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EDITORIAL

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The first few months of 2004 have been marked by many troublesome developments in East Asia. The impeachment of South Korea's president, lack of progress following the six-nation talks on the North Korean nuclear weapons program, the political turbulence after the hotly contested presidential election in Taiwan, and Beijing's recent ruling on the pace of democratic reform in Hong Kong have all heightened the sense of worry and concern within the region and in America. This fifth edition of the *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* highlights related concerns, with articles examining Beijing's push for Article 23 legislation this past summer, the human rights crisis in North Korea, and the extension of the war on terrorism into the Philippines. With additional pieces on Beijing's 2008 Olympics and China's transitional economy, the *Journal* also continues to examine the profound transformations affecting the region. Finally, the *Journal* ventures into new territories, with articles from the disciplines of demography, landscape design, and women's studies.



In "Article 23: Moving from 'Two Systems' to 'One Country'?" **Vicky Hwang** argues that Beijing did not significantly alter its Hong Kong policy when it pushed for the passage of Article 23 legislation during the summer of 2003. Analyzing reports and editorials in pro-China Hong Kong newspapers, Hwang argues that Beijing's desire to enact the Article 23 measures reflected China's longstanding insistence on maintaining ultimate sovereignty over the territory. At the same time, China's leaders also sought to project the image of a Hong Kong possessing a significant degree of self-autonomy, insisting that it was the prerogative of the territory's own leaders to initiate laws on security matters. Meanwhile, in "Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy: The Case of the Auto Components Sourcing Network," **Khan Pyo Lee** argues that post-communist exchange relations do not necessarily correspond with the concept of the market as conceived by neoclassical economists. Indeed, as exemplified by the market for parts and components of automobiles in China, these relations tend to be governed by coordinating mechanisms based on past organizational affiliations and not simply by the impersonal mechanism of price alone.

Looking forward to 2008, **Ryan Ong** evaluates the implications and effects of a Chinese Olympic Games in "New Beijing, Great Olympics: Beijing and its Unfolding Olympic Legacy." Ong traces Beijing's Olympics ambitions from the late 1980s and details the city's intensive preparations both before and after its

winning bid was announced in 2001. Aside from the massive physical transformation of Beijing's urban landscape, Ong questions whether the Olympics will also bring about political changes; he looks to previous Games in Mexico City and Seoul for answers. Beijing will most probably see some political activity in 2008, Ong concludes, but the central government can avoid the remote possibility of significant disruption by continuing its active engagement of the public in the Olympics planning process. **Simona Bignami-Van Assche** addresses a radically different concern of the Chinese government in her article, "A Different Perspective on the Imbalance of Reported Sex Ratios at Birth in Rural China." Using pregnancy histories and vital registration data from the first half of the 1990s, Bignami-Van Assche considers common explanations for the difference between true and reported sex ratios at birth: female infanticide, sex-selective abortion, and the underreporting of girls. Ultimately, she suggests another explanation – the Chinese family planning policy context and its influence on individual and administrative reporting.



In "Untapped Human Resources: Women's Political Role in the Revival of the Japanese Economy," **Robin Orlansky** examines Japanese political reforms that have aimed to improve the position of women in society and mend related socio-economic problems. She specifically looks at why these reforms have faced significant obstacles – despite a recognized need to tackle targeted multiple problems simultaneously – and examines possible options to promote women's rights in Japan. Meanwhile, in "The Japanese Garden for the Mind: The 'Bliss' of Paradise Transcended," **Camelia Nakagawara** takes the reader on a historical and philosophical tour of Japanese gardens, as they evolved from the Heian through the Muromachi periods. Nakagawara grounds the changes in the composition, structure, and meaning of gardens in the context of religious, economic, and political transformations that Japan experienced during that time period.



The international community's silence on North Korean human rights issues, **David S. Lee** argues, has been deafening. "North Korean Human Rights: A Story of Apathy, Victims, and International Law" discusses the little-known plight of those who attempt escape from the world's last Stalinist state. Drawing on interviews with refugees and human rights activists, Lee describes the tremendous challenges of successful escape to China and the horrific consequences of failure. Repatriated refugees sent to North Korean prison camps must endure brutal conditions and intensive labor while facing the sham justice meted out by guards and security agents. Life for those who escape to China is also fraught with difficulty: refugees must avoid being discovered by

Chinese agents as they make their way through an “underground railroad” to third countries. Despite the United Nations’ ineffectiveness and chronic apathy amongst many South Koreans, Lee holds out hope that recent legislation has signaled Seoul’s growing awareness and activism in resolving the North’s human rights situation.



Finally, **George Baylon Radics** explores current developments in US-Philippines relations in “Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Balikatan Exercises in the Philippines and the US ‘War against Terrorism.’” Using the 2002 Balikatan Exercises on Basilan as an example, Radics argues that Washington is slowly reestablishing its military presence on the islands. The fight against terrorism has given the United States both a pressing need and a good excuse to negotiate agreements with the Philippine government and re-deploy troops. Despite strong public and congressional opposition, the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has welcomed efforts to step up military-to-military relations. Such developments threaten to infringe on national sovereignty and negatively affect average Filipinos: Radics cites the continuing violence in Mindanao and alleged human rights violations committed during the Exercises. Radics concludes that the Balikatan Exercises and the increased US military presence are symptomatic of the neo-colonial relationship that exists between the United States and the Philippines.

Correction: In the Current Events article “US Relocates Troops on Korean Peninsula” published in our previous edition (Winter 2004), we had incorrectly stated that Seoul was the home of the 8th Division of the US Army. It is actually the 8th United States Army that is based in the South Korean capital. The *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* regrets the error.

Article 23: Moving from ‘Two Systems’ to ‘One Country’?

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Introduction

In the summer of 2003, the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) moved to introduce a set of new internal security laws that would have marked the most dramatic change in the territory since Beijing assumed sovereignty in 1997. These potentially intrusive new laws, known as the Article 23 measures, outlaw such acts as “subversion,” “sedition,” “treason,” “secession,” and “theft of state secrets” and sparked fiery opposition and widespread concern both locally and abroad. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* (*FEER*) asserted that with the implementation of Article 23, “the common-law foundation that made Hong Kong great is for the first time being intertwined with the more unpredictable and heavy-handed rule by legal decree introduced 53 years ago by the Chinese Communist Party.”¹

The “one country, two systems” formulation, as laid out in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and enshrined in the SAR’s Basic Law, guarantees Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy from Beijing and the preservation of Hong Kong’s capitalist system for at least fifty years after the handover. Academics, lawyers, politicians, journalists, and even businessmen feared that Article 23 would have been a portent of China’s move away from maintaining “two systems” and

toward pursuing greater integration of Hong Kong into “one country,” as suggested by the *FEER*.

What exactly does the Article 23 controversy tell us about China’s policy toward Hong Kong beyond the widespread speculation and hype? This article seeks to examine the official PRC rhetoric regarding the Article 23 measures in order to decipher whether this new development indicates that the broad framework with which China deals with Hong Kong is changing fundamentally, or whether the Article 23 issue is merely an instance of China continuing to follow its original policy toward the territory but taking piecemeal steps to adapt to changing circumstances. After examining China’s historical policy toward Hong Kong and the current party line as illustrated by PRC-owned newspapers circulated in Hong Kong, I argue that, in fact, China’s fundamental policy toward the HKSAR has not changed. Rather, China is merely continuing its long-held pragmatic approach in dealing with Hong Kong by acting within the framework of its existing policy and adapting to new developments in a changing global environment.

The Basis of China’s Policy toward Hong Kong

In 1842, following the Chinese defeat in

¹ Philip Segal, “Business: The Biggest Victim,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 19, 2002, 30.

10 Article 23

China

the Opium War, the Treaty of Nanjing ceded the island of Hong Kong to British sovereignty in perpetuity. In 1860, as a result of the Convention of Peking, which marked the end of the Anglo-Chinese war, the tip of the Kowloon Peninsula was also ceded to British control indefinitely. This new agreement saw the colony's land increase by another three square miles. In 1898, the British, fearing that they would lose out in the European scramble for concessions during the Sino-Japanese war, signed a lease with the Chinese that gave them the entire Peninsula of Kowloon for ninety-nine years. This lease, which was signed for the newly acquired land known as the New Territories, expired on June 30, 1997.

Hong Kong Island was the very first segment of soil the Chinese had ever ceded to the "foreign devils," and it paved the way for other foreign powers to carve niches along China's coast. China never forgot or forgave the humiliation. Thus, when Deng Xiaoping met with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1982 to discuss the future of Hong Kong, he stated:

On the question of sovereignty, China has no room for maneuver. To be frank, the question is not open to discussion. The time is ripe for making it unequivocally clear that China will recover Hong Kong in 1997. That is to say, China will recover not only the New Territories but also Hong Kong Island and Kowloon.²

For many older generation Chinese leaders like Deng, the issue of Hong Kong was an emotional one. These leaders, who had built up a strong sense of nationalism through their revolutionary experiences, considered British

rule over Hong Kong a remnant of Chinese humiliation under imperialism. The younger leaders of the PRC shared the nationalistic sentiments held by their elders as they formulated their opinions of Hong Kong based on communist views of modern Chinese history. Thus, China's policy toward Hong Kong was foremost based on a historical need to regain some of the national dignity it had lost under Western imperialism.

On top of the historical and nationalistic basis for China's policy toward Hong Kong, there was also a pragmatic aspect informing China's policy direction. The leaders in Beijing recognized that Hong Kong would be a useful asset in their drive for economic development and modernization. When Deng initiated the era of reform in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he was well aware that Hong Kong had the knowledge, expertise, and resources China needed to realize its ambitious economic reforms. With their business and technological know-how, their management skills, and their advanced telecommunications and transportation infrastructure, the people of Hong Kong had a large portion of the knowledge and resources China could draw upon to realize its goals as laid out in the Four Modernizations campaign.³

By the 1980s, Hong Kong had shown itself to be an international economic powerhouse. Not only had Hong Kong gained a reputation for being the prime location for foreign investment in Asia, with an annual per capita GDP of US\$8,719 in 1980, compared to China's GDP per capita of US\$972 that same year, Hong Kong itself could serve as a massive source of investment capital.⁴ In fact, within the first

²Deng Xiaoping, "Our Basic Position of the Question of Hong Kong (September 24, 1982)," in The Bureau for the Compilation and Translation of Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin Under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, trans., *Deng Xiaoping on the Question of Hong Kong* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1993), 1.

³ Steve Tsang, *Hong Kong: An Appointment with China* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 134.

⁴ Center for Economic and Policy Research, "Per Capita GDP Growth, 1960-2000," <http://www.cepr.net/IMF/Emperor_Table_1.htm>.

decade of the opening of the Chinese economy, Hong Kong had become China's most important source of external investment and its largest trading partner.⁵ In the 1980s, it became apparent to Beijing that in order to continue with its program of economic development, it needed Hong Kong to serve both as a source of capital investment and as an *entrepôt* to channel foreign trade and investment into the mainland. Thus, China had a pragmatic economic interest *vis-à-vis* the territory.

From a broader global perspective, the Hong Kong question was also perceived as an important factor in shaping Beijing's international reputation. The People's Republic of China was all too aware that allowing Hong Kong to collapse would greatly undermine its global reputation, not to mention the loss of face that would occur if, in managing Hong Kong, they failed where the British had excelled. How China handled the Hong Kong issue would also have direct bearing on its prospects for reunifying with Taiwan. China's handling of the Hong Kong question thus became an issue of great geopolitical importance as the nation began trying to integrate itself into the international community in the early 1980s.

China's Policy toward Hong Kong

In order to incorporate the historical, economic, and geopolitical interests that China's had with respect to Hong Kong, the leaders in Beijing, most notably Deng Xiaoping and Liao Chengzhi, decided on two

tenets in formulating their Hong Kong policy: exercising maximum flexibility in practical matters to maintain prosperity and stability, while keeping complete rigidity over the core issue of sovereignty.⁶ The result arrived in the form of the concept of "one country, two systems."

Originally envisaged as a way to resolve the Taiwan issue, the "one country, two systems" concept had been in the making since the 1978 Third Plenary Session of the Communist Party's Central Committee.⁷ The core of the "one country, two systems" proposal entailed China assuming sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, while guaranteeing that the current capitalist system and way of life in the territory would remain unchanged for fifty years after 1997.⁸ In order to facilitate this, China was prepared to grant Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy.

The British were initially reluctant to accept this formulation because they had initiated the dialogue with China over the Hong Kong issue in the hopes of retaining sovereignty past the 1997 deadline. When it became clear that the Chinese were immovable over the issue of sovereignty and were more than willing to use military force to reclaim Hong Kong if necessary, the British had to concede that the "one country, two systems" formulation encompassed the best possible terms under which Hong Kong could return to Chinese control.

In September 1984, the intensive Chinese-British negotiations, which had

“ **HOW CHINA HANDLED THE HONG KONG ISSUE WOULD ALSO HAVE DIRECT BEARING ON ITS PROSPECTS FOR REUNIFYING WITH TAIWAN.** ”

⁵ Tsang, 134

⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁷ Deng Xiaoping, "We Shall Be Paying Close Attention to Developments in Hong Kong during the Transition Period (July 31, 1984)," in The Bureau for the Compilation and Translation of Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin Under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, trans., *Deng Xiaoping on the Question of Hong Kong* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1993), 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*

12 Article 23

China

proceeded “with the common aim of maintaining the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong,” came to an end when Premier Zhao Ziyang and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher signed the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration (JD).⁹ The Declaration was the cornerstone of a set of Sino-British understandings that were then enshrined into Hong Kong law with the creation of Hong Kong’s mini-constitution, the Basic Law of the HKSAR.¹⁰

Because of its insistence on maintaining complete sovereignty over Hong Kong, the PRC saw the Basic Law as a subsidiary of its own constitution and thus deemed the drafting of the law to be an enterprise that Beijing could monopolize. However, in order to quell fears in the territory, China followed along its policy of flexibility, allowing forty percent of the fifty-nine-member Basic Law Drafting Committee to be made up of local Hong Kong residents who had first been carefully selected and approved by the PRC’s top leaders.

The Basic Law Drafting Committee worked off of the two basic premises and objectives of the “one country, two systems” formulation: to preserve the existing capitalist system and way of life in Hong Kong for at least fifty years and to guarantee a high degree of autonomy. For the leaders in Beijing however, the real issue was how to make the Basic Law serve their interests best.¹¹ Luckily for the people of Hong Kong, it remained in the interest of Beijing to produce a document that would be satisfactory

to both the territory and the international community in order to preserve Hong Kong’s prosperity. If the Basic Law went against the promises laid out in the JD by imposing greater central control, investors and Hong Kong residents would immediately lose confidence, which could potentially result in a mass exodus of both skilled labor and capital. This would have left Hong Kong as more of a burden to the mainland than an asset. As Deng told Margaret Thatcher in December 1984:

If we had wanted to achieve reunification by imposing socialism on Hong Kong, not all three parties [the Chinese, the British and the people of Hong Kong] would have accepted it. And reluctant acquiescence by

some parties would only have led to turmoil. Even if there had been no armed conflict, Hong Kong would have become a bleak city with a host of problems, and that is not something we would have wanted.¹²

In the end, despite public rhetoric, “one country, two systems” was ultimately designed, and the Basic Law

drafted, to serve the interest of the PRC as defined by the CCP – not to serve the interests of the people of Hong Kong. As Wang Gungwu and John Wong write in their introduction to their book, *Hong Kong in China*, “one country, two systems” is “an ingenious tool to meet the historic necessity of taking over Hong Kong in 1997 while retaining the utility of Hong Kong to keep

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⁹ Michael Yahuda, *Hong Kong: China’s Challenge* (London: Routledge, 1996), 65.

¹⁰ Tsang, 200.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹² Deng Xiaoping, “China Will Always Keep its Promise (December 19, 1984),” in The Bureau for the Compilation and Translation of Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin Under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, trans., *Deng Xiaoping on the Question of Hong Kong* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1993), 42.

pace with the modernization efforts of China...the essence of one country, two systems is pragmatic.”¹³

As such, the end result was a Basic Law that was sufficiently vague to allow China a great deal of flexibility and freedom to be more or less stringent in exercising control over Hong Kong, depending on changing circumstances and the evolving external environment. As Deng instructed in his speech at a meeting with the members of the Drafting Committee in April 1987, “the law should not be weighed down with too much detail.”¹⁴ Thus, in preserving the interests of the PRC as defined by the CCP, the leaders in Beijing have used, and will continue to use, the flexibility of the Basic Law and the “one country, two systems” formulation to achieve their ultimate goals of staunchly maintaining sovereignty while preserving prosperity and stability.

Since Hong Kong’s retrocession to Chinese control, the operation of the “one country, two systems” formulation has been closely monitored by both the international community and the people of Hong Kong. Analysts have carefully followed the developments in Hong Kong to see whether the leaders in Beijing have in fact been keeping to the “one country, two systems” formulation or whether they have been shifting their policy direction to exercising greater control over the region. The Article 23 legislation, because it strikes most deeply at the core of the “one country, two systems” distinction, involves an issue that has been the most telling indicator of China’s current policy stance toward Hong Kong since Beijing resumed control over the territory seven years ago.

Article 23 of the Basic Law

Article 23 of the Basic Law states:

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People’s Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies.¹⁵

As a national security measure, Article 23 aims to protect the whole nation: that is, the PRC and the SAR. However, as a law enacted in Hong Kong, it aims to ensure that activities in the territory do not jeopardize the interests and security of the mainland.

Observers have questioned the true motivation behind the Article 23 legislation. The main point of contention lies in the ambiguities found in the wording of the proposed legislation, which could be broadly interpreted to outlaw a host of seemingly innocuous activities. About forty percent of local journalists have signed a petition against the laws for infringing on press freedom, arguing that overly broad definitions of sedition and theft of state secrets threaten the normal activities of news reporting.¹⁶ The Hong Kong Bar Association also has claimed that the laws are unnecessary and a violation of international civil rights. Human rights groups likewise have been concerned about what Article 23 portends for local branches of

¹³ Wang Gungwu and John Wong, *Hong Kong in China: The Challenges of Transition* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1999), 25.

¹⁴ Deng Xiaoping, “Speech at a Meeting with the Members of the Committee for Drafting the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (April 16, 1987),” in *The Bureau for the Compilation and Translation of Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin Under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*, trans., *Deng Xiaoping on the Question of Hong Kong* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1993), 55.

¹⁵ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee, “The Basic Law of the HKSAR,” <http://www.info.gov.hk/basic_law/fulltext/main.htm>.

¹⁶ “Hong Kong Under Threat,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 16, 2002.

14 Article 23

China

groups, such as the Falun Gong, that are outlawed in the PRC.¹⁷ Even the typically politically apathetic business community has voiced concern that these new laws could lead to a restriction of the flow of information necessary to the proper functioning of business in the territory. These worries, in addition to the severe penalty of life imprisonment that accompanies these crimes, have led the local and international community to demand that the proposed Article 23 laws be more clearly defined and explicated.¹⁸

Although the Basic Law came into effect on July 1, 1997, steps to act on the national security measures stipulated in Article 23 were not taken until the fall of 2002. On September 24, 2002, the government released a proposal to implement new security laws in accordance with Article 23. On December 24, the government ended a three-month consultation period on the implementation of the new legislation. On February 26, 2003 the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council. With the Hong Kong administration hoping to wrap up the process of enacting the proposal into law by July 2003, local and international observers accused the government of rushing this set of controversial laws in order to please Beijing.

Despite strong opposition, on June 24, the Bills Committee of the Legislative Council, with its strong pro-Beijing majority, supported the government's proposal to resume the second reading of the bill on July 9, 2003. On July 1, 2003, more than 500,000 people took to the streets in Hong Kong to demonstrate

against the enactment of the Article 23 measures. This marked the largest popular protest to have occurred in China since the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations. Despite this massive display of public dissatisfaction, Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa announced on July 5 that the bill would go ahead as scheduled but with three new amendments. However, on July 6, James Tien, chairman of the Liberal Party, resigned from the Executive Council, taking with him eight pro-government votes. The following day, knowing that the loss of support from the Liberal Party would mean that the National Security Bill would not pass through the Legislative Council, Tung postponed the second reading of the bill. Finally, in a move

that stunned local and international observers, the Chief Executive postponed the legislation on September 5 indefinitely with no timetable set for its reintroduction.

Although Hong Kong legislators first introduced the legislation, the impetus to

act on the Article 23 measures has widely been believed to be provided by Beijing.¹⁹ Because the laws mostly address issues that are of concern primarily to the mainland and not to the SAR, the assumption that these latest developments originated from Beijing is not unfounded. Adding further credence to this assumption is the fact that Hong Kong's Secretary for Security, Regina Ip, who spearheaded the government drive to enact the Article 23 laws, was appointed to her position directly by the Central People's Government and has strong relations with the leaders of the CCP.²⁰

“ALTHOUGH HONG KONG LEGISLATORS FIRST INTRODUCED THE LEGISLATION, THE IMPETUS TO ACT ON THE ARTICLE 23 MEASURES HAS WIDELY BEEN BELIEVED TO BE PROVIDED BY BEIJING.”

¹⁷ “Except when China doesn't like it,” *The Economist*, April 20, 2002.

¹⁸ “Hong Kong Under Threat.”

¹⁹ “Except when China doesn't like it.”

²⁰ HKSAR Government Information Center, “The Honourable Mrs Regina IP Lau Suk-ye,”

http://www.info.gov.hk/info/cv_sfors_e.htm (accessed April 1, 2002). Ip resigned from the cabinet in July 2003.

Content Analysis of Article 23 News Coverage

The views expressed in the *Ta Kung Pao* (*TKP*) and the *Wen Wei Po* (*WWP*) newspapers can be used as an indicator of the official party line. Because these two Hong Kong-based newspapers are PRC-owned, they receive guidance from the CCP's Propaganda Department and are subject to editorial review by Beijing. Thus, an analysis of the news coverage of these two mainland-controlled newspapers may help us understand China's motivations with regard to the national security laws.

An examination of the coverage of the Article 23 controversy found in *TKP* and *WWP* leading up to the protests of July 1, 2003 indicates that China's handling of the Article 23 legislation has largely followed the two premises of its HKSAR policy: exercising complete sovereign control over Hong Kong while doing whatever it needs to do to retain confidence in the region so as to ensure continued stability and prosperity. By moving to implement Article 23, Beijing is foremost showing that Hong Kong is a part of "one country" and therefore cannot be a place where challenges to the PRC's sovereignty are tolerated. At the same time, the timing of the legislation and the efforts to promote the image of Hong Kong as acting on its own to enact these measures all point to Beijing's desire to project a sense of flexibility so as to retain confidence, stability, and prosperity in the region.

Evidence that, in implementing Article 23, Beijing is foremost intent on ascertaining its ultimate sovereignty over Hong Kong can be seen in the extensive reporting on Hong Kong's duty to enact Article 23, as well as the

emphasis on characterizing Hong Kong and China as "one country." For example, Qiao Xiaoyang, vice chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress (NPC), clearly articulated this concern in his article in the *WWP*: "To safeguard the state's *sovereignty* and *unity* [emphasis added], under Article 23 of the Basic Law, the HKSAR is *obligated* to enact laws on its own to prohibit any act [that endangers national security]."²¹ Also, as written in the December 16, 2002 editorial of the *TKP*, "The legislation of Article 23 is the *constitutional responsibility* [emphasis added] of the government of the special administrative region as well as the *civil responsibility* of the vast number of *Chinese citizens* in Hong Kong."²²

Following along the lines of emphasizing Hong Kong and China as one unit, the *TKP* and *WWP* also tied support for Article 23 with Chinese nationalism: any criticism aimed at the proposal, the two newspapers have claimed, is being unpatriotic and excessively aligning with the West. In an editorial about a rally in support of Article 23, a *TKP* journalist wrote:

Why would the Hong Kong people not support and love such a motherland, and what reason is there for them to refuse to carry out their obligations and responsibility as citizens of this country by not enacting the law to protect state security? [. . .] Being a part of the Chinese people, it is actually the greatest happiness and honor of the Hong Kong people to have the opportunity to enact Article 23 and to shoulder the responsibility of protecting state security.²³

²¹ Qiao Xiaoyang, "The Basic Law is the Guardian Angel Watching Over the Principle of 'One Country, Two Systems,'" *Wen Wei Po*, September 27, 2002, trans. in World News Connection (WNC) April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-0927.

²² "The Legislation of Article 23 Will Take Public Opinion into Consideration," *Ta Kung Pao*, December 16 2002, trans. in WNC April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-1216.

²³ "The Winter Enthusiasm in Support of Legislation Warms the People's Heart," *Ta Kung Pao*, December 23, 2002, trans. in WNC April 15 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-1223.

16 Article 23

China

In dealing with criticisms of Article 23, both papers vilified prominent critics of the proposed legislation, especially Martin Lee, the leader of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, Bishop Joseph Zen Ze-kium of Hong Kong's Catholic Diocese, and Anson Chan, the former Chief Secretary of the HKSAR. In an editorial reporting on Lee's visit to Washington, *TKP* reporter Kuan Chao described Lee's reaction to President Bush raising the Article 23 issue at a meeting with Jiang Zemin:

Look! Martin Lee's reaction is just like a gray-haired female attendant waiting in the empress's palace who has been out of favor with the emperor for a long time and is occasionally recognized by the emperor when she is among a crowd of people. One careless glance of the emperor is enough to make the poor slave burst into tears of gratitude . . . Martin Lee was like that – lying completely prostrate at the feet of the foreigners.²⁴

Similarly, because of Bishop Zen's repeated public criticism of Article 23, the *TKP* called him "anti-China in his bones" and accused him of uttering remarks "which are aimed at opposing China and bringing disorder to Hong Kong."²⁵

In linking nationalism to the Article 23 legislation, the newspaper coverage indicates Beijing is concerned, above all, with the sense of unity and solidarity of the Chinese people, regardless of mainland or Hong Kong resident status. This solidarity of the Hong Kong people with the PRC – under the banner of nationalism – carries the message that Hong Kong is an inextricable part of the country and

a territory over which the PRC holds ultimate sovereign control.

The Article 23 issue has also exposed Beijing's view that, in order for the PRC to exercise complete sovereign authority over Hong Kong, the people of Hong Kong must respect the integrity and maintenance of "one country." Views favorable to Taiwan independence have, for instance, been classified as challenges to the sovereignty of the PRC that cannot be tolerated in the HKSAR. In an article published by the *TKP*, Tsang Hin-chi, a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, stated:

The media in Hong Kong should not interview "Taiwan independence activists." Under "one country, two systems," Hong Kong should put emphasis on "one country" and not "two systems." It should take on the responsibility of realizing the great cause of reunification of the nation. It should not give publicity to any people who engage in separatist activities . . . The media should not interview people who are in favor of Taiwan independence. The media should be very careful even if they provide news coverage on that score or else they should not provide any coverage.²⁶

Altogether, Beijing has conceived Article 23 as a means to protect national security by preventing activities that may threaten the sovereignty and stability of the PRC from being carried out in the HKSAR. As a *TKP* editorial stated, "The legislation of Article 23

²⁴ Kuan Chao "The 'Evil Spirit' Indeed Exists," *Ta Kung Pao*, October 28, 2002, trans. in WNC April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-202-1028.

²⁵ Li Shaowen "Tsang Hin-chi Accuses Joseph Zen Ze-kium of Uttering 'Out-Of-Place' Remarks," *Ta Kung Pao*, October 12, 2002, trans. in WNC April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-1012.

²⁶ "Chinese Officials Say Article 23 of HK Basic Law not to Affect Freedom of Speech," *Ta Kung Pao*, September 17, 2002, trans. in WNC April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-202-0917.

ensures national security and prevents Hong Kong from being used as a base for separatist and subversion activities.”²⁷

To some local and international observers, Article 23 seems to indicate increased censorship and decreased freedoms in Hong Kong and, thus, a shift in China’s policy toward the SAR. However, rather than being a dramatic departure from previous policies, Article 23 ultimately aims to protect the sovereignty and stability of the PRC, two longstanding concerns that have always been a top priority of China’s Hong Kong policy. Given the PRC’s ultimate preoccupation with sovereignty due to its historic experience as a victim of imperialism, not tolerating activities that could threaten its sovereignty is very much in keeping with China’s longstanding policies. As detailed above, for pragmatic reasons Beijing will be flexible in allowing the “two systems” to coexist so long as the overriding principle of sovereignty is not jeopardized. Deng stated in April 1987:

It is the policy of the Central Government that the interest of Hong Kong should not be harmed, and we also hope that nothing will happen in Hong Kong itself that will harm its interest or the interests for the country as a whole . . . After 1997 we shall still allow Hong Kong people to criticize the Chinese Communist Party and China, but what if they should turn their words into action, trying to convert Hong Kong into a base

of opposition to the mainland under the pretext of “democracy?” Then we would have no choice but to intervene.²⁸

Thus, Article 23 aims to ensure that freedoms enjoyed in the “two systems” do not threaten the overall interest of maintaining “one country.”

Some may argue that the push for the Article 23 legislation represents a change in Beijing policy because the CCP leaders could have chosen to take this step soon after the 1997 handover, while it in fact did not do so. This argument, however, overlooks the fact that Beijing had always intended to follow through with Article 23 and that it did not push for the legislation not because it was unwilling, but because of its assessment of the international climate after the handover. Indeed, during the first five years of China’s rule over Hong Kong, top officials in Beijing deemed this set of laws too sensitive to further act on. Careful not to make any moves that might harm confidence in the region and cause panic at the

“ALTOGETHER, BEIJING HAS CONCEIVED ARTICLE 23 AS A MEANS TO PROTECT NATIONAL SECURITY BY PREVENTING ACTIVITIES THAT MAY THREATEN THE SOVEREIGNTY AND STABILITY OF THE PRC FROM BEING CARRIED OUT IN THE HKSAR.”

outset of resuming sovereignty, CCP leaders had allowed a strategic delay in acting on Article 23. As Qian Qichen, Vice Premier of the State Council, stated in an interview with Hong Kong’s Asia Television network, “During the five years of the first-term government, the article was not implemented because successful implementation required ripe conditions to ensure that the people had come to a similar understanding.”²⁹

²⁷ “The Legislation of Article 23 Will Take Public Opinion into Consideration.”

²⁸ Deng Xiaoping, “Speech at a Meeting with the Members of the Committee for Drafting the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (April 16, 1987),” in *The Bureau for the Compilation and Translation of Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin Under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*, trans., *Deng Xiaoping on the Question of Hong Kong* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1993), 58.

²⁹ “Qian Qichen: Only Those with Something Devilish to Hide Fear the [Anti-Subversion] Legislation,” *Wen Wei Po*, October 26, 2002, trans. in WNC April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-1026.

18 Article 23

China

Subsequently, conditions during the fall of 2002 were considered optimal for introducing these laws because of the global post-September 11 climate. In particular, there were extensive references in newspaper coverage to the need to protect “national security” in light of the global war on terrorism. This suggests that the leaders in Beijing found the international political environment to be more conducive to implementing the controversial laws for “national security,” which was of course Article 23’s intent. An editorial dealing with Article 23, entitled “Stability is of Critical Importance to Hong Kong’s Economy,” opened with reference to the terrorist bombings on the Indonesian island of Bali.³⁰ In an article featured in the *WWP*, Xu Shimin, a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference Standing Committee, wrote, “The current international situation is turbulent with terrorists doing damage everywhere and big, hegemonic powers going on a rampage . . . In order to build up our own national defense and safeguard our national security, we should never allow the HKSAR to become an unfortified ‘anti-Chinese’ base.”³¹

The coverage in *WWP* and *TKP* in late 2002 also stressed the universality of such national security laws in an era of threatening instability. In a special series entitled “All Countries Have Legislation to Punish the Seven Crimes [referring to treason, secession, sedition, subversion, theft of state secrets, activities of foreign political bodies, and

establishing ties with foreign political bodies],” Article 23 was compared in detail to existing laws in the US, Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, France, Spain, and Italy.³² At a time when even the United States was willing to sacrifice a degree of individual freedom for national security, the top Chinese officials clearly sensed the opportunity to qualify certain liberties enjoyed by the Hong Kong people in the name of protecting national security.

Thus, Beijing was simply waiting for an appropriate time to implement Article 23. Its existence in the Basic Law indicates that Beijing had always intended to implement this set of laws in the HKSAR. Indeed, Article 23 was added to the Basic Law following the huge outpouring of support in Hong Kong for the 1989 Tiananmen student democracy protests. Thus, as early as 1989, the mainland authorities had already shown their intention to prevent Hong Kong from becoming a source of dissent and a base for subversives.³³

The fact that Beijing waited for five years after the handover to act on these laws merely underlines the willingness of the PRC’s top leaders to be flexible in the timing and manner of implementing their policy directives in order to maintain ultimate sovereignty over Hong Kong.

Beyond articulating China’s longstanding concerns on national unity and integrity with respect to the territory, the *TKP* and *WWP* coverage also demonstrated an active effort on the part of mainland officials to project the

“**BEIJING WAS SIMPLY WAITING FOR AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO IMPLEMENT ARTICLE 23. ITS EXISTENCE IN THE BASIC LAW INDICATES THAT BEIJING HAD ALWAYS INTENDED TO IMPLEMENT THIS SET OF LAWS IN THE HKSAR.**”

³⁰ “Stability is of Critical Importance to Hong Kong’s Economy,” *Wen Wei Po*, October 16, 2002, trans. in WNC April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-1016.

³¹ Xu Shimin, “Legislation of Article 23 belongs to China’s Sovereignty,” *Wen Wei Po*, November 26, 2002, trans. in WNC April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-1204.

³² *Wen Wei Po*, September 16, 2002.

³³ Michael Yahuda, “Hong Kong’s Future: Sino-British Negotiations, Perceptions, Organization, and Political Culture,” *International Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 2 (April 1993), 245-266.

image of Hong Kong enacting the Article 23 measures on its own. In particular, several articles and editorials in both the *TKP* and the *WWP* quoted mainland officials stating that the drafting and implementation of the Article 23 laws were tasks left to the HKSAR government to deal with. For instance, in an article reporting on the statements made by Gao Siren, the director of the Central Liaison Office in Hong Kong, a *TKP* reporter wrote, "When asked if the SAR government will issue a white bill, Gao noted that it is up to the SAR government to decide."³⁴ Similarly, the *WWP* published an article with the subsection headline, "Zou Zhekai: Respect the SAR to Enact laws on Its Own."³⁵ Zou, the deputy director of the Central Liaison Office in Hong Kong, was reported to have said that "we should respect the SAR because it is prescribed in the Basic Law that the SAR Government should enact the related laws on its own"³⁶ Qian Qichen was also reported in the *WWP* to have said:

In my view, there was not any pressure [on the SAR over enacting Article 23]. Article 23 is the twenty-third article of the Basic Law to being implemented at this time; and the people have already approved the Basic Law . . . It should be made known that no pressure of any kind was applied and the process has been very open and fair.³⁷

The emphasis on having mainland officials declare Hong Kong as independently enacting the Article 23 legislation can be interpreted as Beijing's continuing desire to

have an apparently autonomous Hong Kong, so as to retain public confidence in the region. The implementation of the Article 23 laws is being presented as legitimately fitting into the framework of China's "one country, two systems" policy. As Vice Chairman of the NPC Legislative Affairs Committee Qiao Xiaoyang asserted in an article published by the *WWP*, the HKSAR needs to pass laws on its own against treason and subversion because the Criminal Law of the PRC, which already bans and punishes these acts, does not apply in Hong Kong by virtue of the separation of the "two systems."³⁸ Thus, he asserted, Hong Kong officials acting on their own to implement the Article 23 measures provides proof of the success of "one country, two systems."

By trying to show themselves as not dictating policymaking in Hong Kong, the leaders in Beijing indicate that they want to appear to be abiding by the mandates of "one country, two systems." Altogether then, although China has emphasized the paramount importance of embracing "one country" through Article 23 legislation, its top leaders are still seriously seeking to project a sense that Hong Kong possesses significant autonomy so as to maintain stability and confidence in the region.

