by additional print materials from the organization, may well indicate the same strategies of positioning and negotiating that, I have argued, exist in the Hùzhù newsletter. One interesting point on which to compare the newsletters may be the proportion of content coming from, or on behalf of, housekeeping agencies and employers. Differences in the attention paid to this element of content may alter the distribution of disciplinary, educational, and social functions served by the newsletter. Additionally, it would be helpful to know more about the Migrant Women’s Club newsletter’s audience – do they share the same social spaces as the women in the Hùzhù Group? Is there a way for women to communicate directly through the newsletter? Further research may indicate that the differences between the Hùzhù Group and the Nóngjiānǚ organizations in terms of virtual communities reflect differences in the real communities, the institutional structure and leadership, and the missions of the organizations themselves.

The Hùzhù newsletter does succeed, without question, in validating the importance of social networks to migrant women. As Fu Gaiping says, “The days pass one by one, and each month I receive a copy of the Hùzhù newsletter. As a girl working away from home, to see a magazine that belongs only to us [migrant workers] makes me so excited”.

For Fu, the material existence of the magazine combines with the content therein, creating a multi-faceted and powerful symbol of legitimacy out of the migrant women’s experience. By recognizing and serving this community, the Hùzhù newsletter treats migrant women as subjects, rather than as Others. This is particularly important in a dangerously bifurcated media environment. As Sun Wanning argues, Chinese media alternates between an aggressive hostility on the one hand and a paternalistic victimization on the other.
when reporting on migrant workers in general, and migrant women workers in particular. The presence of migrant women as active and desiring characters in the newsletters, then, provides an important and empowering alternative subjecthood for migrant women readers. Furthermore, the constructions of migrant women created *through* the newsletter, not simply those presented *in* the newsletter, also possess agency that enables them to “mutually communicate” and to help each other overcome difficulties.

Complicating a simple textual reading of these accounts, I argue that the specific context of the Hùzhù newsletter expands its meaning and function beyond tokenism and into an act grounded in specific social meaning. In contrast to other publications oriented towards migrant women, the authors and the audience are intimately related, sharing space within the organizational structure of the Fuping School. This is to say that claims to knowledge or power posited by the women do not fall flat when heard by an urban public; rather, they resonate with a migrant readership. The process of differentiation between rural and urban that underlies *sū-zhī* discourse has been appropriated by migrant women to write of themselves in comparison to urban citizens but also in comparison to other migrant women. Here, I would like to return to the example of the worker who insisted that her job was legal, her job deserved respect. She clearly sought to draw a distinction between herself and, for example, migrant women working in a “salon” in a red-light district. In another instance, Chen Jinxiu actually posits herself as teacher, eagerly promising to inform her family and friends about what she learned in a lecture.

Even within the Hùzhù group, however, the ability to write to and, in some ways, to speak for the group in its entirety necessarily rests on some differentiation between author and audience. This is achieved in several ways. Dai Xiaohong sees writing-in as a form of power and feels the need to first apologize for her lack of schooling and her left-handedness, both of which should disqualify her otherwise from taking an authoritative position to speak, but both of which she describes herself “overcoming” in the process of writing her letter. The positive, empowering influence of the city results in her ability to write in. It also imbues her with the power to speak and so to represent a certain vision of migrant women workers. All the authors, by virtue of the mediating process of the editors, represent to the greater public and to their peers appropriate modes of behavior, or encouraged attitudes. In this way, exhortations by the women “not to waste your precious youth” contest with admonitions not to “blindly worship the modern city”. Nineteen-year-old Liu Yan’s letter describes the offerings on the local district library’s lecture schedule, serving not only to situate herself as an insider and transmitter of knowledge, but also to inspire (re)actions. She thus claims authority to chastise other migrant women for not taking advantage of these learning opportunities or for, as she says, “wasting [their] precious youth”.

If we reexamine some of the above examples in this light, we can interpret the detailed references to historical and cultural artifacts as reminders that the women must constantly “raise their quality” in order to become recipients and beneficiaries of Chinese society. The visits to museums and historical sites can be quantified as so many small steps towards becoming “civilized”. Lists of tourist destinations become meaningful enactments of knowledge production, and not simply useless quotations or culturally informed understandings drawn from primary school textbooks. Much like a tour guide derives her authority from her rapt audience and from the act of informing, the migrant women who write in to the Hùzhù newsletter occupy a more privileged location than their peers, from which they can extend claims of citizenship, urbanity, and modernity – “quality”.

**Conclusion: Anxiety and Insecurity in the Twenty-First Century**

The negotiations and tactics of positioning discussed in this paper mirror what Helen Siu has called the “uneasy self-fashioning at the margins of China’s metropolises” that has come with the relaxation of *hùkǒu* restrictions, increased (sub)urbanization, and changing job opportunities in the twenty-first century. In this sample of migrant women’s writings, we do not see a “dramatic rejection of the coun-
tryside” as a “field of death”, nor do we see a reluctance or hesitation to embrace urban identities. Rather, the two impulses are in constant tension, and their overlaps or lacunae help to create the heterogeneity of migrant women’s identities upon which we must insist.

We can acknowledge, however, that “between the country and the city, these young women have no place to pursue a modern personhood” – save through the place/space of the Hùzhù Newsletter. In this literary space, the figure of the migrant woman moves effortlessly throughout the social and geographic space of the capital, mingling with migrant and urbanites, Chinese and foreigners. She has access to scientific and medical knowledge and to artistic and cultural traditions. In the “in-betweenness” that characterizes migrant lives, she can manipulate assumptions about the urban and rural, reinvesting rural bodies with agency and value at the same time that she divests urban bodies of their distinction.

Telling stories, Jacka reminds us in her study of migrant women in Beijing’s Haidian district, is “shaped by the audience and the narrator’s backgrounds, expectations, and desires”. The migrant women’s stories included in her book, printed first in Nóngjiānǚ Magazine, have been consumed by a wide variety of readers and consequently produce various kinds of subjects – resistant, victimized, coping, overcoming, triumphing. In the case of the Hùzhù Newsletter, however, we see an institutionally-defined social and textual space in which authors, editors, and audience mutually constitute the identity of the Fuping organization at the same time that they lay claim to their own mutually constituted, highly contingent identities.

ENDNOTES

1 I follow de Certeau in distinguishing between “strategies”, which operate at the level of discourse, and “tactics”, which are embedded in everyday practices that make the “dominant order […] function in another register”: Michel de Certeau (transl. by Steven F. Rendall): The Practice of Everyday Life; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984, p. 32.


3 China State Statistical Bureau (SSB), quoted in: Huang Ping and Zhan Shaohua: Internal migration in China: Linking it to development; Regional Conference on Migration and Development in Asia, Lanzhou, China, 14-16 March 2005.


7 UNDP, 2005.

8 Ibid.


18 Pei-Chia Lan: Negotiating Social Boundaries and Private Zones: The Micropolitics of Employing Migrant Domestic Workers; Social Problems 50 (4), 2003; p. 525.

19 Ibid.

20 See the organization’s website: http://www.fupingjiazheng.com/helpgroups/.
Hùzhù xiǎozǔ jiǎnbào (互助小组简报). This source will hereafter be referred to as HZXZJB, followed by issue/page numbers. All translations from this source are my own.

Ibid., 12/11-15 and 13/10-11. I translate the interchangeably-used words 文明 (wénmíng) and 文化 (wénhuà) as “culture(d)”.


A detailed history of this particular term can be found in Hairong Yan: New Masters, New Servants: Migration, Development, and Women Workers in China; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

Ibid., 1/7, 4/13, 7/5, 6/12.


Ibid, 8/5-6.


Ibid, 9/5.

Ibid, 1/4.

Ibid, 1/5.

Ibid, 11/5.

Ibid, 7/5.

Ibid, 8/6.

Lan, 2003; p. 532.

This is the final line from a song written by a migrant worker and performed by Xu Duo of the Young Rural Migrants Arts Troupe; it is included on the CD Sing for the Workers, 2006.

Ibid, 8/1, 8/4.


Ibid, 1/7, 4/13, 7/5, 6/12.


Ibid, 1/9.

The exact idiom she uses is nǚ dà bù zhōng liú (女大不中留).

Many thanks to Dr. Wang Zheng for alerting me to this socialist feminist reading of “feudal”.

Ibid, 1/9.

Ibid, 1/9.

Ibid, 1/9.

Ibid, 1/9.


Ibid, 4/4, 6/11.

Ibid, 4/2.

Ibid, 4/19.

Ibid, 6/15.

Ibid, 7/14.

Ibid, 4/3.

See the organization’s website: http://www.nongjianv.org/english/aboutus/magazine.html.

Jia Xiaozong (贾秀总): 弘扬“四自”精神发展“四自”理论——纪念“四自”提出20周年; 中华女子学院学报 15 (4), 2003. See Wesoky, 2007 (cited below) for a discussion of these values.

Jia Xiaozong (贾秀总): 弘扬“四自”精神发展“四自”理论——纪念“四自”提出20周年; 中华女子学院学报 15 (4), 2003. See Wesoky, 2007 (cited below) for a discussion of these values.

Ibid, 10/1.


Ibid, 4/4, 6/11.

Ibid, 4/2.

Ibid, 4/19.

Ibid, 6/15.

Ibid, 7/14.

Ibid, 4/3.

See the organization’s website: http://www.nongjianv.org/english/aboutus/magazine.html.


Ibid.

HZXZJB, 6/14.

Ibid, 7/14.
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BOUNDARY-SPANNING CONTENTION: The Panyu Anti-Pollution Protest in Guangdong, China
Katherine Zhao  University of Chicago

The 2009 Panyu anti-pollution protest in Guangdong highlights how three understudied aspects of popular contention in China – the role of social class, the use of modern technologies, and contention that is neither institutional nor extra-institutional – can add to our understanding of contentious politics. In this case, protesters’ skillful blurring of framing and mobilization tactics created the needed pressure to obtain concessions amid a political opportunity created by the Guangzhou government.

Introduction and Research Scope

Sometime on November 23, 2009, public security officials in black uniforms marched from the Guangzhou municipal government building toward a crowd of a few hundred people. These few hundred men and women were protesting the proposed construction of a waste incinerator in the Panyu District of Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province. As the police drew closer, a man’s voice on a loudspeaker could be heard ordering the protesters to “select five representatives to talk with Communist Party leaders”. Protesters chanted in response, “We don’t want to be represented”.1 Studying contentious events like the Panyu protest not only further our understanding of state-society relations in China but also add to the theoretical literature on popular resistance. In locations of limited freedom of speech and assembly such as China, how do individuals frame grievances, mobilize, and interact with structures of political opportunity?

I seek to specify the dynamics and mechanisms underlining the Panyu protest in a way that ties together three understudied forms of contention in China. One gap in the literature concerns the contours of popular contention among the upwardly mobile. Extant research has tended to focus on downtrodden groups, yet studying other groups can elucidate how social class affects resource mobilization and the repertoires of contention. Do upwardly mobile groups protest and resist the system in different ways?2 Another gap stems from understanding the specific linkages between online and offline contention. What is the dynamic between virtual and offline contention, and under what conditions does contention move from one form to the other?3

A third gap in the literature is the study of boundary-spanning contention. Scholars mainly analyze either contained or transgressive contention. Boundary-spanning contention, defined by Kevin O’Brien as incidents that are neither exclusively contained nor transgressive, can therefore illuminate the relation between the two contentious forms.4 Such contention operates at the border of authorized channels of influence. For instance, participants may join officially approved action, such as collective petitions, with disruptive action, such as peacefully marching in public. In addition, participants may employ state rhetoric as well as splits in officialdom to advance their claims.5 O’Brien focuses on misgivings surrounding rural village elections, but how does boundary-spanning contention unfold in an urban setting amid a waste management dispute?

In the discussion that follows, I argue that the Panyu protest constitutes boundary-spanning contention, in which the upwardly mobile employ lawful and disruptive action as well as state rhetoric. Using virtual contention that was facilitated by modern technologies and the political opportunity created by the Guangzhou government, Panyu protesters were able to galvanize the needed manpower and legitimacy to extract concessions. The bold claim would be that upwardly mobile groups in China can resist the system in different ways, namely by using resources such as boundary-spanning contention and modern technologies to increase their ability to set the agenda.
Panyu Protest

The protest in Guangzhou occurs in the backdrop of mounting contention in China. From 1993 to 2005, annual “mass incidents” steadily increased from 8,700 to 87,000. Academic studies further document an increase in the size and violence of popular protests in China and observe a larger section of the population becoming involved in popular contention. According to Zhu Rongji, the former premier of the PRC, 80% of mass complaints result from “unresponsive” local officials. Scholars also note that protests in rural and urban areas occur over similar issues but with a slightly different focus. For example, in rural areas, they are commonly linked with land disputes, exorbitant taxation, and irrigation rights. In urban locales, they mainly concern unemployment and wage arrears, housing demolitions, and excessive fees. In the Panyu protest, residents’ concerns over their health, the environment, and their property values are linked to the increasing problem of waste disposal and management in China’s developing cities. Protests over the construction of waste incinerators have occurred in other urban and developed areas, such as Beijing, Shenzhen, and cities in Jiangsu province in 2009, as well as cities in Guangdong province in 2010.

Origins

Anticipating an increase in the amount of waste the population of Panyu would generate, the local government began to look for a site to construct an incinerator in 2003. Officials noted that existing waste disposal, which consisted of two landfills, would not be enough to process the 2,200 tons of waste estimated to be generated daily by 2010. As Deputy Director of Panyu District’s Urban Landscape Planning Bureau Ye Zhiwen articulates, “Facing the rising demand of garbage treatment, the incinerator is currently the right option for us”, especially as “we could not find a large landfill to deal with the rising garbage due to limited land resources”. Therefore, the Urban Landscape Planning Bureau submitted a site proposal for a waste incinerator project in August 2006. The site – a former landfill in Huijiang Village, Dashi Township – was approved by the local land resources bureau in April 2009, although residents around the proposed site only learned of the project in September 2009.

Dynamics

Panyu residents near the proposed waste incinerator site consisted of villagers and “white collar workers and writers” from residential communities such as Southern Country Olympic Mansions, Lijiang Gardens, and Star River. In response, local party and government officials held a press conference on November 22, 2009 to answer questions related to the construction of the waste incinerator. Officials reiterated that waste incineration was safe and that alternate forms of waste disposal, such as garbage classification that included recycling, were inadequate in light of the anticipated demand. The Guangzhou City Construction and Administration Committee additionally designated November 23, 2009 as a time petitioners could come to voice their opinion about the waste incinerator in Panyu as well as waste disposal plans for the city.

As news of the petition reception spread, residents responded with plans to attend. For example, Huijiang villagers discussed their options and decided to rent three buses to travel to the petition site. The next morning, police stopped the buses at the entrance of the village. The villagers proceeded to use public transportation. Stopped again by the police, they walked the rest of the way. Residents from other communities traveled by public transportation or by private car. In this way, individuals organized into groups to arrive at the petition site mainly based on residential ties but kept in touch with each other through technologies such as Twitter. For instance, even though the location of the petition site was initially unclear, tweets provided updates and final confirmation of the location. Tweets also noted when residents from specific villages or communities arrived.

Hundreds of Panyu residents had gathered by 8:30 a.m. outside the Guangzhou City Construction and Administration Committee’s Monitoring and Directing Center. As they waited to petition, participants carried signs that read “Oppose the waste incinerator; support a
green Panyu” while others wore gas masks. Some residents held signs for oncoming cars to see; others handed out leaflets to passersby documenting the carcinogenic effects from incineration. Still others accepted interviews from reporters. Villagers from nearby Likeng also came to petition with claims that a waste incinerator caused cancer cases to increase in their village. A list of the people who had died before and after the waste incinerator was built circulated through the crowd. The list was self-professed to be unscientific and showed that more people had died of cancer after the incinerator was built.

Individuals registered and filled out petitions, although people began to express frustration with the petitioning process. Participants noted there were not enough petition sheets, that only five names could be listed on each sheet, and that the petition process could only accommodate three to five people at a time. Around 10:20 a.m., some people began chanting that they could not wait any longer and wanted to “express their opinions to the city government”. People then headed en masse toward the municipal government building to protest. Over a hundred police officers and security guards soon presided over the scene, with some videotaping the proceedings. While they did not stop the protesters, they did secure a warning line in front of the building’s entrance. The crowd reached an estimated 800 demonstrators as word of the protest spread via Twitter and mobile phones.

Protesters used various repertoires of contention, including chanting, holding signs, kneeling, talking to the media, and relaying real time updates via the Internet and their mobile phones. For example, people blogged, tweeted, posted photos, and made videos that were then uploaded to YouTube. Protesters conducted a sit-in and alternated chanting slogans such as “Respect the constitution” and “Protect the people”. An elderly woman knelt for over two hours, which prompted others to later chant, “Auntie is kneeling; mayor come out”. Protesters also chanted for Lü Zhiyi, Guangzhou municipal government’s Deputy Secretary-General, to speak to them in person. According to a reporter from the Southern Metropolitan Daily and several tweets, the proceedings remained orderly and traffic was not affected.

Officials also employed different strategies, including trying to negotiate with the crowd to select five representatives who could discuss protesters’ demands with party leaders. They additionally designated the gathering as illegal. According to a tweet, an official broadcasted, “From morning until now, you [participants] have blocked the entrance of the municipal government building for almost five hours, severely affecting the everyday work of the municipal government and affecting everyday traffic. These actions already violate Article 23 of the Public Security Administration Punishment Law and related laws and regulations. May you please stop these illegal activities, and leave within ten minutes.” Lü Zhiyi later appeared before the crowd and promised that an environmental impact assessment would be completed before the project commenced. This helped to end the protest.

**Outcome**

The Panyu district government announced that it would delay the project until December of 2012 to allow for an environmental assessment that involves public participation. According to Su Zequn, the Executive Vice Mayor of Guangzhou, “The government will abide by the openness and transparency principle in choosing the location of the incinerator […] We promise the project will not be started if it fails to pass environmental assessment or if it is opposed by the majority of residents.”

The government plans to consult with the public, the media, and experts for six months to “look for a better way to treat household garbage”, the process will entail sending officials to “every household to solicit opinions”. At a December 10, 2009 meeting with representatives of local residents and the media, district Party and government officials announced further details on the consultation process. The government plans to choose two neighborhoods and a primary school to launch a waste classification pilot project. It will additionally educate the public from early 2011 to the end of 2012 on what the construction of the incinerator entails and will also seek the community’s input on the selection of the site, the corresponding
environmental impact assessment, and the feasibility of the project. After this process, the location of the incinerator will be determined. These plans suggest Guangzhou officials still intend to build the incinerator but the exact location remains up for negotiation. The state responded to residents’ demands for more involvement from the onset. Panyu district Party Secretary Tan Yinghua noted, “From today on, we will start from the beginning. We will mobilize all the residents in Panyu to discuss the location and construction of the incinerator.” With regard to some residents’ demands of an alternate method of garbage disposal – namely, waste classification – the government proposed the solution of a pilot project.

Discussion

Contours of Popular Contention among the Upwardly Mobile

One of the main reasons upwardly mobile Panyu residents could protest differently is because of their access to modern technologies and forms of information. Social class and social status facilitate access to modern technologies as people have to know how to use the technologies, including how to access proxy sites to bypass blocks on Twitter and other websites. The people who know how to evade censors, upload videos, send tweets, have blogs, as well as people who can afford the accompanying technologies are more likely to be those who are upwardly mobile and have greater social capital. According to Charles McElwee, a Shanghai-based environmental lawyer, “The government is really much more anxious about the middle class and how they are using new forms of communication and networking to form into groups. They are worried that they don’t have control over the ways in which people can assemble. These people are more articulate, they can generate some press coverage, they can keep protests going and they share information.”

The Role of Modern Technologies

Modern technologies helped protesters succeed in circumventing state restrictions. The government was able to exert some control. For example, officials censored reports by local newspapers such as the Southern Metropoli-

tan Daily, blocked sites such as Twitter, and discouraged the use of buses to bring protesters to the petitioning site. Yet modern technologies were able to mobilize protesters in ways older methods have been unable to achieve. Devices such as the Internet and mobile phones were a resource for at least two reasons. First, people can conduct their own research and use this knowledge as a form of power. For example, residents countered government claims of safety with research suggesting that dioxin is carcinogenic. They also cited how other countries responded to the issue of waste management and suggested alternate solutions.

Second, people can use modern technologies to disseminate live information, which not only mobilizes participants but also preserves evidence and amplifies the impact of the protest. Participants tweeted the latest information on which roads from Panyu were being monitored by police, how slowly the petitioning process was going, the type of slogans people used, details of exchanges with government employees, and the decision among participants to air their grievances outside the municipal government building instead of waiting in the petitioning reception area. The slogans and live footage, in particular, were then re-tweeted around the world. Some re-tweets specifically mentioned the need to show support and to keep the momentum of the protest alive.

Modern technologies become empowering tools because government officials cannot use “traditional” forms of suppression as easily to censor information, stop attempts at mobilization, and hide evidence of misconduct. Indeed, the ability to use new technologies has been identified by Yongshun Cai as one of the reasons why local governments’ use of suppression has not prevented popular contention. Cai notes that local governments use suppression as a response to popular protests because it contains little risk and is an option when concession or tolerance is not possible. Yet the visible presence of hundreds of cell phones, cameras, and video recording devices makes it difficult for officials to usepressive tactics. Therefore, the widespread use of technologies by the upwardly mobile helps to shape the protesters’ “power to frame and the framing of the issue” so that the state no longer has a monopoly.
Networks and Linkages between Online and Offline Contention

The Panyu protest illuminates how online and offline contention can work together. Motivated to act collectively through shared “not in my backyard” concerns, residents voiced their opposition online in residential and news forums upon hearing of the project in September. They posted comments, engaged in discussion and planning, and voted in at least two polls. One poll documented near-universal opposition (97%) by residents polled on the project, with almost 92% agreeing that the “project will seriously harm their health and the environment". The results of both polls, which show evidence of strong opposition to the incinerator’s construction, have been cited repeatedly in the media. Individuals also expressed their opinions to government agencies through petitioning and protest events such as signature drives that drew media attention. For example, a signature drive on October 25, 2009 in the Hailongwan residential community attracted hundreds of property owners from at least three surrounding communities. The spatial proximity created physical spaces for discussion, fostered and reinforced social networks, and in interaction with virtual spaces helped to build group solidarity and trust within and among residential communities. In addition, the use of varying forms of contention has a multiplier effect that generated pressure for government agencies to respond beyond providing an opportunity for petitioning.

During the protest, online contention disseminated information and controlled the contours of the protest to facilitate orderly yet effective offline contention. For instance, one tweet mentioned that “netizens are helping to ascertain where the reception [for petitions] will take place; the TV station said it will be changed to Jieyang Road”. Another tweet noted, “The situation is stable, the amount of live broadcast will decrease a little bit. Can Twitter friends please let residents coming later know that people have already relocated to the entrance of the municipal government at Fujian Road.” Individuals also used tweets to monitor the parameters of the protest. One tweet warned, “People […] also started walking toward Dongfeng Road, be cautious of losing control.” When an application to upload videos to Twitter – Twitvid – was blocked, one Twitter user tweeted that he switched to Tether, another application, to upload videos and pictures. This kind of technological know-how helps to create a safe space online from official policing, even as the limits of this space change continuously. The re-tweeting of videos and other live documentation further preserves a safe online and offline space.

Boundary-Spanning Contention

The Panyu protest can be seen as a form of boundary-spanning contention because it started on November 23, 2009 within prescribed channels of participation. During this time, participants waited to petition. However, they became increasingly frustrated with the slow process, and began to resort to other methods such as moving to another venue. One can argue that in the transition from one government site to another, these petitioners became protesters. Yet, they were not overtly transgressive; they were neither violent nor destructive. Furthermore, as I show below, they used official rhetoric and divisions within the state – two other indicators of boundary-spanning contention – to further their claims.

Framing: How are a Collective Problem and its Solution Expressed?

When upwardly mobile protesters framed their grievances, four themes repeatedly emerged: (1) concern over possible detrimental effects of the project on their health; (2) concern over effects on the environment; (3) concerns over negative impacts on their property values; and (4) a concern over not having been consulted about such a project. For instance, a Star River resident mentioned, “Government authorities never asked for our opinion about the project before September.” Another resident, Lu Ping, who lived near the proposed site stated, “I bought an apartment here a few years ago because the air quality is better than in downtown areas. If the incinerator is built, it will not only harm everybody’s health, but also lead to a plunge in housing prices.” Such frames are similar to the concepts observed by Yanfei Sun and Dongxin Zhao in a 2008 article, which notes that “concepts such as citizens’ rights to know,
participatory rights, and environmental justice have appeared more and more frequently in the rhetoric of environmentalists and increasingly frame China’s environmental movement”.67

These frames appeal to state rhetoric, especially rhetoric concerning environmental protection, and directly involve the public in official decision-making. For instance, protesters carried signs that read, “Protect Green Guangzhou” and “Respect Public Opinion”.68 Yet, as an example of boundary-spanning contention, the protesters’ presentation also contained subversive elements amid conformity to state rhetoric. For example, some carried signs that read, “We don’t want to be represented.”69 In addition, protesters relayed that they distrusted government proclamations that waste incineration is safe and that the proposed incinerator would be able to minimize pollution. Government officials noted that “state of the art” controls “from overseas” would be introduced to curtail the pollution. But according to Xinhua, a resident asked, “How can operators and government authorities ensure less pollution after this project is put into operation?”70

Protesters were also cognizant of splits in officialdom. For example, they called on local leaders to come out of government buildings in order to speak directly with the people, and explicitly mentioned one official, Lü Zhiyi. Protesters alternated between chanting for the official to come out and for him to step down from his position. The alternation between benign engagements in dialogue to subversive calls for resignation is another example of boundary-spanning contention that puts pressure on officials to respond. Even as protesters invoked national-level rhetoric, they framed their grievances locally rather than against the central government. As other scholars have noted, mass incidents are currently not so much directed at central authorities as primarily aimed at the local government, who is charged with the implementation of various policies including social stability.71 As long as this framing holds, popular contention is less of a threat to the existing regime because the government and the Party retain some legitimacy and popular trust.72 Evidence suggests, for example, that a good number of villagers place more trust in higher rather than lower levels of government. They further distinguish between intent and capacity, viewing the central government’s intent as benevolent even as they doubt its capacity to compel local implementation of its policies. Local officials, on the other hand, are seen as the bad seeds that sometime ignore or even subvert the enforcement of policies.73

Political Opportunity: What are the Outside Factors that Affect Claims-Making?

In the Panyu protest, there were at least two outside factors that assisted the protesters in making claims. Central-level policy and laws in China, such as the Environmental Impact Assessment Law, stipulate the inclusion of public participation in major environmental projects. At the local level, the Guangzhou government did enable some forms of public participation by designating certain days for people to express their opinions in person. The city government, perhaps motivated by a desire for orderly petitioning, therefore created an opening by which protesters can voice their claims.74 Protesters, who proceeded to engage in slightly more disruptive action (including conducting a sit-in outside a government building), then exploited this opening. Such boundary-spanning contention retains pressure but is not devoid of legitimacy or “rightfulness”. In addition, developed areas, such as Guangzhou, have more ability to follow legislation due to greater access to wealth and other resources.

Conclusion

The Panyu protest demonstrates that even in settings where controls on freedom and assembly are in place, groups can still mobilize to gain concessions from the state. In this particular protest, modern technologies greatly facilitated mobilization efforts and resource management. Among the unique aspects of the Panyu protest was the fact that upwardly mobile people participated and contributed their knowledge to a boundary-spanning protest. However, like most protests, the success achieved was dependent upon the level of resistance from state actors.

From the Panyu protest, we may posit that the upwardly mobile can resist the system in distinct ways. They have access to different kinds of resources, such as domestic and international social networks, technical knowledge, and mod-
ern technologies. These resources change the dynamics of the protest and how the opposition reacts. Municipal government officials cannot just respond by claiming expertise, censoring certain websites, or confiscating a person’s cell phone. Yet social class is not a necessary condition. Knowing the law was a common tipping point in many of the successful protests over rural elections that Kevin O’Brien examined.75 In other words, access to resources and knowledge creates leverage in favor of the protesters.76

With regard to the relation between forms of contention, Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly observe that many transgressive acts start from contained incidents.77 The Panyu protest elucidates how slightly more transgressive contention emerges from contained contention. Specifically, inadequacies in current collective grievance procedures coupled with citizens’ knowledge of laws and technologies motivated Panyu residents to try more subversive methods of contention. Participants initially waited to petition, but inadequate resources such as the lack of forms and the capacity to only receive approximately nine petitioners during a span of two hours led residents to change venues.78 That being said, individual participants helped to monitor the protest so that it did not become truly transgressive.

The Panyu protest also allows us to see how dynamics of protest affect governance in developed urban areas. Kevin O’Brien and Li Lianjiang contend that popular rural contention improves policy implementation through ad hoc intervention by the central government.79 Yet, in this case, policy implementation was seemingly improved without direct intervention by central leaders. It is unclear what plans – if any – the local government had to solicit public participation, but it is clear that without pressure from the protesters, the government’s plans would probably not have been so elaborate.

Lastly, the Panyu protest has been followed by at least two protests in nearby areas of Guangdong over the construction of a waste incinerator. Using similar repertoires of contention, including the Internet and slogans such as “Defend our homeland, oppose pollution”, residents in Nankai District, west of Shenzhen City, and Gaoming District, in Foshan City, protested outside of government buildings on the 24th and 25th of January in 2010.80 Further studies could compare the dynamics of contention in other recent protests about waste management in China.81 We may ask: How is contention commonly expressed? How does the government react in general? And what patterns or variations on the Panyu theme can we observe?

ENDNOTES

3 Ibid, p. 20.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid; p. 3.
9 Ibid.
11 Panyu’s approximately 2.5 million residents generated 1,640 tons of daily waste in 2008. S. China’s Guangzhou suspends incinerator project until environmental assessments OK; Xinhua, 23 November 2009.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid. Controversial garbage incinerator project delayed in Guangzhou’s Panyu, 2009.
14 A two-bedroom apartment reportedly has a selling price of three million yuan at Southern Country Olympic Mansions. Malcolm Moore: China’s middle-class rise up in environmental protest; The Telegraph, 23 November 2009. Star River is reportedly 5 kilometers from the site of the proposed project. S. China’s Guangzhou suspends incinerator project until environmental assessments OK, 2009.
For example, see the comments from a NetEase online forum (Ibid.): “Ibid. Ramzy, 2009. Moore, 2009.

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User “Oo_zoe_oO” (Twitter), 23 November 2009: “Employees on the first floor ask if there’s anyone who is just dropping off materials and does not want to be involved. People have been pretty calm.”

User “buchong” (Twitter), 23 November 2009: “At the scene of the place to receive petitions: dozens of people are waiting, only 9 people were received, progress is slow. The person receiving petitions urged people to engage in waste separation, said the government has faith and resolve to push for waste separation, but there are no specific measures or specific department for waste separation.”

User “yehog” (Twitter), 2009.

User “Oo_roe_oO” (Twitter), 23 November 2009: “Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon. From morning until now, you guys have blocked the entrance of the municipal government building for almost 5 hours, severely affecting the everyday work of the municipal government and affecting everyday traffic. These actions already violate Article 23 of the Public Security Administration Punishment Law and related laws and regulations. Would you please stop these illegal activities, and leave within 10 minutes.”

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User “wenyunchao” (Twitter), 23 November 2009: “Two local TV stations started interviewing people, with petitioners in the background holding slogans, some police came as well”; last accessed on 9 May 2011 at: https://docs.google.com/View?id=dg5x95z_67d7jpe9f8k&pli=1.

For example: User “hbwmc4” (Twitter), 23 November 2009: “Saw a few local reporters; more and more people are coming, although it looks like most of the people are from Lijiang Gardens. Saw one person holding a sign standing on the road, directly appealing to passersby.”; last accessed on 9 May 2011 at: https://docs.google.com/View?id=dg5x95z_67d7jpe9f8k&pli=1.

For countering government claims, see: Soong (transl.), 2009. For how other countries responded and alternate solutions, as well as the government’s response, see: Ye Qian: Several Experts on Waste Management in Guangdong Support Incineration, Netizens Critical [广东多位垃圾处理专家支持选择焚烧手段 网民质疑] Xinhua (新华), 26 November 2009.

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On January 29, 2010, the US announced that it would be selling US$6.4 billion worth of weapons to Taiwan. In response, Beijing announced that it would curtail military exchanges with Washington and, for the first time, announced the possibility of sanctions on the US Corporations involved in the arms sale. Instead of a typical retaliation on just the US Government, the Chinese have responded with a direct attack on the defense corporations involved in the deal and are prepared to hold them accountable if they continue with the decision of the US Government. In a lucrative economy like that of China, sanctions on certain corporations could have a dramatic effect on their global competitiveness. It can be found not only that China has the legal capability to levee such sanctions against US Corporations, but also that, because of the internationalization of their civilian sectors, these defense corporations are to a certain degree vulnerable to Chinese pressure. It therefore appears that the new coercive tactic of the People’s Republic of China is to utilize the self-interests of these corporations to mitigate future sales of weapons to Taiwan.

Since 1979, the United States government has operated under the guidance of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) PL 96-8 when dealing with the sales of weapons to the Republic of China (ROC). While the TRA does not establish formal relations with Taiwan, it does develop the framework under which the United States conducts the export of weapons to Taiwan. According to the TRA, the US reserves the right to sell Taiwan “weapons of a defensive character” under the fundamental principle that the US “make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability”.

However the continuous sales to Taiwan by the US have been much to the chagrin of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) who hopes to one day reunite with Taiwan. In certain cases the PRC has responded by securing military relations and taking extreme diplomatic measures to dissuade the US from continuing with sales to Taiwan. Even with such responses by the PRC, these stern remarks appear to have no effect on the decisions of the United States. The US has not only continued to provide Taiwan with weapons, but has also increased the amount of arms exported to Taiwan over the past decade. From 2001 to 2004, the US delivered US$3.7 billion and from 2005 to 2008 US$3.9 billion worth of weapons to Taiwan. To further this trend, on January 29, 2010, the US announced that it would be selling US$6.4 billion worth of weapons to Taiwan. Not only have attempts by the PRC failed in preventing sales to Taiwan, but it also appears that the US is ramping up the amount of weapons that they sell. What is most striking about this new declaration is not the amount that the US has promised, but the new reaction that China is taking to influence US decisions in sales to Taiwan.

In response to the announcement by the US, Beijing curtailed military exchanges with Washington and, for the first time, announced the possibility of sanctions on the US corporations involved in the arms sale. This list of US corporations includes Northrop Grumman, Boeing, United Technologies (UTC), Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon – all of which are defense corporations in the United States. To
ensure that these corporations understand the severity of the claims against them, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ma Zhaoxu, directly threatened the corporations involved by stating: “Some US companies, which ignore the stern objections of the Chinese government and decide to sell weapons to Taiwan regardless, will face sanctions.” Instead of a typical retaliation on the just the US Government, the Chinese have turned their focus on the US corporations involved in the deal and are prepared to hold them accountable if they continue with the decision of the US Government.

To best understand what the PRC spokesman meant by the threatened “sanctions”, one must analyze how China can effectively employ pressure on US corporations. The overarching goal of any corporation is to maximize profit. For China to effectively place pressure on US defense corporations they must have a viable means by which to enact profit constriction and, therefore, must have a vulnerable target to attack. Initially, one would be inclined to believe that China has neither of these capabilities considering that US defense corporations are highly protected by the US Government and, being that China is not allowed to buy US weapons, the PRC is not part of the US defense market. So exactly how can China impose effective sanctions on the US defense sector?

To answer this question this research paper will first analyze the different forms of protection and decipher whether international norms and regulations would prohibit or allow such sanctions. By analyzing the existing forms of protection for the US defense corporations, vulnerabilities can be detected and legitimization can be shown in the threatened “sanctions”. The next section will analyze the business structures of these five corporations and highlight their alarming level of dependency on civilian revenue and therefore the China market. I argue that although the defense sectors of the corporations are highly protected, the civilian sectors of these same corporations are open for attack and depend on the Chinese market for future sales and growth. By analyzing Boeing in particular, it can be shown that US defense corporations have already been under political pressure by China and stand to lose major competitive ground if China were to enact sanction or cause problems for these corporations. The information presented in this paper should serve as an example of exactly how China can create effective and legitimate pressure on US defense corporations and therefore serve as a warning to US strategists that sales of weapons to Taiwan can and will have problematic costs that may not have been realized.

**Are US Defense Corporations Vulnerable to Foreign Sanctions?**

In response to the recent US arms sales to Taiwan, the PRC has utilized the threat of sanctions as a form of coercion. They have not only challenged the decision of the US to sell weapons to Taiwan, but have also challenged the corporations involved in the decision of the US Government. For the sanctions to have any teeth against these corporations, they must have a viable means of being legally employed against the US corporations involved. Their validity must be unhindered by global institutions and unchallengeable by the international community. This therefore calls into question whether or not the international norms and regulations could allow China to invoke such a serious action against US corporations.

The unifying organization in international economics is the World Trade Organization (WTO). Adopting the provisions of the General Agreements to Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the WTO strives to facilitate and foster liberalized trade amongst its members. This international organization not only establishes a framework for negotiations, but also provides a dispute resolution process to ensure participants adhere to the WTO rules and regulations. Considering that China and the US are both members of the WTO, it would be through this organization that China would operate in placing overt sanctions on another country.

While sanctions by their very nature are counter-intuitive to the overarching goal of the WTO, they are still legal. Article XXI of the GATT states:
Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed
(a) to require any contracting party to furnish any information the disclosure of which it
considers contrary to its essential security interests; or
(b) to prevent any contracting party from taking any action which it considers necessary
for the protection of its essential security interests

(i) relating to fissionable materials or the materials from which they are derived

(ii) relating to the traffic in arms, ammunition and implements of war and to such
traffic in other goods and materials as is carried on directly or indirectly for the
purpose of supplying a military establishment;

(iii) taken in time of war or other emergency in international relations; or

(c) to prevent any contracting party from taking any action in pursuance of its obligations
under the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and secu-

As can be seen, Article XXI not only gives na-
tions the clearance to immediately interrupt
trade relations, but it also allows the sanctions
to occur without being bogged down with the
WTO dispute resolution process. Therefore
China has the ability to levy sanctions on US
corporations if it is deemed necessary under the
auspice of “essential security interests”.

As officially published on the embassy website
of the PRC in the United States, Zhang Hanlin,
director of the WTO Institute of the University
of International Business and Economics,
.stated: “As the sales to Taiwan poses a threat
to China’s national security, China has the right
to penalize the companies.” Considering that
the sovereignty of Taiwan is not recognized by
the WTO, it would appear as though China has
a valid point in perceiving the sales to Taiwan
as an illegal transport or trafficking of arms into
their own territory and therefore can be consid-
ered a security concern for the PRC. Under the
guidance of Article XXI, China has a legitimate
reason to believe the arms sales are contrary to
“essential security interests”.

Even though the WTO resolutions would allow
China to impose sanctions on these corpora-
tions, exactly how could the PRC effectively
sanction US defense corporations? China, albe-
it a robust militarized nation, does not receive
weapons from the US. Following the Tianan-
men Square Incident of 1989, the US president,
under the provisions of the Arms Export Con-
trol Act, placed embargoes on military articles
and services to the PRC. A mere twenty days
later the European Community enacted the
same embargo on the PRC and neither has lifted
them since. Therefore China has no part in the
market of the defense sectors of the US defense
corporations. The idea in sanctioning is to im-
pose large costs on products entering the coun-
try; however, due to the decision of the United
States, the PRC is not an authorized nation to
currently receive any weapons from the US.
They therefore have no means to attack these
defense articles considering they are not part
of the US weapons market and can not affect
pricing or marketability. From this information
it can be seen that the threatened sanctions by
the PRC appear not to be aimed at the defense
sectors of these defense corporations. Perhaps
there is another sector within the defense corpo-
rations that could be the target of the threatened
sanctions by the PRC.

Whether or not Beijing places sanctions on
these corporations, the PRC must believe there
is a targetable weakness in the operations of
current US defense corporations, otherwise the
threat could call China’s credibility into ques-
tion.

A clue into the possible target of the PRC was
found in a public statement by the Chinese Em-
bassy in the United States which reminded the
US Government that China had never signed
the Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft and
therefore has the right to decide whether or not
they purchase US civilian aircraft from certain
corporations. The Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft is a WTO agreement entered into force in 1980 that attempts to mitigate import duties on all aircraft with the exception of those purchased for military use. This agreement also extends to aircraft parts, components and flight simulators. Because China refused to sign this agreement, they are therefore free to place import duties on all foreign civilian aircraft and components, thus allowing them to affect the cost and competitiveness of certain foreign corporations that are involved in the sector. While Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon take part in certain components involving civilian aircraft, they are small compared to the level of investment that Boeing has in this sector. This therefore appears to be a direct threat against a civilian sector that is part of a US defense corporation. Does this mean that civilian sectors of the defense corporations are vulnerable to sanctions by the PRC?

**What Makes the Civilian Sector an Easier Target?**

By their very nature, the defense sectors of the US defense corporations are intertwined with the US Government. Unlike civilian corporations, because of the sensitivity of their products to US security, they are under high supervision and are highly scrutinized by the government. Over the years, the US has installed many programs, regulations, laws, and supervisory boards to help control the export of US defense articles to foreign countries.

One of the most significant defining measures to ensure such actions take place is the US code Title 22, Chapter 39, which outlines the arms export controls. According to Subchapter III, §2778 of Chapter 39, the US president has direct control on all exports and imports of defense articles and can provide foreign policy guidance to those designated to receive US weapons or defense services. The president is also authorized to determine what is designated as a defense article or a defense service, thereby controlling the export of everything deemed ‘US weapons’. The decision of whom the defense sector can sell weapons to is not the corporation’s but the US President’s.

Unlike defense articles, products of the civilian sector are able to flow across borders relatively unchecked. The freedom of commerce allows civilian sectors of the defense corporations to extend their supply chain logistics across oceans without the prior approval of the US president as it is with the defense sector. The internationalization of these products allows for the civilian sectors of the defense corporations to create efficiencies in production, increase economies of scale, and access new markets. These corporations are becoming integrated within foreign national borders and becoming accustomed to their way of life. Because of the pure competitiveness of other international civilian corporations, it has almost become a necessity for the civilian sectors of the defense corporations to internationalize in order to maintain their competitive edge.

Because of their freedom to integrate with the global markets, the civilian sectors of the defense corporations are not as protected as the defense corporations. In response to rising questions over governmental control of civilian operations, a top defense executive stated, “The best thing government could do for our international business would be to get out of the way.”

However as the civilian sectors become internationalized, they have opened themselves up to new dynamics. The continued operations in foreign countries create new pressures and difficulties for these corporations. As the civilian sectors of the defense corporations venture into new markets they deal with new laws, customs, and market demands. Plagued by different desires in different countries, the civilian sectors of the defense corporations have worked hard and responded to ensure maximization of profit regardless of their host national ties. There are ever-growing fears that, while defense corporations have host nations, their allegiance to their host nation may weaken due to continued operations in the world market. Analysts generally agree that, due to their dispersed productions and competitive international nature, corporations will fight any restriction on their ability to globalize and reap benefits, even if this is to the chagrin of their host nation.
These notions and observations serve to highlight the fact that the ties between the civilian sectors of the defense corporations and their host nation have in fact thinned as they continue to globalize. Dealing with new governments, pressures, and international competition, the civilian sectors of the defense corporations are more likely today to act against host national interests than when they were autarkic and located solely within national borders. This only gives a sense of reality that, because of the existence of the unprotected and unregulated civilian sectors of the defense corporations, there exists the possibility that these corporations under the right circumstances may acquiesce to foreign national interests in hopes of increasing benefits and profits. An example of this will be explored later in this research. Therefore the continual operation of these corporations in multiple nations raises the likelihood that political confrontation between the foreign nations and the corporation may occur.21

As can be seen, the defense corporation is composed of two major components: the defense sector and the civilian sector. Each has a different market to respond to. The defense sector answers to the United States and only works with foreign governments if the US President allows it. However, the civilian sector can be just as engrained in a foreign market as it is in the US market. Its products and supply chains still flow across borders and into new territories. Regardless of their differences, both sectors are tied together in that they are still part of the same corporations with the same goal of maximizing profit. If China were to place effective sanctions on the civilian sectors of the defense corporations, it would still hurt the same defense corporation involved in selling weapons to Taiwan.

An important observation in assessing the true connection between these two sectors of the defense corporations is that of Jonathan Galloway who addresses, among many things, the global implications of defense corporations by differentiating the driving mechanisms for these corporations.22 He explains that the basic needs and interactions between defense corporations are different based on their level of dependency on foreign sales and operations. Defense corporations that depend more on foreign sales than military sales are more apt to react to foreign market pressures.23 However, while this is true, he highlights that even if civilian operations are only a fifth of a corporation’s revenue, the defense corporation cannot stand to lose that income and is more likely to work harder to maintain it despite it being a smaller part of the corporation’s overall revenue. Therefore he concludes that all defense corporations are dependent to some extent on the three markets: governmental, foreign, and domestic civilian. He argues that these defense corporations will take any action necessary to preserve the balance among these markets regardless of their individual percentages.24 Galloway states: “It stands to reason that their managements will be interested in preserving the dynamic equilibrium between these markets. If the equilibrium between these markets is upset, then the consequences for the firm may become unacceptable.”

Coupling the arguments of Galloway with the arguments that civilian operations are graying the connection to nationalism as they internationalize, one can start to see the plausibility in defense corporations acting to mitigate sanctions from a foreign country like China. This sort of situation is not an unlikely scenario considering that defense corporations in the past have been caught between their host nation and foreign national interests. The well-documented Boeing–McDonnell Douglas merger highlights this very argument.

In 1997, Boeing made a bold move to buy and merge with their long-standing US rival, McDonnell Douglas, another US defense corporation that specialized in aerospace manufacturing and defense contracting. Although the US authorities had approved the merger, the European Union (EU) ruled that the merger was not in the EU’s best interests and demanded that Boeing make changes. Both Boeing and McDonnell Douglas are based out of the United States; however, the EU was concerned that the combined power of the two companies would hinder the European aeronautics corporation, Airbus. Since Airbus is 80%-owned by EADS and 20%-owned by BAE (both of which are defense corporations of the EU) it was speculated
that such a merger would cause Boeing to gain a larger competitive edge and would hurt their own defense corporations in the long run.25

In their defense, Boeing first argued that the US Federal Trade Commission, not the EU, should take the lead in investigating the deal and its legitimacy. The EU, however, went forward with its own commission and unanimously voted that the merger be blocked by any means necessary. Faced with the threat of EU pressure to band together and only buy planes from Airbus, Boeing acquiesced to the concerns of the EU and changed the conditions of the merger so as to satisfy the EU.26 Even though the United States demanded that Boeing maintain its original deal and had a legitimate reason for stating that the original terms were fair, Boeing feared the loss of market share in Europe and, therefore, believed the foreign government’s interests were in their own best interests.

This incident is significant for several reasons. First, this showcases how an international organization was able to pressure two US corporations to conform to their interests and not act solely on the interests of the corporation. They were able to create enough pressure on Boeing to ensure that Boeing conceded to their desires. It was not the fear of losing defense contracting, but the fear of losing sales in commercial jets that ultimately caused Boeing to acquiesce to the desires of a foreign nation. Second, as mentioned above, the rest of the world perceived this move by the EU as a way to protect the European corporation Airbus. This was not because Boeing did not make a good product. It was because of nationalistic reasons that differentiated Airbus from Boeing, which is a dynamic that foreign defense corporations must fight hard to resolve and overcome.

Still, the most important point is that the deepening of integration into other parts of the world due to internationalization over the years has transferred more regulatory powers from host authorities to foreign nations. Companies like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, and UTC will find that their civilian actions, regardless of how small, will invite the attention of the international world and cause great political pressure. Or, in the case of the Taiwan arms sale, the action of their defense sector will invite foreign political pressure and hardship on their internationalized civilian sector.

**How Invested are Defense Corporations in the Civilian Sector in China?**

Considering that all the defense corporations from the Taiwan arms sale are multinational in their civilian operations and have civilian sectors that extend across the globe, China has an ability to sanction portions of the exposed civilian sectors of the defense corporations.27 Therefore to be able to understand the effectiveness of such sanctions it is important to register how much these defense corporations rely on their civilian sectors and how much of a role China plays in the calculations of their future prospect.

In analyzing the chart below, one can see that both Boeing and UTC show a large reliance on their civilian sector. According to their financial data, both companies rely heavily upon their civilian sectors’ total revenue to maintain operations. Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon have a significant amount of civilian revenue; however, their business structure does not rely as heavily on civilian revenue and would therefore not be in major jeopardy if sanctions were imposed on their civilian sectors. This is not to say that their civilian revenue is insignificant; the lowest percentage is 7%, which equals US$2.3 billion. For Boeing and UTC, 49% and 83% are significant enough that these corporations depend on civilian revenue just as much if not more than on their defense revenue and would therefore be extremely vulnerable to Chinese sanctions. This highlights that these two companies stand to lose more than the other three due to their extreme reliance on civilian revenue.29

Both Boeing and UTC have been a part of the American business structure for almost 100 years, but only recently started shifting attention to conducting business transactions overseas. They have seemingly found the rich potential that lies within China’s borders and over the past couple of decades, have developed
long-term relations with the Chinese government. Each one has found their own niche in China’s economy with Boeing selling commercial aircraft to the Chinese airlines and UTC selling Otis elevators and Carrier brand heating and air-conditioning to the Chinese people. For Boeing a complication in the Chinese market would severely hurt their civilian revenue. Over the next two decades, Boeing expects China to spend US$400 billion to purchase approximately 3,770 planes from certain manufacturers, thereby making China the second largest commercial aircraft market in the world. According to UTC’s CEO, Louis Chenevert, “[China’s market] feels really good right now.” Chenevert added that he sees no evidence of China’s market slowing down and noted that the company’s Otis elevators were up by double digits. Furthermore, orders for its Carrier air conditioning systems were “starting to come up.” For UTC, the revenue from Otis Corporation accounted for the bulk of the US$3.1 billion in sales in China last year, and it is estimated that China’s economy will grow 9.9% this year. With results and high expectations for both companies and a large reliance on their civilian sector’s total revenue to maintain operations, it appears as though these two defense corporations have a large reliance on the civilian Chinese market and would therefore be highly vulnerable to Chinese sanctions on their civilian products.

If China does impose the threatened sanctions against these defense corporations it could prove to be detrimental to their international operations. While the military sectors of these defense corporations would not be affected by sanctions from China, the civilian sectors are left relatively unprotected. The combined dynamics of a large reliance on civilian revenue and pressure from a government that has a lucrative market for their civilian sectors to operate in only demonstrates a larger possibility that certain defense corporations will be more likely to adhere to the foreign government’s will over that of their host national government’s desires.

Another way in which China can exploit a major weakness in certain civilian sectors of the defense corporations is through pre-existing competitive rivalries. In most cases, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, UTC, Northrop Grumman, and other defense corporations are in tight contention for defense contracts relating to their respective fields; however, as was discussed in a previous section, China does not have an ability to affect this. There are pre-existing rivalries in the civilian sectors that can be exploited to create even more pressure on the defense corporations involved in the Taiwan arms sale.

The targeting of corporations with strong rivals can serve two purposes: it can cause civil-
ian revenue of the defense corporations to decrease, and it can increase the competitive gain of their key competitor. Not only do they lose that part of the market, but their competitor also ends up gaining from it, thereby delivering a double blow to the defense corporation under fire. In tight competition for new markets like China, this sort of alteration can result in a major setback to the defense corporation’s civilian revenue and could become a long-term effect. Not only does the rival gain from a sanction in China, but also, due to the increased capital, will he have the ability to use this gain in other competitive areas to help increase funding in his global market.

There are many different types of rivalries that exist in the market. Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman mainly compete with each other for defense contracts and their civilian revenue is relatively low compared to others. This indicates that they are somewhat protected from a Chinese exploitation of their key rivalries.

Conglomerate corporations might have several different rivals by the existence of multiple sectors and markets under which they operate. Therefore no one company is completely identical to that of another conglomerate corporation and the existence of a specific rivalry is rare. UTC is a conglomerate that has different civilian sectors like Otis elevators and Carrier air-conditioners.\(^{33}\) The sanctions against UTC would result in fewer Otis elevators and Carrier products; however, there are many different elevator and air-conditioner companies operating in China and therefore no specific competitor would gain from such sanctions. This does not affect the global competitiveness of the civilian sector of UTC; rather it affects local competitiveness in the Chinese market. With this in mind, it is fair to say that the sanctions will not make UTC as vulnerable.

