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Greater China
This research introduces the viability of an East Asian region from the perspective of International Relations. Scholars who emphasize cooperation (e.g. economic or security) and shared norms among Asian neighbors will typically apply a liberal institutionalist or a social constructivist approach. Those who doubt the depth and authenticity of regionalization speak in terms of structural power politics (e.g. state survival) and strategic balancing. This paper critically examines Asian regionalism using the language of social constructivism and not political realism. Ideas, identities, perceptions and behaviors are prioritized. Material forces (e.g. military force posture, balance of power, geopolitics, natural resource allocation, economic leverage and coercion etc.) are of less concern except to the degree they influence identity. Particularly, China’s behavior and interests will have the greatest impact on the viability of the development of East Asian norms and a shared regional identity.

Key Words: International Relations Theories, Social Constructivism, Regionalism, East Asia, China

INTRODUCTION

This article begins with a defense of the premise that the region of East Asia, with the state as primary agent or actor in the region, is a feasible research subject. The article is followed by a discussion of the theoretical approaches (i.e. Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism) to the regionalization, or lack thereof, of East Asia by applying the Constructivist approach. Identity and interest are central to the Constructivist approach, so in that vein the subject of East Asia’s social identity includes a discussion of Confucianism, nationalism and race upon the regional identity. Political interests, including hegemonic, economic and security interests, are addressed here. In conclusion, I argue that China’s current behavior, rather than regional norms (i.e. formal and informal shared conventions that govern state behavior within a region), largely shapes East Asian identity. Specifically, a powerful China could and should be a boon for the region, but its chauvinistic politics, territorial ambitions and hard security dilemmas overshadow the economic benefits of a prospering China.

UNDERTAKING REGIONAL IDENTITY

A region, for the purpose of this article, is a specified geographic area made up of political states. However, over time and after positive intra – regional interactions and cooperation, the people of a given region may begin to identify first with the region and then with the state. Such is the case with some Europeans who, for instance, may see themselves as European first and Luxembourghish or Dutch second. These citizens share a common European identity (and its cultural and political connotations) that transcends their national identity and this is what is meant by regional identity. Further, states’ self-perceptions as national or regional are dynamic and not fixed.

In this paper the region under investigation is East Asia which includes the states of Southeast Asia (ASEAN-10), and Northeast Asia, namely China, Japan, the two Koreas, and Taiwan, with the greater focus upon Northeast Asia. East Asia has not succeeded in creating a regional identity in the global community. For example, Samuel S. Kim recognizes that despite the tremendous literature on regionalism, the lack of literature on East Asia “as a distinct region is striking:” within Asia “only Southeast Asia receives recognition as a region” because of the 1967 creation of ASEAN.¹

The above categorization of East Asia is a “closed” as opposed to “open” definition that includes China and its neighbors as well as other actors with great influence in this region, especially the US. In other words, this is a “closed” approach summed up by Wang Jisi: “What is Asia? (It is) China and its neighbors.”² This article applies a closed approach and there are four reasons why and the US is excluded from this analysis despite its economic, political and security influence in the
region:

Firstly, this is an attempt to understand the region as a platonic model with the US variable removed from the analysis. The US is a key player in Asian security architecture, but this article is not an explanation of said architecture but seeks to understand how Asian states within the region see themselves and their neighbors. Secondly, the US, despite its many Asian immigrants and multiculturalism, it is not an Asian country - not geographically or otherwise. Thirdly given China’s size, proximity, and historical and cultural interaction with its neighbors, China’s behavior in the region has more impact for better or worse. Finally, relative to the long term historical picture of Sino-regional relations, the US is a new comer to the region and some would argue its influence may be in decline - especially if China successfully manages its domestic growth and reform, foreign relations, historical grievances, and territorial interests with its neighbors in the twenty-first century. Now that the region has been defined, let us turn to the role of the state.

UNDERTAKING STATE AS AGENT

States are those political territories occupied by a people with their own government. This article employs a statist (i.e. state as primary agent or actor) approach to the region. This is because in East Asia the modern sovereign state is the prime unit for facilitating interaction between economic, political, and civil units within its borders. The state as actor debate revolves around the degree of state autonomy vis-à-vis the power of non-state actors (e.g. NGOs, MNCs, organized crime and any other entity established outside of state control yet has some bearing on global politics) and the influence of social processes such as globalization. The examples provided throughout this paper make it clear that states are the primary agents in East Asia’s regional politics.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES COMPARED

Now that we have established the subject of study is East Asia with the state as actor, one must then choose among competing theoretical approaches for better understanding the sources of conflict and cooperation that weaken or strengthen the region as a political and social unit. Area studies by and large emphasize field research and single-minded devotion to a nation or region; whereas a disciplinary approach such as IR usually seeks to apply theoretical approaches, which are not limited to particular regions. East Asia is a sui generis research subject and therefore cannot be compared with any other region. In spite of the shortcomings of IR theories at understanding the dynamics of East Asia, they are helpful for explaining some aspects of East Asian interstate relation. This article is hybrid scholarship that includes what may be described as “context-sensitive social science” and “disciplinary area studies.” The following section covers the three big approaches of International Relations (IR): Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism.

Realism

Realists, particularly Neorealists, maintain states seek power maximization and survival under a system of anarchy (i.e. no authority higher than that of the state). As a result states will band together to balance against the perceived threats of other states. States see each other as competitors seeking relative power maximization. This was the predominant view of IR scholars during the Cold War but is now on par with liberalism and losing some ground to Constructivism.

Liberal Institutionalism

A Liberal view celebrates the extent of cooperation between the East Asian states, especially as institutionalized in regional groupings such as ASEAN Plus Three (APT), and their deepening economic interdependence which may eventually frame a meaningful system of cooperative security. However, the Liberal approach has failed to explain why economic interdependence between East Asian states has not smoothed over the distrust between or among them, and fails to provide evidence for the hypothesis that thick economic interdependence prevents war rather than some other factor. After all, economic interdependence did not prevent the Europeans from entering WWI, and today it is economic interdependence that is at least as much a source of conflict as it is a source of cooperation.

Liberals contend that globalization and the dense network of institutions that bind together the developed economies of the world have through this complex interdependence allowed them to “escape the security dilemma” and pursue the business of business. Collective management is the antidote prescribed by liberals to resolve conflict. Their subject matter is cooperation and not conflict and the ability to overcome mutual distrust. Peter Katzenstein gives a concise explanation of the liberal approach below:

The liberal insititutionalist approach to International
Relations is that the international order that hegemons have created through institutions can continue to ameliorate the problem of international anarchy. These institutions facilitate monitoring, enhance political transparency, reduce uncertainty, and increase policy-relevant information… Under some political conditions international conflict can be ameliorated through collective management.7

**Constructivism**

A Constructivist paradigm emphasizes identity, interests, behavior, interactions and ensuing norms among states and their societies as providing the momentum via regional institutions that leads towards regional cooperation. Using the above terminology of Constructivism it is equally logical that the focus points of identity, interest and behavior may lead to conflict just as they may foster cooperation. Aaron Friedberg also recognizes this: “Repeated interaction can erode old identities and transform existing social structures, but it can also reinforce them.” Therefore the theoretical approach of this argument begins with the assumption that human association is determined primarily by both shared and unique ideas and secondarily by material forces, such as military force posture, balance of power, geopolitics, natural resources, economic leverage and coercion etc.

Fundamentally, the difference between Realism and Constructivism and its various hues is the emphasis on power; Realists believe power cannot be transcended as the primary force within global politics whereas Constructivists believe power is transcendable.9 Power can be transcended by choosing to overcome the anarchic nature of the system of states be deliberately choosing to change behavior which in turn shifts the acceptable conventions of global politics. In practice, Realists are pessimists and Constructivists are idealists. However there is no reason Constructivist should avoid focusing on conflict and tension in global politics.

Dale Copeland states, “Conflict does not confirm realism, just as cooperation does not confirm liberalism or constructivism.”10 The reverse of this also holds true: Cooperation doesn’t confirm liberalism. Along this line of thought, Wendt states, “Realism does not have a monopoly on the ugly and brutal side of international life. Even if we agree on a realpolitik description, we can reject a realist explanation.”11 One can reject the realist explanation; however, Constructivist scholars aren’t offering an alternative explanation for conflict in International Relations. They are not challenging the Realist “monopoly on the ugly.” They are providing an alternative methodology for understanding the idealistic side of International Relations. The frequency of realpolitik may indeed, according to Hopf’s position, “have nothing to do with realism.”12

Ideas form national and cultural identities and are shaped by historical as well as material factors such as economic wealth and geography. Identity plays a role in forming interest which impacts behavior. Since the Constructivist approach is applied in this article, the remainder of the paper is structured around the Constructivist terms of identity, interests, behavior, interactions and ensuing norms. Behavior and interaction in turn create new history so that this is an ongoing process of feedback loops and therefore difficult to separate the terms into clear dependent and independent variables because they are mutually constituted. Now let us turn to identity, and consider the roles of Confucianism, state and race upon East Asian identity.

**East Asia’s Social Identity**

National identities are constituted through international relations and through the histories people construct about themselves and their neighbors; state identities, like personal identities, are inter-subjective and established through encounters with others.13 It takes at least two parties to tango but each party may give different accounts of the interaction.14 Pasts are to be remembered and analyzed, but in East Asia there is an unhealthy preoccupation of viewing global affairs in the context of historical grievances. Besides having a preoccupation with the past, the states of East Asia share other commonalities including some informal but socially engrained adherence to Confucianism, an emphasis upon nationalism, and an association between race and nationhood.

**Confucianism and Identity**

Pinpointing mutually shared cultural attributes among East Asian states, such as a common identity, is difficult because there is little evidence of such commonalities in the region.15 If there is a common identity among the East Asian community, it is the influence of Confucian thought. Many values, including Confucian values, are universal, but their unique application within a culture, “their particular weighting within a scale of national values, is the elusive yet defining question for each nation.”16 Confucian ideas
about group identity are the basis of most East Asian states’ formation of national identity as opposed to the liberal individualist values that define Western nations.

Even under profound Western ideological influence, Confucianism is still dominant in East Asian cultural and ethnic systems. Sunhyuk Kim maintains that Confucianism encourages theoretical orthodoxy and ideological purity. (Confucian tradition undermines) compromise, negotiation, bargaining, and accommodation”. A pronounced hierarchical system “between the superior and the inferior is the hallmark of Confucian social order.”

What is regarded as uniquely Confucian is the East Asian meritocracy epitomized in the tradition of exam-oriented schooling and the exam-based selection of the civil servants in East Asia. The state controls school curriculum and other facets of schooling and selection processes in East Asian countries in order to guarantee the equality of educational opportunity. Confucian tradition emphasizes the learning of Confucian ideas, self-cultivation, self-realization, and the regulation of the family. At the state level this includes conformity and orthodoxy, benevolent rule by a dominating government. Confucian ideals prefer the group over the individual, advocating for individual submission to senior authority and the, observance of social hierarchy. In other words, self-sacrifice is generally valued in order to achieve collective well-being.

Nationalism and Identity

Cultural nationalism assumes that a group of people share a set of values, norms, beliefs, and the understanding that they form a singular culture. Cultural nationalism which is ubiquitous in East Asia differs from European and North American practice: there is a greater emphasis in the East upon the link between race and nation explained in more detail in that subsection. In the West there is greater acceptance of multiculturalism and immigration. This is not to say that on the subject of nationalism and identity one approach is better than the other, merely to argue that there is a commonality among East Asian states in their practice and understanding of national identity.

China’s traditional world outlook saw the outside world as barbarous and loathsome in contrast to its civilized and heavenly ordained dynastic rule. The suffering inflicted by nations near and far upon China, compels it to regain its former place as the center of East Asia. Zhang remarks, “Criticizing China’s nationalism is like complaining that the Chinese want to become strong … in the community of nations.” In fact, he continues: “the most cosmopolitan generation of intellectuals in modern Chinese intellectual history were also the most self-conscious nationalists. The two characters were not contradictory, but complemented each other.” In other words, Zhang is referencing the tradition of Western liberal cosmopolitanism that counters nationalism in favor of transnationalism and he argues that in China, on the other hand, nationalism is viewed as forward thinking.

In addition to an intellectual support of nationalism in China, there is a political support as well. The manipulation of Chinese prejudices towards Japan is a strategic weapon the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) wields. The Japan-bashing and hate-filled demonstrations in Chinese cities in April 2005 and September 2012 could be interpreted as an effort at preventing Japan from occupying a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (2005) or sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands (2012). Friedman posits the CCP’s efforts to discredit Japan as “part of a policy to make China the pre-eminent power in the region, something that worries the Japanese government far more than the nationalistic politics of party competition in South Korea.” In an interview with Greg Sheridan, Professor Seizaburo Sato of the Institute for International Studies sees anti-Japanese sentiment in Korea as a “ritualized part of Korean politics” stemming from the “emotional style of Korean politics;” whereas China’s anti-Japanese sentiment, Sato asserts is “Machiavellian” (i.e. zero-sum power politics made up of winners and losers) with the intention of gaining strategic advantage over Japan.

The relationship between Japan the two Koreas is equally influenced by historical legacies. Korea suffered much under Japanese colonial rule. Time has not reduced the anger Korea harbors for Japan. However the democratic Japan today is not the same ferocious Japan that oppressed Korea despite a thorny territorial dispute over the status of the Liancourt Rocks known as Dokdo in Korea and Takeshima in Japan. The emotional bitterness towards Japan, Sheridan remarks, is both “immature and unproductive” because it “blinds” Koreans to the social and political strategic interests that they share with Japan, including “the profound values the two societies have in common.” According to Gi-Wook Shin and Paul Y Chang North
Korea’s (DPRK) guiding ideology is nationalism and not communism as a strategy struggle against Western led globalization, the DPRK uses nuclear nationalism to gain international respect. In other words, DPRK propaganda rallies the people around nationalistic themes such as anti-America and anti-Japan rather than Communist themes such as worker solidarity and proletariat struggle with the bourgeoisie.

Nor are South Korea’s tensions limited to Japan. For example, in Taiwan the perceptions of Taiwanese towards Koreans are negative. Taiwan’s Minster of the Department of Health (DOH) Yaung Chih-liang (楊志良), remarked in a conference that “South Korean people would never say they copied from Taiwan [even when they send delegations to visit and learn from Taiwan]… It’s just like when Korea also said Confucius was from Korea. I detest (討厭) Korean people.”

His views are not unusual, but held by many people in Taiwan towards Koreans. This is in spite of the soft power of the Korean soap operas and K-Pop stars in Taiwan. In fact, although popular culture has diffused broadly in East Asia, according to Hidetaka Yoshimatsu, a professor at the College of Asia Pacific Studies, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, states, “the dissemination of popular cultures and the formation of common regional identities are different matters.”

**Race and Identity**

Nationalism and ethnicity in East Asia are not on the wane, but remains central to the region’s social and political struggles.

Chinese, Japanese, and Korean aren’t simply nationalities but also closely associated with race as explained in more detail this section. For example, Chinese, Japanese and Korean who immigrate abroad can be defined as Japanese – American or Chinese – Canadian. However foreigners (regardless of place origin) who immigrate (such as foreign spouses) to East Asian countries are labeled by their place of origin and not their place of residence, without the addition of any hyphens. Also, in most cases the children born from such unions is also labeled according the place of the foreign parent’s origin. For example, a child born in Japan to a Taiwanese parent and a Japanese parent is called Taiwanese by his teachers, peers, and society at large. Korea, Japan and China are examined respectively.

Korea. In Korea, asserting racial distinctiveness and unity of the Korean nation was reinforced by the negative experience of subjugation by Japanese colonial rule. Japan’s attempt to assimilate Koreans was based on colonial racism, or “nissen dosoron,” which claimed that Koreans were racially subordinate to the Japanese. Koreans protested by asserting their own interpretation of racial origins and national culture. They argued for a nation defined in terms of blood and culture, and to question such unity would have been a denial of the struggle against Japanese imperialism and the Japanese rule. Further, although North and South Korea see each other as mutual threats, Koreans see themselves as one ethnic group despite the politics, and many South Koreans prefer to simply be called Korean.

Japan. Ethno-cultural nationalism also plays an important role in Japan’s self-identity. For example, a good Japanese citizen is a member of the Japanese state (kokumin) and a member of the Japanese nation (Nihonjin). He speaks Japanese, observes traditions (dento) and follows Shintoism. Greg Sheridan argues that Japan’s greatest weakness is not economic stagnation. Rather, Japan’s problem is “its conception of citizenship as being intimately linked with ethnicity, as evidenced in its unwillingness to accord full citizenship rights even to its Korean minority … even after generations of residency.” There is a commonly shared perception among the Japanese that they are a homogeneous people, in racial, ethnic and cultural terms. The notion of “nation” or “nationality” as a culturally rooted and ethnically defined reality is firmly held by most Japanese people.

China. The Chinese are also responsible for associating the nation with race—to be a Han Chinese necessitates one’s inclusion in the Chinese state. This is also one of the rationales of China’s irredentist claims over Taiwan: the people (majority) of Taiwan are ethnically Chinese and therefore a part of China when addressing the issue of Taiwan’s statehood. According to Beijing, Taiwan is a part of China because of the common Han race residing on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, even though the people of Taiwan have been self governing after they gained independence from Japan which had colonized Taiwan from 1895-1945. China’s attitude toward race and nationality is also a source of great tension for its ethnic minorities which is well documented in Western media, particularly the issues of Tibet and Xingjiang.

**East Asia’s Political Interests**

Political, economic and security interests are crucial to the maintenance of power. Power interests shape
identity and influence state behavior. The states of East Asia are interacting to enhance their political, economic and security interests. It is yet unclear whether this interaction is viewed as zero-sum or win-win. It is also unclear if China is willing to take on the responsibility of providing some sort of public goods to the region. So far this has not been the case.

Because of its sheer size, China has the most to gain in absolute terms, and very likely in relative terms, thus enhancing its regional hegemonic position. Will China restrain its territorial ambitions and gain trust, or will it assert its own “core interests” such as unification with Taiwan against Taiwan’s consent and create mistrust among its longtime neighbors? China’s interaction and behavior are of much greater interest to Korea and Japan than the influence wielded by existing regional norms. It is impossible to discuss the political climate of East Asia without understanding the central role of China in setting the cooperative or competitive tone in the region. If regional cooperation is to work, China’s role is essential. Japan and Korea’s accommodation of a rising China is clearly the most pressing challenge for the East Asia region. Concerns about a rising China are “a key determinant of not just the process of regional integration, but also of what the region should be.”

**Hegemonic Interests**

Historically China has seen itself as the central power figure in Asia and it seeks to resume that position. “This Sino-centric order was not just glorious for all involved, but bene-fited all as well,” claims Beijing University’s Ye Zicheng. Further, “Unipolarity (and) the Sino-centric East Asian system was in the interest of both China and the other nations within the system.” Only Chinese make such claims and not their neighbors who in fact fear a regional Chinese hegemony. Paradoxically Chinese strategic rhetoric discourse is strongly against US global hegemony and instead pro-motes equality at the global level, while it em-braces hegemony and attempts to establish a Sino ordered hierarchy at the regional level in East Asia.

With the rise of China and increasing concerns about a re-emerging Sino-centric re-gional order, South Koreans feel the heat of China’s overbearing geographical proximity. For most of Korea’s history China has exer-cised a “diplomatic Confucian big brother” posture. Japan too has in the past defined its own existence as a frog in well with China pro-viding the well that surrounds Japan. Chinese dynasties had the “official right” to intervene in the domestic politics of neighbors, from the selection of the name of the Korean dynasties to selecting individual rulers. This is what happened during the Yi/Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910) and serves as a historical reminder of Korean submission to Chinese hegemony. In the final year of his life (2011), Kim Jong-il increased his travel to Beijing presumably to discuss the succession of his son Kim Jong-un to the throne of supreme leader of North Korea. China is not the only East Asian power, past or present, with regional hegemonic aspirations. Some East Asians believe that the notion of regionalism began with Japan’s past militaristic regionalization packaged as the Greater East Asia Co Prosperity Sphere. These unhappy memories of Japan’s imposed regionalism con-tinue to cause great bitterness of East Asian countries towards Japan. In summary, attempts at regionalization in East Asia are closely identified with imperial impulses; there-fore regionalization is not viewed as something to be embraced. Nevertheless there has been much progress towards economic integration with East Asia albeit with little effect upon common regional identity as explained next.

**Economic Interests**

Increasing economic and cultural interactions among East Asia potentially fosters a regional identity; however, this rosy view remains problematic, because according to Kim and Jhee:

Rather than automatically facilitating regional identity, transnational interaction may exacerbate negative perceptions toward neighboring countries and transnational contact may raise more economic and cultural conflicts, and may highlight the real differences among them.

ASEAN Plus Three (APT) includes China, South Korea, and Japan. It is, however, not based on any treaty or formal binding agreements among the participating states. East Asian states have avoided taking any steps that would limit their national autonomy so that regional cooperation is little more than a verbal exchange. Many projects have been launched under APT yet they are usually managed by one of the Plus Three countries without consulting the other two and the outcome is a series of bilateral ASEAN Plus One, Plus One, Plus One (China, Japan, Korea) rather than true Plus Three East Asian projects.

The one point on which the APT unanimously agrees upon is the principle of noninterference in the affairs of
member states, as contained in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) of 1976. This treaty was first signed by the members of ASEAN with multiple references to sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the exclusive right of a government to govern its population within its own boundaries. These principles, according to Dunn, Nyers and Stubbs, “articulate a sense of vulnerability, which arises from the fear that external powers may seek to compromise their sovereignty.”

Jones and Smith maintain that if norms are what states make of them, then the only norm APT has endorsed (i.e. TAC) is a “realist commitment, not to the region, but to the sovereign inviolability of the nation-state.” In other words, these scholars are arguing that the positive byproduct (shared norms) of state interaction which is meant to transcend national identity instead reinforces national identity. In the case of TAC, the only formally agreed upon norm in East Asia, is the norm of states to not interfere in the business of other states. This directly reinforces the constructed concept of sovereign state and indirectly reinforces the constructed system of anarchy which norms are meant to transcend.

Nevertheless, the APT has worked on promoting stronger East Asian socio-cultural unity and identity through the Networking of East Asian Cultural Heritage (NEACH) and the Network of East Asian Studies (NEAS) initiatives. Together, these have undertaken the following projects:

Work together with cultural and educational institutions to promote a strong sense of identity and an East Asian consciousness.

**Promote East Asian studies in the region**

Promote networking and exchanges of experts in the conservation of the arts, artefacts, and cultural heritage of East Asian countries.

Following the 1997 Asian Crisis, Asian regionalism found a new direction in the sails of cooperation. The lead was initially taken by Japan, which emphasized monetary cooperation. After the high point of the 2000 ASEAN+3 developed the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), however, the progress of monetary integration stalled for nearly a decade and was revived by the global financial crisis, which resulted in renewed calls for regional financial cooperation and member states contributing US$120 billion to the CMI. This is considered the most effective regional financial cooperation mechanism. As Michael Yahuda observes, “real politics occurs bilaterally” because new nations are “jealous of independence, sovereignty, new governments and new nations.” Economic integration, to the extent that it has taken place, occurs through bilateral free trade agreements between states both within and outside the region. However, the American 2008 Financial Crisis and ongoing Great Recession and Euro Crisis are a missed opportunity for a regional Asian response.

East Asian states share a common model of economic development: a domestic economy based upon export and guarded by tight political control. East Asia has favorable environmental conditions (e.g. well developed infrastructure, efficient supply chains, highly literate work forces, and integration into the global economy etc.) for both domestic and regional economic stability to pursue these models. National mercantilist policies that promote exports while restrict imports cause economic tensions within the region. The Great Recession has exasperated these tensions as traditional export markets outside the region are declining because of high unemployment/underemployment in the West, fears regarding the Euro, the sovereign debt European states and fiscal recklessness of Washington. Therefore, East Asian states need to focus more on regional consumer markets and developing local brands considering the changing global economic environment.

There are a number of bilateral FTAs (free trade agreements) especially between China and ASEAN members. The existence of an FTA does not contradict a developmental policy that is mercantilist. Member countries can still peg their currencies and in the case of China export more finished products in exchange for natural resources. Asian economic integration has witnessed an increase of FTAs between Asian countries from a mere 6 in 1996 to 70 in 2011. However, a dearth of empirical information on the FTAs is the biggest impediment to firms using FTAs as indicated by Asian Development Bank (ADB) firm-level surveys that show 70 per cent of responding firms in the Philippines, 45 per cent in China, and 34 per cent in Korea citing low margins of preference and delays and administrative costs for utilizing the FTAs.

Despite increased economic integration, based on the 2003 data provided by AsiaBarometer, a very limited regional identity exists in East Asia, and the link between national identity and regional identity is unlike that of other regions. National identity in East Asia is incompatible with regional identity and a strong
national identity is at the expense of a regional Asian identity. Contrarily, to the liberal neo-functionalist hypothesis that increasing transnational activities promote both regional integration and regional identity, in East Asia, intra-regional interaction has undermined the hope of an Asian identity.

Security and Interests

East Asia and the West are metaphorically in different time zones facing dissimilar realities. Eastern states entered the modern states system during the age of Western imperialism, and many did not gain true independence and sovereignty until the conclusion of the Second World War. As a result, non-traditional human security issues (e.g. global warming, AIDS, poverty, human rights, and international crime etc.) are primary security concerns for Western Europe. Whereas in East Asia traditional security issues, such as the security dilemma, power transition and maritime territorial disputes, are central in determining the major motives of regional politics. Far from regional economic integration leading to a peace dividend, military spending in Asia is waxing. Arguably this military spending is a response to China’s military development.

Increasing Chinese military dominance would affect regional peace and East Asian security in at least four ways. First, China would be compelled to establish a regional hegemony, possibly by force. Second, the rise of Chinese power might trigger a response from Japan, bringing East Asia under the shadow of a new bipolar conflict. Third, it would increase China’s temptation to force Taiwan to “return” to the motherland, which could easily trigger outside involvement, especially if Taiwan requests defensive assistance. Finally, China is in the enviable position to establish and submit to norms that are beneficial to the region; but there must be some sacrifice for this positive gain. China at present lacks the courage and moral resolve to embark on this forward thinking historical project because of its narrow minded zero sum approach (in contrast to the win-win rhetoric of Chinese diplomats) to state relations.

China’s Behavior and East Asian Norms

Regional norms in East Asian politics are central as they construct the social identities of agents in the area, and this helps define perceptions of each state and its interests. Norms can redefine interests in a way that may eventually subsume individual state identity within wider collectivities, although it will take a long time before East Asia develops such powerful norms. Until then, whether China’s international relations are multilateral or bilateral will set the tone of any forthcoming diplomatic norms in East Asia.

When observing the behavior of China in East Asia and regional norms, it is clear that China’s behavior has a greater impact on regional interests than do regional norms. In fact, China’s behavior not only shapes the interests of its neighbors, but it also forms regional norms, the only definitive norm being non-interference. Where China seeks to interfere with Taiwan, it claims this is a domestic case and therefore does not qualify as “interference.” If anyone should seek to assist Taiwan it is the third party that is interfering with China’s core interest. Taiwan for its part has been seeking diplomatic recognition and means for increasing its economic, political, and military security in the face of a Chinese threat to its de facto independence.

Yoshimatsu acknowledges, “The independent function of norms to guide and regulate the states to follow rules that are associated with particular identities is still underdeveloped in East Asia.” China is in the enviable position to establish and submit to norms that are beneficial to the region, but there must be some sacrifice for this positive gain. China at present lacks the courage and moral resolve to embark on this forward thinking historical project because of its narrow minded zero sum approach (in contrast to the win-win rhetoric of Chinese diplomats) to state relations.

Because China is a rising regional power (albeit not a hegemon), how China monitors its great power ambitions is essential for future cooperation in East Asia. Cooperation requires the CCP to forgo nationalism for the greater benefit of the region; otherwise, China is likely to undermine peace in the region. China’s domestic identity increases the likelihood it will use force to achieve its political goals. The CCP dominated authoritarian political system and irredentist predictability leaves much room for serious suspicions among its neighbors. Huang and Xu state political reforms are a prerequisite for China’s ascendency to an effective regional leadership role. Political reform in China is by no means a guarantee of peace, but a democratic China would be more likely to respect the wishes of other East Asian states or regions, such as Taiwan. A powerful China could and should be a boon.
for the region, but its chauvinistic politics, territorial ambitions and hard security dilemmas overshadow the economic benefits of a prospering China. Muthiah Alagappa argues that Chinese maximization of national power works against regional cooperation and Asian nations (not just China) invariably “place state before region.”

In summary, The East Asia region shares cultural features such as a generalized Confucianism based upon top down hierarchies and a strong correlation between racial and national identity. Increased trade and social interaction (including popular culture) between and among states in the region has not led to a growing sense of trust and friendship. Nationalism and historical mistrust have not been overcome by globalization and regional economic integration. These stubborn obstacles preventing a pan-Asian identity have seen no establishment of regional norms other than the state-centric norm of non-interference.

As stated at the beginning of this article, China is the regional leader and sets the tone for East Asian cooperation. So far that tone has not helped promote regional identity over national identity; rather it has increased nationalistic passions among East Asian states. The pessimistic Constructivist outcome is that an identity that undermines compromise by emphasizing the “rightful” place of the strong over the weak, will lead to further mistrust and conflict. If the Chinese would begin to see themselves as Asians, and let go of the bitterness, especially towards Japan and irredentism towards Taiwan, then the optimistic Constructivist outcome is a thriving and peaceful East Asia resulting from deliberate Chinese behavior to bring about a new East Asian identity. The viability of a regional identity manifested by regional norms begins with the redefinition of core interests (e.g. such as non-negotiable “sovereign” claims on contested territories) and transformation of behavior at the state level.

ENDNOTES

9. There is an emerging branch of scholarship called “Realist Constructivism” which agrees with the premise of Realism that power is non-transcendable and like Constructivism stresses the role of the non-material factors of identity, interest and behavior. See for example, research by J. Samuel Barkin, Richard Ned Lebow and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson.
200.
18. Terri Kim, “Confucianism, Modernities and Knowledge: China, South Korea and Japan,” in International Handbook of Comparative Education (Springer Science + Business Media, 2009), 858.
21. This is also based upon my thoughtful observation after having spent equal amounts of time in the US and Asia (primarily Taiwan).
23. Ibid., 143.
26. Korea has agreements or memorandums of understanding to share military intelligence with 21 other countries but not with Japan.
27. Sheridan, Asian Values, Western Dreams: Understanding the New Asia, 239.
33. Ibid.
37. During the 2008 Summer Olympic opening ceremonies, a troupe marched out representing China’s numerous ethnic groups. Ironically every one of the ethnic representatives was a Han Chinese in ethnic garb.
38. Irredentism is the “advocating of annexation of territories administered by another state on the grounds of common ethnicity or prior historical possession.” See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irredentism.
42. Ibid., 13.
43. Ibid., 9.
46. Haruki Wada, “Envisioning a Northeast Asian Community: Regional and Domestic Factors to Consider,” in Regional Cooperation and Its Enemies in Northeast Asia: The Impact of Domestic Forces, ed. Edward Friedman and Kim, Sung Chull (270
Alexis Littlefield
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Facilitating Collective Labor Dispute in China

Overcoming Institutional Weakness in a Developing Country and Its Unexpected Consequences

A growing number of labor disputes and protests have given rise to more labor outrages and are threatening the political stability and legitimacy of China’s government. To handle workers’ discontent in a formal way and to reduce the social impact of labor insurgencies, China instituted the labor dispute (laodongzhengyi, 劳动争议). The labor dispute enables a worker (or workers) to request the labor committee for arbitration or to sue an enterprise. Usually an individual worker carries out the process named individual labor dispute (getilaodongzhengyi 个体劳动争议); sometimes, however, more than three workers will collectively carry out the process (a collective labor dispute, jitilaodongzhengyi 集体劳动争议).

In certain regions, workers are more active in utilizing this institution. The question is why. More specifically, why do some workers use the institution collectively rather than individually? If there is a distinct political impact of collective labor dispute, how does it differ from the outcome of an individual labor dispute? What would increase the number of collective labor disputes? This study attempts to answer these questions. The goals of the paper are to examine, 1) the distinct effect of the collective labor dispute and, 2) the condition under which it is facilitated.

The study will answer these questions by using multivariate analyses with data from China’s labor statistics. The study will show that the number of collective labor disputes in a province has had a positive relationship to the welfare expenditure in that province, yet the number of entire labor disputes has had no such effect. By showing this, the study will argue that collective labor disputes have a distinct political impact on Chinese society. Why then are there more collective labor disputes in some regions than in others? The main hypothesis of the paper is that the collective labor dispute is likely to happen more actively in a region 1) with more grassroots labor unions, 2) with more trained workers, and 3) with less foreign-funded enterprises.

INTRODUCTION

Since opening up the economy in 1978, China’s rapid economic growth has not been achieved without cost. A rising number of labor outrages, evidenced by the growing number of labor disputes and protests, are threatening the political stability and legitimacy of the Chinese government led by the Chinese Communist Party. The labor dispute, an institution implemented by China’s central government, is a formal body to handle labor discontent. Its objective is to reduce the social impact of labor insurgencies.

In certain regions, workers are more active in facilitating the institution. Why is this so and, more specifically, why do workers in certain regions use the institution collectively while others do not? If the collective labor dispute has an effect distinct from the individual labor dispute, under what conditions is it likely to be activated? This study attempts to answer these questions by examining the distinct effect of the collective labor dispute and the conditions most likely to activate it.

Many regard the growing labor insurgency taking place in China as a factor that destabilizes society and threatens economic growth by disturbing investment and reducing productivity. To achieve stable economic growth, the party-state has made reducing the outrage and discontent of workers a top priority. To solve this problem the central government implemented the labor dispute as a formal way of containing the resentment. It enables a worker (or workers) to sue an enterprise or to request arbitration from a labor committee. Most of the time an individual worker carries out the process (individual labor dispute) but sometimes the process can be carried out, collectively, by more than three workers (collective labor dispute). Along with the proclamation of the rule of law\(^1\), China’s central government has encouraged workers to make use of the formal procedure instead of the informal way to seek

In a developing country like China, activating a new institution is difficult. No firm political economic foundation is in place to support the successful implementation of a new institution on a local level. Lacking state capacity to force local governments or enterprises to implement the institution, the central government is failing to see the labor dispute implemented as successfully as it had intended.

In addition, the labor dispute possesses an inherent dilemma. It is ironic that China adopts a component of democracy—the rule of law—to contain the workers’ upheaval and maintain the CCP’s dictatorship. Inherently weak and limited, the labor dispute may contribute to the legitimacy of the state, as was intended, or by enlightening workers it may instead trigger political instability. The labor dispute, it turns out, is a double-edged sword. In a society that lacks proper representative mechanisms such as elections, the labor dispute can be seen as an alternative institution that enables workers to express their opinions to the upper levels of state.

It is thus important to clarify the conditions under which the labor dispute may be activated. The study concentrates not on the increase of the total number of labor disputes per se but more on the incidence of collective labor disputes. It is the latter that more acutely captures the central government’s inherent dilemma. Although collective labor dispute is a legit institution approved by Chinese government, it has a potential to spill over to other forms of illegal collective labor protest, which the government dreads. By revealing the conditions, this paper will show how the weak institution is activated in a developing country while that institution reacts against existing state institutions and other economic conditions.

The central hypotheses of the paper is that the collective labor dispute is likely to happen more actively in a region with, 1) more grassroots labor unions, 2) more trained workers, 3) fewer foreign-funded enterprises. To verify the hypotheses, the study used multivariate analysis. By providing empirical evidence to bolster the hypotheses, this paper will portray how and when the institution in a developing country is activated and why the level of institutional adaption varies regionally.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the existing literature on the labor dispute in China. Section 3 introduces variables used in the analysis and the hypotheses of this paper. Section 4 shows the empirical results from OLS regression. The research is conducted by the multivariate analysis using China’s official labor statistics. In addition to this, Section 4 explains the mechanisms through which certain conditions contribute to collective labor disputes but not to individual labor disputes.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Since labor issues are particularly controversial in China, many studies have examined China’s labor insurgencies. One stream of research focuses on informal resistances taking place outside legal boundaries. In a developing country where formal institutions may not be effectively implemented with the weak state capacity, it may seem insufficient to merely focus on the conditions under which the formal institution can be activated. Critical of the inherent institutional limitation of the formal way of resolving labor discontents, these studies concentrate more on revealing the conditions that promote informal labor actions. These kinds of informal labor protests are usually carried out by laid-off workers or migrant workers who are not qualified to make use of the formal institution. Since the informal labor protest is a sensitive issue in China, few statistical resources are available to the public except the official statistics. For these reasons, most of the studies have been conducted based on in-depth analysis, such as a case study or interview. The limitation of these studies is that by focusing only on the informal protests they provide fewer analyses regarding the central government’s strategy and general tendencies of such labor protest at the national level.

The limitation seems to be overcome by studies that focus on the resistances within legal boundaries such as labor disputes. Analyzing the central government’s strategy to reduce the political instability by containing workers’ resentments within a law or institutions (Gallagher 2005; Chen 2007; Landry 2009), the studies try to reveal the institutional limitation of the labor dispute. Chen (2007), for example, argues that the labor legislation focused only on individual rights. These included contracts, wages, working conditions and pensions, all at the expense of collective rights, namely the rights to organize, to strike, or to bargain. Chinese migrant workers’ legal positions are ambiguous because most of them are employed without urban household registration system (hukou 户口). It makes it hard for them to resist to firm’s unfair treatment to them or make claim for their own rights as workers (Hein Mallee 2000).
collectively. One of the main factors the studies point out as a barrier of the genuine operation of the institution is the malfunctioning of Chinese labor unions. They argue that workers receive little or no practical help from labor unions (Chan & Ngai 2009). They also emphasize the fact that Chinese labor unions function not as workers’ representative organizations but as a de facto government organ subordinate to the CCP (Chan 2009). The labor union plays a role in disseminating the legal knowledge and encouraging workers to use the legal method, both highly recommended by the CCP central government. Nevertheless, the labor union has no actual impact on elevating workers’ rights, especially their collective rights.

It is notable that some of the studies try to examine when, despite its institutional limitations, the labor dispute is helpful. Landry (2009), for example, argues that the key determinants of the successful diffusion of the institution (labor dispute) are the popular trust in the central government and the network among workers and officials. Questioning why some workers become effective at using the labor dispute while others are not, Becker (2007) insists that to facilitate the institution both formal ties and informal ties are necessary.

These works, however, are limited in that they pay little attention to the differences between the two types of labor disputes. They seem to assume that the conditions are the same that facilitate the individual and collective labor disputes. Although both ways are conducted within the legal boundary, they might be activated under different sets of conditions. This study tries to fill the gap by examining the conditions that increase collective labor disputes. It shows that those conditions that activate collective labor disputes differ from those that activate individual labor disputes, such as the density of labor union and the types of workers. This study also shows that Chinese labor unions, regarded as an organ of the state rather than a representative of workers, may actually play a positive role in promoting collective actions.

**HYPOTHESIS AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS**

**Collective labor dispute**

The labor dispute in China differs from other informal labor conflicts, such as strikes, violence protests, or occupation. It is an institution that resolves labor discontent by requesting arbitration or meditation between the worker(s) and the enterprise. More and more workers resort to the institution as they are exposed to concepts of law and personal rights.

The collective labor dispute is a subset of the labor dispute where more than three workers jointly request arbitration rather than do so individually. Most of the labor disputes are filed individually, so collective labor disputes comprise only a small portion of all cases. In 2004, out of a total of 225,693 cases, only 10,804, or 4.78%, were collective labor disputes.

As it has done with the proclamation of the rule of law, the central government has widely encouraged workers to utilize the labor dispute. Since the successful utilization of the institution enhanced the central government’s legitimacy though rule of law while increasing the pressure on local governments to implement the central governments’ law at the same time, the central government has persuaded and educated workers to make use of the institution (Stockmann & Gallagher 2011:443). By channeling labor insurgencies with a state-sanctioned administrative or a legal institution, the Chinese government tried to reduce the social impact of labor insurgencies, with the view that they could hamper economic growth (Stockmann & Gallagher 2011:444). This means that the labor dispute is a fundamentally limited way of solving the labor conflict in favor of workers. It is easy to imagine the limited social ramifications of a collective labor dispute compared to illegal collective actions.

Nevertheless, the distinct effect of collective labor disputes should not be disregarded as it differs from that of individual labor disputes. Intuitively, no matter how limited the institution is, the collective way will clearly exert more pressure on the government than the individual way. Involving many workers who have overlapping interests and serious resentments, the collective disputes are also more complex than individual ones (Ho 2004:87).

Although many collective disputes are resolved by the formal dispute resolution process, it is likely that the legal collective action can intersect with and eventually spill over into what the state fears—illegal collective actions. In addition, in a society lacking a proper representation mechanism,
such as elections, the collective dispute seems to function as a representative mechanism of workers by pressing the local government to be accountable to their opinions\(^4\). The firm and local governments may favor formal labor actions to informal; on the other hand, they have to pay a cost—being responsible to workers’ voices when presented in a formal and legal fashion. One of the ways the local government becomes responsibility is to increase the welfare expenditure for them. It is, thus, likely that the local governments will raise their welfare expenditure when there are more collective labor disputes to prevent the workers’ grievance spill over to larger, illegal collective actions against the government. On the other hand, the local governments have no incentive to react to the increase of the individual labor disputes as it poses no threats to the stability of the government. In other words, the increase of individual labor dispute or the total number of labor dispute will not increase the local welfare expenditure.

As a dependent variable, in this analysis, the study used the ratio the welfare expenditure to the total expenditure of a province. It was selected as a dependent variable that can gauge the local government’s accountability as an increase of welfare expenditure is what most workers have requested of the local government\(^5\).

To investigate the effect of collective labor disputes, the analysis controlled various socio-economic characteristics that might affect the welfare expenditure. These include, for each province, GDP (gdp), density of labor union in the region (tradeu), ratio of illiterate workers (illiterate), and ratio of private economy (private).

Although it does not necessarily operate as it should, Chinese labor unions must be taken into account when it comes to dealing with welfare expenditure. As a legacy of socialism, Chinese labor unions are still responsible for such welfare matters as labor protection, labor insurance, and women workers’ protection \(\text{(Chen 2009:671)}\). The density of labor unions in a region, thus, will affect the welfare expenditure of that region.

The ratio of illiterate workers was taken into account as it is expected to capture uneducated, unskilled workers. The greater the ratio of illiterate workers in a region, the lighter the local government’s burden of welfare, as the local government might not be as responsible to these workers as it should be. As China still has the socialist legacies that provide a relatively wide range of welfare to workers of state-owned enterprise, the ratio of private economy of a region should be considered. Its effect might overlap with the SEZ dummy, which indicates the special economic zones (SEZ). Here the ratio of private economy is higher than other regions, so the test was conducted both with and without the dummy (columns 2 and 3).

The analysis also controlled the raw number of total labor disputes accepted (case). It is likely that local governments are more pressed as the incidence of labor disputes increases, regardless of the relative size or proportion of the disputes normalized by the number of workers.

It also adopted regional dummies as China’s economy has regional distinctiveness\(^6\). It might be argued that the effect of the SEZ dummy might overlap with the regional dummies. Indeed, most of the special economic zones are from China’s coastal provinces. The effect of the dummy, however, remains significant regardless of the dummy’s existence.

The right half of the table shows the results when the independent variable is the number of total labor disputes per the number of employees of the region. The left half of the table shows the results when the independent variable is the number of collective labor disputes per the number of employees of the region. According to Table 1, SEZ dummy seems to have, in both cases, a negative relationship with the dependent variable. This shows that the local governments of special economic zones spend less on welfare compared to

\(^4\) Although there is election in China in grassroots level, it had not been regarded as a genuine representative mechanism in China. Gallagher (2007) says that ‘the use of election is a debate from which China is excluded’, and Tsai (2007) also emphasizes the limited effect of village election in China.

\(^5\) In 2004, 40% of labor dispute was taken place with the demands of social welfare See Chinese labor statistical yearbook (2005) p.526.

other regions. The ratio of illiterate workers seems to have a negative relationship with the welfare expenditure, although not consistently significant through all the experiments. This means the more illiterate workers in a region, the less the welfare expenditure in the region – in other words, the region has lower accountability.

What is noteworthy is that the total number of labor disputes (all_lab)—most of which are individual disputes—in a province seems to have no significant impact on the amount of welfare expenditure. This suggests that the local governments’ expenditure on welfare would not rise according to an increase in the total number of labor disputes.

It is a different story, however, when it comes to collective labor disputes (col_lab). As the results in columns 1 to 4 show, the amount of collective labor disputes have a statistically significant and positive relationship with the welfare expenditure of the local government even after controlling other socioeconomic variables. Though it was not presented in the table, the share of collective

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Table 1 The impact of collective labor dispute on welfare expenditure
Sources: Chinese Labor Statistics 2004, gdp and case are controlled,
Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
labor disputes out of total labor disputes also maintained significant and positive relationship with the welfare expenditure.