Conclusion

Contrary to the continued international media hype over the Article 23 controversy, which proposes that Beijing has radically altered its policy toward the former British colony, an analysis of the two PRC-owned Hong Kong newspapers suggests that the

³⁴ Chan Hsiao-yu, "Gao Siren Expresses Hope for Greater Concern About Economic Issues and People's Livelihood," *Ta Kung Pao*, December 18, 2002, trans. in WNC 15 April 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-1218.

³⁵ Zhuan Haiyuan and Liu Weizhong, "Gao Siren Thinks Article 23 Legislation Will Be Relaxed," *Wen Wei Po*, September 25, 2002, trans. in WNC April 15, 2003, document FBIS-CHI-2002-0925.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ "Only Those with Something Devilish to Hide Fear the [Anti-Subversion] Legislation."

³⁸ "The Basic Law is the Guardian Angel Watching Over the Principle of 'One Country, Two Systems.'"

20 *Article 23*

China

basis of China's Hong Kong policy has not changed. Beijing has shown this through its stress on the "one country" aspect of the "one country, two systems" formulation and its simultaneous insistence that Hong Kong does have significant autonomy.

China's Hong Kong policy has consistently been centered on pragmatism. On the one hand, Beijing has endeavored to retain sovereignty above all else, and it had always planned to have laws to protect against sovereignty-threatening activity in Hong Kong. This was fundamental to the post-handover structure of the territory. The CCP

leaders have never wanted to allow elements that held views contrary to the official line to use Hong Kong as a soapbox from which to voice their dissidence. On the other hand, CCP leaders have also sought to portray Hong Kong as a genuinely autonomous region in order to lend credibility to its policy of "one country, two systems" and to accommodate international expectations. Beijing's approach in pushing for Article 23 and insisting that Hong Kong's government is taking this on its own is, thus, very much in line with the core and longstanding principles of China's policy toward Hong Kong.

Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy: The Case of the Auto Components Sourcing Network

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Much of the literature that has tried to trace and identify important institutional aspects of China's market reform hardly questions in detail what the term "market" or "marketization" denotes in the transformational context. While most researchers agree that there has been an undeniable trend toward progressive marketization in the allocation of resources and coordination of economic transactions, the "market" has been simply assumed and not studied as an object in and of itself. Despite rhetoric that stresses the distinctiveness of China's emergent market system, an ambiguous and undifferentiated view of the market which characterizes much of the literature regarding China's transformation ironically resembles mainstream economics' idea of the market as an abstract coordination mechanism that automatically balances off the supply and demand through voluntary transactions. The neoclassical abstraction of the market, which, in effect, substitutes "marketplace" with an abstract self-equilibrating mechanism of

"placeless market,"¹ exists, however, more in a theory than in reality.

The failure of previous literature on China's transformation to shed light on the structural complexity that underlies the seemingly undifferentiated process of the "market" has led scholars to hastily conclude that a uniform process of marketization was on progress. As a number of recent studies emphasize, however, market economies need not converge into single universal or orthodox form, but can take on varieties of forms reflecting such factors as differences in structure of authority relations and the historical processes as well as institutional conditions under which markets have emerged.² Thus, instead of portraying post-socialist transformation as a systematic transition toward a predestined model of an ideal Western-type market economy, more attention should be paid to the institutional basis from which market systems emerge, as well as social structural contexts in which exchange relations are embedded. As Andrew Walder aptly puts it, "the question,"

¹ See, for example, John Lie, "The Concept of Mode of Exchange," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 57, no. 2 (1992), 508-523, and Winifred B. Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

² See, for example, Max Boisot and John Child, "From Fiefs to Clans and Network Capitalism: Explaining China's Emerging Economic Order," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 4 (1996), 600-628.

22 *Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy*

China

therefore, "is not what *degree* a market has emerged, but what *kind* of market economy is emerging in different regions."³

To construct a more solid view of the market that permits researchers to come to grips with the complexity of institutional change in reforming socialist societies, I suggest that instead of viewing the market as an amorphous "invisible hand," more attention should be directed toward studying the market as a concrete social institution that presents tangible social structural patterns. Focusing on the market as a social institution implies a shift of emphasis toward institutional and structural details underlying an act of exchange. Such a stance allows researchers to pay more attention to the dynamics of institutional transformation and to recognize diverse organizational logics that structure actual patterns of exchange relations in the emergent market that is distinct from "pure" market models of neoclassical economics.

Social Structure of Emergent Market Relations in China's Transformational Economy

Social Structure of the Market

In the neoclassical competitive market model, transactions take place in a social vacuum whereby identities of buyers and sellers, as well as prior history of transactions or social relations, are largely irrelevant. Markets are by and large seen as "unstructured aggregations of individuals, the 'buyers' and 'sellers' coming together for

only short-lived dyadic exchanges."⁴ Exchange relations in the neoclassical market are seen to be arranged in an arm's-length manner, in which actors, acting on their own self interest, freely switch between trading partners without any prolonged social contact or commitment; the only relevant information is the impersonal price signal alone.⁵ Mainstream economics, therefore, has usually ignored the influence of social elements in structuring patterns of exchange, at best treating them as a mere source of "market imperfection." As Mark Granovetter puts it, "in classical and neoclassical economics . . . the fact that actors may have social relations with one another has been treated, if at all, as a frictional drag that impedes competitive markets."⁶ Such an "undersocialized" view of the market reflects the deep-rooted premise of the economics approach, namely the notion of "methodological individualism," which posits that economic agents are portrayed as acting alone rather than in cooperation with others in a defined social unit and that, in turn, socioeconomic systems and institutions should be treated as an aggregation of the behavior of individuals who are independently pursuing their own ends.⁷

An increasing number of scholars, however, have conceptualized markets as consisting of concrete, ongoing relations of exchange among buyers and sellers, presenting social structural patterns which cannot be simply reduced to the maximizing responses of atomistic actors to impersonal

³ Andrew Walder, "Markets and Inequality in Transitional Economies: Toward Testable Theories," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 101, no. 4 (1996), 1068.

⁴ Barry Wellman and S.D. Berkowitz, "Markets," in Barry Wellman and S.D. Berkowitz, eds. *Social Structures: A Network Approach* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 221.

⁵ Frank Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit* (New York: Kelley and Millman, 1957), 78.

⁶ Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 91, no. 3 (1985), 484.

⁷ Albert Hirschman, "Rival Interpretations of Market Society: Civilizing, Destructive, or Feeble?" *Journal of Economic Literature*, vol. 20, no. 4 (1982), 1473-1474.

price signals.⁸ As Harrison White emphasizes, “markets are tangible social structures encompassing sets of producers that have evolved specific role behaviors toward one another and toward an accustomed set of buyers.”⁹ Rather than working toward an abstract understanding of social structure, this line of research focuses on the social structures of the market as objects of direct inquiry in and of themselves. In contrast to the industrial organization approach that conceptualizes market structure in terms of number and size of buyers and sellers, degree of product differentiation, and the presence or absence of barriers to entry, structural sociologists define market structure in a more concrete way, as linked sets of recurrent and enduring patterns of social relations constructed around social acts of exchange.¹⁰ They stress that in reality, markets are not homogeneous but socially structured in various ways.

Exchange relations in markets, therefore, consist not only of atomistic transactions between anonymous buyers and sellers operating at arm’s length, but also, to varying degrees, of recurrent and regularized interactions between socially interlinked partners which constitute definite social structural pattern in the exchange

network. This patterned structure of exchange network reflects the embeddedness of economic action in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations.¹¹ As a result, the macrostructure of a market exchange network, rather than displaying undifferentiated structure with an expansive micro-network in which traders are loosely connected, may instead exhibit differentiated structure with multiple subgroups of clique-like, restrictive micro-networks in which traders are more or less bound in a recurrent pattern of regularized exchange relationship.¹²

Since the “market” or “marketization” has been implicitly assumed rather than explicitly studied in its own right in much of the literature concerning China’s transformation, little attention has been paid to the question of how actual exchange relationships in China’s evolving market are structured and how these structures of market

relations differ from those of conventional models in mainstream economics. In this article, I challenge the view of networks as “templates that channel market exchange”¹³ and direct my analysis toward identifying and illustrating “clans for markets.”¹⁴ Instead of presuming macro characteristics of China’s

“ LITTLE ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO THE QUESTION OF HOW ACTUAL EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS IN CHINA’S EVOLVING MARKET ARE STRUCTURED. ”

⁸ See, for example, Wayne Baker, “The Social Structure of a National Securities Market,” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 89, no. 4 (1984), 775-811; Eric Leifer and Harrison White, “A Structural Approach to Markets,” in Mark Mizruchi and Michael Schwartz, eds., *Intercorporate Relations: The Structural Analysis of Business* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 85-108; Richard Swedberg, “Markets as Social Structures,” in Neil Smelser and Richard Swedberg, eds., *The Handbook of Economic Sociology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 255-282; Brian Uzzi, “Social Structure and Competition in Interfirm Networks: The Paradox of Embeddedness,” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 1 (1997), 35-67; Harrison White, “Where do Markets Come From?” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 87, no. 3 (1981), 517-547; and Sharon Zukin and Paul DiMaggio, “Introduction,” in Sharon Zukin and Paul DiMaggio, eds., *Structures of Capital: The Social Organization of the Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-36.

⁹ Harrison White, “Varieties of Markets,” in Barry Wellman and S. D. Berkowitz, eds., *Social Structures: A Network Approach* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 231.

¹⁰ F. M. Scherer, *Industrial Market Structure and Economic Performance* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), 225.

¹¹ Granovetter, 487.

¹² Baker, 775.

¹³ Zukin and DiMaggio, 20.

¹⁴ David Stark, “Privatization in Hungary: From Plan to Market or from Plan to Clan?” *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1990), 377.

24 *Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy*

China

emerging economic order as evolving toward a predestined institutional order, I assume that emerging markets in China's transformational economy are socially structured in a variety of ways and embody diverse organizational logic. More insights can be gained by focusing on the micro-analysis of identifying patterns and structures of actual economic relations in China's transformational economy.

From Command to 'Commitment'

The "market transition" view regards China's reform process as a gradual shift away from the economy governed by the state plan and bureaucratic command to one significantly driven by market exchange relations. In this framework, bureaucratic command and market exchange are posited as two polar opposites of economic governance, with China's reform experience demonstrating gradual movement from one to the other. As a number of scholars have emphasized, however, actual demarcation between the plan and the market under China's reforms cannot be drawn as sharply as conventional view supposes, and actual exchange relations are structured in distinct ways bearing little resemblance to the ideal-type pure market model of neoclassical economics.

Some scholars have stressed that exchange relations in China's emerging market system, rather than emerging from nothing or from a social and institutional vacuum left by the withering away of the

bureaucratic command system, is presenting structural patterns that reflect the continuity of past organizational arrangements. Dorothy Solinger, for example, has noted that

Certain operational features of China's pre-reform economy have clearly survived the demise of mandatory central planning, taking the form of hybridized, informal relations of exchange . . . In consequence, the ostensible "marketizing" of the Chinese economy has resulted in the creation of a "market system" wherein much economic exchange paradoxically continues to be structured along lines very similar to those [that] existed under a more centrally planned economy.

In short . . . structural continuities in the Chinese economy are disposing firms to choose to trade via tied partnerships even when they are no longer forced to do so.¹⁵

The emergence of market relations based on past organizational structures reflects a path-dependent and evolutionary nature of

market formation in China's transformational context, and it defies the view that the nation's post-socialist transformation is a one-dimensional shift from one mode of economic coordination to another. Market relations do not automatically "emerge" from the institutional vacuum left by the withdrawal of state bureaucratic control, but are "woven" by social actors whose behavior is both facilitated and constrained by pre-

“**MARKET RELATIONS DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY 'EMERGE' FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL VACUUM LEFT BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF STATE BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL, BUT ARE 'WOVEN' BY SOCIAL ACTORS WHOSE BEHAVIOR IS BOTH FACILITATED AND CONSTRAINED BY PRE-EXISTING NETWORKS OF AFFILIATION.**”

¹⁵ Dorothy Solinger, "Urban Reform and Relational Contracting in Post-Mao China: An Interpretation of the Transition from Plan to Market," in Dorothy Solinger, ed., *China's Transition from Socialism: Statist Legacies and Market Reforms, 1980-1990* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), 108.

existing networks of affiliation in which they are embedded. These social actors have rebuilt economic organizations and institutions not “*on the ruins*” of state command economy, but “*with the ruins*” of pre-existing social structure and institutional linkages.¹⁶

It has been emphasized that emergent market relations in China’s transformative economy do not operate independently from the opportunities and constraints provided by the administrative structure of the former command economic system. In other words, exchange relations in societies undergoing transformation from state socialism are not constructed along purely economic logic, but bear “the institutional imprints of a long-lasting experience with state socialism.”¹⁷ Markets, according to this view, rather than proceeding toward self-adjusting and self-regulating markets of neoclassical economics, are seen as “tethered” to the organizational logic of an obstinate past.¹⁸ In short, as Bian and Logan have pointed out, “market coordination does not supplant bureaucratic coordination but is grafted onto it, creating a new hybrid or segmented system.”¹⁹

Some indeed have highlighted the distinctiveness of market arrangements in China’s evolving institutional environment, which shows little resemblance to the atomistic model of a neoclassical market. Boisot and Child, in particular, note that “many business transactions in China appear to be settled through negotiation within a system of networked relations based on

interpersonal reciprocal obligations (*guanxi*).”²⁰ Rather than evolving toward ideal-type arm’s length market relations based on specified legal contracts, patterns of exchange relations in China’s emerging market system are characterized by clan-type networks that are based on mutual trust and longstanding social connections. Informal social ties and inter-firm networks that “got the job done” in bureaucratic command system,²¹ far from fading into irrelevance with the spread of market exchange, have come to constitute the structural basis on which exchange relations in emerging market institutions have reconfigured themselves.

While the conventional view tends to treat these as deviations from ideal-type self-regulating atomistic markets, I would argue that these features, instead of being transitional epiphenomena that would fade away as more complete marketization proceeds, constitute a central aspect of the institutional patterns of China’s emerging market system. In particular, I argue that the market reform and decentralization of the former state command system in the process of China’s economic reform, instead of bringing forth individualistic market relations characterized by arm’s length transactions between atomistic traders based on a spot-market contract, have given rise to exchange relations that can be characterized as “committed exchanges” between institutionally connected partners based on relational contracting.

By “commitment” in exchange, I refer to the stable patterns of exchange that

¹⁶ David Stark, “Recombinant Property in East European Capitalism,” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 101, no. 4 (1996), 995.

¹⁷ Victor Nee and Rebecca Matthews, “Market Transition and Societal Transformation in Reforming State Socialism,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 22 (1996), 402.

¹⁸ See Marc Blecher and Vivienne Shue, *Tethered Deer: Government and Economy in a Chinese County* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Yanjie Bian and John Logan, “Market Transition and the Persistence of Power: The Changing Stratification System in Urban China,” *American Sociological Review*, vol. 61, no. 5 (1996), 741.

²⁰ Boisot and Child, 612.

²¹ Stark, “Recombinant Property,” 994.

26 *Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy*

China

encourage repeated transactions between established traders with mutual interest in continuing the relationship rather than searching widely through the market at each occasion of need.²² Karen Cook and Richard Emerson, for example, have noted that “an actor is said to be committed to another actor in the network to the extent that choice of current exchange partner, from among alternative partners, can be predicted from previous partnerships.”²³ Whereas the mainstream economic model of a competitive market implicitly assumes that exchange partners would develop no loyalties or commitment to one another, social exchange theorists, through repeated laboratory simulations, have demonstrated the development of committed exchange that leads to the emergence of stable social structural patterns in exchange relationships.

This is not to deny, however, the general trend of China's economic reform process wherein state bureaucratic command has been gradually supplanted by market exchange relations in growing spheres of economic coordination and resource allocation. China's economy, through decades of market reform and decentralization, has indeed “grown out of the plan.”²⁴ The declining significance of state bureaucratic command and the spread of market exchange relations, however, have not led to the emergence of individualistic, “free” market relations, detached from previous history of interactions and institutional affiliation. Instead, “committed exchange”

between institutionally linked actors pervade emergent markets, giving rise to a distinct structural pattern wherein organizational actors bound under interlinking ties of former administrative lineages and local corporatist arrangements confine their transactions to one another even after when they are not required to do so. Such exchange relations are not so much the result of narrow utilitarian pursuit of self-interest between atomistic traders, but are imbued with elements of solidarity formulated under prior history of long-standing associations based on common institutional affiliation.

Although the economic reform formally “liberated” economic entities from the hierarchical alignment of state command order and conferred them with autonomy to perform market transaction at their own will, emergent market relations are rife with transactions that continue to remain embedded in social structural pattern which reflects hierarchical bond and social attachment based

on former administrative linkage and regional communalism. Whereas better exchange opportunities outside established partnerships might exist, in an environment characterized by prevalent institutional uncertainties that are inherent in any transformational context, actors might as well gain by sticking to the experienced relationships with familiar partners whom they can trust. Hence, China's “great transformation” hardly implies the rise to dominance of an impersonal “free” market wherein atomistic traders have unrestricted and unconstrained opportunities to trade with

“ CHINA'S 'GREAT TRANSFORMATION' HARDLY IMPLIES THE RISE TO DOMINANCE OF AN IMPERSONAL 'FREE' MARKET WHEREIN ATOMISTIC TRADERS HAVE UNRESTRICTED AND UNCONSTRAINED OPPORTUNITIES TO TRADE WITH ONE ANOTHER. ”

²² Clifford Geertz, “The Bazaar Economy: Information and Search in Peasant Marketing,” *American Economic Review*, vol. 68, no. 2 (1978), 30.

²³ Karen Cook and Richard Emerson, “Power, Equity and Commitment in Exchange Networks,” *American Sociological Review*, vol. 43, no. 5 (1978), 728.

²⁴ Barry Naughton, *Growing out of the Plan: Chinese Economic Reform, 1978-1993* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

one another. Rather, in many cases, the process involves the transformation or “transfiguration” of a formerly hierarchical authority relationship to committed exchange relations wherein market exchanges are more or less limited among sets of partners who share common administrative or regional backgrounds.²⁵ Such exchange relations are hardly governed by the impersonal mechanism of price alone, but more or less reflect the operation of other coordination mechanisms, such as authority and reciprocity.

The degree to which market relations between firms are embedded in the administrative and regional structure of social relationships, however, may differ according to the characteristics and structural positions of the firm. For example, one may assume that exchange relations between state-owned enterprises tend to present stronger structural patterns than those between collectives and private enterprises. Among state owned enterprises, moreover, the level of embeddedness might differ according to the position and status of the firm in the state administrative hierarchy. According to Walder, the strength of the budget constraint faced by public firms in China’s reform context differs according to jurisdictional position of ownership in government hierarchy.²⁶ Public firms of high status in government hierarchy are more likely to belong to “strategic” sectors that are protected by state industrial policy and thus may be facing softer budget constraints. In

light of this argument, it seems plausible to assume that committed exchange relations would be more prevalent with public firms occupying higher position in the state administrative system, since reduced budget constraints provide enough slack to warrant continuing their transactions within the web of cozy established relationships.

Configuration of Manufacturer-Supplier Relations in China’s Automobile Industry

In this section, I illustrate some of the propositions developed earlier in this paper by examining the operation and structure of the market for intermediate products in China’s automobile industry. The automobile industry provides an adequate case for examining in detail how markets are organized since the industry is characterized by myriad diverse and complex exchange relations between parts and components suppliers and final assemblers. Automobile manufacturing typically requires a complex production chain in which more than 10,000 discrete parts, put together into some 100 major components (engines, transmissions, steering gears, suspensions, and so forth), are assembled by the auto manufacturers to produce a complete vehicle.²⁷ A large portion of these parts and components are sourced, that is purchased, from external suppliers, rather than produced in-house. Examining how inter-firm relationships are organized and structured in such a complex supply chain may provide some insights as to the nature of emergent market relations in

²⁵ It is interesting to note that the prevalence and persistence of committed exchange or embedded market relations in an emergent market system is not a unique phenomenon confined to the case of China alone, but is widespread in post-socialist Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Michael Burawoy and Pavel Krotov, for example, in an institutional study of the Soviet transition to capitalism, found that “even if all actors proclaimed themselves enthusiastic devotees of capitalism, still, they are locked into a preexisting system of economic relations that is ‘indispensable and independent of their will.’” See Michael Burawoy and Pavel Krotov, “The Soviet Transition from Socialism to Capitalism: Worker Control and Economic Bargaining in the Wood Industry,” *American Sociological Review*, vol. 57, no. 1 (1992), 17.

²⁶ Andrew Walder, “Local Governments as Industrial Firms: An Organizational Analysis of China’s Transitional Economy,” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 101, no. 2 (1995), 263-301.

²⁷ James Womack, Daniel Jones and Daniel Roos, *The Machine that Changed the World* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990), 58.

28 Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy

China

China's transformational economy. In addition, the government promotes the auto industry as a "strategic" industry. It is still characterized by high non-economic, administrative barriers to entry and consequently, populated predominantly by state-owned enterprises (SOEs) whose jurisdictional position of ownership in state administrative hierarchy is relatively high, either at the ministerial, provincial, or municipal level.²⁸ As has been suggested in the previous section, I presume that such an industry is more likely to be characterized by exchange relations that present high structural embeddedness.

Before the reform era, China's auto industry was characterized by a high degree of vertical integration despite the small average volume of production. For example, while the production volume in 1980 of First Automotive Works (FAW) and Second Automotive Works (SAW; renamed as Dongfeng [East Wind] during the late 1980s), the first and the second largest automobile manufacturer at the time, was only 66,000 and 31,500 units respectively, they internally produced over 70 percent and 75 percent of the components (in value) required to produce a vehicle.²⁹ In stark contrast, Toyota, whose annual production volume in the mid-

1980s was over four million units, produced only 27 percent of the components in-house.³⁰ Such a high level of vertical integration regardless of production volume, the phenomenon generally referred to as firms performing "a complete set of activities whether the firm is large or small" (*daerquan, xiaoerquan*), was commonly present in many other industries in pre-reform China. Under the socialist shortage economies, firms were constantly threatened by uncertainties of supply from downstream industries and faced the strong incentive to integrate and incorporate various production processes to meet production quotas mandated by the government.

Problems associated with this excessive level of vertical integration were particularly acute in the case of the auto industry. Given that the minimum efficient scale (MES) for an auto manufacturer is 300,000 vehicles per year,³¹ it was clear that China's auto firms faced significant inefficiency due to manifest scale diseconomies. In particular, production processes such as engine forging, metal stamping, and processing, which the Chinese auto firms undertook, typically require large amounts of investment on specialized fixed assets and annual production volumes of more than 300,000 vehicles in order to realize

²⁸ The industrial organization of the auto industry has undergone a series of reforms as a result of the state's attempt to rationalize the industry. In general, however, among the eight major corporations that have been selected in the early 1990s as passenger vehicle projects qualified for state support, the so-called "big three, small three, and two micros" (*Sanda Sanxiao Erwei*), two firms among the "big three" (First Auto Works and Dongfeng) and "two micros" (Changan and Guizhou) are "central" SOEs, the former two originally under the jurisdiction of the former Ministry of Machine Building, and the latter two under the jurisdiction of the former Ministry of Armory Industry and Ministry of Aviation and Aeronautics Industry, respectively. The rest (Shanghai, Tianjin, Beijing, and Guangzhou) are provincial or municipal level SOEs. For accounts on the formation and historical evolution of industrial structure in China's auto industry, see Eric Harwit, *China's Automobile Industry: Policies, Problems, and Prospects* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995); Zhongguo qiche gongyeshi bianzuan weiyuanhui (History of China's Automobile Industry Compilation Committee), *Zhongguo qiche gongyeshi 1901-1990 (History of China's Automobile Industry, 1901-1990)* (Beijing: Renmin Jiaotong Chubanshe, 1996); Li Hong, *Zhongguo qichegongye jingji fenxi (Economic Analysis of China's Auto Industry)* (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmindaxue Chubanshe, 1993); Tajima Toshio, "Chugoku jidosha sankyo no tenkai to sankyo soshiki," ("Development and Industrial Structure of China's Automobile Industry") *Shakaikagaku kenkyu (The Journal of Social Science)*, vol. 42, no. 5 (1991); Lee Chunli, *Gendai Chugoku no jidosha sankyo. (Contemporary China's Automobile Industry)* (Tokyo: Shinsansha, 1997); and Zhao Rong, "Chugoku jidosha sankyo no shiteki tenkai," ("Historical Development of China's Auto Industry") in Maruyama Yoshinari, ed., *Chugoku jidosha sankyo no hatten to gijutsu iten (Development of China's Automobile Industry and Technology Transfer)* (Tokyo: Tsugeshobo, 2001).

²⁹ Marukawa Tomoo, *Shijo hassei no dainamikusu: yikoki no chogoku keizai (Dynamics of Market Emergence: China's Economy in Transition)* (Tokyo: Ajia keizai kenkyuso, 1999), 70 and 84.

³⁰ Womack, Jones, and Roos, 155.

³¹ Joseph Bain, *Industrial Organization* (New York: John Wiley, 1968), 284-287.

the lowest possible per-unit production costs.³² In light of the small average volume of production for each firm (less than 4,000 vehicles per firm!),³³ the pre-reform auto firms were clearly facing significant problems of inefficiency, and such considerations would have required firm to outsource some of its components or manufacturing processes to specialized suppliers. One of the important trends in restructuring of the industry since the commencement of market reform, therefore, has involved the disintegration of overly integrated production process, with more reliance on “buying” rather than “making” by individual auto manufactures. For example, in the case of a four-ton truck, a longstanding major product of FAW and SAW, the level of in-house production of components had fallen to 58 percent for the latter in 1991 and to 35 percent for the former in 1992.³⁴

Therefore, it is worthwhile to note that the spread of the market in the context of reform not only has involved the replacement of state command by exchange relations between formally autonomous economic units, but also has proceeded through the substitution of “internal sourcing” within a firm hierarchy with “external sourcing” from outside suppliers for the procurement of intermediate products. In other words, if we adopt Oliver Williamson’s classification of the market and hierarchy as two generic

institutional forms for coordinating economic transactions,³⁵ “marketization” in China’s reform context has not only occurred through the substitution of state redistributive hierarchy with market exchange, but also involved the disaggregation of integrated firm hierarchy into formally independent units, with economic transactions between them ostensibly taking on the form of market relations.

In the auto industry, dramatic vertical disintegration of manufacturers frequently accompanied separation of certain productive facilities or sub-factories into independent spin-off firms. Significant portions of exchange relations in industrial markets for auto components, then, have come to consist

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of transactions between assemblers and their former subunits. However, while greater economies of scale could be achieved by supplying components to a number of auto manufacturers, these spin-off firms, with few exceptions, have remained strongly dependent on the main assembler from which

it was separated. Rather than becoming purely independent operations, these firms have remained “satellites” orbiting the parent firm and conducting most, if not all, of their businesses with the latter. In most cases, these spin-offs have come to constitute major affiliates of the newly formed business groups that began to emerge in the industry around the late 1980s and early 1990s. Of the

³² G. Maxcy and A. Silberston, *The Motor Industry* (London: George Allen & Unwin) as cited in Li Hong, 128-129.

³³ In 1980, there were 56 auto manufacturers in China, producing total of 222,288 vehicles. Zhongguo Qiche Jishu Yanjiu Zhongxin (China Automotive Technology Research Center, or CATNRC) and Zhongguo Qiche Gongye Xiehui (China Association of Automotive Manufacturers, or CAAM), *Zhongguo Qiche Gongye Nianjian 1999 (China Automotive Industry Yearbook, 1999)* (Beijing: Jixie Gongye Chubanshe, 1999), 5 and 89.

³⁴ Marukawa, *Dynamics of Market Emergence*, 70 and 84.

³⁵ See, for example, Oliver Williamson, *Markets and Hierarchies: Analysis and Antitrust Implications* (New York: Free Press, 1975), and Oliver Williamson, *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism: Firms, Markets, Relational Contracting* (New York: Free Press, 1985).

30 *Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy*

China

23 affiliate firms that constituted the “half intimate” stratum of Dongfeng Group in 1992, for example, 14 were specialized components suppliers that were established in the process of the vertical disintegration of Second Auto Works.³⁶ Improvements in efficiency through increased production volume and enhanced coordination could be partially achieved by supplying to manufacturers other than the original main assembler. With the significant exception of SAIC (Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation), however, few of the spin-off parts and components manufacturers have developed supply relationship outside their own business groups.

Other groups of suppliers that have come to constitute important affiliates of business groups include independent SOEs that were formerly subordinate to various state administrative apparatuses, whether central or local, and that have been administratively restructured to become specialized parts and components manufacturers under the umbrella of each business group. Besides the Ministry of Machine Building that was the formal supervisory agency of the industry, various levels of local government and other central ministries that oversaw such areas as transportation, urban construction, metallurgy, and electronics, also operated a substantial number of motor vehicle and parts manufacturers. Of the 2,904 motor vehicle and components manufacturing firms (including motorcycle firms) in 1985, 1,351 firms, or 46.5 percent of the total, belonged to local governments or central ministries other than the Ministry of Machine Building.³⁷ The subsequent reorganization and incorporation

of auto related productive facilities into business groups were basically patterned after such institutional affiliation. In other words, the formation of business groups entailed grouping of independent component manufacturers around core automakers that shared the same administrative lineage. For example, most affiliate parts and components manufacturers of the SAIC and Tianjin Auto Industry Group emerged through the refurbishment of existing local manufacturing facilities that originally belonged to various industrial bureaus of respective municipal governments. Similarly, many of the specialized components manufacturers that constitute the “core” or “intimate” stratum of FAW and Dongfeng Corporation³⁸ originally were under the jurisdiction of either the Ministry of Machine Building or the localities in which the core manufacturer of respective groups were located, namely Jilin province and Changchun city for the former and Hubei province for the latter.

Still another important class of suppliers involves those factories that formerly manufactured products for military use. Many of these factories are located in the hinterlands of western and central China, the outcome of a once massive relocation and dispersion of industrial facilities to a remote and secluded places in the mountains, known as the “Third Front,” in preparation for war against the former Soviet Union. In the reform era, under the face of significant reductions in military expenditure, these production units were encouraged to “transfer product lines for civilian uses” (*junzhuanmin*). Of particular importance to

³⁶ Marukawa Tomoo, “Chugokuni okeru kigyokan kankei no keisei,” (“The Emergence of Inter-firm Relations in China”), *Ajia keizai* (*Asian Economy*), vol. 35 (1994), 14-15.

³⁷ Dangdai Zhongguo Congshu Bianji Weiyuanhui (Modern China Series Editorial Committee), *Dangdai Zhongguode Jixie Gongye* (*Modern China's Machinery Industry*) (Beijing: Dangdai Chubanshe, 1999), 398.

³⁸ In China's auto industry, affiliates of business groups are generally categorized as belonging to the “core” stratum (*hexinceng*), “intimate” stratum (*jimmiceng*), and “half intimate” or “collaborative” stratum (*banjimmiceng* or *xieliceng*). See Marukawa, “The Emergence of Inter-firm Relations in China,” 11-29.

the auto industry are Changan Auto Industry Group and Guizhou Aviation Industry Group (themselves being affiliates of China North Industry Group Corporation and China Aviation Industry Corporation, respectively), which once produced arms related products under the Ministry of Armory Industry and the Ministry of Aviation and Aeronautics. They are now automobile and specialized parts manufacturers.

Significant portions of parts and components procured by the auto manufacturers are supplied by affiliate parts and components manufacturers of the same business group. While the extent to which each automaker relies on in-group procurement differs, SAIC and FAW, for example, procured in-group 44.2 percent (1995) and 42.4 percent (1994) of the domestically sourced domestic parts and components (in value) for the production of Santana and Jetta passenger car models (produced from their joint ventures with Volkswagen, SVW and FAW-VW).³⁹ In the case of the Charade (*Xiali*) model of Tianjin Auto Industry Group, among the 54 major suppliers listed in FOURIN (2001), 41 firms, or 75.9 percent of the total, turned out to be affiliates of the Group.⁴⁰ Typically, in-group automaker-supplier relations are

“ SIGNIFICANT PORTIONS OF PARTS AND COMPONENTS PROCURED BY THE AUTO MANUFACTURERS ARE SUPPLIED BY AFFILIATE PARTS AND COMPONENTS MANUFACTURERS OF THE SAME BUSINESS GROUP. ”

characterized by high level of investments on relation-specific assets. Such in-group supply relations are characterized by norms of reciprocity and trust, in which cut-throat price bargaining is rare and supply price is generally determined on the cost-plus basis, rather than on the basis of spot market price.⁴¹

At the same time, long-term stable relationships and relational contracting also characterize exchange relations between auto manufacturers and suppliers in the same localities. The proportion of parts and components sourced from these suppliers are often substantial. In 1995, for example, among 281 firms that were listed as major components suppliers for SVW, 167 firms, or 59.4 percent of the total, were located in the Shanghai municipality. Besides members of SAIC, 18.9 percent among major suppliers were those firms or corporations that formerly belonged to industrial bureaus other than the machine building bureau of the Shanghai municipal government and sub-municipal level government.⁴² The findings of Huang and Thun also show the tendency for high levels of within-region supply: they report that 63.7 percent of 248 major suppliers of the SVW in 1997 were located in Shanghai.⁴³ The proportion of within-region supply seems to be also extremely high in the

³⁹ Ikeya Kaichi, “Shanghai jidosha kogyo no tenkai,” (“Development of Shanghai’s Auto Industry”) in Mitsuhiro Seki and Kaichi Ikeya, eds., *Chugoku jidosha sankyo to Nippon kigyo (China’s Automobile Industry and Japanese Firms)* (Tokyo: Shinhyoron, 1997), 156-157; Ito Katsuken, “Chugoku jidosha sankyo ni okeru gijutsuiten to kigyokan bungyo,” (Technology Transfer and Inter-firm Division of Labor in China’s Auto Industry) in Yoshio Kawamura, ed., *Chugoku keizaikaikaku to jidosha sankyo (China’s Economic Reform and Auto Industry)* (Kyoto: Showado, 1997), 214.

⁴⁰ FOURIN, 2002 *Chugoku jidosha buhin sankyo (Chinese Automotive and Auto-Parts Industry 2002)* (Nagoya: FOURIN, 2001), 243.

⁴¹ Morimoto Takao and Li Hongbin, “Chugoku jidosha sankyoni okeru shitaukeseisan sisutemu” (“Subcontracting System in China’s Auto Industry”), *Chushokigyokikan (Quarterly Journal of Small and Medium Firm)* (August 1994), 1-16; and Tanaka Akira, “Tianjin kishashudanno ‘Japanization’” (“‘Japanization’ of Tianjin Automotive Group”) in Harudo Shiomi, ed., *Yokokino Chugoku jidosha sankyo (China’s Auto Industry in Transition Era)* (Tokyo: Nippon keizai hyoronsha, 2001), 15-80.

⁴² Ikeya, p. 156.

⁴³ Yasheng Huang and Eric Thun, “Shanghai Volkswagen: Facing a New Era,” (Harvard University: Harvard Business School Case No. 9-700-001, 1999), p. 15.

32 Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy

China

case of components sourcing arrangements for production of the Charade model in Tianjin Auto Industry Group. All 54 major suppliers listed in FOURIN (2001) are located in Tianjin municipality. Of the 156 supply relationships for 116 items of components listed in FOURIN (2002), only seven are from suppliers outside Tianjin.⁴⁴

While ostensibly taking on the form of voluntary exchange between independent units, such supply relations between the main assembler and suppliers of the same locality are frequently mediated and coordinated by the authority of the local state administrative hierarchy. Specified contracts play little role in this type of relations, which are flexibly adjusted given the situation in hand. Even such basic terms of relations as payment of bills are often handled arbitrarily.⁴⁵ This, in part, reflects active involvement of local government in mediating the relationships between assemblers and suppliers.