Boeing on the other hand has one major rival, Airbus. As most would claim, the rivalry between Boeing and Airbus is the largest international rivalry in the world.\(^{34}\) Both companies are identical in that their civilian sectors develop comparable commercial aircraft that are competitive on the global market. Foreign corporations that choose to buy a commercial jet are usually considering whether or not they choose Airbus or Boeing and at times will use the two corporations to play each other off in a bidding war. The stakes are extremely high for each corporation, meaning that a single deal with an airline could be a deciding factor between success and failure in a multibillion-dollar investment.\(^{35}\) Therefore one of the best strategies for both Boeing and Airbus is that of persuading prospective buyers, such as nationally owned airlines, to purchase their own planes instead of those of the respective other.\(^{36}\)

The competition between Boeing and Airbus has been extremely tight over the years. Neither company has been able to pull away from the other, so the slightest change in their global market share can give a company an advantage over the other. For such a close race it can be seen how important the Chinese market is to both companies. According to China’s own projections, they believe they will quadruple their aircraft fleet to 3,900 by 2025, which could create a large amount of potential revenue for Boeing or Airbus.\(^{37}\) To further this, Boeing expects China to spend over US$400 billion to purchase planes over the next couple of years, thus making China the second largest aeronautics market in the world.\(^{38}\) According to Airbus China President Laurence Barron, China “probably has the most potential of any significant market in the world”.\(^{39}\)

However, despite tight contention, is Boeing at a point where it can handle a head-to-head challenge with Airbus in China, especially if sanctions by the Chinese government are enacted? With airlines in other markets struggling and Boeing still trying to recover from its much-delayed Dreamliner 787 project, Boeing seems to be on shaky grounds and stands to lose more than Airbus.\(^{40}\) To make matters worse, before the arms sales to Taiwan, Airbus was already winning more orders from China than Boeing.\(^{41}\)

While Boeing currently has 736 Boeing planes operating in China (and another 30 from McDonnell-Douglas, which Boeing acquired in 1997), Airbus only has 547. However, over the past couple of years, Airbus’s orders from
China have dramatically shifted to give Airbus the advantage. As of February 2010, Chinese airlines have placed orders for 358 Airbus planes and have options for another 14, while they have only ordered 244 new planes from Boeing and have placed no options for further units. Airbus has also acquired letters of intent towards future sales of 60 planes, compared to 40 for Boeing.42

Because the three largest airline companies (China Southern, China Eastern, and Air China) are still controlled by the Chinese government, the purchasing of commercial airliners is highly politicized. Because of this, Chinese officials have the direct ability to reward foreign governments with airplane sales that meet the interests of China.43 In response to such a system, Airbus, in June 2008, built an assembly base in Tianjin.44 By developing an assembly factory in Tianjin, Airbus is hoping that building aircraft in China (and the corresponding transfer of technology) will strengthen its position with the Chinese government, effectively beating out Boeing. To further this, Airbus has also developed an engineering center in Beijing that will train up to 200 local engineers to assist in the plant operations in Tianjin.45 Peter Harbison, executive chairman of the Center for Asia Pacific Aviation in Sydney noted that in China, “if you allow for more local production and information-sharing, the purchaser is going to be a lot more willing to accept your aircraft”.46

Boeing on the other hand is at a disadvantage. Hindered by unions and concerns over the company shifting jobs overseas, Boeing has had to maintain production in the US. However, Boeing has argued that their presence in China is significant because Boeing buys parts from seven local manufacturers in China. Boeing spokesman, Yukui Wang, stated that Boeing is the Chinese aviation industry’s largest foreign customer. He stresses that over the years Boeing has bought US$1.5 billion in aircraft parts and services from China and that this figure “will double in the next few years”.47 Mr. Wang also added, “Chinese suppliers now have a role in all of Boeing airplanes”.48 Along with this, to emphasize their commitment to China, Boeing ramped up its efforts and sent a sales director to Beijing to become the company’s first China-based sales executive – something that is not normally practiced by Boeing.49

Even with the past level of competition between Boeing and Airbus, Boeing is now at a large disadvantage because of their defense sector’s sales of the Harpoon missiles to Taiwan. If China enacts the sanctions against Boeing, Boeing will have to face a strong rival who just became much stronger. This is while they simultaneously lost major ground in the battle over the Chinese market. Even if China does not impose the sanctions, the Chinese government will probably be more likely to purchase planes from and support a company that does not sell weapons to areas of concern as well as one that complies with their interests.

The defense corporations that are more reliant on their defense sales and therefore are not as competitive in the civilian sectors (e.g. Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, and Lockheed Martin) are not under the same kind of pressure to expand their international production base and depend on foreign markets as is Boeing (due to its competitive nature with Airbus). If China were to enact sanctions against Boeing they would be able to meet their aeronautical needs by buying planes from Airbus, who is Boeing’s tight competitor. Not only is Boeing losing the revenue, but their main competitor is gaining from the sanctions. This double-edged sword would increase pressure on Boeing to try and mitigate the sanctions and adhere to the Chinese request, thereby restoring their share of the world market and their political favor in the eyes of the Chinese.

Conclusion

As can be seen from this report, the threats of sanctions by China are quite real. China stands in a position in which they have the capability and means to legally sanction US defense corporations for their involvement in the sales of weapons to Taiwan. While provisions and laws of the US government protect the defense sectors of these corporations, their internationalized civilian sectors are vulnerable to separate sanctions and pressures from the PRC. To further this point, those defense corporations that rely heavily on civilian revenue appear to be
even more vulnerable to Chinese pressure because of the potential of the Chinese market.

Boeing displays the most characteristics that make it vulnerable to pressure from the PRC. In their direct statement about not signing the Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft, it appears as though China is aware of this fact and is directly threatening Boeing with this statement. With a highly politicized process of procuring orders and an ever-tightening competition in China between Boeing and Airbus, Boeing can ill afford the repercussions of the arms sales. They will not only lose the potential revenue of the Chinese economy, but will also lose ground to their major competitor, Airbus. In response to the threat of sanctions, David Wang, President of Boeing in China, stated that “any arms sales to foreign countries or entities are decided by the US government [...] It’s a government-to-government issue”. 50

While this may be true, it does not defeat the point that Boeing was involved in a highly sensitive issue for the PRC and failed to heed its words of warning. While there has been no sanction placed to date, that does not mean this hasn’t affected the relations between the US defense corporations and the PRC.

ENDNOTES

1 Vang Pobzeb: Five Principles of Chinese Foreign Policies; Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2008; p. 46.
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12 Sanctions Against US Firms Selling Arms to Taiwan Not Violating WTO Rules: Chinese Experts.
14 Arms Export Control, Public Law Title 22, US Code, 1976; Chapter 39; accessed on 9 September 2010 at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/uscc.cgi?ACTION=BROWSE&TITLE=22USCC39&PDFS=YES.
15 Ibid.
23 Ibid. p. 493. By military sales, in this case, he is referring to military sales to the host nation and to other nations deemed by the host nation as allowable.
24 Ibid. p. 495.
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The paper analyzes the emerging security concerns that China is facing in the Middle East. Three pertinent case-studies are focused upon: the PRC’s interest in piracy in the Gulf of Aden, the situation in Xinjiang province and its resonance in the Middle East, and finally the PRC’s role in the Iranian nuclear crisis. This analysis of specific case studies, as opposed to a reiteration of general comments on China’s thirst for Middle Eastern oil, is seen as an important step in pursuing the study of China’s relations, especially with the Middle East, to stimulating new lines of enquiry. The paper considers the implications of these case studies with special reference to China’s economic and political security and finds developing concerns for China within these two sectors.

China’s growing importance in the sphere of international relations needs no introduction. Rather, there is increasingly the need to move beyond introductions and generalizations and begin to focus more on the specific dynamics and nature of China’s relations with other regions of the world. This paper hopes to make a step in that direction by focusing exclusively on the emerging security nexus between China and the Middle East.

The paper is influenced by the theoretical underpinnings of the Copenhagen School – especially Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde’s work Security: A New Framework for Analysis. In practice, this first affects which topics are interpreted as being related to “security” and second how those topics are analysed. A Copenhagen reading of international relations divides the field of security into five major sectors: military, economic, political, social, and environmental. Furthermore, the School encourages an analysis that is firmly grounded in the real world and demands a close observation of the “speech acts” which serve to raise issues as security concerns. For the purposes of this study, the potential impact of the Middle East on China’s political and economic security will be analysed. In an attempt to achieve a more holistic view of the Chinese–Middle Eastern security nexus, the cases selected serve to illustrate a range of Chinese state relations: those with Middle Eastern non-state actors, internal non-state actors with connections to Middle Eastern actors, and finally Middle Eastern state actors.

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden

The occurrence of piracy in the Gulf of Aden, mainly along the coast of Somalia, is a prominent example of China’s interaction with Middle Eastern non-state actors. It represents not only the sole theater of active operations for the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), but also a source of intense media and governmental attention. The Gulf of Aden is a transit point for approximately 12% of the world’s petroleum, and China currently receives around 50% of its oil imports from the Middle East – much of which inevitably passes through the Gulf of Aden. Additionally, a substantial amount of China’s export goods, and 40% of China’s imports, transit the area. These factors combine to ensure the Gulf’s position as a chokepoint for international trade. Furthermore, from an objectivist standpoint it would appear that China has a considerable stake in the security of the shipping lanes there.

Piracy in the region has been prevalent for centuries, but a recent upsurge began in the middle of 2007 following the swift deterioration of the Somali state. A UN resolution was passed in June 2008 authorizing states to “coordinate their efforts to deter acts of piracy and armed
robbery”5, and a string of other resolutions followed, culminating in the authorization of land operations in mid-December 2008.6 Insurance premiums for ships transiting the area increased ten-fold,7 and some firms even began to undertake alternative routes8. Towards the end of 2008, the Chinese Ministry of Defense announced the decision to send a fleet to provide an escort – primarily for Chinese vessels but also for foreign ships on request.9 This operation represents a major change in Chinese security policy and is the first time PRC vessels have entered a theater of operations outside the Pacific.10

While reports regarding piracy have appeared throughout Chinese media sources since the middle of 2007 (and some even earlier) describing in detail the pirates’ activities, such reports were largely descriptive, without passing evaluative or analytical comments or noting the seemingly obvious concerns surrounding China’s export/import interests at this key transit point.11 The government paralleled the media silence; no ministry or official publicly addressed the issue or attempted to render it more secure.

On the international level of analysis, very little was done on the part of Chinese actors to prevent the escalation in the level of piracy. At the UN, it was France and the US, framing the debate in terms of anti-terrorism and international trade, who put forward the draft resolution of what was to become Resolution 1816.12 This ruling was co-sponsored by Britain and Panama, with other resolutions being drafted solely by the US.13 Indeed, it seems that Chinese state actors played only a minor role in securing or facilitating the security of the issue, despite the great stake that China has in trade and oil transportation. Chinese diplomats did, however, praise and welcome the resolutions, voting for them in the Security Council. In his comments on the resolution in the Security Council, the Chinese representative to the UN did depict the issue in terms of a “threat to international shipping, maritime trade and security at sea”, going on to place an emphasis on international law and the importance of limiting the operation so as not to interfere with Somalia’s sovereignty.14

The Chinese Ministry of Defense’s statement to deploy came shortly after the occurrence of several major events. These included the passing of Resolution 1851, four days before the official statement, the hijacking of a Chinese fishing vessel, which was ultimately forced to rely on the Malaysian navy for rescue15, and the unprecedented hijacking of a Saudi-flagged supertanker16, representing the clearest threat yet to trade and energy routes. Following the Ministry of Defense’s statement, both the military establishment and the Foreign Ministry made a flurry of security moves, which have been interpreted as a succession of “high profile public relations campaigns”.17 In terms of referent objects, that of international law and the UNSC resolutions were reiterated by officers from the PLA and PLAN18, and the “public relations campaigns” involved repeated emphasis of China’s role in promoting global “peace and safety”19, and being a “responsible member” of the international community20. Other actors, such as those in the state-run media and Foreign Ministry, also began to bring more attention to the threat to China’s international trade and safety of Chinese sailors.21 Additionally, post-announcement comments from IR analysts in China noted the importance of the Gulf region for trade, as well as China’s shift in focus on “non-traditional security”.22 There was, however, no mention of the pirates’ linkages with terrorism, as was found in Western discourse. Significantly, it has since emerged that the Ministry of Transportation had originally raised the notion of naval deployment in October 2008, in meetings with the Foreign Ministry, and was concerned with a loss in China’s market share of global trade.23 Furthermore, it has been suggested that Chinese shipping groups, which employ approximately 400,000 Chinese nationals, lobbied the Ministry of Transportation to secure an escort.24

A large concern for the nature of China’s appearance to the international community is evident in the case study. The initial silence, and the absence of security speech acts, on both an international and domestic level, seems to indicate an unwillingness on the government’s part to display evident military preparations, which must have begun quite some time before the official announcement, due to the rapid deployment which followed. Thus while state
elites accepted piracy as a threat, and must have begun preparing for deployment, they refrained from attempting to secure the issue among the Chinese population or the international community, instead choosing to “free-ride” on the security efforts of other states. This suggests that Chinese officials considered the impact on China’s image, in terms of arousing potential fear of Chinese militarization and an eagerness to deploy and secure its economic interests in the Gulf of Aden, as unacceptably high. Indeed, this was not a misplaced fear, since the decision to deploy, despite UN authorization and the interim Somali government’s encouragement, did generate considerable concern among actors in South East Asia and the West25, especially among proponents of the “China Threat” theory26.

Thus, there are compelling indicators that China’s economic security was a core motivating factor in the decision to deploy the PLAN to the Gulf of Aden. The deployment certainly does represent a “breakthrough” in thinking within China’s elite regarding security27, and must be viewed as an elevation of the issue of economic security out of the realms of “established political methods”; that is to say, a non-interference and non-deployment of troops on active operations, which had hitherto formed a base of elite thinking on security28. It is significant that this aspect of China’s economic security cannot currently be diversified away from, unlike the diversification seen in the final case study in this paper. Furthermore, these underlying motives were, to a large extent, suppressed in official comments and a much greater emphasis was placed on international law as the referent object. This in turn depicts China as a responsible nation, fully integrated into the international system.

Xinjiang and the Middle East

China’s relations with internal non-state actors may yield implications for China’s relations with the Middle East, as well as have repercussions for China’s political and economic security. The key example of this is undoubtedly the Chinese state’s actions in Xinjiang Province. Xinjiang, meaning “new territory” or “old territory returned to the motherland”29, is one of the PRC’s Autonomous Regions, meaning that it is characterized by a large presence of minorities, and in theory enjoys a larger degree of political and cultural freedom30. The total land area of Xinjiang accounts for approximately 1/6 of the total Chinese mainland, and it is populated by a Uyghur-Muslim majority of around 45%, followed by a Han population of 40%. Muslim explorers and diplomatic missions first reached the coasts of China in the middle of the 7th century. More lasting socio-cultural effects were felt deep in the northwest, of what is now considered to be the PRC, during the period of eastern expansion in the Islamic conquests that brought large areas of Central Asia under Arab rule, including present-day Kazakhstan. Throughout this period, Islam began to spread, and over 50% of the province is now Muslim.31

Xinjiang is important to China’s security concerns, which have all been noted: its status as a “buffer zone”, its role in meeting China’s energy needs, relieving pressures of overcrowding in the eastern provinces, its place in wider strategic concerns of exerting influence in Central Asia, and reflecting a (Han-)Chinese “civilizing identity”.34 Significant for China’s political security, it has also been proposed that the government’s assertion of sovereignty over Xinjiang is “every bit as emotion-ridden as the […] claim to Taiwan”.35 However, the relationship between the region, what links Middle Eastern actors have to it, and how these actors hold the potential to affect the situation there has been overlooked.

Due to Xinjiang’s long history of social unrest, the Chinese government has had substantial opportunity to present its narrative of the tensions there and to justify its actions, which have included an escalation in arrests and convictions, known as “Strike Hard” campaigns, restrictions on freedom of speech, and extensive censoring of cultural and educational activities.36 Recur-
rent increases in security, legitimizing such measures, has consistently focused on separatism, which, before the September 11th attacks in the United States, was characterized in terms of the acts of individual perpetrators. Following 9/11, a governmental policy paper re-interpreted the unrest in Xinjiang as connected to highly organized terrorist groups, which were known under a wide variety of names featuring East Turkistan: most prominently the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and the East Turkistan Liberation Organization (ETLO). Moreover, the Chinese government explicitly connected these newly mentioned amalgams of terrorist organizations with “the terrorist forces led by bin Laden”, claiming substantial funding, training, and coordination with Al-Qa’ida, other Central Asian terrorist organizations, and Afghanistan’s Taliban. Consequently, the US and UN recognized the ETIM – whose existence is still a matter of debate – as closely affiliated with Al-Qa’ida, and placed it on their list of terrorist organizations.

Initial Chinese state media reports linked the July 2009 riots, the most recent eruption of violence which was sparked by the killing of two Uyghur workers in Guangdong Province, with “separatist and terrorist actions”. Furthermore, the violence was presented as “premeditated” and “organized in advance”. Government sources also accused the prominent Uyghur businesswoman, Rebiya Kadeer, and her “World Uyghur Congress”, of “masterminding” the violence, reinforcing the notion of organized violence, as opposed to an outburst of ethnic tensions as Western media analyses have framed the Xinjiang issue. Significantly, in the recent unrest, Al-Qa’ida was not cited as involved in the violence, nor, indeed, were ETIM, ETLO, or other East Turkistan terrorist organizations, nor was there any mention of Islam or Islamic terrorism, as has been implied in past reports of tensions in the region.

The PRC government was quick to publicize the praise it received from various states, particularly Middle Eastern states (including Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and the UAE) congratulating the Chinese for how the rioting in Xinjiang was handled. Chinese state media has also utilized the testimony of a number of diplomatic and academic sources in minimizing the significance of the violence in terms of religious tensions. From the other side, the rioting was largely unreported in the Arab media, especially when placed in contrast to the furor generated over the contemporaneous murder of Egyptian national Marwa Sherbini in a German courtroom.

A noticeable exception has been the reactions inside Turkey, where a number of journalists and politicians labeled the Chinese response to the riots as an assault against “ethnic brothers” and called for action in response to the “sufferings in [Turkey’s] ancestral lands”. Most prominently, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan labeled the incidents an “atrocity” and “almost genocide”, adding that Turkey could not “remain as a spectator” to the violence in Xinjiang. Additionally, the Minister for Trade and Industry, Nihat Ergün, as well as various trade union leaders, called for the boycott of Chinese goods in protest. Popular anger also manifested itself in Ankara through street protests where Turks and expatriate Uyghurs chanted anti-Chinese slogans and burned Chinese flags and goods. It is, however, important to note that the official Turkish reaction was much more restrained, with the Foreign Ministry merely expressing its “deep sadness” at the events in Xinjiang.

The most serious and explicit security concern has been posed by a group known as “Al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb” which has threatened China and Chinese assets abroad, specifically the large Chinese expatriate population in Algeria. In contrast to the reaction from Turkey, these warnings have come as a result of “Muslim deaths” in Xinjiang, and they represent the first threats to China from a group claiming to be affiliated with Al-Qa’ida. Clearly there is also the concern that other groups intending on propagating nebulous concepts of “Jihad” will follow suit, and a re-conceptualization of China as a “legitimate” and desirable target, despite attempts to divorce the unrest from religion on China’s part, will emerge. This is a concern noted by political risk consultancy Stirling Assynt’s analysis, and which following announcements from Al-Qa’ida proper seem to have confirmed, although as of yet no re-
percussions appear to have actually occurred. An apparently little-noted detail is that this most vocal and explicitly articulated threat to China from the Middle East, arising as a result of the situation in Xinjiang and Chinese state reactions, has emanated from Algeria, a country with which China historically has strong ties. The implications of this is that rising animosity towards the Chinese state may be generated as a result of Chinese policies and the role of migrant workers in Algeria, inevitably leading to fears that other jihadist groups will take a similar or more active interest in targeting China and Chinese migrants as Chinese economic activities expand throughout the rest of the Middle East.

In terms of safeguarding its international image, it once again appears that the international community is of great concern to Chinese state elites. It has been seen that Chinese governmental sources went to great lengths in order to legitimize actions in Xinjiang by aligning civil unrest there with the global terror discourse in the early 2000s. It would seem that the Chinese state’s security moves were successful due to state elites’ recognition and exploitation of the emerging prevalence of the discourse of terrorism in the West, although other analyses point to the likely deal-brokering between Chinese and US officials regarding Chinese acquiescence, and even limited cooperation, in US-led preparations against Iraq, in exchange for official recognition of China’s alleged terrorist problem in Xinjiang. Nevertheless, such security-related speech acts and the effort expended on the Chinese government’s part to gain official US and UN recognition of the existence of active terrorist groups within its borders, suggests a deep concern with seeking international legitimacy and at least tacit support for state crackdowns. It also speaks to the desire to be seen as integrated and positively involved within the international system, as I have discussed in the less controversial case of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and will discuss in terms of the Iranian nuclear issue.

The supportive reactions from Arab governments and the restrained comments from the Turkish government have neither framed the issue as one of security nor called for extraordinary political action. This is perhaps partly due to the potential for counter-critique regarding various Middle Eastern governments’ treatment of a wide variety of ethnic and religious minorities – from the Berber population of North Africa to Shiite populations in many of the Gulf states. Turkey’s own tumultuous history concerning its treatment of Armenians and Kurds may also have been a motivating factor in restraining official responses, as well as the strong and growing economic and political ties which the Middle East and China enjoy. The strong responses in Turkey would appear to be attributed to perceptions of ethnic homogeneity, as opposed to sentiments of Pan-Islamism, as might perhaps be expected. While it could be argued that Turkey enjoys a relatively more liberal political system than much of the Middle East, the fact that politicizing moves from the press and popular demonstrations have pointed to ethnicity as the referent object would seem to suggest that shared heritage has taken priority over a shared religion in this instance and that various groups in Turkey feel that their social security (that of ethnic Turkic society) is under threat from Chinese state actions in Xinjiang.

However, AQIM and Al-Qa’ida proper have taken the referent object of Islam, and these groups represent the most articulated threat towards Chinese interests that has originated from the Middle East. Thus, these actors also feel their societal security, here defined by Islam, is under threat – the result of which could pose political threats to China’s claims of sovereignty should the fear that these groups will aid separatists and radicalize the Uyghur population be realized. Additionally economic and human security could come under direct threat, should terrorist attacks begin to be carried out on targets both within China and abroad.

Thus, Middle Eastern actors’ responses to how the Chinese state behaves towards groups with linkages to the Middle East may have an impact on China’s economic and political security. The threat from state actors is for now minimal, and the primary threat comes from AQIM, which has vowed revenge on Chinese economic interests and may provoke separatist tendencies in Xinjiang province. As observed in the previous case study, the Chinese state has expended con-
siderable effort in presenting its actions as responsible and legitimate. The recognition of the US and UN, representing the global hegemon and global policeman respectively, of China’s terrorist problem, combined with securing and publicizing Middle Eastern and Muslim support for its actions, once again shows a preoccupation with image.

**China and Iran**

The final case study represents an exploration of the traditional domain of IR: state-state interactions. This yields further insight into how the Chinese state approaches its economic and political interests in the Middle East. The relative paucity and novelty of China’s relations with Middle Eastern state actors undoubtedly explains the corresponding lack of academic attention. Given the prominence and pertinence of Iran’s alleged nuclear ambitions, coupled with China’s well-developed association with Iran,\(^62\) it would appear that one can learn about China’s interests and its approach to international relations through this bilateral relationship. This relationship, developed many decades ago, now seems to revolve mostly around Chinese firms’ participation in large-scale infrastructure projects within the Islamic Republic, as well as Iran’s role in meeting China’s energy requirements\(^63\) – factors which have led some commentators to go so far as to herald the coming of a Chinese-Iranian “alliance”.\(^64\)

The issue has been discussed extensively within the Chinese media and governmental sources, and a notably consistent approach can be discerned since Iran’s nuclear program began to generate interest and concern in the West from late 2002 to early 2003 onwards.\(^65\) Chinese diplomats and Foreign Ministry spokespeople have maintained a stance advocating diplomacy and continued negotiation with regard to the Iranian nuclear issue and have repeatedly emphasized these principles in a number of fora.\(^66\) Additionally, China has made repeated calls for patience, restraint, and continued dialogue from all parties concerned\(^67\) and has reiterated a clear desire to keep the issue away from the UN Security Council and within the jurisdiction of other international bodies.\(^68\)

Similar to the case of piracy in the Gulf of Aden – before the announcement of military intervention – there is what would appear to be a non-evaluative tone in state media commentary on the issue of Iran’s nuclear program, which neither condemns Iranian actions nor condones them.\(^69\) Despite repeated official claims to be playing a “constructive role” in the issue\(^70\), there is a distinct sense that the Chinese government is not a key player in resolving the crisis. This is generated in part by the Chinese government’s and diplomats’ lack of intervention regarding solutions to the crisis, especially when placed in contrast to Turkish, Brazilian, and Russian efforts,\(^71\) as well as by a noticeable silence in official state media on China’s role in the matter, besides reiterated calls for negotiation and diplomacy echoing governmental announcements\(^72\).

Despite statements in public and to the press urging restraint and the continuation of negotiations, Chinese state elites have played a role in the sanctioning of Iran in the United Nations. Indeed, despite repeated speech acts which have attempted to keep the matter out of the UNSC, Chinese diplomats to the UN have consistently voted for resolutions censoring Iran, in the first instance drafted by the British, German, and French delegations and lately sponsored by the former three plus the US.\(^73\) However, while not exercising its veto or even abstaining on the Security Council, China appears to have been consistently working with Russia in order to dilute the severity of the sanctions and resolutions in pre-vote negotiations\(^74\) and then offering an interpretation of those resolutions and sanctions which frame them not as punishing Iran, as Western interpretations often have, but rather as coaxing the Iranians into returning to negotiations\(^75\). Chinese elite sources have also offered rather weak and non-committal promises to step up its ties with Iran, promoting “bilateral development in all fields”, furthering cooperation in the fields of “politics, economy, and trade […].”\(^76\) These statements, it would seem, add to a very limited sense of solidarity with Iran that has been observed through the dilution of UNSC-initiated sanctions.

It would rather appear that a greater security threat for China lies in external action against
Iran. Given Iran’s possession of the world’s third-largest amount of oil resources and current status as OPEC’s second largest oil producer, it would appear that any sustained military intervention which could threaten oil supplies or the validity of the Persian Gulf as a secure transit route would greatly endanger China’s energy routes and consequently its economic security – a potential threat which Israeli actors utilized in lobbying China before key UN votes\textsuperscript{77}, and which the Western media has noted\textsuperscript{78}. However, few academics have observed that Chinese oil firms, which are largely state-owned\textsuperscript{79}, have been dramatically reducing their dependence on Iran as a supplier of oil.\textsuperscript{80} Total supplies from Iran have declined by some 74\% from May 2009 to May 2010\textsuperscript{81}, which now means that Iran supplies around 6\% of China’s oil imports, down from a peak of 16\% in January 2009\textsuperscript{82}, despite China’s overall energy imports rising during that time\textsuperscript{83}.

These actions, combined with China’s general cooperation in the UNSC, suggest a desire to avoid potential conflict with Western powers both in major international organizations and outside of those organizations, should some form of hostilities erupt. Indeed, it would appear that China has gone to great lengths in accommodating Western hostility towards Iran through diversification of its oil suppliers, with an increasing reliance on suppliers who are traditionally allies of the West, such as Saudi Arabia.\textsuperscript{84} Such a decision was by no means inevitable, and it appears that instead of, to use the vocabulary of Realism, attempting to decisively balance against Western power with Russia on the UNSC, or through an escalation of military support to Iran, the PRC’s government has instead decided on a course of accommodating hostility to Iran, while using its influence to weaken sanctions. This suggests that the Chinese state prioritizes its relationship with the West over its economic requirements from Iran and will diversify away from risk if possible. That said, it also suggests that China is prepared to intervene if risk cannot be diversified away from, as observed in the case of piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

Regarding the Copenhagen School, because fears of invasion and diversification of oil suppliers have not been voiced in the Chinese state or media sources, the Copenhagen School lacks the ability to capture them within its framework, requiring the analysis of actions to be incorporated as well – the overlooking of which has been noted as one of the Copenhagen School’s shortcomings.\textsuperscript{85}

As in the other two cases, the audiences of Chinese state elites’ dissolution of security measures must be considered. The issue in China has received relatively little attention, and has not been framed as a core security concern, suggesting that the issue has remained unresolved through the absence of speech acts. Rather, Chinese efforts to keep the matter politicized, and efforts to deemphasize the aspects related to state security, are aimed firmly at the international community. Yet again it is seen that Chinese authorities exhibit a clear concern for managing China’s image as a responsible, constructive power that is fully integrated into the existing global order.

Conclusions

A number of findings have been outlined in this paper, encompassing not only the Chinese–Middle Eastern security relationship, but also an insight into China’s modus operandi in conducting its international relations with Middle Eastern state and non-state actors. In addition, how China’s relations with internal non-state actors can affect the former two relations and implications for China’s attitudes to the rest of the world and the international system:

Economic security: It is clear from the above cases that China’s economic security is becoming more and more dependent on the region. Specifically, a concern for economic security has led to the PLA Navy’s first expedition out of the Pacific. The Iranian issue demonstrates China’s ability to diversify its economic security away from specific states in the Middle East and has shown that it is possible to take a dynamic approach with regard to energy security. These observations further suggest that China may take a more rigid stance with regard to transportation routes – which cannot be diver-
sified to such an extent – in the coming years. Observations regarding Al-Qa’ida and a re-conceptualization of China as a valid target also suggest the as yet unrealized potential for economic disruption, both at home and, more likely, in centers of Chinese activity abroad, especially in the Middle East.

Political: There is little indication that the Middle East poses a political threat to China, or more specifically, the government’s claims to sovereignty over Chinese territories. An emerging potential threat to China’s political security can, however, be found in recent threats of terrorism, and fears that Al-Qa’ida may, as well as targeting economic assets discussed above, give aid to secessionist forces in China’s far western provinces. On a state level, there is little to no threat to China’s political security in this regard. On the contrary, this study has noted the generally supportive, or at least restrained, attitudes of Middle Eastern state actors to Chinese actions in Xinjiang.

Image: The cases above exhibit an extremely sensitive approach on the PRC government’s part to constructing and enhancing China’s image as a responsible power. This concern has been observed in China’s handling of all three cases, from delayed militarization of the Gulf of Aden issue, to integrating the Xinjiang issue into the Western terror narrative, to exploiting the Iranian nuclear crisis to repeatedly emphasize a desire for diplomacy and peace.

Non-confrontationalism: This attitude has been most explicitly displayed in a diversification of energy supplies away from Iran, and a general, although limited, cooperation with Western powers on the UN regarding the Iranian issue. This position is, of course, a far cry from the PRC’s anti-hegemonic stance, which was pursued for the greater part of the 20th century, and does not suggest that the PRC is an overtly revisionist power. Thus there is a clear intention in China’s Middle Eastern policy to avoid confrontation with other powers, even if that means going to extensive lengths and accommodating other states’ hostility.

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JAPAN
SJEAA
Responsibility or Right to Eat Well: The Food Education (Shokuiku) Campaign in Japan

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Given the globalized mass food system, gastronomy today has naturally turned in the direction of anti-industrialization and anti-globalization in search of both nutritionally and gustatorily rich food. Related to this concern with food are also concerns over the local economy, environment, labor problems, healthy and safe living, and many other issues. At the same time, however, questions on what and how to eat can be easily trivialized into a matter of individual consumption choice. Specifically, food activism in a neo-liberalist economy is always at odds with the need for collective action to reform the food system and the self-responsibility-based logic of consumerism. Whether it is a right or a responsibility to eat well is, therefore, an inevitable question when considering the nature of food activism today. Through analysis of the shokuiku (Food and Diet Education) campaign launched by the Japanese government, this paper will strive to reveal problems in food activism with an emphasis on the responsibility to eat well. This case will illustrate that when the emphasis is on a person’s responsibility rather than his or her right, food activism fails to recognize existing social inequalities in class and gender that underlie the current food system. Traditionalism, nationalism, and society’s ideas of what constitutes motherly love distract people from the pursuit of true gastronomy.

Introduction

Knowledge and awareness of food, which used to be almost a synonym for upper-class gourmandism, now has new significance. Carlo Petrini, the founder of the Slow Food movement, which is one of the most influential forms of food activism in the world today, talks about the first reactions that movement participants received when Arcigola, a predecessor organization, was formed in 1980s. “[The] leftist intelligentsia [...] looked down on us as a bunch of good-timers interested only in stuffing ourselves, while from the other side, the food and wine specialists affiliated with the Accademia Italiana della Cucina distrusted us left-wing gastronomes as incompetent intruders with an ideological agenda.” This illustrates how the general understanding of the food movement has changed in just two decades. Questions on what and how to eat no longer stay within a merely hedonistic arena, but have come to assume a more socio-political dimension. Given the current food system in which most food is mass-produced, gastronomy today is turning in the direction of anti-industrialization and anti-globalization in search of both nutritionally and gustatorily rich food. Concerns over food are also related to concerns over the local economy, environment, labor problems, healthy and safe living, and various other issues.

At the same time, however, questions on what and how to eat can easily be trivialized into a matter of individual choice. Compared to other (e.g. ecological) issues, the benefits and consequences of one’s own actions are quite direct, at least at the physical level. You as an individual benefit primarily, and maybe exclusively, from what you eat. Therefore, a quest for good food could be translated to an individual choice about consumption, leaving all big social issues aside. Here lays the intricacy surrounding today’s food activism. The urgency of collective action to reform the current food system is always on the verge of being undermined by the self-responsibility-based logic of consumerism, the logic that could lead to another class issue for its indifference to the existing inequality of consumptive power. For those who cannot afford to eat well, it is an unfair accusation that they have not made correct choices. Whether it is a right or a responsibility to eat well is, therefore, an inevitable question when considering the nature of food activism today.
Responsibility or Right to Eat Well

In order to deepen our investigation into this tension surrounding the conflict between the right and the responsibility to eat well, the *shokuiku* (食育) campaign launched by the Japanese government is an interesting case study. Consisting of two ideographic characters, one signifying *food* or *to eat* (*shoku*; 食) and the other to *nurture*, to *educate*, or *to cultivate* (*iku*; 育), *shokuiku* means “education to promote knowledge about and awareness of food and one’s diet”. This expression has received public attention since the enactment of the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku (食育基本法) in 2005 and has now become a key term for food activism in Japan. It should not be overlooked, however, that *shokuiku* has acquired peculiar connotations beyond its literal meaning, including conservative views about gender, a reinforcement of nationalist or ethno-centrist values, and an overemphasis of consumers’ responsibilities rather than their rights. In order to understand how these conservative values have shaped the food movement, I will briefly overview the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku and then examine how the concept of *shokuiku* was introduced and legislated. With this analysis I will strive to reveal the problems of government-promoted *shokuiku* and its possible influences on food activism in Japan. This case study will illustrate difficulties and complexities that today’s food activism has to cope with in a neoliberal economy.

**The Fundamental Law of Shokuiku**

Lawmakers of the two then-ruling conservative parties, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the New Komeito Party (NKP), submitted a bill proposing the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku. The LDP, NKP, and, interestingly, the Japanese Communist Party voted in favor, while the Democratic Party of Japan and the Social Democratic Party voted against it, and the law was enacted on June 10, 2005, coming into effect on July 15 of the same year. The process of legislation, however, hardly attracted people’s attention. The Diet was in the midst of the historically controversial postal service privatization, which was the chief political goal of the Koizumi cabinet. The media devoted most of its space to the postal service privatization bill and hardly covered the proposed Fundamental Law of Shokuiku. In fact, according to the survey conducted by the cabinet office in July, 47.4% answered that they did not know the word *shokuiku* and its meaning, 26.6% knew the word but not its meaning, and 26.0% knew the word as well as its meaning. In another survey conducted 6 months later (January 2006) by a foundation affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), 33.7% still answered that they had never heard of the word *shokuiku*, 35.1% had heard of the word but did not know its meaning, 23.6% had a general idea, and 6.5% knew it very well. As this data shows, the visibility of *shokuiku* was quite low despite its status as law. It can be said that the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku was enacted and enforced with virtually no public consensus.

The Fundamental Law of Shokuiku consists of 33 articles with amendments addressing the responsibilities of central and local governments, educators, farmers and fishermen, the food industry, and citizens to support *shokuiku* and the basic plans of *shokuiku* promotion under the initiative of the Committee for the Promotion of Shokuiku in the Cabinet Office. There is no article stipulating penalties in case of default. The law is overall mostly about “responsibilities” and “efforts”, and concrete policies are to be determined by the Committee. The spirit of the law is declared in the preamble. (Translated by the author of this paper:)

For the development of our country in the twenty-first century, it is indispensable that children foster sound minds and bodies and fly high into international society in the future, as well as that our nation can ensure mental and physical health, and live active long lives.

In order for children to cultivate a well-rounded character and to acquire zest for living, *shoku* [food, diet, eating, etc.] is of utmost importance. It is now required anew to position *shokuiku* as the basis of living and as the foundation of intellectual, moral, and physical education. It is also requested that *shokuiku* be promoted in a way which encourages people to practice a sound dietary life with knowledge about and the ability to choose *shoku* through various experiences. *Shokuiku* is necessary for the nation for all
generations, however particularly shokuiku for children will have a great impact on their physical and mental growth and on their character formation.

At the same time, living in a fluctuating socio-economic environment, people tend to overlook the importance of shoku. Dietary life of the nation is suffering from problems such as unbalanced nutrition, irregular eating habits, an increase in obesity and lifestyle-related diseases, and an obsession with the “thin-ideal”. New problems are also emerging, such as the issue of food safety and an overdependence on foreign food. Within this deluge of information, people need to learn their own foodways in order to improve their dietary life and to ensure food safety. Furthermore, Japanese foodways are in danger of disappearing. It is the foodways of local varieties, of rich gustation, and of cultural heritage, which have been cultivated on our fertile lands and sea.

Due to the environmental shift surrounding shoku, it is required to foster a national vision of shoku and to actualize a sound dietary life. By advancing the symbiosis between cities and rural areas and developing the relation of trust between consumers and producers of shoku, it is also desired to revitalize rural communities, to preserve and develop food culture, to promote environmentally friendly food production and consumption, and to improve food self-sufficiency.

Each and every nation needs to develop its own awareness of shoku, to deepen gratitude for and understanding of the blessings of nature and the efforts of people involved in shoku, and to acquire the ability to make appropriate decisions based on reliable information about shoku. For this purpose, it is our urgent task to promote shokuiku as a national movement in households, schools, public health centers, local communities, etc. Moreover, through an exchange with foreign countries, it is expected that our efforts to promote shokuiku will contribute to a global shokuiku movement.

Here we establish the law to set out the basic philosophy and direction of shokuiku and to put forward a comprehensive and systematic approach to shokuiku promotion by the state, local government, and the nation.

This preamble, which is of a rather diffuse style, is full of expressions such as “basis of living”, “foundation of intellectual, moral, and physical education”, “the knowledge about and the ability to choose [one’s food and diet]”, “unbalanced nutrition”, “irregular eating habits”, “obesity and lifestyle-related diseases”, “thin-ideal”, “food safety”, “self-sufficiency”, “Japanese foodways in danger”, and “symbiosis between cities and rural areas”. And shokuiku is suggested as the remedy in all these areas. While it is often translated as “food education” into English, it is obvious that shokuiku is not limited to just a food education or nutritional guidelines. It is a much more loaded term, and the expectation and enthusiasm placed on it by the government is striking. While the literal meaning of the expression shokuiku is provided by two ideographic characters, I would like to stress that the concepts and ideas associated with this term make shokuiku peculiar. In the next section, I will overview the first appearance (and disappearance) of this term in the Japanese language, and how it was re-introduced into the policymaking arena in the last few years to reveal how shokuiku has acquired its connotations.

First and Re-Appearance of the Term shokuiku in Japanese

Etymologically, the first appearance of the word shokuiku can be traced back to the Chemical Theory of Diet for Longevity (科学的食用長寿論) by Ishizuka Sagen, who now receives renewed attention as the father of the macrobiotic diet.7 In this pioneering nutritional scientific work, and also in Diet for Health (食物養生法), Ishizuka points to the importance of proper nutrition for children, using his coinage shokuiku.8 Referring to Herbert Spencer’s three educations, intellectual education (ちiku 智育), moral education (saiiku 才育), and physical education (taiiku 体育), Ishizuka maintains that it is shokuiku that underlies the three.9 A few years later, influenced by Ishizuka, the journalist and writer Murai Gensai also uses the word shokuiku in his very popular serial novel The Gourmet (食道楽) to claim that it is more important than the other three educations.11 Despite the huge commercial success of The Gourmet12, however, the word and concept shokuiku itself did not reach popularity.13
According to research by the National Diet Library, it was in the 1990s that shokuiku started to receive wider attention, when journalist Sunada Toshiko promoted the word to introduce nutritional and dietary education in foreign countries. The influence of Sunada’s use of this term on politics is noteworthy. In the National Diet Proceedings, the word shokuiku started appearing frequently in March 2002, and during the first two months, March and April 2002, every instance was in remarks by Takebe Tsutomu, then head of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). Takebe clearly stated that he learned the word and concept from Sunada in his remarks on March 20 in the House of Councillors, and on March 28 in the House of Representatives. After these remarks by Minister Takebe, Policy Outline for Food Safety, which had been prepared starting in November 2002 and was published in June 2003 by MAFF, employed the word shokuiku and listed the promotion of shokuiku as one of its policy objectives.

In the meantime, Hattori Yukio, a celebrity food critic and the president of a culinary school, stated that in 1998 he told Koizumi Jun’ichirō (then Minister of Welfare) that “in the future it must be intellectual education [chiku 知育], moral education [tokuiku 徳育], physical education [taiiku 体育], and also shokuiku”. According to Hattori, Koizumi was impressed by it, and later, when he became the prime minister, included the establishment of a Fundamental Law of Shokuiku in the LDP party platform. In fact, Hattori also claims that he has been working to promote shokuiku with the three educations since 1990. In brief, three points attract our attention. These points are critical for understanding the early stage of legislation of the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku. First, the word and concept of shokuiku started to be advocated in the political arena in the early 2000s. Second, shokuiku was introduced to powerful conservative lawmakers by a handful of experts. And finally, in its introduction to lawmakers, shokuiku was specifically associated with its original appearance in Ishizuka’s own theory, namely shokuiku should be added to, or even precede, intellectual, physical, and moral education. This defines the questions we will now strive to address of when, by whom, and how the originally lesser-known term shokuiku was introduced to politics.

The Food-scape in Japan in the 2000s

The food-scape in Japan in the 2000s can be characterized by two crises – the crisis of food self-sufficiency and the crisis of food safety. The food self-sufficiency ratio is obtained as (domestic supply) / (domestic supply + imported supply—exported supply—increase in stocks). Accordingly, when domestic consumption increases or domestic supply decreases, the self-sufficiency ratio also decreases and indicates a dependence on foreign countries for food supply. The food self-sufficiency ratio has decreased steadily in Japan since the 1960s, and in 1989 the total ratio finally fell below 50% (see Figure 1 in the appendix). In the 2000s, it stayed at around 40%. This chronic dependence on imports for food supply is a result of a combination of factors, including, of course, the decline of the primary sector and climate change. The principal cause, however, lies in the general change of the national dietary habits.

In the White Paper on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas, MAFF points out that, while very little change in per-capita calorie consumption can be observed between 1965 and 2004, the general dietary patterns have been changing dramatically. In particular the consumption of livestock products and oils and fats has significantly increased in the last few decades, which has resulted in a skyrocketing demand for feed crops (especially corn) and oilseed crops (especially soybeans). Upon these observations, MAFF concluded: “Due to the dramatic shift in dietary patterns, the import of items that are in scarce domestic supply has been increasing. This causes the long-term decline in the food self-sufficiency ratio.” Figure 2 illustrates the estimated consumption of rice, wheat, barley, corn, soybeans, meat, and oil and fat from 1960 to 2006. The estimated amounts of consumption of all items, except rice, have increased significantly. On the other hand, the food self-sufficiency ratio of these items has been very low (Figure 3). The consumption of rice, in contrast to other items, has dropped to almost two thirds of the 1960s amount. However, its self-sufficiency ratio has almost always been at 100%, sometimes even higher. The imbalance between supply and demand has caused the chronically low food self-sufficiency ratio; what is in demand is not produced.
Another crisis in Japan of the 2000s was the crisis of food safety. Besides classic issues, such as agrichemicals, artificial additives, and food labeling, new concerns over food safety emerged in the 2000s, such as genetically modified organs, BSE, avian influenza, and E-coli O157. Moreover, the concerns in the 2000s are characterized by a distrust of the food industry. It started with the Snow Brand (雪印) scandals in 2002, the worst food-poisoning outbreak caused by one of the biggest and oldest dairy companies in Japan. To make matters worse, the investigation revealed their slipshod production process. The Table in the appendix is a list of food scandals revealed in the 2000s; the list is just a partial one, and countless other mislabeling, illegal practice, and fraud scandals by the food industry were revealed. A media frenzy is of course one of the reasons why so many scandals were uncovered so suddenly in the 2000s. However, in any case, the impact of this series of incidents on people’s perception is impossible to ignore. People started questioning the credibility of their food system and distrusting domestic makers and Japanese brands. This trend is still accelerating, as it is revealed that most Japanese major brands depend on foreign countries, in particular China, for ingredients and production, since China’s food quality control was questioned.

**Advocates of Shokuiku**

Koizumi Jun’ichirō, then-LDP leader and Prime Minister, was the first to include the term *shokuiku* in the LDP party platform. The implication of the fact that the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku was proposed and enacted under his administration is noteworthy. Before the enactment of the law, Koizumi repeatedly used the term in his speeches in the Diet. He first stated that “besides the intellectual, moral, and physical educations, the cabinet will promote *shokuiku* to emphasize the importance of dietary habits for a sound mind and body” in the keynote address in the 157th Diet in 2003. He further stated that “the cabinet will promote *shokuiku*, which emphasizes the importance of dietary habits for a sound mind and body, and strive to improve the physical abilities of children” in a policy address at the 159th Diet in 2004, and that “the cabinet will develop *shokuiku* as a national movement in order for adults and children to understand the importance of dietary habits” in a policy address at the 162nd Diet in 2005. While Koizumi is known for his longstanding proposal of postal service privatization, these statements clearly show that the enactment of the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku had also been a political goal of his for some time.

After the enactment of the law, Koizumi stated the following in response to the request from Representative Santō Akiko to show his enthusiasm to promote *shokuiku*: “Intellectual, moral, and physical education have been well-known, however, in the end, it is all *shokuiku*. To eat for living. Dietary habits are extremely important both physically and mentally. To this extent, I would like the nation to understand the importance of *shokuiku*. Thus, hereafter, under the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku, I would like to announce the Basic Plan for Shokuiku Promotion by the end of this year and to promote *shokuiku* as the national movement in households, schools, local communities, and various other domains.”

As mentioned previously, Hattori Yukio claims that he was the one who taught Koizumi the term and concept of *shokuiku*. His claim is hard to verify, but his influence on the enactment of the law is quite obvious. On April 8, 2005, three expert witnesses were called to the Cabinet Committee in the House of Representatives: Mizuhara Hiroko of the Food Safety Citizens’ Watch, Kawai Tomoyasu of the Association for Twenty-First Century Fishery, and Hattori. Mizuhara argued against the law by claiming that there were already various regulations and laws to improve the national diet and, moreover, that the proposed law regarded securing food safety and practicing *shokuiku* as a duty of the citizen rather than a right. Kawai was less clear about his position, though he raised some problems with the proposed law and suggested, for example, to open the Committee of Shokuiku Promotion to the citizens and to clarify the responsibility of the central and local governments, especially with regard to improving the self-sufficiency ratio. In contrast, Hattori fully agreed with the proposed law. Almost all his statements endorsed the proposed law by providing his observation as an expert.
Responsibility or Right to Eat Well

Diet also called three witnesses to the House of Councillors on June 7, 2005: Kagawa Yoshiko of the Kagawa Nutrition University (agree), Nakamura Yasuhiko, agriculture journalist (partially agree), and Yoshitake Yoko of i-Coop Miyagi (oppose). After the enactment of the law, of the six witnesses who were previously called to the Diet, only Hattori was appointed as (and still is) a member of the Committee of Shokuiku Promotion and the Evaluation Committee of Shokuiku Promotion.

Hattori being one of the most influential people among those discussed, I would like to focus on his ideas regarding shokuiku and highlight the underlying creeds of the shokuiku campaign. Hattori’s book, An Encouragement of Shokuiku (食育のすすめ) has been a bestseller since its first publication in 1998. In 2006, a revised version was published. In its introduction, Hattori observes problems with the current dietary habits of Japan. He says that because of children’s cram school sessions and their parents’ jobs, the number of times a Japanese family eats a meal together is decreasing. He claims that because they dine alone, children tend to eat only what they like and have no chance to learn social manners. Such irregular dietary habits make children uncooperative, indolent, and short-tempered. Hattori continues that the increase of parricide and child abuse is due to the lack of communication and education at the family table. I would like to draw attention to Hattori’s emphasis on family values. As we continue reading his claims, it is revealed that the family values in Hattori’s mind are specifically based on the traditional gendered division of labor.

Just a simple word count demonstrates his disproportionate reference to women; “mother” appears 27 times in the book, “wife” and “housewife” 9 times, and “grandmother” 3 times, while “father” appears 8 times and “husband” and “grandfather” do not appear at all. Of the 8 instances “father” is written, 3 refer to Hattori’s own father. Thus, the number of times he talks about fathers in general is 5. If we look at each word’s occurrence more closely, we notice that most of the appearances of “mother” are actually in contexts of shokuiku promotion, while this is not the case with “father”. For example: “Mothers should pay enough attention to what children drink and eat outside of home”; “A mother’s lack of knowledge about food and cooking leads to children becoming picky eaters”; “Vegetables like carrots won’t be noticed if chopped and mixed into other foods. Be creative to make colorful dishes. This is the time to show mother’s stuff.”; “Mothers, be creative when you make dishes easy to eat for children by cutting food into small pieces, etc.”; “Mothers, take care of your adolescent children’s health by making a lovingly packed lunch”; “The basis of food culture lies in home cooking. Home-made meals with the hidden flavor ‘love’ brings children peace of mind. The taste of mom’s cooking is a tranquilizer.”; “Mothers should read the school lunch menu and think about the nutritional balance between dinner”.

For Hattori, the family in which shokuiku will be properly practiced consists of a mother as a caretaker, a father as a bread-earner, and children. His view obviously lacks a realistic consideration of working mothers and motherless households. I would like to point out that when he says that shokuiku is the basis of moral education, his statement is laden with conservative family values.

Another implication derived from Hattori’s arguments is an encouragement of consumers (mainly mothers) to be “wise”. Encouragement to be knowledgeable, to be creative, and to choose properly make sense, however, they oddly remind us of the emphasis on “self-responsibility” under Koizumi’s neo-liberalist regime. Hattori says, “Paying for really good things, that is, selective consumption, makes dietary life enriched”. If this expresses his understanding of shokuiku, the concern raised by Mizuhara at the Cabinet Committee is right to the point. The question is whether safe, healthy, and good food can be obtained through your own choice, or if it should be available to all people no matter what.

Responsibility To Eat Well:
Of Whom? For Whom? By Whom?

In the above, I have given an overview of how shokuiku came to be advocated for. This happened in a time of longing for self-sufficiency and crises of food safety, through a few power-
ful conservatives with a traditional gender view and an idealistic view of the principle of self-responsibility. The term *shokuiku* has become politicized and legalized as a cure-all in the areas of: children’s intellectual, moral, and physical achievements; a nutritional and healthy diet; the fight against obesity and other diseases; self-sufficiency; food safety; cultural preservation; natural ecology; the bond between cities and rural areas; the relationship between consumers and producers; etc. One should recall that all these are issues that have long been tackled by civic food activism. However, I question the intent of having *shokuiku* be a national movement to take the lead in, or maybe replace, preceding grass-roots effort.

In June 2008 then–Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda stated that “If we eat more rice, we will not have to reduce the rice acreage, and the food self-sufficiency ratio will automatically increase.” On the other hand, Representative Kato Koichi criticized the suggestion to discontinue the rice acreage reduction by Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura Nobutaka as “a rigid way of thinking”, as if “the agriculture [were only] about rice”. Kato claimed that rice is in surplus and wheat and soybeans need to be produced instead.

What should be noticed here is the difference between the two proposed approaches for solving the problem of a low self-sufficiency ratio. While Kato’s approach is targeted at the supply side, Fukuda and Machimura’s approaches are targeted at the side of demand. As we have seen in Japan, items in demand are not produced while rice has always been in oversupply. This situation is a result of producer rice price subsidies. The gap in the rate of earnings leads to an augmented rice production and diminished wheat and soybean production.

“Eat more rice” as a solution for the self-sufficiency ratio, therefore, can be regarded as passing to consumers the responsibility of the obvious failure of agricultural policies in last few decades.

In this context, I would like to look into the *shokuiku* campaign’s emphasis on a “Japanese diet” and the “traditional food culture”. The *Shokuiku White Paper* explains “Japanese diet” as the diet “made up of rice as the staple food and various supplementary dishes of fishes, meats, vegetables, etc.”, which is “nutritionally excellent” and “includes various domestic agricultural and fishery products”. Therefore the promotion of “Japanese diet” practices would lead to an improved food self-sufficiency ratio and protect the precious food cultures traditional to various regions. Here we can observe a rhetoric about the merits of a “Japanese diet”: it is about nutrition, but also about the self-sufficiency ratio and cultural preservation. In other words, what you eat is not only relevant for your own body but also for the nation, namely its independence and identity. Ohnuki-Tierney points out the symbolism of rice that has repeatedly redefined Japanese “selves” in contrast with others. Even though the credibility of “Japanese as a rice-eating nation” is deeply contested in academia, the stereotypical association of Japanese with rice provides people with a noble objective beyond just practicing a specific style of diet. This appeal to nationalism is intended to provoke a sense of responsibility for the nation.

This approach is considerably different from civic food activism. Civic food activism is essentially based on a sense of rights. For comparison, let us take a look at slogans of the New Japan Women’s Association (NJWA) (Figure 4):

**Safe Food from Japanese Soil, Local Products to Our Tables**

1. It is unforgivable that just one year of poor crops has resulted in a rice shortage. The government is responsible for having enforced the reduction of rice acreage and neglected stockpiling.

2. We want to eat Japanese rice. Let’s prevent the reduction of rice acreage and save Japanese agriculture and the environment.

3. The government should restore the dual-pricing system in order to provide consumers with safe and reasonably priced rice as well as to compensate farmers for their production cost.

4. Our staple foods should be domestically supplied. We will not deprive other nations of their rice. No rice imports.

5. Rice is the source of health and culture. Consumers, farmers, and dealers, let’s unite to save Japanese rice.
Responsibility or Right to Eat Well

This set of slogans was written and employed in 1994 in opposition to the rice import liberalization that had been negotiated in the GATT Uruguay Round. The issues raised here are interestingly similar to those surrounding the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku, e.g. food safety, the self-sufficiency ratio, ecology, food culture, the producer-consumer network, etc. The way they are stated, however, is quite different. The slogans repeatedly refer to the responsibility of the government and to benefits which the citizens should receive. Also it should be noted that the NJWA raised the price issue, which is completely lacking in the shokuiku campaign.

On one hand, the shokuiku campaign encourages people to eat safe, healthy, and domestically produced food, which tends to be more expensive. On the other hand it does not provide practical ways to afford them. As we recall Hattori’s statement, “Paying for really good things, that is, selective consumption, makes dietary life enriched”, it becomes clear that people are expected to practice shokuiku at their own cost.

Another problem of shokuiku is related to its view of gender. By comparing the shokuiku campaign with previous political efforts in the areas of school education and family management, even though the law does not explicitly charge women with these tasks, it is suggested from context that the shokuiku campaign lacks a role for men. One should also take notice of the fact that, while the majority of practitioners of shokuiku are women, top institutions and expert groups are overly male-dominated. For example, the membership of the Committee of Shokuiku Promotion, the top institution of the shokuiku campaign, consists of 18 male regular members, 5 male special members, 7 female regular members, and 2 female special members. In contrast, the group that won the highest award in the Community-based Shokuiku Competition consisted of school lunch nutritionists and parents all of whom were female.