We can see that the number of entire labor disputes in a region fails to impact the welfare expenditure of the region. Thus, it seems that the institution is limited as a tool for increasing workers’ rights or making local governments more accountable, as many other previous studies have already revealed. When it comes to collective labor disputes alone, however, the research shows that local governments seem to become more responsive. The fact that local governments respond only to collective labor disputes and not to the total number of labor disputes supports the hypothesis that the effect of collective labor disputes is different from that of labor disputes taken as a whole. It is thus important to clarify what conditions increase the collective labor disputes. To do so, this study will use a multivariate regression model and verify the hypothesis suggested above.

Hypotheses

As Table 1 shows, the effect of collective labor disputes is not necessarily the same as that of all labor disputes, most of which are brought forward individually. It is thus not difficult to imagine that the collective labor dispute is activated under certain conditions that might not increase the incidence of labor disputes as a whole. It is notable that some regions have a relatively higher ratio of collective labor disputes. Why, then, have the disparities been generated? The study proposes three hypotheses to explain the situation.

1) Chinese labor union

The hypothesis is that collective labor disputes are more actively utilized in regions having denser grassroots labor unions.

Many studies have under-evaluated or disregarded the role of Chinese labor union in representing workers’ opinions. Chinese labor unions function as a state’s organ but not as a representative mechanism for workers. Chen (2009) argued that the institutional power of the union is derived from the state. This means that the growth of union power has nothing to do with the growth of organized labor. Given Chinese labor unions’ limitations, it is counter-intuitive to suppose that more labor unions lead to more collective labor disputes. Because it is a state’s institution, however, when it comes to disseminating the formal and legal ways of carrying out a labor dispute, the labor union might have some positive effect by promoting the accessibility of the institution or by controlling the local government or the enterprise which might hamper workers’ utilization of the institution.

The labor union can also help workers by educating them, by providing workers reliable personnel sources or supporting them indirectly by adding political authorities when they struggle with firms. For example, it is said that a union’s legal assistance has contributed to a high ratio of cases resolved in favor of workers (Ho 2004: 671). It is also said that the close ties between workers and union leaders have contributed to the rapid diffusion of the institution. Importantly, party and league members also play a positive role in enhancing access to legal institutions (Landry 2009).

Despite its very limited role, the Chinese labor union is almost the only institution that provides workers legal aid. In a country where NGOs are few and highly regulated, the labor union is the only source that can raise workers’ consciousness of their legal rights. As such, they are important given that the main barrier preventing workers from utilizing the labor dispute is their lack of legal knowledge and the scarcity of specialized legal aid for employment and labor issues (Gallagher 2007)

Why, then, do Chinese labor unions affect only the incidence of collective labor disputes and not labor disputes overall or solely individual labor disputes? As many studies have concluded, the labor dispute itself is not actually an institution that favors workers’ interests. The labor union or party-state is not overly concerned about the effect of individual labor disputes or the number of labor dispute overall. What they really worry about are informal collective actions that could threaten political stability and frighten away investment.

To a worker trying to utilize the institution individually, union leaders could be indifferent and with impunity. To a group of workers trying to do informal collective action, however, the union leaders can little afford to be indifferent. They would want to contain the movement within a legal and formal way, provide the group legal aid and direct them to utilize the institution. In other words, the labor union would rather co-opt worker members and alleviate the social pressure of the conflict and squash any political ramifications that might
spill over to expression of broader social discontents. Thus, union leaders as well as the local government are likely to react differently to the prospect of an individual and collective labor dispute.

It is also likely that the party-state’s control over workers behavior persists more strongly where there are more grassroots labor unions. If there are fewer grassroots labor unions, no surveillance of collective actions would occur and there would be less effort to direct it through formal channels. In addition, it would be difficult to persuade and promote workers to utilize legal and formal means, if insufficient legal and formal resources are available due to the small number of grassroots labor unions. Workers’ collective actions can be presented in a formal way only when the party-state is thoroughly embedded in the region.

The Chinese labor union is called transmission belt in that it tries to convey the state’s directions to the workers rather than represent workers’ interest as other labor unions do. Nevertheless, in a region with more grassroots unions, it is more likely that the workers have formal ways to gather their opinion. Thus, workers in a region having more grassroots labor unions might find it easier than workers elsewhere to gather and share their opinions and rely on collective labor disputes.

To examine the effects of labor unions on collective labor disputes, I measured the density of grassroots unions (tradeu) by dividing the number of grassroots labor unions by the number of employees in a province.

2) Trained workers

Many studies have argued that collective labor actions are more likely to occur where there are more trained workers. The rationale is that the solidarity among workers and class identities are generated when they learn skills and share an experience in the same space (Chen 2009). The trainees’ active role in organizing workers has also been acknowledged by existing studies that focused on illegal collective labor protests. For example, Chan and Ngai (2009) showed that in the organizing of strikes and protests technicians, skilled workers, and line supervisors acted underground. A similar logic can be applied regarding the collective labor dispute.

In addition, the active facilitation of labor disputes may be boosted by the fact that trainees have more bargaining power (they have skills that firms need). Those with skills may have a greater chance of success in a labor dispute than those with nothing but manual labor skills. Thus, possessing more trained workers may raise the likelihood of collective labor disputes.

3) Foreign investment enterprises

Most collective labor actions (strikes, violent protests, or deforcement) occur in regions high in foreign investment. In 2008, China’s two largest labor protests took place at foreign investment enterprises (FIEs)–Honda (Japan) and Foxconn (Taiwan)\(^8\). FIEs have strict labor regulations and offer little compensation. One of the main reasons for more collective labor actions in FIEs is offensive nationalism, as emotional, national conflict between China and foreign country such as Japan and Korea intensifies the workers’ grievance. (Gallagher 2005; Chan& Ngai 2009; 302-303).

When it comes to collective labor disputes, however, the opposite is expected. In dealing with FIEs, the impact of the labor dispute may be less influential. The Chinese government cannot effectively control an enterprise not under its authority. The state may effectively control a company within its jurisdiction and coordinate the interests of the workers and the firm. With FIEs, its influence may be considerably less.

In addition, the local government’s noncooperation reduces the likelihood of collective labor disputes in a region high in FIEs. For the sake of economic growth of the region, a local government wants to lure foreign investment and keep it happy. It does not want to irritate them by ruling in favor of their workers. Local governments do favor workers utilizing the labor dispute to solve labor conflicts, yet they may not go so far as to force FIEs to implement or obey the local government’s guide as effectively as they do domestic enterprises. Where there is more extraterritoriality, the implementation and adaptation of an institution is less likely to succeed.

Since the state’s power cannot successfully be infused in a region having more FIEs, it is also unlikely that workers there are well informed about making good use of the institution. For example, China’s central government’s effort to establish labor unions at every single company’s unit was challenged by Wal-Mart, who refused to have unions. Thus, where there are more FIEs, the state’s control may not be as influential as that

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Labor Dispute to domestic enterprises. This means when it comes to FIEs, the benefits workers can get from a labor dispute might decrease as the state cannot force the foreign enterprises as firmly as it can do to domestic enterprises to favor workers' demands. Hence, workers may prefer informal means.

**EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

**Research Design**

To examine the conditions that activate collective labor disputes and check the three hypotheses, I used a multivariate OLS analysis using labor statistics in China from 2004. As Chinese labor statistics divides the nation into 31 districts, each variable has 31 observations except for a few cases that omitted data from Tibet. The dependent variables of the study are the number of collective labor disputes in a region (\(\text{col}_\text{lab}\)) and the number of total labor dispute in a region (\(\text{all}_\text{lab}\)). To get normalized data, the number of collective labor disputes was divided by the number of employees in the region.

To test the first hypothesis and measure the impact of labor union on collective labor disputes, the study used the density of labor union (\(\text{tradeu}\)) in a region as an independent variable. It was measured by dividing the number of grassroots labor unions by the number of employees altogether. To test the second hypothesis, the study measured the portion trained workers in a region (\(\text{trained}\)). To investigate the impact of foreign funded enterprises, the study measured the portion of FIEs in the region out of the total number of FIEs in the nation (\(\text{FIE}\)).

The study controlled the economic conditions like GDP (\(\text{gdp}\)) and economic gap between the rural areas and the urban areas of the region (\(\text{gap}\)). The study also introduced a dummy named “SEZ,” which was coded as 1 if the region was SEZ and as 0 if it was not. Since China's economy has certain economic features,

9 It is also likely that because FIEs tend to have less labor unions, the likelihood of collective labor disputes is reducing. It is well known that the union membership has been concentrated in state owned enterprises in China (Chen 2009: 675).

10 Tibet is an outlier in Chinese politics. It seems that the ethnic conflicts, the geographical distances, religious treats make it hard to collect data for the central government. Thus parts of the data for Tibet are missing in the statistical yearbook.

11 Total 11 regions were coded as 1 (SEZ). It includes Tianjin, Hebei, Liaoning, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan. Although majority of the regions coded as 1 were included in ‘coastal area’ in the regional dummies, not all of them are in coastal area.

The study controlled some social conditions such as the un-normalized number of labor dispute, illiteracy and the ratio of migrant workers that might influence the amount of collective labor disputes. The study also controlled the un-normalized total amount of labor dispute suggested, as it is expected that collective disputes are more likely to occur in a region with more labor disputes regardless of its relative frequency or ratio (case).

The amount of uneducated workers is one of the variables that the study adopted so as to help clarify what conditions activate labor disputes. It is likely that the total number of labor disputes has a negative relationship with the number of uneducated workers. Where there are more educated workers there are more who know how to sue. When it comes to collective disputes, however, things might be different. Uneducated workers who are unable to sue the firm or employer independently will seek recourse through more educated co-workers or leaders of labor unions. As an indicator of amount of uneducated workers (\(\text{illiterate}\)), this study divided the number of illiterate workers by the total number of workers.

One of the important social conditions that should be counted is the amount of migrant workers of a region. Although it might have a high correlation with uneducated workers, its effect would not necessarily be the same as that of uneducated workers. As much research has revealed, migrant workers’ legal status is on shakier ground than that of workers’ from urban areas. Along with their lack of legal consciousness and proper knowledge necessary to utilize the legal dispute such as literacy, their fragile social status might act as a barrier preventing them from utilizing the institution. This social condition is measured by dividing the number of migrant workers by the total number of workers (\(\text{mig}\)).

To compare whether the variables affect only the incidence of collective labor disputes or the total number of labor disputes too, the study conducted the same test twice with a different dependent variable each time.

**RESULTS**

Table 2 supports the first hypothesis that the density
of grassroots labor unions has a positive and significant relationship with the collective labor dispute, and this result is consistent throughout all the trials. To be more specific, the right half of the table shows that the density of grassroots labor unions increases the likelihood of collective labor dispute whereas its effect disappears when it comes to total labor dispute, as can be seen in the left half of the table 2. Although unquestionably the study has limitations, the presence of labor union seems to increase the incidence of collective labor disputes. The more labor unions in a region, the more likely collective labor disputes are to take place. The fact that there are more labor unions in a region, however, does not necessarily increase the number of individual labor dispute or the number of total labor dispute. This fills a gap that previous research has passed over. It is often argued and criticized by many studies that the labor unions in China have not contributed to the genuine utilization of the institution. Chinese labor unions, as they have declared, might not affect the activation of the total number of labor disputes, most of which are done individually. They might have a real impact, however, when it comes to collective labor disputes, supporting the workers with legal aid or official ties.

The amount of trainees in the region (trained) has some notable and significant positive relationship with the activation of collective labor disputes. It seems where there are more trained workers, the propensity to use collective labor dispute rises. The fact that trained workers expect more benefit from the formal activity because they have some bargaining power might contribute to the activation of the institution. The effect of trained workers on increasing the labor dispute, however, loses its significance when it comes to explaining the total number of labor disputes. Not only does it lose significance, the directions of the effects also become negative. In other words, whether or not the workers are trained also seems to be irrelevant when it comes to dealing with the total number of labor disputes as opposed to solely collective labor disputes. It seems that trained workers are more likely to rely on collective disputes than on individual disputes.

Unlike with large labor collective (illegal) protests that took place in China lately, the number of collective labor disputes showed a negative relationship with a greater number of FIEs in a region. It was also negatively related to the total number of labor disputes. It supports the third hypothesis of the paper that the more FIEs are there, the less submissive the government’s control would be, and accordingly the less collective labor disputes occur in a region. The effect of FIEs on increasing labor dispute, however, is less extinct when it comes to individual labor dispute as can be seen by the left half the table 2.

Contrary to expectations, collective labor disputes are actually activated where there are more migrant workers (mig). Although this did not produce significant outcomes throughout the entire analysis, the proportion of migrant workers in the region is still positively related with the number of collective labor disputes. The effect of the number of illiterate workers in a region also revealed positive and significant relations with the labor collective dispute, but not with the total labor dispute.

**CONCLUSION**

This study attempts to reveal that there is a distinct political impact of collective labor disputes that individual disputes (or labor disputes in general) cannot generate. By showing that the local government reacts only to the amount of collective labor disputes but not to the total number of labor disputes most of which are done individually, the study casts doubt on the view that the all types of labor disputes are nothing but nominal and have little to do with raising workers’ collective rights. By revealing the positive relationship between the welfare expenditure and the number of collective labor disputes, the study also implies that collective labor dispute has some impacts on raising the local government’s accountability.

Acknowledging its distinct effect, the study attempts to explain the precise conditions that facilitate the incidence of collective labor disputes. Using multivariate analysis, the study showed that collective labor disputes are facilitated where there are more grassroots labor unions, more trained employees and fewer FIEs. It is ironic that the collective dispute is more likely to happen when the state’s control more deeply permeates a region.

Labor unions in China have been regarded as a nominal institution that helps little with, if not actually hampering, workers’ collective actions. Thus, it is noteworthy that labor unions play an important role in promoting workers to collaborate when it comes to transmitting the state’s legal institution—the collective labor dispute. Chinese
Table 2 Different factors that contribute to collective and individual labor disputes

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Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
labor unions, however, play a role not in facilitating the institution in general but in facilitating it in a collective manner. One way to explain this irony is this: It seems that labor unions in China help workers only when trying to contain a collective action, one that is threatening the state’s legitimacy. This is why Chinese labor unions play no significant role when it comes to individual disputes. Individual disputes pose no serious threat to the state. The fact that collective labor disputes can be activated under the aid and control of labor unions reveals an important fact. Without the aid or control of labor unions, the central government’s strategy to contain workers’ grievances in a formal way would be challenged by the local governments or markets that want to escape the state’s regulations.

It is often argued that in a transitional, developing society, formal institutions are ineffective unless supplemented by informal institutions (Becker 2007; Tsai 2007). By showing how collective labor disputes are facilitated with the aid of labor unions and less likely to be utilized where there are more extraterritorialities such as FIEs, this study suggests that a developing country’s weak institution can be empowered by another state institution.

It is also ironic that China has chosen to implement a component of democracy – the rule of law or institutionalization – to suppress the upheaval of workers and maintain stable economic growth. Whether the introduction of such democratic channels of expression led to awakening of workers’ rights and call for further liberalization or to the government’s deepening co-optation or control over workers should be further examined.

ENDNOTES


Yujeong Yang

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DOUBLE PITFALLS FOR “NEW WOMAN”

Mei Niang’s (1920-2008) Fictional Narrative of the Colonial Society

Studies on Mei Niang (梅娘1920-2008), the most famed writer in the Japanese-dominated puppet-state of Manchuria who had shared the same popularity as Eileen Zhang (1920-1995), has received little attention in the English world. This paper looks into her works to analyze the historical predicament for the May Fourth “New Woman’s” project that the writer was persistently in pursuit of, and the intellectual and political dilemma she was entrapped in. It suggests that there is a double pitfall for the Manchurian women in her fictional world: In addition to the conservative ideal about woman as “good wife, wise mother” promoted by the Japanese, there was another one regarding the modern idea of a “free-willed” woman.

INTRODUCTION

After Xiao Hong (1911-1942) left the Japanese-dominated puppet-state Manchuria in 1934, female writers remained there continued their literary representation of the historical experience of the people living in the colonized state, among whom Mei Niang (1920-2008) quickly distinguished herself. In 1942, there was a catch phrase “the south has Zhang Ailing, the north has Mei Niang” (Nan Ling Bei Mei). The link between the two writers was based much more on their comparable fame at the time – even from a historical vantage point of view, both writers published their major works and thus attained their literary achievement before 1945, when they were merely twenty-more years old – than their compatible literary tastes and features as shown in their works with vastly differing foci and thematic motifs. Compared to other works describing life in occupied areas written by patriotic writers living outside the Japanese’s control, which unsurprisingly mostly show tragic sufferings of Chinese citizens there with emphatic nationalist message, Mei Niang’s fictional narrative would appear more “authentic.” This is so partially because most of the stories were a recording of what she saw and heard, and even by what she personally experienced, which thus offer supplemental materials for our understanding of the life in the colonized state apart from what we read from Xiao Hong’s “hard-core” narration. As noted, the distinct feature of her works was a strong feminist discourse. This constitutes a sharp contrast to the other writer in the catchphrase: Zhang Ailing, who, though paying no less concern over the destiny of middle-class women, remained a cold distance from the feminist ideal. Why this significant departure?

So far, the authoritative study on this subject focuses on the aspect that “progressive gendered ideals of modernity, as articulated with reference to May Fourth notions of women’s individual emancipation, inspired young Chinese women in Manchukuo to take advantage of the opportunities offered them by the Japanese colonial state” (Norman Smith 2007: xv). It is well-known that the most important aspect of the New Woman ideal is that this woman should be independent economically and intellectually, holding free subjectivity (thus she can master her own destiny such as undertake free love and decides on her own marriage); and she was also expected to be patriotic and educated, all of which traditional Chinese women fell short of for they were embedded in the feudal social networks, relying on men for social security. Granted that the insistence of the female writers in the area on the May Fourth ideal of “new woman” substantially challenged and subverted the Japanese promotion of conservative Confucian idea of womanhood which aimed to legitimize their political domination, is this sort of cultural criticism, as a form of resistance, effective in its diagnosis of the symptom of the patriarchal, colonial society with residual yet strong traditional conventions and conceptions? How did the female writers there ingeniously assert their views without incurring the colonizer’s suppression? What lessons can we learn from their re-presentation of the colonial society? This paper, with Mei Niang as a case of study, looks into the achievements as well as the limitations of these writers’ practice of literary creation as critical interventions. Rather than merely following the logic of feminism as a theory per se that the writers undertook in structuring their narrative, I try to put the feminist discourse as shown in the texts
via-a-vis the social-political circumstance to see to the twisted relations in the articulation of the May Fourth ideal. I suggest that there is a double pitfall for the Manchurian women in Mei Niang’s fictional world: In addition to the conservative ideal about woman as “good wife, wise mother” promoted by the Japanese, there was another one regarding the “modern” idea of a “free-willed” individual. This is a pitfall partially because the individualist assertion of woman’s right was impossible to be realized under the colonial, semi-traditional social-political and economic conditions, which oftentimes rendered the characters regard their failure as merely a gender issue.

**A SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL WOMAN IN MANCHUKUO**

Mei Niang was the penname of Sun Jiarui. She was born in a wealthy local family in 1920. What brought about her fortunes and social distinction is attributable to the legendary career of her father. He was from a small county of Shandong, yet moved to Manchuria for business interests. His ascendance from a person of nobody to a powerful (before the Japanese came) and rich man—a giant regional industrialist—is almost a miracle: Working initially as a messenger in a British company, he mastered English, Japanese, and Russian in relatively short time period aside of his busy schedule of errands for the foreigners. Foreseeing the promising prospectus of this ingenious talent, a distinguished warlord introduced his daughter to him for marriage. His experience of getting rich can be seen as a rare, and yet also typical, case of some local talents fighting to ascend to the top of the society with their diligence and wisdom, as well as their well relations with powerful domestic dignitaries and foreign businessmen there.

But Mei Niang’s early personal experience is similar to Xiao Hong’s upbringing: her mother, married to the rich family merely as a concubine, was forced by Sun’s formal wife to death (by suicide) not long after Mei Niang was born. But unlike Xiao Hong who kept an inimical relation with her father, Mei Niang’s father treated her kindly and urged her to be independent (Mei Niang, 1998). Her step-mother was distant to her, though not necessarily always harsh to her.

Typical of the wealthy family at the time, the education the writer received from her early years on was eclectic: it was classical Chinese learning blended with studies of Western culture. Since she entered a Junior Middle School for girls as late as 1930 when she was ten, the books she read were mainly works by Chinese May Fourth writers such as Lu Xun (1881-1936) and Bing Xin (1902-1999), by Western writers of classical romanticism (such as those by George Byron (1788-1824)) and realism, and of Soviet’s socialist realism (such as works by Maxim Gorky (1868-1936)). The next year, she transferred to another girl’s school. In her historical vantage point, the dormitory life in these girl’s schools meant to her a formation of a “strong affection” towards collective womanhood.

After the Japanese’s invasion of Manchuria in September 1931 and its immediate occupation of the whole area, a radical change occurred to the Sun family. A patriotic person, Sun Zhiyuan refused the attractive position of Vice president of the Manchukuo Central Bank imposed by the Japanese, and led his family to north China. Yet the economic straitjacket imposed on them due to the Japanese restrictions on capital-exportation from Manchuria forced the family returned to their hometown a year later.

The life in Manchuria was relatively stable compared to other occupied areas at the time. This might have offered the simulacrum of a peaceful society, though the Japanese propaganda of an “earthly paradise” (letu乐土) was hardly seen as reality. Mei Niang, just like other girls from middle-class families who could afford to attend school, was skeptical and loathe towards the Japanese promotion of womanhood ideals that emphasized obedience and docility in family life, which occupied a ponderous share in the school’s curriculum.

The year 1936 marked a turning point for her, as in this year two events happened: Her first story collection named Xiaojie ji (小姐集, A Young Lady’s Collected Works) was published; and her father died. She was sent to Japan to pursue further study in medicine. Interestingly, Xiao Hong was also in Japan around this time. But though Mei Niang had read her works earlier, the two writers embarked on two vastly differing personal trajectories and they apparently never met each other. In the two years in Japan, her dream...
of studying medicine was aborted, yet she gained more knowledge of leftist works such as those by Guo Moruo (1892-1978).

But the more important thing to her seemed to be her love affair with her future husband, a fellow Chinese overseas student who was also studying and working there. The opposition from her family and the latter’s threat of discontinuing her financial support forced her to return to Manchukuo in 1938, working as a proofreader for a local newspaper. But the next year, she still refused the family’s arranged marriage and lived together with her lover, who followed her there. In 1940, her work of Bang (蚌, Oysters) appeared in a Chinese journal sponsored by the Japanese, Daban Huawen meiri (Osaka mainichi shimbun/Chinese Osaka daily).

Together with her husband and some friendly Japanese intellectuals, Mei Niang joined a newly formed literary league, Wencong (Literary Collective). Her second volume of story collection, Di’er dai (The Second Generation) was also published by this organization. In its preface, Liang Shanding (1914-1996), a famed male writer, has praised the writer’s tendency to “expose reality” against her earlier inclination towards “little girl’s love and hate” (Smith 2006:89). The writer’s more famous works are the three novellas Bang (Oysters) (1939), Yu (鱼, Fish) (1941), and Xie (蟹, Crabs) (1941) written shortly later, all of which won several distinguished literary prizes at the time.

The couple moved to Japan in late 1940 because Mei Niang’s husband was dispatched there as a reporter. There, she saw the hardship average Japanese people endured, and also wrote Yu (Fish) and Xie (Crab) which harbored no serious, though subtle, exposure of harsh reality of the local Manchurian society under the Japanese occupation. In spring 1942, she followed her husband to Beiping (北平), working as editor and reporter for Funv zazhi (妇女杂志 Woman’s Journal).

What is controversial, however, is not merely her husband’s role in the North China Writer’s Association which apparently was under the Japanese’s sponsorship. As noted, her “fame” (or notoriety from a historical vantage point?) had “solidified in conjunction with the establishment of the Japanese-sponsored, pan-Asian Greater East Asia Writer’s Congress” (Smith 2006:91), whereas the Congress had unambiguously claimed that it “discusses ways and means of how literary circles … can offer cooperation toward the prosecution of the Greater East Asia War and the creation of literature and art characteristic of East Asia.”

Because of this political complexion, Zhang Ailing had evaded attending its meetings despite the invitation she received from it, and had published a proclamation in newspapers announcing that she had no intention to (and indeed did not) join it though her name appeared there without her own permission. Compared to this political wisdom or misgiving, Mei Niang seemed to quite enjoy her distinction achieved in the Congress. She earned two prizes there: a secondary prize in the second Congress, and with her novelette Xie the “Novel of the Year” in the third Congress.

But what compounds the complexity and added to the ambiguity of the issue is that, the novelettes which brought prizes to Mei Niang are both works of social critique, and Xie even bears unambiguous anti-colonial and anti-patriarchal message, which are counteractive to the Japanese fanfare of establishing “peaceful and happy land” and its promotion of conservative Confucian concepts. It is also worthy to note that the awardee of the first prize in the first Congress, the Manchuria writer Yuan Xi (1919-1988), was imprisoned by the Japanese because of his “dark writings” when he had freed to Beiping from that area. What can explain these curious phenomena is that the writings of these writers, mostly works of social realism, remained their semi-autonomy and a distance to the imperialist’s policies and demands. By being faithful to the reality as the writers saw it as, these works “naturally” downplay any positive image the Japanese tried to propagandize.

Another ambiguity or mystery is Mei Niang’s own attitude towards the Japanese occupation. Obviously in her works she “exposed” the oppressive, dark reality of the occupied area, but not only did her participation in the activities of the Congress stigmatize her image, but one of her articles appeared just before the end of the war in Women’s Journal unambiguously called for Japanese women’s devotion and sacrifice for the
efforts of the “Sacred War.” Her husband’s role in the wartime is no less bewildering: Apparently he led the pro-Japanese writer’s association, yet according to Mei Niang’s own accounts, he in fact worked for the underground resistance force. Historical puzzles aside, I suggest the key to break the debate about whether her writing is a kind of “resistance” or “collaboration” is to look into the real content of her fictional narrative.

Mei Niang and her husband returned to Manchuria in 1945 and stayed there for three years; after that they went to Shanghai and then Taiwan. After 1949, they decided to return to the mainland to join New China, yet her husband drowned himself mysteriously in the sea during this trip, leaving Mei Niang with two daughters and a son. Mei Niang was assigned to teach middle school by the new government and joined Beijing’s Writer’s Association.

**FEMALE DESIRE AND THWARTED DREAM OF WOMEN’S LIBERATION**

A member of the generation receiving the baptism of May Fourth New Culture, in particular its message of woman’s liberation, the writer courageous upheld the banner of woman’s sexual independence; yet sometimes the characters’ assertion of female desire becomes a sort of anarchical self-destruction for themselves. “Dong shoushu zhiqian” (Before Operation) shows the strong influence the writer received from the May Fourth confessional style of writing. As usual, the person who makes confession is a woman. In this genre, the heroine always has experience and delivers her sufferings to a person whom she apparently can trust, usually a man. In this one, the woman is conveying her secrets to the male doctor, whom she happened to meet once in the day she experienced her traumatic incident. She was seduced to have sex with one of his husband’s colleague and contracted venereal disease. What the lesson she learns from this experience, however, is: “Go to hell the so-called virginity! Life is so precious!” and “I will revenge, I will go to work as unlicensed prostitute, to damage those men who play women.” And she insists that “I did not do anything wrong” because her husband also plays other women, and what she performs is merely out of women’s natural instincts. She declares that “I will unite all those unfortunate women to fight men! I will teach my child, to let him understand that the society is so unfair to women. At least I hope the second generation will have understanding and sympathy towards women” (282).

This feminist discourse takes the patriarchal society and in particular, men with male-chauvinist consciousness as the enemy and the target of women’s liberation, which is in line with the May Fourth feminist diagnosis of the social malaise. Yet what it takes to challenge the patriarchal system is an anarchical impulse and a blind move of (self-) deconstruction; in particular, sexual dissipation is mistaken as a weapon for woman’s emancipation, which would easily fall into the pitfall set up by the degenerate society.

Sex plays an equally important role in “Fish.” Because of this emphasis, although it earned the “second prize for literature” in the Congress, it was condemned by a contemporary Japanese writer as a piece that is “utterly devoid of values in its portrayal of adultery and despair” and so “among the most degenerate pieces” that he ever read (Quoted from Gunn1980: 37). Compared to the last story, here the writer entrusts more power to the heroine by granting the only narrative voice to her. The dangerous aspect of this narrative perspective is less in its silencing the other voices, such as that of the male characters, than in its overdue emphasis on the psychological trauma of the female protagonist to invite sympathy that would neglect the social-economic over-determination of the “woman’s problem”.

A confession from a woman on a stormy night unravels the curtain of the story, which is conveyed to her paramour. Gradually we learn that her experience, a representative love affair of a May Fourth “new woman.” A girl “thirsting for love,” she betrays her family to be with the man who allures her heart, yet he turns out to be a married man merely enamored of her beauty. As a result, her blind passion comes with tremendous cost. She is pregnant, and the man pays little attention to her and there was oftentimes fighting between them. She finds solace in her husband’s cousin who seems to be sympathetic of her experience. Yet after the consummation of this (perhaps not less blind) passion with the latter, she articulates
complaints of the same issue: he loves her merely because of her physical attraction. Like Meili, she attributes the cause of the unromantic ending to the patriarchal society that takes women as accessory of men rather than a human being. This is a familiar criticism from the May Fourth tradition of repudiating the “feudal” society; whereas the new focus on women’s sexual satisfaction offers no better sign of prospect.

The central imagery of the story comes from the title “fish,” whose connotation is explained clearly by the protagonist’s deliverance of her inner thought: “I have seen through (the society): The fish in the net can only find a hole to free itself; to wait until it is captured and then put back again into the water. It is more illusionary than dream. If it gets an opportunity to free itself out of the net, no matter whether it falls into the water or in the earth, it is good anyway; what happens after that can be considered afterwards” (79). The words show a brave will to break loose from the stifling social circumstance, yet fundamentally it is out of an anarchical passion against anything that obstructs the fulfillment of her desire, and it would easily be quenched by conventional force without much repercussion from the society.

Furthermore, this “new woman” herself acknowledges that she is paradoxical in her feelings. In her confession, she acknowledges that she does not love her husband’s cousin, but only because the latter consoles her heart physically and emotionally that she develops their affair. And although her first love cheats her and treats her badly, she still wants him back and admits that she still “loves” him. This is not merely due to the weakness of an emotionally-entrapped woman, but should be seen as simultaneously a dilemma for a middle class “new woman” who has few choices before the reality exposes its true facade. Nevertheless, she insists that she is not wrong in her choice from the very beginning. “What I did was not wrong at all. I needed love, then I loved…I did not hurt anybody, I did not give anyone inconvenience, what I chose to do was the only way that I could take. I still want myself, then I have to follow this path” (109). This lament is not merely an explanation for the sake of her (in)dignity, but the principle she sticks to as shown here, which dictates that any choice is up to the decision of an individual so long as it does not hurt others, is fundamentally the tenet of the May Fourth individualism and the “golden rule” held by the (Western) middle class, but in the contemporary Chinese society which fell short of a full rationalization process, a dogmatic insistence on this laisse-faire principle could only lead to failure and suffering in reality, especially for woman, because the other gender and the society in general oftentimes did not accommodate and cooperate with this belief.

Nevertheless, like the first story, here the author implies that it is desire as an inalienable natural instinct that brings about all the happenings, because the title “Yu” in Chinese pronunciation is identical to desire. The pursuit of freedom from the traditional ethical-moral straitjacket which stresses suppression of physical instinct led to a reverse process aimed to chase sexual liberation. Nevertheless, the protagonist here still dares not to expose or articulate this consciousness; rather, she argues that the cause for her series of unfortunate choice is from the outside: “If my family did not oppress me, I will not love Lin Xingmin so carelessly; if Lin Xingmin did not bully me so much, I would not accept your solace” (109). And she can only hope the society will be open enough to accept her extramarital affair: “If this society has one more reasonable person, women will have less bitterness.” While she pins down the patriarchal society as the chief culprit, she does not reflect on whether she herself has anything to do with her sufferings.

The author’s exposure of the various problems related to “woman’s issue” from a societal perspective reveal the impossibility of the “New Culture,” and she oftentimes attributes it to “men’s problem.” “Lv” (A Trip) (1942) records an episode happened in a train from the narrator’s perspective. Just before she departs, she hears from her aunt that a whore who kills her husband is in the train with her paramour, and there are a lot of polices waiting there hunting for her. During the trip, this traveler (the narrator) notices a beautiful lady with a handsome man, by their intimate manners she fantasizes that they are the wanted. Yet what turns out is that they are another pair of lover who are also freeing from the restraint of marriage and
the oppression of public opinion. Their destiny is not different from the alleged whore: While we are informed finally that the latter is captured immediately when she is boarding the train, they are found by the man’s vulgar wife just before the train stops. By paralleling the two similar cases, and with the comment of an elder man which complains the unreliability of women at the time, the narrative shows that the society habitually attributes the responsibility of problems caused by extramarital relations to women. While “free love” seems not a faraway dream now, the ideal of “New Women(hood)” is still constrained by the customary social opinions on woman.

A PROBLEM CAUSED BY MEN?

“Men’s responsibility” becomes the more salient motif of the writer’s satirical fiction. “Huanghun Zhixian” (Gift at a Dusk) lampoons the lust of men, in this way it clearly reveals that the problem lies in men rather than women. A poet Li Liming sees an advertisement in a newspaper from a newly widow who proclaims that she is rich and beautiful and wants to interview any middle-aged man who has the will to marry her. Extremely excited, he immediately plans to visit her despite his returned wife from her hometown needs his pick-up. Yet the woman turns out to be a dirty woman with five children. She cries to tell the poet that she frees to the city to evade bandits, and it is her landlord’s daughter who “sets up” the scheme for her to get some offers from “sympathetic philanthropists”. Poet Li is disappointed, angry, and shifts towards his dry wife whom he has little interests in order to pry out some money from the latter. From a feminist perspective, the story still implies that ugly man with a lustrous mind is the cause of the social problems.

“Chundao Renjian” (The Spring Returns to the Human World) similarly exposes the dirty minds of a group of men. This time the game reverses itself: These men pretend to publicly hire some actresses while the real intention is to seduce women; but while they think they have successfully achieved their goal, those girls ask them for money for various reasons: they are also manipulating men by catering to their lustful taste in order to attain their own objective. But the author does not want to show that these girls are mercenary swindlers; rather, their sisterhood and their kind hearts (one girl really needs money to meet expensive expenditures to save her mother) make a sharp contrast to the dirty men who only want their body. That the “women’s problem” is caused by men unambiguously becomes the story’s central theme. Meanwhile, it is the patriarchal society that forces the girls to sell themselves to maintain a humble life.

Likewise, “Xiao guanggao li de gushi” (Story inside a small advertisement, 1943) through the same confessional mode of writing delivers the female narrator’s sufferings to her lover: She is manipulated to swindle dowry from men who love her. “Yuye” (Rainy Night) describes a scene in which a woman slaughters the man who tries to rape her. In all, the author shows that the “women’s issue” are all caused by men, or the patriarchal society which privileges men and oppress women with the concept of virginity.

Although the dignity of women is the core concern of all these stories, when the writer shifts her perspective a little bit towards incidents taken place outside of woman’s interior arena, the rewards are more fruitful. For instance, she sometimes notices that the problematic exists not merely in “men,” but in the condition of the “New Culture” itself, which is shown in the metamorphosis of the “New Youths.”

Xiao Furen (Little Wife), written in 1944, is an unfinished novel. Its major plotline narrates a broken romance of an ideal couple, who has married against the objection of their relatives, which was an eminently successful story of the May Fourth “free love;” whereas the failure of this marriage obviously becomes a post-May Fourth narrative. In the very beginning, this couple is still in their honeymoon and embarks on their journey from Beiping to Changchun, a city in the Manchuria, in order to find a haven there to avoid the persecution of their families. The second section changes the time setting to two years later, when there has been fissures between the two, and the husband beats the “little wife” Fenghuang (which means Phoenix) and leaves the family. What happens is that he has an affair with the female master of the school where he works. But he tries to break with this extramarital affair as he still deeply loves his wife, and his paramour (the schoolmaster) also understands and accepts quietly his arrangement. The novel closes with his chance meeting with the family of his nieces in Japan, where he has been there teaching Chinese in order to cool down the intricate relations between him and his two lovers. In this narrative, both the wife Phoenix and the schoolmaster are “new women.” The triangle that
shows the complexity of the emotional tangles might aim to underline the psychological weakness of the “little women”. Here, the husband loves his wife, so the problem happened apparently exists elsewhere; in particular, in the troubled relationship in the middle-class world.

Mei Niang sometimes more clearly reveals what causes the tragedy of their romance resides in the coalition between the stifling colonial situation and the degenerate traditional force. Clam is focusing on a psychologically besieged young woman. Through her perspective, it presents a dim picture of the local society in which women could not find much hope in living a noble life with dignity, thus it can be read as a story inheriting the spirit of the May Fourth New Literature. The storyline is not complex: Meili, a high-school graduate and a clerk, is in love with her coworker Qi. In this “free love” she devotes her virginity. Yet her parents oppose the trend of “free love,” warning her of the alleged immorality of the practice and intending to marry her to a playboy whom she dislikes. Meanwhile, Qi’s family also arranges him a marriage with a woman in a compatible household from his hometown. When Meili hears the news, in an impulse to revenge Qi’s betrayal which she mistakes it as, she declares that she has another lover and never loves Qi. She also leaves her job which offers merely meager salary for her. Her haste reaction backfires to hurt herself: A chance meeting with a former male colleague in a park is set up by some evil news reporter as a case of immoral affair, and Qi takes it to be the truth and reluctantly accepts his arranged marriage. Meili tries to save her love by going to the train station to stop Qi, yet she misses it. In this unfortunate encounter she is “devastated by the loss of her relationship, her job, and her hope for the future” (Smith 2006:93).

Like a typical May Fourth New Literature piece, the story shows that what causes the predicament of women in love is the semi-traditional society: residual yet diehard customary practice of arranged practice, social prejudice against the “immoral” free love, few choices for intellectual women in society save for some low-paid jobs, etc, all of which contribute to the unfortunate “accidents” of the heroine. In terms of all these familiar motifs, the story is not exceptional or fresh enough; what adds to its merits, however, is the detailed presentation of the colonized society.

The heroine lives in the society as a second-rate citizen, for the arrogance of the Japanese appears here and there. Not only is the Japanese train ticket-collector harsh to her and to other passengers, the Japanese soldiers sing obscene song and call girls of Manchuria in the streets bordering on sexual harassment, but even Japanese kids also dare to throw stones to her for fun (the identity of these persons are ascertained through nuanced reference to their awkward pronunciation of Chinese characters and their body size and gesture). The several references to the setting sun are also generally regarded as the writer’s deliberate depreciation of the Japanese suzerainty. In this occupied society, the collaborators – two patrols – bully their country men (those middle class citizens) which they dared not do so before the occupation for the latter’s official position (as one patrol acknowledges), because now they are only responsible to the Japanese authority.

Under these social-political conditions, the life of middle class families is inevitably affected; Meili’s family is no exception. We are informed that her “family, originally not so harmonious, recently because of the confiscation of its houses and the rationing of foods, has already been a mess,” which leads to her parents’ eagerness to marry her out to a wealthy family. Her elder brother has complained to her that he has few choices: Not a graduate of the colonial military school, he cannot hope to ascend to a higher position; the will to develop his career is also frustrated by the meager payment. Under this suffocating environment, he only wants to immerse himself in physical dissipation by appropriating the inheritance of the residual family fortune. The ugly internal landscape of this extended gentry’s household is delineated: Many ladies engage in majong; her brother indulges himself in opium and her father in concubine; one of her brother spends money for prostitutes; there are numerous internecine fights among the ladies and men in the extended family vying for property and fortune, a familiar clan politics abound in the literature of the period.

Living in this degenerate world, apparently, Meili has internalized the May Fourth concept of New Women, including its tenet of free love, into her mind. But she still realizes that granted her love with Qi succeeded, the future prospect is not a rosy one (which reminds us the experience of romance in Lu Xun’s “Regret for the Past” (Shangshi). She has confessed to her girlfriends her relations with Qi: “We are not different. We knew (each other), fell in love, and only wait to get married.
But our future will not be better than yours (that drags on a less than unhappy life)” (25). She attributes this failure of implementing the ideal of May Fourth ideal of free love to the prejudice of the society: “in my view, it is only because of the immoral slander of average people. Once a man and a woman know each other and walk together, other people will say a lot of things about their relations. As a result, they could not afford not to get married (to avoid more negative public opinion)” (25).7 This explanation sees the problem less in the society as a network than in men, which, however, still fails to find out the true cause of the problem with a social nature – it displaces an essentially social problem to be an ethical issue, regardless the target is the “immoral” common people or the other gender.

This is so is because from the perspective of the narrative which focuses on Meili, the sufferings of the people in the society are examined through the unfortunate destiny of the women; and the hope to break out of this straitjacket is also put on the collective awakening of their feminist consciousness of the women and their will. When Meili talks to her girlfriend: “This society was not prepared for women. Originally (I) thought that I still can study and work, now even this little hope is disappearing. To study? There are three-hour classes on housework in the six-hour daily class schedule. To work? Women are (regarded as) incompetent and merely serve tea (to men)...But we are already fortunate, (because) we have a heart that can feel agonies. If all women feel this pang, then we have the opportunity of salvation, isn’t it?” (23) Later on, when she reflects on her loss of virgin to Qi, she complains that Qi does not consider her situation, “the road for women is narrow; in particular, the society still evaluates women based on her virginity.” She concludes that “only women can sympathize and understand women, only women unite together they can save themselves” (45).

The educated background gives Meili a sort of sense of intellectual certainty, but her diagnosis of the problem could not settle the problems within her extended family, which to a great extent bring about her torture and tragic experience; nor can it redress the prejudice and customary consciousness and practice against women’s rights in the society that is the more direct cause of her aborted romance. This awareness of women’s rights also has rare opportunity to be realized in the colonial society: the Japanese would suppress it directly with its rhetoric of conservative Confucianism. Therefore, the “collective sisterhood,” as a utopia, in this historical circumstance merely gives illusionary plan(e) of solution to the “women’s problem.”

On the other hand, the central concern for Meili and her girlfriends are much more on their role in love and marriage than on their jobs which pay them pitiable sum of reward. Xiuwen complains that women’s role in family is merely raising children and doing housework. Echoing this view, Meili says she is better to work as a prostitute than to be a wife, merely a plaything for men. This bold assertion subverts the Japanese’s promotion of the ideal womanhood, yet it shows more a regret over the lack of social opportunities due to the retarded social rationalization for women, than a clear political consciousness against the Japanese propaganda. Fundamentally, in its negative statement, the narrative looks for sympathetic men as the last resort and haven.

Indeed, if the woman finds no way to change the consciousness of average people (so she resorts to the collective sisterhood for potential power, which is an illusory utopia, as said), then she tries to rely on men to address the dilemma. She accepts Qi’s rhetoric that as long as they join together, they can escape to the heavens, though earlier she has a clear realization that even if they seek freedom in Tianjin, Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing, “everywhere would be the same” (28-29)8. Moreover, Qi’s rhetoric appears merely a pretext to hoodwink Meili’s trust in order to take her virginity (which happens immediately after the talk) – in its side effect this subtly exposes the hypocrisy of “men” – but Meili later on still holds that she is right in devoting her virginity for the sake of love. Yet in other times, not only does she acknowledge that she is too haste before she knows Qi fully, a deconstructive effect also lies there: free love based on her “free will” in reality might not be so romantic and ideal. Granted she and Qi’s love consummated itself in marriage, the final outcome might just like what her girlfriend is experiencing: fighting and divorce.

In this light, although the central message that the story meant to convey is that “Meili’s devastation personifies the violence that Mei Niang ascribed to the Confucian ideals that dominated women’s lives in Manchukuo” (Smith 2006: 95), the preface of the story – which reads: “A huge wave throws her into the beach, she was shone to dray. She could not bear more (desire) but open her shell. Yet as soon as she did this, her body was picked up,” – obviously refers to the sexual desire...
of the woman – which, if not seen as the genesis of the problem, at least plays an important function in it. The text conveys a feminist message of sexual liberation irrespective of conventional concept, which seemingly offers the way for solution of the “woman’s issue.” But this overarching message is challenged by the side plot of the story itself.

