

Synergy

The Journal of Contemporary Asian Studies

Volume 2
2017

*Academic Articles and
Op-Eds about East, Southeast
and South Asia*





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*The Journal
of Contemporary
Asian Studies*

*Volume 2
2017*

EDITED BY *Daniel C. Park
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Arthur Lui
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Synergy: The Journal of Contemporary Asian Studies

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

It is with honour and pleasure that I present you with the second volume of the Synergy Journal in print edition. Over the 2016-17 academic cycle, over 25 of University of Toronto students have committed themselves to the editorial production of this volume and the creation of exceptional scholarly works on Synergy's website. I would like to sincerely congratulate and thank every Synergy member and executive for being committed and supportive of this strenuous, but rewarding process. This was a wonderful year with the Synergy team, and I could not ask for anything better. I would also like to give my biggest gratitude and upmost thanks to Gloria Liu, the incoming Editor-in-Chief, who did so much for Synergy. Thank you.

The Synergy Journal was founded in the summer of 2015 with the generous support of the Asian Institute at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. Our vision from the start has been to stimulate and generate vibrant academic discussions on the current political, historical, societal, and economic developments in the Asian region. Being one of the founding members, it is amazing to see how much the journal has grown. I am incredibly proud of the progress we made. Since the journal's inception, we have consistently contributed to our growing online database of now eighty-two scholarly articles, event reports, and op-eds. As we did the year before, we organized the academic panel talk "Resettlement of North Korean Refugees in South Korea and Beyond: What Do We Know?" in March 2017, attracting audiences from many different fabric of Toronto. At the same time, we reported on numerous other events organized by the Asian Institute and the Munk School.

This particular print volume that you are about to read strives to continue and exhibit the journal's founding vision. In this volume, you will find carefully researched content on topics such as the territorial dispute over

the South China Sea, the Korean Wave or “Hallyu”, and economic integration and human rights in South Asia.

The authors published in this volume consists of both undergraduate and graduate level students from various top institutions around the world. The volume exhibits the best articles accepted by Synergy during the 2016-17 academic cycle.

As one of the founding members of the Synergy Journal, I sincerely hope that our readers like you would enjoy this year’s volume and appreciate our efforts in gathering contemporary Asian research.

Sincerely,

Daniel C. Park

Editor-in-Chief 2016-17

Synergy: The Journal of Contemporary Asian Studies

FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure to offer a few prefatory remarks about the state of Asian Studies and *Synergy*'s interventions into this field of knowledge. Some time ago, in his now classic book *Orientalism*, the noted public intellectual and scholar Edward Said alerted us to the politics of knowledge production about the "Orient." Not only did he demonstrate that knowledge about others is almost always inflected by power and interests; he also compelled us to consider that key conceptual terms such as "Asia" or "the West" are not natural categories, but products of history and relations of power.

Many of the great thinkers of post-Enlightenment Europe -- from Kant and Hegel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to social scientists such as Max Weber in the twentieth -- used an imaginary non-West, including an imaginary Asia, in order to constitute Europe and themselves as at the forefront of civilization, progress, world history, and humanity. In *Religion of China* Weber, who is perhaps the single most influential social scientist of the twentieth century, constructed China as a backward and hopelessly unchanging society. He used this imaginary China as a dark foil against which to shine an image of post-Reformation Europe as at the mesmerizing forefront of progress and rationality for all of humanity. Now many of us are aware that such representations of Europe or the West and its Others were constitutive of the cultural dimensions of Western imperialism and that Japanese Orientalists also came to produce their own version of the Orient and to imagine themselves as the leader of Asia.

But we have come a long way since then -- or have we? Certainly the field of Asian studies has diversified and many conventional tropes about Asia that were carried into Cold War area studies have come under scrutiny. To be sure, we now find plenty of scholars of Asia who argue that China's recent economic development is in part due to the fact that for most of history China was ahead of the West in so many measures of human progress. Others have maintained that Weber had Confucianism all wrong. Actually, instead of serving as an impediment to progress and

capitalism, Asian and traditional values unleashed the successes of first Japan, then the so-called Four Asian Tigers, and now the five Tiger Cub economies of Southeast Asia. The changing demographics of Asian studies has also led to some changes. While the old paradigm depended upon the strict separation of “Us” from “Them,” the increased flow of Asian immigrants to North America and Europe, which has had a kind of trickle up effect into Asian studies, has played a part in making it increasingly difficult to draw the line between Asians “over there” and those of us who speak for Asian studies “over here.” One of the effects of this challenge to conventional Asian studies has been a turn toward transnationalism as well as a querying about the boundaries between Asian studies and Asian North American studies. Where does Asia end and North America or Europe begin?

At the same time, much of the discourse on dynamic Asia is mired in what I consider to be a type of non-Eurocentrism based upon a logic of progress that remains an effect of Eurocentric modernity. Moreover, the naming of Asians as tigers, cubs, or worse yet dragons, and recycled images of irrational Oriental despots – these tap into some remaining perceptions of Asia as somehow outside of European humanity. And it is still common to lump all the people of a particular nation together, as if they make up a homogenous group that speaks with one voice. Finally, at the core we must remember that the will to power, or at least in simpler terms the desire to speak in the national interest or in the interests of particular groups who claim to represent the national community, always entices all of us who work in any field.

At the Asian Institute, which is the main sponsor of *Synergy*, I believe we share a vision of contemporary Asian studies that builds upon the strengths of the old area studies – for example, language competency and intimate empirical knowledge of concrete places – but while also leaving behind reified notions of cultures and nations and also self-aware that our objects of study do not simply exist “out there” as if in a state of nature. Instead, we constitute them because we hope to address specific issues. Since we hope to privilege issues over geographic and disciplinary boundaries, we encourage a variety of research topics, many of which are

transnational and employ methods learned from a range of academic disciplines.

Synergy represents some of the best work of our students as well as research from a network of student scholars from around the globe. I would like to extend my personal congratulations to all those who have worked on this endeavor, especially the editors and contributors and also encourage all readers to learn from the journal and to join in conversations sparked by the articles.

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East Asia

1

China and Japan Embroiled in East China Sea Dispute: Risk of Clash Boosted?

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The territorial dispute between China and Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands in the East China Sea is heating up.

The escalation in this long-running dispute started in January 2016, when China dispatched two coastguard ships to patrol the Diaoyu islands, asserting its sovereignty claims despite the Japanese warning that it would use military vessels to combat China's actions. Recently, China has further upped the ante by deploying a Chinese navy ship, the first ever Chinese military vessel in the

contiguous zone of Japanese-administered waters in the East China Sea. This string of incidents has complicated the chronic territorial issue between China and Japan, thereby making the management of the crisis highly problematic.

Raising tensions still further, in its counter response to Chinese actions, Japan has switched on a radar station in the East China Sea, giving it a permanent intelligence-gathering post close to Taiwan and the disputed islands. In addition, Japan has also increased its fleet presence

in the disputed waters. Here, it is also worth noting that Japan's activities in the East China Sea are a result of its changing security policy in becoming a 'normal' country. Despite its umbrella protection under the US-Japan Defence Treaty, Japan still faces risks from an assertive China, a nuclear North Korea, and the growing terror of ISIS, calling for a revision in Japan's pacifist posture. On March 29, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe passed a new military law to challenge China's unilateral territory reclamation in the East China Sea. The sea has been historically compounded by heightened tensions due to US exercises of the freedom of navigation.

These recent events highlight old territorial tensions, which were revived in 2012 with Japan's purchase of the Senkaku Islands from a private owner. Next came China's establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea in 2013. Just last year, Beijing justified its ship patrol near the Diaoyu Islands by calling Japan's actions "irreproachable". In response, Japan plans to use Self-Defense Force (SDF) units

to drive away "Chinese naval ships" from waters near the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, a move that could severely destabilize China-Japan relations, given the escalation of tensions in the East China Sea.

This new momentum has seen the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands re-emerge as a potential confrontation hotspot in the Asia-Pacific region. Until now, the status quo was maintained through patrolling by both sides, using coast guard vessels. China's 2015 deployment of a navy frigate, operated by the Chinese coast guard near Japan's claimed 12-mile exclusive economic zone, added a hostile dimension to regional stability. If Japan uses SDF units to respond to China's naval vessels in the disputed waters, China may deploy naval forces, thus further elevating the existing tension.

The further threat of conflict cannot be ruled out. China has already deployed the frigate and signaled a warning to Japan. In response to Japan's hardline use of SDF units, China has reacted by claiming that "China has every right to navigate and patrol in its territorial waters near

Diaoyu Islands”. China also pointedly asked Japan to exercise restraint and avert any kind of escalation in the East China Sea.

In a strong reaffirmation of China’s sovereignty claims, China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei said, “the Diaoyu Island and its adjacent islets have been an inherent part of Chinese territory since ancient times. China’s determination to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity is unswerving”. He added that “the last thing China wants to see is the escalation of tension in the East China Sea”. Despite these statements, the increasingly hardline positions of both China and Japan – something both previously refrained from—shows a shift in policy from both sides, and reflects their mutual failure to encourage dialogue, as agreed to in 2014.

This marked a shift in the situation in the East China Sea, meaning that any further imbalance in the status quo could come at a severe cost to the entire Asia-Pacific region. The ongoing territorial tension between China and Japan makes it a crucial

aspect of regional security. As both sides harden their positions, the likelihood of further escalation cannot be overlooked.

However, since neither side wants a military confrontation, the wisdom lies in de-escalating tensions. In doing so, both China and Japan need to find confidence-building measures. Since the costs and stakes are equally high on both sides, it is expedient for them both to act proactively rather than reactively to avoid unintended clashes. This can be done by quickly implementing a crisis management mechanism by adopting Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in the East China Sea. In addition, both sides should make maritime security talks between the two countries a regular fixture.

Most importantly, the leaders of both countries should moderate their military posturing in order to maintain peace and stability, and enter dialogue to settle on a permanent solution to the impending crisis. It is essential that they work together to contain the risks of an unintended military confrontation.

2

China's Rising Footprint into Latin America: Geopolitics, Economics or Both?

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Abstract

As China endeavors to set the terms of global governance, it is important for the country to preserve its economic stability as well as maintain robust ties with Third world nations. It is in this context that Latin America is of great significance to China. Although China's relations with this region date back to the fourteenth century, it was only in the last decade that the country has projected proactive diplomacy towards the region. Within this framework, this paper attempts to identify the key drivers that have motivated China to make deep inroads into Latin America.

Introduction

China's dramatic rise in world politics over the last few decades can be marked as one of the principal developments in international relations. The country's brisk economic

growth and rapid integration into the global economy has had varying political and economic implications across the globe. Particularly, China's rise has had some cumbersome implications on Latin America. Beijing's foreign policy towards

the region has been defined by the values of equality, common development, mutual benefit, and the principle of a win-win relationship.¹ Interestingly, although China's ties with Latin America date back to the fourteenth century, it was only in the last decade that the country has projected a proactive stance towards the region. The heightened interest is due to a number of key factors. It is in this context that this paper seeks to identify the factors that have driven China to make deep inroads into the region of Latin America.

Background

China's relations with Latin America can be traced back to the Ming dynasty of 1368 to 1644.² This was an era characterized by thriving trade ties between the two locations across the Pacific. Whereas China shipped porcelain, silk, and cotton yarn to Peru and Mexico, Latin America shipped agricultural products like sunflower, tobacco, tomato, and corn to China. There is even an assertion that some 600 years ago, Chinese sailor Zheng He

and his fleet had discovered the Americas approximately 70 years before Columbus.³ Initial official ties between China and Latin America was established between 1870s and 1900s, when the Qing dynasty fostered diplomatic ties with Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, and Panama.⁴

Relations did not develop between the two countries from 1900 to 1949 because China was largely unacquainted with Latin American culture and viewed the region as an integral component within the U.S. sphere of influence. On the other hand, the Latin American countries (LAC) were apprehensive of Chinese endeavours and sought to maintain distance. This was due to geographical distance, ideological hostility, cultural ignorance, economic incompatibility, and the necessity to focus on the issue of internal security.⁵

Soon after its formal establishment in 1949 and during the country's initial engagement with the region, the People's Republic of China (PRC) desired to promulgate the

Chinese model in Latin America. This involved escalating the anti-American sentiment, thereby destabilising the U.S position in the region and enhancing the image of China. This was to secure the support of Latin Americans, in order to promote Chinese foreign policy objectives in the future⁶. In 1959, Fidel Castro's victory in the Cuban Revolution attracted political and moral support from China. On September 28, 1960, Cuba became the first Latin American country to establish formal diplomatic relations with China.⁷

In the 1970s and 1980s, following Sino-American rapprochement, Nixon's momentous sojourn to Beijing⁸, the PRC's assumption of a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and the deepening of Deng Xiaoping's "reform and opening up" of China, Latin American countries began to expand their relations with China. Relations between China and LAC have increased most rapidly in the last 15 years, after the PRC's accession to the World Trade Organization

(WTO) in 2001 and the country's adoption of the "going out" strategy. Additionally, the aspiration of some Latin American countries to diversify their political and commercial relations paved the way for the Chinese to offer closer ties as an alternative to Latin America's reliance on the United States. At this stage, China's principal goal was to facilitate a greater exchange of trade and refurbish domestic industrialization.

Post-Tiananmen crisis, from 1989 to 1991, China adhered to an inward-looking policy. Three factors governed Sino-Latin American relations during the 1990s. First, with its ties with the West at an all-time low due to the Tiananmen incident, China sought to shore up its ties with Third World nations by advancing its position as a leader of the Third World. The second factor was China's emphasis on economic diplomacy. China had grown increasingly dependent on U.S. capital and markets, making it vulnerable to American economic and political pressures. The third factor was the Taiwan issue. Since the 1950s China's approach towards

the region was constructed to challenge Taiwan's influence in Latin America. Although Taiwan had lost considerable ground in the region since its expulsion from the UN in 1971, yet Taiwan's position witnessed considerable improvement from 1989 onward. Therefore, pressed by the challenge of Taiwan's drive to retrieve influence in the region, China courted closer ties with the Latin American countries.⁹

At the beginning of the twenty first century, PRC began to practice active diplomacy towards Latin America. The two sides maintained robust political and economic ties, frequent high-level visits, collaboration in trade, culture, science and technology, and educational exchanges.

Latin America evolved into a region of emerging priorities for the Chinese leadership. This is evident from four key milestones in Sino-Latin American relations in the last eight years: 1) the White Paper on China and the Caribbean released by the Chinese government in November 2008; 2) the proposal of the "1+3+6"

framework for 2015-2019 by President Xi Jinping at the first Summit of Leaders of China and Latin America and the Caribbean; 3) the 2014 adoption of the ^{China}-CELAC (China-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Cooperation Plan 2015-19; 4) and the release of China's Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean on November 24, 2016.¹⁰ Essentially, China's interest in making its inroads into Latin America is founded upon the country's geopolitical and economic interests.

Geopolitical Interest

Starting from its establishment in 1949, the PRC identified itself as a member of what was then known as the Third World America. Although the PRC engaged intensively with Asia and Africa, the country's engagement with Latin America remained limited. In the 1950s and 1960s, China sought to consolidate the support of the developing nations, including Latin American countries, to safeguard national sovereignty and economic development within the framework of anti-

imperialism. For instance, in 1959, Fidel Castro's victory in Cuba drew immediate political support from China. Further, in the 1960s, China extended its support to the other Latin American nations in their endeavours to reduce U.S. influence.

It is interesting to note that at the turn of the century, China's active engagement with Latin America corresponded with a period when the LACs were undergoing a tumultuous transition to the political left. Left-leaning governments ascended in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Venezuela, and Uruguay.¹¹ Many were largely anti-American in their approach. Their critical position vis-à-vis the U.S. worked in China's favour during a period of rapidly expanding ties.

To address the question of whether China has any strategic interest in Latin America, it is firstly important to understand that Latin America appears within Beijing's larger framework of advocating its

version of "democratizing international relations". China's endeavours hope to create a multipolar economic and political international order wherein the Middle Kingdom revives its customary position at the core of international affairs.¹²

Geo-politically, China's interest toward Latin America and the Caribbean is profoundly influenced by broader policy concerns. For several decades, China had aspired to perform a leading role in the developing world, and had adopted an approach to act independently on behalf of developing nations. As China moves away from the idea of "Third World-ism" to that of multilateralism, it is attempting to strengthen its global network of alliances within the prism of South-South cooperation.¹³ Consequently, China has ventured into amplifying its strategic synergy with Latin American nations.

Further, China also recognizes the fact that several of these nations have offered support to ward off resolutions by the West condemning Beijing for its human rights record. Especially

after a decisive victory in what could have been China's first official censure by the UN Human Rights Council in 1995, Beijing has sought the votes of the Latin American nations at the UN and other international forums to counterbalance U.S. influence. China seeks the support of the region on issues such as climate change, energy security, economic governance, and cybersecurity.

Thus, in the recently published "Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean", China made a clear declaration it seeks to cooperate with the LACs on matters of social and economic governance. In order to attain a more equitable world order, China hopes to cooperate at various multilateral forums such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC), G20, International Monetary Fund, Bank of International Settlements, World Bank, WTO, Financial Stability Board, Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, and the UNSC.¹⁴ China cooperates with Latin America and the Caribbean through various multilateral platforms: the China-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

(CELAC) Forum, United Nations, Organization of American States (OAS), G5 group, Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS), and the BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India, China).

Lastly, and most importantly, the U.S. pivot to Asia has possibly driven China into the American "backyard". These two events must not be observed separately. China's increasing penetration into the Latin American region is largely to counterbalance the U.S. presence in Asia. However, China is currently testing the waters and seeks to avoid directly antagonizing U.S. hegemony.

There is another strategic consideration: Taiwan. China's White Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean (2008) and Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean (2016) both mention that "the one China principle is an important political foundation" for Beijing to develop its relations with LAC.¹⁵ Currently, out of a total number of 33 nations, Paraguay, Haiti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Republic of

Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Panama continue to maintain diplomatic ties with the Taiwanese government.¹⁶

Economic Interest

As scholar Jiang Shixue has identified, in the present-day globalization, politics is inclined to be economic in nature. Thus, to consolidate robust bilateral ties with the region, economics remains a cornerstone of China's foreign policy towards Latin America. Trade ties between the two sides have grown from \$200 million in 1975 to \$236.5 billion in 2015.¹⁷ At present, China is Latin America's second-largest trading partner and its most important source of investment.¹⁸

The first bilateral trade agreement concluded between China and Chile was in October 1952. With a GDP of \$10.87 trillion¹⁹ and foreign exchange reserves of \$3.22 trillion²⁰ in 2016, China is one of the principle economic players in international politics today. As its economic clout grows, Beijing strives to fulfill three

major objectives: to secure acknowledgement of full market status, to obtain the raw materials it needs and diversify the source of such imports in order to minimise China's vulnerability, and to sustain its access to markets and export its manufactured commodities.²¹ In this context, Latin America plays a significant role in fulfilling the aforementioned objectives. Although China's ties with the continent may have significant security and political aspects, yet at present, the most salient dimension is economic.

