The Johns Hopkins University

East Asian Studies
Student Advisory Committee

East Asian Studies Forum & Review

Fall 2024

The *East Asian Studies Forum and Review* is a biannual publication of interdisciplinary undergraduate research with a regional focus on East Asia. The journal is supported by the Johns Hopkins University's East Asian Studies Program and is produced entirely by undergraduate students. It aims to showcase research, while promoting awareness and scholarly discussion of a vibrant, diverse, and increasingly prominent region of the world.

The Fall 2024 *East Asian Studies Forum and Review* features a total of ten papers from five Johns Hopkins University students and five students from institutions across the country. We are thrilled to have such diverse perspectives in this edition of the *Forum and Review*. Submissions consist of course papers as well as independent research. The journal is divided into three sections:

The first section, "East Asia Reflecting Back," features papers that inspect the impact of the historical cultures of East Asian nations on their modern attitudes, ranging from pop culture obsessions to conceptions of masculinity and religion. The following section, "East Asia Reigning Over," investigates the means by which East Asian state powers have governed those within its borders, drawing on historical and contemporary examples. The third section is titled "East Asia Looking Outwards". It documents foreign pursuits of East Asian governments outside of their borders.

We would like to thank not only all of our student authors, but also our committee members, editors, and distinguished faculty members for making this publication possible.

Part I: East Asia Looking Back

Masculinity & Conflict: Attitudes in East Asia

Ainsley Gill, Vanderbilt University

As economic competition and political tensions between China and the United States continue to rise, East Asia is increasingly emerging as a region of interest. Not only is East Asia "a key engine of global economic growth," but it is also the region where U.S. and Chinese interests "most clearly intersect."[1] With a wide variety of potentially incendiary sources of conflict from the Korean peninsula to the Taiwanese strait, a deep understanding of the region's culture, history, and motivations is crucial for long-term strategic decision-making. One crucial aspect of discerning these state actors' motivations and predicting their decisions is an understanding of important cultural values that define strength, leadership, and the images these countries want to project internationally.

In East Asia, the concept of masculinity, especially as it relates to honor, is highly influential. These forces often play out in politics as an obligation to address and avenge "historical wrongs are often and acrimoniously invoked in politics" with "territorial disputes [serving] as focal points for nationalist rhetoric laden with the language of honor."[2] Yet, the role of masculinity has not been fully explored within the current literature on East Asian cultural norms. Studies of masculinity have largely remained limited to definitional work, with little attention given to the established cultural importance of masculinity and honor and its political implications. A review of existing literature on masculinity in the field emphasizes that "masculinity as an analytical concept has received limited attention in historical and cultural

[1] Chhabra, T., Doshi, R., Hass, R., and Kimball, E. "Global China: East Asia." *The Brookings Institute*, 2019.
[2] Melander, E. "Gender and Masculine Honor Ideology: Why They Matter for Peace." *Global Asia* 10, no. 4 (2015): 40-45.

studies of Asia."[3] After identifying this gap in the literature, I sought to discover if attitudes toward masculinity and honor were related to attitudes toward conflict. This brings me to my research question: to what extent are attitudes regarding traditional masculinity and honor correlated with attitudes toward conflict in East Asia?

Literature Review

In order to evaluate the influence of masculinity and honor on attitudes toward conflict in East Asia, it is critical to understand how masculinity and honor are defined within this region. This literature review will first lay out the various historical, cultural, and social influences around masculinity and honor, then discuss the already established connections between masculinity, conflict, and violence endorsement, and then identify the resulting policy implications.

Perceptions of Masculinity in East Asia

Within the East Asian context, masculinity is conceptualized through two main lenses: *wen* and *wu*. *Wen* is typically associated with scholars, referring to intellectual, artistic, or literary prowess and reflecting the success and honor to be gained by attaining positions in the civil service through the exam-based system. *Wu* refers to both "the power of military strength" and military authority, as well as "the wisdom to know when and when not to deploy this strength."[4] Though the concepts of *wen* and *wu* originated in China, "East Asia has historically shared similar cultural repertoires for 'being a man'" and masculinity in general, often originating from these concepts and in part because of their "shared regional history."[5] The ways in which *wen*

[3] Ikeya, C. "Masculinities in Asia: A Review Essay." *Asian Studies Review* 38, no. 2 (2014): 342-252.
[4] Louie, K. Theorising Chinese Masculinity. *Cambridge: University Press*, 2002.
[5] Coates, J. "Persona, Politics and Chinese Masculinity in Japan: The Case of Li Xiaomu." In *The Cosmopolitan Dream: Transnational Chinese Masculinities in a Global Age*, edited by D. Hird and G. Song, 127-148. Hong Kong: University Press, 2018.

and *wu* manifest and are valued across countries vary, but they remain an influential concept across the region.

Though the nuances of how each country conceptualizes masculinity vary, a few key underlying values and themes remain. To illustrate, in South Korea, achieving a strict family hierarchy that designates the man as the breadwinner at the top with his respectful and supportive wife and children below him is a crucial component of ideal masculinity. A man's career and, through it, his ability to support his family and serve his country is highly valued.[6] In Japan, the role of men as fathers and their responsibilities to their children are crucial in sustaining the patriarchal social and familial structure.[7] In China, masculinity is affirmed through the telling of history, as the figures of historical and cultural significance credited for China's development and progress are men lauded for their strength, honor, and wisdom. Across China, Japan, and South Korea, the idealized forms of masculinity are all rooted in the Confucian ideal of man's dominance both in the workplace and at home, as well as state leadership.[8] Due to their similar history and culture, it is likely that the same holds true in Taiwan as well. Thus, while there may be some variation in each of these nation's understanding of masculinity and their attitudes towards it, their shared foundation in Confucian ideals makes it likely that the basic tenets of masculinity (honor, success, and fulfilling the paternal role) will be generally similar across the four nations.

A cultural value critical in understanding the nuances of ideal masculinity in East Asia is honor. In this case, the concept of honor "refers to a reputation that entails the right to be given

[6] Ma, G., Yang, C., Qin, Z., and Guo, M. "Hegemonic Masculinity in East Asia: China, South Korea and Japan." *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 615 (2021, p. 2405)
[7] Ibid, p. 2406.
[8] Ibid, p. 2408.

respect and precedence in social interactions."[9] For men, this includes living up to the ideals of masculinity by exhibiting strength, bravery, and discouraging potential threats of violence.[10] Across East Asia, honor is critically important on an individual level, with a man's honorable reputation cited as one of the "most important attributes of masculinity."[11]Alongside it were the success of his career, his control over his life, and his status within the family, further reinforcing the resilience of Confucian values across the region.[12]

At this intersection of these two concepts is masculine honor ideology, deriving from "the belief that aggression is sometimes justifiable and even necessary, such as when a man's manhood, family, or romantic partner is insulted or threatened."[13] This ideology informs the actions of individuals through social expectations and pressures about how masculinity responds in the face of threats. To illustrate, the presence of masculine honor beliefs, in which honor relies heavily on one's ability to protect and care for family or in-group members, "were positively correlated with participants' levels of trait aggression."[14] A similar study found that "a significant and strong relationship exists between masculine honor ideology and self-reported aggressive behavior."[15] Not only does a strong adherence to traditional ideals of masculinity

[9] Melander, E. "Gender and Masculine Honor Ideology: Why They Matter for Peace." *Global Asia* 10, no. 4 (2015): 40-45.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ng, C. J., Tan, H. M., and Low, W. Y. "What Do Asian Men Consider as Important Masculinity Attributes? Findings from the Asian Men's Attitudes to Life Events and Sexuality (MALES) Study." *Journal of Men's Health* 5, no. 4 (2008, p. 353).
[12] Ibid.
[13] Saucier, D., Stanford, A. J., Miller, S. S., Martens, A. L., Miller, A. K., Jones, T. L., McManus, J. L., and Burns, M. D. "Masculine Honor Beliefs: Measurement and Correlates." *Personality and Individual Differences* 94 (2016, p. 13).
[14] Ibid.
[15] Norton-Baker, M. "Masculine Honor Ideology: An Unrecognized Risk Factor for Aggressive Behavior." PhD diss., *University of North Dakota*, 2020, p. 42.

make an individual more likely to act aggressively themselves, but they are more likely to endorse violent actions by others as well as violence broadly."[16]

Ties Between Masculinity and Conflict

These traditional ideals of honor and masculinity do not only inform individuals' attitudes toward their own career, life, and family, but also infiltrate their attitudes toward external political issues and foreign policy. As masculinity and aggression become tightly linked within this system of belief, concepts of honor move from an individual application to a national one, placing the same prerequisites of strength and an ability to protect and avenge in-group members onto the state in order for it to be considered honorable. This is illustrated most clearly by an American study that examined the connection between masculine honor ideology and respondents' willingness to endorse military action in response to terrorist attacks. The stronger participants' adherence to masculine honor beliefs, the more likely they were to support hostilities towards terrorists, extreme interrogation protocol with terrorist suspects, and broad military campaigns against terrorism in response to their fellow citizens, or in-group, of a state being clearly threatened or harmed by a terrorist attack.[17]

However, the predictive power of this relationship extends beyond terrorism. Individuals with strong masculine honor beliefs also held positive associations with war, especially in order to achieve revenge, protect their nation, protect their family, and spread their ideas.[18] Within the worldview of masculine honor beliefs, war is "good for…preservation of the security of oneself,

[16] Bozkurt, V., Tartanoglu, S., and Dawes, G. "Masculinity and Violence: Sex Roles and Violence Endorsement Among University Students." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 205 (2015): 254-260.
[17] Barnes, C. D., Brown, R. P., and Osterman, L. L. "Don't Tread on Me: Masculine Honor Ideology in the US and Militant Responses to Terrorism." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 38, no. 8 (2012): 1143-1156.
[18] Saucier, D., McManus, J. L., O'Dea, C. J., Webster, R. J., Sonnentag, T. L., and Strain, M. L. "Individual Differences in Masculine Honor Beliefs Predict Attitudes Toward Aggressive Security Measures, War, and Peace." *Journal of Peace Psychology* 24, no. 1 (2018, p. 114).

one's family, one's reputation, one's country and one's worldview."[19] We see this play out as those with stronger masculine honor beliefs were more likely to justify U.S. military action in response to Afghanistan and Iraq.[20] Across a variety of situations both individual and national, personal and political, masculine honor ideologies work to justify and normalize violence as the primary response to outside threats.[21]

Masculine honor ideology has been studied throughout the West, yet despite its social and political implications, "little empirical research has been undertaken so far about East Asian masculine honor ideologies."[22] The vast majority of research on masculine honor beliefs is centered on the United States, in particular the South. However, as East Asia increases in international relevance, it is essential to identify and understand the social, political, and cultural factors that can drive conflict and violence, including masculine honor ideology. Even as the prevalence of masculine honor beliefs has declined in some parts of the West, including Europe, they have persisted across East Asia, providing an impetus for such research.[23] There is a distinct gap in the literature when it comes to examining if the implications of masculine honor ideology in the West continue to hold true in East Asia. My research seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between East Asian populations' adherence to masculine honor ideology and their attitudes toward conflict.

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[19] Ibid, p. 116.
[20] Saucier, D., and McManus, J. "Men of Honor: Examining Individual Differences in Masculine Honor Beliefs." In *Masculinities in a Global Era*, edited by J. Gelfer, 85-99. Springer, 2014.
[21] Saucier, D., Stanford, A. J., Miller, S. S., Martens, A. L., Miller, A. K., Jones, T. L., McManus, J. L., and Burns, M. D. "Masculine Honor Beliefs: Measurement and Correlates." *Personality and Individual Differences* 94 (2016, p. 13).
[22] Melander, E. "Gender and Masculine Honor Ideology: Why They Matter for Peace." *Global Asia* 10, no. 4 (2015): 40-45.
[23] Ibid.

Theory

Given that the literature discussed above established the centrality of honor and the ability to protect one's in-group in defining masculinity in the East Asian context, I hypothesize that masculine honor ideologies are present in East Asia. Further, given the strong relationship established in the Western context between these masculine honor ideologies and a willingness to endorse individual and state-level violence, I hypothesize that a similar relationship exists in East Asia. Specifically, I hypothesize that the presence of masculine honor ideologies will be strongly correlated with attitudes toward conflict. Within this theory, the independent variable is the extent to which masculine honor ideologies are present and the dependent variable is attitudes towards conflict, as measured by yearly military spending.

I believe the individual public attitudes of masculine honor ideologies impact national level policies for a few main reasons. First, as previously discussed, perceptions of strength under masculine honor ideology depend on the government's ability to defend itself and its citizens from any threats or slights that may arise.[24] When masculine honor ideology is present among a country's population, a government can shore up the trust and faith of its people through spending a larger portion of its budget on military and defense. This impact is likely to be pronounced in democracies where the opinions of the people have greater political power through voting. Yet, whether a country is closer to autocracy or democracy, garnering the political support, endorsement, and trust of their citizens is important in retaining power and support for leaders' political agenda writ-large. As such, in situations where the citizens of a state perceive its strength through the lens of masculine honor ideology, increasing the

[24] Saucier, D., Stanford, A. J., Miller, S. S., Martens, A. L., Miller, A. K., Jones, T. L., McManus, J. L., and Burns, M. D. "Masculine Honor Beliefs: Measurement and Correlates." *Personality and Individual Differences* 94 (2016, p. 13).

proportion of the budget that a state spends on its military can reaffirm the state's power and strength in the eyes of the people, earning the government crucial political capital and support.

Methods

In order to investigate my research question and the validity of my theory, I used data from the World Values Survey to assess the degree to which China, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea each adhere to aspects of traditional masculinity and masculine honor ideology. I measured my independent variable by creating a masculine honor ideology metric (M-HIM) which included items from the World Values Survey related to aggression, violence, traditional values of masculinity, adherence to traditional gender roles, and the justifiability of violence on an individual and state-wide level. The World Value Survey is a representative international study conducted by social scientists in over 120 countries. It assesses how values, opinion, and ideals change over time and compare between countries through surveys conducted in participating countries around the world every five years. My 29-item metric was compiled based on certain survey items and calculated and compared and compared based on two periods in which similar versions of the World Values Survey were conducted. More specifically, I chose the waves of the survey conducted between 1990 and 1998 and between 2010 and 2020 due to cross-question applicability and relevance to my research. I then used the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's database to collect data on the military expenditures for each of the four nations. I used this data to approximate attitudes toward conflict for my dependent variable, specifically by measuring military expenditure as a percentage of overall government spending for that year.

I chose to use military expenditure to approximate attitudes towards conflict in order to best measure the priorities of a nation, due to the inherent nature of tradeoffs that come with

allocating funds in a national budget. The larger the percentage of the budget spent on the military, the greater priority the nation, its people, and its leaders place on their ability to engage in conflict and defend their in-group from any threats that may arise. This measure better controls for differences in the size and scale of nations and provides a more precise and nuanced image of fluctuations in attitudes toward conflict over time than a measure like the number of conflicts a country is actively involved in for a given year.

In order to assess the extent of the relationship that exists between the M-HIM and a nation's military spending, I ran Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. The relationship was evaluated over time, comparing data from the 1990-1998 and 2010-2020 waves of the World Values Survey with the military expenditure for the corresponding years. I hypothesized that, based on my theory, there will be a positive correlation between adherence to masculine honor ideology and the percentage of the budget that a state spends on its military.

Results & Analysis

The M-HIM is evaluated on a scale assessing the strength of these beliefs from 0-1, with 0 representing the complete absence of those beliefs among those surveyed and 1 being a perfect adherence to masculine honor ideology. A score of 1 would indicate an absolute belief in traditional gender roles; an absolute endorsement of violence when threatened; a top priority of being able to defend one's in-group on an individual and national scale; and a high value placed on honor, independence, and individual achievement. As this is a rather extreme collection of beliefs and the World Values Survey is meant to approximate the views of an entire country's population, it is implausible that the M-HIM for any country (even beyond those tested here) would be equal to 1, with scores near 1 being similarly unlikely. As such, even lower M-HIM

scores can be influential enough to have a political impact on leaders' decisions, priorities, and military spending.

After calculating the M-HIM for the waves of the World Values Survey between 1990-1998 and 2010-2020, I found that masculine honor ideology was significantly and influentially present, with an initial strength of about 0.5 in three out of the four countries, as shown in Figure 1 below. Though the M-HIMs are generally in a period of slow decline, their presence and persistence over the thirty-year time frame studied confirms my first hypothesis that these ideologies were present across East Asia.

Figure 1: M-HIMs Between 1990-2020

	Masculine Honor Ideology Metric			
	1990-1994	*1995-1998*	*2010-2014*	*2017-2020*
China	0.52	0.479	0.416	0.44
Taiwan	data not available	0.465	0.366	0.349
Japan	0.368	0.393	0.358	0.289
South Korea	0.526	0.451	0.395	0.415

Though M-HIMs in these East Asian countries are broadly in a state of slow decline due largely to globalization and modernization, they are highly susceptible to fluctuations based on socio-political factors. For example, though China's M-HIM had been in decline since the first wave of survey data studied, it began to trend upward during the most recent survey period. This slight uptick in the M-HIM was, at least in part, the result of the rising nationalism and tensions between China and the United States. Historically, "masculinity has been analyzed as inextricably linked to economic and state power" in China.[25] So, as the US became increasingly

[25] Zheng, T. "Masculinity in Crisis: Effeminate Men, Loss of Manhood, and the Nation-State in Postsocialist China." *Etnografica* 19, no. 2 (2015): 347-365.

threatening, especially under the rhetoric and economic sanctions of the Trump administration, rhetoric targeting so-called 'effeminate men' rose and China began implementing policies to address what they deemed a crisis of masculinity, including increasing athletic funding and banning "effeminate men" from public broadcasting and television.[26] It should come as no surprise that, within the context of an increased threat from the U.S., and this rhetoric and these policies promoting traditional gender roles, masculine honor ideology became more prevalent in China.

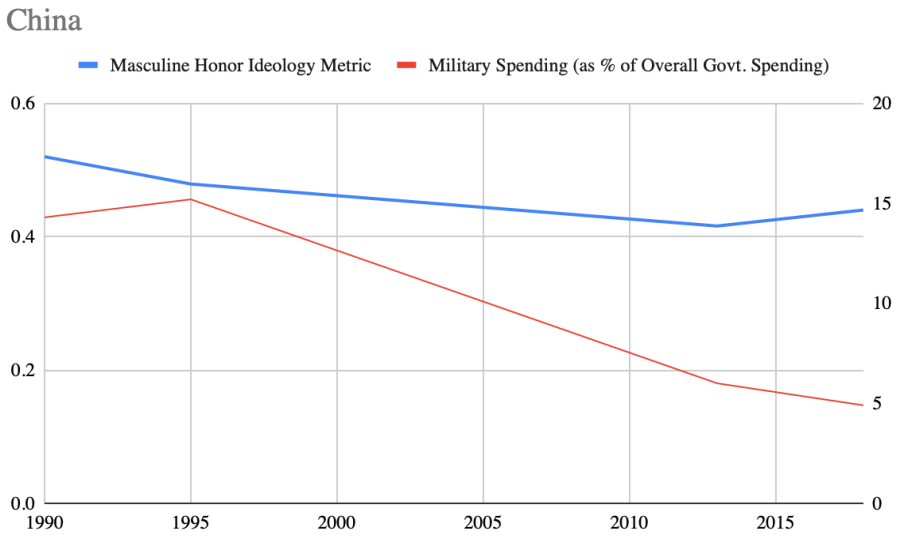
Similarly, South Korea's M-HIM also began to tick upward during the 2017-2020 wave of the World Values Survey after an otherwise steady period of decline. As in China, this uptick is likely related to internal political dynamics. In March of 2017, South Korea's first female president, Park Geun-hye, was impeached and removed from office on charges of corruption, bribery, abuse of power, and revealing state secrets and later sentenced to 24 years in prison on related charges.[27] While nearly every Korean president to date has ended their term in scandal, the response to failure of the most prominent example of female political leadership was especially gendered. This, paired with the rise of right-wing conservative backlash to the South Korean feminism movement online and the rising threats and missile testing from North Korea during this period resulted in an increase in the state's M-HIM.[28]

When the M-HIMs for each country were plotted over time alongside my dependent variable, which approximated a state's attitude toward conflict via military spending as a percentage of overall government spending, a strong positive correlation emerged across all four

[26] Chowdury, D. R. "Empires and 'Effeminate Men.' After Britain and America, It's China's Turn to Worry about Masculinity." *Time*.
[27] Sang-Hun, C. "Park Geun-hye, South Korea's Ousted President, Gets 24 Years in Prison." *The New York Times*, April 6, 2018.
[28] Sang-Hun, C., and Sanger, D. E. "North Korea Launches Another Missile, Escalating Crisis." *The New York Times*, September 14, 2017.

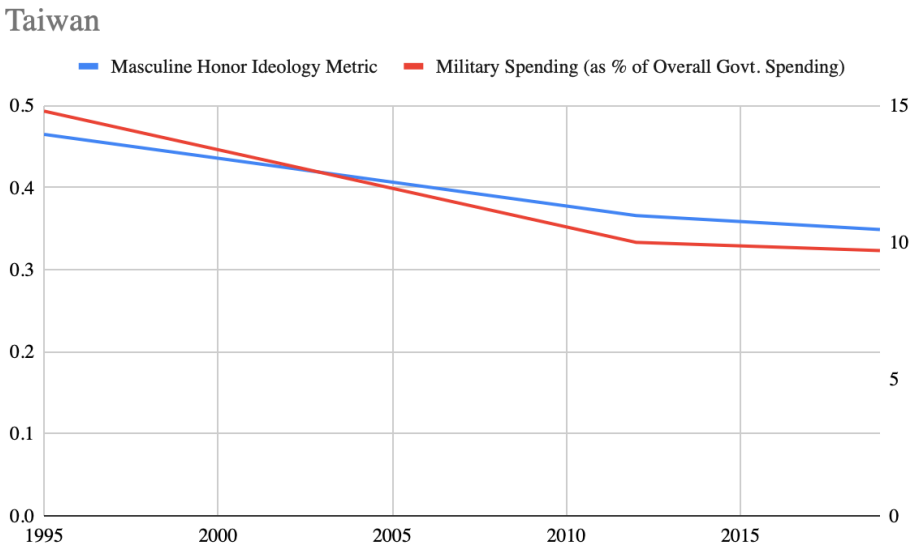
of the East Asian countries studied. In China, the correlation coefficient was 0.857, indicating a strong positive correlation between the two values as seen in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: M-HIM & Military Spending in China



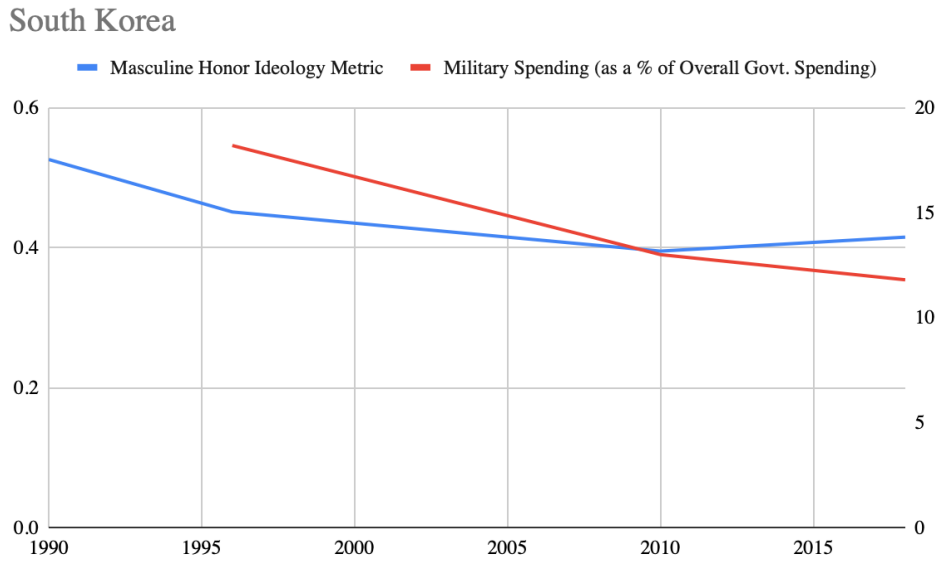
In Taiwan, the relationship was extraordinarily strong, with a near-perfect positive correlation of 0.997 as seen in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: M-HIM & Military Spending in Taiwan



In South Korea, the relationship between the M-HIM and military spending is a strong positive one with a correlation coefficient of 0.859, as illustrated in Figure 4 below.

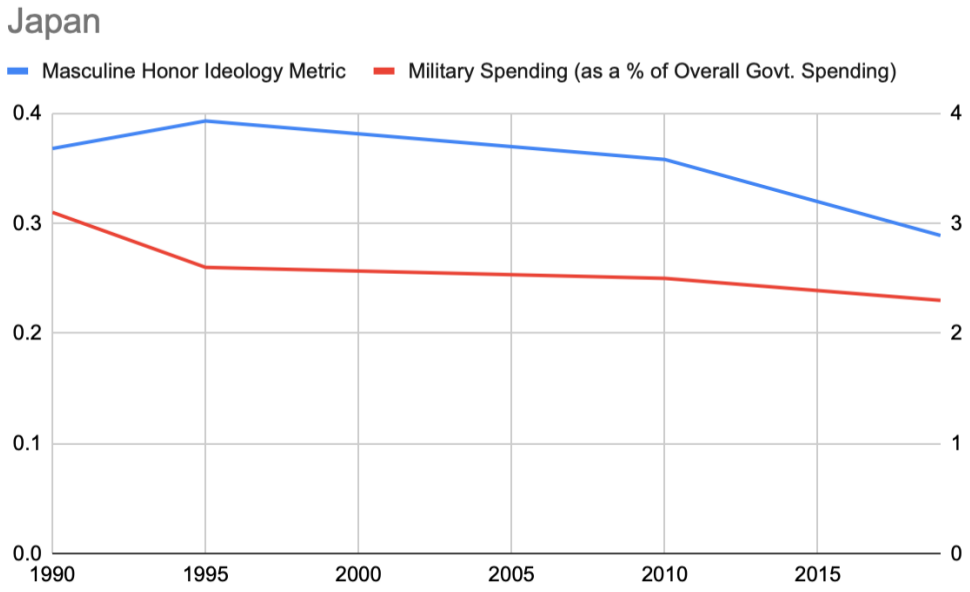
Figure 4: M-HIM & Military Spending in South Korea



The same positive relationship exists in Japan, but only at a moderate strength, with a correlation of 0.579 as seen in Figure 4 below. This relationship is slightly weaker than that established in the other three countries, likely due to the constitutional constraints on the military and defense spending imposed on Japan by the United States after World War II. In Article 9 of its Constitution, Japan renounced offensive war as a means of resolving disputes and has historically limited its own military capabilities to only what is necessary defensively, restricting military spending to 1% of overall GDP.[29] These legal and normative limits on the military result in a correlation coefficient lower than that of the other countries studied, though it should be noted that the correlation is still relatively strong in its own right.