A representative example of active involvement by local governments in structuring the supply network can be shown in the organization of the "Community for Localization of the Shanghai Santana" (*Shanghai Sangtana guochanhua gongtongti*) under the auspices of the Shanghai municipal government. To promote the development of the regional auto components industry and mobilize suppliers for the substitution of imported components, the Shanghai municipal government organized the Community in 1988, which was composed of various research and financial institutions,

universities, and component manufacturers.⁴⁶ To oversee the overall effort to develop the local automobile industry and to enhance the coordination between relevant industrial bureaus, the Office for Coordinating Localization of Shanghai Passenger Cars (*Shanghaishi jiaocheng guochanhua xietiao bangongshi*) was established, headed by then-vice mayor of the city Huang Ju. The Community, under the direct supervision of the Office, cooperated closely with the SAIC and played a crucial role in the process of developing the regional supplier network, from the selection of target components to be localized to the financing of technological restructuring and the import of foreign technologies and facilities. To finance the project, the Shanghai municipal government levied RMB 28,000 per unit of vehicle sold (equivalent to some 16 percent of final sales price) for a "localization fund" (*guochanhua jijin*), a practice that was subsequently banned by the central government in 1994, coincident with the introduction of the new national tax system.⁴⁷

In some occasions, supply relations have been directly organized and coordinated through the administrative interventions of the central state. For example, to assist the local sourcing of parts and components for the Santana model of SVW, a meeting was organized in 1988 under the auspices of the Ministry of Machine Building and the China National Automotive Industrial Corporation (CNAIC); relevant central agencies and local governments, as well as the Shanghai

⁴⁴ FOURIN, *Chugoku jidosha buhin sankyo no kyosoryoku (Chinese Automotive Components Industry, Special Report)* (Nagoya: FOURIN, 2002), 115-116.

⁴⁵ Tanaka, 24-25.

⁴⁶ In 1995, the Community was composed of 125 component suppliers, six universities, five research institutes, and three financial institutions. Among the component suppliers, 73 and 13 are located in Shanghai municipality and adjacent Jiangsu province. Among the former, 22 are affiliates of SAIC.

⁴⁷ From 1988 to 1994, the city of Shanghai collected over RMB 5 billion, an amount roughly equivalent to 83 percent of total investment made in the auto components industry of Shanghai from 1986 to 1995 and 28 percent of total national investment in the industry from 1988 to 1994. Huang and Thun, 7; Chen Jin, *Chugoku joyosha kikyō no seichosenryaku (Growth Strategies of the Chinese Automotive Manufacturers)* (Tokyo: Shinsansa, 2000), 95; and *Zhongguo qiche gongye nianjian 1999 (China Automotive Industry Yearbook, 1999)*, 9.

municipal government, participated in that meeting. To promote the localization of imported parts for the Santana model and enlarge the basis for components supply to the national level, it was proposed that SVW obtain a third of its components from affiliated production units under China Automotive Parts Corporation (affiliate of CNAIC), China North Industry Group Corporation, and China National Aviation Industry Corporation.

Despite years of reform efforts meant to introduce “discipline of market competition,” evidence suggests that the fragmented structure of the components sourcing network by regions, groups, and ministerial division (*diqu chengtao, jituan chengtao, bumen chengtao*) has remained quite stable.⁴⁸ In 1989, SVW procured 38.9 percent, 27 percent, and 13.2 percent of the domestically produced components (including those produced in-house) for its Santana model from, respectively, the SAIC affiliate component makers, the affiliates of other industrial corporations under the Shanghai municipal and sub-municipal level governments, and the affiliates of China Automotive Parts Corporation, China North Industry Group Corporation, and China National Aviation Industry Corporation. In 1995, the

distribution was 35 percent, 15 percent, and 10 percent, respectively. In light of the fact that the localization ratio of the components has increased dramatically during that period from 31 percent to 86.5 percent, it is remarkable that the overall distribution of sources from which components are supplied has remained this stable.⁴⁹

Conclusion

The market is a social institution that is structured in various ways reflecting diverse institutional context. Recently, an increasing number of researchers have taken on a view that contemporary market economies, rather than converging to a single universal model, are configured on the basis of distinct institutional and social structural foundations. Instead of simply assuming that a uniform process of marketization is in progress, researchers can gain more insights into the institutional complexities and organizational diversities of China’s post-socialist transformation by paying more attention to specific coordination mechanisms and concrete social structures underlying exchange relations in the evolving market system.

The case of the industrial market for the supply of parts and components in China’s

“ IN SOME OCCASIONS, SUPPLY RELATIONS HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY ORGANIZED AND COORDINATED THROUGH THE ADMINISTRATIVE INTERVENTIONS OF THE CENTRAL STATE. ”

⁴⁸ An outcome that might have stemmed from such fragmented, “clan”-like structures of industrial sourcing network in China’s auto industry is persistently higher profitability of components suppliers relative to auto assemblers. From 1998 to 2002, comparison of overall profitability, measured in terms of annual profit-sales ratio, consistently shows higher profitability of parts and components manufacturers as compared to auto manufacturers. From 1998 to 2002, annual profit-sales ratios for parts and components manufacturers were 5.96 percent, 6.41 percent, 7.13 percent, 7.92 percent, and 8.83 percent. The ratios are persistently higher than that of assemblers, which were 1.85 percent, 3.91 percent, 4.44 percent, 6.08 percent, and 7.17 percent for the respective years. In addition, proportions of firms operating in deficit during the same period were lower for the former than the latter. From 1998 to 2002, the annual proportions of firms operating in red among total components makers and assemblers were 38.1 percent, 35.2 percent, 28.9 percent, 34.8 percent, and 23.3 percent for the former and 51.3 percent, 36.4 percent, 28.9 percent, 34.8 percent, and 23.3 percent for the latter. *Ibid.* Such difference in profitability is all the more interesting, since parts and components manufacturers in general operate less efficiently than final assemblers in terms of utilization of resources. For example, throughout the same period, comparative labor productivity and asset utilization ratio of the former were around 32 to 52 percent and 71 to 87 percent of the latter. Despite such relative inefficiency, it seems that ‘subdued competition’ that resulted from fragmented structure of industrial sourcing relations allowed producers of auto parts and components consistently higher profitability relative to final assemblers, which seems to face greater threat of competition at the end market. *Zhongguo qiche gongye nianjian* (1999-2003).

⁴⁹ Lee Chunli, 233.

34 *Social Organization of Markets in China's Transformational Economy*

China

automobile industry shows that emergent exchange relations differ from those conceived by neoclassical economists, as they are embedded in institutionalized relationships derived from past organizational affiliations and local corporatism. Marketization of the Chinese auto industry did not lead to the emergence of a self-adjusting market governed by the impersonal mechanism of price alone; rather, the supply chain is predominantly characterized by “closed” or “restrictive” networks of long-term and stable exchange relations in which coordination mechanism other than price, such as authority and reciprocity, plays significant role.

While some have argued that the role of social networks and clientelist ties in configuring market relations is on the decline, it is inappropriate to conclude that an idealized market model will necessarily

emerge. In the case of the automobile industry, it is possible to interpret the present structure of supply networks as reflective of the fact that, until recently, the industry basically remained a “sellers’ market.” As competition in the final product market becomes fiercer, a trend that has already been occurring since the late 1990s, it is probable that exchange relations between assemblers and suppliers will become more competitive and that price mechanisms will begin to play a more crucial role. Even so, it is difficult to expect that market relations will converge to an individualistic model of the market economy, and it is probable that the exchange network will continue to be characterized by a distinct mix of coordination mechanisms and structural patterns that reflect institutional and social foundations from which the network emerged.

New Beijing, Great Olympics: Beijing and its Unfolding Olympic Legacy

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For many months in early 2001, Beijing was a city obsessed with the dream of the Olympics: its city streets were filled with posters and slogans, its newspapers focused on the Games, and its leaders monitored developments within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) with great anticipation. When IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch finally announced on July 13 that Beijing had won the right to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, the entire city erupted into a “flag-waving, horn-honking, music-jamming, firecracker-exploding party.”¹ For Beijing and for China as a whole, the IOC announcement came as a form of redemption, especially after the failed 1993 bid for the 2000 Games.² For the rest of the world, the Chinese victory was more controversial. Some critics, including many from the United States, argued that China’s poor record on human rights made it incapable of upholding the ideals of peace and freedom embodied in the Olympic Charter. For others, though, a Chinese Olympics was an eventual necessity, due to China’s economic power and its growing stature within the Olympic movement. The debate still rages today, focusing on the impact of the 2008 Games on Beijing, on China, and on global politics.

This article will examine Beijing’s bid and the current state of its preparation for the Games and will address some of the Olympics’ political and economic effects on Beijing. To address economic issues, this paper will draw on Beijing’s current efforts in urban planning and economic information about Beijing’s Olympic budget. In examining possible political lessons that China’s leaders may be able to draw from this experience, this article will look at previous Summer Olympic Games held in Mexico City (1968) and Seoul (1988), which provide important insights into the political nature and long-term ramifications of the hosting process.

Beijing’s Bidding Process

China’s decision to bid for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games was officially made by the State Council in November 1998, but its desire to host the Games began as early as the late 1980s. In 1993, when Beijing first bid to host the Games, Beijing’s detractors, led by many in the United States, focused on China’s human rights record, considered to be especially poor in the light of the Tiananmen Square demonstrations only four years before. This mindset was balanced by the desire of many within the IOC and the

¹ Alan Abrahamson, “New Beijing, Great Olympics’: 2008 Games Represent a Chance to Bring about a Dramatic Turning Point in Chinese History,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 13, 2001, D10.

² “Major Landmarks of 2008 Bid,” *See You in Beijing* (Beijing: Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, February 2001), 28; “Olympic Bid Election History – Voting Records and Results,” <<http://www.gamesbids.com/english/archives/past.shtml>>.

36 *New Beijing, Great Olympics*

China

world community to fully bring China into the Olympic movement. Though Beijing lost the 1993 bid, the Chinese government was determined to win the right to host. After declining to bid for the 2004 Games, the Chinese government in 1998 again offered their candidacy for the 2008 Games.³

The motivations behind the government's most recent bid were largely the same as those behind its earlier attempts to host the Olympics. Like many other nations, China saw the Olympics as a developmental engine that could spur growth in Beijing and the surrounding area for years to come. The Olympics could also increase China's international prestige and project an image, both domestically and internationally, of national strength and unity. The need for international prestige has long been a key part of China's foreign policy thinking, as its leaders remember all too well China's "century of humiliation" in the 1800s. China's foreign policy also rests on the need for projection of national strength, since much of the ruling Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) legitimacy rests on its commitment to national strength and continued economic growth.⁴ The Olympics would also provide the government with an opportunity to improve Beijing's infrastructure, as well as the rationale to devote significant funds to the project.⁵

The Olympics thus presented an important opportunity for China to achieve many goals simultaneously. In November 1998, China's Central Committee formally decided that Beijing should bid for the 2008

Olympics, and solicited a formal application from the Beijing city government. Beijing submitted its application to the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) on November 25, 1998, and the COC then forwarded to the IOC. After Beijing's acceptance as a candidate city on April 7, 1999, the IOC then sent local officials a detailed questionnaire that addressed every major area of Olympic planning. From this point, Beijing could prepare itself as an official applicant, and China's State Council approved the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee (BOBICO) on September 6, 1999. Members of the new body included officials from the Beijing municipal government, the State Council, the State Sport General Administration, and several other national agencies with a stake in Olympic planning.⁶ After a great deal of planning, BOBICO submitted the completed questionnaire in June 2000. On August 28, 2000, the IOC Executive Board formally announced that Beijing had been accepted as a candidate city to host the 2008 Olympics, along with Osaka, Istanbul, Toronto, and Paris.⁷

Throughout the latter half of 2000, 28 delegations from international sports federations visited China to examine closely the existing facilities and facilities plans. Official Olympic visits by the IOC Evaluation Commission to candidate cities were scheduled for early 2001. During their February visit, the Commission toured all of Beijing's major sporting facilities and met with city planners. They also visited several other non-sporting facilities in Beijing,

³ Ezra Vogel, "How Can the United States and China Pursue Common Interests and Manage Differences?," in Ezra Vogel, ed., *Living with China* (New York: WW Norton, 1997), 25-6; Dwight H. Perkins, "How China's Economic Transformation Shapes Its Future," in Ezra Vogel, ed., *Living with China* (New York: WW Norton, 1997), 143.

⁴ Heidi Haugen, "The Construction of Beijing as an Olympic City" (University of Oslo: proposed Master's thesis, 2003), 1-2.

⁵ Matthew J. Burbank, Gregory D. Andranovich, and Charles H. Heying, *Olympic Dreams: The Impact of Mega-Events on Local Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 158.

⁶ "Major Landmarks of 2008 Bid," 28.

⁷ *Ibid.*

including a local hospital and the headquarters for China Central Television.⁸ In the Commission's official report, Beijing's bid was recommended as "excellent," along with the bids of Paris and Toronto. It noted possible environmental and traffic problems, but felt these concerns could be easily overcome with Beijing's ambitious planning efforts and its strong governmental capacity.⁹

From the beginning of its bid process, the Chinese government attempted to garner broad domestic support, from both key public figures and the general population. For instance, in April 2000, BOBICO announced that Zhang Yimou, a Chinese director famous internationally for films such as *Raise the Red Lantern* and *Red Sorghum*, would direct a video supporting Beijing's Olympic bid. This occurred in spite of the many years of official criticism that Zhang had faced for his films satirizing Chinese society and government.¹⁰ Other notable public figures signed on to support the bid, including Fu Mingxia, a three-time gold medallist in women's diving.¹¹ China also attempted to mobilize popular support through various public relations campaigns, both domestically and abroad. The government established Olympic service groups to encourage public support for Beijing's bid through events and programs. Some of the most widely publicized

programs were those that dealt with city beautification and foreign language instruction. Polls conducted by IOC research teams during the bidding period found that 96 percent of Beijing's population supported the Olympics.¹²

As in 1993, however, world opinion was divided over the issue of Beijing's bid. China's environmental problems, including Beijing's poor air quality, were of concern to environmentalists, medical specialists, and athletes. Officials in many governments argued over China's human rights record, and many international human rights organizations claimed that rewarding China with the hosting of the Olympics would only exacerbate the country's human rights problems. A bipartisan coalition of American congressmen introduced resolutions to the House and Senate in March 2001, demanding that the IOC reject Beijing's bid because of its poor record on human rights.¹³ Prevailing world opinion in 2001, however, was more in favor of engagement than it had been eight years before, arguing that the Olympic movement's continued growth and success depended upon China's involvement. The IOC Evaluation Commission's official report noted that a Beijing Olympics would "leave a unique legacy to China and to sport."¹⁴ These proponents of engagement also framed

“**PREVAILING WORLD OPINION IN 2001 WAS MORE IN FAVOR OF ENGAGEMENT THAN IT HAD BEEN EIGHT YEARS BEFORE, ARGUING THAT THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT'S CONTINUED GROWTH AND SUCCESS DEPENDED UPON CHINA'S INVOLVEMENT.**”

⁸ International Olympic Committee Evaluation Commission, *Report of the IOC Evaluation Commission for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in 2008* (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2001), 99, 103.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 95-6.

¹⁰ "Major Landmarks of 2008 Bid," 28.

¹¹ "Beijing Presents Itself to the World," *See You in Beijing* (Beijing: Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, February 2001), 29.

¹² "Zest for Foreign Languages," *See You in Beijing* (Beijing: Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, February 2001), 64; International Olympic Committee Evaluation Commission, *Report of the IOC Evaluation Commission for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in 2008*, 60.

¹³ Kate Snow, "Chinese envoy urges Congress not to block Olympic bid," *CNN*, April 10, 2001, <<http://www.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/04/10/congress.olympics/index.html>>.

¹⁴ International Olympic Committee Evaluation Commission, *Report of the IOC Evaluation Commission*, 95.

38 *New Beijing, Great Olympics*

China

debate on Beijing's bid as an opportunity to encourage growth and reform in the country.

Debate only intensified through the summer of 2001. Beijing was widely considered to be the frontrunner because of the advanced state of its preparations and because of its strategic importance. A Beijing victory, though, was hardly a foregone conclusion. In 1993, Beijing had been considered the frontrunner for much of the bidding process, only to lose to Sydney. In 2001, its main challengers were Paris and Toronto, the two other cities whose bids had also been rated as excellent. Yet when the final voting was tallied, Beijing had won by a large margin on only the second ballot. Not since 1981 had the Olympic host been decided on so few ballots.¹⁵

Pre-Olympic Preparations

After the IOC's selection of Beijing, the Chinese government wasted little time in initiating official Olympic preparations. On August 7, it formed a preparatory panel, headed by Beijing Vice Mayor Liu Jingmin; on December 31, 2001, this panel officially established the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG). The new committee was headed by Liu Qi, Beijing's mayor, and included officials from Beijing's municipal government, the State Sports General

Association of China, and the Chinese Olympic Committee.¹⁶

Less than two weeks after its establishment, BOCOG published a three-phase plan for the Olympics. The first phase, from October 2001 until mid-2003, would include consolidation of supervisory organizations, drafting and initial implementation of a comprehensive Olympic Action Plan, securing of funds for facility construction, and the drafting of blueprints for major facilities. The second phase, from mid-2003 until mid-2006, would encompass the bulk of facility construction. During the final phase, from mid-2006 until the opening of the Games in mid-2008, officials would conduct double-checks of facilities, execute

test runs of the competitions, and make any final adjustments or last-minute preparations for the Games.¹⁷

On March 28, 2002, the BOCOG publicly released its Olympic Action Plan (OAP), which outlined the

committee's strategic themes and objectives and its overall plans for the Olympics.¹⁸ In sections on facilities construction and management, the OAP focused on new construction, distribution of facilities, and post-Games use of facilities, as well as compatibility with the pre-existing Tenth Five-Year Plan and Beijing's "Strategy for Three-phased Development."¹⁹ The OAP also

“**AFTER THE IOC'S SELECTION OF BEIJING, THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT WASTED LITTLE TIME IN INITIATING OFFICIAL OLYMPIC PREPARATIONS.**”

¹⁵ In that election, Seoul won the right to host the 1988 Games over its only other challenger, Nagoya. See Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report: Games of the XXIVth Olympiad, Seoul 1988*, Vol. 1 (Seoul: Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee, 1989), 40-2; "Olympic Bid Election History," online.

¹⁶ "Beijing 2008 Organizing Committee to be Formed in Two Months," *People's Daily*, August 20, 2001, <http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200108/20/print20010820_77759.html>; "Beijing Launches Organizing Committee, Promises Open and Frugal Games," *People's Daily*, December 13, 2001, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200112/13/eng20011213_86600.shtml>.

¹⁷ Du Minghua, "Beijing Fixes Timetable for Olympic Games Preparation," *People's Daily*, December 26 2001, <http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200112/26/print20011226_87492.html>.

¹⁸ These themes, which were originally proposed in Beijing's candidacy materials, included an environmentally friendly "Green Olympics," a modern "High-Tech Olympics," and a "People's Olympics" organized around cultural exchange and popular hospitality. For more, see Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Beijing Olympic Action Plan* (Beijing: Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, 2002), I.1-I.2; "Beijing Unveils Action Plan for 2008 Olympic Games," *Xinhua*, March 29, 2002.

¹⁹ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Beijing Olympic Action Plan*, I.1.

addressed other necessary areas of Olympic preparation, including communications infrastructure, transportation issues, and environmental improvement. In all, the document proved to be comprehensive and was well received by members of an IOC delegation that visited in late April 2002.²⁰

Under the BOCOG plan, the Olympics would utilize 37 competition venues in China. Of the 32 venues in Beijing, 19 would be new and 13 would be renovated preexisting structures. The largest share of the facilities, 14, would be located around the Olympic Green, an area in northern Beijing. The Olympic Green would include the Olympic Village and the Media Village, as well as other press facilities and communications infrastructure.²¹ Other secondary areas of Olympic activity would include the University Area in northern Beijing, the Northern Tourist District, and the Western Community Area, centered on the Wukesong Culture and Sports Center. This decentralized clustering was known as the “one center, three districts” development model.²² In December 2002, BOCOG proposed an altered plan, lower in cost, that would build and utilize more venues on university campuses to “avoid wasting resources after the Games.”²³ In June 2003, BOCOG announced an official cut of US\$180 million from its budget, due to adjustments in venue planning and the number of Olympic sports.²⁴

After the development of its specific plan for facility construction and management,

BOCOG continued to work with multiple levels of government to divide ownership of the new facilities and responsibility for their construction. The largest number of venues lies under the jurisdiction of the Beijing city government and the governments of its districts. Several venues, however, fall outside of the scope of the Beijing municipal government. Many university facilities, such as Qinghua University Indoor Stadium, are planned for use as training sites with only minor modifications; the universities will resume management of the modified sites after the Olympics.²⁵ Venues in other cities, like Shenyang Wulihe Stadium, are being constructed and managed by their municipal governments, which will control them after the Games. The central State Administration for Sports also owns and controls a few major venues within Beijing, including the Sports Hall at Beijing Physical Education University.²⁶

These other bodies that were given control of venues were allowed the freedom to govern the construction or modification of facilities and to govern their after-games usage. Most have chosen to issue open bidding for design, construction, and management of their venues. BOCOG has already selected several bids for the design of the Olympic Green and the Wukesong Cultural and Sports Center and has issued open calls for the sporting venues in those areas through a centralized website (<http://www.bjinvest.gov.cn>).²⁷ Final

²⁰ “Beijing Olympic Action Plan Receives Active Response,” *Xinhua*, April 29, 2002.

²¹ “Geographic Locations of Competition Sites for Beijing 2008 Olympic Games,” *See You in Beijing* (Beijing: Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, February 2001), 78.

²² Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Beijing Olympic Action Plan*, II.1.

²³ “Beijing Plans to Build More Olympic Venues on Campuses,” *Xinhua*, December 27, 2002.

²⁴ “Beijing Cut Olympics Construction Budget by US\$180M,” *Business Daily Update*, July 1, 2003.

²⁵ “Beijing 2008 – Best Sports Facilities,” *See You in Beijing* (Beijing: Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, February 2001), 81.

²⁶ Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero, “Appendix” (Rome: Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero, 2002), 1-4.

²⁷ Two firms – Sasaki Associates from the United States and Tianjin Huahui Engineering and Architect Design Company from China – received first prize, but elements from all of the winning designs are expected to be included in the final green space. For more information, see “BOCOG Confident of Completing Venue Construction by End of 2006,” *Xinhua*, December 27, 2002; “Beijing Offers Seven Bids for Olympic Stadiums, Gymnasiums,” *Xinhua*, October 26, 2002.

40 *New Beijing, Great Olympics*

China

decisions on most of these venues, based on design, plans for post-Games use, and overall cost, were made by the end of 2003, and construction on many of them, including the National Stadium, has already begun. The remaining venues will begin construction by the end of 2004.²⁸ In late 2003, overall costs for the Games venues were estimated at US\$1.39 billion, with US\$1.14 billion of that from construction of new facilities and US\$0.25 billion from renovation of old facilities.²⁹

BOCOG also addressed the issue of accommodations in both its Olympic bid and subsequent construction plans. The current layout for the Olympic Village includes accommodations for 15,000 athletes and team officials. The Village complex will also include restaurants, libraries, cinemas, and shops. Beijing's public accommodations are largely completed; as BOBICO pointed out in its reply to the first official IOC

questionnaire, the city already had sufficient infrastructure to host the Olympics, with 241 star-rated hotels and 71,669 rooms. BOBICO anticipated an additional 28,464 rooms becoming available by 2008.³⁰ BOBICO also stated Beijing's intention to open some university student apartments (8,990 rooms) and other lodging facilities (including private homes, with 63,358 rooms) for visitors.

Communications infrastructure is a high priority for BOCOG, especially high-tech telecommunications infrastructure. The Games concept advocated by BOBICO and BOCOG calls for a "high-tech Olympics" with the latest in communications hardware and software.³¹ As in previous Olympic Games, the BOCOG plans to construct an International Broadcasting Center (IBC) and a Main Press Center (MPC), both of which will be located in the Olympic Green area near the Press Village.³² In its OAP, BOCOG also announced plans to standardize and "clean up" radio frequencies, increase substantially the amount of fiber-optic cable in the city, install a new broadband digital communications system, expand the use of e-commerce and SmartCard technology, and introduce artificial intelligence to ease linguistic difficulties of athletes and spectators.³³

Beijing's transportation system, which was largely overhauled in the late 1990s for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic, is undergoing further changes in preparation for the Olympics. The urban transport system is organized around a series of concentric ring roads that loop around the city; in 2001, when Olympic preparations began, Beijing had three completed ring roads.³⁴ Beijing's two-line subway system and its extensive bus system were both popular methods of public

“ **THE GAMES CONCEPT ADVOCATED BY BOBICO AND BOCOG CALLS FOR A ‘HIGH-TECH OLYMPICS’ WITH THE LATEST IN COMMUNICATIONS HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE.** ”

²⁸ "Beijing Kicks Off Construction of Olympic Venues," *Xinhua*, December 24, 2003; Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "Tender Notification: 4. Time Schedule," <<http://olympic.bjinvest.gov.cn/english/tender/tender04.jsp>>.

²⁹ Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero, 1, 4.

³⁰ Of these new rooms, 7,368 would be in star-rated hotels, 15,096 would be in university housing, and 6,000 would be other lodging facilities. See Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, *Replies to Questionnaire* (Beijing: Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, 2000), 28, 32.

³¹ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Beijing Olympic Action Plan*, I.1.

³² International Olympic Committee Evaluation Commission, *Report of the IOC Evaluation Commission*, 73.

³³ Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, 18; Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Beijing Olympic Action Plan*, III.4

³⁴ As of 2001, Beijing already had three major ring roads – the First, Second, and Third Ring roads. The Fourth Ring Road, already underway in 2001, was completed in 2002. See Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, *Replies to Questionnaire*, 34.

transport, and Beijing Capital International Airport could handle 35 million passengers daily. Current plans include major transportation changes, such as:

- Construction of the Fifth Ring Road (completed in October 2003) and the Sixth Ring Road (scheduled to be finished by 2005).
- The expansion of several expressways and railways connecting Beijing to surrounding cities (including Shanghai and Qinhuangdao).
- Construction and reconstruction of 318 kilometers of roads and 154.5 kilometers of urban light railway.
- Construction of eight new subway lines connecting all areas of the metropolitan area, one of which is already complete, and the renovation of Beijing's two existing lines to include automatic ticketing systems.
- Expansion of Beijing's bus system to include 18,000 buses and a passenger capacity of more than 4.5 billion passengers per year.
- Addition of Olympic lanes to many main roads for use by athletes, officials, and the press.
- Expansion of Beijing Capital International Airport and possible construction of a new airport, as well as modifications to Tianjin International Airport, Nanyuan Airport, and Xijiao Airport for support purposes.³⁵

These changes to Beijing's physical landscape, many of which are already well

underway, are rapidly improving Beijing's transportation capacity.

Environmental issues have been another target for BOCOG in its Olympic preparations, especially considering the widespread concern expressed about Beijing's environment during the candidacy process. These concerns led BOBICO, along with the city's environmental bureau and twenty NGOs, to found the Green Olympics Project (GOP). This project pledged US\$5.6 billion for environmental cleanup and protection activities from 1998 to 2002, with an additional US\$6.6 billion for projects from 2002 to 2007. Parts of the GOP included strategic environmental assessments for all aspects of Olympic preparation and a permanent Education Center for Sustainable Development, to operate in the Olympic Green during and after the Games.³⁶ It also addressed specific environmental concerns, including airborne pollution and deforestation. By 2008, it aims to increase the number of buses and taxis operating on natural gas by thirty percent.³⁷ Beijing also plans to decrease coal consumption, from 26 million tons in 2002 to 15 million tons in 2007, and replace it with natural gas.³⁸ Reforestation and increased green space are also major concerns for government planners; in an August 2, 2003 press release, BOCOG stated that its reforestation programs planted more than two million trees and three million square meters of grassland in 2002 alone.³⁹ While environmental concerns are still considerable, Beijing has

³⁵ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Beijing Olympic Action Plan*, III.3; Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Transport Construction and Traffic Management Plan* (Beijing: Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, 2002), 2.1-2.2, 3.2; "Beijing's First Ring Highway Opens to Traffic," *Xinhua*, November 3, 2003; Li Heng, "Beijing Pondering over Second International Airport to Greet Olympic Passengers," *People's Daily*, April 1, 2002.

³⁶ Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, *Beijing 2008*, Vol. 1 (Beijing: Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, 2000), 53-55.

³⁷ In 2001, these figures were 60 percent for public buses and 40 percent for taxis; by 2008, the government aims to have converted 90 percent of public buses and 70 percent of taxis to natural gas. For more, see Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee, *Beijing 2008*, 55.

³⁸ "Beijing Cuts Energy Rates by Half to Discourage Use of Coal," *Xinhua*, September 12, 2002.

³⁹ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "The Olympic Games and the Development of Beijing," <<http://en.beijing-2008.org/91/29/article211612991.shtml>>.

42 *New Beijing, Great Olympics*

China

shown signs of progress.

BOCOG has been working closely with officials from the IOC throughout the process and has also used several other regional games and sporting events as its models for study. In 2002, BOCOG sent representatives to study the Seventeenth Commonwealth Games in Manchester; it has also sent delegations to the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, the South Korea/Japan World Cup Finals, and the Asian Games in Busan.⁴⁰ Chinese officials have held several meetings with officials from the Organizing Committee for the 2004 Athens Games.⁴¹ The BOCOG works closely with the IOC to ensure that preparations run smoothly and on schedule. For example, the IOC Coordination Commission, responsible for ensuring proper interaction between a Games' local Olympic Organizing Committee (OOC) and the overall body, has visited Beijing several times and has praised the scope and speed of Beijing's Olympic preparations.⁴²

Economic and Budgetary Considerations

The initial budget for the 2008 Olympic Games was formulated during Beijing's candidacy process, and was drafted in conference with government officials on all levels, the IOC and Chinese Olympic Committee, and international financial consultants. Beijing officials also used the Sydney budget as a close working model. The budget, as finalized on December 14,

2000, provides US\$1.61 billion for the Organizing Committee, with a surplus of US\$16 million.

Revenues from selling broadcast rights to major television networks represent by far the largest portion of expected revenues, at US\$709 million (43.6 percent). An additional US\$260 million (16 percent) will come from sponsorships, both domestic and abroad.⁴³ In its candidature files, BOBICO stated its intent to select approximately ten international corporations and ten to fifteen domestic companies to serve as official Olympic sponsors.⁴⁴ Kodak, Samsung, and Coca-Cola, among others, have already inked agreements to sponsor the Games, and more sponsors should be announced in the coming months.⁴⁵ Donations are difficult for any OOC to estimate, as they are completely dependent on the voluntary actions of a broad sector of businesses and individuals. US\$20 million seems like a large figure, but not an unrealistic one in light of figures from Sydney and Atlanta.⁴⁶

On the expenditures side, the BOCOG budget deals mainly with operations costs and other direct Olympic expenses; operations costs comprise 88.2 percent of the BOCOG budget. One important feature of the budget is the "subsidies" area, which includes a US\$50 million contribution by the national government and a combined US\$50 million subsidy from several municipal governments, including Beijing's

“ WHILE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS ARE STILL CONSIDERABLE, BEIJING HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF PROGRESS. ”

⁴⁰ Gao Peng, "Sports Yearender: Beijing Olympics – A Good Beginning is Half the Battle," *Xinhua*, December 26, 2002.
⁴¹ "IOC to Send BOCOG Staff to Participate in Preparations for Athens Olympics," *Xinhua*, December 4, 2002; Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "BOCOG Learn from Overseas Games Organizers," <http://www.beijing-2008.org/new_olympic/2002-08-28/59.shtm>.
⁴² "Beijing Praised for Progress in Planning the 2008 Olympics," *Xinhua*, December 4, 2002.
⁴³ Olympic Games Bid Committee, *Beijing 2008*, 73.
⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.
⁴⁵ "Beijing Launches 2008 Olympic Marketing Plan," *Agence France Presse*, September 1, 2003.
⁴⁶ Olympic Games Bid Committee, *Beijing 2008*, 73.

contribution. In a US\$1.6 billion BOCOG budget, these figures are relatively minor; however, to local governments, these numbers loom large and will certainly have an effect on local governance.

The BOCOG budget seems deceptively small because most of the Olympic expenditures are borne solely or largely by other institutions. A more realistic estimate of the budget is US\$15.9 billion; this includes only those projects that can easily be tied closely to the Olympic Games. This figure is nearly ten times the stated BOCOG budget.⁴⁷ In many cases, the BOCOG plans to team up with a local city government or local business to construct a facility. Of the US\$1.6 billion required to construct the 37 sports facilities, the BOCOG budget covers only 13.36 percent of funds, or \$220 million. The Olympic Village, for instance, is anticipated to cost US\$482 million, of which only US\$40 million (8.2 percent) will be paid by the BOCOG. Thus, the financial burden placed on average Chinese citizens is two-fold, from the official BOCOG budget *and* from the Olympic expenditures undertaken by local governments and businesses. This budget is still flexible, and could change as costs adjust and products change. For example, if Beijing decides to build a second international airport, this will increase costs some and perhaps cut into the BOCOG's current surplus – although, as a capital expenditure, the cost of the airport would likely be largely borne by the Beijing municipal government. Yet it is important for both the government and for China watchers to remember that the burden of Olympic expenditures will be supported not only by residents of Beijing, but also by citizens in

other parts of China, who will not directly see the benefits of their contributions.

Infrastructural Ramifications for Beijing

Beijing's urban landscape is currently undergoing changes on an unprecedented scale, as vast areas of the city are being remade in preparation for the Olympics. The last time major changes in Beijing's landscape were made was in 1997-98, for fiftieth anniversary of the People's Republic of China.⁴⁸ New facilities will greatly add to Beijing's capacity for both sporting activities and other large-scale events. This widespread construction, however, has raised some serious concerns, as is illustrated in current debate over historical preservation.

BOBICO has made the post-Games use of its sporting facilities a high priority in its candidature documents. After the Games, many of the university facilities – including gymnasia at Qinghua University and Beijing University of Science and Technology – will be returned directly to their original university environments. Many facilities, including the National Stadium, Wukesong Culture and Sports Center, and National Swimming Center, will be maintained as sports facilities for future international sporting events held in Beijing.⁴⁹

The Olympic Village will be converted into a permanent residential area, and athletes' residences will be sold off as commercial apartments, helping to ease Beijing's serious housing shortage. Other facilities, including an entertainment center, a convention center, and even an international school, will also emerge out of the Village.⁵⁰ Open green spaces will be

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Beijing Construction – Capital Investment," *China Economic Review*, October 4, 2002, 17.

⁴⁹ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "National Stadium," <<http://olympic.bjinvest.gov.cn/english/project/index01.jsp>>; Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "Wukesong Culture and Sports Center," <<http://olympic.bjinvest.gov.cn/english/project/index06.jsp>>; Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "National Swimming Center," <<http://olympic.bjinvest.gov.cn/english/project/index02.jsp>>.

44 *New Beijing, Great Olympics*

China

converted into public parks or, like the Beijing Countryside Horse Racetrack, even into golf courses.⁵¹ Beijing's construction plans conform closely to previous city planning models, but also seek to expand and develop new growth centers. The Olympic Green represents one such development objective, and serves as the "center" of the "one center, three districts" development model.⁵² It is being constructed on the north side of the city, along the city's traditional north-south axis, in an area that has recently seen strong growth. City planners hope that the Olympic Green can become the hub of a new downtown.⁵³ While two of the Olympic districts, the Western Community Area and the University Area, lie in largely developed urban regions, the third district, the Northern Tourist District, is far less developed. Beijing's planners hope that this area, approximately 35 miles northeast of the Olympic Village, can develop into a new commercial and recreational center. In general, Olympic development is focused in the northern areas of the city, which reflects planners' hopes to push development outward and develop viable "satellite towns" along the lines of Fengtai and Beiyuan.⁵⁴

One critical issue facing Beijing's city planners is the proper balance between urban

development and historical preservation. The necessity of modern facilities for the Olympics has forced the government to stress development, but not without incurring a cultural and historical cost. According to Shan Jixiang, the head of Beijing's planning commission, Beijing had already spent RMB 300 million (approximately US\$39.8 million) on cultural renovation and protection as of March 2002; Beijing has also pledged an additional US\$75 million through 2008.⁵⁵ Several areas, however, including the Nanchizi area west of the Forbidden City, have seen major renovations, resulting in the loss of many of Beijing's historic *hutong*. Although Nanchizi had been designated by the government as a protected area for

special preservation, district leaders bypassed the government directive and brought in developers, allegedly to "beautify" and "preserve" the area.⁵⁶ This balance of new and old is a tense one in Beijing, but the Olympics seem to have given the pro-development forces the upper hand.