Nevertheless, the reference to the societal network through the heroine’s social experience marks a turning to a broader perspective, which led to a more comprehensive portraiture of the semi-traditional and colonial totality. Ye he hua kai (Flowers That Blossom in the Night), another unfinished novel, is apparently a story that has various layers of contrasts between men and women. All its characters bear typical features pertaining to his/her social status and ideological concepts, which contribute to its representative value of a skit of critical realism. Daidai is married to a tycoon to secure her financial needs while her younger sister Dailin ekes out a hard life with her own perseverance. Daidai’s husband Rixin (literally means daily renewed) is a vulgar Babbitt who squanders money coveting an opera actress, a conventional decadence at the time for both the old leftovers and the new rich. A young man and reporter Han Qingyun, Daidai’s former neighborhood, upon a chance meeting with her, plans to seduce her as his concubine and also tries to hoodwink money from her husband. He helps the actress Lingzhu who is coveted by Rixin by assisting her study and daily sustenance, whereas containing in his mind an evil scheme of manipulating her body and heart for his physical and material enjoyments. The ugliness of these two men composing a sharp contrast to Dailin’s lover Aiqun (literally means “love the masses”) who honestly fights against the hardness of life for the goodness of the family.

Although Daidai, Rixin and Han Qingyun appear either pitiable or despicable, they were all “New Men” and “New Women” that had received the baptism of the May Fourth New Culture. Although Daidai’s marriage was founded more upon the stake of money than love, we cannot deny that she also loves her husband and she chose him out of her own choice; and although Rixin splurges money, being a social elite he is not too evil and he loves Daidai tenderly. Han Qingyun is reminiscent of the character Fan Jiashu in Zhang Henshui’s (1895-1967) novel Tixiao yinyuan (Fate in Tears and Laughter), but the kindness of Fan now metamorphoses itself to be the evilness of Han. These characterizations fundamentally subvert the image of “New Youth” idealized in the New Culture Enlightenment.

Han Qingyun is especially noteworthy. He appears progressive to Daidai, and informed her that although to average people “to survive is a big problem and eating becomes the only objective,” he himself believes that “on top of eating, man should have a goal. If not, isn’t that life has no meaning at all?” When Daidai asks him what this goal is, his grandiose answer appears illusionary for readers: “(to work) for the state, for the people, and for the masses” (408-409). The reason that this progressive political slogan shows itself as merely balderdash is not merely because we have been informed that Qingyun is a selfish man intending to seduce Daidai for ulterior, debased gains, but it is the result of our consideration of the local society in which these youths who had been subjected to the influence of the May Fourth New Culture have to drag out an ignoble life under the colonial oppression and have no way to realize these lofty ideal. His desire for Daidai is partially out of his envy for her husband, a new rich that appears to him vulgar.

Parallel to the paradoxical situation which shows how a seemingly progressive May Fourth youth retrogrades to be a rat, the recipients of this grandiloquent rhetoric of May Fourth ideals are also not enlightened. Lingzhu doubts his teachings “as soon as she begins to associate with rich persons.” To her “the force of life outweighs him (his baptism), and it matters much more” (441). Most of these people had owned sublime social-political ideals. Now more or less they resign to the dire situation which the colonial regime imposes upon them, in which economic necessity surpass any other concerns. What makes the ideal of New Culture impossible, we are informed, is the social circumstance. Dailin has no way but to accept her sister’s financial assistance for her ill mother, as the salary of his father, a school principal, could not maintain their life sustenance. She urges his sister Daidai to find a job in order to keep her dignity, but the plan is mocked by Rixin for its impracticality: the money earned by honest work cannot pay fare for bus, and only the job of working as prostitute can support oneself at the time. Accordingly, from the broad social network and interpersonal relations we see the correlation between the stringent social-political conditions and the hopeless living situation and the little choice for “new women,” thus the futility of the
“New Culture” concepts.

If in this story, the disclosure of the degraded colonial society is still conducted through the examination of the “woman’s issue;” then sometimes we also witness the reverse sort of observation: the latter’s problem is embedded in an unfolding of a “family saga.” This is shown in Xie (Crabs).

Although the epitaph of the story (which reads: “the man who captures crabs turns on the light in his boat, then the crabs themselves follow the light. Then, they fall into the net well prepared for them”) reminds us the motif of “men’s problem,” and it indeed concerns the destiny of women in a traditional society colonized by a foreign subject; its thematic scope is much broader, which offers a vivid picture of a declining extended Chinese traditional family trapped in the net of the colonial society and of its degradation and metamorphosis.

The protagonists of the novel are two filles, Sun Ling and Little Cui; but now it does not attend exclusively on the women. Rather, the details in Clam related to the family politics of the extended family here received more comprehensive treatment. Containing many auto-biographical elements, we are informed that this extended well-to-do family got rich through its ties to Russians who had powerful force in the local society before they were evicted by the invading Japanese. After that its fortune falls into irrevocable decline. In a colonized society, there were always men from the erstwhile rich gentry’s family trying to save their privilege and advance their interests by not only usurping the residual fortune of the family (which precipitates its disintegration), but also cooperate with the colonizers in order to have a share in the latter’s colonial adventure. The incarnation of this evil in the novel is Third uncle, who manages to manipulate the family business by controlling its channel of revenue at the cost of the interests of other family members, most of whom pitiable nieces and cousins without the protection of their former patrons who are now either died or neglect to take care of the complicated and noisome affairs. He also enters the local tax office controlled by the Japanese. When he sees the daily routine there cannot offer him much money, he joins the illegal business of selling opium, which finally forfeits his fortune.

What is portrayed to be more evil seems to be the behaviors of the cattier lackey named Wang Fu. Seeing the irreversible change of fate, he changes his object of loyalty from the elder master to Third Uncle. He does not openly object the latter’s ugly plan of marring his daughter Little Cui as concubine, but manages to send her as a gift to the Japanese. But this major plotline is buried subtly under many of the interspersed plots and episodes. Even the provocative recording of the search of concubines for the Manchukuo “emperor” manipulated by the Japanese which causes misgivings and panics of the local society did not attract much attention. The reason for this calculated description of a by no means flattering picture is quite simple: The major event itself is sufficient enough to invite the Japanese’s suspicion and cause a dangerous situation to the author. That the writer not only did not find trouble, but earned a handsome prize from the Congress is probably due to the fact that this realistic piece aimed only to expose the reality “as it is”; and it did it so faithfully that even the Japanese could not find its subversive connotation by its superficial narration. Thus the disintegration of the Chinese family with the disastrous effect of the Japanese appropriation of local fortune by forced conversion of silver to worthless paper currency is vicariously presented. This is done through Ling’s stepmother’s obsession over her concealed, amassed stash of silver, parts of which nevertheless is cheated away by the merciless lacky Wang Fu in his mission of money conversion entrusted by the widow.

It is under this social-political context-as-subtext that the relentless process of demise of the traditional Chinese world is delivered through the personae of the aged Granny, the impotent and unskilled elder brother, and the frustrated and resigned brother Xiang, who had been an overseas student in Japan and had held entrepreneurship to do business; and under this bleak circumstance the fates of the two lovely girls. The destiny of Little Cui is introduced earlier.9 Another girl, Ling, is the daughter of the second son of the matriarch who nevertheless had passed away (the story implies that her father quits his office as a result of his unfulfilled dream due to the Japanese occupation, because he had informed Ling his will to rejuvenate the weak country). She loves study, yet her educational and career plan is sabotaged by the Japanese occupation. The current curriculum she learns from school is mainly on Japanese cuisine to meet the Japanese promotion of “wise wife, good mother.” The message of “new women” ideal is also asserted through her realization
that only self-reliance and spirit of endurance can help women in times of hardship. Compared to Little Cui, who is illiterate, the destiny of this “new (intellectual) woman” is more unascertained.

FROM CONCERNS OVER THE “NEW WOMAN” TO THE SUBALTERN

As noted, throughout the colonial period the writer “implicitly argues that the social turmoil that epitomized Chinese life in Manchukuo was induced by Japanese colonialism and patriarchy” (Smith 2007: 80). The writer would turn more and more towards the social politics that caused the woman’s issue in the latter period, but even in her earlier career, she had already had sensitive attention to it. “Bangwan de xiju” (An Evening’s Comedy), an early story included in Di’er dai (The Second Generation), for instance, is a farce that exposes the “abnormal” reality of the colonial society that divests the citizens of their sense of dignity.

The story is a farce that exposes the “abnormal” reality of the colonial society that divests the citizens of their sense of dignity.

The happenings take place in a laundry and in the street. In the beginning, Little Sanzi, an apprentice in a family laundry shop, is scolded by the hostess for his ineptness. He is deeply appreciative of his Korean colleague, a feminine youth and the favorite of the matriarch, who diverts the latter’s attention thus absolves the punishment that he would receive. But Sanzi is soon forced to leave off his duty again by the matriarch’s son to go to the street helping the latter study the skill of driving bike. In the street, the naughty boys have fun with a flirting lady, who returns the mockery of the son by intimating that his mother keeps illegitimate lovers. When the son is about to lose his tantrum, his father Master Wang joins the farce by endeavoring to seduce the attractive woman. At the moment, the hostess arrives with the Korean boy. Witnessing what has happened, in front of the gathering public looking for fun, she vehemently rebukes his husband, scolds the woman, and orders Xiao Liuzi to go home serving the Korean boy, who is very tired.

There are a lot of concealed messages in the text which make it filled with allegorical connotation. The person who runs throughout the scene is the matriarch, who might be seen as typifying the traditional-styled patriarchal power, as she owns all its main features: keeping extramarital lovers (the Korean boy is probably insinuated to be one of her lovers), being harsh to the lower and subordinated class, arbitrarily managing business, and obsequiously co-operating with and ingratiating the Japanese. The last of which is revealed by her peculiar relations with the colonizer: She can freely enter the latter’s headquarters. But this is done by her sending the Korean boy as a gift to the Japanese to satisfy their lust (in Manchuria, the many Korean residents were simultaneously the target of the Japanese colonial desire). Under her shadow, her husband, the nominal Master Wang, appears incompetent and ludicrous who only knows of seducing women.

The chaotic and farcical ending gives a vivid, symbolic picture of the colonial Manchurian society. The Japanese are the invisible yet omnipresent dark force in the subtext. Under this gigantic shadow, the Chinese as well as all the other nations in the land live a pitiable life. For the middle class residents, in particular, their ignoble living state show itself as the inheritance of degenerate traditional conventions and practice which goes hand in hand with an intricate intercourse with the Japanese for favor. The title “an evening’s comedy” can be simultaneously translated as “a farce during the sunset,” which gives us more hints about its allegorical nature with a political significance.

In the period between she settled down in Beijing in 1942 and the surrender of the Japanese in 1945, Mei Niang’s concerns over the destiny of New Woman was unabated. But
while she insisted on this agenda, in her objective observation of the real happenings of the society, we see the metamorphosis of the image of New Woman. Meanwhile, towards the later period, she broadened her horizon to look into the dignity of the subaltern, joining her feminist stance with the humanitarian inclination towards those suffering masses lived under the life standard of the proto-bourgeois ladies. This new move then sharpens the edge of her critical realism.

“Zhu Ru” (Dwarf) from a first-person female narrator’s perspective transcribes the tragic life of a dwarf. He is a bastard by her landlord and his mistress. But neither did the enfeebled landlord protect his mistress nor is he responsible for the dwarf who is his son. While the pitiable woman is beaten to death by the landlord’s merciless wife, the son lives an abject life in the past ten more years and is subjected to all kind of prejudice and abuse. He appears ugly and foolish to other persons, nevertheless the narrator feels intimate with him and cares for him tenderly. His pubescent sexual instinct pushes him to touch her, which has provokes her impulsive reaction that stuns him. Just before this intimate relation develops, unfortunately the dwarf is attacked by a mad dog and dies on the site. A humiliated and injured boy, he is essentially murdered by the web of the dark society and the ignorant people. In this touching piece the author combines her feminist concern (over the destiny of vulnerable women) with the destiny of the oppressed and the downtrodden, showing that the two issues are closely related, which make it come close to leftist writing and its humanitarian perspective.

Similarly, “Xinglu nan” (Difficulty in the Road) (1943) is also a story reminiscent of the writings of leftist writers, which makes a contrast between a “new woman” and a collie in terms of their differing life standard and morality. It records the psychological metamorphosis of a women returning home from a banquet in a night. She is scared by a barking dog, and helped by a man to evade it. But immediately she takes this man as a threat as he is seemingly following her. Finding no assistance from a cart driver who is haste to return home and insulted by a drunkard who mistakes her to be a “street angel” (prostitute), she feels that she falls into a desperate situation. The man rebukes her misunderstanding of him, which apparently hurts her sense of dignity. He defends himself as a “civilized man,” reproaching the narrator as a woman who “merely knows drinking, card playing, watching movie, and engaging in love,” who squanders money for senseless feelings (to avoid the supposed danger, she has promised ten dollars to the cart-driver) but does not know the amount of money would assist a family in which food is not guaranteed and a daughter seriously ill. To express his indignant sentiment, he claims that while he had no intention to rob her, now he takes away her money as he supposes this would not be much harmful to her. In the meantime, he throws her a load of something he holds and asks her to see what destitute men eat everyday. After he leaves, a cart belatedly arrives. The narrator finds that what he throws to her is a dirty peanut cake, which is still demanded by the driver who takes it as what the narrator incidentally found in the street. She simultaneously finds a note in the paper enveloping the cake, which indicates that the man is a primary school teacher, and the cake is what he can find for his ill daughter. Feeling incompetent and desperate, he is going to commit suicide. The narrator feels a little solace because her money might help the man temporarily cancel his plan of ending his life.

The story reminds us Lu Xun’s story “A Little Matter” (Yijian xiaoshi), which narrates how a little good deed did by a cart driver made the narrator realize the kindness of the oppressed subaltern. By contrast, this story focuses on the dignity of the latter, and “exposes” the superficial and egocentric lifestyle of the middle class “New Woman”. If Lu Xun’s story belongs to the category of revolutionary realism, this piece is fundamentally a critical realistic writing – through a humanitarian concern, it demonstrates the spirit of liberal humanism. But it also shows that the author has tried to find other unjust social phenomena in addition to the predicament of the “New Woman,” though she might not have found the intricate relations between the two.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines Mei Niang’s fiction as a case study of the writings by female writers in the
Manchurian society during the period of Japanese occupation. Living in the colonial society, as noted, the Manchurian woman writers “worked within a weighty regulatory framework to map out careers, which ultimately undermined the state that staked claim to their allegiance and sought to contour their self-identities” (Smith 2007: xiv). The endeavor might be consciously or unconsciously taken by a specific writer, but undoubtedly that by a somewhat collective effort the woman writers sabotaged the Japanese agenda of resorting to the rhetoric of “good wife, wise mother” to realize their intended goal of imposing the colonial identity on the Manchurian people.

On the other hand, due to the limitation of the living conditions and lack of available sources offering inspirational political analysis of the social malaise, the writers’ ideal of “new woman” that “advocated women’s dominion over their bodies, relationships, and careers” (Smith 2007:14), has also a certain shortsightedness. Oftentimes the female writers believed that “women in this society experience a great deal of suffering and pain that men can’t imagine ... Only women can change this world into heaven.”10 The cause for women’s suffering was rightfully attributed to the “male chauvinist society” (nanquan shehui), but the narrative usually did not go further to diagnose the deep roots, the structural over-determinations of the semi-traditional society and the colonial state apparatus. In short, they staged a feminist critique of the colonial society, which was both valid and effective in terms of its sharp exposure and denunciation of the patriarchal society undergirded by the colonial supra-structure and its conservative ideological framework; and pallid and inefficient in terms of diagnosing the real cause of the women’s problem and ways to overturn and eradicate the social-political as well as economic roots of the social malaise. As a result, they often attribute the “woman’s problem” to “men” as a gender issue. But we also see that when Mei Niang with her humanitarian spirits combines the feminist discourse with an analysis of political economy, or the universal rhetoric with concrete social-historical reference, the writing becomes a sharper weapon bearing more critical edge to fulfill its potential and its aimed goal of women’s liberation.

This argument can be examined from another perspective. Mei Niang’s writing looks into the state of condition of the “New Culture” enlightenment in the 1940s. The exposure of the moral degeneration of the various “New Youths” reveals the historical predicament of the May Fourth “New Culture” project (including the “New Woman” ideal) that the writer was persistently in pursuit of. The sympathetic description of extramarital relation shows that the subject matter related to “free love” has extended from the May Fourth struggle for the individual right of choosing one’s own lover into a farther area related to the interior arena of intimate emotions and relations, an area closely related to the middle class world. Because the various characters in the writer’s world have the potential (much more than that of the characters in Eileen Zhang’s fiction) to reach the state of middle-class woman (thanks to the relative stability and developed rationalization process of the colonial society), they own more the fantasies of realizing the middle class dream of individualism and “New Woman’s ideal” (which then constitutes a sharp contrast to Eileen Zhang who held a cynical attitude towards the same issues), but the colonial state’s policy sabotaged this hope. While the reservation over and the critique of the puppet-state’s conservatism adds to their knowledge of the women’s problem, when the writer broadens her horizon and ties in this concern with the social network, including the subaltern, a more comprehensive picture is unfolded and a more poignant critique of the colonial society presents itself.
Endnotes

1. According to Norman Smith’s study, the catchphrase was “coined by Beijing’s Madezeng and Shanghai’s Yuzhoufeng bookstore after a contest to determine the most popular contemporary Chinese woman writer.” See Smith (2006, p.81).


3. One critic has summarized the features of the New Woman, “Most of new women were educated and from decent families; some of them already became famous in the social circles. In real life, the new women would wear the most fashionable clothes, go to theaters or shows without men’s company. She was a frequenter of various ball parties, an old customer of largest shops, and an advocate of free love. Sometimes she had a job and lived alone in a rented apartment.” See Zhu Ping, “The Promiscuous New Woman in May Fourth Period,” http://sociology.rutgers.edu/DOCUMENTS/conf_papers/Zhu_Ping.pdf (Accessed Aug. 18, 2012).


6. Because a quarrel with her husband, she went out to release her anxiety, and happened to see one of his husband’s colleague. He asked her to deliver two books to her husband, which he borrowed from the latter.

7. From the text we can hardly tell whether this statement is articulated by Meili or her girlfriend Xiuwen. But no matter who says it, Meili obviously accepts the explanation.

8. These areas are all occupied areas at the time, perhaps the writer at the time dared not mention any city in the control of the Chinese government.

9. To outstrip this burden, Dailin has held “a secret longing, a secret hope among her classmates” – to go to an “ideal place” where “money would lose its power, a place that justice, innocence, and the sublime feelings of the humanity aggregate” (p.454). We are informed that there are many people around them assigned to help to deliver the youths who want to go that place.

10. What has not been mentioned is that when she is assigned by her father to take care of the matriarch Grandma, she has also been coveted or admired by the enfeebled Xiang, who himself is a married man.

11. The words were articulated in a letter, written in 1942, to a fellow Manchuria female writer Wu Ying (1915-1961). It was published in Xinjing’s (the renamed Changchun) Qingnian wenhua [Youth Culture], See Mei Niang (1943, p.84).


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Remaking Mao

From Propaganda to Pop Culture

This paper traces the evolution of the use of Mao’s image in mainland China. The hypothesis proposed is that the changes in the way that Mao Zedong is used in art mirror changes in the Chinese socio–political, and therefore cultural, identity. The research is presented in three chronological parts: propaganda, avant–garde art, and merchandise. For each section, a historic overview is provided, followed by an analysis of specific artistic works pertaining to the category, and finally a conclusion regarding the significance of those previously explored works. The paper concludes that Mao’s descent from God–like figure to symbol of critique, and finally to empty pop culture icon marks a change in the displayed attitude of the Chinese public from hopeful and happy to apathetic and resigned to the increased influence of globalization.

In the past century, China has undergone immense political, economic and cultural changes. The end of imperialism in China came in 1912, which saw the fall of the Qīng (清) dynasty. From 1913 to 1927, China experienced an era of turmoil characterized by skirmishes between regional warlords vying for power. In 1927, Chiang Kai–shek established the Republic of China, backed by the Nationalist Kuomintang (zhōngguó guómíndǎng 中国国民党) party, introducing a period of relative stability, until the Second Sino–Japanese War (dì èr cì zhōng rì zhànzhēng/ 抗日戰爭) in 1937 laid waste to China. During this time, the Chinese Civil War (guógòng nèizhàn 国共内战) was also being waged. In 1945 the Sino–Japanese war ended, and in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (zhōngguó gòngchǎndǎng 中国共产党) ousted the KMT from Mainland China to establish the People’s Republic of China (zhōnghuá rénmín gònghéguó 中华人民共和国), headed by Mao Zedong.

From his debut as a political force during the Long March (zhǎngzhēng 長徵) in 1934, Mao Zedong, alternatively known as Chairman Mao, the Great Leader, or the Great Helmsman, has not left the sphere of Chinese consciousness. After his death in 1976, and the takeover of China’s government by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, it would have made sense to sideline Mao from China’s cultural arena, yet Mao had come to symbolize the Chinese Communist Party and even China itself; Deng could not discard Mao without destabilizing the ideological foundation of both the CCP and the nation (Barmé 1996, 13). Mao has subsisted, transforming from a symbol of stability and progress in Cultural Revolution propaganda, to a critical motif in the 90s avant–garde art movement, and finally to a sign of China’s succumbing to capitalism on present–day t–shirts and other commodities. Despite these various incarnations, Mao has remained a highly–recognizable personification of China; the China he represents, however, is constantly transforming. Evaluating these changes can be very difficult, but is made easier by using Mao as an anchoring point of reference. The progression of China’s national identity can be mapped by tracing the evolution of the use of Mao’s image.

MAO AS PROPAGANDA

The Chinese term for propaganda is xuānchuán 宣传, meaning to broadcast or disseminate information. Unlike the English term, propaganda in China does not carry innate negative connotations. From its inception, the Chinese Communist Party has relied extensively on propaganda as a means of promulgating its cause. Much of its success in this field is owed to use of propaganda by Mao Zedong. By the time the CCP rose to power in 1949, Mao had already employed propaganda to eradicate the negative opinions of the 1934 “Long March” (Brady 2008, 1), transforming the arduous two–year journey to Yan’an, at the end of which only one–fifth of the original 200,000 travelers survived (Sun 2006, 2), into a symbol of victory for the Party. Already contextualized as a great leader in the CCP, Mao became the head of China itself after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. He continued his use of propaganda to solidify and extend the ruling power of the CCP.

Mao demanded a unity of politics and art in which pre–1949 forms of art and culture familiar to the masses
were recycled and imbued with a new political message (Holm 1984, 8). After a period of political decline, in which his ideas about art were for the most part repressed, Mao, with the help of the People’s Liberation Army, began reinstating political posters using such moral models as the much–lauded soldier Lei Feng (see fig. 1). At the same time, the personality cult of Mao was developing, and Mao himself was upheld as a moral standard. As such, starting with the 1966–1976 Cultural Revolution period, Mao Zedong became a subject of propaganda art (Landsberger 1995, 44). Mao portraits became increasingly prevalent in homes, to the point of near–deification. As a political symbol, Mao came to represent China; his image was hung above Tiananmen Square, reproduced as propaganda posters and emblazoned on “Mao badges.” (FIGURE 1)

The most prominent image of Mao Zedong is arguably his portrait hanging outside the Forbidden City in Beijing. Though the public space has almost become synonymous with Mao, the first portrait to hang there was, in fact, of SunYat–sen, who is often called the father of modern China. The portrait was erected after Sun’s death, and established the conventions that were later adopted in erecting the Mao portrait (after an interim period in which the image Chiang Kai–shek appeared), namely a frontal image flanked by slogans (Hung 2005, 69). In February 1949, the first of a series of Mao portraits was placed above Tiananmen’s balcony. This picture was a front view of the leader’s face; it is speculated that Mao did not approve the image (Hung 2005, 72). Eight months later, the picture was exchanged for an image based on a photograph from his Yan’ an days, and approved by Chairman Mao. In this picture, painted by Zhou Lingzhao (1919 – present), Mao is turned slightly, eschewing the perfectly frontal and emotionless view of the imperial portraits of the past. He is smiling and looking off into the distance, as if looking ahead to a brighter future (see fig. 2). In 1950, a new portrait, the painting of which was spearheaded by Xin Mang (1916–2007), was crafted. In this rendition, Mao is shown in three–quarters view, looking upward. The painting was criticized as it prevented any eye contact with the leader, causing Mao to appear to disregard the masses (Hung 2005, 76). Xin Mang and his colleagues tried again, but in 1952, their final attempt was replaced by a portrait by Zhang Zhenshi (1914–1992). This painting resembled a studio portrait, in which all creative and artistic style had been excised, including the elimination of distinctive brushwork. The 1952 portrait became the ideal representation of Mao from which all other depictions took inspiration. (FIGURE 2)
The 1952 rendition of the image has remained on Tiananmen up to the present day, though damage from the elements requires that it be restored yearly. The portrait has been carefully monitored to maintain its perfect appearance. One of the artists was even exiled to carpentry workshop for two years for simply using a perspective that obscured one of Mao’s ears (Ni 2006, see also Schrift 2001, 105 for a folk story about the missing ear). Though many of their names are now known, the painters working on Mao’s portrait were not permitted to talk about their work. Wu Hung, author and professor of Chinese art history, explains,

The anonymity of the painters means the autonomy of the painting: it no longer seems a work created by a particular human hand, but an image that is always there and changes on its own. People passing Tiananmen rarely think about who painted the portrait or notice its changes. But the image has indeed been changing: the middle-aged Chairman in the 1952 portrait became in the 1963 version an older man with a faint smile on his lips, which again became an even older man in the 1967 version, whose mask–like face shows no sign or emotion of thought [(see fig. 3)]. With the authorship of these different versions erased, the changes in the Tiananmen portrait and the aging of its subject are collapsed into a single, natural process. The portrait appears to age on its own... (2005, 81)

There are, in fact, two identical Mao portraits; one is restored while the other is displayed, ensuring that Mao is never more than a day or two away from his post overlooking the square (Ni 2006). (FIGURE 3)

That even after Deng Xiaoping rose to power, the portrait on the front wall of Tiananmen remained showed that the likeness had transcended Mao the person, who had faults and made mistakes; the image instead depicted Mao the symbol of a nation, representing only the triumphs of China. The image itself is made impossible to critique as a work of art, because the Chinese Communist Party has worked intensely to eliminate all of the values that would place the painting in the realm of art. The portrait of Mao is Tiananmen Square, simply is; whether it does anything is incumbent upon the viewer’s ability to give it meaning. The photograph–like quality eliminates any subjective values in the painting, causing Mao to be made objective (especially with the elimination of his slight smile in the 1967 edition). The portrait is designed to remind the population that Mao and Maoism is still watching over and influencing China, while limiting any analysis of either the portrait or the man.

Chinese Communist propaganda is the result of a long tradition of visual communication. Specifically, New Year prints can be pointed to as one of the most important precursors of Communist propaganda posters. These prints used tradition symbols, such as flowers, and deities, such as the Kitchen God. One effect of these posters was the widespread distribution of Confucian values; the posters, though they did not explicitly dictate proper conduct, were imbued with Confucian ideals, and therefore necessarily indicated desired behavior (Landsberger 1995, 22–23). The Communist propaganda poster borrowed the element of social control through imagery, as well as certain motifs and stylistic choices, from these New Year prints. After the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art, these rurally–oriented posters were expanded to appeal to a wider audience, in order to win over potentially hostile groups, including urbanites. The poster needed to link everyday life with political issues (Landsberger 1995, 34–36).

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao began to appear on many of these propaganda posters. The leader was depicted in a variety of situations, often interacting with peasants, inspecting factories or standing by the Yangzi River (Wolf, et al. 2003). As the leader–

FIGURE 3: The current portrait of Mao, updated in 1976, hanging in Tiananmen Square. (Reproduced from Hung, 2005)
worship of Mao Zedong intensified, his image was increasingly portrayed as deific and removed from the masses (Landsberger 1995, 44). In one rendition (see fig. 4), Mao is floating above a marching population who are surrounded by waving red flags. The citizens wave or hold their Little Red Books, as well as banners proclaiming, “Long Live the Chinese Communist Party”, and “Long Live the People’s Republic of China”. The people all wear different styles of ethnic dress, indicating that all of the many groups of people in China are a part of the Mao’s Communist movement. The hugely disproportionate leader is smiling and clapping, benevolently affirming and applauding the people’s jubilant march. The forward movement by the people implied in the poster conveys continuous progress towards Mao’s conception of a utopia. This progress is overseen by the Great Leader, whose huge stature makes him seem godly, and serves to frame the poster as a sacred symbol (Landsberger 2002, 150–151). This saintly aspect is compounded by the fact that posters such as this one replaced pictures of deities like the Kitchen God in Chinese homes. In fact, failing to install such an image of Mao often labeled one a “counterrevolutionary,” a label which was accompanied by such chastisements as jail and exile (Edison and Edison 2005). The message in this poster is very straightforward; the Chinese people are healthy, happy, and always progressing under the watchful and benevolent gaze of Mao Zedong. While posters communicating these messages hung throughout China, a similar method of spreading propaganda could be seen pinned to the chests of the Chinese people: Mao badges. (FIGURE 4)

Badges, termed xiàngzhāng (像章), were historically held in high esteem in Chinese society, as they were often used to honor people, especially heroes, military personnel, model workers, and those who had experienced bitter struggle. These badges featured such images as the national flag, sunray striations, stars, tools, pagodas, trains, lighthouses, books, and more. They also featured portraits, drawing especially on Mao Zedong’s image for inspiration. Mao badges (Máo zhāng, 毛章) first emerged in the 1930s, when students used the metal from empty toothpaste tubes to mimic the likenesses of Communist figures around the time of the second Sino–Japanese War (Wang 2008, 4).

The first official Mao Zedong badge was the work of Ling Zifeng, an art academy teacher, who crafted a mold for the badge to celebrate the seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Schrift 2001, 59–61). Badge production became intensive after the PRC was established, and continued, and reached a massive scale during the Cultural Revolution. The explanation for the fervor with which the badges were acquired (either without cost from work units or organizations, purchased individually, or through trade with relatives and friends (Schrift 2001, 69)) and worn is explained in the May 1968 issue of China Reconstructs (Reddest Red Sun – Mao Badges n.d.), “This eager demand for the shining Chairmain Mao badges is an expression of the increasing depth with which Mao Tse–tung’s thought has taken root in the hearts of the world’s people…” Mao badges were especially effective in stirring solidarity with Mao Zedong thought due to their primarily visual nature. While big character posters and copies of Quotations of Chairman Mao Tse–tung were very prominent, many of the viewers of these mediums of propaganda expression were, in fact, illiterate. Study groups had to be convened to teach Mao’s Little Red Book to the illiterate through rote memorization (Schrift 2001, 8). Badges had few, if any, words inscribed on them, and their striking colors, as well as their portability, increased their popularity; Mao badges were an effective means of arousing the public because they were an easily consumed form of propaganda. Wearing the Mao badge not only declared allegiance to Mao’s communist cause, but acted as a method of unification; no matter one’s individual variances, the badges’ limited visual vocabulary meant
that a sense of camaraderie and unity was disseminated through the masses.

The most common manifestation of the Mao Zedong badge features a profile of Mao on a red circular background (see fig. 5). The red color symbolizes Communism, but also happiness, virtue, and the south (the birthplace of the revolution). It is also used in keeping away “pernicious influences” (Williams 2006, 99–100). The background can be plain, or can contain any manner of engraved scenery, such as a sunray pattern, the Yan’an pagoda, or a warship surging through waves (Wang 2008, 53–79). The placement of Mao’s image in the circular red background brings to mind the popular phrase, “Chairman Mao is the red sun in our hearts” (Máo zhǔxí shì wǒmen xīnzhōng de hóng tài yáng 毛主席是我們心中的紅太陽). The philosophy of Mao Zedong is considered the guiding principle for living, a source of illumination that, if extinguished, would mean the end of Chinese society. The badges are reminiscent of patron saint necklaces, offering protection to the wearer from various types of harm. Mao was seen as a great protector (often styled as the “great helmsman”) of Chinese society, shielding the Chinese people from the negative influences of revisionists and capitalism.

In order to provoke loyalty in its citizens, Chinese Communist Party propaganda relied on the use of “models”, or ideal citizens whom the whole country should seek to emulate. Based on traditional values propagated by Confucius (Landsberger 1995, 18), these models were meant to be agitative; the images were crafted based on the Party’s assessment of the socio–political situation with an aim to provoke a change in the behavior of those who viewed them. In this way, propaganda was equivalent to political education, wherein an internal contradiction between an individual’s principles and the ideal values portrayed in the posters would reach an equilibrium through which the new values were internalized (Landsberger 1995, 26). Mao as an icon transcended the role of model and instead came to fulfill the role of deity. The portrayal of Mao in posters, on badges, and in Tiananmen Square only furthered the godly character of the leader. Coupled with the tight control of the depictions of the leader, these depictions made Mao seem invincible and unquestionable despite his previous falterings, as well as omnipresent and all–knowing. Every detail of his representation had to be invested with symbolic meaning that followed the ideological lines of the Party (Landsberger 2002, 150–151). Mao became what the Trinity is for Christianity: China’s God, China’s son (read: sun), and China’s Holy Spirit (specifically, the embodiment of China’s national identity). This, however, would not last; years after Mao’s death, avant–garde artists would bring his image back to earthly proportions by using the Chairman as a method of dissent and critique.

Mao as Critique

Avant–garde art in China can be seen as a more modern and artistically–oriented extension of the New Culture Movement (xīn wénhuà yùndòng 新文化運動) of the mid–1910s and 1920s. The movement, which called for the alteration of traditional views on language, writing, and education, was led by Chinese intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu (1990–1939). The movement set the stage for the avant–garde artists by promoting literary and historical criticisms. Though the movement, which advocated “art for the life of the masses”, was replaced after Mao Zedong’s Yan’an Talk in 1942 by “mass art”, which encompasses the propaganda art discussed in the previous section, avant–garde artists now had a paradigm from which to draw inspiration. The New Culture Movement established new ways of
writing, painting, and thinking which necessitated a true evaluation of the past in order to be able to incorporate it into a new conception of Chinese culture, or discard it entirely and move forward with completely novel ideas (Hummel 1930, 58–59). Mao Zedong's policies dampened this critical attitude, as an effect of the change from “revolution in art” to “revolutionary art” was an elimination of the creativity and the expression of “misery about specific social problems in people’s lives.” (Gao 2011, 41)

After Deng Xiaoping’s rise to power in 1978 and the implementation of his policy changes, however, new art groups began to emerge, drawing on the same idea of historical critique cultivated by the New Culture Movement. As Karen Smith, an authority on the Chinese contemporary art scene, explains, “awareness of ‘difference,’ of insularity, and the people’s sense of shame at how backward China had been allowed to become, underpin any map of aesthetic evolution in New China that we might care to draw.” (Smith 2006, 19) Students who had been taught that art was meant to “present the common people with an uplifting spiritual experience, via an unambiguous expression of recognizable forms” were able to rebel against that idea under the “opening” of China by Deng Xiaoping. The artists, drawing inspiration from journals of foreign art, used their work to “criticize the suppression of human nature in Mao’s period” (Gao 2011, 65). A crusade, known as the Anti–Spiritual Pollution Campaign (qīngchú jīngshén wūrǎn清除精神污染), was started by Communist Party conservatives in 1983 to counter this movement, but in 1985, the campaign ended and avant–gardism began to flourish in what became known as the ‘85 Movement. An intense discussion of culture accompanied the ‘85 movement, focusing on the relationship between East and West, as well as on modernization (Gao 2011, 101–102). The purpose, and challenge, of the movement was to bring China up to speed with the progress of the international community; Chinese artists attempted to do in a few decades what the West had achieved in the realm of art in the past one hundred and fifty years (Smith 2006, 21). Lacking a frame of reference for what modern art actually was, Chinese artists mixed Western influences and the domestic art of the past to create what became known as political pop art (zhèngzhì bō pǔ政治波普). Cynical realism (wán shì xiànshí zhǔyì玩世現實主義) also appeared around this time, using distorted human features to represent the absurdity of reality (Gao 2011, 266). Through the use of these new art styles, artists such as Wang Guangyi, Wang Jinsong, and Wang Ziwei examined the socio–political issues plaguing China.

![FIGURE 6: Mao Zedong AO, 1988, Wang Guangyi, oil on canvas, from The Farber Collection in New York. (Reproduced from Smith, 2006, p.54)](image-url)

Of all of the painters of political pop art in China, Wang Guangyi (1956/7 – present) is perhaps the most famous. Wang grew up under Mao Zedong’s rule as a severely impoverished child in the far north of China, struggling to avoid ostracism by painting for the other schoolchildren (Smith 2006, 39–41). From an early age, he was instructed that “the sole purpose of great art was to present the common people with an uplifting spiritual experience, via an unambiguous expression of recognizable forms and emotions that would leave no doubt as to the greatness of the socio–historical age and civilization to which they belonged.” (Smith 2006, 19) Wang, a student of oil painting, began his career by painting parodies of masterpieces of Western art, but soon turned to an iconic figure closer to home: Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong AO, alternatively titled Mao Zedong – Black Grid, (1988) reproduces in triplicate the famous Tiananmen Square painting of Mao. The portrait was converted to greyscale and placed behind a grid (see fig. 6). The painting was so controversial that it was nearly cut from the China/Avant–Garde exhibition, where it was to be displayed; censors accused Wang of placing Mao in a jail (Gao 2011, 154–156). The artist was obliged to write an inscription describing his respect for Mao before it could be shown. He was also obliged to change the lettering on the painting (from AO to AC), despite his avowal that the letters did not have any significance (Koppel–Yang 2007, 209–210).

The monochromatic color scheme of Mao Zedong AO drains the benevolence from Mao’s face, making
him appear stern and aloof, unlike his carefully propagandized persona. Wang Guangyi’s placement of Mao behind a grid displaces us from him, preventing viewers from simply consuming the inherent Communist message. During the Cultural Revolution, the grid was used to duplicate Mao’s image without errors in proportion or scale (Jiang 2007, 17). By bringing this hidden grid forward, Wang makes Mao dissectible; he forces us to consider the scaffolding that built up Mao’s magnanimous persona. The viewer is forced to reevaluate the instinct to see Mao as the “red, red Sun” of China (Koppel–Yang 2007, 209); instead of idolizing Mao, Wang Guangyi wants people to “evaluate his historical role using rational analysis and logical thinking” (Gao 2011, 156). His artistic choices espouse an objective representation of the leader, eliminating the subjective emotions and connotations associated with Mao’s image. By deconstructing the official portrait, Wang Guangyi attempted to reshape the “common unconsciousness” of the readers previously dominated by Mao Zedong Thought and Communist propaganda.

Another painter who re–appropriated propaganda images is Wang Jinsong (1963 – present). Wang Jinsong was raised in a time of political turmoil; his childhood coincided with the Cultural Revolution (wénhuà dàgémìng文化大革命), wherein Mao Zedong rose back to power after the brief dominance of the moderates, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. By the time Wang graduated from the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in 1987 (Pöhlmann, Reschke and Noch 1994, 156), Mao Zedong was dead and Deng Xiaoping was back in power, this time as the head of the CCP. A “cynical realist” painter as well as a photographer, Wang focuses his work on the “national trauma, trauma of China’s gradual yet painful switch to a market economy” (Lin 2010, 27), honing in on the “reality of Chinese society” (Hendrikse 2008, 88). While his most well–known works focus on the one–child policy (Standard Family, 1996) and the demolition of old homes to make way for high–rises (One Hundred Signs of Demolition, 1999), one of earlier pieces speaks volumes about the Chinese attitude toward Mao and Mao Zedong Thought.

Taking a Picture in Front of Tiananmen Square uses as its basis In Front of Tiananmen (1964; see fig. 7), a painting by Sun Zixi (1929 – present). In the Sun Zixi painting, a family stands, beaming, in front of the Tiananmen portrait of Mao. The family members are dressed simply, and wear Revolution–style caps. The painting of Mao hangs above their heads and the Great Leader sports a benevolent, almost proud gaze. The family appears relatively proportional to the monument behind them, and other families can be seen preparing to take their own Tiananmen pictures. The central family is organized in a tight and orderly group. In Wang Jinsong’s reprise (see fig. 8), however, the figures are vastly out of proportion, eclipsing all but the top of Mao’s (bald) head. The figures sport corporate attire, and presumably are not a family at all, but a group of business people on a trip together. They are seemingly from Shanghai, as indicated by a handbag in the picture. While the original painting features a family wearing clothing commensurate with that of peasants from the countryside, the figures in the newer painting are from a large, metropolitan city. Whereas in the original painting the family’s smiles exhibit a pious but excited atmosphere, appropriate for such a meaningful occasion, the smiles in Taking a Picture in Front of Tiananmen Square are too jovial and light–hearted. The business people in Wang’s painting do not care about Mao; they are going through the expected tourist motions of taking a picture with the monument, but in doing so, they completely ignore the historical and cultural undertones of the occasion. By obscuring Mao’s visage, Wang Jinsong is demonstrating that what was once Mao’s China has been taken over by capitalism and consumerism, leaving only a hint of the country that Mao built. The style of the painting, utilizing bright, flat colors, creates a lack of depth; the figures appear parodic and comedic (Lu 1997, 117). The background figures lack faces, emphasizing the emptiness of the picture–taking act. These people could be anyone; their identities, besides the fact that they are not the families of the past united by ideology, are irrelevant. Family has been replaced by corporate networks, and solemn respect has been subverted by a distinct irreverence for the Communist ways of the past. While purporting to represent China, these people taking pictures in front of Tiananmen in fact obscure and ignore everything for which Communism in China stood; Mao’s portrait is simply another check–mark in a guidebook. (FIGURES 7 & 8)

A third artist known for using Mao’s image, Wang Ziwei (1963 – present), like Wang Jinsong, has only distant childhood memories of Mao, but nonetheless the leader has had a profound influence on his art. The current literature on Wang Ziwei is rather sparse,
consisting only of a biography, with little to no analysis of his works. He graduated from the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts in 1983 (Chang and Li 2001, 34), after which, along with his mentor Yu Youhan (1943–present), he began using Mao as a trope in his artwork. Both Wang and Yu depicted Mao in a mixture of Chinese and Western contexts, often juxtaposing a Western pop icon with the Great Helmsman (see, for example, Yu’s Mao with Whitney, 1989). Wang in particular used Mao extensively in a variety of contexts. The leader could be seen depicted in pastels, relaxing (The leader (Lao Mao), 1992) or waving to the crowd, (The Great Wave: Greetings, comrades, 1992). He could be shown floating in thought bubbles above the heads of Western pop–art style figures (see, for example, Hopeless, 2007), sharing the canvas with Western food items (Ice Cream and Tomato on Mao, 1992), or portrayed as the eye of a Picasso–esque woman (Femme Aux Mao, 2009). Mao is placed in an astounding quantity of contexts.

One particular painting that distinctly exemplifies the “post–Mao, postsocialist, postmodern China” (S. H. Lu 2001) that Wang Ziwei inhabits is his Mao and Mickey (1994; see fig. 9). In this painting, there is an alternating pattern of Mao’s profile facing West and Mickey Mouse’s head and torso facing East. Superimposed on the images of Mao in a diagonal line are the separate words “Don’t” “Help” and “Me”, the last of which is accompanied by a question mark. The directionality of the profiles is significant. Mickey Mouse is looking East, as Western icons and ideology filter into China. Mao, as a stand–in for the Chinese national identity, is looking West, portraying the East’s relative cultural receptiveness to these Western ideals. Mao Zedong’s expression is grimmer in Ziwei’s work than in the original propaganda poster (see fig. 10). In Wang’s painting, Mao’s lips are slightly more downturned, indicating sourness towards the overtly ecstatic Mickey. Mao Zedong would be distinctly displeased with the intrusion of Western elements, especially capitalist ones, into Chinese society. The phrase “Don’t Save Me?” on the canvas seems to represent Chinese society’s struggle with the paradox inherent in Deng Xiaoping’s “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. The policy has vastly improved the quality of life in China, but it has also eviscerated the core Communist values that built the PRC. China is somehow socialist and capitalist at once, and this leads to a confusing dilemma for the Chinese people: do they want to be saved from the free market system that has revitalized their economy? Or are they prepared to allow Communism to become the national system of government merely nominally? By taking the idea of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, and in the case of political pop, analyzing it with the creation of “American pop art with Chinese characteristics”, Wang Ziwei succinctly demonstrates this difficulty characteristic of modern Chinese society. (FIGURES 9 & 10)

A common thread in the works of Wang Guangyi,
Wang Jinsong, and Wang Ziwei is their use of Mao as a personification of the Chinese national identity. Wang Guangyi criticizes the instinct to see Mao as the iconization of a healthy and happy China, instead pushing the audience to objectively evaluate Mao’s real effects on China, both beneficial and detrimental. Wang Jinsong remarks on the disappearance of the core values of Mao Zedong Thought in China by highlighting obscuration of Mao behind the entrepreneurial and capitalist atmosphere in China today. Wang Ziwei juxtaposes the East and West in order to bring to light the symbiotic, yet potentially destructive, influence of Western countries on Chinese society. Each of the artists’ messages is made immensely powerful by the appropriation of propaganda images. Pictures whose express purpose was to eliminate criticism of and elevate Chinese people’s enthusiasm for the Chinese Communist Party are used to accomplish the opposite purpose. The cracks in the Mao’s “model” persona are illuminated and magnified by the artists of the political pop and cynical realist movements in China. These artists fought against Mao’s socialist ideology, especially his conceptions about the use of art. The insights highlighted by these artists were meant to enable the Chinese people to look inward and analyze the actual state of Chinese society under Deng Xiaoping’s reforms, including both domestic politics and foreign affairs. They exhibited the tension between localization and globalization, and between ideology and materialism. These artists attempted to eliminate the distance between art and the praxis of life, while at the same time demonstrating the difficulty of that endeavor due to the false elimination of that gap by Communist propaganda (Lin 2010, 2–3).