Without concrete policies based on the principle of gender equality, activities of shokuiku promotion inevitably tend to be carried out by women (as expected, as we have seen), especially mothers. As Anne Allison notes, social expectations of Japanese mothers as well as Japanese mothers’ self-identification is often associated with cooking. Making good food for one’s family can be interpreted as mother’s love, which puts mothers in an extremely exhausting position. An elementary school teacher senses in children’s classroom discussions this “love” ideology attached to hand-prepared meals. The gendered division of labor is justified and concealed in the name of love. At the same time, this love ideology exposes the existence of a “problematic family”. The teacher’s concern is that shokuiku may overly enforce the ideal model of food=love=mother. Thus this love ideology easily becomes the standard by which mothers are judged. Working mothers, mothers who don’t cook, and mothers who buy take-out food will be blamed not necessarily for their lack of time and skill, but more for their lack of “love” for their family. The classroom debate example suggests that this tendency is exacerbated by the shokuiku campaign and its lack of a clear awareness of the principle of gender equality.

Conclusion

A few powerful conservatives, interested in the self-responsibility principle and traditional gender roles, introduced the concept of shokuiku to the political arena in a time of crises of self-sufficiency and food safety. Therefore, the shokuiku campaign under the Fundamental Law of Shokuiku inherently politicizes people’s, particularly women’s, responsibility to eat and feed their family members. Though many of the goals the shokuiku campaign intends to achieve are shared with those of preceding grass-roots movements, the effectiveness of the approach of shokuiku ought to be deeply questioned. This paper illustrates that when the shokuiku principle relies on a person’s responsibility rather than his or her rights, food activism easily fails to recognize existing social inequalities in class and gender that underlie the current food system. Traditionalism, nationalism, and society’s ideas of what constitutes motherly love distract people from the pursuit of true gastronomy.

This manuscript was accepted in 2010 and edited before the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.
Aiko Kojima

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Interestingly, the shokusaku campaign is now facing a new phase, after its initial enactment. In the last general election, the long-time ruling parties LDP and NKP suffered a historic defeat. The new government was established in September 2009 by a coalition of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the People’s New Party (PNP). DPJ and SDP were two parties who opposed the Fundamental Law of Shokusaku, and PNP is a new party split off the LDP in 2005 by opposing Koizumi’s postal privatization. Fukushima Mizuho, party leader of the SDP, was first designated as Minister of State for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety, Social Affairs, and Gender Equality, thus in charge of shokusaku promotion. Since her resignation in May 2010, all successors in this position so far have been affiliated with the DPJ. How the shokusaku campaign fares under the new cabinet will need to be observed.

This was the Special Social Survey regarding Shokusaku (食育に関する特別調査) by the Cabinet Office. The survey was conducted in July 2005 and the data was published in September 2005. The question was "Do you know the word shokusaku and its meaning? Choose one from the following: 1. I know the word and its meaning. 2. I know the word but not its meaning. 3. I know neither the word nor its meaning."

This was the Social Survey regarding the Recognition of Dietary Guidelines and Shokusaku (食生活指導・食育に関する認知度調査) by the Information Service Center for Food and Foodways. The survey was conducted in January 2006 and the data was published in March 2006. The question was "Do you know the word shokusaku? Choose one from the following: 1. I know its idea very well. 2. I know its general idea. 3. I do not know its idea well, but have heard of the word. 4. I have never heard of the word."

By for example, MAFF has produced the English brochure What is “Shokusaku (Food Education)”? for download from the official website (http://www.maff.go.jp/en/topics/pdf/shokusaku.pdf). The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) has published the Handbook for Agricultural and Fishery Products Import Regulations 2007 in April 2008, which includes a chapter titled The Fundamental Law of Food Education (Shokusaku).

Ishizuka Sagen (石塚左玄) Chemical Theory of Diet for Longevity (化学的食育論), Tōkyō (東京); Hakubunkan (博文館), 1896.

Ishizuka Sagen (石塚左玄) Diet for Health (食物養生法), Tōkyō (東京); Hakubunkan (博文館), 1898.

To translate Spencer’s moral education as sūshū to is peculiar to Ishizuka; it is more commonly translated as tokusaku (德育).

"Alas, people who have schoolchildren, regardless of where they live, should tighten up family rules and remember that physical, intellectual, and moral education is in the end all about shokusaku." (Domestic supply to be brought to the family is in the end all about shokusaku, the word is peculiar to Ishizuka; it is more commonly translated as tokusaku (德育).)

Murai Gen’ichirō (村井善一郎): The Gourmet (食道楽), Tōkyō (東京); Hōchisha Shuppanbu (報知社出版部), 1903-1913. The Gourmet consists of 8 volumes, with 4 volumes titled with each season (spring, summer, fall, winter) and 4 volumes as sequels for each season. In volume 3, Fall, there is a chapter titled shokuiku theory (食育論). In this chapter, Murai has one main character says the following: “Just like protein, fat, and carbohydrates, intellectual, physical, and moral education must be combined with proper balance. It is absurd, however, not to learn about shokusaku, which is more important than intellectual or physical education, and should have precedence.” (食育論。食育に関する教育の一部は食育にその一体を以て配合せねばならず。然し喫食育よりも食育が一番大切な食育の事なきに違いなきものや)(Murai, 1903-1913; vol 3).

The Gourmet was first published in the newspaper Hochi as a serial novel and then republished in book form. The initial print run of 3000 copies, which was regarded as a bestseller at the time, sold out through pre-orders, and reprints were constantly being printed at a rate that printing could not keep up with. Kuriwai Hisako (久保井比佐子): The Man of "The Gourmet", Murai Gen’ichirō (食道楽の人村井善一郎), Tōkyō (東京); Iwanami Shoten (岩波書店), 2004.


The very first appearance of the word is in 1994, in: Proceedings of the Committee on Education in the House of Councillors, no. 4, 20 June 1994; p. 1. Councillor Nōno (野辺) Chieko, who used to work as a nurse, a midwife, and a medical school faculty member, used the term shokusaku twice in her questions to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Though she also refers to three educations, Nōno (unlike Ishizuka and Murai) regards shokuiku as one of the three educations, and should have precedence. “(食育・体育・徳育の三つは蛋白質と脂肪と澱粉の様に程や加減を測って配合しなければならん、然し先づし食育を固定せんばならねから。)（服部幸應, 1903-1913; vol 3）.

The value (domestic supply + imported supply - exported supply - increase in stock) is not the actual amount of consumption in the strict sense. However, following the Food Balance Sheet by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), this value is an estimate.

Due to the minimum access requirement agreed upon in the GATT Uruguay Round in 1995, the self-sufficiency ration has been at around 95% since then. However as imported rice goes to processing, the ratio of rice for human consumption has been at around 100%.


Hattori, 2006.
Responsibility or Right to Eat Well

Aiko Kojima

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Figure 1: Food Self-Sufficiency Ratio (Calorie-Based) in Japan from 1960 to 2008

Data from MAFF Food Self Sufficiency Data Room
accessed 5 October 2010 at: http://www.maff.go.jp/j/zyukyu/fbs/other/2-5-1.xls

Figure 2: Food Consumption in Japan from 1960 to 2006 by Item: Rice, Wheat, Barley, Corn, Soybeans, Meat, Oil and Fat

Data from MAFF Food Self Sufficiency Data Room
accessed 5 October 2010 at: http://www.maff.go.jp/j/zyukyu/fbs/other/2-2-4.xls
Responsibility or Right to Eat Well

Wheat

Barley

Corn
Responsibility or Right to Eat Well

Figure 3: Food Self-Sufficiency Ratio in Japan 1960-2008

Data from MAFF Food Self Sufficiency Data Room

accessed 5 October 2010 at: http://www.maff.go.jp/j/zyukyu/fbs/other/2-5-1.xls
Figure 4: Poster of the New Japan Women’s Association Slogans
Table: Food Scandals during the 2000s in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scandal Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Snow Brand Milk Scandal: In the wake of the food poisoning outbreak caused by Snow Brand milk, Snow Brand’s longstanding use of expired milk was revealed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2004</td>
<td>Beef Mislabling Scandal: Snow Brand, Nippon Food, Nippon Meat Packers (Nippon Ham), Hannan Foods Group, Fujichiku Group In response to the report of the first BSE-infected cow in Japan in 2001, the government started a buyback program for domestic beef. Major meatpackers mislabeled imported beef as domestic beef and thus illegally received subsidies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Mister Donut Illegal Food Additive Scandal: Illegal food additives were detected in the buns which Mister Donut imported from China. Mister Donut concealed this and kept sales going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Asada Nosan Avian Influenza Scandal: The Asada Nosan Egg Farm concealed an outbreak of the avian flu on its premises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Fujiya Violations of Food Hygiene Law Scandal: Fujiya’s structural violations of the Food Hygiene Law were revealed: mislabeling of the expiration date, use of expired milk, failure of pest control, sales of food of substandard quality, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Akafuku Date Mislabling Scandal: Akafuku’s longstanding mislabeling of expiration dates and ingredients was revealed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Hinaidori Mislabling Scandal: Hinaidori’s longstanding mislabeling was revealed. Hinaidori sold chicken from other regions as “indigenous to the Hinai region” (the Hinai region is known for its high-grade chicken).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Meat Hope Meat Fraud Scandal: Meat Hope’s longstanding frauds were revealed: pork and other unidentified meat mixed into ground beef, blood mixed into discolored meat, decaying meat mixed into fresh meat, mislabeling of imported chicken as domestic chicken, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Senba Kiccho Scandal: Various frauds and violations by Senba Kiccho were revealed: mislabeling of the date and origin of products, concealment of mislabeling, reuse of leftovers of customers in restaurants, intimidation of part-time workers into silence, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Realist" Betweenness and Collective Victims: Domon Ken’s *Hiroshima*

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This paper attempts an analysis of Japanese photographer Domon Ken’s work in the immediate post-war years, in particular between 1950 and 1958. This period encompasses the rise of the so-named realism in Japanese photography, as it was advocated by Domon himself. Starting in 1950 as monthly contributor to the journal *Camera* he not only developed and publicized his ideas on the notions of photography, but at the same time intensively shaped a generation of younger amateur photographers, thereby leaving his personal imprint on the subsequent direction of Japanese photography. The paper focuses on a discussion of the medium of photography itself and its interpretation through Domon by means of a close reading of his work *Hiroshima* (1957). Here, in order to establish an essential theoretical background for Domon’s understanding of realism, I draw from his own treatises on photography and the writings of philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō, by whom Domon was greatly influenced. I intend to illustrate that the immediate post-war years were a period of major changes in the use of photography, especially triggered through Domon’s own approach to and understanding of this medium.

**Introduction**

The two decades succeeding the Second World War in Japan have fostered a number of varied attempts to cope with and interpret its devastating effects. Among various modes of expression, photography has occupied a central role in the endeavors of artists attempting to comprehend the immediate past and seeking to fittingly position it and themselves in the context of Japan’s post-war era and society. The artistic labor to cope with the war-torn past and its aftermath on Japanese society has nurtured new, innovative currents, not only in photography alone, but in multiple other forms of artistic expression, such as performance and dance, to name but a few.

Photography in the immediate post-war decades was primarily determined and shaped by the so-named “realism” movement, a fashion of sorts, whose foremost Japanese representative Domon Ken (1909-1990) was most influential. Starting in 1950 as monthly contributor to the journal *Camera*, he not only developed and publicized his ideas on the notions of the photographic medium, but at the same time intensively shaped a generation of younger amateur photographers. In this journal Domon articulated his ideas of “realist” photography very clearly through regular discussions with another renowned photography artist, Kimura Ihei (1901-1974). Both exchanged their perception of photography’s role through, at times rather heated, debates in the context of monthly held amateur photograph competitions. Domon, who at no point in life appears to have minced his words in any way, states his notion of what photography is supposed to achieve very clearly. To him, the photographer’s mission is to capture the “real” through completely unstaged, unaltered photographs, in whose making the artist is to strip himself of any subjectivity.¹

Domon considered realism the only valid current in post-war photography. Revealing his political views quite overtly, he states that the Japanese had been deceived by the government throughout the war and that therefore the public was craving to see the “real”. Photography’s role was to present them with just that.² He vehemently dismissed pictorial photography, or as he called it, “salon photography” as outdated and exhausted.³ Its time was over, he said, stressing that only the “absolutely unstaged” photograph, i.e. the true image without even the faintest artificiality, is the only valid means of capturing the hardships of post-war society.⁴
This complete avoidance of subjectivity is, however, not be mistaken with “naturalism”, which to Domon was merely a technique to reflect the readily visible by means of a photograph.5 Domon clearly distinguishes between jijitsu (facts) and shinjitsu (truth).6 Jijitsu to him is nothing more than merely what is visible by the human eye, the things that are in front of us. Shinjitsu in turn is that which is beyond the visible, something he calls “ghostly” (yūrei no yō) that leaves no visible traces.7

In fact, what Domon considered a good photographer as someone possessing an ability he calls the “photographer’s eye”, by means of which exclusively “realist” photographs can be achieved. The photographer’s eye is a talent of sorts that enables the artist to see beyond the merely visible, and by mastering the camera in a superior way, capture the emotionality, the present, past and future of a certain person and moment. This, in addition to a, one might say, strategic organization of the photograph, i.e. to shoot from a certain angle and utilize natural light in an advanced fashion8, the talented professional photographer (Domon vehemently dismissed “amateur photographers”) was capable of infusing “emotional truth” into the pictorial frame.9

In 1953 there arose an intense discussion of Domon’s realism. Increasingly, the prevalent approach in Japan to the “social photograph” was negatively labeled as “beggar photography” (kojiki shashin).10 Realist photography was particularly dismissed by the critic Watanabe Kosho as designing a false image of post-war society by emphasizing a small minority of people in society. Another critic, Tanaka Masao, defending this Japanese approach, however, argued that Domon’s images were too sterile and void of emotions. This critique is quite fascinating as Domon himself advocated that a realist photograph should capture not just the image, but the emotions that surround it.11

This whole argument might have led Domon to proclaim the end of what he called the “first phase of realism” in 1954 and that thereafter the “second phase” had begun. This phase should embrace a deeper and more beautiful aesthetic.12 However, since he did not elaborate any specific characteristics further, by comparing his oeuvre of the first and second phases, hardly any clear distinction can be made.

His notion of realism is exploited to an excessively stunning extent in Domon Ken’s Hiroshima series, which is the central subject of this present discussion. Shot in 1957 and published in 1959 by Kenkōsha, Hiroshima occupies a significant and rather personally charged role in Domon’s oeuvre. As I will elaborate in the following pages, Domon regarded the necessity and goal of increasing the awareness of the atomic bomb’s aftermath, which is the central focus of the Hiroshima series, as a national responsibility of the “Japanese photographer”, which he considered himself.13 In my analysis I will draw on the writings of the Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960), in particular his notion of betweenness as articulated in his work Rinrigaku (The Study of Ethics), by which Domon was greatly influenced. Watsuji’s understanding of the betweenness of man (ningen) with and inside its societal context (sonzai) sheds a fascinating light on Domon as a “Japanese photographer”, bearing responsibility towards the Japanese people as a whole and thus in turn creating a body of collective victims.

Hiroshima Content

Before engaging in a more in-depth discussion of this connection and its results, it is of course necessary to give an overview of the work Hiroshima itself.14 A project initiated by the illustrated Shukan shincho, Domon went to Hiroshima in order capture the effects of the atomic bomb on human life, still visible thirteen years after its impact. As Domon states in the introduction to the 1958 Kenkōsha edition, this job turned into a personal endeavor, which he says, shaped him significantly as an individual person.15

The book’s black cover is decorated with a white abstract drawing of a deformed face, seemingly torn in pain and agony, possibly hinting at the burned faces of the bomb’s victims. The first page shows another abstract, less figurative drawing, which may also represent a face. Its staccato-like edginess creates a rather
disquieting effect in the viewer. Additionally one can read the book’s title and Domon Ken’s name in both Japanese and Roman letters, executed in an edgy, hesitant script. Both drawings were made by the renowned Japanese artist Sano Shigejirō (1900-1987), a former student of Matisse and Miró, who gained considerable prominence through designing a large number of book covers from the 1940s to 1960s.

The opening page is covered with a blood red-colored transparent foil. Thus, it combines the air of the drawings’ abstract, innocent, yet disturbingly staccato simplicity, with additional distress through the red foil and makes no pretensions as to the emotions it seeks to provoke in the viewer. The red-colored foil covering the opening page in addition to the edgy drawing clearly states its intention visually. It creates a strong tension within the viewer, immediately polarizing him by invoking that something terrible and sad is associated with Hiroshima that can be found documented in the following pages. The use of the signal color red evokes different associations, most of them with strongly negative connotations. One may immediately think of a signal to stop and pause or of alarm, but also of blood, thus being a metaphor for death and pain. The red layer covering the drawing creates a striking potentiation of rendering what is rather simple and naive, yet disturbingly expressive as though it were seen through a layer of blood. This makes the image troublesome and emphasizes its edgy, disquieting, yet innocent, simple quality. The opening page intentionally seeks to alert the viewer that the following pages contain evidence of a horrible tragedy, something utterly emotional and disquieting.

Pages four and five state the book’s content in a single sentence in Japanese and English respectively (page five includes an additional table of contents in English). I will cite the English version here: “The collection of photographs is a record of the scars left in the wake of the atomic bomb exploded on [sic] the city of Hiroshima at an altitude of 570 meters at 8:15 a.m., Aug. 6, 1945.”

This citation is quite self-explanatory and its lack of neutrality is evident. It reveals that the following pages will not deal with the subject in an objective, but in a highly emotional manner. This sentence is a statement, whose language already reveals on the first pages what Domon’s realist photography, exemplified by the Hiroshima volume, aims at evoking: the victimization of the Japanese people.

Following this statement, the reader finds Domon’s foreword, first in English, followed by the Japanese version, which in itself is a fascinating account not only of Domon’s own perception of his own role and responsibility as a photographer, but of the Japanese society in the immediate post-war decades. Therefore, the introduction merits a closer look.

In the opening lines, Domon explains the initial reason for his first-ever trip to Hiroshima. Sent there as a contracted photographer by the illustrated Shūkan shincho, Domon soon was absorbed by the place and story of Hiroshima. He clearly states that “hiroshima” should not be forgotten and emphasizes its continuing relevance. Although past events have been seemingly rendered irrelevant due to technological advancements in the atomic sector, “hiroshima” is still “alive” he declares. It is particularly notable that “hiroshima” is written in the syllabic katakana script and not in Chinese characters as would usually be the case when referring to the city of Hiroshima. It indicates the special significance of the term itself. It is not the city that is being referred to, but an event that is above all characterized by the atomic bomb and the suffering caused by it. The title thus transforms the city into a symbol. This symbol is intended to stand for the injustice and pain that are detached from the actual place Hiroshima itself. The choice of “hiroshima” in katakana script reveals itself as a signifier that acts as an analogy for the general suffering of the Japanese people during World War II. While serving a syncretic role, it simultaneously acts as a highlighter of the term “hiroshima” as being considered something extraordinary and above all exclusively Japanese.

Thirteen years after the bomb’s impact, he laments, the Japanese public seems to have lost touch with the devastating events of the recent past. Domon overtly blames the “mass com-
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Communication” (massu komunikeeshon) that, by focusing on the present, is supplying the people only with an amalgam of exclusively recent international news, while leaving out matters of, what Domon considers, national “duty” (shimeikan), such as Hiroshima. Here Domon seemingly fails to consider an important aspect of Japan’s post-war society. The 1950s in particular were a period of rapid economic growth, the so-named Jinmu Boom (Jinmu keiki), during which the Japanese public grew increasingly wealthy and intensely strove to forget the country’s war-torn past and its hardships. The war’s aftermath, such as the many sick and wounded, also due to the atomic bomb, were simply ignored or purposively forgotten and considered a thing of a horrible, and above all distant past. By scapegoating the mass media, Domon misses this in his criticism. However, his aim still remains the same. Domon’s endeavor is motivated by a feeling of personal responsibility. By being Japanese, he advocates for a nationwide understanding of and compassion towards the atomic bomb’s victims and their suffering. As he points out, the tragedy could have happened to any place in Japan, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki were targets only by circumstance. In his line of argumentation, Domon refers to Henry Truman’s initiative to use atomic bombs on various other destinations in Japan. By including all Japanese in a group of collective (possible) victims, Domon attempts to create a collective of suffering. Any Japanese could have been a victim of the atomic bomb, so all are part of the same group. This underlying current in the whole Hiroshima volume shall be elaborated further at a later point in light of Watsuji’s understanding of betweenness. Prior to this, however, it is crucial to continue the book’s description.

After a table of contents in Japanese, the main body of 130 pages of photographs follows. The photographic plates are themselves followed by 46 pages of notes by Domon on the photographs’ content in Japanese, which are headed “Hiroshima notes” (hiroshima nooto), this time with Hiroshima written in Chinese characters. It is interesting to observe Hiroshima being written in this way here. The choice of Chinese characters, thus referring to the actual place of Hiroshima can be linked to the notes section’s dealing with concrete personal accounts, and not, as “hiroshima” indicates, with an abstract signer of collective suffering. This deliberate simultaneous separation and fusion of concrete fact material and abstract notions creates a fascinating meaning for “hiroshima” as a signer for the Japanese people as a unified body of victims. This dualism directly corresponds to the technique used throughout the Hiroshima volume of juxtaposing images of emotional, concrete fates of people with images of documentary objectivity, both additionally illustrated by accompanying texts in the notes section. Of interest is also the lack of a translation of the notes section. The use of English in the volume is therefore limited to the translation of the foreword and the table of contents.

It can be assumed that the photobook might have been intended for a foreign audience to some extent, however, limited funds or intention may have prevented a translation of Domon’s “Hiroshima notes”, which are also included in his two-volume autobiography To die and to live of 1974.

However, I dare to suggest that the missing translation of the notes section somewhat fits the overall layout and intention of the book, as their content is extremely intimate and appears as if it had been dedicated to an understanding friend. This leads me to argue that Hiroshima was largely intended as a victims’ account for a domestic audience in order to create a form of national unity through collective victimization. The translated parts indeed point at including a foreign audience to some extent. But if an international circulation would have been the aim, why would just a minor part have been translated and the whole notes corpus been left out? In fact, the book can rather be considered as a national endeavor. Their missing translation in any case is unfortunate, one must say, since their content offers an especially intriguing subject of analysis, as I will attempt to elaborate at a later point.

The picture section commences with a color image (the sole color photo in the book) of the burned arms and scarred breast of an elder man, identified as Yoshikawa Kiyoshi in the notes. While the lower side of his right breast is devoured by a long scar, the left breast is cast in
shadow. The fingers of his right hand are deformed and the long ingrown fingernails may indicate his advanced age or inability to sufficiently take care of himself. His belt and indigo trousers are also clearly visible, giving the impression of the subject being examined by a doctor. The image expresses a silent, yet forceful statement of protest.

The accompanying notes speak in a quite direct and emotionally charged language. In the first paragraph one finds words such as “devil’s messengers” (akuma no shisha) when referring to the pilots of the Enola Gay, followed by an in-depth description of August 6, 1945 as Mr. Yoshikawa experienced it. We learn that his house collapsed on him and that he managed to rescue his wife from the debris. The first-person narrator, presumably Mr. Yoshikawa himself, continues his account by describing the devastation around him, the burning city which he saw in the distance and the black rain shortly after the bomb’s impact. The whole text reads as a shocking eye-witness report of an immeasurable tragedy.

The language is very personal and intensely emotional. It spares no private detail, which is its most striking characteristic. The private nature of this and the other personal accounts in the notes section is in fact remarkable. Indeed, they read as if addressing family members or close friends, not as though intended for a public readership. However, as noted earlier, the context thus created is fascinating. The whole photobook reads and looks as if it were a private, yet horrifying account of a crime, assembled for an understanding friend. The text offers a story that one must tell, in order to relieve oneself – the articulation of a therapeutic practice, so to speak.

By combining the private character and the intended audience, the notes section’s evoked intention quickly becomes clear to the critical reader. The book acts as an emotional bond between those who were made to suffer and their fellow countrymen. It is a pictorial and textual link between the Japanese people, who eventually are all part of the post-war suffering through their national unity. Therefore it can be argued that the main target audience are doubtlessly Japanese.

Continuing the analysis of the photo plates section is quite a challenge to a weak stomach, as Domon intimately details a woman’s skin transplant surgery. Although black and white, the images are difficult to look at and shall only be described briefly.

The surgery consists of the transplant of a skin fragment from the woman’s leg to her left upper cheek, in order to repair her burned and deformed skin in that area. In the notes section, the woman is described anonymously as a 33-year-old wife and mother. Albeit anonymous, the text again includes an intense and personal report on the suffering in the immediate aftermath of the bomb’s impact. The reader is also told that the woman had to undergo nine separate surgeries on eleven parts of her body. The dates of these are given and range over a period of slightly more than five months.

The victimization theme is drastically articulated. The images are documentary close-up shots directly and frontally capturing the subject. Domon here does not follow his own notion of emotional truth articulated in 1953. Neither does he much play with angle, space or shadows, as in the first image of the book, to capture hidden emotions nor does he invoke the sadness of the moment. These images are rather a documentary coverage of a surgery and their explicitness is obviously meant to shock the viewer. However, as severe as they might seem, these photographs still comply with Domon’s notion of documentary realism as a direct and neutral representation as he advocated it early in 1950. His early notion of realist photography is here exploited to the extreme.

However, I dare to argue that there is more to these images than mere shock value. Domon is not famous for avoiding harsh truths, but for articulating immediate actuality, no matter how disturbing it might be. He is a master of exploiting the possibilities of the camera. Through combining the documentary neutrality of the images and the emotionality of its accompanying texts in the notes section, he implants the impression of suffering even stronger in the viewer. Hiroshima plays with a well-thought balance of emotional reality, which is not limited to the text, but evoked by a large part of the
photographs, combined with pure documentary realism. This combination of emotional truth and straight documentation aims at evoking deep compassion and thus solidarity with the victims. Therefore, it can be argued that this indicates a deliberate calculation and exploitation of the viewer for Domon’s personal view regarding the issue of “hiroshima”.

Following the documentary coverage of the surgery, the book includes a series of forty photographs of patients in the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Hospital (Hiroshima genbaku byōin). Among these images are close-ups of burned and scarred as well as partly deformed body parts and a documentary coverage of a foot surgery, in addition to images of everyday life in the hospital with women in kimono playing boardgames, chatting or reading illustrated magazines. The viewer can see faces that are bravely smiling and those devoured in pain and agony. A middle-aged man plays go with an elder man, leaving the hospital shortly after while being bidden farewell by all patients. The rooms are often decorated with folded paper cranes, the symbol of solidarity with the atomic bombs’ victims in Japan.

The composition of again shocking close-up coverage of deep wounds and surgeries, interwoven with cheerfully optimistic images of normal life in an institution of suffering articulates a symbolic gesture. It is, as noted before, part of the well-calculated layout of the whole volume. This series suggests that while pain is omnipresent, there is still always brevity and hope.

While the face of one woman can at one point be observed clenching her teeth in great pain, in another image she is smilingly coiffured by a fellow patient. Utilizing almost exclusively women and children, with the exception of the photograph of the two men, this series creates an image that stands as substitute for the assaulted fragile Japan. Its country’s vulnerable citizens are innocently blemished, but while fragile, they and their country are still brave and will recover, no matter how severe the wounds.

Yet, national unity is crucial for compassion by the whole body of Japanese people, and this is precisely what Domon seeks to evoke through this alternating pattern of shocking and sympathetic images. “Forgetting” is breaking this unity apart and Domon stirs against this general post-war tendency by means of his realist photographs conveying his notion of emotional truth.

The next series of six pages are devoted to the severely ill boy Kenji, who at the time of the bomb’s impact had been unborn in his mother’s womb. One image shows the infant Kenji lying in a hospital bed, attended by a nurse. His face looks weak and emaciated, and in the following images the viewer learns he has already passed away, as his father is depicted standing before his son’s grave. This very individual fate is exemplary for all of those unborn children who suffered from the bomb’s aftermath. As noted before, women and children often occupy a central role in Hiroshima. Symbolizing the most fragile, Domon intelligently and quite subtly interweaves their images in his line of argumentation. By juxtaposing clear-cut documentary with highly emotionally charged images of the most vulnerable, Domon creates and nurtures a very particular effect on the viewer, that of simultaneous shock and compassion.

With the coverage of Kenji’s fate the narrative moves out of the hospital. The following six pages form a coverage of research conducted on short- and long-term effects by atomic bombs. Among technical gear and photographs of statistical data, two Japanese scientists can be seen conversing with a Caucasian man on what is most likely a scientific report. The notes section identifies this series as depicting research attempts concerning suffering from keloid. As noted just before, by juxtaposing the story of Kenji with this rather neutral coverage of science, Domon again, as he does throughout the whole volume, makes use of the contrasting effect of combining images conveying emotional truth with those of a more plain documentary character.

This neutral documentary coverage of keloid research is followed by thirty-seven pages with images of the Six Directions School (Rokuhō gakuen) near Hiroshima and the Hiroshima Municipal School for War Victims (Hiroshima-shi sensai kyōiku seisho). The first institution,
named after the six Buddhist directions, accommodates children who have lost their parents through the atomic bombing or suffer from related disabilities, such as blindness. The second is a Christian orphanage that performs a similar function.

The images offer an intimate glimpse at the children’s daily life. The viewer observes them playing, eating and happily smiling into the camera. Despite their pitiful situation, they have not lost an intense lust for life. The images stress that they are normal children engaged in activities typical for their age. Here in particular is Domon’s sublime skill as a realist photographer overtly evident. The children do not seem to mind or even recognize the presence of the camera. As if shot from secrecy and hiding, Domon is able to capture what appears to be an unadulterated genuine coverage of the children’s daily activities.

This can be observed in special intensity in the ten pages separately devoted to two blind twin girls of the Hiroshima Municipal School for War Victims. By even seeming to play with Domon, the children’s genuineness increases the emotions of sympathy arising in the viewer. These images of the two institutions, I think, represent an excellent example of Domon’s notions of emotional truth and realism within the Hiroshima volume. On the other hand, both institutions act as symbols for solidarity with the victims, in particular with those whose sufferings were caused much later through its aftermath, thus as totally innocent.

The fact, however, that a Buddhism-inspired institution and a Christian orphanage are covered together raises an additional interesting aspect. It indicates that victims are not divided by faith, but by what was done to them. Regardless whether the children of these institutions or the women in the hospital, they are all part of a collective suffering. They are presented as victims of the same deed, of something that could have affected anyone in Japan. Therefore, religious faith and other differences become meaningless in the face of such suffering.

Here again, Domon sends a strong signal, indicating that the suffering and thus the assault is collective. He regards himself as the advocate for the unjustly treated, by informing the Japanese of their agony, with the aim of extending their role of victims towards all Japanese citizens. The term “hiroshima” again becomes a symbol for national unity through collective victimization.

In the succeeding pages families are portrayed. The first image depicts an elderly woman lying on a futon and staring ahead with empty eyes. She is helped by a girl in the next photograph, thus again implying solidarity. Following this, a father is depicted on his sickbed. The next photograph shows six members of the family in a rundown house, the languishing father, an ashtray and magazine in front of him, being fanned by his son. This image is particularly intense, as it reveals the sadness and devastation within the immediate domestic environment of the people affected. One can only imagine the traumatic effect this situation must have had on the children, by seeing their continually weakening father suffering.

The following pages are again full of joy and optimism, closely following the psychological pattern of the book. The first images show a young woman holding her infant daughter, who in the following picture is receiving a haircut. The image after this is perhaps one of the most iconic in relation to immediate post-war Japan. The girl’s father, his face disfigured by numerous scars, is seen laughing wholeheartedly, thereby transforming his face into a grotesque mask, while he holds his daughter with a scarred, rough hand. She again smiles at the camera with the innocent, pure and soft expression of an infant, while her mother looks caring at the daughter, her own face showing the slight discolorations of burns.

This photograph encompasses all that “hiroshima” indicates, thus it encapsulates all that Domon is attempting to evoke. The people in it act not as individuals, but as iconic representations. The father represents the masculine war victim, who has fought for Japan’s cause and while not having perished overseas, bears now the marks of injustice and pain forever carved in his body – a favorite subject of Domon’s photography of the 1950s. The wife, or the
feminine, full of passionate and genuine motherliness has unjustly been assaulted. She acts as a bridge between the wartorn past and the new future, which is represented by the unharmed, healthy infant. The girl indicates a new age that, albeit unscarred by the past, at the same time bears the burden of responsibility not to forget that the suffering is collective and cannot be easily undone with time and must be remembered.

The following pages are devoted to the girl’s father and reveal him to be a fisherman. The viewer can see the joy in his eyes when he is aboard his little boat, pursuing his business, seemingly indicating that while the scars of the past still remain, there is hope after the suffering. Yet, this suffering shall nevertheless not be forgotten, as it continues to be part of the country’s collective heritage.

Following the young family’s portrait, Domon included twelve pages of photographs whose main focus is nonliving things. He portrays the Atom Dome (Genbaku doomu) from both inside and out as well as parts of the interior of the then new Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (Hiroshima heiwa kinen shiryōkan) designed by Tange Kenzō, which is consistently attacked for its single-sided representation of the war issue. The last pages show the numerous tombs of the bomb’s victims in Hiroshima. Here again the Domon’s juxtaposition of emotionally charged material and pure documentary coverage becomes clear.

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The photographs speak in a rather overt and clear language and have quite a significant message interwoven in them. In his striving for increasing public awareness of the atomic bombs’ victims, Domon, consciously or unconsciously, achieves something much more significant – the photographs and the people on them become something one might call iconic, in order to create a collective of compassion in the post-fascist Japanese context. This notion of icons is closely linked to Watsuji’s notion of “ethical” ningen and shall be further elaborated upon in this context.

An icon here is an exemplary figure that acts as a substitute for the whole. This means that the icon functions as a signifier for a larger body, in other words, it stands as a representative for the whole group. While being a part of the group, the figure that is iconized, as a result of this process, stands aloof of the group, while simultaneously being an integral part of it. This positions the icon as a synecdoche – it is both signifier and signified at the same time. This notion can be applied to the difference in writing of the term “hiroshima” in katakana syllabic script and Hiroshima in Chinese characters. The former thus becomes a synecdoche for the latter. The term “hiroshima”, as described before stands aloof of the actual place, but is yet inextricably connected to it. By indicating a special event, i.e. the atomic bomb’s past, present and future, “hiroshima” as a synecdoche creates a national bond by acting as an icon for a suffering of national dimension. As noted before, the atomic bomb, as Domon seeks to remind the Japanese public, could have been dropped on any location in Japan. Thus, “hiroshima” not only encompasses the actual fact of the bomb’s impact on the city of Hiroshima, but furthermore the aforementioned possibility of hitting any place in the country. Therefore, the term “hiroshima” acts as an icon that stands for collective suffering creating a national bond.

This schism is similar to the *betweenness* of ningen as articulated by Watsuji in his masterwork Rinrigaku (The Study of Ethics) published in 1937-1949. Here, Watsuji strives to specify the vague term of “ethics” in light of the interaction of individuals among each other and thus in the context of society. Significantly influenced and inspired by German philosophy, in particular that of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Watsuji builds his argument around a fundamental critique of it. While Heidegger in his endeavors to define *being* makes the independent *individual* the central focus of his discussion, Watsuji turns against this and argues the individual is a Western concept and therefore not applicable in a Japanese context. Rather, instead of the individual, he indicates the twofold structure of the Japanese word ningen. Being both a singular and plural term, it signifies both an individual and a group of individuals. Furthermore, as a result of this structure,
**ningen** does not only include the aforementioned meaning of one or more individuals, but their relationships amongst one another. In this respect, Watsuji argues, **ningen**’s full significance can never be grasped by encompassing just one individual, but always requires more than two in order to fulfill the term’s implied twofold meaning. This is the fundamental shift away from Western philosophical currents that Watsuji strove to accomplish.

**Ningen** is in constant interrelation with **sonzai**, the substitute term for Heidegger’s notion of **being**. However, it should be noted here that Watsuji vehemently opposed the equalization of **being** with **sonzai**. Both are terms that share similar characteristics, but still encompass two very different concepts. **Sonzai**, he says, is not abstract, as Heidegger’s **being**, but a concrete system of interrelated acts by **ningen**. This system of interrelation is overall determined by subjective acts, performed by **ningen**. The relationship of **ningen** and **sonzai** is thus not defined through an elevated meta-system, but follows very concrete, subjective actions.

This point is crucial for the interpretation of Domon and his **Hiroshima** photographs, since he, as an artist, uses photography as a means of subjective action towards the group of Japanese people. His aim at increasing public awareness and therefore forming a group consciousness of collective victims can be described as an act by **ningen** towards the whole of the others, i.e. the Japanese people, where in turn these actions’ results become manifest within their mutual **sonzai**. This applicability shall be further explained below.

According to Watsuji, the relationship of **ningen** and **sonzai** can be called **betweenness**, which in turn is fundamentally determined by certain norms of righteous behavior, **rinri** (ethics). **Betweenness** is above all, says Watsuji, characterized by a “reciprocal relationship” of giving and taking. Individual actions originate from a subjective individual drive, however they are inextricably linked to other individuals. Watsuji argues that therefore there does not exist a single, isolated individual, but individuals are in constant exchange with a bigger entity, a group, so to speak. This “nonduality of self and other” is the fundamental component of **betweenness**. While the individuals still maintain a certain amount of independence in their actions, they are basically determined by the group, and the group in turn is determined by these actions, or in other words by the individuals **betweenness**. This reciprocity is directly applicable to Domon and his **Hiroshima** photographs.

As noted before, Domon was much influenced by Watsuji’s writings and their ideas are reflected in his work. Watsuji argued that in order to work, **betweenness** required language as the most basic element. Put in a different way, it needs some form of communication. This can be extended to art, especially photography, since language is not confined to verbal utterances only. Domon, in his self-imposed position as a “Japanese photographer”, or as an advocate for the atomic bomb victims can be directly positioned in the concept of **betweenness**. In his role as an artist he is of course an individual, but simultaneously, through his body of work, he is in direct reciprocal relationship with the subjects of his photographs. It goes without saying that this basic, very general relationship can easily be applied to any other example of the **betweenness** of one or two individuals. However, Domon who positions himself as advocate for the post-war sufferings of Japanese people, creates a very special sort of reciprocity.

He attempts to create a group consciousness by extending the role of the victims beyond those who were directly affected by the bombing of Hiroshima respectively. Domon regards this as his personal responsibility and in fact states in 1953 that “if a photographer turns away from these war victims while holding a camera, a mechanism that facilitates the most realistic of records, I would call him an anti-humanistic betrayer of the Japanese race”. These statements could not express his position clearer.

Furthermore, as the title of his autobiography suggests, Domon also extensively reflects within it on life and death. He states that death is being ignored by many people, but is yet an integral part of human existence. Life is nothing more than transient and its perishability should
be remembered by the people. This temporality of existence makes the need for compassion and awareness of life’s transience even more necessary and underlines Domon’s general aim of creating a national group consciousness.

Therefore it becomes evident that Domon regards himself as an advocate for the Japanese people. His images, through which he creates iconic expressions of the post-fascist era in Japan, are the means to bond these individual victims with the rest of the Japanese people. He sees the role of realism in post-war Japanese society as a national responsibility for him as a Japanese photographer. Therefore, following the philosophical notion of betweenness in Watsuji’s work, he positions himself as part of the group Japan and in the role of its advocate. Through this advocacy of the camera, he attempts to create a correlation between individuals, him and the victims and the group, the Japanese people, in which he and the victims are automatically included merely by their existence. This group however, is not just the neutral body of Japanese citizens, but a group who share the mutual characteristic of having been assaulted by the atomic bombs and by its own government. This can directly be equaled with the nondual reciprocity of ningen and sonzai. Domon occupies the role of an individual ningen that is in direct correlation, betweenness, with his intended audience, the Japanese people, a group of ningen. Thus, he creates he a mutual, reciprocal relationship between him, the victims and the Japanese public, sonzai, by means of his photographs, a means of language, consequently pursuing the aim of creating a collective consciousness by means of a shared past and the presence of suffering.

The suffering, one might say, is not limited to those who actually suffer physically. They act as symbols for a national pain. This is in accord with Watsuji’s notion of the betweenness of the individual as being a correlative part of larger continuum, the group of Japan in this case. He regards the Japanese as a collective body of victims, who bear responsibility for each other. Thus, through his photographs Domon seeks to increase the general public’s awareness, as any place in Japan could have suffered by the atomic bomb and its long-term effects. His Hiroshima photographs therefore stand symbolically for something far greater, a national responsibility. This very fact places them in an iconic position within Japanese society – they are thus between and create a bond. The victims are turned into subjects placed in an ambivalent relationship of time and space. While they are part of Japan’s post-war, post-fascist society, they bear the remnants of this past carved in their bodies, as manifest through their sufferings. They are turned into living memory icons that remind the Japanese public, itself so eager to forget the past, of just that. Domon, by means of his realist photographs places these victims as both deeply anchored within the society, but also removed from it by means of their special position as victims of a wishfully bygone past. While they occupy this removed position as reminders of past events, their continuing suffering implants them deeply in the post-war society and acts as a connection between past and presence, therefore, as Domon strives for, bonding all Japanese.

In particular realist photography, as Domon advocated it, is crucial in the creation of these Hiroshima images that are positioned as mediating between in order to form a collective consciousness. In the very beginning of his autobiography, Domon states that photographers must not have bad intentions (akui). No photographer shall use his art in a negative way, for instance in order to damage someone or to convey negative, harmful ideas. Photography is a noble profession that requires a high system of ethics and with this comes a high level of responsibility. In fact, Domon’s outlook on the medium of photography cannot be called international, but rather very domestically focused. Throughout his autobiography one finds continuous references to how Japanese photographers should approach Japan, how they should look out to grasping the Japanese people’s sorrow, joy, longings, etc. For a Japanese photographer is above all Japanese and shall see and interpret Japan from this standpoint, in order to personally grasp its meaning. This offers a fascinating and revealing insight of Domon’s self-perception and his rather nationally oriented outlook on photography. To him, the medium’s role is to thematize national issues, to comprehend the essence of what it means to be
Japanese, of *Japaneseness*, so to speak. His notion of realist photography appears to be shaped around this very aim of conveying messages of national relevance for creating a national consciousness.

**Conclusion**

The photographer, Domon says, is not of importance, but only the photograph itself counts.35 While he states this, doubts inevitably arise and one should question this statement. The photographs of Domon’s *Hiroshima* series are of course masterworks of realist photography as Domon advocated it and express his talent in a particularly intense way. However, their subjects and their layout arrangement reflect exclusively Domon’s personal opinion and goal towards the issue of “hiroshima”. While creating these icons of past and present, encompassed by the ambivalent above term “hiroshima”, Domon infuses his personal notion and aims deeply inside them. However, this does not imply that the photographs themselves become subjective by means of technique, but do go in accordance with Domon’s ideal of realist photography. Rather, their elevation to the status of icons and the aim of creating a national awareness through a collective victimization of the Japanese people renders them subjective in retrospect by means of their utilization for Domon’s aims – they become subjective by being turned into icons of compassion and collective suffering.

This status is conveyed upon the images by Domon himself and therefore directly reflects his personal intentions. By utilizing the iconic notion prevalent in “hiroshima”, he seeks to create a bond between those who directly suffered from the atomic bomb and its aftermath and the Japanese post-war public, seemingly unharmed, yet very vulnerable, only by chance spared from the same fate. Domon emphasizes this shared fate, creating a national unity through mutual compassion by various meticulously calculated techniques throughout the *Hiroshima* volume. By juxtaposing photographs of sympathetic, touching scenes showing brave and happily smiling bomb victims (strongly conveying “emotional truth”) with those of pure realist documentary character, some of them severely shocking, he creates a strong impact on the viewer. Domon deliberately pairs the two emotional responses of compassion and shock to foster sympathetic feelings within the viewer. This is further enhanced by the notes explaining the photographs’ content. They read as an intimate account of a witnessed crime, assembled for an understanding friend and therefore act as strong support for the photographs intense illustration of the post-war suffering due to the atomic bomb’s impact on Hiroshima. The combination of “emotional truth” and “realism”, in addition to the intimate notes, containing both touching victims’ accounts as well as scientific material achieves a very strong effect. He thus turns the subjects of his photographs into icons, synecdoches of national suffering that are both deeply anchored in the past and the present, containing evidence of a horrible deed of the past, while simultaneously occupying a crucial position in Japan’s present culture. This is precisely what Domon seeks to communicate.

Domon considers photography a medium fit and even predestined for stimulating national awareness and national unity. This goes in direct accordance with the notion of *betweenness* as explained by Watsuji. By means of his photographs, a form of language, Domon positions himself as an individual and as all Japanese, *ningen*, within the continuum of *sonzai*. He is giving the anonymous pain and post-war suffering a face. In other words, he utters a concrete message, by which he incorporates those that are seemingly outside the sphere of suffering inside of it. He strives to create an entity that encompasses both the suffering and the rest of the Japanese people who are linked to post-war suffering by means of compassion. This compassion arises both from the fact that Japanese belong to the entity of Japan, as well as by the fact that any place could have been subject to atomic bombing. Therefore, it becomes clearly apparent that Domon, through the advocacy of his photography, is working within the concept of *betweenness* in order to elucidate the reciprocal relationship between those suffering and those who are meant to feel compassionate towards them.36
“Realist” Betweenness and Collective Victims

ENDNOTES

1 Domon Ken (土門拳): To Die and to Live (死ぬことと生きること), vol. 1; Tōkyō (東京): Tsukiji Shokan (築地書館), 1974; pp. 204-206.
2 Abe Hiruyuki (阿部博行): Domon Ken: His Life and Time (土門拳 生涯とその時代); Tōkyō (東京): Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku (法政大学出版局), 1997; p. 183.
5 Domon, 1974; pp. 236-243.
6 Ibid. pp. 42, 204-206.
7 Ibid. pp. 42-43.
9 Domon, 1974; pp. 252-255.
10 Abe, 1997; p. 205.
12 Abe, 1997; p. 208.
13 Ibid. p. 198.
14 Some parts of the present paper have previously been published in a different context and have been incorporated here. See: Frank Feltens: Constructing Collective Victims – Domon Ken and Tōmatsu Shōmei: Two Japanese Photographers; Modern Art Asia 2, February 2010.
16 Domon, 1958; pp. 4-5.
17 Ibid., 1958; pp. 5-6.
18 Due to the effect which the term “hiroshima” written in katakana has, I have purposely chosen the above spelling with lowercase h, in order to indicate its role as a symbol and statement.
23 Watsuji, 1996; p. 43.
24 Ibid. p. 33.
25 Ibid. p. 34.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid. p. 35.
28 Abe, 1997; p. 198.
29 Thomas, 2008; p. 382.
30 Domon, 1974; p. 76.
31 Ibid. p. 77.
32 Ibid. p. 8.
33 Ibid. p. 21.
34 Ibid. p. 22.
36 Other works consulted:

Domon Ken (土門拳): Pilgrimage of Old Temples (古寺巡礼); vol. 1; Tōkyō (東京): Bijutsu Shappansha (美術出版社), 1963.
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Who's Missing? Who Cares: 
The Issue of Abduction by North Korea

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There have been enormous perceptual and definitional gaps between Japan and overseas in relation to the issue of abduction by North Korea. Even within Japan, the Japanese government and private advocacy groups differ in their perception of the issue and also in their estimates of the number of abductees and the countries that they are from. Foreign reports tend to focus on emotional reactions made by families of Japanese abductees and regard Japan as being obsessed with this issue. Overseas articles rely on Kim Jong-Il’s claim made during his meeting with Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichirō in 2002 when he admitted that his country had kidnapped 13 Japanese citizens. The Japanese government has designated 17 Japanese citizens as abductees and believes that about 30 more persons could have been kidnapped as of today. On the other hand, Japanese advocacy groups believe that the number of abductees is actually far more than the government’s estimate and that the total number is about 600 from at least 12 countries. Japan argues that this issue, an act of international terrorism, entails serious violation of national sovereignty and human rights. The issue of abduction is complicated because it also involves diplomacy and domestic politics. It is hard to verify the exact number of the abductees held in North Korea, which is the reason that Japan has had difficulties in receiving understanding and cooperation from the international community. Thus, more English publications and a stronger and centralized intelligence capability are critical in order to share Japanese views and prove the Japanese claims. Building of intelligence capability, especially human intelligence, will help Japan prevent kidnappings by foreign agents in the future, have a better situational awareness of the abduction issue, and obtain international support through the US global alliance network. This would be the first step to facilitate resolution of the issue.

Introduction

In 2009, two events brought Japanese and American attention to the issue of abductions by North Korea. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with the families of Japanese citizens who were kidnapped by North Korean agents during her first tour to Japan in February 2009.1 The following month, a former North Korean agent met with the family of a Japanese woman in Busan, South Korea, who had been kidnapped by the North in 1978, leaving behind her two babies. She gave training in Japanese language and culture to the North Korean agent in North Korea between 1981 and 1983.2 Several major mass media outlets sensationally covered the two meetings and the Japanese abduction, including the Washington Post, New York Times, and Korea Times. Even in academia the issue generated considerable interest. However, most of foreign articles accept a claim made by North Korea, in which Kim Jong-Il admitted during Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichirō’s (小泉純一郎) visit to Pyongyang in 2002, that North Korea had kidnapped 13 Japanese citizens.

In contrast to the foreign media portrayals, Japan interprets the abduction issue as an act of international terrorism, which targets other nationals. However, it is also worth pointing out that even among Japanese concerned organizations, their definition of the abduction issue does not coincide. Japanese advocacy groups believe that North Korea targeted about 600 people from at least 12 countries,3 and the Japanese government identifies 19 Japanese cases of abduction. North Korea, however, has refuted Japan’s claim. The majority of foreign coverage disregards the definition of the Japa-
nese government and private advocacy groups and does not recognize this discrepancy as a problem. Only a couple of the foreign articles refer directly to the claims made by Japanese advocacy groups. While neglecting to clarify the definition, some of the articles called the issue an “emotional” one or “a national obsession”. This is a good example of the ways in which the perceptions and interpretations of this issue differ widely both domestically and internationally.

Certainly, the perceptual gap probably helps the North Korean goal of trivializing the issue as much as possible and averting potential obstacles to receiving foreign aid. Neither the discrepancy nor the kidnappings have yet been resolved. These discrepancies and definitional gaps have undermined the resolution of this significant international issue of human rights violation. In order to solve the problem, the Japanese first has to resolve the definitional gaps, and then seek cooperation from the international community to pressure North Korea together to return the victims. This paper will examine the definitional gaps and foreign coverage of the abduction issue, and then outlines actions that the Japanese government and advocacy groups should take to deal with these issues.

**Various Definitions of the Abduction Issue**

The Japanese and North Korean governments, along with civilian groups supporting families of abductees, have given different definitions with respect to victims’ nationalities, numbers, and abduction periods. This has resulted in a stalemate in bilateral negotiations between the two governments and also caused confusion among the English media.

**Definition of the Abduction Issue by the North Korean Government**

Kim Jong-Il admitted the abduction of 13 Japanese citizens in 2002 when he and Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichirō (小泉纯一郎) had a meeting in Pyongyang. The Japanese government had demanded investigations into the 12 individuals whom the Japanese authorities had identified as abductees. North Korea, however, claimed that 4 were alive in North Korea, 8 had died, and that there was no evidence that the remaining individuals had ever entered North Korea. The North Korean delegation also admitted that the country had abducted another person, about whom the Japanese government had not yet queried, and confirmed that she was still alive in North Korea.

In October 2002, 5 victims were permitted to return to Japan. They are Chimura Yasushi (地村保志), Chimura (Hamamoto) Fukie (地村 [浜本]富貴恵), Hasuie Kaoru (蓮池薰), Hasuie (Okudo) Yukiko (蓮池 [奥土]祐子子), and Soga Hitomi (曽我ひとみ). Soga is the person whom the Japanese delegation had at first not recognized as a victim and about whom they had not demanded any information. North Korea still argues that the eight victims Yokota Megumi (横田めぐみ), Ichikawa Shuichi (市川修一), Ishioka Tōru (石岡亨), Hara Tadaaki (原他晃), Taguchi Yaeko (田口八重子), Matumoto Rumiko (増元るみ子), Matsuki Kaoru (松木薰), and Arimoto Keiko (有本恵子) died, and that the other two, Soga Miyoshi (曽我ミヨシ), the mother of Soga Hitomi (曽我ひとみ), and Kume Hiroshi (久米裕) never entered its territory. In 2004, North Korea permitted the children of Hasuie (蓮池), Chimura (地村), and Soga (曽我) to go to Japan to stay with their parents in addition to Charles Jenkins, Soga Hitomi’s (曽我ひとみ) American husband, whom she married in North Korea.

North Korea’s position is that the abduction issue was solved because the nation has returned 5 survivors and their families to Japan. It insists that it has provided all information on the deceased victims with their death certificates and the remains of 2 abductees.

**Definition of the Abduction Issue by the Japanese Government**

Altogether, the Japanese government has designated 17 Japanese citizens as abductees and believes that about 30 more persons could have been kidnapped as of today. In addition to the 15 aforementioned victims, the government identified Tanaka Minoru (田中実) as an abductee in April 2005 and Matsumoto Kyōko (松本京子) in November 2006. Nevertheless, the government is aware that some additional 30 Japanese
persons and other nationals might also have been kidnapped by the North, although the media has hardly ever reported this claim.