[29] Liang, X., and Tian, N. "The Proposed Hike in Japan's Military Expenditure." *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.*

Figure 5: M-HIM & Military Spending in Japan



Notably, the relationships depicted in Figures 2-5 above are not ones in which both variables trend consistently upwards or consistently downwards and, in doing so, trend together. Rather, their fluctuations both up and down over time are highly correlated together, as illustrated in the data and the two case studies examining the recent uptick in the M-HIM in China and South Korea. As such, this provides strong evidence against alternative hypotheses that would suggest the similarities between the M-HIM and a state's military spending are merely coincidental, rather than related.

Strong positive correlations exist between the M-HIM and the portion of the state's budget spent on the military for each of the four East Asian states studied, thereby proving both parts of my theory correct in this context. In a test of validity, these relationships also held true when attitudes toward conflict were approximated via military spending measured as a portion of the nation's GDP, resulting in similarly strong positive correlations. Based on these results, my

hypothesis that the presence of masculine honor ideologies is strongly correlated with attitudes toward conflict held true.

Conclusion

I initially theorized that Masculine Honor Ideologies would be both (1) present in the East Asian context and (2) positively correlated with attitudes towards conflict. Through the development and calculation of the M-HIM and an analysis of its correlation with attitudes toward conflict over a thirty-year time period, both aspects of my theory have held true. The M-HIMs for China, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea all revealed the presence and influence of masculine honor ideology within these states and, despite a slight decline, the persistence of these beliefs over time, proving the first part of my theory correct. When I compared the M-HIMs for each state to the corresponding military spending for that year as a percentage of overall government spending, I found a strong positive correlation between the presence and strength of masculine honor ideologies and a state's attitude towards conflict across all four nations studied, proving the second part of my theory correct.

Challenges

However, there were some weaknesses in my research based on the limitations of the data available. The World Values Survey, which I used certain items from to calculate the M-HIMs, often did not ask the questions I analyzed consistently, requiring me to pull data from the survey waves at either end of the thirty year time period studied between 1990-1998 and 2010-2020, rather than having more continuous data. Additionally, the format and structure of the data set did not enable me to control for individual factors like respondents' gender and age and national level factors including election years and the gender of leaders.

Strengths

Despite data limitations, the analysis in this study provides a strong foundation in understanding the impact of social and cultural factors on political decision-making, national spending, and attitudes toward conflict. The strength and validity of my results are evidenced by the strong positive correlations identified between the M-HIMs and the thoughtful, nuanced, and carefully chosen measure of approximating attitudes toward conflict via military spending as a percentage of overall government spending. Addressing a distinct gap, my research expanded upon what existing literature on masculinity in East Asia has explored so far, going beyond definitional work to explore the political implications of the social and cultural conceptions of masculinity, honor, and the resulting presence of masculine honor ideology.

Implications

The strong positive relationship established between the presence of masculine honor ideologies and military spending is indicative of the political influence that cultural concepts of gender, strength, and masculinity can hold. The strong correlations identified in this research indicate these are not only traits that individuals seek to possess themselves, but also traits that nations seek to exemplify in order to engender public support and project an image of strength internationally. As illustrated in my research, one major way that a nation emphasizes its traditional strength, masculinity, honor, and ability to protect its citizens from potential threats is through prioritizing its military when allocating funding. As such, countries with more egalitarian, modern, and progressive gender norms are less likely to face social pressure from their citizens to assert their strength via expanding military funding. This may mean that the government is able to allocate more funding toward education, healthcare, infrastructure, or other economic programs.

It is important to note that leaders are still seeking to win support from their citizens, but in nations where masculine honor ideology is less prevalent, this is more likely to occur through social and economic policies that more directly impact citizens' quality of life. In contrast, within nations where masculine honor ideology is more influential, leaders face greater social pressure and expectations to spend larger portions of their budget on reinforcing a national image of strength and masculinity, leaving less for these social and economic programs.

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Li Zubai: Theological Influences and Innovations

Jeff Tang, University of California, Los Angeles

Introduction:

Much of the life of Li Zubai (d. 1665) has faded into historical oblivion, with scholars as early as Fang Hao, writing in the mid-twentieth century, relying mostly on speculation rather than facts.[1] Over 50 years later, the situation remains unchanged due to the lack of historical records such as memorials, letters, and other written documents. Thankfully, four works of Li's survive to the present, of which I offer the first close reading of his two theological tracts: *Tongshan shuo* (On the assimilation of goodness) and *Tianxue chuangai* (A summary of the spread of Heavenly Teachings).[2] I aim to contextualize his ideas as developed in both *Assimilation* and *Summary* to demonstrate a progression of increasing two-way appropriation of Chinese philosophy and religion and Christianity with each another. This process, which Li was already undertaking conservatively in *Assimilation* and which he fully embraces in *Summary*, consisted of synergizing Confucian and Christian ideas into a single worldview, with Christianity embodying the overarching perspective, under which Confucianism is just one manifestation. Li makes a special effort to tailor his theology of the Christian God to a Neo-Confucian understanding of the workings of the universe. In other words, Li's works were trying to convince his audience that Confucian thought, in its most original and truest form, was simply a Chinese version of Christianity. In this assertion, he turned Matteo Ricci's (1552-1610) idea of Christianity as supplementary to Confucianism (*buru* 补儒) on its head , instead arguing that

[1] Wu Fei 吴菲, "Li Zubai yu Tianxue chuangai yanjiu" 李祖白与天学传概研究, (Master's, Jilin University, 2020): 24.

[2] I will henceforth refer to *Tongshan shuo* by my shortened English translation of the title: *Assimilation*; similarly, *Tianxue chuangai* shall henceforth be referred to as: *Summary*.

Confucianism was one of many unique manifestations of Christianity. In the close readings that follow, I reject Wu Liwei and Xiao Qinghe's notion that Li's works were singular and isolated from other Christian-related Chinese publications during the Ming-Qing transition and instead position Li's theology as the cumulation of more than half a century's worth of missionary activities in China by the Jesuits and the ideological fruit of their efforts. Li's theology represents a complete synthesis and embrace of Christian ideas, yet this acceptance also grounds Christianity within Chinese philosophical texts and concepts. Rather than simply accepting the Jesuits' doctrines, he was one amongst a series of Chinese Christians, like Xu Guangqi (1562-1633) before him, who took Western Christianity and made it not just compatible but, more importantly, a necessary and philosophically cogent completion of past Chinese philosophical and religious questions. Li's contribution to this process of indigenization is most salient in the merging of Chinese history with biblical chronology. However, in analyzing both works, Li's analysis of the place of Jesuits and Christianity in Chinese history is also noteworthy and will, I suggest, cement his legacy as a Chinese Christian writer of history and philosophy long after his death.

Past scholarship on Li can roughly be divided into three types. First, scholars both in China and the West have focused on Li's role in the dissemination of Jesuit science during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties.[3] They have principally written about Li as a student of Schall von Bell, the leader of the court Jesuits in Beijing, whose primary job was to secure imperial favor for missions throughout China, usually by providing scientific services for the

[3] See Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China 1550-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 467. Catherine Jami, "Revisiting the Calendar Case (1664-1669): Science, Religion, and Politics in Early Qing Beijing," *Korean Journal of History of Science* 27, no. 2 (2015): 469-471. Ren Dayuan, "The Influence of Tianxue on Chinese Thought in the Seventeeth Century," *Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies* 69, no.1 (2021): 152.

emperor. In these works, Li is only analyzed in terms of his relationship to the much more famous Bell; little is written about his own accomplishments. Li's role in the coauthoring of *Yuanjing shuo* (On Telescopes), as the first Chinese text on the topic is acknowledged and studied, but since its contents are mostly related to astronomy with little connections to theology and history, I will not discuss it below. Second, the scholar Adrian Dudink has briefly discussed the potential influence of Li's work as a writer of origin narratives of Chinese civilization. Li had a unique theory of the chronological development of Chinese history, both of which have been touched upon briefly by the scholars Minghui Hu, Dayuan Ren, and Hans Kühner, who all acknowledge its novelty.[4] Dudink's analysis probes further, maintaining that while Li was surely inspired in his work by the historical chronologies written by the Jesuits in China, his theories can be considered in the larger context of writings on Chinese origin narratives. For example, he has argued that Li's inspirations could have included works from Chinese writers in Manilla, thereby including him as one amongst a larger line of East Asian history and culture authors who labored alongside their European contemporaries to figure out a unifying narrative of world history.[5] Finally, and most frequently discussed, is Li's role in the Calendar Case of the Kangxi court (1665-1666). As many scholars have discussed this in the past, I will merely provide details as it pertains to Li's life and thoughts. I have nothing new to add to this already extensive discussion.[6]

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[4] See Hu Minghui, "Provenance in Contest: Searching for the Origins of Jesuit Astronomy in Early Qing China," *The International History Review* 24, no. 1 (2002): 19. Hans Küher, "The Project of the Modernization of Chinese Historiography," in *Translation and Modernization in East Asia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Lawrence Wang-chi Wong (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2017), 98. Ren Dayuan, "The Influence of Tianxue on Chinese Thought in the Seventeeth Century," 155.

[5] Adrian Dudink, "Biblical Chronology and the Transmission of the Theory of Six 'World Ages' to China: Gezhi aolüe 格致奥略 (Outine of the Mystery [revealed through] natural science before 1723," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 35, no.1 (2012): 48.

[6] See Max Bohnenkamp and Tao Feiya, *Beyond Indigenization:Christianity and Chinese History in a Global Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 22. Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 235. Litian Swen, *Jesuit Mission and Submission: Qing Rulership and the Fate*

Li's writings were deeply influenced by late 16th- and early 17th-century Jesuit tracts written in Chinese. Li's theory of a Western origin of the Chinese people contains traces of both Jesuit and Chinese narratives of the past. Since the Renaissance, Europeans had attempted to reconstruct a historical narrative based on Biblical stories by dating key events in both the Old and New Testaments to better legitimize their historicity. They also tried to fit the histories of other civilizations into this framework so that their narrative might reach beyond Europe and the Mediterranean regions to extend to the whole world.[7] The Jesuits were one of the most vociferous undertakers of this enterprise, and their missionaries in China sought to rework Chinese history within a Christian context.[8] According to the Jesuits, Chinese civilization, like all world cultures, originally came from Judea, which was the Biblical cradle of humankind after the Flood. In 1637, for instance, Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1591-1666) wrote to the Vatican of a former agreement amongst Jesuit missionaries in China discussing how to present to the Chinese the chronology of the Bible.[9] However, the furthest the Jesuits ever went was to suggest that mankind came from Noah's descendants after the Flood and that Chinese historical records agree with this idea. There were never any explicit mentions of Judea, of the connection between Fuxi (the mythical progenitor the Chinese) and Noah, nor of the implication that Chinese civilization was not only not the oldest in the world, but that, in fact, it was foreign in origin.[10]

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of Christianity in China 1644-1735 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 102. Ma Yong 马勇, *Jindai Zhongguo wenhua zhuwenti* 近代中国文化诸问题 (Shanghai: Orient Publishing Center, 2008), 144. Zhang Guogang 张国刚, *Wenming de duihua: zhongxi guanxishi lun* 文明的对话：中西关系史论 (Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press, 2013), 319.

[7] Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship, Volume II Historical Chronology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 137.

[8] Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 142.

[9] Zhu Qianzhi 朱谦之, *Zhongguo zhexue duiyu ouzhou de yingxiang* 中国哲学对于欧洲的影响 (Fuzhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 1985), 164.

[10] Lü Jiangying 吕江英, *Kangxi chunian de lifazhizheng yu ruye chongtu* 康熙初年的历法之争与儒耶冲突 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2015), 11-12.

The reason for the Jesuits' discretion was due to the lengthy legacy of Chinese writing on its own history. From the Han to the Song Dynasty, nearly every major Chinese historian assumed—not without reason—that China was the world's oldest and most advanced civilization. The Jesuits, especially those stationed in Beijing, knew that were they to directly connect the origins of Chinese civilization to the West, they would be challenging a powerful tradition of Chinese dynastic histories, which would likely not endear them to officials and emperors at the Ming and Qing courts.[11]

Matteo Ricci, as the first of the court Jesuits, stressed the importance of presenting Christianity as "buru, or a complimentary idea to Confucianism," for even though he (along with other Jesuits in China) never once doubted the truth and supremacy of their religion over all other cultural philosophies, they also realized that the Chinese had a deep reverence for their own philosophical texts and traditions. Ricci and his followers agreed early on that if they were going to propagate Christianity in China, especially among Chinese courtiers and men of letters, they needed to present Christianity as a concept that would not threaten the existing Confucian orthodoxy, which was regarded as the highest philosophic-cultural standard in the world by most literate Chinese, including among devout Chinese Christians.[12] Li's writings disrupted this carefully constructed religious status quo. To understand the conditions that produced his courage and specific worldview, I turn now to his life.

Li's Biography:

Here, I rely on the scholarship of Fang Hao, Wu Liwei, Xiao Qinghe, and Wu Fei, to paint the larger brushstrokes of Li's life, such as his birthplace, his entry into Beijing, his

[11] Zhu Weizheng and Ruth Hayhoe, *Coming Out of the Middle Ages: Comparative Reflections on China and the West* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 136.
[12] Ronnie Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 145.

discipleship under Schall von Bell, and, of course, his execution during the Calendar Case, as well as the subsequent brief expulsion of Jesuits from the Qing court. The exact date of Li's birth is unknown; historical records, such as Zhao Erxun's *Qingshi gao* (Draft History of the Qing), only begins to address him after his induction into the Astronomy Bureau established by Schall von Bell, the leading Jesuit in China after Matteo Ricci. Nevertheless, there is speculation regarding his birthplace. Fang Hao theorizes that Li was born in Beijing, possibly the son of an official at the imperial court. Fang notes that throughout his lifetime, he was most likely a close associate of several court Jesuits, all of whom lived in Beijing, such as Giulio Aleni, Ludovico Buglio, Giacomo Rho, and, of course, his teacher, Schall von Bell.[13] Schall von Bell held immense influence within Beijing, not just as the Head of the Astronomical Bureau, of which he alone determined membership, but also as the mathematics and astronomy tutor of the young Kangxi Emperor, who was recorded many times to have addressed him as *laoshi* (teacher).[14] According to Fang, Li first appears in the historical records when he aided in the transcription and translation of Schall von Bell's treatise, *On Telescopes*. To be associated so closely with Schall von Bell, as his student and co-author, Fang argues that Li must have been born in Beijing, as Schall von Bell himself arrived in China through Macau, but then immediately made his way to Beijing. Thus, Li could not have become acquainted with his Jesuit teacher elsewhere in China.[15] The historians Wu Liwei and Xiao Qinghe disagree, however, instead opining that Li

[13] Fang Hao 方豪, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao shi renwu zhuan* 中国天主教史人物转 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1988), 107.
[14] Arthur Hummel Sr. and Pamela Crossley, *Eminent Chinese of the Qing Period* (Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2017), 743.
[15] Fang Hao, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao shi renwu zhuan*, 108.

must have been born somewhere in Jiangnan (the region just south of the Yangzi River), possibly Hangzhou.[16]

Their reasonings are threefold. First, they criticize Fang's assumption that just because Li was heavily associated with Beijing Jesuits such as Schall von Bell, this alone is no evidence for his origin as a Beijinger. Second, Xiao, draws from Li's recently discovered poem, "Da dao xing" (On the workings of the great way), which Li dedicated to his Jesuit friend Giacomo Rho, and in which he referenced a small town "within the greater Jiangnan region" as his place of birth.[17] Furthermore, contrary to Fang's assessment, it appears that before arriving in Beijing in the early 1620s, both Schall von Bell and Buglio were known to have spent time in the southern regions of China, the former in Nanjing and the latter in Fujian. As a result, the more likely scenario, especially given Li's own mention of his place of birth, is that he became acquainted with the court Jesuits before he arrived in Beijing. By the time he was working for the imperial court, Schall von Bell must have known Li, as he personally invited Li to work in the Calendar Bureau.[18] As to how Li came to know the Jesuits, his poem again supplies the necessary information. Within the first lines, Li describes himself as someone "born into the embrace and knowledge of Tianzhu," Tianzhu being the most commonly used Chinese term for the Christian God. As a result, we can safely surmise that Li was probably born into a Christian household, making him among the earliest generations of Chinese Christians who were raised in, instead of

[16] See Wu Liwei 吴莉苇, "Mingqing shiren dui shengjing niandai tixi de jieshuo yu lijie: yi Li Zubai Tianxue chuangai wei ge an" 明清士人对圣经年代体系的解说与理解: 与李祖白天学传概为个案, *Zhonghua Wenhua luncong* 中华文化论丛, no. 1 (2009): 294. See Xiao Qinghe 肖清和, "The Great Dao is for the Universal World since the Original Time: New Research on Confucian Christian Li Zubai in Early Qing" 大道由来天下公, *Sino-Christian Studies* 23, (2017): 142.
[17] Xiao Qinghe, "The Great Dao," 144.
[18] Xiao Qinghe, "The Imperial Astronomical Bureau and the Official Catholic Community during the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties," *International Journal of Sino-Western Studies* 22, (2022): 47.

converted to, the faith.[19] The poem offers no additional details of his personal life; however, based on these tidbits we can further infer that, perhaps, as someone born into a Christian household, Li may have known at least some Jesuits working in the Jiangnan region since he was a child. These Jesuits, who used the cities of Jiangnan as waystations to rest and learn Mandarin before journeying north toward Beijing, could have then introduced him to the Jesuits at the court.

Of Li's formative years, we cannot speculate. However, once Li received a post in the Royal Astronomical Bureau in Beijing, more information about him becomes available. The historian Chang Pingying dates Li's entry into the Bureau to around 1624. In 1626, his *Yuanjing shuo*, co-authored with Schall von Bell, was published. Over the next twenty years, Li would work closely with Schall von Bell and the other court Jesuits through the Ming-Qing transition by editing, proofreading, and prefacing their scientific and religious works. Then, in 1646, he was promoted to head of the Summer Office by Schall von Bell. Historians are not in agreement on the functions and significance of this office.[20] During the Ming-Qing transition, the Jesuits suffered immense turbulence, and especially financial hardships, throughout China. However, in Beijing, under the leadership of Schall von Bell, they quickly rendered their services to the Shunzhi Emperor of the newly founded Qing dynasty.[21] Due to their expertise in Western science, the Shunzhi Emperor not only allowed the Jesuits to retain their formal posts in the imperial court, but also allocated to them more power and influence. For example, in 1645, he combined Schall von Bell's Astronomical Bureau with the Muslim Astronomical Office,

[19] Chang Pingying, "Chinese Hereditary Mathematician Families of the Astronomical Bureau, 1620-1850," (PhD, City University of New York, 2015): 60.
[20] Xiao Qinghe, "The Great Dao," 147.
[21] From the arrival of the Jesuits in 1579 until the death of Ricci in 1610, Chinese Christians in the mainland were all converts; but once these Chinese Christians started having families, Christianity became a household religion. See Catherine Jami, "Revisiting the Calendar Case," 463.

appointing Schall von Bell the overseer of both. With the Shunzhi Emperor's blessing, Schall von Bell ousted all the Muslims in this new Astronomical Bureau and replaced them with Chinese Christians loyal to the Jesuits. It is likely that Li's ascension within the Bureau was made possible because of Schall von Bell's reorganization of the imperial court's astronomy sector.[22] Having secured the imperial patronage of the Shunzhi Emperor, and later the Kangxi Emperor, the Jesuits and their followers at court grew bolder; accordingly, Li became more outspoken as can be seen from his *Tianxue chuangai*.

In both *Assimilation* and *Summary* Li disseminates Christian ideology. His vocal support for Christianity, specifically his eventual idea that it was the parent ideology of Confucian thought drew immense ire from other members of imperial court.[23] In 1663, Yang Guangxian, a Chinese official of Muslim faith and former astronomer at the Bureau, submitted a series of memorials accusing Schall von Bell of "sponsoring the misappropriation and distortion of Confucian doctrines and promoting heterodoxic ideas."[24] In the early months of 1665, a close consort of the Shunzhi emperor suddenly passed away, which Yang further blamed on the Jesuits. He claimed they miscalculated the burial date of Prince Rong, the Shunzhi emperor's son, who had died in 1658, and that this error had caused the consort's death.[25] In response to Yang's accusations, Li wrote *Summary* to defend both Schall von Bell and the continued presence of the Jesuits in China. What followed was the now well-studied Calendar Case of 1665-1666. As it pertains to Li, months after his publication of the *Summary*, Yang published

[22] Toby E. Huff, *Intellectual Curiosity and the Scientific Revolution: A Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 103.
[23] Wu Fei, "Li Zubai yu Tianxue chuangai yanjiu," 49.
[24] Catherine Jami, "Revisiting the Calendar Case," 470.
[25] Yang Guangxian 杨光先, *Bixie Lun* 辟邪论, in *Fandigang tushuguancang mingqing zhongxi wenhua jiaoliu shi wenxian congkan* 梵蒂冈图书馆藏明清中西文化交流史文献丛刊, ed. Federico Massini, Ren Dayuan, and Ambrogio M. Piazzoni (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2014), 1278.

another tract, *Budeyi* (J'accuse), in which he denounces Li for his "provocations against the emperor" and his "arrogant and traitorous idea of linking China's past with the history of a foreign nation." He accused Li of "supplanting Confucianism with the Jesuits' heterodoxic ideas," intimating that while previously Li was only concealing Western doctrine in Confucianism, now he was actively "promoting falsehoods and denigrating the teachings of Confucius, which forms the core of all things under Heaven (Tianxia)." In conclusion, he asked for Li's execution as punishment and as an example to all who misinterpret the "will of Heaven (tian)."[26]

Here, historians' assessment diverges, with some such as Fang Hao and Wu Liwei attributing the subsequent consequences of the Calendar Case to the "uproar" Li's ideas caused at court.[27] Others, such as Catherine Jami and Paul Rule, consider Li irrelevant in the case, and point to court politics as the main factor in the persecution of the Jesuits.[28] Xiao Qinghe takes a middle ground, arguing instead that Li's ideas may have functioned in bringing about his own demise, but his influence was not great enough as to spill into the major decisions of the Kangxi Emperor.[29] Whatever the case, in 1665 Kangxi ultimately approved of the expulsion of all Jesuits from China proper to Macau, and sentenced Li, along with four other Chinese Christians, all of whom working in the Bureau, to death. Schall von Bell was eventually pardoned and allowed to live out the remainder of his years under house arrest in Beijing, while the other Jesuits weathered out the storm in Guangzhou. Less than a year later, the Jesuits were pardoned, and

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[26] Yang Guangxian 杨光先, *Budeyi* 不得已, in *Fandigang tushuguancang mingqing zhongxi wenhua jiaoliu shi wenxian congkan* 梵蒂冈图书馆藏明清中西文化交流史文献丛刊, ed. Federico Massini, Ren Dayuan, and Ambrogio M. Piazzoni (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2014), 1302.
[27] Yang Guangxian, *Budeyi*, 1303.
[28] See Fang Hao, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao shi renwu zhuan*, 113. Wu Liwei, "Mingqing shiren dui shengjing niandai tixi de jieshuo yu lijie," 298.
[29] Xiao Qinghe, "The Great Dao," 149.

though persecution by local officials lingered throughout China, by 1670, the court Jesuits had regained the confidence of the Kangxi Emperor, again thanks to their scientific expertise; Christians throughout China were allowed to practice and proselytize again.[30]

[30] Catherine Jami, "Revisiting the Calendar Case," 474.

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Between History and Fantasy: The Figure of Abe no Seimei in the Literary Realm of Yumemakura Baku's "Onmyōji"

Ichiro Ng, Columbia University

Gracefully gliding across the ice, a tall, slender figure with a brilliant white garment transforms the ice rink into a divine realm. With a cool gaze and a calm composure, he defies gravity, twirling and leaping effortlessly. In the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics, Hanyu Yuzuru, a Japanese ice skater hailed as the "ice prince," won a gold medal with a program titled "SEIMEI," which alludes to the historical figure of Abe no Seimei, the preeminent Onmyōji practitioner of 10th century Japan (figure 1). Hanyu's adaptation of this figure is but one part of the larger "Seimei boom," a cultural phenomenon in contemporary Japan that peaked in the 1990s and 2000s. Onmyōji (陰陽師), who are practitioners of Onmyōdo (陰陽道) or the "way of yin and yang," a Japanese belief system involving divinations, purification rituals, communicating with supernatural spirits, and astrology, was suddenly the latest craze in popular culture. Although banned as superstition in the Meiji period, images of Abe no Seimei and his supernatural powers rapidly permeated contemporary culture across novels, movies, comic books, and video games, compelling people to flock to the Seimei Shrine in Kyoto (figure 2). Enigmatically, a practitioner of an ancient belief system that would readily be dismissed as occult in today's scientific world became an alluring figure of contemporary culture.