In 2000, under the leadership of Premier Zhu Rongji and President Jiang Zemin, China launched the *going-out* (*zouchuqu zhanlue*) strategy to secure access over stable supplies of natural resources and raw materials. This was an essential measure to sustain the country's brisk economic development. Further, with regard to the country's going-out strategy for energy security, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce has identified Latin America along with the Middle East, Africa, Russia, and Central Asia as the four chief areas that are likely to become net energy

suppliers for Beijing. Beijing also wants to sustain its access to overseas markets, in order to secure the exports of Chinese manufactured products. Bilateral trade between China and Latin America stood at \$263.6 billion in 2014.²²

Interestingly, a number of factors have accounted for the promising appearance of Sino-Latin American commercial engagement. First, Latin America possesses a wealth of natural resources that is key to China's brisk economic development. Second, there is an adequate economic complementarity between the two sides. Third, as both Latin America and China experience economic reforms, markets are opening up and investment policies are becoming more liberal. Fourth, in this era of globalization, both China and Latin America have shared interests on matters of South-South cooperation. Fifth, it is imperative on Latin America's part to identify and appreciate China's huge market potential, especially after China's entry into the WTO.²³

However, there has been a visible slackening of the economic growth in Latin America. Given the sluggishness of the global economic growth in general and the slowing down of the Chinese economy, there has been a fall in commodity prices and a weakening of foreign investment.²⁴ This is primarily due to the slowing of the Chinese economy, as China is a key consumer of the Latin American commodities. Corruption and economic mismanagement were liable for this economic slump. In this context, there has been a surge of right-wing governments in Argentina, Venezuela, and Guatemala.²⁵ However, despite the slender rise of right-wing governments, with a development fund worth \$35 billion and a more cordial bilateral discourse with China, Beijing seems to be the more desirable alternative. Beijing has significantly increased its influence in the region through the incorporation of its twin drivers of investment and financial cooperation. Further, the extension of Chinese projects such as 1) One Belt One Road (OBOR) through the

proposed 19,000 kilometer trans-Pacific fiber-optic Internet cable from People's Republic of China to Chile and 2) the incorporation of several Latin American nations into the Asian Investment and Infrastructure Bank (AIIB) has enhanced Latin America's connectivity with the rest of world. These factors are defining the trajectory of Sino-Latin American ties in the present.²⁶

Recent trends in the amplification of trade volume as well as a super commodities cycle have endorsed the argument that Beijing is economically important to the countries of the continent. Robust economic ties with Beijing have been viewed by the Latin American nations as a positive development that had enabled them to overcome the financial crisis of 2008. According to statistics from the Inter-American Dialogue (IAD), China had evolved as the region's leading banker with \$22 billion in 2014. Indeed, owing to the challenges in their domestic growth, the chief objective of Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela in their engagement with China is to

procure financial investment and assistance from the country. Further, the IAD report suggested that China offered loans that exceeded the combined worth of those by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the World Bank.²⁷

Furthermore, while United States is shifting towards the traditional notion of protectionism, China appears to be one of the last mainstays against protectionism. A report by Credit Suisse on globalization drew data from the Global Trade Alert to establish that the United States is the country that imposes most number of protectionist measures than other countries such as China, Japan and Mexico.²⁸ Under the administration of President Donald Trump, the aggressive anti-free trade stance could encompass the abandoning of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the renegotiation of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The TPP comprises of five West Hemisphere nations, of which three states (Mexico, Chile and Peru) are LACs. Essentially, the

TPP would augment LAC participation in Asian markets. This would consequently amplify their exports, improve their capacity to lure foreign direct investment and bolster engagement in global value chains.²⁹ However, with Trump pledging to pull out from the 12-nation TPP, referring to the agreement as “a potential disaster for our country”³⁰, there is now ample space for China to embrace leadership in trade. Subsequently, Beijing has pushed for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which is the Chinese rendition of an Asia-Pacific trade pact. Unlike the TPP, which merely lays down environmental and labour standards, the RCEP excludes the U.S. and includes the

reduction of tariffs. Thus, several countries including Peru and Chile now seek to join the RCEP to counter protectionism from the US.³¹

China’s recent engagements with LACs reflect the increasing importance that the region holds for the country. Given the fact that the international order is in a state of flux and China is a power to reckon with, LACs also seek to forge robust ties with Beijing. Owing to its pursuit to set the terms of global governance, it is important for China to both sustain its economic stability and maintain flourishing ties with developing nations. It is in this context that Latin America continues to be of great significance for China.

¹ “China’s Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*, Accessed 3 January, 2017, http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2008-11/05/content_1140347.htm.

² Zhu, Zhiqun, China’s New Diplomacy: Rational, Strategies and Significance (USA: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010).

³ Ibid.

Declaration: The portion on China's Geopolitical Interest in Latin America has already appeared in The Diplomat

⁴ Zhu, Zhiqun, China's New Diplomacy: Rationale, Strategies and Significance (USA: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013).

⁵ Frank O, Mora, The People's Republic of China and Latin America: From Indifference to Engagement (Asian Affairs, 24(1), 1997), 35-58.

⁶ William, E, Ratliff, Communist China and Cultural Diplomacy toward Latin America 1949-1960 (The Hispanic American Historical Review, 49(1), 1969), 53-79.

⁷ Shixue, Jiang, Recent Development of Sino-Latin American Relations and its Implications (Estudios Internacionales, 38(152), 2006) 19-41.

⁸ Frank O, Mora, The People's Republic of China and Latin America: From Indifference to Engagement (Asian Affairs, 24(1), 1997), 35-58.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Shoujun, Cui, China's New Commitments to LAC and Its Geopolitical Implications (USA Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹¹ Nora, Lustig, "Most Unequal on Earth." *International Monetary Fund*, Accessed 15 January 2016, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2015/09/lustig.htm>.

¹² Peter J, Pham, China's Strategic Penetration of Latin America: What it Means for U.S. Interests (The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, 32(6), 2010), 363-381.

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3

“Flag Aid”: The Limitations of the Saemaul Undong Development Model and the Shortcomings of South Korea’s ODA Approach

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Abstract

The Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement) was a nation-wide rural development campaign mobilised by the Park Chung Hee regime in the 1970s. The movement has often been cited by the South Korean government as one of the leading causes for the nation’s ‘miraculous’ economic growth since its independence after the Korean War. As South Korea transitioned from being a recipient of aid to becoming a donor of aid when it joined the OECD in 1996, Korea developed the ambition to become a global leader in development. Since then, the Saemaul Undong has been featured prominently in Korea’s discourse on development, portraying its own foreign aid as being distinct by virtue of the country’s own successful development experience. When the Park Geun-hye administration came to power in 2013, Seoul became further invested in presenting Saemaul Undong as a unique and universal development program that should be disseminated worldwide to aid developing countries. However, despite the successful and positive publicity it has

garnered from much of the developing world, Korea's overall contributions to development have been met with international criticism. This paper provides a brief investigation into some of the main arguments of these criticisms and assesses to what extent they hold true.

Keywords

ODA, Saemaul Undong, the OECD, development, Korea

On September 26th 2015, President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea (ROK) attended a high-level forum on Saemaul Undong, co-hosted by both the ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) during the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York. In her keynote speech addressed to developing countries that attended the forum, Park lauded the Saemaul Undong (SU), South Korea's (hereinafter Korea) rural development model of the 1970s, as having been essential to Korea's economic "miracle". In the end, she reaffirmed and welcomed the decision made by the UNDP and the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) to base

Korea's SU experience as an inspiration for the creation of the New Rural Development Paradigm and the Inclusive and Sustainable New Communities Model. The SU high-level forum was a notable achievement for the ROK's recent ongoing quest for global political influence and recognition as a world leader in development initiatives. More specifically, it showed Korea's willingness to raise its standing amongst international organizations, like the UN and the OECD, as both a key contributor to the field of development and a role model for the developing world.¹

Yet under the veneer of high-profile events lies the reality behind Korea's true contributions to development.

The ROK has been underperforming as a donor country in terms of the allocation and efficacy of its Official Development Aid (ODA), which is the OECD's measure of a country's aid contributions. How does one come to grips on this seemingly paradoxical state that Seoul has managed to place itself in? This paper argues that the successful branding of the SU to its ODA programs is the result of the Korean state's selective narrative, portraying the movement as both universally applicable and fundamentally linked to Korea's highly successful economic development. However, without synchronizing Korea's SU development rhetoric with its actual ODA contributions in the coming years, it is argued that Korea is likely to fall from grace and be recognized as a donor country that simply distributes "flag aid", more preoccupied with advancing its image and visibility on the world stage than aiding on-the-ground development in recipient countries.²

South Korea's Global Ambitions

Much has been said on the ROK's remarkable development from an economic basket case to now as one of the world's most advanced economies. However, relatively little has been said on Korea's rise to a notable political player on the global stage. Admittedly, Korea's search for a viable role in the global political arena has been fairly recent. It started with gaining membership into the prestigious OECD in 1996. From that moment on, bristled with confidence from its own highly successful development, Korea set on a course to become a leader in the field of development. This was an aspiring goal, considering how Korea was once itself the recipient of vast amounts of foreign aid in its developmental years. Subsequently, Seoul has been strategically working towards becoming a recognizable and respected donor country in the international community. Some highlights of Korea's recent endeavours to accomplish this include gaining membership

into the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), also known as the "donor's club", as "the first former aid recipient to join the OECD/DAC" in 2010.³ Other endeavors include the hosting of the fifth G20 summit in 2010, where Korea made an active and successful attempt at adding development issues to the G20 agenda⁴; the hosting of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011, where Korea took a leading role in strengthening the bridge between DAC members and its recipients⁵; and organizing the Global SU Leadership forum in 2014, where close to 450 delegates from forty countries across Asia and Africa gathered to hear the Park administration lauding the success of Korea's own developmental history through the SU and expressing the government's will to share their unique knowledge of development worldwide.⁶

Saemaul Undong

The New Village Movement was first launched in 1970 during the heyday of Park

Chung Hee's authoritarian regime. Initially limited in its scope, the SU first began as a rural communities program that sought to develop solidarity, cooperation, and a sense of self-help mentality within rural villages, in order for them to take more agency in improving their own economic livelihoods and prospects. The state assisted in this endeavour by introducing "small-scale self-help projects"⁷ designed to foster village cooperation to increase village income collectively, as well as providing materials for villages to kick-start their own small-scale development projects. It was only after the Park regime realized the efficacy of the program at the village level that the state began to transform it into its flagship for the nationwide rural development modernization initiative and ethos campaign of the 1970s. This is the common portrayal of the SU today.⁸ Raising the living standards and income levels of rural households to match those living in urban settings, the SU is nationally credited and celebrated for its contribution in leading Korea out of poverty through a joint combination of a uniquely Korean way of

government-inspired development and a zealous spirit of voluntary cooperation on part of the participants.⁹

However, in an attempt to make its model seem more universally applicable to the rest of the developing world, Seoul has selectively left out the coercive top-down nature that the movement ultimately was built on and maintained throughout. The Park regime made sure to mobilize everyone in the movement such that “not only was every level of government involved in promoting [it], an entire parallel bureaucracy was created to ensure that plans made at the national level were communicated from the President down to the local level”.¹⁰ The state’s narrative also downplayed or even omitted the infamous Yushin constitution of 1972, and how Park effectively tailored the constitution so that he could sustain his illegitimate rule as long as possible. In light of this fact, it is hard not to see the SU movement as more of a nationwide mobilization campaign designed to counter widespread urban resentment with Park’s rural constituencies,

which had traditionally formed his base of popular support.¹¹

Although there had always existed grassroots activities in the spread of the SU development model since its inception, it began its process of becoming formally institutionalized as Korea’s National ODA Brand in 2010. The Committee for International Development Cooperation (CIDC), the group responsible for coordinating Korean ODA, published its Strategic Plan for International Development Cooperation, in which it highlighted the necessity of “[developing] an aid program for global Saemaul Undong”.¹² From there, advocating the SU as Korea’s distinctive ODA style continued to circulate until the CIDC in 2014 came up with its Comprehensive Action Plan for Global Saemaul Undong.¹³ This Action Plan paved the way for the realization of the Global SU Leadership forum the same year. Not long after the closing ceremony of the forum, the Korean government, through its web media portal, proudly headlined “Saemaul Undong becomes global development model”.¹⁴

The Shortcomings of South Korean ODA

The SU model was met with considerable appeal worldwide, and it appears as if Korea's international recognition and prestige as a donor country has largely been established at this point in time. However, a true judging of Korea's commitment to development lies in the review and evaluation of its recent ODA history. Based on the evidence gathered, it is argued that Korea has simply not been rising to the occasion enough to merit being considered a potential world leader in development. The three main shortcomings of Korean ODA and its characteristics are outlined in the following.

First, despite being admitted inside the DAC, the ROK has not been keeping up to the standards expected of members inside the committee. When Korea first joined in 2010, it pledged to increase its ODA/GNI percentage to 0.25 by 2015. But as Jeong notes, "Korea's aid volume has barely surpassed 0.1% of

GNI...[lagging] behind all the advanced economies when it comes to the size of ODA"¹⁵ since admission. In 2011, Korea's ODA volume reached a figure of nearly \$1.33 billion, which looks impressive at the outset until one realizes that it accounted for a mere 0.12 percent of its GNI. In the same year, the average ODA/GNI percentage of all DAC members was 0.32.¹⁶ Quantitative measures of DAC members take into consideration the total volume of ODA and ODA/GNI ratio, in addition to variables such as humanitarian grants-ODA ratio, grants-ODA ratio, and multilateral aid-ODA ratio. These variables all rank Korea near the bottom.¹⁷ The Commitment to Development Index, which quantifies the world's richest countries according to their policies that affect the rest of the world's poorer populations, ranked Korea consistently at the bottom of their list from 2010 to 2014, despite five new countries getting listed in their index since 2010.¹⁸

Second, with the progression of Korea's ODA initiative, it is becoming increasingly clear that

the ROK has little desire to change its traditional strategic prioritization of the Asia-Pacific region over others. Therefore, Korea's contributions to development are not globally spread, rather, it is regionally biased. For instance, a review of the government's Strategic Plan and Mid-term ODA Policy for 2011-2015, which outlines the allocation of Korea's ODA orientations for each geographic region, shows the ROK's clear desire for the Asia-Pacific region to be the primary beneficiary of its ODA flows.¹⁹ This regional bias should not be surprising, given Korea's ODA history of favouring Asia. In 2005, 81 percent of its ODA was directed to the Asia-Pacific, and while that figure had dropped to 65 percent in 2010, Korea's ODA to the region had increased from its 2009 figure of 55 percent.²⁰ Furthermore, in 2009, the then President of the ROK Lee Myung Bak announced the New Asia Initiative in Jakarta, Indonesia, underlining Korea's highly aspiring ambition to represent the interests of other Asian countries on international platforms.²¹ It is difficult not to see a correlation between the

timing of this announcement and the sudden rebounding increase of its ODA allocation to the Asia-Pacific in 2010.

Third, the ROK continues to lean heavily towards bilateralism, loans, and tied aid as the three main pillars in its strategy of distributing its ODA worldwide. In its Strategic Plan and Mid-term ODA Policy for 2011-2015, Korea affirmed its decision "to maintain the bilateral to multilateral ODA ratio at 70:30"²² until 2015, such that its 2012 ODA volume of \$1597.5 million was divided into \$1,183 million as bilateral aid and \$414 million channeled as multilateral aid.²³

In regards to its ratio of loans to grants in its ODA flows, the Korean government has set a ratio of 40 to 60 percent to be maintained until 2015, despite international criticism.²⁴ And while Korea has made a clear effort to reduce the high percentage of its tied aid (foreign aid given on the condition that the receiving country use the funds to buy the goods and/or services of the donor country) by pledging in 2009 to have 75 percent of its

aid untied by 2015,²⁵ the DAC's special peer review of Korea's contribution to international development in 2012 sharply noted that "the untied proportion of Korea's total aid was lower in 2010 (at 32 percent) than in 2009 (44 percent)".²⁶

These findings have serious implications, as many critics to the ROK's approach to ODA have already made clear. The lopsided favouring of bilateralism over multilateralism suggests that Seoul is heavily preoccupied in advancing its image – its visibility – as a donor country, which strongly resonates with Jeong's argument that the purpose of branding SU to Korea's ODA was largely to distinguish itself from other established donors in the DAC.²⁷ Distributing aid bilaterally ensures that recipient countries know who is directly funneling them aid, and as the donor, it has the power to both selectively choose who and where their aid funnels into. Korea's strategic prioritization over the Asia-Pacific would not have been possible if it had relied on multilateral institutions to channel the bulk of its ODA. Regarding Korea's leaning

towards the use of loans over grants, the majority of the DAC members "have portfolios comprised nearly entirely of grants".²⁸ Due to the fact that loans, concessional or not, hold the potential to damage a recipient country's debt sustainability, there has been an international consensus that providing ODA in grants should take priority over the form of loans. Yet Korea, while admittedly having made some concessions in the past, continues to be resistant to international donor norms despite being a formal member of the DAC. Finally, the DAC peer review and its criticism of Korea's preference of tied aid to untied aid reveals that Korea continues to make pledges to the international community, specifically to the DAC. It also shows that Korea either never had the intention of following through with, or lost interest halfway as it prioritized its self interests over international donor norms.

Conclusion

These points of contention are not to condemn the ROK's

efforts in trying to become a respected donor country. It is true that Korea has made significant strides in its contributions to development, and continues to steadily increase its ODA flows. Korea's own transition from a former aid recipient to a member of the elite DAC amongst OECD members should be considered a significant accomplishment in its contributions to global development. The purpose of raising these points, rather, was to illustrate the discontinuity between the highly celebrated Global SU development model and the relatively minimal impact that Korea's ODA efforts are making towards actual on-the-ground development. Seoul seeks to become the world's leading face in development by being the one to push forward "a paradigm shift in development cooperation from financial aid and 'aid effectiveness' to the promotion of economic growth, 'development effectiveness' and 'knowledge sharing'".²⁹ Through the revival and championing of SU as a development model, Korea believes that it will not only put a distinguishable image behind Korean ODA contributions, but

also provide the blueprint for developing countries to successfully implement their own development initiatives, thus providing the Korean state the justification to keep its material ODA volume set relatively low.

But this would be a big mistake for the Korean government to assume. The SU has been narrated by the state in such a way as to make it seem universal and exportable as a "one size fits all" approach, but the model itself was born out of the specific context of Park's illegitimate authoritarian rule after the 1972 Yushin reforms. Additionally, international criticism is growing over the way in which the ROK is pursuing its ODA programs. Korea cannot continue to hold itself to be exceptional so as to believe it is worthy of being exempt from contributing its ODA in the same volume and manner as the majority of DAC members, by virtue of its own "special" new development model. Seoul must make a renewed effort to abide by the guidelines of the DAC and develop an ODA philosophy that is both coherent with the

practices of the larger donor community. This approach ought to be free from significant regional biases and political undertones that take into account both the recipient country's already established relations and potential future relations. Korea's development

model must push aside the self-interested unilateralism of its ODA approach, and gain an international reputation as a country that is serious in both promoting and contributing to the genuine development of recipient countries worldwide.