China's nascent historical preservation movement, led by scholars such as Fang Ke and Zhang Yan, is still relatively disorganized and has little sway with the government. Government planners still regard historical preservation as an "obstacle to progress."⁵⁷ This cultural and historical

“ IN GENERAL, OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT IS FOCUSED IN THE NORTHERN AREAS OF THE CITY, WHICH REFLECTS PLANNERS' HOPES TO PUSH DEVELOPMENT OUTWARD AND DEVELOP VIABLE 'SATELLITE TOWNS.' ”

⁵⁰ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "Olympic Village," <<http://olympic.bjinvest.gov.cn/english/project/index04.jsp>>.

⁵¹ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "Beijing Countryside Horse Racetrack Venue," <<http://olympic.bjinvest.gov.cn/english/project/index08.jsp>>.

⁵² Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Beijing Olympic Action Plan*, II.1.

⁵³ Du Minghua, "Olympic Park to Become Heart of 'Second Capital' to Beijing," *People's Daily*, October 31, 2001.

⁵⁴ "Beijing Construction – Capital Investment," 17.

⁵⁵ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, "The Olympic Games and the Development of Beijing," online; "Beijing Olympics Seek Balance between New and Old," *People's Daily*, March 28, 2002, <http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200203/28/eng20020328_93031.shtml>.

⁵⁶ "Beijing Construction – Capital Investment," 17.

⁵⁷ Fang Ke and Zhang Yan, "To Redevelop Beijing or to Destroy Beijing?: The Paradoxes and Problems in the Renewal of the Old City of Beijing from the Perspective of the Widening of Ping'an Avenue," *Architect*, vol. 84 (1998), 2.

loss casts a shadow on the future and viability of Beijing's development plans.

Political Ramifications for China

The impact of the 2008 Games on the Beijing landscape is not limited to its infrastructure. Many have speculated, with good reason, that the Olympics could play a role in shaping Beijing's political future. The debate in 2001 over Beijing's bid provides a perfect example, as the two sides painted starkly different pictures of a post-Olympics China. Critics claimed that China's poor record in areas such as population policy and human rights should disqualify it from the honor of hosting the Olympics and feared that the Olympics could even give the government a freer hand for oppressive action in areas like human rights. The government, for example, could cite the need for stability and order in repressing public demonstrations or an independent media. Rewarding China, they argued, would only encourage repressive behavior and stunt political reform.

Supporters of a Beijing Olympics, in contrast, advocated the policy of engagement, claiming that the increased international exposure brought by the Games could contribute to China's international integration. This integration could lead China's leaders to seek greater world involvement in other areas, thus encouraging the country to be a responsible world power with a stake in international norms and institutions. Advocates also claimed that amplified media attention could constrain the government from acting against its citizens and could empower the public voice, leading to political reform and greater political freedom. Beijing's supporters point to the marked changes in China's political system

that have taken place since China's rapprochement with the United States and the West in the 1970s.

Which prognosis is correct? It may still be too early to predict the impact of the Olympics on China, but some clues may be found about the current situation with the help of two previous Games as examples. Mexico City (1968) and Seoul (1988), like Beijing, were host cities in less developed countries, which won the right to host the Summer Olympic Games for partly political purposes. Mexico City represented the first time that the Olympics were held in Latin America, and Seoul marked the first Asian Olympics outside of Japan.⁵⁸ Their experiences provide key insights into what Beijing and the rest of the world may realistically expect in the coming years. In both Seoul and Mexico City, major protests led by university students occurred shortly before the Games opened and posed a serious threat to the operation of the Games themselves. These protests occurred, however, in different social contexts. In Mexico City, the students – and the people in general – had little role to play in the Games preparations, and were frustrated at the large sums that were spent on Olympic preparations instead of on social welfare. The government, fearful that the Games could be cancelled or moved, responded quickly and harshly with a violent crackdown, known as the Tlatelolco Massacre. The suppression temporarily ended public debate and strengthened the government through the Olympics. In the long run, however, Tlatelolco strengthened the public voice and widened factions within the ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). This facilitated Mexican political reform and the eventual

⁵⁸ David B. Kanin, *A Political History of the Olympic Games* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 92; Christopher R. Hill, *Olympic Politics*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 119-120.

46 *New Beijing, Great Olympics*

China

end of PRI electoral dominance.

In Seoul, protests were a final spark that ignited the fires of political reform. The student-led protests in 1988 were preceded by the events of the “Seoul Spring,” a period of relative political liberalization in 1980 that ended with the government harshly suppressing riots in Kwangju (the so-called “Kwangju Massacre.”) Unlike in Mexico City, however, the government under strongman Chun Doo-hwan made real attempts to include the South Korean public in the Olympic preparations, through propaganda campaigns and public programs. Therefore, all sides – the students, government, and the middle class – felt that they had a stake in the success of the Olympics. This constrained any radical action, and gave both sides a shared concern and a common time frame. The students thus confined their demands to their political aims of free elections and a new constitution, and protests were largely non-violent. Chun’s government, mindful of Kwangju, was averse to political violence and so sought more peaceful means of resolution. The shift away from political violence, coupled with the urgency of action prescribed by the Olympics, helped to pave the way for compromise and substantive political reform.

Based on the experiences of these previous Games and Beijing’s own political context, the Beijing government is likely to confront political activity, possibly protest, in the run-up to the Games. Protests, especially student-led ones, have a history in China; university students have taken an important role in several periods of major political change in China, including the Republican Revolution and the Cultural Revolution. The Falun Gong, largely under control, could attempt to spark such protest, or a new

political actor could arise. Protests or other manifestations of political dissent are far more likely in the event of slowing economic growth in China. Such a situation is possible but unlikely, considering both the strong attention that the CCP pays to continued growth and the economic effects of Beijing’s Olympic construction. Chinese economists have estimated that the additional investment and consumption associated with the Olympics could boost GDP by as much as 1.67 percent annually until 2007.⁵⁹

If it materializes, political dissent is unlikely to be anywhere near as big or important politically as it proved in Mexico City or in Seoul. The trouble in Mexico City arose when students felt alienated from the preparations. Through both the bidding and preparation periods, Beijing has made real efforts to involve the public and stress the “importance” of the Olympic Games for China. According to Beijing’s Olympic Action Plan, one of the three key elements of BOCOG’s overall strategic concept is the concept of a “People’s Olympics,” with the “widest possible participation of the people in the preparation for Games.”⁶⁰ By giving the people a stake in the preparations process, China’s leadership has attempted to blunt political dissatisfaction with the Games. In Seoul, the impetus for protests arose from the events of the “Seoul Spring” and memories of the Kwangju Massacre. Although China also has a violent incident in its recent past – Tiananmen Square – this incident does not figure as prominently in the Chinese public discourse as Kwangju did in Korea. The leaders of Tiananmen, unlike their Korean counterparts, are also now largely abroad and thus have little public voice within China.

In terms of political reform, the

⁵⁹ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, “The Olympic Games and the Development of Beijing,” online.

⁶⁰ Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, *Beijing Olympic Action Plan*, I.1.

Olympics will, in the short-run, help the CCP solidify its control over China and will strengthen CCP claims as the defender of a strong China and Chinese nationalism. The CCP, however, cannot hope to control the forces that an international event like the Olympics will bring to China. Such a mega-event, simply by its scale and its multinational nature, focuses international attention and political pressure on China in a way that few other events can. The public voice and public participation that the government and the BOCOG have attempted to encourage during the bidding and preparations process paradoxically may help to inculcate an independent public voice that endures after the Olympics. If this public voice grows and truly becomes independent, it can push for government accountability or even reform. In this sense, the Olympics could contribute to long-term political reform in China and further changes in the CCP.

“ IN TERMS OF POLITICAL REFORM, THE OLYMPICS WILL, IN THE SHORT-RUN, HELP THE CCP SOLIDIFY ITS CONTROL OVER CHINA AND WILL STRENGTHEN CCP CLAIMS AS THE DEFENDER OF A STRONG CHINA AND CHINESE NATIONALISM. ”

Lessons for Beijing

The Beijing government thus faces the Olympics knowing the seriousness of its task and the significance of the events it is planning. The Olympics have the potential to remake Beijing, both politically and physically – and they have already started to do so. The ruling CCP wants to run a smooth, successful Games with a minimum of political protest. They hope that the Games will allow them to broaden their international contacts and that an incident-free Games will cause a shift in worldwide opinion in favor of China and away from the human rights regime advocated by many in the West. The Seoul and Mexico City Games give them a course of action to follow, a number of

distinct lessons to study, and a primer for the outcomes of government tactics in handling the Olympics and their preparation. What lessons can the national government under Hu Jintao draw from these examples?

First, the CCP should take care to frame the Olympics in the public consciousness carefully. They should use public projects and propaganda campaigns to present themselves as the driving force behind the Olympic bid and preparations. The CCP should also attempt to frame the public dialogue to advocate that a successful Olympics are important, if not vital, to China's stance as a major world power. If successful in this regard, this will allow them to avoid the mistakes of the Mexico City

Games. By continuing to implement small-scale, decentralized projects for handling micro-areas of Beijing's Olympic preparations, the government could make political protest less likely by empowering the citizens within the Chinese Olympic movement. To this point, the

Chinese government has shown that it recognizes the importance of this step and has garnered support from a broad coalition of Chinese. Government officials have been surprisingly savvy in public relations, through speeches, personal contact, and their use of information channels like the Internet. The government has spent substantial sums on public relations campaigns through the bidding process. The estimated Olympic budget includes an additional US\$60 million for advertising and promotion during the pre-Games period. While some of these funds are intended for international audiences, domestic advertising is – and should be – a critical priority for the Beijing

China

government.

Second, the Beijing government must be careful about how it handles public dissent, if any arises. It must walk a fine line between controlling public protest and violently suppressing it. In both Seoul and Mexico City, as well as in Tiananmen Square, harsh suppression of student protests only spawned more public protest. Though the government will assuredly be nervous about anything that might disrupt the security of the Games, it must avoid serious crackdowns. This will be even truer in light of the international media presence in Beijing. Beijing can help itself out by trying to maximize positive media coverage of the Olympics, which would have a beneficial impact on world opinion. Any violent government response could damage Beijing's image. Though the government fears the chaos of political dissent (*luan*), it should also fear the ramifications of suppressing that dissent; Mexico City provides a perfect example of why they must do so. The CCP must then balance the perceived need for an orderly, successful Olympics with the possible negative media attention that a harsh crackdown could bring. Beijing could forestall any political unrest by meeting with representatives from a few key groups, including university students and possibly entrepreneurs, to gather input on the Games and on political reform. These meetings could easily be set up by the government to discuss the concerns and positions of both sides. Closed consultation sessions would give the appearance of a commitment to liberalization and reform, but would ensure the lack of a media presence. China's actual movement toward reform

would play out during and after the Games, and it could decide how far it wanted to move towards liberalization once the immediate concerns of the Olympics were past.

From an infrastructural perspective, BOCOG has already mapped out a solid plan for success, and has begun most of its Olympic construction. Previous Olympics have illustrated the importance of pre-Games planning for post-Games use, and also the financial benefits of pursuing close links with business. Beijing must continue to work with both domestic and international firms to encourage high levels of donations and sponsorship. It must maintain its commitment to environmental expenditures, and also must be mindful of the need for historical preservation. Beijing has technically done this, as its site selection generally avoided historic areas. As the whole city prepares for the Olympics, Beijing's planners must weigh carefully the city's development needs against its history and tradition not only for the sake of preservation, but also to maintain popular support and avoid negative media attention.

“ BEIJING COULD FORESTALL ANY POLITICAL UNREST BY MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM A FEW KEY GROUPS, INCLUDING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND POSSIBLY ENTREPRENEURS, TO GATHER INPUT ON THE GAMES AND ON POLITICAL REFORM. ”

Summary and Conclusions

The Beijing Olympics already is one of the most anticipated mega-events of this decade, and anticipation will only grow as 2008 approaches. This is due, in no small part, to divided world opinion on China and the country's paradoxical status as both a strong power and a weak one, as a Communist state with an increasingly capitalist economy. Yet, Beijing of 2008 will be drastically different from today's Beijing,

considering the rapid pace of change in the Chinese capital. The Olympics will be a major catalyst for this change; indeed, the Beijing landscape has already begun to feel the effects of the Olympic Games. Construction is everywhere in the city, and Beijing's government aims to have construction and modification of 26 venues finished by 2006. On top of these sporting venues, Beijing is also laying the framework for a better transportation network with greater capacity, one that will not only draw in more of the Beijing metropolitan area but will also integrate Beijing with Hebei province and with greater northeastern China. Beijing's environmental changes will also be drastic, as the city tries to clean up the air and water.

From a political standpoint, the time between now and the Olympics is likely to remain mostly, though not entirely, quiet. Protests are possible, even likely, as China

certainly has enough groups which would seek to use the forum presented by the Olympics to make a political statement. Public gestures of political reform, as Chun Doo-hwan did in South Korea, would be credible under new CCP Chairman Hu Jintao. Indeed, many political theorists have independently speculated that Hu will be a reformer. By 2008, he should have been fully able to consolidate power and may even be able to begin his own legacy independent of Jiang Zemin. In the short run, however, the Games are not likely to be severely affected by political activity, and any political reform will be small in scope. The CCP should emerge from a problem-free Olympics with strong popular support and a positive international reputation. In the long run, however, the Olympics may accelerate China's drive towards international integration and will further political reform and increased personal freedom within the state.

A Different Perspective on the Imbalance of Reported Sex Ratios at Birth in Rural China

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Introduction

The reported sex ratio at birth is the number of male births per 100 female births enumerated in a census, a survey, or civil registration. Theoretically, the reported sex ratio should be equal to the “true” sex ratio (i.e., the number of males per 100 females born in a population), which is biologically stable around the value of 106 in the absence of social and behavioral interference.

Yet, by using survey and census data, many studies have identified discrepancies between true and reported sex ratios at birth in most countries, especially in the developing world. Three main proximate causes of this “imbalance” of reported sex ratios at birth have generally been identified: female infanticide, underreporting of girls, and sex-selective abortion practices.¹ Important distant causes of abnormally high sex ratios at birth are usually acknowledged to be the implementation of family planning policies targeted at fertility reduction and strong preference for sons over daughters. In fact,

in countries where son preferences do exist, fertility decline has generally resulted in more skewed sex ratios at birth – a phenomenon that has been observed in Taiwan, Korea,² India,³ Bangladesh, and China.⁴

Almost all studies on the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth rely on two main implicit assumptions: 1) distant causes provide the context in which the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth arises as a result of its proximate causes; and 2) the measurement process of the sex ratio at birth – from the actual data collection to the release of the final results – is not systematically affected by the implementation of specific family planning policies and/or by the existence of gender preferences for children. In other words, it is generally assumed that the social, cultural, and political context might create incentives for sex-selective abortion, sex-selective underreporting, and sex-selective infanticide, but would not affect the way through which births are actually measured. The context is

¹ Yet, it is worth maintaining a distinction between sex-selective abortion—which can indeed be a possible cause of true variations in the sex ratio at birth—and the other two, which are factors affecting only the reported sex ratio at birth. See Terence H. Hull, “Recent Trends in Sex Ratios at Birth in China,” *Population and Development Review*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1990), 63-83; Terence H. Hull and Wen Xingyan, “Rising Sex Ratios at Birth in China: Evidence from the 1990 Population Census,” paper presented at the International Seminar on China’s 1990 Population Census, October 19-23, 1992, Beijing; and J. Ansley Coale and Judith Banister, “Five Decades of Missing Females in China,” *Demography*, vol. 31, no. 3 (1994), 459-479.

² Chai Bin Park, “Preference for Sons, Family Size, and Sex Ratio: An Empirical Study in Korea,” *Demography*, vol. 20, no. 3 (1983), 333-352.

³ Monica Das Gupta and P.N. Mari Bhat, “Fertility Decline and Increased Manifestation of Sex Bias in India,” *Population Studies*, vol. 51, no. 3 (1997), 307-315.

⁴ Chai Bin Park, and Nam-Hoon Cho, “Consequences of Son Preference in a Low-Fertility Society: Imbalance of the Sex Ratio at Birth in Korea,” *Population and Development Review*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1995), 59-85.

not supposed to exert any systematic effect on the measurement process of the sex ratio at birth, and its eventual imbalance is supposed to be an “objective” circumstance.

The assumption about the validity of the indicators utilized and the reliability of the methods of data collection – in the analysis of the imbalance of reported sex ratios as well as of most other topics – is indeed a common one in demographic literature. The geographic, political, social, and economic context is generally supposed to affect the quality of demographic data in a random, non-systematic way. Yet, what if a specific context does create incentives, at the individual and administrative level, to purposely misreport and mismeasure the actual number of births, abortions, or infant deaths?

The possibility that the quality of the demographic data used to measure the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth might be affected by systematic errors caused by contextual influences on the data collection process cannot be excluded *a priori*. Each statistical system develops around complex social relations, involving the roles of respondents, interviewers, administrative personnel in charge of processing the data, and official agencies responsible for disclosing them. As the information travels from one level to another it is susceptible to the effects of the social interaction among individuals with different social interest and constraints. This might be especially true for official statistical

systems, where the choice of what to measure, how to measure it, and how to interpret the results is often determined by political judgment.⁵

At least some evidence about the relationship between the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth and sex selective abortion, sex-selective infanticide, and sex-selective underreporting might therefore be disputable, if there are unmeasured or omitted causes that both affect the outcome and are correlated with its proximate causes.⁶

These considerations are made here because the measurement of the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth in four counties in rural northern China raises serious questions about the extent to which the social interaction between respondent and interviewer is biased by contextual influences on the data collection process.

I calculated sex ratios at birth using both linked and unlinked records from retrospective pregnancy histories and vital registration data collected between 1991 and 1996 in four counties in rural northern China. The puzzling result of the analysis is that the same respondents seem to answer the same questions in a systematically different way if they report in a retrospective survey or in a vital registration system. These discrepancies pose a major problem. Is this disagreement related to the specific characteristics of the survey design in the two cases, or to different models of interviewer-respondent interaction

“ **THE CHINESE FAMILY PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT SEEMS TO EXERT A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTING. IF THIS IS ACTUALLY THE CASE, THE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF STATISTICAL ESTIMATES BASED ON THESE DATA COULD BE SERIOUSLY COMPROMISED AND CAUTION SHOULD BE ADOPTED IN THEIR INTERPRETATION.** ”

⁵ William Alonso and Paul Starr, *The Politics of Numbers* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1983), 34; and Herbert Smith, Tu Ping, Maria Giovanna Merli and Mark Hereward, “Implementation of a Demographic and Contraceptive Surveillance System in Four Counties in North China,” *Population Research and Policy Review*, vol. 16, no. 4 (1997), 292-3.

⁶ Michael E. Sobel, “Causal Inference in the Social and Behavioral Sciences,” in *Handbook of Statistical Modeling for the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Plenum Press, 1995); and Herbert Smith, “Causation and Demography: Some Comments,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, 2001, Washington, DC.

52 *A Different Perspective*

China

that apply within each context? I suggest that the observed inconsistencies across demographic data collection processes might arise because, in the four counties considered, the Chinese family planning policy context seems to exert a significant influence on both individual and administrative reporting. If this is actually the case, the validity and reliability of statistical estimates based on these data could be seriously compromised and caution should be adopted in their interpretation.

Proximate and Distant Causes of the Imbalance of Reported Sex Ratios at Birth in China

The rising trend in reported sex ratios at birth in China that started during the 1980s (Table 1) has been well-documented by using data from retrospective demographic

surveys, such as the 1982 One-per-Thousand Fertility Survey, the 1986 One-Percent Population Survey, and the 1988 Two-per-Thousand Fertility Survey.⁷

Previous research of excessively high sex ratios in China has identified various proximate causes of this trend: 1) excess mortality of girls;⁸ 2) underreporting of girls and sex-selective abortion by means of ultrasound and other diagnostic methods;⁹ 3) misreporting early deaths of girls as still births;¹⁰ and 4) giving up daughters for adoption.¹¹

From a broader perspective, the imbalance of the reported sex ratio at birth is a data collection problem, because girls are being omitted from fertility surveys.¹² This problem might arise because at the local level there are disincentives for reporting pregnancies and birth in the context of the

Table 1. Reported sex ratio at birth in China: 1960-1989

Year	Sex ratio	Year	Sex ratio	Year	Sex ratio
1960	110.3	1970	105.9	1980	107.4
1961	108.8	1971	105.2	1981	107.1
1962	106.6	1972	107.0	1982	107.2
1963	107.1	1973	106.3	1983	107.9
1964	106.6	1974	106.7	1984	108.5
1965	106.2	1975	106.4	1985	111.4
1966	112.2	1976	107.4	1986	112.3
1967	106.6	1977	106.7	1987	111.0
1968	102.5	1978	105.9	1988	n.a.
1969	104.5	1979	105.8	1989	113.8

Source: Sten Johansson and Ola Nygren, "The Missing Girls of China: A New Demographic Account," *Population and Development Review*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1991).

⁷ Arthur Haupt, "The Shadow of Female Infanticide," *Intercom*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1983),13-14; Sten Johansson, "A Swedish Perspective on Sex Ratios and Other Intriguing Aspects of China's Demography," in Li Chengrui, ed., *A Census of One Billion People* (Beijing: State Statistical Bureau, 1984); J. Ansley Coale, *Rapid Population Change in China, 1952-1982* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1984); and Judith Banister, *China's Changing Population* (Stanford: Stanford University Press,1987).

⁸ Judith Banister, "China: Recent Mortality Levels and Trends," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, April 30-May 2, 1992, Denver, Colorado.

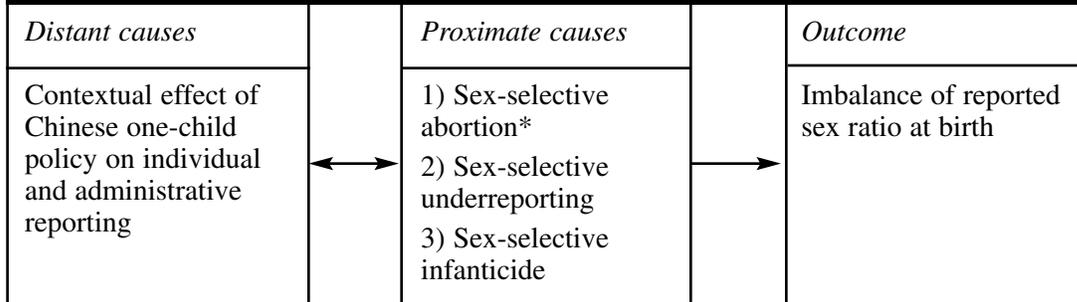
⁹ Hull, 63-83; and Zeng Yi, Tu Ping, Gu Baochang, Xu Yi, Li Bohua, and Li Yongping, "Causes and Implications of the Recent Increase in the Reported Sex Ratio at Birth in China," *Population and Development Review*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1993), 283-303.

¹⁰ Coale and Banister.

¹¹ Sten Johansson and Ola Nygren, "The Missing Girls of China: A new Demographic Account," *Population and Development Review*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1991), 35-51.

¹² Herbert Smith, "Nonreporting of Births or Nonreporting of Pregnancies? Some Evidence from Four Rural Counties in North China," *Demography*, vol. 31, no. 3 (1994), 484.

Figure 1. Suggested framework for the analysis of the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth in four counties in rural northern China



*See Footnote 1.

Chinese one-child family planning program.¹³ In fact, the Chinese statistical system is deeply grounded in the organization of the society over which measurement is desired, and official statistics have traditionally been maintained for administrative and planning purposes (to see that policies are implemented and goals are met. The quality of family planning data in China is therefore likely to have been affected by the establishment of a system of financial awards and penalties to measure how well cadres were able to fulfill birth quotas – the cadre responsibility system – within that policy framework.¹⁴

For these reasons, it is seldom disputed that the implementation of the one-child policy during the 1980s has been the main distant cause of the contemporary high sex ratio.¹⁵ Yet, this consideration has not been developed much further in the literature. Most demographic research on the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth in China has focused on its proximate causes (sex-selective underreporting, sex-selective abortion, and sex-selective infanticide) as separate from its main distant cause - i.e., the

one-child policy. This article takes a different approach and suggests a framework for the analysis of the imbalance of reported Chinese sex ratios at birth where the interaction between its proximate and distant causes plays a major role (Figure 1). Specifically, I use data from retrospective pregnancy histories and vital registration data collected between 1991 and 1996 in four counties in rural north China to identify the role and the extent of the interaction between proximate and more distant causes of discrepancies between true and reported sex ratios, i.e., the role of the context in which these discrepancies were measured.

Contextual Effects on Individual and Administrative Reporting in Four Counties in Rural Northern China: The Available Evidence

In 1992, the State Family Planning Commission of the People’s Republic of China selected four counties in rural northern China to participate in a field study designed for the Introduction of New Contraceptives in Rural China (INCRC) project.

The four counties studied – Huasheng

¹³ Karen Hardee-Cleveland and Judith Banister, “Fertility Policy and Implementation in China, 1986-1988,” *Population and Development Review*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1988), 245-286.

¹⁴ John Aird, “Recent Demographic Data from China: Problems and Prospects,” in *China Under the Four Modernizations*, Part I (Washington, DC: Joint Economic Committee, United States Congress, 1986), 196; and Sian Cui, “Inquiry into the Quality of Population Statistics,” *Population and Economics*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1990), 31.

¹⁵ Hull and Wen.

54 *A Different Perspective*

China

and Pangxie in Hebei Province, and Ciqixian and Shanshui in Shandong Province – were purposely selected to be representative of the kind of model in family planning that the government has been trying to promote.¹⁶ Except for this common feature, the economic and geographical situations of the four counties vary.¹⁷ Huasheng is a semi-mountainous county with strong political connections. Pangxie is a coastal enterprise zone, but the economy still relies mainly on agriculture and has not benefited from the rapid development that has characterized other Chinese counties. Ciqixian is a district in an industrial city. Shanshui is a mountain county designated by the government as underdeveloped. In addition, there is a salient demographic distinction between Huasheng and the other three counties. In fact, Pangxie, Ciqixian, and Shanshui operate under the One-Son-Two-Child policy (which allows couples to have a second child if the first child is a girl), while couples in Huasheng can have two children regardless of the sex of the first child.

The outcome of the INCRC project is composed of a pair of overlapping surveys (the Baseline and the Follow-up Survey, carried out in 1991 and 1994, respectively) and a vital statistics system (the surveillance “Card” system, running over the period 1992-96).

On the basis of these data sources, at least a few studies (described in detail below) found abnormally high sex ratios at

first birth and higher parities in the four counties studied. This evidence is in contrast with the situation reported at the national level, in which the imbalance of sex ratios at higher parities is opposed to almost normal levels reported for first births.¹⁸

When retrospective pregnancy histories (such as those collected by the INCRC project) are used to calculate sex ratios at birth, female infanticide or other forms of differential mortality can generally be excluded as proximate causes.¹⁹ In addition, ultrasound machines (a common device for the detection of the sex of the fetus *in utero*) were not common at the time when the surveys were carried out and the vital registration system was operative,²⁰ so that sex-selective abortion can also be excluded as a main proximate cause of the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth in the study counties.²¹ The possibility that elevated sex ratios in the INCRC retrospective surveys might be in part the result of misreporting early deaths of girls as stillbirths can also be ruled out.²² Therefore, it seems that the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth in the four study areas arise mainly as the result of a substantial tendency to omit female births from retrospective pregnancy histories. Why would this tendency arise?

By using retrospective pregnancy histories from the Baseline Survey, Smith and Tian (1993) found sex ratios at first birth higher than normal at the beginning and the end of the 1980s, but significantly lower than normal from 1987 to 1989, in all counties

¹⁶ Ping Tu, “Contraceptive Use Patterns among Young Rural Women in Four Counties of China,” paper presented at the First International Conference on Introducing New Contraceptives in Rural China, June 1993, Honolulu.

¹⁷ Zhengchao Qian, “Progression to Second Birth in China: A Study of Four Rural Counties,” *Population Studies*, vol. 51, no. 2 (1997), 221-228.

¹⁸ As reported in Hull and Wen; Johansson and Nygren; and Ping Tu, “The Sex Ratios at Birth in China: Results from the 1990 Census,” unpublished manuscript (Beijing: Institute of Population Research, Peking University, 1992).

¹⁹ As they might in census measures of extant sex ratios that are survived back via life table methods, to obtain “implied” sex ratios at births.

²⁰ Ultrasound machines were only available at county hospitals. Yet, there is a government ban on the use of ultrasound for sex-selection, so that sex-selective abortions are illegal. Couples who wanted a boy could obtain a test only through personal connections, or by bribing medical personnel. See Zeng, et al.

²¹ However, a study (described below) suggests that sex-selective abortion might have been more important than usually thought in determining the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth in the four study areas. See Smith, et al.

²² Smith, “Nonreporting of Births.”

studied.²³ They suggested that the observed pattern was likely to be related to the shifts in local fertility policy during the second half of the 1980s, which allowed couples in Huasheng and Pangxie to have a second birth if the first birth was a daughter. So, they suggested that low first birth sex ratios during the period between 1987 and 1989 were an individual reporting response to policies that anticipated a greater allowance for future fertility among those couples whose first child was a girl.²⁴

Analyzing the same data, Qian (1997) focused on the progression to second birth. He found “unnaturally” high sex ratios at second birth arising from the systematic tendency of having a son (rather than a daughter) of those women whose first child was a daughter. He showed that the progression to a boy as second birth is faster for women with senior high school education than for women with only primary school education, and took this evidence as an indirect proof that sex-selective abortion might have played a role greater than usually thought in the four studied counties. Educated women will be, in fact, better informed on ultrasound devices and will have more connections to people in power and easier access to sex-selective abortion. He concluded that the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth in the four research areas might reflect differences in socioeconomic development, as well as differences in the enforcement of the family planning policy and regulations.

Using preliminary data for the INCRC

“**EDUCATED WOMEN WILL BE, IN FACT, BETTER INFORMED ON ULTRASOUND DEVICES AND WILL HAVE MORE CONNECTIONS TO PEOPLE IN POWER AND EASIER ACCESS TO SEX-SELECTIVE ABORTION.**”

Shanshui County Card System, Smith et al. (1997) also found abnormally high sex ratios for higher parities. They stressed that, under the One-Son-Two-Child policy, it would not be difficult to imagine how such a phenomenon might occur in an administrative record-keeping system, since a family whose first child is a boy, but that wants to have a second child, could only do so if that first child were administratively a girl.²⁵

In all these studies, the imbalance of the sex ratio at birth in the four research counties seems therefore to emerge mainly as a data quality problem, arising within and because of the Chinese family planning policy context. As Smith et al. note detailing the efforts to implement the INCRC surveillance system:

Often official statistics are collected and processed to reflect national goals at the possible expense of the accuracy of data . . . [In the INCRC four study counties] the data [statistical workers] collect are often used as the basis for the higher-level

administrators to assess their performance, and assign awards or penalties accordingly. Thus “administrative interference” is commonplace and our intended improvement of the statistical system (for the INCRC project) occurs in a context where the data we seek to collect can have real consequences for subjects and administrators alike. [Yet] not all problems with the accuracy of data begin at the administrative end. Individual couples may not report accurately on their

²³ This pattern was not uniform across counties, with Huasheng and Ciqixian showing the greatest variability, while in Pangxie and, to a lesser extent, in Shanshui, sex ratios were overall very close to 1.06, according to Herbert Smith, and Liang Tian, “Variations in Sex Ratios for First Births in Four Counties: Where Does the Variation Begin?” paper presented at the First International Conference on Introducing New Contraceptives in Rural China, 1993, Honolulu.

²⁴ Smith and Tian, 14.

²⁵ Smith, et al, 308.

behavior, so as to achieve desired family size or sex compositions that are at variance with the mandates of official policy.

Data and Methods

The INCRC project has three essential components. The first is the Baseline Survey, carried out in the four counties mentioned above in December 1991, before the implementation of the experimental features of the INCRC project. The second is the Follow-up Survey, which was conducted in July 1994, after the experimental changes had been in place for more than two years. The third is a family planning surveillance system ("Card System"), implemented from 1992 to 1996 to provide demographic and contraceptive histories for all women of childbearing age in each township included in the project.

The INCRC Card System is a family planning surveillance system introduced in 1992, which ran throughout 1996 in the four study counties.²⁶ The INCRC Card System was grafted onto a pre-existing system of administrative records ("Old Card System") and was purposively designed to provide more accurate and detailed information. Like the old surveillance system, the INCRC Card System has five components: family planning surveillance cards and four registration books (marriages, births, deaths, and family planning procedures). A family planning surveillance card is filled out for all women of childbearing age in the township.

The information recorded on these cards includes the number of children ever born and children surviving by sex, and complete longitudinal pregnancy and contraceptive histories.²⁷ Vital events such as marriage, birth, death, abortion, and other family planning operations must be recorded in the registration book within one month from their occurrence and then transferred to the surveillance card at the end of each month. In order to facilitate the input of data being collected by the Card System, the INCRC project provided each township with a microcomputer loaded with a Chinese-character database program specifically developed for this task. The INCRC Card System includes 141,152 records for the period 1992-1996.

Both the Baseline and the Follow-up Survey are complex, multi-stage samples. Yet, the sampling procedure varied somehow across the two surveys.²⁸ In both surveys, six townships were randomly selected within each county.²⁹ In the Baseline Survey, eight villages were then randomly selected within each of the 24 study townships, while in the Follow-up Survey five villages were sampled from each township, including three or more villages that had participated in the Baseline Survey. For the Baseline Survey the sampling frame was provided by administrative lists of villages; for the Follow-up Survey it was provided by the surveillance cards of the INCRC Card System. Finally, within each village the Baseline Survey

²⁶ Smith, et al.

²⁷ In the Old Card System a surveillance card was filled out only for married women. In addition, information was collected on the most recent pregnancy alone.

²⁸ Ping Tu, Mark Hereward, Qiu Shuhua and Ni Jiajun, "The Baseline Survey for the Project on Introducing New Contraceptives in Rural China. Part I: Preliminary Findings of the Survey" (Beijing: State Family Planning Commission, 1992); Ping Tu and Mark Hereward, "The Baseline Survey for the Project on Introducing New Contraceptives in Rural China. Part II: Tabulations of the Data" (Beijing: State Family Planning Commission, 1992); and Ping Tu and Mark Hereward, "The Follow-up Survey for the Project on Introducing New Contraceptives with Enhanced Services in Rural China" (Beijing: State Family Planning Commission, 1994).

²⁹ In both the Baseline and the Follow-up Survey townships were chosen as primary sampling units because for most Chinese women the initial point of contact with family planning service workers is at the township level—usually at a family planning service station, but potentially at a township hospital (Smith et al., 291). There are between twenty and 35 townships per county, each including about 24 villages and with a total population on the order of 25,000 (implying 4,000-5,000 married women of reproductive age).

randomly selected fifty married women under the age of 35 (all eligible women if there were fifty or fewer available). For the Follow-up Survey, 150 women under the age of 38 were selected (all eligible women if there were less than 150).³⁰ The Follow-up Survey yielded 11,759 interviews, including 2,676 women who had been interviewed in the Baseline Survey as well.