Figure 1: Hanyu Yuzuru in the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics.[1]

Figure 2: Okano Reiko's comic book adaptation of Yumemakura's Onmyōji.[2]

[1] Yoshiki Kogaito, "Hanyu Yuzuru 299.42 ten. 722 Nichi Buri 'SEIMEI' Shinishō de Netsuen," Sponichi Annex, 2020, https://www.sponichi.co.jp/sports/news/2020/02/09/kiji/20200209s00079000273000c.html.
[2] Reiko Okano. *Gashū Onmyōji*, (Tokyo: Hakusensha, 2002).

However, a 10th-century portrait of Abe no Seimei, a rather stout figure with a bushy mustache, resembles nothing of any of the contemporary images, let alone the skater Hanyu Yuzuru (figure 3). The current image associated with Seimei, and the root of the "Seimei boom" itself, is primarily credited to Yumemakura Baku's book series titled *Onmyōji*, of which its first short story "Onmyōji" was published in a 1986 issue of a popular literature magazine *All Yomimono*. In order to understand the allure of the current Seimei figure, Yumemakura's work must be examined. The short stories of this book series follow a basic structure of the pair of Abe no Seimei and Minamoto no Hiromasa, a Heian nobleman, a relationship that resembles that of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, solving detective cases involving Oni (鬼), or demons with curses. In Yumemakura's "Onmyōji," Seimei is a beautiful young man (美男子 *bidanshi*) with a "tall stature, fair skin, and a cool gaze" (Yumemakura 1991, 21). Mysterious and ambiguous in nature, he is "like a cloud in the night sky" that moves without notice, something "that cannot be grasped" (9). With these depictions, Yumemakura partakes in a representation and reinvention of the historical figure of Abe no Seimei.

Figure 3. Abe no Seimei's historical portrait. [3]

[3] Asahi Shimbun, "2022 nen aki no kyōto hikōkai bunkazai tokubetsu kōkai midokoro shōkai densetsu no abenoseimei to urashima monogatari," Asahi Shimbun, (2022), https://www.asahi.com/relife/article/14699149.

Yumemakura's narrative technique of going back and forth between history and fantasy functions to render Abe no Seimei as a liminal figure between such two realms. Even when Yumemakura mentions that Abe no Seimei was born in the 21st year of the Engi era, he states that such dates are "not directly relevant to the story" and if one is to preserve the "allure of the story," it may be better to "leave such details unclear."[4] His reasoning is inextricably linked with the persona of Seimei himself, as Yumemakura notes that "it is this approach" that is "perhaps the most fitting" for Seimei.[5] In other words, in order to depict Seimei, who is himself a mysterious figure, one's narrative technique also ought to leave room for ambiguity, a pocket that then allows Yumemakura to insert his imagination about Seimei. It should be noted that by bringing in historical details and then claiming that they are irrelevant, Yumemakura is not eradicating history in his narrative, because such would mean that he would not mention historical facts at all to begin with. Instead, by bringing up and subsequently rejecting such historical details, Yumemakura places Abe no Seimei into a liminal state where he is simultaneously detached from and connected with history.

Under this basic framework of oscillating between history and fantasy, Yumemakura then embarks on adapting the supernatural narratives about Seimei from the *Konjaku Monogatarishū* (今昔物語集), a 12th-century collection of popular tales. However, his treatment of this text is rather vague and does not provide much information to the reader. Yumemakura merely refers to these tales as the Konjaku Monogatari and briefly mentions that there are "some interesting stories about Abe no Seimei in this text."[6] Especially as a work of popular literature, there is no expectation that readers will know that the Konjaku is a collection of Buddhist tales and popular

[4] Baku Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, (Tokyo: Bunshun Bunko, 1991): 9.
[5] Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, 10.
[6] Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, 11.

tales, many of them having a supernatural quality similar to those of the Seimei stories. Although it is obvious from the actual content of the tales that they are fantastical, it is important to note that Yumemakura does not literally state this.

Against this backdrop, Yumemakura swaps historical facts with literal details of the tales in his established dichotomy between history and fantasy, which deceptively renders such fantastical tales as historical within this dynamic. When he adapts a tale from the Konjaku about a priest who asks to become a disciple of Seimei, Yumemakura occasionally quotes the text written in classical Japanese, such as when revealing Seimei's thoughts when he receives this request from the priest: "This priest is well versed in the way of the Onmyō, and he came here to test me."[7] Seeing that the priest has two spirit assistants called the shikijin (識神) that Onmyōji employs, Seimei decides to play a trick on the priest and outwit him. After asking him in a polite language to come back at a later date, Seimei uses a spell to hide the two shikijin when the priest has started to head home. When the priest comes back to Seimei and begs for mercy, Seimei tells him in a vulgar manner, "you can test me all you want, but you can't trick me that easily." Yumemakura then adds his own imagination, speculative details that fill in the gaps of the original tale, like how "his lips must have been smiling, perhaps not exactly in a vulgar way, but at the very least not elegant."[8] In such scenes, Yumemakura makes an obvious distinction between the authentic parts of the original tale, which are marked by declarative statements if not direct quotes, and his own imaginations, which are characterized by speculative words such as "maybe" or "could." In other words, Yumemakura maintains this dynamic of dichotomies, though he has swapped historical facts with a premodern popular tale.

[7] Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, 15.
[8] Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, 17.

However, Yumemakura's approach is not merely an oscillation between the original content of the tale and his own imagination. As he reins in and restricts his imagination, Yumemakura creates the impression that there is some significance in preserving the originality of the tale as if they are factual and he does not want to deviate from them. When Yumemakura includes the detail that Seimei says, "I made the two shikijin buy some wine and appetizers since you've entertained me so much," and when Seimei eventually gives the two shikijin back to the priest, he interrupts himself, saying, "it would have been funny if Seimei had said this, but such is not written in the Konjaku."[9] In other words, Yumemakura reins in his imagination that deviates from the original story at times, as if he is somewhat invested in maintaining the tale's authenticity. Coupled with the direct quoting of the original text, Yumemakura deceptively creates the impression that the content of the tale is the opposite of his own imagination of fantasy by means of forming a dichotomy between the two. As there is a continued oscillation, first between history and fantasy, and now fantasy-as-history and fantasy, Yumemakura creates the false impression that the Konjaku tale is something historical. In this sense, Yumemakura is not merely fantasizing about the historical figure of Seimei. His narrative technique is bidirectional in the sense that he renders that fantastical Abe no Seimei of the Konjaku as history.

By rendering the Konjaku as fantasy-as-history, Yumemakura immerses the contemporary reader in the supernatural worldview of the Heian period that the Konjaku embodies in his literary realm. Yumemakura characterizes the Heian period in the following manner: "a time when darkness remained just as darkness, where a certain portion of people undeniably believed in the existence of mysterious things. Demons and mononoke did not simply

[9] Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, 18.

dwell in the distant forests and mountains. Within the common darkness of the city, they lived together with humans, at times under the same roof, hiding their presence."[10] On a conceptual level, Yumemakura delineates the presence of demons as something that is not separate from humans but rather immersed in human society. Such a description invites the reader to imagine demons not as separate entities but as something that is a part of their own world. More importantly, such is the setting that Yumemakura assigns for the Konjaku, and thus, the Konjaku also reciprocally represents this Heian worldview for Yumemakura. Yumemakura subtly treats the Konjaku text as if it were historical in contrast to his own imagination of mere fantasy, which also renders this Heian worldview of a belief in supernatural beings as something that contrasts such fantasy.

More broadly, this liminality, oscillating between historical facts, fantasy, and fantasy-as-history, creates a sense of mystique in Abe no Seimei. While Yumemakura does not attempt to define what an Onmyōji is in exact words to maintain its mysterious quality, he does define it in the negative sense. As he rejects terms such as "fortune-teller" (**占い師** *uranaishi*), a "sorcerer" (**幻術師** *genjutsushi*), or a "worship vendor" (**拝み屋** *ogamiya*), all contemporary terms that emphasize the fraudulent image of diviners, Yumemakura carefully distinguishes Onmyōdo from mere fantasy, sorcery, or escapism.[11] Thus, it is imperative for Yumemakura that his character of Seimei is still based on history, or the Onmyōji would be reduced to Yumemakura's mere daydreaming. At the same time, strictly depicting Abe no Seimei according to historical facts would be problematic. Abe no Seimei of historicity would invite readers to view him and his status at the time as but a reflection of a primitive worldview that foolishly believed in

[10] Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, 10.
[11] Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, 10.

supernatural powers. In other words, a reader from the contemporary perspective would detach themself from this. However, simply bringing in the Konjaku in its original form, which would be a mere product of this supernatural worldview at the time, would also lead to the same distanced perspective by the reader. Thus, his oscillating technique, which gives a mysterious quality to Seimei and the Onmyōji as a whole, pulls the reader away from the two extremes of historicity and fantasy. By finding a middle ground, Yumemakura not only gives an allure to Seimei but also allows the reader to be immersed in the fantasy-as-history Heian worldview of the Konjaku.

Although Yumemakura creates a new Abe no Seimei figure out of his imagination, it is not simply created out of thin air. Rather, it is a new persona that is imposed onto the preexisting Seimei figure of the Konjaku literary realm. In Yumemakura's literary realm, Seimei is not a mere one-dimensional figure of elegance in that there is both a refinement and vulgarity to him: "As an Onmyōji, he needed to be in the know of the dark sides of society" and "his lips with a graceful smile can sometimes hold a vulgar smirk at other occasions."[12] Yumemakura ascribes this trait to Seimei based on the scene of him tricking the priest when Seimei switches from polite to vulgar language, which leads Yumemakura to imagine Seimei's vulgar smile. Not only does Yumemakura gesture toward the fact that this switch in language is an original feature of the Konjaku, as he does not use speculative language when narrating this section of Seimei's dialogue, but even in the original Konjaku text, it can be confirmed that Seimei first politely says "please go back home for today, choose an auspicious day and come back to me then. I am happy to offer you my teachings," then later says "you can test other people all you want, but you should not do the same to Seimei."[13] Here, the first response is filled with honorific verbs

[12] Yumemakura, *Onmyoji*, 21-22.
[13] Mabuchi et al. 1976, 285

such as tamafu (給ふ) and humble verbs like tatematsuru (たてまつる). However, Seimei's second response has no such respectful language, and this switch indicates Konjaku's characterization of Seimei as a fictional narrative. While this subtle change here has but a small effect on Seimei's character, perhaps he is more animated when he reveals to the priest that he had known that he was being tested; it certainly does render Seimei as a character with more depth. The impolite language displays two sides of Seimei, and in this sense, he is more humanlike. In other words, Yumemakura's Seimei figure, who simultaneously possesses elegance and vulgarity, is based on this switch in language in the Konjaku. The Seimei figure of Yumemakura is grafted onto the Seimei figure of the Konjaku.

Not only does the Konjaku depict a specific persona of Seimei, but a comparison with *Uji Shui Monogatari* (宇治拾遺物語), which is another compilation of popular tales that feature the same exact Seimei tale, reveals that the Konjaku itself participates in the act of reinventing and fantasizing a new Seimei figure out of source material. The Uji Shui, which is believed to have been compiled around the 13th century, shares many stories with the Konjaku, one of which is this story about the priest who tests Seimei. Comparing the two versions of the tale, one would find that the content and language are virtually identical. The plot of the priest visiting Seimei, then Seimei playing a trick on him, is the same in both renditions, and much of the language is identical. As both collections are mostly unoriginal compilations of stories from older sources, it is plausible that the two versions come from the same source. However, whereas the Konjaku switches from respectful to vulgar language in the aforementioned section, the Uji Shui version retains the honorific verbs. While the Uji Shui is believed to have been compiled a century after the Konjaku, when considering that they are likely drawing from the same sources, it is plausible that the Uji Shui version is an older version of the tale and that the Konjaku version edited this

part of the story. Konjaku partakes in the creation of a fictional Seimei figure by editing the content of the original story. In the same way that Yumemakura grafts a new Seimei figure on top of the one of Konjaku, the Konjaku itself may be creating its own Seimei figure based on an older narrative that the Uji Shui records.

In this sense, Yumemakura's fantasization and creation of a new Seimei figure within his literary realm is not novel. Rather, Yumemakura is but one addition to the literary tradition of fantasizing about historical figures in Japan. Stories of local history in the genre of setsuwa (説話), or orally transmitted historical narratives that have been recorded on paper, which encompasses both the Konjaku and Uji Shui, were especially inclined to this creative characterization of a historical figure, as editors or transmitters were freely able to revise these historical narratives if they had their own different interpretation or had heard a variation. Texts like *The Tale of Heike*, which uses many setsuwa stories as its material, expanded upon the preexisting tales and reinvented historical figures.[14]

Nonetheless, while Yumemakura's *Onmyōji* and the Konjaku may both be partaking in this tradition of fantasizing historical figures, the difference in notions of authorship between 10th century and contemporary Japan means that their methods of reinvention are also different. Especially regarding popular genres such as the Monogatari (物語) (which includes the Konjaku), premodern Japan had very different notions of authorship. There was no modern sense of an originator or inventor of a specific text, and for compilations such as the Konjaku, the "author" would not be the owner of the stories but would rather play multiple roles of a collector, writer, or editor. The process of originating and editing a story was anonymous and diffuse.[15]

[14] Haruo Shirane, "Genre, Media (Visual and Material Culture), and Orality," Fall 2023 Graduate Seminar in Japanese Literature, (lecture, New York, NY, September 2023).
[15] Shirane, "Genre, Media (Visual and Material Culture), and Orality."

Thus, the "author" of the Konjaku does not cite the source of the Seimei story, which would have been pointless anyway as the source itself was most likely anonymously transmitted and edited along the way, nor does he indicate the edits that he may have made to the story. The "author" of the Konjaku would not have had a strong sense of the source being "someone else's work," but at the same time, this would have conversely meant that he himself did not feel much ownership in his additions to the story. It is only natural that such a textual landscape of anonymous collecting and editing would have been conducive to fantasizing about historical figures. Coupled with the fact that the Seimei story was a form of local history that was orally circulated and then recorded in a compilation of similar tales, this diffused sense of authorship allowed for a fluid interpretation and depiction of historical figures.

In contrast, Yumemakura makes a clear distinction between the original content of the Konjaku and his own imagination, which reflects a modern notion of authorship as an originator of texts. If anything, this very separation allows Yumemakura to use his oscillating narrative technique between history and fantasy. As the author and narrator, Yumemakura has a dominant voice that pervades the story, such as when he directly states his decision to leave the historical details of Seimei ambiguous. Yumemakura mentions the Konjaku, directly quotes sections of the original text, and sets a dichotomy between it and his own imagination. It is due to Yumemakura's contemporary notion of an author as the originator that allows him to separate the Konjaku as being "someone else's work" and his imagination as "his own work," which then allows him to oscillate between the two. The Seimei figure of Yumemakura's literary realm, one with a peculiar mystique, is only made possible by his modern understanding of authorship and textual ownership. While Yumemakura's act itself of grafting a Seimei figure onto a preexisting one is part of a longstanding Japanese tradition of the reinvention of historical figures, inasmuch

as his narrative technique that forms this Seimei figure requires a modern notion of authorship, the new Seimei figure of Yumemakura is novel and unique to his time and circumstances.

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Part II: East Asia Reigning Over

From Student to Sovereign: How the Manchu Court Cooperated and Ruled the Mongol Societies and Their Territories in Early Qing Dynasty

Jiaheng Lyu, University of Texas at Austin

Introduction

Mongolian society had different roles in their interactions with the Manchus, starting from the late 16th century when the Jianzhou Jurchens rose in Liaodong, up until the peak of the Qing dynasty's territorial expansion under Emperor Qianlong's rule. The Mongols served as both family members of and teachers to the Manchus, acted as allies and enemies, and were friends and subjects at different times. The Manchu-Mongol relationship which spanned almost three hundred years was shaped by intermarriage, title grants, commercial exchanges, the patronage of Lamaism, and war. Understanding the relationship between the Manchus and Mongols is crucial to studying the political structure and territorial formation of the late Chinese Empire.

Historians have systematically studied the complex relationship between the Manchus and Mongols throughout the early Qing dynasty. Many historians have noticed that the relationship between these two nations was not as close as claimed by Emperor Shunzhi, who described it as "long belonged to one family." Peter C. Perdue points out that "the Manchus aimed at intimate linkages with their fellow Central Eurasians—linkages that did not, however, obliterate boundaries between the two peoples."[1] Edward Rhoads compares the social standing of Banner Mongols to Banner Manchus. He asserts that the Manchu banners were socially superior to the Mongol banners, and the social position among the Mongol Eight Banners varied

[1] Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2005), 125.

depending on whether they had submitted to the Qing before the invasion of China proper.[2] Huaiyin Li analyzes the geopolitics of Mongolia's frontier in relation to the Qing court: "At any rate, all of these frontiers (Outer Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia) served one purpose for the Qing, that is, providing geopolitical security for the dynasty."[3] Compared to the interior, particularly China proper and its capital, the role of the Mongolian frontier was instrumental yet indeed peripheral."[4]

This article will explore the Manchu rulers' motives and strategies in incorporating the Mongols' societies and governments, clarifying how the Manchu Empire absorbed almost all Mongol khanates and tribes into its camp.

Banner System, Intermarriage, and National Script

Before Nurhaci united all Jurchen tribes in Manchuria in 1588, the development of the Jurchen society generally lagged behind their neighboring Mongols in military capability, governmental organization, and social development. From the late 16th century to the early 17th century, Manchuria was not only the motherland of Jurchens, but also shared with many other nations, including many Eastern Mongolian tribes that occupied half of the region. The Mongol tribes' presence offered an opportunity for the loosely organized Jurchen court and army to thrive, yet simultaneously posed a threat to the stability of the Jurchen community.

Following the Jurchen Civil War in the 1590s, the Khorchin tribe and several other Mongolian tribes near Manchuria gradually established connections with Nurhaci.[5] Following a series of successes in war and politics, the Jurchen rulers needed a more efficient social organization to develop their state. In 1601, Nurhaci grouped his soldiers into units called *niru*

[2] Edward Rhoads, *Manchus & Han* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 23.
[3] Huaiyin Li, *The Making of the Modern Chinese State* (London: Routledge, 2020), 35.
[4] Li, *Modern Chinese State*, 35
[5] Yi Dai, *A Concise History of the Qing Dynasty* (Singapore: Silkroad Press, 2011), 42.

(meaning 'arrow' in Manchu), each consisting of three hundred men. The *niru* was multifunctional, used for both hunting and combat, much like the Mongolian *qosighun* during the Yuan dynasty. These units were eventually formed into four distinct banners, identified by their flag colors, setting the foundation for the Eight Banner system.[6] The Banner system shared features with Mongolia, including the use of sacred flags, the appointment of hereditary commanders, and the merger of military and civil governance. [7] Jurchen commanders proved to be more efficient in managing their armies by incorporating Manchu traditions with Jurchen and Mongol military organization.

The Jurchen social system was highly effective at integrating other ethnic groups into their military and society. To strengthen political relations, the Manchu royal family frequently arranged marriages with Mongol nobles. Starting in 1594, Nurhaci fostered unity between his tribe and the Mongols through political marriages, including the exchange of concubines with the Khalkha Mongols. These intermarriages reinforced Nurhaci's connections with Eastern Mongol tribes.[8] In 1607, the Mongols elevated Nurhaci's status by awarding him the title "*Sure Kundulen Han*," recognizing him as a significant leader in Central Eurasia.[9] This title, combined with political marriages, cemented Nurhaci's alliance with the Eastern and Khalkha Mongol regimes. The Khorchin tribe formed more marriage alliances in number with the Jurchens than any other Eastern Mongolian group. These widespread marriages between the Khorchins and Jurchens resulted in the Khorchins' integration into the Jurchen society following their involvement in conflicts with Chahar in 1612 and 1615.[10] This period marks a significant shift in the Manchu-

[6] Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The Fall of Imperial China* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 76.
[7] Perdue, *China Marches West*, 123.
[8] John King Fairbank and David Farquhar, *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 198-199.
[9] Fairbank and Farquhar, *The Chinese World Order*, 198-199.
[10] Jiaji Du, *Qingchao manmeng lianyin yanjiu* [Studies on Manchu-Mongolian Marriage in Qing Dynasty] (Beijing: People's Press, 2003), 6-7.

Mongol relationship, as the Jurchens shifted from relying on Mongolian support and culture to having the Mongols cooperate with Nurhaci in Manchuria and beyond.

This close relationship between Jurchen and Mongol rule not only facilitated military alliances but also influenced cultural exchanges. The Jurchen court aimed to develop a unique national identity through linguistic and cultural innovations based on Mongolian culture to enhance its governance capabilities. Following their unification of Manchuria, the Jurchen elite wished to develop a new national script, believing it would boost administrative efficiency and forge a distinct Manchu identity.[11] Officials of the Nurhaci era adopted the Mongolian script for written communication. It was common for Jianzhou Jurchen officials to be proficient in the Mongolian language. During Nurhaci's reign, numerous literate advisors served as a bridge for the exchange of information between the Manchu and Mongol states. In Peter Perdue's words, such people who grew up with Mongolian connections and also understood the culture and language of Chinese, Manchus, and Mongolian were "transfrontiers-men."[12] Nurhaci ordered two transfrontiers-men Erdeni Baksi and G'ag'ai to develop a new alphabetic script for the national language in 1599, taking those used for the Mongolian as their basis.[13] The new national script was similar to Mongolian, but could accurately represent the pronunciation of Manchu words.[14] The emergence of the new script allowed the Jurchen people to write in their own language. As the Jurchen (Manchu) regime established the Eight Banners system, intermarried with Mongolian aristocratic women, and developed Manchu script, they enhanced its governance capabilities and overall national strength by adopting Mongolian social culture and institutions.

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[11] Perdue, *China Marches West*, 123.
[12] Perdue, *China Marches West*, 122.
[13] Thomas Taylor Meadows, *Translations from the Manchu: With the Original Texts, Prefaced by an Essay on the Language* (New York: Nabu Press, 2010), 9.
[14] Meadows, *Translations from the Manchu*, 9.

This improvement empowered the Manchu regime to expand its control over more Mongolian tribes.

The Submission of Eastern Mongolia

Mongolia remained divided after Nurhaci's unification of the scattered Jurchen tribes. During the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century, Eastern Mongolia had a nominal monarch, Ligdan Khan of the Chahar, but each tribe had relatively equal status and autonomy. During the war between Nurhaci and the Ming Empire, the Chahar government stood against the Jurchens due to their commercial interests with the Ming. In Eastern Mongolia, tribal leaders had contradicting opinions on the conflict between the Ming and the Jurchens. Some want to work with the Ming, hoping for their support to gain control over the south of the Gobi Desert and parts of Liaodong. However, most wished to escape Ligdan Khan's rule and align with the Jurchen authority because of dissatisfaction with Ligdan Khan's leadership and his betrayal of the Buddhist Gelug sect.[15] The Khorchin tribe, in particular, favored closer ties with the Jurchens, largely because of their intermarriages with the Jurchen rulers and strong connections between their ruling classes.

After the alliance between Later Jin, a kingdom established by the Jurchens, and Khorchin, more and more Mongolian tribes were forced to flee from the Chahar because of the military threat posed by Ligdan Khan. Those tribes left the control of Chahar, and most of them later submitted to Later Jin.[16] The Qing court gave the majority of thirty-seven Mongol tribal leaders official titles before 1644, as well as Manchu wives from the royal family.[17] However, not all Mongol tribes had the same political standings. The political standings of each tribe were

[15] Dai, *A Concise History of the Qing Dynasty*, 90.
[16] Dai, *A Concise History of the Qing Dynasty*, 90.
[17] Perdue, *China Marches West*, 66-67.

related to their participation in the war against Chahar, as well as their loyalty to the Jurchen rules and population size. Imperial titles and the position in the Banner System were granted to submitted Mongol leaders.[18]

The Khorchin was highly esteemed by the Manchu royal family, making it one of the most prestigious Mongolian tribes. Their value stemmed not only from being the first Mongolian tribe to ally with the Manchu empire but also from their active collaboration with Hong Taiji, the first emperor of the Qing Dynasty, in conflicts against the Chahar and the Ming.[19] As a reward for their loyalty and contributions, three of the four hereditary Mongol princes of *jasagh*[20] in the early Qing dynasty were from the Khorchin.[21] This historical alliance led to numerous intermarriages between the Khorchin and the Qing royal family, more than any other Mongolian tribe before the Qing's expansion into China Proper.[22] One of Hong Taiji's Mongolian wives (*fujin*), Empress Borjijit Bumbutai, was from Khorchin. She gave birth to the first Qing emperor with Mongolian descendants, namely the emperor Shunzhi. These connections greatly enhanced the Khorchins' political importance in the early Qing period.

The Eastern Dorbet's situation illustrates the disparities in status among Eastern Mongolian tribes. Although Dorbet chose to ally with the Later Jin simultaneously with the Khorchin, their standing in the Manchu Empire differed significantly. The Dorbet had only one banner in the northeast, in contrast to the Khorchin's six, highlighting a smaller scale in terms of size and population. [23] Unlike the more favored Khorchin, this lesser prominence together with

[18] Du, *Qingchao manmeng lianyin yanjiu*, 123-124.
[19] Yu Yang, Liheng Song, "The Ethnic Relationship with Manchu and Khorchin Department of Mongolian during Time from Late Ming to Early Qing Dynasties," *Journal of Inner Mongolia University* 39, no.3 (May 2013): 42-43.
[20] Jasagh, who was chosen from among the Mongol nobility to oversee banner matters, the Qing court had the power to change the appointment.
[21] Du, *Qingchao manmeng lianyin yanjiu*, 21.
[22] Du, *Qingchao manmeng lianyin yanjiu*, 21.
[23] Du, *Qingchao manmeng lianyin yanjiu*, 117.

geopolitical marginalization and weaker military strength, resulted in only one intermarriage history with the Manchu royal family during Hong Taiji's reign. [24] The Qing court did not provide special favor to the frontier Dorbet banner like Khorchin, but instead received the same treatment as the other *jasagh* Mongolian leaders.