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4

Heil Hirohito: Was Imperial Japan a Fascist Totalitarian State?

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Abstract

Was Imperial Japan a fascist totalitarian power? Fascism scholar Robert Paxton does not think so (arguing instead that it was a simple military dictatorship), but this essay argues to the contrary: despite not having a fascist party in power, Imperial Japan does indeed fulfill the definitions of totalitarian fascism. Rather, Japan underwent a fascist revolution in slow motion. With the collapse of civilian bureaucratic credibility and political opponents, the military acquired a monopoly of power through a mix of terrorist and state co-option methods. The emergence of a radical interpretation of Shinto effectively created a political religion undergirding the dictatorship's domestic repression and foreign policy, and sought to create a new man devoid of individuality and completely loyal to the Emperor. Yet, the absence of the revolutionary party does not immediately disqualify Japan from being a totalitarian state: ideological conformity and mass mobilization ensured that the population overwhelmingly consented to the war and the dictatorship.

In his seminal study of fascism, Robert Paxton argues that with the absence of a mass revolutionary party and a rupture from the incumbent regime,

Imperial Japan was merely “an expansionist military dictatorship with a high degree of state-sponsored mobilization [rather] than as a fascist

regime”.¹ Yet, despite his reservations about the extent of Japan’s oppressiveness, the similarities between Japan and its totalitarian European allies are extraordinarily similar. Although no fascist party rose to power in Imperial Japan, the events leading to the rise of radical militarism, the use of a totalitarian ideology centered around Emperor worship, mass popular mobilization, and institutionalized repression, nevertheless simulated the same revolutionary and totalitarian conditions that a militia party-based revolution would have brought about. For this essay, I will use Emilio Gentile’s definition of totalitarianism, which, in a nutshell, stresses that totalitarianism is:

an experiment in political domination undertaken by a revolutionary movement, with an intergralist conception of politics, that aspires toward a monopoly of power and ... destroys or transforms the previous regime and constructs a new state, based on a single party-regime.... It seeks ... a political religion that aims to shape the individual and the masses [by creating] a new

*man... The ultimate goal is to create a new civilization along expansionist and supranational lines.*²

The root of why a fascist party leadership did not materialize in Imperial Japan dates back to the beginning of the modern Meiji state. In accordance with the Emperor’s divinity, the Meiji constitution was considered a sacred document that could not be amended or changed. As such, many of the radicals who wanted to transform society were forced to work within the system—these became the pragmatic Control Faction in the military. Their rivals, who instead believed that the Emperor must become closer to the people by removing the corrupt political structures separating them, emerged as the terroristic Imperial Way Faction.³

The historical and cultural context in which these radical factions rose can largely be termed as a crisis of modernity in Japan, wherein the military appeared to be the solution to Japan’s longstanding problems. Japan faced at least two pressing concerns: geopolitical ambitions and social modernization. With

regards to the former, interwar Japanese elites identified modernization and prosperity with military power. Given that it was Western imperialism that abruptly forced Japan to modernize its feudal status quo,⁴ the lesson learned was that Japan's imperialism was inseparable from nation-building and capitalist development.⁵ By the 1930s, the literate Japanese public was well-acquainted with the standard narrative of their national modernization, in which Japan's victories over China and Russia since the 1890s demonstrate the increasing actualization of Japan's ambitions of becoming a world power.⁶ Not only did these military campaigns bring Japan respect from the West through territorial conquests, they also helped overcome the atomization of society brought about by modernity through rallying people around the flag.⁷

The other issue the military seemed to provide a solution to was the rise of mass participation. Throughout the 1900s and 1910s, popular riots at home and people's revolutions abroad led to the collapse of the Meiji-era political assumption of absolute

monarchy being a viable rein. Intellectuals realized that the state must now take into account the masses by giving them more political consciousness.⁸ The military seemed to address the issue of incorporating the common folk into the nationalization project through mass mobilization. After all, the military, as well as paramilitary settler organizations, were places for social advancement. The war provided people—particularly the educated-but-unemployed demography—with an outlet for “social and political participation and advancement in a time of crisis”, including opportunities for profit and women attempting to earn more space in society through wartime contributions.⁹ While life for conscripts and enlisted men was borderline torturous in the military, for many volunteer NCOs, the military flattened the socioeconomic class strata and allowed them to advance in society.¹⁰ With their solutions to Japan's thirst for expansion and need to address the rise of mass politics, the military appeared to be a vanguard of Japanese modernity, giving it much clout and respect in society.

Since the establishment of the military general staff in 1878, the military as a whole was constitutionally independent of civilian oversight and control. They sent their own candidates to represent them in the civilian cabinet, who were answerable only to the Emperor himself. As such, they had always been able to exert extraordinary influence on successive civilian cabinets to bend them to their will on national policies, lest the Army or the Navy dissolve the cabinet's mandate by refusing to nominate their own cabinet ministers.¹¹ In this system of a de facto military veto, the civilian government was largely impotent in expressing power over foreign policy and military spending.

Unfortunately for the civilian government, they bore the brunt of a popular interwar nationalist discourse of a "victim consciousness" myth that decried how Japan was treated unfairly by the West. Japan was forced by "diplomatic pressure by three European countries to give up territory it had won by "legitimate" means in the war with China", diplomatically sideline at the Versailles

conference, and stop America from barring Japanese immigrants. Note that these milestones of grievances all involved diplomacy and politics; conversely, the triumphalist narrative featured a military that had never been defeated.¹² The civilian politicians were blamed for messing up Japan. As Ienaga Saburo recounts, by 1932, fifth and sixth graders were naturally espousing xenophobic attitudes, alongside the fervent belief that civilian diplomacy was weak whereas "the cowardice of the cabinet" and the League of Nations were national embarrassments for the children. They looked forward to "Japan winning one battle after another".¹³ The unpopularity of civilian bureaucrats eventually extended to even civilian co-conspirators of ultranationalist military terrorists in the mid-1930s. Although ultranationalist civilian terrorists dominated right wing violence in the prewar era, the growing prevalence of radicalized military officers led to political violence being "[planned] and led primarily by military officers against other military officers, as well as against civilians".¹⁴ Therefore, it would seem that a civilian-driven

mass party would have been impossible given the civilian government's unpopularity and the military's strong influence on society.

The fall of the fledging Taisho democracy in the early Showa period was, in a sense, a revolution in slow motion. The Taisho era had a reasonably vibrant debate on the constitutional role of the Emperor given that the absolute monarchy model was obsolete, between authoritarian monarchists who saw the Emperor as divine but ultimately “responsive to the needs and the welfare of all the Japanese people”,¹⁵ and liberal constitutionalists who saw the Emperor as an “organ” of a constitutional monarchy.¹⁶ In 1935, the liberal emperor-as-organ interpretation of the constitution (in which the emperor was treated as yet another branch of the government, rather than as divinity) collapsed in credibility as various military and civilian ultranationalists effectively purged leading Emperor-as-organ theorist Minobe Tatsukichi from public life following a protracted campaign

of character assassination, threats, and book burnings.¹⁷ At the same time, increasingly broad interpretations of the draconian Peace Preservation Law — which empowered police to arbitrarily arrest dissidents for upsetting public peace — allowed for the full suppression of the already weak leftists and liberals.¹⁸ With the absolute discrediting of civilian bureaucrats and the disintegration of any dissent by the military and their ultranationalist allies, only the military provided a viable source of legitimacy for leading and radicalizing Japanese society. Yet, the traditional institutions of Meiji and Taisho Japan remained, albeit co-opted by the military, as opposed to being radically transformed. Why?

Through the aforementioned crisis of modernity in interwar Japan, reactionaries whom Walter Skya calls “radical Shinto ultranationalists” developed a genuinely totalitarian ideology. Realizing that the Emperor's absolute authority and divinity must also include the newly politicized masses, political theorists like Kakehi Katsuhiko expounded the idea that the

Japanese people were inherently superior for being “faithful to the original, true essence of the state”, which is defined as the “unique unity of all the Japanese people, superiors and inferiors, living at different times and places throughout history under the rule of the divine emperor”.¹⁹ In order to bring about a utopian “Plain of High Heaven” on Earth, the Japanese people must purify themselves by annihilating the individual self and transcend “into the mystical body of the emperor once one’s own individuality is abandoned”. In other words, the figure of the Emperor was the living embodiment of the popular, general will of the Japanese people, not unlike the almost mystical Fuhrer of Nazi Germany.²⁰

Concurrent with the shift towards ultranationalism was the change in policing culture, where the police began to view themselves as “officers of the state” sworn to protect the kokutai (the national polity) and the Emperor, rather than “servants of the people”.²¹ Rather than physically annihilating thought criminals from society, from

May 1931 onward the Japanese Tokko (thought police) carried out the policy of conversion (tenko),²² in which dissidents were pressured to recant their beliefs and convert to Emperor-worship.²³ Ultimately, between 1928 and 1941, 66,000 were arrested under the Peace Preservation Law, but just a small fraction of this number ever moved beyond prosecution stage, and only a single person was executed for treason.²⁴ While this was lenient compared to Nazi or Soviet concentration camps,²⁵ this lenience was naturally derived from Kakehi’s notion that “one was born, in the ultimate sense, not from one’s parents but from the emperor”.²⁶ Because everybody was the Emperor’s child, one prosecutor argued that “since they were all Japanese, sooner or later they would all come around to realizing that their ideas were wrong”.²⁷ While Elise Tipton argued that this leniency made the Japanese police state ideologically closer to “the early modern European police state than its twentieth-century contemporaries and wartime allies”,²⁸ as we shall see later in this essay, the ideology the

police was protecting was certainly totalitarian.

At the same time, radical Shinto ultra-nationalism helps ideologically justify the brutal conquest of Japan's neighbours. The ideology identified Western individualism and non-volkisch states as mortal enemies of the Emperor. Skya notes that if one follows Kakehi's fundamentalist ideology to its logical conclusion, it justifies totalitarian expansionism on the grounds that the existence of non-collectivized peoples would always threaten the kokutai's cohesiveness, so Japan must extend his dominion to the entire world to bring the "one great universal life" under the Emperor.²⁹ Although the Japanese leadership used pan-Asian and anti-Western imperialism rhetoric in their propaganda to justify their invasions to the peoples they conquered (in the form of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere), few ultra-nationalists believed in it by the time the war was underway.³⁰ Indeed, a March 1941 government directive declared that "although we use the expression "Asian co-

operation", this by no means ignores the fact that Japan was created by the Gods or posits an automatic racial equality".³¹ Given this superiority, Japan must necessarily bring the rest of East Asia under the same Emperor-worshipping ideology through assimilation, and they instituted a policy of cultural assimilation, if not cultural genocide, on their direct colonies and the rest of the Co-Prosperity Sphere.³² Korean and Taiwanese culture and language were banned and replaced by their Japanese equivalents, while other East Asian countries were treated as sub-humans.³³

This totalitarian ideology explains the contradiction between a relatively lenient police state on the Home Islands and the horrific atrocities visited on colonized subjects abroad.³⁴ Indeed, as Yoshimi Yoshiaki noted in *Grassroots Fascism*, there is a supreme irony in that the "critical moment of fascist consolidation" happened when the domestic fascist movement failed to take power in 1940-1941—just as the early victories of the Pacific War suddenly created a rally-around-

the-flag consensus among the Japanese people in support of the war. The mass mobilization and social upheavals of total war rendered blatant fascism redundant as Japanese society collectivized and radicalized itself.³⁵

The 1930s saw an epic struggle between the Imperial Way Faction and the Control Faction, both of whom believed in this ideology but disagreed on the methods. Individuals broadly affiliated with the Imperial Way Faction launched a terroristic campaign between 1932 and 1936 that assassinated prime ministers and ideological opponents, and occasionally attempted coups.³⁶ Yet, the notion that the Control Faction consisted of traditional conservatives³⁷ is an incorrect one. After all, there was a unanimous consensus at the top about the war's aims and the supremacy of the Emperor. Moreover, it was only through the radical actions of the Imperial Way Faction destabilizing Japan that the Control Faction was able to ascend to power. The senior commanders not only effectively tolerated the junior officers'

terrorism by rarely disciplining them in a meaningful way, the military leadership also took advantage of the February 26, 1936 coup attempt by the Imperial Way to consolidate their control over the civilian cabinet by mandating that only active generals could serve as military ministers, thus cementing the primacy of aggressive militarism in the political agenda.³⁸

Despite this emphasis on the military leadership taking over and radicalizing Japan, the Japanese population was complicit in providing mass support to the military leadership. Ethan Mark noted that traditional Marxist and Western historiographical approaches to wartime Japan's development were essentially elite-centric, often ignoring and thereby implicitly absolving the common people from the war.³⁹ Rather, there was legitimate appeal at the grassroots level for the Emperor and the war. Although this popular appeal was based on decades of elite-driven socialization and education, by the time the war rolled around, there was popular support for the legitimacy of the war as a whole.

Decades of militaristic education contributed to inculcating a culture where such militarism was normalized. As textbook and curriculum production became increasingly centralized over the final decades of the Meiji Emperor's reign, the government intensified patriotic materials and values in course curricula, including questions figuring military scenarios, military training during physical education, and reinforcing notions of absolute loyalty in ethics class.⁴⁰ Although generally these jingoistic curricula spiked during the wars, since wars were becoming increasingly frequent, "they left a permanent militaristic tint to the standard curriculum taught during the interwar years", including during the relatively liberal Taisho period.⁴¹ Given decades of exposure, the critical mass of the Japanese population would have instinctively supported at least some aspects of the war,⁴² but it also made the national shift towards radical Shinto ultra-nationalism less of a revolution than a continuation of existing trends.

Contrary to suggestions that the Japanese leadership was merely

reinforcing conservative values, by the time Japan entered into wartime, a nascent development of a New Man ideology by the ultranationalists sought to remake the Japanese man into an extension of the Emperor's state. The popularization of military training from 1925 on was designed to transform students into "the soldier of the plough, obedient, loyal, committed, muscular and disciplined",⁴³ in particular to build up the male body as well as inoculate Japanese from potential infiltration of Western ideals from an early age.⁴⁴ The militaristic propaganda in schools and in mass media emphasize collectivity and importance of military virtues, over the valorization of individuals; for instance, "three brave soldiers" legend did not name the martyred soldiers who fell adhering to the bushido code. This myth democratized in a sense old elitist samurai codes to the masses, while stressing collectivity over individualism as what matters in war.⁴⁵ Under this radical Shinto ultranationalist ideology, the New Man at the end of this ideological refashioning was one who obliterated his own

individualism and incorporated into the spiritual collective of the nation as embodied by the Emperor.⁴⁶ Thus, this incorporation of the masses into the state through refashioning them into cells of an organic body constituted yet another incremental development towards totalitarianism in Japan, fulfilling another one of Gentile's requirements.

A potential argument against the totalitarian nature of Imperial Japan may lie in its structural organization. For all the ideology's talk about national unity for the Emperor, there was little cohesion within the government, and even the military itself. Of course, the military as a whole was contemptuous of the civilian government, and even sought to lock them out of decision-making during the Pacific War.⁴⁷ The Kempeitai (military police) and the civilian police, as well as the Justice Ministry, also locked horns on divvying up domestic policing prerogatives and jurisdiction.⁴⁸ Conversely, the Army Ministry and the Navy Ministry were at odds with each other, to say the least; at one point, even Prime Minister

Hideki Tojo, himself an army general, did not learn about the "defeat at Midway till a month later".⁴⁹ That abuse and neglect was rife in the military ranks and in paramilitary settler organizations only contributed to Japan's increasingly brutal exertion of force on Chinese civilians as the brutalized rank-and-file had to vent their frustrations out somewhere.⁵⁰ This internal division, and the inefficiency and brutality it produced, seems to suggest that Japan may have been simply an authoritarian state.

Yet, arguably this lateral competition from each other was a by-product of the radical Shinto ultranationalist ideology. The Shintoist ideologues and propagandists sought to redefine traditional familial, social and emotional bonds such that they would be meaningless, as every person's energies would be devoted to serving the Emperor and carrying out his wishes.⁵¹ Despite these internal divisions, the Emperor's legitimacy was never in question; for instance, the different police departments all agreed on the same basic ends of preserving

the nations despite bickering over the means of doing so.⁵² In effect, by placing the kokutai and upholding of Japanese values first, this devalued human lives and served to atomize society, which serves to reinforce the totalitarian structure of the Empire absent a solitary, disciplined mass party.

It is clear that, although it was the military that took over the state rather than a revolutionary party, much of Imperial Japan matches Gentile's definition of totalitarianism. With the collapse of civilian bureaucratic credibility and political opponents, the military thus acquired a monopoly of power through a mix of terrorist and state co-option methods. The

emergence of a radical interpretation of Shinto effectively created a political religion undergirding the dictatorship's domestic repression and foreign policy, and sought to create a new man devoid of individuality and completely loyal to the Emperor. Yet, the absence of the revolutionary party does not immediately disqualify Japan from being a totalitarian state: ideological conformity and mass mobilization ensured that the population overwhelmingly consented to the war and the dictatorship. Imperial Japan may have been a relatively less murderous or genocidal regime than Nazi Germany, but its totalitarian grip on society would give Hitler a run for his money.

¹ Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 198–200.

² Gentile, "Fascism and the Italian Road to Totalitarianism," 292.

³ Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 231.

⁴ Wilson, "The Past in the Present: War in Narratives of Modernity in the 1920s and 1930s," 171.

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- ⁵ Yoshimi, *Grassroots Fascism*, 8.
- ⁶ Wilson, "The Past in the Present: War in Narratives of Modernity in the 1920s and 1930s," 173.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 174–178.
- ⁸ Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 136–137.
- ⁹ Yoshimi, *Grassroots Fascism*, 21.
- ¹⁰ Ienaga, *Japan's Last War*, 53–54.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33–37.
- ¹² Wilson, "The Past in the Present: War in Narratives of Modernity in the 1920s and 1930s," 172–173.
- ¹³ Ienaga, *Japan's Last War*, 29–30.
- ¹⁴ Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 239–240.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 138.
- ¹⁶ Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan*, 151–152.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 151–153.
- ¹⁸ Ienaga, *Japan's Last War*, 13–18, 98.
- ¹⁹ Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 192–193.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 193–198, 218–221.
- ²¹ Tipton, *The Japanese Police State*, 139.
- ²² Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan*, 127.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 127–138.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 141.
- ²⁵ Tipton, *The Japanese Police State*, 142–151.
- ²⁶ Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 196–197.
- ²⁷ Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan*, 127.
- ²⁸ Tipton, *The Japanese Police State*, 131.
- ²⁹ Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 217–221.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 248.
- ³¹ Ienaga, *Japan's Last War*, 154.
- ³² Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 218–322.
- ³³ Ienaga, *Japan's Last War*, 156–180.
- ³⁴ Yoshimi, *Grassroots Fascism*, 18.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 19–20.
- ³⁶ Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 233–238.
- ³⁷ See Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan*, 175–179; Tipton, *The Japanese Police State*, 152.
- ³⁸ Ienaga, *Japan's Last War*, 41–45.
- ³⁹ Yoshimi, *Grassroots Fascism*, 1–5.
- ⁴⁰ Ienaga, *Japan's Last War*, 23–26.