Mao’s portrait personified China, but it signified only the China that was promoted by the Communist Party. By appropriating his image, the artists were able to challenge the CCP’s construction of what China is as a nation. Wang Guangyi, Wang Jinsong, and Wang Ziwei took what was meant to be un–analyzable, namely, Mao’s visage, and used it to put forth a more realistic portrayal of the state of Chinese society in the present day. This analysis, however, was only possible by building upon Mao’s previous legacy as an artistic symbol; avant–garde artists relied on a continued recognition of Mao as propaganda as a basic requirement for an understanding of their work. These artists, therefore, instigated a reframing of the significance of Mao’s image, without eliminating its potential as a Communist symbol.

**MAO AS MERCHANDISE**

Just as avant–garde art in China grew out of the Chinese Communist Party’s use of visual propaganda, the Mao paraphernalia craze grew out of a desire to appropriate those art forms for sale to the common consumer. Avant–garde artists, such as Wang Guangyi, have made millions of dollars from their work, becoming part of China’s “nouveau riche” (Smith 2006), but the impetus for their work was not the monetary compensation; their art is message first, money second. Even high fashion has tried to strike a balance between meaning and price, as in the case of Vivienne Tam’s 1995 controversial Mao collection. Included in this collection was a dress with a repeating pattern of four silkscreened paintings of Mao, one of which featured Mao with pigtails, and another Mao with a bee on his nose (see fig. 11). For t–shirt artists, theme park owners and commodities manufacturers, however, the incentive to create Mao merchandise is purely a monetary one. Though the Mao lighters and yo–yos that sing “The East is Red”, the glow–in–the–dark Mao busts, the watches with Mao holograms (Barmé 1996, 42), and other similar merchandise possess cultural messages, their intent is not necessarily to illuminate anything about Chinese society. In many instances in the consumer market, an item can start out with a specific meaning, and grow meaningless through the repeated consumption of that object. Mao t–shirts grew out of a meaningful cultural
Remaking Mao

history, but currently represent the devolution of certain sectors of Chinese society into mindless consumerism.

Revolutionary paraphernalia has been on sale in Chinese marketplaces from the Revolution itself to the present. In recent years, however, such revered objects have given way to a less–politicalized, more tourist–oriented commodity: the Mao t–shirt. The most simple rendition is just Mao's profile on a plain background, but popular variations include captions such as “LMAO Zedong” (LMAO being chatspeak for “laughing my ass off”), “RTFM” (chatspeak for “read the fucking manual”) accompanying Mao holding his Little Red Book, “Chairman Mao is my homeboy”, and “Mickey Mao” describing a picture of Mao wearing Mickey Mouse ears. The most popular Mao t–shirt at present is the “Oba–Mao” shirt, depicting a popular Mao pose with President Obama’s face in place of the great leader’s (although these t–shirts were banned in China before the President’s official visit (Chang 2009)). According to Barmé, this “t–shirt” craze most likely originated from the efforts of an entrepreneur–artist named Kong Yongqian (1962–present). Kong developed his passion for t–shirt art from a young age; in primary school, he drew patches on his clothing to exhibit his frugality and “Lei Feng spirit” (Barmé 1999, 146). He continued his use of t–shirts as a canvas into adulthood, and, after the 1989 protests in Beijing, he saw an opportunity to spread his art while making money doing so. Geremie R. Barmé, a professor of Chinese cultural at the Australia National University College of Asia and the Pacific, explains,

“The shirts were aimed at amusing and unsettling people who had fallen into an emotional torpor after 1989; they were supposed to be a means for creating a mood of public excitement, to rekindle for a moment the easygoing carnival atmosphere of the street protests... It was an attempt to confound elite culture – written culture, academic art, and political language – by using the nub of contemporary Chinese life, the marketplace. The shirts would exploit the traditional focal point of the educated elite, the written word, and by utilizing unconventional typefaces and calligraphy to carry colloquial message, they would also be an unspoken protest against both official parole and advertising patter.” (Barmé 1999, 150)

Drawing from several sources of information, including local Beijing slang, the Shougakukan Dictionary of New Chinese Words, and the fiction of Wang Shuo, Kong hoped to add to the discussion about what “Chineseness” and the Chinese national identity really consisted of (Barmé 1999, 151–154). Kong’s t–shirts (see fig. 12) became instantly popular, so much so that the Chinese government detained him for questioning about the shirts’ political intent, and his merchandise was banned from the market (Goodwin 2010, 15). The trend, however, was unstoppable; other vendors began selling their own versions of Kong Yongqian–style shirts, and the black market exploded with marked–up editions of Kong’s work (Barmé 1999, 165). In 1992, thanks to the popularity of slogan–bearing t–shirts caused by Kong’s work, people began to realize the commercial value of manufacturing t–shirts. T–shirts were soon being used as promotional material for companies, productions, and publications. In 1991, shirts with Mao’s quotations appeared on the market, swiftly followed by t–shirts with Mao’s visage in 1992 (Barmé 1999, 169). The shirts were presumably worn ironically, a subtle jab at the mixture of consumerism and capitalism that make up current Chinese society. While these t–shirts add a new layer of meaning to Mao’s image, it is important to note that their existence as consumer goods does not negate the other interpretations of Mao’s image; Mao’s portrait is still hanging on Tiananmen Square, and avant–garde artists are still producing critical imagery. The Mao t–shirt, therefore, represents the addition of a new veneer of meaning for Mao’s image: the influx of capitalism into Chinese society. (FIGURE 12)

As Mao is reincarnated, no longer proudly displayed on badges affixed to the chest of devotees, but instead emblazoned on the chests of foreign tourists and apathetic young Chinese, it is clear that the basic tenets of his philosophy have eroded. While the Party once had a firm grip on depictions of Mao, and therefore control of the public’s perception of the CCP, these hundreds of renditions of the Great Helmsman have unleashed the possibility of hundreds of different perceptions of Mao, and by extension, of China. As Michael
Dutton, in his book Streetlife China, explains, “Consumerism, therefore, transgresses the limits of any attempt to ‘inlay’ a dominant ideology. Consumption, then, can be a productive moment but the desire it unleashes is also quite unstable... it is productive of a desire to own the reified objects of the gaze, but it cannot ‘police’ the reasons for those desires emerging. In other words, there is no ‘right way’ to consume.” (1998, 281; see also 5) To the Communist Party, however, there is a “right way” to consume Mao, and that is through the lens of CCP ideology. With the influx of capitalist-style consumerism, the certainty and stability that Mao’s image was designed to represent fades into the ennui and apathy of “gray” youth culture. Barmé (1999, 99–144) elaborates on the “graying” of Chinese culture. Gray is meant to symbolize the cloudy and confusing combination of revolutionary red and the glint of capitalism. The result is uncertainty and languor combined with irony, sarcasm and fatalism. In this new gray conception of Mao, deification has turned to reification. Dissent is still present in the wearing of the Chairman’s image, but it is a dampened dissent, peppered with defeatism.

The blasé attitude of China’s youth in regards to Mao’s image has led manufacturers to turn almost exclusively to a different market. As Mao as dissent loses traction in Chinese society, Mao as souvenir is only rising in popularity. The most overt function of Mao t-shirts presently, therefore, is to cater to the desires of China’s visitors. The Great Leader’s visage is used as a token of worldliness for travelers, indicating that they have experienced China, that they have consumed it and have returned home victorious, bearing the fruits of their conquering. Chinese vendors have no qualms about selling the symbol of their national identity at a discount price. Mao belongs to the highest bidder, rather than to the government, demonstrating the weakening of the CCP’s authority over the definition of what China is, and what China means as a nation.

The decision to sell Mao’s image is not surprising if it is looked at through the lens of global brand identity. How can China compete with the international success of Coca-Cola (可口可樂), McDonald’s (麥當勞), Starbucks (星巴克), and the rest of the international giants? What has China produced that has the instant name recognition of those companies? The answer that one comes to quickly is that China has Mao. Mao in the past may have been both the Lenin and Marx of China, but now he is China’s Elvis, Che, and Mickey Mouse wrapped into one. Mao impersonation is a growing industry, and there is even a Mao theme park in Shaoshan, the Great Leader’s birth place, where “Mao is the logo on every product” (Dutton 1998, 223, 232). Mao restaurants, Cultural Revolution-themed and featuring Mao’s favorite dishes, have popped up all over, especially in Shaoshan and Beijing (Barmé 1996, 37, 53). One shopkeeper in Hong Kong even offered the comparison, “the Chairman is like Giorgio Armani.” (Rauhala 2009) Mao is a celebrity, and the power he exerts over the Chinese people is no longer a wholly ideological one; his perpetuation rests on his status as “the first and only Chinese global brand” (Barboza 2006). Mao Zedong has joined the ranks of pop-culture fame, and it seems unlikely that he will cease to populate vendor’s shelves and tables anytime soon.

CONCLUSION

Mao’s image has undergone drastic changes as China’s socio-political and economic climate has been evolving. As Mao’s image has changed, it has marked alterations in the attitudes of the Chinese populace. In the Cultural Revolution, Mao symbolized a happy, healthy Communist Party of China, and therefore a happy and healthy People’s
Republic of China. During the ’84 movement, Mao personified a more critical attitude, wherein Chinese people began to question and critique; Mao was used as a catalyst to provoke people to evaluate the reality of China, rather than to continue to believe in the utopia that the CCP had promised. In recent years, he has come to symbolize the “graying” of Chinese society and young people’s acceptance of the inevitability of globalization (and therefore a reduction of respect for the sanctity of Chinese culture). From God–like figure, to satirical emblem, to pedestrian logo, Mao has been reified, de–sanctified, de–politicized, and commoditized. It is noteworthy, however, that remnants of the previous connotations of Mao’s image remain; many Chinese people still look to Mao as symbol of a hope, or a personification of critique, but those interpretations have been incorporated into a multiplicity of meaning. Each new layer of meaning can be linked with a new conception of China proliferated by a segment of the Chinese populace; Mao’s symbolism becomes increasingly complex with each new generation of citizens. Mao, therefore, is a particular potent representation of heterogeneous and ever–changing Chinese society. As China’s “brand,” Mao’s usage can continue to be employed as a barometer for the China’s socio–political climate, which indubitably will continue to change as new leaders come to power and the effects of globalization increase.

ENDNOTES


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Towards Complex Interdependence

Sino–Taiwanese Relations and the International Relations Spectrum

Developments in Sino-Taiwanese relations under the administration of Republic of China President Ma Ying-jeou have prompted some observers to suggest that interdependence is replacing confrontation at the heart of cross-strait relations. This article explores this argument using realist and complex interdependence theories as opposing poles along a spectrum of foreign relations and concludes that although in many areas relations are moving away from the realist pole towards interdependence, the relationship is still strongly affected by considerations traditionally associated with realistic political thought. The author argues that by integrating realist and complex interdependence theories it is possible to arrive at a more complete understanding of the dynamics at work in Sino-Taiwanese relations.

Author’s Note
This article represents the author’s views solely and not the views of the US military or government.

Prevailing wisdom holds that the 2008 election of Ma Ying-jeou to the Republic of China (ROC) presidency and concurrent return of the Kuomintang (KMT) as Taiwan’s ruling party marked the beginning of a dramatic shift in Sino–Taiwanese relations away from confrontation due to the abandonment of the former ruling Democratic Progressive Party’s (DPP) inclination toward policies aimed at eventual de jure independence. The cycle of China–Taiwan cooperation has accelerated over the past four years to the point that questions of cross–strait integration are being raised. If true, such developments may imply growing interdependence – a concept with significant implications for Sino–Taiwanese relations across issue areas according to established theories.

The following article explores whether or not conditions of interdependence are present in cross–strait relations and if so, to what degree? This fundamental question is examined through the lens of complex interdependence theory advocated by Professors Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in their book Power and Interdependence in order to determine if such assertions are warranted. This analysis is critical because misapplication of interdependence theory risks leading scholars and policy–makers alike to conclusions wholly unsuited to China–Taiwan relations, with potentially catastrophic results.

Understanding Complex Interdependence and Its Relation to Realism

The theory of complex interdependence provides a method for systematically evaluating whether the relationship is evolving from the realist construct employed by the two states for over six decades toward a relationship increasingly characterized by interdependence. For our purposes, interdependence is defined simply as “mutual dependence” on the part of two parties and does not necessarily imply cooperation, or mutual/evenly balanced benefit. It also surpasses simple interconnectedness – defined simply as increased contact or interaction – because in Keohane and Nye’s construct, interdependence creates costs that constrain one or both parties’ geopolitical options while interconnectedness does not. Although the few lines in this article devoted to the theory in no way does it complete justice, complex interdependence’s salient features are useful analytical tools and are summarized below.

To accurately understand Keohane and Nye’s argument, it is important to grasp that their theory is not a universal or stand–alone theory. Rather, it integrates aspects of both realist and liberal traditions into a continuum (or spectrum) of international relations. According to this model, both realism and complex interdependence represent abstractions – or ideal constructs – of the real world and are therefore best characterized as opposing poles along the spectrum of international relations. In practice, real global politics occur somewhere along the spectrum between both poles, with certain situations more or less approximating...
conditions of realism, and others more or less approximating conditions of complex interdependence. Finally, it is critical to note that relations are not fixed at a point along the spectrum; they may shift further toward either pole based on intended and unintended geopolitical outcomes.13

Under conditions of complex interdependence, power is exerted less through traditional instruments than through the manipulation of interdependence in issue areas.14 Interdependence creates sensitivity amongst the parties involved because the actions of one (intentional or not) produce effects upon the other. If one side is so sensitive to the other’s actions that leveraging the relationship could cause policy change, this is termed vulnerability.16 One side deciding to leverage or abstain from leveraging the other’s vulnerability in a particular issue area thus creates power.17

According to its progenitors, complex interdependent relationships are distinguishable by three characteristics: multiple channels of interaction, absence of a hierarchy of issues, and minimal use of force between the two parties.18 Politically, relations are conducted through bargaining processes that minimize linkage strategies across issue areas, stress the importance of agenda-setting, bear the effects of significant transnational/transgovernmental interaction, and are significantly driven by international organizations.19 In Keohane and Nye’s definition, international organizations are less about “institutions than as clusters of intergovernmental and transgovernmental networks associated with the formal institutions.”20

REALISM AND TRADITIONAL SINO-TAIWANESE RELATIONS

For most of their history since 1949, Sino-Taiwanese relations have been characterized by severe mistrust and the absence of cross-strait political/military cooperation resulting in both sides adopting a realist perspective regarding bilateral relations.21 This mistrust is the by–product of twenty years’ civil war prior to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, and a series of armed clashes including ROC amphibious incursions along the PRC’s coast in the late 1940s–early 1950s;22 the Taiwan Straits Crises of 1954–5, 1958,23 and most recently, 1995–6;24 and Chiang’s proposed ROC invasion of the PRC in the wake of the failed Great Leap Forward in 1962.25 The cumulative effect of these conflicts is skepticism in Taipei towards Beijing’s long-term intentions (and increasingly, short–term as PRC military capabilities increase26); and on Beijing’s part, hypersensitivity toward any Taiwanese action construed as a move toward de jure independence from the Mainland. Because the historical context of the relationship suggests willingness by both sides to employ force to achieve policy objectives, the continued efficacy of force is generally taken for granted.

This conclusion manifests itself in two prevailing realist concepts that dominate the bilateral relationship. The first – stable deterrence27– is mutual. As Robert Ross notes, in the Sino–Taiwanese context, deterrence requires a “status-quo state to possess the retaliatory capability to inflict costs that outweigh the benefits to a country that might use force to change the status quo and the reputation for resolve to make its retaliatory threats credible. Effective deterrence thus requires that all actors value peace more than costly forceful revision of the status quo.”28 From the ROC’s perspective this means maintaining a resistance capability significant enough to persuade Chinese Communist Party (CCP) decision–makers that an attack on the island is too costly relative to the potential gains achieved; and for the PRC, it means maintaining an offensive capability credible enough to persuade ROC officials that the punitive costs outweigh the benefits of independence.29 According to Ross, because neither “country values revising the status quo higher than the expected cost of use of force”30, conflict is unlikely across the strait. Unfortunately, this theory rests on a number of malleable assumptions: that deterrence capabilities lack offensive potential;31 that the U.S. will intervene in the event of a Chinese attack;32 and that time is working on China’s side33 toward “peaceful unification.”34 If any of these assumptions are proven wrong, the situation reverts to unstable deterrence, which features “a propensity for unintended crisis escalation and for unintended war”35, especially if one side is perceived as likely to conduct a
preemptive/preventative war.36

Thomas J. Christensen argues that this, in fact, is the case. The PRC historically employs trend analysis to strategic decision-making, encouraging the use of force under conditions not considered feasible by traditional deterrence theory when windows of opportunity are closing or windows of vulnerability are opening.37 Windows logic suggests “CCP leaders have used force – sometimes against superior foes or their allies – because they feared that, if they did not, the PRC’s strategic situation would only worsen further. They often have done so in anticipation of a future bright-line provocation rather than waiting for the provocation to occur”; and that “the PRC might use force even if the United States has military superiority, even if Taiwan has not formally declared legal independence, and even if the PLA [People’s Liberation Army] lacks the ability to resolve the Taiwan question permanently through the use of force against the island and its interests.”38 He also argues that such provocations “would not always appear obvious to the casual observer,”39 but might include reversing Taiwanese domestic opinion trending toward legal independence;40 perceived negative trends regarding US security policy towards the PRC;41 and frustration that “Taiwan’s economic dependence on the mainland and PLA coercive capability were not producing Taipei’s accommodation.”42 He concludes that leaders “should not expect the PLA to wait until [increased] capabilities are up and running to strike Taiwan and try to force a political deal.”43 This perspective is tantamount to endorsing preemptive/preventive war under the right conditions44, which suggests the CCP views the utility of force in significantly less stringent terms than simply as a means of deterrence.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

Having defined the spectrum of international relations and demonstrated the tendency of Sino-Taiwanese relations to operate near the realist extreme, it is critical to highlight recent developments in PRC-ROC relations that are contributing to the notion of greater interconnectedness.

The January 2012 reelection of President Ma and the KMT has been interpreted as popular validation of the past four years’ ‘China-centric’ foreign policy credited with increasing societal interconnectedness across dyads, and substantially decreasing cross-strait tensions to their lowest point since 1949.45 Interestingly, the perceived disruptive effect that a DDP victory might exert upon cross-strait trade was cited as a crucial factor in Ma’s reelection; a bid supported by many in the business community.46 Economically, more than 30,000 Taiwanese firms maintain manufacturing facilities in China,47 and bilateral trade accounted for US$ 127.5 billion48 in 2011. Implemented in September 2010, the Economic Co-operation Framework Agreement (ECFA) that cut tariffs on 539 Taiwanese exports to China and 267 Chinese products entering Taiwan49 facilitating a 19% increase in bilateral trade during its first 12 months in effect,50 critical growth for an economy still recovering from the 2008 global recession. His administration also negotiated (or enabled private corporate) agreements with the Chinese regarding opening bilateral banking markets,51 bilateral investments,52 direct settlement of currencies,53 securities and insurance,54 intellectual property,55 and has proposed a common market with China.56

Culturally, bilateral contacts are at their strongest in sixty years due to the implementation of agreements enabling direct air, postal, and shipping links between the PRC and ROC in December 2008.57 This liberalization of cross-strait cultural movement has increased bilateral tourism,58 and will likely increase the already 1 million Taiwanese living on the Mainland.59 Further, increased communication cooperation – epitomized by a recent bilateral telecommunications deal between China and Taiwan’s largest telecom corporations60 – is reinforcing cultural interconnectedness by providing political and business elites with greater opportunities to dialogue with their cross-strait colleagues.

Educational exchange is also expanding, with the PRC agreeing in April 2010 to allow “Taiwanese senior high school students who score in the top 12% in scholastic aptitude tests [to] apply directly to 123 universities in China” with only an interview;61 and pending agreement on awarding joint degrees between universities in both the PRC and ROC.62

Law enforcement cooperation is also increasing, with reciprocating visits over the last two years by the Chinese Vice Minister of Public Safety and the Taiwanese National Police Chief.63 Both sides agreed to increase cross-strait coordination regarding crime in April 2009, with the ROC reporting 17 cross-border fraud cases solved and 1,245 arrests (not all from fraud) in the agreement’s first 18 months.64
Finally, even in the geopolitical sphere confidence building measures including a reduction in missiles targeting Taiwan have been broached, although such dialogue is still in its infancy.55 Taken together, these measures appear to demonstrate increased Sino–Taiwanese cooperation; however, whether this interconnectedness is indicative of interdependence remains to be examined.

ANALYZING SINO-TAIWANESE COMPLEX INTERDEPENDENCE

Applying Keohane and Nye’s characteristics of complex interdependence allows for a more accurate determination of whether the relationship is moving away from the realist pole on the international relations spectrum, and if so, to what extent.

True interdependence – as opposed to simple interconnectedness – is suggested by the fact that multiple channels of interaction at the interstate,56 transgovernmental,57 and transnational levels58 clearly exist between the PRC and ROC. “ Interstate”59 (entity–to–entity) interaction is arguably at its greatest level since 1949, and cooperation facilitated by deliberate governmental policies to reduce cross–strait political/military tensions has set the conditions for significant transgovernmental and transnational intercourse. Transgovernmental activity at sub–entity level is responsible for official agreements in each of the issue areas including economics, culture, and law enforcement; however, these contacts tend to reinforce entity policy and have not yet created the niche interests amongst various bureaucratic organs which complex interdependence theory predicts will lead to: fragmentation of entity–level policy coherence, and cross–border cooperation with the other entity’s bureaucracy to achieve policy goals favorable with transgovernmental interests.60

Transnational interaction comes closer to the complex interdependence ideal. Although economic cooperation between the two sides can be traced back nearly three decades to Deng Xiaoping’s reforms of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the trend is clearly accelerating; with the ECFA being the latest and most comprehensive step toward economic interconnectedness. The PRC represents the ROC’s largest trade partner, its largest export market (crucial for an export-based economy), and is its second largest source of imports after Japan (2012 year–to–date figures).71 The PRC is also Taiwan’s top destination for foreign direct investment72 and a significant source of labor for off–shore manufacturing. For its part, Taiwan is China’s seventh largest trading partner,73 ninth largest export market,74 and fifth largest source of imports.75 Taiwan is also the source of China’s greatest trade deficit (all 2008 figures).76 Viewed comprehensively, the statistics suggest dense economic interdependence.

Trade, however, is not the only issue area suggesting interdependence. Liberatized movement restrictions are producing further measurable transnational impacts. Tourist volume,77 the rights of students attending universities across the strait,78 and assurance of intellectual property79 are all significant issues created by greater cultural exchange; while illegal immigration of Chinese to Taiwan,80 transnational prostitution,81 and smuggling in weapons, drugs and human trafficking82 are law enforcement issues exacerbated by increased bilateral contacts.

Arguments for the Sino–Taiwanese relationship approaching complex interdependence start breaking down, however, as the next two analytical characteristics are applied. Although recent developments focused on increasing interconnectedness in a variety of dyads, the Sino–Taiwanese relationship continues to demonstrate a clear hierarchy of issues, with sovereignty and international status at the top. Legally, both sides assert that their entity is the legitimate government of all China.83 Although the ROC in practice long–ago abandoned this claim, the PRC continues to assert a ‘One China’ principle – loosely based on the ‘One China’ policy articulated in Sino–American Joint Communiqués of 1972, 1979, and 1982 84 – that stipulates “there is only one China in the world; the mainland and Taiwan all belong to one China; and China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity are indivisible.”85 As such, the PRC has embarked on a deliberate policy of confining Taiwan’s international space in multinational forums by insisting the ROC not be included in organizations where sovereignty is a precondition for membership, or by placing the island in a position that infers subordination to the PRC in an attempt to internationally discredit notions of Taiwan as a separate entity.86 Despite DPP pro–independence rhetoric in the mid 1990s–2000s, Taiwan continues to maintain that relations should be guided by the 1992 consensus that there is “one China subject to different interpretations,”87 essentially an endorsement of the status quo. This dynamic is unique in contemporary global relations and may militate
against the applicability of complex interdependence theory between two entities where at least one side does not accept the other’s sovereignty.

As a result of this mutual non-recognition, threatened use of force remains a viable option for decision-makers to effect political change, as exhibited in ongoing territorial disputes involving the Diaoyutais and South China Sea. China’s 2005 anti-secession law sanctions the employment of “non–peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity” in the event of a Taiwanese declaration of independence, codifying earlier public statements by Chinese leaders to that effect. Although ostensibly a deterrent to Taiwanese de jure independence from the PRC’s point of view, the maintenance of significant military force in the Taiwan Strait area capable of backing China’s threat creates a security dilemma for the ROC, who interprets PLA deployments as a possible mechanism for forcible unification. As a result, the KMT continues to pursue the purchase and development of weapon systems to counter potential PRC aggression, and the ROC military has adopted an aggressive defensive military strategy of striking PLA units to prevent them from moving out of their own territory and defeating the PLA Navy (PLAN) at sea as a prelude to traditional denial of access to Taiwanese shores.

**SINO-TAIWANESE RELATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SPECTRUM: CONCLUSIONS**

Having examined the relationship through the characteristics of multiple layers of contact, hierarchy of issues, and use of force it is possible to draw some inferences regarding the position of Sino–Taiwanese relations on the international relations spectrum and the direction contemporary developments are moving the relationship. It is also possible to draw critical conclusions as to the appropriateness of applying realist and complex interdependence ideas to the China–Taiwan situation.

Although the continued preeminence of the sovereignty issue and inclinations toward viewing force as a usable instrument of power preclude any claim that the Sino–Taiwanese relationship approaches the complex interdependence ideal, it is clear that increasing interdependence in the economic, cultural, and law enforcement dyads are slowly moving the relationship away from the realist pole, insisting on a more sophisticated interpretation than traditional realism provides.

Ironically, given realist commentator’s criticisms, Keohane and Nye provide an excellent framework for achieving this synthesis: “our argument in this book is not that the traditional view of world politics is wrong. We believe that several approaches are needed, but to different degrees in different situations. We need both traditional wisdom and new insights. We also need to know how and when to combine them.” Their observations that “conflict will take new forms, and may even increase” under conditions of interdependence and that the joint gains created by it will not necessarily be free of distributional conflict are fundamental to integrating their theory and realism in the PRC–ROC context.

Interdependence’s greatest intersection with realism occurs in domestic politics, because domestic concerns often drive – or limit – decision-makers’ foreign policy options. This dynamic is operative on both sides of the strait, complicating relatively clear calculations regarding both deterrence and windows of opportunity/vulnerability.

Ross’ assumption regarding the continued prevalence of stable deterrence rests, among other things, on the CCP’s continued perception that time is on China’s side regarding its primary foreign policy goal: unification with Taiwan. Because “PRC analysis of Taiwan domestic politics is centrally important to Beijing’s trend analysis,” domestic developments in the ROC threaten this assumption. Increased interdependence has created a perception among some elites in Taiwan that Ma’s China–centric policy is intent on facilitating peaceful unification with the Mainland using increased economic and cultural integration as a means. KMT policies ostensibly directed at minimizing tension – such as not displaying the Taiwanese flag at functions attended by PRC officials, or even at sporting
events involving Chinese teams held on ROC soil\textsuperscript{106} – are instead producing a strong nationalistic reaction that emphasizes Sino–Taiwanese cultural differences rather than similarities.\textsuperscript{107} This in turn produces political pressure to clearly demonstrate Taiwan’s continued independence from the Mainland. Recent refusals to coordinate with Beijing over diplomatic responses to Japan’s purchase of the Diaoyutais in favor of unilateral Taiwanese action\textsuperscript{108} exemplify this trend, which stokes the very tensions the KMT’s domestic policy seeks to reduce while threatening to accelerate tends the CCP, facing its own imminent internal transition of power, might find increasingly unacceptable. Applying Christensen’s “windows logic,” such developments could prompt a vigorous PRC response despite rational actors’ sincerest efforts to avoid conflict.\textsuperscript{109}

Chinese strategists are applying interdependence concepts to PRC policy planning. The CCP prefers ‘peaceful unification’\textsuperscript{110} – an approach reliant on interdependence – effected by increasingly tight integration that makes the exertion of Taiwanese independence increasingly impossible,\textsuperscript{111} and ultimately erodes opposition to a political settlement. However, evidence also indicates that the PLA’s contingency plans for Taiwan forego direct seizure of the island\textsuperscript{112} in favor of a nuanced approach combining various instruments to effect unification by force, if necessary, through manipulating interdependence. The 1995–6 Taiwan Strait Crisis – where PRC coercion caused US$ 14 billion and many of Taiwan’s elite to flee the island\textsuperscript{113} – provides a glimpse into this strategy. It incorporates “terrorism, drug trafficking, environmental degradation… computer virus propagation”\textsuperscript{114} and limited military operations\textsuperscript{115} to manipulate Taiwanese political, economic, and cultural vulnerabilities. These include Taiwan’s open society (which PLA leaders believe will cause political chaos),\textsuperscript{116} the economy’s overexposure to Chinese markets, the economy’s reliance on foreign imports for many critical commodities, the economy’s vulnerability to fleeing equity, and the vulnerability of Taiwanese citizens and students residing on the Mainland.

China’s own policy, however, is also vulnerable to domestic pressures influenced by interdependence. As Margaret Pearson notes in her study of the PRC’s interaction with the World Trade Organization (WTO), “trade politics in China is primarily domestic.”\textsuperscript{117} Because expansion of trade is central to Beijing’s strategy,\textsuperscript{118} domestic considerations will increasingly impact the CCP’s foreign policy. For example, textiles are a key Chinese export.\textsuperscript{119} Although the ECFA guides Sino–Taiwanese trade, it does not apply to either entity’s trade with third parties. A recent agreement between the Taiwan Textile Federation and the European Textile and Clothing Confederation promises to increase Taiwan’s exposure to the world’s largest textile and clothing market,\textsuperscript{120} presenting a direct challenge to Beijing’s economic interests. Pearson’s study predicts – in a Sino-American context – that such a development would likely be a source of major conflict,\textsuperscript{121} with China likely to “link [textiles] to other issues to get what it wants in textiles and apparel.”\textsuperscript{122} This conclusion likely applies to Taiwan as well, perhaps more so given the ROC’s vulnerability to China as a result of their tight interdependence. It is probable that transnational elements in the form of Chinese textile corporations will pressure the CCP to leverage the PRC’s relationship with Taiwan to produce a market outcome despite warming relations and the ECFA, potentially through transgovernmental contacts at the WTO and elsewhere.

This, however, only scratches the surface of potential interdependence–fueled domestic pressures on PRC policy. A recent estimate by Credit Suisse indicates that as a result of China’s economic expansion, household wealth will double in the next five years if current growth is maintained.\textsuperscript{123} If conventional wisdom correlating the size of a society’s middle class and its appetite for greater individual freedom is believed, this rapid expansion in middle class purchasing power suggests potential trouble for the CCP’s exclusive grip on political power; a frightening prospect for a party in the midst of a leadership transition. Here interdependence might expose the PRC sensitivity to human rights reform.\textsuperscript{124} In fact, this may already be occurring. Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo receiving the Nobel Peace Prize inspired an open letter by CCP elders to the current leadership, and initial indications are that the CCP (at least publicly) is considering the proposal.\textsuperscript{125} This development—compounded with the current row over Wang Lijun’s trial and Hu Jintao’s imminent transfer of power to Vice President Xi Jinping—could produce serious complications for the CCP, causing a shift in Taiwan policy. It is important to remember that historically “basic shifts in the state’s (China) policy content and direction can at times derive from the power calculations of a particular leadership group or may occur because of changes in the balance of power among contending
groups or the rise or fall of a particular leader.” Moreover, as the Bo Xilai scandal illustrates, “political and social disorder... can result from prolonged elite strife.” An orderly secession is not assured. Although the PLA has historically demonstrated absolute loyalty to the party, it is important to point out that Hu was the first leader in CCP history to emerge from a power base outside the PLA, instituting civilian control over the military (instead of the other way around) through adroit maneuvering as the heir apparent and then newly appointed leader in the early 2000s. It is unclear how the PLA will react to another CCP leader emerging from outside its fold, and if Xi possesses the ability to maneuver as adroitly as Hu. Because regime maintenance is the CCP’s ultimate policy goal – more so even than peaceful unification with Taiwan or economic growth, which is simply a means of maintaining a monopoly on political power – such developments could produce a major shift in Taiwanese policy. As Christensen notes “domestic conditions have consistently contributed to Chinese use of force.”

By integrating realist and complex interdependence theories it is possible to arrive at a more complete understanding of the dynamics at work in Sino-Taiwanese relations. Allen Whiting “emphasized the role of historical legacies and their link to CCP domestic legitimacy as a central driving force in China’s foreign relations. In this context, he appreciates the central role that the Taiwan issue plays in linking the domestic and international political challenges facing the CCP leadership and in influencing PRC relations with actors other than Taiwan.” In other words, instead of simply producing peace, interdependence merely complicates the variables impacting international relations in our world. Effectively connecting the dots allows leaders to make better-informed decisions and minimizes surprise reactions to unilateral initiatives.

ENDNOTES

1. Virtual Information Center, Taiwan Primer, 10 July 2003 (Updated 02 June 2008), 20.
2. Since differentiating between strains in realist thought is not central to this work, I will use Keohane and Nye’s realist assumptions for the sake of argument. These are 1) states are coherent units and the dominant actor in world politics; 2) force is a usable and effective instrument of policy; and 3) a hierarchy of issues exists with security at the top. See Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Power and Interdependence (New York, NY: Longman, 2001), 20.
3. Ibid, 7.
4. Ibid, 270.
5. Ibid, 8-9.
6. These costs are termed sensitivity and vulnerability interdependence and are discussed below.
8. Ibid, ix-x, xv-xvi, 19.
13. Ibid, 140.
15. Ibid, 10-12, 236-7.
17. Ibid, Chapter 1.
24. The sources on this crisis are voluminous. See Coming Conflict with China, The China Threat, Red Dragon Rising, and New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy.
26. See Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell (Editors), The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China’s Military (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010) for an excellent analysis of growing PLA capabilities.
32. Ibid, 16-21.
33. Ibid, 38.
34. Ibid, 21.
35. Ibid, 30.
36. Preemptive warfare defined as military action to disrupt/prevent an adversary’s imminent move versus preventive war, which does not require imminent adversarial action, but merely the potential for such action in the future.
38. Ibid, 51.
39. Ibid, 52.
40. Ibid, 75.
41. Ibid, 76-77.
42. Ibid, 77.
43. Ibid, 78.
44. Red Dragon Rising, 160.
47. “Comparative Deterrence,” 22.
51. Crystal Hsu, “FSC chief wary about ‘hot money’ tax” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 123 (15 October 2010), 12.
53. Ted Yang, “BOT to offer yuan settlement” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 127 (19 October 2010), 12.
60. Jason Tan, “Chunghwa Telecom looks to ink deal with China Mobile” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 120 (12 October 2010), 12.
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64. Ibid.
65. Alan Fong, “R.O.C. moves forward in confidence” from The China Post, Vol. LVIII, No. 39 (11 October, 2010), 1; and Vincent Y. Chao, “Timetable needed for missile talks: DPP” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 120 (12 October 2010), 1 among other recent news stories.
66. Defined as formal, state-to-state interactions; normal channel assumed by realists. See Complex Interdependence, 21.
67. Defined as informal contact by government elites or contact between bureaucracies within the government; applies when the assumption that states act coherently as units is relaxed. Ibid.
68. Defined as contact by non-governmental entities with the capacity to influence policy; applies when the assumption that states are the only units is relaxed. Ibid.
69. I shall refrain from applying this label to Sino–Taiwanese relations and instead use ‘entity–to–entity’ because the PRC’s refusal to recognize ROC sovereignty plays a crucial role in the further development of relations. I have avoided ‘unit’ because of its connotations for IR specialists, and ‘party’ to avoid confusing ‘state’ interaction with ‘political party’ interaction.
70. Complex Interdependence, 29-30.
72. “Comparative Deterrence,” 22.
78. Flora Wang, “MOE expects cross-strait education MOU this year” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 127 (19 October 2010), 2.
82. Taiwan Primer, 3.
84. Ibid, 29 and The Coming Conflict with China, 121.
87. Taiwan Primer, 33.
89. The China Threat, 196-7.
90. The ROC Ministry of National Defense publicly estimates that the PLA is capable of deploying between 1,500-2,000 missiles against Taiwan, independent of other means including PLA ground forces, special operation, aircraft, and PLA Navy vessels. See Vincent Y. Chao, “Timetable needed for missile talks: DPP” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 120 (12 October 2010), 1.
92. A samples of this concern are contained in Liu Shih-Chung, “Assessing future cross–strait agenda” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 120 (12 October 2010), 8; and Editorial, “What’s behind PRC missile gesture?” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 123 (15 October 2010), 8.
93. Taipei, AFP, “Taiwan to continue to buy, develop arms: Ma” from The China Post, Vol. LVIII, No. 39 (11 October, 2010), 9.
94. Ibid and AFP, Taipei, “Taiwan plans to build six minesweeping naval craft” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 128 (20 October 2010), 1.
95. Taiwan Primer, 41.
96. Power and Interdependence, xiii, 269-70.
97. Ibid, 7.
98. Ibid, 7.
100. Ibid, 7, 37, 45-6, 132-7.
103. “Windows and War.” 76.
104. The Liberty Times Editorial, “Secret meetings and their dangers” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 120 (12 October 2010), 8; Paul Lin, “Sensitive spots dampen Ma’s dream” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 125 (16 October 2010), 8; Editorial, “Ma’s China misquotes irrelevant” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 129 (21 October 2010), 8.
105. Hung Mao-Hsiung, “Ma’s truce looks like a diplomatic surrender” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 126 (18 October 2010), 8; Editorial, “Patriotism and leading by example” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 128 (20 October 2010), 8.
112. The PLA realizes that seizure by traditional means would be both costly and not guarantee success. See The Coming Conflict with China, 163; Red Dragon Rising, 157-8; Interpreting China’s Grand Strategy, 167.
115. Red Dragon Rising, 159-64.
118. Ibid, 246.
120. Staff Writer, “Textile groups sign MOU” from Taipei Times, Vol. 12, No. 123 (15 October 2010), 11.
122. Ibid, 262.
127. Ibid.
128. Red Dragon Rising, 48-49; You Ji and Daniel Alderman, “Changing Civil-Military Relations in China” from Roy Kam-
phausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell (Editors), The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China’s Military (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), 137-9.
135. New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy, 380.

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During the fascist era, Germany and Japan developed powerful ideologies of patriotism, nationalism, and strict social order. These ideologies were essential to the compliance of the population of each nation with large-scale war efforts that stressed domestic social and economic resources. Government departments such as the Central Information Bureau in Japan and the Ministry of Propaganda in Nazi Germany saturated visual culture with ideological messages. The German and Japan wartime institutions of media control published and edited periodicals such as Shashin Shuho, which was designed to “drum up morale” among citizens and convince them that the war was just, winnable, and deserving of their support.

This paper analyzes images from five periodicals between 1937 and 1945: The Japanese periodicals Shashin Shuho and Nippon, and the Nazi German periodicals Neues Volk, Junge Welt, and Berlin, Tokio, Rom.

The five periodicals: The Japanese periodicals Shashin Shuho and Nippon, and the Nazi German periodicals Neues Volk, Junge Welt, and Berlin, Tokio, Rom and their parent institutions visually simplified society into demographic groups based on age and gender, whose stereotyped appearances were iconically associated with their ideological role in society. Idealized behaviors, such as childrearing, military enrollment, and physical training, were in turn demanded of the members of each group through interpellation by a stereotyped physical form. These forms—distinctive, repeated silhouettes that represented different ideals of citizens behavior—were designed to be imitated in both mundane daily life and activities in the support of the nation. These forms clearly denoted ideological roles, were powerfully sympathetic, and were used to visually inspire and control citizens and negotiate ideologically inconsistent situations.

THE BODILY FORM AND IDEOLOGY

A bodily form is a basic shape of the body repeatedly and consistently used to represent a member of a particular social group. Other characteristics that identify members of such groups, such as the coding of sexes with masculinity or femininity and the repeated use of motifs that symbolize expertise, daily life, or military power, frequently appear in close association with such forms. The fascist periodicals discussed in the paper typically represent members of a demographic group exclusively with the corresponding basic form and its trappings, creating an illusion of social homogeneity and the representative appropriateness of the stereotyping form. The use of a form, such as the fleshy arms and face of a nursing Nazi mother, or the firmly set angular shoulders and strong stance of her soldier husband, carries potent ideological associations that suggest the harmonious “natural order” promised to form in conjunction with either regime’s goals.

The present survey reveals pervasive trends in the use of the form; German periodical images relied more heavily than Japanese images on the shape of the body, while Japanese images had a much greater tendency to use dynamic movements and concerted activity in conjunction with the bodily form to indicate common social action and direction. Like the bodily form, such unified actions by a group suggest participation in a larger, national order.

Periodicals commonly used bodily forms as illustrations and stock images. German and Japanese journals utilized paintings, photomontage and photographic images of daily life with the goal of “communicating ideological principles to citizens.” These images often appeared alongside patriotic texts discussing the war effort or the domestic economic situation of either country. These images and their layout contexts were tightly controlled by their respective government institutions: the Japanese government’s Central Information Bureau (CIB), in addition to publishing Shashin Shuho, carefully monitored all published periodicals and censored them freely, while the government of Nazi Germany utilized a central art
organization and the Ministry of Propaganda to monitor publications and art and maintain their ideological coherence. These bureaus had a crucial role in keeping the ideological message of each periodical clear and in concert with the national agenda. Periodicals were thus a major instrument of the fascist Japanese and German governments in disseminating ideology and interpellating citizens to transform society and contribute to the country’s military and economic stability.

The unity of purpose and social harmony suggested by bodily forms and related representations played a powerful role in communicating ideology in fascist visual culture. In these representations, fascist German and Japanese periodicals imbued bodily forms with moralizing traits and characteristics closely related to the government’s prescribed roles for each social group. Premised on the suggestion that the stereotype of each group represented demographic reality, periodical images became a powerful means of constructing an inherent “nature” of each group that corresponded to ideological roles and visualized an ideal of social harmony to encourage citizen imitation. The use of these forms enabled each country to maintain a visually consistent ideology across ideologically inconsistent goals; for example, the concept of the traditional Japanese family was used to justify women’s dual roles of child birthing and volunteering for the state and men’s absorption into military training, while in reality these state duties represented a significant burden of time and effort distancing citizens from familial commitment. This implied continuity heavily manipulated, among other elements of society, concepts of women’s roles and the family, and aided fascist governments in extracting civilian time and material resources to contribute to the total war effort.

While the German and Japanese government orchestration of periodical content shows strong similarities in the use of ideology and images to promote specific civilian roles, the forms themselves reflect the differences in Germany and Japan’s respective ideologies. One of the most prominent differences between the two ideologies is the discrepancy between diversity and a homogenous whole. Japan’s ideal of a diverse group of citizens united in a single purpose was closely connected to the ideological promise of the formation of “independent” and “self-sufficient” nations and their “willing” participation in the Co-Prosperity sphere. Germany, by contrast, emphasized the total elimination of individuality and the reduction of society to a eugenically and culturally pure group. Thus, the Japanese images surveyed tend to suggest a body of citizens with a loosely common form united in action, while the German images depict separate demographic groups as iconic, stationary, and almost completely homogenous in form.

Thus, bodily forms indicate the crucial ideological differences between Japan and Germany. These differences are particularly clear when iconic bodily forms are used to visually negotiate ideologically paradoxical or inconsistent social and political situations. This bridging effect, as well as the complications caused by lack of visual negotiation, communicates profoundly different ideological priorities. There are several significant areas of ideological negotiation. These include the transposition of the form of the solider onto boys, the divide between the form of the mother and the form of the young woman, and the feminized or masculinized appearance of women in the workforce. In these instances, one bodily form is artificially made to imitate another, provoking ideological associations between demographic groups. Images in both Japanese and German periodicals indicate the deliberate use of bodily forms to mediate ideologically unstable ground and thus an awareness of the bodily form and its ideological instrumentality.