The Japanese government is doubtful that the eight abductees have died because they were relatively young (between their 20s and 40s) when they “died” and because their remains do not exist. Their death certificates were all issued by the same North Korean hospital in 2002. The documents argue that the victims “died” of gas poisoning, traffic accidents, heart attacks, and suicide. For instance, Ichikawa Shuichi (市川修一) allegedly died of heart attack while swimming during an urgent business trip when he was 24 years old, although he was not able to swim while he was in Japan. In 2004, North Korea admitted that the certificates were hastily drafted upon the visit of the Japanese delegation in 2002. Furthermore, no remains of the abductees exist. North Korea says that the bodies of 6 abductees were buried but were washed away by flood. The North Korean government forwarded the “remains” of Yokota Megumi (横田めぐみ) and Matsuki Kaoru (松木薫) to the Japanese government, but DNA tests refuted the North Korean claim.8

Thus, the Japanese government argues that the evidence North Korea has submitted hardly supports their claims. Although Japan has demanded further information, North Korea has not replied yet. The government believes that Pyongyang hides information and does not want to return abductees who were forcibly involved in North Korean spy education and know about covert activities such as the Korean Airlines bombing.9

Moreover, the Japanese government is aware that in more than 30 cases of missing persons, North Korea was likely involved in their abduction, although it does not specify who the probable abductees are. According to its website, the government demanded that North Korea investigate these cases and immediately return the victims of kidnapping to Japan.10

In addition, the Japanese government points out that North Korea has kidnapped citizens from the Republic of Korea, Romania, Thailand, and Lebanon and abducted two North Korean children from Japan whose mother is Japanese. Claiming that abduction is a serious violation of human rights, the Japanese government has demanded that North Korea allow the two children to return to Japan.11

However, outside the website, the government does not openly refer to either the cases of the additional missing Japanese or foreigners, and it is unclear as to how the Japanese government cooperates with the nations whose citizens were allegedly kidnapped. This is probably because normalization of relations with North Korea has been a critical issue for the Japanese political community. Due to a growing interest in the abduction issue among the general public, politicians have not been able to overtly suggest prioritizing the normalization over the abduction issue since Koizumi’s visit to Pyongyang. His successor, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō (安倍晋三), declared that the abduction issue should be the number one public priority. However, the mass media are now busy covering new political problems such as the recent tensions between Japan and the United States over the relocation project of the Futenma Air Station (普天間飛行場) in Okinawa (沖縄), as Emma Chanlett-Avery, an Asian affairs expert at the Congressional Research Service points out.12 The Japanese political community takes advantage of this situation, neglecting the abduction issue in favor of dealing with a different agenda. Thus, it is more difficult for Japan to fill in the definitional gap with Washington on this abduction issue.

Also, since the information regarding these possible abductions is scattered all over its website, it would be difficult for foreign readers to understand the claims of the government comprehensively. This designation issue will be discussed below.

Definition of the Abduction Issue by Private Advocacy Groups in Japan

The Japanese advocacy groups believe that the number of abductees is actually far more than the government’s estimate and that the total number is about 600 from at least 12 countries.13 Families of Japanese abductees and their advocates began grassroots movements
to arouse public opinion and to pressure the government to recover abductees in 1997. The Japanese public and the government hardly believed the claim in the beginning. They were more convinced when Kim Jong-II admitted the abductions in 2002, and he also noted that Soga Hitomi (曽我ひとみ), was abducted as well although the Japanese government had never asked the regime for accounts of her fate. This astonishing news resulted in increased inquiries from families whose loved ones disappeared decades ago. Consequently, private citizen groups started to address these queries.

There are three major private organizations handling the abduction issue: the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN) (北朝鮮に拉致された日本人を救出するための全国協議会), the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (AFVKN) (北朝鮮による拉致被害者家族連絡会), and the Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea (COMJAN) (特定失踪者問題調査会). NARKN is a coalition of non-profit organizations to rescue all the victims abducted by North Korea in cooperation with and with the support of AFVKN. AFVKN was launched in March 1997, and the coalition was established in April 1998. COMJAN was formed in January 2003 to investigate missing persons who might have been abducted from Japan by North Korea. It focuses on finding and rescuing probable abductees.

**National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN)**

NARKN states that that North Korea committed state-sponsored terrorism, kidnapping over 600 people from at least 12 countries, based on information from the Japanese and South Korean government, as well as witnesses including Charles Jenkins and a South Korean returned abductee.14 This claim was included in a letter to Hillary Clinton when she visited Tokyo in February 2009.15 The breakdown of the statistics on the NARKN website is as follows: Japan (about 100); South Korea (82,959 during the Korean War and 489 after the ceasefire); China (2); Malaysia (4); Thailand (1); Singapore (1); Lebanon (4); Jordan (1); Romania (1); France (3); Italy (3); and the Netherlands (2).16

**Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea (COMJAN)**

The Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea (COMJAN) believes that abductions cannot be ruled out in about 470 cases of missing residents of Japan between 1948 and 2007 as of March 2010.17 Araki Kazuhiro (荒木和博), COMJAN Chairman and a professor at Takushoku University (拓殖大学), holds that the abduction issue is a collective designation, which covers cases of Japanese citizens, South and North Korean residents in Japan, and other foreigners.18 Unlike NARKN, COMJAN focuses more on domestic cases and has more information on them. Since COMJAN includes Korean residents in Japan as well, the number of possible abductees is larger than the NARKN estimate.

Thus, the term *abduction issue* means something quite different to Japan and North Korea. Even in Japan, the definition varies among the various groups. The only abduction cases North Korea has admitted to are related to the 13 Japanese citizens, while the number of abductees that the Japanese government officially lists is 17, all Japanese. On the contrary, the Japanese advocacy groups claim that North Korean agents kidnapped citizens from at least 12 nations, including Japan from which more than 100 Japanese citizens were abducted.

**Difficulty in defining the issue**

What then, accounts for this gap among the groups? Araki Kazuhiro (荒木和博) points out19 the two causes that prevent the discovery of the exact number of abductees.

First, North Korea targeted and abducted Japanese citizens who had no relatives or were estranged from their families, such as Hara Tadaaki (原敕晁), identified as an abductee by the Japanese government, according to Araki. In such a case, it is less likely that their families would call for an investigation. Police investigations often framed these cases merely
as missing persons incidents. If the kidnapper of Hara Tadaaki had not been arrested and persons belonging to abduction-related organizations had not testified, no one would have ever known that Hara was kidnapped.²⁰

Second, Araki argues that it is sometimes difficult to draw a line in a “grey area”, which refers to missing people whose disappearance could be attributed either to abduction or free will, as well as people who were kidnapped but whose nationality is not Japanese. Some abductees might have been sympathetic or have had some interest in North Korea, explaining their motivations for traveling there. Yet they have not been permitted to return to Japan. For example, the Yodo-gō (よど号) hijackers group tempted Ishioka Tōru (石岡亨), Matsuki Kaoru (松木薰), and Arimoto Keiko (有本恵子) to visit North Korea.²¹ In the 1970s and 1980s, average Japanese people did not have a negative image of North Korea. Accordingly, the three abductees might have been interested in North Korea to some extent. They did not, however, expect that they would be forced to reside in North Korea permanently. Although the Japanese government has officially designated all three as abductees, it has not included similar cases in the official list yet. Araki claims that not being permitted to return to Japan upon request constitutes a kind of abduction.²²

Therefore, Araki insists that the exact number of abductees will not be discovered until significant changes occur within the North Korean regime, which would permit independent investigations. However, he also indicates that even then, the number may remain ambiguous for two reasons: the evidence doctrine of the police and the arbitrary designation of the Japanese government.²³

First of all, as the police leads the investigations, they consider all aspects of the incident in accordance with the evidence doctrine. If no evidence is found to support North Korea’s involvement, the case will not be regarded as an abduction. Most of the probable abductees are adult couples. If the police did not find any definite criminal signs, they would usually not investigate further because such cases of disappearance look merely like a couple who ran away under the pressure of family opposition or financial difficulties. It is nearly impossible for the police to investigate a case in which missing people might have been abducted and to designate them as such decades after the fact. Furthermore, each time, government involvement followed the lead of other sources of information, such as newspapers or magazine articles, and only then were the abductees designated as such.²⁴

Next, the designation process used by the Japanese government is rather arbitrary. There are three prerequisites for government in its recognition of abductees, according to Araki: (1) the kidnapping occurred against their own will; (2) the abductees are held in North Korea; and (3) the abductees still remain confined there. However, the government has not necessarily followed this rule. For instance, Soga Miyoshi (曽我ミヨシ), was designated as an abductee only because she was with her daughter, Soga Hitomi (曽我ひとみ), when Hitomi was kidnapped by North Korean agents according to Hitomi, although North Korea denies the abduction of her mother.²⁵ Another case is Terakoshi (寺越), who was missing from his boat in 1963 and was found alive in North Korea 24 years later. On the other hand, the government has not interpreted the Terakoshi case as an abduction although he was apparently kidnapped, and the government acknowledges that he is held in North Korea.²⁶

Thus, even if families or their supporters believe that a missing person was abducted due to circumstantial evidence, the authorities do not necessarily regard the case as an abduction. This is in part the reason why the Japanese government delayed bringing up this issue at negotiations with North Korea. Even after the government established the official designation system, it is still difficult for the government to negotiate with North Korea for abductees who do not have such legal guarantees. So, the abduction issue is not only an international issue, but also a domestic one. In fact, the confusion caused by this designation issue can be seen in foreign reports as well.
As discussed, the term “the abduction issue” means something quite different to Japan and North Korea. Even in Japan, the definition varies among entities. Taking this situation into consideration, it is not surprising that foreign media have been confused. Some of the examples are as follows:


- The definition somewhere between the Japanese government’s and NARKN’s (at least 16 abductees): *The Washington Post* dated February 2009


- Definition more limited than North Korea’s: *Reuters* dated March 2009 (several abductees)

The expression “at least 16 Japanese” by the *Washington Post* probably reflects the fact that the Japanese government finally classified Matsumoto Kyōko (松本京子) as an abductee in November 2006, the time in which the total number of identified abductees reached 17. The article was published after that.

Surprisingly, the American media hardly links the abduction issue with Kim Dong-shik, who has US permanent citizenship, except for the *Washington Post* article in June 2008. According to the article, North Korean agents kidnapped the Christian missionary in 2000 in northeastern China when he was helping North Korean defectors and taken to North Korea.

This confusion is also seen in academic articles as well. Peter M. Beck, Professor at American University and Ewha Womans University, relies on North Korea’s argument. On the other hand, Larry A. Niksch, US Congressional Research Service, refers to the claims made by the Japanese advocacy groups that North Korea abducted several hundred Japanese citizens. He also cites “Country Reports, 2005” issued by the US Department of State, which states it is likely that citizens other than Japanese have been kidnapped by North Korea according to plausible sources.

It seems that even North Korean experts in the United States are not necessarily familiar with the claims of the Japanese government and advocacy groups. Just like most of the overseas media, the scholars do not recognize the possibility that the abduction issue possibly involves several nations and violates both human rights and national sovereignty.

**Problems with Overseas Reports**

The problem is that overseas reports tend to label the abduction issues as “emotional” or regard Japan as “obsessed with the issue” without clarifying the obstacles in defining the issue domestically and internationally or explaining the context of the terms of “emotional” or “obsessed.” In many cases, such coverage has referred to the abduction issue in combination with the North Korean nuclear issue and has indicated that Japan is isolated in the Six-Party Talks in bringing up the abduction issue at negotiations since other parties prioritize North Korean denuclearization. Since the Six-Party Talks is the only official channel that Tokyo has with Pyongyang, the Japanese government has no choice but to take advantage of the framework to negotiate the abduction issue. However, US analysts of East Asia as well as foreign media are not necessarily aware of this situation in the Japanese government.

One exception is Todd Crowell of the *Asia Sentinel*, who tried to explain why Japan is “obsessed” with the issue. He pointed out the case of Yokota Megumi (横田めぐみ), who was a 13-year-old middle school girl when she was kidnapped by North Korean agents, and wrote, “Megumi was just a typical Japanese school girl, doing typical Japanese school girl activities with her friends living in a typical Japanese neighborhood. No wonder her plight tugs at the country’s heart.”
It is true that the case has received a lot of sympathy because Yokota was abducted when she was quite young. Also, this issue entails some “emotional” aspects because it is natural that families or relatives wish to recover their missing loved ones. This and other overseas reports, however, have neglected a more important fact: both the Japanese government and private support groups pursue their activities from the position of human rights and national sovereignty rather than personal sympathy, as indicated in their websites, brochures, and books.

This is why Japan has been prioritizing the issue in diplomacy and brought up this subject at various meetings, including at the United Nations and G8 Summit, which are not limited to the Six-Party Talks. The Japanese government, however, has not necessarily tried to correlate the issue with the North Korean nuclear issue.

Thus, it is necessary for Japan to commit itself more to promoting better understanding of the issue in the international community and to prevent itself from being further alienated in international negotiations. It will be helpful to provide the world with evidence of the abduction for that purpose.

Policy Recommendations

Good public relations and an effective intelligence capability are key strategies for the Japanese government and advocacy groups, for resolving the issue. Although some NARKN and COMJAN members demand the deployment of the Self Defense Forces (SDF) to rescue the abductees from North Korea, such a military action is not realistic. First of all, the SDF does not have sufficient offensive capabilities to pursue the mission under the pacifist constitution. Second, to pursue a covert operation for rescue, reliable human intelligence (HUMINT) is necessary. Regardless, the Japanese government does not have a HUMINT organization. As a result, it would be extremely difficult for the SDF to obtain accurate information on the whereabouts of the abductees and possible rescue routes. Third, any proactive military action would provoke a backlash among the other Asian nations, especially China and South Korea. Even though the two countries sometimes utilize anti-Japanese feelings to unite their nationals, Japan should avoid inspiring fear in the international community. By reminding them of the Japanese pre-war militarism, Japan could risk harming bilateral relations with them.

Recommendation 1: Public Relations

Public relations and a stronger intelligence capability are plausible options. Unfortunately, both the Japanese government and private groups supporting the abductees and families do not seem to have emphasized public relations in English to bridge the gap in understanding and make it easier for the international community to grasp the complexity of the issue. There is rarely any academic analysis in English concerning this issue that is available and published by Japanese officials or scholars, while plenty of materials are available in Japanese.

Japan’s Cabinet Office established the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue, which has a website in Japanese, English, Korean, Chinese, Russian, French, Spanish, Italian, and German. On its Japanese and English website, the government does not explain why and how it brought up the issue at the Six-Party Talks, whereas the website briefly describes efforts at the United Nations and G8 Summit. To understand Japan’s agenda regarding the abduction issue, one has to visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website to check each round of the talks.\(^\text{38}\) Such methods of information organization make it difficult for non-Japanese or even Japanese people to understand the stance of the Japanese government comprehensively.

COMJAN and NARKN have English websites, whose contents include only a small portion of their Japanese websites on the development of the issue and information on abductees. Some of the board members of the groups are professors and analysts of North Korean issues and have published books and academic essays to present their analysis of abductions, but they are all in Japanese.

Yokota Sakie (横田早紀江), the mother of Yokota Megumi (横田めぐみ), published a book
titled *North Korea Kidnapped My Daughter* and Charles Jenkins, the husband of Soga Hitomi (曽我ひとみ), *The Reluctant Communist: My Desertion, Court-Martial, and Forty-Year Imprisonment in North Korea*, both are in English. They are helpful to understand the agony experienced by abductees and their families even though some might regard these books as subjective. Nonetheless, Jenkins’ book revealed that he had witnessed abductees from Thailand and China, and this work allowed the international community to better understand North Korea and the international abduction issue. Thus, such testimony of returned abductees and families of abductees would facilitate the understanding of the issue and supplement information provided by academic reports, even though the five Japanese victims who returned to Japan have not shared their experiences in North Korea with the public yet.

Better public relations should target English readers, especially the US government and American citizens first because the US also has a victim kidnapped by North Korea and the United States has more influence on North Korea and the international community than Japan. In January 2005, the Illinois delegation sent a letter to North Korean ambassador to the United Nations and demanded information on Kim Dong-shik, because he used to live in Illinois. President Barack Obama was one of the delegation members who signed the letter. Japan should take advantage of the letter and receive sympathy of the president and the US Congress to pressure North Korea. Although Washington does not want to see bilateral ties with Japan deteriorate and needs its financial aid to bargain with North Korea, the American government tends to prioritize denuclearization of North Korea. Therefore, Japan must publish comprehensive and objective reports about the abduction issue in English and analyze the multilayered complexity of diplomacy, human rights, national sovereignty, and domestic politics. The government’s official English websites have to be translated more thoroughly. Also, the advocacy groups and scholars should translate their books, essays, and websites into English, utilizing information that they obtain from the government, abductees, and their families.

If Japanese scholars or officials make full use of the vast amount of materials available in Japanese and present the all-embracing English analysis, they can explain to the international community, for instance, why it is difficult to obtain cooperation from the South Korean government for the abduction issue at the Six-Party Talks. This is primarily because the last two South Korean administrations were pro–North Korea before Lee Myongbak and did not admit to the existence of South Korean abductees. This practice has often alienated Japan at international negotiations.

**Recommendation 2: Intelligence Capability Building**

The second key is intelligence capability building. Reportedly, Kim Jong-Il has had a health problem for a while, and his power is likely to fall to the third son, Kim Jong-Un. Nobody knows the possible implications of Kim Jong-Il’s death on the abduction issue, as Emma Chanlett-Avery points out. Araki Kazuhiro has a more ambivalent view: he believes that since Kim’s death could make it difficult for North Korea to maintain the dictatorship, the possibility of bringing back the abductees would increase. He also notes that North Korea might destroy evidence of the kidnappings and kill the abductees in the worst case scenario, taking advantage of the potential chaos after the death of their leader. Additionally, without obtaining reliable information on the abductions, the Japanese government will not be able to either verify the facts regarding the abduction issue in the international community or fill in the definitional gaps. The government should share analysis results with the United States. Since the whereabouts of the victims would be revealed only by HUMINT and communication intelligence, Japan can forward such sensitive information only to its ally, the United States. To disseminate classified information on the victims from other countries, Japan has to use the network of the Unites States with South Korea and Europe. These steps are critical to
promote understanding and cooperation in the international community.

Therefore, an intelligence capability is needed. Currently, such capability is dispersed among the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Police Agency, and the Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office (CIRO). Red tape has resulted in stovepiped intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination in Japan. The CIRO must take the initiative like the US Director of National Intelligence and serve as the command and control. CIRO should control collection, analysis, and dissemination of all sources of intelligence. Japan dismantled its HUMINT organizations after World War II; however, this kind of intelligence is essential to back up other sources and to avoid being deceived. Furthermore, as the relations between Japan and the United States has become tense due to the deadlocked Futenma relocation project, Washington would appreciate any proactive security efforts made by Tokyo as long as Japanese initiative contributes to the alliance.

Since intelligence organizations do not have to clarify their structure and strengths, this capability building would be able to be low-profile. It would minimize the worsening relations with Asian countries. The Japanese government can use Article 5.3 of the information disclosure law to decline the release of information because the clause allows the government to withhold information essential to national security. Fortunately, several former HUMINT agents from the Rikugun Nakano Gakkō (the Imperial Army Nakano intelligence school 陸軍中野学校) are still alive, including former Second Lieutenant Onoda Hiroo 小野田寛郎. However, since they are almost 90 years old, the government does not have much time left to take advantage of the pre-war resources.

Also, stronger intelligence capability means better prevention of kidnapping by foreign agents. Since Japan does not own any HUMINT agency at this stage, it has not made a spy prevention law yet. If the government establishes such a law, it has to make an exception in favor for Japanese abductees since they would have been forced to get involved in the training of North Korean agents and committed illegal activities indirectly.

**Conclusion**

The abduction issue is complicated because it entails diplomacy, human rights, national sovereignty, and domestic politics. It is hard to verify the exact number of the abductees held in North Korea. That is why Japan has had difficulties in obtaining understanding and cooperation from the international community. Although Japan has published many books, essays, and websites regarding the issue, only a small fraction of them has been translated into English. This poor accessibility to detailed and comprehensive analysis has prevented other countries from gaining the whole picture of the issue and Japan’s views. The definitional gaps between Japan and the international community have hardly closed yet. Thus, more English publications and a stronger and centralized intelligence capability are critical in order to share Japanese views and prove the Japanese claims. Building of intelligence capability, especially HUMINT, will help Japan prevent kidnappings by foreign agents in the future, have a better situational awareness of the abduction issue, and obtain international support through the US global alliance network. This would be the first step to facilitate resolution of the issue.

**ENDNOTES**


3  AFVKN and NARKN (家族会, 救う会): Appendix 1: Cases of Abductions by North Korea in 12 Countries (参考資料1 世界十二か国で行われている北朝鮮による拉致被害者, i.e. AFVKN and NARKN. Entire Picture and Solution of “Abductions by North Korea” – from the International Viewpoint (北朝鮮拉致の全貌と解決－国際的視野で考える) Sankei Books, 2007; p. 97.


8  Ibid.

9  Ibid.


14  Ibid.

15  Shigeo Inzuka (飯塚繁雄) and Yoshiaki Fujino (藤野義昭); Letter from NARKN to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, 17 February 2009; accessed on 24 April 2010 at: http://retrieve-abductees.blogspot.com/2009-02/official-letter-addressed-to-secretary.html.


18  Araki Kazuhiro (荒木和博); North Korean Abductions and Japan (北朝鮮による拉致の概要と日本における対応について); Institute of Foreign Affairs at Takushoku University, Report (拓殖大学海外事情研究所報告) 43, 2009; p. 77.

19  Interview via e-mail with Araki Kazuhiro (荒木和博), 20 April 2010.

20  Araki, 2009; p. 79.

21  The communist Yodo-gō Group hijacked Japan Airlines Flight 351, known as Yodo-gō, on March 31, 1970. After releasing the passengers, the group fled and held funerals for the missing men. Nonetheless, the family of Terakoshi Sotō 太橋寺越 (Noto Peninsula 大撃上, and one of the missing men, received a letter he sent from North Korea 24 years later in 1987. Subsequent letter exchanges proved that not only Sotō but also his nephew, Terakoshi Takeshi (寺越能), and his wife Tomoe (友枝恵谷) visited North Korea in 1988, 25 years after the incident. See: Eya Osamu (大庭伊洋); Analysis of Abductions by North Korea (北朝鮮による拉致の分析); NARKN; accessed on 22 March 2010 at: http://www.sukukai.jp/pdf/2010012906.pdf.


27  Kim, 2009.


35  YoonSong Song: As a Member of the South Korean National Assembly (韓国国会議員として); in: AFVKN and NARKN, 2007; p. 172.

36  Interview with Emma Chanlett-Avery, 2010.
Mihoko Matsubara

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44 Interview via e-mail with Araki Kazuhiro, 2010.

The Court, the Constitution and Japanese-American Internment

Joshua Gannis  Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

This paper examines the historiographical context of Japanese-American internment as well as the plight of Fred Korematsu and aims to demonstrate how public opinion, the actions of the US Supreme Court, and the executive branch of the US Government all intersected and shaped a domestic policy that systematically stripped US citizens of their fundamental civil rights because of their Japanese heritage. The paper also examines how the system of checks and balances created by the US Constitution failed to protect Japanese-Americans’ fundamental civil rights during the Second World War. The paper looks to numerous San Francisco Bay area and national newspapers to gauge public opinion on the issue of Japanese Internment. The paper’s content utilizes numerous declassified memos from the War Department and the Justice Department, along with the US Supreme Court record and decision in Korematsu v. United States, to demonstrate the impact public opinion had on the decision to implement, maintain and constitutionally condone race-based Japanese-American Internment. The underlying question the paper seeks to examine is whether the US Supreme Court could act as a bulwark to uphold the basic civil rights of Japanese-American citizens against a strong wartime executive and rabid public discrimination.

Fred Korematsu was one of 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry forcefully relocated by the US military from their California, Oregon, and Washington State homes to ten internment camps located away from the coast. Korematsu and others challenged Congress’s and the military’s authority to relocate and detain them. They argued that their military exclusion from their hometowns and their subsequent detainment violated their Fifth Amendment due process rights and their Fourteenth Amendment rights to equal protection under the law. Yet, both Congress and American public opinion supported the executive branch’s military-implemented removal and internment programs. Korematsu appealed his conviction and looked to the Supreme Court for a remedy to restore and protect his Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment constitutional rights.

Historians have demonstrated that the power of the executive branch of the US federal government tends to expand during wartime. The case of Japanese-American internment shows that this expansion of executive power is further strengthened when it can be buttressed by public support, and that it usually comes at the expense of individual constitutional rights. In the case of Korematsu v. United States, the expansion of wartime executive power supported by Congress and public opinion constrained the Supreme Court of the United States from restoring Korematsu and the other tens of thousands of Japanese-Americans their constitutional rights. Ultimately the United States Supreme Court held that the danger posed by possible fifth column activity by United States citizens of Japanese ancestry and Japanese alien residents warranted the curtailment of their Fifth and Fourteenth amendments.

In a war fought, supposedly, to make the world safe for democracy, why did the Supreme Court of the United States agree to strip US citizens of their basic constitutional rights in the face of scant military evidence? Some historians place the blame for Japanese internment squarely on the executive branch. Others blame the historical context of racist animosity that existed in the Western states, particularly in California.

Still others place the ultimate blame on the Su-
Supreme Court of the United States which acts as the final arbiter on all constitutional issues. Yet, it seemed though that the breakdown of the protections of individual rights guaranteed by the constitution may be due to the stress that the war put on the framework of the constitutional system.

Part of this stress emanated from a racist public outcry supporting Japanese internment. Evidence of this support can be found in various newspapers’ editorial sections in letters to the editor, op-ed pieces and syndicated columns. Racist public opinion combined with the harsh realities of waging a global conflict for the nation’s survival caused the system of checks and balances installed in the Constitution to protect the rights of its citizens to ultimately break down. This paper seeks to examine the historiographical context of Japanese-American internment and to examine the plight of Fred Korematsu. It demonstrates how public opinion intersected and shaped a domestic policy that systematically stripped citizens of their fundamental rights because of their Japanese heritage and how the system of checks and balances created by the US Constitution failed to protect Japanese-Americans’ fundamental rights during the Second World War. The historiographical context further demonstrates that the evacuation from the West Coast and the internment of persons of Japanese-American ancestry consisted of a policy born out of popular racism, manifested in the forum of public opinion and implemented by an unsympathetic executive.

The Historiographical Context

In By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese-Americans, Greg Robinson wonders why Franklin D. Roosevelt had been removed from the historical narrative surrounding Japanese internment during World War II. Robinson felt that Roosevelt’s direct involvement with Japanese internment had not been sufficiently portrayed in the historical narrative of Japanese-American internment. Thus, he set forth to integrate Roosevelt more thoroughly into the historical narrative as a much more active participant in the sad episode of Japanese-American internment. Robinson postulated that the environment of scientific racism that permeated American society during FDR’s youth and its effect on his worldview and that of other contemporary Americans profoundly shaped Roosevelt’s view of the Japanese, especially after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He argued that the evacuation movement, “though catalyzed by the emergency [of war], represented the culmination of a historic pattern of prejudice and legal discrimination against the ‘Japs’ on the West Coast.” Robinson emphasized that racism felt towards Japanese-Americans created the binding factor that allowed various and disparate social, economic and military forces to coalesce and present a united push for evacuation and internment. He held Roosevelt responsible for his lack of personal interest in some of the consequences of the policy decisions relating to internment, such as compensating Japanese-American citizens for property loss due to their removal. The overall effectiveness of Robinson’s argument weakened when he tried to reconstruct Roosevelt’s psychological state in reference to his opinions and beliefs about the Japanese. And his assertions of Roosevelt’s racist tendencies towards the Japanese lacked direct evidence. But, his evidence detailing Roosevelt’s disengagement from the issue of internment was both direct and convincing. As such, Robinson’s work called other historians to look more closely at some of Roosevelt’s more pragmatic wartime decisions, such as not allowing Jewish refugees from Europe sanctuary from Nazi Germany in America.

In Justice at War, Peter Irons argued that a legal scandal of historic proportions allowed the US War Department to essentially fabricate an argument for the military necessity of Japanese-American internment. The Justice Department suppressed evidence that demonstrated the unnecessary nature of evacuation and internment and did not include it in their official brief submitted to the US Supreme Court justifying the internment of Fred Korematsu and some 110,000 Japanese-Americans during World War II. Irons showed well-documented evidence, in the form of official Justice and War Department memos and interviews with the individuals involved, that there was a concerted effort by the War Department and to a lesser extent by the Department of Justice to suppress evidence that did not support the military necessity of Japanese Internment. He also im-
plicated Korematsu’s own defense team in the scandal, arguing that the ACLU was bowing to the Roosevelt Administration’s pressure not to paint the administration in a negative light. This action hamstrung the part of the ACLU’s original defense that questioned the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066. Ultimately, Irons cited the sad historical record detailed in his book and the words and deeds of the various lawyers and judges involved as clear evidence that the American justice system failed completely in the case of Fred Korematsu and the other 110,000 Japanese-Americans evacuated and interned.

What makes Iron’s book even more intriguing is that the information he obtained to write the book, numerous War and Justice Department memos obtained in a FOIA request, led him to champion Fred Korematsu’s case to be reopened and his guilty verdict vacated on the basis that the government intentionally withheld evidence from the Supreme Court that could have substantially altered the verdict. He uncovered the suppressed evidence that revealed that the FBI and other members of the Justice Department deemed evacuation and internment to be wholly unnecessary. While his work served as an almost definitive legal study of the Japanese-American internment there is room to place the legal study in a more thorough political and social context to achieve a greater comprehensive historical understanding of Japanese internment.

Finally, Morton Grodzins’ Americans Betrayed dealt with the issue of internment at a time when the event was still fresh in many Americans’ memory. Grodzins published Americans Betrayed a mere three years after the closure of the last Japanese internment camp operating in the United States. Grodzins sought to “explain why and how evacuation became national policy”, and how the evacuation and internment of people of Japanese heritage was “America’s worst wartime mistake”. Grodzins was aware that writing about what he termed a social and political history of an event soon after its occurrence might seem to pose problems. But he felt the problems could be solved because of his “firm belief that political and social history may be profitably written soon after history-making events,” arguing that the ability to interview the politicians and participants involved soon after the event and collecting all available documentation was of the utmost importance since “documents, memories, careers and even lives disappear rapidly”. Grodzins posed a valid point, but a rich, full, definitive history cannot be written so soon after an event. It takes time for the larger historical context in which the specific written historical narrative is embedded to completely flesh out and develop. For example, the suppressed Justice and War Department memos that surfaced during Iron’s FOIA request would not have been available to Grodzins at the time he wrote Americans Betrayed. These memos provided historians new insight into the policymaking process that Grodzins ultimately sought to uncover.

These works of history help illustrate the racist historical context that seemed to influence and inform public opinion on the West Coast by an unsympathetic executive. Historians have to seriously look at the impact of public opinion as a force that can shape government policy and in this case Japanese-American internment. The shape of public opinion then must be considered when trying to parse out the historical context of an event.
The somewhat amorphous nature of public opinion can provide some problems for historians. The most widely accepted definition of public opinion is that it consists of the general consensus of the public’s feelings on a particular issue. This paper seeks to gauge public opinion by analyzing editorials, letters to the editor, and syndicated columns published in the major national and West Coast papers during Japanese-American internment. Newspapers not only reflect public opinion but can affect and influence it as well. Walter Lippmann, in his book *Public Opinion*, argues that the media is key in “manufacturing consent” for the general public. It is media that can frame and control the public discourse of a particular subject. While analysis of articles, columns and editorials in newspapers like the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Los Angeles Times* may not provide a perfect barometer for the opinion of every American, it can help historians to gauge the public opinion or manufactured opinion of the public.

In late winter and early spring of 1942, public opinion resoundingly supported Japanese-American internment. It took the entire US government to plan and implement the internment of Japanese-American citizens. In order for internment to occur, the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the federal government had to act in agreement to strip away the basic constitutional rights of a group of US citizens. The Supreme Court has often been perceived as the final protector of an American’s basic constitutional rights. Should the Court have stopped the internment?

A better question is: could the Supreme Court of the United States realistically have prevented the internment of Japanese-Americans? An internment that was supported by a popular president wielding unprecedented wartime powers, a supportive Congress, and what appeared to be rabid public opinion? The inability of the Supreme Court to restrain the executive and legislative branches during time of war demonstrates the inability of the US Constitutional system to fully protect an individual’s fundamental rights. Examinations of the popular print media and its influence on the executive branch and US Supreme Court’s treatment of Fred Korematsu may provide some answers.

Fred Korematsu and the Creation of Public Opinion

Without broad public support, it is doubtful that the US government would have been able to implement and maintain the internment of tens of thousands of US citizens for no reason other than the color of their skin. After the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, white Americans initially supported the Japanese population. On December 8, 1941, the *San Francisco Examiner* ran a short piece entitled “Witch Hunt Banned” which cautioned San Francisco residents and the nation not to jump to any rash conclusions regarding the 1.1 million aliens residing in the country. When disturbances broke out in public schools in the Los Angeles area, the local government and *Los Angeles Times* urged that an “attitude of sanity, and fairness be applied toward all children; that every effort be made to show a real American sprit toward American-born children of Japanese blood”.

But within six weeks of the publication of articles that called for calm and rational behavior, “war hysteria” had gripped much of the nation with the West Coast leading the call for the removal and internment of Japanese aliens and US citizens of Japanese ancestry. On January 28, 1942, the *Los Angeles Times* published an editorial calling for the federal government to “remove Japanese from vital military areas”. The editorial further stated, “[t]hat the time has come to realize that the rigors of war demand proper detention of Japanese and their immediate removal from the most acute danger spots”. The editorial further offered that the call for Japanese removal and exclusion “accepts the public feeling on the subject”. The *San Francisco Examiner* published a syndicated column by Henry Mc Lemore the following day, January 29, calling for the “immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast”. Mc Lemore noted that he knew that “there must be no such thing as race or creed hatred, but do those things go when a country is fighting for its life?” Mc Lemore’s answer was a resounding “Yes”. He ended his column by stating that he hated the Japanese, “and that goes for all of them”.

This type of sentiment was not just limited to West Coast newspapers. Walter Lippmann, a
well-respected essayist and columnist, wrote a nationally syndicated column that was published in the Washington Post on Feb 14, 1942 which warned the nation about a potential attack from “within and without” by Japanese saboteurs. Lippmann called for the exclusion of Japanese aliens and US citizens of Japanese descent from sensitive areas on the West Coast. A few days after Lippmann’s column on February 15, Westbrook Pledger in a Washington Post editorial supported Lippmann’s call for exclusion but went one step further and demanded, “the Japanese in California should be under armed guard to the last woman and man right now, and to hell with habeas corpus”.20

The Los Angeles Times editorial as well as McLemore’s, Lippmann’s and Pledger’s columns offered that there should be no distinction between Japanese aliens and US citizens of Japanese descent. Specifically the Los Angeles Times piece attempted to take a measured tone by stating that “there is every disposition to protect the civil rights of the enemy races from persecution or unnecessary hardship”. But it continued to argue that the disposition to protect civil rights was outweighed by the preservation of the nation. The distinction made earlier by the Los Angeles Times in their applause of the local schools encouraging tolerance towards American citizens of Japanese decent and the calls by the San Francisco Examiner asking for caution and rational thought had dissipated.

Beyond columnists and editors, average citizens across the West Coast also called for exclusion and internment of Japanese-Americans. Ben Maineri Jr. of San Francisco wrote a letter to the Examiner and claimed that it would be “disastrous for these people [US citizens of Japanese Decent] to have privileges of American citizenship”.21 Carolyn Standley, also of San Francisco, wrote to the Examiner and stated the government should “put all the Japanese in camps”22. Even “civic” groups wrote articles in support of internment. The Native Sons of the Golden West, a nativist organization with a history of supporting anti-Asian laws and measures, endorsed a congressional resolution in late January 1942 supporting the stand to “rid the western coast of the United States of the Japanese”23.

While racism tended to be the underlying motive for the push for internment, some saw internment and removal as a golden economic opportunity. Internment forced Japanese-American farmers to sell their land or risk receiving no compensation once they were forcibly removed to a relocation camp. Groups like the Western Growers Protective Association took advantage of this fact as they pushed hard for Japanese internment. Californians were reassured by the Western Growers that the sudden loss of Japanese labor would not affect the state’s vegetable production. The Western Growers argued that the Japanese-American land would sell fast because it was such “choice land” and would readily be bought up by white farmers once their Japanese-American competition evaporated.24 The head of Western Growers Protective, F.W. McNabb, wrote to Congressman John Z. Anderson outlining a program for Japanese removal that dictated that all persons of Japanese ancestry be removed a minimum of 300 miles from the Pacific coast and placed into concentration camps in the Rockies.25 The removal of Japanese-American farmers from central California was a huge economic gain for the members of the Western Growers Protective. While groups like the Western Growers Protective saw an economic opportunity in the removal of Japanese-Americans from their land, the Federal Government at this early stage was still primarily focused on eliminating the perceived security threat posed by Japanese agents provocateurs.

The Government Responds

The federal government had responded and acted quickly after Pearl Harbor to round up some two to three thousand Japanese aliens that were on an FBI list of possible alien security risks. The FBI and the Office of Naval Intelligence both agreed that those rounded up were likely the only individuals who would act as “saboteurs and enemy agents”.26 Indeed, the Office of Naval Intelligence acknowledged that “the large majority [Japanese aliens] are at least passively loyal to the United States”, and that the “Japanese Problem had been magnified out of its true proportion largely because of the physical [racial] characteristics of the Japanese people”.27 In other words both the FBI and the
Office of Naval Intelligence believed that the exclusion and internment of some 110,000 individuals of Japanese descent was not a military necessity. The Office of Naval Intelligence also acknowledged that the actions of the federal government were largely based on racist hysteria.28

Press reports of secret contact by Japanese spies signaling Japanese submarines offshore by signal light and/or secret radio communications inflamed mass hysteria.29 Walter Lippmann was chief among columnists citing secret radio transmissions between Japanese spies and offshore warships.30 These allegations were investigated by both the FBI and the FCC, and no evidence of any clandestine broadcasts emanating from the West Coast to waiting Japanese vessels offshore was found.31 The media discourse and public opinion helped to inform the debate taking place in the military regarding exclusion and internment. In fact, Lt. General John L. DeWitt, Commanding General of the Western Theater of Operations, noted that “there’s a tremendous volume of public opinion now developing against the Japanese of all classes, that is aliens and non-aliens […] they don’t trust the Japanese, none of them”.32

The results of these investigations were buried by both the Justice and the War Departments. The public hysteria continued with civic groups like the Native Sons of the Golden West and agricultural interests like the Western Growers Protective Association calling for removal and internment. Their statements and pleas for government action led to West Coast politician and member of Congress Leland Ford to argue that, Ford’s fear of fifth column activity was echoed by other prominent West Coast politicians like California’s then–Attorney General Earl Warren. Warren was concerned that the lack of any fifth column activity was a sure sign that the enemy was coordinating a grand strike, much like Pearl Harbor, and he felt that “we [the United States] are just being lulled into a false sense of security and that the only reason we haven’t had a disaster in California is because it has been timed for a different date”.34 Ultimately, Warren went on to write an amicus brief on behalf of California supporting the US government’s program of exclusion and internment in the Korematsu case.

West Coast politicians, bolstered by prevailing public opinion, clamored for the federal government to respond to the “Japanese Problem”. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 authorizing the “Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, to prescribe military areas […] from which any or all persons may be excluded”.35 Secretary of War Henry Stimson under authorization from the executive order placed the question of Japanese exclusion and relocation on the shoulders of Lt. General John L. DeWitt. On May 3, 1942, DeWitt issued Civilian Exclusion Order No. 34, which “ordered all persons of Japanese ancestry both alien and non-alien, to be excluded from that portion of Military Area No. 1 [including] Alameda County”.36 Fred Korematsu lived in Alameda County and was ultimately charged with ignoring instructions to report to the assembly center on C Street in Hayward, California. Not only was Korematsu in violation of the military order but he was also in violation of Congress’s recently passed Public Law 503, which called for criminal penalties for the violation of DeWitt’s military order. Congress had acquiesced to the desires of President Roosevelt, the Governors of the West Coast states, and prominent West Coast politicians, pundits and public opinion in removing all individuals of Japanese descent from the coastal areas of the western states. Japanese internment now carried the approval of both Congress and the President, not to mention the military, and was rabidly supported by public opinion. This was the political context in which the US Supreme
The Court found itself when Fred Korematsu’s case came before the Supreme Court.

**Korematsu and the Court**

The Supreme Court upheld Korematsu’s conviction and the constitutionality of the exclusion and internment of alien Japanese and US citizens of Japanese descent in a 6-3 ruling. Justice Hugo Black’s opinion revolved around the notion of the exclusion and internment as military necessities to secure the safety and perpetuation of the United States. To this end, Justice Black and the Court relied on Lt. Gen. DeWitt’s *Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast 1942* as the sole basis for determining if internment was indeed a military necessity.

The pressure felt by the military to prolong the internment emanated both from public opinion, which in 1944 still supported internment, and FDR’s pandering to popular public opinion as not to risk his re-election bid in 1944. A memo sent to Lt. Gen. DeWitt in May of 1943, which stated that internment was no longer a military necessity but should still be continued because the public would not support a return of the Japanese to their homes “short of a decisive military victory against Japan”, demonstrated that public opinion helped to prolong Japanese internment. It should also be noted that the information regarding the military necessity of internment in the memo sent to DeWitt did not find its way into the briefs filed by the government.

DeWitt’s *Final Report*, which the Court relied upon, buried and contradicted evidence gathered by the FBI, the Office of Naval Intelligence, and the FCC. DeWitt claimed that there were “hundreds of reports nightly of signal lights visible from the coast, and of intercepts of unidentified radio transmissions and signaling […] observed at premises which could not be entered without a warrant. The problem required immediate solution”. This statement was in direct contradiction of the above-mentioned investigations that found that people were not signaling or radioing submarines off the West Coast of the United States. The Director of the Alien Enemy Control Division of the Justice Department, Edward Ennis, concerned about these discrepancies in DeWitt’s report, added a footnote to the government’s Korematsu brief that brought the Court’s attention to the gross inconsistencies between DeWitt’s report and the actual facts. The War Department objected to the footnote because it weakened their argument of military necessity. The Justice Department and the War department reached a compromise and a diluted, ineffectual version of the original footnote was placed in the brief submitted. As a result, the Court paid little-to-no heed to the diluted footnote.

Writing for the Court and basing his knowledge of facts on Lt. Gen. DeWitt’s misleading report, Justice Black held:

> That compulsory exclusion of large groups of citizens from their homes, except under circumstances of direst emergency and peril, is inconsistent with our basic governmental institutions. But when under conditions of modern warfare our shores are threatened by hostile forces, the power to protect must be commensurate with the threatened danger.

Black and the Court believed Lt. Gen. DeWitt’s argument that the exclusion and detention of Japanese aliens and citizens of Japanese descent was indeed a military necessity. The implications of this decision were such that in times of war, military necessity could and did trump fundamental constitutional rights like due process.

The Court found that the necessity of Japanese exclusion and internment required the altering of the basic governmental institutions, i.e. denying US citizens their Fourteenth amendment right to due process. Justice Black would go on and write that “Hardships are a part of war […] all citizens feel the impact of war. Citizenship has its responsibilities […] and in time of war the burden is heavy”. In essence, the denial of a citizen’s constitutional rights became part of the hardships that individuals had to face during war. This contention was very similar to Leland Ford’s statement, which was informed by prevailing public opinion, that truly patriotic
citizens of Japanese decent would do their part for the war effort by allowing themselves to be placed in concentration camps.\textsuperscript{44}

Justice Black also readily rejected the racist quality of the law by arguing the law was purely a military necessity. Based on DeWitt’s report, he noted that the military was constrained, by both time and the imminent threat of invasion, from segregating the loyal citizens of Japanese ancestry from the disloyal citizens of Japanese ancestry. The context of the war and the nature of the enemy provided for the internment. Black argued that no overt intent to discriminate against Japanese citizens existed. Black’s quick dismissal of the racial component of the act was anathema to Justice Stone’s footnote 4 in the Court’s 1938 opinion of \textit{United States v. Carolene Products Company}.\textsuperscript{45} The footnote called for strict judicial scrutiny if a law discriminated against a discrete and insular minority and limited their constitutional rights. By dismissing the racial component of the act, Black acquiesced to the political pressures and constraints placed on the Court by the legislative and executive branches of the government and public opinion.

Both Justice Jackson and Justice Murphy dissented from the Court’s majority opinion. Both were dubious of the military necessity claim put forth in Justice Black’s majority opinion in support of Korematsu’s conviction and the validity of exclusion and internment. Justice Murphy pointed out that the military order was based on “assumptions of racial guilt rather than bona fide military necessity”.\textsuperscript{46} As evidence of this, Murphy pointed to the language of DeWitt’s \textit{Final Report}, saying that DeWitt referred to all individuals of Japanese descent as “subversive”, an “enemy race” whose “racial strains are undiluted”, and as constituting “over 112,000 potential enemies […] at large [on the Pacific Coast]”.\textsuperscript{47}

No evidence pertaining to the FBI or the FCC investigations of enemy communications ever made it to the Court. No mention of the Army’s 1943 memo, which stated that there was no military necessity to maintain the internment, was presented to the Court. This suppression of evidence would ultimately allow Korematsu and the other individuals involved in the test cases to get their convictions overturned in the 1980s on a writ of error \textit{coram nobis}.\textsuperscript{48} It can be argued that these convictions might not have been overturned if public opinion had not changed to view the internment as a dark episode in US History. Congress investigated the internment and ultimately issued an apology and financial restitution for those citizens that were interned.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The political context undergirded by public opinion constrained the actions of the Supreme Court by forcing it to rule against Korematsu and the protection of fundamental rights. The system failed Korematsu. Further investigation is needed to determine to what extent public opinion had been swayed by special interests. It would also be helpful to undergo a comparative study of how public opinion influenced actions undertaken by the Executive branch during war that curtailed or eliminated basic constitutional rights and how the Supreme Court ruled on these actions. Comparing Lincoln’s suspension of the writ of \textit{habeas corpus} to Wilson’s signing the Espionage Act in 1917 and the case of Japanese internment might prove an interesting starting point.

The broad support for exclusion and internment by both political branches of the government and the public left the Court with few options.\textsuperscript{49} Even though both the Justice and War Departments sought to bury evidence questioning the military necessity of internment, the court still had an obligation arising from its own precedents to raise a more rigorous objection to the constitutionality of internment.\textsuperscript{50} If the Court ruled internment unconstitutional, it certainly risked a drop in prestige in the eyes of the public. The Court felt that during wartime it was essential for the country to be unified. The Court sacrificed fundamental principles in order not to stand in the way of the nation’s unified racist support for the internment of Japanese-Americans. The harsh realities of total war and the racial hysteria it can engender, led to the breakdown of the constitutional system in the United States to protect the fundamental rights of individuals.\textsuperscript{51}
ENDNOTES

1. Mary Beth Norton, in *In the Devils Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), showed how initial public support for the actions of the magistrates involved in the Salem Witch Trials allowed for the rapid expansion and escalation of the trials themselves. Louis Fisher, in *Nazi Saboteurs on Trial: A Military Tribunal and American Law* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), argues that during World War II the expansion of executive power resulted in a curtailing of due processes rights for individuals, for the sake of national security objectives. A group of bumbling Nazi saboteurs was subjected to the first military tribunals since the Civil War. FDR and the government were more concerned with their speedy trial and execution than with the saboteurs’ right to due process. The US Supreme Court backed FDR’s creation of military tribunals in spite of its earlier decision in *Ex parte Milligan* (71 US (4 Wall.) 2 (1866)) holding that individuals not be tried in a military court where civilian courts existed. FDR was also concerned about the possibility of a negative public reaction if the truth of how the saboteurs were actually captured was leaked.

2. Peter Irons in his book *Justice at War* (cited below), contends that Korematsu’s loss in the Supreme Court was due to unethical legal conduct by both the government, in the suppression and destruction of evidence, and Korematsu’s consul who was hamstrung by infighting between local ACLU lawyers and their national policy body. I contend that both of these lapses in ethics are a direct result of the political pressure that was placed on all parties by the president, Congress, the Court, the Military and virulent public opinion.


9. Ibid. p. 373.

10. Ibid. p. viii.


12. *Wisconsin Hunt Banned*, San Francisco Examiner, 8 December 1942; p. 3.


14. What accounts for this change in public sentiment? There is no simple answer. One may point to the Japanese campaign in the Philippines and their capture of Singapore, not to mention the accounts of Japanese atrocities pouring out of Asia as one of the possible causes of the shift.


16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.


22. Carolyn Standley: Letter to the Editor; San Francisco Examiner, 30 January 1942.


24. Grodzins, 22.

25. Ibid; 25.


27. Ibid.


30. Ibid.


33. Leland Ford in a letter written to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson on 16 January 1942; http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/learning_history/japanese_internment/ford_statements.cfm. The term “fifth column” originated in a remark by Francisco Franco, the Spanish dictator, that he was marching on Madrid with four columns of troops, and that there was a “fifth column” of sympathizers within the city ready to help.


35. Executive Order 9066, signed by FDR on 19 February 1942.

36. Civilian Exclusion Order No. 34.


38. Memorandum: Colonel Bendetson to General DeWitt, 3 May 1943.


40. Memorandum: Edward J. Ennis to Solicitor General Fahy, 19 April 1943. The memo stated that DeWitt’s “report makes statements concerning radio transmissions directly contradicted by a letter from the FCC and the report makes assertions concerning radio transmissions and ship-to-shore signaling directly contradicted by a memorandum from the FBI”.

41. DeWitt’s report also implies that because the FBI could not or would not get warrants to check out supposed signaling from houses owned by citizens, the drastic measure of exclusion and internment was necessary to quell the danger.


43. Ibid.

44. Leland Ford in a letter written to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, 16 January 1942.

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As it exists in Japan, Lolita Fashion, like other Japanese subcultures, developed as a response to social pressures and anxieties felt by young women and men in the 1970s and 1980s. Rather than dealing with the difficult reality of rapid commercialization, destabilization of society, a rigid social system, and an increasingly body-focused fashion norm, a select group of youth chose to find comfort in the over-the-top imaginary world of lace, frills, bows, tulle, and ribbons that is Lolita Fashion. However, the more gothic elements of the style reflect that behind this cute façade lurks the dark, sinister knowledge that this ploy will inevitably end, the real world unchanged.

Background: What is Lolita Fashion?

If one enters the basement of street fashion hub Laforet in Harajuku, Tokyo, one will come across a curious fashion creature found almost exclusively in Japan: an adult woman, usually in her late teens or early twenties, dressed like a doll. Indeed, the first store one enters, Angelic Pretty, looks very much like a little girl’s dream doll house. The walls and furniture are pink and decorated with tea-sets, cookies, and teddy bears. The shop clerk is dressed in a long pink jumper skirt decorated with birds and bunnies, along with a gigantic bow and knee socks of the same pattern. Her feet are shod in artificial-leather, purple Mary Janes, her huge bleached-blonde hair is curled and piled on her head, and with her milky-white complexion and long nails decorated with plastic figures of confectionaries, she looks like she could be marketed as an Easter Edition Fairy Tale Princess doll.

Move on to the darkly lit Atelier Pierrot and one will find a slightly different fantasy realm. The walls and dressing room are draped in red velvet and the exposed back wall is covered with golden stars. The clothes lining the walls are decidedly muted. This shop clerk could have walked out of a Victorian-era portrait. She is dressed in a knee-length, black jumper skirt with a soft-pink rose pattern. A ribbon is tied around her slim waist. On her shoulders is a princess-sleeved cream shrug edged in fleur-de-lis lace. Under her pouffy tulle slip she wears lacy, floral patterned tights and her feet are shod in black boots tied with pink ribbon. Her brown hair has been curled into soft waves and a small pink rose adorns her left ear.

Although the women (and occasionally men) in Laforet look slightly different, they all share the same basic elements in their appearance: long, curled hair, frilly dresses, delicate head-dresses or elaborate bonnets, knee-socks, round-toed Mary Janes, round-collared blouses and pouffy, tulle slips. This fantasy child-inspired dress-up fashion is called Lolita, and it has developed into a full-fledged subculture in Japan. Not to be confused with Vladimir Nabokov’s novel of the same name, Lolita refers to the practice of adult women dressing in excessively frilly, doll/princess/maiden-inspired clothing. And like cuteness in Japan, Lolita pervades every aspect of a Lolita’s appearance, and to a certain extent, her (or his) life. It is easy to think of Lolita as an anachronistic living version of an expensive doll – and indeed, Lolitas often own and carry around matching dolls.

The Lolita genre has fragmented into several main subgenres. Sweet Lolita is the saccharine, pink imaginary childhood Lolita brand embodied by such brands as Angelic Pretty. Classic Lolita is the elegant, 19th-century damsel-inspired aesthetic embodied by such brands as Victorian Maiden. Gothic Lolita features longer skirts, corsets, dark colors and gothic symbols, as seen in brands such as Moi-même-Moitié. Pirate Lolita features leather boots, peasant
blouses, gaudy hats and Spanish jewelry, a style represented by such brands as Alice and the Pirates. Grotesque Lolita features injured girls in hospital gowns and bandages and is embodied by such brands as Blah Blah Hospital. This is only a sampling of the wide gamut of Lolita styles.

What gave rise to such an extraordinary fashion? There is no other nation on earth that has built such a large industry dressing adult women like dolls. Why would Lolita gain such popularity in Japan, and what accounts for its unique characteristics? From September 2009 to July 2010 I studied abroad in Kyoto and made it my personal quest to get to the bottom of this mysterious aesthetic. As well as traditional research I had the unique opportunity to personally delve into the enigma of Lolita Fashion by working at both the Classic Lolita brand Mary Magdalene as well as the famous Baby the Stars Shine Bright.

From January to July 2010 I worked four hours once a week at the business office of Mary Magdalene, a small atelier specializing in Classic Lolita. Mary is run solely by four individuals: the CEO, the designer, and two young employees out of a tiny apartment in Osaka, a quintessential example of the types of “apartment maker” brands which gave birth to Harajuku fashion. It was a fascinating look at the behind-the-scenes process and politics of Lolita Fashion. I did translation work as well as various tasks such as inspecting, cleaning, and ironing clothes.

During the same period I also worked as a sales clerk at the Baby the Stars Shine Bright store which opened in Kyoto in March 2010. Baby the Stars Shine Bright is probably the best-known Lolita Fashion brand and specializes in Sweet Lolita. The mid-size shop was located on the seventh floor of OPA, a multilevel fashion-based shopping center. OPA is mainly dominated by gyaru (gal) brands, which cater to fashion and peer-conscious women in their teens and twenties. I was fairly shocked to hear that Baby, the anathema of gyaru, would open shop literally in the middle of a gyaru stronghold. Our store was located on the “Cute and Sexy” floor, surrounded by stores selling lingerie, punk-rock clothing, shoes, and nail and hair accessories.

At Baby I performed all the responsibilities of a regular staff member. I assisted customers in selecting products, answered queries about products or Baby in general, handled cash and maintained the cash register, managed product inventory, sent and received shipments, etc. I was able to meet and spend considerable time with the company founder and President Isobe Akinori, as well as management from the Kansai area. After opening, I worked once or twice a week for eight hour shifts, got to know the other Lolita stores in the area, and met many Lolitas in the Kyoto area.