⁴¹ Ibid., 24–25.

⁴² Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan*, 149.

⁴³ Mangan and Komagome, “Militarism, Sacrifice and Emperor Worship,” 184.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 191–193.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 189–190.

⁴⁶ Skya, *Japan’s Holy War*, 195–198, 269–270.

⁴⁷ Ienaga, *Japan’s Last War*, 36–38.

⁴⁸ Tipton, *The Japanese Police State*, 140–141.

⁴⁹ Ienaga, *Japan’s Last War*, 39.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 51–53; Mangan and Komagome, “Militarism, Sacrifice and Emperor Worship,” 202.

⁵¹ Skya, *Japan’s Holy War*, 326–328.

⁵² Tipton, *The Japanese Police State*, 152.

5

Taiwan and China: A New Set of Interesting Times

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Abstract

In examining China, a perennial site of focus is that of relations between mainland China, known as the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Taiwan, known as the Republic of China (ROC). With the key relationship between the United States and Taiwan and the elections of Donald Trump and of Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) respectively, a refocusing on Taiwan has occurred. Although relations between Taiwan and mainland China have generally remained tense but calm, recent issues have placed weight on the prospect of a deterioration of relations.

In examining China, a perennial site of focus is that of relations between mainland China, known as the People's Republic of

China (PRC), and Taiwan, known as the Republic of China (ROC). With the key relationship between the United States and

Taiwan and the elections of Donald Trump and of Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) respectively, a refocusing on Taiwan has occurred. Although relations between Taiwan and mainland China have generally remained tense but calm, recent issues have placed weight on the prospect of a deterioration of relations. Taiwan became a de-facto separate entity in 1949 when Chiang Kai Shek (蔣介石) and the Kuomintang (KMT) Party were pushed out of mainland China for Taiwan by the Communist Party of China. From 1949 to 1987, Taiwan was placed under martial law, mirroring the intensity of KMT's relations with mainland and the indigenous inhabitants of Taiwan. Given the unprecedented power of the military over local administration, the KMT gained a strong, authoritarian hold over the island through the "White Terror."¹ The "White Terror" included the jailing of political dissidents and suppression of popular dissent, and it continues

to bring the KMT criticism today.

By the mid-1970s, relations between Taiwan and the Mainland began to thaw. Chiang's death in 1975 allowed opposition and dissidents to issue greater demands of his successor, his son Chiang Ching Kuo (蔣經國). Due to the United States' adoption of the "One China Policy" in 1979, which shifted their recognition of "China" from Taiwan to the PRC, Taiwan lost its main foreign supporter, which furthered its isolated position. Although Taiwan adopted the "Three Noes policy" of "no contact, no compromise, and no negotiation"² with China in 1979, this position of political isolationism diminished by 1987, when the hijacking of a China Airlines Flight flying above Taiwan forced Taiwanese officials to re-establish dialogue with the PRC. Marking the first of many meetings between the two parties, the negotiations in 1987 culminated in the unofficial

1992 Consensus, in which the PRC and ROC agreed on a mutual understanding of the existence of “One China,” but with different interpretations of the term.³

The 1992 Consensus formed one of the key dividing factors between the KMT and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the main opposition party in Taiwan formed in 1986-87 during the end of Martial Law. The DPP, a party with political leaning towards Taiwanese independence, rejects the 1992 Consensus. The DPP states that there was no “One China Consensus” during that meeting, while the KMT believes the Consensus does exist. This crucial difference between the two parties has generally defined the ebb of mainland China and Taiwan relations. Chen Shui Bian (陳水扁), the DPP President from 2000 to 2008, was perceived as a supporter of Taiwanese independence. His presidency led to a deterioration in Mainland-Taiwan relations.⁴

The following KMT President, Ma Ying Jeou (馬英九), maintained the rhetoric of a sovereign Taiwan but generally supported policies that strengthened ties to the Mainland.⁵

In 2016, Taiwan is possibly entering a new state of relations with mainland China. Firstly, Taiwan elected the second DPP and first female President, Tsai Ing Wen, in May 2016. Unlike the largely populist Chen, Tsai’s academic background and political experience shape her technocratic approach to Mainland-Taiwanese relations.⁶ Quoted as being a “seasoned negotiator” following her experience in the Taiwan’s Ministry of Economic Affairs and Mainland Affairs Council, her experience places her in a position to understand and utilize notions of independence beyond simply garnering greater political support.⁷ In addition, her unprecedented popularity during the 2016 elections demonstrated a public

identification with the DPP's position for an independent Taiwan rather than support for populist notions of opposition against KMT policies. With the development of domestic movements such as the Sunflower movement that demand greater suzerainty and independence for Taiwan, the support for Tsai among young people demonstrates greater support for the DPP's cause.⁸ Secondly, the election of Trump in the U.S. has also led to a divergence from traditional American foreign policy viewpoints. He may take an alternative view of American-Taiwanese relations in his coming term beginning in 2017.

These two factors largely came into focus in the recent diplomatic row concerning Trump's direct call with Tsai. On December 2, 2016, Trump became the first President in over four decades to have official, direct contact with a Taiwanese leader. They discussed Taiwanese-American relations

for the future and issued mutual congratulations on their recent electoral victories. This direct call between Trump and Tsai violated the unspoken diplomatic rule of "no (direct) contact".⁹ Although the incident clearly undermines America's policy of a "One China" understanding in regards to Sino-American relations, the impact of the incident was largely handled through a sense of moderation by both Chinese and American officials. The Chinese Foreign Minister stated that the call was a "petty action by the Taiwan side".¹⁰ However, it was also toned down through Trump's general and explicit ignorance of certain traditional protocol regarding international relations.¹¹

In line with an increasing sense of instability permeating, especially concerning Trump's often unpredictable nature, China has increasingly asserted its position in forcing Taiwan to toe in line with the 1992 Consensus. The recent seizure of

Singaporean Armoured Vehicles in the Port of Hong Kong by Chinese Customs is illustrative of this. En route from regular military exercises in Taiwan, nine Singaporean Armoured Vehicles were seized by Customs in a “routine inspection”.¹² Although largely claimed to be a surprise inspection by the Chinese, the logistics in mounting this seizure clearly emphasized China’s motives in isolating Taiwan and enforcing its view of the “One China Principle”. Combined with the recent lodging of a diplomatic complaint with Singapore in concern to its cooperation with Taiwan, the mutual understanding regarding the diplomatic purpose of this action is apparent.

Chinese-Taiwanese relations will undoubtedly be a site of tension in the near future, though the relations will most likely continue on the current path of an uneasy peace. China will continue to contain its actions to an increasing assimilation of

Taiwan through increasing diplomatic and economic pressures while Taiwan continues to rebut such efforts. The true propensity for change lies not domestically in Taiwanese movements but in American involvement.

Trump’s call to Wen made news headlines across the globe as a possible shift in American foreign policy. The comparative lack of global coverage caused by domestic Taiwanese movements such as the Sunflower Movement demonstrates the lack of external influence exerted by such groups. Although definitely not lacking in domestic power, such groups play a key part in creating a domestic notion of an independent Taiwan that is limited in the international sphere. Bridging this gap requires additional nation-state relations and recognition. Apart from the U.S., many other nations are generally unwilling or incapable of addressing this gap in the face of Chinese power.

Although Trump's actions have hinted at signs of pro-Taiwanese policies, they are far from re-establishing any significant American ties or official recognition of the nation. However, Trump's general propensity to go beyond diplomatic norms and

“freewheel” a risqué foreign policy as seen in his numerous contacts with other foreign leaders and criticism of Obama's policies could possibly further undermine the existing Sino-American understanding regarding the “One China policy”.¹³

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6

The Two-Child Policy and Maternity Leave in China: At the Crossroad of Demography and Female Empowerment

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Abstract

On January 1st, 2016, the Chinese two-child policy went into effect. This policy ended the 35-year One-Child Policy that imposed a fine on families who chose to have two children. The Two-Child Policy suggests that China seeks to enlarge their next generation. As a government-led effort to ease population control, the Two-Child Policy has thus far not yielded the effect its policy-makers hoped for. In fact, according to public opinion polls, many Chinese families are unwilling to have a second child.¹ This reception of the Two-Child Policy among young couples has called into question the effectiveness of this loosening on demographic policy.

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China's demographic policy is inextricably linked to the age and gender composition of the future labour force.³ The availability of labour has always been an issue of contention for Chinese authorities and is associated with the sustained development of the national economy. For instance, research has shown that regions with lower fertility rates have higher demands for migrant labor. Given the scope of the problem, the city of Beijing is concerned.

However, the current unwillingness to have an additional child amongst young couples is more rooted in more

short-term concerns for economic stability. The overwhelming majority cite economic reasons as the primary cause of unwillingness to have a second child, especially young employees who work in urban centers. The working generation in China is experiencing unprecedented economic pressure. In addition to the country's competitive job market, living costs in major cities induce anxiety among entry level employees. Combined with the aging demographic in China, young workers experience pressure to support their elders while also trying to manage debt and maintain a decent standard of living.⁴ As a result, financial constraints have become a widespread deterrence from increased fertility rates, and thus a setback as the Chinese government attempts to revitalize population growth.⁵

Critically, financial insecurity disproportionately affects working women. Women in China face a difficult situation, resulting from entrenched sexism in the workplace. Sexism is manifested in areas including "hiring discrimination, lower

wages, wrongful dismissal, forced departure into early retirement”.⁶ These conditions add to the exhausting and costly reconciliation of family life and employment for female employees. In China, many working mothers have a sense of ‘maternal guilt’, torn between their plans for childbirth and their career.⁷ In the context of financial stress and gender-based discrimination, the decision to forgo a second child seems logical and inevitable.

Despite this economic and social backdrop, the Chinese government does possess the means to a solution. At the intersection of employment security and female protection, maternity leave policies are linked to the willingness of young women to have a second child. More substantive employment security will incentivize demographic productivity while also achieving the important objective of protecting the rights of working women. Meanwhile, the government has expressed its encouragement for more childbirth by removing the clause commending “late marriage and late childbearing”

in relevant provisions.⁸ Moreover, in some regions, the government has even introduced additional paternity leave allowances of roughly fifteen days.⁹ Most importantly, the government has announced additional days of maternity leave for women who are taking the opportunity to have a second child.¹⁰

Currently, the Chinese system for maternity leave is the sum of the number of days from the following three components: state policy, municipal or regional regulations, and employer permission.¹¹ During the leave, expecting mothers receive a lieu of salary paid by the Chinese Social Security Bureau.¹² Women are also offered special protection during pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding periods, including exemptions from unreasonable firing.¹³ In 2012, the federal government in China extended the minimum number of days from 90 to 98 in the “Provisions on Female Labor Protection under Special Circumstances”, also known as State Council Decree No. 619.¹⁴ In addition to the federal minimum, each province adds additional days,

which is then further complemented at the discretion of the employer. For example, provinces such as Sichuan, Fujian, and Shandong are known to have relatively longer permitted leaves.¹⁵ In recent years, China's development in maternity leave policies has been characterized as generally pro-employee.¹⁶

However, despite policy changes, access to maternity leave and female empowerment remain blurry at best. For instance, instructions for seeking extended leave from employers are extremely vague.¹⁷ Furthermore, navigating the bureaucracy to obtain "baby permits", otherwise known as family planning service certificates, remains a challenge.¹⁸ Beyond the policy framework, there remains considerable and often inter-generational, traditional, and cultural pressure on women to prioritize caring for the family. Older generations often do not understand why economic stability has any relevance to child-rearing since most of China's working population

today was born under harsh economic conditions.

A mix of sociological and structural influences deter working women from acting in line with the Chinese government's hopes for more childbirth. Maternity leave policies are central to female empowerment, demographic development, and financial security for young workers in China. The status quo reflects the pressing necessity for China's increasingly free childbirth policy to be matched with similar support for working women. As female employees in China feel less anxious about leaving their jobs temporarily to have children, the effectiveness of the Two-Child Policy will increase. Extending maternity leave is a win-win solution and can play an important role in achieving the country's long-term plan to increase population growth and to promote gender equality.

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Understanding Transnational Korea Through Hallyu: Resilience of Developmentalism in the 21st Century

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Abstract

“Gangnam Style” is emblematic of Hallyu, a term first coined by the Chinese media in the late 1990s to describe the phenomenon through which Korean cultural products were enthusiastically received and consumed by various countries in East and Southeast Asia, including Japan, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Korean cultural products not only encompass different forms of media such as movies, popular songs, and television dramas but also material products such as fashion accessories, clothing, mobile smartphones, and other technologies. Recently, scholars such as Dal Yong Jin and Kyong Yoon have noted the emergence of “Hallyu 2.0”, a term describing the spread of the Korean Wave outside of Asia’s borders into Europe and South America. What distinguishes the initial Korean Wave from Hallyu 2.0 is the way in which it is circulated online through social media. More importantly, social media,

the new mode of distribution fundamental to Hallyu 2.0, counters mainstream arguments that common cultural and traditional “Asian values” are at the root of the Korean Wave’s spread. Therefore, this paper will critically assess mainstream discourses which rely on “culture” to simplistically argue how the region’s common Confucian-laden and traditional Asian values in Korean cultural products are reasons for Hallyu’s popularity and expansion into East Asia. In so doing, this paper sets out to (i) overcome a reductionist “cultural” explanation for the spread of Hallyu while also (ii) highlighting the role of a “corporate/state led model from above” and a “grassroots-driven model from below” in promoting a “creative contents industry.”

With a mixture of slight horror and befuddlement on my father’s normally stoic face, it was clear that Psy’s “Gangnam Style” had caught him unprepared and confused, yet his face remained glued to the computer monitor, watching as Psy showcased his gyrating, pelvic-thrusting, horseback riding dance. My reaction to the satirical and absurd music video was amusement, whereas my father’s reaction was completely different yet predictable given his lack of exposure to Korean popular culture. Why had our reactions been so different? The entire world had seemingly watched the music video

overnight; how might we understand the spread of Hallyu?

“Gangnam Style” is emblematic of Hallyu, a term first coined by the Chinese media in the late 1990s to describe the phenomenon through which Korean cultural products were enthusiastically received and consumed by various countries in East and Southeast Asia: Japan, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, to name a few. Korean cultural products not only encompass different forms of media like movies, popular songs, and television dramas, but also include material products

like fashion accessories, clothing, smartphones, and other forms of technologies. Recently, scholars like Dal Yong Jin and Kyong Yoon have noted the emergence of “Hallyu 2.0,” a term describing the spread of the Korean Wave outside of Asia’s borders into Europe and South America.¹ What distinguishes the initial Korean Wave from Hallyu 2.0 is the way in which it is circulated online through social media. More importantly, the new mode of distribution fundamental to Hallyu 2.0, social media, counters mainstream arguments that common cultural and traditional “Asian values” are at the root of the Korean Wave’s spread.

This paper will critically assess mainstream discourses that rely on “culture” to argue that the region’s Confucian-laden and traditional Asian values in Korean cultural products are reasons for Hallyu’s popularity and expansion into East Asia. In so doing, this paper sets out to (i) overcome a reductionist

“cultural” explanation for the spread of Hallyu while also (ii) highlighting the role of a “corporate/state led model from above” and a “grassroots-driven model from below”² in promoting a “creative contents industry.”³

By the twenty-first century, the Korean Wave has become a part of common discourse not just for Korean government policy makers but also for ordinary Korean people and overseas fans of Korean popular culture. The 2.5 billion view count “Gangnam Style” has is indicative of Hallyu’s reach and global spread. Scholars have increasingly written a number of academic writings on the topic. For instance, as of February 23, 2013, Lee Hye-Kyung cites 1,940 articles on Google Scholar tackling the phenomenon of the Korean Wave.⁴ Early scholarship on Hallyu has focused on identifying common reasons behind its appeal to Asian and South Asian audiences. More specifically,

these articles point to family-oriented Confucian values as a determining factor for why Hallyu has been embraced in Asia.⁵ For instance, Sang-Yeon Sung asserts that based on her interviews, Taiwanese audiences found the “values and sentiments” in Korean soap operas were more relatable than those in Western products because they “derive[d] from Confucianism” which embodied “family values” that included, amongst other things, “respecting elders” and maintaining close kinship ties.⁶ Empirical studies have also pointed to Confucian traditions as a factor for why Korean cultural products have been consumed by audiences in Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia.⁷ However, contrary to other scholars who have relied solely upon the Confucianism as a reason for the spread of Hallyu, Suh, Cho and Kwon point to the role of other political-economic and socio-cultural factors in the consumption of Hallyu. This paper echoes Kee-hyeung Lee’s

argument that “dominant discourses on Hallyu in South Korea “utilize[s] ... [an] essentialistic, homogenized ... and reductionist sense of culture, which is highly problematic and one-dimensional.”⁸

A more nuanced understanding of the spread of Hallyu can be seen in the work of Ryoo Woongjae (2009) and Shuling Huang (2011). Rather than assuming the given “Korean-ness” of Hallyu, Huang and Ryoo emphasize how the reconstruction of Korean-ness is contingent upon the complex relationship between media, business enterprises, and local consumers.⁹ Huang succinctly asserts that “it is hybrid modernity that makes popular culture transferable in this region.”¹⁰ Both scholars build upon Stuart Hall’s model of communication, whereby cultural consumption entails not only “decoding (interpretation) but also re-encoding (expression) by social actors in specific social contexts”.¹¹ And yet, Huang’s

argument that “Korean popular culture is acceptable in places such as Taiwan, China, and Singapore because of its blending of Western cultures and Asian values” is limiting, as it neglects non-Asian countries in Latin America and Europe while also continuing to use cultural proximity as a reason for the spread of Hallyu.