**BOYS TO SOLDIERS**

In fascist imagery, the soldier symbolized the vision of society as it progressed in its military goals. Their appearance encouraged the population’s support of and contributions to the war effort. In contrast to this role, both Germany and Japan considered very young boys to be children and therefore to require education and the experience of childhood. However, young men were brought into the military at ages as young as fifteen in Japan and were consistently encouraged to prepare for their futures as soldiers in service of the nation in Germany. The form of the soldier conceptually bridged these distinct social groups while maintaining the separate visual qualities of soliderhood and childhood.

The soldier’s appearance is highly symbolic in both German and Japanese images and represents the force of the nation’s concerted wartime efforts and ultimate goals. These connotations were deeply rooted in each nation’s conceptualization of masculinity. The German approach to loading the form of the soldier with ideological potency was to indicate his physical
masculinity and racial and spiritual purity. One clear display of this is on slide one, a contrast between Russian and German soldiers in the monthly periodical Neues Volk which, as the title suggests, strongly subscribed to concepts of racial eugenics. Here, the ideal form of the German soldier is clearly visible: his absence of physical deformity and perfect proportions mark him as Aryan, his linear face and strong jaw communicate nobility, and his muscled and angular form suggests strength. The appearance of the Russian soldiers varies by individual, while the uniforms, form, and common facing direction of the German men suggest their similarity and unity of purpose. The German male is always subservient to the military power structure and uses displays of force to show allegiance, as shown on slide two where the nearly identical soldiers shout a return to a command. Thus, the soldier is forceful and penetrative, his mentality rooted in a community of aggressive masculinity.9 The representation of soldiers suggests a unity of purpose with that of Nazi Germany and ultimate purity. His rigid, masculinized form provides the basic form for most images of German men, even in occupational and technical roles, and example of which is shown on slide three.

In contrast, the actions of the soldiers in Japanese periodical images take symbolic priority over their forms. In the images of Shashin Shuho, the CIB’s official periodical, the Japanese soldier also has a form that is very muscular and solid- as shown, for example, on slide four. This form visually unites soldiers when they are represented in groups, but is much less consistent than the racial type used in German images. Lines of soldiers, though not homogenized by their racial appearance, are united by their very precise actions, such as the circular movement performed in perfect step on slide four. Most German soldiers are seen from the front instead of in movement from the side, thus suggesting an unstoppable force rather than a maneuvering one. Japanese images are thus much more dynamic, as their soldiers seem to march quickly, perform complex maneuvers, and are shown in combat—indicating a fascination with strategy perhaps reflective of the distance of the Japanese front during the Second World War. Soldiers thus symbolize the efficiency, harmony, and common vision of the Japanese military. They thus seem more active, but just as aggressive as images of German soldiers, as in the image on slide five, where the soldier leaps through the frame towards the viewer. These images express the ideological ideal of the “Japanese Spirit,” which is visually indicated by determined facial features, masculine force, and a sense of unified action related to the construction of a future state.

Boys and adult men have distinct forms in both German and Japanese publications. Boys are often depicted as members of youth groups and organizations, and as participating in both group and individual activities. Men, by contrast, are almost always shown as soldiers or in a professional or technical class. Positive depictions of soldiers suggested a bright future for the men who might be drafted, and strongly encouraged boys to emulate the soldier’s military participation. This extended to portraying boys as having soldier-like qualities while in youth groups. Such imagery removed boys from associations with the family and instead placed them under the tutelage of the state.10 The enjoyable, playful youth groups in which Japanese and German boys participated were visually bridged with their idealized but much more demanding future of military service by the visual superimposition of the forms of soldiers and military training onto the actions of youth groups. Periodicals thus visually indicated that youth groups indoctrinated children and prepared them for a lifetime of military service to the state.

German Boys take the form of industrious, stocky youth, as shown in slide six. In this issue of Junge Welt, a publication for the Hitler Youth, the boys assist farmers in local areas to increase productivity. These boys serve a didactic purpose, as they are used to show the populace (and here, other boys) how to support the nation through service work as they simultaneously learn the values of patriotism. This is a significant change from the depictions of very young children, whose vulnerability—shown, for example, on slide seven—represents Germany’s future racial and ideological purity. The sexes are separated as early as three or four in German images, when boys become coded with the male gender. In slide nine, for example, young men are shown as more muscular and active than girls and take a more visible interest in both academic and military education. The boys of the Hitler youth are frequently shown in groups and camps, which is highly suggestive of their later lives as soldiers. An excellent example of this can be seen in Leni Riefenstahl’s Triumph des Willens, where the Hitler Youth sleep in rank-and-file tents, roughhouse with their comrades, and drink the
same gruel served up for breakfast. Their childhood education, partially in preparation for a military future, thus becomes closely associated with a nostalgic childhood image of youthful comradeship and play.

The Japanese periodicals surveyed do not visually separate or gender young boys until they are of high school age. Even at this point, they retain the qualities of the very young in that they are considered to be future members of society who need to be brought up properly and learn to value service to the nation. Images of male youth groups were pervasive in Japanese publications. As shown in figure eight, boys tended to lack a distinct form, aside from their military-based school uniforms, but were united by appearing in groups. They frequently work in large community groups and thus form a part of an entire society volunteering for the country. In a similar trajectory towards soldierhood as German boys, they are shown marching and roughhousing, suggesting their training as future soldiers by imitating their forms and actions. Due the association of Japanese boys with the military, these youth groups are also more likely to be shown volunteering for military work than female youth groups. Japanese boys are thus predominantly connected to images of soldierhood by actions and visual organization rather than by form.

There thus is a clear visual parallel between the actions and organization of youth groups and adult military life. As shown in slide eight, both countries encouraged boys to actively imitate marching soldiers and attempt to reach their level of discipline. Young boys are usually shown to have an interest in military weaponry and guns, often encouraged by their fathers as in slide nine, which draws an explicit connection between father and son while excluding the girl. These images deliberately impose the form of the soldier onto young boys. Nationalistic education through youth groups and volunteer work was visually associated with early military training while also maintaining the suggestion of childhood through camaraderie and group activity. Some images indicated that even young male athletes were training for soldierhood, as they appear similar to soldiers in form and forcefulness. The correlation between future military career and training is visible in the two images on slide ten. The image of a sumo wrestler on the left is accompanied by text discussing fighting on behalf of the nation and the right image directly incorporates military elements through the replacement of a shot-put with a hand grenade. This clear ideological continuum from the forms and actions of young boys to those of adult soldiers is absent for women and girls.

**UNMARRIED WOMEN TO MOTHERS**

Fascist ideology maintained an ambivalent attitude towards mothers, as they were restricted to the domain of the home while simultaneously honored as the foundation of culture. Unlike the transition from boy to soldier, the development of a girl into a mother was unclear and seems to have been neglected in Japanese and German ideology. Germany and Japan both emphasized the importance of girl’s physical training for her future motherhood and seemed to treat the development of a girl into a homemaking mother as a natural progression. However, these two demographic groups are represented by jarringly different forms that lack clear ideological mediation.

The German woman’s appearance was totally dominated by a relationship to her child. As shown in slide eleven, she was a stocky, fleshy woman with smooth, unblemished skin who typically dressed in common clothing. These accompanying features suggest her femininity and gentleness as a mother. The mother’s body fat may be a visual embodiment of her ability to provide for her children; notably, critical depictions of American mothers show primarily slender women. The persistence of this form throughout representations of mothers suggests the ideological concept that upon reaching motherhood, a woman with a child becomes exclusively a mother, charged with the tasks of procreating and raising the next generation. The German mother is typically shown in the home or providing for her children, and German images and accompanying texts, it is suggested that these homemaking duties fit into a moral, natural order of society. The set of images on slide twelve defines much of what was considered unnatural for a woman. The images suggest that American women drink copious amounts of alcohol, associate with negroes, participate in the political sphere, and are financially incapable of taking care of their children. These qualities are incompatible with the ideological duties of the mother, as they depict women acting as individuals, distancing them from any relationship with children. They contrast strongly with images of family life in Nazi Germany, where mothers are typically shown basking in their patriotic responsibilities to their children or the state. Any suggestion of the incompetence of a providing
father or the selfishness of woman in the absence of a child serves as an accusation of immorality and unnaturalness.

Unlike the form of German women, the Japanese bodily forms of mother and female youth are very similar, but a considerable division is drawn between children and young women when they become eligible for marriage. The form for the women who are eligible for marriage or married is an elegant form that registers with several standards of beauty, such as the slender neck and the “body that is never fat,” as in slide thirteen’s image of a healthy, fit young woman. Representations of the Japanese body in the images surveyed are more focused on the health and fitness of the woman than on their racial purity and direct care of children. This shift in priority suggests a less strict ideological separation of men and women and reflects the Japanese government’s encouragement for women to competently take on multiple roles outside of the home. Like German women, Japanese periodicals often show Japanese mothers alongside their children, but charge them with a much more explicit role of caring for their children’s physical and cultural well-being; for example, as in slide thirteen’s image of a mother holding her child during a physician’s check-up. Sexuality was efficiently phased out of Japanese publications during the war years, with the goal and effect of portraying Japanese women as moral and proper. Periodicals thus depict women as cultural educators and the keepers of Japan’s future.

Japanese mothers typically appear dressed in kimono or kimono-like garments. International tourism publications such as Nippon used kimono to represent Japanese cultural uniqueness, and kimono were quickly adopted wartime symbols of patriotism due to their contrast with Western clothing. When combined with the image of the mother, they resonate with her role as the keeper of culture and the home. Earhart describes how this role formed the basis of “the battle for the home front,” the stability of Japanese society, which expanded to include work outside the home in support of the Japanese nation. Women and children frequently make up the vast majority of attendants in images of festivals and shrines and often perform the ceremonial and spiritual duties of the house and religion in place of men. Later in the war, the depiction of women expanded to include their volunteer work in factories, and their kimono were both visually and literally replaced by patterned monpe which indicated greater activity and practicality.

German ideology also considered the woman to be the keeper of culture, as she is charged with maintaining the household and thus the heart of Germany. In the periodicals surveyed, images suggesting this role persisted over the course of the war. A powerful version of this emerges in depictions of the Madonna-like agricultural German woman, whose close relationship to the land indicates her place at the root of all German culture. For example, in slide fourteen, the woman is seated, surrounded by her children, and breastfeeds while gazing into the distance, indicating her awareness of the importance of her maternal duties to Germany’s future. Such images are suggestive of the constructed Nazi German values of a simple, traditional past and tie the image of the childbearing mother to images of the providing land, thus establishing the woman as the basis of culture. This agricultural type abounds in Japanese images as well, for example, in representations of Japanese settlers in Manchuria happily working in the fields with their children. These women are suggested to be bearers of Japanese culture into Manchuria, but are also evoke a constructed, spiritually pure pre-modern Japanese past.

Clear patterns separating the form of the mother and future mother emerge in both Nazi and fascist Japanese periodicals. Fascist periodicals depict the unmarried woman using the Nordic type, which Richardson describes as a healthy, slender body with small breasts and modest thighs and hips. The German government selected this physical type to represent German citizens due to its connotations of racial purity and fitness. Slide fifteen shows an example of the Nordic type in images of several young German gymnasts exercising. This form, with its underlying erotic suggestion of sexual potential and future motherhood, dominates depictions of young Nazi women. Young girls were encouraged to be extremely physically active so as to achieve this racially pure form. The forms of young Japanese women were similarly fit and they therefore shared some visual and physical characteristics, but these were not as visually consistent and did not carry such strong ideological connotations of race and sexual fitness. Instead, Japanese girls were visually united by their uniforms and similar haircuts, as well as participation in organized group activity.

German images, such as those in slide fifteen,
frequently portray young women participating in competitive youth groups that encouraged adamant participation in youth culture and sport. These groups created “eugenically fit,” healthy bodies and thus prepared girls for womanhood and being mothers. Images of athletic women followed the Nordic architectural model and were muscular but emphasized grace over strength or force, marking the girls as feminine. Richardson notes that the enjoyment of physical activity in a community of eugenically pure girls, an important element of the realization of the German will, was more important to encouraging devotion to the state than emphasizing the future of the girls as child bearers. This body that enjoys activity and its own strength stands in stark contrast to the generalized fleshy form of the mother that was assigned to young women as soon as they bore children. The young Japanese woman, by contrast, was rarely singled out in images. Physical activity was an important part of preparing her body for healthy motherhood and proper citizenship, and periodicals therefore often show her participating in mass group exercises to tone and slim her body, as in slide fifteen, an image of group gymnastics from Shashin Shuho. Physical activity was an important part of preparing her body for healthy motherhood and proper citizenship, and periodicals therefore often show her participating in mass group exercises to tone and slim her body, as in slide fifteen, an image of group gymnastics from Shashin Shuho. Mass exercise demonstrated the commitment of Japanese citizens to a unifying national goal of health and fitness. The toned body thus had implications outside of motherhood: Japanese citizens, for example, were all encouraged to avoid appearing to be too well-fed and thus selfish hoarders of food that could be donated to the state and army. Instead, a toned body indicated both nationalistic selflessness and an ability to contribute to the nation through volunteer work. Thus, in the Japanese images surveyed, the action of group exercise held greater ideological significance than the associated physical form.

The visual connection between the forms of young girls and women was jarring in the Japanese and especially German images surveyed. The Japanese images showed greater similarity in the form of young girls and mothers than did German images, and depict a few unifying actions such as cultural education, where young women are shown in the process of learning proper manners and homemaking skills, essential to their future as mothers. This is consistent with the Japanese woman’s much more active cultural role, and images of cultural education were largely absent in representations of German women. Although both German and Japanese images closely associated images of young boys with their future as soldiers, the visual physical connection between mothers and girls was neglected. The fascist governments failed to develop a clear ideological trajectory from girlhood to motherhood. This gap suggests that the ideology that encouraged women to become mothers and homemakers was considered to be so universal that it was perceived as the only” natural” future for young girls, and therefore required no explanation or transition.

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

The different visual treatment of working women in Japanese and German periodical images corresponds to different ideological approaches to the constructed female gender and the role of the woman outside the home. Images of German women in the workforce indicate a much more prohibitive ideological approach to women workers, while Japanese images reveal an ideological support of “multi-tasking,” where women are responsible for housework as well as volunteering for neighborhood and industrial work. The visual relationship of the female worker to masculine or feminine forms conveys a powerful message about the perceived expertise and competency of women in the workforce.

The image of the male worker, which formed the standard to which images of women in the workforce were held, differed greatly between German and Japanese periodical images. Periodicals such as Neues Volk depicted German men in industrial work with the soldier’s bodily form, as in slide three, and suggested that they were very forceful, dominating any machines they used. The German scientist was also soldier-like in his very rigid posture, but was much more slender than the industrial worker and was suggested to have expertise and authority through the lab coat and microscope motifs. Images of Japanese workers, by contrast, do not suggest force or a soldier’s body, but instead are accompanied by a wider variety of motifs suggesting their authority and competency. As in slide sixteen, machines such as microscopes, for example, were shown with much greater frequency in Japanese images. These machines functioned as powerful symbols of modernity and efficiency and could be used in large numbers, in contrast to German images, which depicted machines an unruly force that required control by masculine brawn. These images depicted working men in appropriate uniforms and gear, strongly indicating the use of these elements as symbols of expertise. Images
of women who entered the workforce were implicitly visually compared with the bodily forms, control over machines, and uniforms of male workers to gauge their competency.

Depictions of the Nazi German “career women” in periodical images diverged sharply from images of the mobilized Japanese woman. German women who occupied traditionally masculine jobs were visibly transposed into the uniforms and masculine appearances of the missing male workers, as in the image in slide seventeen, which features a very masculine female train conductor in what is obviously a man’s uniform. Her appearance echoes the rigidity and linear facial structure that defines the bodily form of German men, and her unflattering uniform eliminates the feminine contours of her body. Women who performed more ideologically female work, such as filing or writing letters as a secretary or working with babies as a nurse, typically appeared in better-fitting, feminine attire and maintained their soft facial features. Some jobs, such as that of police officer, were re-conceptualized to show women exclusively taking care of lost or runaway children, severely limiting the professionalization of women and their assumption of masculine roles. These different uses of gender coding visibly reinforced the idea that work outside the home was a man’s domain and that women would be masculinized by participating in it. However, the text of the periodicals advocates that women could hold the position for men until their return, somewhat normalizing the participation of women in what were previously off-limit fields due to the incompatibility of women’s “natural” qualities. This visual dichotomy and conceptual blending was crucial to maintaining ideological continuity during the reversal of government policy later in the war, which ultimately encouraged women to enter jobs depleted of men while maintaining the emphasis on the separate gender spheres.

Japan’s depiction of women in the workforce was considerably more flattering. Women working even in heavy industry and military production were shown with a clearly feminine appearance, suggesting the ideological flexibility that conceptually allowed women to adopt a great variety of roles as demanded by domestic production and perform them well. For example, slide eighteen shows a photograph of women working in a munitions plant that clearly shows the feminine characteristics of their face and bodies. This mutability of roles and contexts in which women appeared reflects Japan’s distinct ideological priorities. Japanese women were encouraged to think of working as sacrificing their time for the country and not as working for a wage to increase family income. Female efforts in domestic military and industrial production were essential to the war effort. As the war progressed, Shashin Shuho and Nippon transposed qualities of depictions of men, such as expertise, discipline, and devotion, onto depictions of women in industry, the home, and the military, as shown in slide nineteen’s images of young women working as dentists and in a coal plant. This differs greatly from the hesitant depiction of working women in German periodicals, which reinforced the unnatural nature of women workers and the view that women were only temporarily holding men’s jobs. Women were also much more commonly shown working at physical labor and operating machinery in Japanese than in German periodical images, which freely connected working Japanese women to these symbols of efficiency and modernity. While these key differences and changes over the course of the war challenged the separation of genders into separate domestic and occupational spheres, women were encouraged to work as volunteers and not for pay in both Germany and Japan. Thus, there was always an ideological separation between the working world of women and the professional world of men, no matter how radically images may have appeared to bridge them.

In both Japanese and German periodical images, there was a clear continuum of ideological comfort with jobs assigned to women that diverged from household tasks. Japanese images seem much more comfortable with women moving farther away from the household realm. The least threatening and most similar to housework among these were the roles of seamstresses and secretaries, images of which are shown in slide twenty. Even in these jobs, however, Japanese women were more frequently associated with machines and suggested to have authority and competency, while German women were more often associated with their previous work in the home, such as letter-writing and performing small, repetitive tasks.

The next stage was factory and laboratory work. Where German images largely attribute to women the motifs associated with technical expertise, Japanese images reflect the country’s policy of allowing women to do “soft work”—anything of which they were physically
capable. Although both German and Japanese images show women involved in some elements of laboratory work, Japanese women in scientific disciplines typically had a much more professional appearance. Japanese women are shown in lab coats, using tools and equipment that symbolize scientific and medical knowledge. For example, the image on slide nineteen shows a female hygienist working on a patient with medical tools. There are additionally numerous depictions of Japanese women working throughout factory production chains, which, while not awkwardly masculinizing the women, have little to no suggestion of maternal or caretaker tasks. German periodicals, by contrast, rarely show women working in factories.

Finally, images of women in the workforce also include military mobilization. Images of women training for military defense and procedures appear frequently in Japanese periodicals and rarely in German periodicals. Unlike German women, the Japanese government tasked women with military training for homeland defense in the event of a domestic invasion and responsibility for the family’s preparation for air raids or gassings. Women in Japan were eventually trained en masse for domestic defense using bamboo spears. Such periodical images portray them very similarly to Japanese soldiers, especially in uniform and totally united action, whereas images of mobilized German women maintained feminine characteristics, such as sociability and a disorganized appearance. This is shown in the contrast of images on slide twenty-one, where Japanese women drill during kendo training and German women are mobilized for agricultural work. The appearance of a Japanese woman who will “do anything to win” in slide twenty-two borrows elements of the determined and intense appearance of the male Japanese soldier, such as a furrowed brow and sweaty face, to communicate her seriousness and competency. Notably, the woman remains feminine in this transfer of qualities, as her skin still appears smooth and soft. In contrast, the German government decided on ideological grounds not to train women for domestic defense. The images of women mobilized in volunteer corps used by German periodicals images corresponded to this policy with a lack of professional or militaristic appearances.

This final frontier of military mobilization reveals the divide between the flexible attitude of the Japanese towards the issue of women working outside the home, and the strict German ideological stance which maintained a strict separation between the working world of men and the domestic world of women. The masculine or feminine appearance of women when occupying roles left behind by men heading to the front was a powerful indicator of whether a new role was considered to be “natural,” or ideologically appropriate.

**CONCLUSION**

The different uses of the bodily form and corresponding images indicate the similarities and differences of German and Japanese ideologies. The focus on group action in Japanese images suggests the unification of a diverse group of people into a single national vision consistent with the ideological basis of the Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere, while the greater frequency of the use of stereotyped forms in German images emphasizes the total erasure of the individual and its incorporation into the fascist state.

The stereotyped forms and other visual symbols assigned to men, women and children in the two fascist societies indicate the roles of individual social groups and thus illustrate an ideological program for how citizens should act to best support the government and nation. Women are shown as child bearers who maintain the stability of national culture, while men are frequently represented as soldiers with a very strong vision for the order of society and its future. Youth were segregated by gender into different groups and prepared for these future roles. This association of role with gender and age group was naturalized as a harmonious social order.

Therefore, the use of these forms to negotiate changes in roles was critical for ideological consistency. Boys were taught to anticipate their roles as soldiers by visual comparison with their forms and actions. Young girls were taught to prepare themselves for motherhood physically, but the absence of a clear transition, especially in German periodicals, reflects the ideological assumption and oversight that girls had no other future than to become mothers. The portrayal of women in the workforce reflects the sharp divides between the ideologies of either country. Even when depicted in heavy industry, periodicals showed working women as feminine and thus visually suggested them to be capable of juggling both motherhood and work, while German women were masculinized, suggesting that work outside the home was “unnatural” for them.

It is thus clear that bodily forms and roles provided
ideological direction for many demographic targets. Not only did periodical images provide such a goal for every stage of life, they often visually negotiated the transitions between them. The use of forms to unify and indicate the roles of citizens was directly reflective of government ideology and its aims for controlling and uniting a body of citizens in service to the state. Stereotyped forms were powerful tools of communication that prescribed predefined roles to each citizen and visually assured citizens of ideological consistence.

ENDNOTES

4. Adam, Peter. Art of the Their Reich, 52.
10. Adam, Peter. Art of the Their Reich, 77.
A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH TO FDI IN JAPAN

Evolving Norms and Investment Opportunities

Among developed nations, Japan has consistently ranked at the bottom in terms of the amount of FDI it attracts. However, from 1998 direct investment into Japan began to increase, and over the next decade the country experienced its own inward FDI boom. While economic shifts and government policy directives promoting FDI began in the 1990s, it was not until a breakdown of norms in Japanese business, which fundamentally altered how firms were run, that Japan became a more attractive place for foreign investors. The gradual decline of the lifetime employment system and the eradication of long-term keiretsu relationships created more flexible firms and dissolved impenetrable business ties that previously served as barriers to FDI. This normative shift increased competition in Japan, and the result has been a more competitive environment for foreign investment in the twenty-first century.

In a United Nations’ (UN) study comparing the ratio of a country’s share of global inward foreign direct investment (FDI) to its share of global GDP (inward FDI performance index) from 1998-2000 Japan ranked 131st out of 140 nations. A separate study of the same 140 countries ranked each based on how much inward FDI the country should expect based on its current economic and political structure (inward FDI potential index). In this second study, Japan placed much higher, ranking 14th out of 140. These findings suggest that Japan had the structural capacity to attract significantly more inward FDI than the amount actually flowing into its economy, yet factors were hindering its ability to reach full capacity. These studies labeled Japan as “below-potential” in international comparison, as global FDI inflows were increasing at annual rates between 15% and 30% during the early 1990s, while Japan lagged behind averaging only 8% annual growth in FDI inflows from 1991-96. However, beginning in 1998 and into the twenty-first century, Japan began to catch up and even experienced its own mini-FDI boom. Inward FDI stock in Japan more than doubled in value from 1.33% of GDP in 2001 to a post-war high of 2.94% in 2007, and it appeared that Japan was beginning to realize some of its potential. Factors that previously served as impediments to FDI were no longer as omnipresent, but what exactly was behind this change?

In order to answer this question, it is important to consider why FDI in Japan was so scarce in the first place. A survey of foreign firms conducted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in 2002 listed the top factors historically inhibiting FDI in Japan as (in order) cost-related issues, tough customer demands, high tax rates, complex distribution channels, and anti-competitive business practices. Deregulation of industry and government promotion of FDI began in the 1990s, but these did not fully address the inhibiting factors of FDI in Japan. It was only when a breakdown of long-held norms in Japanese business began to occur in the late 1990s that Japan became a more attractive destination for foreign investors. In particular, the lifetime employment system and long-term keiretsu relationships that characterized Japanese management in the post-war period also served a dual role in hindering foreign investment through the inflexible costs and impenetrable distribution and financing channels they helped create. That is, until the business environment began to change in the late 1990s. A reduction in permanent employees at Japanese corporations during this time period served to lower fixed costs and increase flexibility for firms. Incoming foreign business leaders made examples of cutting keiretsu relationships, which freed up distribution channels and increased competition. These changes helped create a new business climate in the twenty-first century, and with the aid of government promotion and a continuing global trend towards cross-border investment, the flow of FDI into Japan began to increase.

However, much of the scholarship on FDI has focused solely on economic explanations in regards to
changing patterns of investment. In the case of Japan, there was indeed economic change occurring during this time period, and the structure of Japan’s economy was becoming more receptive to FDI, but this is only part of the story. It was only after social change occurred, change that was originally resisted despite rational economic benefits for firms, that Japan became more receptive to FDI. For this reason, a more complete explanation for the case of Japan can be drawn from the constructivist framework of international political economy. While the majority of constructivist literature is derived from international relations, it has recently received attention in international political economy, as well. This framework acknowledges economic principles at work, but suggests that outcomes are also the result of social factors, and not solely based on material or rational explanations. The reality is that the factors inhibiting FDI in Japan were supported by social constructs, and the breakdown of these norms, which led to a more receptive environment for investment, resulted in an increase of FDI in the early twenty-first century.

In order to show the role of norms and provide theoretical context for their effects, this paper is divided into five sections. The first section lays out the theoretical framework and includes a general review of the determinants of FDI, previous scholarship on FDI in Japan, and how constructivist thought best explains the upward trend of direct investment into Japan. The second section examines how both the lifetime employment system and long-term keiretsu relationships became institutionalized as norms in the post-war period, and how their institutionalization was both reflective and supportive of an environment not conducive to FDI. Following this, the third section will focus on the government and FDI, showing how its initiatives reflected the economic change in the 1990s, but that its role is only part of the picture. Then, the fourth section examines how the eventual breakdown of these norms helped reduce fixed costs, weaken keiretsu ties, and made Japan a more competitive and attractive place to invest in the 2000s. Finally, the conclusion ties the evidence and framework together and includes a brief look at the current state of FDI in Japan.

FDI AND CONSTRUCTIVIST INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

The focus of this paper is on FDI and thus it is first essential to define this term and differentiate FDI from other forms of investment. While definitions vary by institution, perhaps the most developed work on FDI comes from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which publishes and revises the “Benchmark Definition of Foreign Direct Investment.” The most recent edition defines FDI as “the obtainment of a lasting interest by a resident entity in one economy in an entity resident in an economy other than that of the investor.” The key term differentiating direct investment from portfolio investment is “lasting interest”, which suggests a long-term relationship between the investor and the resident entity, in which the investor has significant influence over management decisions. In numerical terms, the OECD categorizes FDI as a foreign investor owning ten percent or more of the ordinary shares or voting power in an enterprise. This differs from portfolio investment, which consists of an investment of less than ten percent and does not necessarily indicate any long-term or controlling interest by the investor. For purposes of clarity, references to investment in this paper will be based on this definition of FDI, as the implications for direct investment differ from that of lesser investment interests.

The question of what determines FDI is a more complex issue due to the number of factors involved. For example, in the previously mentioned UN study, the inward FDI performance index tested twenty-eight economic and political factors for statistical relevancy in determining investment. The most salient variables were GDP per capita, share of exports in GDP, telephone lines per 1,000 inhabitants, and GDP growth rate. In short, countries with developed economies (at least in terms of GDP per capita), established trade relations, and a high quality of infrastructure were most receptive to FDI. On the political side, country risk and corruption were the most relevant, with an inverse relationship to inward FDI. In other words, countries with a lower risk index and fewer instances of corruption were more attractive for foreign investors, according to this study.

The majority of scholarly literature on FDI comes from the economics discipline, but has produced mixed results on the determinants foreign investment. There have been two basic approaches to the study of FDI, one from a micro perspective which limits the scope to a single firm, and another from a macro perspective which studies economies as a whole. On a micro
level, the decision to invest in a foreign entity relies on factors intrinsic to a particular firm. These include cost reduction and ownership incentives to operating in a foreign market, and the decision to invest will be a reflection of the particular advantages tied to these factors. From a macro perspective, the scope of study is expanded beyond the firm and examines characteristics of markets as a whole. Factors often referenced as determinants of FDI include various barriers to entry, market size, and the political environment. The volume of literature is far too vast to be given justice in this brief section, but it is important to note that an overarching theory on the determinants of FDI has not been reached, as most studies focus on a particular industry and/or geographic region.

**FDI, Japan and Constructivist International Political Economy**

Fitting with the previously mentioned pattern, there exists a small niche of literature focused specifically on Japanese inward FDI. Because FDI in Japan has historically been so low, the studies involving Japan have mainly focused on the puzzle of why investment in Japan is so low compared to other developed countries. In Foreign Direct Investment in Japan, perhaps the most extensive volume to date on the subject, several scholars offer their take on the paucity of FDI in Japan. Thomas Jordan addresses factors such as high costs, complex distribution channels, and keiretsu relationships as barriers to investment. In addition, Ryuhei Wakusugi offers a useful analysis of how anti-competitive business practices and government regulations contributed to the prevention of FDI into Japan. However, because these studies were conducted before the recent surge of investment, they lack any explanations for changes in investment patterns. Ralph Paprzycki and Kyoji Fukao offer a more recent take on Japan, citing impenetrable keiretsu relationships, inflexible labor practices, and high costs as historical barriers, and then suggest a gradual degradation of these factors, along with deregulation of the economy, as reasons for the recent increase in investment. While these are useful observations and in line with the argument presented in this paper, the scope of their analysis is too broad to examine the underlying causes of these barriers in great depth.

From the previous literature on FDI in Japan, it is clear that scholars agree Japan is an outlier among developed economies, as the UN FDI Performance and Potential Indices suggest. In addition, there is consensus that barriers to FDI in Japan consist of cost-related factors, complex distribution channels, and anti-competitive business practices, results consistent with the METI survey of foreign firms. However, there is little reference in the literature to the social explanations behind their existence, and how normative changes brought about their subsequent demise. A more complete view would acknowledge these social constructs, and therefore the aim of this paper is not to dispute the arguments that previous authors have provided, but to place their findings in a framework that allows for the acknowledgement of the social factors involved.

The theoretical framework of constructivism has sought to explain occurrences in the international system as the result of social constructions, norms, or identities and was originally proposed as a challenge to realism in international relations. However, constructivism has moved beyond politics and into international political economy, with proponents suggesting that material or rational explanations are not sufficient in explaining the decisions of individuals, firms, and governments. This seems no more evident than in the case of Japan. During the post-war period of economic growth, many firms made efforts to protect their employees, creating short-term inflexibility. In addition, long-term buyer-supplier relationships were maintained, even when costs could be reduced by going to the market. The fact that alterations to these practices were resisted, even in the malaise of the 1990s, shows the power of the norms supporting their existence. For this reason, when attempting to explain the breakdown of barriers to FDI in Japan, it is important to consider the social aspects of this change. This is where constructivism helps fill gaps in the current literature, as the following evidence will show the role of norms in Japanese business and their impact on FDI.

**CORPORATE JAPAN IN THE POSTWAR PERIOD**

It is well known that Japan enjoyed economic success in the post-war period up until 1990. Indeed, it is even referred to as the Japanese economic “miracle.” By the time this “miracle” ended, Japan was the second largest country in the world in terms of nominal GDP. Economic growth spanning nearly four decades led to the entrenchment of business practices that came to be seen as distinctly Japanese. In particular, the
lifetime employment system and long-term business relationships became institutionalized as norms during this period. These norms were embedded in corporate Japan to the point where, in some instances, they took precedence over more economically rational decisions. For example, workers were retained and compensated based on seniority, rather than their actual contributions to profitability. In addition, management at major corporations preferred long-term keiretsu relationships, as opposed to shopping the market for cheaper suppliers. This section will examine the institutionalization of these norms, and the role of these social constructs in the Japanese economy in the post-war period.

Institutionalization of Lifetime Employment System

Scholars place the origins of Japan’s lifetime employment system in the inter-war period, from 1918-1930. In this period Japan was facing rapid industrialization while simultaneously experiencing substantial labor shortages. As work became more specific depending on the firm, companies sought to hire and retain their own employees. In addition to company training, employees were given the benefit of job security. According to Chiaki Moriguchi and Hiroshi Ono, it was during this time that employees began to expect these conditions as terms of their employment. While this is a rather brief historical summary, the key aspect of this development was the institutionalization of lifetime employment in the post-war period.

The economic success that began after World War II and continued up until the 1990s proved to be a safe haven for the lifetime employment system. A closer examination of this time period shows why this was the case. From 1960 to 1989 the Japanese per capita GDP grew at an annual average growth rate of 5.6%. In this economic environment, the system worked quite well. With the economy growing, corporations could afford to retain employees and train them for the specific needs of their corporation. In return, employees were rewarded financially based on their loyalty to the firm over the course of their career. With such benefits for both workers and firms, there was little incentive for change. These benefits showed not only the deep integration of employees and firms, but also how this integration served to buffer the lifetime employment practice.

Long-term Relationships and Cooperative Competition

In addition to the practice of lifetime employment, firms in Japan also displayed a tendency to favor long-term keiretsu relationships, which resulted in a more cooperative form of competition. These relationships came in two basic forms, horizontal and vertical. Horizontal relationships between keiretsu member firms were inter-industry groupings, where firms received financing from a “main-bank” and shares were cross-held among the group. Vertical keiretsu ties refer to the long-term buyer-supplier relationships that existed within particular industries. In short, firms displayed a tendency to receive goods from one supplier with an established relationship, rather than shopping the incentives, including job security, pensions, welfare and health benefits, and even assistance in finding a spouse. In addition, employees were trained in-house in order to develop skills specific to their firm. This combination of skills and incentives tied specifically to one firm served as a strong deterrence to move elsewhere. One result of this arrangement was the understanding of seniority-based wages for the employees. Although this tended to hinder the most talented employees, it also benefited the average employee by generally guaranteed promotions. Furthermore, the obstacles faced by trying to switch firms meant that it was in the best interests of all employees, regardless of talent, to remain at one company. In this environment, employees clearly gained from remaining at one firm for the duration of their career and lifetime employment for them became the norm.

However, this was not a one-sided deal. Firms also benefited under this system. The firms’ in-house training system allowed each firm to receive a return on their investment. In addition, since many crucial aspects of the employees’ social lives were tied to the firm, this created a loyal workforce with the firm’s interests in mind. While this system created high fixed-costs for the company, the general economic success and relationships among businesses in this time period served to mute this point. In fact, many successful Japanese corporations in this era were characterized by low profit margins, an aspect that was supported by the financial system discussed in the next section. With loyal employees and economic growth, firms had few incentives to veer from a lifetime employment system, and it became an institutionalized practice.
market. Resistance to the keiretsu style of management was taboo\(^\text{18}\) as these practices were supported by social customs such as settai (annual gatherings between buyers and suppliers), amakudari (the placement of retired bureaucrats in leadership positions in the private sector) and President’s Clubs (routine meetings between the heads of keiretsu member firms). This allowed corporations to focus on long-term growth strategies, as opposed to the more Western style of profiting to appease the shareholders of the firm. Because the economy was growing, this style of management faced little opposition and these methods of leadership became the norm.

Because of Japan’s economic success during the second half of the twentieth century, scholars have paid much attention to the Japanese style of management. According to Ronald Dore of the London School of Economics, two distinct features of Japanese management were relational trading and cooperative competition.\(^\text{19}\) Relational trading refers to the preference of long-term suppliers over the market-based system of searching for the best value. This was also the case in the financial system, where the established relationship between the bank and its keiretsu member firms took precedence over other sources of funding. The second characteristic, cooperative competition, Dore refers to as the implicit agreements among firms to limit the type of competition they choose to engage in with other firms. This practice was a common practice between keiretsu groupings, which usually had competing firms in each industry. One example of this style was that while firms competed in advertising and product differentiation, they chose to avoid price competition. As these practices continued to be implemented, resistance to other styles of management increased.

Perhaps the most well-known example of resistance to change involves a foreign investor named T. Boone Pickens. Pickens was an American oil tycoon who attempted to enter the Japanese market in 1990. After managing to acquire a 26.3% ownership stake in Koito, a Toyota subsidiary, Pickens then attempted to secure a seat on the Board of Directors. However, management resisted his efforts, suggesting that Pickens was not the type of leader they were looking for and he was only interested in short-term profits, and not the long-term future of the company.\(^\text{20}\) Even as the largest shareholder in the firm, the board voted to reject Pickens bid in favor of their previous style of management. Such management practices were manifested over three decades of economic growth, and as the Pickens case shows, established relationships between firms took precedence over the wishes of even a majority shareholder.

The Impact of Norms on FDI in Japan

The history of FDI in Japan is a reflection of these norms, as well as government policy and economic shifts. For the first three decades following World War II, investment into Japan was controlled by the government, and as it sought to promote domestic industries, it allowed very little FDI into Japan. However, the previously mentioned norms that were institutionalized during this period remained, even after government regulations on investment were lifted. The conditions created by these norms were not favorable for incoming FDI, and levels remained low. The economic change of the 1990s presented a challenge to the existing normative structures, but as they had been fostered for nearly four decades, normative change came slow. This section will trace the post-war history of FDI in Japan, and how the interplay of factors both created and dismantled a normative structure that was not conducive to investment in Japan.

A major goal of the Japanese government following World War II was to promote national autonomy and economic growth. One step in this process was the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Act of 1949, which gave the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) the power of authorization over incoming trade. Similarly, the Foreign Investment Law was enacted in 1950 in order to protect domestic companies from foreign takeover. The state also actively encouraged the formation of keiretsu as a means to prevent foreign takeovers of Japanese businesses, as member firms were bound together through cross-shareholding and supply chain relationships.\(^\text{21}\) In addition, the financial system consisted of a “main-bank” at the center of each keiretsu, and member firms received their financing through this institution. With little availability of outside funding and Japanese management promoting long-term relations, the keiretsu bonds tightened and made any entrance by a foreign entity difficult. As the keiretsu partnership system continued through the proceeding decades, foreign investment in Japan remained at a low level.

However, by the 1980s legal control over foreign investment had dwindled. The laws were revised in
1980, and from this point foreign investors only had to notify MITI of their intentions, rather than receive approval. Nevertheless, the lack of FDI persisted. Informal barriers such as long-term cross-shareholding remained in place. In addition, the rapid appreciation of the yen following the Plaza Accord of 1985, and the asset bubble that followed, increased costs in Japan for the latter half of the decade. However, even after the bubble era, FDI remained low. By the mid 1990s, stable shareholders still owned over 40% of the market value of all held shares on Japanese market, which made it difficult to acquire a lasting interest from the outside. The bank-centric finance system resulted in domestic financial institutions holding a significant amount of shares in Japanese firms, and there was little room for foreigners to enter the market. As Hideyaki Miyajima of Harvard University points out, this strategy was maintained because it was particularly effective in preventing takeovers of Japanese companies by foreign investors. In fact, from 1991 to 1995, annual FDI flows into Japan averaged a 1% decrease over the previous year’s amount. The practices that were effective in fostering domestic growth in Japan for nearly four decades were still being implemented in the 1990s, despite a drastically different economic environment.

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND INWARD FDI

It is clear from the previous section that government policies were effective in preventing FDI into Japan during the period of economic growth, but when economic imperatives shifted in 1990s the government changed from a policy of prevention to one of promotion. This shift was clear as early as 1994, when the Japan Investment Council was formed as a forum for government and business leaders to come together for the purpose of increasing FDI in Japan. Efforts further increased under Prime Minister Koizumi, who in 2003 enacted a plan to double FDI in Japan within five years. However, while government policy change was essential in paving the way for investment into Japan in the 1980s, the actual pattern of FDI inflows does not necessarily mirror the government’s promotion efforts in the 1990s. A closer look at these two major initiatives shows that government is only part of the story behind FDI in Japan.

The Japan Investment Council

A key indicator of the Japanese government’s attitude towards inward FDI was the formation of the Japan Investment Council (JIC) in 1994. The duties of this council are defined as “collecting opinions on improving the investment environment” and “disseminating information on related measures for promoting investment.” Through this council, the Japanese government brings together the Prime Minister and cabinet members in order to discuss measures for increasing FDI into Japan. These measures included tax law revisions to attract foreign companies, increased publicity of Japan as a destination for FDI, and subsidies for investors in certain industries such as technology and design. These were the most substantial steps taken by the Japanese government regarding inward FDI since reforming the investment and trade laws in 1980, and showed that the government realized the viability of foreign investment as a tool for economic growth in the future.

However, while the JIC was formed in 1994, it did not produce immediate results. As mentioned before, inflows of FDI in Japan decreased from 1991 to 1995, and remained stagnant the following year. It was not until five years later, in 1999, that FDI inflows saw a major increase, nearly quadrupling in number from $3.3 billion to $12.3 billion in a one-year span. This initial boom continued into the 2000s, leading to the doubling of FDI stock in Japan over the previously mentioned period of 2001-2007. While the JIC’s measures certainly helped ease the flow of investment into Japan, the timing suggests that other factors were involved as well. The global M&A wave in the late 1990s certainly contributed to this pattern, but it was also not until the late 1990s that the normative changes discussed in this paper began to occur and made Japan a more attractive place to invest, as well.

“The Promotion of Inward FDI into Japan”

By 2003, the investment wave into Japan had begun, and despite a lull in 2001 following a global recession, FDI into Japan remained at a stable level. This same year, the Japanese government launched “The Promotion of Inward FDI into Japan,” its second major initiative aimed at increasing investment. As part of its formation, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi announced in his annual policy speech that he sought to double inward FDI into Japan over the next five years. Included with this promotion were several recommendations and objectives for increasing investment opportunities. These included new investment vehicles for foreign investors such as cross-border equity swaps and investing
through Japanese limited liability partnerships. These were designed to make it easier for foreign investors to acquire shares in Japanese corporations and offered tax incentives when choosing this type of vehicle. Koizumi’s promotion was the most significant support given to foreign investment by a prime minister in the post-war period, and was a reflection of the Japanese government’s changing attitude towards FDI.

However, once again government initiatives appear to be only part of the picture. By the time Koizumi introduced his proposal, investment into Japan had already begun flowing in at stable levels. At this time, Japan was already becoming a more competitive market and barriers to FDI were already being reduced. The measures introduced in “The Promotion of Inward FDI into Japan” may have been beneficial for foreign investors, but the numbers suggest that they did not have a substantial impact. FDI inflows into Japan actually decreased slightly following their introduction in 2003, and remained steady until 2007, when another surge of investment came into Japan. This second major initiative was certainly a bold statement by the government, particularly with its visible support of the Prime Minister, but its effects on investment into Japan are less clear, and suggest that similarly to the JIC, other factors were also in play.

**Evolving Norms and Investment Opportunities**

The prolonged recession of the 1990s brought much change to Japan and long-held norms in Japanese business began to break down. In particular, the lifetime employment structure with a seniority based wage system, a staple of corporate growth strategy in the post-war period, faced resistance as firms were struggling to survive in a sluggish economy. Changes to this system were initially resisted due to their social support, but as the statistics in this section will show, the use of this system was diminishing by the late 1990s and into the 2000s. Firms now supported flexibility in favor of long-term employment. In addition, Japanese companies begrudgingly began to rid themselves of relationships that were not cost-efficient. The hiring of Carlos Ghosn in Renault’s takeover of Nissan in 1999 jumpstarted this trend, and his actions in the restructuring of the company set a precedent for moves of this kind. Ghosn employed tactics that rid the firm of long-term keiretsu relationships, and this technique spread to other corporations in Japan. The 1990s were a time of change concerning the structure and manner in which Japanese business was done, and the resulting changes led to a more competitive marketplace. Inflexible costs, complex distribution channels, and anti-competitive business practices, all mentioned as barriers to foreign investment in the METI survey of foreign firms, were no longer as prevalent in this new business environment, and it was during this time that the flow of investment into Japan began to increase.

**Lifetime Employment Breakdown**

The downturn of the economy following the burst of the asset bubble, and the prolonged stagnation that followed, placed great pressure on Japanese firms in the 1990s. The previous system of bank-centered finance posed problems, as many banks were laden with toxic debt as a result of the bubble economy. As firms sought new growth strategies and aimed to cut costs, the lifetime employment system became a prime target. This system had benefited Japanese corporations in a growing economy as it allowed firms to sacrifice short-term gains in favor of long-term growth, but the pressure to perform in the new economic environment no longer afforded firms this benefit. The norm of lifetime employment, institutionalized over the course of the post-war period, was being challenged by the economic forces at play in the 1990s.