My interaction in the Lolita community was conducted almost entirely in Japanese. Most of my interaction was on an informal basis and the conversations recorded in this paper are recalled from notes and journals, not from recorded interviews. For privacy reasons I use mostly shopnames or nicknames of colleagues cited in this paper. Unless otherwise indicated, any translation from Japanese to English is my own.

Some may be tempted to dismiss this fashion as another short-lived fad dreamed up by desperate clothing manufacturers looking to squeeze a bit more profit out of Japan’s dwindling youth population. These fashions may be devoured by over-indulged Japanese girls anxious to jump on the next hot fashion bandwagon, but are soon to go the way of pet rocks and cabbage patch dolls. This could not be further from the truth. Lolita Fashion has been around for more than thirty years and is as firmly rooted in youth culture as it has ever been. I found that Lolita Fashion is not just a frivolous marketing ploy; it is a complex form of rebellion and social commentary on Japan’s oppressive social structure and its social expectations on young people, especially young women.

**Cuteness in Japan**

Lolita Fashion has a surprisingly long history. Despite the change that has occurred since Lolita’s first appearance in the late 1970s, certain elements remain intact: the clothes must draw
inspiration from a time period and place that is not modern Japan, they must be high-quality (not costume-like), and they must emphasize the innocence, vulnerability, sweetness or—in other words—cuteness of the wearer. One thing can be said with certainty: if it is not cute, it is not Lolita. So it is from cute that we will begin our foray into the Lolita wonderland.

Say what you may about politeness and bushido, but “cute” has become the new byword for Japanese culture. Step off the plane and into Narita airport, and cuteness screams at you: cute food, cute cell phones, cute key chains, cute characters telling you not to smoke in public areas, cute toilet paper, cute slot machines—seemingly the most impossibly crude or mundane are gilded with a perky, pink veneer. Western visitors to Japan are often shocked at how cuteness, whether tasteful or tacky, seems to have worked its way into every aspect—even the most sinister or unsavory—of Japanese life. Hello Kitty condoms? Yes, they’re out there.1

Many Westerners feel unsettled with the extreme cuteness in Japan. This is especially true when Westerners, especially women, encounter the Lolita—who not only consumes cute, but transforms herself into a living symbol of cute—a lavish, decadent, symbol of an impossible ideal.

**Background: Cute**

What is considered cute varies slightly from culture to culture, but at the basic level what is “cute” is made of the same basic components. The cute reaction seems to stem from two contradictory human tendencies: the desire to protect our vulnerable young, and the need for mastery and manipulation.2

Both compassion and sadism are expressed in the Japanese meaning. The Japanese word for “cute”, kawaii, comes from the Chinese compound 可愛, with 可 meaning “can”, or “possible”, and 愛 meaning “love” or “affection”. Directly translated as “lovable”, kawaii became immensely popular as a word describing “infantile and delicate at the same time as being pretty”.3 However, kawaii is closely related to the Japanese word kawaisou (可哀相), meaning poor, pathetic, or pitiable.

Responding positively to cuteness is in our genes. Seeing and interacting with cuteness makes people feel good. New research suggests that cute images stimulate the same pleasure centers of the brain aroused by sex, a good meal or psychoactive drugs like cocaine.4

There is, however, a very sadistic aspect to cute consumption. Like sex, cocaine, or food, it can have an addictive tendency. Indeed, cute is closely associated with the grotesque.5 Surrounding ourselves with defenseless, pathetic objects gives us a sense of our own empowerment. In The Cuteness of the Avant-Garde, Ngai Sianne writes, “in its exaggerated passivity and vulnerability, the cute object is as often intended to excite a consumer’s sadistic desires for mastery and control as much as his or her desire to cuddle.”6 The sadistic side of cute can be seen very plainly in the Grotesque Lolita subgenre.

Whether it induces a sense of motherly protection or satisfies our desire to dominate, cute makes us feel good. Cute sells, and therefore, manufacturers are constantly vying with one another on how to best cute-sucker consumers.
*Cute* is the number one reason women give for why they wear Lolita. Indeed, of the thirty or so Lolitas I came in contact with, every single one of them said they were attracted to Lolita because it is cute. What makes the Japanese such suckers for *cute*? Cuteness has not always been a mainstay of Japanese culture. As far as researchers can tell, the “kawaii craze” began in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This is also when Lolita-esque brands were born, beginning with Lolita precursor brands like *Milk* and *Pink House*.

**Japan’s Prozac**

It is generally agreed that cuteness is used as sort of a cultural Prozac in Japan’s brutally rigid society. Brian J. McVeigh, scholar of East Asian studies at the University of Arizona, explains, “Cuteness is used to soften up the vertical society, to soften power relations and present authority without being threatening.” As Iizumi Misako, a 33-year-old office lady, says, “When I look at cute things, lovely things, that makes me feel relieved. It’s like a pet. They cure our wounded soul.” However, the dark side that lurks behind much of Japan’s pop culture seems to suggest a certain level of awareness by Japanese youth that it is going to take more than a cute Band-Aid to heal their psychological wounds.

**Arduous Adulthood**

Unlike in much of the West, where adulthood is seen as a period of freedom, in Japan adulthood is viewed by many young people as a gloomy period of heavy burdens. According to Sharon Kinsella, the majority of Japanese teenagers expect their adult life to be a period of restricted freedom and a time of adult responsibility to family, company, and societal obligations. It is easy to understand why this is the case. For many Japanese children, hard-core career training begins after a relatively relaxed, fun elementary school period. Japanese youth are pushed hard to study for college entrance exams, and half of them will enter cram school upon junior high, though some students begin cram school as early as kindergarten. Cram school usually ends around 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. in the evening, and this in addition to extracurricular activities and school work leaves youth physically and mentally exhausted. It is easy to imagine how a high school senior, facing extreme pressure from all the adults around her and her fellow peers, could find solace by looking back to those care-free elementary school days, and seek to relive those years through Lolita.

Adulthood in Japan, although challenging in general, places special burdens on women. Although conditions have improved slightly since the 1970s and 1980s, women on average still earn €52 (US) on each dollar men earn. Additionally, the expectation for a woman to marry and bear children still carries significant weight. Unfortunately, life after marriage is not a glowing picture of family bliss. Mothers are discouraged from social life and increasingly expected to devote themselves to supporting their children’s trajectory through the education system.

Against this social background it is no surprise that cuteness has gained such widespread popularity and that Japanese *cute* focuses so squarely on childishness. Acting childish is an effort to partake of childhood’s legendary simplicity, happiness, and emotional warmth, something lacking in modern adult Japanese life. Lolita Fashion is primarily based in the neo-romantic notion of childhood and encourages its devotees not only to dress like children, but indulge in childish activities such as playing with stuffed animals and eating sweets.

However, behind the lace trims and glitter is a very nihilistic element of Lolita, revealed by the dark, sardonic side of this fashion. Although the Lolita may find temporary relief in her attempt to create an eternal childhood, try as she may she cannot completely isolate herself from society’s pressures. She knows, at least subconsciously, that someday her imaginary world will come crashing down. Although most Lolitas will insist that their lifestyle will not change as they age, it is rare to see a Lolita older than forty, though they do occasionally exist. This struggle against inevitable capitulation may help to explain the militancy of many Lolitas, who wear their clothes proudly and vow fer-
vently that they will “follow their own path”, as well as some of the disturbing, cynical aspects which seep into their culture.

**Cute Against “The Man”**

The kind of extreme cuteness expressed in Lolita is not simply a cultural Prozac. Although the seeds of cute consumption may have been planted in the post-war period, Japan’s kawaii culture emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s and peaked in the 1980s. In addition to a form of self-consolation it also acted as a rebellion (though a rather indirect, weak, and cowardly one) against established order and values. Rather than challenging “the Man” through angry and sexually charged forms such as Punk and Rock, which were favored by Western youth, Japanese mainstream culture simply refused to grow up. Rather than fighting commercialization and forcing social change, kawaii culture indulged it, finding comfort and companionship in consumption. Sharon Kin-sella states, “The contemporary associations of social disaffection or social rebellion with childishness began during the students’ movement at the end of the 1960s.”

The Sweet Lolita is a salient symbol of rebellion. By adopting the appearance and attitude of a child (not of an adolescent), the Lolita is able to create an imaginary persona for herself where she is free from the pressures of adult life. The dedicated Sweet Lolita does not just wear the clothes of a child, but she will speak in a nasal, high-pitched voice, adopt a pigeon-toed childish posture, and carry around children’s toys. She not only surrounds herself with cute, comforting things to make her feel better about herself, but personally embodies the cuteness itself. By presenting herself as weak, innocent, and vulnerable, she sends a clear message about her inability or refusal to accept adult roles. At first glance the Lolita persona may appear to be the spoiled, petulant, stupid-but-pretty girl aesthetic so distressing to feminists. When compared to the traditional Japanese model of a woman as a subservient, long-suffering daughter, wife, and mother, however, the selfish, in-your-face Lolita aesthetic is surprisingly subversive.

It should not be a surprise that most adults hate the Lolita style. In a 1994 poll by SPA! Magazine, Lolita came in first as the most reprehensible youth fashion trend, beating out low-riding pants, bling, and man skirts. By acting selfish and childish, the Lolita contradicts nearly every single “traditional” Japanese value: self-discipline, responsibility, self-sacrifice, and hard work. She is saying, “I’m a spoiled, immature little brat and I like it that way!”

I was personally taken by surprise at the rebelliousness of many of the Lolitas I met. As mentioned above, when I asked Lolita fans why they liked Lolita, the answer was always the same: because it’s cute. This, however, was not enough to explain a lifestyle dedication. I met many girls who expressed their desire to wear Lolita clothing, but couldn’t because their parents (usually the father) would not allow it. Most of the girls who worked at a Lolita company or wore Lolita on a daily basis were certainly not shrinking violets and were well aware of the subversive nature of their appearance. The girls were often subject to extreme pressure by their parents and society and found in Lolita a way to push back. In a fascinating coincidence, all six of the staff members at the Kyoto Baby, including myself, were oldest children whose parents had held high expectations for their futures. With the exception of myself, all the girls had come from working class families who had dreamed of upward mobility for their daughters, but their daughters had had other ideas.

Kei, my coworker and the best salesperson in Kansai, was an excellent example of this stubborn spirit. She was a tiny, extremely bright woman of twenty-two and seemed a bit more socially-adjusted than most Lolitas. She was originally from Fukuoka but was living with her sister, who was attending a training school for teachers in Kyoto. She came from a typical working class family; her father was a plumber and her mother a housewife. But despite her modest circumstances she had attended private schools since kindergarten and had even visited the US during a school trip. She spoke English better than she would admit and was remarkably witty. I first met her at a dinner held for us by Baby’s CEO. The first thing she asked me
was, “How do you say, ‘I will follow my own path’ in English (自分の道を行くしかない)? As in, I will follow my heart and make my own decisions.” I was impressed by her pluck.

“Kei-chan”, I asked. “When did you first start liking Lolita?”

“Well, I have actually liked it since high school,” she admitted. “But my mom, you see, said it was alright and cute and all, but it was too expensive and embarrassing and wouldn’t let me wear it outside the house. So it was only after I moved out that I could really wear it.” She paused for a minute. “But I have to say, my parents are really unhappy with me working here. Especially after they sent me to private school and college and everything …”

“Oh, you went to college?” I was surprised and yet not entirely shocked. Kei did seem better-educated than the other girls at Baby.

“Yeah, I studied law for four years at Fukuoka University, so they freaked out when I found this part-time job at a Lolita store. Especially my old man.”

“But, then why did you choose to study law?”

“Well, ever since I was little my parents told me I have to become a lawyer, so when I went to college naturally that is what I studied.”

“Why did your parents want you to be a lawyer?”

Kei looked at me like I was an idiot. “Because of the money, of course! In Japan if you want a high salary you become either a doctor or a lawyer … but when I was looking for jobs there wasn’t really anything I was interested in. Then my sister was moving out here and Baby was hiring, and I’ve wanted to work at Baby since I was in high school, so I decided I should take the chance.”

I couldn’t help admiring Kei for choosing a life of relative poverty and a job she liked rather than having money and a job she hated, even though I did understand her parents’ disappointment. What was even more surprising was that she was not entirely unusual. When I was talking to Kanami, the manager of the Kobe store, about how many American students have to pay their way through college, she became extremely defensive.

“Well, a lot of Japanese students must pay their own way too!” she said, puffing herself up. “What do you think I did?”

“Wow, you paid your own way through college?” I said, “That’s really admirable!”

“My parents told me I was a girl and girls didn’t need to go to college. But I wanted to go, so I paid for it myself. It wasn’t easy.” She laughed. “But even with a college degree I still only earn JPY800 [US$9] an hour. But I wouldn’t give up this job for anything. Life’s just not fair, is it?”

Kei and Kanami were not the only Lolitas on rocky ground with their parents. Haru, the oldest girl, had not spoken with her father since high school, and Choco only spoke of her parents to complain. Even at Mary the situation was pretty dismal. Makki, who was my supervisor, was twenty-five and came from a large family of devout Catholics who had wanted her to become a nun. “That just wasn’t the life for me”, she said.

Despite these women’s resistance to pressure to conform, they did not channel their discontent into some sort of social movement, whether through political action, volunteer work, or socially-minded careers. Lolitas on the whole tended to be nice people, but they were quite wrapped up in their own self-centered worlds and were not aware or simply did not care about issues of social justice, even ones that affected them. When I told my coworker Haru that I was taking a class on women’s issues and was disappointed in the sex discrimination in Japan, she had never even heard of sex discrimination.

“What do you mean, discrimination because of sex?” she asked. I was surprised to hear this from a woman who was getting paid half of what her husband was, even though she was probably twice as qualified.
I struggled to explain with my still limited Japanese, “It is where, you know, people don’t have the same opportunities or are disadvantaged because of their sex.”

She thought about this for a bit. “Oh yeah, I guess we do have that here. You mean, like how boys can’t go into certain Picture Club booths?”

**Origin of Inaction**

To be sure, there are plenty of apathetic young people like Haru in the US. But unlike in the US, where the rebellions of the 1960s were instrumental in bringing about important reform about sex, race, and equality, the Japanese demonstrations of the 1960s and 1970s met bitter defeat. Since this time there have been very few public protests in Japan, while they have remained popular in the US and continue to bring attention to social injustice. The defeat of the Ampo protesters in 1970 delivered a fatal blow to Japanese progressives. Since the Ampo demonstrations, public protests or any sort of public display of discontent is considered taboo. Only feeble, superficial stabs at rebellion (such as altering personal appearance) are tolerated, and only to a certain point. It is probably because of this crushed progressive spirit that very little headway has been made to solve social problems such as sexism, racism, and ageism in Japan. Unlike in the US and Europe there are no laws in Japan protecting its citizens against discrimination and litigation rates are still comparatively low. In a society where bleaching one’s hair endangers their chances of college entrance, and where parents bet everything on their child’s success, it is hard to blame Japanese young people for giving up on real social change and acting selfishly and pettily by wrapping themselves in a protective dream-land cocoon.

**Laced with Nostalgia**

Lolitas are not just obsessed with childhood, but specifically with a childhood that never belonged to them – a neo-romantic Victorian notion of childhood.

Like the rest of *cute* culture, Lolita was heavily influenced by the sense of nostalgia that overwhelmed the consumer market in the 1970s and 1980s. The high economic growth beginning in the 1950s brought wealth, but was accompanied by serious pollution and social breakdown. Doubts about the future were already widespread by the end of the 1960s. The Ampo demonstrations and oil crisis fueled these doubts. At the same time Western culture in the form of film, television, and print media flooded the country, and Japanese began to idolize these often sugar-coated portrayals and reproduced them in *cute* culture.

Lolita Fashion, like many “fancy good” products, was particularly smitten with French images. Uehara Kumiko, the head designer at Baby the Stars Shine Bright, says she draws much of her inspiration from the Rococo period. Marie Antoinette remains a perennial icon in Lolita culture, with countless dresses bearing her name. In the novel, *Shimotsuma Monogatari* (published in English as *Kamikaze Girls*) the main character and self-professed Lolita Momoko claims that “A true Lolita must nurture a Rococo spirit and live a Rococo lifestyle.”

However, despite the popularity of *Shimotsuma Monogatari* and the continuing fixation on Marie Antoinette, Lolita Fashion has much more in common with Victorian children’s clothes. Rococo fashion was low-cut, mature, and sensuous, a far cry from the Puritan garb of the modern Lolita. What Lolita has most in common with Rococo is its obsession with detail and frivolity.

The reality is that Lolitas do not really care about the authenticity of their nostalgia. They are dressing up to create a world they imagine to be happier than the real one and have found an image of what they want in 18th- and 19th-century Europe. Actually, Lolita Fashion draws inspiration and idolizes any period where young women acted like “ladies” (お嬢様), be it the French Rococo or the antebellum American South. An ironic element of Lolita Fashion is that clothes are often given seemingly (and sometimes genuinely) meaningful names taken from the world of art or literature such as “Artemisia” (Mary) and “The Name of the Rose” (Baby), but the majority of patrons are unaware of these allusions and when informed are gen-
erally uninterested. They just like the feeling of nostalgia it gives them.

Patrick Wright states that “nostalgia […] testifies in more general ways to the destabilization of everyday life”. The Lolita, seeking to embody nostalgia, is critical and rebellious of the present she lives in as she tries to build an imaginary past.

Beauty

Embracing a fashion that idealizes doll-like cuteness also allows Lolitas to escape from contemporary standards of beauty. Compared to the modern beauty standard, cuteness is a generous ideal, emphasizing roundness, softness and clumsiness. “Beauty attracts admiration and demands a pedestal; cuteness attracts affection and demands a lap. Beauty is rare and brutal, despoiled by a single pimple. Cuteness is commonplace and generous, content on occasion to cohabit with homeliness.” Beauty may be especially brutal toward Japanese women, who have had to face Western ideals of beauty since the Meiji era. This was especially true in the mid-1980s, when Body Con (short for Body-Consciousness, a style which favors tight-fitting clothes designed to display a body’s sensuous curves) became all the rage. The icons of this style were leggy, curvaceous celebrities such as Madonna and Brooke Shields. Many Japanese women felt they had a hard time living up to this standard, and found a welcome alternative in Lolita Fashion. Lolita designer Hirooka Naoto (aka h.NAOTO) is one of the main creative forces behind Gothic Lolita. He theorizes, “I think many Japanese women feel intimidated by high fashion in the West and feel they can never live up to the refined beauty that they feel Western women strive for, so instead they shoot for a cute look, one that doesn’t require tall, curvaceous bodies and instead emphasizes girlishness”.

Lolita Fashion magnanimously caters to a wide range of body types. Lolita brands have seized upon this appeal and designed their clothes very cleverly to allow girls of astonishingly different proportions to fit into them. Most Lolita styles hide the body shape underneath layers of slips, petticoats, and panniers and look just as appropriate on larger builds as on slim ones. A hallmark of a Lolita dress is the shirring (シャーリング), a gathering device made by drawing the dress material up on parallel rows of short running stitches, placed in the back, which can be loosened or tightened depending on the frame of the wearer. It is because of this device that most Lolita Fashion brands can get away with manufacturing just one size, though the shirring will only stretch so far, to the chagrin of many larger women.
Lolita Fashion’s emphasis on modesty is welcomed by many women with skin disorders. Among my coworkers at Baby were women plagued by severe acne, keratosis, and vitiligo. I was shocked numerous times to discover that women who I had previously seen wearing a full blown Lolita outfit were hiding a skin disorder. SPA! Magazine points out that many of the girls who wear Lolita “would not look good in Body Con”. Upon visiting a few stores my own host mother commented that “a lot of Lolitas are chubby, aren’t they?” She was not being critical; actually, these girls look fabulous in Lolita Fashion, a style which allows them to express their beauty without conforming to mainstream conventions.

Pretty Clothes for a Pretty Penny

Lolita clothes are over-the-top, but unfortunately for their disciples, so are their prices. The mainstay of a Lolita wardrobe is the jumper-skirt worn over a blouse with knee socks and a headdress. The average brand-name jumper-skirt will cost JP¥20,000 to JP¥30,000 (around US$215-US$315), the blouse will cost around JP¥15,000 (US$160), the socks JP¥2,000 (US$22), the head dress JP¥4,000 (US$44). Coordinate this with shoes of JP¥20,000 (US$215), a necklace (JP¥8000, US$88), and a purse (JP¥20,000, US$215), and you are talking around JP¥90,000, or almost US$1,000 for an ensemble. Considering that most of the dress material is cotton, the shoes and purse are synthetic leather, and the necklace is plastic, this seems an utterly outrageous sum.

Quality or Price Inflation?

Just how inflated are the prices? This was a harder question to answer than I had supposed. I worked in the Mary corporate office so I had the chance to see the clothes in process from the drawing board to the retail store. I learned that despite the seemingly outrageous prices the Lolita companies are not making a large profit. The combination of high-quality materials, intense labor, and limited quantities produced makes for expensive clothes.

This was especially true for a tiny company like Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene, as with all Lolita brands, does its best to exude an air of elegance, sumptuousness, and sophistication. Every one of their pieces and their marketing materials reeks of elegance. When traveling to my first interview I was rather confused when the address I had been given led me to a dingy Osaka neighborhood literally straddled between two sets of train tracks. The only buildings in the area were shabby old apartment and condominium complexes. Having spent most of my time in Japan in immaculate Kyoto I was rather disconcerted. I looked at the condominium complex, then back at the address I had been given to see that they did indeed match. I carefully approached the entrance and to my relief saw “Mary Magdalene 3F” written in katakana on one of the mailboxes.

After being buzzed in I rode a dingy elevator to the third floor and was led by a young woman, whom I would later learn was the designer Tanaka Reiko, to a tiny kitchen that had been converted into an office. I had dressed in a suit for the interview, but Tanaka herself wore a classy but plain jumper. They can’t be making a lot of money, I thought to myself.

Working at Mary on a weekly basis I realized that the spirit of thriftiness I had experienced at that first interview extended to every part of their operation. Despite the illusion of luxury exhibited in their products there was no room for extravagance on the business end. They would usually only produce around 50 of each item, but each item would be impeccable. A staff member would personally inspect each product, remove lose threads, and iron it before it shipped out. The staff salaries were quite low. The starting salary at the time was JP¥700 an hour (US$8), and even the CEO could not have been making much. He ate sack lunches, shopped for used clothing, and rode his bike to work every day.

Although Baby has larger operations than Mary, they encounter similarly high production costs and rely mostly on staff dedication to make ends meet. There were moments when I was amazed they could afford to stay in business, and it was clear that everyone working there, including the CEO and designers, were not in it for the money. Although the company spent
considerable sums on marketing and goodies for their customers, they kept their labor costs very low. The average salary for a shop staffer was JP¥800 (US$9) an hour, and the highest paid workers were only paid JP¥1000 (US$10). These girls’ frugality was astonishing. It was as if these girls lived and breathed for the clothes. Although some of them still lived at home with their parents, the majority of staff I met and worked with lived on their own and supported themselves. Even with a steep staff discount the clothes at Baby were expensive, but the girls would buy an item they liked even if it meant their cell-phone service was cut, which actually happened once or twice when I was there.

Cult of Shōjo

The Lolita aesthetic is based on the desire to emulate a shōjo, or girl of around school age that can be roughly defined as a young woman. It is interesting to note that there is no equivalent male fashion. The closest would probably be Aristocrat, which, as its name suggests, involves men dressing as (usually Victorian) aristocracy. However, when worn by males, the aristocrat is portrayed exclusively as adult; there is no shōnen (young man) fashion phenomenon worn by young men. Why would adult women dressing up as a child be so much more popular than adult men dressing up as young boys?

Part of the answer lies in the place of shōjo in Japanese popular imagination.

Japanese culture has always held a peculiar fascination for the shōjo. She appears in literature, from classics such as Kawabata’s The Dancing Girl of Izu to Yoshimoto Banana’s Kitchen. Shōjo is the hero of every single Studio Ghibli film, and is the face of a multitude of advertising campaigns. Shōjo, between the ages of 11 and 15, is seen as a liminal creature, not a child but not yet a woman.

The original culture of prizing girlhood arose in Victorian England and was embraced by such canonical authors as Wordsworth, Dickens, Ruskin, and Carroll. In Victorian England’s strict social structure girls represented the true essence of childhood or bygone times of innocence. In Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman, Catherine Robson argues that the idolization of little girls by elite Victorian men was linked to the belief that men only become masculine after they leave the nursery – and the domain of women – and are “tainted” by the outside world of men. Little girls, argues Robson, thus offer an adult male the best opportunity to chase after what he imagines to be his purer past. Although boys were ripped from their mothers’ arms and made to wear trousers and go to school at around five or six, little girls remained symbols of “true childhood” until puberty. Alice of Alice in Wonderland has become the archetype of the Victorian shōjo, and it is no surprise that she would become the heroine of Lolita Fashion. Alice of Alice in Wonderland is by far the most popular figure in Lolita culture. She even has a magazine of Lolita Fashion – Alice Deco – named after her.

The Cult of Girlhood eventually found fertile ground in Meiji-era Japan. The ideal shōjo of pre-war Japan was protected by a patriarch and educated in elite schools, a pure girl protected from the ugliness of the real world. But because of her naiveté and lack of experience she was also a symbol of latent potential and social freedom.
Since the rapid commercialization of the 1970s, the *shōjo* took on a new role – one of consumer. Young women, who are still largely excluded from the workforce and important social roles – exist as sheer consumers. Like children – a dependent with no means of production – *shōjo* has become a “master trope for all kinds of social consumption”. However, because of this limited opportunity to take on “adult” roles before marriage, the *shōjo* represents a longed-for, carefree, unencumbered life unattainable by men. Lolita, in its excessiveness, exorbitant price tags, and selfish individualism is an embodiment of this ideal. Lolita culture is so perfectly in harmony with the *shōjo* Myth that it even adopted the Victorian Child – the original object of the cult of the child – as its symbolic attire.

Whether this was a conscious decision by the progenitors of Lolita Fashion is unclear, but one thing is certain: like the Victorian gentleman and the cult of the child, men have played a very active role in the creation and propagation of Lolita Fashion. Kinsella contends that young men, envious of the *shōjo* myth, fetishize young women, “either as real girl friends or syrup sweet little girl heroines”. This fetishization can be seen in such men as Novala Take-moto, one of the main proponents of the Lolita lifestyle. Take-moto’s *Shimotsuma Monogatari* was largely responsible for taking Lolita from the back-alleys of Harajuku to the world. However, many Lolita fans are startled to hear Take-moto is actually a straight, middle-aged man, yet is a tireless campaigner for *otome* (乙女) or maiden culture, whose first widely recognized work was entitled *Soleilnuit: For Becoming a Proper Young Lady*. Other examples include the founders of *Baby the Stars Shine Bright* Isobe Akinori and CEO and designer at *Mary Magdalene* Sakamura. These men have, despite being middle-aged and male, dedicated their careers to building up the Lolita industry.

**Lolita Fashion and Lolita Complex: Unfortunate Relatives**

Although Take-moto, Isobe, and Sakamura are relatively positive examples of men who worship at the altar of *shōjo*, whenever Lolita Fashion is discussed it is inevitably faced with difficult questions about its relationship to Lolicon. Lolita Fashion, with all its emphasis on innocence, chastity, and girls-just-wanna-have-fun mindset, bears an unfortunate resemblance to another Japanese phenomenon that emerged in the same period, and for which Japan has become internationally notorious: the Lolita Complex, commonly known in Japan as *Lolicon*.

Lolicon refers to an adult male’s sexual attraction to young girls or girls with youthful characteristics. Lolicon is a major problem (although it is not viewed by the mostly male leadership of Japan as a problem) that has plagued Japan since the 1970s – not coincidentally the same time period that saw the rise of *cute* and Lolita Fashion. For many Japanese men the younger their sexual partner, the better, and this has given rise to a whole host of Lolicon-related industries. Lolicon manga (Japanese comic books) is sold openly in many bookstores, and *enjokōsai* (援助交際), which refers to the practice of junior high and high school girls prostituting themselves with middle-aged men, remains widespread.

The reasons behind Japan’s Lolicon affliction are complex but share many of the same causal factors as Lolita Fashion. Japan has a fairly troubling sexual past – even before the Lolicon boom. In arguably Japan’s most famous literary work *The Tale of Genji* the celebrated title character rapes the child Murasaki, and it was as recently as the 1930s that women were being used as sex slaves all over Asia. The Lolicon phenomenon is not an entirely modern problem.

At its basis, Lolicon stems from a desire to have sex with a girl without any resistance, or without all the trouble of a mature adult relationship. John Whittier Treat argues that Lolicon rose out of the commoditization and fetishization of the *shōjo*. Like everything else in Japan, sex has become commoditized to an extreme degree, and the unproductive Eros of the *shōjo* has not escaped that commoditization. Because *shōjo*, in their unique social role, are seen as passive, they symbolize “a total object, the object of play” which can be used up and thrown away.
Despite the unfortunately similar monikers and shared time frame, Lolita Fashion is essentially the opposite of Lolicon. Likely the biggest reason for the confusion between the two is the name Lolita: which in the United States refers to a pre-pubescent vamp, while in Japan refers to an adult who wishes to remain pure and child-like. Who first started using the term Lolita to refer to the over-the-top virginal fashion is unclear, but the term can probably be thought of as wa-sei eigo (和製英語, English invented in Japan). The vast majority of Lolitas are completely unaware that the fashion subculture they embrace shares its name with a controversial mid-20th-century American novel.

Women who dress in Lolita Fashion are not doing so for the male gaze. Lolitas are very vocal on this point and take care to differentiate themselves from workers at Maid Cafés and even anime fans who dress up as their favorite characters. Photographs are banned in nearly every single Lolita shop, and most Lolitas will not agree to have their photo taken. One thing that all Lolitas can agree on is this: “We wear this fashion for ourselves.” Furthermore, Lolita Fashion, with its emphasis on modesty, extravagance, and narcissistic look-at-me-I-don’t-give-a-damn attitude, is not considered attractive to men of the Lolicon variety, or indeed Japanese men in general. They are more likely to be frightened than allured by a girl fully done-up in Lolita, because although she is displaying external symbols of childishness, any grown woman who is gutsy enough to wear that sort of fashion in public is certainly no coward and not easily taken advantage of: The Lolitas of Lolita Fashion, unlike Nabokov’s Lolita, are actually a pedophile’s worst nightmare: they are not young, they are not sexualized, they are not easily exploitable, and they clearly have a lot of needs to be met.

**Men: Troublesome Objects of Affection**

Although Lolitas take extra precautions to avoid exploitation, they are not intrinsically averse to romantic relationships with men, though their ideal man is likely to never leave his pedestal.

Because of most Lolitas’ vociferous insistence that they are not wearing such a style to attract men, I naively assumed they did not care about men at all. In reality I would often see Lolitas shopping with their boyfriends or husbands, some of them with their own peculiar fashion identity, but most often they looked like typical Japanese guys. Once in a while a girl would come into the store toting a boyfriend dressed in Goth and my coworkers would go into a tizzy. Apparently, the ideal match for a Lolita is a Goth, who like the Lolita is willing to spend hundreds of hours and hundreds of thousands of Japanese yen on creating an identity far removed from reality, and therefore understands the Lolita’s needs. This fact is supported by several Lolita magazines as well as my coworkers, but this fantasy rarely plays out in reality. Lolitas seem more content to worship a vision of their ideal man than actually settle down with a real one.
Although many girls would come into Baby with their mothers to buy clothes, I never saw a Lolita with children of her own. It seems that if one has to balance between the demands of a Lolita lifestyle and one’s family, Lolita usually loses.

**Uncertain Futures**

What does the future hold for the current Lolitas? Although some of them will end up making careers out of their passions, such as what Tanaka Reiko did with *Mary Magdalene*, the majority of these women will face very difficult choices. Working at a company or store specializing in Lolita Fashion is one of the only viable options for girls who wish to wear Lolita Fashion as everyday outfits, but it is difficult for them to support themselves with such work, much less a family. The prejudice directed toward Lolitas makes it difficult to find a marriage partner and they are likely to be pressured to conform to “Japanese housewife” standards after marriage. In addition to this, the older a women becomes the harder it is to pull off the Lolita aesthetic. There is an emerging group of women who choose to wear Lolita Fashion as they age who have come to be called “Aunty Lolitas”, but they are still a small minority.

In my opinion, the fact that, today, nearly forty years after its conception, Lolita Fashion is booming is in general bad news for Japanese society. Although having gone through many stages, including Goth, Punk, and currently saccharine sweet, the idea of escaping from reality still stands at the center of its philosophy. In fact, many of the old-school Lolitas are troubled that the current trend in Lolita Fashion focuses on the creation of a sweet dream fantasy, as opposed to the more outwardly rebellious gothic styles of the 1990s. Rather than expending their creative energy towards achieving social change or form meaningful relationships, they lavish their attention on their own obsessive world of fashion, a female outsider languishing in an unchanging social system.

Although the women I worked with and those that I met insisted they would continue to wear the clothes they loved despite how old they may become, they are facing what is ultimately a losing battle. When asked about their future, most Lolitas either dodge the question or give vague answers such as “I’ll keep doing this for a while.” My coworker Akki at *Mary*, who lived with her single mother and whose boyfriend was unemployed, was surprisingly honest about her bleak situation. “I really want to make Lolita clothing and succeed at *Mary*, but I don’t know. Maybe it would have been better to get a job at a big company like Wacoal. That’s where most of my classmates went.”

Behind the lace, panniers, glitter, and fake eyelashes of the Lolita exterior lies a vulnerable human being who realizes she cannot hide behind a cute exterior forever. However, until the day she finally gives in to her mother’s nagging, sells her Vivienne Westwood shoes and cleans out her closet, she will continue to strut the streets of Harajuku, parasol and stuffed animal rabbit in hand. She acts as a conspicuous reminder not only of modern youth’s resentment of the status quo, but also of their reluctance to do anything meaningful about it.39

**ENDNOTES**

4 Angier, 2006.
7 Kinsella, 1995.
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외일 청간

KOREA
SJEAA
In the early 1960s, South Korea and Indonesia were two of the poorest countries in the world. The next four decades saw South Korea achieve the economic miracle of becoming the world’s eleventh-largest economy and a member of the OECD. During this period, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries posted impressive GDP growth but ultimately came nowhere close to the level of development achieved by South Korea or the economies of the other “Asian Tigers”. This article examines the reasons for the striking difference in economic growth between South Korea and Indonesia, as well as some reasons for their surprisingly similar falls during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. The author concludes that, while there are many contributing factors, the main reason for the discrepancy in growth lies in the different economic policies employed by the US in relation to each country. However, with the end of the Cold War, US policy quickly shifted its emphasis to economic liberalization in South Korea and Indonesia. This created a situation where the two countries became irresistible to Western multi-national corporations (MNCs), ultimately resulting in the near-total collapse of their economies during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. Ultimately, the case of South Korea indicates that certain protectionist policies, when used effectively and with the blessing of larger, more developed economies, can assist developing countries in achieving rapid economic development and a higher level of income equality.
So why is it that by the time of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, South Korea’s per-capita GDP had eclipsed the $10,000 mark (more than 10 times that of Indonesia), and the country had been admitted into the OECD, while Indonesia’s per-capita GDP lagged behind South American and African countries like Bolivia and Swaziland?

Why is it that in 2005 South Korea’s life expectancy was eight years longer than that of Indonesia and the infant mortality rate in South Korea was five per every thousand live births as opposed to twenty-eight per every thousand live births in Indonesia? Why is it that South Korea’s Human Development Index (HDI) rank is 26th in the world, giving it the distinction of being a “highly developed country”, whereas Indonesia falls well below the fiftieth percentile mark at 111? Why is income equality in South Korea and Indonesia so different, with GINI indices of 31.6 and 39.4 respectively (a lower number means a higher level of income equality)? Finally, despite all the discrepancies in the growth of these two countries, why were they two of the worst-hit economies in the 1997 financial crisis?

This paper will first examine economic growth and political change in South Korea and Indonesia from the end of WWII until the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. This will be followed by an exploration of the tools used by each country as a means of facilitating growth. I will then examine some important factors contributing to the difference in growth between the two. Finally, I will look at some of the reasons why these two economies were hit especially hard by the 1997 financial crisis, and what effects the IMF Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) have had on their economic and social systems. The paper will conclude by analyzing the effect that the different use of protectionist measures has had on economic growth in the two countries.

Comparing Economic Growth and Political Change in South Korea and Indonesia

South Korea: Economic Growth and Political Change 1945-1997

The Korean peninsula has often found itself in close proximity to big powers. From its historical role as a tributary vassal state of dynastic China to its present-day division, Korea has been invaded for its strategic location numerous times throughout the course of history. Immediately after WWII, Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation and directly integrated into the post–Yalta Conference world order, with the US occupying the southern half of the

Figure 1: GDP Per Capita in South Korea (ROK) and Indonesia, 1967-2004

![GDP Per Capita](chart.png)

peninsula and the USSR the northern half. During the late 1940s, the US-backed South Korean government eradicated the unionists and communists. However, during this time they also instituted land reform that limited farmland holdings to 7.35 acres. This effectively eliminated the former gentry from the political sphere and created the foundation for a higher level of economic equality in the country.7

The collapse of the Yalta system resulted in the Korean War (1950-1953) which left the peninsula in ruins. In the seven years following the war, the Syngman Rhee regime focused on rehabilitation of the agricultural sector and Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). The 1950s saw slow economic growth and a heavy dependence on foreign aid, the majority of which came from the US.8 After the student uprising in 1960, General Park Chung-hee took power in a military coup and got South Korea started on the fast track to industrialization. For the remainder of the 1960s, Park used the state as an engine for export-led industrialization by focusing the big national conglomerates (chaebol 재벌) on light industrial manufacturing through export promotion.

In the 1970s, the Park government refocused its export promotion from light industry to Heavy Chemical Industrialization (HCI). The HCI drive transformed South Korea into a producer of steel, petrochemicals, and high tech products and enabled the country to become the largest ship builder in the world. Despite a recession, high interest rates, and oil price shocks, South Korea’s economy grew at a rate of over 10% per year9 throughout the 1970s thanks to heavy borrowing from abroad.10

In 1979, president Park was assassinated, marking a change in direction for South Korea. The early 1980s saw GDP growth slow to between 5% and 10% (except for a minor drop in 1980), before picking up steam to average over 10% growth again at the end of the decade.11 However, South Korea faced an oil crisis, labor unrest, and growing impatience from the West over the lack of access for Western multi-national corporations (MNCs) to the South Korean economy. In the early 1990s, with OECD membership pending, South Korea finally liberalized its financial sector allowing for foreign participation in the stock market and limited access to the banking industry. However, foreign entities were still only permitted a 15% ownership stake in South Korean companies, effectively placing the chaebols off-limits to foreign MNCs.12

South Korean Tools of Growth: Bank Control, Export Promotion, and Protectionism

Nearly immediately after assuming power, the Park regime took the important step of nationalizing all of South Korea’s banks. Domination of the banking sector was so complete that by 1970 the government was in control of 96.4% of the country’s financial assets, giving the Park regime the ability to direct the South Korean economy.13 Control of domestic capital was compounded by the fact that the Park government strictly limited Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in South Korea, instead preferring international state-to-state loans. These two factors allowed the government to decide which companies would get credit and which ones would be rejected.14 As Scitovsky notes, this created a situation where “firms that fail to do what the government wants them to do often find that their loan applications are ignored or their outstanding loans fail to be renewed”.15

The government also formed a number of policies giving generous incentives to domestic firms that focused all their energy on export promotion. Tax exemptions were one of the most effective of these incentives. For instance, from 1961 to 1972, the government offered an exemption of up to 50% on corporate and personal income tax from export earnings.16 Regulations also made it easy for firms to import products directly related to exports such as raw materials and parts. At the same time, the government introduced a number of other protectionist policies such as: currency undervaluation, tariff protection, export quotas, wage controls, and production subsidies.17 This protected the domestic chaebols from foreign takeovers and created an environment where long-term growth strategy was actually more profitable than short-term profit.
Indonesia: Economic Growth and Political Change 1945-1997

After WWII, the Indonesians also released themselves from the shackles of Japanese imperialism. However, the Dutch were not quite ready to give up their claim on the archipelago until tense negotiations, and a little nudging from the US after 1948, convinced them to recognize the Republic of Indonesia (at that time called the Republic of the United States of Indonesia) as a sovereign nation in 1949. While not faced with the utter destruction of war like Korea, Indonesia and its charismatic leader Sukarno had their own set of problems in unifying one of the most diverse nations in the world. Sukarno’s government was initially pro-West, even carrying out its own purge of communists in the late 1940s. However, Sukarno and his anti-imperialist rhetoric eventually distanced him from the Western powers and even invited a few coup and assassination attempts with US backing.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Indonesia, like South Korea, adopted a policy of ISI in an attempt to protect its fledgling industries and create a self-sufficient industrialized economy. However, economic growth was stagnant, only increasing at an annual rate of 3.2% from 1951 to 1967. In response to the weak economy, Sukarno declared his ideas of “guided economy” and “guided democracy”, in which he saw himself as the mastermind behind Indonesia’s economic and social development. As Sukarno’s split with the West widened, he evicted Western companies from Indonesia. At the same time he expropriated and nationalized foreign capital, most of which was Dutch, British, or American.

In 1965, General Suharto used a failed coup attempt, which left almost all the army leadership dead, to take control of the army and supplant Sukarno as the country’s leader. When Suharto formally took power in 1967 and set up the “New Order”, Indonesian economic policy changed completely. This was mainly thanks to a group of foreign trained Indonesian economists, known as the Berkeley Mafia, who were chosen by Suharto to fill all the key economic positions in the new government. Unlike the more protectionist policies adopted by General Park in South Korea, in the years immediately following the founding of Suharto’s New Order, Indonesia was opened wide to FDI. This was especially true with regards to the abundant natural resources the archipelago had to offer. Foreign MNCs were allowed 100% ownership in Indonesia and, more importantly, they were allowed to own 100% of natural resources such as gold, copper, hardwood, rubber, natural gas, and oil. As an added incentive the government offered generous tax breaks and in some cases even complete tax holidays lasting several years in order to attract FDI. The Suharto regime was able to boost economic expansion on the back of the country’s natural resources, and from 1968 to 1997 the GDP grew at an average of 7.1% per year. However, this growth was heavily dependent on oil exports, and when the price of oil fell, as it did in the early 1980s, the Indonesian economy was stagnant or in some cases even shrank.

In the 1970s, Indonesia resurrected some barriers to unrestricted foreign access. Foreign companies were limited to 49% ownership; however they were given fifteen years to divest, making the new regulation rather weak, especially considering that it did not apply to natural resources that were already under foreign control. Throughout the decade, oil and natural gas were by far Indonesia’s chief exports accounting for two thirds of the country’s export total in 1979. In the 1980s and 1990s, plunging oil prices forced Indonesia into economic diversification, causing the country’s light manufacturing industry to grow. As time went on, much of Indonesia’s economy was effectively closed to foreigners because of corrupt government monopolies and regulations. Like South Korea, in the early 1990s Indonesia liberalized its capital markets allowing an influx of foreign investment and, until the 1997 financial crisis, the country had been slowly but steadily complying with Western demands to open up the rest of the economy in order to receive foreign aid and loans.

Indonesian Tools of Growth: Natural Resources and FDI

In the early years of Suharto’s New Order, the main driver of economic growth was FDI. After years of a closed-door policy under Sukarno,
Western MNCs were salivating at the thought of unfettered access to Indonesia’s shallow sea oil reserves and other abundant resources. The US firm Freeport was the first to enter Indonesia, gaining 100% ownership of the biggest gold mine in the world along with a three-year tax holiday. These natural resources, especially oil and natural gas, were Indonesia’s main exports. This strategy created impressive GDP growth during the oil booms but rather slow growth when the prices dropped. For instance, according to World Bank statistics the Indonesian economy retracted by 12% in 1983.

When Indonesia’s economy started to diversify in the 1980s, its large, mainly unskilled, and therefore cheap, labor force became an essential factor in the growth of Indonesia’s light industry manufacturing. As in South Korea, Indonesia’s president exerted total control over the economy. However, Suharto exerted direct control, creating or eliminating regulations and monopolies on a whim. Park on the other hand, used more subtle means of control such as the extension or refusal of credit to firms.

Factors Contributing to the Difference in Growth between South Korea and Indonesia

The Resource Curse aka Dutch Disease

The Resource Curse theory (also known as Dutch Disease due to the downturn of the Dutch economy after the discovery of a large natural gas field) points to the relatively slow economic and manufacturing growth of resource-rich countries in comparison with resource-poor countries. Using this theory to compare Indonesia, a land of abundant natural resources, with South Korea, a land of almost none, provides an interesting perspective on the growth of the two countries. Jeffrey Sachs and Andrew M. Warner have noted, “Resource-rich economies are subject to more extreme rent-seeking behavior than resource-poor economies”, leading to corruption and power struggles “inefficiently exhausting the public good”. Another important factor noted is “that manufacturing, as opposed to natural-resource production, leads to a more complex division of labor and hence to a higher standard of living.”

Both of these observations are strikingly true in Indonesia. Transparency International (TI) ranks Suharto at the top of their all-time corruption league table, estimating that the dictator and his family pocketed US$15-35 billion during his 30 years in power. While Indonesia was open to foreign investment and ownership, FDI was heavily reliant on the system of patronage where foreign companies would need to have a powerful friend in the government or the military. In most cases this person had to be directly connected to Suharto himself. Corruption in South Korea, on the other hand, was more subtle. Furthermore, since foreign MNCs had significantly less influence, corrupt capital did not flow out of the country like it did in Indonesia. Indonesia’s dependence on natural resources (especially oil and natural gas) for export revenue artificially pushed up the per-capita GDP without promoting income equality. Especially in the 1970s during the oil boom, Indonesia’s focus on oil slowed down export promotion and industrialization in the manufacturing sector. While South Korea was already in the midst of the HCI drive that helped create a sophisticated division of labor in the country, Indonesia was still relying on oil and natural gas for two thirds of its export revenue.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

The role of FDI in the growth of these two economies is one of the most obvious differences. The first few years of Suharto’s New Order set the tone for the rest of the Suharto regime and FDI continued to increase in Indonesia until the financial crisis. In South Korea, however, the military government immediately imposed strict regulations on the amount of FDI permitted and relied almost entirely on foreign loans (mostly from the US) for its foreign capital needs. It is worth noting that these protectionist regulations must have been imposed with the blessing of the US considering South Korea continued to have the unwavering support of the US government and a steady stream of US loans. This anti-FDI support was apparently not extended to Indonesia. The overall trends of positive FDI growth in Indonesia, and negative FDI in South Korea can be seen in the chart below.
The FDI trends in both countries followed the same historical pattern until the years following the financial crisis. During the first few post-crisis years, South Korea’s chaebol and banking industries were opened to foreign ownership attracting the FDI (mainly in the form of mergers and acquisitions) that had been waiting impatiently for years to sweep into the South Korean markets. In Indonesia the situation was so bad that Suharto was forced to step down creating an unstable and thus unattractive investment environment in the country.

Protectionism

As previously stated, South Korea was very effective in guiding its economy through a number of protectionist policies such as undervaluation of currency, tariff protection, export quotas, wage controls, and production subsidies. The use of these protectionist policies shows the determination of the US not to impose any pressure on its Cold War ally regarding the closed nature of its economy. On the other hand, the Berkeley Mafia and their US advisors guided Indonesia into a policy of complete openness to FDI, which resulted in the country’s natural resources being dominated by Western MNCs.36

Evidently, the lure of Indonesia’s riches was impossible for the US to ignore, which created a policy of instant access to the country. By contrast, in the early years of the Park regime there was nothing worth exploiting in South Korea. This, combined with the US wish for the creation of strong pro-West East Asian economies in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan to act as a buffer against the spread of communism, created a policy of US indulgence towards South Korea’s protected export-led economy.

Employment

Despite the wage controls and limitations imposed upon trade union activity, job security in South Korea was much better than in Indonesia. Regulations requiring mandatory severance pay and the lifetime employment law were aimed at creating an environment of employee loyalty in the chaebols. The government also pushed the chaebols to set up Employee Stock Ownership Programs (ESOP) by mandating that firms must offer employees the right of first refusal on 20% of company stock. As an added bonus, the government offered tax breaks for employees that bought into the programs. The ESOPs were so popular that in 1997, immediately before the crisis, about 76% of Korean workers were participating in the programs.37 The ESOPs and other employee benefits not only helped close the gap between the rich and the poor, but also gave Korean workers more job security, which, in turn, gave them greater spending power. These benefits helped to create a South Korean middle class and the working class became another driver of economic growth.
Heavy Chemical Industrialization (HCI) Drive

In the 1970s, South Korea changed focus from export-led light industry manufacturing to heavy industry and high tech exports. The reasons for this were twofold. First, to continue the trend of impressive economic growth it was necessary to diversify. Second, the slight thawing of relations between the US and South Korea’s communist neighbors (the PRC and the USSR) caused deep concern in a country that was still technically at war. In other words, the shift to production of steel and petrochemicals happened for both economic and defensive reasons. The success of the HCI drive again lay in the government’s ability to give domestic companies a boost through protectionist policies. One example of this is the 1976 government mandate that all crude oil must be delivered in vessels built by the struggling Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI). Within 10 years HHI had become the largest shipbuilder in the world.38

During the period of South Korea’s HCI drive, the Indonesian government focused on collecting revenues from the high price of oil. In the 1980s and 1990s when the Indonesian economy was attempting to diversify, the heavy industries and high tech sectors lagged behind, mired in corruption and heavily dependent on foreign technology. Suharto imposed protectionist measures himself. However, unlike the South Korean measures that were used as tools to jumpstart domestic companies, Suharto’s measures were largely put in place to protect interests held by his family or close associates. One striking example of this was the “national car” policy announced by Suharto in 1996. This policy provided a huge tax break to the PT Timor Putra Nasional (TPN) car manufacturer, which, coincidentally, was owned by Suharto’s son Tommy. Ironically, Tommy could not get his company’s production lines up and running in enough time to domestically produce the first fleet of Timors, so the “national cars” were wholly produced, assembled, and imported from Kia Motors in South Korea.39

Education

Education is the only reason listed here where South Korea had a tangible advantage over Indonesia from the beginning. This is due to the fact that the Korean illiteracy rate was already below 10% in the 1960s40, while Indonesian illiteracy was still hovering around 33% as late as 1980.41 In fact, South Korea has consistently put a heavy focus on education. During its time as a developing nation, more than 10% of the South Korean GDP was spent on education (the highest among all developing countries) and South Korea was second in the world behind the US in the percentage of high school graduates advancing to university.42

According to the World Bank, in 1998 28% of South Korea’s labor force had received higher education compared to only 4% in Indonesia.43 South Korea’s high level of education provided the country with the skilled labor force necessary to accomplish the HCI drive and become a world leader in high tech industries. In this regard Indonesia still lags far behind. While the country has recently achieved 90% enrollment in primary education, enrollment in secondary and tertiary education is much lower44, presenting a continued challenge for future economic diversification.

Preliminary Conclusions

To sum up, despite having a similar economic and political environment in the decade following the Second World War, South Korea and Indonesia took very different development paths after 1960. The South Korean government took control of the banking sector and used credit allocation to push export promotion that eventually created a complex division of labor. At the same time the government utilized a number of protectionist measures in order to shelter the country’s budding industries from foreign influence. This was all done with the implicit consent of the United States who was furnishing South Korea with state-to-state loans. Indonesia, on the other hand, had too many natural riches to be given the same rights of protectionism as South Korea. Moreover, Indonesia was not on the front line of the Cold War like South Korea. Therefore, under the direction of the Berkley Mafia, Suharto’s New Order opened the country to FDI and focused the economy on natural resource extraction by foreign MNCs.
It is not hard to determine which of these development paths was more successful. Protectionism allowed South Korea to become one of the world’s most powerful economies with a per-capita GDP ten times that of Indonesia. More importantly, South Korea has a much higher level of income equality and is a highly developed country according to the HDI. However, as the Cold War ended, the push for economic liberalization in Asia began in earnest. In the next section we will explore how this economic liberalization eventually precipitated a financial crisis that would bring both of these very different economies to their knees while stripping away many of the protectionist tools that helped South Korea become an economic powerhouse.

The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis

In the 1990s the second-best world, the world of blocs, or iron and bamboo curtains, unexpectedly disappeared – and therefore, so has American indulgence for the neo-mercantilism of its East Asian allies, which was always a function of the cold-war struggles with their opposites.

Despite all the economic differences listed above, by the early 1990s, as the world was awakening to the reality of the sudden end to the Cold War, the two countries once again possessed some important similarities. While Indonesia was nowhere near the economic development of South Korea (by then South Korea was already the eleventh largest economy in the world), the country had managed to diversify its economy from the oil dependence of the 1970s. Thanks to an export-led approach, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw Indonesia’s economy grow at an annual rate of over 10%. Most importantly, both economies were, for the most part, shut to the Western world. South Korea had largely managed to resist Western pressure and protect its domestic industries, while Indonesia had become increasingly isolated due to corruption and cronyism. This was mainly manifested by Suharto using tariffs and regulations to shut out foreigners in order to enrich his family and associates.

The end of the Cold War brought a completely new dynamic to international relations in Asia. With the threat of the communist bloc gone, South Korea’s homegrown industries represented by the chaebols suddenly became irresistible to Western MNCs, much like Indonesia’s natural resources had been just 30 years earlier. MNCs also longed for a return to the unfettered access to Indonesia’s riches and cheap labor force that had slowly been regulated away.

The one area in which both countries had bowed to Western pressure was the financial sector. With a membership to the OECD on the table, South Korea had relented, allowing foreign participation in the stock market and limited access to the banking industry. Indonesia had also opened their capital markets in a bid to receive aid money and loans from Western countries. While the liberalization of capital markets allowed “hot money” to rush into the countries and created booming stock markets in the early 1990s, it was this same liberalization that eventually caused the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis.