In *Landing of the Wave: Hallyu in Peru and Brazil*, the authors argue convincingly that the emergence of Hallyu in Latin America was grounded in socioeconomic grounds and not cultural proximity. To the surprise of even the authors, Hallyu appealed to a technologically-literate group of people of European or indigenous descent, not Korean immigrants, who were of a lower-than-average socioeconomic status,¹² whereas in Asia, affluence characterized Hallyu fans. However, many Peruvian and Brazilian youth were drawn to Hallyu as a form of escape from their low

economic status and social reality. Korean dramas were appealing because they “portrayed a reality of hope where ‘social upward mobility’ was possible and ‘provided a ... possibility of a better life distinct from the one in which they existed.’”¹³ The authors not only highlight the importance of social media in how Hallyu was embraced by Latin American youth despite “residing in a geographically, linguistically, and culturally different region of the world”; they also point out how social media provides the Korean state with the possibility of a new market for exporting its culture and products.¹⁴

The hopes and dreams portrayed in Korean dramas and yearned for by Latin American youth are not simply a by-product of an emulation of a westernized version of a better life; they are images that are carefully maintained by the developmental state of South Korea. Although the overnight explosion of “Gangnam Style” indicates the

spontaneous nature of Hallyu, a closer analysis of the Korean developmental state suggests culture was carefully controlled by the state. A continuity can be traced to the developmental state of Park Chung Hee in the 1960s.¹⁵ Hyungseok Kang states, “the developmental state model, based on strong state intervention ... affected all policy fields, including the arts and culture, as the state became its biggest resource provider, planner and coordinator”.¹⁶ The 1960s-developmental state was interested in cultivating a cultural identity separate from Japan. More specifically, the Park regime positioned itself as an ally more valuable to the U.S. during the Vietnam War in the hope of participating in lucrative U.S. Offshore Procurement (OSP) contracts.¹⁷ Therefore, geopolitics in the 1960s is one of many key reasons for why culture was under strict government control and used to form the basis of a “national modernization” project.¹⁸ Jang and Paik reiterate Kang’s

argument and emphasize how “Koreans ... embarked on a non-stop nation building project to re-establish the political, economic, and social pillars of the country.”¹⁹ This nation-building project continued into the 1990s and three events at the turn of the century shifted the government’s conception of culture: democratization of the state and neoliberalization of public policies in the early 1990s, the 1998 allowance of Hollywood to distribute movies directly to theatres, and the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. These events compelled a government reconceptualization of the potential efficacy of Korean cultural products and ushered in “the future possibility for the Korean Wave.”²⁰

The democratization of the state by the early 1990s with the election of President Kim Young-Sam “signified a critical juncture for cultural policy discourses.”²¹ Policy makers were fearful of Korea’s lack of competitiveness on the global

market and therefore actively looking for “novel ways”²² to raise Korea’s status as a cultural state. Considering the influx of American and foreign goods entering the country, the state quickly initiated the Motion Picture Promotion Law by restricting foreign films and increasing Korean film representation in theatres. Jin Dal Yong elaborates on this point as he explains how the government began to use “both legal and financial resources to promote content industries.”²³ These included diverse incentives like tax breaks and subsidies which allowed chaebol capital to invest in the domestic film industry. Furthermore, “film producers financed their films by borrowing from banks directly” once the government reclassified the movie business from a service industry to a manufacturing industry, which had enjoyed unparalleled support from the government since the Korean War.

The neoliberalization of public policies was precipitated by “a new and powerful impetus to the *seggyehwa* (globalization) of Korea.”²⁴ The Kim government framed *seggyehwa* as an active response to external pressures in order to survive a “new world of infinite global competition.”²⁵ Coupled with the fear that a national Korean identity would disappear under the flood of foreign goods and cultural products, Korean cultural products were becoming reconceptualized, shifting “from the government’s view on culture as a vehicle for legitimization” towards an idea of culture “as a source of untapped economic potential.”²⁶ Thus, in embracing neoliberal policies, the developmental state utilized culture to situate itself in the global economy, mirroring the ways in which foreign aid was used to “infiltrate new markets in recipient ... countries.”²⁷ A study conducted by Suh, Cho, and Kwon highlights “economic interaction” as a key factor for the entry of

Korean cultural products into Vietnam.²⁸ More importantly, economic interaction between Korea and Vietnam is primarily based on Korean ODA, and according to the OECD, Korea is the second-largest donor country to Vietnam.²⁹

The financial crisis of 1997 brought about a 7 percent GNP loss³⁰ and resulted in President Kim Dae-jung's issuance of the President Proclamation on Culture. Although the proclamation was largely symbolic,³¹ it highlights the importance Korean cultural products have increasingly played in its economy. During the crisis, Korea was forced to restructure its industry. Korean government policymakers were aware of establishing a knowledge-based society and therefore, facilitated political and economic support of the media and culture industries. Hyejung Ju reveals "Korean network television programs were exported increasingly by more than 30 percent annually

from 2001 to 2005"; the increased exportation of television programs reflected a tenfold increase in revenue surpassing \$10 million.³²

These numbers are pale in comparison to "Gangnam Style," which generated over \$8 million in revenue on YouTube alone.³³ Closer attention must be paid to new forms of social distribution. Jung and Shim point to YouTube as an "important platform for creative content consumption" and a "new revenue model" for major entertainment companies."³⁴ Whereas previous distribution models and revenue streams relied on a traditional, static, and highly regulated media environment like television or film productions, Hallyu 2.0 utilized "an emerging model in the Web 2.0 environment"³⁵ that harnessed the grassroots power of fans and audiences to distribute content, generate revenue, and create value.³⁶ This form of meaning-making is contingent upon time. In other words, the accrued value

in objects is a temporal condition: “When one recognizes value in an object, one becomes a sort of bridge across time. That is, one recognizes not only the existence of a history of past desires and intentions that have given shape to the present form of the object, but that history extends itself through one’s own desires, wishes, and intentions, newly mobilized in that very act of recognition”.³⁷ Social distribution models are constructed through a collaborative relationship between “mainstream-distribution bodies and grassroots networks.”³⁸ These new forms of social distribution counter arguments that Korean cultural products were disseminated by the state and corporations in a top-down fashion. Although Jung and Shim admit “strategic collaborations between K-pop industry and global social media companies³⁹ were instrumental to the success of “Gangnam Style,” their emphasis on grassroots networks provides

room for agency and even creativity – in the form of YouTube “Gangnam Style” parodies and music covers – for fans who wish to participate in and profit from the music video. Even in these new forms of social distribution, Jung and Shim avoid “Neo-Weberian assumptions that presuppose and overemphasize the role of the state in controlling and regulating economic activities” in the market.⁴⁰ More specifically, rather than focusing on “national scale actors such as central government officials, federalized Korean industries, head offices of enterprises, or central politicians,” Jung and Shim argue that transnational processes like Web 2.0 social distribution models and local actors, or online viewers, are key to the spread of Hallyu.

As Jesook Song emphasized, there is a “dominant imagination” that Korean developmentalism ended with the neoliberalization of the nation. However, a careful analysis of Hallyu and the active

role of the state in pursuing nation-branding reveal the meticulous logic and practice behind economic growth in the neoliberal era. Therefore, the purpose, development, and character of Hallyu should not be construed as a cultural embodiment of Korean-ness but as a purposefully crafted manifestation of economic development and the result of a distinct form of developmentalism.

In returning to “Gangnam Style,” several points need to be made. Considering the national perception of Gangnam as the wealthiest section in the entire country, “Gangnam Style” was a localized song targeted for domestic consumption. Nevertheless, the music video became an overnight sensation, receiving 2 billion views in a little over three years. Such success was made possible through social media, with YouTube functioning as a

network between song and consumer. Social media exposure allows Korean popular cultural products to spread beyond national boundaries. Common discourses of Hallyu that emphasize shared “Asian values” are problematic, as “Gangnam Style” reveals how a locally targeted content, or any targeted content for that matter, can be adapted globally regardless of whether it possesses any Asian values. Therefore, as we sort through conflicting discourses on the Korean Wave and the different ways in which Korean popular culture is received and interpreted, we might construct Hallyu not only as a transnational movement defined by its “multi-layered” nature and “multi-directional mobility” but also as a new form of logic and practice of state-planned development in which culture is the new currency.

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²⁹ Aid by Donor, Recipient and Sector – OECD, accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.oecd.org/statistics/datalab/oda-recipient-sector.htm>.

³⁰ *The Korean Wave: Korean Popular Culture in Global Context* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 2, <http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doi/10.1057/978113735028>

³¹ Eun-Young Jung, Transnational Korea: A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States, *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 31, 2009, 69.

³² Hyejung Ju, Transformations of the Korean Media Industry by the Korean Wave, *The Korean Wave*, ed. Yasue Kuwahara (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 35,

<http://www.palgraveconnect.com/doi/10.1057/9781137350282.0006>.

³³ Jung and Shim, Social Distribution, 496.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 495.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 196.

³⁶ In referring to value, I draw upon David Graeber's definition of value which recast[s];

³⁷ Graeber, David, Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan), 2001. <http://www.palgrave.com/>.

³⁸ Jung and Shim, Social Distribution, 494.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 493.

⁴⁰ Bae-gyoon Park, Developmental State and Politics of Industrial Complex Development in South Korea: A Multi-Scalar Analysis of the Development of Masan Free Export Zone in the 1960s, (University of Toronto, 2015).

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8

Western Artistic Influences in the Cultural Revolution (Primary Source Analysis of “Creating the Socialist New, Fostering Proletarian Originality” in the Peking Review, 1968)

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Abstract

The Cultural Revolution is widely considered to be a time when cultural life in China was dark and stagnant, with nothing but the eight model operas. In particular, orthodox historical interpretations see the era of the Cultural Revolution as a xenophobic era that rejected any cultural influences and ideas from the foreign, especially Western, world. An article from the 1968 *Peking Review* on the model opera “Red Lantern with piano accompaniment” brings these orthodox interpretations to question. This primary source reveals the greater political significance that art and culture took on during this era and in turn sheds light on the innovative and creative aspects of the Cultural Revolution.

The period of the Cultural Revolution is often labeled as a “cultural desert”,¹ a time during

which cultural life “descended into a dark and obscurantist age”.² One aspect that

contributed to this orthodox perception was China's rejection of all foreign cultural and artistic influences, for example, by "shutting the door completely to foreign music".³ In the 1979 documentary *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*, Stern asked the striking question, "the very young people here are remarkable, but the eighteen, nineteen, and twenty year olds are different. It seems like something happened to them. What happened in between?" A teacher at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music responded, "the Cultural Revolution – it was an attempt to change the cultural format of the country into a closed, inward looking society that rejected any information, accomplishment, recognition of foreign influence". Another teacher recalled, "Western classical music playing was a crime".⁴

Primary media sources from the decade of the Cultural Revolution suggest a more nuanced story. The article "Creating the Socialist New, Fostering Proletarian Originality" appeared in the *Peking Review* in 1968. Appearing alongside many other

Chinese articles praising the production of the model theatrical work *Red Lantern with Piano Accompaniment*,⁵ this particular article is an English-version commentary directed towards international observers. As a primary historical document, it offers valuable insights into the official attitude towards Western music and art at the height of the Cultural Revolution. A close reading of this commentary uncovers the complex realities beyond a xenophobic rejection of all foreign influences as traditionally assumed. Part of this complexity derives from the historical circumstances under which piano music took on a broader political significance. Delving into the contradictions surrounding *The Red Lantern with Piano Accompaniment*, this work is a demonstration of Mao's principle of *making foreign things serve China*, and this ultimately sheds light on the artistic forces during an era that is traditionally known as being culturally destructive and stagnant. This analysis will in turn provide a more complete and balanced understanding of cultural life in China during the Cultural Revolution.

The primary purpose of the selected article is summarized in its opening sentence: "Praising the piano music *The Red Lantern* with Peking opera singing, a new, recently created form of proletarian revolutionary art".⁶ The mere appearance of piano music in this iconic Peking opera is sufficient irony to question the general contention of China's rejection of all foreign influence. The commentator of the article further develops this irony by claiming that "the success of this new work foretells that the storm of the revolution in Western musical instruments and symphonic music is beginning to spread wide, that the torrent of the revolution in musical accompaniment to Chinese opera is going to sway forward on a broad front".⁷ This sentence suggests cultural exchange rather than cultural rejection. Had China really shut the door to foreign music, how did the symphonic composition style make its way into *The Red Lantern*? Had the era really been a xenophobic era that rejected all foreign influence, why would Jiang Qing deliberately integrate piano music into a Chinese model theatrical work?

To the credit of orthodox historians, foreign music and art was blatantly criticized, and this article was no exception. While describing the integration of piano music into *The Red Lantern*, the commentator stated that the work "critically used the traditional means of expression of the piano and swept away all the decadent, demoralizing, formalistic or corrupting elements of bourgeois piano music".⁸ The commentator made the central point that the use of piano music in the West is often in the service of the ruling elite, stating that "for hundreds of years, piano music was dominated by the feudal landlord class and the bourgeoisie. Even a glimpse through the names of the 'hero' to whom the bourgeois 'masters' of piano music dedicated their work is revealing: devils, nymphs... countless compositions for the piano, but how few were made for the working people!"⁹ More revealing than this general criticism of elite piano music was a specific critique of how this Western influence has penetrated Chinese society and the Chinese Communist Party. The commentator pointed specifically to the Chinese

counter-revolutionaries in the cultural sphere:

“China’s Khrushchev and his agents in the field of literature and art such as Chou Yang and others did their utmost to oppose Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line and stubbornly pushed a counter-revolutionary revisionist line in this field... they made use of the weapon of literature and art to serve their aim of capitalist restoration, to ‘encourage’ enthusiasm for capitalism among the world and to make socialist China ‘evolve peacefully’ on to the capitalist road... In contrast to the deterioration of piano music in the bourgeois West, where a chimpanzee was asked on to a stage to smash the piano to win the cheers of the audience, the art of the piano in socialist New China has taken a glorious road...”¹⁰

Delving into the historical and political circumstances of this time, it is possible to make sense of this critical attitude as more than merely groundless accusations and propaganda. It is possible to trace the roots of these accusations to an event in 1958 that was significant both

culturally and politically. At the inaugural International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition held in Moscow at the height of the Cold War, Van Cliburn, an American pianist from Texas, took home the gold medal. Cliburn’s victory in piano performance at a Soviet competition became a symbol of Khrushchev’s revisionism, the thaw of the Cold War, the possibility of peaceful coexistence between the United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), as well as Khrushchev’s more flexible attitude towards American culture and capitalism. This was also the landmark event of the artistic liberalization and opening-up of the Khrushchev era. Considering the political context of deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations, it is possible to match the figurative language used in the commentary to people and events. The chimpanzee can be interpreted as a metaphorical description of Cliburn, and the “smashing of the piano to win cheers of the audience”¹¹ is likely to have been a figurative description of his victorious performance of Russian composer Tchaikovsky’s *Piano Concerto*

No. 1, especially with this work's characteristically loud percussive and chordal piano opening. The worries of using piano music and other artistic means as a path to the acceptance of American capitalism was thus a real and imminent concern. During this time, one's artistic expression often took on a broader political significance. The idea of art for art's sake was the basis of Khrushchev's approval of American Van Cliburn's victory, yet Khrushchev's very statement that art is not subject to national and political boundaries was political in nature, reflecting the USSR's willingness to pursue peaceful coexistence with a capitalist America. Ironically, this act also used art as a tool to signify ideological and political compromise. The important takeaway is that the resulting Chinese criticism of foreign music and art was not a xenophobic rejection of its influence and artistic qualities, but rather of its political and ideological implications.

Building on this criticism, the Chinese response included elements of cultural exchange and artistic creativity. The

creative process of integrating Western piano composition into *The Red Lantern* as indicated in the *Peking Review* commentary demonstrates the Maoist principle of *make foreign things serve China*. First, an optimistic and accepting attitude towards foreign artistic influences was evident, as the commentary stated, "foreign artistic forms [have] their good points... in order to develop a new socialist literature and art in China, we must critically assimilate and inherit fine foreign artistic forms. It is entirely wrong to reject indiscriminately all foreign artistic forms and adopt a nihilistic attitude".¹² Second, a selective but creative process of transformation and innovation was employed. The commentator wrote to this point; "Foreign artistic forms must undergo a transformation if they are to express our new socialist content and become well-liked by the common people of China. Blind worship of Western artistic forms, the view that all things 'foreign' are fine, not carry out reforms in [them, this] is also entirely wrong".¹³

Motivated by this critical but optimistic attitude, the

composition process sparked a series of creative artistic innovations. The commentary claimed that as a result, the “new composition has both retained the basic characteristics of Peking opera singing and percussion music and brought into full play the wide range, great power and varied means of expression of the piano”.¹⁴ Much more than baseless praise of the Maoist line, this claim is built on concrete examples offered throughout the commentary. For instance, different tonal qualities of piano music came to symbolize the different characters in *The Red Lantern*. Li Yu-ho, the hero of the story, is symbolized by deep, steady bass notes on the piano. Hatoyama, the Japanese captain and main villain of the story, is symbolized by “grating and dull” tones. Li Tieh-mei, the young heroine, is symbolized by a “tumultuous piano accompaniment”.¹⁵ Furthermore, progressions in sound and piano-playing techniques also took on important roles in advancing the plot and structure of the opera. For example, a solo piano passage replaced the original interpolation of the Peking opera. Vigorous melodic playing

was associated with Li Yu-ho’s heroic acts against the Japanese. The piano accompaniment’s rhythmic progression paralleled the character development and maturation of Tieh-mei, and the piano *cadenza* was associated with the story’s climax.¹⁶ As a result, the 1968 production of *The Red Lantern with Piano Accompaniment* marked the first time in Chinese history where the piano shared a stage with Peking opera singers. In a recent interview, Yin Chengzong, the composer of the piano accompaniment to this work, confirmed these creative processes. Yin recalled,

“...to accompany Peking opera, I first need to understand it... so I began to modestly study it, deeply study it, and after understanding it thoroughly, I found that these seemingly different genres of art actually had many commonalities... I discovered that both Peking opera and its accompaniment have no overlapping harmony, and the harmony of piano music can thus fill in this gap; from here [piano music can] enrich the performance of Peking opera. Using modern words, it’s called

complementary advantage, a win-win”.¹⁷

Bringing to surface the dynamic, interactive, and creative artistic forces in the production of *The Red Lantern with Piano Accompaniment*, the selected article paints a more nuanced picture of the Communist Party’s official attitude towards Western artistic influences at the time. Features of Western music – its symphonic composition style and the expressive abilities of its classical instruments, specifically – were adopted and integrated into traditional Chinese art forms and revolutionary stories to create an innovative art form termed “proletarian revolutionary art”. Returning to the documentary on Isaac Stern’s visit to China, rather than understanding *Mao to Mozart* as a metaphor for the

abrupt change from the dark cultural era of Mao to an era in which Mozart’s music can once again be enjoyed, one should recognize that even Mozart’s operas were a response to the politics of his time, rife with references to the class inequalities and revolutionary ideas during the Hapsburg Empire.¹⁸ To brand the work of the latter as artistic masterpieces and the former as mere propaganda with no artistic merit misses the fact that both were, at the most basic level, a reflection of their times. Thus, this analysis brings attention to the innovations and creations of the Cultural Revolution era, calls into question the commonly presumed darkness of this period, and arrives at a more complete and accurate understanding of cultural life in China at the time.

¹ Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), 6.

² Maurice Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 368.

³ Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution*, 39-96.

⁴ Murray Lerner, *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*, Documentary (1979; United States: Docurama).

⁵ Chinese articles on this topic were very similar in content, no discrepancies were found between commentaries in Chinese publications and this English one.

⁶ Unknown author, "Creating the Socialist New, Fostering Proletarian Originality," *Peking Review* Volume 38 (1968): 28-32.

⁷ Unknown author, "Creating the Socialist New, Fostering Proletarian Originality," 28-32.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Personal translation, "1968 piano accompanied 'Red Lantern'", *163 News/Made in China*, Accessed 8 July

2016. <http://ent.163.com/special/00033JI5/1968hdj.html>

¹⁸ Peter Culshaw, "Mozart was a political revolutionary," *Telegraph*, Accessed 8 July 2016.