However, normative pressure to maintain the system remained and change did not come immediately. Many firms resisted an abandonment of lifetime employment, as evidenced in a 1993 survey of Japanese corporate executives who claimed that the top priority as a leader was to “protect the employment and lifestyle of workers.” As an alternative, corporations sought new techniques to curb costs and increase productivity. For example, as opposed to laying-off employees, some firms chose to transfer employees within the company to increase productivity. Case studies done by Takao Kato in 1997 show that manufacturing firms were engaged in such activities in the early 1990s. One firm relocated 2,000 employees on one-year terms through its various divisions and another moved over 3,000 employees from 1991 to 1993 on three-year fixed rotations through its departments. Labor statistics from the early 1990s also show that resistance to change was present. Even with pressure to move away from permanent employees, the percentage of the labor force in non-permanent positions only moved from 20% in 1990 to 22% in 1996.
However, by the late 1990s and into the 2000s, firms finally showed a willingness to move away from lifetime employment. Attitudes towards lifetime employment among Japanese executives were markedly different from those in the 1993 survey, where firms’ top priority was to protect its workers. In a 2003 survey of 1000 Japanese firms, the average firm planned to reduce new-graduate hires by 7% and increase experienced, mid-career hires by 9%.35 Similarly, in a 2004 survey of corporate attitudes towards lifetime employment, the most popular response was that adjustments to the system were required.36 Firms during this time period were becoming more flexible in cost and focused in their growth strategy. It should also be noted that extraneous factors also contributed to increased labor flexibility. For example, a 2004 revision to the Labor Standards Law made it easier for firms to rid themselves of employees, even ones still on the implicit guarantee of lifetime employment. This increased flexibility is evidenced in the percentage of non-permanent employees in the labor force, which saw a significant increase from 24% in 1998 to 34% in 2006.37 Lifetime employment, a norm that was resistant to change in Japan, was beginning to break down and the results were more flexible and efficient firms, not burdened with the high-fixed costs of the previous era.

Breakdown of Long-term Relationships

By the late 1990s the postwar Japanese style of management was in dire need of change. As mentioned in the previous section, firms faced increasing pressure to cut costs and traditional management practices such as long-term buyer supplier relationships and cross-shareholding were no longer the optimal way to run business. However, because these practices had been institutionalized into the Japanese corporate culture, many firms were reluctant to change. Cost-cutting techniques such as severing keiretsu ties were initially opposed by Keidanren, the Japanese Business Federation, because they were deemed “detrimental to Japan’s social fabric.”38 The system of long-term relationships and cooperative competition had been in place for so long, it was hard to find leaders willing to make necessary changes to the existing system. That is, until the late 1990s.

Perhaps the most influential man in Japanese business in recent memory is Carlos Ghosn, a French-Brazilian who took over the struggling automaker Nissan in early 1999. One characteristic of Nissan, and of other Japanese automakers, was their established relationships with their suppliers. However, due to the long-term nature of these dealings, such relationships had developed slack over time. Therefore, one of the first moves made by Ghosn was to sever ties between Nissan and over 600 suppliers he deemed to be operating below optimal cost-efficiency.39 In addition, Nissan was also engaged in cross-shareholding relationships with over 1,400 firms, and one tenet of Ghosn’s Nissan Revival Plan was to reduce this number down to a mere four. These moves were initially shocking to the Japanese public and were met with heavy resistance. As Keidanren’s opposition showed, there were fears that the “social fabric” of Japanese business would be disturbed.

However, it was not just Ghosn that had an impact on management style in Japan. Mazda is another example of a major Japanese firm engaged in similar techniques in the late 1990s. This trend spread outside of the automotive industry and Japanese leaders began mimicking Ghosn’s style of management. Leaders in the electronics and manufacturing industries began severing ties with suppliers, albeit more subtly than the overhaul happening in the automotive industry.40 This shift in management style stood in stark contrast to the traditional Japanese style of relational trading and cooperative competition, with Ghosn serving as a catalyst to challenge this norm. Previously impenetrable networks of suppliers were now freed up to a more competitive open market, and as a result Japan became a more attractive place for foreign investment.

Increase of FDI into Japan

Revisiting the UN FDI performance and potential indices from the first section, these suggested that Japan possessed an economy capable of receiving foreign investment in the 1990s, but was performing below expectations. The reason behind Japan’s low performance can be drawn from METI survey of foreign firms, which listed the top factors historically inhibiting FDI into Japan as (in order) cost-related issues, tough customer demands, high tax rates, complex distribution channels, and anti-competitive business practices. However, Japan in the 1990s was a market undergoing a dramatic transition. Changes discussed in this paper include government initiatives, which aimed to lower tax rates for foreign firms and deregulate industry to make a more competitive marketplace. These certainly played a role in making Japan a more attractive place
for foreign investment. However, this explanation is incomplete without addressing the evolving social fabric of Japanese business. Movements away from the lifetime employment system and traditional Japanese management practices, such as long-term keiretsu relationships, helped create more flexible, cost-efficient firms and cleared up complex distribution channels. These changes faced initial resistance, as their practice was deeply rooted in Japanese social custom, but the eventual change in how businesses operate in Japan made the market a more competitive destination for foreign investment. This is shown through a dramatic increase in FDI in the late 1990s and into the 2000s.

Ulrike Schaede describes the period from 1998-2006 as an inflection point for Japan.\(^\text{41}\) It was during this window that the Japanese marketplace was undergoing dramatic change, with firms becoming leaner and more competitive, and the Japanese economy receiving an infusion of foreign competition. Much of this competition came in the form of FDI, as the following numbers from the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) show.\(^\text{42}\) From 1991-97 the gross annual flow of FDI into Japan (not counting disinvestment) averaged $4.6 billion, but in 1998 FDI flow nearly doubled from the previous year to an all-time high of $10.5 billion. This more than doubled again the next year, with $21.5 billion worth of FDI flowing into Japan in 1999, and $28.3 billion coming in 2000. The global economic downturn beginning in 2001 brought the amount of FDI down to an average of $17 billion over the next three years, but in 2004 the value of FDI coming into Japan reached $37.5 billion. Correspondingly, FDI stock in Japan was also increasing during this time period. At the end of 1998, the value of FDI stock in Japan totaled $26.2 billion, but by 2000 this number had increased to $50.3 billion, and by 2005 reached over $100 billion. The numbers show a clear upward trend in FDI during this time frame, and stand in stark contrast to the paucity of foreign investment for the majority of the post-war period.

A closer look at the investment statistics during this time period shows which sectors of the economy were more receptive to FDI. These numbers are indicative of the changes taking place in Japanese business. While investment was increasing across the board, the manufacturing sector, where many vertical keiretsu ties were being cut, initially received FDI at a higher rate than the non-manufacturing sector. From the JETRO investment statistics, gross FDI flows into the manufacturing sector from 1998-2000 increased by 293%, with machinery receiving the most investment in this category.\(^\text{43}\) Non-manufacturing FDI increased at a slightly lower rate of 263% initially, but by 2004 FDI into this sector had reached an annual flow of over four times the amount seen in 1998. Within non-manufacturing industries, the finance and insurance sector, where traditional practices such as long-term cross-shareholding were being phased out, saw the most investment. This was followed by the trading and service sectors. As a whole, the Japanese economy felt reverberations from the global recession in 2001, and FDI into Japan did not continue to increase at rates seen in the late 1990s. However, once the world economy recovered, significant investment into Japan continued until 2008. Over the decade-long boom, FDI stock in Japan increased to a value just over $200 billion, nearly eight times the amount recorded in 1998.

**CONCLUSION: CONSTRUCTIVISM, NORMS, AND FDI IN JAPAN**

In concluding this analysis, it is important to revisit the theoretical framework of constructivist political economy, and show how the case of Japan fits into this mold. Once again, the key concept in this emerging niche of scholarship is that economic outcomes are not just the result of material factors, but are also a reflection of social factors that cannot necessarily be measured in real terms. Japanese firms in the post-war period were rife with social constructs supporting the way firms conducted business for nearly four decades. These included management styles favoring lifetime employment, long-term relationships with suppliers and financiers, and cooperative competition, all of which created an environment not conducive to foreign investment. While these tactics were not without economic benefits during the growth period, they contained inherent inefficiencies that became exposed when the economic environment changed in the 1990s. However, even in the face of hardship, firms were resistant to change these methods, as shown by their slow adaptation to the new landscape in the 1990s. It was only after the eventual disintegration of these norms that the outcome produced was an increase of FDI into Japan, and to ignore this fact by solely focusing on material explanations results in an incomplete argument.

The new business environment in Japan is...
characterized by more flexible firms that now engage in relationships based on cost-efficiency, rather than long-term stability in order to compete. Studies such as the METI survey of foreign firms suggest that these are characteristics that are favored by foreign investors, and the eradication of post-war styles of Japanese management have broken down previous barriers to FDI in Japan. However, even with these changes taking place, Japan is not immune to trends in the global economy nor has it become an investment haven to rival other leaders in inward FDI. Rates of investment have dropped significantly following the global recession in 2009, and the rapid appreciation of the yen in recent years has resulted in the increase of Japanese outward FDI, while adversely impacting inward investment. In addition, Japan remains an expensive place to do business and still has a corporate tax rate high enough to ward off many potential investors. For these reasons, the FDI boom did not last indefinitely and foreign investment in Japan is still considered fairly low in global comparison.

Even so, an eight-fold increase in FDI stock in 10 years from 1998 to 2008 cannot be ignored. Long known for its outward investment, Japan has now joined the global economy as a legitimate destination for foreign investment in the 21st century. The protective policies of its government in the post-war period have switched to ones of FDI promotion, and the business environment is changing to suit the needs of foreign investors. Gone are the impenetrable distribution channels, anti-competitive practices, and rigid cost structures of firms. These management styles were supported by social constructs developed in the post-war period of economic growth, and become known as distinctly Japanese. However, their demise in the 1990s, resulted in foreign investment levels never before seen in Japan, a country that has received much attention for its historical insularity and at times contentious economic relations with the outside world.

ENDNOTES

10. Thomas F. Jordan, “The Future of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan”, in M. Yoshitomi and


22. Anchordoguy, Reprogramming Japan, 47.


25. Miyajima and Kuroki, Corporate Governance in Japan, 1.


38. Schaede, Choose and Focus, 180.

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41. Schaede, Choose and Focus, 149.

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The world is becoming increasingly globalized, and boundaries between countries are starting to blur in terms of economic, industrial, and social activities. Some academics believe that nationalistic ideologies have no place in a globalized community, since the environment is now much more open to blending cultures and politics, etc. However, South Korea (hereafter “Korea”) is one example of a country that remains nationalistic while also steadily globalizing for the past 25 years or so. This supports the argument made by other scholars, who claim that nationalism can remain strong in certain countries while achieving globalization, and even that nationalism and globalization can strengthen each other.

In Korea, the government has directly been utilizing globalization to promote national interests. This can be seen, for example, in the worldwide promotion of Korean food. The Korean government is working to globalize Korean cuisine and to make it internationally renowned, and at the same time it is touting the benefits and positives of Korean food, which encourages a nationalistic feeling among Korean people. Thus, nationalism and globalization can work together, and I argue that one supports the other with respect to the promotion of Korean cuisine.

GLOBALIZATION AND NATIONALISM

Globalization is generally defined as describing “the increasing interconnectivity and interdependence of the world in political, social, cultural, economic, and environmental terms.” Globalization first began with the Age of Discovery in the 16th century, and then it grew substantially after the Napoleonic wars via international trade. With respect to Korea, globalization first became an important ideology when Kim Young Sam was president in the 1990s. In 1994, Kim publicly announced Korea’s drive for globalization, and the government began to implement economic reforms with respect to the global economy.

On an international scale, globalization is currently thriving. Reasons for this may include recent technological advancements, as well as the reduction of trade barriers and international migration. Korea has also continued to globalize from the 1990s through today, and is experiencing the positive effects of doing so—the economy was internationally ranked as having the thirteenth largest GDP in 2011. Furthermore, Korea is a world leader in digital technology, and Korean students are studying abroad more than ever (Koreans make up the fourth-largest foreign student population in U.S. colleges). In the present day, Korea is heavily globalized and involved in the international community.

Korea has globalized by being mindful of worldwide societies and economies, but has managed to maintain its own identity at the same time. While some scholars believe that nationalism does not have a place in a globalized community, many Koreans believe that they can utilize foreign ideas while preserving Korean culture and structure. Furthermore, they say that nationalism still exists in Korea and influences the culture, politics, and values, even while achieving globalization. President Kim Young Sam was a large proponent of globalization, but also stated that Koreans could only become global citizens by understanding their own culture and national identity. Kim therefore meant that nationalism was a prerequisite for a successful global movement. The government proceeded to endorse nationalistic Korean cultural programs and events with the ultimate goal of achieving globalization.

While globalization in Korea happens partially by being aware of international influences, it also occurs when Korea puts its own effects outside of the country. For example, there are many Korean companies that manufacture cellular phones that began as local corporations, but are now known all over the world. These companies have become very successful, partially due to overseas sales. This success has stirred nationalistic feelings in Korea. Several Koreans have “expressed loyalty and affection for [a Korean phone manufacturer], and said that they were proud of the firm’s technological achievements.” Not only are Koreans loyal to Korean-made phones, but some people are even pressured to use such phones at work to support the national economy. While they feel loyal to phones produced in their homeland, they also feel...
Globalization of Korean Food

proud and happy that these companies are performing well internationally.

Globalization is not simply about politics and economics, but also about sharing a nation’s culture with the rest of the world. The “Korean Wave” is a major cultural phenomenon where Korean pop culture (such as music and movies) became popular in the rest of Asia and then around the world. After Korean pop culture made an international impact, there were spin-off effects that made Korean food, language, and tourism in Korea more popular as well. According to one article written about the Korean Wave, Korean people are very proud of seeing their culture become well-known around the world.

Korea is not only trying to use globalization to encourage nationalism in Korea, but abroad as well. There has recently been a proliferation of the idea that a person with Korean blood is Korean, no matter where in the world that person resides. This idea was embodied in law in 1999, when the government enacted The Act Regarding the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans, which was meant to create Korean networks for citizens living abroad. These networks are meant for Koreans to pre-serve their ethnic identity abroad, thus using globalization to strengthen communications between Koreans around the world.

Whether influences are coming into the country or permeating the international space, whether the people live within Korea or abroad, globalization is arguably increasing (or at least confirming) feelings of nationalism among Koreans. “National and global forces do not necessarily contradict each other; rather, they are readily compatible and interactive. This is because globalization can be appropriated for national interests and globalization can intensify, rather than weaken, national consciousness.” In this paper, I will show that Korea’s promotion of Korean food is one example of nationalism being channeled to enhance the globalization of Korean food, and that this globalization in turn is promoting nationalism among Koreans.

Scholars have already analyzed the recent increase in globalization of Korean food, noting the beneficial effects of bringing Korean cuisine into the international scene, and examining how Korea is trying to further globalize its food. However, there does not appear to be much discussion regarding globalization of Korean food with respect to Korean nationalism. At least one paper discusses the concept briefly, mainly to point out that globalizing Korean food has acted as a “brand image” for Korea. My paper will further discuss the effects of globalizing Korean cuisine, and will flesh out the idea that exporting Korean food overseas acts to strengthen Korea’s national identity. My paper will also analyze the potential concerns and issues that could result (or have already resulted) from Korea’s simultaneous nationalistic and global approach to its cuisine.

Korean Cuisine: An Introduction

What is Korean food? The question is more difficult to answer than one might think, because to define a national cuisine is also to define a national consensus, history, different customs and preferences, and uniqueness, among other things. Regional differences in food raise questions about what Korean food really is, and one could ask whether one must be of Korean descent to create a Korean dish, for example. Furthermore, if a dish using Korean ingredients and foods was invented in France, some people may believe it is an authentically Korean food, while others may not. The aforementioned questions are not simply thought experiments, since in places such as Japan, many in the food industry are concerned about the authenticity of Japanese cuisine, and whether any dish or its ingredients are Japanese enough. One successful Japanese chef and entrepreneur has determined that as long as the fundamentals of a dish are Japanese, “new Japa-nese dishes can be created anywhere in the world.”

Some people might say that Korean food is what most Korean people eat at home, or what Koreans normatively determine is their national food. Ultimately, even though there are regional and historical variations in cooking methods and food materials, the basic meal structure and range of food ingredients are similar, and the differences are small enough that a national cuisine can be loosely determined by focusing on foods that the general public commonly recognizes as Korean.

Korean food was originally heavily influenced by the Chinese empire, which probably brought rice farming (around 4 B.C.) and food pickling techniques (sometime between 57 B.C. and 935 A.D.) into the country. Korean BBQ, which is extremely popular today, came to Korea when the Mongols spread across Asia in the 1200s. One of the most well-known Korean foods, kimchi, was created around 1800.

Until the late Chosun dynasty (in the late 1800s), Korean food differed depending on the region.
after, cuisine from the southwest region of Korea (Chollado) became dominant throughout the entire nation. While there are still some regional variations in the food, the basic meal structure is now similar all over Korea.\textsuperscript{21} Korean cuisine is generally divided into bap (rice) and banchan (“side” dishes), and soup is also considered to be part of a normal meal. Meals are prepared by many methods (grilling, frying, bak-ing, etc.), but one practice that is absolutely fun-damental to Korean cuisine is fermentation—both kimchi and jang (fermented soybean sauce) is used in a majority of meals.\textsuperscript{24} In fact, kimchi is probably the one dish that enters most non-Koreans’ minds when asked to think about Ko-rean food.

The kimchi of today is very different from the first kimchi made in Korea. Before red pep-pers were introduced into the country, kimchi basically consisted of salted radishes. During the Koryo dynasty (918-1392), Chinese cabbage was used more often, as well as garlic and other spices.\textsuperscript{25} Around the 1800s, the style of kimchi that is popular today was developed. Red peppers were introduced, and soy sauce (along with salt) was introduced as a kimchi preservative. Today, there are over 200 different types of kimchi.

For the most part, Korean food is known to be relatively healthy. It is not generally oily, and often calls for fresh vegetables or fermented pickles. Vegetables play an important role in Ko-rean cuisine. They are always present at every meal, whether as a side dish or in a soup, whether cooked or uncooked, seasoned or unseasoned. And while Korean BBQ is popular today, histori-cally Korean meals involved less meat, with the exception of fish. The nature of Korean food may be one reason why Korean people have relatively low rates of obesity and circulatory disease.\textsuperscript{26}

Although globalization did not really take off in Korea until the 1990s, Korean food is what it is today partially due to globalization. Several spices that are frequently used in Korean cooking (and have been for centuries) originate from other parts of the world.\textsuperscript{27} China is not the only country to provide ingredients, but sesame oil from Af-rica, garlic from Southern Europe and Central Asia, and chili from Central America, for exam-ple. One ingredient that is vital to most Korean cooking comes from abroad: the red pepper. Red peppers are the reason much Korean food has a spicy kick.

Whereas globalization may have influ-enced Korean cooking throughout the centuries, Korean food has taken a little longer to find a place in global cuisine. Even Chinese food, which is now ubiquitous in the United States, was not well-received in years past.\textsuperscript{28} In 1876, a tour guide noted that Chinese food can be “exotic and rare, but sometimes also disgusting…” and Chi-nese restaurants were considered unsanitary until the 1930s.\textsuperscript{29} Korean food did not escape the scorn of American diners as late as the 1980s and 1990s, particularly kimchi (pickled cabbage), which has a distinctly strong odor. Kimchi was made fun of in old television series (like the popular 1980s sitcom M*A*S*H) and seen as strange, unclean, and smelly. Korean people even thought that their food might be too spicy and garlicky for the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{30}

However, the Korean government began promoting its spiciest, garlickiest food—kimchi—within Korea in the 1980s, and Korean people started to feel proud of this fermented cabbage dish as their own. One example of Ko-rean nationalism towards food occurred during the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Japan sought to name “kimuchi”, its version of kimchi, as an offic-ial Olympic food.\textsuperscript{31} Korea protested, and took its case to the Codex Alimentarius (which deter-mines international standards relating to food), which ruled that the Korean recipe for kimchi should be designated as the international stan-dard.

Korea has since sought to globalize kim-chi. Internationally watched events such as the 1988 Seoul Olympics and the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup have allowed the government to pre-sent kimchi to the global community as Korea’s national food.\textsuperscript{32} Americans have slowly become more accepting of kimchi, to the point where the senior editor of Food Arts magazine has said that kimchi may become the next salsa.\textsuperscript{33}

Korean food has developed through the centuries via a combination of traditional culture and tastes, and foreign ingredients and influences. It is known for being healthy, spicy, and vegeta-ble-heavy. Korea didn’t make a concerted effort to globalize until the mid-1990s, but as globaliza-tion continued, Korean people began to think of their food in an international sense, particularly with respect to a sense of national pride and iden-tity.\textsuperscript{34} Korean food already integrates many in-redients from around the world, and now Korea is trying to share its fare with the international community and put its food in the world’s top five ethnic cuisines.

**THE GLOBALIZATION OF KOREAN FOOD**
The national cuisines of many countries have found
Globalization of Korean Food

Kim Yoon-Ok, the First Lady of South Korea, has also taken a large interest in Korea’s project to globalize Korean food. For example, she went to New York City to advise Korean chefs and restaurant owners in the area about how to promote Korean food there. She suggested that restaurant owners consider training foreign non-Korean chefs, who could make Korean food more popular outside the community by making the food more palatable to American tastes. She also suggested that Korean restaurants not serve a smorgasbord of different types of foods, but to specialize in one or two dishes to attract more customers. It is unclear whether her advice has been taken, but Kim has continued to participate in the Korean Cuisine to the World campaign by doing things from writing a Korean food cook-book, to making pajun (Korean seafood and scal-lion pancakes) for a group of American veterans of the Korean War.

Korean food has continued to become more popular abroad, especially in the United States. Los Angeles hosted the Korean BBQ Cook Off in 2011, which featured 21 local Korean restaurants and their food. The cook-off featured a Korean BBQ Top Grill Master Compe-tition, as well as a Choco Pie Eating Contest. More than 10,000 participants came to join the festivities, and it was noted that most of the attendees were not Korean. Non-Koreans in America are continuing to enjoy Korean food. In San Francisco, people travel to Korean supermarkets to buy traditional foods such as kimchi. Some of these people even create their own fusion foods. One retired Hispanic chef reported that he enjoys buying kimchi to eat with Salvadoran pupusas.

Kimchi fusions are not an isolated culi-nary incident, but Korean food has now become so popular and integrated into American cuisine that a “new culinary form: Korean-fusion food” has emerged in the United States. These culinary fusions have appeared in America over the past few years, which illustrates the globalization of food in action. For example, there is a popular taco truck in Los Angeles called Kogi BBQ, which sells Korean-Mexican food, including kalbi tacos and kimchi quesadillas. This truck has become a national phenomenon and has inspired other Korean-Mexican dishes, such as Korean burritos, which contain kimchi-fried rice and bul-gogi, as well as salsa and cheese. Now, there are restaurants that serve bulgogi cheesesteaks, hot dogs with sautéed kimchi, and French fries (gamja) with kimchi relish. One writer suggests that “the gamja fries may foretell a day when our obese children whine after Xtreme Kimchi Dori-tos and White Castle Bulgogi Sliders.”

The government is clearly taking its Ko-rean food promotion seriously, as further evi-denced by the Korea Food Expo in 2008, which took place in Seoul. Several important govern-ment officials were in attendance, including the prime minister and the minister of food and agri-culture. The director of the Italian Culinary Insti-tute for Foreigners gave a presentation about Italian food abroad and how it has become so suc-cessful, and there were several exhibitions and events at the expo that allowed both restauran-teurs and consumers to come together and share ideas about the Korean food industry. The expo was primarily meant as an event where this shar-ing of ideas would ultimately lead to a more suc-cessful push to promote Korean cuisine in the international sphere.

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It is quite telling that Korean fusion foods are becoming popular in America. The cuisine is now recognizable enough that it can be combined with more well-known foods such as tacos or hot dogs, and identified as a “Korean taco”, etc. Ko-rean food is becoming more globalized and more popular. This is not only changing non-Koreans’ views on Korean cuisine, but it is forcing Korean people to think about their food and what it means to share it with the world. While one might say that globalization negates the need for a na-tion to be nationalistic or protective of its culture, I (and others) argue that the globalization of food could inspire a type of culinary nationalism, and that this is definitely true in the case of Korean cuisine.

**HOW NATIONALISM AND GLOBALIZATION COMBINE WITH RESPECT TO KOREAN FOOD**

As previously mentioned, in this increasingly globalized world, the boundaries (both political and geographical) that kept national cuisines within a nation have been erased. People are more interested in trying new foods, resulting in “hyper-sophisticated consumers who share in-formation and judgments in an endless stream of journals, newspapers, and blogs.” However, while these boundaries are disappearing, “more and more countries propose culinary distinction as a market of identity.” Countries are proud of their food, and use it to encourage tourism as well as the export industry. Food can bring groups together and set them apart from the rest of the world, and ethnic cuisine helps make the idea of a national group more concrete and coherent. It appears that many nations see their cuisine as a marker of identity in this new world of blurred borders. Korea is no exception.

As Korean food has become more global-ized through the years, and as Korea has become more globalized and connected in general, one might think that Korean people would become less nationalistic. However, at least one academic has commented that “[n]ational cuisines are by no means purely indigenous nor an antithesis to globalization.” In fact, I argue that globalization appears to have enhanced Korean nationalism in some ways. Of course, if a food is to be global-ized, it must be of good quality—something consumers worldwide want to eat. Since promoting Korean food in the international realm means convincing people to eat and like it, Korean in-dustries, the government, and even academics have been making a concerted effort to illustrate the positives of their cuisine, which encourages people to think highly of their food, and therefore by association, Korean culture.

For example, the Korean Food Foundation (KFF) is a government registered civil institution that aims to promote and globalize Korean food. The KFF website is found at www.hansik.org (“hansik” is simply “Korean food” in Korean), and provides a fairly comprehensive overview about different methods of promoting Korean foods. It has focused on promoting Korean cui-sine by illustrating the positive aspects of the food. The website touts the food’s “historical and nutritional values.” Furthermore, the KFF will participate in festivals and showcases to spread knowledge about Korean food and culture, conduct research about Korean food to scientifically determine its positive qualities, and provide professional culinary education to chefs who specialize in Korean food. The KFF’s research will determine the nutritional value of Korean food, and the effectiveness of Korean food in preventing health problems and disease (including high blood pressure and obesity). Thus, the KFF’s main goal is to promote Korean food all over the world, and by doing so it is continuously seeking ways to legitimize and praise Korean culture.

While the KFF is increasing knowledge and acceptance of Korean food around the world, others are trying to promote Korean food by in-ductrializing it and making it a major part of the tourism industry in Korea. The Ministry of Cul-ture and Tourism, along with the Korea Culture and Tourism Policy Institute has stated that the food culture (including service and hospitality) has not matured enough in Korea to satisfy tour-ists. Formal polls have determined that many people think that, to build more of a market for Korean food in the tourism industry, there should be a standardization of Korean recipes, as well as more policy support and promotion of Korean food. The tourism industry is likely becoming involved in the promotion of Korean food for financial reasons. The Korean food service mar-ket has been growing by over 10% annually since 2004, which has been a boon to the Korean econ-omy. If Korean food becomes more popular worldwide, foreigners may be more likely to visit Korea on vacation.

Korean people may feel nationalistic about their food partly because international ac-ceptance of Korean cuisine has positive financial effects. This makes sense, because food is ulti-mately a product that can be sold. However, food is also something that can symbolize a

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**Jane Kim**

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country’s identity. Korean people may see acceptance of their nation’s cuisine as acceptance of their nation’s culture. Food can act as the image of a nation, and thus a nation can use its cuisine to build up its image. One Korean university professor notes that “Korean cultural assets cannot be taken outside [of] Korea, but the taste of Korean food can be taken anywhere, so we should promote excellence of Korean food rigorously.”

This sense of Korean identity is also illustrated by analyzing Korean acceptance of foreign foods.

Globalization has not only taken Korean food overseas, but it has brought foreign food into Korea. Some foreign restaurant and café chains, such as Starbucks, have become quite successful in the country. However, nationalistic sentiment in Korea has sometimes made it difficult for foreign restaurants like McDonald’s to make inroads into Korea, and Korean consumers have extolled homegrown Korean rice over American hamburgers, for example. Sometimes, consuming foreign products—or even Korean products made under a foreign license—is considered unpatriotic, and companies selling purely Korean products sometimes even advertise that fact. There-fore, although the influence of foreign foods is definitely present, it appears that sometimes, globalization of foreign influences in Korea have caused Koreans to become even more nationalistic, particularly with regard to food.

One example that approaches Korean culinary nationalism head on and shows that food is tied to country is a Korean movie from 2007 called Le Grand Chef (Sik Gaek). In the film, there is a cooking competition to win the knife of the last Imperial chef, who was so loyal to Korea and the emperor that he chopped off his hand to avoid having to cook for the Japanese occupiers. The protagonist chef in the movie was incredibly nationalistic, while the antagonist (a competitor chef) came from a family that was sympathetic to the Japanese. In the final round of the contest, the two chefs must prepare a soup. While the antagonist uses a recipe that had been approved by the Japanese, the hero creates a soup that “contained the very essence of Korea.” Interestingly, at first the Korean judges are offended by what seems like such a simple dish. It is a foreigner, the Japanese emissary, who notes that “each ingredient is tied to the land, to this people, and to their history.” The outsider recognizes Korean food as Korean, and “the international context defines the national identity.” Thus, the film illustrates that globalization and nationalism can grow together.

The rise of Korean food around the world has shown that globalization and nationalism are not necessarily at odds with each other, but in fact can work together. For example, the globalization of Korean food may make Koreans feel more proud of their cuisine, and as more foreign influences come into Korea, the people may feel more of a sense of identity connected to their own nation’s food. The globalization of Korean food may also serve as a chance for Korea to make financial gains via the tourism industry or Korean restaurants abroad, and thus Koreans could try to promote Korean food for financial reasons as well. While Koreans have generally been excited about the fact that their cuisine is gaining fame worldwide, some people are criticizing the Korean food promotion movement, and I will discuss this in the next section.

**KOREAN FOOD PROMOTION: CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS**

While the Korean government appears very dedicated to promoting Korean food overseas, not all Koreans see the need for the campaign. Some critics say that the promotion has been unsuccessful, is expensive, and is wasting taxpayers’ money. One Korean-American student scoffed at the idea of the campaign making inroads in America: “I think the restaurants here can speak for themselves…[g]overnments can’t tell people what to like.” While some people don’t see the need to consciously develop programs to promote Korean food, others agree with the programs but have other gripes about the methods that are being used to globalize Korean cuisine.

In 2009, a major Korean newspaper published an article proposing that the Korean rice wine drink “makgeolli” should change its Romanized spelling to mauggoli, makgcoli, or makoli. The article stated that non-Koreans could mispronounce the word due to the current spelling, and say “mak-jolee” instead of “mak-kolee”. Critics of this article think that changing the name would be confusing and costly. The current spelling is already accepted, and searching “makgeolli” in Google brings up 75,800 hits. Major international organizations recognize the current spelling, and an effort to change that might make it more difficult for non-Koreans to find out about the drink. One critic notes that “[m]akgeolli is an example of how Korea has a lot of fervor and passion to globalize, but has yet to do...
The spelling of Korean foods as presented to the rest of the world is not just the topic of one article in a Korean newspaper. Some Koreans are pushing to stop putting two consecutive consonants in food names, because it is unappealing. “Pizza and spaghetti would be sole exceptions. In my view, people tend to get bad impressions from bizarre names like kimchi jjigae,” said one New York restaurant manager. He also complained that names like kimchi soup or kimchi stew would be better, but “[f]or some reason…the Seoul administration sticks to jjigae and does not listen to the grassroots uproar.” Apparently, the KFF is planning to publish a standardized Romanization for Korean food to make it easier for people to recognize and learn about. This list will be delivered to governmental organizations, educational institutions, and restaurants.

Still more critics have been complaining that Korean side dishes (banchan) keep people from fully enjoying Korean food. These side dishes involve many small bowls of things like kimchi, sliced cucumbers, noodles, mung beans, potatoes, etc. and some think these are too heavy for appetizers. Since customers fill up on banchan, the criticism is that they are already half-full by the time they get their main course. Another objection lies in food presentation. Critics say that Korean restaurants make their food look like “low-priced, second-string food, which attracts customers with quantity rather than quality.” Some say that banchan should be done away with altogether, and that more focus must be put on food presentation.

While there is some criticism of the way that the government is promoting Korean food abroad, it seems like most people are supportive of the campaign. Some say that while the government’s plan is expensive, it will all be worth it in the long run when Korean food has become popular (and presumably lucrative) in foreign countries. And seeing as Korean food is becoming increasingly widespread in America and other countries, it appears that the campaign has been relatively successful thus far.

**CONCLUSION**

Korean food has been globalizing for centuries—the cuisine has been influenced by cooking techniques and ingredients from all around the world. However, it is only recently that Korea has made a concerted effort to put its food in the international realm. The Korean government has expended millions of dollars on its “Korean Cuisine to the World” campaign, and First Lady Kim Yoon-Ok has taken a personal interest in promoting Korean food. The campaign appears to be at least somewhat successful, as more non-Koreans around the world are eating and enjoying Korean cuisine than ever before—so much so that Korean fusion dishes (Korean-Mexican food, Korean-American food, etc.) are popping up in Western countries.

As Korean food has become more popular around the world, the Korean government has been trying to put its cuisine into the top five ethnic foods in the world. The Korean citizenry has become aware of this goal, and many people are trying to help promote Korean food. Korea has also been using its cuisine to distinguish itself from other countries, and extolling its taste, complexity and health benefits as a source of pride. While some scholars insist that globalization comes with a lack of nationalism, it appears that the globalization of Korean food has spurred nationalistic feelings amongst the Korean people, resulting in even more globalization of the cuisine.

Others have shown that globalization and nationalism can work hand in hand, and in this paper, I have demonstrated that the concept holds true with respect to the globalization of Korean food. As we continue to study subjects such as Korea’s nationalistic approach to its cuisine or Korea’s globalization of its ethnic dishes, our understanding of Korean culture itself is enhanced. Analyzing these things allow us to see how a group of people view themselves with respect to their own country as well as foreign countries. Perhaps in the future, studies could be done that further analyze the effects that Korea’s approach to its food have had on the country and its people.
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Jane N. Kim, J.D. 2012, has won the 1st Annual Korean Studies Writing Prize with her paper titled “The Globalization of Korean Food.” Jane was born in Seattle and attended college at the University of Washington. Before coming to Stanford, she obtained her PhD in molecular biology from Yale Uni-versity. Now, she has just graduated from Stanford Law School with the goal of becoming a patent lawyer in the bioscience field.
Korea and Taiwan had both been occupied and colonized by Japan during the first half of the twentieth century. Japan established a replica of the Japanese bureaucracy, police, education, and judicial system in two colonies but pursued contrasting domestic colonial policies in the degree of exploitation and assimilation. While the colonial policies in Korea were more abrupt and aggressive, those in Taiwan were accredited by more cooperative and mutually beneficial features. Such different ruling approaches resulted in the varying levels and political orientations of nationalist movements toward the Japanese colonial rule. Koreans had a much stronger sense of anti-Japanese prejudices and the nationalist resistance persisted throughout the whole colonial period. Taiwanese, on the other hand, adopted a more compliant course and kept their goals moderate enough to avoid open confrontation with the colonial government. This paper examines the reasons for such homogeneity as well as diversity in the ways Japan ruled its colonies through a comparative study of nationalist movements in Korea and Taiwan.

INTRODUCTION

Korea and Taiwan were the two most prominent colonies of Japan. The Qing Dynasty ceded Taiwan to Japan in 1895 following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, while Korea became a Japanese colony informally in 1905 and formally in 1910. Both countries gained independence from Japanese colonization after Japan’s defeat in World War II in 1945.

Among all the colonies of Japan, Korea and Taiwan were the only two colonies that organized nationalist movements, although both nations gained some economic development under Japanese rule. However, Korea presented a greater nationalist resistance to Japan than Taiwan did. During the colonial period, Taiwanese adopted a more restrained course and kept their goals moderate enough to avoid open confrontation with the colonial government. Koreans, on the other hand, used every means - moderate as well as radical - to achieve their goal of national independence. Even today, Korea has reserved its nationalist point of view towards Japan. As a result, Korean historiography tends to regard any positives deriving from Japanese imperialism as incidental to the ruthless pursuit of Japanese interests. Many Taiwanese, in contrast, have looked upon their colonial experience as a rea-sonably happy and nostalgic, while welcoming the Japanese presence as a favorable alternative to a Chinese one. Thus, Taiwanese consider Japanese acts as having improved the quality of life in Taiwan, and thereby hold a much more pro-Japanese sentiment.

Why was the Japanese occupation of Korea ultimately met with high levels of resistance and national animosity by the Korean masses? Why did the Japanese occupation of Taiwan not generate the same anti-Japanese prejudices that existed in Korea, but instead intensified the fervor of existing anti-Chinese sentiments, ultimately creating a uniquely Taiwanese identity?

In ruling Korea and Taiwan, the Japanese had adopted identical systems but different policies. Korea and Taiwan too held almost identical political structures, education systems and policy agendas. However, there were several differences in the colonial policies adopted by the two colonial governments. This paper aims to examine such homogeneity as well as diversity through a comparative study of Japanese rule in Korea and Taiwan.

KOREA AND TAIWAN AS COLONIES OF JAPAN

As the first colony of Japan, Taiwan was the third largest colony within the empire. The island was important to Japan in two ways. First, it served as an important training ground for numerous colonial officials who provided the empire with valuable experiences in administering the other colonies. The success of Japan in ruling its first colony, Taiwan, set an
example for other colonies to follow. Moreover, Taiwan was the most profitable colony within the Japanese empire. Taiwan’s sugar industry enabled Japan to become the fourth largest cane sugar industry producer of the world. As a result, Taiwan achieved the goal of financial self-sufficiency within seven years. Meanwhile, other Japanese colonies took a longer time to achieve this status, and Korea never stopped receiving subsidies from Tokyo throughout the thirty-five years of Japanese rule.7

Korea was the largest colony within the Japanese colonial empire. Its uniqueness lay in the fact that it was annexed not as a result of victory in foreign war but by a treaty agreement, which guaranteed “equal treatment” for Koreans. An unusually large number of Koreans served in the colonial government at all levels - even the police force. Korea was also a unique colony to Japan, as it was the only colony of Japan, which possessed a strong cultural identity and a history of more than two thousand years as an independent nation.8

The Koreans and Taiwanese both shared similar origins and values with their colonial rulers. Korea and Taiwan, like Japan, received strong influences from Confucianism, which spread from China. This in turn created a sense of cultural affinity between the colonizers and the colonized. Thus, the Japanese vigorously promoted its assimilation policy in these two colonies. In the 1930s, the Japanese intensified its efforts in assimilating the Koreans and Taiwanese and inaugurated the Kominka Movements (kominka undō 皇民化運動) in both colonies around the same time. They were also the only two colonies where nationalist movements were organized setting the two colonies apart from the rest of the Japanese colonies.9 Thus, the similarity of the colonial experience of the two colonies and their uniqueness within the Japanese colonial empire provide us with good cases for a comparative study.

REACTION AND RESPONSE OF KOREANS AND TAIWANESE

The Taiwanese reaction and response to the Japanese imperial undertakings differed dramatically from the situation in Korea, and for many people of Taiwanese background, the Japanese occupation manifested itself in the form of a pro-Japanese, anti-Chinese prejudice, rather than the undeniable anti-Japanese sentiment generated in Korea. This is supported further by the argument below:

“Unlike the Koreans, who vehemently detested and tenaciously opposed the Japanese and their colonial occupation, the Taiwanese are said to have retained a fairly positive image of the Japanese and recollected approvingly the virtues of Japanese rule. If the Koreans speak of oppression and resistance, the Taiwanese speak of modernization and development...Although the supposed contrast between colonial Taiwan and colonial Korea has more to do with their respective precolonial and postcolonial histories than Japanese rule per se, it is undeniable that Japanese colonialism has had a profound impact on the subsequent developments of these former colonies.” 10

Consequently, there were striking differences between the Korean nationalist movement and the one in Taiwan. First, the two colonies had different goals in their nationalist movements. Taiwanese nationalists mostly worked towards the goal of home rule, as the nature of their movement was reformist.11 They showed a willingness to stay within the Japanese empire if Japan accepted their demand for home rule. In the course of their struggle, they were willing to make major concessions and narrow their goal. In the 1930s, they fought for a mere local autonomy and nothing else. This attitude contrasts sharply with that of the Koreans. To the Koreans, anything less than independence was unthinkable. They used various means and formed dozens of organizations to fight for their national independence without compromise. Whether they were cultural nationalists in Korea or independence fighters in Manchuria, they all worked for the same common goal - the independence of Korea.

Second, while Taiwanese nationalist leaders chose to take a moderate course and work within the legal framework set up by their colonial rulers, Korean nationalist leaders chose to work without this legal framework and take a radical and violent course of actions in achieving their aims. Some of them even chose exile as they found it difficult for them to carry on their work
under Japanese rule. As such, there were many Korean nationalist leaders who continued their struggle with the Japanese in China, Manchuria, Siberia and the United States. Those who stayed in Korea tended to work outside the system set up by the Japanese. Thus, the colonial government had to adopt a repressive policy in dealing with them. On the other hand, most of the Taiwanese nationalist leaders had limited themselves to the political opposition by law. They tried very hard to persuade the Japanese government to meet their demands by petitioning the Taiwan Government-General as well as the Japanese Government. They were even willing to end their political movement when the colonial administration asked them to. The Taiwanese were in essence more ready to compromise.

However, both nationalist movements of the Koreans and the Taiwanese failed and had been successfully suppressed by the colonial government in the end. Nonetheless, nationalist movements in Korea and Taiwan showed that the Koreans and Taiwanese were far from passive objects who awaited Japanese assimilation. They had struggled actively against the colonial rule, though by various means.

WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?

Geography and Topography

The first reason is concerned with geography and topography. Geographically, Korea occupies a strategic place in the waters of the Sea of Japan, Korea Strait, and Yellow Sea, and any conflicts on the Korean peninsula would have the potential to influence the neighboring countries. Taiwan, on the other hand, is not so geographically close to the Japanese homeland compared with Korea. In this sense, Korea was more important to Japan than Taiwan. Taiwan was a colony acquired by Japan as a prize for its victory over China and a way to glorify the army. Some Meiji leaders, in the early colonial period of Taiwan, thought that the island was a burden rather than a treasure and felt a need to sell it to other colonial powers when they faced the strong resistance put up by the islanders. This showed that the Japanese did not think Taiwan as vital of a colony as they did with Korea. Throughout the colonial period, Taiwan yielded the most profit to Japan but never served as the most strategically important colony of Japan until the late 1930s when Japan started its all-out expansion in Asia. From the very beginning, Japan acquired Korea out of the question of national security. The peninsula was geographically proximate to Japan, and a hostile power gaining control of Korea could potentially threaten Japan’s security. Therefore, the Japanese never loosened its control over Korea and the military remained influential in ruling the peninsula throughout the colonial period.

Nevertheless, geographical differences alone cannot explain why resistance to Japanese rule was stronger in Korea than Taiwan, since both countries suffered similar levels of political repression at the hands of the Japanese.

Social Structure

The second important difference was the varying levels of native social structure between two nations. Taiwan was an agrarian economy characterized by small farms and relatively weak native elites. Immediately after the occupation of Japanese colonial ruler, many Taiwanese elites escaped to the Mainland. Taiwanese emigrants were primarily wealthy and from the upper gentry. Their exodus deprived Taiwan of much of the potential leadership of a nationalist movement, thereby establishing new elites who depended on the Japanese government and showed a willingness to collaborate.

In contrast, Korea was a much more polarized society with a strong and well-entrenched elite group -- the yangban. The yangban, consisting of the top ten percent of the population, had centuries of aristocratic legitimation. Specifically, they monopolized positions in the government and military establishment. However, after Japan assumed control in Korea in 1910, the yangban had suffered an enormous loss of class status and privilege by Japanese egalitarian policies and by its removal from government offices. Only a very small segment of this local elite collaborated with the Japanese ruler. Consequently, Korea had an ample supply of native leaders to mobilize a nationalist resistance movement against Japanese rule.