Despite these differences, the shared threat from the Chahar united most Eastern Mongolian tribes with the Later Jin. Hong Taiji personally led an expedition against the Chahar in 1628.[25] The Manchu army collaborated with the Kharchin and joined forces with other Mongolians like the Tumed and Ordos.[26] Campaigns in 1632 and 1635 eliminated Chahar's influence in Eastern Mongolia. In 1635, Hong Taiji's captures of Ligdan Khan's family and the Yuan Imperial Seal underscored the conquest's significance, symbolizing his legitimacy as the Chinese emperor.

The Annexation of Khalkha Mongolia

Khalkha Mongolia was situated north of the Gobi Desert, bordered by the Oirtas, Russia, and the northern Qing region. When Hong Taiji planned to expand his empire after annexing Eastern Mongolia, he eyed the Khalkha. As the Ming weakened and the Manchu rose, some Khalkha leaders paid tribute to the Manchus court and recognized the Qing emperor as their monarch between 1635 and 1637 voluntarily.[27]

However, the Khalkhas also maintained complex connections with Russia and the Oirats. In an effort to settle disputes with the Oirats and confront threats from Russians and Manchus,

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[24] Du, *Qingchao manmeng lianyin yanjiu*, 117.
[25] Guozhi Liang and Agui Janggiya, *Huangqing Kaiguo Fanglue* [Annalistic History of the Founding of Qing Dynasty] (Beijing: National Library of China Publishing House, 2006), 12.
[26] Liang and Janggiya, *Huangqing Kaiguo Fanglue*, 12.
[27] Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 68.

Khalkha and Oirat leaders established the Mongolia-Oirat Code in September 1640. [28] Despite being the nominal suzerainty of the Khalkhas, the Qing court stayed out of this agreement, and the Khalkhas did not seek approval from the Manchu emperor when they signed the code.

The Khalkhas, who enjoyed a high level of autonomy, had a tumultuous relationship with the Manchus during the 1640s and 1650s.[29] A large-scale rebellion broke out in 1646 led by Chechen-khan, with support from the Tüshiyetü Khan Gombodorj and Sunid leader Tenggis in Khalkha Mongolia.[30] The rebellion was quelled in Ulaanbaatar within two years, but it was not an easy win for the Qing army. The Manchu court struggled to muster enough troops to crush the uprising at first. The Qing court dispatched a Mongolian-dominated army, commanded by a Khorchin Mongolian general. Subsequently, it became customary for the Manchu court to appoint Mongol-descended commanders to suppress rebellions in the Khalkha region and Oirat Xinjiang.[31]

The Qing court adopted a policy of appeasement after the rebellion was suppressed. To ensure the peace and stability of the Khalkhas, the Manchu emperor granted titles, established standardized tribute allowances, and awarded equitable goods, such as daily necessities like food, horses, and cloth to Khalkha nobles. However, the nature of internal disputes among the Khalkha made them vulnerable to attack from other Mongol tribes.[32] The main threat came from the Zunghar Khanate in the west. The turning point in the power of balance within the Khalkha

[28] Zhiqiang Chen and Jin Gao, "Legal Regulation and Control of Mongolian Society by Mongolia-Oirat Code," *Journal of Dalian Nationalities University* 11, no.2 (2009): 102.
[29] Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, 68.
[30] Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 68-69.
[31] Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 68-69.
[32] Shenbo Yuan, "Kaerke Menggu jasake de shezhi yu yuanbian [Studies on the establishment and evolution of the Khalkha Mongolian Jasak]," *Qing History Research Correspondence* 5, no.2 (February 1998): 7-9.

territory came in the 1670s with the unification of the Oirats under Galdan, a Tibetan-Buddhist Zunghar khan.[33]

In 1670, Galdan assumed leadership as the third ruler of the Zunghar Khanate. His reign saw the swift expansion of the Zunghar Khanate's influence in southern Xinjiang, Kazakh, and Kirghizia. In early 1688, Galdan became involved in the war between the Tüshiyetü and Jasaktu Khans, using his younger brother's death as justification.[34] Galdan's attack shattered the Khalkha confederation. After Galdan's invasion, the Khalkha abandoned their tents, possessions, horses, and sheep and fled south, day and night without stopping.[35] The substantial increase in population migrating to the Qing border heightened the pressure on border defense.

In 1690, while Galdan continued to pursue Tüshiyetü Khan along the Khalkha River, the Qing army and Galdan's forces unexpectedly fought at the Urhui River. With Galdan's forces advancing to Ulan Butung, located 450 kilometers north of the capital, Beijing, Emperor Kangxi deemed it necessary to personally lead a campaign against Galdan to ensure the capital's security. In the same year, the Battle of Ulan Butung ended with the absolute victory of the Qing army.[36]

Emperor Kangxi acknowledged the need to employ firm governance over Khalkha Mongolia to ensure the security of the northern region adjacent to the capital. One year after the victory at Ulan Butung, Kangxi convened a large assembly of the Khalkha khans and nobles in Dolon Nor. At this meeting, Kangxi declared his plan to organize Khalkha tribes into banners.

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[33] Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, 68.
[34] Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 19.
[35] Qi Ma and Tingyu Zhang, *Qing Sheng Zu Shi Lu* [Factual Record of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty] (Beijing: Qing Dynasty Archive, 1732), 276, 277.
[36] Perdue, *China Marches West*, 115.

The implementation of the League-banner system in Khalkha Mongolia marked the formal integration of the far-off region into the Qing government's jurisdiction.[37]

Following the establishment of the League-banner system in Khalkha Mongolia, the former khanates were organized into banners. All former Khalkha khans retained their title in their former territory. The power of those former khans only represents their nominal leadership since Jasak, appointed by the Court of Territorial Affairs (*lifan yuan*), governed all the banners and leagues.[38] On top of that, a governor-general (*amban*) of Mongolia was appointed to oversee Khalkha banner affairs in Uliastai. The Qing court also demarcated the boundaries between different banners and installed border inspection stations in both the north and south frontier of the Gobi Desert.[39] Patrol soldiers were to prevent the tribes and herds of each banner from transgressing into the pastures of neighboring banners.[40]

The life of the traditional tribal groups changed as transhumance, the free seasonal migration between summer and winter pastures, became limited to movement within territories.[41] The Manchu court implemented strict regulations that limited the movement of Jasaks and nobles across all banners. The princes and lamas, Tibetan Buddhist monks who have achieved the highest level of spiritual development, from every banner were obligated to follow a designated route upon entering Beijing for tribute. They were required to use a specified entry port and report the number of individuals passing through customs. Through implementing the League-banner system, officials designated by the Qing dynasty gained direct authority to

[37] Wenli Lyu, "Hard Governance: The Operating Mechanism and Implementation Efficiency of the League Flag System in the Qing Dynasty" *Hebei Academic Journal* 42, no.1 (January 2022): 81.
[38] Charles R. Bawden, *The Mondern History of Mongolia* (London: Routledge, 2002), 105.
[39] Buyanchogt. "An Archeological Study of the Former Sentries in Inner Mongolia in Qing Dynasty," *Journal of Hebei University Philosophy and Social Sciences* 30, no.2 (March 2007): 135-136.
[40] Li, *Modern Chinese State*, 32.
[41] Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, 69.

oversee various affairs within Khalkha Mongolia. The Manchu rulers implemented rigorous cross-border control measures, reducing inter-tribal communication.

The Tibet of Khoshut and Xinjiang of Zunghar

Besides warfare, alliances through marriage, the establishment of the League-banner system, and cultural exchanges, Tibetan Buddhism also significantly shaped the Manchu-Mongol relations during the Qing dynasty. The concept of "lama-patron" relationships, which blends spiritual and temporal authority.[42] The "lama-patron" relationships played an important role in the political history of Mongolia and Tibet. By the late sixteenth century, many Mongol leaders adopted Tibetan Buddhism to legitimize their power, which elevated the Gelug sect led by the Dalai Lama as a dominant religious force within Tibet.[43]

Recognizing the influence of Tibetan Buddhism among Mongol nobles, Qing emperors like Hong Taiji and Shunzhi sought to forge political ties with the Dalai Lama to consolidate control over Eastern and Khalkha Mongolia. In 1652, during a meeting with the Fifth Dalai Lama, Emperor Shunzhi not only presented him with gifts but also bestowed upon him an honorary title, a golden certificate, and a seal of authority. This act solidified the lama-patron relationship with the Dalai Lama.[44] This bond allowed the Qing emperors to rely on the Dalai Lama to mediate disputes among the Mongol tribes, thereby maintaining the stability of the emperor's governance since the regime of Shunzhi.

Following the Fifth Dalai Lama's death, succession disputes triggered strife in Tibet. The situation escalated when Zunghar sought territorial expansion beyond what is now Xinjiang. Zunghar allied with Tibetan nobles who opposed their nominal leader, Lhazang Khan, and seized

[42] Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, 245.
[43] Giuseppe Tucci, *The Religious of Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 41.
[44] Jiawei Wang and Nyima Gyaincain, *The Historical Status of China's Tibet* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 1997), 47.

Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. The turmoil subsided in 1720 after Zunghar's defeat in a Qing-led campaign in Tibet. The Qing quickly installed their preferred candidate as the Seventh Dalai Lama and transferred real authority to the Imperial Commissioner, replicating their strategy in Khalkha Mongolia. The Manchus court implemented a "divide and rule" approach in Tibet and Kokonor, splitting the regions into separate administrative units. [45] To safeguard the Dalai Lama from potential Zunghar capture, the Manchus court relocated him to Litang, which is closer to China Proper than Xinjiang.[46] This decision demonstrates the de facto subordination of the Dalai Lama to the Manchu emperor.

Located in the northern region of Tibet, the military presence of the Zunghar Khanate posed a significant threat to the security of the Qing frontier. Although the Manchus had established control over Khalkha Mongolia, Tibet, and Kokonor, the secret political collaboration between the Zunghar and the Mongol nobles on the frontier still held the potential for a future conflict in the eyes of the Manchu ruler.

After Galdan's death, his successor Tswang Rabtan tried to mend fences with the Qing emperor, Kangxi. In response to envoys from Tsewang Rabdan's camp, Emperor Kangxi promised them that the Qing had no "intention of destroying [the Zunghar] state." [47] However, this truce did not deter Tswang Rabdan from cooperating with Tibetan clergies and the Khoshut Mongol regime in Kokonor in preparing their march east toward the Qing. During the Lobsang Rebellion against Qing rule in Kokonor in 1723, Tswang Rabdan backed the rebels and gave sanctuary to Lobsang Danjin. Although the Qing demanded the rebels be turned over, this conflict in Kokonor did not immediately harm the Qing-Zunghar relations. By 1725, Emperor

[45] Norbu. "On the Relationship between Mongolia and Tibet during the Qing Dynasty and the Establish the Ruling Authority of the Qing Government in Qinghai and Tibet." *Journal of Tibet University* 36, no.1 (February 2021): 78.
[46] Wang and Gyaincain, *The Historical Status of China's Tibet*, 56.
[47] Perdue, *China Marches West*, 240.

Yongzheng even granted the Zunghars control over the Turpan region and agreed on their borders in the Altai Mountains and Hami with them. [48]

After the death of Tswang Rabdan in 1727, Galdan Tseren became the new leader of Zunghar. He maintained his father's policy toward the Qing. The Zunghar delegation visited Beijing and submitted tribute to the emperor almost every year until 1729.[49] However, the Zunghar regime's close engagements with Tibet and Kokonor continued, which raised concerns about their threat to the stability of the borderland for the emperor. The Qing and Zunghar maintained peace for fifteen years after 1739, when the Qing court and the Zunghar Khanate began a truce. The internal struggle within Zunghar allowed Emperor Qianlong to annex the region.

In 1537 and 1538 the Derbet Taiji and nobles, as well as Amursana, military leaders of the Zunghars, submitted to the Qing. The Manchu emperor saw the unrest of Zunghar as an opportunity to solidify control over the Mongols and keep up the fighting morale of the increasingly sedentarized banner soldiers.[50] Amursana devised a battle strategy against Zunghar for Emperor Qianlong. In 1755, the emperor attacked Zunghar and captured the last Zunghar khan, Dawaci. He was pardoned by the emperor and granted the title of "Heshuo Prince" as a demonstration of the emperor's benevolence towards the Mongols who had submitted.[51] The Zunghar, as a state, came to an end after the last Taiji who surrendered to the Qing.

In Zungharia, the Manchu ruler implemented the "divide and rule" strategy by granting the Zunghar leaders who surrendered the title of "khan." However, similar to the situation in

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[48] Ma and Zhang, *Qing Sheng Zu Shi Lu*, 31.
[49] Qingshun Qi, "The History (1644-1744) of A-hundred-year Relation between Qing Dynasty and Junggar Khanate." *Journal of the Western Mongolian Studies* 2. no.2 (2008): 15.
[50] Perdue, *China Marches West*, 274.
[51] Fuheng Hucha, *Pingding Zhungeer Fanglue* [The Strategy of Pacifying Zunghar] (Lhasa: Tibetan Academy of Social Science, 2007), 16.

Khalkha Mongolia, these khans held only nominal titles, and the governor-general restricted their actions. The real power remained in the hands of the heads of each league. After the conquest of Zunghar and upon discovering the Manchu emperor's reverence for Tibetan Buddhism, Ubashi, the Torghut leader, guided his people back to their ancestral homeland. The Torghut, one of the "Four Oirats," migrated westward towards Russia to escape the internal conflicts among the Oirats. Emperor Qianlong recognized their sincerity and submission, rewarding them with 300,000 taels of silver, along with clothing materials, grains, and livestock as a token of appreciation.[52] The Manchu ruler granted special privileges to the Derbet, Torghut, and other tribes that willingly submitted to the Qing dynasty.

In comparison to the Mongolian tribes that voluntarily submitted to the Manchu Empire, Zunghar's descendants remained steadfast in their resistance. They often reneged on their commitments to rebel, so they received comparatively less favorable treatment and post-war living conditions than their fellow Oirats. Moreover, to prevent the Zunghar Mongols from building internal unity through family ties, the Manchu rulers deliberately avoided placing people from the same lineage under a single banner.[53] This led to the descendants of the Zunghars having lacked influence within the political system of the Qing dynasty. Also, compared to other Mongol tribes and banners, Zunghars' production and living environment were notably harsher.

The Manchu court stabilized Mongolian society by using strategies such as divide and rule and establishing "lama-patron" relationships with the powerful Tibetan religious leader, Dalai Lama. The court's intervention in Xinjiang and Tibet was slow and gradual. During the war

[52] Shigeru Yamada, *Qingdai Menggu Shehui Zhidu* [Studies on Mongolian Social System in Qing Dynasty] (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1987), 88.
[53] Yamada, *Qingdai Menggu Shehui Zhidu*, 87-90.

with Zunghar, the court offered favorable treatment to those who surrendered and accepted Qing rule while weakening the resolve of those who resisted. These tactics allowed the Manchu rulers to neutralize threats to the Qing empire's security and effectively rule distant Mongolian tribes.

Conclusion

At first, the Manchurian ruling class was students of Mongol culture and military system. As they rose in Manchuria, they effectively incorporated Mongolian traditions and systems, developed the Banner System, Manchu script, and Inner Asia style of intermarriage. The incorporation of Manchuria with the Mongolian societies solidified their rule and enhanced their political ties. Strategic diplomacy, military conquests, and cultural assimilation marked the transition from student to sovereigns over Mongolian society. This transition played an important role in the expansion and stability of the Qing dynasty.

The mix of Manchu-Mongol governance enabled Manchu rulers to maintain control over a huge and diverse empire. Once characterized by mutual respect and cooperation, the Manchurian rule over the Mongols eventually transformed into a hierarchical relationship in certain areas. This shift occurred after the Qing court was betrayed by some rebellious Mongolian nobles. Driven by geopolitical concerns and the significant role of Tibetan Buddhism, the Manchus eventually conquered all Mongolian tribes in Eurasia. The imperial court also had different systems for treating different Mongolian tribes. The Manchus' governance of the Mongolian societies allowed the Qing dynasty to ensure the security of the northern part of its empire and capital. It established the territory framework of modern-day China's northern, northwest, and southwest regions. The study of relations between Manchu and Mongol society not only elucidates how the Qing empire managed to control such an extensive territory, but also

highlights the reason that early Manchu rulers prioritized their relationships with the different Mongolian tribes from Manchuria all the way to Xinjiang.

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Killing Two Birds with One Stone: Analysis of the Up to the Mountain and Down to the Countryside (UMDC) Movement

Jing (Celia) Yang, Johns Hopkins University

Today, many people consider the Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside (UMDC) Movement to be a cruel deception by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As part of the Cultural Revolution, the UMDC Movement was initiated and mobilized by Mao Zedong, the chairman of the People's Republic of China (PRC) from 1949, the year of the PRC's proclamation, to 1976, the year of Mao's death. Under Mao's ruling, the CCP was one of the major stakeholders during this movement. The party advertised his ideologies by disseminating multimodal propaganda, including posters, songs, books (e.g., the "Little Red Book"), and articles posted on *People's Daily*—the largest and most influential government-owned newspaper at that time. As a political tool, the UMDC Movement served multiple political motives beyond its surface objective which was to re-educate urban youths. This article serves three purposes: (1) exploring two underlying goals of the movement; (2) arguing that the political goals have brought great economic harm to the Chinese society; and (3) analyzing propaganda used by the CCP during the movement.

First, besides the CCP, another major stakeholder of the movement consisted of approximately 17 million urban youths, known as the *zhiqing* or the "educated" youth[1], and were key participants in the UMDC Movement. Among these 17 million young people, more than 4 million were urban secondary students who graduated between 1966 and 1968, and who were later called "*laosanjie*."[2] Due to the Red Guards Movement, a mass youth movement that was

[1] In the essay, I use "sent-down youths" and "educated youths" interchangeably.
[2] "Laosanjie," Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias, accessed April 23, 2024, https://contemporary_chinese_culture.en-academic.com/417/laosanjie.

mobilized by Chairman Mao to destroy China's pre-communist past and fight against counter-communist ideologies (e.g., capitalism), the *laosanjie* could no longer attend school because all high schools and universities were shut down as a result of the movement. The rest of the *zhiqing* typically had some educational background, ranging from middle school to university, and a small proportion of the *zhiqing* (around 6 percent) were even university students.[3] Following the fervor of the Red Guards Movement, from 1968 to 1978, most urban youths were forced to leave their families in exile to the countryside where they could receive re-education from lower-middle-class peasants.

While the CCP successfully mobilized the *zhiqing* in rural areas, this strategic move led to unforeseen consequences on China's societal development. In 1956, the CCP issued an "Outline of National Agricultural Development from 1956 to 1967" in which it called for urban youth to voluntarily contribute to rural development by moving to and working in rural areas. Then, in the early 1960s, the CCP started to send urban youths to the countryside, aiming to "develop these young students as agricultural workers equipped with knowledge and skills, as well as socialist consciousness, through education and influences from the poor and lower-middle class peasants and farm workers."[4] In the late 1960s, after the announcement of the "Re-education Theory," the CCP officially started the UMDC Movement which lasted for a decade. In 1978, the *zhiqing* "began to organize open protests demanding that the central government allow them to return to their urban homes."[5] Eventually, in the late 1970s, the movement ended gradually as the youths left the countryside and returned to cities. Nevertheless, its influence on

[3] Weiyi Wu and Hong Fan, *The Identity of Zhiqing : The Lost Generation*, (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016).
[4] Weiyi Wu and Hong Fan, "The Rise and Fall of the 'Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside' Movement: A Historical Review," *Rozenberg Quarterly*, accessed April 23, 2024.
[5] Emily Honig and Xiaojian Zhao, *Across the Great Divide: The Sent-down Youth Movement in Mao's China, 1968-1980*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019): 137

China's development, especially China's education, was permanent. As revealed by economists Li and Meng's research, the interruption of education during the Cultural Revolution had a long-lasting negative impact on both society and individuals. This explains why there are very few Chinese scientists or experts in other academic fields from that generation in China.

Though, on the surface, the movement's mission seemed to be directed towards re-educating urban youths with proletariat ideologies, the CCP initiated this movement with three total political goals. As Bin Xu pointed out in Chairman *Mao's Children*, the party killed two birds with one stone.[6] The first and most obvious goal was to force urban youths who were "contaminated by the 'bourgeoisie-dominated' education system" to be re-educated by making them live closely with the proletariat class so that they could have a better understanding of the communist ideology. As Chairman Mao wrote in 1968, "It is very necessary for the educated youth to go to the countryside and undergo re-education by poor peasants." With the UMDC Movement, Mao successfully achieved this goal. The second goal was to resolve two pressuring social issues. Due to the Red Guard Movement, mass urban unemployment and out-of-school problems were the most severe social issues that concerned the CCP. Through the UMDC Movement, the CCP could solve the issues by forcibly exiling young people from urban areas to rural areas so that no one would be unemployed.

The third goal of the UMDC Movement was to develop China's rural and frontier areas as they had newly gained a large population of almost free laborers. However, this movement not only failed to improve the urban areas but also added more burdens to these underdeveloped regions, causing serious economic and social problems.[7] Economically, because the *zhiqing* did

[6] Bin Xu, Chairman Mao's Children: Generation and the Politics of Memory in China, (Cambridge, United Kingdom; Cambridge University Press, 2021).
[7] Honig & Zhao, *Across the Great Divide*, 158.

not have experience with farm work, they had severely low productivity. However, in the meanwhile, they still needed to consume food and other resources, leading to food shortages in rural areas. Socially, many *zhiqing* and their families felt much discontent with this movement. As sociologist Bin Xu indicated in his book, "Most *zhiqing* tell similar stories about their difficulties and suffering in the countryside, such as strenuous work, scarce food, isolation from cities, and interrupted education."[8] Among his *zhiqing* interviewees, 27.6% reported negative feelings towards their personal experience with the UMDC Movement, while 43.7% reported negative feelings when including historical evaluation which is "an evaluative account of the sent-down program as a historical and political event."[9] However, the data very likely underestimates the percentage of negative feelings experienced by the former *zhiqing* population. That is because most people who have traumatic experiences are not willing to recall such disturbing stories, let alone speak about them in interviews after many years have passed. Fortunately, there are many memoirs and interviews about the UMDC Movement by former Zhiqing. For example, in the interview Down to the Countryside Movement (2020) by Yang Shaojun, the interviewee Wu Zeyi talked about how he "laid down burden[s]," and "walked out of [the] shadow." Compared to the great number of *zhiqing*, the number of memoirs and interviews is relatively small. However, every one of these accounts represents the hardships and burdens that an entire *zhiqing* community experienced. More importantly, a great number of former *zhiqing* died from suffering during the "re-education" process or in protests to return to cities. Overall, there may be more positive accounts of the UMDC Movement than negative ones available today, but that does not mean more people had positive experiences than negative ones.

[8] Xu, *Chairman Mao's Children: Generation and the Politics of Memory in China*, (Cambridge, United Kingdom; Cambridge University Press, 2021): 9
[9] Xu, *Chairman Mao's Children*, 43.

The UMDC Movement extensively used propaganda that presented the CCP in a favorable light. Although most *zhiqing* suffered from their experience in the countryside, the CCP created posters demonstrating *zhiqing*s' passion for this movement. Similarly, most peasants did not welcome the urban youth, but the CCP created posters demonstrating peasants' welcoming attitudes. Almost all posters created during that time included slogans and catchphrases that conducted the CCP's propagandistic agenda. Through the deliberate use of rhetoric in propaganda described in the following paragraphs, the CCP not only put itself in a favorable position but also succeeded in convincing some urban youths to voluntarily go to the countryside during the first quarter of the movement.

The most distinct bonding rhetoric used in the posters is the inclusive pronoun "we." The following are several examples of the use of "we" in CCP's propaganda posters:

The poster on the left says, "The needs of the motherland are our aspirations!" The right one says, "To villages we go, to the borders we go, to places in the motherland where we are most needed we go." The banner on the train says, "Learn from Comrade Jin Xunhua."[10] In both examples, the use of "we" aims to bond urban youths together. Also, they create a sense of urgency by emphasizing the "need" of the country. By using such rhetoric, the CCP invoked a

[10] Jin Xunhua was an educated youth who sacrificed his life for saving public property (two utility poles) in torrents.

sense of collective identity and shared responsibility among young people. As China has always practiced collectivism, this concept was deeply rooted in Chinese people's minds. Everyone was taught from an early age to care more about the benefits of the party and the community over their own. As described by Luming Mao in his book *The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric*, Chinese society had an extremely negative view of individualism—caring most about one's own benefits—in the 1900s.[11] As Mao writes, after the establishment of the PRC in 1949, "individualism began to be seen as nothing more than self-centeredness, as illicit, selfish behavior driven by the doctrine of spontaneous license."[12] In a society that practices socialism and collectivism, everyone feels the need to dedicate oneself to the community and, from a broader perspective, the country. As a result, appealing to the sense of responsibility and urgency were two effective tools used by the CCP to manipulate people, and it convinced many people to comply with the party's requests to "go to where young people are most needed" voluntarily. comply with the party's requests to "go to where young people are most needed" voluntarily.

In addition, the CCP also portrayed educated youths as respectable and laudable through deliberate positive word choices on posters. The following are some examples:

[11] LuMing Mao, *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric*, (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press), 2006.
[12] Mao, *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie*, 96.