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Southeast Asia

Advent of Islamic Hard-Liners: Implications on Indonesia's Communion Culture

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Abstract

Indonesia perpetually prides itself with its multi-faceted diversity, rightfully so. While the majority of Indonesians are largely united with their own national identity, language and creed, it is a nation that is essentially an amalgamation of over six thousand inhabited islands, approximately three hundred native languages and hundreds of distinct ethnicities. Inevitably, a country so assorted like Indonesia will need to craft policies and governance systems which highlight commonalities between the different sub-groups in the community, instead of underlining the idiosyncrasies, which are potent in causing conflicts and misunderstandings between the sub-groups. In this article, I pore over the theme of religious diversity and communion culture in Indonesia. More definitively, this essay examines if the rise of Islamic hard-liners impose any effects in Indonesia's communion culture – specifically religious harmony. If so, what forms of detriments does it inflict? It is crucial to note that it is not in the interest of this essay to judge and analyse the accuracy of any faith and its practices. While my field trip notations come only from Central Java, this essay discusses the above-mentioned thesis through the setting of Indonesia in its entirety.

Indonesia perpetually prides itself on its multifaceted diversity. While most Indonesians are united in their national identity, language and creed, Indonesia is essentially an amalgamation of over six thousand inhabited islands, approximately three hundred native languages and hundreds of distinct ethnicities (Schefold, 1998). Inevitably, a country as assorted as Indonesia would need to craft policies and governance systems that highlight commonalities between the different sub-groups in the community, rather than underlining the idiosyncrasies that can instigate conflicts and misunderstandings between the sub-groups.

In this essay, I examine the theme of religious diversity and communion culture in Indonesia. More definitively, this essay examines whether the rise of Islamic hard-liners imposes any effects in Indonesia's communion culture – specifically religious harmony – and if so, what forms of detriments does it inflict. It is crucial to note that it is not in the

interest of this essay to judge and analyse the accuracy of any faith and its practices. While my field trip notations come from Central Java, this essay discusses the above-mentioned thesis through an Indonesian lens.

Religions in Indonesia

Religious differences are contentious forms of diversity. In many countries, discussions of religious differences are regarded as beyond-the-pale topics as they involve personal beliefs and testaments of faith. Furthermore, religious differences can be doubly sensitive as they involve two types of individualities – inter-religious differences and intra-religious differences. This diversity could be capitalized upon to enrich a nation's culture and heritage by strengthening it economically, socially and culturally (Baker, 1976). However, more often than not, inter-religious and intra-religious differences have proven to be harmful to the community, should it not be well managed.

Indonesia is not an exception. While more than eighty percent of its populace is Muslim, Indonesian government has not declared itself as an Islamic country (Indonesia Investments, 2016). Instead, it is a secular democratic country that forces its citizens to take up one of the six recognised religions – Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Protestantism, Catholicism and Confucianism (Pausacker, 2007). Believing in the one and only Supreme Being – also known as “*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*” – is the first principle of the *Pancasila*. The *Pancasila* is the official philosophical document forged by Sukarno, Indonesia’s first President after it gained independence (Morfit, 1981). Indonesia’s government has not declared any state-mandated religion, unlike its neighbour, Malaysia, which has declared Islam as its government’s religion.

Islamisation of Indonesia

Islam reached Indonesia around 1100 through Indian traders from Gujarat, India. The spread of

Islam in Indonesia followed a geographical progression over a period of four centuries (1100 to 1500) starting with Sumatra, followed by Java, before moving to other parts of the Malay Archipelago including Malaya and Mindanao (Ahmed, 2001). Islamic traditions and beliefs have spread nationwide through trade and migration.

Most Muslims in Indonesia are Sunni Muslims, with the majority of them following the Syafi’i school of thought (Fealy et al, 2008). This parallels the majority of Muslims in Southeast Asia. However, this does not mask the presence of smaller sects and schools of thought within the Muslim community in Indonesia. Only 0.5% of Muslims in Indonesia are Shi’ite Muslims while 0.2% of Muslims in Indonesia are followers of the Ahmadiyyah Islamic sect (Burhani, 2014). Originally from Northern India, the Ahmadiyyah was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1889. Ahmad claimed that he was the awaited Messiah, as prophesied by Prophet Muhammad and mentioned in the Quran.

Communion Culture in Java (Based on field trip observations)

During my field trip to Central Java (i.e. Jogjakarta and Solo), I noticed several phenomena that proved that Indonesia was not superficial in its religious tolerance and harmony. Instead, more often than not, I was convinced that the communion culture was intensely embraced by the general population. Respect and admiration for each other's faiths and cultures were also massively entrenched in the locals, from the royalties to the commoners.

Firstly, I observed that all of the palaces that I visited – *Mangkunegaran* Palace, *Kasunanan* Palace and *Kraton Ngayogyakarta* – preserved emblems from the Hindu tradition such as the paintings and sculptures of Lord Shiva and half-elephant statues resembling Ganesha. In my opinion, this was pivotal evidence that the royalties embraced Hinduism as a vital part of Indonesia's rich history, despite being followers and practitioners of the Islamic faith. This is notwithstanding the

fact that Muslims are generally not encouraged to erect any kind of statues, especially within residential compounds (Al-Qaradawi, 1999). Upon further interaction with the guide at *Kasunanan* Palace, he mentioned that the intention of preserving such emblems was purely to document the history of the nation, not for idolatry purposes.

Additionally, the locals were generally open to partaking in religious practices of other faiths. For instance, at the top of *Sukuh* Temple, I came across Muslim women donning the hijab who meditated with the Hindus. During the month of Ramadhan, I was informed by a local in Solo's *Fatimah* Mosque that non-Muslims would help in events held by the mosques in their vicinities. In line with what *Pak Made*, our resident guide in Indonesia mentioned, Indonesians from all faiths would regularly visit each other's religious monuments, especially during local festivities. For example, the Hindus in Jogjakarta would join the Buddhists to visit the Borobudur, Mendut and Pawon temples in celebration of Vesak

Day – a day to celebrate the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha.

On a macro level, I viewed the substantial and scrupulous preservation of non-Islamic places of worship – from the small *Candi Pawon* to the huge *Prambanan* Temple – as a form of communion and respect that the government and the people had for minorities in Indonesia, or specifically on Java Island. It validates the idea that the nation values the contribution of non-Islamic traditions to the formation of Indonesia and their roles in preserving its cultural diversity. What was more remarkable was that some of the temples' keepers were Muslim, such as the keeper of *Ketek* Temple who was present whilst we visited on the third day of our field trip.

My interactions with the owners of Labasan Village, where we resided on the fourth night of our field trip, revealed an intriguing trend about their primary identities. I could sense that they identified themselves as Javanese first before anything else, including being a Muslim. This was unlike many of the interactions that I have had with

Muslims in other parts of the world such as in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, India and Australia. A large proportion of our interactions revolved around Javanese culture and heritage, rather than Islamic nuances in the country. I believe that the primary identity that an individual associates himself with most closely will manifest in the way he lives his life. Thus, if most Javanese regard being Javanese as their primary identity, the chances of religious conflicts and misunderstandings would be greatly reduced.

Based on my field trip observations coupled with my secondary research, the bottom line is that the highly diversified Indonesian citizens have lived generation after generation in peace and harmony, alongside one another. Their respect and admiration towards each other surpass religious beliefs, cultural lines and ethnic practices. This is what I refer to as Indonesia's communion culture.

Rise of Islamic Hard-Liners

Hard-liners refer to groups of individuals, usually political

groups, who adhere to a set of ideas and policies. Islamic hard-liners, in parallel, often refer to individuals or groups of individuals who are uncompromising in their Islamic beliefs, traditions and practices as well as *Shariah* law guidelines (Ghosh, 2013). To clarify, the discussion here revolves around individuals who impose their beliefs onto society through personal attacks, political pressures and reform movements. Personal uncompromising sets of beliefs that are not imposed on anyone else have minimal, if any, effects on society at large. Some examples of Islamic hard-liners in Indonesia include *Nadhlatul Ulama* (Association of Islamic Scholars), *Muhammadiyah* and the most notorious Islamic Defenders Front, also known as *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI).

Over approximately the past five years, several issues surrounding pluralism and the re-definition of Islam in Indonesia have emerged due to the activities conducted by several Islamic hard-liners in the country. Multiple inter-religious tensions have emerged amongst the community, including forced closure of Protestant churches,

burning of places of worship and prevention of the use of “*Allah*” as a reference to God by Christians (CSW, 2015). Besides inter-religious tensions stirred by Islamic hard-liners, intra-Muslim conflicts have also taken place in various parts of Indonesia. In 2011, during the holy month of Ramadhan, Ahmadiyah followers in Western Java were attacked by 1500 Sunni Muslims in An-Nur Mosque, resulting in three deaths and hundreds of injured individuals. Former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, after being pressured by Islamic hard-liners, also forbade Ahmadiis from proselytising, just like Shi’ite Muslims in Indonesia (Economist, 2015).

Implications to Indonesia

Indonesia is colourful in its diversity and has embraced differences for centuries. Undeniably, any form of infringement on harmony would shake the country on many tiers, both tangibly and intangibly. I argue that these hard-liners, and the movements driven by them, present long-term effects to

Indonesia. To a small extent, some of the effects discussed in the following segment can be irreversible. In the following segment, this paper delves into the effects that these hard-liners have on Indonesia on three different categories – social and cultural, political, and economic.

Social

In my opinion, the biggest effect of this phenomenon is on the social fabric of the country; the communion culture and the ability to live life together are affected. When beliefs are imposed on a national level, the biggest subsections of the community that will be affected are minorities – such as the Christian community and non-Sunni Muslims in Indonesia. Over the past ten years, Christians in Indonesia have had a trying time maintaining their rights in certain aspects of their practice of faith. Not only have the FPI attacked many churches in Indonesia, Islamic hard-liners have also disturbed inter-religious dialogues and rallies that aim to promote mutual understanding and respect between various religious groups (Al-Jazeera, 2008).

What is more precarious about Islamic hard-liners such as the FPI, is that they use violence as a means to get their messages across and retaliate against other peaceful groups rallying against them, as well as to pressure the local and central governments to take their side. Deservingly so, hard-liner groups like the FPI have been classified as militants by international press agencies. In early June 2008, the FPI attacked a peaceful rally that sought for equality for the Ahmadiyyah sect of Muslims, who are a minority in Indonesia (NTDTV, 2008). In 2006, several group of Islamic hard-liners stoned and threw heavy items at Playboy Magazine's office to protest against the magazine's production in Indonesia (Associated Press, 2015).

It is palpable that Indonesia's freedom of religion is no longer absolute. The very first principle of the *Pancasila* has been violated by presence of Islamic hard-liners in the Indonesian community. I argue that this harm towards Indonesia's social fabric inevitably leads to distrust and suspicion between different

religions and different religious sects. Such trust and confidence within and between different religions takes years to be shaped, let alone be re-woven after it has been ripped apart (Pye et al, 2004).

Political

The Indonesian government has been accused of not vindicating the principle of religious freedom well, especially by global Christian organisations. The rise of Islamic hard-liners adds political pressure to the government. In a democratic nation like Indonesia, vote-seeking policies and legislations are passed to please the Islamic hard-liners. Thus, vocal minority hard-liners are accumulating power through violent street movements and frequent destructive demonstrations in the country (Abuza, 2006). An example of such vote-seeking incidences was when Vice-President Jusuf Kalla made a public statement in 2008 saying that the Ahmadi sect in Indonesia was no longer permitted to gather publicly or proselytise in Indonesia, just as was demanded by Islamic hard-liners.

Besides creating friction between religious groups and sects in Indonesia, Islamic hard-liners also influenced the appointment of key civil service holders in the country. Essentially, they demand that all governors, civil service key officers and judges practise the Islamic faith. Should they fail to do so, Islamic hard-liners would protest, sometimes violently. In late 2014, hundreds of FPI members organised riots and injured nearly twenty police officers to prevent Deputy Governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama – also known as *Ahok* – a Chinese Christian from taking over as the governor of Jakarta. Islamic hard-liners felt that non-Muslims were not allowed to lead a city where the majority of its citizens are Muslims (Jakarta Globe, 2014). Besides, *Nadhlatul Ulama* (NU), the world's largest Islamic organisation, is said to have links with Islamic hard-liners despite its initial advocacy of democracy and pluralism (Berkeley Center, 2016). NU also runs a political party, *Parti Kebangkitan Bangsa* (PKB) – National Awakening Party. The PKB is one of Indonesia's leading parties, which has successfully placed Mr Abdurrahman Wahid,

more affectionately known as *Gus Dur*, as Indonesia's fourth President, following the resignation of President Suharto.

Indonesia must separate faith from politics in order to live up to its vision of a multi-religion secular state. Should Islamic hard-liners be able to influence – directly or indirectly – top decision-making processes addressing issues pertaining to pluralism and the appointment of key office bearers of the nation, this would create a pro-Islamic nation that could potentially mask the needs and demands of non-Islamic, or specifically non-Sunni, sub-groups in the country. Such minority marginalisation, within and between religions, would further dredge identity crises amongst the country's citizens and give rise to even more social disorders (JanMohamed, 1987).

Economic

Besides posing negative effects in the social and political realms of the nation, Islamic hard-liners also sprinkle some direct and knock-on effects to the economy of Indonesia. Due to the strict and uncompromising approach

adopted by the Islamic hard-liners, some revenue-generating industries cannot develop and face restrictions in Indonesia. Mass entertainment such as the music industry and the mainstream media – print and electronic – face pressures from Islamic hard-liners in Indonesia. In 2006, the FPI started a series of violent and nonviolent protests against the production of Playboy Magazine in Indonesia and demanded judicial and legislative actions to be taken against owners of Playboy Indonesia for disturbing public morality (Kitley, 2008). In 2008, the Indonesian government passed one of the world's strictest anti-pornography bills, after demands were made by activists and women's groups believed to be affiliated to the Islamic hard-liners. The legislation was deemed to be opposing Indonesia's tradition of diversity and pluralism and to be a step towards strict Islamic law (Vaswani, 2010). In 2012, a Lady Gaga concert was cancelled following threats made by Islamic hard-liners to burn the venue, simultaneously claiming Lady Gaga's bra-and-panty costume to be inappropriate for Indonesia's public. The

following year, Islamic hard-liner groups, including Islam Reform Movement (Garis) and Hizb Ut-Tahrir, protested aggressively against the organizers of the Miss World pageant and demanded that it be restricted from being held in Bali and Jakarta as it was originally planned (Dawn, 2013). Besides media restrictions, alcohol production and commercialisation were also fiercely fought against by Islamic hard-liners in their attempt to make Indonesia largely alcohol-free.

This streak of restrictions and impositions on a wide plethora of revenue-generating industries have direct and knock-on economic effects on Indonesia. Needless to say, it is not maximizing its economic possibilities and is not reaping its maximal societal benefits. Albeit indirectly, it is also worrying that such restrictions and impositions deter potential investments from foreign corporations and entities due to social and political instabilities as well as economic growth uncertainties caused by the massive restrictions and impositions advocated by Islamic hard-liners. Investments

are paramount to the development and growth of a nation, especially for a developing nation like Indonesia in which poverty is still rampant (Wang et al, 1992).

Conclusion

Indonesia is undergoing tremors of change in its administration, social culture and economic makeup. While the end effects of these changes caused by Islamic hard-liners to Indonesia are uncertain, what is definite is that the reduction in inter-religious tolerance and room for pluralism is to be frowned upon. Besides the aforementioned effects in the social, political and economic prisms of the nation, Islamic hard-liners and their uncompromising sets of beliefs are also affecting Indonesia's communion culture by increasing homogeneity in the religious sphere. When Islamic hard-liners push to dominate the entire nation with their ideals, centuries of heritage and other cultures that played an important role in Indonesia's pre-colonial history might eventually vanish.

It is onerous to eradicate these effects, once perpetrated. While economic effects can be relatively easy to solve through strategic economic planning and economic diversification, I argue that the damages inflicted against Indonesia's social fabric are awfully laborious to repair, if not impossible. Minority groups' trust in the government is also hard to rebuild once dented. Thus, this essay concludes that the rise of Islamic hard-liners in Indonesia directly harms the communion culture in Indonesia to a large extent, primarily through social, political and economic prisms.

The field trip to Indonesia has made me fathom the intricacies of managing such a diverse nation. Southeast Asia is composed of many nations that are as heterogeneous as Indonesia. The peaceful environment that I observed first-hand in Indonesia cannot be taken for granted; violators of peace such as Islamic hard-liners still linger in the country. If mishandled, Indonesia could turn into an entirely disparate country from what I experienced during my field trip to Solo and Jogjakarta.

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10

On the Philippines' recent split with the Americans: Nationalism or Realpolitik?

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Abstract

From the outset, Philippines' recent abandonment of the United States for China seems like an act of realism based on economic pursuit. After all, one of the reasons why Duterte was able to win the national elections so decisively was because he promised development and growth. In the recent past, Philippines' rural areas have failed to keep up with the city centers. As the Economist suggests, Philippines' business-process-outsourcing (BPO) has failed to trickle down, as nearly a third of all Filipinos still live with less than \$3.10 per day.¹ Development, however, requires capital, and that can no longer be expected from Philippines' former Western allies who has been shying away from international responsibilities. But China, on the other hand, has been funneling cash to various regions setting up partnerships; in December 2015, China's free trade agreement with Korea reduced tariffs for the first time, and early this year, their trade agreement with Australia undertook the same measures.² Duterte's shift in attitude towards China suggests his aim for Philippines to take part in a bilateral trade agreement as well, as China has already promised billions in loans and investments in response to his trip to Beijing.

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their trade agreement with Australia undertook the same measures.⁴ Duterte's shift in attitude towards China suggests his aim for Philippines to take part in a bilateral trade agreement as well, as China has already promised billions in loans and investments in response to his trip to Beijing.

Despite economic motivations, however, the significance in Philippines' alliance with China can hardly be understated. Early this June, Philippines' former President Benigno Aquino III filed a complaint to against the Hague to protest China's blockade in Scarborough Shoal, due to their dispute over sovereignty in the South China Sea. Mr. Aquino's complaints were not unfound, for China has been taking aggressive measures on the seas over the past two years. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, Beijing has reclaimed more than 2,900 acres of islands since December 2013, more than all other claimants combined in

the last forty years.⁵ Satellite imagery has shown unprecedented activity of China on the Subi Reef and the Fiery Cross Reef in the Spratlys, that is, the construction of artificial platforms, including helipads, airstrips, piers, radars, and other surveillance structures.⁶ The problem with these constructions is that the Spratlys are also claimed by Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Taiwan.⁷ Duterte's willingness to relieve tension with China, therefore, is confronted with serious difficulties. How is he going to answer the question of the South China Sea? One must wonder, how much longer can he avoid discussing the issue of sovereignty?

One must also consider whether Duterte's cooperation with China necessitates his split with the United States. After all, why can't Duterte align himself with both powers at the same time? As a member of the so-called "free world", when was the last time South Korea publicly denounced China by

siding with the Americans? If the Europeans thought that cooperation with Washington necessitated an opposition against Beijing's aggressiveness, why has the Hague failed to take any actual measures upon Mr. Obama's warning to the Chinese on the South China Sea dispute? Undoubtedly, the international situation is very different today than it was 50 years ago. Every country that finds itself in the middle of a disagreement between China and the United States is in an uncomfortable position, for no country thinks that an alliance with either is attractive enough to reject the other. This explains why the only countries who ever confronted China in any issue over the recent past were countries whose national interests were directly at stake, such as the likes of the Philippines and Japan over their sovereign claims in the South China Sea.