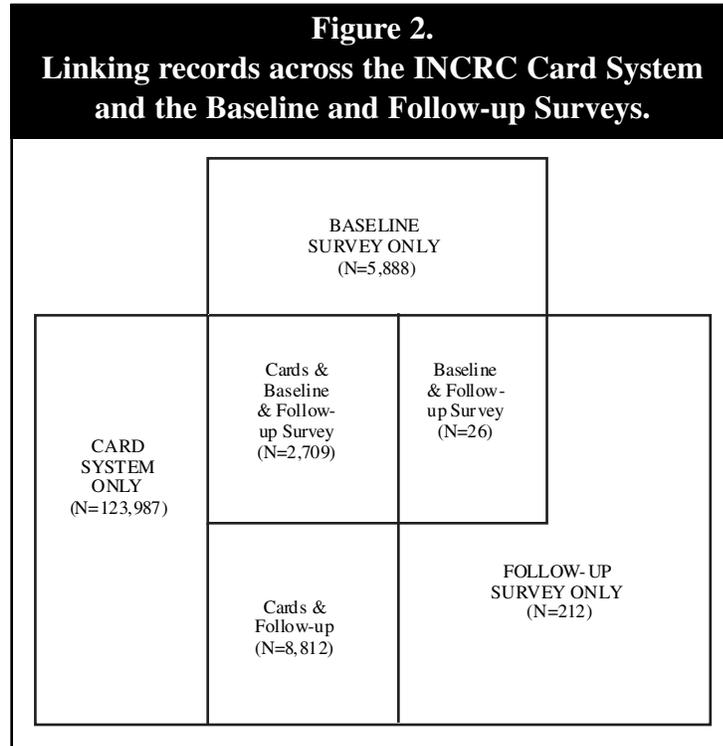
In this article, I use linked records across the Baseline Survey, the Follow-up Survey, and the INCRC surveillance system. The INCRC Card System was indeed designed to link to clinical records and to the project Baseline and Follow-up Surveys.

It has been possible to link 11,521 records (98 percent of the total number of records in the Follow-up Survey) between the Follow-up Survey and the Card System. Out of the total number of linked records between the Card System and the Follow-up Survey, 2,709 observations refer to villages that were also sampled by the Baseline Survey (Figure 2).

The matching of these records is quite good. All counties, townships, villages, and women sampled by the Follow-up Survey are included also in the Card System. Overall, misreporting of a woman's year of birth in the linked records is only ten percent (25

percent for the complete date of birth³¹) and misreporting of a woman's marital status is as low as one percent.³²

When the matching evaluation is done separately for each county and township (Table 2), it emerges that misreporting of a woman's age is an issue in Shanshui. Despite the analysis below that includes all records



linked across the Follow-up Survey and the Card System, caution will therefore be adopted in the interpretation of results for Shanshui.

Results and Discussion

Two sets of results are shown below. First, sex ratios at birth by parity, year, and

³⁰ The extension of the upper age was to ensure that all birth cohorts represented in the Baseline Survey were represented in the Follow-up Survey as well.
³¹ In the Card System, the Baseline Survey and the Follow-up Survey age was measured with reference to Western definitions and the Western calendar. Yet, confusion among interviewers and respondents between the Western and Chinese calendars led to inconsistencies in the reporting of age and dates. Particularly, because of the use of the lunar calendar, months were more easily displaced than years.
³² The Card System recorded vital events regardless of women's marital status. Yet, virtually all women in the Card System are married.

58 *A Different Perspective*

China

county have been calculated on the basis of all records in the Card System for the period 1992-1996. This first set of results is meant to integrate the work by Smith et al. (1997), which referred to preliminary data for Shanshui only.³³ Results for linked records across the Card System and the Follow-up Survey are then presented.

Results from the INCRC Card System, 1992-1996

A regional pattern of interest seems to emerge in the four study areas over the time period considered (Figure 3 and Table 3). On one side, Huasheng and Pangxie tend to have sex ratios for first births somewhat lower than what it would be expected by chance and

Table 2. Matching evaluation: number of bad matchings as a percentage of the overall number of matched records across the INCRC Card System and Follow-up Survey within each county and township, June 1992 to June 1994.

<i>Huasheng</i>							
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Total
Year of birth	2.83%	4.06%	2.57%	5.04%	1.86%	3.00%	3.32%
Month of birth	2.33%	6.22%	2.34%	4.87%	2.79%	4.38%	3.79%
Complete date of birth	3.99%	8.37%	3.98%	7.64%	4.42%	5.76%	5.71%
N	601	418	427	615	430	434	2925
<i>Pangxie</i>							
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Total
Year of birth	1.66%	0.96%	5.94%	36.06%	8.78%	0.72%	7.53%
Month of birth	0.74%	2.70%	11.17%	60.10%	9.92%	0.00%	11.93%
Complete date of birth	2.22%	3.28%	13.51%	67.31%	11.90%	0.72%	13.85%
N	541	519	385	421	353	277	2496
<i>Ciqixian</i>							
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Total
Year of birth	1.06%	2.14%	3.18%	3.78%	11.62%	14.65%	7.15%
Month of birth	1.85%	3.30%	4.87%	8.11%	40.57%	30.97%	17.03%
Complete date of birth	2.65%	4.85%	6.18%	9.01%	44.30%	36.42%	19.69%
N	378	515	534	555	456	704	3142
<i>Shanshui</i>							
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Total
Year of birth	26.06%	14.47%	12.73%	25.10%	13.59%	34.82%	21.54%
Month of birth	70.64%	68.64%	84.73%	77.35%	59.47%	54.66%	68.38%
Complete date of birth	75.78%	70.08%	84.73%	81.57%	61.30%	63.83%	72.14%
N	545	629	275	522	493	471	2935

Note: For each township and county, percentages are calculated as the number of bad matches over the total number of linked records for that township/county.

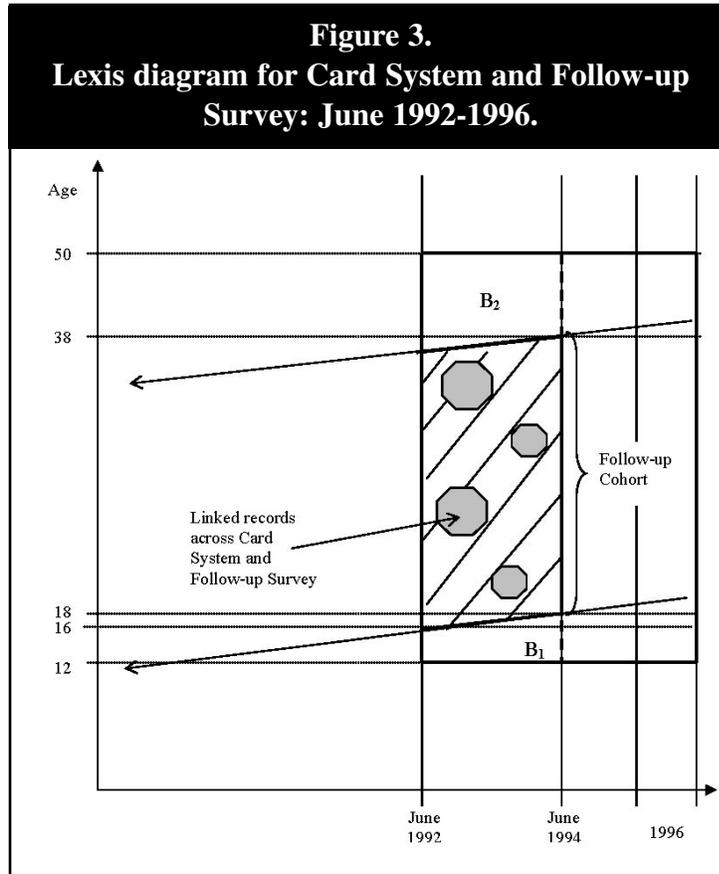
³³ Data collection was still ongoing at the time when the article was written.

implausibly low sex ratios at birth for second births or higher parities. For example, over the period from 1992 to 1996, the sex ratio at birth in Huasheng was five percent lower for parity two than for parity one, with virtually no variability across townships.³⁴ On the other side, Ciqixian and Shanshui tend to have sex ratios at birth for first births within the “normal” range but impossibly high sex ratios at birth for second births or higher parities. In particular, in Ciqixian the sex ratio increases by five percent at higher parities, while in Shanshui it increases by almost twenty percent. In both cases, there is again virtually no variability across townships.

In Ciqixian and Shanshui (where sex ratios at birth for second and higher order parities are substantially higher than it would be expected by chance) the results seem to be consistent with the One-Son-Two-Child policy, according to which families are allowed to have a second birth if the first birth is female. The ratio of higher births to parity one births (0.4 in Ciqixian and 0.5 in Shanshui) is, in fact, close to the ratio (0.5) implied by this policy. Interestingly enough, the data for Huasheng and Pangxie are also consistent with the One-Son-Two-Child policy (being the ratio of higher births to parity one births equal, respectively, to 0.4 and 0.6), even though the sex ratio at second births and

higher parities is, as mentioned before, lower than the sex ratio at first birth. Even more interesting is the fact that Huasheng is actually the only county among those studied where families are allowed to have a second birth regardless the sex of the first birth.

The trend of reported sex ratios at birth



by parity shows a second pattern of interest. There is, in fact, no constancy in the increase of the sex ratio with parity. As previously mentioned, this increase can be observed only for Ciqixian and Shanshui, whereas Huasheng and Pangxie show an opposite trend.

The picture emerging from the analysis

³⁴ If the year 1992 (when the INCRC Card System was not completely operative yet) is not taken into account, this ratio becomes ten percent lower overall.

China

Table 3. Results from the INCRC Card System: sex ratios at birth by county, township, and birth order, 1992-1996.

<i>Huasheng</i>							
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Total
All births	1.00	1.05	0.93	0.96	1.09	0.96	1.00
N	982	423	429	1067	941	771	4613
Parity 1	0.95	1.09	0.88	0.98	1.19	1.01	1.01
N	709	368	375	875	599	490	3416
Parity 2+	1.13	0.83	1.35	0.86	0.93	0.89	0.96
N	273	55	54	192	342	281	1197
<i>Pangxie</i>							
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Total
All births	0.95	0.80	1.09	1.00	0.90	1.10	0.99
N	772	598	3109	1006	1992	699	8176
Parity 1	1.03	0.84	1.06	1.06	0.89	1.01	0.99
N	507	382	2037	683	1202	436	5247
Parity 2+	0.83	0.74	1.15	0.89	0.91	1.27	0.99
N	265	216	1072	323	790	263	2929
<i>Ciqixian</i>							
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Total
All births	1.16	1.06	1.00	1.16	1.10	1.08	1.09
N	450	1690	625	846	1188	673	5470
Parity 1	1.00	1.07	1.03	1.27	1.02	1.03	1.07
N	244	1551	419	490	682	445	3831
Parity 2+	1.40	0.96	0.94	1.02	1.22	1.19	1.13
N	206	139	206	356	506	228	1641
<i>Shanshui</i>							
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	Total
All births	1.11	0.98	0.96	1.17	1.19	1.21	1.11
N	3112	1607	1269	3201	1912	1129	12230
Parity 1	1.05	0.92	0.89	1.08	1.09	1.18	1.04
N	1993	1139	785	2189	1239	730	8075
Parity 2+	1.23	1.14	1.07	1.40	1.40	1.25	1.27
N	1119	468	484	1012	673	399	4155

of the INCRC Card System's data is therefore puzzling. It is indeed difficult to provide a comprehensive and plausible explanation for the observed trends, which seem to contradict traditional evidence about the imbalance of sex ratios at birth, in China

as elsewhere.

To search for such an explanation, reported sex ratios at birth in the four study counties were analysed across linked records between the INCRC Card System and Follow-up Survey.

Results from linked records across the INCRC Card System and Follow-up Survey: June 1992-June 1994

Two interesting results seem to emerge from the analysis of linked records across the INCRC Card System and Follow-up Survey (Table 4).

First, the agreement of linked records (Table 4, columns 3 and 4) on the number of

live births, non-live births, and sex ratios at birth is excellent. Not only are the means of live and non-live births virtually identical for those respondents who were interviewed in the Follow-up Survey and recorded on the Card System, but the responses are also in strong accord across the two data collection systems (Table 5).³⁵ Second, there is a striking disagreement between those in the

Table 4. Means (and standard errors) for live births, sex ratio at birth, and non-live births by sample and county: Card System and Follow-up Survey, June 1992 through June 1994.

	All records (1)	Card System Cards only (2)	Follow-up Survey Respondents with linked records	
			(3)	(4)
Live births				
Huasheng	0.07 (.011)	0.06 (.009)	0.13 (.017)	0.15 (.010)
Pangxie	0.12 (.009)	0.11 (.010)	0.20 (.020)	0.22 (.018)
Ciqixian	0.07 (.009)	0.07 (.009)	0.15 (0.17)	0.17 (.015)
Shanshui	0.12 (.004)	0.11 (.005)	0.20 (.011)	0.24 (.016)
Sex ratio at birth				
Huasheng	1.05 (.037)	1.11 (.052)	0.95 (.093)	1.00 (.082)
Pangxie	1.01 (.054)	1.02 (.056)	0.91 (.071)	0.95 (.070)
Ciqixian	1.10 (.048)	1.15 (.057)	0.95 (.102)	0.98 (.064)
Shanshui	1.11 (.056)	1.09 (.063)	1.22 (.078)	1.20 (.065)
Non-live births				
Huasheng	0.03 (.009)	0.02 (.008)	0.06 (.011)	0.08 (.013)
Pangxie	0.04 (.004)	0.04 (.004)	0.07 (.007)	0.12 (.011)
Ciqixian	0.03 (.006)	0.02 (.006)	0.05 (.008)	0.05 (.007)
Shanshui	0.04 (.005)	0.04 (.004)	0.06 (.012)	0.09 (.008)
Sample size				
Huasheng	24188	21259	2929	
Pangxie	38017	35506	2511	
Ciqixian	26384	23242	3142	
Shanshui	46919	43980	2939	

Note: The mean numbers of live and non-live births and sex ratios at birth have been obtained by using svy commands of the statistical package STATA 6.0. The four study counties were used as four strata and, within each stratum, townships have been considered as primary sampling units (psu). In columns (1)-(3) means and standard errors are also weighted by using the sampling weights of the Card System. Finally, in column (4), means and standard errors are weighted and adjusted for the complex, multi-stage sampling design of the Follow-up Survey. Sample sizes are unweighted.

³⁵ The only exception seems to be Shanshui County with regard to reporting of non-live births. Yet, as previously mentioned, caution is needed in the interpretation of results for Shanshui because of the poor records matching.

China

Table 5. Agreement about number of live and non-live births: Card System and Follow-up Survey, June 1992 through June 1994.

	Agreement	Expected agreement	Kappa ³⁶
Live births			
Huasheng	96.96%	76.21%	0.8723
Pangxie	95.86%	65.87%	0.8787
Ciqixian	96.34%	73.38%	0.8625
Shanshui	94.86%	66.03%	0.8488
Non-live births			
Huasheng	97.03%	88.59%	0.7396
Pangxie	94.62%	84.91%	0.6438
Ciqixian	96.31%	90.75%	0.6011
Shanshui	92.28%	87.56%	0.3790

Card System who were sampled by the Follow-up Survey and those who were not (Table 4, columns 2 and 3). Reporting of live and non-live births doubles from the unmatched surveillance cards and the linked records with the Follow-up Survey. In addition, for all counties except Shanshui, the sex ratios for those in the Card System not interviewed during the Follow-up Survey are higher (and more “normal”) than for those included in both the Card System and the Follow-up Survey.

Third, by looking at the first three columns of Table 4, it is interesting to focus on how the overall results for the Card System (column 1) can be broken down between records in the Card System only (column 2) and records linked with the Follow-up Survey (column 3). The “normal” sex ratios at birth for the Card System as a whole result to be primarily a function of the impossibly low sex ratios for respondents sampled by the Follow-up Survey as well, and slightly higher sex ratios for respondents sampled by the Card System only. Absent the

linked records, sex ratios at birth for Pangxie and Ciqixian would be definitely too high (column 2), whereas if all records in the Card System are taken into account (column 1) only values for Shanshui are slightly above their “normal” value.

These results are problematic because there was no possibility for those recorded in the Card System to know that the Follow-up Survey would have sampled them as well. So, why does reporting of births in the sub-sample of records drawn from the Card System (i.e., the linked records) differ so much from that of the Card System as a whole but agree so strictly with reporting of births in the Follow-up Survey?

Careful analysis reveals that the disagreement of means of live and non-live births between linked and unlinked records within the Card System (Table 4, columns 2 and 3) is simply due to different sampling designs across the Card System and the Follow-up Survey. This is illustrated in Figure 3. On one hand, the Card system sampled all women aged twelve to fifty in

³⁶ Kappa is a measure of agreement that is positive when observed agreement exceeds that expected due to chance under the hypothesis of independence.

June 1992, and “followed them up” until 1996. On the other hand, the Follow-up Survey recorded retrospective information for the cohort of women aged 18 to 38 in June 1994. The present analysis has therefore been carried out with reference to the lined parallelogram and the rectangle indicated in Figure 3. The rectangle includes all demographic events recorded by the Card

System from June 1992 to 1996, and the shaded parallelogram those recorded by the Follow-up Survey from June 1992 to June 1994. Since the sample for the Follow-up Survey was randomly drawn from the surveillance cards, linked records across the Card System and the Follow-up Survey refer to the dark shaded areas within the lined parallelogram. Demographic events

Table 6. Means (and standard errors) for live births, sex ratio at birth and non-live births by sample and county: linked observations between the Card System and the Follow-up Survey, June 1992 through June 1994.

	Cards Only (1)	Respondents with linked records in the Cards Total (2)	New Villages (3)	Old Villages (4)
Live births				
Huasheng	0.06 (.009)	0.13 (.017)	0.14 (.021)	0.07 (.010)
Pangxie	0.11 (.010)	0.20 (.020)	0.23 (.025)	0.15 (.015)
Ciqixian	0.07 (.009)	0.15 (.017)	0.16 (.022)	0.10 (.013)
Shanshui	0.11 (.005)	0.20 (.011)	0.23 (.013)	0.10 (.006)
Sex ratio at birth				
Huasheng	1.08 (.037)	0.95 (.093)	0.92 (.118)	1.18 (.158)
Pangxie	1.02 (.056)	0.91 (.071)	0.90 (.068)	0.92 (.325)
Ciqixian	1.15 (.052)	0.95 (.102)	0.95 (.138)	0.95 (.145)
Shanshui	1.10 (.064)	1.22 (.078)	1.18 (.066)	1.58 (.419)
Non-live births				
Huasheng	0.02 (.008)	0.06 (.011)	0.05 (.010)	0.07 (.018)
Pangxie	0.04 (.004)	0.07 (.007)	0.06 (.004)	0.07 (.020)
Ciqixian	0.02 (.006)	0.05 (.008)	0.04 (.010)	0.06 (.007)
Shanshui	0.04 (.004)	0.06 (.012)	0.06 (.013)	0.06 (.010)
Sample size				
Huasheng	22656	2929	2257	672
Pangxie	36907	2511	1852	659
Ciqixian	24667	3142	2366	776
Shanshui	45401	2939	2337	602

Note: The mean numbers of live and non-live births and sex ratios at birth have been obtained by using svy commands of the statistical package STATA 6.0. The four study counties were used as four strata and, within each stratum, townships have been considered as primary sampling units (psu). In columns (1)-(3) means and standard errors are also weighted by using the sampling weights of the Card System. Finally, in column (4), means and standard errors are weighted and adjusted for the complex, multi-stage sampling design of the Follow-up Survey. Sample sizes are unweighted.

64 *A Different Perspective*

China

recorded only by the Card System refer to the areas B_1 and B_2 , and to the points within the lined parallelogram not included in the dark shaded areas.

As it is evident in Figure 3, linked records principally refer to women of reproductive age, who are likely to have the highest fertility in the Card System. On the contrary, records only in the Card System mainly refer to women either at the early beginning (area B_1) or toward the end (area B_2) of their reproductive life span. These youngest and oldest cohorts in the Card System give birth to a smaller number of children, so producing the observed disagreement of means of live and non-live births between linked and unlinked records within the Card System (Table 4, columns 2 and 3, top and bottom panels).

Yet, the different sampling design of the Card System and the Follow-up Survey does not account for differences in sex ratios at birth across the two groups of records. More insight into these discrepancies might be given by recalling that some of the linked records between the Card System and the Follow-up Survey refer to villages sampled by the Baseline Survey as well. In Table 6, these two groups of records are considered separately.³⁷ “Old Villages” refer to the villages sampled by the Baseline Survey in December 1991, while “New Villages” to those sampled only by the Follow-up Survey in June 1994. It emerges that old villages tend to have higher (and somehow too high) sex ratios at birth than new villages, whereas new villages report more live births than old villages.³⁸

The greatest majority of births occurring in new villages (77 percent) are first births while most births occurring in old villages (65 percent) are births of second or higher order parities. The disagreement of sex ratios at birth between linked and unlinked records in the Card System might therefore arise only because of the different parities of the births considered in the two cases. In other terms, differences in reporting between those only in the Card System and those sampled by the Follow-up Survey as well could simply reflect the fact that across the surveillance cards births are more evenly distributed with respect to parity than in the linked records for the Follow-up Survey, which includes mainly first births. The sex ratio at birth for linked records in the Card System would therefore be representative only of sex ratio at first births. Yet, by restricting the analysis only on first births (Table 7), the disagreement between the unlinked and linked records in the Card System emerges as striking as before, suggesting the existence of a real underlying disagreement between the two groups of records.³⁹

We record vital events for a group of women. Two years later, we ask a subgroup of those women to report retrospectively the succession of demographic events they experienced during a certain period of time. The sex ratios at birth calculated for the subgroup of women sampled both times strongly agree; yet, they are systematically different from those calculated for the original group of women (which are also more “normal”). Since there was no possibility for the women in the subgroup to

³⁷ It has to be noted that a “sensitisation effect” induced by the Baseline Survey has to be excluded given the small percentage of people in the linked records who had been previously sampled by the Baseline Survey (2,709 out of 11,521 linked records).

³⁸ Note that reporting of live births is similar for records only in the Card System (Table 6, column 1) and linked records across the Card System and the two surveys (Table 6, column 4), because both groups of records refer to women at the end of their reproductive life span. Yet, sex ratios at birth are extremely different even in these two cases.

³⁹ The matching of first births across the Card System and the Follow-up Survey is fairly good ($\kappa=0.68$) despite not as good as for all births considered together (see Table 5).

Table 7. Number of live births and sex ratio at birth by county: First birth order, Card System and Follow-up Survey, June 1992 through June 1994.

	Card System		Follow-up Survey	
	All records	Cards only	Respondents with linked records	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Live births				
Huasheng	1812	1090	297	323
Pangxie	4710	2478	326	327
Ciqixian	2073	1132	315	346
Shanshui	5592	3327	419	454
Sex ratio at birth				
Huasheng	1.07 (.078)	1.12 (.076)	0.93 (.112)	1.03 (.117)
Pangxie	1.04 (.046)	1.05 (.048)	0.94 (.078)	1.06 (.078)
Ciqixian	1.05 (.051)	1.07 (.062)	0.96 (.157)	1.00 (.059)
Shanshui	1.02 (.061)	1.01 (.069)	1.14 (.055)	1.15 (.068)

Note: Sex ratios at birth have been obtained by using *svy* commands of the statistical package STATA 6.0. The four study counties were used as four strata and, within each stratum, townships have been considered as primary sampling units (psu). In columns (1)-(3) sex ratios and standard errors are also weighted by using the sampling weights of the Card System. Finally, in column (4), means and standard errors are weighted and adjusted for the complex, multi-stage sampling design of the Follow-up Survey. Numbers of live births are unweighted.

know that they would have been sampled twice, what can be a reasonable explanation for these discrepancies?

The inconsistencies of the results across the Card System and the Follow-up Survey might acquire a different connotation if it is assumed that, within the context of the Chinese family planning policy, demographic data collection during the INCR project was affected in two main competing ways. First, the political context biased individual reporting towards over-reporting of female births at parity one, because most couples would have not been allowed otherwise to have another child if they already had a son. Second, administrative reporting could have been strongly

influenced by the need to conform to the demographic targets set by the Chinese family planning policy, specifically by the need to ensure that the overall ratio of higher births to first births was consistent with that implied by the One-Son-Two-Child policy. These assumptions are consistent with the existing literature on the topic, as it has been illustrated before.

From this point of view, the fact that unlinked records from the Card System give more "normal" results than the Follow-up Survey in terms of the number of live and non-live births and sex ratios at birth (see Table 4, columns 2 and 4) can be interpreted as reflecting the greater influence of administrative over individual reporting. In

China

order to guarantee that fertility behaviors are consistent with the Chinese family planning policies, administrative reporting would in fact easily be biased toward reporting of more “normal” sex ratios at birth, especially given the increased attention of scholars, policymakers, and the general public to the problem of the increase of reported sex ratios in China.⁴⁰ At the same time, lower values of sex ratios at birth in the Follow-up Survey might show evidence of over-reporting of female births for all counties except Shanshui, where the higher value of the sex ratio at birth seem to suggest over-reporting of male births (see Table 3). In Huasheng, Pangxie, and Ciqixian, over-reporting of girls for all parities arise mainly because of over-reporting of first female births; the same is true in Shanshui with reference to over-reporting of male births (see Table 6). In Huasheng, Pangxie, and Ciqixian, this evidence is therefore consistent with the fact that, at the individual level, the most efficient strategy to continue childbearing without violating the Chinese One-Son-Two-Child policy is to report a female birth even when a male birth has already occurred.

Inconsistencies within the Card System (between those who were sampled by the Follow-up Survey and those who were not) might suggest again contextual interferences on the process of data collection. The INCRC Card System indeed provided the sampling frame for the Follow-up Survey, so that the local administrative units were aware of who in the Card System would have been included in the Follow-up Survey. Given the time-lag between recording of demographic events on the cards and transferring this information to a computer, it is not difficult to imagine that

the card information for those sampled by the Follow-up Survey were computerized after the end of the survey in order to allow the two types of information to agree. Alternatively, it might not be hard to imagine that, during the actual process of data collection for the Follow-up Survey, the interviewers brought the cards to the interviews and used the information there contained to cross-examine the respondents. This would also explain the extremely high agreement across the linked records, which show virtually no variability across townships.

Conclusion

Statistical systems are supposed to be “neutral” measurement devices that do not interfere with the process of data collection. Yet, statistical systems can rarely be neutral observational devices as they are generally intended to be. This is because such systems develop around a complex social interaction between those who collect the data and those who provide it (such as the interviewer and the respondent in a sample survey), as well as the context in which the demographic data collection process is actually carried out.

The study of the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth in four counties in rural China seems to show that this complex social interaction can result in a systematic bias in the data and, therefore, in lower quality information. The context in which the demographic data collection process actually takes place seems to exert a crucial influence on individual and administrative reporting in the four study areas. This influence produces systematically different results when the imbalance of sex ratios at birth is measured on the basis of the data obtained from the

⁴⁰ For example, see Aird; Banister; Hull; Hull and Wen; and Johansson and Nygren. In June 1986, the State Family Planning Commission organized a seminar on the topic of sex ratios. A summary of the seminar can be found in Xian Zhao, “A Summary Report of the ‘Whole China Seminar on Population Sex Ratios,’” in *Family Planning Yearbook* (Beijing: People’s Hygiene Publishing House, 1987).

same respondents with different methods of data collection.

From these considerations, two major problems seem to emerge. First, which data source should we consider more reliable? There can be no single answer to this question. The observed inconsistencies across different methods of data collection cast doubts upon the validity of the indicators adopted and the reliability of the methods themselves. Second, generalizations about

the emerging of the imbalance of reported sex ratios at birth as a result of sex-selective abortion, sex-selective infanticide, and sex-selective underreporting in the study areas might be misleading. In fact, if the measurement process of the sex ratio at birth depends upon the context in which it actually takes place, then the presence of systematic other than random errors in the data seriously limits their interpretation outside that context.

Untapped Human Resources: Women's Political Role in the Revival of the Japanese Economy

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Introduction

According to statistics compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in October 2003, Japan ranked 98th out of 127 countries in the percentage of female representatives in its legislature.¹ In other words, women comprised a mere 7.3 percent of Japan's lower house, meaning that out of 480 lawmakers, only 35 were women. While it can be argued that the representation of women in the legislature does not mirror the position of women in society as a whole – the United States, after all, came in at 60th place with women comprising only 14.3 percent of the House of Representatives – the case of Japan is distinctive in that in addition to its meager female representation, the nation is confronted by multiple crises, which may be alleviated by increased participation of women in the lawmaking process. Japan is entering its fourteenth year of economic recession and, with a declining birthrate and a rapidly aging population, faces a demographic crisis. Legislative amendments regarding the increase of female participation in the labor force and the handling of the declining birth rate are imperative to the revival of the Japanese economy. The need for such legislative reform is widely

recognized in Japan, and yet the institutional change that has occurred thus far has been done so at an extraordinarily slow pace. Moreover, even when reform has occurred, it has often not translated into actual changes in society. This article examines Japanese political reforms that ostensibly aim to improve the position of women in society and mend related socioeconomic problems. More specifically, it looks at why these reforms, despite a recognized need to tackle the targeted multiple problems simultaneously, have faced significant obstacles.

First, this article will discuss the historical background and significant events preceding Japan's current predicament. In many respects, Japan has come a long way from the *ryosai kenbo*, or "good wives, wise mothers" national ideal set forth in the pre-war period. The constitution, rewritten in 1947, declared that, "All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic, or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status, or family origin."² As many scholars note, however, the attainment of women's rights as articulated by the constitution has not been fully realized in Japan. Moreover, an unequal social status for

¹ In terms of the percentage of women represented in the lower houses of parliaments or the single chambers of countries without bicameral legislative systems. See "Women in Parliaments," <<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>>.

² Article 14 quoted in Louis D. Hayes, *Introduction to Japanese Politics* (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 330.

women that continues to be justified by “traditional cultural expectations,” which are shared by both men and women in Japan. In order to understand the present challenges, it is important to trace the history of reforms related to the women’s movement, as well as past and present involvement of women in the legislative procedure. This exploration includes an account of the challenges historically faced by women entering politics in Japan, as well as a comparative study with Vietnam.

Next, the current dilemmas being faced in Japan are examined. Particular attention is given to those issues which most affect the female population and that could possibly be improved with more women in control of legislative procedures. First, the matter of increasing women in the labor force is considered. As *New York Times* columnist Howard French noted in a piece about women in the Japanese workforce, “With women sidelined from the career track, Japan is effectively fighting with one hand tied behind its back.”³ The obstacles that Japanese women face as they try to advance in the labor force are looked at, along with the corresponding legislation regarding these obstacles. Interconnected with this issue is that of Japan’s demographic dilemma. The various pressures on women as workers, mothers, and care providers (for both children and the elderly) are considered in this examination. Problems with the simultaneous increasing of women in the labor force and increasing of the population are dealt with as well.

The existing legislation on these gender-specific issues is looked at carefully, as is the

question of why there has been such a lack of expediency in the making and implementing of these laws. To that end, the shortcomings of the existing legislation are revealed, and discrepancies between what is law and what is actually seen in Japanese society are brought to light. The measures which have not yet been accepted into society are also important to consider in view of the economic stagnation which Japan has experienced for the past thirteen years.

The conclusion of the article draws together the contributing factors of the current political and social dilemmas in the realm of women’s involvement in order to explain why reform has been so drawn-out and unsuccessful in stimulating Japan’s economy. Various models suggesting where political power in Japan is rooted provide ways for identifying the most effective means of political, social, and economic reform.

“ONE OF THE MOST PERSUASIVE REASONS FOR LOOKING AT THE HISTORY OF GENDER-SPECIFIC LEGISLATION IN JAPAN IS THAT IN THE PAST SUCH LEGISLATION HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED AND RESULTED IN FAR-REACHING REFORM.”

Sweeping Reforms of Gender Policy in Japan: A Historical Background

One of the most persuasive reasons for looking at the history of gender-specific legislation in Japan is that in the past such legislation has been implemented and resulted in far-reaching reform. The accomplishments of past social restructuring are thus important to turn to when considering the possibilities for future change. While universal theories can be applied to the case of Japan, in many instances it is more useful to look at actual historical precedent. Examples from the past are useful in identifying social intricacies that may aid or hinder future political reform.

Most of the Meiji era reforms on gender

³ Howard French, “Japan’s Neglected Resource: Female Workers,” *New York Times*, July 25, 2003.

70 *Untapped Human Resources*

Japan relations in Japan had to do with gaining support and approval from the West. Following seven centuries of feudalism and the opening to international trade in 1868, the concern over whether or not Japan was a “civilized” nation was at the forefront of the political agenda. In its struggle for global power, Japan was willing to improve the position of women to reflect those social structures of more “civilized” countries. The Meiji Six Society, an organization founded in 1873 and made up of intellectuals and government officials, promoted the integration of western ideas into Japanese society.⁴ Writings by society members reveal that they saw the position of women as closely linked to the problem of Japan’s weakness in the global political economy. For example, a piece by Fukuzawa Yukichi, a Meiji era publicist and influential society member, reads:

In the civilized countries of the West, much of the social intercourse is managed by women, and even though they do not run society, they work in harmony among men and help smooth the situation . . . in carrying out the business of the nation, in the West both men and women divide the burden between them, while . . . [in Japan only half of them, the men only, carry the burden . . . the labor force that performs the national business is only half that of the West].⁵

It should be noted that Fukuzawa’s statements were somewhat confined to the

women of his own samurai class, who were not permitted to work, and did not apply directly to women of merchant, artisan, and peasant classes who were in fact working at this time. However, the fact that such discourse was being published is significant when considering the motives behind sweeping governmental reform. It was widely acknowledged that reform was necessary in order to modernize the nation and to lessen criticism coming from the West over Japan’s “inferiority.”

In 1872, the Education Ordinance was passed, stating “Learning is no longer to be considered as belonging to the upper classes, but is to be equally the inheritance of nobles and gentry, farmers and artisans, males and females.”⁶ The purpose of women’s inclusion in educational reform was to produce women who were “good wives, and wise mothers,” or *ryosai kenbo*. While the goals of this legislation may not fit the modern-day understanding of “progress,” in the context of Japan’s highly patriarchal and feudally-influenced society, it was a landmark development. Subsequent legislation both advanced and quashed the plight of women as influential members of Japanese society,⁷ yet the evidence is clear that political reform was taking place and had profound effects on the Japanese society. The point here is not to try to trace the trajectory of women’s empowerment, as Japan’s defeat in World War II in 1945 resulted in such sweeping social and constitutional reforms that it would be quite complicated to link today’s gender politics back to those of the pre-war period. Rather, the historical precedent makes it clear

⁴ Joanna Liddle and Nakajima Sachiko, *Rising Suns, Rising Daughters: Gender Class and Power in Japan* (New York: Zed Books, 2000), 32.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁷ The Police Security Regulations’ Article 5, for example, was amended in 1890 to exclude all women from all forms of political activity. They were banned not only from the political parties, but from even attending political meetings. From Liddle and Nakajima, 47.

that reform by means of government legislation has been and remains possible in Japanese society.

Women Enter the Political Arena

Under the charge of General MacArthur, the occupation government carried out extensive reforms with respect to women's rights, most notably the granting of female suffrage. On April 10, 1946, women voted and ran for political office for the first time in Japanese history.⁸ Sixty-seven percent of women came to the polls – only an 11.5 percent gap behind the 78.5 percent turnout for men.⁹ Perhaps even more importantly, of the 79 female candidates running for office in the Diet in the 1946 elections, 39 were elected. This meant that females made up 8.4 percent of the Lower House representatives, a number that remains unmatched to this day.¹⁰ These 1946 election results revealed Japanese women of the day's desire to have their voices heard in the political arena.

Many significant social changes took place during the electoral terms of these immediate post-war Diet members. For one, reforms encouraging gender equality continued. In April 1947, the Labor Standards Law, or *Rodo Kijun Ho*, laid out several groundbreaking changes with respect to women in the labor force. Women were to receive “equal work for equal pay” (Article 4), and they were granted the right to maternity leave (Article 65), nursing leave (Article 66), and menstrual leave (Article 67). Such amendments facilitated the augmentation of the Japanese workforce by women in that they acknowledged and accommodated distinctively female needs.

Furthermore, in 1947, a restructured Ministry of Labor added a new Women and Minors' Bureau (*Fujin Shonen Kyoku*), which was responsible for ensuring the protection of women in the workforce, implementing a ban on child labor, as well as monitoring the condition of domestic labor.¹¹ The effect that these postwar constitutional amendments had on women of the time was not uniformly positive – despite the increased opportunities to express their political views and participate in the workforce, many women were still bound psychologically to a patriarchal system, which valued the “male breadwinner,” and thus were hesitant to take advantage of the reforms. However, the constitutional change in the 1940s planted the seeds for further reform in the future, as women's newfound capacity to vote enabled them to be heard in the political arena.