The first poster says, "Good sons and daughters aspire to travel far and make their marks." The second one says, "The glory of going up to the mountains and going down to the countryside." The third one says, "Good daughter of the poor and lower-middle class peasants." In all three posters, there are positive words, such as "good" and "glory." Such positive depictions appeal to the sense of pride in young people, compelling them to voluntarily participate in the movement. Moreover, as Mao indicates in his book, Chinese culture has always emphasized the importance of "filial piety" (*xiao*) which refers to the virtue of respecting one's parents.[13] By connecting sent-down youths and lower-class peasants through familial relationships, the CCP also appeals to young people's sense of filial piety. Bearing this in mind, young people would respect and admire peasants because they are their "sons and daughters." Moreover, intensive compliments of sent-down youths connote reproach against those who had not been sent down. In fact, the CCP did delineate staying in cities as inappropriate. For example, in 1968, the CCP posted a piece entitled *We Too Have Two Hands, Let Us Not Laze About in the City*.[14] In other words,

[13] Mao, *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie*.
[14] Ned Kelly, "This Day in History: Down to the Countryside Movement Launched," *That's Mags* (December 22, 2021). https://www.thatsmags.com/china/post/8077/china-chronicles-up-to-the-mountains-and-down-to-the-countryside.

urban youths who were not sent down to the countryside should be considered indolent and irresponsible. By evoking shame and guilt among this group of young people, the CCP further pushed more youths to join this movement.

In addition to the words on posters, the images are also worth analyzing. First and foremost, everyone is smiling in all the posters. The CCP used smiling faces to show the willing and satisfied attitudes of sent-down youths and lower-class peasants towards the UMDC Movement. Similarly, in the two posters, the educated youths are staring toward a distant horizon, representing their aspirational future in the countryside. However, both groups complained much about this movement in reality. These pieces of propaganda were effective during the first half of the movement, attracting many urban youths to volunteer to go to the countryside because they all imagined a harmonious life with lower-class peasants. However, as more sent-down youths expressed their dissatisfaction with their country life, more urban youths realized the difficulty of their potential fate in the countryside and, thus, were unwilling to join this movement.

Many forms of propaganda were created during the UMDC Movement. Other than the posters mentioned above, there were also "red" songs propagated by the CCP, such as "The Song of the Revolutionary Educated Youth." In those songs, the CCP also extensively used similar rhetoric (e.g., the use of "we" and other emotional appeals) as those in posters. The decade-long UMDC Movement officially ended in 1978 after the demise of Chairman Mao Zedong. However, the CCP has continued to use similar rhetoric in propaganda for different purposes until even today. With the development of technology, there are even more forms of multimodal propaganda, such as short videos on TikTok and posts on Weibo (i.e., Chinese Twitter).

In the article, we discussed three major objectives that the CCP hoped to achieve by initiating the UMDC Movement, during which thousands of young people suffered. On the surface level, the goal was to re-educate “bourgeoisie-contaminated” urban youths. However, as we delved deeper into the analysis of the movement, we could see how the CCP killed two birds with one stone—lowering the high unemployment rate caused by the Red Guards Movement and advertising pro-CCP statements—with the UMDC Movement. In conclusion, the movement has a long-lasting and detrimental effect on Chinese society by harming the emotional, physical, and intellectual well-being of its young generation who could have a better future if they were not forced to be part of the movement. They were the sacrifice by the CCP for the purpose of promoting social stability and empowering the party. Although the UMDC Movement has ended for almost 50 years, such sacrificial means and propaganda rhetoric will not end as long as the CCP stands.

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Fortes, Foucault, and the Family: A South Korean Case Study of State Involvement in Kinship and Migration

Noah Walch, Johns Hopkins University

The interjection of the state into the family has long been a point of contention in the realm of anthropology. Since the theories of Meyer Fortes denoting distinct domestic and politico-jural spheres, many conceptions of the family and state action within have arisen. In a direct rejection of Fortesian thinking, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing and Sylvia Junko Yanagisako led a feminist school of kinship theory that complicates Fortes's strict lines between the public and the private.[1] Other theories are borne from philosophies that focus instead on power and sexuality— Chloë Taylor and other feminist scholars continue discussions of the family in the vein of Michel Foucault and explore the state and family as institutions.[2] In Foucauldian writing on power, the family is not a body with a fixed definition; it is a "continually contested fiction" without transhistorical generalizability.[3] Foucault's "genealogy of the family" characterizes its volatility as points of contention between sovereign and disciplinary powers, in which the institutions of both state and family engage.[4]

The South Korean state's responses to various demographic crises in the late 20th and early 21st century offers rich ethnographic opportunities to grapple with these various perspectives of kinship. Specifically, the South Korean government has long been engaged in the co-opting of transnational migration to exert state power upon the family. The mere existence of this state interference offers compelling evidence to join Tsing and Yanagisako in their rejection

[1] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing and Sylvia Junko Yanagisako, "Feminism and Kinship Theory," *Current Anthropology* 24, no. 2 (August-October 1983).
[2] Chloë Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power," *Hypatia* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2012).
[3] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."
[4] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."

of Fortesian theories of distinct politico-jural and domestic spheres. As these policies evolve over time, South Korea as an ethnographic case study demonstrates the ever-changing genealogy of the family, especially as it is contested by state power and as it is affected by gendered expectations of the mother.

Objects of Ethnographic Study

After the Korean War, as South Korea embarked upon an economic miracle, unmarried young women moving to cities from the rural countryside became an easily-accessible and quickly-growing workforce.[5] There was a downside, however— "by the mid-1980s the Korean government was faced with a bride shortage in the countryside so severe it could no longer be ignored."[6] Between 1978 and 1990, under the banner of "bring[ing] the sound of crying babies back to the countryside," the government-subsidized Research Association for the Welfare of Korean Farm and Fishing Villages (RWFFV) arranged 600 marriages between unmarried women and rural bachelors around Korea.[7] But desire among single Korean women to return to the country was dwindling, and what had started as an economic problem became political as Korean agricultural markets opened to imports, angering farmers already feeling short-changed.[8] Spurred by these factors and normalization of relations with China, in 1993 the Korean government, hoping to provide disgruntled rural bachelors with an alternative source of wives, designated ethnic Korean (also called Joseonjok) brides from China as "acceptable foreign imports."[9]

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[5] Caren Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors," in *Making and Faking Kinship: Marriage and Labor Migration between China and South Korea*, ed. Charles D. Freilich (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).
[6] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors," 35.
[7] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors."
[8] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors."
[9] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors," 43.

Nearly three decades later, South Korea again faces a dearth of "crying babies," which is now no longer an issue specific to the countryside. Just as the government once endorsed migration from China to increase the supply of Korean brides, "South Korea is looking to attract foreign domestic helpers from Southeast Asia to help families with child-care and housework."[10] In a pilot program organized by the Seoul city government and the national Ministry of Employment and Labor, 100 domestic workers will be provided with visas and will work for Korean families for at least six months.[11] Many of the workers jumping at the chance to move to Seoul already work abroad in Singapore or Hong Kong, though they themselves hail from the Philippines, Indonesia, or Sri Lanka.[12] Unlike the programs in Singapore and Hong Kong, domestic workers in South Korea will be provided their own accommodation separate from their employers and will be paid an hourly wage in accordance with the minimum for domestic workers.[13]

The Domestic and the Politico-Jural

The Fortesian distinction between the "domestic" and the "politico-jural" spheres of kinship set out to complicate Western assumptions of the purely biological basis of kinship, but since its introduction in 1958 it has faced scrutiny itself.[14] Tsing and Yanagisako problematize its dependence on traditional gender roles— assumptions remained, both of a domestic core between women and their children as well as a separate political network that comprised relationships between men.[15] They cite the ethnographic contributions of Vanessa Maher to

[10] Toh Ee Ming, "In Singapore and Hong Kong, Korean dream tempts domestic helpers," *AlJazeera*, July 5, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2023/7/5/singapore-and-hong-kongs-domestic-helpers-eye-korean-dream
[11] Lee Jae-lim, "Korea to allow 100 foreign domestic workers into Seoul," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, July 31, 2023, https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2023/07/31/national/socialAffairs/Domestic-workers/20230731174725485.html
[12] Toh, "Singapore."
[13] Toh, "Singapore."
[14] Tsing and Yanagisako, "Feminism and Kinship Theory."
[15] Tsing and Yanagisako, "Feminism and Kinship Theory."

reject the clear-cut distinction of public and private altogether: Maher shows in her study of Turinese seamstresses that even if women engaged in economic pursuits classically deemed to be "domestic" (such as dressmaking), these pursuits also necessarily extended beyond the borders of the domestic.[16] As the clothiers of upper-class women, Maher argues that these seamstresses often took the opportunity to appropriate modes of bourgeois fashion, and their husbands characterized clients' visits as non-domestic intrusions into the domestic sphere of the home.[17]

Caren Freeman's ethnography of Joseonjok brides contributes to this argument of Tsing, Yanagisako, and Maher by characterizing the economic ambitions of women in a sphere that is both domestic and politico-jural. Minseon, one of Freeman's Joseonjok interlocutors who had married a man on rural Jeju Island, cheerfully engages in her domestic responsibilities at home while also financially supporting a family network that spans international borders, language barriers, and currency exchanges.[18] Neither do her dreams and ambitions fit neatly into the Fortesian spheres— she wishes to utilize her skills in Mandarin to become an interpreter in the flourishing tourism industry of Jeju, but also hopes that one day she can build a large addition on her family home and raise her children as a housewife.[19] Minseon refuses to limit her activities or her aspirations to either singly domestic or singly politico-jural, embodying feminist critiques of Fortesian kinship theory. Additionally, Joseonjok wives' engagement in marriage migration in the first place complicates the distinction of the public and the private. Hiju, a Joseonjok interlocutor who married a construction worker in South Gyeongsang Province, is committed to the components of the classically-defined domestic sphere: she is raising a three-month-old

[16] Tsing and Yanagisako, "Feminism and Kinship Theory."
[17] Tsing and Yanagisako, "Feminism and Kinship Theory."
[18] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors."
[19] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors."

daughter and, despite heated arguments early in her marriage, cares well for her in-laws.[20] But Hiju's entire marriage is also a distinctly political pursuit— her husband went on a "marriage expedition" to China to meet her, she purposely sought out a matchmaker who could find her a husband in South Korea, and Hiju's migration was approved of and explicitly endorsed by the South Korean government.[21] Just as Maher's interlocutors inhabit the domestic and the political spheres simultaneously, Minseon and Hiju are further evidence of the limitations of Fortesian kinship theory.

A Genealogy of the Sovereign Korean Family

With Fortes and his notion of distinct spheres of kinship thoroughly disproved, other perspectives on the family may prove instructive in the analysis of domestic migration to South Korea. As aforementioned, Michel Foucault's thoughts on the family range widely, and Chloë Taylor goes as far as claiming that Foucault had no true theory on the family.[22] Instead, Taylor argues, Foucault's varying musings on the family as an institution belie its underlying fictionality as a concept; that is to say, neither is the existence of the family to be assumed nor can inherent values and traits of the family be proclaimed.[23] While not going so far as to answer questions regarding the truth or fiction of the family, examination of South Korean ethnography may offer insight into another oft-explored Foucauldian concept: the nature of power. As Foucault would tell it, discipline is two-fold: there is sovereign power— derived from blood, either through conquest or child-rearing, and focused on its origin as the basis of its power— and there is disciplinary power— justified by the promise of its potential, focused on the optimization of

[20] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors."
[21] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors."
[22] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."
[23] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."

society, and designed to be world-shaping.[24] In its simplest telling, the family is a sovereign institution and the state is disciplinary— membership in a family is passed down by blood while citizenship of a nation is established through the forward-looking social contract. But just as state involvement in the family complicates the distinction between the Fortesian spheres of kinship, so it does with this neat division of sovereignty and discipline. Taylor claims that Foucault's genealogy of the family demonstrates the contentious interactions between sovereign power and disciplinary power in the institutional family. Viewing the above objects of ethnography through this lens not only bolsters this claim, but perhaps offers a genealogy of the modern South Korean family in its own right.

While it has already been established that the subsidized marriage migration of Joseonjok women to South Korea lies somewhere between purely political or purely domestic, the character of the power exhibited by the family in Freeman's ethnography has much less ambiguity. Despite the involvement of the state, the sovereignty of the family is largely left intact after these marriages. With Foucault's definition of sovereign power drawing upon ties of blood, it is important to note the portrayal of Joseonjok brides as "repatriated Koreans" rather than Chinese migrants. Much propaganda regarding the marriage migration program centered on its ability to restore the "minjok," a conceptualization of the blood-ties of an ethnically homogenous Korean people.[25] Thus, even the state's justification for the Joseonjok migration program was derived, in part, from a place of sovereignty. While it can be conceded that the goal of increased birth rates and higher rural populations is more in line with disciplinary thought, the decision of the South Korean state to derive the legitimacy of these brides from a shared Korean bloodline is undoubtedly sovereign in nature. Furthermore, Foucault emphasizes that sovereignty

[24] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."
[25] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors."

individuates power while discipline depersonalizes it, which once again points to the Joseonjok program leaving the sovereignty of the family intact.[26] The Joseonjok bride retains a maternal individuality (which Foucault neglects to analyze but Taylor does mention as a key component of feminist critique) and cannot be characterized as the impersonal, easily-replaced arbiters of disciplinary power (e.g. doctors, prison guards).[27]

While Freeman's ethnography does acknowledge the importance of child-bearing— which Foucault recognizes as the focus of disciplinary power within the family— in the role of the Joseonjok bride, this does not indicate that the families of Freeman's ethnography are anything but primarily sovereign institutions. In thinking of the family as a sovereign institution, which Foucault does mainly in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *Psychiatric Power* (2003), the state is considered an outside, almost enveloping, force of disciplinary power.[28] In fact, Freeman cites June J. H. Lee's description of the "family welfare" culture that many Joseonjok brides find themselves it to note that it is a "a *state-defined* responsibility to take care of children, the elderly…" and others (emphasis is Freeman's).[29] While these marriage migrants retain power in the distinctly sovereign family through maternal blood-right, the Foucauldian concept of discipline being "grafted onto" the family is well displayed by the expectations foisted upon them by the South Korean government. However, complications to this model of the blood-based, sovereign family arise when Freeman notes that those looking for foreign brides have set their sights on Southeast Asia, with one in six foreign brides being Vietnamese women as of 2007.[30] Thankfully, complications are not out of the Foucauldian scope. As noted before, Taylor

[26] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."
[27] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."
[28] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."
[29] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors," 50.
[30] Freeman, "Chosŏnjok Maidens and Farmer Bachelors," 49.

shows that Foucault's thoughts on the family were as ever-changing as the institution itself. As the focus of this analysis turn toward the sea change in state-endorsed migration to South Korea, the contested genealogy of the family shifts in kind.

The Korean Family and Disciplinary Power

As the focus of rural marriage migration shifted from China to Vietnam and its neighbors, urban families and politicians facing dropping birthrates set their sights southeast as well. Representing a drastic remodeling of the institution of the Korean family, these fledgling migration programs in South Korea's large cities elided marriage altogether. As reported by Toh Ee Ming for Al-Jazeera, domestic workers who from Southeast Asia are seeking out Korea in part due to the allure of its popular culture, but largely as a result of market forces.[31] Metchie, a Filipina interlocutor working a domestic job in Singapore, explains that "while she's so excited to see all the snow there," the real pull for her and her colleagues is the "possibly higher salary and greater freedom."[32] The duties of these domestic workers— and their point of origin— is similar to that of Joseonjok brides: to rear children and alleviate the burden of family responsibility upon politically discontent Korean citizens. Similarly to June Lee's concept of "family welfare," the expectations of domestic migrant workers' jobs are set out by the state. While this could lead to the understanding of domestic workers' as another instance of the "grafting on" of disciplinary power unto the family, the removal of marriage and child-bearing from the job description of these new migrants all but destroys the blood-basis of Foucauldian sovereign power. The figure of the domestic worker also does much to dispel the sovereign concept of an individuated center of power. Whereas fathers (and arguably mothers) are personalized even in programs of marriage migration, domestic workers find themselves in a less

[31] Toh, "Singapore."
[32] Toh, "Singapore."

individual role, more akin (but certainly not identical) to the disciplinary prison's "warden [who] could be replaced by another warden" without much reason for outcry.[33]

Foucault himself observes this shift in *Abnormal* (1999), as he sees the nuclear family evolving into an institution with all of the trappings of disciplinary power.[34] Foucault's argument for the family as an institution of discipline hinges on his notion of biopower, and the submission of the parents to the state's disciplinary notions of medicine and pedagogy.[35] He contends that the state sexualizes the family in order to co-opt its institutions, thus extending the reach of the state's discipline. But the pilot program for domestic workers in South Korea seems to be almost wholly unconcerned with sexuality. The demographic crisis has, in fact, negated the need for the state to harness the parental desire to surveil a child's sexuality that Foucault's argument in *Abnormal* hinges on.

An Incomplete Genealogy of Maternal Power

This genealogy of the family is dependent not on sex, but on ambition— and often ambitions that, as explored earlier, transcend the borders of the domestic or politico-jural. Just as Minseon wished both to be a housewife and a Jeju tour guide, an explicit goal of the migrant workers program is to "prevent career breaks for women."[36] It is here where gender must necessarily be addressed. Just as every interlocutor in the ethnographies of study (Minseon, Hiju, Metchie, even the Turinese seamstresses) has been a woman and how the pursuits of women are used to complicate Fortesian spheres of kinship, so does Foucault argue that mothers and their desire to control their children's sexuality are the avenue through which the state co-opts institutional power from the family. But this notion falls into the same trap that Tsing and

[33] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power," 203.
[34] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."
[35] Taylor, "Foucault and Familial Power."
[36] Lee, "Korea."

Yanagisako accuse Fortes of falling victim to: it assumes a core between mother and child that is domestic and private in nature. Instead, the experiences of these interlocutors migrating to South Korea show that family deference to state disciplinary power is not inherently sexual; they show that while Foucault's genealogy of the family can be instructive, it has clear limitations in its portrayal of women's contributions to kinship as an institution. It overstates an axiom of control between women and their children while dismissing out of hand the individuation of the mother. It presumes sexual obsession and hysteria in mothers with little basis in ethnography, and it falls into the Fortesian assumption that women have no desires beyond the sphere of the home. In short, Foucault's genealogy is woefully incomplete, but evaluating the experiences of women as they navigate contentions between discipline and sovereignty can begin to fill in the gaps.

Conclusion

Discussions of the interactions between the family and the state often treat the two as static entities, with their current formations treated as foregone conclusions. In his theory of distinct domestic and politico-jural spheres of kinship, Meyer Fortes makes just this error, neglecting to analyse the economic pursuits of women in a space somewhere between each of these regions. Tsing, Yanagisako and Maher do this through ethnographic study of Turinese garment workers, and evidence to support their claim is present in Caren Freeman's ethnography of Joseonjok marriage migrants to South Korea. Once the Fortesian spheres are left behind, it becomes instructive to review Freeman's ethnography through a Foucauldian lens, with direction from Chloë Taylor to read his musings as a genealogy of an oft-contested, ever-changing family institution. A comparison of Freeman's ethnography alongside Toh Ee Ming's reporting on prospective migrant domestic workers to South Korea reflects well this genealogy characterized by friction between sovereign and domestic power. However, the focus of these ethnographies

(and of domestic migration) on the experiences of women exposes a limitation of this Foucauldian genealogy. Consultation of these ethnographies with South Korea as a case study is able to fill in these gaps, fleshing out the Foucauldian mother figure to a woman with ambitions and political desires beyond those of the state, her husband, or her children.

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An Uprooting Without Upheaval: The Effect of Beijing Spatial Governance on Suppressing Dissent

Richard Liu, Johns Hopkins University

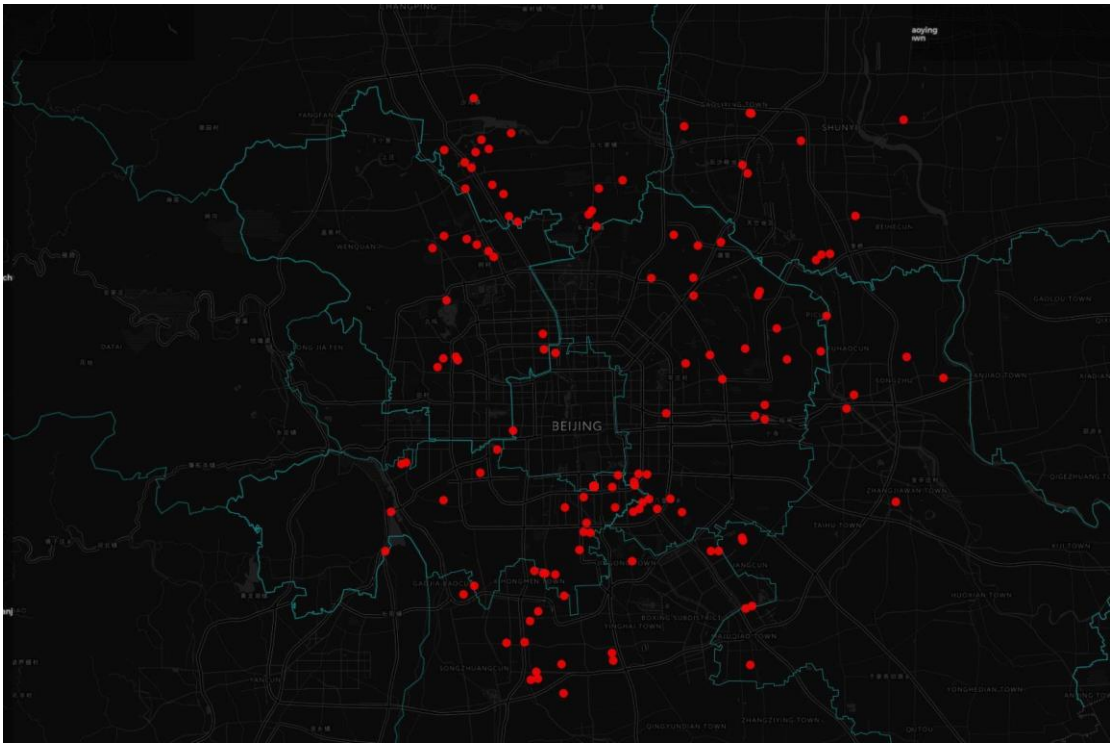
Introduction & Thesis

On November 18th, 2017, a fire in Beijing's Xinjian Village (新建村) killed 19 people.[1] Of the dead, 17 were peasant workers who migrated from rural areas outside of Beijing and without local household registration (hukou) status.[2] Two days later, on November 20th, the 40-day citywide Safety and Hidden Dangers Major Investigation, Major Cleaning, and Major Rectification Campaign (全市安全隐患大排查大清理大整治专项行动) began, which led to mass territorial evictions that ordered residents of the urban village to vacate their current resident within three days throughout Beijing.[3] Most residents that were targeted belong to a group referred to as the "low-end population" (低端人口).[4] Like the majority of those who had died in the fire, many of the tens of thousands of "low-end" people displaced were migrant workers.[5] This event was later termed as the Beijing Uprooting (北京切除) by the media.

The comprehensiveness of this displacement is unprecedented. While Chinese cities often conduct campaigns targeting informal spaces, Beijing Uprooting stands out for its immense scale.[6] According to Duan media, there are at least 289 documented sites that were demolished

[1] "北京市禁止违法建设若干规定," The People's Government of Beijing Municipality, 2011, accessed April 18, 2024, http://www.beijing.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengcefagui/201905/ t20190522_56970.html.
[2] "北京市禁止违法建设若干规定."
[3] "北京：开展安全隐患大排查大清理大整治," 人民网, accessed April 18, 2024, http://politics.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1120/c1001-29655323.html.
[4] "白信：北京切除的，是威脅政治安全的新流民階級，" *端傳媒 Initium Media*, December 9, 2017, https://theinitium.com/article/20171128-opinion-beijing-immigrants/.
[5] Carwyn Morris, "Spatial Governance in Beijing: Informality, Illegality and the Displacement of the 'Low-end Population,'" *China Quarterly* 251 (August 3, 2022): 822–42, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0305741022000868.
[6] Amy Hanser, "Street Politics: Street Vendors and Urban Governance in China," *China Quarterly* 226 (April 18,

during this territorial eviction, many of which were urban villages[7] in Beijing.[8] Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of sites demolished across Beijing. Also, the eviction seemed even more ominous as prior to the eviction, the Beijing Municipal Government published its roadmap of urban development plan up to 2035 (北京城市总体规划(2016年—2035年)) with specific goals like reducing Beijing's population from 25 million in 2017 to 23 million by 2020.[9]



These events also raised an important question: Why do Beijing's migrant population, who have been the target of this mass eviction, not form any opposition against the state's

2016): 363–82, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0305741016000278.

[7] By urban village in this essay refers to the Chinese term chéngzhōngcūn (城中村), literally 'village within the city,' more commonly, as 'urban village' (Tian 2008; Zheng et al. 2009; Song and Zenou 2012; Wu et al. 2014). This term specifically refers to rural villages that have, as a result of the dramatically fast urbanization process of the last four decades, been encircled by expanding urban settlements. Turned into rural-urban hybrid settlements without the direct involvement of the state, urban villages have mushroomed around most large cities across China, becoming the preferential rental/settlement for low-income internal migrants and the urban poor.

[8] "數據動畫帶你看：北京清退「低端人口」，影響多大？未來如何？," *端傳媒 Initium Media*, September 24, 2020, https://theinitium.com/article/20171201-mainland-beijing-uprooted-data/.