Perhaps, therefore, Duterte's decision to split with the Americans is a result of nationalism. As previously

evinced, Philippines' cooperation with China and her split with the United States are not mutually exclusive. Yet this only implies that there is an additional force outside the realms of material utilitarianism at work. If one takes into account of Philippines' history with the United States over the past 100 years, an obvious possibility would be the revival of Filipino nationalism, that is, the vibrant sentiments of the "nation state."

It must be noted that Filipino nationalism existed for as long as the fate of the region was decided by foreign interventions. At the beginning, the Philippines was under Spanish rule. When the Americans defeated the Spanish in the Spanish American War, the long-standing colony of the Philippines was turned over to the United States. Under the considerations of opening the Asian market, the Philippines' inability to self-rule, and the possibility of annexation by other powers, the Americans

decided to take charge of the Philippines until it was granted independence in 1946. Though the Philippine-American War in 1899 ended in America's favor, resentments among Filipino inhabitants persisted. Nevertheless, these feelings were overshadowed by the spirit of the Cold War. When the Philippines remained as one of America's primary sites for naval establishments in the Asian front, there is evidence to believe that Duterte's recent comments about America entails his nationalist aspirations. Early this fall, Duterte called for the removal of all foreign troops from the Philippines, possibly within the next two years. This was obviously targeted at the United States, since the Subic Bay base was reopened in 2015 to station the American navy. Duterte even concedes that he "may have ruffled the feelings of some but that is how is. We will survive, without the assistance of American, maybe a lesser quality of life, but as I said, we will survive."⁸

Overall, Duterte's recent actions appear to be a mixture of nationalism and "*realpolitik*." His *realpolitik* consists in his ability to observe opportunities which would bring the Philippines a material prosperity. Yet it is clear that he will not take advantage of every one of those opportunities when he conceded the possibility of having a less desirable material condition in the removal of the American navy. This is precisely the reason why Duterte's foreign policies cannot be exclusively

described as *realpolitik*, for his nationalist sentiments have established certain moral fundamentals. In his rejection of American influence, he implicitly suggests that despite his unruliness in his war on drugs or any verbal abuse of foreign leaders, there are certain fine lines that cannot be crossed regardless of material outcomes. Evidently, this would include a closer relationship with the United States, which can only be explained in context of the Filipino history

¹ *A guide to the Philippines' history, economy and politics* in "the Economist", May 6th 2016, 15:30 by the Data Team:
<http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2016/05/daily-chart-5>

² *China-ROK, China-Australia FTA to take effect on December 20* in "China FTA Network", 2015-12-11 09:04:14:
http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/enarticle/enkorea/enkoreanews/201601/30417_1.html

³ *A guide to the Philippines' history, economy and politics* in "the Economist", May 6th 2016, 15:30 by the Data Team:
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⁵ *China's Maritime Disputes* by "Council on Foreign Relations", 11 Dec. 2016: <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/chinas-maritime-disputes/p31345#!p31345>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Philippine president calls for removal of all US troops* by Justin McCurry, in "the Guardian", 26 October 2016: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/26/philippine-president-calls-for-removal-of-all-us-troops>

South Asia

Economic Integration in a Rising South Asia

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Abstract

Home to a population of 1.7 billion and an average economic growth rate of 6% over the past decade, South Asia is one of the fastest growing regions of the world. While most countries within South Asia are developing, they are doing so with little regional cooperation. This is in contrast to regions in the past that have progressed together, such as South East Asia, or the European Union, which used regional economic cooperation to create one cohesive regional identity. South Asia is peculiar in that it is home to countries that share much more with each other culturally and geographically than many in other regions, but would much rather develop slowly and independently rather than rapidly and in conjunction. This leads to the question of why a region so dynamic and full of possibilities fails to take advantage of the benefits that lie in its immediate neighbourhood. As is often the case, politics and history in South Asia have always overshadowed its economy and continue to do so to this day. The limits to economic cooperation are facilitated by persisting hostilities along lines of terrorism, border conflicts and international alliance engagements.

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These political disagreements have cost the region the opportunity to integrate in the same way many others have. At this point, the intra-region trade within South Asia accounts for less than 5% of the individual trade proportions of countries in the area. This is very low compared to

the Europe Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), where intra-regional trade is at 60% and 25% respectively. Currently, the trade between countries in South Asia accounts for approximately \$28 billion annually. However, with greater integration this could grow to above \$100 billion. Due to tariffs and duties, intra-regional trade costs for border sharing countries such as Pakistan and India is often higher than the costs of trade with countries outside of the region. It costs India less to trade with Brazil, which is 9000 miles away than it does to trade with Pakistan. This is because of limits on border movement and lack of accessible transit routes that other countries in the region are allowed to use.

It is of immense interest to those who work on the region's economy to find ways to improve this situation. It is statistically proven that when countries trade with each other, they are less likely to fight wars and incite inter-state conflicts. While the political issues in the region are not going anywhere in the near future, we can expect them to decline in importance with an increase in trade between the countries of South Asia. So while India discusses border problems with

Bangladesh and Pakistan, it should continue trading with both. Similarly, one way to improve relations with Afghanistan would be for Pakistan to offer a land transit route to the landlocked country. Even Nepal should be able to trade through India as energy is a major avenue for cooperation. While Bhutan and Nepal have excess energy potential, countries such as India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are all lacking in ability to fulfill their demands. Cooperation along these lines could increase interdependence and benefit all regional players. Greater engagement with each other could also increase future costs of conflict manifold and incentivize the countries in the long term to solve their bilateral disagreements to enhance trade.

Furthermore, where politics need not be a factor in inter-state relations, it should be denied any nuisance value. Organizations such as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) need to be de-politicized and used as a means to further regional economic objectives. The kind of framework followed by the ASEAN countries and the EU may provide a good frame of reference. Whereas these agreements have often maintained

a degree of independence from inter-state political scuffles, SAARC has failed to do so. The recent boycott of the SAARC meeting in Pakistan by India, Afghanistan and Bangladesh is proof of that. More than a genuine commitment to sanction Pakistan for its alleged support of terrorist organizations attacking Afghanistan and India, this boycott was meant more to embarrass the host, which it succeeded in doing so. If sanctioning Pakistan was the real aim, surely all of these countries could end trade with the country entirely. That being said, it is important that Pakistan plays its part in assuaging the fears and concerns of its neighbours on the topic of terrorism as best it can, which it has so far failed to do so. Furthermore, Pakistan's insistence on depriving India of the Most Favoured Nation status has been used as a political ploy to garner domestic voter support. Had it been handled with more earnest, this opportunity could have instead been used to improve economic ties immensely between the hostile neighbours.

It is time that politics are kept at bay where they do more harm than good to all countries involved. Political problems and historical rivalries cannot be eased in a

matter of days but greater economic engagement can increase the will on the part of all countries to create genuine resolutions for such problems, in order to establish better ties for the future. South Asia should learn

from countries such as China and Japan, which have had similar problems for decades but have not let them interfere with their economic objectives. The region has only to gain from trading within and nothing to lose.

Note: All of the statistics used was used from one source from a World Bank series on South Asia. The link is provided below.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/south-asia-regional-integration>

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2015/11/06/regional-integration-the-answer-to-south-asias-development>

Nuclear Threats in South Asia: The Confrontational Dynamics

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Abstract

India is not a signatory to the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but it should not be perceived that India is not working to attain an effective mechanism to check nuclear proliferation in South Asia. The article attempts to critically analyze and evolve through research, potent suggestive measures to deal with the menace of prevailing nuclear threat in the region. In principle, India is in complete abidance to the core of NPT guidelines. The proof is conspicuous by its rigorous adherence to the commitment of nuclear disarmament and non-transfer of nuclear technology to non-nuclear power countries. The paper further discusses recommendations to support the 'as is' status and galvanizes India's ardent pledge for non-proliferation to rope-in a robust nuclear security mechanism in the region. The comprehensive tool like 'Design Basis Threat', development of 'White Paper' on nuclear security and safety issue, nuclear forensic science, 'insider threat', cyber security, application of technological innovations for prevention of bio terrorism and personal reliability program are some of the areas where analytical study delves and suggestions are made.

Proximity to the Nuclear Threats

The protection and security of nuclear and radioactive substances became a crucial matter for international organizations and world policymakers after the end of the Cold War, when the world had a narrow escape from World War III in the form of the Cuban Missile Crisis. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 emerged the risk of nuclear theft, sabotage, and dissemination of nuclear technology to the wrong ends. All these crucially became the matter of severe concern with a parallel growth of terrorism, which will continue to remain so, as the haste to acquire atomic power is rising among non-state actors.

The race to acquire the fission and fusion apocalyptic power is rising among terrorist organizations and unruly states in an irrepressible manner. The world is entering an era of mass terrorism, faster than we can imagine. Although, it seems to be far-fetched, the antagonist powers of a peaceful world have the potentiality of making a crude nuclear bomb.

Amongst the causes of serious concerns, the two most palpable ones seem to be; firstly, multiple cases of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) or Plutonium smuggling and seizure, and secondly, tracing and detecting the misappropriated nuclear material. Owing to the fact that the quantity required to make a bomb is significantly small makes the latter difficult to pin.

The Incident and Trafficking Data Base (ITDB)¹ of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) gives an account from 1996 to 2015, confirming that illicit trafficking, theft and other illegal activities of nuclear material are rampant. According to the Member States, there are confirmed reports of 2,889 such incidences reported till December 31, 2015 out of which 454 incidences are of unauthorized possession and criminal activities, 762 are of thefts and other unidentified losses, 1622 are regarding unauthorized activities while the remaining 71 are undefined.

Given the context, the South Asian nuclear threat matrix is complicated and terror waves are descending in from a complex

history of violent extremism, ethnic conflicts, Islamic militancy, cross border terrorism and the connections between South Asia and Middle East kinetics. This also includes the proliferation ring, which originated from Pakistan (*AQ Khan Network*) and spread to Iran, North Korea, and Libya. South Asia is a vulnerable region and is subjected to nuclear threats, which are continuously subdued by the shadow of fiendish terrorism.

These incidences are evidence to the perceived steep rise in the call for these materials. Moreover, theft and sabotages also indicate that there is a convincible deep trench in the security system guarding these radioactive materials. Extensive industrial use of radioactive isotopes for civil and medicinal purposes is yet another vulnerable area for wrongfully siphoning out these materials. Nuclear Proliferation by new states and hasty expansion of civil nuclear energy projects offering low cost and clean energy sources are critical areas where strict international scrutiny and revision of policies is required.

According to a Harvard research report,² a few of the terrorist groups, such as, *Al Qaeda*, *Aum*

Shinrikyo (Japanese origin) and a Chechen terrorist group are found to be active in acquiring nuclear materials from around the world. The incidents include a suspected Chechen terrorist group carrying out exploration at Russian nuclear weapon storage sites. *Al Qaeda* has also made incessant attempts to procure nuclear material and conduct crude tests of conventional explosives in the Afghan deserts, in addition to their surreptitious recruitment drives of nuclear technologists. Another recent alarming case was that of the pervasive monitoring and recording of a Belgian facility official for stocks of HEU. In late 2000, terrorists of Pakistani origin assaulted and aggressed against their own military installations in search of nuclear materials. These are a few of many such recorded incidents.

The endorsement to Weapons of Mass Destructions (WMD) in the book, "*Exoneration*" released in 2008 by *Ayman al-Zawahiri* (current leader of *Al Qaida*) states gross offensive declarations, justifying killings, as well as repeated efforts to get nuclear materials and recruit nuclear technology experts. Incidents like the *Kamra* air force base attack in Pakistan by Taliban militants in 2012, attacks on

military armament facility in *Wah* Cantonment and nuclear storage in *Sargodha* in 2008 and 2007 respectively, indicate annihilative motives of Pakistan's home grown militancy. Moreover, the concern is low yield tactical nuclear heads, which due to their size and mode of operability pose a major security challenge, as they are susceptible to thefts and attacks. The most important factor responsible for nuclear terrorism threat in South Asia includes ample evidence of state support and sponsorship of non-state actors. Provision of easy transit and diplomatic support to these terrorist groups by State actors for political leverage is an unfortunate and catastrophic dynamic of South Asia.

These worrying indicators are the symptoms of a devastating future. The menace of terrorism is growing along with consequent growth of the nuclear arms race in the world's most vulnerable region-South Asia. The possibilities of relatively easier operations of seizures, sabotaging, sparking-off a Chernobyl-type disaster, ambush attacks, stealing and attacking the nuclear plants due to inadequacy in security and technological measures are relatively high in South Asia, which escalates their probabilities.

With cogent evidence, India has proved and sustained its benign nuclear growth in such a fluid and potentially nuclear threat prone region. Looking into South Asian dynamics, India preserves its commitment to non-proliferation and atomic power usage predominantly for peaceful purposes. India does not contemplate nuclear power as an alternative to conventional military arms, but as a complement to its security structure and civil nuclear demands.

India's borders do not enjoy the leverage of a safe neighborhood, and is frequently coerced and subjected to wars and proxy wars by nuke-enabled neighbors. The aforesaid reasons compel India to ensure a limited vertical proliferation by exercising the nuclear power options. Currently, India and Pakistan both own sizable and ostentatious nuclear arsenals. According to the June, 2016 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report, India has 100-120 nuclear warheads, whereas Pakistan's count ramping up to 110-130. This in itself is a matter of serious concern, especially when both scored poorly on Nuclear Security Index as per Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). However, India's proven steadfast fixity towards

horizontal non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) remains unblemished owing to its commitment to assist and facilitate the inspections and reviews to the national and international atomic watch dogs of its nuclear regulatory framework regularly.

A proposed road map to facilitate protection and safe guard nuclear material in a stage gate manner is laid down hereunder in the form of recommendations for all South Asian countries and India in particular. The recommendations are phased out in three “terms” for effective implementation and precise monitoring.

Primary Term (1 to 3 Years)

1. Foremost is to constitute an institution for national security not under any Governmental Ministry, but directly under the sovereign control of the Constitution of India. This will withstand *intra* and international power politics. Currently the Atomic Energy Research Board (AERB) has the authority to regulate security of the nuclear material limited to civil and military facilities wherein the major load of

separated plutonium and HEU resides is under the autonomous control of defence. Considering the issue at hand, a new Nuclear Safety Regulatory Authority (NSRA) which would be fully independent of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has been proposed.³ However, even if the pending legislation is passed, it will be a statute law and vulnerable to easy amendments. Rather, it needs to be raised to the level where it draws its powers from the *Grundnorm*, the Constitution of India.

2. The nuclear material used for civil purposes, which, poses a potential misuse against nuclear weapons, should be provided security infrastructure tantamount to the Government nuclear weapon project’s security level.

3. Compatible with the international nuclear safety regulations to safeguard the nuclear infrastructures and installations against terrorist attacks warrants regular and rigorous upgrade. The same may be achieved by:

- A mandatory and rigorous vigilance against the ‘insider corruption’ and ‘insider

threat'. There should be professionally trained, well equipped adequate staff at the nuclear facilities with a strict access control system.

- Stringent process driven surveillance, time bound and well-structured maintenance, approved standards of dosimetry and waste product management with defined waste path, including sustained program for pyro processing for reduction in nuclear waste product should be the key focus area.
- Abidance to Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety and regular advancements in designing and construction to mitigate redundancy and anticipated failure modes should be ascertained and contained.
- Similar to Bhaba Atomic Research Center (IERMON⁴), aerial monitoring system nationwide for detection of environmental radiation, threat detection monitoring could also be incorporated perhaps

through motion or thermal detectors.

- Research reactors, institutes, laboratories and medical institutions working on nuclear medicines should have high level penetration resistant security provisions inclusive of spike strips, watch towers, and formidable barricading to withstand any kind of sabotage or thefts including suicidal vehicular threats.
- Setting up of radiation detection equipment in threat prone border areas, installation of radiation portals and detection monitoring at sea ports, airports, mail facilities and cargo traffics.

4. Although India's nuclear establishments are working on strict Personnel Reliability Program (PRP) i.e. screening of reliability measures for the employees working in nuclear establishments must be extended to cover the grass-root level employees and recruitments in the vicinity of nuclear power projects with the same rigor and strictness monitoring erratic and disgruntled behavioral patterns. Most importantly, security checks

should essentially be gender and religion neutral.

Intermediary Term (3 to 4 Years)

5. Currently, nuclear facilities in India are guarded by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) controlled by the Home Ministry. A dedicated specialized wing under the Defense Ministry, namely ‘Atomic Security Forces’, which is trained, specialized and well equipped to combat and withstand any kind of nuclear security threat is desirable. To test the security system, “force-on-force” exercise should be conducted for vulnerability assessments and performance.

6. Design Basis Threat⁵ (DBT) is a comprehensive tool and should be mandatory for every nuclear establishment in India. It should be designed with clear objectives such as physical protection inclusive of failsafe system, detection criteria and method, assessments for delays and method, and pragmatic responses to malicious activities. The task involves high level of Intel, technology and prior thinking. Few important prior considerations before the designing phase, like collection of

information anticipating existence and threat motives, physical magnitude and traits of the potential threat, prospective modules preempting an attack with considered limitations of the responding forces are to be roped in. The identified limitations should be collaboratively worked out forthwith with the related agencies.

7. Licensing and control of import and export of nuclear material and dual use goods in strict abidance to the WMD Act 2005 and Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC) Act 2007 control lists, as India is committed to control and cease proliferation of strategic goods and dual use technologies. The recent changes made in national export control list by updating of Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technology (SCOMET) list in accordance with major multilateral export control regimes will accelerate India’s entry to global non-proliferation architecture.

8. Development of a comprehensive “White Paper” for nuclear security and safety measures is needed to bring in transparency. An action plan based on “limitations” and “best practices” of other Member States

for policy alignment and incorporation to suit Indian nuclear and radiological facilities is required. A comparative research data on operative nuclear security structure conducted by various countries may be developed.

9. The Crisis Management Group (CMG) for nuclear emergency response (1987), is functional under the Department of Atomic Energy. A dedicated team with relevant expertise to contain a situation of unprecedented nature e.g. in case of a sabotage, theft, attack or suicidal detonation is highly desirable. Mock drills in hypothetical situations are highly recommended.

Final Term (4 to 5 Years)

10. Nuclear cyber security is another challenge that needs to be addressed at nuclear facilities. Primarily, guidelines should be developed to determine and evaluate the risks as accurately as possible. Lack of preparedness for a high profile cyber-attack will lead to crisis. The nuclear facilities should share threat data anonymously, although, India is currently working on Secure

Network Access System (SNAS), which is diligently working for security of cyber infrastructure. There should be encouragement for the implementation of ‘Security by Design’ that includes avoiding purposeless digital features, and inclusion of robust authentication and encryption technologies. Promoting the feature of ‘Whitelisting⁶’, which ceases digital tractability and the patch work⁷ in security systems. Promotion and inclusion for secure optical data diodes⁸ are highly recommended in cyber security nuclear facilities. Hypothetical mock drills should be conducted to facilitate practical know-how of a nuclear threat.