In addition, the existence of bǎojiǎ (保甲) system in Taiwan and the lack of a similar system in Korea also helped Japanese ruler to monitor and control Taiwan with ease. Bǎojiǎ system consisted of a community-based structure of law enforcement and civil control, in which crimes committed by one family would result in punishment for all families in that community. By having the police supervised the traditional native system and by holding the people of an entire community responsible
for a crime, the Japanese were able to force the natives into submission in a relatively short period. For a crime, the Japanese were able to force the natives into submission in a relatively short period.22

**Governance**

Whereas the Japanese government instituted a form of direct and militaristic rule in Korea, it exercised a more indirect one in Taiwan, leaving little room for native elites to participate in governance.23 According to Hechter, indirect rule inhibits nationalism by reducing the demand for sovereignty. When the central ruler had no capacity to impose his will on distant territories directly, he essentially relied on the indirect rule of local representatives who were responsive to local values. This not only kept demand for nationalism low but also made the collective action that is essential to nationalism extremely difficult.24-25

Before 1919, Japanese colonial rule in Korea and Taiwan was militaristic in character. The posts of Governor-General in both Korea and Taiwan were only opened to high ranking military officers on active service. The military men ruled the two colonies without the interference of the civilian officials in Japan. But after 1919, the Japanese still maintained military men as governors in Korea, while Taiwan had enforced a civilian rule from 1919 to 1936. Accordingly, the power of the Taiwan Governor-General was reduced. The Japanese Government tightened its control over the administration of Taiwan at that point. The Taiwan Governor-General was placed under the direct supervision of the Japanese Government, leading to a deprivation of the right to command the garrisons on the island. On the other hand, Korea was still out of the control of the civilian government in Tokyo. Since the military men still occupied the post of Korean Governor-General, his power had not been reduced in any sense. He was only responsible to the Emperor through the Prime Minister, meaning the Korean Governor-General enjoyed a higher status than his counterpart in Taiwan. As such, a civilian governance system in Taiwan utilized local elites and indigenous practices to control the local population and thus effectively prohibited organized popular resistance to Japanese rule while a direct rule in Korea gave rise to many Korean resistance movements.

Moreover, the Japanese government introduced local autonomy to both Korea and Taiwan but it was only a gesture rather than a real concession. In theory, the Koreans enjoyed larger autonomy in local affairs and thus gave some spaces for the emergence of nationalist movements. Local autonomy was introduced to Taiwan only in 1935, five years later than Korea, and was far more limited in scale than the one introduced in Korea. It does not, however, mean that the Koreans enjoyed more freedom than the Taiwanese. The colonial administration remained authoritarian even with the introduction of local autonomy in the two colonies. In fact, according to Edward I-te Chen, Japan “decided to relax control somewhat in the hope that the Koreans might be reconciled to ‘autonomy’ and abandon their demand for independence.”

**Economy**

Japanese rule in Taiwan brought the island greater economic progress than in Korea. During its occupation, Japan devoted a considerable part of its budgets on Taiwan’s infrastructure, roads, harbors, railroads, power plants and irrigation system.26 Expenditures on agriculture, education and public works accounted for over 60% of budgetary outlays for most years from 1910 to 1938. For example, the Japanese colonial government heavily financed the constructions of many irrigation systems, with the Chia-Nan Reservoir system constructed during 1920s and early 1930s as the biggest project. The system greatly increased the agricultural productivity in the irrigation area. Before the project, paddy land area consisted of 35% of total cultivated land in Tainan. After the project was completed, the ratio increased to 70% in 1937. The productivity of paddy land was much higher than dry land, and the irrigation project greatly enhanced Taiwan’s agricultural production.28

Accordingly, Taiwan’s economy was boosted enormously, which led to a greatly improved quality of life; “by the 1920s the consumption of meat, vegetables, and fruits was higher than that” anywhere in China, and “even higher than in some parts of Japan”.29 Also, “the death rate dropped to 33 per 1000 in 1906, and to 19 per 1000 by 1940” due to better “hygienic measures introduced by the [Japanese] government”.30

As the economy grew rapidly, Taiwan people enjoyed a relatively higher standard of living and thus were more inclined to maintain a peaceful and cooperative relationship with colonial ruler.

In Korea, by contrast, economy also benefited from Japanese improvement in the economic, administrative and educational infrastructures, but with relatively small growth, as a larger share of budgetary had been expended on public order and administration for much
of the period from 1911 to 1938. By examining national income and other statistics to document the economic development of Taiwan and Korea, Cha and Wu finds that Taiwan’s development during the Japanese era was more successful than Korea. Mizoguchi and Yuzo compared Taiwan and Korea’s capital formation during the colonial period, and also found that Taiwan’s investment to GNE ratio was significantly higher than Korea. In essence, colonial economic policies in Korea were characterized by more exploitative and impoverishing elements, which largely contributed to a much stronger sense of anti-Japanese sentiment among Koreans.

Education Policy

The Japanese actively promoted the assimilation policy in both Korea and Taiwan. The most effective means was the introduction of Japanese-style education in the two colonies. In Korea and Taiwan, Japan set up Japanese-style common and ordinary schools, inducing Korean and Taiwanese children to study in these schools. The curriculum of these schools strongly emphasized the learning of the Japanese language and history, as the main purpose of the education for colonial youth was to make them loyal subjects of the Japanese Emperor. In both colonies, the Japanese exploited their common cultural heritage such as Confucian values with the colonial charges to promote the assimilation policy.

The education systems of the two colonies, however, were still based on the separatist approach despite its strong flavor of assimilation. First, whereas the Japanese colonial administration took central control over Korean education immediately after annexation, this did not occur in Taiwan until twenty-four years after annexation. As a result, the shift in Taiwan’s education system was gradual rather than instantaneous, and the gradualism of this shift reduced the resistance to Japanese assimilation. Secondly, Japanese youth in Korea and Taiwan attended separate schools which were opened only for them. Their schools were higher in standard, and post-elementary education in the two colonies was in favor of the Japanese. In Taiwan, no single private college or university was allowed to be established. The Taiwanese had to compete with the Japanese on unfavorable terms for the limited places provided by the public post-elementary institutions. In Korea, the Japanese tried hard to control the private institutions, elementary and secondary schools. Nevertheless, still there were many private schools and colleges for the Koreans. They provided the Koreans with an alternative to the public schools and significantly contributed to the promotion of native education. Traditional schools flourished in Korea even under the strict control of the colonial administration. This was not the case in Taiwan where traditional schools declined and were finally abolished by the colonial government. Consequently, the Japanese assimilation policy through education bore better fruit in Taiwan than in Korea. From table 1, one can see that the spread of the Japanese language in Taiwan clearly indicated a higher degree of colonial assimilation than in Korea. Thirdly, indigenous culture in Taiwan was not suppressed as it was in Korea. The Taiwanese were allowed to practice many of their indigenous customs, and they were taught about Chinese geography, history, and culture, just as were students in Japan. In Korea by contrast, Korean history was revised to show that the Koreans were racially akin to their rulers and were destined to be ruled by the Japanese.

### Table 1. Knowledge of Japanese in Korea and Taiwan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>1941</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: percentage of the total native population

Furthermore, there was a compulsory policy for Koreans to discard their ancestral names and adopt Japanese ones. Those who did not comply were expelled from school, denied mail and train services, and given decreased rations. In Taiwan, however, the shift to Japanese names was optional. By 1942, only about ten percent of the population had adopted Japanese names, while in Korea, more than eighty percent of the population had been forced to do so.

National Identity

Nationalism was also important in making the two colonial administrations different. Korea was...
an independent nation before it was annexed by the Japanese for more than twelve centuries. The Joseon Dynasty, overthrown by the Japanese government, had been established in the late fourteenth century. The Koreans were proud of their long history and was able to isolate itself for centuries from foreign influence up to the mid-19th century. The colonial rivalries among the powers over the peninsula had already helped foster in the minds of the Koreans a sense of national identity with their own country. The emergence of the Korean identity made it more difficult for the Japanese to rule the colony at will. Furthermore, Koreans have often felt themselves superior to Japan, or at least equal within the Chinese sphere. Having been conquered by the “inferior” Japanese crippled Korean national pride and created a major anti-Japanese sentiment.

In contrast, Taiwan was only a province of the Qing dynasty before Japanese annexation in 1895. The population of the island was divided into the Chinese and aborigines, and a modern identity similar to national identity had not yet developed on the island. The islanders were far from a homogeneous group. Their resistance to the Japanese rule in the early colonial period was scattered and sporadic. Japan could thus rule the island with ease. Moreover, the poor treatment by the Qing government prior to 1895 also greatly weakened the Taiwanese attachment to the country. During the Qing rule, Taiwan was notorious for the frequency of uprisings; some of them lasted for years. For example, in 1888 a severe rebellion had erupted in central Taiwan, when Governor Liu Ming-chuan pushed for a land reform. However, after the Japanese took over, the physical, social, and economic landscape of Taiwan changed dramatically as the disorder and lack of organization and centralized control was replaced by a proven formula for social order and efficiency. This helped develop a pro-Japanese sentiment in Taiwan and facilitated an eased transition process into Japanese colonial rule.

The presence of the royal family of the Joseon Dynasty in Korea also had adverse effects on the Japanese colonial rule. The Japanese were obligated to treat the royal family with respect and generosity. The members of the royal family received peerage from the Japanese Government. Their presence reminded the Koreans that their country was once an independent country and was annexed by Japan illegally. In fact, during the early colonial period, they became the focal point for the Korean nationalists to rally the support of the Koreans in their straggle against the Japanese. In Taiwan, the Taiwan Government-General did not have to face such a problem. The Qing dynasty had given up its hope to regain control of the island at the very beginning. After the conclusion of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, the Qing government had already recalled its officials from the island. After the failure of their half-hearted resistance against the Japanese rule, the Qing officials in Taiwan withdrew almost immediately. The Taiwanese were left to face the Japanese on their own. The Republic of China, which was established in 1912, was troubled by the internal instability and was unable and unwilling to help the Taiwanese in their straggle against the Japanese. The Taiwanese were well aware of their limitations, and thus they did not resort to radical means which would only induce Japanese repression.

**CONCLUSION**

The colonial systems of Japan in Korea and Taiwan, to a large extent, were identical to each other. The colonial policy helped the Korean and Taiwan Governments-General to suppress revolts, supervise local administrative units, carry out census, and promote the policies which aimed at solving economic issues with the colonial peoples. Yet they were not uniform or homogeneous. The social structures, political administrations, economic models and education systems exhibited great diversity. Japan ruled the two colonies as separate entity with different domestic ruling approaches, while assimilating and exploiting the peoples in the two colonies. Such diversity was responsible for the varying levels and political orientations of resistance movements toward the Japanese colonial rule. This was a result of the difference in the local conditions of each colony as well as relative strategic importance of Korea to Taiwan within the Japanese Empire. The difference in the colonial systems in Korea and Taiwan had produced different results which could be expected: Koreans had stronger nationalist resistance than Taiwanese throughout the colonial period.

Even today, much of the legacies of Japanese colonial infrastructures continue to function. Korea still struggles to wither away its colonial experience to prize its national culture and identity, whereas Taiwan has adjusted itself to it with a unique Taiwanese identity and more varied ethnic
preconceptions. Especially in Korea, the history of vehement resistance against the Japanese rule nurtures a strong sense of ethnic unity and nationalist sentiment. For example, Koreans repeatedly lodge severe mass protests against visits by Japanese high-rank officials to the Yasukuni Shrine, which is seen as glorifying the Class A war criminals during the World War II. The territorial dispute between Korea and Japan with respect to Liancourt Rocks is a nationalist focal point and adds fuel for anti-Japanese sentiment. In essence, Korean people tend to go completely over the top whenever there is any similar type of contest between Korea and Japan emerging in the future with great potential to separate the two countries diplomatically. As for Koreans, “historical memory and feelings of resentment run deeply and can influence Korea’s relations with its neighbors, allies, and enemies in ways not easily predicted by models of policy-making predicated on realpolitik or other geo-strategic or economic concerns”.

ENDNOTES

21. Hechter, Matesan, and Hale, 2009
23. Hechter, Matesan, and Hale, 2009

FEI YAN

Fei Yan is currently a PhD candidate at the Sociology Department of the University of Oxford.
This paper argues that the U.S. should capitalize on current declines in anti-American sentiments in South Korea to strengthen the economically and strategically significant bilateral alliance. Identifying current mitigating factors such as the rise of China and the increased North Korean threat, the paper shows that mitigating factors are overriding historical roots of past anti-Americanism such as the U.S. military presence and South Korean media bias to produce an overall decline in South Korean anti-Americanism. Policies recommended for the U.S. to achieve this aim are: public diplomacy to mitigate negative public perception of the U.S. military, ratification of the KORUS FTA, promotion of civil society in South Korea, as well as continued military support against the North.

Author’s Note
This paper was written in early 2011, focusing on South Korean anti-Americanism as a policy problem. Identifying both aggravating factors (such as the U.S. military presence) and mitigating factors (such as China’s rise) behind the phenomenon, this paper recommends policies fit for the U.S. government to pursue in order to mitigate South Korean anti-Americanism in the 2010 context.

Since then, significant changes have taken place in the Korean Peninsula, attesting to the dynamic nature of this region’s geopolitics. Particularly worthy of mention is Kim Jong Il’s death and the ratification of the KORUS FTA, and both of these changes act to support the original framework established in this paper in terms of their effect on anti-Americanism. Amidst such rapid changes and remaining geopolitical significance of the Korean Peninsula, understanding the driving mechanisms behind anti-American sentiment stays vital in explaining the contours of U.S.-South Korean relations today.

Kim Jong Il’s death in December 2011 triggered theories of regime collapse and greater Chinese intervention in the peninsula. Although these theories remain unfounded, fears of North Korean belligerence during the succession period were partly confirmed with a failed April 2012 missile test. Such instability from the North acts to further mitigate motives for anti-Americanism, acting to strengthen U.S.-South Korean military cooperation. Talks of OPCON transfer and Yongsan military base relocation, while controversial only a few years ago, have been quietly delayed to 2015 and 2019 respectively amidst these changes.

As recommended in this paper at the time of writing, the KORUS FTA was ratified in both countries in late 2011. It is certainly a step forward, strengthening bilateral economic relations between the two countries; the U.S.-South Korea trade volume exceeded $100 billion for the first time in 2011. However, there admittedly are many interest groups who are now less advantaged through the FTA and assuaging these groups is crucial to curtail potential anti-Americanism as a result of the agreement. While all policy analyses and recommendations in the paper have been done in the 2010 context, subsequent changes seem to be in line with recent trajectories outlined in the paper, which has been annotated in parts for the most up-to-date information.
INTRODUCTION
South Korea has both been virulently anti-American and staunchly pro-American throughout its modern history. The former prevailed in the early 2000s, as millions took to the streets to protest President Bush’s designation of North Korea as part of the “axis of evil,” and the acquittal of two U.S. servicemen after causing the deaths of two Korean schoolgirls in a traffic accident. Approval of the U.S. dropped to 46% as Hillary Clinton worried of Korean “historical amnesia.” However, the election of Barack Obama heralded an era of improved public perception, with close to 80% favorably inclined towards the United States. A renewal of conservative leadership under President Lee Myung-bak is increasing both military and economic cooperation with the U.S., with a Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement approaching ratification.

The current decline in anti-Americanism in South Korea can be attributed to overarching global trends:

- The rise of China
- North Korean aggression

Such factors mitigate the effects of traditional aggravators of anti-Americanism:

- The U.S. military presence
- South Korean media bias

The stakes of maintaining this declining trend of anti-Americanism in South Korea are high. As the 7th largest trading partner of the U.S., South Korea is a crucial ally in an important economic and strategic region. Particularly with the recent escalation in tension with a nuclear North Korea, a solid alliance between the U.S. and South Korea seems imperative for regional harmony.

In order for the U.S. to capitalize on mitigating factors and address aggravating factors of anti-Americanism, the following policies are recommended:

- Public diplomacy addressing U.S. military-related social problems
- Greater U.S. representation in the South Korea media
- Conclude the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement
- Promote civil society in South Korea

BACKGROUND
Two types of anti-Americanism are problematic, and sometimes indistinguishably intertwined with one another in South Korea: legacy and sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism. Supposed U.S. pursuit of its interests at the expense of South Korean national sovereignty are underlying causes of both, with the forcible drawing of the 38th parallel after decolonization, and U.S. role in aiding dictatorships friendly to its interests through measures such as the 1961 May 16 coup being earlier examples. Relying on U.S. aid for legitimacy, these dictatorships enforced a strict top-down pro-Americanism, prohibiting anti-American expressions under Article 7 of the 1948 National Security Law. Admittedly, the public was also appreciative of U.S. aid and too preoccupied with immediate domestic concerns such as extreme poverty and North Korean threat to develop any anti-American sentiments beyond “momentary, emotional, and unorganized reactions to sporadic political events.”

Anti-American sentiments burst into mainstream political discourse for the first time in the popular protests following the 1980 Kwangju Massacre, when hundreds of dissidents were killed by government troops supposedly authorized by the United States. This movement was both a reaction to “perceived American complicity” to government repression and reduced need to rely on the U.S. economically. Ironically, anti-Americanism became “a prominent undercurrent” to the pro-democracy movement throughout the 1980s, eventually leading to the overthrow of the U.S-backed Chun Doo-hwan regime. This incident marked a transformation of anti-Americanism from fringe movement to focal point of mainstream nationalism, and an emergence of an anti-Americanism that protested a lack of equal sovereign standing between the two nations.

After democratization in 1987, South Korean anti-Americanism lost its violent beginnings, as it became part of accepted political discourse. Democratization disarmed the historically student-led South Korean political activism, with seasoned career activists and politicians instead taking the helms of the movement. Rising economic prosperity and the maturation of an online generation accustomed to
democratic freedoms led to increased vocalization of South Korean discontent regarding the alliance with the U.S. and perceived U.S. obstruction of South Korean national interests in world affairs. Anti-Americanism continues to wax and wane; it receded in the 1990s with Clinton-era breakthroughs on North Korea, among them the 1994 Agreed Framework and the 2000 Inter-Korean Summit meeting, resurfaced in the Bush era with unprecedented intensity, but is again in decline in the Obama era. However, what has remained consistent was the South Korean sentiment captured in polls that the U.S. does not set policy attuned to South Korean interests.

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

United States Military Presence

Currently numbering 28,500², the presence of the United States Forces Korea (USFK) since the decolonization and partition of South Korea has been a historical cause of frictions in bilateral relations. Frequently seen as complicit in dictatorial repression, the U.S. military presence contributes significantly to accumulating the reservoir of “han,” a smoldering bitterness about past victimization deeply ingrained in the South Korean national psyche. Even after democratization, enduring social and economic problems arising from the presence of the United States Forces Korea (USFK), such as illegal Kijichon prostitution, jurisdiction issues arising from crimes committed by U.S. servicemen as well as economic costs of maintaining the U.S. military presence, have created friction in the alliance. Additionally, U.S. wartime control of South Korean armed forces is seen by some as an anachronistic reminder of a subjugated past. These circumstances all trigger impressions of continuing South Korean dependence and inability to effectively pursue its interests on the world stage, leading to virulent sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism. The most recent spike in anti-Americanism occurred in 2002 at the aftermath of a traffic accident where USFK soldiers caused the death of two Korean schoolgirls. Mass anti-American protests overwhelmed Seoul streets for months after the U.S. refused to try the soldiers in a Korean court, then acquitted them of all charges. Although the U.S. claimed that this was in accordance with the Status of Forces Act (SOFA), protesters claimed that an abnormally low proportion of U.S. servicemen are charged and convicted for crimes committed in South Korea compared to other countries. They demanded for a revision with a severity that shocked analysts and policymakers alike, eventually resulting in an apology from President Bush.

What is often forgotten in assessment of this “sudden” onset of anti-Americanism was that SOFA had been revised barely a year ago in 2001, partially in response to another controversy in 1992, the brutal murder of a Kijichon prostitute by a U.S. soldier. Why, if SOFA had been revised just a year ago, was the same problem happening again? If the U.S. had indeed ruled justly, why did President Bush apologize?

The answers to such questions must necessarily highlight the failures of incident-based, reactive “band-aid” measures. After the crisis recedes out of the media spotlight, no other measures are taken to resolve the root cause of anti-Americanism, in this case the social problems caused by the USFK presence. Crimes committed by U.S. servicemen against Kijichon prostitutes among others have been occurring since the 1950s, and certainly cannot be eliminated overnight. The lack of any awareness and visible efforts to mitigate this situation is just as much due to inept decisions made by the South Korean government and cultural taboos. Nevertheless, the U.S. military is the most visible manifestation of U.S. policy in South Korea, and any problems they cause receive disproportionate scrutiny. In order to minimize anti-American responses when such incidents occur in the future, the U.S. should show a strict dedication to maintaining accountability of their forces and real concern for mitigating social problems their troops cause in South Korea.

Fortunately, the Obama administration stands on a much more advantageous plane to address this than its predecessors. North Korean aggression has in part averted attention from these problems, diminishing calls to relocate the Yongsan U.S. military base occupying prime real estate in downtown Seoul and transfer U.S.

² True as of May 2011.
Operational Control (OPCON) of South Korean armed forces. These voices will undoubtedly come back after the defusing of current tensions, so U.S. policymakers need to use these favorable circumstances prudently, addressing sources of anti-Americanism through consistent public diplomacy rather than incident-based measures.

**South Korean Media Biases**

South Korean anti-Americanism is amplified and perpetuated by biases in the domestic media environment. Control of mainstream media by government-friendly interests, linguistic constraints, barriers to foreigner participation online and emotional volatility of the South Korean Internet all slant public exposure to foreign opinion. Cumulatively, they result in excessive coverage of news detrimental for the U.S. image, while those more positive are ignored or downplayed.

The ownership structure of the South Korean media environment has exacerbated partisan coverage and thus anti-American biases. Currently, over 70% of the newspaper market is dominated by South Korea’s three largest national dailies, the Joongang Ilbo, Choson Ilbo and Donga Ilbo, all owned by government-friendly conglomerates. Though government and big business usually lean pro-American, such a market structure can become problematic when anti-Americanism is politically expedient, and mainstream media becomes a mouthpiece for government-led anti-Americanism. Media favor to Roh Moo-hyun’s anti-American platform in his 2002 presidential campaign greatly contributed to his winning over young, educated voters.

Nevertheless, typical conservative dominance of mainstream media has led to a “progressive flight” online. Online newspapers such as OhmyNews are a powerful, often anti-American voice in South Korea, one of the most wired countries in the world. These media outlets and nonprofits effectively utilize the Internet as an anti-American weapon, saturating it with coverage of events such as the 2002 traffic accident, as well as orchestrating the mass demonstrations so central to Korean civic culture. Internet news outlets were instrumental in driving the fear-driven rhetoric against the importing of supposedly tainted U.S. beef in 2008, even resorting to wild allegations that American beef causes Alzheimer’s. The World Health Organization pronouncing U.S. beef safe was simply ignored.

Such a capacity for online media to incite public protest means the mainstream media are often forced to follow the agenda set by the online media for the sake of profit. Anti-Americanism simply sells well in a country long known for its “shrimp among whales” sensitivity to big-country slights. Thus, media outlets cover even trivial slights inconsequential in the long run, such as General John A. Wickham comparing Koreans to ‘lemmings who are willing to follow any leader they get’ unsuited for democracy. Even in the aftermath of the WikiLeaks scandal, South Korean headlines focused not on bilateral contingency plans of reunification, but a relatively obscure Korean Brookings Institute scholar’s Facebook post alleging U.S. officials stated that territorial concessions would be necessary to placate China on the event of reunification.

Language and structural factors that limit access to foreign viewpoints for South Koreans also deprive opportunities for more balanced reporting. The dearth of Korean translated versions of major English-language news outlets such as CNN, Time and BBC leads to the vast majority of South Koreans receiving foreign news filtered through domestic media. The requirement of state-issued resident registration numbers to access many online news and political forums means that foreigners are often excluded from participation, and South Korean audiences from foreign opinion. Despite U.S. perspectives being available on resources such as the Information Resource Center operated by the U.S. embassy in Seoul, lack of awareness and accessibility means such information is often unnoticed by media outlets, let alone the average citizen. Many South Koreans simply do not know what concessions the U.S. has made, with the less hard-line policies of the later Bush era being ignored by South Korean media. This bias in exposure acts to further the sense of victimization and usurpation of sovereign rights underlying legacy and sovereign-nationalist
anti-Americanism.

Currently, neither mainstream nor online channels provide an adequately objective representation of U.S. policy in Korea. American opinions consistently fail to reach the ears of the South Korean public in an unfiltered, timely fashion: the 1989 statement from the U.S. giving their side of the story on the Kwangju Massacre, although much of it legitimate, came nine years too late. Although just as subject to bias as the mainstream media, the Internet is indispensable in any policy solution to combat biases in the media environment not only because of its reach, but also for the demographic of younger, more anti-American generations that rely on it most.

Rise of China

Contrary to earlier U.S. fears that South Korea would switch allegiance to China, increasing Chinese influence is actually serving to mitigate anti-American sentiments in South Korea. China’s economic competition, gestures betraying hegemonic ambitions and divergent values are all potential threats to South Korean interests, and have acted to diminish anti-American voices within South Korea. The U.S., by reassuring South Korea of their protection from such threats, can capitalize on this phenomenon to solidify the U.S.-South Korea alliance.

Exponential Chinese economic growth has been both blessing and curse to South Korea. Since normalization of relations between the two countries in 1992, China rose within a decade to overtake the U.S. and become South Korea’s top trade partner. However, Chinese competition has also pressured South Korea to open up its markets and initiate a rash of Free Trade Agreements, signing one with the European Union and also pushing progress on the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA).

The KORUS FTA is both a South Korean response to Chinese competition and a U.S. stopgap against Chinese attempts to erode U.S. regional influence through economic hegemony: it recently attempted to organize a free trade area comprising of only Asian nations, excluding the United States. However, Congressional opposition sank the initial 2007 version of bill in the United States, while South Korean anti-globalization interests such as farmers and trade unions hijacked scandals on tainted imported U.S. beef to oppose the FTA. Rhetoric portraying the FTA as the undermining of national interests by the U.S. resonated well with the South Korean public. The 2008 protests virtually immobilized the Lee administration just months into office, forcing Lee to reshuffle his entire cabinet. Despite such pockets of anti-American dissent, Chinese ambivalence amidst North Korean aggression spurred a breakthrough revision, with plans to sign the FTA by the end of this year and have it ratified in both governments by next year, a promising move towards an important step forward in the bilateral alliance.

China’s heavy-handed response to a 2004 controversy over the origins of Koguryo was a disillusioning moment for the minority of South Koreans who believed China’s ‘peaceful rise’ could replace the existing alliance with the United States. When South Korea protested the Chinese government-sponsored Northeast Project of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences listing Koguryo as a Chinese province, China removed Koguryo from South Korean ancient history on its official foreign ministry website. South Koreans took Chinese actions as an expression of ‘hegemonic ambitions’ to expand influence into the Korean Peninsula, and this incident served as a pivotal moment in driving a wedge between Sino-Korean bilateral relations.

Growing Chinese influence and differing incentives over North Korea are also sources of tension, and South Korea has looked to the U.S. for support. For China to fulfill its top priority of sustaining economic growth and regional stability, a moribund North as a buffer state is more useful than chaotic regime collapse or a unified Korea hostile to China. Its monopoly of access to North Korea through administration of the six-party talks is an indispensable diplomacy tool that China won’t give up easily. This translates to China calling for blameless returns to the six-party talks after incidents such as the Yeonpyeong Island shelling, despite international consensus putting the North at fault and its propensity to “[use] the time to further develop its nuclear capacity.” In response to this, South Korea is increasingly turning to separate avenues of diplomatic dialogue with the United States excluding China and North Korea to meet amongst themselves, in a new Cold War-esque order known as the “G2 phenomenon” in South Korea.

China also presents a threat to South Korean values of democracy instilled by U.S. hegemony. Eschewing both democracy and capitalism, Chinese repression of
its citizens, political dissenters and minority regions in Xinjiang and Tibet represent to South Koreans an unwelcome reminder of their own past of dictatorship and repression. Moreover, its blatant violations of international law in repatriating North Korean refugees seeking passage through China also drive a significant wedge between any prospects of close Sino-Korean relations.

Declining Sino-Korean amity reduces anti-Americanism based on the prospects of a more viable hegemon to ally with, and has resulted in a fortuitous geopolitical climate where the U.S. is seen as South Korea’s most reliable ally. It is imperative that the U.S. reaffirms the fundamentally shared values and interests that underlie this bond to maintain the alliance.

**North Korean Aggression**

Current North Korean aggression is dampening pan-Korean ethnic-based nationalism, with South Koreans increasingly viewing North Koreans as unrelated other rather than brother, significantly mitigating sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism. In contrast, in times of low threat from North Korea, pan-Korean sentiments viewing North Korea as brother is more likely to prevail, while South Koreans are less likely to tolerate inconveniences from the alliance with the United States. Such conditions are extremely conducive to virulent forms of sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism.

The transformation of South Korea from an impoverished state dependent on U.S. aid to an economically prosperous, democratic middle-power brought with it a rise of national self-esteem. Before the 1980s, direct military threat from North Korea outweighed pan-Korean ethnic nationalism based on perceived brotherhood through immutable blood ties, allowing South Korea and the U.S. to unite in fierce anti-Communism. Now, having far outstripped North Korea economically, the South Koreans view North Korea as state and North Korea as people differently. While Kim Jong Il is acknowledged as a tyrant, North Korea’s spiral down to humanitarian and economic chaos tends to be viewed with sympathy.

Democratization and economic prosperity brought with it a possibility of vocalizing these new multidimensional views towards North Korea, but the lingering sense of victimization and inadequacy in the South Korean national psyche at times spur emotional reactions to perceived U.S. snubs to North Korea. In the period of progressive rule under Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, tensions with the North Koreans were at an all-time low with the ‘sunshine policy,’ where huge amounts of aid were given largely without conditions to North Korea. Declining necessity of the U.S. as guarantor of peace and generational shifts bringing into leadership a younger cohort who had never experienced American rescue from poverty and war resulted in a South Korea unwilling to give the U.S. “a free pass for the sake of national security.” At this time, Bush’s unilateralism vis-à-vis North Korea and the war on terror were seen as hampering harmonious inter-Korean relations, and met with widespread and severe anti-American protests.

However, recent tensions with North Korea are dampening anti-American sentiments more prevalent throughout the last decade. The March 2010 sinking of the South Korean naval vessel, the Cheonan, killed all 46 crewmembers onboard, and the artillery barrage on South Korean Yeonpyeong Island in November later that year resulted in both civilian and military casualties. The pace and extent that sentiments towards North Korea have chilled shocked analysts; a study done by Korea University’s Asiatic Research Institute found that since 2005, more than twice as many respondents designated North Korea as “enemy” or “unrelated people,” while those preferring “brother” or “neighbor” decreased substantially. This detachment from North Korea gives greater chance for South Koreans to develop a national identity as civically grounded and complete in itself, rather than ethnically grounded as a victim forcibly estranged from its other half.

Accompanying such trends, public opinion seems to be leaning towards a tighter U.S. alliance, as evidenced by positive responses to the OPCON transfer postponement, belying 2002 protests demanding just the opposite. The recent Wikileaks revelations that the U.S. and South Korea were preparing contingency plans for North Korean regime collapse were also received well, but findings that most South Koreans aren’t willing to contribute money towards reunification in the short term should also be noted as a sign of concern for economic consequences tempering a blind pursuit for a unified Korea.

Current North Korean belligerence creates a suitable climate both for a reaffirmation of U.S. commitment in South Korea and a move away from
an ethnic-based South Korean national identity that often fuels sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism. The U.S. is playing the most direct role of defending South Korean national security in recent years, and this is deflecting attention from typical frictions part of the alliance. However, these positive conditions are from exogenous factors rather than successful policymaking, and may be temporary. It is important for the U.S. to participate actively in refashioning the alliance to a strengthened one capable of withstanding less conducive circumstances.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Public diplomacy addressing U.S. military-related social problems**

Public diplomacy programs to address social problems caused by the U.S. military presence in Korea can be an effective solution in combating virulent forms of sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism that flare up in response to short-term incidents. Examples of such programs include fundraising for improving the welfare of Kijichon residents adversely affected by the U.S. military presence, awareness campaigns to reduce discrimination that prevents serious discourse and aid for Kijichon prostitutes and support groups to help them leave the sector. Medals with appropriate publicity could be awarded to domestic nonprofit groups that make particular progress or achievement.

Such a program would ideally be a collaborative effort from start to finish, financed jointly by the State Department and the private sector, and implemented by public diplomacy specialists in the U.S. embassy in Seoul with support from local nonprofit organizations, universities and private corporations. Collaboration and its publicity is crucial in order for the program to have legitimacy to the Korean public as not just another unilateral U.S. program, but also for the extra resources, networks and goodwill these groups have. Naturally, its central message should be that the U.S. is making a serious effort to promote a bilateral relationship more of equals. Such campaigns’ primary targets should be the younger generations, who are most likely to find out about these efforts online, as well as participate in further campaign efforts.

Impact would be measured primarily through attendance at events and amount fundraised, with participant feedback integrated into an annual progress report submitted to U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Kathleen Stephens. As an official with both influence and local exposure, the Ambassador would be able to see the effects of the program herself and be attuned to local conditions enough to make an informed decision about the efficacy of the program, and inform any interested State Department officials.

Such programs’ advantages lie in their novelty: existing public diplomacy programs are largely educational in nature, mostly consisting of exchange programs, seminars and speaker series. This means when implemented, these efforts are more likely to receive widespread media attention. Executed correctly with a clear long term program in mind, this is likely to not only better the lives of those disadvantaged groups, but strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance and rectify perceptions that the U.S. does not care about the social problems caused by its military presence.

Of course, any public diplomacy program is vulnerable to lack of interest or even negative attention due to bad publicity. The government-aligned mainstream media may portray the U.S. as meddling in South Korean internal affairs. In order to avoid this, it is important not to openly contradict domestic government policy. Additionally, as Kijichon prostitutes and other issues touch on sensitive parts of both the bilateral relationship and South Korean culture, it is possible that there may be a backlash in public opinion if not implemented with these nuances in mind. This drawback can be mitigated by remaining in clear consultation with local groups through the entire process. Though likely to be relatively costless, obtaining celebrity endorsements or establishing large-scale programs to achieve long-term solutions could be expensive. Nevertheless, these precautions are not likely to be any more restrictive than typical diplomatic efforts, which all require an adherence to domestic government policy and cultural nuances.

**Improve US representation in the South Korean media environment**

The informational imbalances in the South Korean media environment that perpetuate anti-Americanism can be rectified through a greater provision of foreign viewpoints. Directly translated versions of articles of major U.S. news sources such as Time and CNN
available as links on popular Korean news websites and comprehensive search engine sites such as OhMyNews or Naver are likely to find a welcome audience in university students, intellectuals and younger Internet users. Although translation and personnel costs could be substantial, integrating articles to existing South Korean news websites should be cheaper than establishing an entirely new website and building publicity for it. Costs could be further contained by initially translating articles pertinent to U.S.-ROK bilateral relations on a trial basis. Further expansions could occur depending on monitored web traffic and feedback solicited on college campuses and workplaces.

Additionally, the current wealth of information on U.S. policies posted on the U.S. embassy or State Department website goes unnoticed by much of the South Korean public. The Information Officer overseeing the South Korean Information Resource Center (IRC) program should make increased accessibility of this information a priority, expanding its current focus on informing “institutions and professionals” to the general public. Timely responses to events and subsequent media coverage liable to engendering misconceptions about the U.S. is necessary through press conferences, prominent guest speakers from the U.S. and other media-oriented events, with a goal for more informed dialogue in the wider political arena.

The advantages of such a policy is that it is timely: the U.S.-South Korea alliance has tightened recently and coverage has been favorable. An influx of U.S. opinion is more likely to be welcomed now than before. It also fills a knowledge gap in the media environment, acting to make anti-Americanism based on misinformation less likely. The controversy regarding the WikiLeaks references to territorial concessions to China expose uncertainty and insecurity on the U.S. stance as related to such situations, which could be ameliorated through clarifying information from U.S. sources. Moreover, the audience most likely to access these new resources is the younger generations that happen to be the most anti-American, and who will have a vital role influencing policy in future decades.

Although effective for younger Internet users, this policy’s reliance on Internet media means it will be less effective on older generations, who still rely on the three major daily newspapers for most of their information. Additionally, the increasing ability to customize content that one sees on the Internet leaves doubt on the policy’s efficacy against those with already hardened anti-American biases. Bias of the translators may also pose a problem, but this could largely be ameliorated through hire of thoroughly screened, objective translators belonging to organizations unaffiliated to the government. However, the policy’s largest problem is that it relies fundamentally on favorability of actual policy – no matter how much favorable press enters the South Korean media environment, it is unlikely to be effective if actual policy and bilateral relationship between South Korea and the U.S. is strained.

Conclude the KORUS FTA

The KORUS FTA is a centerpiece in the Obama administration’s attempt to strengthen bilateral relations with South Korea and its commitment in the region. The recent breakthrough in reaching a revised agreement is a clear step in the right direction, but whether it is successfully ratified in both countries remains a test of the strength of the bilateral alliance. Ratifying the FTA would solve the diplomatic eyesore it became since it failed to be resolved at the widely anticipated G20 summit, as well as meet the necessity for a closer alliance amidst the rising regional geopolitical threat and Chinese economic competition. Given the difficulty with which this agreement was achieved, the U.S. must be proactive and reassure the South Koreans by pushing domestically to have the agreement signed and ratified.

A major advantage is the economic benefit to both countries. While an FTA will by no means slow down the ‘Chinese juggernaut,’ they will contribute to less trade being diverted away from the U.S. due to high tariffs. Estimates from the U.S. International Trade Commission predict boosts of the gross domestic product up to $12 billion each year, with the South Koreans to gain $800 million annually from additional car exports alone. Another benefit is the clear sign of U.S. strategic commitment in Northeast Asia and intention of maintaining a strong influence in the region sent to China and South Korea. South Korean and U.S. policymakers alike see the FTA as an effort to promote greater competitiveness against China and Japan.
Political costs to overcome Congressional opposition that sank the bill in 2007 remain, but the more favorable conditions with the revised agreement and a Republican majority Congress is likely to ease the process. To counter remaining Congressional opposition because of South Korea not budging on the suspension of U.S. beef importation, the executive branch should emphasize the overall economic benefits from the South Korean automobile concessions in the revised bill, notably its relaxation of environmental standards for imported cars. Although it could take substantial political capital to persuade Congress and economic interests to pass the deal, it would still be less than the credibility lost if the deal fails to pass.

Despite a vocal minority comprising of farmers, automakers and unions opposing the FTA in South Korea, general support for the KORUS FTA had remained high at around 60%. This support is likely to erode somewhat after the concessions in the auto industry, which South Koreans view as substantive. However, the U.S. concessions made in agriculture, particularly leaving intact the beef import bans for the foreseeable future, should work to placate opposing interests and avoid igniting mass anti-American protests that could inflate the perception of the degree of opposition, in particular with media bias. As directly impacting public opinion on this is risky as it could be seen as disingenuous, the U.S. should reassure South Korean policymakers of the worth of political capital expended by aggressively pushing the bill in the U.S.

The KORUS FTA would strengthen and add a welcome new dimension to U.S.-ROK bilateral relations, which from the beginning has been largely military and geopolitical.

For both nations it will be a development of the traditional military alliance into a more comprehensive partnership, checking Chinese influence and stemming anti-Americanism from excessive scrutiny on the alliance’s military dimension.

**Promote Civil Society in South Korea**

The U.S. should reaffirm its shared democratic values between South Korea and reassure them against the threat China’s rise poses towards these values to further strengthen the alliance and maintain the decline of anti-Americanism in South Korea. Beyond highlighting differences from China, the goal of such a policy would be encouraging a move away from the ethnic-based sense of national identity built on common victimization so prone to becoming sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism. This can be done through supporting the development of democratic institutions and civil society through financing local nonprofits and lobby efforts to enhance democratic freedoms such as freedom of speech, press and combating corruption. In particular, supporting efforts to reduce restrictions for foreigners in participating in online forums should fulfill both this goal and reducing media bias in South Korea. Additionally, the U.S. should focus more on North Korea-related human rights issues, including Chinese treatment of North Korean refugees and North Korean repression of religious freedoms. Keeping Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Robert King on the table for any future talks with or regarding North Korea could also help emphasize U.S. commitment on the issue. Financed collaboratively by U.S. and South Korean nonprofits dealing with the same issue areas, the effectiveness of this policy can be confirmed through legislative changes, growth of informed dialogue on intellectual forums and level of public awareness gauged through polls.

The advantages of such a policy lie in the vast array of existing resources. Fortunately, there are already some established issue-based networks of South Korean and U.S. nonprofits, such as the South Korean Citizens Alliance for Human Rights working with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy to spearhead the promotion of ‘change in the human rights situation and governance of North Korea.’ Additionally, the high percentage of Christians in South Korea (according to a 2005 survey done by the government, 29.2% professed to be Christian) translate to a solid foundation for missions efforts, political lobbying resources and promulgation of information on Chinese and North Korean suppression of these rights.

These existing favorable conditions are in part due to the extensive history of people-to-people educational and religious exchanges between South Korean and the United States. Better utilizing and expanding these networks through greater financing and exchange efforts should work to draw South Koreans away from the victimization narrative that characterizes their legacy anti-Americanism, as well as fixing the long-lasting perception that the U.S. does not take South Korean interests into account in regional geopolitics.
Additionally, greater democratic freedoms, especially heightened freedom of the press, mean that U.S. opinions can be better distributed among the Korean people. The goodwill attained from such efforts would strengthen the alliance, even without direct efforts to undermine any affinity for China. However, language constraints and geographic distance continues to limit joint efforts to improve civil society and democratic institutions. Additionally, in order for U.S. efforts to manifest visible impact in the South Korean political discourse, significant financial costs would have to be incurred in order to sustain personnel and expertise. Moreover, it is extremely unlikely that these efforts would actually result in any change of Chinese behavior; sustained efforts throughout the Clinton years to influence the Chinese record on human rights have been fruitless. Nevertheless, strengthening U.S. commitment to South Korean efforts to develop democratic institutions will solidify its place as its only dependable ally, as opposed to a more alien China.

**Continue Firm Support Against North Korea**

The U.S. should respond aptly to heightened North Korean tensions by tightening the alliance with South Korea, through reaffirming previous security commitments and continuing close consultation with South Korea on military decisions. Firstly, the U.S. should maintain in the short term the escalated military presence in the Yellow Sea. The George Washington aircraft carrier could be temporarily stationed there, taking part in any future major military exercises; maintenance costs could be diverted from what would normally be spent had it been in its Okinawa base. Beyond assuaging South Korean insecurities, this would send a meaningful signal to China that if it doesn’t take concrete steps to work towards North Korean denuclearization and help enforce current international sanctions, it would have to deal with increased foreign military presence directly at its doors. Secondly, the U.S. should maintain open consultations with the South Korean government regarding any major USFK decision; this will greatly assuage South Korean fears that tensions will escalate into war between North Korea and the U.S. beyond their control; the controversy over territorial concessions to China on the event of reunification was just one manifestation of this fear. Thirdly, while the U.S. should support any South Korean government efforts to prepare for reunification, it should be mindful of public opinion, which is currently against individually mandated reunification taxes. The effectiveness of such a policy would be hard to gauge especially in the long term, but lack of North Korean retaliation to South Korean military exercises and recent conciliatory gestures upon New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson’s visit seem to be tentative indications of defusing tensions. The benefits to such a policy are enormous. Beyond assuaging South Korean concerns of U.S. unilateralism and becoming embroiled in a war they did not consent to, which are some of the primary motivators of sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism, the U.S. is coming to aid South Korea in its greatest time of need in recent years. Escalated military presence, in particular military exercises taking place within China’s Exclusive Economic Zone, should give China incentive to pool whatever influence they have on North Korea to rein in its aggression. Aside from restationing the George Washington, there is not much additional financial cost not already being incurred, and political cost is likely to be minimal as this is not a radical departure from current policy that has North Korean denuclearization as one of the primary regional strategic goals. Additionally, this policy offers a way to transcend the old cycle of talks and concessions for a U.S. growingly hard pressed for alternatives regarding North Korea.

However, the U.S. should be mindful that excessive U.S. aggression could act to provoke China and North Korea into rather than out of war. Aggression or involvement beyond the level of supporter and what the South Korean public is comfortable with may provoke fresh anti-Americanism, while on the other hand a lack of involvement or assertion may make the U.S. seem weak. Additionally, an escalation of military presence, however much is diverted or contributed by the U.S. government, would mean at least a sustenance of the current expenditures incurred to finance the U.S. military presence. In times of low tension, this has been one of the foremost sources of anti-Americanism in South Korea, and after current tensions subside it is highly likely that these issues will return to political discourse unless these traditional causes of anti-Americanism are addressed.