From the 1960s to the 1990s, women's legislation began to challenge the role of women as domestic laborers and common notions of the Japanese housewife. Through Japan's rapid economic growth, booming industrialization, and increased use of mechanical devices, which reduced the time spent on housework, housewives took advantage of increased opportunities to join the labor force or become involved in politics.¹² Political ideologies that had previously been considered dangerous, such as socialism, saw an upwelling of support among the female population. Several women, including Tanaka Sumiko and Doi Takako, even served as leaders of left-wing parties.¹³ While the attitudes held by these smaller parties were not solely geared toward the advancement of women, the increased

⁸ Susan J. Pharr, *Political Women in Japan: The Search for a Place in Political Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 22.

⁹ This gender gap in voter participation closed rapidly. By the December 27, 1969 Lower House general elections, the percentage of women voters exceeded that of men for the first time.

¹⁰ Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 125

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 130-131.

¹² *Ibid.*, 133.

¹³ *Ibid.*

72 *Untapped Human Resources*

Japan participation of women in politics generally underlined a slow but steady trend toward increased activity outside of the domestic context.

To this day however, despite the progress stemming from the radical political reforms of the late 1940s, successful realization of the above legislation has yet to be realized. For example, women's wages still do not match those of men for comparable jobs, and social security and other related schemes, such as taxation and the pension system, are still geared toward a patriarchal system.¹⁴ While legislation has continued to be created and amended with the apparent goal of improving women's opportunities in the workforce, loopholes and oversights in the utilization of these measures have meant that the advancement of Japanese women has stagnated.

Johanna Liddle and Nakajima Sachiko offer one suggestion for why reform has ultimately been unsuccessful. They assert that constitutional reforms following the war arose not so much from a US desire to see Japan democratized as it did from a US desire to see Japan demilitarized in order to consolidate US dominance.¹⁵ Likewise, reforms for women's rights had less to do with women's liberation than with the securing of a US control. Examples cited include the US's ultimate lack of support for women's political organizations, as well as a government-

mandated initiative to expand systems of prostitution during the US occupation.¹⁶ The US thus did not back these reforms for the purpose of advancing women's rights, and as a result, the post-war women's movement got off to a shaky start and had little fundamental support from the US. The political alliance between the US and Japan has historically been powerful and significant in shaping Japanese policy, a fact which was recently highlighted by Japan's decision to send troops to Iraq.¹⁷ The lack of support by the US in Japan's early stages of reform to women's rights, therefore, had far-reaching effects and continues to negatively impact the rate of improvement.

Susan Pharr also has examined the difficulties experienced by the early women's political movement in Japan. She cites several reasons as to why the movement did not take off as it did in many other nations around the same time period and why it remains weak in a global context. In particular, she argues that the timing of the introduction of suffrage and other political rights for Japanese women was abrupt and did not follow a wave of turmoil over issues of human equality and individual rights as it did in Western nations such as New Zealand, England, Germany, and the United States. In addition, the movement to grant women the right to vote was more of an external rather than an internal force, and

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¹⁴ For a thorough study on these inequalities, see Eiko Shinotsuka, "Women Workers in Japan: Past Present, Future," in Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley, eds., *Women of Japan and Korea: Continuity and Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 95-119.

¹⁵ Liddle and Nakajima, 153-54.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁷ Since Article 9 of the Japanese constitution states that Japan shall have no offensive army, the Self-Defense Force troops currently stationed in Iraq are essentially being protected by US troops. Popular opinion is of the belief that Japan sent the delegation as a symbolic act to show its support for the US.

domestic support for the new rights was not as strong as in other nations.¹⁸

Japanese Reforms: A Comparison with Vietnam

Interesting comparisons can be drawn between the plight of women in Japan and that of women in Vietnam – another nation that faced radical social reforms following a war and holds many other similarities with Japan. First, Japan and Vietnam share cultural traits. For example, most Vietnamese people (like the Japanese) historically identify themselves with Buddhism, but have a secular government.¹⁹ Furthermore, 90 percent of Vietnamese citizens are ethnic Vietnamese. Japan's population is 99 percent ethnic Japanese. Thus, the similar secular and cultural determinants of the two countries make them ideal cases to compare.

With respect to politics, Vietnam and Japan use similar rhetoric in their constitutional amendments regarding the rights of women. The first constitution (1946) of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam states that “women enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres.”²⁰ Although Japan's post-war constitution similarly stated that “there shall be no discrimination in political, economic, or social relations because of . . . sex,”²¹ the directives seem to have been realized to a much greater extent in Vietnam, particularly with regard to women's capacity as lawmakers. As Japan's Lower House has seen a steady decrease in female representation from its all-time high of 8.4

percent following the election of 1946, there have been a growing number of female lawmakers in Vietnam. Interestingly, the percentage of women in Vietnam's National Assembly has risen from 2.48 percent in 1946 to 27.3 percent as of now.²²

Vietnam's socio-political history from 1946 to the present has been turbulent, with the Vietnam War serving as a key turning point for the nation as a whole. An ancient Vietnamese saying declares, “When war comes, even women have to fight.”²³ During the period from 1945 to 1975, Vietnamese women were active participants in the conflicts between North and South Vietnam and the US and its allies. The Communist Party advocated women taking up the role of fighters (a group which came to be known as the “long-haired warriors”), and Vietcong propaganda encouraged the active participation of women in the war as opposed to them acting as domestic laborers.²⁴ Many women in this period also held significant political positions and were instrumental in the shaping of Vietnamese policy. One such woman was Nguyen Thi Binh, who served as the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and as a Vietnamese representative during the long peace talks in Paris from 1968 to 1973.²⁵ While the creation of legislation cannot be attributed to one individual such as Binh, it is nonetheless important to note that many significant reforms which affected women took effect while she was in office.²⁶

On July 2, 1976, the Democratic

¹⁸ Pharr, 174-5.

¹⁹ The sect of Buddhism in the two countries varies, however. Vietnamese Buddhists are Hinayana, while the Japanese are Mahayana. Hinayana Buddhists do not believe that any woman can reach enlightenment without first being reborn as a man.

²⁰ UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, “Status of Women: Vietnam” (Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 1989), 49.

²¹ Hayes, 330

²² UNESCO, 49.

²³ Sandra C. Taylor, *Vietnamese Women at War* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 9.

²⁴ See “Vietcong Tells Girl Recruits to Make War, Not Love,” March 13, 1969, cited in Taylor, 147.

²⁵ Following the end of the war, Binh served as the Minister of Education and later on became a member of the National Assembly and served as the Vice President of Vietnam. *Ibid.*, 124.

²⁶ In 1991 a labor law was promulgated to protect the welfare of women workers, and in 1993 new policies to control prostitution and AIDS were put into place. See Karen G. Turner, *Even the Women Must Fight: Memories of War from North Vietnam* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 1998), xvi.

74 *Untapped Human Resources*

Japan

Republic of North Vietnam and the Republic of South Vietnam united to form the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Prior to this time, little detailed information about Vietnamese gender issues was available, as Western scholars were not permitted to enter the country without communist guides and interpreters by their sides.²⁷ The new constitution adopted in 1980 established the National Assembly as the highest governing body, with Assembly members elected directly by the people to serve five-year terms.²⁸ In 1984, the Vietnamese Communist Party put forth Directive 44 and Resolution 176a,²⁹ both of which aimed to promote women's emancipation and equality between genders. They state explicitly that the state will be strengthened through the increase of women playing roles in economic and state management, as well as resolving that at least one-third of all elected bodies are to be comprised of women.³⁰

Following the adoption of market reforms in 1986, the formal political ideology of Vietnam experienced a significant degree of change. Although the country was still officially socialist, it gave up on central planning and restructured the economy to allow a much greater role for the market. Following these reforms, more scholarship became available with respect to the role and impact of women in Vietnamese politics and the economy.³¹ In addition to the steadily growing number of women in Vietnam's legislative system, areas such as agriculture have seen a "re-feminization" as men have

gravitated toward urban areas to find jobs. As a result of men leaving their families in rural areas to look for urban jobs, there has also been a marked increase in the number of women serving as the head of the household.³² While post-socialist countries often see setbacks in gender equality as women move from the labor force back into the home, Vietnam's women have had a different experience.

One view regarding the relative success of reforms in Vietnam states that union activity has been particularly strong and therefore helpful in mobilizing women. Indeed, Vietnamese unions overall are largely comprised of women, and they are very proactive in securing women's rights. The Vietnam Women's Union (VWU), as stipulated in Resolution 176a, serves a focused role, namely strengthening the state's efficiency in enforcing women's rights policies. The Union submits drafts of policies and laws to the state aimed at ensuring women's full participation in politics and meets once a year with the Council of Ministers to review the implementation of such laws. The VWU also has special programs in cooperation with different branches of the government to increase legal literacy among women.³³

On the other hand, Japan's unions – and women's unions in particular – have historically been poorly organized and overall unsuccessful. Japan legalized labor unions following the Allied occupation, but although the number of female workers rose, the

²⁷ Jayne Werner and Danièle Bélanger, "Introduction: Gender and Viet Nam Studies," in Jayne Werner and Danièle Bélanger, eds. *Gender, Household, State: Dôì Mói in Viet Nam* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Publications, 2002), 14.

²⁸ Ronald Cima, "Vietnam: Historical Background," in V. Largo, ed., *Vietnam: Current Issues and Historical Background* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002), 76.

²⁹ For the texts of Directives 44 and 176a, see the website of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, <<http://www.na.gov.vn/english/index.html>>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Werner and Bélanger, 15.

³² Ibid., 36. According to the World Bank, 27 percent of all households were headed by females in Vietnam in 1993.

³³ UNESCO, 53.

percentage of those who unionized continued to decline after peaking at 51 percent in 1949. The drop in participation was quite drastic, down to 30.9 percent only five years later in 1954.³⁴ This decline may have been due to a variety of factors, including a lack of organization or a general shifting of interests. Today, one issue of contention with respect to unions is that of the “temp,” or part-time worker in Japan. Unions generally exclude these part-time workers, and considering that there are almost a million registered temps (90 percent of whom are female), this is a significant group of women to exclude from union activity.³⁵

The United Nations’ “Consideration of Reports” notes that women in Vietnam enjoy equality with men in all political activities, such as voting and standing for election to state bodies. In 1995, the Vietnamese government drafted the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women, which listed eleven explicit goals. This is theoretically the same system in place in Japan. The National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam, however, also states that a major objective is to have women make up twenty to thirty percent of elected government officials and to have fifteen to twenty percent of government agencies and advisory bodies at all levels be comprised of women.³⁶ A National Plan of Action such as this, which mandates a specific figure, could alleviate the huge gender discrepancies in the Japanese government.

Political Power Flow in Japan

An examination of how political power is structured in Japan may perhaps shed further light on ways in which change could be implemented. If we are to believe that power flows from the top down, then the difference in the number of men and women in the Diet is a matter of concern. However, some scholars, such as Joyce Gelb and Robin LeBlanc, contend that power in Japan can flow from the bottom up, namely from local, interest-based political factions, which often have much higher concentrations of women than ones at the national level. In identifying the origins and paths of political power, the most efficient means of rapid social reform can be recognized and relevant political groups can be targeted. As such, several different theories will be briefly examined.

One theory of Japanese political power is that it is rooted in various governmental agencies that exert great influence over both the Diet and the general population. For example, political scientist Chalmers Johnson asserts that, “Although it is influenced by pressure groups and political claimants, the elite bureaucracy of Japan makes most major decisions, drafts virtually all legislation, controls the national budget, and is the source of all major policy innovations in the system.”³⁷ With respect to the influence of women in politics, Johnson’s model implies that an increase in the percentages of females in the various governmental ministries would be the most effective means to advance women’s rights.

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³⁴ Mackie, 131.

³⁵ Charles Weathers, “Changing White-collar Workplaces and Female Temporary Workers in Japan,” *Social Science Japan Journal*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2001), 201.

³⁶ United Nations 2002 International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights report, 15

³⁷ Chalmers Johnson, “MITI and the Japanese Miracle,” in Curtis Milhaupt *et al.*, eds., *Japanese Law in Context: Readings in Society, the Economy, and Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 515.

76 *Untapped Human Resources*

Japan

At present, women are underrepresented at all levels of the bureaucracy, especially in the higher civil servant positions. The number of women taking the higher civil service exam is miniscule compared to that of men, and the percentage passing is lower as well.³⁸ According to Johnson's model, a lack of Japanese women in bureaucratic positions translates to a lack of power being exerted on their behalf.

Some scholars do not see the seat of political power in one particular branch as in Johnson's model, but rather see power as something that can flow from different levels of the populace. Zhao Quansheng looks at the "politics behind politics" in his book, *Japanese Policymaking*. Though his case studies focus primarily on the making of foreign policy toward China, his findings are significant and applicable to various other realms of politics. Zhao argues that in contrast to conventional analyses of Japanese policymaking as formal and "patterned," informal practices and channels bear a significant weight in policymaking. He examines the Japanese policymaking process on three levels: the societal level, the institutional level, and the individual level. As opposed to Johnson's model, Zhao sees the bureaucracy not as *the* major source for innovations, but as part of what he calls the "ruling tripod," meaning the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the business community, and the higher elite corps of the bureaucracy.³⁹ Zhao concludes that social

networks⁴⁰ are one of the most efficient means by which to synchronize different interests and to attain consensus among the political elite.⁴¹ While Johnson's analysis of the bureaucracy is important in that it points out a major source of political control in Japan, Zhao's examination incorporates this bureaucracy along with other influential groups to provide a broader picture of power flow.

Zhao's assertion that informal social networks are key in Japanese politics can be seen in practice when looking at women's movements and women's organizations in Japan – an illustration of political activity taking place outside the formal structures. Indeed, post-war women's movements have exerted significant social and political

influence in Japan. While prior to the Second World War the *ryosai kenbo* ideal severely limited the extent to which women's movements could assert political influence in any form, following post-war constitutional reforms, women's organizations were

able to gain both legitimacy and influence in Japanese politics.⁴² This influence can be seen in the number of legislative initiatives that feminist organizations were able to directly change. The most influential of these post-war organizations was the Women's Democratic Club, later the Fighting Women's Group (*gurupu tatakau onna*). This group, sometimes acting alone and sometimes in alliance with other movements, managed to abolish legalized prostitution in 1956, affect the price, quality, and safety of consumer

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³⁸ Hayes, 63.

³⁹ Zhao Quansheng, *Japanese Policymaking: The Politics Behind Politics* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1993), 195.

⁴⁰ "Social networks" as used here has a variety of different meanings, but broadly refers to any political activity which takes place outside of state structures such as the legislative, executive, or judiciary branches.

⁴¹ Zhao, 185.

⁴² Kathleen Uno, "The Death of 'Good Wife, Wise Mother'?" in Edward R Beauchamp, ed., *Women and Women's Issues in Post-World War II Japan* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 249.

goods in the 1960s, prevent the tightening of abortion law in both 1973 and 1982, and remove the home economics requirement for high school girls.⁴³ These acts, which were aimed expressly at creating a more equal environment for women, serve as proof that the political power necessary to create social reform does not need to stem from formal branches of the government and that groups united for a single cause have the power to generate legislative change.

Robin LeBlanc's *Bicycle Citizens* further explores these means of informal political influence, mainly by looking at the political world of the Japanese housewife. LeBlanc dispels the myth that Japanese housewives are without a political world by revealing the multitude of volunteer and social welfare activities in which they participate. Many of the housewives LeBlanc interviewed felt that national politics are far removed from their own lives, but that their voices can be heard at local interest-based political groups. LeBlanc provides the example of the Netto movement to illustrate this. All of its elected representatives are women, and the majority of its support comes from housewives.⁴⁴ Another noteworthy feature of the Netto movement is that in the mid-1990s, a time when Japanese national politics experienced "chaotic disintegration"⁴⁵ as the LDP fractured and lost control of the Diet, Netto grew in size and strength and was able to achieve its political objectives. These objectives were met by Netto members claiming seats in prefectural assemblies, an accomplishment that led supporters, housewives, to feel that their perspectives were represented.

Similarly, Joyce Gelb and Margarita

Estevez-Abe, in "Political Women in Japan: A Case Study of the Seikatsusha Network Movement," maintain that the Seikatsu movement has been an incredible vehicle for mobilizing women in both community activities and electoral politics. It has, they claim, also redefined many women's goals and given them a new sense of empowerment.⁴⁶ LeBlanc, Gelb, and Estevez-Abe's research thus ascribes political power in Japan as something that can come from the grassroots level upwards. Altogether, these suggest that local and informal political networks and movements may be key in driving social reform. They may have little bearing on Japan's international affairs or non-socially-related national politics, but it can be observed that when the issue strikes close enough to home, housewives and other common citizens do have the ability to organize and create change.

In the broader picture, the various paradigms on Japanese political power flow all are reasonable and more or less applicable to various political situations. Johnson's and Zhao's assertions that power rests in the bureaucracy and in networks which include the bureaucracy are important to consider if one is primarily concerned with the fact that women are historically underrepresented in these power-wielding groups. Indeed, if the bureaucracy and related groups are to be taken as the most important sources of political power, then the best way to exert a real influence on women's issues would be to increase the number of women in those groups. However, as LeBlanc, Gelb, and Estevez-Abe make clear, political power is not monopolized by the government, and local networks and movements have been

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Robin LeBlanc, *Bicycle Citizens: The Political World of the Japanese Housewife* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 123.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 195.

⁴⁶ Joyce Gelb and Margarita Estevez-Abe, "Political Women in Japan: A Case Study of the *Seikatsusha* Network Movement," *Social Science Japan Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1998), 263.

Japan

effective in the past when it came to reforming issues that were important to women. In order to further gauge whether or not local politics are the key to social reform, an investigation of some of the current socio-political issues is in order.

Conflicting Interests: Working Mothers and Japan's Demographic Dilemma

Women in present-day Japan are forced to juggle multiple roles as mothers, wives, care-providers, and workers. This is not unique to Japan, of course, as women in many societies are forced to balance family life with their participation in society. However, current economic pressures impinge upon women's options as many expect women to boost both the economy and the population of Japan, as well as care for the increasing population of elderly individuals. The solution seems to be to tackle multiple problems simultaneously through legislation enabling mothers to be workers, workers to be care-providers, and vice versa. However, because the issues involved are complex, multidirectional legislation will be necessary to mend most of these problems.

Women have comprised a large part of the Japanese labor force for most of the past century. The jobs with the highest concentration of women have shifted from being agricultural, in the early part of the twentieth century, to clerical positions in the present-day workforce. As Rodney Clark states, however, "It is admittedly true that no industrial society gives women genuine parity with men in economic affairs, but Japanese women are more rigidly discriminated against than their Western

counterparts."⁴⁷ Women may make up a significant portion of the workforce, but they do not usually experience the same kind of psychological and material benefits that working men in Japan can attain. Women are expected to provide concentrated maternal involvement in child-care once they enter motherhood. Consequently, the pattern of women's employment in Japan has developed into an "M-curve," with the first peak of employment coming in the years before marriage and childbirth, and the second in the middle-age years once childrearing responsibilities have declined.⁴⁸ Women's care-giving roles are not limited to children, either, as wives and daughters-in-law have traditionally held the responsibility of caring for frail, elderly relatives.⁴⁹ As Japan is the most rapidly aging country in the world, this issue of care for the elderly will continue to grow in its effect on women's roles and on the economy in coming years.

When their care-giving responsibilities cease and women reenter the workforce, it is often as part-time employment. As such, these women have different contracts from full-time employees, which do not permit them to receive the same benefits, such as retirement pensions and health insurance, even though they often work up to 35 hours a week.⁵⁰ In addition to social pressures such as care-giving, the tax system in Japan is geared toward a patriarchal family structure, with the male encouraged to take on the role of sole breadwinner and female that of a dependent housewife: the national income tax deduction for dependent spouses and children, which was introduced in 1961, provides more income support if the wife stays at home or

⁴⁷ Rodney Clark, *The Japanese Company* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 234.

⁴⁸ Elise Tipton, "Being Women in Japan, 1970-2000," in Louise Edwards and Mina Roces, eds. *Women in Asia: Tradition, Modernity and Globalization* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 215.

⁴⁹ Susan Orpett Long and Phyllis Braudy Harris, "Gender and Elder Care: Social Change and the Role of the Caregiver in Japan," *Social Science Japan Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2000), 21.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

works only part time.⁵¹

In 1985, Japan's Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) was passed in an initiative to expand employment and career opportunities for women.⁵² However, the actual application of this law still lacks consistency, and its effects thus remain limited. The law stipulates that employers should not discriminate against women in job training, fringe benefits, mandatory retirement age, resignation, and dismissal. The law also "requests" that employers try not to discriminate against women in recruiting, hiring, and promotion. Employers who violate the law are not sanctioned, however, because compliance is voluntary, not mandatory.⁵³ The number of women in the workforce did not increase drastically following the passing of the EEOL, and much criticism has ensued over the intent of the law and the government's lack of enforcement.

Millie Creighton, like Liddle and Nakajima, argues that the equal employment legislation passed in Japan was not aimed at shifting the role of women in Japan, but rather reflected Japan's desire to be accepted by the international community.⁵⁴

Sociologist Ueno Chizuko has further criticized the EEOL by saying that it is "like a sieve" because the law stipulates "good faith" compliance without any penalty for not

observing it. In order to meet the requirements of the law, she explains, companies have created a two-track personnel advancement system consisting of a career track and a non-career track. This is because the law does not allow companies to designate certain jobs as "for males" or "for females."⁵⁵ Less than one percent of newly hired women, however, enter the career track.⁵⁶ Ueno's suggestion as to why the number of women who work continuously has not increased drastically following the creation of the EEOL is twofold. First, there has been no improvement in the conditions under which women have to balance work and childrearing. And second, young women do not find the lifestyle of personal sacrifice

attractive, and such sacrifice is viewed as necessary to succeed. In fact, she argues, the EEOL has resulted in an increased desire for young women to become full-time housewives.⁵⁷ The fact that the actual results of this seemingly well-intentioned legislation run counter to the

goal of expanding opportunities for women is significant. The creation of the legislation alone has not been enough to kindle major changes in the breakdown of gender-role stereotypes, which suggests that the implementation of more stringent compliance rules should be considered.

Many women choose alternate forms of

“ THE TAX SYSTEM IN JAPAN IS GEARED TOWARD A PATRIARCHAL FAMILY STRUCTURE, WITH THE MALE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF SOLE BREADWINNER AND FEMALE THAT OF A DEPENDENT HOUSEWIFE. ”

⁵¹ There are four main categories of tax deductions: basic allowance, spousal allowance, special spousal allowance, and allowance for dependents (children and elderly parents). Each of these deductions is worth 380,000 yen (US\$3,518), or even more if the child is aged 16 to 22. Therefore, a typical family consisting of a male breadwinner with a non-working wife and two children can write US\$11,000-US\$13,000 off their yearly income. See Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Asia Program Special Report No. 107, January 2003, 21.

⁵² Millie Creighton, "Marriage, Motherhood, and Career Management in a Japanese 'Counter Culture,'" in Anne E. Imamura, ed., *Re-Imaging Japanese Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 192.

⁵³ Asia Program Special Report, 22.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Mackie, 185.

⁵⁶ Ueno Chizuko, "Women and the Family in Transition in Postindustrial Japan," in Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley, eds., *Women of Japan and Korea: Continuity and Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 34.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 35

80 *Untapped Human Resources*

Japan employment so as to avoid making personal sacrifice. One of the most common alternatives to full-time employment is part-time work. Part-time employees, or “temps,” are hired to reduce labor costs and raise the productivity of companies.⁵⁸ These workers, however, receive lower pay, no benefits, and enjoy little job security. Charles Weathers asserts that the part-time employment system has also helped to perpetuate gender segregation and age discrimination, as ninety percent of registered temps are woman and companies usually do not hire temps over 35 years of age.⁵⁹ The result is a further rift in gender-role expectations by both employers and employees. Companies have come to expect to be able to hire cheap female “temp” labor, and many women seem to have come to accept the status quo.

Another hindrance to the working woman in Japan is the issue of child-care, and the difficulties faced when trying to work and be a mother simultaneously. Yoshiko Tomizawa, a working mother-turned-politician, recounts her experience with the child-care problem:

I had a child in 1983. After my maternity leave was over, I decided to enroll my baby in a day nursery, but none of the public facilities in Suginami Ward, Tokyo, would take an eight-week-old child. The only places I could find were private nurseries, where the conditions were poor, so I found myself in a tight spot. I had to choose whether or not to resign from my job. Until that time I had believed the nursery care system was an elementary issue in the equality between

men and women and had thought it was more advanced. The social conditions that would allow women with children to continue to work simply did not exist.⁶⁰

In the early 1990s, the Japanese government finally began to address the problem of child-care because of concerns over labor shortages and the social problems caused by illegal alien workers. The government passed the Child Care Leave Law in 1991 in order to allow women and older people to compensate for the labor shortages. The law, however, does not guarantee pay during the term of the mother’s leave (up to one year), and this greatly limits the extent to which it is used.⁶¹ As Tomizawa describes in recalling her crusade to reform child-care laws, most politicians, men and women alike, believe that paternalism is natural. This cultural mindset can help to explain the historically slow pace of women’s rights legislation. While the Japanese workforce may offer “equal opportunity” to men and women in Japan, it is clear that “equal employment” is far from being realized.

Two demographic shifts, namely falling birthrates and the aging population, present other significant sources of pressure on the Japanese economy. With Japan’s stringent naturalization laws, the only way to increase the population is for Japanese women to have more children.⁶² The trend toward fewer children began in the 1950s, after abortion had been legalized and the government sponsored programs encouraging contraceptive use to try to curb population growth in the post-war period of economic devastation and poverty. By the 1960s, however, Prime

⁵⁸ Weathers, 201.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Tomizawa Yoshiko, “From Child-Care to Local Politics,” in AMPO – Japan Asia Quarterly Review, ed., *Voices from the Japanese Women’s Movement* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1996), 196.

⁶¹ Shinotsuka, 114.

⁶² Since this time, the birthrate has continued to decline further below replacement level (2.1 children per woman).

Minister Sato began to encourage women to have more children again in order to provide the workforce to sustain the nation's economic growth. Politicians also continued to urge women to have more babies throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and this was one of the major forces behind the repeated refusals to legalize the birth control pill.⁶³ Some of the reasons cited by women today as to why they are not having more children include the costs of education, the economic recession, and limited housing space.

Concurrent with the declining birthrate is an increasing elderly population. The Japanese enjoy the longest life spans in the world, with males living to an average of 77.8 years and females to an average of 85, and someone needs to provide care for this graying population. Paul Hewitt argues that most of Japan's economic ills arise either directly out of, or are being exacerbated by, the demographic imbalance that is taking shape. He claims that Japan's political culture and its labor market institutions are not suited to deal with the demographic change. With a diminishing number of workers, Japan will continue to see its GDP decline unless productivity rises faster than the rate of labor force decline. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates that Japan's labor force will decline by an average of 0.7 percent a year between 2000 and 2025, and 0.9 percent a year between 2025 and 2050, which means an increasing drag on GDP

“**TWO DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS, NAMELY FALLING BIRTHRATES AND THE AGING POPULATION, PRESENT SIGNIFICANT SOURCES OF PRESSURE ON THE JAPANESE ECONOMY.**”

growth. There are several other problems which Hewitt links to Japan's "hyperaging" dilemma, including depressed consumption and increased unemployment rates.⁶⁴

Other scholars, however, take a slightly less alarmist viewpoint. Usui Chikako, for example, believes that with policy adjustments and in labor, welfare, family, and educational institutions, Japan will be able to cope successfully with its demographic shifts. An interesting solution which she poses for dealing with the economic factors of the aging population is to draw from an "untapped supply of labor," namely middle-aged and older females.⁶⁵ She further asserts that the position of women is a critical factor in any discussion of population aging, for not only do women serve as a source of labor, but their postponement of marriage is a driving factor behind demographic change. She notes that the significance of marriage has steadily declined, with premarital sexual activity becoming more tolerated and more women being university-educated.⁶⁶ She also mentions the problems associated with raising children in Japan, such as the high costs of education and the lack of adequate child-care facilities for working mothers.⁶⁷ Usui's conclusion is that the demographic dilemma in Japan is resolvable with policy adjustments, and that the government should restore the public's confidence by re-conceptualizing the relationships between social policies, demographic shifts, and the changing economy. Her observations make the link

⁶³ Lobbying by large pharmaceutical companies and medical organizations, however, helped pass legislation to legalize the Pill in 1999.

⁶⁴ See Asia Program Special Report.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 and 19.

⁶⁶ Women tend to want to marry men who are at least as well educated as they are, yet men prefer to marry women who are somewhat less educated than themselves. The result is a constriction of the pool of desirable men, which persuades women to postpone marriage. *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

82 *Untapped Human Resources*

Japan between socioeconomic factors and women's status in Japan clear: without legislation geared toward rapid improvements in the conditions under which women can work and be care-providers, the demographic problem will worsen, and the economy will continue in the downward spiral that it has been in for the past thirteen years.

Conclusion

Japan still lags behind most industrialized nations in terms of its empowerment of women.⁶⁸ While Vietnam is a socialist state and has a different political system than Japan, in many instances the Southeast Asian state has done a better job of advancing women's rights. The National Plan of Action for the advancement of women, for example, which sets forth concrete goals, has had a profound impact on gender relations in Vietnam. It has resulted not only in more women wielding lawmaking power, but in more women in managerial positions in the workforce as well. Legislation such as the Vietnamese National Plan of Action is imperative at this critical junction in Japanese history. As past legislation regarding the working conditions and overall rights of women in Japan has been implemented for ambiguous reasons and too often poorly followed through on, the changes in the social status for women have been slow and inadequate.

A column that appeared in the Japanese women's magazine *Wife* in 1990 was entitled "From 'Okusan' to 'Sotosan,'" meaning "From the woman who 'resides in the inner part [of the house]' to the woman who 'is outside.'"⁶⁹ Because "okusan" also means "wife," or "housewife," the title suggests that the ideology of housewives of the 1990s had begun to shift. This sentiment indeed seems to be growing, with feminist groups increasingly drawing attention to the lack of government action to enforce progressive legislation. Despite protests by women's groups, however, the pace of legislative reform remains far too slow to keep up with Japan's demographic decline and economic woes. Women's desire to see change, coupled with the critical need for reform in order to boost the Japanese economy, makes the lack of governmental focus on these issues particularly puzzling.

The power to create change can come from any level of the Japanese political structure, as we have seen that past legislation has been ushered in by individuals ranging from ordinary housewives to the Prime Minister and by international pressure as well. What remains to be determined is whether or not further political reform in Japan will eventually have the capacity to shift the current national consciousness that is unwilling to foster extensive societal changes.

⁶⁸ This year the World Economic Forum ranked Japan 69th out of 75 member nations in empowering its women. See French, "Japan's Neglected Resource: Female Workers."

⁶⁹ Tipton, 218.

The Japanese Garden for the Mind: The 'Bliss' of Paradise Transcended

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The question is, why were the gardens first created, and do we still create them for the same reasons? No animal makes a garden, although animals' nests and shelters are a form of primitive architecture. The garden could be said to stand at the crossroads of nature and culture, of matter and consciousness. It is neither purely the one nor the other; it discloses both in the form of human art.

- Gunter Nitschke¹

It is dualistic to detest the world and to rejoice in liberation . . . Liberation can be found where there is bondage, but where there is ultimately no bondage, where is there need for liberation?

- Vimalakirti Sutra

Introduction

Literature

For many centuries, Japanese gardens have been both a source of fascination and an object of mystification for Japanese and non-Japanese alike. In spite of the many different forms of gardens that have been created throughout Japanese history, and the very

different meanings those forms had for the people who created and enjoyed them, in the vast literature (especially in the non-Japanese sources) Japanese gardens are often treated as one unitary whole amassing all characteristics that have been gathered over history into one big, amorphous notion.² This historical construct seems to have long taken on a life of its own, at home and abroad.

As is usually the case with Japanese traditional arts, information concerning garden techniques and principles has long been inaccessible to the general public. Instead, such knowledge has only been available to the initiated, transmitted mainly through "secret teachings," literally, and "oral transmission" or *kuden*. The famous *Sakuteiki*, kept secret until modern times, is one example.³ Beyond this mystification of the subject from within, there are additional hurdles to surpass for the outsider. Indeed, one is often given the sensation of listening in on a discourse that is meant only for insiders. Some otherwise very interesting sources, even books published after World War II, would sound outdated in literal translation, because they are scattered with words like

¹ Gunter Nitschke, *Japanese Gardens: Right Angle and Natural Form* (Koln, Germany: Benedikt Taschen Verlag, 1999), 238.

² Even though I acknowledge the need to sometimes point out general characteristics that apply to all types of Japanese gardens, there is a striking imbalance in the literature between the treatment of specific types and historical periods, and the aggregating style mentioned above. The past decades have seen successful attempts to correct this imbalance. See, for example, Mitchell Bring and Josse Wayembergh, *Japanese Gardens: Design and Meaning* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981) and Nitschke, *Japanese Gardens*.

³ The *Sakuteiki*, or *Records on Garden Making*, is a manual on gardening techniques surviving in manuscript form. Often dubbed "the first gardening manual," it is roughly dated between the mid to late eleventh century, and its authorship is controversial. Initially attributed to Fujiwara Yoshitsune, it is now believed to be the work of Tachibana no Toshitsuna (1028-1094), the son of Fujiwara no Yorimichi. See Takei Jiro and Marc P. Keane, *Sakuteiki, Visions of the Japanese gardens: A Modern Translation of Japan's Gardening Classic* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2001), 3-8.

Japan *waga kuni* (our country) or even *waga teien* (our gardens). On the other hand, books on Japanese gardens in English range from the highly popular to the scholarly, with the bulk concentrated at the popular end. Large sections of these books contain explicative material, not only with respect to the specialized terminology, but also to the more general terms referring to specifically Japanese aesthetic or cultural values. Those may be helpful for someone who is searching for an introduction to the general issues concerning Japanese gardens and the cultural context to which they belong, but for more in-depth approaches, one has to look at a limited number of sources written by foreign scholars. Or, one must overcome the feeling of listening in on somebody else's conversation when reading primary sources. In other words, there still seems to be a schismatic gap between sources from and for the "inside" and "outside" of Japan.

The plethora of books in English on Japanese gardens, which give readable accounts of their history and principles, contribute, in degrees, to the establishment of a "modern myth of Japanese gardens." They obviously reflect the interest the world displays in them, but, at the same time, may act as a deterrent in their understanding and scholarly analysis. Even though they may be correct in what they say, by scratching the surface, they give the impression that all the issues have been elucidated, when in fact many have not.

The biggest source of frustration in

reading these works is, however, the fact that they do not support information by providing citations.⁴ In fact, many fairly interesting books do not even have bibliographies. The same concepts are recycled, the same "facts" are mentioned over and over again, until it is impossible to find out where exactly they originated. From this respect alone, differentiating fact from construct is a task akin to archeological work.

Terminology and Concepts

We cannot begin to understand anything about Japanese gardens without first looking at how garden vocabulary and concepts developed. There is no definitive exegesis of the evolution of the terms for gardens, although partial attempts fill the literature. A close look at the terminology can shed some light on how the notion of "garden" was perceived at the time of the first creation of garden-like spaces in Japanese history and what changes occurred in subsequent historical periods.

In contemporary Japanese, the word *niwa* chiefly designates the space adjacent to residences, occupied by a garden. The notion of "yard" in modern Japanese has been almost entirely obscured by the notion of "garden," to the extent that the overlap is almost complete. The first mentions of the word *niwa* in the *Nihon shoki*, *Kojiki*,⁵ and *Manyoshu*⁶ have, however, a different meaning from the modern one. Here the word designates a ground, a flat open space used for human activity, whether it is a

⁴ To give just one example, Erik Borja, a respected architect and skilled designer of gardens, says: "There are some rules about the use of stones, the most important of which is that they must not be used in a different way from their natural position. A stone that is found lying on its side, for example, must not be placed vertically, and vice versa. The original placement must be respected, and each stone must be re-positioned in the garden as it was originally found. This is crucial if their original 'nature' is to be preserved." He has obviously internalized the ancient precepts of the *Sakuteiki* of which he quotes liberally without giving a citation. Even though he mentions the *Sakuteiki* in many instances, specific passages like the one quoted above lack due acknowledgement. Eric Borja, *Zen Gardens* (London: Ward Lock, 1999), 58.