11. Detecting and fighting against illicit trafficking of radioactive material can be effectively done through “Nuclear Forensics” via interpretations of radiochemical and environmental signatures targeting forensic signals. Thus, prohibiting movement of nuclear and radiological samples. Research & Development efforts in the domain, benchmarking with international “best practices” need to be implemented.

12. Collaborating and cooperation within the South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation (SAARC) countries under a common agenda to deal with nuclear security by combating nuclear threat initiatives would serve India with twin goals: stability in the neighborhood and development in the region.

13. Insufficient visibility in India's bio defense sector propels India to address its needs for a dedicated statute for prophylaxis and control over bio terrorism. Considering the population, a bio terror strike is certain to have a deadly impact on the rate of morbidity and mortality. The communicable diseases are likely to spread much faster in India, therefore a panacea to strengthen the biodefense infrastructure is crucial. Some of the recommendations for bio safety are:

- Bio medical waste management, syndromic surveillance system, prior threat analysis and contingent plans, well-coordinated prompt medical response system to route unusual infections, variants and symptoms.
- Immunization to control epidemiology, developing

epidemiological models through geographical information system, mapping, and mathematical simulation models for impact measurement.

- Joint Biological Point Detection Systems (JBPDS), a special suite used for detection in contaminated area, laboratory diagnostic capacity and a communication system like Early Aberration Reporting System (EARS) are *sine qua non*.
- Microarray technology (drug and disease diagnosis), organic light emitting devices (detection of lethal factors), bio-sense system (for real time disease data) and other bioinformatics pathogen intrusion detection tools are vital.
- Establishment of Bio Safety Laboratories Level-3 (BSL-3) and BSL-4 are extremely desirable for research and containment of highly contentious diseases.
- New statutory enactments along with necessary amendments to

the existing ones (Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897; Disaster Management Act, 2005) to suit the need of the hour are essential for ensuring the bio safety structure. Formation of national agencies to audit and validate BSL-3 and BSL-4 periodically should be of highest priority.

Closing Words (Proposed Ways to Measuring Implementation)

Today, India follows to a large extent certain theoretically rigorous principles for security of its nuclear material. But considering the growing menace of pervading threat of theft and sabotage, for the flawless detection of the perpetrators working outside India, the system seems to be yet put to an acid test.

Thus, proactively India needs well fortified security mechanisms for its nuclear material and devices. The recommendations discussed above are inclusive of inbuilt robust measurable mechanisms to validate its necessity to suit India's urgent and growing needs. However, a few measures which may be reiterated and suggestive are: (a) a robust regulatory mechanism enacting broad guidelines flowing from the aforementioned 'Constitutional Body' can be devised for phased execution and feedback. (b) Constant tracking, monitoring and scrutiny of database to arrest snags, failure reports and security compromises would help monitoring and cascading constant qualitative improvement in the results. (c) Periodic incentivized programs scheduled for ethical hackers to operate upon demos and prototypes of government systems may be organized to explore vulnerabilities and uptake new developmental challenges to the system.

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Violating Universal Rights for Power: A Look at Human Rights in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was established to give international legal recognition to individual rights, challenging unjust state law or customary practices. The Declaration forms the foundation of international human rights law and establishes the parameters of human rights today. Although international human rights standards may seem to be embraced by states on the surface, they remain largely ineffective, as they are not properly implemented on a national level by many states, including Bangladesh. The human rights situation in Bangladesh has quickly deteriorated under the highly repressive, authoritarian regime led by the Awami League (AL). The AL-led government has received widespread criticism from many international human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, for committing countless human rights atrocities across the country through its security forces. Through analyzing the current political context in Bangladesh and articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I argue that the current Bangladeshi government is a gross violator of international human rights standards. In order to forcibly remain in power, they carry out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture and restrict freedom of expression.

Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on December 10, 1948. The Declaration was established as a protective measure after the human rights atrocities of World War II and intended to give back agency to individuals in light of increasing state control and aggression. The adoption of the Declaration gave international legal recognition to individual rights, which were used to challenge unjust state law or customary practices.¹ One of the Declaration's main intentions was to act as a body of protection for individuals whose civil and political rights were taken away by the state.² While many parts of the world were still under colonial rule, the Declaration received worldwide endorsement, with newly independent nations adopting and embracing it later on.³ Jack Donnelly suggests that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is now seen as "a standard of political legitimacy", where states seemingly upholding the Declaration are viewed as legitimate on the world stage.⁴ International human rights standards set out in the Declaration

impose obligations on sovereign states, but although these human rights standards may seem to be embraced by states on the surface they remain largely ineffective as they are not properly implemented on a national level by many states, including many Western democracies that were at the forefront of establishing and implementing these standards of human rights. Gross human rights violations are found to be even more common in countries, such as Bangladesh, with pseudo-democratic governments. I analyze the current political context in Bangladesh and articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to argue that the current Bangladeshi government is a gross violator of international human rights standards, in order to forcibly remain in power, through carrying out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture and restricting freedom of expression.

Human Rights and the Universal Declaration

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights forms the foundation of international human rights law and establishes the parameters of human rights

today.⁵ Human rights refer to “goods, services, opportunities, and protections” that each individual is entitled to as human beings in order to ensure their human dignity and agency, protecting against injustices and leading to individual empowerment.⁶ Human rights are not abstract values, but rather social practices intended to recognize those values.⁷ The Declaration views internationally recognized human rights as an indivisible structure where certain rights can only be ensured by the presence of many other rights.⁸ Thus the Declaration must be implemented and practiced by states in its entirety in order to be an effective protection for injustices committed against individuals. However, Michael Ignatieff points out that the states that signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights only adopted it in principle, believing that it would never restrict their behavior due to a lack of enforcement measures in place.⁹ For many states, including Bangladesh, the Declaration is merely a declaration and does not have the same effect as a state treaty or convention requiring national ratification.¹⁰ The lack of enforcement measures especially hinders the ability of the Declaration to pressure the

Bangladeshi government into acting justly towards its citizens. The absence of a freely functioning political opposition in the country also contributes to the attack on human rights throughout Bangladesh.

Bangladesh’s Current Political Context

The 2014 general elections in Bangladesh were marked by intense political turmoil and violence throughout the country as the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by Khaleda Zia, and their allies boycotted the elections due to the refusal of the ruling Awami League (AL), led by Sheikh Hasina, to hand over power to an impartial caretaker government ahead of the elections. This led to the AL essentially running uncontested and winning the elections with a voter turnout of only 22%.¹¹ Opposition protests against the elections were met with violent clashes with the police and rival political party supporters, resulting in many deaths from bullet injuries after the police opened fire on opposition protestors.¹² However, there were no independent investigations made into these and the unlawful killings, many committed by the

police and security officials through their abuse of power, were conveniently ignored and remain unpunished. Gaining a majority in Parliament, through what many would consider unfair elections, the AL-led government pushed for new laws and policies, amended the Constitution and became “a highly centralized bureaucratic regime”, exercising complete control over the Parliament, the judiciary and local tiers of government.¹³ Having extensive control over the country allowed the Bangladeshi government to commit countless human rights violations against its citizens without being held accountable, and constantly breaching the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Extrajudicial Killings, Arbitrary Arrests, Enforced Disappearances and Torture

A major challenge to human rights and democratic practices in Bangladesh includes the government’s use of the police or Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), an elite government security force, especially against opposition political activists.¹⁴ Bangladeshi

security forces carried out numerous arbitrary arrests throughout the country and the Bangladesh-based human rights organization, Odhikar reported at least 287 enforced disappearances from January 2009 to July 2016.¹⁵ The exact number of enforced disappearances is likely to be much higher and many of those abducted were known to be critical of the government or supporters of opposition political parties, such as the BNP or Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh. Whether opposition political activists are abducted by the police or RAB and remain in secret detention or are eventually shown arrested or found dead, security forces using torture and treating individuals in an inhuman manner outside of the protection of the law is widespread in Bangladesh. The countless torture techniques of Bangladeshi security forces violating human dignity include beatings, suspension from the ceiling, electric shocks to the genitals and shooting detainees in their legs.¹⁶ These practices all violate article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.¹⁷ Although in power through what many consider to be unlawful means, the current

Bangladeshi government still has a responsibility towards its citizens to protect them from any form of harm and abuse. However, to remain in power through any means necessary, the AL-led government has been routinely sanctioning these human rights violations through security forces that in turn receive complete immunity from the government.

The police or RAB are regularly implicated in testimonies from eyewitnesses and the families of individuals subjected to enforced disappearances. Men carrying weapons and traveling in vehicles used by police or RAB personnel and, in many cases, also identifying themselves as police or RAB officers are described by the families and eyewitnesses as being responsible for abducting or arbitrarily arresting individuals without any reason or criminal charges.¹⁸ Even after repeated requests to police, the families of those who are abducted receive no information on their whereabouts and when attempting to file complaints against the police or RAB, the police do not accept their complaints.¹⁹ Under the current AL-led government, there has been a rise in incidents where individuals known to be critical of the government are especially targeted and taken into secret

detention, by men who appear to be members of law enforcement agencies, without being brought to court within 24 hours of their detention as required by Bangladeshi law.²⁰ These cases point to the violation of article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which prohibits “arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”.²¹ They reflect the clear lack of human rights protections in place in Bangladesh under the current AL-led government, which fails to safeguard the human rights of its citizens, especially those with opposing political views.

Although in principle the Bangladeshi Constitution guarantees the right to life of all citizens in articles 31 and 32, government sanctioned extrajudicial killings carried out by Bangladeshi security forces is an extremely common practice.²² Extrajudicial killings or executions are any unlawful deaths caused by law enforcement officials in Bangladesh without any legal basis or without the sanction of a judicial process.²³ According to basic principles of justice, an individual is entitled to the opportunity to be heard and make a case for their innocence before being convicted, punished or deprived of their life in any judicial system.²⁴ However,

law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh seldom follow this. Instead, countless individuals are killed either in police custody or through the practice of “cross-fires” which is security forces firing guns from different directions simultaneously in the same area, resulting in extrajudicial murders when individuals are conveniently killed before they are heard in a court of law.²⁵ The use of government sanctioned armed force illegally against individuals is a strategy adopted by the AL-led government in many cases as an instrument to silence opposition in Bangladesh. This again is a violation of article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which ensures the “right to life, liberty and security” of all individuals.²⁶ This is an essential right that all individuals should be ensured by their government, regardless of their political views, and is one of the main rights that are conditions for the fulfillment of other rights in the Declaration. Violation of this right points to the fact that the current Bangladeshi government not only regularly violates an essential international standard of human rights, but also its own Constitution.

Restrictions on the Freedom of Expression

Since independence in 1971, Bangladesh has never experienced such unreasonable restrictions on freedom of expression, speech and writing under a non-military regime as those imposed today.²⁷ The AL-led Bangladeshi government is well known for constantly violating article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression,” including the freedom to hold opinions without constraints and the freedom to receive and disseminate information and ideas through any form of media.²⁸ The Bangladeshi Constitution also sets out rights to freedom of expression with “reasonable restrictions”, however national security legislation and sedition and criminal libel laws in the country largely prevent the media, journalists and human rights activists from speaking out against the unlawful actions of the AL-led government.²⁹ As a result, certain laws of the country, even if contradictory to the Constitution or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are frequently used to arrest and prosecute critics of the government.

The AL-led government abuses its power to limit and restrict freedom of expression and through its use of Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act, it actively threatens human rights advocates, bloggers and media representatives for criticizing the government.³⁰ Section 57 of the Act criminalizes publication of material criticizing or opposing the government, among other actions, as it is seen "...to deteriorate law and order, prejudice the image of the State..." and has a sentence of a minimum of seven years and a maximum of 14 years in prison.³¹ Through this legislation, many human rights activists in Bangladesh writing on government sanctioned extrajudicial executions by security forces were charged and detained under Section 57.³² Sedition laws in Bangladesh are often used by the government to meet its own interests and destroy any opposition against its rule. Penalties can be anywhere from fines to life imprisonment or even as extreme as the death penalty if an individual is found guilty of undermining the Bangladeshi Constitution.³³ Ironically, there are no such consequences for a regime undermining the Bangladeshi Constitution. The prominent

opposition newspaper, Amar Desh faced numerous legal and regulatory threats and eventually the newspaper's print edition was banned and its owner and acting editor, Mahmudur Rahman was arrested and tortured in custody on numerous charges, including sedition, for publishing material questioning the actions and legality of the AL-led government.³⁴ Other newspapers, such as Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, were also deemed anti-government in their coverage and as a result the army's intelligence agency ordered Bangladesh's largest companies to stop advertising in the newspapers, reducing their income and putting their existence at risk.³⁵

Journalists are also frequently arrested and detained for up to 120 days without trial under the 1974 Special Powers Act for publishing material critical of the government and its policies and many reporters face contempt of court charges for being critical of judicial proceedings or personnel in Bangladesh.³⁶ Bangladesh based British journalist, David Bergman was convicted of contempt of court over articles which he published, criticizing the death-toll figures of the 1971 war presented by the government and the conduct of the war crimes

tribunal set up by the AL-led government.³⁷ Concerned with Bergman's conviction, 50 journalists, academics, writers and activists signed a statement in his support. However, they were later forced to apologize and those who did not were also charged with contempt of court. The government is known to carry out surveillance on journalists and their work. The police have even gone as far as monitoring the e-mail correspondence of some journalists and when journalists are brought in for questioning by security forces they are asked to give up their passwords to intelligence officers.³⁸ Many journalists were also threatened and physically attacked by security forces and military intelligence agents in order to prevent them from documenting the unlawful actions of the government.

Other measures taken by the AL-led government against Bangladeshi human rights advocates and journalists critical of the government also include calls by security agencies to news editors or TV talk show producers, threatening them not to invite individuals who are critical of the government to write in their newspapers or appear on their talk shows.³⁹ Security forces and thugs believed to be hired by the ruling

AL even directly attacked some critics publicly known to call out the actions of the government.⁴⁰ Clearly, these types of incidents reflect the government's attack on freedom of opinion and expression as well as journalistic freedom in Bangladesh, which are human rights violations both under the Constitution of Bangladesh as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since the AL-led government forcefully took hold of power in Bangladesh, there have been countless efforts on their part to control the content of newspapers and television talk shows. It has now come to a point where there is not only a restriction of freedom of expression but also constant government propaganda conveniently disseminated in the media, through pro-government newspapers and television channels, to cover up the human rights atrocities of the government and its security forces.

The Ministry of Information in Bangladesh has control over granting broadcast licenses to commercial and community outlets and this power allowed the government to close down television channels for supposedly breaching broadcasting regulations.⁴¹ However, it became clear that the real reason behind

channels, such as Diganta TV and Islamic TV, being shutdown was their broadcast of footage incriminating the government and its security forces of carrying out many human rights atrocities and targeted killings of opposition supporters.⁴² In addition, private broadcast outlets are required by the government to only air government-produced news segments and official speeches.⁴³ As a result of the limits to freedom of expression and the climate of fear in the country, many media outlets are forced to exercise self-censorship, inviting only government-approved guests on their talk shows and completely ignoring dissident or opposing views.⁴⁴ Recently, there has also been an increase in the censorship of internet-based content by the government: blocking Youtube, Facebook and other social-media sites and messaging apps, such as WhatsApp and Viber. These are particularly blocked when the government is involved in major controversies and has the need to restrict communication tools in order to prevent large-scale protests from taking place across the country.

Conclusion

The human rights situation in Bangladesh has quickly deteriorated with the current AL-led government not only forcibly taking over power in questionable elections, but also transforming into a highly repressive, authoritarian regime where international human rights standards, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are constantly violated by the government and its security forces taking law into their own hands without any consequences. Individuals rely on the state to protect their rights and human dignity through using its monopoly of the legitimate use of force in a just and lawful manner. However, in the case of Bangladesh, to hold a tight grip on power, the AL-led government is using its control over the military, police and other security agencies to crack down on opposition supporters and those critical of the government, essentially crushing any political opposition in the country. In doing so, the Bangladeshi government is responsible and should be held accountable for committing countless human rights atrocities, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, enforced

disappearances and torture as well as restricting freedom of expression in the

country. These human rights violations not only threaten democracy and contradict the

Constitution of Bangladesh, but also violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which sets out international standards that all countries are obliged to follow in order to be considered a legitimate state in the international community.

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² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

³ Donnelly, Jack. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (3rd edition). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013. p. 26.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12 & 32.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29; Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*, p. 57.

⁷ Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, pp. 10-11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁹ Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*, p. 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Feldman, Shelley. "Bangladesh in 2014: Illusive Democracy." *Asian Survey*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2015, p. 67.

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- ¹⁴ Ibid, p. 68.
- ¹⁵ *BANGLADESH: We demand justice! Stop enforced disappearances and return the disappeared to their families!* Dhaka: Odhikar, 2016, <http://www.afad-online.org/images/2016/BANGLADESH.pdf>. Accessed 6 December 2016.
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- ²³ Ibid, p. 72.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ The United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, art. 3.
- ²⁷ Bergman, David. “At the Dhaka Literary Festival, Restrictions on Free Speech Will Be the Elephant in the Room.” *The Wire* 18 November 2016, <http://thewire.in/80996/dhaka-literary-festival-freedom-of-speech/>. Accessed 6 December 2016.
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- ²⁹ *Bangladesh: Freedom of the Press 2016*. Freedom House, 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/bangladesh>. Accessed 6 December 2016.

³⁰ Feldman, “Bangladesh in 2014: Illusive Democracy,” p. 68; Bergman, “At the Dhaka Literary Festival, Restrictions on Free Speech Will Be the Elephant in the Room.”

³¹ *Stop them, now! Bangladesh: Enforced Disappearances, Torture and Restrictions on Freedom of Expression*, Amnesty International, p. 15; Bergman, “At the Dhaka Literary Festival, Restrictions on Free Speech Will Be the Elephant in the Room.”

³² *Stop them, now! Bangladesh: Enforced Disappearances, Torture and Restrictions on Freedom of Expression*, Amnesty International, p. 16.

³³ *Bangladesh: Freedom of the Press 2016*, Freedom House.

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³⁵ Bergman, “At the Dhaka Literary Festival, Restrictions on Free Speech Will Be the Elephant in the Room.”

³⁶ *Bangladesh: Freedom of the Press 2016*, Freedom House.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *Stop them, now! Bangladesh: Enforced Disappearances, Torture and Restrictions on Freedom of Expression*, Amnesty International, p. 17.

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 18-19.

⁴¹ *Bangladesh: Freedom of the Press 2016*, Freedom House.

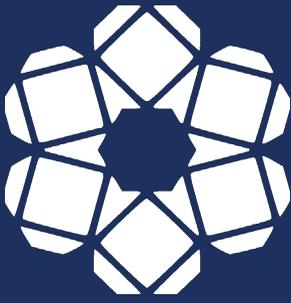
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