[9] "目录_北京城市总体规划（2016年—2035年）北京市规划和自然资源委员会," n.d., http://ghzrzyw.beijing.gov.cn/zhengwuxinxi/zxzt/bjcsztgh20162035/202001/t20200102_1554613.html.

decision? This question is particularly underexplained in current literature regarding the Beijing Uprooting, where the main emphasis is on the inhumanity of such mass eviction.[10] This silence is particularly abnormal considering that Guy Standing has likened the migrant population to "the precariat," a new emerging class that takes on unstable occupations and can form solidarity and opposition to the state.[11] Empirically, the migrant population in Beijing has been a contentious group, carrying out almost 200 documented protests throughout the city in the past two years to defend their interests.[12] In this paper, I argue that the lack of opposition from the migrant population is due to the state's technique of urban governance. Firstly, the migrant population's residence space is being framed as illegal by the state's tactics of spatial governance on informal space. Additionally, the state appeases other interest groups in the urban villages, which were previously an integral part of allying with the opposition of the migrant population against the state, further paving their way to outlaw the migrant populations' resident space without much opposition. The migrant population can often form powerful contentions in their workplace, and the workplace as a site of mobilization and organization is key to framing legal demands. Ching Kwan Lee, a pioneer in studying grassroot protests in China since the 1990s, summarizes this as a key framing in labor protests in China.[13] In the case of the urban villages, if their ground of contention is deemed illegal, the protest would lose the keyframing that legitimizes it. Furthermore, the lack of communal relationships within the migrant population in the urban village prior to the Beijing Uprooting also contributed to the lack of contention compared to

[10] Ran Liu and Tai-Chee Wong, "Urban Village Redevelopment in Beijing: The State-dominated Formalization of Informal Housing," *Cities* 72 (February 1, 2018): 160–72, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2017.08.008; Qiaochu Li, Song Jiani, and Zhang Shuchi, "Beijing Evictions: A Winter's Tale," in *ANU Press eBooks*, 2019, https://doi.org/10.22459/mic.04.2019.23.
[11] Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).
[12] "工人集体行动地图," China Labor Bulletine, accessed April 18, 2024, https://Maps.clb.org.hk.
[13] Ching Kwan Lee, Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt (Univ of California Press, 2007).

labor protests, where migrant populations are often unified by shared space and experiences. The urban village in relation to its residents, is a space only defined as commercial with a complete absence of solidarity and unity.

Literature Review

Rich literature deals with the migrant population's opposition to draconian state policies. To begin with, some important pieces of literature discuss site-specific contention against the state. Scholarly literature on migrants' site-specific contentions against the state agrees that space-related ecology is a key factor in shaping a protest or direct contention against the state as empirically observed, unified locations like dormitories or work sites is key for networking, mobilization, and unification of demands.[14] The necessity of a shared physical environment as a key factor for the potential for mobilization is not limited to protests in China. However, the current literature does not address why some spaces enable social mobilization against the state while others cannot, especially during the Beijing Uprooting in 2017.

Other relevant areas of the literature discuss aspects of population and urban villages, focusing on the urban village as a community. Xiang Biao, a renowned sociologist on migrant workers in China, conducted ethnographic research during the 1990s in Zhejiang Village (浙江村), another urban village in Beijing. Upon revisiting in 2017, he noted the transformation of the migrant community in urban villages in Beijing from a "horizontal network into vertical

[14] Yong Shun Cai, "Collective Resistance in China: Why Popular Protests Succeed or Fail," *Choice/Choice Reviews* 48, no. 03 (November 1, 2010): 48–1702, https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.48-1702; Pu Hao et al., "Spatial Analyses of the Urban Village Development Process in Shenzhen, China," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 6 (February 16, 2012): 2177–97, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01109.x.; Huikun Hong et al., "Analysis of the Housing–Jobs Separation Characteristics of Different Village Types in the Mountainous and Hilly Region of Southwest China," *Land* 11, no. 11 (November 7, 2022): 1990, https://doi.org/10.3390/land11111990.; J. C. Laurence and Biao Xiang, "Native Place, Migration and the Emergence of Peasant Enclaves in Beijing," *China Quarterly* 155 (September 1, 1998): 546–81, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0305741000049997.

hierarchy" with the dissolution of the old comradery and social relations.[15] The highlight of a new form of community without solidarity or unity is an important note many studies of migrant populations have mentioned since the 2010s.[16] The literature also agrees on the growing precarious state of the migrant population with a growing inability to confront violence and injustice.[17] As Xiang Biao notes, "The current urban village is completely defined by a commercial relationship with no solidarity nor autonomy…migrants are even more fragmentized than before."[18] While this lack of organization from the community within urban villages may also partially answer the question, the problem is that migrant workers in the workplace are the same group within the urban village. Yet, they could mobilize and form contention against & appeal to the state in the workplace.

Therefore, I aim to fill a gap that synthesizes some of the current findings in the literature by comparing labor protests in the workplace to the absence of contention in residential spaces like the urban village to show why one of the most contentious groups in China is being dissolved in the urban village.

Methodology

To investigate the reasons why the migrant population did not yield any meaningful contentions, with full knowledge that the migrant population is actively demanding their rights in the workplace, I will conduct a comparative study between the workplaces in Beijing that saw constant labor protests in 2017 and the urban villages that are directly impacted by the Uprooting which saw an absence of any protests. My data regarding labor protests mainly comes from

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[15] Biao Xiang, *Transcending Boundaries: Zhejiangcun: the Story of a Migrant Village in Beijing* (BRILL, 2004).
[16] Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION*.
[17] Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION*;
"白信：北京切除的，是威脅政治安全的新流民階級."
[18] "項飆：在驅逐之外，北京「浙江村」正規化的糾結和代價," *端傳媒 Initium Media*, January 22, 2018, https://theinitium.com/article/20171205-opinion-xiangbiao-beijing-zhejiang/.

China Labor Bulletin's crowd-sourced "strike map" that collects data on "collective actions by workers, including strikes and protests, and illustrates the development of labor struggles in China."[19] I will limit the timeframe from January 2017 to December 2017 to fit the best into the Uprooting's time frame, and I will focus specifically on Beijing. As the Labor Bulletin indicated, most of the sites where labor strikes and group events occur are occupied by the migrant population, similar to those who were impacted during the Uprooting, but the workspace where labor strikes occur starkly contrasted the urban villages.[20] By conducting this "most similar different outcome" study, I aim to highlight key themes in labor protests organized by the migrant population.[21] Furthermore, I will incorporate a framework of spatial governance to demonstrate how space played a vital role in eliminating any legal ground for any organization.

Analysis

Urban governance, especially concerning population control, follows a top-down structure. The emphasis of this form of governance is on how cities are individual interest-seeking agents, and population control is imposed with a city's discretion when population congregation becomes a burden to the city's productivity and efficiency.[22] This understanding of cities as entrepreneurial subjects specifies a part of the incentivizing force in terms of population control.

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[19] "工人集体行动地图."

[20] "項飙：在驅逐之外，北京「浙江村」正規化的糾結和代價. "

[21] Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *the American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (September 1, 1971): 682–93, https://doi.org/10.2307/1955513.

[22] J. Vernon Henderson, *Urban Development: Theory, Fact, and Illusion* (Oxford University Press on Demand, 1991); Vernon Henderson, "Urbanization in Developing Countries," *the World Bank Research Observer* 17, no. 1 (May 1, 2002): 89–112, https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/17.1.89; Leslie Shieh and John Friedmann, "Restructuring Urban Governance," *City* 12, no. 2 (July 1, 2008): 183–95, https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810802176433; J.L. Taylor and D.G. Williams, *Urban Planning Practice in Developing Countries* (Elsevier, 2013); Hanser, "Street Politics: Street Vendors and Urban Governance in China." ; Eva Pils, "From Authoritarian Development to Totalist Urban Reordering: The Daxing Forced Evictions Case," *China Information* 34, no. 2 (July 1, 2020): 270–90, https://doi.org/10.1177/0920203x20929590.

It also corroborated with Beijing's central objective for its urban development roadmap, as Beijing hopes to control its population and "optimize urban productivity and efficiency."[23]

Strong state intervention has always defined China's urban governance and planning. In many mass-scale projects, state entrepreneurism, where the state is directly engaged in land appropriation and development, has been highlighted by multiple pieces of literature.[24] While state entrepreneurism is not a uniquely Chinese phenomenon but a global trend in late capitalism, it's important to note that city governments in China are more than willing to directly intervene alongside market forces to redevelop and restructure urban spaces.[25] Furthermore, this layer of total state control is acknowledged as a given fact following the land status in China, where the state legally owns all lands and properties.[26]

The concept of spatial governance comes from the Foucauldian idea, "understood in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behavior."[27] In particular, by focusing on space rather than individuals inhabiting the space, the state was able to focus on "control through the management of space" to target "population rather than particular individuals."[28]As Morris noted, such control is "enshrined" through laws and regulations, giving the state actors a free hand to manage, sell, and confiscate land regardless of who owns the land. A common theme is that Beijing can "uproot" a population it deems as "low-end" since the state

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[23] "目录_北京城市总体规划（2016年—2035年）北京市规划和自然资源委员会."
[24] Zhu Qian, "Building Hangzhou's New City Center: Mega Project Development and Entrepreneurial Urban Governance in China," *Asian Geographer* 28, no. 1 (June 1, 2011): 3–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/10225706.2011.577977; Ran Liu and Tai-Chee Wong, "Urban Village Redevelopment in Beijing: The State-dominated Formalization of Informal Housing," *Cities* 72 (February 1, 2018): 160–72, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2017.08.008;
[25] David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography/Geografiska Annaler. Series B. Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (April 1, 1989): 3–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/04353684.1989.11879583; Fulong Wu, Jiang Xu, and Anthony Gar-On Yeh, *Urban Development in Post-Reform China: State, Market, and Space* (Routledge, 2006).
[26] Henderson, *Urban Development: Theory, Fact, and Illusion*.
[27] Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth : Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, 1997.
[28] Sally Engle Merry, "'Spatial Governmentality and the New Urban Social Order: Controlling Gender Violence Through Law,'" in *Routledge eBooks*, 2012, 407–14, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203103333-58.

can flexibly alter the definition of informal urban sectors like the urban villages that are the results of "everyday appropriations of actual city space by urban inhabitant." [29]

Furthermore, a key concept in governing by spatiality is the power to demolish or restructure a space, as numerous urban village redevelopment studies have shown; it is also a tactic to justify the reconfiguration of space over the problem of displaced population.[30] One key tactic the city government utilizes is classifying space as legal or illegal. This also ties in with urban villages as an informal space in China, which has always been in the gray area of city jurisdiction due to years of intentional neglect by city officials.[31] The allowance of such a gray area can be seen as the state's suspension of the binary legal and illegal category for their economic productivity.[32] However, they can also be subject to sudden changes of status by the state, like deeming a long-existing informal sector illegal, subject to redevelopment and sweeping policing. The state may also use the excuse that such grey areas should be subject to formalization from a grey area to a "rule of law," which happened in Zhejiang Village in Beijing in the 2000s.[33] It's important to note that informal areas like urban villages, while being involved with local actors in their interests, always operate with the top-down rules of the city authority in China and are subject to a sudden change in status.

Therefore, in Beijing Uprooting, when the city utilized official rhetoric to engage in a sweeping campaign of mass eviction, the city produced illegal spaces through the rhetoric of

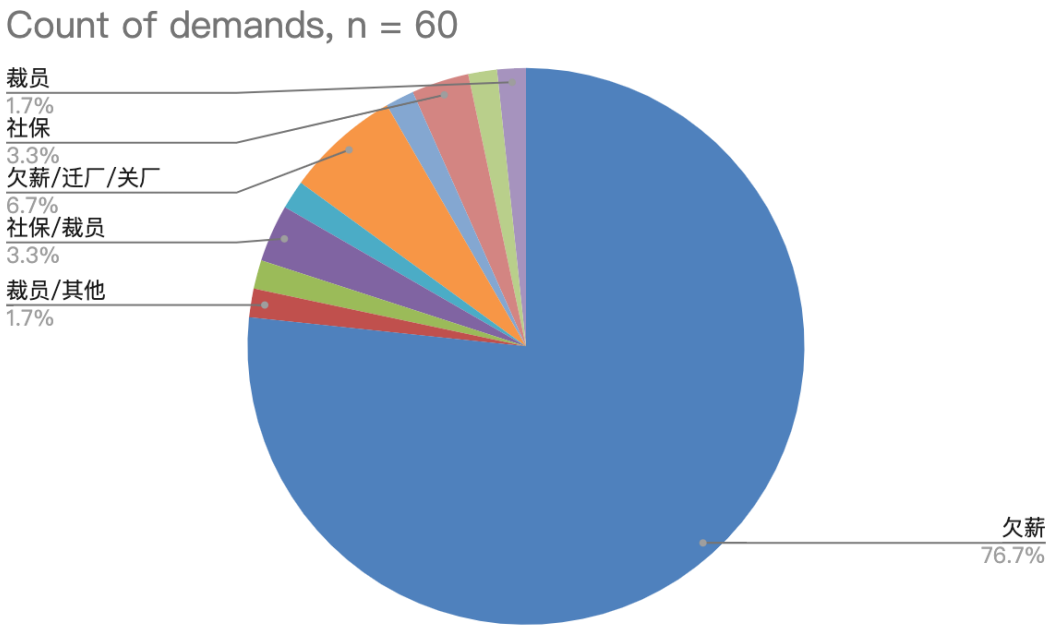
[29] Hanser, "Street Politics: Street Vendors and Urban Governance in China."
[30] Fulong Wu, "State Dominance in Urban Redevelopment," *Urban Affairs Review* 52, no. 5 (August 3, 2016): 631–58, https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087415612930.
[31] Hanser, "Street Politics: Street Vendors and Urban Governance in China."
[32] Pu Hao et al., "Spatial Analyses of the Urban Village Development Process in Shenzhen, China," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 6 (February 16, 2012): 2177–97, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01109.x.
[33] "項飆：在驅逐之外，北京「浙江村」正規化的糾結和代價," *端傳媒 Initium Media*, January 22, 2018, https://theinitium.com/article/20171205-opinion-xiangbiao-beijing-zhejiang/.

"illegal buildings" (违法搭建).[34] Illegality is broadly phrased and targets the previously untouched grey areas, with those that "did not obtain any construction permits, temporary construction permits and those that did not construct according to permitted construction framework..."[35] However, such sweeping production of illegal space also meant residents couldn't obtain permits within days' notice. As Morris puts it, the state regulations have suddenly invaded the urban village that "...law openly ignored year after year, neoliberal urbanism that supported trans-local migration and local economies prospered has prospered for years in those urban villages."[36] This act of deeming the informal space that has existed for years as suddenly illegal has framed the urban villages as places of illegality and threats. Across urban villages in Beijing after the fire, notices were posted to inform residents of the "intensified efforts for the detection and removal of safety hazards" that explicitly commanded the "evacuation of residents within 3 days."[37] Danger and illegality become a powerful tactic to outlaw space, leading to the subsequent eviction of residents under the guise of targeting illegality. Residents are not targeted as illegal, but their relationship with space means that by removing spaces where they reside, they have little choice but to leave the space. This framing of space has decisively impacted the mobilization ability of the migrant population against the state in the face of injustice.

Despite not contesting the state about Beijing Uprooting itself, the migrant population continued to contest the state in other domains during this time. According to the China Labor Bulletin, even during the Uprooting, around 60 verified and documented labor protests in Beijing

[34] "目录_北京城市总体规划（2016年—2035年）北京市规划和自然资源委员会."
[35] "目录_北京城市总体规划（2016年—2035年）北京市规划和自然资源委员会."
[36] Morris, "Spatial Governance in Beijing: Informality, Illegality and the Displacement of the 'Low-End Population.'"
[37] Morris, "Spatial Governance in Beijing: Informality, Illegality and the Displacement of the 'Low-End Population.'"

took place.[38] Figures 2 and 3 below show the motives behind all 60 labor unrests, with the majority (76.7%) being wage arrears followed by factory closure (6.7%).



The intense labor unrest during the same timeframe of the Beijing Uprooting is a puzzling phenomenon. As Lee points out in *Against the Law,* most participants involved in labor protests are part of the same group of migrants who reside in urban villages.[39] However, Lee highlights a key phenomenon of labor protests in her work: "these social classes demand citizens' legal rights and condemn official corruption as illegal."[40] A central framing of successful collective resistance and labor protest in China is to specifically pursue/defend their legal rights (Cai 2010, 309). This is corroborated by my dataset regarding labor protests, as most documented labor protests center on legal demands labor encountered in their workplace: wage

[38] "工人集体行动地图."
[39] Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt*.
[40] Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt*.

arrears, factory closure, pension disputes, etc. Note how laborers' grievance often involves their property and legal rights being infringed.

Why do these laborers protest the infringement of their property and legal rights in their workplace yet remain silent when they face eviction from their residents in urban villages? In that case, the immediate observable difference is this framing. Workplace protests often justify their demands with legal rights, that they deserve payment or they deserve pensions after retirement under the Labor Law.[41] In the case of Beijing Uprooting, however, the state utilized spatial governance techniques to outlaw the urban villages they lived in from the start. The invisible barrier the city drew has not only forbidden the residents to reside in spaces but also drawn the urban villages that the migrant population resides in as illegal due to the proclaimed "illegal construction." [42] Therefore, the centerpiece of legal demands that was to enable protests to take shape for migrant workers was already illegalized by the state.

However, it would be a misconception to understand laborers as a group with no agency unless they are backed by legal demand. As an informal space, urban villages have an interwoven web of interests, from migrant workers renting houses to real-estate owners renting out these cheaper rooms.[43] Empirically, there has been an alliance that forms protests in China, with "the rise of a hidden alliance or an unorganized convergence of the peasantry, the working class, and the propertied middle class toward the terrain of the law. As victims of state-led "accumulation by dispossession" (dispossessed of their land, employment, and property rights), these social classes would join to march on the streets demanding citizens' legal rights and

[41] Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt*.
[42] Li, Jiani, and Shuchi, "Beijing Evictions: A Winter's Tale."
[43] Li et al., "Redevelopment of Urban Village in China – a Step Towards an Effective Urban Policy? A Case Study of Liede Village in Guangzhou."

condemn official corruption as illegal."[44] Frequently, the protest can also be mounted through this notion of shared grievances across the different groups, which represents the demographics of urban villages as the peasantry owns the land and the propertied middle class owns the estates where the working class (the migrant population) resides(Zheng & Long, 2009). But in the case of the Beijing Uprooting, the state also allied with the propertied middle class and the land-owning peasantry in legal terms before and during the Uprooting, further breaking the migrant population's organizing capacity and any possibility of framing their opposition to state-led eviction as illegal.

Before the Uprooting, Beijing invested heavily in resettlement and compensation in urban village redevelopment negotiations. Just months before the Uprooting, the city offered landlords in urban villages that were to be subject to uprooting in November to swap their land & property for four to eight apartments in redeveloped urban villages along with an unspecified amount of cash reimbursement for demolished properties for estate owners averaging 2000$/sq.ft.[45] This negotiating strategy between the state and property owners has been termed "resettlement first, demolition second." [46] Such tactics were explicitly stated "to minimize any unrest or oppositions from land and estate owners."[47]

Such tactics are what Xiang Biao termed "divide–extraction" tactics, which further break down the potentiality of any opposition that may ally interest groups within an urban village.[48] By utilizing such tactics, both the centrality of law and legalism are on the state's side, while the

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[44] Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt*.
[45] Hong et al., "Analysis of the Housing–Jobs Separation Characteristics of Different Village Types in the Mountainous and Hilly Region of Southwest China."
[46] "历时3年，顺义区北务镇成功创建'市级安全社区'！_工作," Copyright © 2017 Sohu.com Inc. All Rights Reserved., n.d., https://www.sohu.com/a/408202575_99965849.
[47] Liu and Wong, "Urban Village Redevelopment in Beijing: The State-Dominated Formalization of Informal Housing."
[48] "项飙：正规化了的北京「浙江村」，社會關係和自保能力也瓦解了."

potential of opposition from Beijing homeowners that previously mounted open resistance against state control of space in 2008 has been eliminated.[49] The state's intervention affected the socio-spatial relations that benefited some people, often the property owners, while others were left out (the migrant populations). By offering benefits to property owners while making previously informal space illegal through the production of illegal space, the migrant population is being "decentered yet governed, while subjected to displacement at any moment ."[50]

Furthermore, scholars have highlighted the spatial ecology that may enable protests to occur.[51] As Zhao has mentioned, favorable spatial ecology is fundamental for forming a residence space-based social network based on mutual influence to mobilize protests, and urban villages follow the same pattern.[52] Xiang Biao's case study on peasant enclaves in Beijing notes the importance of social relations in facilitating residents' agency and capacity for mobilization and social organization.[53] However, since the 2000s, Xiang Biao notes that social action and the self-organization – self-protection capacity of the migrant population - have disappeared because of a dissolution of informal relations in the urban village and a transformation from a "horizontal network to a vertical hierarchy."[54] In workplaces, informal social relations are facilitated by a sense of comradery through everyday routine and shared residence, which is a vital spatial ecology for organization and protests.[55] This may also explain the empirical evidence of Beijing's sporadic labor protests.

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[49] Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt*.
[50] Morris, "Spatial Governance in Beijing: Informality, Illegality and the Displacement of the 'Low-End Population.'"
[51] Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*.
[52] Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*.
[53] J. C. Laurence and Biao Xiang, "Native Place, Migration and the Emergence of Peasant Enclaves in Beijing," *China Quarterly* 155 (September 1, 1998): 546–81, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0305741000049997.
[54] "項飆：正規化了的北京「浙江村」，社會關係和自保能力也瓦解了."
[55] Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt*.

Contrastingly, in the case of urban villages, the residents' relationship with one another and their relationship to the urban village is more of a vertical hierarchy of landlord and renter, completely devoid of any meaningful social connection.[56] Furthermore, their place of residence also leads to a dissolution of any identity: Standing notes that often, the migrant populations' place of residence is so fragmented that there is a lack of "traditions of social memory, a feeling they belong to an occupational community steeped in stable practices, codes of ethics and norms of behavior, reciprocity, and fraternity."[57] Spatiotemporally, the residents in these urban villages are fragmented by their varying schedules, occupations, and duration of stay, leading to "housing – job fragmentation."[58] This further explains the migrant populations' lack of organization in the face of eviction. The spatial governance made previously informal spatial relations illegal, and the already decentralized residents, who are fragmented but governed, are displaced with little choice, no legitimate frames of opposition, and no allies to mount such opposition in demand for legality. As a result, the victims of the Uprooting were incapable of producing any solidarity as they did in the workplace to mount meaningful opposition against the state.

However, this essay omitted a key area. Many displaced people have chosen to resettle in Gu'an and Xiong, a newly established district in the periphery of Beijing .[59] This state of being displaced from their housing but remaining in the periphery of the city may be a reason why the migrant population did not resort to contention against the state. This aspect of the community resilience of the migrant population may deserve further inquiry.

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[56] Laurence and Xiang, "Native Place, Migration and the Emergence of Peasant Enclaves in Beijing."
[57] Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION*.
[58] Hong et al., "Analysis of the Housing–Jobs Separation Characteristics of Different Village Types in the Mountainous and Hilly Region of Southwest China."
[59] Morris, "Spatial Governance in Beijing: Informality, Illegality and the Displacement of the 'Low-End Population.'"; Liu and Wong, "Urban Village Redevelopment in Beijing: The State-Dominated Formalization of Informal Housing."

Conclusion

In the middle of a late November night, with cold creeping in, young and old families were evicted from their homes due to the spatial statuses of their residences. In just a week, such horror repeated numerous times across Beijing. This article argued that the lack of contention from the migrant population during the Uprooting is due to the state's spatial governance technique, which allied with the property owner and took the ground of legality. Control through space has enabled Beijing to make the migrant population displaceable by eliminating the very informal space that makes the city livable for them. This control benefitted the property owners and displaced residents while stripping away the migrant population’s empirical tactics of contention through legality. This essay's comparison between workplace protest in Beijing and the Uprooting also highlights how spatial ecology and contention through legality have been the key factors in enabling the mobilization of the migrant population in protests in the workplace and illustrates how the lack of these key factors will lead to the silencing of the migrant population.

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Part III: East Asia Looking Outwards

Imperial Holdings in East Asia: Singapore and British Hong Kong

Lydia Yu, Johns Hopkins University

In the heyday of the British Empire, it covered a quarter of the available landmass and ruled over 450 million people.[1] Part of its vast expanse of colonial holdings were Hong Kong and Singapore, in far-flung Asia. These colonies were not settler colonies, meaning very few British colonizers ever moved there. Economic gain and dominance over regional trade were the main objectives behind establishing Hong Kong and Singapore. Both colonies held strategic maritime locations in Asia as Singapore is along the Strait of Malacca and Hong Kong is in the South China Sea. Situated between India and China, these colonies were the two most profitable regions for British trade, and subsequently, the colonies' monopoly over goods along this trade route, like opium and tea, prompted their prosperity. The financial opportunities presented in Hong Kong and Singapore attracted migrants from all over Asia, particularly China, whose civilian population was suffering from the Chinese political and economic turmoil of the late Qing dynasty—the chaos and aftermath of the Opium Wars, overpopulation, hunger, and poverty.[2] But despite these similarities, Singapore and Hong Kong induced different cultures and class structures. The primary benefactors of the colonization of Singapore and Hong Kong were the British, while many ethnically Chinese subjects also attained status as elites in the new colony through trade. In Singapore, the aristocratic class, known as the Taukeh, were valued for their close ties to China. In contrast, the Compradors, the high-class of the Chinese in Hong

[1] Paul Kane and Molly Groarke, "British Empire Facts," National Geographic Kids, https://www.natgeokids.com/nz/discover/history/general-history/british-empire-facts/#:~:text=The%20size%20of%20the%20British,ruling%20over%20458%20million%20people.
[2] Jessica Harrison-Hall, "An Introduction to 19th-Century China," The British Museum, February 28, 2023, https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/introduction-19th-century-china.