⁵ The *Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihongi* or *Nihon shoki*) and *Records of Ancient Matters* (*Kojiki*) are the oldest extant annals in Japanese, dating from the eighth century.

⁶ This is an eighth century anthology of poetry.

fishing ground, a hunting ground, or a ceremonial ground.⁷ In that sense, the original meaning of the word *niwa* seems to be closer to what in English is called a courtyard, and its extensive use in the above mentioned documents can be considered an indication of the importance attached to such open spaces.

The first term used to refer to a garden-like space as such is *shima*. This seems to be of particular importance both because the word contained the meaning “island” and because of the subsequent obsession with the island theme in garden making. Semantically, the use of the word *shima* is a way of using the focal point, the island. In other words, it is an instance of pointing at the whole by referring to the part. The use of the term *shima* to designate garden-like spaces adjacent to architecture is indicative of a yet inexistent concept of “garden,” which would be separated from the natural landscape as an established genus. On a conscious level, people were possibly “making an island” in a way very similar to a child playing house. Creating a landscape with an island was probably perceived as a sort of playful mimesis, unstructured by conscious meta-conceptualization, but possibly characterized by a profound mythical determinism. An island was eminently an island, a genus in its own in a way somewhat similar to what Claude Lévi-Strauss describes as “the science of the concrete,” as a mode of functioning of the “savage mind,” but possessing the quality of abstractness at the same time.⁸ As Rudolf Arnheim points out, “any phenomenon

experienced by the mind can acquire abstractness if it is seen as a distillate of something more complex [in our case, landscape].”⁹

The *Nihon shoki* makes numerous references to watery spaces where emperors and empresses enjoy themselves. One, widely cited in garden literature, is the fact that Soga no Umako, the important figure from the Soga clan, earned himself the nickname “Shima no Ototo,” or “the minister with the garden/island.”¹⁰ This fact is seen by Kawase Kazuma as an indication of the still exotic perception of having such a watery paradise on one’s own premises. The term *shima* is used extensively in the *Manyōshū* as well, and can still be found in the Heian period poetic tale, the *Ise Monogatari*.

On the surface level, the use of the word island could be interpreted as a reflection that these acts of garden-making were perceived to be acts of replicating the topography of the land, in a ludic mimesis, as mentioned above. They may have been, at the same time, perceived to be acts of sacralization. As Mircea Eliade explains, in traditional societies, “houses are held to be at the Center of the World and, on a microscopic scale, to reproduce the universe.”¹¹ Moreover, the symbolism of islands, in Eliade’s view, is universally perceived to be related to creation: “One of the paradigmatic images of creation is the island that suddenly manifests itself in the midst of the waves.”¹² Eliade also says that “every construction or fabrication has the cosmogony as paradigmatic model. The creation of the world becomes the

⁷ For an interpretation of ancient use of space and the need for open space, see Kawase Kazuma, *Muso Kokushi – zen to teien* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1968), 106-108. For further discussions of ancient use of space, also see Amino Yoshihiko, *Nihon ron no shiza* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1991), 269-280.

⁸ See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 1-33.

⁹ Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 156.

¹⁰ W. G. Aston, C.M.G. trans., *Nihongi, Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to AD 697* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1972), 154 and 188.

¹¹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane; the Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959), 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, 130.

86 *The Japanese Garden for the Mind*

Japan archetype of every creative human gesture, whatever its plan of reference may be.”¹³

In Japan, where the paradigm is obviously constituted by the *kuni-umi* (literally “birth of the land”) myths,¹⁴ the use of the word *shima* to designate garden-like fabrications of the human microcosm is particularly meaningful. We seem to be confronted with an extremely rich concentration of symbolic substrata in the use of this word: creation as such, sacralization, and repetition of the archetypal model all at once. It is no wonder that the island should become an all-pervasive theme and we can see what a significant foundation gardens developed upon. We shall see later how this can further be related to the valences of stones, which are closely knit to those contained in islands.

The next decisive phase in the development of terms designating gardens and their extensions is the introduction of the concept *sansui* from the Chinese *shanshui*, (literally “mountain-water”), taken to mean “nature” or “landscape.”¹⁵ The idea of landscape being a composite of mountains and water belongs to the Chinese pictorial tradition. A whole range of iconographic elements (for example, *horai*, “the isles of the blessed”) is also imported along with the concept, and these connotations will constitute a steady presence in the constellation of garden images created thereafter. The word *senzui* also appears in the *Sakuteiki*, designating garden-like spaces, so we can clearly construe its use as an indication of the “landscape” quality

associated with gardens.

The presence of the *yin-yang* dichotomy is quite obvious: mountains as an expression of masculinity, stability, permanence, power, and assertion; water as feminine, unstable, formless, and nullifying. Its cultural connotations, the association of the concept with the classical culture of China that constituted a model and a standard for Japan’s own cultural creation, are larger topics that are deeply connected to the *sansui* concept, but are beyond the focus of this article.

Focus: The Establishment of the Contemplative Mode and the Karesansui Lithic Space

From the initial island-like spaces mentioned previously, some of which can be located archeologically,¹⁶ to the sophisticated tea gardens and stroll gardens of the Momoyama (1547-1600) and Edo (1600-1867) periods, many garden styles and types have developed. There is not only a rich variety of styles and sub-styles, but also an insatiable willingness to name them. Perhaps no other gardens in the world have been given as many names as Japanese gardens. This is partly due to the elusiveness of many of their perceived characteristics, and the attempt to describe them as faithfully as possible. The more elusive a characteristic is, however, the fascination it yields on the one hand, and willingness to demystify it on the other. Curiously enough, as a result, sometimes quite obvious qualities are contested.

“ IN JAPAN . . . THE USE OF THE WORD SHIMA TO DESIGNATE GARDEN-LIKE FABRICATIONS OF THE HUMAN MICROCOSM IS PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL. ”

¹³ Ibid., 45.

¹⁴ The legend concerning the creation of the islands of Japan, as recorded in the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*, states that: “Thereupon they thrust down the jewel-spear of Heaven, and groping about therewith found the ocean. The brine which dripped from the point of the spear coagulated and became an island which received the name of Ono-goro-jima.” From W. G. Aston and C.M.G. trans., 12.

¹⁵ The word was apparently pronounced *senzui* in earlier periods, as shown by *furigana* present in the *Sakuteiki* manuscripts of earlier date. Kawase, 108.

¹⁶ Ibid., 106.

One fairly elusive, yet dynamically central characteristic of Japanese gardens is their perceived contemplativeness. The closest a Japanese garden gets to the Western park is the stroll garden, a garden designed around a central pond.¹⁷ But even there, it is like an immense terrarium of fictional worlds, a collection of vistas and of literary allusions; each point on the stroll path is a “peeping” spot, a premeditated angle for contemplation.

Contemplativeness is therefore as much a quality of the garden itself as it is an attitude dictated by that quality. It is, therefore, a complex cultural construct. It is precisely this attitude that architect Ueda Atsushi refers to in *The Inner Harmony of the Japanese House*:

The [Japanese] garden is a “work of art” which is to be appreciated while sitting in the drawing room. Thus, the garden is something to be seen, and not a place to exercise or relax in. Most older Japanese, those who were raised before the war, are likely to have memories of being scolded by their mothers on the score: “Get out of there. The garden is not a place for playing!”¹⁸

In this article, “contemplation” and “contemplative” refer to a frame of mind that stresses a thoughtful, detached mode of attending to a landscape; it implies physical or metaphorical distancing, and often a sense of reverence. This also implies considering the landscape itself as an object for contemplation and a vessel for meaning, as opposed to a mere location, a vessel for human presence. Naturally, any landscape has

the potential to be both. At the same time, relative weight is usually attached to only one of these extremes.

The question then is to understand the origins and conditions that generated such values in the first place and the reasons for their endurance. I will try to show how socially determined architectural changes, along with stones and stone material, have participated in the establishment of a contemplative frame of mind. This is a process that reaches momentum in the highly instable phase of transition from aristocratic rule to military rule, spanning through the Kamakura period (1191-1333) and into the Muromachi (1333-1547) period.

The first full-fledged gardens that we have a relatively clear picture of are the watery paradises of the Heian period (794-1191) that belonged to aristocratic residences.¹⁹ Here we see a combination of strictly functional space, the flat, sand-covered area at the south of the main hall, *shinden*, and the pond garden proper. The pond was used both as a stage for festivities, when boats carrying musicians were part of the paraphernalia deployed to enhance the atmosphere, but also simply for pleasure boating. On the other hand, Pure Land Buddhist temples used the same prototype as a base for developing a highly mandalistic form of garden, assigning each element a specific, systematized signification referencing accession to the Pure Land. This type of garden is, in the most explicit and structured sense, a picture of paradise.²⁰ Irrespective of the type, all gardens are replete with religious iconography, islands and stones playing an important part in its expression.

¹⁷ One such garden is the famous Edo period Katsura Rikkyu in the imperial summer palace near Kyoto.

¹⁸ Ueda Atsushi, *Nihonjin to Sumai: The Inner Harmony of the Japanese House* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 161.

¹⁹ See Takei and Keane, 12-13.

²⁰ See Hasegawa Masami, *Nihon teien zakko: niwa to shiso* (Kyoto: Toyo Bunkasha, 1983), 285-289.

Japan

As we approach the Muromachi period there is a fundamental shift in the use of space, in the meaning contained in the gardens, and the means of expression used. More specifically, there is a fundamental change in the way gardens were meant to be enjoyed, in the attitude with which gardens were approached, and the positioning of the viewer in relationship to the gardens. The growing, powerful presence of Zen Buddhism acted as a catalytic force in the mixing of preexisting possibilities and newly emerging ones. The resulting set of values constituted an enduring legacy that marked all later developments and produced what has been perceived to be the “contemplativeness” of Japanese gardens. Changes in the architectural framework were accompanied by the use of a newly matured form of expression, the *karesansui* style, which further places stones in a central position. An entirely new form of space was created on the grounds of Zen temples, the combined result of architectural delineations and a new lithic rhetoric.²¹

Transcending Paradise: The Redefinition of Space in Japanese Architecture and Gardens

Heian Period Shinden-zukuri Prototype and its Pond Garden Form: Use and Implications

Except for archeological sites, what we

can actually see today of Heian period gardens are fragmentary remains in a very few locations. The best preserved of these is the pond garden of Byodo-in temple in Uji, Kyoto.²² There are, however, numerous pictorial representations in hand scrolls like *Nenju Gyoji Emaki* (twelfth century), depicting annual festivities at the estates of aristocrats, or *Koma Kurabe Gyoko Emaki* (fourteenth century) depicting events of 1024 at Kaiano-in, the estate of Fujiwara no Yorimichi (992-1074), to mention only a couple. The above, combined with descriptions in literary works like *Genji Monogatari* on the one hand, and in the previously mentioned gardening manual *Sakuteiki* on the other, provide us with a fairly clear picture of what Heian gardens were like, how they were enjoyed, and what cultural values they embodied.²³

Heian period gardens, also called “pond gardens” or *chitei*, were built as part of the architectural construct called *shinden-zukuri*, or

shinden style architecture of the aristocratic residences and Pure Land Buddhist temples. Modeled on a Chinese prototype, the building itself is basically symmetric, but the garden facing it to the south and extending into the southeast and southwest around the open corridors is not. Between the building and the garden there is a sand covered courtyard, *nantei*, contiguous with the pond garden area.²⁴ This corresponds to the “open space

“ AS WE APPROACH THE MUROMACHI PERIOD THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN THE USE OF SPACE, IN THE MEANING CONTAINED IN THE GARDENS, AND THE MEANS OF EXPRESSION USED. ”

²¹ Stones and gravel are often regarded as separate, even distinct entities. But gravel and even sand belong to the same material in different manifestations. I define lithic space as any space that is determined by the presence of stone material, irrespective of size or use.

²² Byodo-in temple, originally built by Fujiwara no Yorimichi (992-1074) as a palace, which he then turned into a temple in 1052, has managed to maintain intact its main Phoenix Hall and pond garden. This is particularly important because, even if only partially preserved, it clearly presents us with an example of the prototypical, symmetrical layout of the *shinden-zukuri*.

²³ The *Sakuteiki*, a work produced in the eleventh century, is considered to be not only an apt descriptor of Heian period gardens, but also an invaluable source for understanding aesthetic, religious, and social considerations pertaining to them.

²⁴ This area was the stage for both official and a variety of recreational events and games.

for human activity” designated by the word *niwa*, as discussed above. The pond features one or more islands, the central one being connected to the southern and northern shores by arched vermilion bridges. The yard and the garden taken together occupy roughly half the size of a typical estate.

Heian-kyo, present day Kyoto, was built in the eighth century at the order of Emperor Kammu. Using the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907) capital of Changan (present-day Xian) as a model, a city was first built at Heijō-kyo (near present day Nara) and then reconstructed at Heian-kyo (794). To begin with, this city layout was a compressed version of the Changan prototype. Such compression characterized Japanese architectural history and became a factor of paramount importance in subsequent changes. Also, as Inaji Toshiro demonstrates, even though “the formula for *shinden-zukuri* emerged from an existing symmetrical pattern,”²⁵ this prototype was, upon adoption, subjected to complex interpretation and abbreviation:

Shinden-zukuri residential architecture used abbreviation as its means of adapting the Chinese prototype to a different set of circumstances. This style honored the symmetrical formula as ideal, while also giving high priority to the need to conform to site conditions and the building’s intended function. Architectural interpretations of the prototype shifted to the diagonally-stepped “geese-in-flight” pattern and a myriad of other asymmetrical forms of *shinden-zukuri*.²⁶

Even though the buildings themselves

were originally meant to follow a symmetrical pattern, the garden itself was never constructed symmetrically. On the contrary, asymmetry is practiced consciously and is overtly emphasized as a design principle. Again, the *Sakuteiki* is rich in examples in this respect. For example:

The bridge [connecting the islands in the pond] should not align with the center of the central stair roof but rather should be placed off-center in the garden so that the eastern post of the bridge aligns with the western post of the central stair roof.²⁷

Considering this, it could be said that it is precisely the gardens that acted as triggers in the adoption of asymmetry in Japanese architecture.

The perception of built landscape as intrinsically asymmetric has, in my opinion, a further vital implication. By establishing a creative field that is free from the externally superimposed mathematical grid of geometric/symmetric design, the door is left open for a form of unhampered fictional discourse using the elements of natural landscape in a way akin to literature. Asymmetry not only allows for the expression of beauty in natural form, but also for the expression of meaning in creative ways that symmetry would not permit. Freedom of expression on a formal level allows for freedom of expression on the level of content, more specifically, for the presence of the “story,” the fiction that is attached to the created landscape. But it is precisely the sacredness with which the landscape is invested, its mythological quality, which makes it more than nature. Japanese gardens have been portrayed as cute imitations of

²⁵ Inaji Toshiro, Pamela Virgilio, trans., *The Garden as Architecture: Form and Spirit in the Gardens of Japan, China and Korea* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1998), 5-16.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷ Takei and Keane, 155.

90 *The Japanese Garden for the Mind*

Japan

nature, and love of nature has long been considered the sole dynamic factor in their creation and for their perceived mimetism. But what I see in these man-made landscapes is first and foremost a world saturated with meaning, not just a world of form. They are landscapes with a story, and the story lives precisely in the seemingly unpredictable nooks of asymmetric form.

From their inception, the artificial landscapes attached to dwellings were probably perceived as miniature worlds imbued with religious significance, as shown by the early incorporation of the mountain Shumisen as part of the island.²⁸ Heian period gardens further enlarge this pantheon to incorporate Daoist iconography: Mt. Horai,²⁹ where the Daoist immortals were believed to reside, represented the main pond island accompanied by other representations including the turtle island, *kamejima*, and the crane island, *tsurujima*.

These representations were part of a miraculous world of make-believe, complete with boats carrying musicians, all meant as a set of devices to entice the immortals. The sophisticated ceremonies depicted in handscrolls and in literary works were forms of enacting paradise, where human actors placed themselves in a fictional world created with painstaking meticulousness.³⁰

Pure Land temples also used the same *shinden-zukuri* architecture and pond garden, but attached to them a different interpretation. The center island was no longer the Isle of the Immortals, but the Pure Land itself and the vermilion bridge connecting it to the shore

signified the path to salvation. Such a flexibility of interpretation is a fundamental characteristic of the gardens in these early periods, and it always complicates interpretation, but at the same time, it is obviously a propitious condition for the act of creation.

Moreover, a fact that needs to be taken into consideration is that the boundaries between the “religious” and the “secular” are also often quite fluid. For instance, Byodo-in was transformed by Yorimichi himself from his residence into a Pure Land temple. We tend to think in terms of “secularization” of artistic or architectural forms, but here we have instances of the opposite. Another example would be the common practice of members of the emerging *samurai* class to build themselves a temple and become priests after retiring. This has an important consequence: specific architectural or artistic features are freely exchanged across blurred religious-secular demarcations.

Of course, the gardens of aristocratic residences are different from the mandalistic, temple versions. However, they share the belief in a world beyond. All in all, religious iconography is not only all pervasive in Heian period gardens, but it is also characterized by an extreme syncretism. To begin with, the *shinden-zukuri* building itself was a copy of the Pure Land representations of paradise. The Buddhist Trinity was also a commonly used image by setting stones as *sanzon seki*.³¹ The whole layout was also thoroughly based on *feng-shui* principles, or more or less free

“ THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE ‘RELIGIOUS’ AND THE ‘SECULAR’ ARE ALSO OFTEN QUITE FLUID. ”

²⁸ The singular, upright stone is often used as an expression of Mt. Shumisen (in Sanskrit: Sumeru).

²⁹ In Chinese: Peng-lai.

³⁰ Some words should be said here about the “famous places of scenic beauty” that were, apart from religious iconography, another very important thematic prototype, also mentioned in the *Sakuteiki*. According to Inaji, “At this point in Japanese garden history, the recreation of famous sights had been established as an appropriate metaphor for the ‘natural landscape;’ it has maintained this same status through the present day.” Inaji, 16.

³¹ *Sanzon seki* are stones symbolizing the Buddhist trinity.

interpretations of those, combined with a system of indigenous taboos. We are presented with a multilayered fictional world, vibrant with meaning. To further enhance participation in the landscape, the *shinden-zukuri* structure was enclosed by shutters or *shitomido*, which, once raised, allowed for an unobstructed view of the artificial landscape. This probably made the building feel very much part of the surrounding garden.

A fact of great importance is that all of the above mentioned images of the sacred were somehow connected with or expressed in the built landscape using stones. Within the flamboyant, colorful drama depicted in literature and pictorial representations, stones themselves don't stand out; but when we read the *Sakuteiki* their significance looms large.

In sum, Heian period gardens, while already displaying many of the qualities that characterize Zen temple gardens—like asymmetry, for instance—were highly imbued with a sense of idyllic admiration at one end and of mystic fascination at the other. This mindset had a tinge of the miraculous, of the make-believe. Human actors willingly wove themselves into the canvas, taking part in the fiction they created as landscape.

In Japan, landscape architecture initially developed, therefore, as a creative ground, situated at the crossroads of syncretic religious belief and the human need to fantasize and play. It is equally a reflection of religious belief and the means for the creation of beauty, a beauty which was not consciously separated from religious feeling. The world of meaning thus generated was very much in the realm of the fantastic, and represented not one paradise, but a multitude of paradises. Above all, it expressed a seemingly infinite yearning to inhabit paradise and to be inhabited by it.

The Transition to the Muromachi Period Gardens

In the subsequent historical periods of Kamakura and Muromachi, architecture and gardens underwent revolutionary changes as part of what constituted one of the most fertile creative waves in Japanese cultural history. It would be impossible to understand these changes if we do not consider the historical developments and the socio-political background that generated them.

The decline of the aristocracy and the gradual process that led to the creation of the *bakufu* and the emergence of the *samurai* as a leading class determined the society of the Kamakura and Muromachi periods in every respect. The naive idealism of the Heian period gave way to an age of profound meditation and a quest for meaning that paralleled the quest for power of the newly emerging class. Two other factors further took part in the creation of the age: the second great wave of Chinese influence and the growing influence of Zen Buddhism, especially of the Rinzai sect. Both were the result of a mixture of conditions and a felicitous coincidence of interests. The Song Dynasty was crumbling under the Mongol invasion, and the many Chinese Chan priests who fled their homeland found refuge in Japan. Many of them were high-ranking reputed masters,³² which meant that the cultural input they were able to provide was of a high intellectual level. They were met with open arms by the emerging military regime, which was looking for a powerful, yet controllable educational apparatus. Even though it had been introduced much earlier, as a sect, Zen Buddhism was only beginning to gain momentum, which meant that it was free of the political entanglements of the other Buddhist sects, making it appealing to

³² For example, Lanchi Daolong (1213-78), who immigrated to Japan in 1246.

92 *The Japanese Garden for the Mind*

Japan

the *bakufu*. Zen temples were kept under relatively tight control, did not develop large land holdings, and relied on the government for sponsorship. This economic aspect was decisive in the intimate relationship that grew between the warrior class and Zen temples.

The *bakufu* realized very early that power also meant knowledge and, under the *bunbu ryodo* slogan,³³ they were determined to create a warrior class that was superior in terms of education in addition to the martial arts. As a result, Zen monasteries became vibrant citadels of learning for the warrior class, as well as centers of culture and commerce. There are many other further reasons why the *bakufu* favored Zen Buddhism. One of them is that Zen Buddhism emphasized personal effort or strength, *jiriki*, as opposed to other sects that stressed external salvation. Also, Zen Buddhism emphasized oral transmission from master to disciple, as opposed to the study of the texts of the scriptures, which were written in highly inaccessible Chinese. The philosophy of Zen Buddhism magnificently coincided with the needs of the warrior. It was a twofold source of empowerment: culturally, it created the superiority needed to compete with the high standards that the nobility had set; mentally, the “no mindedness” taught by Zen provided the strength needed in battle.

Finally, the transfer of the new Ashikaga military government’s capital from Kamakura to the Muromachi district of Kyoto (1338), the subsequent socioeconomic development, and the so-called “renaissance” that it engendered, further favored the development of the arts and gardens. It is of

no little significance that the great monastery of Tenryuji, whose garden constitutes an important transitional moment between the Heian period *shinden-zukuri* gardens and the Muromachi *karesansui* gardens, was built at the order of the founder of the Muromachi *bakufu*, Ashikaga Takauji (1305-58). And it is of no little significance that he appointed as the first abbot none other than Muso Kokushi (1275-1351), the most important figure of Zen Buddhism during the first half of the fourteenth century, who was also well known and even criticized by his opponents for his involvement with worldly matters like gardening.

All these developments are presented here in simplified form. I only hint at the scope of human action that constituted the underlying motivation for the cultural production of the age, of which gardens are only one part. What is important is that the instability of the age itself had the side effect of stimulating creative energy. There was a huge propensity for experimentation, and architectural space became one of the most richly experimented in mediums.

The Shift in Perspective, Positioning of the Beholder: The Birth of the Contemplative Mode

Changes in social forms trigger changes in material forms; architecture, being the vessel of human activity, becomes extremely malleable. As a result of the changes discussed above, the process that triggered the shift from the *shinden* to the *shoin* architectural style gained full momentum.³⁴

“ CHANGES IN SOCIAL FORMS TRIGGER CHANGES IN MATERIAL FORMS; ARCHITECTURE, BEING THE VESSEL OF HUMAN ACTIVITY, BECOMES EXTREMELY MALLEABLE. ”

³³ This slogan is translated as “the pen and the sword.”

³⁴ *Shoin-zukuri* is “a style of residential architecture that developed during the Kamakura and Muromachi periods. It was mainly used in warrior residences and Zen temple abbots’ quarters. It is divided into rooms with fixed walls and sliding doors, has *tatami*-mat flooring and square posts. In its most elaborate form this style includes a *tokonoma* alcove, *chigaidana* staggered shelves, a *tsukeshoin* built-in desk, coved and coffered ceilings, and a *jodan* raised floor area.” Inaji, 193.

This transition, which paralleled the advent of the *samurai* class and the establishment of Zen as the dominant religion of the period, was gradual, as it clearly reflected the re-tailoring of architecture to people's needs and the crystallization of new cultural values. In *The Garden as Architecture*, Inaji Toshiro describes some significant stages in the process:

During the medieval period, in order to adapt to further reductions in size, the main hall was reduced in scale and the symmetrical pairs of *tainoya* annexes, *tsuridono* fishing pavilions, *chumon* inner gates, and *sukiro* open corridors were all omitted on one side. Asymmetrical in ground plan, a smaller *shinden* and a single *tainoya* connected by a reduced-scale *sukiro* and *chumon* became the new standard. This is the compositional form typically seen today in Zen sub-temples, except that the *shinden* is now replaced by a *kyakuden* (guest hall) or *hojo* (abbot's quarters).³⁵

A clearer distinction between the private (*ke*) and public (*hare*) areas was being made through the more extensive use of walls and sliding screens to divide them. This partitioning of the interior space, which began in the twelfth century and was accompanied by the replacement of *shitomido* shutters with *mairado* shutters,³⁶ triggered important changes in the angle of vision, from the panoramic view of the *shinden* to a more acute angled view.³⁷ Also, a

multitude of viewing angles and ways to manipulate them became possible. This had significant consequences on the way gardens were perceived.

The single most important change was, as Inaji points out,³⁸ the loss of functionality of the southern court, which both in residences and temples, initially served as a venue for all important events. Furthermore, buildings used to be entered through the southern hall. The creation of an entryway, which later became the *genkan*, rendered the southern court useless. As a result, "that space was now made available for designers to use in a more artistic way."³⁹ This space, now without an entryway, became a secluded enclosure attached to the main hall.

The earlier *shinden* prototype combined a functional-ritual space, represented by the sand covered *niwa*, and the pond garden in its background. What happened when the southern court lost its functionality was first a reduction in size. This, according to Inaji, was dealt with in two different ways: *samurai* residences, or *buke yashiki*, deleted the *niwa* in favor of a highly compacted version of the pond garden; Zen temples retained the graveled *niwa* instead.⁴⁰ Inaji sees these as "ostensibly antithetical interpretations of the same prototype,"⁴¹ one abstract, one representational. But the act of compacting, of miniaturization, can be considered an act of abstraction, too; since reduction in scale implies a reversal in the process of understanding, where "knowledge of the whole precedes knowledge of the parts."⁴² This is precisely what occurred, as what we

³⁵ Ibid., 34.

³⁶ These shutters are "a sliding wooden door faced with thin, closely spaced wooden strips. This was installed in early *shoin-zukuri* architecture as a set of two wooden doors and one paper screen (*akarishoji*) per bay that slid horizontally in a three-track gutter." Ibid., 192.

³⁷ Ibid., 37.

³⁸ Ibid., 40.

³⁹ Marc P. Keane, *Japanese Garden Design* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 1996), 54.

⁴⁰ Inaji., 43.

⁴¹ Ibid., 49.

⁴² Strauss, 23-24.

94 *The Japanese Garden for the Mind*

Japan are presented with are gardens that can be seen in their entirety. Heian panoramic gardens, like handscrolls, implied a permanent sweeping of the visual field to grasp it.

A completely new form of architecture and a completely new way of seeing had emerged. The garden had become a very different world. From the paradise-like landscape that could be populated with musicians in ornate boats, where the range of vision expanded out and wide, the garden was now an off-limits, outdoor terrarium. At the same time, it was a precipitous, breathtaking close-up, invading the beholder's consciousness with its proximity, readily transporting him to a meta-experiential realm. Even though this space was created as a result of scale reduction, through the architectural exacerbation of the viewing angle, the opposite effect was attained: a sensation of reality looming large.

The height of this effect was achieved on the grounds of Zen monasteries, of which Ryoanji is the epitome and the pinnacle. There, in the Zen monks' hands, the enclosure with its off-limits space reaches even farther. The lens to look through is *karesansui*, another brilliant product of the age.

Karesansui: The Term and its Meaning

The term *karesansui* or *karesenzui* is translated into English as "dry landscape garden" and first appears in the *Sakuteiki*:

There is also a way to create gardens without ponds or streams. This is called Dry Garden Style and should be created by setting stones along the base of a hill or with Meadows in the garden.⁴³

The most conspicuous and unequivocal characteristic of the garden style it designates is the complete absence of water from the composition, combined with its artful portrayal using stones, and often, but not always, gravel, and an overall abstractness or symbolism of expression. A secondary but not absolutely necessary feature is the liberal use of blank spaces, mostly a characteristic of the *sekitei*, using stones and gravel only, variety. The absence of extensive plantings, while a characteristic of the style, is applied quite flexibly. It does not seem to be an absolute requirement, like the absence of water. The reasons plantings are less favored in *karesansui* may be varied. One could be that, even though they can be trimmed, they

are relatively difficult to control, especially over a long span of time. The stylized aspect of the *karesansui* is probably seen as incompatible with vegetal freedom. On the other hand, when they are heavily trimmed, a difficult

to deal with element of contrived-ness becomes part of the composition. This can easily hamper the prized naturalness that is an essential feature of materials used in the *karesansui* style. Apart from the seasonal connotations that are also not part of the style, there are the practical considerations of keeping the sand free from vegetal material. The permanent task of raking the sand is already sufficient, not to mention that the overall abstractness would suffer from the presence of too much vegetation.

Another aspect worthy of mentioning is the actual semantic structure of the word. The word *sansui*, meaning landscape, is determined by *kare*, which taken alone

“ A COMPLETELY NEW FORM OF ARCHITECTURE AND A COMPLETELY NEW WAY OF SEEING HAD EMERGED. THE GARDEN HAD BECOME A VERY DIFFERENT WORLD. ”

⁴³ Keane points out that this must have been different from the *karesansui* of the Middle Ages, but I would argue that the fact that the idea of *not using water* was already "there" is of great importance as a premise for development. Jiro and Keane trans., 160.

originally meant “withered,” “shrunk,” or “dead,” in reference to plants. Judging from that, what one would normally envision is a desolate landscape, perhaps containing withered trees, which, even though it suggests the absence of water, is not what the actual term means, since, in effect, *karesansui* is a metaphorical affirmation of water.

The term *karesansui* is omnipresent in Japanese garden literature, but it is often used ambiguously, existing in competition and overlapping with other terms like “flat garden,” “rock garden” or *sekitei*, “contemplative garden” or *kansho niwa*, and finally, “Zen garden” or *zen niwa*. Since some *karesansui* gardens like the Daisen-in North-Eastern garden are not flat at all—some are not just stones and shrubbery, they contain trees as well—the terms are sometimes used in combination to better describe specific gardens.

There is one problem that needs to be pointed out. One of the most salient characteristics of Japanese architecture is the fact that the garden and its physical surroundings are an inseparable entity. This is further enhanced and expressed through the flexible, fluid nature of demarcations, which are denied as soon as they are laid out and which simultaneously separate and connect.⁴⁴ All of this considered, one can never look at a *karesansui* section in a garden as totally independent of the rest. Moreover, most temples have a cluster of gardens – a complex composite – the components of which, even if not entirely present in the same visual framework, silently participate in the effect, either through memory, through the overlaying, or through the partial simultaneous exposure that the multi-angled

structure of Japanese architecture so aptly and so pervasively utilizes. As Arnheim says, “To see an object in space means to see it in context.”⁴⁵ This may sound like an axiomatic truth, but we are often too willing to disregard the consequences of the context on the object and concentrate our interpretive attention on the object. When we perceive it, we perceive it as a whole, but when we attempt to understand it, or explain our understanding of it, we lose the context from the view. Even the Ryoanji *sekitei*, the ultimate stone garden, is enhanced both by the patina of the background wall and the greenery in the further background, which immediately counteracts its austerity, and, at the same time, by the memory of the lush vegetation in the northern section of the garden, or even a possible oblique, simultaneous glimpse of the vegetal western corner. This is one of the most quintessential attributes of the original Zen gardens: the elaborate equilibrium of contraries, and the apprehension of the world as a dialectical continuum. *Karesansui* should be used in the strict sense of a style, sometimes dominant, indeed, but always perceived in the context of the whole. As a generic term for the gardens of the Zen temples and *samurai* residences of the Muromachi, however, perhaps the most logically sound taxonomy is to call them Zen gardens, implying the whole garden construct as mentioned above.

The Poetics of *Karesansui*: ‘A Flower Does Not Talk’ but a Rock Has the Voice of Water

Origins and Intent

Conflicting interpretations are given as to why *karesansui* was created, both based on

⁴⁴ An example of this is *shakkei*, or “borrowed scenery.” First, a hedge or a wall is constructed, which looks like a fairly rigid enclosure. In fact, it is only an intermediary background, a demarcation which both separates and connects the primary, foreground landscape with the background landscape, which is thus “drawn-in” the picture. This is an example of the duality of demarcations intentionally used in Japanese architecture to achieve this kind of paradoxical effect.

⁴⁵ Arnheim, 54.

96 *The Japanese Garden for the Mind*

Japan

the physical presence or absence of water. Kawase Kazuma considers it originally a response by Zen priests to the lack of water in their Chinese mountain cloisters, which was subsequently imported to Japan. This view is not, however, supported by any evidence or sources. At the other end, Ito Teiji considers the style to be a luxury possible only in a natural environment in which water is abundant, like the islands of Japan.

Whether it is practically motivated by any of the above or not, *karesansui* is surely an extremely creative, revolutionary form of expression, primarily conditioned by artistic intent—a powerful, intuitive, disciplined intent, concerned with expressing the osseous essence of things beyond things themselves.⁴⁶ So much has been debated over the Zen-ness or Zen-lessness of this art form that one feels reluctant to join the ranks of discussers. But whoever were the physical creators of one garden or the other, whether they were painters, priests, or the *kawaramono* outcasts, what they expressed clearly reflects values recognized as Zen. To begin with, how can one express nothingness, *mu*, more dramatically than by taking water out of a garden?

On the other hand, the use of stone material to express water is an almost perverse rendering of the *yin* and *yang* principles, since it expresses water, a *yin* element, by a *yang* material, stone. Thus, one can consider a stone garden to be an obliteration of the *yin* principle from the form, but one which still maintains it in content by substitution with the *yang* material. Such a choice could be construed as symptomatic of the “masculine” age of Muromachi.

Compositionally speaking, if we think in terms of the evolution from the *shinden* prototype discussed earlier, what we are presented with is a shuffling of planes: the pond is metaphorically dragged over to the sanded *niwa* area, which, in turn, by superimposition acquires the meaning of “water.” Thus, neither the *niwa* nor the pond are lost or *semantically* omitted. They are instead combined into one single symbolic rendering of the pond. The pond itself, in the *shinden* garden, had been a metaphor for the sea,⁴⁷ and that significance is maintained in the sand garden. The change in expression is also characteristic of the shift from mimesis to symbolism.

*The ‘Stone is Water / Gravel is Water’
Metaphor*

The main element in the logic of *karesansui* is that the sand (gravel), as has been shown, is a signifier of water. This is an example of a complete overlap of meaning, which is therefore a full-fledged metaphor. Water is not denied; on the contrary, it is *asserted*. The exclusion of water, instead of being its denial, is an even more potent affirmation because it is done metaphorically. Sand is created through the erosive power of water. Hence, water is contained in it, almost like a hereditary trait. We deal with a highly significant transference of meaning in which sand/gravel behaves like a material metaphor.

Again, as was the case with the gardens of the Heian period, here we have a similar phenomenon, but with a symbolic, rather than fictional content. Water is flat, the sand-covered surface also flat and, like water, also light reflecting. But, unlike water, sand is pliable, malleable, and controllable. As a

⁴⁶ Two possibly important sources of inspiration for *karesansui* that are not treated in this article are the art of *bonseki*, miniature stone gardens probably brought from China, and Chinese landscape painting, especially from the Song Dynasty.

⁴⁷ The *sansui* concept itself is already a metaphorical reduction of landscape into symbolic elements: mountains equal heaven and water equals earth.

liquid, water can only be intentionally shaped by placement within a vessel; then it is the personality of the vessel that takes preponderance, obscuring water itself. What the *sekitei* accomplishes is the ability to shape water itself, to immortalize the ripples, to freeze the flow. This control over the formless, too, coincides with a Zen ideal. And even though lithic material is used to achieve that, water is not petrified, but instead given a structured eloquence, an infinitely mysterious new voice.