The crisis began in Thailand over fears that the country did not have enough foreign reserves to back up its currency. The resulting panic caused investors to pull out of Thailand at lighting speed. Unfortunately, most investments had been part of package deals that included other Asian economies. Therefore, the sudden outflow of “hot money” from the Thai capital markets and the resulting collapse of the Thai economy dragged its Asian neighbors down with it. Affected countries were forced to drain their reserves to prop up their currencies. Columbia Economist Jeffrey Sachs has pointed out that there was no fundamental reason for the crisis except for pure panic on the part of investors.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was initially created for this exact situation. Had the IMF reacted quickly and discretely with loans to prop up the currencies of the failing countries, the crisis would likely have been averted. However, the IMF failed to do so until it was far too late. By the time the IMF put together a mammoth bailout package for Asia with US$43 billion earmarked for Indonesia and a whop-
ping US$57 billion for South Korea, the two countries’ foreign reserves were drained and their currencies were in serious trouble. Stanley Fisher of the IMF stated, “You can’t force a country to ask you for help. It has to ask. But when it’s out of money, it hasn’t got many places to turn.”51 With this attitude, the IMF entered the Asian Financial Crisis with money tied to a long list of SAPs forcing South Korea and Indonesia “to sign agreements that looked more like Christmas trees than contracts”.52 The SAPs intended result was to open the two economies to foreign participation and in this they were resoundingly successful. However, the IMF SAPs had other consequences that will be explored in the next two sections.

**IMF Structural Adjustment Programs: South Korea**

The IMF set the tone for negotiations in South Korea by requiring all the presidential candidates in the upcoming elections to officially “endorse” whatever agreement was reached and to abide by the stipulated SAPs.53 Through this, the IMF effectively eliminated democracy from the equation, giving itself more room to open the Korean economy to the world. In South Korea, these conditions recalled the dark days of colonialism and “the day the deal was signed was instantly dubbed Korea’s ‘National Humiliation Day’”.54

The most drastic changes introduced through SAPs were with regards to FDI and foreign ownership. The regulations restricting foreign ownership were completely lifted, allowing for 100% ownership by foreign companies. This opened the floodgates and led to a deluge of FDI flowing into the country. Today, US firms own 40% of the shares on the South Korean stock market as well as one third of the country’s banking industry.55 There was no better time for Western MNCs to enter South Korea, as many of the chaebols, who just a year before had been strong members of the Fortune 500, were now either bankrupt or in very vulnerable positions. This resulted in a fire sale of assets, company divisions, and even entire chaebols. Daewoo Motors was eventually sold to GM for a measly US$400 million, when at the beginning of the crisis it was valued at US$7 billion.56

It was the working class who was most affected by the SAPs. The IMF demanded a number of austerity measures necessitating budget cuts that sparked mass layoffs. The SAPs also eliminated many of South Korea’s employee benefits and protections, such as the lifetime employment law and mandatory severance pay. Companies were also no longer required to provide ESOPs for their workers causing a sharp decline in employee participation.57 The suffering endured by the people of South Korea during the crisis can be seen in very real terms by the fact that the suicide rate increased by over 50% during this period.58

**IMF Structural Adjustment Programs: Indonesia**

In Indonesia, the IMF mandated a record 140 SAPs dismantling government monopolies and deregulating almost every aspect of the economy. When the Indonesian government protested against some of the SAPs, news that Indonesia might not receive the bailout money was leaked to the media resulting in further panic and causing the rupiah to lose 25% of its value in a single day. SAPs were directly responsible for the closing of sixteen Indonesian banks. Since there were no assurances on the stability of others, there was a run on the banks that almost brought down Indonesia’s entire banking industry.59

As in South Korea, the SAPs caused widespread unemployment while at the same time cutting subsidies on daily necessities. Without the subsidies, prices skyrocketed – an effect that was compounded by the collapse of the currency. People lost their jobs and saw their savings disappear in bank closings. Meanwhile the currency collapsed while the prices of food and other necessities skyrocketed. This trifecta of suffering pushed the poverty rate from 11% in 1996 all the way up to 37.9% in 1999.60 Unfortunately, the despair of the Indonesian people expressed itself in the form of violent riots directed at Indonesians of Chinese descent which left thousands dead and many more injured.
Reaction to the IMF 
Structural Adjustment Programs

The sudden destruction of economies that had seemed so strong and the widespread human suffering in the affected countries gave many in the world of economics pause and eventually split the community into two camps. Those like Stanley Fischer, then first deputy managing director of the IMF, believed that “the benefits of liberalizing the capital account outweigh the potential costs”.61 On the other hand, Joseph Stiglitz, the former chief economist of the World Bank, thought that liberalization without proper regulation was at the core of the crisis. He pointed to the fact that countries like India and China that had maintained their capital controls had made it through the crisis relatively unscathed. Stiglitz argued that stronger and more effective controls lead to more stability and thus more long-term investment, while even going so far as to subtly accuse the IMF of bowing to special interests.62

Conclusions

Aside from being representative of the regions of East Asia and Southeast Asia, South Korea and Indonesia are also representative of two distinct positions in the world order that has changed surprisingly little since the West first collided with Asia. Ever since the first European traders arrived in what is now Indonesia, the area has been primarily a source of raw materials and natural resources. Korea has historically been a buffer zone between great powers, a position it has held from its time as a tributary vassal state to dynastic China until the modern-day division hewed out by the post-WWII superpowers in order to maintain a balance between opposing ideologies. By understanding these different positions in the world order it becomes easier to understand some of the fundamental reasons for the difference in economic growth in these two countries since the end of WWII.

There are, of course, countless reasons that have played a role in creating the modern-day economic situations in these countries. As previously stated, education is an important factor that is often neglected. The two Asian countries that experienced the most dramatic “miracle” growth are South Korea and Japan. Not coincidentally, these two countries already had very high literacy rates when they began their modern economic development and they also devoted relatively more resources to education than other developing nations.

However, while there may be countless factors contributing to the difference in growth, the main reason lies in US policy towards the two countries. Without the blessing of the US, the Park regime would never have been able to institute the wide-ranging protectionist policies and completely shut out FDI in favor of state-to-state loans. In the end it is precisely this strategy which allowed South Korean chaebols to grow into Fortune 500 companies. At any moment, the US could have put an end to South Korea’s homegrown export-led industrialization experiment by simply refusing loans and demanding that the country open its doors to FDI. However, this didn’t happen, just as it didn’t happen in Japan or Taiwan. In the Cold War world, the East Asian security network had to be strong, and this meant strong economically. At the same time that the US was indulging South Korea’s protected economy it was pushing for a totally open one in Indonesia. The 100% foreign ownership and FDI flowing in to control Indonesia’s natural resources is a stark contrast to the situation in South Korea, and herein lies the fundamental difference.

So what can we take from this? One country, which is provided with loan support and is allowed to protect its economy from foreign interests, transforms itself from an economic backwater to the eleventh-largest economy in the world with a high level of income equality within 40 years. In that same time period another country flings its doors open to FDI and foreign MNCs. This second country grows steadily but has a low level of income equality, rampant corruption and a per-capita GDP less than one-tenth of the first country. It would seem that protectionist policies, when used correctly, can be very beneficial for developing countries as a means to guide their economies and promote income equality. Purely free-market policies, on the other hand, seem to promote growth but not at the same rate and are lacking in the promotion of income equality. Therefore,
if powerful economies such as the US truly want to help developing countries, they should use South Korea as a template for themselves when making policy decisions. It is safe to say that regulations, far from hindering South Korea’s growth, provided the necessary tools to guide the economy to the level of sophistication that we see today. In fact, it was the deregulation of the financial industry that caused the worst crisis in both of these countries’ modern economic histories.

For this reason it is imperative that the financial sector, and especially capital markets, are intelligently regulated. In the electronic age, money can flow faster than ever and, with no barriers in place to control it, small panics can become huge crises affecting millions or even billions of people in the blink of an eye. Capital markets should be used as tools to stimulate long-term growth. In order to accomplish this, Ha-Joon Chang notes that financial markets need to become significantly less efficient and more closely linked to the real economy.63 This means limiting FDI in the form of speculative “hot money” that can flow into a country through liberalized capital markets and reinstating some effective forms of protectionism for developing economies.

In a purely unregulated free market there are inevitable booms and crashes; however, effective government regulation can minimize this cycle by refocusing the economy on long-term growth instead of short-term profit. It is necessary to minimize the boom-and-bust cycle because it is extremely dangerous. The 50% increase in South Korea’s suicide rate and the riots targeting Indonesians of Chinese descent are examples of what can happen in a smaller downturn such as the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. Nazi Germany, Japanese Militarism, and WWII are examples of what can happen during a large worldwide economic depression. In order to ensure worldwide growth, it is necessary to understand that economic security is directly related to global security. Ultimately, developed economies can and should adopt responsible economic policies for themselves and towards the developing world.

ENDNOTES


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Nicholas Loubere

Nicholas Loubere is currently preparing to begin his PhD study through the White Rose East Asia Centre/East Asian Studies at the University of Leeds on a Fully-Funded International Research Scholarship (FIRS). Nicholas graduated with a bachelor’s degree in English Literature from Northern Illinois University and spent one year studying abroad at the University of Bristol in England. After graduation Nicholas volunteered on an archeological dig in Peru, studied Spanish, and finally moved to China, where he spent three years teaching before being accepted for a China Scholarship Council (CSC) scholarship to pursue a master’s degree in Asia-Pacific International Relations at Xiamen University. Nicholas’ PhD research will focus on actor-oriented perspectives of the rapidly expanding microfinance industry in China. He is especially interested in how microfinance is impacting rural livelihoods and entrepreneurship in the Chinese context.
South Korea, despite being the world’s fifteenth-largest economy, most wired nation, and home to some of the world’s most famous corporate brands, is still not well-known to many foreigners. The general perception that many outsiders – especially those in the West – have of South Korea is often negative and distorted and does not reflect what many South Koreans feel is the truth about their country. In an effort to address South Korea’s image problem, President Lee made it one of his top priorities upon entering office to improve South Korea’s image abroad. In January 2009 he established the Presidential Council on Nation Branding to design and manage his global public relations campaign for South Korea. This paper will discuss some of the most recent and current activities in which the South Korean government has been involved to promote its country (particularly within the United States) and will analyze some of the obstacles and potential challenges the campaign faces. The paper will also seek to assess the effectiveness of the government’s nation-branding projects thus far and present the general prospects of the campaign.

Background on South Korea’s nation-branding campaign

South Korea, despite its technological advances, rapid economic development, and rich culture, has by and large not received the recognition it deserves and is in serious need of an image enhancement. For many people, the name “Korea” conjures up a variety of negative images (North Korea, the Korean War, a xenophobic population, etc.), or no image at all, a fact that worries many Korean policymakers. The South Korean government, realizing the need to narrow the gap between the current reality of South Korea and the foreign public’s often skewed perception of it, has thus in recent years shifted its focus from hard power to soft power and stepped up its efforts to promote Korean culture overseas.

South Korea’s determined efforts to improve its image might lead one to question what importance a nation’s image really holds: what are the effects of a nation’s brand? First, nation branding that successfully enhances a country’s image can have positive economic effects: it can boost tourism, draw in more foreign investment, and increase the value and flow of exports from the country (which is highly beneficial for an export-oriented economy such as that of Korea). In addition, a higher national brand value can translate into greater status in the international community and more influence in global affairs. Third, and perhaps most interestingly, nation branding is, in the words of Keith Dinnie, a professor at Temple University’s Japan campus, “a form of self-defense in which countries seek to tell their own stories rather than be defined by foreign media, rival nations, or the perpetuation of national stereotypes”. Hence, nation branding can be a means by which smaller and lesser-known countries like South Korea can increase their soft power and become more visible in the global community.

In light of these benefits, current President Lee Myung-bak has made it one of his top priorities to upgrade Korea’s national brand image. In January 2009 he created the Presidential Council on Nation Branding, consisting of 47 members, including 13 government officials (8 of whom are ministers) and 34 civilian members (mostly from the private sector). The Council was created partly in response to South
South Korea’s dismal ranking of 33 out of 50 nations according to the 2008 Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, which is currently the most widely-accepted system for measuring the global reputation of a country – in other words, the country’s “brand image”. In an interview with The Korea Times, Euh Yoon-dae, the inaugural chairman of the Council, called South Korea’s low ranking “a shame for Koreans”, especially considering South Korea’s status as the fifteenth-largest economy in the world. Euh also stated that Korea’s image abroad is “less than clear and, by and large, very narrow”, and emphasized the importance of improving the Korean brand in enhancing Korea’s competitiveness in the global economy.

In the Council’s first report to President Lee in March 2009, Euh announced that the Council aimed to raise South Korea’s ranking in the index a whopping 18 spots to rank 15 over the next four years. This ambitious plan was met with much skepticism from numerous experts, including Simon Anholt, the British government advisor who first coined the term “nation branding”. In an interview with The Korea Times, Anholt said, “No country has ever moved by more than one or two places in the national brand index, and in any case this isn’t the proper way of using the index.” Realizing the extreme difficulty of this daunting task (South Korea moved up only two spots from 33rd to 31st in Anholt’s 2009 Nation Brands Index) and believing that the Anholt-GfK Index did not accurately measure a nation’s brand image, the Council created its own nation brands index in conjunction with the Samsung Economic Research Institute (SERI) in July 2009. The index was tentatively named the PCNB-SERI Brand Index and would be published every year beginning in 2009. Euh said in an interview with Joongang Daily that the purpose of the index would be to evaluate objectively the effectiveness of the Council’s efforts to improve the Korea brand, adding that he believed that Korea’s brand index “will be more efficient and accurate than other systems now in use”. However, some critics have questioned the objectivity of the index: after all, the Samsung Economic Research Institute, despite being an NGO, is still a Korean organization, and many analysts find it hard to believe that such an index would not be biased in favor of Korea, despite Euh’s claims to objectivity. A popular blog on nation branding has likened the act to “a pupil making his own exam”. Professor Nicholas Cull of the University of Southern California remarked, “What is least encouraging is the suggestion that one mechanism to advance Korea in the international brand leagues might be to simply change the leagues […] The result looks suspiciously like Simon Anholt’s original formulation with a few extra tweaks to spread the criteria of analysis into areas of comparative strength for Korea”.

Despite these criticisms, the Council and SERI proceeded to publish their first results in December 2009. The index was renamed the Nation Brand Dual Octagon (NBDO) and actually consisted of two sub-indices: an authentic brand index that was based on statistical evidence and an image brand index that was measured by conducting a poll of 13,500 people in twenty-six countries. Both sub-indices measured fifty countries using eight criteria: the economy, science and technology, government efficiency, infrastructure, traditional culture, modern culture, natural resources, and people and celebrities. South Korea ranked 19th in the authentic brand index (the United States ranked first) and 20th in the image brand index (in which France ranked first). According to a researcher at SERI, the survey implied that “South Korea should improve its infrastructure and government efficiency […] which fall behind the average of OECD members”.

Shortly after the Presidential Council on Nation Branding was formed, Euh acknowledged the enormity of the Council’s task by saying, “Korea’s national brand is seriously weak and the country’s image does not compare with its national power. This is one of the tasks that the nation should address most urgently, as it strives to leap into the ranks of the world’s most advanced countries.” The Council wasted no time in tackling this urgent problem and launched its nation-branding project in March 2009 with the following 10 action points:

1. Promote taekwondo: Every year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT),
in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST), and the Korea Taekwondo Association, sends taekwondo performance teams to different countries to promote Korea’s national sport, but in 2009 the government increased its efforts by launching a project called “Enjoy Taekwondo”. The project includes supporting taekwondo-related movies and video games, building an exhibition center in Korea that will hold taekwondo demonstrations throughout the year, sending more taekwondo instructors abroad, and creating an online taekwondo manual.

2. Dispatch service volunteers abroad every year: In May 2009 the Korean government launched World Friends Korea, a program like the United States Peace Corps that will send over 3,000 volunteers to developing countries every year. This makes South Korea second only to the United States in the number of volunteers sent abroad annually.

3. Adopt a “Korean Wave” program: Named after the Korean culture boom that has swept across Asia, this program aims to help developing countries achieve rapid economic development like South Korea did by providing them with technological support.

4. Introduce the Global Korea scholarship: A scholarship program has been established for foreign students to study in Korea in an effort to improve the group’s image of the country.

5. Adopt a Campus Asia program: A separate program in which the Korean government seeks to recruit and train talented young minds from other Asian countries.

6. Increase external aid: In addition to sending more humanitarian volunteers, Korea aims to increase its level of economic aid to developing countries. While Euh indicated that Korea’s official development assistance (ODA) has increased over recent years, he acknowledged that the amount was still small compared to contributions from other advanced countries and that Korea needed to work on further increasing its own.

7. Develop state-of-the-art technologies: South Korea plans to improve on its already impressive technological achievements and become the forefront of cutting-edge technology.

8. Nurture the culture and tourism industries.

9. Treat foreigners and multi-cultural families better: In an effort to improve Korea’s attractiveness as a tourist destination, the government has started a campaign to encourage Koreans to be friendlier and more hospitable to foreigners.

10. Help Koreans become “global citizens”: The government has been trying to foster a greater sense of multiculturalism and open-mindedness in Korean society by promoting exchange programs, sending volunteers abroad (as mentioned previously), and establishing cultural centers in Korea that educate domestic Koreans about other cultures.

Recent and Current Efforts by the Korean Government to Improve the Korea Brand through Cultural Diplomacy

In addition to the ten-point action plan, the Korean government is attempting to utilize cultural diplomacy to enhance Korea’s image. Such efforts have been implemented through several different avenues, including pop culture, language, traditional cuisine, and the arts.

Although the Korean Wave, or Hallyu (한류, the Korean term that refers to the popularity of Korean culture, especially pop culture, abroad), has waned in recent years, the Korean government has tried to sustain it by subsidizing the costs of production of some Korean dramas, movies, and documentaries, since high production costs are part of the reason for Hallyu’s decline. While it is true that much of the effort to promote the Korean Wave has been spearheaded by the private sector (e.g. entertainment companies), the Korean government has been extremely supportive of its actions and has tried to complement them by, for instance, sending Korean celebrities to other parts of Asia to spread their work. In addition, the government has made it possible for popular Korean television dramas to be aired in remote countries such as Paraguay, Swaziland, Iran, Peru, and
Morocco. Many South Korean policymakers see the Korean Wave as highly effective in improving Korea’s image and increasing South Korea’s soft power, and have been working to find ways to use Hallyu to both attract more tourists and boost national exports.20

Besides entertainment, other aspects of Korean culture have been key in broadening the international perception of Korea. One of the government’s major recent projects has been to spread the Korean language. MCST plans to unify all Korean language institutes around the world under one title, the King Sejong Institute (named after the famous king who invented hangeul 한글, the Korean alphabet), by 2010.21 Akin to France’s Alliance Française or Germany’s Goethe-Institut, the single name would serve as a recognizable go-to language organization for foreigners with Korean language ambitions. The ministry has announced plans to establish an additional 500 King Sejong Institutes overseas by 2015.22

In April 2009 the South Korean government started a campaign to globalize hanshik (한식), or Korean cuisine. The main aims are to make Korean food more accessible in other countries, raise awareness of its health benefits, and improve the reputation of its taste. The government has invested $40 million in the campaign with the hopes of making Korean food one of the world’s top five favored cuisines by 2017.23 Plans include opening an additional 30,000 Korean restaurants abroad by 201724 and starting Korean cooking classes at prestigious culinary schools around the world, such as Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and the Culinary Institute of America.25 The Korean First Lady Kim Yoon-ok herself has been one of the campaign’s most active supporters: she is the honorary chairwoman of the Globalization of the Korean Cuisine Committee and has prepared Korean food for various special events, including the ASEAN-Korea Commemorative Summit held in June 2009 and President Lee’s visit to the United States in September 2009, during which she cooked Korean food for Korean War veterans.26 In addition, she gave a presentation on Korean cuisine for CNN’s special feature Eye on South Korea, which was broadcast on CNN International in October 2009.27

Every year MOFAT sends Korean performance troupes abroad and organizes Korean art exhibitions and film festivals in many different countries for foreign exposure. In 2009 a total of 77 events pertaining to the Korean arts were held in 47 countries with the support of MOFAT.28 MOFAT carefully selects the performance groups and art exhibitions, taking into account the cultural characteristics and preferences of each host country. In addition, MOFAT conducts surveys at the end of each performance, in which the audience is asked to provide feedback to facilitate the ministry’s future performance-to-country matches.29 MOFAT has also continued to exhibit Korean traditional and contemporary art pieces in embassies and consulates throughout the world to highlight the work of Korean artists. The ministry has been running a website since 2007 called Cyber Art Gallery30, which shows these selected works of art on display. Every year a different set of artwork is presented on the website so that online visitors can experience the genre’s breadth and variety. The online collections from 2007 and 2008 even have English descriptions explaining both the art and the artists behind them.

The Korean government has also been working to increase Korea’s status in the international community by cooperating more closely with multilateral organizations such as UNESCO. Korea is an active member of the UNESCO Executive Board, participating in eight intergovernmental committees of UNESCO and thus adopting on a greater role in shaping global cultural debates and policies.31 In June 2008, Korea became a board member of the Intergovernmental Committee of Intangible Cultural Heritage, taking on a voice in determining and preserving elements of cultural heritage around the world.32 In fact, in September 2009, five of Korea’s traditional dances and rituals were added to UNESCO’s List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.33

Sports diplomacy has also been a vital component of Korea’s nation-branding strategy. Besides promoting taekwondo, Korea has been bidding relentlessly to host a number of international sports events, including the 2011 International Athletic Games, the 2014 Asian Games, the 2014 Winter Olympics, the 2018
Winter Olympics, and the 2022 FIFA World Cup. In 2007, Korea was chosen to host the 2011 International Athletic Games (to be held in Daegu) and the 2014 Asian Games (to be held in Incheon).\textsuperscript{34} Korea lost its bid to host the 2014 Winter Olympics, but has placed its bid for the subsequent Winter Olympics in 2018. The government expects that successful bids to host the 2018 Winter Olympics and the 2022 FIFA World Cup would greatly improve Korea’s national image and boost tourism and the economy.

Korea was also selected to host the G20 Summit for November 2010, an event viewed as a major opportunity to enhance its global status. In preparation for the event, the Presidential Council on Nation Branding drew up a formal list of goals, which included naming a park and a street after the summit in its honor, organizing a forum for student leaders from the G20 countries, creating self-promotional ads to be shown by international media such as BBC and CNN, promoting Korean culture and food to foreigners, using the Internet to educate people about Korea, and more.\textsuperscript{35} President Lee said that “Korea should take advantage of the event to become a more respected and powerful nation”, adding that “it will be a good opportunity, too, to upgrade global awareness about Korea’s potential as well as the remarkable achievements the nation has made during the past decades”.\textsuperscript{36}

Problems and obstacles to overcome in enhancing Korea’s national image

Despite its multi-pronged branding strategy and firm determination to improve its image, Korea faces a number of hurdles that impede its quest for a better global reputation. For example, the current tourism slogan for Korea, “Korea Sparkling”, has received much criticism, and many experts have complained that it sounds like an advertisement for “carbonated or sparkling water” instead of a “catchy tourism slogan”.\textsuperscript{37} Euh remarked, “The campaign has cost the government millions of dollars, but whether it attained the desired effects is questionable.”\textsuperscript{38} In July 2009 the Council decided to abandon “Korea Sparkling” and replace it with something yet to be determined.\textsuperscript{39} The Council is also considering replacing the national slogan “Dynamic Korea” with one that more eloquently represents modern-day Korea.\textsuperscript{40} However, as Keith Dinnie notes, slogans can only do so much and are “no substitute for intelligent coordination of different stakeholders and substantive improvement of the nation’s capabilities, whether in terms of being a good location for business, study, or visiting”.\textsuperscript{41}

Korea’s nation-branding campaign also suffers from a lack of organized coordination. Local governments throughout Korea seem more focused on promoting their own respective cities rather than working with the national government to create a more unified, well-defined image of the country. Numerous cities have been conducting their own city-branding campaigns, even competing with each other for the world’s attention and highlighting their individual strengths with little regard for the possibility that these actions contribute to a disjointed national picture.\textsuperscript{42} The Presidential Council on Nation Branding acknowledged the need for better coordination between the national and municipal governments and expressed its intent to reorganize branding activities.\textsuperscript{43}

A major reason for this lack of coordination is the underlying disagreement over which aspects of Korea and Korean culture to promote. For instance, some Korean policymakers favor emphasizing Korea’s traditional culture over its contemporary one, while others believe it more necessary to reinvent Korea by promoting its more modern developments (Korean pop culture, recent advances in science and technology, etc.). Euh himself seems to fall into the latter category, stating in an interview with \textit{Joongang Daily} that “While most tourism campaigns feature history and folk culture, it is more important to show where Korea stands right now as a modern, industrialized nation. Posters of traditional Korean masks sometimes make foreigners wonder if the country is still a developing nation”.\textsuperscript{44}

This lack of general consensus on what Korea is seems to drive Korean officials’ difficulty in their nation-branding efforts.\textsuperscript{45} The issue is compounded by inherent cultural and language barriers that have hindered Koreans from effectively presenting their culture abroad. Negative
publicity surrounding certain Korean practices (political corruption, the prevalence of plastic surgery, the consumption of dog meat, and the existence of Nazi-themed bars, among others) has only hurt Korea’s image in the eyes of the world. Korea needs to overcome such elements that threaten to damage its reputation, a task that the nation-branding Council has set out to do. One of the Council’s primary strategies to dampen the effects of these negative images is to spin them into more positive characteristics. For example, President Lee suggested promoting the beef protests as evidence that Korean citizens have a healthy dose of activism and are by no means apathetic to such issues.46

Another challenge that South Korea faces is the general ignorance foreigners have about it, though this reality has dichotomous consequences. It can be a blessing by giving South Korea the opportunity to build its image from scratch and mold itself into whatever it wants to be in the international view (as it has done with, for example, the Southeast Asian countries, where Korea has successfully portrayed itself as “cool” and “hip” thanks to the massive export of its pop culture). However, it can also be a curse by deeming South Korea as less relevant or important in comparison to its bigger, more powerful neighbors of China and Japan; in this latter case, Korea has to work particularly hard to show the world why it matters. Moreover, many non-Koreans who do have knowledge of the country, especially those in Western countries, may have one that is limited to what they see and hear from the media, which usually devote a disproportionate amount of coverage to Kim Jong-il and the North Korean nuclear issue.

Such uneven media coverage makes it even more difficult for South Korea to disassociate the Korea brand from North Korea, which it already strives to do. “One unfortunate thing is that South Korea shares its name with a rogue state. The link to North Korea is bad news. It gets painted with the same brush”, says Simon Anholt in an LA Times article.47 And it does not help that the DMZ has become one of the most popular tourist attractions in Korea, further ingraining South Korea’s connection to its northern brother in foreigners’ minds. “Korean travel agencies unthinkingly take foreign tourists [to the DMZ]. In terms of nation branding, it is a really bad idea”, says Euh.48 Euh noted that many foreigners who visit South Korea often do not take anything else away from their trip besides South Korea’s “confrontation with North Korea”.49 The nation-branding Council even found that 48.4% of surveyed foreigners living in Korea believed that inter-Korean confrontation was the main reason for South Korea’s weak national brand.50

One thing with which South Korea does want to link itself are its internationally renowned chaebols (재벌, business conglomerates) like Samsung, Hyundai, and LG. Unfortunately, despite South Korea’s technological achievements and its successful commercial brands, many consumers fail to identify these products and services with Korea. Part of the reason stems from the fact that the chaebols are generally reluctant to associate their brands with Korea, perhaps fearing that a connection with the country’s relatively lagging world reputation might discourage consumers from buying their products. Interestingly enough, some Korean government officials seem to believe that such corporate brands can no longer be associated with Korea because they have become truly global, with offices and factories in many different countries and numerous non-Korean employees working for them. Nevertheless, the public still tends to associate many MNCs with their respective countries of origin (Sony with Japan, for example), so it would seem that advertising these chaebol brands as being Korean would only serve to raise Korea’s international reputation.

The South Korean Government’s Efforts to Promote the Korea Brand in the United States, and Specifically in Washington, DC

Although South Korea has had a longer history of contact with the United States than with many other countries outside of Asia, many – if not most – Americans remain barely acquainted with the country. It has been more difficult to promote Korean culture within the United States than in many other nations, partly because of the sheer size of the United States and also the fact that most Korean cultural
events (such as concerts and film screenings) in the country have thus far taken place in large metropolitan areas such as New York and Los Angeles, cities with already sizeable Korean populations. Moreover, when these events do occur, most of the audience usually turns out to be Korean or Korean-American. However, the Korean government is working hard to find new and creative ways to more extensively promote the Korea brand. Much of the challenge lies in finding those aspects of Korea that will interest Americans in particular, and recognizing that what has worked for Korea in other regions might not work in the United States. For example, while concerts featuring traditional Korean music have had receptive audiences in Africa, they do not seem to have had as much success in the United States.51 “Different approaches are necessary to promote national image in different regions”, stated the Korean Institute for Industrial Policy Studies, which recently ranked South Korea tenth in brand value according to its own nation-branding survey.52

Furthermore, the issue of Korea’s nation branding and cultural diplomacy seems neither urgent nor important to Korea-related organizations in the United States, with the exception of some organizations in New York City (e.g. the Korea Society and the Korean Cultural Service) and Los Angeles (e.g. the Korean Cultural Center) and the KORUS House and the Korea Foundation in Washington, DC (both of which are government-affiliated organizations). In Washington, DC for example, think tanks and other research institutions with any interest in the Korean Peninsula tend to be much more concerned about South Korea’s other issues, particularly those in relation to North Korea. The US-Korea Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), for instance, started a project on studying South Korea’s grand strategy and nation-branding policies in 2007, but folded shortly thereafter due to lack of student and faculty interest.53

The KORUS House and the Korea Foundation are the two organizations in Washington, DC, that have been the most active in promoting Korean culture and Korea’s brand image. The KORUS House was founded in 1996 by the South Korean Embassy as a separate location specially dedicated to fostering the US-ROK alliance and promoting mutual understanding between the two countries. The KORUS House is in charge of organizing and managing all cultural events and programs for the Korean Embassy. Its recent and ongoing activities include offering three levels of Korean language classes and organizing Korean food festivals, art exhibitions and film screenings, usually held at the KORUS House or one of the Smithsonian institutions. In addition, the KORUS House has invited distinguished *samulnori* (사물놀이), a form of traditional Korean percussion music) performance troupes from Korea to hold concerts for audiences in the DC area.54

The Korea Foundation has also been active in local promotion of Korean culture. Established in 1991 as an organization affiliated with MOFAT, the Korea Foundation’s purpose is to support academic and cultural exchange programs in order to promote a better and more favorable world understanding of Korea.55 The Korea Foundation’s United States office was established in Washington, DC in 2005. The DC branch works with the Korea Foundation headquarters in Seoul to organize Korean performances and art exhibitions not only within DC but in all of the United States. Most of the performances are actually held in Los Angeles, Houston, and New York City, and have ranged from traditional Korean music to contemporary dance. While the Foundation’s main office in Seoul organizes many of these cultural events, funding responsibilities lie with the DC office.56 The DC branch has thus provided financial support to student-run Korean cultural organizations at DC universities and graduate schools, including the Korea Club at Johns Hopkins SAIS. It also sponsors, in partnership with the Korean Film Council, the DC Korean Film Festival, which is held every spring at the Freer and Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian Institution. Furthermore, part of the Foundation’s $1.25 million donation to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History was used to create the museum’s Korea Gallery in June 2007.57

In addition to supporting cultural and artistic activities, the Korea Foundation also supports Korean Studies and Korean language programs, offers fellowships and grants to schol-
ars researching Korea, contributes financially to think tanks worldwide for projects related to Korea, and promotes intellectual exchange between Korea and other countries. In the past few years in Washington, DC, the Korea Foundation has provided support for Korean Studies courses at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and has funded Korea-related research projects at a number of DC think tanks, including the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Korea Economic Institute of America (KEI), the Atlantic Council, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, among others. The Foundation also invites US Congressional staff members and former US Peace Corps volunteers to visit South Korea. In 2008 (the most recent year for which an annual report for the Foundation has been published), twenty-seven US Congressional staffers working on issues dealing with the Korean Peninsula were invited to visit South Korea for a week, during which they toured the National Assembly of Korea and Korean research institutions, met with Korean policymakers, and visited cultural and historical sites in Korea. That same year, sixty-one former Peace Corps volunteers who had served in Korea, as well as their families, were also invited to Korea, where they visited the places they had served previously, were introduced to Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) volunteers and were entertained by Korean cultural performances. In addition to inviting Americans to Korea, the Korea Foundation also sends delegations of Korean student leaders to the United States for forums and conferences. In 2008, the Foundation sent a total of twenty-six young Koreans to the United States through its International Exchange of Young Leaders program.

Korea has evidently been very active in recent years in promoting its culture and image in DC, at least through the KORUS House and the Korea Foundation. In addition to supporting programs that introduce Korean culture to the general American public, these two organizations have been trying to boost Korea’s image in the minds of US policymakers and opinion leaders. For example, the KORUS House has invited some US Congressmen, such as Representative Charles Rangel (who fought in the Korean War), to Korean music concerts and taekwondo demonstrations in the past. In May 2009, looking to promote Korean food to culinary industry leaders, the KORUS House and the Korea Foundation jointly hosted a Korean food festival entitled “Experiencing the Art of Korean Cuisine” at the famous Willard Intercontinental Hotel. The event showcased Korean haute cuisine to about 150 guests that included food critics, renowned chefs, journalists and a few notable US politicians, and received many rave reviews from the guests afterwards.

**Assessment of the Effectiveness of Korea’s Nation-Branding Campaign and Future Prospects for the Campaign**

Although it may still be too early to assess the overall effectiveness of Korea’s nation-branding strategy (after all, the campaign was officially launched only a year ago in January 2009), some nation-branding experts and enthusiasts think the country is off to a good start. Moreover, people around the world are becoming increasingly aware of Korea, thanks to the Korean government’s proactive and innovative efforts toward that end. A myriad of simultaneous other factors, too, have contributed to this heightened awareness of Korea: for example, Korean expatriate communities have become larger, more Korean students are choosing to study abroad every year, and Korean commercial brands have risen in value worldwide.

As a small and relatively weak nation wedged between two of the world’s most powerful countries, China and Japan, Korea’s quest to capture some of the spotlight has undoubtedly been an uphill struggle. Out of the three countries, Japan has had the longest history of culture promotion in other countries, including the United States. Americans are therefore generally more familiar with Japanese culture than with Chinese or Korean culture. As for China, a Communist country whose main concern used to be its food supply, it was not until the 1990s that it realized the importance of global reputation and began working diligently to upgrade its national image. Hence, like Korea, China was late in promoting its brand image abroad, particularly in the United States. However, unlike
Korea, China’s enormous physical size, population and economic scale are difficult for other countries to ignore, which has helped the nation become as relevant and influential as it is today in a short period of time.

While Korea lacks China’s massive scale and Japan’s long-standing cultural promotion, it does have two advantages: an exceptionally high level of determination to self-improve, and a comprehensive and centralized nation-branding project overseen by the President and his Council. According to Keith Dinnie, while Japan continues to promote its national image in a variety of ways differently from Korea, it appears to lack a single, well-defined strategy. Its activities are largely uncoordinated and directed by individual ministries and organizations independently of one another. Moreover, Japan appears to be content with its current image and does not feel the need to publicize its efforts as much. In contrast, Korea’s approach to nation branding has been much more top-down. Dinnie believes that Korea’s centralized strategy has the potential to be much more effective than Japan’s.67 China’s nation-branding plan is also much less clearly defined than Korea’s, although one of its main image objectives appears to be that of a peaceful, rising super-power. China’s approach seems to focus more on traditional culture than commercial brands, while Japan does the opposite.68 However, in comparison to Korea, China’s nation-branding efforts seem to have passed largely unnoticed by other countries.

Public perceptions take time to change, and nation branding is not an overnight project. Despite the plagues of political scandals, public protests, negative stereotypes, and North Korean issues that have prevented South Korea from climbing higher on the nation brand index, Euh said that he believes his nation is making progress and is optimistic that Korea’s brand image will drastically improve in the next two or three years.69 With the newly-appointed Lee Bae-yong, a former president of Ewha Women’s University in Seoul, as chair of the Presidential Council on Nation Branding (Euh left his post in July 2010), it remains to be seen how South Korea’s branding campaign will evolve in the near future. What is certain is Korea’s effort to rectify its image against all odds. “The important thing is to continue doing our best to promote Korea’s image. At least by doing so, people will not think Korea is a poor or an inferior country”, says Mr. Nam, the Minister Counselor for Public Affairs at the Korean Embassy. The Koreans’ strong sense of national pride, coupled with their characteristic will to succeed, could very well be the fuel that propels Korea’s nation-branding campaign forward. Alan Timblick, the head of the Seoul Global Center, a center that helps foreigners adjust to life in Korea, notes, “What drives Korea more than any other country is the desire to improve, and you don’t find that same drive in many other societies.” As long as Koreans are able to maintain their raw energy and ambition in their nation-branding strategies, the future prospects for improving South Korea’s image and global reputation certainly look promising.

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An FTA WITH THE US:
Comparison between South Korea and Japan
Ryoko Nakano  Johns Hopkins University

The objective of this paper is to compare the national systems of Japan and South Korea and how they have recently led to different economic policies, by using as case studies their respective positions on a free trade agreement with the US. The two countries share many social and economic characteristics but are crucially different in other respects, notably in the domain of politics.

Introduction

In 2007, South Korea and the US signed a free trade agreement (FTA), with some renegotiation in 2010. The agreement still needs to be ratified by the US Congress and South Korea’s National Assembly. With strong opposition in both countries, it is highly questionable when it will be ratified, especially in the midst of the economic downturn which has caused countries to increasingly focus on the situation at home. Nevertheless, the US and South Korea’s progress for a bilateral free trade agreement is a far cry from the current situation between the US and Japan. In Japan, the idea of an FTA with the US is said to be politically difficult. Official negotiations between the two governments have not started even though there are concerns that Japan might be negatively affected if it cannot compete with South Korea in its charge for regional economic alliances in Asia. What was the difference between South Korea and Japan in 2007? Both South Korea and Japan deemed the US a major trading partner, they both had strong farm lobbies, their exports were comprised primarily of manufactured goods and both depended greatly on the US security umbrella. Regardless of their similarities, South Korea reached an agreement by suppressing domestic opposition from interest groups, while Japan sees no possibilities in the near future.

What does a free trade agreement with the US mean to each country?

The Korean War in the 1950s was instrumental in forming the US–South Korea economic alliance. Since then, the US has given critical economic and political support to South Korea. The US has historically been South Korea’s biggest trading partner. South Korea gradually transitioned from military authoritarian rule to liberal democracy, and with the dictatorship surrendering its power to the opposition United Democratic Front (UDP) in 1998, South Korea steered away from the US. In 2004 China surpassed the US as the largest trading partner of South Korea and in 2005 Japan replaced the US as second-largest trading partner. The ruling UDP also tried to ease relations with North Korea, a dramatic change from the confrontational diplomacy Seoul had been employing until then.

Under these political developments, the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KORUS) was created in 2007 with the aim of eliminating approximately 95% of all tariffs within three years. The FTA is expected to increase bilateral trade between the two countries by approximately $10 billion to an annual $85 billion once it is fully implemented. The FTA’s benefits are fairly substantial, considering that South Korea’s trade for 2008 was estimated to have been approximately $860 billion and that its annual GDP growth rate before the economic downturn in 2008 fluctuated between 4% and 5%. Scholars supporting the FTA in the two countries at the time of the agreement stated that it would improve South Korea’s economic slowdown by pushing through economic reforms and could also serve to raise South Korea’s credit rating. Furthermore, it was assumed that it would give the country a competitive advantage over China and Japan, its regional competitors. For the US on the other hand, the FTA is supposed to counterbalance South Korea’s growing trade ties with China, potentially enabling the US to regain its position as Seoul’s preeminent trade partner. An FTA agreement would also be a powerful statement of Washington’s commitment to Asia, broadening the US–South Korea relationship beyond a military alliance.

The US and Japan have become long-standing military allies with increasingly intertwined
economies. An FTA was first proposed in the late 1980s by US Ambassador to Japan Mike Mansfield at a time when trade frictions prevailed between the two countries. The idea was not taken seriously at the time because Japan still had many competition-sensitive commodities and had deeply invested in the GATT multilateral trade negotiations. The US also did not see any gains at the time and did not pursue it further. The frictions became less problematic once China rapidly emerged into the global economic scene, increased its trade deficit with the US, and replaced the focus the US had on Japan. What does a Japan-US Free Trade Agreement generate? A Japanese think tank estimates that an agreement would not substantially raise GDP growth rates for either country: 0.15% for Japan and 0.01% for the US. The Japanese agricultural and food sectors would shrink, while its machinery and equipment sectors, especially the auto and electric machinery sectors, would expand. However, the farming sector would benefit, while the automobile sector would suffer in the US. Is it worthwhile to pursue an agreement when certain sectors will be negatively affected in each country? For Japan, an agreement could enhance the US-Japan alliance and regional security in the Far East. For the US, the FTA would help counterbalance China’s growing economic ties with Japan. Furthermore, the bilateral knot could circumvent the development of a possible regional FTA between ASEAN, China, South Korea, and Japan in East Asia that excludes the US.

As shown, South Korea would reap economic benefits from ratifying an FTA with the US. On the other hand, an agreement with Japan would strengthen political and diplomatic ties rather than afford economic benefits.

Ethnicity and Regional Cleavages

Japan and South Korea are both democracies, although South Korea is relatively young, considering it gradually transitioned from an authoritarian military government to a liberal democratic system. This was achieved after the 1998 presidential election, the first peaceful transfer of power through democratic procedures. Both countries are largely ethnically homogeneous. According to Mohsin Dingankar although South Korea is not ethnically divided, it does have two cleavages: regionalism and a generational divide.

Dingankar states that regionalism can be traced back to the rivalry between the ancient Silla and Paekche kingdoms, which correspond to modern day Youngnana in the west and Honam in the east. The military dictatorship of President Park Chung-hee in the 1970s fueled resentment in the east, because he used pork-barrel policies to favor his home region, Youngnana. Park’s persecution of Kim Dae-jung, a political figure from the region who later rose to become president, also contributed to the discontent of the east. The Gwangju massacre of 1978, which was reportedly squelched by the South Korean army with US acknowledgment, has fermented resentment toward the US. Finally, the generational divide surfaced during the Presidential election of Roh Moo-hyun in 2002. He gained the support of the younger generation – people in their 30s who had been college students during the 1980s when the pro-democratization movement was the strongest. The younger generation is known to believe the probability of war to be low, regardless of the mounting tensions with North Korea, and that their country should be more self-assured with the US.

The South Korean political parties, according to Dingankar, are divided by the two regions above. The largely conservative Grand National Party (GNP) controls the industrialized Youngnam region in the east, while the progressive Democratic Party (DP) is supported by the mostly agrarian regions of Honam in the west, where President Roh hailed from. The GNP is pro-American and anti-North Korean, while the DP is generally anti-American and takes a softer approach to North Korea. Roh, a leftist human activist, initiated the free trade talks despite their negative effects on the agricultural sector. He was indeed in a better position than the conservatives from the affluent western Youngnam, since the eastern region assumes they suffer from a weaker economy. The FTA will presumably benefit the industrialized eastern region more with an increase in exports of textiles and passenger vehicles. By contrast, the mostly agrarian southwest will be affected by a rise in fruit and meat product imports.

The Japanese cleavage is an urban-rural divide that is similar to the blue state–red state split.
in the US between liberals and conservatives. The rural regions were supported by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since the 1940s, partly because of its connections to the agricultural cooperatives that farmers had membership in and to small local construction companies. In exchange for votes, politicians secured agriculture subsidies and public infrastructure work in their constituencies. The tight relationship helped develop heavyweight political figures in these rural regions compared to the urban cities, in which a lot of the constituencies have a high level of floating votes and politicians face challenges in developing a loyal support base. However, the development of income inequality in Japan as in other industrialized countries between the mid-1980s and 2000 changed the political dynamics. The impact may have been more troublesome in Japan, where just about everyone is considered middle-class. Having been the ruling party for sixty years, the LDP experienced a crushing defeat in the 2009 elections. The opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) made inroads into the LDP’s strongholds in farming prefectures and fishing areas and replaced them as the ruling party. In the early 2000s, public infrastructure works were slashed to reduce Japan’s mounting fiscal deficit, which reduced employment opportunities in the rural regions. Lifetime employment was no longer available to all, and the number of part-time workers with lower pay increased. Industries became increasingly concentrated in or near the metropolitan cities of Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka. In rural parts of the country, factories closed and youths left their hometowns to seek jobs in these cities, leaving behind the elderly. In Japan, the value of a single vote is disproportionately between rural and urban areas, consistently favoring rural voters. Therefore it is strategically important for the ruling party to introduce policies of preferential treatment to those from the farming sector so that they can maintain seats in the Diet. Politicians from rural constituencies are known to be political heavyweights in Japan, and they blocked the government’s efforts at trade liberalization. Many government leaders preferred the status quo because it provided economic benefits in return for loyalty and support.

Both countries are economically divided along industrial urban regions and agrarian rural regions. A strict east-west divide runs through the country in South Korea and has consolidated each respective region into a political powerhouse under a charismatic political leader. However in Japan, the poorer agrarian regions are dispersed throughout the country, each with its own regional political lawmaker. They fail to bond together, because the legislative branch of the government from 2006 onwards has not been able to provide a solution to the income inequality that prevails throughout the country.

**Farming Lobby**

Both countries have an agricultural industry that has lagged behind in growth compared to other sectors. The importance of the agricultural industry to the national economy has decreased. In Korea, the agricultural industry’s contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) fell from 14.8% in 1980 to 3% in 2007, and the farming workforce declined from 32.4% in 1980 to 7.2% in 2007 because people were less willing to work in the sector. In Japan the agricultural industry only constitutes 1.6% of the GDP (as of 2009) and farmers account for only 4% of the workforce. The primary crop in both South Korea and Japan is rice, which is cultivated by approximately 80% of its small family farms. Both countries have made it a political priority to supply the nation with domestically grown rice. Demand for other major crops such as barley, wheat, and soybeans are supplied through imports, because production has declined year by year. In both countries, the average farm size is as small as 1.5 hectares. Both countries have agriculture cooperatives that provide agricultural banking and credit services, supply farmers with agriculture-related supplies including fertilizers and pesticides, and purchase agriculture products from the farmers to sell to the market. Moreover, rural regions are overrepresented in both countries because their votes are disproportionally weighted compared to their urban counterparts. In South Korea, there is one representative per 30,000 people in rural areas, as opposed to one representative per 300,000 people in urban areas. In Japan, a House Representative in the rural areas would require less than half the number of votes compared to an urban representative. Therefore, farmers enjoy comparatively more political power, disproportionate to their numbers, and are the most active opponents of the FTA.
As such, food security has been an argument to fend off calls for concessions in a free trade agreement that would negatively affect the farming community. For example, Japan started FTA negotiations with Australia in 2007, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of the Liberal Democratic Party, but they have yet to reach an agreement. The primary reason is Japanese concern that Australia's more competitive farm products could impair Japan's domestic sector, especially through a rise in dairy imports. As it is, Japan is a net agriculture importer and the ideas of increasing its reliance on foreign imports even further are doubtful and not politically viable. Even the Democratic Party of Japan, a proponent for an FTA between the US and Japan, backed away from supporting the idea when it came to power in 2009. The rural farming votes were just too important to lose.

**Political System**

South Korea has a presidential system in which the president is elected through direct vote and enjoys a fixed term of five years. The system's strong element of a zero-sum game and tendency to favor the politics of personality can be found in South Korean politics. The legislative function is a unicameral national assembly in which lawmakers are elected through a parallel system in which 245 members are elected in single-seat constituencies and 54 by proportional representation. The system introduces a frequent executive-legislative stalemate in comparison to a parliamentary system, where the prime minister is essentially the representative of the ruling party in the legislative office. One of the important factors to understanding why the free trade agreement was inked is to study President Roh Moo-hyun, who initiated the talks. Upon his appointment, Roh was hugely popular among the 386 Generation, who was in its thirties at the time, for his image as a political outsider and a human rights advocate. He enjoyed a 90% approval upon appointment, which dropped to 18% but then returned to 31% towards the end of his term. He was committed to introducing ambitious new agendas, which included the continuance of the Sunshine Policy of engagement towards North Korea, the establishment of Korea as a business hub in Northeast Asia, and a review of the relationship with the US and Japan. Although he was initially known to support pro-North Korean, anti-American policies, in reality he switched to strengthening the alliance with the US, because he sought to achieve a peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue through diplomacy. He reduced US troops in Korea, dispatched Korean troops to Iraq, and started arranging for the transfer of wartime operational control, which had been requested by the US and would replace the US-led combined forces command with a Seoul-led joint command system. But Roh's initial target to develop Korea as an international business hub in Northeast Asia was not as successful in the first months of his administration. Instead, the country saw foreign investment leave due to prosecutorial investigations on the purchase and sale of a bank and a surge in welfare government spending. To summarize, Roh sought bilateral economic ties to compensate for the strained security relations created by the North Korean problem. He was capable of doing this because under the presidential system the president has the power to appoint senior public officials including the prime minister, who assists him or her in supervising the cabinet ministers and the government ministries, and because he has a fixed tenure of five years, during which he can carry out policies that would later become his legacy without the fear of losing his office mid-term.

Japan has a bicameral parliamentary system with a constitutional monarchy. It has a parallel voting system in both houses that is designed to address the views of the majority but also allows the views of the minority votes to be included in the legislature. Being a bicameral parliamentary system, the lower house has the power to override, by a two-thirds vote, any attempts by the upper house to negate conclusion of the lower house.

In 2006, LDP's Prime Minister Abe started FTA negotiations with Australia, which like the US is also a large exporter of farm products. As is usual within a parliamentary system, the cabinet ministers are not the prime minister's loyal subjects but his parliamentary colleagues, who tend to have their own priorities. Abe, knowing his initiative for starting the negotiations would be pushed back if he were to have a highly influential Agriculture Minister, designated former Ministry of Agriculture officials whom he hoped would be able to contain the farming sector and would also agree to respect his wishes.
However in early 2007, when KORUS was agreed upon, the LDP together with its allies was facing serious political challenges from the DPJ due to the rise in regional income inequality between the rural and urban regions. The LDP’s coalition, which had enjoyed a majority both in the Lower and Upper Houses, saw a defeat in an Upper House election that year, primarily because the farming sector that had been at the core of its support base from one generation to the next had finally decided the party was not delivering. As a result, the LDP together with its coalition partner New Komeito continued to enjoy a two-thirds majority in the Lower House, but the DPJ’s coalition ruled the Upper House, causing a stalemate in the legislative procedures and preventing important legislations from passing the Diet. Therefore, the political situation at the time did not give Abe or any of his successors an opportunity to proceed further with a free trade agreement that would reduce his approval rates in the rural regions which used to be a strong political support base for the LDP in view of the next elections. The FTA negotiations with Australia have not been concluded till this day.

**Economic ties with the US**

South Korea and Japan were highly industrialized economies with incredible records of growth and global integration. This occurred under close government and business ties, financial credits and import restrictions directed at specific industries under highly centralized government guidance. Both the South Korean and the Japanese governments imported raw materials and technology, pursued economic growth through exports and encouraged savings and investment over consumption.

However, the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 revealed South Korea’s structural weakness after which it adopted a series of economic reforms to turn the floundering economy around. The GDP plunged by 6.9% in 1998 but recovered by 9% in 1999-2000 and moderated in 2003-2007 to an annual rate of 4% to 5% due to falling exports. The reforms introduced during this time fostered greater openness to foreign investment, imports, and flexibility in the labor structure. As a result, Korea’s economy became more market-oriented. Because of this experience, Korea has been open to neo-liberalism: trade liberalization, deregulation, and increased foreign investment. With the increase in the amount of corporate investment going to China and other lower-wage countries, President Roh and Kim Hyun-chong, South Korea’s Minister of Trade, saw KORUS as a way to compete with rapid Chinese growth by increasing trade, attracting investment and new jobs in the future.

Japan was not as heavily affected by the Asian financial crisis. However, seeing the success of neo-liberal economic and fiscal policies in both the US and the UK, it did apply a series of similar policies in 2001-2005 to push the economy out of the recession that had continued since the 1990s. They were all policies designed to reduce the level of government involvement in the economy and included the privatization of Japan’s postal savings services to allow the funds to be used efficiently and effectively, deregulation to attract foreign direct investment into Japan, a slash in pork-barrel expenditures to reduce the fiscal deficit that had already exceeded the annual GDP, tax reforms to reduce local government dependence on the central government authorities and create strong regional governance, and an increase in free trade agreements. Although the GDP growth rate recovered from -0.8% in 2001 to +2% in 2003-2006, the fruits of the neo-liberal economic and fiscal policies in the early 2000s went to large corporations while the small- and middle-sized companies which account for 70% of the workforce continued to suffer. Compared with South Korea, Japan was not in a position to pursue a free trade agreement with the US in 2007, because general public sentiment ran against further economic liberalization under US influence. For Japan an FTA would entail a reduction in rice and meat production: 12% and 10%, respectively. These two commodities are generally produced in the rural regions where government-funded infrastructure projects have decreased due to the slash in expenditures.

**Conclusion**

As we have seen, South Korea and Japan have many similarities. They are both democratic nations, largely ethnically homogenous, have through centralized government guidance been able to modernize their economy and have become one of the major exporters of automobile
and electronic devices. They have both relied on the US for both military security and economic development while in recent years have developed increasing economic ties with China. The reason why South Korea inked an agreement with the US seems to be in the presidential system that allowed then-President Roh to push through politically sensitive negotiations onto the table as well as South Korea’s successful experience during the Asian Financial crisis in employing policies of neo-liberalism. Without these two factors, it was impossible for Japan to place negotiations onto the table at the same time in 2007 even if it did find an agreement beneficial for bilateral relations. However, one must note that the global wave of free trade agreements that existed in 2007 has subsided. The close collapse of the world financial system in 2008 and the global credit crisis that followed called for changes in laissez faire policies. As such, a ratification of free trade agreements at this time would be extremely difficult because it would require a strong economy that could create jobs for those negatively affected.

Considering that South Korea’s FTA with the EU will tentatively go into effect on July 1, 2011, the US could be gently urged into ratifying KORUS. The two FTAs combined will no doubt affect Japan economically in the future and could lead the country to consider negotiations with the US out of necessity. Japan should learn from South Korea’s experience and learn from the challenges and difficulties it faced.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA
SJEAA
FEMINIST VALUES AND WOMEN’S ATTITUDES TOWARDS MARRIAGE AND CHILDBEARING IN SINGAPORE

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This research aims to address the gap in the research literature’s understanding of women’s contemporary attitudes towards marriage and childbearing by reexamining what women nowadays define as “feminist” and investigating the link between contemporary feminist values and women’s attitudes toward marriage and childbearing. Drawing on in-depth interview data of 16 female Singaporean university students, I argue that feminist values as perceived by the respondents are not necessarily antagonistic to or incompatible with traditional gender roles, and thus do not drive the respondents to reject family formation and childbearing. Yet, feminist values are still relevant in explaining the trend of delayed marriage and low fertility, as they cause the respondents to seek gender equality in marriage through financial independence. Consequently, despite seeing themselves as family-oriented and having strong desires for marriage and motherhood, the respondents exhibit “career-orientedness” in their future plans to work full-time and remain employed for several years, to delay marriage, and to have less than two children.