Kong, were mostly interracial and worked as middlemen between Chinese and Western corporations.

In Singapore, the Taukeh, the Hokkien term for "boss", became the Chinese elite through entrepreneurialism. The Chinese in Singapore were a diverse mix of various Southern Chinese cultural and language groups, including the Hokkien, Hakka, Teochew, and Cantonese. These groups carried over their inherited, centuries-old disputes and rivalry from China, forming warring factions without government intervention or the "divide and rule" policy.[3] British indirect control and laissez-faire policies took advantage of this natural division. Secret societies and triads featured prominently in the lives of Chinese Singaporeans, organizing employment, housing, religion, and in all other ways. From the beginning of Singapore, the Hokkiens were the largest Chinese sub-group and dominated commercial life. The Taukeh elite benefited most from British trade, utilizing familial relations within villages and close ties to China to recruit more cheap labor. The main demographic enticed by this offer were young bachelors in search of economic opportunity, known as Coolies, each hoping for their own rags-to-riches story. The Taukeh manipulated the Coolies' naivety by supplying them with expensive opium until they became addicted and in debt. These business owners utilized opium to keep their recruited Coolies trapped with no choice but to continue working for them as indentured workers. Opium was an essential source of revenue, and they were not afraid to betray, cheat, and manipulate their fellow countrymen. A private practitioner, Dr. Little, estimated in 1848, that "20 percent of the entire population and more than half the Chinese adults were opium addicts."[4]

Although these Taukeh were Paranakans, or in Hokkien, laukeh, meaning "born in the Straits Settlements", they embraced their Chinese identities proudly. As men did in China, many

[3] Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel, *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia*, (Brill, 2015).
[4] C.M. Turnbull, *A History of Modern Singapore, 1819-2005*, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2005).

still wore pigtails, dressed in the Chinese style, and took concubines. By the end of the 19th century, due to troubles with the Chinese economy, "[Imperial Chinese] titles were sold in large numbers to Singapore Chinese up to the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty."[5]

Additionally, Singaporean Chinese nationalism was shaped and awakened by the Chinese May Fourth Movement. In 1919, students in Beijing protested against the imperialist resolutions and rulings of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I, calling for the modernization of Chinese civic policies under the May Fourth Movement. The Chinese community of Singapore reflected the same divisions in China, divided between those who supported the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party as the better administration for China (Trocki 61)[6]. Later on, when the Japanese expanded into other parts of East Asia before the onset of World War II, Singaporean-Chinese boycotted and protested Japanese goods and shops. While this was in part due to their allegiance to the British Empire, these acts were also in protest of the maltreatment of mainland China by Japan as well.

In contrast to Singapore, the takeover of Hong Kong was a direct result of Anglo-Chinese politics. Chinese defeat in the First Opium War led to the Treaty of Nanking—where the Chinese refused the British proposition of occupying the Zhoushan Islands and accepted Hong Kong as an alternative. This setback did not affect the profitability of Hong Kong to the British. Working under the British is the elite class of Compradors, Portuguese—who controlled nearby Macau—a phrase meaning "buyer". The Compradors mainly differed from the Taukeh in that they did not own the businesses they were employed by, although some eventually achieved success with their own companies. Compradors were middlemen for foreign companies, bridging Western and Eastern commerce. Their ethnicity reflected this mix of culture; many prominent Comprador

[5] Turnbull, *A History*.
[6] Carl A. Trocki, *Singapore: Wealth, Power and the Culture of Control*, (New York: Routledge, 2006).

families were interracial Eurasians. One example is Robert Ho Tung. Although he was Eurasian, he identifies as Chinese, epitomized by his choice of traditional Chinese clothing even when meeting US Vice President Garner. The Compradors worked for companies like Jardine and Matheson Co., which traded tea and silk, but most importantly, opium. The exportation of opium to China formed the basis of the early Hong Kong economy (Tsang 73).[7] Since Hong Kong is so geographically close to China, especially when compared to Singapore, the British entrusted those with further separation from China, like those who are interracial, as the elites.

Hong Kong's adjacency to China attracted the critics of the Imperial Chinese government as a safe haven. Among those are Sun Yat-sen, who later became the first president of the Republic of China, which succeeded the Chinese empire, and Liang Qichao. Since Hong Kong was not a settler colony, its population was majority Chinese and served as an example of what a reformed Chinese society could be with modernized policies. These revolutionaries' work in Hong Kong, writing essays exposing the inefficiencies and corruption of the Chinese imperial government and its oppressive bureaucracy, served as a later foundation for the Republic of China and the dismantling of the Chinese Empire.

Thus, the unique positions of Hong Kong and Singapore with large Chinese populations outside of China proved crucial in supporting political movements and changes in 20th-century China. The free-market capitalist systems in both colonies also attracted immigration and allowed different groups to rise in their new social hierarchy—albeit the British remained at the top. Although racist policies were in place, for example, redlining and segregation, these non-British ethnicities gained substantial influence in civilian life. The Taukeh and Compradors became the elite class of the Chinese in Singapore and Hong Kong, respectively. They took

[7] Tsang, Steve. 2004. *A Modern History of Hong Kong*. I.B. Tauris.

advantage of the Opium Trade, promoting and selling it even at the expense of exploiting other ethnic-Chinese laborers, Coolies. However, concurrently, these elites used their influence to improve living conditions during the early settlements by establishing facilities, like hospitals, for those in need.

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Revisiting the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War: Neo-realist and Constructivist Perspectives

Quynh Anh Cao Le, Lawrence University

In 1979, China waged a brief but brutal military attack on Vietnam, a country that had been a close ally, described as close as "lips and teeth," with Beijing.[1] This military campaign became the largest war China has conducted since the Korean War, resulting in thousands of casualties to each side.[2] This incident is both surprising and mysterious since two close allies with the same ideology turned into adversaries very swiftly. There is already a wide range of explanations for the origin of the bloody attack, but this paper aims to examine the Sino-Vietnamese war through the lens of international relations theory. By combining neo-realism and constructivism, this paper shows how the Sino-Vietnamese War was constructed and why China decided to use force to "teach a lesson" to Vietnam.

The roots of the Sino-Vietnamese conflict

The roots of the Sino-Vietnamese conflict can be traced back to various factors that existed long before 1979, including historical distrust and conflicts of interest between the two states throughout the First and Second Indochina Wars. The situation deteriorated rapidly after 1975 when Hanoi chose to align itself with the Soviet Union and turn its back on China.

After 1945, Vietnam and China established warm relations and cooperated closely as communist nations with shared anti-imperialistic goals. While Vietnam-China relations were close during the Second Indochina War and the Vietnam War, with China providing generous political, military, and diplomatic support to Vietnam, there were several underlying conflicts of

[1] Robert S. Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975-1979* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 25.
[2] King C. Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979: Issues, Decisions, and Implications* (California: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), 8.

interest between the two.[3] By 1975, Vietnam had accused China of its desire to maintain a divided country, weakening the Vietnamese effort to liberate South Vietnam and preventing Vietnamese independence.[4] In return, China considered Vietnam ungrateful for China's generous assistance and was dissatisfied with the increase of Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation.[5]

After Vietnam unified in 1975, the first issue that developed a split in Sino-Vietnamese relations was the concern of economic assistance for Hanoi's post-war reconstruction plan. From September to November 1975, the Vietnamese delegation went to meet Chinese and Soviet leaders to seek aid for its Five-Year Plan (1976-1980). China refused to provide aid for Vietnam's reconstruction plan and offered no new aid to Hanoi after 1977, showing evidence of frustration with the Vietnamese. Instead, the Soviet Union provided extremely generous aid of $3 billion for Vietnam's Five-Year Plan.[6] After that, the Soviet Union's influence on Hanoi grew significantly while China's influence gradually declined. Soviet-Vietnamese ties took a deeper step when Vietnam was officially admitted into the Soviet-led COMECON on June 29, 1978. Five days later, China canceled all aid and withdrew all Chinese specialists from Vietnam.[7]

During the same period, tensions between Kampuchea and Vietnam led to a direct confrontation between Beijing and Hanoi. In 1977, the Pol Pot regime consolidated power in Phnom Penh and launched several attacks on the Vietnamese border, increasing the risk of a border war breaking out in Vietnam's southwest.[8] With tensions escalating, on 20-25 November

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[3] Chen, 10–21.
[4] Nicholas Khoo, *Collateral Damage: Sino-Soviet Rivalry and the Termination of the Sino-Vietnamese Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 97.
[5] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 21–22; Duiker, *China and Vietnam*, 61–62; Khoo, *Collateral Damage*, 100–102.
[6] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 23–24; Khoo, *Collateral Damage*, 117–18; Manh Hung Nguyen, "The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict: Power Play among Communist Neighbors," *Asian Survey* 19, no. 11 (1979): 1039, https://doi.org/10.2307/2643953.
[7] Khoo, *Collateral Damage*, 126; Nguyen, "The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict," 1044.
[8] Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975-1979*, 133.

1977, Hanoi sent a delegation to ask for China's mediation and urge Beijing to put pressure on Phnom Penh to resolve the conflict. However, Chinese leaders refused Hanoi's request and demanded that Vietnam withdraw its troops from Cambodia to achieve a cease-fire.[9] Beijing's statement indicated China's continued backing for the Pol Pot regime to directly attack Vietnam. Hanoi has accused China of being the "main culprit" behind Kampuchea's war with Vietnam. Tap Chi Cong San, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of Vietnam, firmly condemned the reactionary Pol Pot - Ieng Sary clique as "a blood-thirsty lackey clique badly needed by Chinese authorities to carry out their expansionist policy in Indochina and in all Southeast Asia."[10]

In February 1978, under the "green light" of the Soviet Union, Hanoi reached a decision to overthrow the Phnom Penh regime by force in the Fourth Plenum. This raised real concerns among Chinese leaders. Hanoi's decision to invade Cambodia clearly required the approval of the Soviet leadership. Tracing back the timeline to late 1978, right after Vietnam joined the COMECON bloc in June 1978 and signed the Soviet-Vietnamese treaty in November of the same year, Hanoi launched its military attack on Phnom Penh in late December.[11] Vietnam certainly anticipated a strong reaction from Beijing to its military action in Kampuchea but Hanoi was only assured once it had an insurance policy from the Soviet Union.[12] Hanoi tried to further deter China by allowing the Soviet Union to build a naval base at Cam Ranh Bay in August 1978.

China maintained a wait-and-see attitude until mid-November 1978. Deng Xiaoping said that the extent of Hanoi's punishment would depend on how far it went.[13] Only after Hanoi

[9] Duiker, *China and Vietnam*, 67–70; Khoo, *Collateral Damage*, 123.
[10] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 35.
[11] Chen, 36–37.
[12] Khoo, *Collateral Damage*, 128–29.
[13] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 85; Kuan Yew Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 596–97.

entered a de-facto alliance with Moscow in November 1978, Beijing felt an urgent need to respond to the expansion of the Moscow-Hanoi axis over Kampuchea. Deng Xiaoping immediately called for an enlarged Politburo meeting to discuss a military punishment from November to December 1978.[14] This was the point of no return in the Sino-Vietnamese conflict.

The conflict erupted when Vietnamese troops landed in Cambodian territory, prompting China to respond with a counterattack along Vietnam's northern border. On December 25, 1978, the People's Daily warned Hanoi that any further aggressive actions would be met with punishment. [15] Despite this warning, Vietnam launched a military invasion on the same day, landing 150,000 troops along the Vietnamese-Kampuchean border. Thirteen days later, on January 7, the Vietnamese army swiftly captured Phnom Penh and established a pro-Vietnam government in Kampuchea.[16] Beijing, however, refrained from immediate retaliation, awaiting Deng Xiaoping's visit to the US to seek support from the Carter administration.[17] Upon Deng's return, on February 17, 1979, the Chinese army launched a punitive war against Vietnam, crossing the border.

Neo-realism: Sino-Vietnamese distribution of power

This paper analyzes the formation of the Sino-Vietnamese war through neo-realism, a school of thought in which the distribution of power between two states is the central factor that leads to conflict. The alliance with the Soviet Union caused the Sino-Vietnamese distribution of power to gradually favor Hanoi. Hanoi's quick capture of Phnom Penh in early 1979 instilled a sense of urgency in China about the possible dominance of Hanoi over Indochina and an urge to

[14] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 85–86; Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975-1979*, 205.
[15] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 89–94; Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975-1979*, 202–18.
[16] Khoo, *Collateral Damage*, 127.
[17] Duiker, *China and Vietnam*, 84–85; Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 339–40, https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674062832.

prevent a decisive shift in the Sino-Vietnamese distribution of power. China's decision of war was also a product of the security dilemma since the Soviet factor remarkably increased Vietnam's threat to China's security.

The international system is recognized as an anarchic environment in which no central authority higher than states exists, requiring each state to rely on its own devices to safeguard its interests. Only when states can surpass their potential rivals in power advantage can they survive in this self-help system. By this logic, states must care deeply about the distribution of power among actors, compelling them to maximize their capabilities over their rivals. However, even if one state strives to gain more power for its purpose of defense, another state can perceive this action as a threat to its security. Consequently, states tend to feel insecure and seek to acquire more power to outstrip their rivalries, creating a security dilemma amongst them.

For more than two millennia, the distribution of power between China and Vietnam has been primarily asymmetric, with China consistently being the stronger side and Vietnam being the weaker one. Throughout history, the competition for power and influence in the Sino-sphere has been solely between these two countries. However, since the Cold War, this situation has become more complicated due to the involvement of the Soviet Union and Indochina. The withdrawal of US troops from South Vietnam in 1975 left a power vacuum in the region, opening the possibility for other major powers to engage in a confrontation over Vietnam.

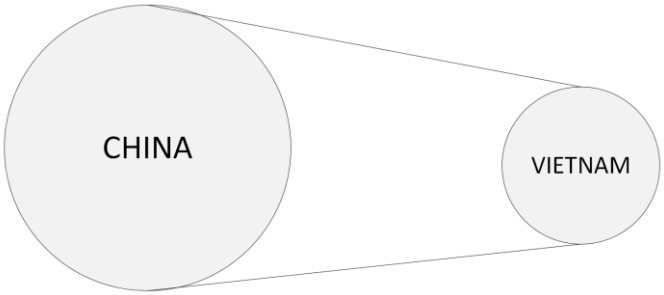

Figure 1: Asymmetry in Sino-Vietnamese relations throughout history

The USSR became a critical factor when Vietnam aligned with the Soviets to implement strategies vis-à-vis a rising threat from China. During the crucial stages of the Vietnam War, China and Vietnam disagreed over the priority of the war to liberate the South, with Hanoi believing that China wanted to keep a divided Vietnam.[18] A peak of mistrust occurred when China gave "a green light" for the US to bomb North Vietnam during Nixon's visit in 1972. In 1974, after the US withdrew its troops, China occupied Vietnam's Paracel Islands, which were still under the control of the Saigon regime. When Vietnam gained independence, Hanoi also accused the 1.5 million Chinese in Saigon of being a "fifth army" that Beijing used to sabotage Vietnam from within.[19] This chain of distrust made Vietnamese leaders extremely concerned about the security threat from the North, and they sought a solution to gain protection.

In response to the rising threat from China, Vietnam faced a choice: balancing or bandwagoning. Balancing refers to states implementing strategies vis-à-vis a rising threatening power to preserve the security status quo and save their interests.[20] These strategies involve strengthening their own military capabilities (internal balancing) and forming alliances with other states (external balancing) to counter great powers. By contrast, bandwagoning is the behavior of states, especially weaker ones, aligning themselves with emerging threatening power.

Pursuing bandwagoning was not a viable option for Vietnam because of a trade-off by which smaller states seeking to optimize their interests inevitably find themselves sacrificing a degree of political autonomy. With strong nationalist sentiments after a long-lasting resistance

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[18] Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975-1979*, 21–24.
[19] Huy Duc, *The Winning Side* (California: OsinBook, 2012), 57–59; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vietnam, "The truth about Vietnam - China relations over the past 30 years" (Truth Publishing House, October 1979).
[20] Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 18–19; Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): 3–43, https://doi.org/10.2307/2538540; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Illinois: Waveland Press, 2010), 126–27.

war against America, Hanoi refuses to fall into subordination with Beijing. The most likely strategy would be external balancing by an alliance with a capable power to counter the threat of China. Moscow was certainly satisfied with this role of security guarantor as the Soviets could expand its influence over Indochina to encircle China.[21] The Soviets' generous aid to Hanoi's Five-Year plan was the starting point for Soviet involvement in the Sino-Vietnamese distribution of power.

Although the Soviet Union agreed to a massive $3 billion in aid to Vietnam in 1975, the distribution of power between Hanoi and Beijing did not change significantly until the end of 1976. In December 1976, Hanoi initiated a "special relationship" with Laos and Cambodia as the first step toward establishing the Indochina Federation under Hanoi's leadership.[22] This union implied that the governments in Vientiane and Phnom Penh will both be pro-Vietnamese groups and any important decisions of these two states would first need to be cleared with Vietnam. This idea obviously concerned Beijing about the formation of Hanoi's sphere of influence over Indochina. Hanoi quickly established special relations with Laos in July 1977. However, its attempt to reach an agreement with the Phnom Penh government failed.[23]

The distribution of power only started to change when the Soviet factor became more actively involved in this equilibrium. Hanoi's decision to oust the Pol Pot regime in February 1978 could not have been made without the Soviet Union's approval. As an insurance policy for Hanoi, before the Kampuchea-Vietnamese war broke out, the Soviet Union guaranteed economic support by admitting Vietnam into the COMECON in June 1978.[24] Furthermore, Moscow

[21] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 22–23.
[22] Chen, 33–36; Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975-1979*, 94–97.
[23] Khoo, *Collateral Damage*, 115–20.
[24] Bruce Burton, "Contending Explanations of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War," *International Journal* 34, no. 4 (December 1, 1979): 713, https://doi.org/10.1177/002070207903400410; Khoo, *Collateral Damage*, 128–29.

brought deterrent strength to Hanoi by signing a Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty in November 1978. Article 6 specifies that "In case either party is attacked or threatened with attack, the two parties signatory to the treaty shall immediately consult each other with a view to eliminating that threat and shall take appropriate and effective measures to preserve peace and security of the two countries."[25] Before a military campaign scheduled for December, the Soviet Union, as Vietnam's new ally, provided all the support and deterrence that Hanoi needed.

Vietnam's intention to occupy Cambodia created a worst-case scenario for Beijing regarding the Sino-Vietnamese distribution of power. If Vietnam swallowed Cambodia, the whole of Indochina would be under Hanoi's sphere of influence. The distribution of power will certainly bring Hanoi to a more equal position with Beijing in Southeast Asia. Moreover, the force behind Hanoi was the backing of the Soviet Union in economic power and deterrence strength with the presence of the Soviet navy at Cam Ranh port.[26] This move hit the geopolitical interests of China - when great powers were sensitive to possible threats in their proximity. Looking at the Sino-Vietnamese distribution of power, for the first time, Hanoi possesses a more favorable power position and geopolitical advantage than Beijing. China would be placed in a pincer position, being besieged from both the North and the South. To the North was the Soviet army and to the South was Indochina-bloc under the control of the Vietnamese army. This would turn China from the stronger side to the weaker side.

Given Beijing's strength at that moment, the scenario of Hanoi swallowing Cambodia seemed a highly precarious situation. China had just stepped out from the Cultural Revolution with dramatic turmoil in domestic politics and a weak economy in urgent need of reform.[27]

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[25] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 27.
[26] Chen, 27–28.
[27] Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, 217–26.

Moreover, China had not engaged in any major warfare for over three decades since the Korean War, which raised real concerns about military weakness.[28] Since China does not share a border with Cambodia, its only way to support Pol Pot would have been through the Air Force or Navy. Therefore, if Hanoi eliminates Pol Pot and completely occupies Cambodia, it would be much harder for China to control the situation, especially considering the declining strength of the Chinese army, as it has not engaged in any large battles since the Korean War. The cost would be the delay of its economic reform Four Modernizations.[29] Therefore, China needed to act immediately before the situation got out of hand.

It could be argued that China's act of war was a response to preventing a possible decisive shift in the distribution of power, leaving China sandwiched between Vietnam and the Soviet Union. However, their strategy of using Pol Pot to weaken Hanoi's strength ultimately was neutralized by the Vietnamese army. China had to rely on its own devices. Carrying out a border war in the North was a viable option to help disperse Vietnamese military movements in Cambodia.

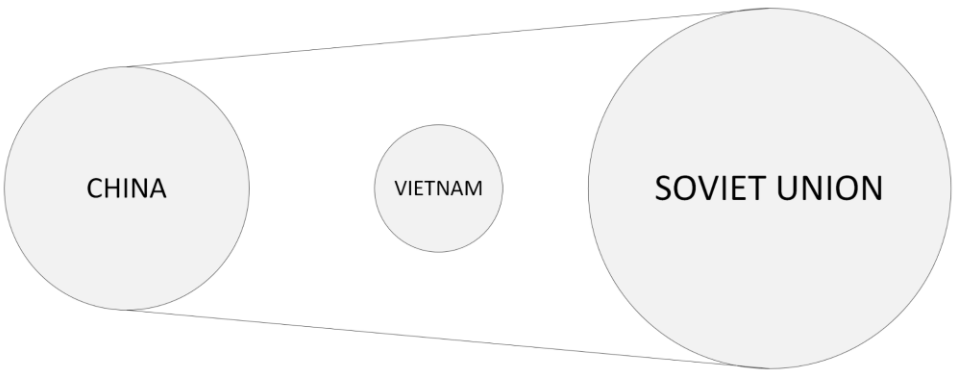

Figure 2: Vietnam's threat is magnified by the shadow of the Soviet factor

[28] Xiaoming Zhang, *Deng Xiaoping's Long War: The Military Conflict between China and Vietnam, 1979-1991* (North Carolina: UNC Press Books, 2015), 67–68.
[29] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 87–88; Zhang, *Deng Xiaoping's Long War*, 54–55.

China's decision to wage war was also a result of the security dilemma that arose due to Vietnam's rising threat. In most cases, the security dilemma would not be suitable to illustrate Sino-Vietnamese relations when China is always a stronger one, and only Vietnam feels a great deal of insecurity. Vietnam itself does not pose a significant threat to Beijing. However, the Cold War added the factor of the Soviet Union, a superpower with both economic and military power far superior to China's and in serious ideological conflict with Beijing. The Soviet factor dramatically changed the nature of the Sino-Vietnamese conflict.[30] As Ross argued, once the Soviet Union sided with Vietnam, the threat from Vietnam became much more serious and captured China's attention.[31] Therefore, according to Figure 2, Beijing's war decision could be explained as a response to the rising threat from Vietnam, which was much more magnified by the shadow of the Soviet Union.

Constructivism: The clash of identities between Beijing and Hanoi

This paper moves to examine the origins of the Sino-Vietnamese war through the constructivist lens. The history of interaction between the two countries has constructed a "view of self" and a "view of other" in each state, then creating particular norms in bilateral relations. The conflict broke out when there was a strong shift in Vietnam's "view of self", from submissive to seeking equality, as well as China's view of Hanoi, from a good child to a revisionist state. Then, Hanoi's breaking of norms in bilateral relations, along with its military overtone, urged China to take a punitive military action to exert its "view of self" as a responsible dominant state.

According to Wendt, the way a state behaves towards other actors depends on the meaning that the actor ascribes to it. This meaning is constructed from a history of past

[30] Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 28.
[31] Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975-1979*, 265–66.

interactions between the two.[32] In other words, a state cannot determine whether another state is a friend or enemy without ever interacting with them. A history of social interaction helps actors gain knowledge about each other. If this process is repeated over a long period of time, understanding of each other will be strengthened and form the conduct of "reciprocal typification".[33] This reciprocal typification will construct and reinforce identity formation, which is a "view of self" and a "view of others" in each state.[34]

Vietnam and China have a 2000-year history of interaction. History depicts Sino-Vietnamese relations as a long-standing enmity between a powerful suzerain and a small but stubborn tributary state.[35] All tributary states, including Vietnam, were treated as "children" of the emperor. These "barbarian" nations were considered fortunate to have received the emperor's benevolence by allowing them to access and enjoy the benefits of Chinese civilization.[36] Vietnam acknowledges China's authority but maintains its own will to resist and fight for independence and autonomy. To China, Vietnam is often seen as a defiant nation, behaving like a "wayward younger brother who stubbornly refused to follow the proper patterns of behavior laid down by the sages of the past".[37] Vietnam is always wary of China's intentions of invasion, and its geographical proximity only intensifies its fear and suspicion of China's threat.

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[32] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 396–406.
[33] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (England: Penguin Books, 1991), 70–72, 89–91.
[34] Paul A. Kowert, "National Identity: Inside and Out," in *Origins of National Interests* (London: Routledge, 1999), 4–6; Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 404–5.
[35] Nguyen, "The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict"; Martin Stuart-Fox, "Southeast Asia and China: The Role of History and Culture in Shaping Future Relations," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 26, no. 1 (2004): 116–39.
[36] Stuart-Fox, "Southeast Asia and China," 125–27.
[37] Duiker, *China and Vietnam*, 6; Nguyen, "The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict," 1037–38.