**CONCLUSION**

As one of the most longstanding U.S. allies in the East Asian region, South Korean anti-Americanism continues to be on the decline in the long term as political, economic and social interests continue to
converge. Nevertheless, active efforts to maintain this positive trend is crucial, as isolated occurrences such as the 2002 killings can trigger waves of virulent anti-Americanism. The extensive presence of online communication and nationalistic nuances of anti-Americanism often contribute to the fast spread of anti-Americanism as a recurring theme in political discourse. The policies suggested above such as more open trade relations, public diplomacy and geopolitical support against North Korea are but a few examples of the many aspects of the bilateral relationship that could be developed, both at the governmental and grass-roots level.

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ANTI-AMERICANISM


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Benefits in the Job Market of Attending an Elite University

A comparison of South Korea and the United States of America

Social capital accumulation and exploitation are facilitated by attendance at an elite university. In South Korea’s extremely competitive education systems one’s alma mater offers information about the potential social capital and educational capital of an individual to his or her employer, and a strong trend of in-hiring can be observed. This is often attributed to Confucian- or Asian values, and viewed negatively by insiders and outsiders alike. This paper posits that this is not an “Confucian” or “Asia” phenomenon, but a product of a diversified education system in which elite universities turn out not only more capable students (educational capital), but also better connected ones (social capital) whose degrees signal potential value to employers (cultural capital). Using the United States (also with diversified and stratified high-education) as a comparison, this paper explores the effects of elite education on career prospects in both countries in an attempt to attest or deny the uniqueness of the South Korean case.

Introduction

“In a highly homogenous society without ethnic, linguistic or religious cleavages, once traditional social stratification is dismantled, educational attainment looms large as the single most important source of potential social stratification.”

Tun-jen Cheng

“An educational institution may bestow three distinct types of human capital upon its graduates: scholastic capital (the amount of knowledge required), social capital (personal contacts, network ties, inculcation of achievement motivation), and cultural capital (the value society places on symbols of prestige).”

Daniel A. Judge, Daniel M. Cable, John W. Bourdreaux, and Robert D. Bretz.

University is an important and formative step along an individual’s path toward a career. Many studies have examined higher education’s returns in the job market, all with the conclusion that the investment of resources in post-secondary training results in substantial rewards. These returns are based on a combination of acquired factors of educational and social capital, which change in balance by individual and institution. In a diversified education market, the amount and type of capital associated with a given institution varies—graduation from elite universities can be expected to offer distinct benefits for graduates in the job market.

South Korea and the United States both have large, diversified higher education markets with high enrollment relative to their respective population. Speaking on the educational situation in the U.S., Martin Trow comments that post-secondary schooling has “transformed from a privilege into a right, and for an increasing number into an obligation” ; much the same can be said of Korea. Students compete fiercely for admission into the exclusive universities, while inclusive lower-tier institutions compete for students absorbing the remainder. Both countries’ universities are highly stratified; the Korean premium on SKY universities (Seoul National, Korea University, and Yonsei University) resembles the reputation of the American Ivy League.

The Confucian value system and pattern of networked relationships of kin, regional, alumni, or business ties common across Asia are touted as the reason for the region’s success, as well as blamed for the special type of exclusive elite building within these societies. In South Korea, educational background is an important access key to the jonggo networks, which are themselves instrumental for success. Much criticism is attracted by perceived preferential treatment for these top university graduates, many of whom dominate the
business elite of the country. Sunhwa Lee and Mary C. Brinton’s evidence shows “schools provide not only credentials but critical introductions in the job search process” in both Japan and Korea.

In the United States, the system of education is highly inclusive; over 4000 institutions enroll approximately 15 million students. Examination of top business leaders, however, reveals a disproportionate number of elite university alumni, and evidence suggests a premium exists in the initial hiring process, salary determination, and promotion rate of candidates holding an elite university degree.

Social capital accumulation and exploitation are facilitated by attendance at elite universities. South Korea and America both feature education systems in which one’s alma mater can offer significant information about the potential social capital and educational capital of an individual. South Korea’s pattern of educational elite favoritism is often marked on the scorecard of Confucian influence, but American preference for elite university graduates appears to follow this pattern as well. Thus, the research question explored in this paper is: How unique is South Korean preferential hiring, and economic domination by elite university graduates? Are these semi-institutional networks Confucian- or Asian-specific, or a product of the diversified education system in which elite universities turn out not only more capable students (educational capital), but better connected ones (social capital) whose degrees signal graduates’ potential value to employers (cultural capital)? Using the United States as a comparison, this paper explores the effects of elite education on career prospects.

The remainder of this paper will proceed as follows: Section 2 discusses the theoretical framework informing the study. Sections 3 and 4 examine Korea and the United States in terms of their educational structure and opportunities, and how these affect hiring and top level promotion. Section 5 discusses shortcomings of this study and offers a comparison of the two cases and the trend favoring the educational elites. Finally, section 6 concludes.

**TERMS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section will look at the primary theories and terms informing the assertions of this paper, namely social and cultural capital diversified education and maximal maintained inequality (MMI), and the Confucian Society.

**Human Capital Theory**

**Social Capital**

Social capital theory was first introduced in the 19th century, but an increase in study and expansion of the concept began in earnest more recently with French scholar Pierre Bourdieu, and was popularized in American sociology by leading scholars James Coleman and Robert Putnam. Definitions of social capital vary under each author. Bourdieu sees social capital as something possessed by an individual and focuses on “the kinds of interpersonal connections that can enhance one’s professional advancement” that “is often indispensable if one desires to attract clients in socially important positions” such as in business or politics. Putnam and Coleman emphasize “social capital as the community norms and expectations that arise from close networks of personal ties (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000”).

Mark Granovetter ranks social capital ties on a sliding scale of strong to weak, based on the time and emotional investment they require to form and maintain. Importantly, “strong” and “weak” evaluate the investment, not the usefulness of the tie for any particular purpose. Robert Putnam adds the additional dimension of bridging (inclusive) and bonding (exclusive) to describe whether the ties are among more heterogeneous groups (e.g. reading clubs, bowling leagues, and civil rights movements) or homogenous groups (e.g. ethnic fraternities and expensive country clubs). The category can also split into personal/private capital versus institutional capital. Personal social capital refers to friends, family, and other connections from one’s private life; institutional social capital includes fellow alumni, colleagues, professors, and other professional contacts.

In terms of job searching, social capital is the “who you know” factor. On one’s resume, participation in university activities such as sports teams, fraternities, clubs, and volunteer groups, are high social capital indicators with possible benefits for employment. A background of high socioeconomic class can also be an indicator for the most influential types of social capital desired by business.

**Scholastic (Educational) Capital**

Scholastic capital is the cumulative of educational attainment and achievement in all its quantitative and qualitative dimensions, and can be seen as the “what
you know” side of the equation. Degrees from higher-level institutions, higher levels of degrees, membership in an honors fraternity, and a high GPA are all indicators of educational capital. Different specializations, issuing institution, and higher level degrees are emphasized by seekers, and can individually or collaboratively bring increasing returns to the investment of their attainment.

**Diversified Education System and MMI**

The United States and South Korean higher education structures, when they expanded, offered not only more places, but also more educational tracks and types of higher education, and thus can both be categorized as diversified education systems. The variety of academic and vocational education options range from the premier private elite research universities (academic), sliding downwards to the second tier of lesser public and private four-year colleges (primarily academic), and finally to tertiary opportunities in two-year colleges, tech schools, or other degree and certificate granting institutions (primarily vocational).

Differentiation and expansion of educational options can be seen as parallel as well as compounding phenomena. As the demand for education increases, the availability of different types of education can be alternatively seen as offering more places, or as a means for the persistence of elitism—many studies have shown a continued predominance of high socio-economic status (SES) background in the highest universities, even while giving more people access to some form higher education. In a diversified system, competition by the universities for students and by the students for university spots leads to a stratification of the institutions based on their exclusivity to high-achieving students; this is the final “where did you learn it” factor of the equation employers could examine.

The MMI theory posits “inequality between any two social strata in the odds of attaining a given level of education persists until the advantaged class reaches the point of saturation”. Examples of this can be seen in the benefits to the Korean and American middle class as the tertiary level of education expands following near universalization of secondary level education. “When a given level of education expands, we should expect increasing inequality at the next level due to the increased heterogeneity of the eligible population”.

Education in South Korea and America through the secondary level, and increasingly into the tertiary level is becoming a question of not whether to attend, but where to attend, as the availability of and qualification for that option are taken for granted. As the level of participation in tertiary education grows (although it is still heavily elite-weighted) the additional factors of social background represented by SES class and—more importantly for this study—institutional quality (which can represent the acquisition and possession of premium levels of all types of human capital), may become more important also for job seekers.

**Confucian Values and Network Society**

A discussion of Confucian values could easily constitute an entire paper by itself, and is a difficult concept to encapsulate. For this reason, only those most important aspects relating to the topics in this work are discussed.

Confucian societies are characterized by a collectivist attitude, in which the individual is only defined by his relationships. Kinship ties are the first and foremost of these relationships (followed by regional and school ties), with all other relationships modeled on patterns found within the family. Paternalistic approaches to business culture are therefore the norm, and hierarchical deference in even purely social groups is typical. Confucian societies in general, including Korea, are classified as low trust societies, which is again a function of the family/group-oriented nature of association. Within an established group, trust is implicit and greases the wheels for social and professional interactions alike, but the high degree of exclusivity makes penetration into such a group difficult, if not impossible, for outsiders. Especially in Korea, kinship and regional ties are thought to strongly out-weigh ties formed by scholastic association.

Regarding education, Confucianism sees the pursuit of knowledge “as an end in itself, in practice, it [is] generally seen as a means of social mobility”. It proposes a meritocratic ideal under which all individuals are born equal and must follow the road to self-betterment and moral improvement through learning. Moreover, to advance in modern Korean society one’s status must be “achieved rather than inherited, and amount of education is a determinant of status independent to economic success”.

**EVIDENCE FROM KOREA**

In the following sections of this chapter, a brief outline of Korea’s educational system at pre- and collegiate levels constructs a background from which
to look at the hiring trends for university graduates and for top management promotion.

**Education in Korea**

The Korean education system has expanded massively in quantity and quality over the past decades and can be characterized as both highly structured and highly competitive, as well as demand-driven. In the last 60 years, South Korea has moved from being a country in which the majority of the population had never completed even primary education and was illiterate—in 1945 the illiteracy rate was 78%—to being one of the most literate and well-schooled nations in the world. Korean high school students now consistently score at the top of the International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP) tests and hold the top place for combined scores from OECD nations. South Korea ranks third (behind Czech Republic and Norway) in proportion of the population with a secondary degree; in the youngest cohort in the study, Koreans rank first in university degrees per capita.

An important point in the observation of the South Korean education system is the size and nature of the public/private institutional split. After the free and mandatory elementary school years, tuition is charged at all middle and high schools. Public institutions receive the bulk of their funding from the state, and enrollment quotas control spending per student; private institutions must teach the same curriculum, but receive no funding and are capped from charging significantly more tuition to offset their deficit. Thus, “private schools generally have larger classes and are less well equipped,” functioning as “second-best overflow institutions… rather than elite institutions for the well-heeled”. The same source shows 30% of middle school students, and 47% and 53% of vocational and academic high school students, respectively, attend private schools; more recent figures for higher education show 76% of university and 95% of junior college students attend private institutions. In Korea, the top institutions at the secondary and tertiary levels—including the crown jewel Seoul University—are public.

**Primary and Secondary Education**

The Korean education structure is composed of six years of free compulsory primary education, followed by three years each for middle school and either an academic or vocational high school. Following the World Bank model, public expenditure on education (relatively low at 4.5% of GDP) is focused on promoting quality and inclusion at the lower levels of education. Centralized control of educational policy and curriculum aims to reduce inequality by region or household. Indeed, South Korean pre-tertiary academic education is remarkably homogeneous.

Secondary schools, i.e. academic or vocational high school, begin to differentiate among students. In Korea, “academic education is a high cost, high yield investment, while vocational school is a low cost, low yield investment”. A high school entrance examination is administered to all middle school students; lower test scores and achievement are first selected into vocational schools, after which a lottery places the remaining students in academic schools. This policy again aims to reduce inequality. The focus of academic high schools is almost entirely on preparation for the university entrance exams, and presupposes entrance. Vocational schools were initially designed to be a terminal track of education to produce workers for expanding industry. Demand by parents has seen an increasing integration of academic classes allowing motivated students to enter university from these schools, though still at lower rate than the academic schools. Ironically, vocational high school graduates have a higher rate of return to their educational investment than academic high school graduates who fail to find places in university.

Another important aspect of pre-tertiary education is the “shadow system” of tutors and cram schools that accompany a student through the years of formal education. The government of the 1980’s attempted to ban extra classes and private tutoring, but the law was repealed in the face of flagrant disregard by eager students and their families vying for a place in top institutions. The financial burden that these extras add to the already high cost of education—for which few financing options are offered—are steep and can limit the success of low SES students whose families are unable to pay for them. The 4.5% figure of GDP the state spends on education is deceptively small compared to the amount most families spend. Seth’s data from the mid-1990’s estimates that the public paid 51% of direct education costs (17 trillion wan by families vs. 16.7 trillion wan by the government); when the “shadow system” is added, this proportion rises to 69% of education costs.

**Post-secondary Education**

Korean higher education is highly competitive due to tough entrance examinations and a strict quota
KOREA

system of accepted students. Only 13% of higher education institutes are public (26 universities, and only 5 colleges), and Korean families pay 83% of the funding for the tertiary level of education—highest in the OECD.

The general examination allows a monotonic ranking of the universities with the elite SKY universities at the zenith absorbing the top students each year. Korean universities and colleges are highly stratified, with significantly decreasing returns from top to bottom. Graduates are “ranked for the rest of their life by the ranking of the university they attended,” and top jobs go to “graduates of the most prestigious Seoul-based universities…with lesser job prospects for, in order, regional university graduates, vocational high school graduates, academic high school graduates who have not gone on to college, and school-leavers who, these days, are confined to unskilled occupations”.

Hyunjoon Park’s 2007 paper also notes that the massive expansion of the higher education system fits the stratification model: more second-tier colleges were built than universities. Even amongst the new universities, lower academic standards are acknowledged. The degrees offered by new universities are less prestigious than those from earlier established schools, and place their issuing institution closer to the second than the first tier.

The Job Market

Korean industry is dominated by the chaebols, and jobs in these corporations are the most coveted by graduates. Cheng Tun-jen hypothesizes by using comparison data from Taiwan that the expansion and academically weighted Korean education system is a result of its relationship with the chaebols. Education and the chaebols corporations expanded in tandem, and Cheng identifies the large enterprises’ demand for academically trained “salary men” as fuel for “education fever”. This works in concert with a cultural bias against manual labor that skews the educational market. As a result, Korean students hold 75% academic degrees to only 25% with technical or vocational qualifications (in culturally and historically similar, but SME dominated Taiwan, the ratio is 45:55).

Since the rapid expansion of higher education has been “allowing the ‘cheaper’ departments, such as the humanities, to create more spaces” — instead of needed math, engineering, and natural sciences departments — there is a mismatch between the student supply and the market demand for academic vs. vocational skills; the quota system only partially remedies this situation. Since the crisis in 1977, the “inequality measure of undergraduate major…climbed up rather sharply” with more demand for business, law, and economics majors on company corporate boards.

The competition for jobs and promotion is therefore as fierce as that for university entrance. However, since employers are not bound to strict rules of test ranking for acceptance, social capital factors enter the picture. Although a visible preference for prestigious university graduates dominates hiring practices, students from lesser universities, and later those seeking promotion and advancement into the top echelons of company control, often rely on social capital.

Hiring

Lee and Brinton’s 1996 paper “Elite Education and Social Capital: The Case of South Korea” compares the South Korean pattern with both the Japanese and American education-career transition. Like Japan, in Korea “schools provide not only credentials but critical introductions in the job search process” and “alumni ties—a ‘semi-institutional network’—[have become] an effective job-search channel”. Their paper hypothesizes that top university graduates are more likely to use institutional social capital (i.e. alumni and university contacts) to gain employment, and will hold a greater proportion of jobs at large firms; although high SES background students will be overrepresented in prestigious universities, the effects of social background and the need for use of personal social contacts will be mitigated by attendance at the top universities; lesser university grads will show a heavier reliance on personal channels.

Results from Lee and Brinton are largely supported by Hyunjoon Park’s works on social inequality in Korea based on education. The former authors show that the percentage of university grads who get jobs through direct application holds constant across all universities. As predicted there is also an inverse relationship between university prestige ranking and use of personal social capital; a positive relationship with use of institutional capital; and “having more human capital than the average individual at one’s university helps significantly more if the university is ranked second or third, rather than first”. Finally, while “the positive association between family socioeconomic status and the attainment of elite education…seems to be present in South Korea”, Park’s
works shows the effect of father’s education and SES are still lesser effects than in other diversified education systems, though they are gradually becoming stronger. This is possibly due to the high degree of urbanization (85% of the population) in Korea compared to the U.S., suburbanization of educated and wealthy families, and the amount centralized control over education.

In the initial hiring phase, it appears that prestigious university alumni do enjoy a significant preference by employers over lesser university alumni. Lee and Park report that in 1989, graduates from the top six Korean universities constituted 34% of the new employees of the top 50 company, even though they accounted for only 15% of the grads for that year; these top university graduates were hired into the best positions at a rate more than double the remainder of their cohort. The institutional social capital accompanying their degree trumps the personal social capital that other graduates can mobilize. Unfortunately more studies on the initial hiring process were not found, however, the importance of social capital and advantages of elite university degrees for promotion—especially to the top corporate board—are well documented, and explored below.

**Promotion at the Top**

The close-knit nature and homogeneity of the upper limits of corporate management in Korea is well documented, and much criticized—attracting blame for the 1997 Asian financial crisis’ effects in Korea, and more generally for being exclusive and particularistic. The mechanism of homophily, which “explains group composition in terms of the similarity of member’ characteristics such as regional origins, schools, and kinship”, is perpetuated by what Shin and Chin identify as a “‘homosexual reproduction’ in which men reproduce their own image” and “guard power and privilege for those...they see as ‘their kind’” . In addition to secondary and university ties, regional ties are also important for corporate promotion. No data was found to relate regional background to hiring practices, but the below cited studies compare regional as well as educational homophily.

Kim and Kim report that among corporate directors out of more than 2000 high schools and 200 universities, the top nine high schools’ alumni constitute 32% of the sample, while the number for the top nine universities is even more remarkably high at 72%. The concentration from SKY universities is alone nearly 50% (Seoul National University 27.13%, Korea University 10.8%, and Yonsei University 9.75%). Most recently, Kim and Park, looking at pairs of CEOs and owners, identify 14.9% to be matched by university history; the same study also shows being in a matched pair tends to reduce the hazard rate, i.e. extend the tenure of hire, for the CEO. Kim and Kim, looking at samples of the entire corporate board rather than just owner/CEO pairs, show university-based in-hiring is strongest among SKY university graduates, with the CEO’s university alma mater matching the dominant university amongst the remaining board members nearly 38% of the time. High school alumni ties were actually stronger (matching 40.5%) than university ties.

After the 1997 financial crisis, when political pressure forced boards to diversify their regional composition, university homophily grew to 50% in 2000—fully half of the directors being alumni matches to the CEO; clearly “decision makers in firms...have relied more heavily upon personal ties when recruiting board members.” Interestingly however, both university and high school heterogeneity have a positive relationship with firm size, level of industry risk, firm performance, and low debt level, thus suggesting in-hiring may be far from the best option.

**EVIDENCE FROM THE UNITED STATES**

This chapter follows the same layout as the previous chapter, examining the structure of the United States’ primary-secondary and tertiary education, and its relationship with hiring and corporate promotion preferences.

**Educational Structure**

The United States’ demand-driven education system has expanded to near complete levels of inclusion through the secondary level—85% of the adult population holding at least a high school diploma. Tertiary level education has also expanded greatly since the end of WWII. The GI Bill opened up universities to veterans through grants and funding, and similar programs later extended to regular citizens too. Like in Korea, community colleges and lower level four-year institutions led the expansion of the post-secondary sector. In 2007, 63% of high school grads went on to some form of post-secondary education, and 25% of the U.S. adult population held a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Education is highly decentralized in America, and receives national, state, and local funding. Each school
district is given large autonomy to decide its own
curriculum within national and state requirements, and
to hire its own (state certified) teachers. Public education
is free and compulsory (and enforced by truancy laws)
for children through the 12th grade or equivalent
school-leaving certification; high school graduates
continuing into both public and private post-secondary
education pay tuition. Opposite to the Korean system,
in the United States, the private education sector is seen
as the more prestigious track with higher academic
standards.

While U.S. universities dominate international
rankings—taking more than half of the places in the top
50 institutions—American high school students rank
only approximately half way up the lists in all areas on
the OECD’s studies on education in recent years.

Primary and Secondary Education

Primary and secondary education in the U.S., due
to the decentralized system, is difficult to generalize.
Across 12 years of schooling, most districts separate
students into elementary, middle, and high school
levels, though the exact years of division changes,
and some districts have additional intermediate levels.
Free public schools absorb 90% of students, with the
remaining 10% choosing tuition-charging private
education or home schooling—most attend Catholic
schools. Due to the particularistic nature of the public
system granted by decentralization, it varies whether
a private school is the best investment in terms of
education. However, as shall be presented later, these
schools can be an important source of social capital.
Useem and Karabel’s 1986 work identifies fourteen
elite private schools as conferring “upper class” status:
Choate, Deerfield, Groton, Hill, Hotchkiss, Kent,
Lawrenceville, Middlesex, Milton, Portsmouth, Priory,
St. George’s, St. Mark’s, St. Paul’s, and Taft. Richard
Zweigenhaft also notes a difference for Yale graduate’s
likely career path and likelihood of using the Yale
social capital connections between public and private
high school graduates.

Post-secondary Education

Students seeking American post-secondary degrees
may choose between public and private institutions;
both charge tuition—on average approximately $7000/
semester at public schools, and up to seven times that
amount for top private universities—and both public
and private sources of grants and funding are readily
available to students. The same as at the primary and
secondary levels, public institutions take up the lion’s
share (75%) of students, and unlike South Korea, no
quota is placed on admission outside of the university’s
own discretion. Also, while all American students
take the SAT (or ACT) as an entry exam to university,
admission is based on many more factors than merely
test scores. These include various measures of social
capital (community, school, or club involvement,
participation in sports teams, part-time employment,
etc.). Rankings of universities, however, are usually
related to their exclusivity—based on average SAT
score—and to some extent also on their tuition cost.

The Ivy League (Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Cornell,
Brown, Dartmouth, University of Pennsylvania, and
Columbia) and other private east coast names (e.g.
Georgetown, John Hopkins, MIT, etc.) dominate the
top schools list, and are synonymous with exclusive
admission and prestigious degrees. However, many
public schools (e.g. University of Michigan, several
the University of California schools, University
of Washington) also score very high, with certain
programs or degrees associated with an “upper class”
background.

The Job Market

Seeking employment for American college and
university graduates is a competitive process in which
the effects of social and educational capital both play a
part. This section of the chapter will look at the value
an elite university degree can have for first jobs, and for
promotion at the top of the corporate structure.

Hiring

Many influential studies look at the effects of
college quality, and educational and social capital on
employment in America. Most studies, done from the
perspective of human capital theory, operate under the
assumption that “the labor market rewards investments
individuals make in themselves and that these
investments lead to greater productivity and higher
salary”. The studies also generally show that while a
disproportionate number of university- and especially
elite students are from a high SES background, the
effects of the university degree mitigate the advantage
observed among non-graduates for social background.
Moreover, while the rate of return to each successive
level of education from primary upward declines, the
importance of SES background continues to diminish
with each step higher up the education ladder (e.g. to
more elite schools, or higher level degrees).
Evidence varies on the rate of return to college quality. The findings of James et al. declare that “while sending your child to Harvard appears to be a good investment, sending him to your local state university to major in Engineering, to take lots of math, and preferably to attain a high GPA, is an even better private investment. Apparently what matters most is not which college you attend but what you do while there”. However, the same work and others acknowledge that when controlling for these internal characteristics, the degree from the elite university will triumph. The evidence of Bowman and Mehay’s 2002 study of promotion patterns of U.S. Naval officers—from which the “up-or-out” fourth level promotion can be construed as roughly the military equivalent of a civilian getting a job—shows that private school candidates have an advantage over public school candidates. The private school effect even trumped GPA as an important factor; private school grads consistently receive better performance reports and are more likely to be promoted at this fourth stage.

Cost typically acts as a proxy for selectivity and prestige of a school, and there are “net positive socioeconomic returns to investment in a relatively high cost college.” These effects are greater for women and minorities. This finding, when paired with 2001 data from Brown and Davis concerning hiring rates out of historically black colleges, suggests a possible homophily effect assisting the higher human capital value for elite graduates from these groups.

Promotion at the Top

Concerning promotion into the business elite of America, the evidence for the value of a prestigious university degree is stronger than for the initial hiring process. The study of Useem and Karabel in 1986, and the later 1995 work by Judge, Cable, Bourdreau, and Bretz both demonstrate a clear preference in the boardroom for Ivy Leaguers and other top university grads, a larger impact for “upper class” background than the initial hiring studies showed, and substantial increases in salary regardless of both characteristics. “Even among senior corporate managers, continued upward mobility is enhanced by the possession of prestigious university credentials…Compared to a senior manager holding a BA degree from a non-elite institution, the holder of the top BA is 42% more likely to reach the chief executive suite.” Holders of a BA degree from one of these institutions if one’s BA is from an unranked university (especially if the degree makes one an alumnus of a superior university) does, however, increase chances of advancement. Judge et al. supports all of Useem and Karabel’s earlier findings with additional data concerning salary. Particularly interesting in their findings is the $600,000 pay gap over the (20 year) career which Ivy League graduates enjoy, even with the authors calculations controlling for education quality.

An upper class background also substantially increases the likelihood of promotion to the corporate board. Social background occasionally even appears to be a qualification in and of itself without a university degree. This is probably because such a candidate is “more likely to have the kind of dense network of high-status friends and acquaintances or ‘social capital’ that facilitates advancement within the ranks of management.” For these high SES individuals, having a BA is enough to raise their chances of promotion to the same level as superior degree holders from a lower SES background. Earning a higher level of degree (i.e. MA, MBA, LLB, etc.) makes no significant difference for promotion for upper class members, and in general high SES background individuals pursue fewer advanced degrees. Zweigenhaft’s evidence from a study of Yale alumni shows high SES origin individuals associate themselves as much with their prep school as their university, suggesting social background is as important a club as alma mater ties; this generally supports the probability of SES background being an important hiring factor—even if lacking a homogeneous educational background, these individuals are still seen as part of the same prestigious group.

In sum, scholastic capital enhances the probability of promotion into the senior management ranks, and yields significantly higher returns in salary as well. The increase in probability of both promotions is, however, steadier among those of non-upper class rather than upper class origin—membership in the latter also carrying its own (lesser) salary benefits independent of scholastic capital investments.

DISCUSSION AND COMPARISON

Unfortunately, this study is hindered by the lack of matching and current data. The focus of the statistics for the American and South Korean studies is similar enough to offer a tantalizing hope that parallels can be drawn, but falls short of delivering a clear result. To
properly compare the strengths of preference for elite
grads in each country, empirical research with answers
to this exact question as its goal needs to be undertaken.
Some comparison, however, can be offered based on the
general shapes and trends detected from the information
available.

South Koreans and Americans share a similar
preference for hiring—and especially in-hiring—
among graduates of elite universities. This should be
no surprise, as admission to both systems of higher
education is controlled by national standardized exams.
Entrance examination scores have a large and direct
impact on admission to university (though in America
other student background factors appear to play a larger
role than in Korea). Therefore, ranking universities in
both countries by academic quality should come easily
from examination of the admitted students’ average test
scores. Furthermore, from a scholastic capital standpoint
it follows that employers looking for top quality
academic qualification should choose individuals from
the best universities first.

Concerning social capital, evidence in both
countries shows a concentration of higher SES status
individuals in elite schools. In South Korea, this may
reflect the ability to pay for classes and tutors in the
shadow education system when preparing for exams. In
America, a similar bonus based on education may exist
for prep school attendees, but more importantly even
middle class students are able to afford the time and
money for the extracurricular activities that can serve as
a boost to low test scores. For both countries, the small
representation of the lowest SES brackets possibly not
only reflects a lack of funds to pay for educational or
extracurricular extras, but a lack of time to also invest
in the intensive preparations; in America this is likely
exacerbated by the effects of a peer culture in low
SES areas that doesn’t value education or educational
ambition particularly highly.

Due to the large number of patrician class students
at the elite schools in both countries, attendance at an
elite institution assumes association with these people,
and the formation of important social connections
potentially useful in business. This further advances
the assumed value of a graduate from one of these
schools for employers looking to exploit such ties. Ties
into an elite social network could easily be construed to
outweigh the benefits of a slightly more academically
talented individual from a lesser institution who has
not only no useful contacts within the upper class,
but also little experience interacting with this class
of individuals. This social capital factor could help
explain the results from the American study showing
the leap-frog maneuver some managers from an upper
class background can accomplish to gain promotions
to top positions over their more academically qualified
colleagues. On a final note, the higher quality and
wider webs of institutional social capital related to elite
schools, relative to lesser schools, is also an advantage
for graduates in the hiring and promotion process.

CONCLUSION

In both South Korea and America the effects of an
elite university degree are significant in search for a job,
and later for promotion within the corporate structure.
SES background is also a determining factor, but studies
from both countries have shown the effect of social class
is mitigated by university affiliation. As to answering
the research question of the strength and uniqueness
of Korea’s elite hiring and in-hiring tendencies, it is
unfortunately impossible to draw definitive conclusions
from the present evidence. Studies on initial hiring,
salary, and promotion in America show that preferences
and preferential treatment for elites exist in the U.S. as
well. More importantly, from the data gathered there
appear to be similar preferences for educational affinity
on the corporate boards. Board composition with strong
regional affinity in Korea is perhaps in America echoed
by the predominance of high SES background (which
is typically, and especially in the studies here cited,
regionally associated with the East Coast) managers,
and shows similar preference for homophily in both
countries. Despite the limitations of the empirical data,
trends seem positive and significant in both countries,
and suggest grounds for future research exploring the
comparative value of an elite SKY or Ivy degree in
South Korea and America.
ENDNOTES

7. Lee and Brinton.
17. Sources on MMI include Mare (1980, 1981), and Raftery and Hout (1993), however, as this is a merely a brief overview of the concept and the above sources were not readily available, this paper uses only the citation of those sources in Shavit and Blossfeld, Persistent Inequality (1993), and Shavit et al., Stratification in Higher Education (2007).
19. Arum et al.
20. Raftery and Hout 1993, in Arum et al., p. 3.
22. Arum et al., p. 29.
25. e.g. Cheng; Lee, and Brinton; Hyunjoon Park; Seth; Sorenson.
27. Ibid., p. 18.
30. Ibid.
31. Sorenson.
32. Seth.
34. Sorenson, p. 19.
35. Hyunjoon Park.
37. Ibid.
38. Kim, and Kim, p. 53.
40. Ibid.; Hyunjoon Park.
41. Lee and Brinton, p. 188.
42. Ibid.; support also found in Sorenson.
43. Hyunjoon Park, “Educational Expansion and Inequality of Opportunity”.
44. Lee and Brinton.
45. e.g. Kim and Kim; Kim and Park; Shin and Chin.
46. Kim and Kim, p. 42.
47. Shin and Chin, p. 4.
48. Shin and Chin’s (1989) evidence is to the contrary of both Kim & Kim (2008) and Kim & Park (2009). Their study finds only a slight trend in SNU graduates and negligible evidence for other higher institutions (high school affinity ties were identified and significant, underscoring a preference for regional as well as academic ascription). Based on the evidence of the two previously mention studies, however, it seems likely that the results (now over 20 years old, and thus based on a different generational cohort of graduates) may be misleading.
50. Background information in this chapter concerning the US education system is taken from the U.S. Department of Education homepage unless otherwise specified.
51. Roska et al.; Trow.
53. Roska et al.
54. Zweigenhaft.
55. Roska et al.
56. Ibid.
58. e.g. Arcidiacono; Black and Smith; Christopher M. Brown II and James Earl Davis, “The Historically Black College as

60. Psacharopoulos.
61. James et al.; Useem and Karabel,
62. James et al., p. 251-252
63. ibid; de Graaf and Flap; Martin.
64. Although it can be argued that Bowman and Mehay’s (2002) evidence on naval officers is not comparable to civilian data, the author believes that the homogeneity of the sample and the career option which includes only two basic career tracks offers an interesting example when compared to the extremely heterogeneous nature of both the sample group and the potential career options in the civilian sector.
65. Pascarella et al., p. 284.
66. “Upper class” status in these studies is based on attendance at an elite prep school or inclusion in the Social Register
67. Useem and Karabel’s lists include:
68. The top 11 undergraduate universities: the Ivy Leagues (minus Brown University) plus John Hopkins, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Stanford, and Williams College.
69. The top 11 MBA schools: Columbia University, Dartmouth University, Harvard University, MIT, Northwestern University, Stanford University, UC Berkley, UC LA, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania.
70. The top 9 law schools: Columbia University, Harvard University, New York University, Stanford University, UC Berkley, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University.
71. Harvard is considered the top school for all degrees, with a Harvard MBA as the top degree for business.
72. The latter study by Judge et al. (1995) sites this earlier work, and therefore presumably works from the same list.
73. Useem and Karabel, p. 197.
74. Judge et al.
75. Useem and Karabel, p. 188-189.
76. e.g. ibid; Zweigenhaft

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The rise of China is one of the defining issues of the Twenty-first century. China’s transformation from a backward, isolated nation after the Second World War (1939-1945) and the Chinese civil war (1927-1949/50), to the modern, industrious and prosperous China of today is nothing less than remarkable. It is important to remember however, that the rise of China would not have been possible if it had not been for the opening of relations between the US and China by President Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Henry Kissinger has recently released his own account of modern Chinese history and the US opening to China in his book, Kissinger on China (2011). Kissinger is of course well known for his style of writing in which he often displays his own views as a “projective biography”. From his Harvard years, to his rise to office, he often used his academic writings to state ‘quite clearly what he would do as a policy maker’ (H. Starr, 1980: p474). Kissinger on China is no exception, he may have left office but this work again displays Kissinger’s views in a detailed and readable style. So in a detailed account on the history of modern China, from one of the most influential statesmen of the twentieth century, what lessons can be learned on future relations with China?

It should be made clear that Kissinger’s book does not offer the most comprehensive account on Chinese history, he also does not create upsets or scandal by going into too much detail on the infamous working relationship he had with Richard Nixon, although Kissinger does offer a sober assessment of Nixon as a statesman (p263). It is also easy to dismiss the writings of Kissinger as one reviewer has done in the New York Times as ‘a sly attempt by a controversial figure to burnish his legacy as Nixon’s national security adviser and secretary of state’ (M. Katatani, 2011). But underneath Kissinger’s account of the opening to China is a guide to future relations with China in the mould of the realist school of thought. Realism is one of the dominant paradigms of international relations theory and Kissinger’s version of “realpolitik” offers an insightful guide to future relations with China.

Perhaps the most invaluable part of the book is Kissinger’s account of relations with Premier Zhou and Chairman Mao. Despite his brief visit it is interesting to note the observations Kissinger makes on the character and outlook of the Chinese leaders during those early days of dialogue in 1972. Kissinger also offers insightful observations on the differences of Chinese culture and politics. Whilst the Western tradition of politics expects leaders to display oratory skills, Kissinger observes that ‘in the Mandarin tradition, they operate essentially out of sight, legitimized by performance’ — an observation that undoubtedly has relevance to the current leaders of China’s communist party. For those who see conflict with China as inevitable, Kissinger also highlights how China will be a very different power to what the US is used to as whilst the West bases its strategy on an approach similar to the game of Chess, China has an ancient tradition of basing its strategy on the game of Wei Qi, a very different approach that involves issues of encirclement compared to Western strategic ideas of deterrence (pp131-134). One of the key lessons of the book in fact seems to be that leaders of both east and west need to recognise and respect the differences between established Western norms and ideas compared to China’s ancient customs and traditions.

The rise of China is likely to change the international system in ways that cannot be foreseen with certainty. But with the west in economic turmoil many critics see the era of an American-led global order as over. Gideon Rachman (2011) the Financial Times foreign affairs columnist has convincingly argued that America is in decline and with China’s insatiable rise it has led many to believe that China will inevitably find increasing opportunities to challenge the US dominance. The decline of US power and the rise of China have led one scholar to comment that ‘only China has the capacity to pose a challenge to US regional hegemony’ (David Kerr,
When some neorealist thinkers are openly advocating confrontation with China (Mearsheimer 2006) Henry Kissinger’s account of modern China offers intelligent advice on this challenging issue. With China’s increasing political power it is easy to descend into pessimistic predictions of a future conflict. Reading Kissinger’s account of the opening to China highlights how the Marxist, Mao-era China also believed conflict with the United States was not just probable but unavoidable (p203). The detailed first hand account of the opening to China offers not only a glimpse into the workings of diplomacy, but also a testament that shows nothing is inevitable. Whilst it was once seen as destiny for the US to come into conflict with Mao era China, the work of Kissinger and the geopolitical focus and leadership of Richard Nixon meant that the US entered into diplomatic relations with China, an unprecedented achievement for the time.

Whilst it is easy to dismiss On China as an attempt by Kissinger to mould a legacy that offers a positive reflection on his life’s work, Kissinger’s book also offers an insightful first hand account of one of the most dramatic moments in the twentieth century and for that reason alone it is worth reading.

ENDNOTES


REVIEWED BY KEVIN BLACHORD

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The Song dynasty [960-1279] not only marks a decisive rupture in China’s history but also a fascinating period in East Asian history. However, despite the considerable scholarly output in Song studies since the 1970s, a comprehensive appreciation of the history of China’s Song Dynasty in English had been lacking until very recently. About the same time when the long-awaited volume on Song history in the Cambridge History of China series hits the shelves in the first half of 2009,1 the Harvard University Press puts forth a series of six books on the history of imperial China with Dieter Kuhn’s fourth volume The Age of Confucian Rule: The Song Transformation of China. As his student, I was honored to have access to some of his manuscripts before the official publication.

Similar to the Cambridge volume, Dieter Kuhn’s study of Song history is subdivided into two parts: a brief but succinct chronological survey of political history followed by topical chapters addressing developments and transformations in the socio-economic, intellectual, and cultural history of Chinese society, and some of the neighboring non-Chinese states such as the Khi-tan Liao [907-1125], Jurchen Jin [1115-1234], and Tanguts Xi Xia [1038-1227], roughly between 960 and 1279. The book begins rather conventionally with a political history in the respective periods. In the first chapter, the author reviews the ninth-century pre-Song past, illustrating the state of the lands the Song dynasty inherited upon its establishment. Chapter two emphasizes the achievements of the first three Song emperors. The following chapter narrates the successive large-scale reforms launched by Fan Zhongyan and Wan Anshi in the eleventh-century and the collapse of the Song regime under Jurchen incursions. The fourth chapter then highlights the major moments in the rise and fall of the remnant Song court in the southern half of its former territories from 1127 to 1279. As shown above, the first chapters of the book cover generously the most famous events regarding the Song emperors, chief councilors, and other political actors, taking the reader on an exploration of the major transformations in the political and geopolitical landscape and in interstate power relations during four centuries of Chinese history. Although most of these accounts were brief, Kuhn provides the book with a lively narrative and presents the Song political history in a lively and engaging style.

The overwhelming focus of this book, apart from political events, is fixed on other spheres which shaped Song history, as Kuhn ventures into intellectual, economic, and social history. Chapter five focuses heavily on Confucianism, indicating the origin of the book’s title. The following chapters describe Song’s examination and education systems (ch. 6), rituals such as marriage and funeral customs of Song Chinese and their non-Han neighbors (ch. 7), the expansion of new styles of literature, painting and ceramics (ch. 8), daily life in the capitals of Kaifeng and Hangzhou (ch. 9), advances and innovations in technology (ch. 10), the financial policies and taxation systems (ch. 11), and colorful account of private lives and fashions in the Song (ch. 12).

As the title of Kuhn’s book suggests, Song China was fundamentally a Confucian state. However, some Song specialists may feel that the ideas of Zhu Xi, the Cheng brothers, and other Neo-Confucianist ideas are not discussed with enough intensity (p. 101-106) while more attention was paid to Buddhism and Daoism (p. 106-112). What Kuhn seems to emphasize here is that the evolution of Neo-Confucianism during the Song took immense account of Buddhism and Daoism. In effect, this was necessary as many Confucians in early Song responded vigorously to the “new problems and challenges presented by the flourishing influence of
Hang Lin

Buddhism and Dao-ism in Chinese culture” (p. 100). Kuhn notes that the relationships between Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism were so close that Song Confucians “faced a religious reality that could not be ignored but asked for a compatible answer” (p. 112). In other words, the philosophical innovation of Song’s intellectual society was to reform Confucianism, taking into account the popularity of Buddhism and Daoism. In turn, the Buddhist canon integrated Confucian filial piety.

The main strength of Kuhn’s study lies in his detailed and vivid socio-economical and cultural accounts in the Song period. For instance, the Song conception of city design represents “a change of urban paradigms” (p. 191) because the Song capitals were designed to accommodate markets and night time activity, as opposed to the Tang when these activities were” regulated and confined to sections of cities together with red light districts” (p. 189). As a result of Song’s “open cities”, its Kaifeng population increased drastically from “809,000 people” in the 980s to “about 1.3 million in 1103” (p. 195). Both in Kaifeng and Hangzhou, trade and commerce flourished, the proliferation of workshops, mar-kets, and family business were “without parallel elsewhere” (p. 209). Restaurants of various kinds catered to “all sorts of guests and tastes” and recreation and pleasure establishments made “the capital never rest” (p. 203).

Based on a wide range of primary and secondary scholarship on textual and material sources, the text moves from the description of more common themes like popular entertainment to subject matter sometimes overlooked in survey histories such as marriage customs (p. 138-142), funeral practices (p. 148-154), or health care (p. 271-275). Compared to earlier works aimed at a general audience, such as Jacques Gernet’s Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion and Mark Elvin’s The Pattern of the Chinese Past, this book offers a much complete bibliograph-phy and many more citations to primary and secondary literature. Meticulous accounts acco-mmatedated in the book show that Kuhn is particularly good on topics that deal with material culture broadly conceived such as farm production (p. 213-220), weaving skills (p. 220-224), transport canals (p. 224-230), mines (p. 230-232), currency (p. 234-244), clothing (p. 263-266), sedan chairs (p. 255-256), cosmetics (p. 256-261), and the like. He has written a large body of academic literature which are devoted to the developments of technology and material culture in China, such the volume on textile technology in Joseph Needham’s standard work Science and Civilisa-tion in China. A Place for the Dead, a comprehensive research on Song graves and tombs based on careful survey of archeological discoveries, and Die Kunst des Grabbaus, a pioneer work on Khitan Liao’s unique practices of reshaping Chi-nese-style dome-shaped tombs, to name only a few.

Another one of many strengths of this book is the tasteful integration of Song’s neigh-bors, Liao, Jin and Xi Xia, throughout the work. Regarding the treaties Song signed with the respective neighbors, Kuhn sides with those Song officials who pragmatically opted for indemnified peace, willing to tolerate de facto coexistence with other alien states. He argues that the annual payment of tribute sets “a precedent for coexis-tence on the basis of peaceful bilateral relations for generations to come” (p. 46), crediting Song’s prosperity in part to the long peace. Moreover, Kuhn juxtaposes his discussions on Buddhism in Song (p. 108-110) with similar religious prac-ticies in Liao and Jin. As well as comparing marriage customs of the Khitan and Jurchen (p. 146-148) with the Han Chinese (p. 138-142). Indeed, the era between the 10th and 13th century marks one of the most decisive reptures in the history of China. China experienced under the Song an eco-nomic and cultural apex in its history, but the late medieval age was also a time when tribal regimes of the northeast renewed their incursions and be-came a menace for the Song. Kuhn reminds us the importance and necessity to include Song’s non-Han neighbors in our observation of Song China because there existed no “China” as it was understood before or since, but rather a territory divided among different ethnic nations and states.

Apart from occasional anachronisms and pinyin transliteration errors, for example the Four Books had not yet been separated out and estab-lished as standard canons for the Civil Service Examinations in the eleventh century (p. 129) and Mei Yaochen appears wrongly as Mei Yaozhen (p. 260), Song historians may take issue with some of the larger interpretive claims. The rela-tionships between “Neo-Confucian rationality” (p. 279) and Song’s exploration of the natural and material world (p. 102), as well as changes of Chinese conception of world order in the context of
political and to some extent also cultural coexistence with “barbarian” conquest states may be disputed. Of course we must bear in mind that the main aim of these Harvard series is to reach more general readers than Song specialists, and in this sense, Kuhn rises to this challenge successfully. In summary, Dieter Kuhn’s The Age of Confucian Rule: The Song Transformation of China offers a picturesque portrait of Song China full of skillful syntheses, intriguing observations, and provocative arguments, to both professional historians as well as the wider public.

ENDNOTES


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