Introduction

Starting in the late 1970s, a new trend of very low fertility has been spreading in industrialized nations. Defined as a continuing total fertility rate (TFR) of under 1.5, very low fertility was achieved in Central Europe in the early 1980s, in Southern Europe in the late 1980s, in parts of East Asia in the early 1990s, and in Eastern Europe and ex-USSR Western Asia throughout the 1990s. Singapore had been in this group since 1978 when it reached replacement fertility, and subsequently hit sub-replacement fertility by 2002.

Research, especially the work of demographers, has identified a change in attitude of women in the present day with regard to marriage and childbearing as one of the causes for low fertility. In brief, contemporary women have been found to be more career-oriented and to seek alternative sources of fulfillment to marriage and motherhood, which are now seen as “opportunity costs” to a woman’s career and lifestyle. Consequently, scholars have suggested that as women become more highly educated and have better career opportunities, their desire for marriage and motherhood decreases. This is empirically evident in the tendency of highly educated women to delay marriage and limit childbearing for the sake of advancing their career.

Going a step further, studies that attempt to explain the change in contemporary women’s mentality in making career choices, family formation, and childbearing often allude to feminism and feminist values. They posit that women, especially the highly educated, increasingly adopt feminist values and therefore yearn for independence of traditional gender roles. Insofar as traditional gender roles prescribe “separate spheres” of women’s and men’s lives, with women as keepers of the home and men as financial providers, rejection of traditional gender roles drives women away from the home and into the labor force, leading them to prioritize their careers, financial independence, and autonomy over family formation and childbearing. In the Singaporean social context, as well as in other Pacific Asian countries like Japan and Korea where traditional gender roles persist, women’s rejection of traditional gender roles is the focus of scholarly works in explaining the changed female attitude towards marriage and childbearing.
However, this argument seems to rely on a static and singular meaning of feminist values and assumes that feminist values are always antagonistic towards traditional gender roles. I find this assumption problematic because feminism has never been static or singular in meaning. To the extent that feminism has undergone several transformations after global successes of women’s liberation movements in the 1970s, I doubt that feminist values are still necessarily antagonistic towards traditional gender roles. In effect, I would like to question whether it is still appropriate to use women’s adoption of feminist values as the explanation for their lack of interest in marriage and childbearing.

This paper thus aims to reexamine the link between feminist values and women’s attitudes towards marriage and childbearing in the empirical context of Singapore. Drawing on in-depth interview data, I argue that respondents, who would be regarded in the literature as being feminists, are not necessarily antagonistic toward traditional gender roles. Being feminist does not drive the respondents to reject marriage and childbearing. In fact, most of the respondents suggested that they are more family-oriented than career-oriented, and have a strong desire to get married and have children in the future. However, certain elements of being “feminist” are still relevant in explaining the trend of delayed marriage and low fertility. Respondents, drawing on their understandings of feminism, seek gender equality in marriage, and, in adjusting their future plans for that goal, they effectively perpetuate the trend of delayed marriage and low fertility despite their desire for marriage and motherhood.

**Literature Review**

1. **From feminism to delayed marriage and low fertility**

Literature has documented, in two important ways, the impact of women’s liberation movements of the 1970s on shaping a marked difference in women’s attitudes towards marriage and childbearing. These movements, also known as *Second Wave feminism*, rose in the late 1960s and early 1970s and were concerned with gaining equal rights for women, not only in terms of political rights but also in the areas of family, sexuality, and work. On one hand, the movements’ political activities have contributed greatly to a changing social structure which allows for less discrimination and equal access to education and paid work, reproductive rights, greater representation of women and women’s interests in the media, and so on. Women are thus able to become self-reliant to the extent that they can support themselves financially through employment, which means that marriage is no longer the sole possible choice in life. On the other hand, the movement had also strong effects on non-activist women as it lead to a fundamental change in gender roles and attitudes in industrialized Western and Asian countries alike: a growing rejection of the traditional gender roles that marriage and motherhood entail, one which defines women’s obligations to husbands and children. Insofar as traditional gender roles persist in the institutions of marriage and motherhood, scholars have suggested that women who embrace the movement’s messages of equality and independence would view marriage and motherhood as “opportunity costs” to their satisfaction in life and, as a consequence, would delay their entrance into marriage and motherhood, or even end up in non-marriage and voluntary childlessness. In sum, the women’s liberation movements not only widened the range of life choices available to women but also shaped women’s mentalities in making choices, which means that marriage and motherhood have not only lost their primacy in women’s life choices but have also become inferior choices compared to career and education.

Another body of literature, consisting primarily of demographers’ work, has identified women’s changed attitudes towards marriage and motherhood as explanations for the trend of delayed marriage and low fertility. Previous studies show that as women are increasingly educated and thus have more life choices outside of the institution of marriage, they tend to reject traditional gender roles and value career and other goals higher than family formation and childbearing. In the context of the United States, Wilkie finds that the group of highly educated women prepared for fulltime employment accounts for most of the delay in marriage and...
childbearing, while less educated women still conform to the traditional pattern of marriage in their early 20s and have their first birth two or three years later. Similarly, White\textsuperscript{14} highlights that young women’s drive for self-determination, self-development, and personal economic independence has reframed their gender expectations, leading to a lower desire for marriage and motherhood. It is also noted that contemporary women express their desires to follow their own goals despite romantic relationships, emphasizing their view of the optional nature of marriage.\textsuperscript{15} Rejection of traditional roles is clearer in the Asian context, in which traditional gender roles persist to a greater extent. It is suggested that highly educated women in Korea are much less likely to be married at any age, as higher education increases career aspirations and employment.\textsuperscript{16} In Japan, researchers have documented young Japanese women’s dissatisfaction with and rejection of traditional marriage life.\textsuperscript{17} In Singapore, Lyons-Lee finds that women who have never been married reject not the idea of marriage and childbearing but the traditional definition of family and gender roles as imposed by the state and their own family.\textsuperscript{18} Echoing her findings, Straughan\textsuperscript{19} affirms that the prevalence of traditional gender roles in Singaporean society is one of the stronger barriers that hinder women from desiring marriage and motherhood.

Yet, not many studies have come to question how the change in attitude came about. Parsons, Frieze, and Ruble\textsuperscript{20} note that career-oriented women are somewhat more likely to identify with the women’s liberation movement’s values. Greenglass and Devins\textsuperscript{21} similarly attribute significant changes in the lifestyle of young women to the advent of women’s liberation movements. Most recently, Aronson\textsuperscript{22} suggested that young women subconsciously incorporate feminist ideologies and attitudes into their lives’ plans and expectations, therefore prioritizing education and paid work over marriage and motherhood. Likewise, it is suggested that educated women in Pacific Asia have increasingly adopted feminist values, leading to their rejection of the traditional gender roles in marriage and motherhood.\textsuperscript{23} In general, contemporary women’s feminist values have been equated to Second Wave feminist values, as previously mentioned, in striving to establish women as equal to their male counterparts in rejecting traditional gender roles and in prioritizing alternative sources of self-fulfillment over marriage and motherhood.

2. The mismatch

It seems to me that equating feminist values to those of the Second Wave is dangerous because it implies a static view of feminist values as well as feminism in general. After its peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Second Wave feminism has undergone various transformational phases. Aronson\textsuperscript{24} suggests that the Second Wave movement has simultaneously experienced great successes and backlash. Its successes lie in realizing the political goals in gaining equal rights for women in the workplace and in the education system\textsuperscript{25}, as well as maintaining a “broadly institutionalized and effective interest group” based in academia, especially women’s studies programs.\textsuperscript{26} The Second Wave’s backlash is evident in a decline in grassroots mobilization and negative public discourse by anti-feminist organizations and media figures.\textsuperscript{27} The backlash essentially criticizes Second Wave feminism and encourages young women to “exercise personal choice, in particular, as consumers of clothes and beauty products, and to react against the [feminist] stereotype of [wearing] dungarees, [using] little make up and [being] anti-male".\textsuperscript{28} Thus, although Second Wave feminism has achieved various successes, its agendas and position were being questioned even by those inside the movement. As Rebecca Walker puts it:

For many of us it seems that to be a feminist in the way that we have seen or understood feminism is to conform to an identity and way of living that doesn’t allow for individuality, complexity, or less-than-perfect personal histories. We fear that the identity will dictate and regulate our lives, instantaneously pitting us against someone, forcing us to choose inflexible and unchanging sides, female against male, black against white, oppressed against oppressor, good against bad.\textsuperscript{29}
Feminism as a movement could not remain and has not remained as homogenous and organized in its goals and agendas. While there is the post-feminist idea that there is no longer a need for feminism as women have made so many gains in legal, economic, political, and reproductive rights\(^30\), there is also an emerging Third Wave feminism that takes on a different set of agendas and feminist goals. In defining the Third Wave, Heywood and Drake\(^31\) suggest that the movement is still embracing Second Wave critique as a central definitional thread, yet the emphasis is on the great variety of feminisms across cultural barriers, so that feminists would be able to speak to each other across cultural and national barriers.\(^32\) The theme of diversity is strongly highlighted in Third Wave Feminism, as Heywood and Drake suggest:

The third wave is a movement committed to local action and characterized by dispersal and diversity, as opposed to a single-leader and single-issue movement, a strategy that resists co-optation and supports survival in global technoculture.\(^33\)

Therefore, as feminism has now shifted towards greater flexibility and diversity, one might expect that feminist values in our time are tremendously different from those of the 1970s women’s liberation movements. If so, it means that there might be a mismatch in what contemporary women embrace as feminist values and what have been assumed to be feminist values in literature. In effect, this mismatch might lead to a misinterpretation of contemporary women’s attitudes towards family formation, in that their education and feminist inclinations do not necessarily lead them to be career-minded and antagonistic toward traditional gender roles.

**Methodology**

**1. The research**

In this paper, I examine what contemporary women define as “feminist” and consequently, the link between “feminist” values and women’s attitudes toward marriage and childbearing, by looking at a group of Singaporean university undergraduate women who identify with feminist values. These women are in a good position to make meaningful choices to pursue careers as their educational attainments permit and would be more likely to have a pro-career, anti-marriage, and childbearing attitude because of their feminist inclinations – as present literature would predict.

**2. Desires, plans and their significance**

The research does not look at women’s actual behavior but at their plans regarding work, marriage, and motherhood in the future, for desires and future plans – during the early stage of decision-making when women would weigh all the pros and cons related to work, marriage, and childbearing – would better reflect women’s value systems and attitudes. Moreover, research using longitudinal data suggests that future plans do play an important role in the events leading to a woman’s decisions about whether to marry, have children, and enter or remain in the labor market\(^34\); therefore understanding the desires and plans of women is vital in predicting their actual behavior in the future.

**3. Feminism and feminist values in Singapore**

This research seeks to understand what contemporary women perceive to be “feminist” values and is thus based on the assumption that feminism has a substantial impact on the worldview of non-activist women and on their perception of work, marriage, and childbearing, as suggested by scholars.\(^35\) However, studies on the impact of feminism on the general public are done primarily in a North American context, while the situation in Singapore might not be exactly the same. Compared to their North American counterparts, feminist movements in Singapore started later and developed under the state’s anti-feminist agenda – which all added up to what Lyons terms “a state of ambivalence”\(^36\), where the feminist identity is built upon contingency and compromise. Hence, there is a concern that not all female undergraduates in Singapore have sufficient knowledge of feminism to sustain meaningful conversations on what they perceive as feminist values.
In light of that, I have targeted the group of female undergraduates who are comparatively more knowledgeable about feminism than others. I draw on Aronson’s concept of the “qualified feminist”\(^1\), who is most knowledgeable about feminism due to her enrollment in women’s studies courses, as a starting point for sampling. All respondents of this research are undergraduates who have taken courses in women’s studies. The respondents, despite having a deeper understanding of feminism, do represent the population of female undergraduates in Singapore to the extent that they are in the same age group and have acquired their worldview within the same Singaporean socio-political context. Moreover, by assessing the conditions that led respondents to adopt or reject feminist values, this research could contribute to understanding feminism’s impacts on women in present-day Singapore by identifying the channels through which feminist values spread and the conditions that foster women’s feminist inclinations.

4. Sampling & Interview

Desires and future plans regarding marriage, childbearing, and work are often considered personal and private, especially in the context of Singapore.\(^3\) A certain level of trust is needed in order for the respondents to share and discuss their desires and plans. Thus the snowball sampling method was adopted, as it is the most suitable strategy for approaching sensitive topics. Through snowball sampling, 16 respondents were recruited. All of them were students from the three comprehensive universities in Singapore, namely Nanyang Technological University (NTU), the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Management University (SMU), and have taken courses in women’s studies.

Face-to-face, in-depth interviews with the respondents were conducted from October 2009 to January 2010. The interviews were semi-structured, with an interview schedule that provided a general guideline for the conversation and at the same time allowed me to follow up and probe for more information. The interviews lasted 40-70 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Two main themes were covered in each interview. First the respondents were asked to define feminism. They were also asked to describe their social background and identify the sources for their ideas. They were also asked to suggest a solution for existing gender inequality. From this, I was hoping to explore the respondents’ perception of feminist values and to compare them to the themes of Second Wave feminism. Second, the interview explored how respondents rationalize their plans and desires regarding work, marriage, and motherhood, in order to understand how respondents give meaning to these concepts subjectively, while at the same time investigating how respondents’ feminist values shape their plans and desires.

Certain parts of the interview transcript will be quoted in order to clarify the findings; respondents have been given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Typical Singlish\(^3\) terms (lah, loh, leh, liao, etc.) were omitted to enhance clarity, and explanations were added where necessary.

Findings & Discussion

1. Feminist values

The respondents’ definitions of gender (in)equality are similar, yet different from those of the Second Wave in various respects. Respondents suggest that gender inequality is a structural problem, that women are in general disadvantaged compared to men, and that gender inequality has a strong negative impact on their lives to the extent that they think something should be done about it. However, their stance differs in that they are seeing plurality in feminism, in rejecting the idea that all women are similarly oppressed, and in highlighting that some men are affected by gender inequality as well. They also imagine gender equality differently, in stressing the process of negotiation of gender roles over the outcome, i.e. the gender roles that they end up performing, and in seeking individualistic solutions for equality.

\(a\). Effect of feminism on non-activist women

When asked to define “feminism”, all respondents suggested that they were not quite sure of
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the history of feminism and could not recall the origin of their ideas. The media, schoolwork, and internet were three popular sources that the respondents thought they got their ideas from. Recalling their first encounter with the idea of feminism, 25-year-old Stefanie suggested:

I am not so sure when I first heard about feminism. But I guess the word “feminism” is floating around on the news you know, and I roughly know what it is about. Oh and I remember having literature class in secondary school, feminism was one of the themes.

Vicky, 23, noted that the internet is where she gets most of her information from:

I heard of the term “feminism” long time ago, way before learning it in my sociology class. I could not remember when, I think it may be the news, some magazines or from my friends. But when I learn about it in university, I thought it was interesting and went to google it. Actually most of the things I know about feminism is from the internet, Wikipedia, and online articles … because in school they teach feminism very difficult you know … the readings can kill [laugh].

Although they were not able to talk about the development of feminism, all respondents knew that there is not only one form of feminism but many. Some respondents[^20] managed to identify and name differences. Irene, 23, expressed:

I know some people think there is only one form of feminism, like the anti-male thing. I think it is just stupid, because there are many groups of feminists who are up to different things. There are radical feminist, liberal, and socialist ones if I remember their names correctly. And the radical feminists tend to be criticized more, but they are not all, not feminism in the whole.

In brief, the respondents gave very general definitions of feminism that correspond to the baseline definition for all forms of feminism, i.e. a concern about socially constructed gender inequality. All respondents linked feminism with the mission to eradicate gender inequality. They suggested that feminism remains relevant today because gender inequality exists in Singaporean society and made positive remarks (to varying degree) about it. Olivia, 25, suggested that feminism is a “good thing to have”:

Well I think feminism is an awesome thing to have. I mean, it did help a lot in giving women a more equal start, like education. And it gives you a perspective to look at life, like, actually some stuffs are not natural as people are making them look like. Things like women have to be nurturing and caring because it is our nature to be so.

Not only did the respondents have positive views about feminism, but all respondents also agreed with the feminist mission to eradicate gender inequality and highlighted that gender equality is an important component of satisfaction in their lives. For instance, when asked about her tolerance of gender discrimination, Molly, 23, said:

I have not experienced gender discrimination in my life so far, but maybe in the future, you know, working and marriage and all. Well I will not let it happen to me, I will try to overcome it in one way or another … it’s like fighting for happiness, no way I’m going to accept people dictating me to do this and that just because of my gender.

The responses are in tune with Chafetz’s[^32] and Aronson’s suggestion[^43] that non-activist women in the general public were affected by the messages of feminism and effectively adopted feminist values in internalizing the feminist goal to eradicate gender inequality, even though they were ambivalent about the terminology. This finding further suggests that the respondents in Singapore were not only locally but also glob-
ally affected by the feminist movement, due to the flow of information via the internet and the institutionalization of feminism within academia that allows it to be taught at schools and universities.

b. A similar yet different view of gender inequality

When asked to define “gender inequality”, all respondents suggested that gender inequality is a structural problem, expressed in the form of “ideologies” and “expectations” that are enforced by institutions like the family, the government, and the education system. They blamed these structures for hindering the individual from “living true to themselves and be fulfilled”. Jane pinpointed the government as the main enforcer of gendered expectation:

I think the state play the biggest part in deciding what we should do as a man or woman. You can look at the National Service [NS] system; it is the clearest place where men and women are not equal. The state is forcing all men to go for NS. So it is like repeating the idea that the men should be the strong one, the protector, the provider; and women are helpless. And it is the law so you have no choice; men have to be strong because they are forced to do so in NS training. And as women you cannot have that kind of status, even if you are qualified to be a military officer. Of course you can volunteer to serve at NS but I don’t think they train women the same way. And some women might be hesitated because NS is like the world of men.

In a similar manner, Annie, 24, highlighted how she has always struggled with her family and friends:

I am not sure if it is culture, but there is this whole thing about being a girl that my parents and some of my girlfriends are making noise about. They all say that I am not girl enough. I just hate it when they keep complaining about me don’t know how to cook, to clean, to be soft, whatever. I am not seeing anything wrong with it, but they all complain and use some girl standards to measure my inappropriateness.

Samantha, 26, believed that the education system is where gender inequality begins:

I think the co-ed school is where they teach us gender. Like in the class you have both male and female, so the teachers will assign you tasks based on gender. Boys will do more heavy things and will learn to lead, while girls will do easier, less demanding tasks and sometimes if you cannot do it then it’s still okay. It just get repeated and somehow kids will think it’s normal … they grow up thinking it’s normal that way.

The respondents’ definitions of “gender inequality” were thus similar to those of the Second Wave in that gender inequality is viewed as a social and structural problem. However, their ideas differed from those of the Second Wave primarily in that they did not see all women suffering the same way, while at the same time reflecting the Third Wave’s agenda of diversity. A majority of the respondents suggested that there are various factors that “chip in” and worsen or lighten the situation for a particular woman, such as her education level and class background. Pamela, 23, thought that gender is just a contributing factor in a woman suffering from discrimination:

I do not think all women are suffering because of gender inequality. If you are a woman and you are poor then you would be more powerless. But rich women are sometimes more powerful than men, like, if they came from a powerful family and their parents loved them. So it’s hard to say that all women are poor little things, I don’t think so at all.

Also, most respondents suggested that men, too, suffer from rigid gender expectations, reflecting a more flexible definition of gender inequality that is consistent with the development
of global feminism in not confining the movement to just women’s issues. For instance, Sue, 21, suggested:

Some men are not enjoying being a man too I think. Like if he is weak and he is not smarter than his wife, the expectation that he should take charge of the family is a burden for him … not all men are happily living the men’s life … there’s also the gays and the lesbians. I don’t think women are the only victim (of the structure).

c. A different set of feminist values

Not only did the respondents view gender inequality differently from the Second Wave, their feminist values are also different from those of the Second Wave, which attributes the rejection of traditional gender roles and aspirations to self-realization in careers. Instead, all respondents highlighted the importance of the negotiation process of gender roles over the outcome. Jane thought that she could be a full-time housewife, not a victim of gender inequality:

I love to do housework, to cook, and to take care of children. I really hope to be a fulltime housewife if the situation allows. I think housework in itself is not a bad thing; it is bad only when you are forced to do it. If it is a choice, then it is fair.

All respondents equated gender inequality with the imposition of a certain gender role on the basis of one’s sex, highlighting that they are not against traditional gender roles but against how the roles are imposed on them. Annie voiced her discontent:

I just hate it when people use the label on me, and force me to do things just because I am a girl. My mom keeps forcing me to learn cooking, because as a girl I should know that. I think if she used different reasons, like showing me the benefits of being able to cook my own food, to take care of myself if I am away from home and if my parents are not home, I would have agreed. It is her way of forcing that is getting on my nerves, not the thing about cooking itself.

Respondents thus equated gender equality with a “fair negotiation” of gender roles, emphasizing that reasoning and consensus are vital. 23-year-old Esther expressed that a fair share of housework did not necessarily have to be an exactly equal share, as long as it was negotiated:

I would not mind if I have to do a bigger chunk of housework next time, if it is fair. I do not believe in a fifty-fifty division by the way, because not all families are the same. Like if I have a less demanding job, and my husband is some high ranking manager, of course he would have less spare time than I do. And since he earns more, his job is more important to keep us alive. So even if I have to do like 90% of the housework, I would not complain. But it has to be fair, like we discuss and agree on that, not him imposing on me or me imposing on him.

In sum, all the respondents suggested that they had nothing against traditional gender roles, while noting that women’s entrance to paid work did not necessarily reflect gender equality. Jane, who wanted to become a housewife, reflected that the new idea of a “career woman” in Singapore is a new form of oppression:

When I tell people I want to be a housewife, they look at me in awe. They ask me why I attend university, as if I am wasting my time and the society’s efforts. I just do not like to work outside the home, but it seems that my point never got through. People assume that if you are educated, you should work.

As such, respondents’ feminist values are not antagonistic towards traditional gender roles, marriage, and motherhood. Indeed, a majority of the respondents suggest that they are family-oriented. They expressed that they would like to get married and have children in the future and would not mind performing traditional
gender roles. But at the same time, all respondents suggested that they wanted to achieve gender equality, at least within their marriage and their careers — because these were the two things they could make a choice about. Respondents like Kate, 23, were very optimistic about the choice of workplace:

Even if I am discriminated against at work, I can always quit. And find a better company, as long as I am good enough. I think that some companies would have better policies, like Chinese companies are often not very open to female promotion, but Western ones are.

Likewise, respondents who had a desire to get married and have children in the future believed that they could negotiate family matters with their spouses by becoming financially independent. They tended to equate power to negotiate with earning power, as June, 21, put it:

I think it is important to be financial independent, it wouldn’t matter if the husband wants things different from me. He must negotiate with me because I am not 100% dependent on him. And even if we cannot negotiate, I can always walk away [from the marriage] because I can support myself and my children financially without him. In a sense, he must put in an effort to please me [laugh].

Furthermore, they expressed more concern about enhancing their capacity in negotiating gender roles and thus enforcing gender equality in their marriage than about their husband’s gender roles. Pamela highlighted that she would not mind her future husband having traditional gender roles:

I do not mind my future husband being a bit domineering. I am quite submissive so it is ok. But even after having kids, I would still want to work, maybe part-time. Because being financial independent is very important, even if I can earn very little compared to him.

If I do not have to ask him for every penny and listen to him in everything, it creates a healthier relationship. Like he has to listen to me and take my points into account. If you make it a habit of letting him decide every time, he will just assume that you want him to lead and take you for granted.

d. Structural problem, individualistic solution

Although all respondents suggested that gender inequality in Singapore is a structural problem, they remained pessimistic about structural changes in Singapore. All respondents suggested that the state in Singapore is so strong that any collective action would not be able to change the situation. Maria, 23, talked about structural changes:

If there is ever any change in the social structure, I think it needs to be approved by the state. That is the reason I want to be a governmental officer, because then I would be in the organization that make decisions, and can sort of inject my ideas in those decisions.

Even respondents who were relatively active in activist groups doubted the ability of civil society and activist groups in Singapore to produce structural change. June, an active member of a human rights activist group, recounted:

Civil society in Singapore is not very powerful, we always have to wait and depend on the state’s final decisions. Like you can work on a project for six months, one year, and then when you present it to someone in the state, they can just say no. Then the efforts are wasted. Not once, but sometimes we got lucky to have some Members of Parliament agreed on our position paper. And from there we have some hope in making it works.

Consequently, the respondents felt that they should “take care of it” (that is, of gender inequality) themselves, seeking individual so-
lutions. Two respondents, Dawn and Molly, suggested that they would want to establish themselves in a career and be as “successful as the top men”, thus seeing themselves not getting married and having children at all, in order to be able to devote time for career and professional development. They noted that they needed to “work harder” to overcome the initial disadvantages of gender. The rest – those who see themselves as family-oriented – suggested that they had a choice in two main areas of life: paid work and family. In terms of paid work, they thought that if they are “good enough”, they can make a choice in finding a better (and gender-equal) workplace. In terms of family, they stressed that being financially independent would boost their capacity to negotiate with their future spouses and thus guarantee gender equality within marriage.

2. Desires and plans for work, marriage and childbearing

I found that the respondents’ feminist values shaped their desire for equality in gender role negotiation, and that their individualistic solutions to the gender problem had strong effects on shaping their plans to delay their entrance to marriage and motherhood, despite their desires for family formation. In this section, I will only discuss the 14 family-oriented respondents who suggested that they would like to get married and have children in the future.

a. The importance of a satisfying family life

All respondents who thought that they were family-oriented unanimously suggested that respect and negotiation are fundamental to a satisfying family life. When asked to describe her ideal spouse and husband-wife relationship, Christina noted how “being in an equal position” is important to her:

I feel that marriage is a choice, and if I chose it, it must be a satisfying one. It is most important that husband and wife respect and do not impose oneself on the other. To do so, I think both parties should be in an equal position … like we both do paid work and housework … may not be exactly fifty-fifty but at least one has an idea of what the other is doing, it is like the foundation of respect.

Similarly, Pamela expressed her definition of a desirable marriage and spouse, in which she expressed that the spouse’s ideas of gender roles are not as important as how he would put the ideas towards her:

I do not think so much about the outcome … it is only for people to see and to judge. What is more important is that I myself have to know and have to feel that we have gotten there [the outcome] in a fair way. I do not mind if the guy is domineering and strong-opinioned, but he has to listen to me if I have my point. And he has to persuade me to get his ways. I have to agree on that; he cannot force me.

Q: What if he forces you to do something that you don’t want?

A: I will not accept it. Even if he uses the circumstance to force me, like if he refuses to take care of the home at all, I would take the responsibility for one day maybe. But I won’t put the problem to rest, I will continue the fight … until he listens to me or gives me a good reason that I agree to. If it does not work out, then I will consider a divorce.

Q: Are you serious?

A: Yes I think I am in every way. There’s no point living with someone who has no respect for you. It is not a meaningful marriage.

This pattern thus has important implications for research. First, it shows that a large proportion of respondents who uphold feminist values do desire to enter marriage and motherhood and do not reject traditional gender roles. Second, it suggests that the gender roles upheld by future spouses and traditional gender roles’ persistence in marriage and motherhood do not affect the respondents’ evaluation of a satisfy-
ing marriage. Rather, their concerns lie in the extent to which they can negotiate the gender roles within marriage, the process that makes it fair and meaningful.

**b. The instrumental role of paid work**

Paid work was seen as an important source for respondents’ gaining leverage in the negotiation process. First and most importantly, all respondents believed that paid work is the vehicle for financial independence. As previously highlighted, the respondents sought individual solutions for gender equality by striving for financial independence. They also tended to equate earning power to the capacity in gender role negotiation vis-à-vis their spouses. Many respondents suggested that they only wanted the money from paid work. Discussing her future career plan, Kate noted that:

> Actually I am not sure what I want to do after graduation, which is coming in a few months and it is scary. Honestly I just want a job that pays not too bad. Two thousands plus should be enough, and I think I am not going to be picky. I want to be able to support myself financially so that I can stop asking money from my parents, and have more freedom … doing things that I want.

Put simply, the respondents’ attachment to paid work can be understood as follows. Although all 14 respondents planned to work for at least five to seven years before entering marriage and motherhood, they did not desire careers but instead the earning power to establish themselves in gender role negotiation within marriage. Irene shared her concerns:

> I will definitely work for the pay, and work for a few years, maybe five, before settling down [for marriage]. And I will work even after having children. Being financial independent is important if you want to get your way in life, in marriage. It is not like I am not serious with my job, but frankly now I am not sure what I want. You know I don’t have a burning desire to be this director or that manager … I would try to work as hard as I can and be responsible to my job. But it is all about the money, anything else … whether I get hooked and like my job, or get promoted, whatever else … is just a bonus. I don’t mind taking the bonus [laugh], but I will not be sad or affected if the bonus never come.

Besides financial independence, paid work also added value to some respondents’ perception of self-worth. Olivia suggested that remaining employed would keep her socially connected:

> I also want a social life outside marriage … like even if I work part-time I still get to know new people and friends. And I won’t become a desperate housewife [laugh]! I mean in a sense it keeps me updated, keeps me from becoming so dependent on him [the future husband] both financially and emotionally … and keeps me from becoming that boring woman who is always at home and wait for him.

In sum, paid work played an instrumental role in the respondents’ quest for their desired marriage in equipping them with the financial independence that negotiation capacity is built upon, and for some, enhancing their worth in the eyes of the spouses. It is thus important to distinguish between work and career, as Machung points out:

> A career, especially a career in the male-dominated professional and technical sector, is distinguished from a job by its demands for training and responsibility as well as by its potential for status, promotion and high pay. Access to these rewards is usually predicated upon long, continuous, committed, uninterrupted work.

The pattern found among respondents in this study suggests a fine line between young women’s desire to work and desire for a career, or career-orientatedness. The respondents’ desire to
work and to remain employed after marriage and childbearing might pass them off as being career-minded, but a close look at the meaning they attach to paid work reveals that their true desires lie in a particular type of marriage that requires them to work. Hence, I suggest that a woman’s career-orientedness should not be measured by her interest in paid work alone, but also by her intentions – whether she desires paid work itself or the benefits that she thinks paid work would bring to other areas of her life, such as gender equality in marriage.

c. Consequences on childbearing

With regard to childbearing, the respondents wanted to have children because children would fulfill their lives as family-oriented women. But they also recognized that having children would make it harder for them to ensure the respect and negotiability of gender roles in marriage. The respondents can be split into two distinctive camps regarding work after childbirth. Financial independence plays an important role:

1. Some respondents would like to stop working and devote their energy to child-rearing and housework, because they thought that “family and children are the most important things in life” and deserve their full attention. However, in order to reach that stage, these respondents suggested that they would like to reach a substantial stage of financial independence before stopping working. Esther suggested that:

The saving would make me feel more prepared about upheavals of marriage life. If the marriage turned bad, I can back out and take care of myself and my children.

This group of respondents foresaw that they would need to work for a longer period of time (seven years or more) to build up savings before having their first child. As a result, they thought that they would have children at a much later age, suggesting that they would not have more than two, because their age would not permit it.

2. The other group of respondents suggested that they would continue working after having children. They believed that employment ensures financial independence “all the way” and would help them maintain their negotiating power in marriage. This group of respondents expected to have children right after marriage because their earning power would be constant. However, they also suggested that they did not want to have too many children (not more than two), because that would mean a lot more work to juggle.

Thus, for both groups, respondents’ aspirations for financial independence as a cure for gender problems within marriage was the underlying reason for their plan to delay marriage and limit childbearing.

Conclusions

Drawing on in-depth interview data, this paper suggests that women who are “feminist” or have “feminist” values are not always antagonistic towards traditional gender roles, as often assumed in the research literature. I found that respondents’ perceptions of feminist values and goals were shaped by current global developments of feminism and have evolved from the values and goals of Second Wave feminism. Particularly, my respondents did not see gender (in)equality in the outcome (i.e. whether a woman ends up performing traditional or egalitarian gender roles) but in the process of gender role negotiation. I thus argue that feminist values, as found among my respondents, do not necessarily lead to a rejection of marriage and motherhood or an aspiration for a career.

That said, the particular feminist values upheld by my respondents are still relevant in explaining the trend of delayed marriage and low fertility. Respondents’ perception of gender relations and inequalities motivated them to strive for gender equality or a fair process of gender role negotiation in marriage. Consequently, the respondents, who regard themselves as structurally powerless, sought individualistic solutions for gender equality in their future marriage by yearning for financial independence through the venue of paid work. The solutions, shaped by Singapore’s socio-political context, thus caused the respondents to plan for several years of paid employment and effectively delay marriage and
motherhood. Drawing on the findings, I would like to suggest that a desire or lack of desire for marriage and motherhood in general is insufficient to explain whether women delay marriage and motherhood. Instead, the desire should be contextualized in order to form a meaningful explanation – we should ask what type of marriage and motherhood are desired, and what solutions women in a particular social context seek to achieve their desired form of marriage.

ENDNOTES

1 A TFR of 1.5 births per woman means a replacement-subfertility level. The replacement level is at approximately 2.1 births per women.
16 Choe, 1996.
19 Straughan, 2006.
22 Aronson, 2008.
24 Pamela Aronson: Feminists or “Postfeminists”? Young Women’s Attitudes toward Feminism and Gender Relations; Gender and Society 17 (6), 2003.
29 Rebecca Walker: Being real: an introduction; in: Rebecca Walker (ed.): To be real: telling the truth and changing the face of feminism; Anchor Books, 1995; p. xxxiii.
32 Hannam, 2006; p. 167.
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THE AMALGAMATION OF JAVANESE ABANGAN, ISLAM, TAOISM AND BUDDHISM IN THE SAM PO KONG SHRINE

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This paper describes a religious phenomenon at the Sam Po Kong temple in Semarang. I argue that the syncretism there is the result of cultural and religious interconnections between Javanese abangan, Islam, Taoism, and Buddhism. The beginning of this paper will depict the historical explorations of Cheng Ho, the principal figure in this Sam Po Kong shrine. The next part describes several instances of Javanese abangan, Islamic, Taoist, and Buddhist influences in this pantheon. The remainder of this paper will argue that the notion of Oneness of God believed by Sam Po Kong members is the result of political influences in Indonesia.

Introduction

In history all over the world, religions have had to enter syncretism with local cultures so that they could easily be accepted by local societies. In Indonesia, particularly in Java, such amalgamation has proven effective in disseminating Islamic precepts. Yet, something else emerged from this fusion of Islam, Hinduism, and Javanese culture, termed abangan, which is incompatible with real Islamic tenets regarding ethical monotheism. Despite some criticism of abangan, many Javanese still practice it due to their pride of Javanese culture and the endeavor to perpetuate their ancestors’ beliefs.

Admiral Cheng Ho, the Noble-Hearted Wanderer from the East

As mentioned by Nora C. Buckley, Admiral Cheng Ho 鄭和 (born Ma He 馬和) was of Muslim Arab–Mongol heritage. In 1381, he was sent to Ming dynasty’s royal palaces, along with some young boys, to protect the king’s mistresses. Therefore, he had to be castrated. He was also trained in a special school and military base to be a reserve soldier in the battlefield. He received his Chinese name Cheng Ho through his courage and devotion. He also bears the Buddhist name Sam Po, “three jewels”. The word “Kong” – which is only used by Chinese people in Semarang – means “an ancestor which is respected”.

In the next twenty years, he succeeded in leading seven imperial maritime missions to thirty-seven countries on the Indochinese coast, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the east coast of Africa with more than 1,500 sophisticated ships and 28,000 soldiers. In 1405, he embarked on his last voyage, which was a failure. Because of his extreme kowtow to the Emperor, the Chinese government had lost its credibility in the eyes of the locals. It was a tragic end for a great explorer who was well known as a lover of the sea and a frugal spender. Nevertheless, at the end of his reign, he was awarded a title of Admiral by the emperor. Since then, he has been considered a hero worshiped by the locals who believe in a syncretic religion that is a mixture of Catholicism, Islam, Taoism, and Buddhism.
However, according to historical accounts inscribed on sculptures in the Sam Po Kong temple, Cheng Ho’s wisdom, leadership, and tolerance distinguish him from other sea adventurers, in particular Europeans such as Columbus and Vasco da Gama. Instead of using coercive force, he preferred peaceful ways and even assisted some countries in solving internal and regional conflicts. In 1409, he mediated the peaceful agreement between Malaka (now Malaysia) and Siam (now Thailand). In Malaysia, he even protected Princess Han Li Bao (漢麗寶), the future wife of Sultan Mansyur Syah. During a journey to “Old Harbor”, or Ba Lin Bang (now Palembang, the capital city of South Sumatra), he defeated Chen Zuyi (陳祖義), a famous pirate, and his 5,000 men.8 In Indonesia, Cheng Ho was the main negotiator of the civil war resolution between Zainal Abidin and Iskandar (Su Gan La).9

Cheng Ho’s significant contributions in these countries resulted in friendship and cooperation between the Chinese emperor and kings of the territories he visited. By the same token, he and his sailors could mingle easily with the local inhabitants. His diplomatic position was also advocated by the presence of Shen-Hui, a Buddhist monk, and Hasan, the Imam of the Ching Chin mosque in Siam during his maritime explorations.10 Therefore, various rulers gave him ample presents, from trading goods to exotic plants and animals.11

Cheng Ho’s fame and reputation of greatness generated admiration among Chinese locals in Indonesia and Siam. As mentioned by Kong Yuanzhi12, of the many Buddhist temples in Siam, there are two Sam Po Kong temples. The first one used to be called the Panancheng temple, and was constructed in 1324. The local community renamed the Panancheng temple to Sam Po Kong temple because they greatly admired Cheng Ho and his men for his trading missions to Ayuthaya in 1407 and 1409. Additionally, Ming Shi (明史, the book about the history of the Ming dynasty) asserts that in the Sam Po Kong temple in Siam, there is a statue of Cheng Ho which is worshipped by Siamese Chinese people.

A Glance of the Sam Po Kong Temple

The Sam Po Kong temple is a well-known shrine and tourist site in Semarang, known not only for its wonderful architecture, but also for the name of the temple itself – Sam Po Kong or Cheng Ho – that is associated with a highly respected Chinese person for both the (non-Muslim) Chinese and the (Muslim) Javanese. His charismatic figure has become the unifier for these two distinct ethnic groups that have been coexisting for years in Semarang. Even Javanese who do not belong to those groups come
to this shrine for mystical worship in order to receive blessings from Mbah Juru Mudi.\textsuperscript{13}

In the past, this temple was a mosque built by Chinese Muslims in Semarang. Cheng Ho visited this mosque in 1413. But, it was converted to the Sam Po Kong temple when Jin Bun came to Semarang in 1474. It remained a religious place for non-Muslim Chinese ever since, although Jin Bun was a Muslim who became the Sultan of Demak.\textsuperscript{14} His sympathetic nature was appreciated by non-Muslim Chinese living in Semarang.\textsuperscript{15}

Today, it is one of the best-known and largest Chinese shrines in Indonesia. In almost the entire area of this vast temple, there are sculptures of ships and dragons. The ships show Sam Po Kong’s role as a Chinese leader and conqueror. The dragons are typical Chinese icons which embody the force that rule this world.\textsuperscript{16} Four statues of guardian generals in the middle of Sam Po Kong temple “protect” it. Some of them resemble Chinese men, whereas the others look like Chinese heavenly beings (with a long beard, a unique face, and special clothing).

The shrine consists of three main temple buildings. Even though all three are located in one area, the Sam Po Kong temple, the two sub-temples are not dedicated to Cheng Ho. The middle temple serves as a holy place for the followers of Mbah Juru Mudi, while the last temple functions as a pantheon for those worshipping Dewa Bumi (the god of Earth). All of these temples have a three-level roof, which looks like a lotus petal.\textsuperscript{17} Using Durkheim’s theory, the establishment of the other two shrines had the objective of creating a space for symbols and rituals enabling people to express profound emotions of community attachment – a vehicle for social feelings.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, within the area of the Sam Po Kong temple, we can observe the very interesting situation of three different religious groups worshipping people or supernatural entities of transcendence.

Clifford Geertz’s definition of “religion”, applicable to the Sam Po Kong temple, is as follows:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{enumerate}

In the three shrines, we will find many symbols whose purpose is “to carry and to convey to people an idea”, meaning to be powerful and able to bestow “inner peace and joy” for the temples’ worshippers. Next, these positive innate feelings have to do with so-called “ultimate explanations of the world”. The combination of symbols, internal sentiments, and worldviews will characterize each ritual in a special way.\textsuperscript{20}

In the following, I will analyze the syncretism in each of the three sub-temples of the Sam Po Kong shrine.

\textbf{What is the Function of the First Temple?}

The first temple is dedicated to the Admiral Cheng Ho or Sam Po Kong. However, we will not encounter Cheng Ho’s remains in this place. There is only a “holy cave of Sam Po Kong” (\textit{gua suci Sam Po Kong}), for him to use his supernatural powers there. Followers of the first temple believe that he was able to go to China only by entering a well located in the cave. An-
other version of the story affirms that the well operates as a place of ablation.\textsuperscript{21}

Worshipping a well is one evidence of syncretism between Javanese mystical beliefs (abangan) and Islam. For Javanese Muslims, a well is considered sacred because it not only functions as an important water supplier for society, but also symbolizes purity since Muslim saints utilized it for ablution. Hence, in the past, Prophet Mohammed’s friends (Ali and Utsman), Muslim clergy, and saints built wells in devoutness to Islam. While the Muslim Javanese use wells as part of Islamic precepts, local abangan followers pay homage to the oldest well in a village by giving offerings and performing ceremonies. Such activities are called nyadran.\textsuperscript{22}

Applying Geertz’s theory, Cheng Ho’s well provides a set of symbols which trigger within its believers moods and motivation to worship. They are convinced that Cheng Ho is a saint who can grant their wishes. Thus we will find many letters from worshippers of this well with prayers and wishes addressed to Cheng Ho. Applying Durkheim’s approach, the conviction that Cheng Ho’s holy cave has supernatural powers has become a paramount belief creating attachment to this temple.

There is also another Islamic element of the first temple distinguishing it from the others: the bedug\textsuperscript{23}, used as a part of certain ceremonies in the first temple. In Indonesia\textsuperscript{24}, the muezzin\textsuperscript{25} strikes the bedug before azan. Besides, in Buddhism and Taoism, there are no rituals which involve a bedug. Both the size and the form of the bedug in the first temple are very similar to a bedug in mosques. It is only the red color\textsuperscript{26} of the bedug which differentiates it from Indonesian Muslims’ bedug.

Also Buddhist influences can be seen in the first shrine: a large bell whose sound is used for helping one focus one’s mind during prayers, rituals, meditation, or ceremonies; and 8 Pak Shien\textsuperscript{27} surrounding Cheng Ho’s statue. Even Taoist symbols can be found in the first temple, for instance an even number of big candles in the court of the first pantheon as the embodiment of Yin and Yang.\textsuperscript{28}

The evidence above supports my argument that syncretism between abangan, Islam, Buddhism, and Taoism has generated unique beliefs and practices in the first temple.

Islamic and Abangan Influences in the Second Pantheon

Unlike the first temple which functions as a religious place only for worshipping Cheng Ho’s well as his “supernatural” inheritance, the second pantheon is built for the community, who expects to receive “blessings” and a “better
life” from Mbah Juru Mudi’s grave. Not only is his “spirit” believed to be present, his body is also buried here.

Such religious practice is rooted in Javanese abangan: its adherents usually visit prominent people’s graves on special days (such as Jumat Kliwon or Muharram) to perform mystical rituals. Nur Syam has noted that usually people select to worship graves of persons believed to possess “supernatural force”, such as Mbah Modin Asyari’s grave in Tuban. For every such individual’s grave, there is a janitor guarding it and who is intimately familiar with the deceased’s biography and guides visitors to it.

Like in this Javanese abangan custom, there is a janitor who always takes care of the grave of Mbah Juru Mudi. Visitors, both Chinese and Javanese, usually worship his grave, wishing that he would grant their prayers. Sometimes they also meditate beside that grave; in this regard, note the tall tree near the grave. The title mbah originates from Javanese. It is reserved for older people with “special abilities”. So far however, I could not find any sources describing any supernatural powers of Mbah Juru Mudi. In my research I only found that he was a Chinese Muslim, and the form of his gravestone is quite typical of Islam.

Another piece of evidence for Javanese abangan influences on this second shrine is the existence of two Javanese guardian statues which would “protect” both the pantheon and the grave of Mbah Juru Mudi. Usually, such “bodyguards” are placed only in ancient Javanese buildings (like the Sultan’s palace) and some Hindu temples decorated with Javanese ornaments (e.g. the Javanese puppet named Wayang). Yet, the Javanese statues in the second shrine are unique since they are surrounded by Chinese decoration, for instance Chinese characters, pictures of Chinese gods, and red color.

Rituals of worshipping the graves of Mbah Juru Mudi are certainly worth scrutinizing under the frameworks of both Geertz’s and Durkheim’s theories. For Geertz, conviction will produce mood and motivation which will move its followers to pray and meditate in this temple. Through Durkheim’s idea of “society as the sacred”, we can see that the belief that Mbah Juru Mudi is an extraordinary person has united the feelings of both Javanese abangan and Chinese followers in this shrine.

The Combination of Taoism and Javanese Abangan Belief in the Third Temple

The third shrine is the most interesting one compared to the other two, because it is devoid of human icons of worship. It belongs to the cult of Dewa Bumi. This means that it engages the abstract transcendent. This deity can be re-
garded as an influence from Javanese *abangan*, that is *danjang*.\(^3^4\) Geertz in his detailed work *Religion of Java\(^3^5\)* describes *danjang* as a guardian spirit that assists and protects people; thus every village possesses one *danjang*. Javanese belief of *danjang* aside, Dewa Bumi is said to safeguard people living around him from evil omens and bad spirits.

However, the conception of a “guardian spirit” in the third shrine differs from that found in *abangan* in several respects. First, *danjang* are usually believed to be “spirits of actual historic figures now deceased”.\(^3^6\) Dewa Bumi however does not represent any real person of significance: he originated from a Chinese god (and has Chinese names: Hok Tek Ching Shin, Fu Te Cheng Sen, Ta Pe Kong, and others).\(^3^7\) Next, *danjang* believers are required to do *slametan*\(^3^8\), whereas Dewa Bumi worshippers are only required to pray to him. Finally, *danjang* does not need other guardian spirits, while Dewa Bumi is accompanied by two other deities to protect his temple, namely Dewa Bulan (the god of the moon) and Dewa Matahari (the god of the sun). In other words, I believe that Dewa Bumi is the combination of Javanese *abangan* and Taoism since Dewa Bulan and Dewa Matahari refer to Yin and Yang energy.

Within the framework of Geertz’s theory, religious insignia in the third temple provoke mood and motivation to pray to Dewa Bumi; afterwards, this activity will create the belief by the Dewa Bumi sect that this deity, with assistance of Dewa Bulan and Dewa Matahari (Yin and Yang), is their protector. If religion in this pantheon is analyzed under Durkheim’s theory, one might draw the conclusion that faith in Dewa Bumi has bound followers to this temple. Syncretism plays a role in shaping ideas of Dewa Bumi in this third pantheon, although it is not inspired by a human being.

**Politics of Translation: Buddhism and Taoism à la Indonesia**

When I asked the janitor about the role of Cheng Ho, Mbah Juru Mudi, and Dewa Bumi concerning the paradigm of Durkheim’s communal feelings in all three pantheons of the Sam Po Kong temple, he answered that the transcendent entities found here are media towards only one god (*gusti*). I find this notion of monotheism very interesting because, in fact, Buddhism and Taoism do not worship a god. They are often described as *philosophies of life* which provide rules to create harmony with human beings, nature, and the universe.

I then noticed that this idea of “one god” arises from the translation of the term *agama* in Indonesian, when reading Sita Hidayah’s article which tries to deconstruct that word. She reveals that *agama* has become the “politicization of religion”, which determines the concept of citizenship in Indonesia. That is, only those who belong to a “legitimate religion”\(^3^9\) can “exist” in the social life and political sphere. Regarding the syncretism in Sam Po Kong’s temple, the recognition of only one god not only stands for assimilation between Chinese culture and beliefs (Taoism, Buddhism) and Javanese tradition (*abangan*) and religion (Islam) in Semarang, but also is a means for hegemonic power of monotheistic religions in Indonesia. Hidayah terms this “the king’s outfit”, i.e. *agama* has reinforced major religions’ teachings.\(^4^0\)

Rosalind Shaw and Charles Steward support this argument by contending that some findings about the “invention of culture” uncover the strong political contingency within syncretism and hybridization. Such reconstruction (of culture) can be regarded as “colonial representations and Western modernist forms of
consciousness in general”.41 It means that the conception of ethical monotheism as one of the precepts of syncretism in Sam Po Kong’s temple is the embodiment of the old colonial idea that “modern religions” are supposed to be monotheistic. Otherwise they would be excluded from the commonly accepted world religions and categorized as “alien indigenous beliefs” instead. The consequence of being regarded as an indigenous belief (kepercayaan) — Hidayah also spoke of this — is to be marginalized by the state. Therefore, for me, this monotheistic belief is a sort of strategy to obtain the state’s recognition.

Concluding Remarks

In sum, the birth of different rituals in the Sam Po Kong shrine is a product of integration of Islam, abangan, Buddhism, and Taoism, a form of syncretism or hybridity. The dynamics of social interaction, especially between Chinese and Javanese people, have rendered this possible.

However, the existence of monotheism in this particular example of syncretism raises questions, due to the absence of such a notion in the original tenets of Buddhism and Taoism. Such a belief seems to stem from the term agama imposed by the state, which demands every official religion in Indonesia to have faith in “one god”.

My observations and analysis of syncretistic phenomena in this temple employed Geertz’s and Durkheim’s functionalist theories to investigate the roles of religious rituals, beliefs, and activities in each of the three pantheons. In this paper I also consider the Indonesian political background — how “religion” is defined — to illustrate the hegemony of monotheistic religions, which have created a monotheism-centric perception of things.42

1 In the view of other Muslims, adherents of Javanese abangan have committed apostasy and idolatry, which are rigidly forbidden by the Qur’an. Clifford Geertz in his Religion of Java (pp. 126-130) made a distinction between abangan (agama Jawa) and agama Islam santri (students of Islam as taught in traditional Islamic boarding schools). These two groups differ in Islamic doctrine, social organization, and community (umma). Clifford Geertz: The Religion of Java; The University of Chicago Press, 1960.
2 Rosalind Shaw and Charles Steward define this as “the formation of new cultural forms from bits and pieces of cultural practice of diverse origins” (p. 10) in their Introduction: problematizing syncretism of: Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw (eds.): Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The politics of religious synthesis; Routledge, 1994.
3 Translated as agama in Indonesian.
4 The janitor of the Sam Po Kong temple more often uses the word Gusti than the word Tuhan. The former is the Javanese translation of the word “God”, whereas the latter is its Indonesian translation. Abangan people often use the word Gusti. Muslim missionaries in Java (such as the Wuli Songo, the “Nine Saints”) usually add the word Allah after Gusti to remind the local villagers that their god is Allah. The preference for the word Gusti by Sam Po Kong’s janitor shows that he has been influenced by abangan.
6 This information was given by the guide of the Sam Po Kong temple.
8 This information is taken from writings on sculptures in the Sam Po Kong shrines. These sculptures cite sources from The Documentary Records of the Ming Dynasty, chapter 71: The History of Far East; and The History of Lou Dong Liu Jia Gan Tian Fu Palace.
9 This evidence can also be found on the sculptures. In 1415, Cheng Ho and his troops arrived in Aceh (Sumendala). At that time, the King of Aceh was assassinated by King Nakur from Batak. Afterwards, as Prince Zainal Abidin was too young to take revenge, the Queen of Aceh declared that the person who could kill King Nakur could marry her and be the next king. A fisherman did just that and led Aceh together with the Queen. When Zainal Abidin grew up, he staged a coup d’état against his stepfather. Iskandar, his step brother, could not accept that and started a revolt. The resulting civil war was ended with the help of Cheng Ho.
10 Buckley, 1975: p. 467.
11 For example, King Hulumosi (of what is now Iran) bestowed him a kylin (giraffe). This information is found on the sculptures.
13 There is neither detailed historical explanation nor a biography of this person. According to Sadiyono, the janitor who guards the second temple of Sam Po Kong, dedicated to Mbah Juru Mudi, this person is a Muslim individual and different from General Cheng Ho: His real name is Wang Cin Lung, and he worked in the crew of Cheng Ho’s ship. I do not know why the Chinese people in Semarang chose to worship him rather than other Chinese Muslim troops led by Cheng Ho. Another difficulty is the absence of data on the number of Cheng Ho’s Chinese soldiers at the time they arrived in Semarang. The term juru mudi means “helmsman”.
14 Jin Bun is the son of a Chinese princess (name unknown), the fourth wife of King Brawijaya. Muljana (cited below) elaborates that according to the story in Babad Tanah Jawi, Princess Champa, the third wife of King Brawijaya, felt jealous of that Chinese princess. Thus, King Brawijaya gave the Chinese Princess, who was pregnant at that time, to Arya Damar as a present. Thus Arya Damar became the stepfather of Jin Bun. He also had a stepbrother named Kin San. Later, both of them learned Islam from Sunan Ampel. Finally, Jin Bun (aka Raden Patah) ruled Demak, the first Islamic kingdom/territory in Java, the third one in Nusantara (now Indonesia), and the fourth one in Southeast Asia. Its capital city was Demak, with Semarang as its port city.
Amalgamation

Dian Maya Safitri

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This paper examines US military assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand from the time of the 9/11 terrorist attacks to the present. 9/11 marked a new stage in the regional security complex because of dramatic increases in US military aid programs to the region. Enlarged US military assistance has significantly impacted bilateral relations, especially since Washington has viewed Southeast Asia as the “second front” in the war against terrorism. The aim of this paper is to assess Presidents Bush and Obama’s military aid programs to the three Southeast Asian nations and to recommend a more feasible strategy of foreign policy to the Obama administration. The paper argues that the leadership in Washington should use more smart power (Armitage & Nye), a grand strategy that combines hard power with soft power, to enlarge and enhance US influence in Southeast Asia.