	View of self	**View of other**
Vietnam (1950s-1970s)	Nationalist but subject to dependence	Helpful role model
Vietnam (post-1975)	Nationalist but seeking-equality	Betrayal and hegemonic expansionist
China (1950s-1970s)	Superior states	"Good" child
China (post-1975)	Superior states	Ungrateful revisionist state

Table 3: China and Vietnam's identity formation during the 1950s-1970s and post-1975

From the 1950s to 1970s, Vietnam and China temporarily ended their "ancient enmity" and established a new identity for each state in this two-decade close cooperation to fight imperialism.[38] Vietnam looked up to China as a role model for learning from ideological philosophy, institutional forms, and military strategies that could be used to resist imperialism. Mao Zedong also described the relationship between the two revolutionary parties as "close as lips and teeth".[39] However, even though the bilateral relations are intimate, it remained a dependent asymmetrical relationship, in which Vietnam is under Beijing's instructions in all aspects of revolutionary policy. Therefore, Hanoi was still considered a subordinate and compliant child in Beijing's eyes.[40]

When states have adopted specific identities, they then establish norms for the conduct of bilateral relationships. These norms would represent expectations and proscription of behavior "for a given identity".[41] It can be said that norms are an integral part of identity because norms

[38] Burton, "Contending Explanations of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War," 702–3.
[39] Brantly Womack, *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 166–67.
[40] Womack, 162–64.
[41] Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 54.

standardize how states should act when adopting these identities. Thus, once norms are significantly violated, identity will no longer be maintained.[42] Consequently, a change in identity will also lead to a shift in national interests and policies.[43]

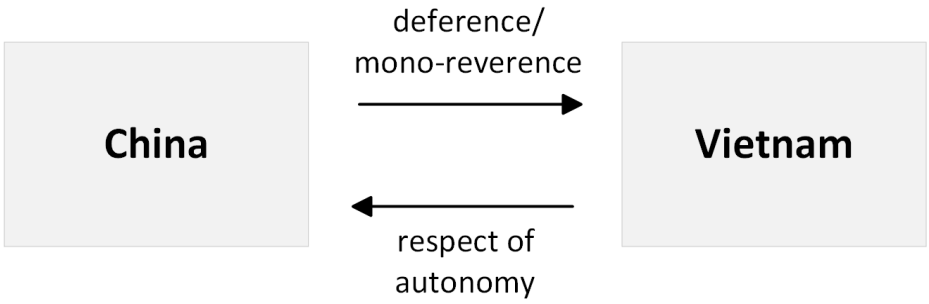

Figure 4: Norms in the Sino-Vietnamese relations

Given its identity as a dominant power during the 1950s-1970s, China expected Vietnam to show deference and mono-reverence to its authority. While deference is a common norm in a hierarchical relationship, mono-reverence is a unique feature that arose in the Cold War. Throughout its 2,000-year history, no major power other than China dominated Southeast Asia, also known as the Sino-sphere.[44] Therefore, mono-reverence, which means respecting only China as a regional power, has become the norm without saying in bilateral relations. However, during the Cold War, the Soviet factor came into play, resulting in competition over Asia, the Chinese leaders now explicitly expected Vietnam to only acknowledge China as the sole power in the region. In return, China would follow Vietnam's expectation to recognize its independence, autonomy, and demand for support.[45] As early as 1965, Deng Xiaoping proposed

[42] Katzenstein, 52–59.
[43] Katzenstein, 60–61.
[44] Stuart-Fox, "Southeast Asia and China."
[45] Brantly Womack, "Asymmetry and Systemic Misperception: China, Vietnam, and Cambodia during the 1970s," in *China Among Unequals* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2010), 428–30, https://doi.org/10.1142/9789814295284_0018.

increasing China's aid to Vietnam up to $1 billion if Vietnam severed relations with the Soviet Union.[46]

However, China repeatedly violated these norms by putting its interests first and sacrificing the interests of its smaller neighbors. Vietnam has accused China of betraying it at least three times. The first instance was at the Geneva Conference in 1954, when China colluded with France and forced Vietnam to accept France's proposal of dividing its territory. The second time was in 1972 when China gave the US the green light to bomb North Vietnam in return for US concessions on the Taiwan issue. Finally, Vietnam accused China of using the "reactionary Pol Pot group" to sabotage Vietnamese independence, marking the third instance of betrayal. Those betrayals imprinted in Hanoi leaders' minds that Beijing was a "traitor", desiring to destroy its stability and independence.[47]

China's violation of norms caused fear of a potential return of the tributary system in the minds of Hanoi leaders. Since 1975, Vietnam leaders have exposed "Beijing's plot to annex Vietnam and Indochina, in order to pave the way to realize its dream of expanding and dominating the whole of Southeast Asia".[48] The Sino-Vietnamese strategic distrust pushed Vietnam closer to the Soviet Union. Unlike China, Vietnam and the Soviet Union clearly did not have a history of insecurity.[49] In addition, the two are geographically and racially distinct, so Vietnamese people did not have the similar fear of being dominated and invaded as they did with China. The alliance with the Soviet Union, however, marked a turning point for both Vietnam's view of self and China's view of Hanoi.

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[46] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vietnam, "The truth about Vietnam - China relations over the past 30 years"; Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, 272–73.
[47] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vietnam, "The truth about Vietnam - China relations over the past 30 years."
[48] Duan Le, "Speech of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam at the First Session of the 7th National Assembly" (National Assembly, June 25, 1981), https://quochoi.vn:443/tulieuquochoi/anpham/Pages/anpham.aspx?AnPhamItemID=3261.
[49] Le.

There is a significant change in Vietnam's "view of self" as it has moved from a submissive stance to seeking equal footing with China. Vietnam's victory over the most powerful power in the world, combined with the endorsement of the Soviet Union, contributed to the rise of Vietnam's nationalism and motivated it to seek a more prominent position.[50] Once it was acknowledged by its biggest brother, Hanoi could not avoid considering itself a "little hegemon" in Indochina, which was evident from its desire to establish the Indochina Federation under Hanoi's leadership. Since then, Vietnam also considered itself to have an "equal" position with Beijing in the communist movement when the Soviet Union recognized it as a Socialist outpost in Southeast Asia and for its contribution to the world revolution by winning the Vietnam War.[51]

In Beijing's eyes, Vietnam has violated norms by openly favoring the new suzerain and turning its back on its old one. Chinese leaders even called Hanoi an ungrateful "S.O.B." for disregarding China's great sacrifice for the Vietnamese revolution.[52] Both sides view each other as traitors. But whatever their reasons may be, by 1978, the norms in bilateral relations had completely broken, leading to a drastic change in each state's identity. China was now a reactionary and expansionist establishment in the eyes of Hanoi, while Hanoi was an ungrateful, revisionist state in Beijing's perception. China's perception of Vietnam as a revisionist state was further reinforced when Vietnam took military action in Cambodia. China viewed this behavior of Vietnam as the "Cuba of the East" when paving the way for the Soviet Union to expand over Southeast Asia to replace Beijing as a new regional suzerain.[53] This turned Hanoi into a brazen traitor of Beijing.

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[50] Lee, *From Third World to First*, 335–36.
[51] Le, "Speech of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam at the First Session of the 7th National Assembly."
[52] Lee, *From Third World to First*, 595–96.
[53] Lee, 596–97.

The threat from Hanoi poses a risk of undermining China's internal identity. If China failed to control Vietnam, it would be a shame for China and especially damage its self-concept as a credible dominant state that can control the situation. This was unacceptable, especially when China needed a stable self-concept to strengthen its stability before launching its Four Modernizations.[54] Beijing feels an urgent need to react to assert its "view of self" as a responsible dominant state when its identity and credibility are at stake.[55] Factors of betrayal, violation of norms, and clash of identities also intensify the argument among Beijing's leadership that Hanoi deserves a punishment.[56] The punitive war was for Beijing to affirm its internal identity while reminding Vietnam of its unrealistic self-perception. The words "teach Vietnam a lesson" also show that the war is a demonstration of Beijing's role as a regional power responsible for correcting a perverse traitor who disrupts the Chinese-ruled order.

Conclusion

Both the theoretical perspectives of neo-realism and constructivism provide reasonable explanations for the formation of the Sino-Vietnamese war and Beijing's decision to wage it. However, neo-realism only considers the evolution of the conflict at the time the distribution of power started to change, specifically when Vietnam initiated the Indochina Federation and joined a de-facto alliance with the Soviets in 1978. By contrast, the constructivist perspective provides a deeper understanding of why the war was constructed from a series of historical distrust and conflicts that happened during the Second Indochina War and Vietnam War, which occurred long before any significant shift in the distribution of power.

[54] Kowert, "National Identity," 32–34.
[55] Burton, "Contending Explanations of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War," 714; Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 88.
[56] Zhang, *Deng Xiaoping's Long War*, 46–47.

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Understanding China's BRI Strategy in Thailand through Economic, Geopolitical, and Security Dimensions

Grace Ma, Johns Hopkins University

Introduction

In Kazakhstan in 2013, President Xi announced the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In the past decade, the BRI's primary goals have been increasing China's global outreach, fostering international connectivity, and expanding China's geopolitical influence by funding infrastructure programs in countries worldwide. The BRI comprises the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and the sea-based Maritime Silk Road (MSR), and Southeast Asia is at the crossroads of both. On the SREB, Southeast Asia is at the junction of the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. On the other hand, the MSR connects routes from Southeast Asia heading toward the South Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, and Europe.[1] As part of the SREB, China hopes to install high-speed railways (HSRs) throughout Southeast Asian countries to form the Pan-Asian Railway Network that stretches from China to Singapore. Thailand is central to this initiative, as it serves as the link between the portion of the railway in Laos and the rest of Southeast Asia. Unlike other countries such as Laos and Malaysia, which have multiple BRI partnerships in different sectors with China, Thailand's involvement with the BRI is limited to the development of HSRs and related infrastructure like ports. This paper will thus seek to understand what the BRI in Thailand means strategically for China. It will begin by briefly outlining Sino-Thai relations in recent years and detailing the HSR project in Thailand. Then, it

[1] Naksinn, Kanpimon, Tanyalak Chaisorn, and Warinbhorn Benjasak. "The Belt and Road Initiative." Commercial Dispute Resolution, September 21, 2021. https://www.cdr-news.com/cdr-essential-intelligence/1100-cdr-the-belt-and-road-initiative-2021/thailand.

will examine China's economic, geopolitical, and security rationale behind its push for BRI involvement in Thailand via HSRs.

Background: Sino-Thai Relations

Empirically, Thailand has exercised a flexible and balanced diplomatic approach toward the U.S. and China. Thailand is America's oldest ally in the region and one of its two treaty allies in Southeast Asia. At the same time, Thailand has remained a close partner of China in terms of bilateral cooperation, and it is the first Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) country to have maintained its security consultative mechanisms and military exercises with China.[2] Historically, Thailand and China were allies against Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, which set the stage for their cordial relationship and cooperation in the commerce, tourism, military, and security fields in the post-Cold War world. Moreover, Thailand has seen a recent shift away from the West and into China's orbit. This movement was driven by the U.S. and China's differing attitudes toward Thailand during the 1997-1998 Asian Financial Crisis and the 2014 military coup. During the 1997-1998 Asian Financial Crisis, China supported Thailand rather than criticizing it and endorsing the International Monetary Fund's austerity measures as the U.S. did. As a result, the Thai government increasingly prioritized its collaboration with China, especially after Thailand's 2014 military coup. The U.S. denounced the coup and reduced its cooperation with Thailand, whereas China accepted the military junta and stated that it would not interfere in Thailand's domestic politics and affairs.[3] These events solidified China as a cooperative and cordial partner to Thailand, pulling Thailand away from the Western orbit.

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[2] Kuik, Cheng-Chwee. "Elite Legitimation and the Agency of the Host Country: Evidence from Laos, Malaysia, and Thailand's BRI Engagement." In Global Perspectives on China's Belt and Road Initiative: Asserting Agency through Regional Connectivity, edited by Florian Schneider, 217–44. Amsterdam University Press, 2021. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1dc9k7j.12, p.234.

[3] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project." Taylor & Francis Online, April 26, 2019. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00472336.2019.1603318, p.386.

Background: HSR as a BRI Project in Thailand

After completion, the HSR in Thailand would connect to the Laotian portion of the Pan-Asian Railway Network. The project is split into two parts that run south to north in Thailand: The first phase entails railway construction from Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchasima, while the second phase would connect Nakhon Ratchasima to Nong Khai, ultimately bridging Laos and Thailand. In conjunction with HSR development, China has also begun modernizing and expanding ports in Sattahip, Laem Chabang, and Map Ta Phut as part of its BRI strategy in Thailand.[4] However, progress on the HSR has been slow because of constant renegotiations due to Thailand's political instability. While talks on this project began in 2008 under former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, it dragged on following Thailand's military rule due to disagreements on construction costs, financing, and risk sharing.[5] The junta ultimately decided to proceed with the project amidst critical voices to deal with Thailand's slow economic growth and stagnating foreign investment. However, a concrete completion date has yet to be established. Progress on the HSR has been hindered as previously negotiated arrangements were altered or abandoned due to Thailand's changing leaders and governments and their different interests. In general, Beijing views Thai negotiators as constantly changing their conditions and demands, while Thai officials perceive the Chinese as difficult to negotiate with because they are more risk-averse and less generous than expected.[6]

[4] Rana, Pradumna B, and Xianbai Ji. "BRI and Southeast Asia." SpringerLink, July 31, 2020. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-15-5171-0_5, p.95.
[5] Kuik, Cheng-Chwee. "Elite Legitimation and the Agency of the Host Country: Evidence from Laos, Malaysia, and Thailand's BRI Engagement," p.233.
[6] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.397.

Economic Rationale

China's reason for focusing on the HSR as its signature BRI project in Thailand stems from its economic desire to relieve its domestic HSR over-capacity, support state-owned constructors and manufacturers, improve market access for southwestern China, ensure access to valuable resources in Southeast Asia, and use economic diplomacy to further its regional influence and ties. China's domestic HSR and related industries suffer from over-capacity due to China primarily producing labor-intensive goods rather than capital-intensive, heavy-industry ones related to the construction of HSRs. For example, sectors like iron, steel, and aluminum are weighed down by debt and low-capacity utilization.[7] Additionally, China does not have enough domestic demand for HSRs, as it will only be able to reach its goal of 15,000 km of HSR by 2025 if the government can create mega-cities and if the already heavily indebted state-owned train operator—the China Railway Corporation (CRC)—can take on additional debt.[8] The uncertainty of prospects in China thus makes foreign projects and expansion more attractive. The HSR in Thailand will allow China to use up its excess supply-chain capacity left from the limited domestic demand. By supporting the HSR project, the Xi administration also hopes to make national champions such as the CRC internationally competitive and increasingly profitable from foreign expansion. Moreover, the infrastructure gap in Thailand also paves the way for more commercial opportunities for Chinese construction companies and equipment manufacturers. To illustrate, more than 100 Chinese companies have built factories in the Thai city of Rayong

[7] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.390.
[8] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.390.

alone,[9] highlighting the HSR project's potential to increase manufacturing opportunities for Chinese firms and illustrating its importance to China's economic development.

Beyond foreign expansion, the HSR network may help improve southwestern China's market access and ensure that China has access to vital resources. The Pan-Asian Railway Network would allow China's landlocked and economically lagging southwestern provinces—especially Yunnan, where the railway begins—to gain direct access to Southeast Asian markets.[10] At the same time, the HSR initiative would create various manufacturing and construction jobs in the inland parts of southwestern China and reduce the country's income and spatial inequalities between the more developed coastal areas and the more impoverished inner regions.[11] Moreover, as the imports to China—which range from industrial raw materials to natural resources to food grains—increase, the country becomes increasingly reliant on other nations. To prevent import shortages, Beijing can utilize the HSR in Thailand to secure access to valuable resources, as Central and Southeast Asia are resource-rich and provide land-based alternatives to imports from sea lanes.[12]

Another critical economic factor contributing to China's BRI strategy in Thailand is how it allows China to utilize economic diplomacy. The HSR is part of China's attempt to portray itself as a regional infrastructure provider and challenge Japan, ASEAN's established infrastructure provider. In addition, it fosters Chinese standards in the international arena and

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[9] Rana, Pradumna B, and Xianbai Ji. "BRI and Southeast Asia," p.95.
[10] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.398.
[11] Damuri, Yose Rizal, Vidhyandika Perkasa, Raymond Atje, and Fajar Hirawan. "Prospects and Challenges of BRI from Some ASEAN Countries' Perspectives." PERCEPTIONS AND READINESS OF INDONESIA TOWARDS THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: UNDERSTANDING LOCAL PERSPECTIVES, CAPACITY, AND GOVERNANCE. Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2019. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25409.8, p.37.
[12] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.386.

stimulates China-centered regional production networks, allowing it to further its regional influence.[13] The BRI also enables China to display its economic power in a friendly and non-threatening way, as it has strategic interests in maintaining close ties with Southeast Asian countries. The BRI's infrastructure connectivity projects have built ties and alliances with other nations, creating the foundation for government-to-government negotiations.[14] In Thailand specifically, the HSR project has ensured that the two countries' infrastructure-related firms are cooperating rather than competing with each other, furthering the cordial relationships between the two governments.

Geopolitical Rationale

The geographic positioning of Thailand at the center of Southeast Asia makes it a strategic partner for China to reach the rest of Southeast Asia. Not only is Thailand surrounded by Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia, but also it is next to the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, linking China to the rest of ASEAN.[15] Thailand is also conveniently located in the middle of the Pan-Asian Railway Network and thus connects projects between ASEAN and China, earning it the title of "the buckle of the belt."[16] As a result of these factors, China's involvement in Thailand via the HSR network allows China to connect to other Southeast Asian countries and highlights the importance of connectivity in China's BRI strategy in Thailand. Furthermore, because Thailand does not have a coastline on the South China Sea, it circumvents the tensions and maritime disputes in the region that arise among other ASEAN countries, like

[13] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.400.
[14] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.390.
[15] Naksinn, Kanpimon, Tanyalak Chaisorn, and Warinbhorn Benjasak. "The Belt and Road Initiative."
[16] Punyaratabandhu, Piratorn, and Jiranuwat Swaspitchayaskun. Thailand's Perception and Strategy toward China's BRI Expansion: Hedging with Cooperating, September 21, 2020. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10971475.2020.1809819, p.75.

Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.[17] These geographical features allow Thailand to be the coordinator and middleman between China and other ASEAN nations, explaining why China hopes to strengthen ties with Thailand via the BRI.

Beijing can also utilize the HSR to bolster regional stability and expand its influence. By building infrastructure and ensuring cross-border trade between its neighbors, China hopes to boost living standards and reduce ethnic strife on borderlands, ultimately preventing conflicts from spilling over into China.[18] Beijing also hopes to deepen ties with ASEAN countries and position itself as a partner and not a threat to the region, although its disputes with ASEAN nations in the South China Sea and its aggressive attitude toward Taiwan may undermine this goal. Nonetheless, the purpose of BRI is to instill trust between China and ASEAN and deepen their interdependence and dialogue. Moreover, China has refrained from interfering in other nations' internal affairs—evident from its attitude toward Thailand's 2014 military coup in stark contrast to the West—and followed up with support via the BRI. China can wield BRI engagements with Thailand to gain more ASEAN support and establish regional stability. Beijing's view of Thailand is that it is part of a group of target countries not fully on its side yet, which explains its focus on bringing Thailand into its orbit.[19] Thailand's regional influence and aforementioned role as the middleman between China and the rest of Southeast Asia offers the potential for expanding the number of supporting votes in ASEAN for programs beneficial to China. Moreover, the HSR in Thailand may help portray China as a friendly power and help improve its ties with ASEAN.

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[17] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.395.
[18] Lauridsen, Laurids S. "Drivers of China's Regional Infrastructure Diplomacy: The Case of the Sino-Thai Railway Project," p.385.
[19] Dossani, Rafiq, Lynn Hu, and Christian Curriden. Implementing China's Grand Strategy in Asia Through Institutions, 2021. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA1600/RRA1653-1/RAND_RRA1653-1.pdf, p.25.

As a result of the HSR in Thailand, Sino-Thai relationships have further improved, bringing Thailand closer to the Chinese orbit. Thailand's Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, who was elected in September of 2023, made China his first official visit destination outside of ASEAN. In the recent Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Thavisin emphasized Thailand's ties with China, stating that the two nations have had a long history of friendly relations and that the people support each other like kin. Moreover, he encouraged additional BRI involvement in Thailand, mentioning that he hopes to work with more Chinese enterprises on BRI projects in the future to strengthen the trade and ties between the two nations. China has also echoed these same sentiments, declaring that China and its ASEAN neighbors have all been friendly with each other and that China will continue to pursue a policy of friendship and cooperation in the region. Furthermore, it stated that it will maintain its commitment to the development of ASEAN and the ASEAN-China strategic partnership.

Security Rationale

Security is another facet behind China's BRI strategy in Thailand, as it seeks to replace the Washington-Bangkok link with a Beijing-Bangkok link. Decision-makers in Beijing are undeniably concerned with the BRI's economic and diplomatic payoffs, but they are also invested in its security payoff. As previously discussed, Thailand has historically close security ties with the U.S., but BRI initiatives allow China to erode and replace those links and position itself as the regional hegemon. For example, as economic ties have tightened between China and Thailand, a traditional customer of the U.S. for military equipment, Thailand has begun purchasing more military equipment from China.[20] In 2017, the Thai government approved the purchase of three Yuan-class submarines from China, but the two parties are discussing a

[20] Freeman, Carla, and Mie Ōba. Bridging the Belt and Road Divide, October 10, 2019. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/10/bridging-belt-and-road-divide-pub-80019.

potential swap of the submarines for a frigate.[21] Either way, Chinese arms exports have allowed China to improve its relationships in ASEAN and demonstrate that it is a capable alternative to the U.S.[22] It has also repeatedly displayed its military strength by increasing military exercises with Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries to act as a counter-balance to the U.S. In July of 2023, China and Thailand conducted their sixth Falcon Strike. This joint air combat exercise aims to facilitate the two countries' military cooperation and help safeguard the region,[23] allowing Beijing to further position itself as a cooperative ally with the necessary military strength to become the new protector of the region.

The Pan-Asian Railway Network would ease China's long-standing security concerns over maritime chokepoints. China is largely reliant on the Malacca Strait to access its imports, and around eighty percent of its oil imports travel through the strait,[24] creating fears in Beijing that the country may not be able to access vital resources if conflicts arise and the strait is blockaded. By linking China to ports throughout Thailand and Southeast Asia, the HSR ensures that China will have more options to access the maritime trade routes that it heavily depends on.[25] Beijing's concerns over secure access to sea routes further explain its investment in establishing the HSR and ports in Thailand.

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[21] Thepgumpanat, Panarat, and Panu Wongcha-um. "Thailand Aims Swapping Chinese Sub with Frigate after Troubled Deal." Reuters, October 24, 2023. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-aims-swapping-chinese-sub-with-frigate-after-troubled-deal-2023-10-24/.

[22] Zheng, Sarah. "How China Is Using Military Ties to Expand Its Reach in Southeast Asia." South China Morning Post, September 25, 2017. https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2112724/how-china-using-military-ties-expand-its-reach.

[23] Liu, Xuanzun. "21-Day China-Thailand Joint Air Combat Exercises End in Success, Combat Capabilities and Collaboration Enhanced." Global Times, July 23, 2023. https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202307/1294883.shtml#:~:text=The%20Falcon%20Strike%202023%20marked,peace%20and%20stability%2C%20CCTV%20reported.

[24] Freeman, Carla, and Mie Ōba. Bridging the Belt and Road Divide.

[25] Peter, Zsombor. "Thailand Sets 2028 Target to Finish High-Speed Rail Link with China." Voice of America, July 17, 2022. https://www.voanews.com/a/thailand-sets-2028-target-to-finish-high-speed-rail-link-with-china/6662154.html.

The HSR in Thailand may also serve dual civil-military purposes as part of Beijing's security strategy. While the HSR may facilitate China's humanitarian and disaster relief operations in Southeast Asia, it may also quicken the transportation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops and increase Chinese military presence in the region. Furthermore, China's direct access to Southeast Asian ports via the HSR would allow it to protect commercial shipping lanes, trade routes, and energy flows. However, there are no clear statements or attitudes from Beijing that would reveal the PLA's role in the region or whether it would deploy troops to protect BRI projects and the citizens working on them.[26] However, many BRI projects in ASEAN, such as the Pan-Asian Railway Network that have the potential to be dual use, are far from complete, making it ambiguous if they are meant to possess any military functions. While Beijing consistently phrases the BRI and the HSR solely as connectivity and economic projects, their potential for military usage is undeniable and may constitute a part of Beijing's security rationale behind the implementation of the HSR.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the economic, geopolitical, and security motivations underlying China's strategic BRI engagement in Thailand via the Pan-Asian Railway Network and the building of HSRs. China's economic rationale behind the implementation of HSRs includes its desire to export its over-capacity of HSRs, support state-owned enterprises, secure market access, and diminish income inequality within the country. Geopolitically, Thailand's strategic location at the heart of Southeast Asia positions it as the perfect partner for China to expand its influence across Southeast Asia and engage in dialogue with other ASEAN countries. Moreover,

[26] Wu, Xiangning, and You Ji. "The Military Drivers of China's Belt and Road Endeavor: Expanding the Global Reach from Land Mess to the Maritime Domains." China Review 20, no. 4 (2020): 223–44. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26959859, p. 232.

Thailand's limited stakes in the tensions in the South China Sea reinforce its appeal as a strategic partner. Regarding security considerations behind China's BRI strategy in Thailand, the HSR project enables China to position itself as an alternative to the U.S. by deepening its economic and diplomatic ties in the region. Moreover, the HSR has the potential to help China secure access to maritime trade routes and increase its military presence.

This paper's scope is limited to the examination of the Chinese viewpoint and rationale behind the BRI's expansion into Thailand. However, it is important to consider Thai perspectives, understand why the BRI may be an attractive initiative for Bangkok, and recognize whether considerable risks exist in its engagements with Beijing.

The Thai HSR example is a microcosm of the economic, geopolitical, and security considerations behind China's BRI strategy and illustrates Beijing's strategic goals. Scholars, policymakers, and other stakeholders can understand the ever-evolving dynamics of China's regional and global engagements by understanding Beijing's fundamental motivations.

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Fall 2024