Introduction

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (hereafter referred to as 9/11), US intelligence agencies discovered that several extremist Muslim groups in Southeast Asia had been cooperating with Al Qaeda. As a result, the importance of Southeast Asia in the formulation of US security policy escalated. New military ties were formed between the United States and several Southeast Asian nations, and US military assistance to the region increased dramatically. Among these nations, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand have been most important to the United States. Indonesia is home to the world’s largest Muslim population and plays a critical symbolic role in the fight against Islamic extremism in Southeast Asia. The Philippines and Thailand are the only treaty allies of the United States in Southeast Asia, so they have been prioritized in the war against terrorism. All three nations are founding members, along with Malaysia and Singapore, of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967.

While US military assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand has been successful at countering terrorism and enhancing bilateral relations, it has also contributed to human rights abuses in all three countries. To enable US military assistance to be more effective, this paper argues that the Obama administration should use more smart power, which is defined by Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, Jr. as an integrated grand strategy that combines hard power with soft power. The concept of smart power and ways in which it can improve US foreign policy in Southeast Asia will be further elaborated upon in this paper.

Studying US military assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand is crucial for two reasons. First, US military aid programs to the three countries have been controversial, despite being effective in fighting terrorism, as political controversy has often stemmed from the poor human rights records of the three recipient nations. This controversial nature of US military aid programs poses constraints on the enlargement of US influence in Southeast Asia, and thus requires a closer look. Second, China’s increasing influence in Southeast Asia demands that the United States escalate its own prestige and power in the region. While applying the Cold War containment strategy to counterbalance the rise of China is not necessarily inadequate, Washington needs to prevent the
The Need for More Smart Power

possibility of power in the international system shifting towards a bipolar world with the United States and China as major rivals. To prepare for greater future challenges posed by China, the United States must reexamine its bilateral relations with Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand and revamp its overall foreign policy strategy.

To explore these points while assessing US military assistance to the three Southeast Asian nations, this paper is organized into six sections. The first section provides a brief historical background of US military assistance to these three countries prior to 9/11. The second section then analyzes the impact of US military assistance to Indonesia. The third section evaluates the case of the Philippines, while the fourth section investigates US military aid programs to Thailand. The fifth section argues that the Obama administration should use more smart power in its foreign policy towards these three countries. The last section concludes the discussion with an overall assessment of US military assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Historical Background on US Military Assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand

Military assistance is an essential tool of US foreign policy. While it has been a fundamental component of US foreign policy since the end of World War II, the goals and objectives have been varied to meet the demands of changing policies over time. From 1945 until the early 1990s, the main objective of US military assistance had been to defeat communism. The military aid programs sought to reduce the attraction of communism and to strengthen the US allies’ military capabilities for possible conflicts against communist countries. In 1990, however, the end of the Cold War changed the rationale for military aid programs. Although the Clinton administration emphasized the promotion of “sustainable development” as the main post–Cold War strategy, military assistance was focused on building military-to-military relations with recipient nations. This would be a general trend of US military assistance up until the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001.

The United States helps its friends and allies acquire US military equipment and training through its military aid programs. There are four main programs. The Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program grants recipient governments money to purchase equipment from the US government or through US commercial channels. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program seeks to increase professionalism of the allies’ military by providing military training to foreign military officers and personnel. Peacekeeping funds are also given to support voluntary non-UN operations. Lastly, the Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) have been introduced as a new form of military assistance since 9/11.

Historically, the United States has maintained a close relationship with the Philippines and Thailand while somewhat marginalizing Indonesia in its strategy towards Southeast Asia. The Philippines was a colony of the United States from 1898 to 1946 and became a US treaty ally under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) Pact of 1954. Even after the 1992 closure of US bases in the Philippines, the two countries have maintained a close alliance and ratified the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in 1999. Thailand became a US treaty ally through the SEATO Treaty, and secured itself a sizeable amount of US military assistance during the Cold War to fight a domestic communist insurgency, through its support for the United States in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Indonesia was a recipient of US military assistance until fierce criticism over Indonesia’s attack on East Timor forced the United States to impose sanctions on military assistance in 1993. However, after 9/11, as the world’s largest Muslim nation, Indonesia became the focus in the US war against terrorism.

Indonesia

The Bush Administration

During the leadership of President Abdurrahman Wahid from 1999 to 2001, the United States was largely marginalized in Indonesian
policy-making circles as Wahid’s foreign policy, centered on a “look towards Asia” policy, was intended to counter US influence in Asia and create a regional bloc with China and India. When Megawati Sukarnoputri became the president of Indonesia in 2001, however, US-Indonesia relations entered a new phase. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Megawati kept to her previously scheduled visit to Washington in late September 2001. During her visit, the leader of the world’s largest Muslim nation denounced terrorism and expressed her support for the United States. The Bush administration rewarded Megawati’s support with a US$400 million trade-and-aid deal and the creation of the Indonesia-US Security Dialogue.8

President Megawati’s support for President Bush’s war against terrorism unofficially resulted in the lifting of US sanctions on military assistance to Indonesia. Consequently, from Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 to FY 2002, US military assistance increased dramatically. Military aid given through the IMET program increased from zero to US$400,000.9 Because the United States had not yet officially lifted its sanctions on Indonesia, military aid given to Indonesia under the IMET program was slightly different from the regular IMET program; US Congress only allowed Indonesia to participate in the form of Expanded International Military Education and Training (E-IMET), which provided training to Indonesia’s military and emphasized human rights and military codes of conduct.10 In addition to financing under E-IMET, in August 2002, US Secretary of State Collin Powell visited Indonesia and announced aid of US$50 million over three years to assist Indonesia’s security forces.11

Although Megawati supported Bush’s war against terrorism, she and many Indonesians initially did not take counterterrorism efforts seriously as they believed the terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was a foreign terrorist group focused on anti-Western activities. This detachment, however, soon gave way to a dramatic increase in counterterrorism cooperation between both countries, following the two Bali bombings in October 2002 and October 2005 and the Marriott bombing in August 2003. Since the 2002 Bali bombing, Indonesian police and counterterrorism agents have arrested about 500 JI members and killed Azahari bin Husin, a key JI bomb maker, in East Java in 2005.12 The captures and killing of JI members prove that US military aid programs under E-IMET have seen success in Indonesia.

While the E-IMET program has led to significant progress in Southeast Asian regional security, increased US military assistance has caused concerns both in Indonesia and in the United States. As a response to US military assistance to the Indonesian military (TNI), Indonesian human rights activists urged US Congress to block military aid to TNI. TNI has long been accused for holding too much power (“power broker”) in Indonesian politics and committing numerous killings to wipe out any opposition. In a letter to the US Congress, Indonesian activists wrote that due to US military assistance, “Irreparable damage will be done to our efforts at reform; any further attempts by the TNI to change old practices will almost certainly end”.13 They were keenly aware that US military assistance would enhance the capabilities of TNI, which would use those resources for more human rights violations. Such was the case when US military support helped Indonesia invade East Timor in December 1975. According to East Timor’s Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), several documents declassified in 2006 suggest that US military assistance bolstered TNI’s invasion and occupation.14

In addition to Indonesian rights activists, many in the United States also acknowledged human rights problems in Indonesia and shared concerns for the renewed US military assistance. In its 2002 human rights report on Indonesia, the US State Department denounced Indonesia’s human rights measures:

The [Indonesian] government’s human rights record [remains] poor, and it [continues] to commit serious abuses. Soldiers and police murdered, tortured, raped, beat and arbitrarily detained both civilians and members of separatist movements […] Retired and active duty military officers who were known to have committed seri-
Ralph Boyce, then–US Ambassador to Indonesia, criticized Powell’s announcement of aid, stating that it failed to take past TNI actions into consideration.16 Many others also worried that the military assistance under the E-IMET program ignored the Leahy Law, under which the US defense personnel cannot “[train] foreign military units with a history of human rights violations unless the government in question is taking effective measures to bring those responsible to justice.”17 Because of the Leahy Law, President Bush faced strong opposition in Congress as he escalated military assistance to Indonesia.

Despite fierce criticism, President Bush made another political move to enhance military-to-military relations with Indonesia in his second term. In 2005, the Bush administration determined that Indonesia had met legislative conditions for the United States to lift sanctions on military assistance to Indonesia. Lifting sanctions enabled the resumption of full IMET and waived restrictions on the FMF programs. Consequently, from FY 2005 to FY 2007, US military assistance under the FMF to Indonesia increased from zero to over US$6 million, and the IMET almost doubled from US$728,000 to US$1.4 million.18 Washington and Jakarta also tightened intelligence cooperation, but they kept it low because Indonesian leaders worried that extremist groups would capitalize on the government’s close relationship with the United States to expand their size.19

**The Obama Administration**

As President Obama assumed office in 2009, many expected that the president, who spent part of his childhood in Indonesia, would significantly enhance the bilateral relationship with Jakarta. The expectation proved to be correct when President Obama assured Muslim nations in his June 2009 Cairo speech, stating that the relationship between America and Islam would not be “exclusive and need not be in competition”.20 Moreover, the Obama administration reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen the relationship with the world’s largest Muslim nation through several political moves. In February 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Indonesia during her first trip abroad as Secretary of State and praised Indonesia for its “democracy, modernity and women’s rights”.21 Secretary Clinton also announced the provision of US$10 million in aid to promote higher education in Indonesia during Indonesian Foreign Minister Wirajuda’s visit to Washington in June 2009.22

Along with these amicable political moves, President Obama has increased US military assistance to Indonesia in recent years. Military assistance under the FMF program increased from US$15.7 million in FY 2009 to estimated US$20 million in FY 2010, and the amount requested for FY 2011 was US$22 million.23 In case of the IMET program, the amount increased from US$1.5 million in 2009 to an estimated US$1.75 million in 2010.24 In addition to increased levels of assistance, the Obama administration is also floating a plan to train the Indonesian military’s younger members, known as Kopassus.25 Soldiers in Kopassus are relatively young and thus were not involved in earlier abuses of TNI. In March 2010, several members of the force visited Washington to discuss the proposal with the Obama administration.26

Increased military assistance and the plan to train Indonesian units have led to sharp criticism of President Obama’s plan. Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), who sponsored the Leahy Amendment, reminded the Obama administration that US law requires the Indonesia government to take significant measures to improve its military’s human rights problems. Speaking about President Obama’s trip to Indonesia, which was originally scheduled for March and then delayed twice due to domestic issues, Leahy warned the president that “It would be a mistake to walk away now from an important principle that has been a consistent element of our policy through several US administrations.”27 Brad Adams, the Asian director for Human Rights Watch, also opposed the Obama administration’s plan by stating that “human rights abusers continue to serve and be promoted […] in Kopassus”.28
Reacting to reports about increased US military aid and Obama’s plan to train Kopassus, many Indonesians who hoped for reforms of TNI urged the Obama administration to stop military assistance to Indonesia. The East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN), in an open letter to President Obama, blamed US policy for ignoring the well-being of Indonesians and focusing solely on narrow strategic and economic interests. Others worried that TNI still practices political murders, despite President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton’s claims to the contrary. Senior Indonesian officials and several Indonesian government documents revealed recently that the US-backed TNI assassinated several civilian activists during 2009. Despite such fierce criticism, on July 22, 2010, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates announced that the United States is lifting its 12-year prohibition on contacts and assistance to the Indonesian military as the Obama administration concluded that TNI had cleaned up its ranks and is committed to human rights. President Obama’s decision will certainly enhance US-Indonesian relations and help the United States achieve several objectives such as counterbalancing Chinese influence in the region. However, it will also discourage many who had faith in US power to enact positive change throughout the world. Sophie Richardson, Asia advocacy director for Human Rights Watch, denounced Obama’s decision by stating that “this decision is a stunning betrayal of the standards the US has”, and will have “ramifications well beyond Indonesia, in effect telegraphing to abusive militaries worldwide that the Obama administration’s human rights standards are up for negotiation.”

While President Obama’s efforts to enhance US-Indonesia relations are strategically crucial in counterbalancing growing Chinese influence in the region and thus deserve some credit, his decision to resume military-to-military relations without mandating TNI to reform will have detrimental effects on the global image of the United States. As Suciwati, an Indonesian widow, who lost her rights activist husband in a political killing, said, President Obama is “rewarding [TNI] without requiring accountability”. Because of this decision, the Indonesian security services will continue to get away with political killings, and the United States will most likely suffer significant loss in its power to persuade others in international relations.

**The Philippines**

**The Bush Administration**

As was the case with US-Indonesia relations, the 9/11 terrorist attacks reinvigorated the once ailing security alliance between the United States and the Philippines. When 9/11 occurred, the Filipino President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, quickly responded by granting the United States overflight rights for its military aircraft and expressed her support for President Bush’s war against terrorism. In addition, Manila formed an Inter-Agency Task Force Against International Terrorism to coordinate intelligence operations with the United States. The Bush administration praised President Arroyo for her speedy response to help the United States and promised to give the Philippines US$92.3 million in military equipment. These developments following 9/11 revived military-to-military relations which had been at a low point since the decision to close down US bases in the Philippines in 1991.

As a result of Arroyo’s support for President Bush, the Philippines received a significant increase in US military assistance. Under the two countries’ joint military exercises known as Balikatan, which began after the ratification of the Philippine-American VFA in 1999, President Bush dramatically expanded the training of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). In January 2002, Balikatan 2002-1 exercises were launched with specific goals to enhance the combat capability of the AFP. Approximately 1,650 US troops, including 150 special force troops, conducted the training of the AFP in Zamboanga and Basilan Island in the Philippines. In addition, during this time period, US military assistance to the Philippines in the form of the FMF, IMET, and Peacekeeping programs was also augmented. While US military aid under the FMF, IMET, and Peacekeeping programs together added up to about US$5.3 million in FY 2001, the number increased to about US$23 million in FY 2002.
US military assistance became the fundamental platform to fight terrorism in the Philippines. Some of the active terrorist groups in the Philippines are Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the main Southeast Asian Islamic terrorist group with ties to Al Qaeda, and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), a small terrorist group which operates in the southern Philippines. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a Muslim separatist group which seeks to gain autonomy in the area of Mindanao, also poses a major threat to the Filipino government. These groups have presented legitimate concerns, and the Filipino military, supported by the Bush administration, had significantly weakened the ASG and sought peaceful engagement with JI and MILF. Without US military assistance, AFP would have lacked the ability to combat the terrorist groups in the Philippines.

In addition to the terrorist groups, territorial disputes with China over the Spratly Islands have proved problematic for the Philippines. Some analysts have argued that China wanted to prevent greater US military assistance and presence in the Philippines. Thus, not only did enhanced military-to-military relations help the Philippines strengthen its position over the Spratly Islands, but it also enabled the United States to counterbalance the rise of China. In 2003, Washington took another step to strengthen its security relations with Manila. During President Arroyo’s visit to Washington in May, the Bush administration designated the Philippines as a Major Non-NATO Ally and promised to increase its military assistance to an even greater extent. This status made the Philippines eligible for increased defense cooperation with the United States and greater access to US weapons systems.

While enhanced military-to-military relations have produced several positive results, they may also have contributed to human rights abuses in the Philippines. The US State Department’s 2006 report on the Philippines acknowledged that human rights problems by the US-backed Philippine security forces were prevalent:

Security forces […] committed a number of arbitrary and unlawful killings.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) investigated 296 complaints of killings between January and November, compared with a total of 453 complaints of killings during 2005. The CHR suspected personnel from the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in a number of the killings of leftist activists operating in rural areas that it investigated during the year. These politically motivated acts of violence not only targeted leftist activists but also journalists and other media employees. In many cases, the PNP and AFP assassinated these journalists and activists because they criticized the government and threatened the ruling regime’s interests. Thus, the overall impact of President Bush’s military assistance to the Philippines was twofold. On the one hand, US military assistance greatly supported the AFP’s efforts to fight domestic terrorist groups in the Philippines and tightened the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Philippines. On the other hand, the newly enhanced capabilities of the Filipino military and security forces exacerbated the human rights abuses of the Arroyo administration.

**The Obama Administration**

The Obama administration’s strategies towards the Philippines have continued to be generous. During President Arroyo’s visit to Washington in July 2009, President Obama recognized the two countries’ friendship and expressed his desire to launch “even greater cooperation between [the] two countries in the years to come”. With this rhetoric, President Obama escalated military assistance to the Philippines. Combined US military assistance under the FMF, IMET, and NADR programs reached almost US$34 million in FY 2009 and increased to about US$40 million in FY 2010. These numbers made the Philippines the largest recipient of US military assistance during FY 2009 and FY 2010 in Southeast Asia.

This military assistance, however, became very controversial when reports of human rights...
Thailand

The Bush Administration

In contrast to Indonesia and the Philippines’ immediate expression of support for the Bush administration after 9/11, Thailand issued a befuddled response. On September 14, 2001, then–Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra declared that Thailand would remain “strictly neutral”, and deputy prime minister Thammarak Isarangkul na Ayuthaya expressed reluctance to strongly support the United States due to threats of foreign terrorism. On the following day, however, Thaksin changed his position and pledged full support for the United States. Thaksin’s first official visit to Washington in December 2001 cleared uncertainties lingering between Washington and Bangkok. The Thai Prime Minister promised President Bush Thailand’s full cooperation in the war against terrorism, and offered an engineering battalion and several medical teams to support the US war effort in Afghanistan. During the US-led invasion of Iraq, Thailand also contributed by dispatching over 450 troops for reconstruction efforts. While Washington was still worried about Thaksin’s initial hesitation, Thaksin’s support gave enough political commitment for President Bush to increase security cooperation with Thailand.

Consequently, Thailand saw a substantive increase in US military assistance. The most dramatic change occurred with the FMF program in which Thailand received nothing in FY 2001 but US$1.3 million in FY 2002. Under the IMET program, the United States also continued to fund the Thai military to improve its professionalism and to conduct joint military exercises. The joint exercises included Cobra Gold, which became America’s largest combined military exercise in Asia, and Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), a bilateral exercise designed to increase the US Navy’s understanding of Southeast Asian cultures. In addition, Thailand obtained funds under the Global Peacekeeping Operations Initiative (GPOI). From FY 2001 to FY 2005, the amount of GPOI gradually increased from about US$1 million to US$2.5 million. Furthermore, the

This criticism forced Washington to pressure Manila to improve its human rights record. In 2010, the US House of Representatives adopted House Resolution 3081 to withhold US$2 million under the FMF until the Filipino government takes effective steps to improve human rights problems and to prosecute military personnel who have violated human rights. In addition, in the US budget request for FY 2011, military assistance under the FMF was cut in half for FY 2011.

The Philippines still receives significantly higher military assistance than other recipients in Southeast Asia, but, by reducing the amount of military assistance, the US government is certainly pressuring Manila to reform. Decreased military assistance can also be interpreted as Washington’s message to the new Filipino government under Benigno Simeon “Noynoy” Cojuangco Aquino III. On June 30, 2010, the Philippines ended the ten-year-long presidency of Arroyo and ushered in a new administration under Aquino. The Obama administration’s budget request for FY 2011 may be reflecting Washington’s pressure on the Aquino administration.
Bush administration granted Thailand the NADR under the Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance (EXBS) program, which strengthened Thailand’s ability to control and detect the transfer of materials and technologies that could be used for developing weapons.\textsuperscript{58} On top of increased military funding, the United States designated Thailand as a Major Non-NATO ally in October 2003. As in the case with the Philippines, this status made Thailand eligible for greater defense cooperation with the United States and greater access to US weapons systems.

Security cooperation between the United States and Thailand has produced both positive and negative impacts. The biggest success was the capture of Riduan Isamuddin better known as Hambali, the top lieutenant of Osama bin Laden in Southeast Asia. He was the mastermind responsible for the Bali bombing in 2002 and the Marriot bombing in 2003. In August 2003, Hambali was captured in Thailand in a joint operation by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Thai counterterrorism authorities.\textsuperscript{59} His capture was praised by US officials as a major victory in the war against terrorism. On the negative side, US military aid programs led to a political backlash in the form of criticism of Thailand’s human rights record. The 2004 US State Department Human Rights Report claimed that the Thai security forces continued to commit numerous extrajudicial killings.\textsuperscript{60} Because of these unlawful killings, many human rights activists and US officials condemned the increased US military assistance.

Then, on September 19, 2006, a military coup overthrew Prime Minister Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party. In response to the coup, the Bush administration suspended some military and peacekeeping assistance under Section 508 of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act and stopped funding for counterterrorism assistance provided under Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006.\textsuperscript{61} However, in overall impact, this US response was mild. In FY 2007, although US funding under the FMF and IMET programs completely stopped, US military assistance continued under the GOPI and NADR programs at the level of previous years.\textsuperscript{62} Moreover, in February 2008, the Bush administration removed legal restrictions despite the questionable legitimacy of then–Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont.

\textbf{The Obama Administration}

While the Obama administration has no intention of completely disregarding a long-time treaty ally, it seems to be prioritizing Indonesia over Thailand in its strategy towards Southeast Asia perhaps because of his personal ties to Indonesia. He spent four years of his childhood there and has a half-sister who is part-Indonesian. President Obama has only met with Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva in multilateral settings and has not seemed passionate about discussing the future of US-Thai relations. Conversely, Obama has mentioned Indonesia several times as a crucial strategic partner. While issues involving Indonesia invigorate Obama, Thailand’s continuing problems have put US-Thai relations on hold as seen in US military aid to Thailand. A comparison of US military assistance to Thailand in FY 2009 and in FY 2010 shows only one minor change: slightly decreasing the NADR.\textsuperscript{63} The amount of funds under the FMF and IMET programs are very similar between FY 2009 and FY 2010.\textsuperscript{64} In a way, the numbers show that the United States continues its commitments towards Thailand, but the trend drastically contrasts with increasing US military assistance to Indonesia.

Because the Obama administration is watching developments in Thailand and how the problems will be resolved, US military assistance to Thailand has been less controversial than that given to Indonesia and the Philippines. While controversies over human rights abuses in Indonesia and the Philippines are fervently debated issues in Washington and among human rights activists, Thailand’s human rights record has received relatively less attention. A more contentious issue regarding Thailand has been its recent political turmoil, which probably caused Washington to be more disappointed with Bangkok. The military coup in 2006 already raised concerns about Thailand’s ability to preserve democratic structures, and the political turmoil in 2010 exacerbated those concerns. If the Thai leadership fails to reorganize...
its political structure and to resolve its problems by means that uphold democratic ideals, then Thailand, once among the best examples of democracy in the region, may become a less favored US partner in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{65}

The Obama administration certainly has reasons to be disappointed with Thai leadership and be half-hearted about US-Thai relations. However, it must take measures to secure and enhance bilateral relations with Thailand, as Thailand is an important strategic ally for the United States for two reasons. First, it had been one of the best examples of democracy in Southeast Asia. While the ideological importance of Thailand’s democracy has diminished since the end of the Cold War, the United States cannot afford to see democracy in Thailand become a failure. Political turmoil in 2006 and in 2010 illustrated that there is a possibility of Thailand becoming a failed democracy. Such a disaster would have a detrimental effect on US influence in the region as Southeast Asians may become less favorably inclined towards American values. Second, Thailand may become an important geostrategic point in the United States’ effort to counterbalance the rise of China. China is currently constructing a gas pipeline across Burma into China.\textsuperscript{66} In the past, the United States and its allies could keep an eye on Chinese gas imports, as China relied heavily on sea-lane transport via the Strait of Malacca. This will no longer be the case when the gas pipeline is completed. Therefore, by sharing a border with Burma, Thailand will be a geostrategic point for the United States to prevent further exclusive cooperation between China and Burma. For these reasons, the Obama administration should not marginalize Thailand’s role in US foreign policy.

**Smart Power Strategy**

A recurring phenomenon with US military assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand is that, while US military aid programs have been successful at countering terrorism and enhancing US bilateral relations with the three nations, they also contributed to human rights abuses in the recipient countries. Such a negative, unintended consequence of US military aid programs poses a dilemma for Washington. On the one hand, if the United States uses military assistance to help allies fight terrorism and to bolster bilateral relations, it often generates human rights abuses in recipient countries. On the other hand, if the United States curtails military aid to a certain ally, this ally may complain bitterly and turn to another great power, such as China, for military assistance. To solve the dilemma that current US foreign policy faces, this paper argues that the Obama administration should use more smart power, rather than rely solely on hard power.

Hard power is defined as “the application of military power to meet national ends”\textsuperscript{67}, whereas soft power is defined as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments”\textsuperscript{68}. President Obama should use more smart power, which combines hard power and soft power. Stating that the United States won the Cold War by combining hard power with soft power, Armitage and Nye argue that US reliance on hard power since 9/11 has frightened the world and turned world opinion against the United States.\textsuperscript{69} It was obvious that anti-Americanism increased significantly around the world during the Bush administration, and because of its over-reliance on hard power, the United States suffered from soft power losses.

When Barack Obama became President of the United States, however, world opinion appeared to change. A Gallup World Poll showed that world citizens’ views on US leadership significantly improved just before and after Obama assumed office.\textsuperscript{70} Obama, a gifted speaker with messages full of hope and dreams, certainly illustrated that an influential leader alone can dramatically shift world opinion about a nation. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake for the Obama administration to depend solely on his popularity as a source of soft power and believe that it is fully utilizing smart power in its foreign policy. A smart power strategy requires the Obama administration to invest more in soft power. It forces Washington to balance US hard military power with soft “attractive” power by “investing in the global good – by providing things that people and governments want but cannot attain without US leadership”\textsuperscript{71}.
What is the global good that cannot be obtained without US leadership? This paper argues that the global good refers to the American values that endorse democracy, freedom, and justice. These were the values that created the American Dream and generated respect for US leadership throughout the world. Both became vital sources of US soft power during the Cold War. Washington has failed to uphold these American values in its foreign policy since 9/11. Unresolved controversies with US military assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand epitomize this point. Therefore, to overcome such challenges and become a more influential and persuasive world power, the United States must devise a smart power strategy that incorporates more elements of soft power into its current use of hard power.

President Obama’s popularity, resulting from the actualization of his American dream by becoming the first African-American president and from his personality and character, has already provided a good starting point. Now, the Obama administration must formulate policies that can increase the United States’ soft power and generate global good incorporating American values. Such policies must include support for international institutions, aligning the United States with international development, promoting public health, increasing interactions of US civil society with others, maintaining an open international economy, and dealing seriously with climate change and energy insecurity. When the Obama administration succeeds in integrating these elements into the current strategy, US foreign policy, including its military aid programs, can be even more effective and will be able to ensure greater US influence in international politics.

A smart power strategy can benefit US foreign policy in three ways. First, smart power can enhance the legitimacy of US foreign policy. Nye rightly asserts that “when our words do not match our actions, we demean our character and moral standing and diminish our influence”. The United States cannot lecture about democracy when its military assistance supports Indonesia’s TNI and the Philippines’ AFP, both of which have notorious human rights records. Washington needs to confront the human rights problems of its bilateral partners and persuade them to change. Turning a blind eye to these problems will decrease the legitimacy of US foreign policy and have a detrimental effect on US influence in international politics in the long run. Smart power can avert this vicious cycle.

Second, smart power can increase the effectiveness of US foreign policy. When anti-Americanism becomes prevalent in a country, any effort by political leaders to cooperate with the United States will be viewed as an act of treachery. In such a case, provision of military assistance, a form of hard power, cannot achieve US foreign policy objectives effectively because the United States has lost its attractiveness. Those who have been victimized by TNI’s or AFP’s human rights abuses would certainly hold such extreme anti-American sentiment as they continue to hear news about increasing military assistance. A smart power strategy can slowly transform anti-Americanism into pro-Americanism. In addition, an increase in attractiveness and persuasive power can enhance the level of cooperation by making foreign governments desire to work with the United States. Enhancing the level of cooperation would also make US foreign policy more effective.

Third, smart power can ensure the sustainability of US power in international politics. Nye correctly argues that the US’s “staying power has a great deal to do with whether it is perceived as a bully or a friend”. Ignoring soft power and depending solely on hard power cannot be a viable foreign policy strategy because such a strategy would portray the United States as a bully. As mentioned earlier, the rise of China threatens the future of US power and represents a possible scenario in which the international system reverts to a bipolar structure. Even disregarding the rise of China, the United States is generally perceived as less powerful now than in its pre-9/11 state. To eradicate suspicions about the future of US power in international politics, the United States must devise a smart power strategy and increase its attractiveness immediately.

Placing a great emphasis on soft power in discussing smart power, this paper’s argument might be viewed as suggesting to the United...
States to abandon its hard power. However, this is not the case. A smart power strategy does not require the United States to discard its hard power. In fact, I would argue that the United States should remain the strongest military power in the world. As my assessments of US military assistance to the three Southeast Asian nations illustrated, the usage of hard power often produced better bilateral relations. Thus, this paper argues that the United States should continue its current use of hard power, become more attractive and persuasive by increasing its soft power, and balance soft power with hard power to exert greater influence in Southeast Asia and the world.

Conclusion

US military assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand has grown significantly since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Among the three recipients, the Philippines enjoyed the greatest amount of the military aid from the United States during the Bush administration. As President Obama seeks to prioritize Indonesia in his strategies towards Southeast Asia, Indonesia is expected to receive the largest amount of US military assistance from the Obama administration among the three nations. While US military aid to the three nations has caused controversy, the case in Indonesia has been the most controversial due to TNI’s continued human rights violations and the existence of the Leahy Law. Such controversy surrounding US military assistance to the three Southeast Asian nations demonstrates the need to use more smart power in US foreign policy. By balancing its current use of hard power with soft power, the United States would be able to execute a more legitimate, effective, and sustainable foreign policy strategy. And not only will more smart power help the United States solve controversies over US military assistance to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, but it will also help Washington counterbalance the rise of China successfully. Therefore, the Obama administration should immediately incorporate more smart power into its current foreign policy and enlarge US influence in Southeast Asia.

ENDNOTES

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16 Smith, 2003; p. 460.
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47 Ibid. p. 5.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
52 FY 2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations.
54 Ibid. pp. 466-467.
55 Emma Charlett-Avery, 2009; p. 9.
56 See both FY 2003 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations and FY 2004 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations.
58 FY 2004 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations.
61 Lum, 2008; p. 11.
63 FY 2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations.
64 Ibid.
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In his recent work titled *Art in China*, art historian Craig Clunas introduces the visual arts in China, ranging from the Neolithic period to the contemporary art scene of the People’s Republic. His survey is “neither fully chronological nor fully thematic” (p. 13), but contextual: he discusses art in China as it has been made for burial tombs, commissioned by the imperial court, displayed in temples and other religious sites, created and criticized by the literati, and traded in the marketplace. In choosing this approach, Clunas gives primary importance to the function of art, arguing against the intellectual traditions that maintain that a work of art must be “something without a function or something considered in the light of the removal or concealment of its function” (p. 13). By comparing individual works of art as they were used across contexts, he also demonstrates how constructions of meaning in given objects have changed over time. Clunas is successful in creating a quality introduction to art in China, in which he demonstrates the clarity and organizational effectiveness of his context-based approach. Although this review contests Clunas’s thesis argument and criticizes his underrepresentation of some forms of religious art in China, *Art in China* proves to be an exemplary work, accessible to specialists and enthusiasts alike.

The content of *Art in China* includes much more than text: the pages are vibrant with captivating photography paired with detailed captions, maps, or other information, which does not distract the reader from the text, as one might fear, but instead complements it and engages him or her further into the work. The text is accompanied by 132 high-quality images of the pieces of art in discussion, as well as several historical maps, time period charts, and short encapsulations of background or otherwise related information, all of which help enhance the overall clarity of the book and enable the reader to acquire a more complete understanding of the material. The appendices of the book include an innovative, multi-dimensional (po-
Bok Reviews

Art in China

Clunas utilizes his context-centric approach to make an impressive contribution to recent scholarly publications regarding the commodification of literati paintings. In the fourth chapter of the book, “Art in the Life of the Elite”, he explains the emergence of the theory of literati painting in the Song period (960-1279 CE), which is the first time a distinction was elaborated between amateur scholar-officials and professional artisan painters. This distinction, Clunas adds, was marked by a number of themes, among which was the notion that an educated gentleman should never sell his paintings for financial reward, lest he be equated with a common artisan. As his discourse continues, he builds on the work of previous scholars and further clarifies that this notion, once conceived of as the actual standard for literati artists, was, in fact, just an ideal (James Cahill: The Painter’s Practice; Columbia University Press, 1994). Clunas asserts that, by about 1600 CE, literati who relied on marketing their paintings for economic support, ironically “also relied on appearing not to do precisely that thing” (p. 187). In the fifth chapter, “Art in the Marketplace”, he introduces Qing scholar-official Zheng Xie’s painting entitled “Bamboos” (dated 1759 CE) and points out that, despite having the subject matter and formal attributes of the literati style, the painting was surely sold for cash (p. 193). He refers to a section in the previous chapter that explains that “by the Song dynasty the bamboo stood in poetry for the character of the gentlemen, ‘bending but not yielding’, while the handling of the brush, with each leaf rendered in a single stroke, draws closer to the more prestigious art form of calligraphy” (p. 142). By directly comparing the work across contexts, Clunas clearly makes his case, and convinces his reader that, contrary to the theoretical ideal, “literati painting” had, in effect, become a commodity.

Art in China has a well-researched section on calligraphy in the chapter “Art in the Life of the Elite”, where he presents a concise summary of the religious developments that led to the rise of calligraphy as an art form. Clunas notes in his introduction that “Chinese elite definitions of ‘art’ over the last thousand years have always given first place to calligraphy, though English-language surveys often tend to devote...
less space to this than they do to sculpture, which is validated as a ‘fine art’ in the Western post-Renaissance tradition” (p. 12). Rather than continue the ethnocentric trends set by earlier Western art historians, Clunas gives a prominent place to calligraphy and thereby distances himself from previous unsatisfactory modes of scholarship. Through a brief yet thorough survey accompanied by detailed charts and photographs, he helps the reader understand the rapidly executed and less legible variations of cursive script known as “draft script”, or “crazy draft script” in its more extreme forms. These calligraphic styles and other varieties of the Chinese script are presented in a table that includes their dates of development and references multiple example photographs within the text. This section of the work not only provides an introduction suitable for the novice reader, but also contributes new ideas to contemporary scholarly discourse on the origins and meaning of calligraphy.

Although his summary of the religious origins of calligraphy is excellent, Clunas’s work as a whole inadequately represents (and in one instance misrepresents) the forms of religious art in China. The art of Buddhism fills most of the 34-page chapter that focuses on religion, “Art in the Temple”; Daoist art receives about 5 pages; and the art of the popular religion is entirely absent. While it is true that most of the religious art coming out of China that survives today is Buddhist, more attention could have been paid to other religious traditions, while still making clear the prominence of Buddhist art. Daoist art is discussed to some extent, first in a brief section about the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) emperors’ patronage of Daoism, wherein a Tang statue of a highly important Daoist god is given a full-page photograph (p. 102). Clunas describes in interesting detail the formal elements that link this statue to Buddhist sculpture, yet fails to accurately identify the iconography of the carved deity. It is not that he has not attempted to; on the contrary, Clunas writes that “the iconography is distinctive; no Buddha has a triple-forked beard, for example, and the feather fan held in the figure’s right hand is also an exclusive attribute of immortals of this type” (p. 103). Provided with a greater familiarity of the conventions of Daoist iconography, Clunas could have gone a step further. By comparing the figure with similar images in available publications, such as Stephen Little’s (ed.) Taoism and the Arts of China (The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), one can immediately determine the iconography of the figure: he is none other than Dàodé Tiānzūn (道德天尊, the Celestial Worthy of the Way and Its Power), the third of the Three Pure Ones (三清 Sānqīng), the highest of the supreme gods in the Daoist pantheon. Furthermore, while this figure may “have originally been flanked by two standing attendants” (p. 103), as Clunas accurately notes, it is also likely that this statue of Dàodé Tiānzūn sat to the right of similar statues of his two superior deities, Yuánshǐ Tiānzūn (元始天尊) and Língbǎo Tiānzūn (靈寶天尊), in order of rank. One additional potential improvement pertains to the caption Clunas provides for the image. It currently reads: “Stone sculpture of seated Heavenly Worthy, one of the figures of the Daoist pantheon of immortals, dated 719 CE” (p. 103). Yet, the Daoist pantheon is not simply a “pantheon of immortals” as Clunas suggests, rather it consists of supreme gods, celestial rulers, guardians, saviors, saints, and other immortal beings; moreover, there are numerous Heavenly Worthies (天尊 Tiānzūn) within it. Given the importance of art and images to the Daoist tradition as well as to the popular religion, some further research in these areas would have helped provide a clearer picture of the complexity of religious art in China. The neglect of these religions is not entirely surprising, however, as Western art history has long limited its scope to Buddhism, and only in recent years have scholars begun to turn their attention to Daoism and other religions. Bearing this in mind, that Clunas has at least included the art of the Daoist tradition marks an important first step in the transcendence of yet another unsatisfactory trend of previous scholarship, one that brings the field closer to an accurate understanding of Chinese religious art.

Aside from his representation of religious art, readers may also challenge the moot nature of Clunas’s thesis, which proposes a semantic shift in the way his topic is defined. In his own words: “This book is very deliberately called Art in China, and not Chinese Art, because it is written out of a distrust of the existence of
any unifying principles or essences linking such a wide range of made things” (p. 10). Clunas elaborates on this statement, arguing that “Chinese art” denotes a 19th-century Western-invented category that assumes a false sense of coherence between art works produced in very different times and places. He reminds his readers that no one in China prior to the 19th century grouped the variety of art works – textiles, pieces of calligraphy, paintings, sculptures, ceramics, and other works of art – into the same field of inquiry (p. 9). Thus, he asserts that “Chinese art”, as a category, is the product of reductionist historiography and hints that it should be dropped in favor of a new term, “art in China”. He points out examples of the scholarly biases that have derived from presumptions about what is or is not “Chinese art”, first with the French scholar Victor Segalen (1878-1922), author of *The Great Statuary of China*, who refused to discuss Buddhist sculpture in China, on the grounds that it was imported from India (p. 12). In another example, he explains how some scholars in the 1980s have used the word “un-Chinese” to describe aesthetic features uncharacteristic of common art works from China (p. 19). Clearly, Clunas is concerned with the problem of essentialism and proposes that his terminology more accurately reflects the reality of the body of works being studied in his book. While this argument seems interesting at first, the text lacks sufficient examples to explain why, in most cases, “Chinese art” would not be just as good a descriptive term. Certainly, Clunas’s intention to indiscriminately include all forms of art in China is understood and appreciated; however, the term “Chinese art” need not be eschewed just because some scholars may have claimed that this or that is not “Chinese”. Indeed, if “Chinese art” were semantically inaccurate, then perhaps “Chinese history” would also be better expressed as “the history of China”, or “Chinese culture” as “the culture of China”. “Chinese art” is a useful term, especially as it is consistent with and parallels other geographical categories of art, all of which are attached to a similar label, such as “European art”, “African art”, and so on. As such, the term and its companions, for example “Chinese painting” and “Chinese architecture”, will likely remain descriptive terms for their respective genres for some time to come. Although Clunas’s proposed semantic adjustment may not win favor, he nonetheless has made an important statement about the diversity of the genre, one that deserves recognition and consideration by anyone who explores the visual culture of China.

Craig Clunas has demonstrated his academic prowess once again with the excellent scholarship presented in *Art in China*. Its fluid and captivating discourse is accompanied by brilliant photographs of the ancient and contemporary works of art in discussion, as well as extensive maps, charts, and tables that allow for complete understanding. While this review criticizes the practicality of the book’s thesis, and also the misrepresentation and neglect of forms of religious art in China other than Buddhist, these criticisms do not outweigh the positive attributes of this remarkable book. *Art in China* by Craig Clunas is a great contribution to the field of art history, and it raises the bar for what one should expect from an introductory art survey of any region or genre. Academics interested in the visual arts would be wise to study and emulate this work.
Author Tina Lu considered *Fancy Meeting You Here* as an alternate title for the book, as it is centered on unexpected encounters between individuals in peculiar situations (The MacMillan Report, Yale, Dec. 11, 2009). *Accidental Incest* is a comprehensive effort to document and interpret an array of accidental encounters described in late imperial Chinese literature, in which individual characters are portrayed as being tied, and coalesced, into larger human communities beyond local and consanguineous ones. Based on a close reading of different genres of classical tale, *chuánqí* (傳奇) drama, vernacular short story and long prose narrative from the late Ming to the early Qing periods, Lu addresses challenging questions that Benedict Anderson had raised in *Imagined Communities*: by what means could the contingent individual of this era make sense of the size, the border, and the unity of the empire, and even the more abstract topography of *tiānxià* (天下)? In other words, how could the individual be transformed into a more “public” being? The imagination of the community comes into being, Lu argues, distinctively at the moment when people meet each other at non-quotidian situations such as during incestuous encounters. On the one hand, the book implicitly speaks to the traditional Confucian topos by expressing how individuals and families could combine to form a greater human collective defining the kingdom. On the other hand, it offers a prequel to the modern concern which surfaced at the turn of the 20th century: how to build the community of society after the collapse of traditional families. Faced with such a haunting
topic of both anthropological and political dimensions, Lu delves into literary archetypes for different modes of imagining the community.

The chapters of this book, rather than following any chronological or thematic order, are arbitrarily arranged, each addressing different types of encounters through a number of representative texts. Yet those subsumed under the same heading are not strictly of the same breed. While Lu herself does not explicitly attempt to categorize these encounters, a sketchy typology could still be reconstructed through her textual analyses, which cover a spectrum of communities. On one level, communities tend to endlessly proliferate by means of unexpected encounters. However, this type of process of expansion can at times, ironically, reveal rather than stretch the limits of the community. Under this category, the narrative pattern of family separation and reunion during the fall of the Ming dynasty is discussed with particular originality on Lu’s part. In her reading of a set of an early Qing collection of short stories (chapter 3), Lu argues that the restoration of a separated family is fraught with incestuous danger, for any sexual encounter with a stranger could turn out to be one with an old family member who has long gone astray. In other words, exogamy is drawn back to endogamy. As a result, the attempt of broadening the community through exogamy winds up in a regressive reproduction of the same community. Although Lu’s analysis only grapples with the structure of such stories, it could broach further discussion pivotal to both the contemporary readers of the story and to modern researchers: how could people restore the lost dynasty by virtue of rebuilding the family, if the latter risks violating the patriarchal order? Lu discusses another noteworthy encounter of the same type: the commercial exchanges that occur in business journeys (chapters 2 and 4). Echoing the business credos that measure distance as profit, the fictional world implies a trade route stretching endlessly with the possibility of infinite commercial interest. But the seemingly boundless world, once again, confronts an ironic self-restriction. Lu expounds how the perfect exchange predicated on mutual benefit has to be, before all else, made possible by relativizing the Chinese value system, which in turn marks the limit of the Chinese territory in a symbolic manner. As a rehearsal of post-colonial discourse in this part of the book, Lu’s argument is still eye-opening in illuminating, without any reduction or simplification, the nuance and paradox of the text under study: how the desire for commercial expansion could be intertwined with self-critique.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are narrative archetypes in which human community has lost the wherewithal to expand outward and instead tends to contract to nothingness. According to Lu, the classical model stories of filial piety can not only flat out the community of the kingdom, but also defy the perpetuation of family structure altogether – especially in extreme cases such as gēgǔ (剖股) or gēgān (剖肝), cutting some part from one’s thigh or liver. These acts are associated with cannibalism, since the older generation manages to survive at the expense of its descendants (chapter 5), and thus leads to the self-consumption of the family. The same narrowing-down of community also holds true in the case of Ròupútuán (肉蒲團) (chapter 8). While the hero launches his sexual adventure in the seemingly infinite population, believing its enormous size will ignore his immorality as a statistic cipher, Lu demonstrates how the text manages to confine such infinitude by calculating karmic retribution with accuracy. In both cases – one of extreme self-sacrifice, the other of extreme debauchery – the argument keeps questioning how the boundary of ethics could serve to circumscribe the community.

Lu’s book provides a wide landscape of literary archetypes around the topic of imagining human communities by attending to another variety of encounters taking place within the domestic space, as exemplified by those described in Jīnpíngméi (金瓶梅), Honglóumèng (紅樓夢) (chapters 6 and 7), and other case studies. Her analyses here contribute to Chinese literature studies by drawing on a number of refreshing but understudied perspectives. First, they give a compelling example of how familiar literature can be analyzed from spatial perspectives. Human encounter in Lu’s book is primarily interpreted as geographical activities preceding political ones, whereupon the ethical connotation of “community” is made substantial with geographical significance; and this is
further examined in relation with issues such as the expansion of the empire and the spread of commercial activities. What is more, human encounter is rendered as a social space where a variety of exchanges are played out. Developing from a discussion of the primal form of marital or gift exchanges in anthropological studies, Lu tackles more ambitious questions on how other advanced exchange system such as commodity exchange, the mechanism of exogamy, or even colonial activities in late imperial China could be illuminated by literary imagination.

Fascinating as it is, it is unfortunate that some points in this book are not represented with clarity and argumentative rigor. Furthermore, no plausible hypothesis is proposed. The book tends to raise questions instead of answering them, and in doing so it does no more than give a formal description of the plot structure of the literary works examined, without reference to context, or any textual history or cultural background that plays a significant role in spawning the archetype. In the conclusion of the book, Lu ends with an open-ended epilogue meditating the problem of genre, especially how long prose narrative stands against short stories in terms of its capacity to accommodate greater human community. Like all the other chapters, in the epilogue Lu meticulously avoids pushing her analysis too far, and resists any further generalizations beyond specific textual analysis. In fact, lacking any coherent argument as a backbone, the whole book is left as a patchwork of thought pieces, creatively written but loosely organized. While such a mosaic style does preserve the complexity of different texts, there are indeed other tentative frameworks that could have united the whole work in a more cogent manner. For example, some of the material could be usefully strung together under the aspect of the figure of “the stranger”, of how the confrontation with the outside other – either in marital/commercial activities or general travel – could shift the vertical axis of social organization, backed up by the cardinal human bond of father-son, into a more horizontal and mobile one.

Further methodological issues are also worth mentioning here. Lu’s argument, first of all, remarkably ignores the historical context both in general or specific to the turbulent era under study. Taking inspiration from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s question of what pushes the preliminary family into a bigger community of state (pp. 156-160), the book reduces the entangled network of Chinese society into the three discrete levels of the individual, the family, and the state; none of these strata is delicately defined or distinguished from its Western counterpart. Hardly any other mediators between these levels, either the gentry class, or the booming merchant community in the late Ming, has been taken into consideration. A more rigorous discussion of the idea of “community” would have mapped and structured the materials in a more reasonable way, and helped to clarify some ambivalent terms such as that of a “dyadic relationship” (p. 135).

Moreover, there are insufficient interpretations and inaccurate use of general Confucian discourse, especially the radical strain of late Ming Confucians. In addition, the impact of Buddhism, which has noted imprints on the literature in question, was neglected. Absence of explications of such rudimentary concern makes some arguments flawed and far-fetched. A telling example can be found in chapter 5, where Lu hastily puts gēgǔ and breast-feeding the parents as a practice against the Confucian ethics of begetting the children in order to continue the genealogy (pp. 162-163). Such opposition is oversimplified, because the extreme practices of filial piety to preserve the older generation are not necessarily carried out at the cost of the younger generation. What is at stake here is to what degree one could appropriate the body derived from one’s parents, and whether the practice, such as feeding parents with babies, would impose moral wrongs on the part of parents. Furthermore, the recourse to literary theories in this book seems to lack any real purpose or effectiveness, aside from the book’s use of select quotations from theoretical texts to open and frame the discussion in a rhetorical way. The theories themselves are not explicated or contextualized, such as Marce Mauss’s idea of a “distant partner” (p. 23); nor are their interpretations central to the point under examination, as demonstrated by an irrelevant reference to Fredric Jameson’s analysis of genre criticism (pp. 19, 265). For a book that aspires to adopt
an anthropological perspective as well as to offer a reflection on genre, a more pertinent investigation of the two theories mentioned above should be placed on top of the author’s agenda.

It is not difficult to cast a critical eye over all the shortcomings of this book. After all, this is a book that goes slightly off the beaten track, employing an approach that is not conventional in classical or Chinese literature study. The blemishes, however, could be partly justified since the book addresses the literature largely from the view of cross-cultural comparison. Lu’s preoccupation with human community starts from the question lurking in *La Comédie humaine* by Honoré de Balzac, as well as in shorter pieces such as *La biblioteca de Babel* by Jorge Luis Borges: how could disparate narrative forms, short or long, manage to grasp only a finite sample of the human world to represent the infinite whole? In other words, Lu is asking a question dealing with the collective unconscious underlying the mythical recurrence of a narrative pattern fashioned within the self-contained literary realm, and transcends the limits of specific cultural or historical contexts. It seems that Lu is keenly aware of the nature of her methodology, however problematic her approach might appear. Her bold neglect of the dominant academic practice of historical criticism reveals her intention to recall old archetypal criticism, which openly defies any historical or social reference by solely focusing on literary patterns played out by various archetypes of human psyches. The book’s mapping of narrative variants of human encounter stands in line with such a tradition. Despite all the arbitrariness and lack of rigor inherent in the methodology, the book is teeming with inspiring sparks, each of which could elicit and inspire further research. This book thus reminds us of the analytical power that an antique technique of textual analysis still retains.
Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century

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The traditional arguments hold that the dramatic increases of flashing neon lights and subsequent economic prosperity as well as cultural richness that occurred in Shanghai were an obvious consequence of the Western impact or were associated with the West after Shanghai was opened as treaty port in 1843. However, Lu Hanchao’s book takes us beyond the neon lights to the city’s residential neighborhoods, shantytowns, and public thoroughfares, and shows that Shanghai’s image as modern China’s showcase of Westernization often overshadowed the persistence of the patterns and practices in the everyday life of the “little urbanites” (xiǎoshìmín 小市民). While things Western were literally a daily part of life, the people of Shanghai comfortably kept and adapted many old customs and lifestyles (p. 297). In fact, modernity in China in some respects had Chinese roots and was not something entirely transplanted from the outside (p. 17).

“Little urbanites”, the focus of the whole book, include factory workers, store owners and their clerks, government employees, most office staff, waiters, salesmen, teachers, newspapermen, policemen, postmen, writers, and various entertainers, along with their dependents. Literally, “little” stresses one’s social standing while “urbanite” stresses one’s residential settlement (p. 62). The majority of “little urbanites” lived side by side with few class distinctions in alleyway houses (lǐlòng 里弄), a distinctive Shanghaiese type of housing built along small alleyways off the main streets and usually situated within stone-gated compounds (shíkùmén 石庫門). Meanwhile, the alleyway compounds also housed a mass of small shops and busi-
nresses catering to those people: rice stores, food stores, tobacco and paper stores, hot water stores (lǎohǔzào 老虎灶), publishers, temples, and even schools. Indeed, some institutions of higher education were to be found there. In these alleys, too, were entertainments, street theaters, storytelling peddlers hawking their wares, wine stores, and proletarian restaurants (pǔluóguǎn 普羅館). Yet the hallucinogenic neon lights of Shanghai are still sparkling and be seen as a powerful manifestation of the city’s modernity and Western orientation; for many little urbanite, what mattered most in their daily life was “the petty but vigorous commerce and activities conducted in an area within walking distance from home, not the dazzling life symbolized by the Bund and Nanking Road” (p. 243). In other words, most of the city’s much publicized modern amenities were quite irrelevant to their daily life.

By exploring the everyday spaces of Shanghai’s residential neighborhoods, Lu finds a deep penetration of local commerce into the daily life of ordinary people. Throughout the day, the alleyways were visited by street food sellers with various indigenous snacks as well as peddlers with commodities such as newspapers, flowers, salt, socks, towels, soap, bamboo poles, and many other things. In between came other hawkers who offered services that ranged from haircuts to repairing every kind of domestic utensils. There were also portable libraries providing book renting business in alleyways and the most popular books were novels and picture storybooks. Moreover, the residents never had to go far to do serious shopping. The neighborhoods had every variety of shops, including fruit and vegetable markets for their daily fresh foods.

Commerce was so widespread among people of all walks of life and so pervasive in every aspect of the city that one had to commend one’s soul to it in order to survive or success, and in the process each had become a merchant of a sort. Accordingly, a distinctive merchant character of Shànghǎirén (上海人) has been formed under such extraordinary commercial culture. Shanghainese have been stereotyped as astute, resourceful, calculating, quick-witted, adaptive and flexible, in contrast to the rigid, tradition-bound, and orthodox Beijing style (Jíngpài 京派; note that the commercial culture of Shanghai is also named Hǎipài 海派). As Lu Xun (鲁迅) pointed out, “Haipai is just the helper of commerce”, whereas “Jingpai is the hack of officialdom” (p. 313). All of these are characteristics associated with commerce (p. 312) as “the essence of being Shanghainese derived from commerce” (p. 16). According to Lu, the dominant way of thinking of Shànghǎirén was pragmatism, a pragmatism of incorporating whatever was appealing and available to make life better (p. 295). Living in a city that was both the most modern and the most Western in China, Shànghǎirén responded by taking what was useful to them in improving their daily lives, or in making those lives more varied, more productive, or simply more profitable. For example, rickshaw men, along with other peasants and country people moving into Shanghai, were “made into petty traders of all sorts. In turn these small potatoes became the true brickwork of the commercial world and its culture we call ‘Shanghai’” (p. 105); tenants were made into second-landlord by subletting space to others and types and levels of subletting were quickly devised and promoted in many alleyway house neighborhoods.

In his book China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation (Harvard University Press, Harvard East Asian Monographs 224, 2003), Karl Gerth provides a detailed examination on the impact of National Products Movements on the formation of Chinese nationalism. The movement and its promotion of Chinese goods reached into many facets of Chinese life and influenced many aspects of China’s growing consumer culture. Since old Shanghai hosted so many anti-imperialist boycotts and mass patriotic marches, I would be very curious to know how the ordinary Shànghǎirén, especially those living in the vast alleyway neighborhoods participated in the movement as well as the link between quotidian and protest patterns. Moreover, if the typical character of Shànghǎirén is astute, would their decision on whether to join the movement, to a large extent, be based on a cost-benefit calculation?
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