Water is originally also sound. A “dry waterfall” composition, akin to creating a blank space, silences the water by commanding it to stone. Then again, the intention is to create sound, to exhort sound from the apparently silent boulders. Yet again, this is done using a different medium; a visual effect is achieved by manipulating the shapes, lines, surfaces and mass of boulders and gravel. The visual sensation of movement, and the rhythm created this way is also, as a result, suggestive of sound. But the sound is created only the moment the viewer looks and sees properly. It is a highly interactive form of art, where the beholder is permanently summoned up to participate in the creation of meaning. Herein we can very clearly see the dialogue type of pedagogy practiced by Zen Buddhism. Only here the interlocutor is not the *roshi*, but nature itself, the ultimate teacher, a nature that has not only been distilled to its osseous core, but also rendered in such a way that it is infinitely open to dialogue, and to idiosyncratic interpretation by any number of thirsty beholders. Using silence to effectuate sound, amassing silent boulders to create the fearful roar of a waterfall: what *koan*, expressed in the feeble form of words that Zen so much fought to expose and to overcome, could be

more eloquent than this?⁴⁸

The Sekitei and its Beholder

When contemplating a rock garden, the distinction between subject and object and between the viewer and the viewed is easily blurred. In looking, one is “raking” the sand in a symbolic way by following the repetitive, rhythmical patterns of the ripples. One is thus drawn into a dialogue with the composition, and at the same time with oneself. On the one hand, the viewer is prohibited access to the neatly raked, delineated perimeter of the sand garden. On the other, he is drawn in, almost against his will.

Raked gravel is far from being the sole means of expression in stone gardens. One extremely important concept that originates in the technique of ink-wash painting is what is called *yohaku no bi*, “the beauty of the space left empty,” or the beauty of the remaining space. It is associated with silence or the lack of motion in other arts like *Noh* drama, and it implies tremendous discipline: to be able to abstain from crowding the place with forms, from crowding the air with sounds, or the stage with movement. It is, recognizably, a vivid, specific application of Zen concepts and Zen discipline. On the other hand, even though the source of inspiration may have been ink-wash paintings, to take the two-dimensional black and white mode of a painting and transpose it into the volumetric form of the garden – literally transforming the graveled yard of previous ages and various orientations into a lithic canvas – is a creative act of magnificent proportions that is too often taken for granted. We are also dealing with an exacerbation of the visual, and at the same time with a flexibility that allows for an unusual exchange of mediums, like the expression of sound through visual

⁴⁸ Even though, as the *Sakuteiki* clearly shows, waterfalls were used extensively in the Heian period, too, in its new dry form, and conveying the additional symbolism of enlightenment, the waterfall becomes one of the central themes of Zen gardens.

Japan

suggestion.

Standing on the flat surface of the “ocean,” like the wind, or even like a demiurge, the Zen priest raking the sand is making waves, is actually exercising *being the wind that creates waves on the surface of the ocean*. At the same time, by perpetuating an archetypal act in raking the gravel, he is unified with the cohorts of priests who have performed the raking through history. The gravel is their shared lithic blood, flowing like sap through the rake and the hands that hold it. And all this time, the concrete feel of the gravel under the special sandals the monk is wearing reminds him of the here and now and of the limitations of the physical body he inhabits. The monk enters the garden, not as a user, and not just as a janitor, but as a creator, equally of the garden and of himself. In a way, the raking of the sand itself, while a chore, is at the same time like a performed *koan*, belonging to an oral tradition, handed down from generation to generation of priests. This highly interactive aspect of life with a sand garden is largely overlooked, mentioned only in passing, as “maintenance,” when in fact it may be the single most vibrant aspect of the famous sand gardens.

Implications of the Transition for the Establishment of Contemplation as a Mode of Viewing

All of the qualities of the evolving *shoin-zukuri* architecture of the Muromachi period discussed so far reinforce the tendency already existent in the Heian period of contemplating landscape. What happens is an

accentuation of the scenic quality. The transition is from an idyllic landscape to the austere landscape of the *karesansui* style, from a mimetic to a symbolic portrayal of nature.

There is also an almost cinematic effect of zooming-in. The landscapes are smaller, but they are also close-ups. So, they gain in immediacy in that way, too, but they are no longer landscapes evoking memories of places seen, however remote in time and space. Under the influence of Zen philosophy, contemplation becomes synonymous with introspection, and observing the outside world means looking into one’s own nature. The landscapes take the viewer inside on a mental journey to a metaphysical realm, at once intimately close and remote. They are remote through their abstractness and at the same time architecturally close, resulting in an enhanced effect.

In this newly created stone and gravel canvas, in its abstract eloquence and off-limits austerity, one can see the fostering of an attitude and the creation of a paradigm of contemplation, far more powerful than the idyllic-miraculous contemplative gaze of the Heian period. Contemplation shifts from an outward to an inward realm.

The use of space in every way sustains that shift. The *shoin-zukuri* architectural elements discussed before, the transformation from a functional to a non-functional area and further innovations in the framing of the view and angle of viewing also contribute to the creation of the contemplative mode. This new contemplative mode contains the shift in

“ UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ZEN PHILOSOPHY, CONTEMPLATION BECOMES SYNONYMOUS WITH INTROSPECTION, AND OBSERVING THE OUTSIDE WORLD MEANS LOOKING INTO ONE’S OWN NATURE. ”

⁴⁹ We could speculate that the Zen temple gardens were not even “understood” by their contemporaries. However close to Zen, even elite warriors did not normally use the *karesansui* style in their gardens, as we saw earlier. They chose to use a compacted, representational version of the pond garden.

perspective concerning nature, landscape itself, a decantation of preexisting lithic symbolism and the creation of a new lithic rhetoric.

In an off-limits zone in the form of an abstract sanctuary, a visual *koan* is created. That also represents a change from a public space to an intimate space. If Heian gardens were extrovert sanctuaries, imbued with the significance of the mythical, the gardens of Muromachi Zen monasteries are secluded, introvert sanctuaries, labyrinths for a mental, solitary journey. We are witnessing the creation of a distinct culture of the private, through the discovery of the ultimate solitude of existence. On a creative level, it may be precisely the realization that the human being is alone in the face of his or her existence (a realization that much of the rest of the world only achieved later, and is usually associated with the concept of modernity) that constitutes the source of the abstractness of the Muromachi rock compositions.⁴⁹

The realization of the potential for expression contained in stone material may have aided the creators of the dry garden style in the tremendous leap they made in expression, allowing them to distill meaning to such an extent that they were able to arrive at the potent “gravel is water” metaphor which constitutes the most fascinating characteristic of the dry gardens. The importance of this creative landmark cannot be overstated. It represents a revolution in aesthetic expression, generated through a process of “compacting,” potentially aggregating a multitude of significant elements into a minimum amount of material form to contain it, hence its potency and appeal. The unconventional approach to modes of expression practiced by Zen may well have been a factor in the bold decision of

replacing ink with sand and stones. The resulting lithic statement is an unmistakable landmark of Japanese gardens thereafter.

Stones and the Paradigm of Contemplation

We have seen how changes in social conditions engendered changes in the architectural environment and in the values that governed it, bringing forth new ways of seeing, and, more specifically, a radical new way of dealing with architecturally adjacent space in the form of the gradually emerging *niwa*. We have seen how successive architectural modifications gradually created an enclosed southern yard that could be used for experimentation. And we have seen the huge metamorphosis such experiments produced within the atmosphere of the Muromachi era.

Finally, we have seen how this transformation coincided with the birth of a new, metaphysical contemplative mode, which functions in an environment that fundamentally bases its logic in a very idiosyncratic lithic rhetoric. The question still lingers of the significance of stones in a greater, diachronical context. We also need to return to the initial question of what is ultimately perceived as “sacred space,” and what are its salient features, in other words, how do people identify it to be imbued with qualities of the sacred.

If one looks at representative uses of stones in Japanese early history, one finds a very evident, pervasive cult of stones, as manifest in the *iwakura* and the *iwasaka*, large rock formations very often found in pairs, married together by sometimes enormous *shimenawa*,⁵⁰ or enclosed by the same *shimenawa* in what is known under the name of *shiki*. Here, we see the river pebble variety of ground covering, of which

⁵⁰ This form of binding constitutes the object of study in Gunter Nitschke, *From Shinto to Ando: Studies in Architectural Anthropology in Japan* (London: Academy Editions, 1993).

Nitschke says:

Both the mysterious *shiki*, an empty space strewn with river pebbles and fenced in by a sacred straw rope and the *himorogi*, an evergreen tree placed at the center of such a space, are classic forms of a *yorishiro*, a deity's temporary visiting place. The *shiki* seems to derive from the original purification place near some water course; that would explain why it is spread with river pebbles, even when miles away from any water.⁵¹

It is very important to notice the association of sacred space with water, and at the same time, the fact that the stones covering such a space—river pebbles in this case—are associated with the water from which they obviously originate. Gravel, also stone material, is subsequently used as cover for the ceremonial grounds of the *shinden-zukuri* place, as we have seen, in the form of the southern court. On the other hand, a variety of taboos of animist origins applied to the handling of rocks, as the Heian period work *Sakuteiki* clearly declares: “If so much as one of these taboos is violated, the master of the household will fall ill and eventually die, and his land will fall into desolation and become the abode of devils.”⁵²

Considering all these characteristics, we can say that there is a sense of reverence, of awe, associated with lithic material that comes from the animist heritage. This may be translated into a contemplative feeling and attitude, originating before what is called *kansho-niwa*, “contemplative garden”

(Ryoanji and the like), and extending beyond it as an overall awe-like reverence, overlapping with aesthetic enjoyment.⁵³

“Revered/sacred” also implies non-tangibility. In Japanese culture especially, we can distinguish between the sacred to the degree that it cannot even be “touched” visually, like the *goshintai* of shrines, and the sacred that is available for visual tangibility, as exemplified by the *shimenawa* demarcated off-limits zones of the *shiki*. Contemplation can be thought of as a function of the relationship between the reverent viewer and such a mystically determined zone. The gardens of Zen temples may be thought of as new Muromachi renditions of such a function, and even though the values involved are very different, the off-limits zone created thereof, when accepted as a wider cultural value, may be perceived to be related to the same mechanism of reverence.

Stones themselves have a fundamental relationship to Japanese gardens from their incipience. Western analysts of Japanese gardens were impressed with this. In 1893, Josiah Conder remarked: “A striking characteristic of Japanese gardening is the importance attached to the use of natural stones, rocks, and boulders.”⁵⁴ The very nature of stones in a more universal sense may hold the key to some of their perceived importance in the specific context of Japanese gardens:

The hierophany of a stone is pre-eminently an ontophany; above all, the stone is, it always remains itself, it does not change – and it strikes man by what it

⁵¹ Nitschke, *From Shinto to Ando*, 97.

⁵² Takei and Keane, 188.

⁵³ Actually, some authors argue that even the concept of aesthetic enjoyment did not originally exist as such in Japan until modern times, this awe-like reverence being the closest equivalent to aesthetic enjoyment. For example, Kitagawa talks about “the easy fusion and homology of the aesthetic and religious experiences that have given a distinctive character to the Japanese religious tradition.” See Joseph M. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 49.

⁵⁴ Josiah Conder, *Landscape Gardening in Japan* (Tokyo: Kelly and Walsh, 1893), 41.

possesses in irreducibility and absoluteness, and, in so doing, reveals to him by analogy the irreducibility and absoluteness of being. Perceived by virtue of a religious experience, the specific mode of existence of the stone reveals to man the nature of an absolute existence, beyond time, invulnerable to becoming.⁵⁵

Moreover, as we have already seen in the discussion of terms pertaining to gardens, this may be part of the concept of *shanshui*. Mountains came to be associated with and symbolized by stones; islands, in their turn, are often seen as associated with mountains; we have also seen how the island can be associated with the cosmogonic myths.

With respect to the possible perceptions of islands, dealt with earlier, there is one further intriguing fact that can be considered. In his book *The Gardens of Japan*, Ito Teiji mentions the presence of “stone fountains and standing male and female figures in postures of embrace”⁵⁶ in fifth and sixth century palace gardens. He considers them “too decidedly alien [e.g., having non-Japanese physiognomy] to have been Japanese in inspiration.” But these sculptures seem similar to the many *dosojin* images that constitute the object of Michael Czaja’s study in *Gods of Myths and Stone – Phallicism in Japanese Folk Religion*.⁵⁷ There is one *dosojin* in Tottori prefecture in which Izanagi is depicted holding the spear used in the creation of the islands. Even though this *dosojin* is dated 1883, it shows that the connection with the cosmogonic paradigm is a possibility in the Japanese psyche.

We need to further consider the

phallic/fertility valences of stones and menhirs discussed by Mircea Eliade, and what that could mean in relation to the *risshaku* (“standing of stones”). There is an intriguing comment in the *Sakuteiki* in respect to this: “It is rare that all stones within a garden will be set upright; most will be set horizontally. Even so, one says *standing* stones, not *laying* stones.”⁵⁸

The image of the mountain, visually represented using stones, is like a vessel containing multilayered versions of sacredness: from Buddhist Sumeru/Shumisen/Sumi, to Daoist Horai/Peng-lai, or the more ornate crane and turtle, also from the Daoist paraphernalia. All of these symbolic versions of mountains are maintained in the contemplative gardens of the Muromachi period, contributing to the rhetoric of the off-limits space, the original southern court with its previous functional connotations of ritual. All of this considered, stones play a very complex role in the multilayered mental construct of the sacred. Consciously or not, previous symbolism is retained in the Muromachi gardens of contemplation, adding to the introspective definition of contemplation itself that they so aptly establish.

Conclusion

This article began with the basic assumption that if we look carefully at how terms are used in historical texts and correlate those findings with historical gardens and the socio-political milieu that generated them, we can reconstitute the cultural dimensions of gardens and the values that determined them. A much more difficult task is to understand the dialectical movement of those dimensions and values, which happens simultaneously on

⁵⁵ Eliade, 155.

⁵⁶ Ito Teiji, *The Gardens of Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984), 25.

⁵⁷ *Dosojin* are roadside religious stone figures. Many *dosojin* are of a sexual nature, often depicting couples in more or less obvious degrees of intimacy.

⁵⁸ Takei and Keane, 162.

102 *The Japanese Garden for the Mind*

Japan

the specific level of periods, genres and types, and on the macro-linguistic, macro-cultural level, that takes meaning from one particular materiality and endows it with increased generality. That generality is informed by the deeper cultural and political drives of the social aggregate. Furthermore, in historical perspective, cultural values are subject to an infinite process of stratification and transformation, where nothing is ever completely obliterated, but where anything that is part of the heritage can always be revived, thus reinterpreted, and sometimes manipulated. Attempting to trace the origins of a concept formed as a result of such a process is always daunting. Finding the layers and the points at which certain decisive changes seem to have taken place, is, however, *sine-qua-non* for a real understanding and for placing of the issues in perspective.

My attention was drawn to the perceived contemplative character of Japanese gardens, the off-limits quality of their space, and at the same time a certain feeling of reverence associated with garden space that does not seem to be readily available to explanation in terms of modern perceptions alone. The above qualities seem to have filtered their way into modern attitudes concerning gardens from paradigmatic sources.

A look at the evolution of the terms designating architecturally adjacent garden-like spaces and the actual uses of those spaces reveals connections that can be made with ancestral layers of meaning, related to the use of stones and stone material, and to the perception of garden space as imbued with

qualities of the sacred. The *Sakuteiki*, with its eclectic approach to the handling and understanding of stones, clearly displays a mixture of pantheist, Buddhist, and geomantic values. In that respect, the *Sakuteiki* itself is almost like a geological sediment, where one can see all the layers, very clearly presented in cross-section.

After the Heian phase, idyllic on the one hand and mandalistic on the other, we come to a revolutionary point, represented by what has been preserved as the gardens of the Zen monasteries of Muromachi period built in the dry landscape style called *karesansui*. These seem to have been created as part of a relatively fast process of transformation spanning from the late Heian period, through Kamakura, and flourishing in the Muromachi period. Here, the mode has shifted to a highly mental one. The graveled surfaces that used to cover the *niwa* and the *shiki* of indigenous animist spaces are used now in the stone gardens of Zen temples as an aesthetic means of expression and as a metaphorical device. They can also be seen as a fusion of the pictorial landscape and the functional *niwa* in one single metaphorical stage-set, in which stones are immortalized enacting a never-ending ceremony.

Drawing on feelings of reverence on the one hand—for nature in general and for stones and stone material in particular—the creators of Muromachi era gardens established a mode of expression and a set of values that dictate the particular attitude of contemplation that has become a fundamental way of viewing gardens today.

North Korean Human Rights: A Story of Apathy, Victims, and International Law

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Introduction

On July 25, 2003, I moderated a presentation on North Korean human rights at Yonsei University's Graduate School of International Studies.¹ As I gazed across the auditorium, I realized that everyone was mesmerized by the testimony being given by the North Korean defector sitting before them. He spoke very simply, yet the experience he described was powerfully tragic. He had endured two North Korean prison camps, eluded armed border guards, and staved off starvation by eating grass. In every way, he was a survivor, and yet he looked "normal"—there was nothing to distinguish him from any other twenty-year old Korean walking the streets of Seoul. Nothing indicated that just three years ago, he was living in the most brutal, totalitarian state in the world, located just forty miles away.

Human rights is about stories. The goal of this article is to advance the story of human rights in North Korea to a space where it can be exposed, digested, and retold. Unfortunately, the situation has been marginalized due to continuing tension over

North Korea's nuclear program. The severity of that problem notwithstanding, it is almost unbelievable how little attention human rights in North Korea receives. Indeed, the international community's silence has been deafening.²

North Korean human rights issues consist of two connected strands. The first deals with the actual conditions within North Korea, specifically inside the prison camps. The second is the status of refugees; approximately 200,000 or so are currently hiding in China,³ and an ever-growing number of new refugees cross from North Korea into China daily. Both of these issues will be addressed in detail. Initially, this article will look at the development of the United Nations human rights regime and its role in the North Korean human rights problem. With this framework in hand, I will explore human rights violations and prison conditions in North Korea. Next, the plight of refugees, including issues of repatriation and the role of NGOs and human rights activists in assisting North Korean refugees, will be discussed. Finally, this article will address the role of the South Korean govern-

¹ During the summer of 2003, I was fortunate enough to receive the James West Fellowship and had the opportunity to intern at the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights. It is within this capacity that I was moderating the presentation. Additionally, I was also able to research North Korean issues at the Korea Institute for National Unification and Kyungnam University's Graduate School of North Korean Studies.

² See, for example, James Seymour, "China and the International Asylum Regime: The Case of the North Korean Refugees in China," *Life & Human Rights in North Korea*, issue 18 (Winter 2000), 28, 30.

³ There is no exact count of how many North Korean refugees are in China. The numbers are constantly in flux due to new arrivals and repatriations. Most estimates place the number of refugees between 100,000 and 200,000.

104 *North Korean Human Rights*

Korea ment in the North Korean human rights problem and the significance of recent legislation passed by the South Korean legislature to address the issue.

The United Nations and North Korean Human Rights

In order to analyze the North Korean human rights situation, it is important to view it through an international human rights framework. The idea of protection for human rights by an international organization originated in philosophical, social, and political movements, as well as in diverse legal doctrines that have evolved over the last few centuries.⁴ As a product of this development, the United Nations from its inception has focused on human rights and has played a central role in advancing human rights in the modern era. The Charter of the United Nations was the first international treaty that was expressly based on a universal respect for human rights.⁵

Expanding upon the Charter's original intent, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) advanced the fundamental principle that human rights are based on "inherent dignity."⁶ The UDHR also recognized that a stable social order, both domestically and internationally, is needed so human rights can be fully realized.⁷ Though the UDHR is not technically legally

binding,⁸ it has exerted a great deal of influence in normalizing, legitimizing, and developing an international human rights regime.⁹

The next major advancement came with the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights, arguably the most important set of international human rights treaties.¹⁰ There are two covenants: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These two covenants not only enumerate certain rights, but more importantly, they create a mechanism within the United Nations to deal with human rights violations.¹¹ The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights authorizes the formation of a Human Rights Committee, which has played a crucial role in organizing and institutionalizing a standard procedure by which human rights violations are reported and investigated.¹²

Most recently, the United Nations created the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR).¹³ The UNHCR is an institutionalized body that is essential in combating human rights violations. Its regional offices are tasked with monitoring and investigating human rights.¹⁴ Additionally, the UNHCR certifies people as refugees in order to facilitate their protection under international

⁴ Sung Chul Choi, *Human Rights and North Korea* (Seoul: The Institute of Unification Policy, Hanyang University, 1999), 42.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸ It passed only as a General Assembly resolution; however, there are international legal scholars that claim the UDHR has binding force.

⁹ Choi, *Human Rights and North Korea*, 54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹¹ Sung Chul Choi, "Human Rights in North Korea in the Light of International Covenants," in *International Community and Human Rights in North Korea* (1996), 53, 73.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ The UNHCR as it stands today was created on September 15, 1997, though there were various permutations of it before. See <<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/hchr.htm>>.

¹⁴ See generally <<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/5/field.htm>>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

law.¹⁵ Within the UNHCR, there are also working groups and special rapporteurs that focus on specific themes such as torture or religious intolerance.¹⁶

Though not nearly exhaustive, the preceding overview of the United Nations human rights framework provides a broad outline from which to examine the North Korean human rights crisis. Unfortunately, the United Nations has often been a source of frustration for activists.¹⁷ Though the April 15, 2003 adoption of the United Nations Resolution on North Korea by the Commission on Human Rights was viewed as a watershed moment, in actuality the Resolution was nothing more than a symbolic gesture.¹⁸ Its significance was dulled considering that even South Korea abstained from the vote.¹⁹ In essence, the Resolution simply condemned the North Korean government for its behavior and then encouraged the United Nations and its member states to act. Indeed, the United Nations has not only been ineffective, but also tardy in calling attention to the plight of those North Koreans hiding in China or imprisoned in their own country.

Timothy Peters, a leading North Korean human rights activist, expressed a sentiment that appears widespread by those who assist North Korean refugees:

“ THOUGH THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA WAS FOUNDED IN 1948, THE NORTH KOREAN REGIME HAS OPERATED PRISON CAMPS SINCE 1947. ”

[Using the analogy of a game,] it seems like the United Nations is sitting in the grandstands as an observer while the amateurs [referring to human rights activists and NGOs] are on the playing field. The UNHCR are the professional players in terms of training, facilities, etc. Their exclusive mission is to monitor and deal with the human rights of refugees, but it’s like they are a toothless lion.²⁰

Prison Camps in North Korea

Prison camps and gulags have traditionally played an infamous role in the history of countries that adopt communism, and North Korea is no different. Though the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was founded in 1948, the North Korean regime has operated prison camps since 1947.²¹ The original purpose of the camps was to detain landowners, the religiously active, and those who collaborated with the Japanese during the occupation. Immediately following the Korean War, the camps were used mainly to hold those that assisted the United States and South Korea.²² Only from the late 1950s onward did the camps adopt a more sinister role in enforcing strict adherence to the cult of Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il.²³ Those unfortunate enough to

¹⁶ Jae Chun Won, “The UN Resolution on North Korea: The Test Ahead,” *Life & Human Rights in North Korea*, issue 28 (Summer 2003), 8-17.

¹⁷ Interview with Timothy Peters, founder and director of Helping Hands Korea, Seoul, South Korea. (October 23, 2003).

¹⁸ United Nations Resolution on North Korea, April 15, 2003, United Nations Commission on Human Rights, <<http://www.hrnk.org/documents/Geneva03-EUResFinal2.doc>>.

¹⁹ Don Kirk, “South Korea Abstains From Vote Assailing North on Rights,” *The New York Times*, April 16, 2003. South Korea abstained from voting because it did not want to disrupt forthcoming multilateral talks with North Korea.

²⁰ Interview with Timothy Peters.

²¹ Choi, *Human Rights and North Korea*, 277.

²² Ibid.

²³ Kim Il-Sung was the leader of North Korea from 1948 until his death in 1994, at which point his son, Kim Jong-Il, succeeded him and remains currently in power.

106 North Korean Human Rights

Korea

be branded “anti-revolutionaries” were routinely sent to prison camps or executed.

The US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea recently released a comprehensive report detailing the structure of North Korean prison camps. Though the report examines different types of camps and detention centers,²⁴ the long-term labor camps – or *kwan-li-so*²⁵ – are identified as sites of the most egregious human rights violations in North Korea. Most of the *kwan-li-so* are located in the mountainous regions of North Korea’s hinterland,²⁶ in isolated valleys, which makes both access and escape difficult.²⁷ These prison camps are often thought of as penal colonies and are similar in size to small towns.²⁸ The exact number of *kwan-li-so* is uncertain, but it is believed that the number has decreased from around a dozen to six or seven.²⁹ It is important to note that even though the number of camps has decreased, the total number of prisoners has remained the same. Each camp is believed to hold approximately 5,000-50,000 prisoners, with the total number of prisoners in North Korea believed to be approximately 150,000-200,000.³⁰

The prisoners sent to a *kwan-li-so* are not

entitled to even a façade of normal trial procedures. The State Security Agency (SSA) has the power to unilaterally decide the fate of political prisoners without any sort of judicial review or appeal process.³¹ The SSA procedures, however, seem benign when compared to the more common method employed by security and police forces: detention of the alleged offender, subjection of the individual to torture until a confession is extracted, and then the transfer of that person directly to the *kwan-li-so* based on the confession.³² The severity of punishment and the dearth of sound legal procedure are especially apparent when the North Korean idea of “collective responsibility” is applied.³³ Not only is the political prisoner

sent to a *kwan-li-so*, so are up to three generations of that person’s family. This includes parents, siblings, children, and sometimes even grandchildren, depending on the severity of the offense.³⁴

Once the political prisoner and their family members are sent to a *kwan-li-so*, survival becomes a daunting task. Prisoners

experience extremely difficult manual labor while being given only minimal rations, if any. Often, prisoners are forced to

“ NOT ONLY IS THE POLITICAL PRISONER SENT TO A KWAN-LI-SO, SO ARE UP TO THREE GENERATIONS OF THAT PERSON’S FAMILY. THIS INCLUDES PARENTS, SIBLINGS, CHILDREN, AND SOMETIMES EVEN GRANDCHILDREN. ”

²⁴ There are both short-term and long-term camps and detention centers. Some of these camps are used to punish common criminals while others are used to incarcerate political prisoners. There are also centers for those who were unsuccessful in fleeing North Korea and were forcefully repatriated from China.

²⁵ The literal translation of *kwan-li-so* is “management center;” however, in the context of North Korea’s prison camps it is taken to mean the largest political prison camps or penal colonies.

²⁶ These regions include Hamgyong, Pyongan, and Changan provinces. Choi, *Human Rights and North Korea*, 280.

²⁷ David Hawk, *The Hidden Gulag: Exposing North Korea’s Prison Camps* (Washington, DC: US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2003), 24.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11. The *kwan-li-so* near the Chinese border have been closed, in part, to limit exposure to the outside world.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

³¹ Choi, *Human Rights and North Korea*, 280.

³² Hawk, 25.

³³ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁴ *Ibid.* This idea of imprisoning up to three generations of a prisoner’s family is rooted in a statement Kim Il-Sung made in 1972: “Factionalists or enemies of class, whoever they are, their seed must be eliminated through three generations.”

supplement their diet by eating such things as tree bark, grass, and rodents.³⁵ The food situation was further exacerbated during the 1990s due to the famine-like conditions that gripped North Korea.

In addition to the meager sustenance, prisoners are engaged in arduous physical tasks such as mining, farming, and logging.³⁶ The workday often exceeds 12 hours and runs seven days a week, with national holidays as the only days of rest.³⁷ Prisoners are forced to work until exhaustion, and are severely punished if caught resting or otherwise breaking prison rules. Additionally, public executions are commonly used to instill fear within the prison populace.

Ahn Hyok, a former prison guard that defected to South Korea, related this story:

One winter day in 1988, some security officers were returning from hunting when they discovered some old prisoners taking a rest at the foot of a hill below. There were three large logs on the top of the hill. The security officers quietly kicked the logs downhill. The logs rolled down on the old prisoners without making any noise because the snow was deep. As they kicked the last log, they shouted, "You s.o.b.! How dare you stop working, eh?" The old people were startled and were about to get up when the first log rolled over them. Some were bleeding from the head, some suffered

broken backs, legs, and arms, and others just fainted from being startled . . . Usually the wounds sustained from this type of accident would develop frostbite in the winter and begin to rot.³⁸

Refugees, Repatriation, and Life in China

North Korea experienced a gradual decline of food availability in the early 1990s. Food and crude oil subsidies from China and the former Soviet Union, which North Korea had previously relied on, were abruptly withdrawn.³⁹ This led to a sharp decline in agricultural and industrial production, which resulted in the North Korean government's two-meal a day campaign.⁴⁰ The withdrawal of food subsidies and the subsequent decline in agricultural production were exacerbated by natural disasters from 1995 to 1997.⁴¹ This included nationwide flooding, followed by a severe drought in major agricultural areas.⁴² Faced with an increasing food shortage,⁴³ the North Korean government allotted a majority of the country's domestic food supply and international food aid to the military and to the government in order to ensure the regime's survival.⁴⁴ The government's preservation policy, coupled with several untimely natural disasters, resulted in the deaths of 2-3 million people, which was then approximately ten percent of the North Korean population.⁴⁵

Even without the famine, there was already an exodus of people from North

³⁵ Hawk, 25.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, "Old Prisoners Killed for Stopping Work," <http://nkhumanrights.or.kr/NKHR_new/index_eng_new.htm>.

³⁹ Presentation at the Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University, University Awareness Program, Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, July 25, 2003.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Natural disasters were responsible for 15-20 percent of North Korea's food deficit.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Experts referred to North Korea's atrophy as "slow-motion" famine.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ During the mid-1990s, the North Korean population was estimated to be 20-22 million.

108 *North Korean Human Rights*

Korea

Korea to China.⁴⁶ The pre-famine migration was principally composed of able-bodied males who were often used for labor.⁴⁷ As the effects of the famine spread in the late 1990s, malnourished children and women began to pour into China's Yanbian region.⁴⁸ China did not view the initial migration of North Koreans as a problem; however, unemployment caused by the privatization of state-owned enterprises in the region, coupled with the growing number of North Korean refugees, eventually posed a problem for the Chinese government.⁴⁹

Escaping from North Korea is a difficult, dangerous task. Refugees often are required to traverse mountainous paths and fast-moving rivers. During the winter, frigid temperatures and snow add to the rough terrain, making escape attempts even more dangerous. In addition to physical concerns, refugees are faced with guards on both the Chinese and North Korean sides of the border. North Koreans attempting to flee often bribe North Korean border guards, with the reported rate being three months' salary.⁵⁰ Bribing border guards, however, is no guarantee of safe passage, since many recent refugees report that guards

have been given orders to "shoot to kill" any North Korean attempting to cross the border.⁵¹

Alternatively, if caught by Chinese border guards, North Koreans will likely be repatriated back to North Korea, or pay a fine ranging from RMB 2,000-5,000 at the very least (a sum so large that most refugees are unable to pay).⁵² North Koreans are often tortured before being repatriated, if captured by the Chinese.⁵³

Being repatriated to North Korea is equivalent to a prison sentence, if not an execution.⁵⁴ In the North Korean Criminal Code, Article 117 states that "one who crosses the border without permission shall be punished by a sentence of three years or less [of] re-education."⁵⁵

Those who are repatriated are often held in detention/interrogation facilities along the Chinese-North Korean border, which are used specifically to question repatriated North Koreans.⁵⁶

Detainees are subjected to intense interrogation⁵⁷ to ascertain their exposure to South Korean media and

Christianity, as well as their original intent for leaving North Korea.⁵⁸ Depending on the answers given in interrogation, one could be

“**BRIBING BORDER GUARDS IS NO GUARANTEE OF SAFE PASSAGE, SINCE MANY RECENT REFUGEES REPORT THAT GUARDS HAVE BEEN GIVEN ORDERS TO ‘SHOOT TO KILL’ ANY NORTH KOREAN ATTEMPTING TO CROSS THE BORDER.**”

⁴⁶ Seymour, 30.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Yanbian is an autonomous prefecture that is heavily populated by ethnic Koreans and is part of China's border with North Korea. Koreans comprise roughly forty percent of the population in Yanbian, thus making it a prime destination for refugees trying to flee North Korea.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Presentation at the Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Seymour, 33.

⁵³ "North Korean Refugee Describes Abuse in Chinese Custody," *Radio Free Asia*, <<http://origin.rfaweb.org/front/article.html?service=eng&encoding=10&id=113459>>.

⁵⁴ Presentation at the Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University. Reports from refugees have stated that defection or attempted defection—including attempts to gain entrance to a foreign embassy—have led to capital punishment.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Hawk, 58.

⁵⁷ Interrogations usually lasted anywhere from ten days to two months.

⁵⁸ Hawk, 58. The questioning is used to identify the motivation for leaving North Korea. If it was purely economic, then punishment is generally lighter; however, for those that were gone for over a year, had political motivations for leaving, or had attempted escape previously, the punishment is either life in prison or execution.

sent to a *kwan-li-so* or executed.⁵⁹ Those not sent to a *kwan-li-so* or executed are often detained in a separate labor camp, in order to minimize their exposure to those who have not been outside of North Korea.⁶⁰

Besides the physical torture that occurs during interrogation, there are also reports of ethnically motivated infanticide and abortion by North Korean prison and security officials. Based on interviews of refugees now in South Korea, North Korean women who became pregnant in China were either forced to have abortions or their babies were killed after labor was induced.⁶¹

Choi,⁶² a former prisoner, reported this experience:

Among the detainees were ten pregnant women, three of whom were in the eighth to ninth month of pregnancy. Choi and two other non-pregnant women were assigned to assist these three pregnant women, who were too weak to walk alone, in walking to a military hospital outside the detention center. The woman assisted by Choi was given a labor-inducing injection and shortly thereafter gave birth. While Choi watched in horror, the baby was suffocated with a wet towel in front of the mother, who passed out in distress. When the woman regained consciousness, both she and Choi were taken back to the detention center. The two other non-pregnant women who assisted the two other pregnant detainees told Choi that those newborns were also suffocated in front of their mothers. The explanation was that “no half-Han [Chinese] babies” would be tolerated.⁶³

An elderly female prisoner, referred to here as Former Detainee No. 24, was held at a different detention center for repatriated North Koreans but also recounted a similar experience:

The first baby was born to a 28-year old woman named Lim, who had been happily married to a Chinese man. The baby boy was born healthy and unusually large, owing to the mother’s ability to eat well during pregnancy in China. Former Detainee No. 24 assisted in holding the baby’s head during delivery and then cut the umbilical cord. But when she started to hold the baby and wrap him in a blanket, a guard grabbed the newborn by one leg and threw it in a large, plastic-lined box. A doctor explained that since North Korea was short on food, the country should not have to feed the children of foreign fathers. When the box was full of babies, Former Detainee No. 24 later learned, it was taken outside and buried.⁶⁴

Returning to North Korea through repatriation almost certainly guarantees a grim life. But life for North Koreans hiding in China is not any easier and often fraught with danger and exploitation.

North Korean refugees who make it to Yanbian and other areas of China attempt to blend in with local ethnic Koreans by changing their dress and wearing makeup.⁶⁵ They do this in order to avoid both Chinese police as well as North Korean agents. Those fortunate enough to link up with Christian groups or missionaries are often provided

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 59.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² In order to protect the families of prisoners still in North Korea, only the surname or former detainee numbers are used to identify North Koreans that were interviewed.

⁶³ Hawk, 61.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 62.

⁶⁵ Seymour, 30.

110 North Korean Human Rights

Korea

with work and housing. However, businesses caught employing North Koreans can be subject to fines of up to RMB 30,000.⁶⁶ Additionally, police often threaten Christian groups and other individuals that assist North Korean refugees.

There are numerous Christian as well as Buddhist NGOs operating in northeastern China that work with North Korean refugees. Over the last few years, the Chinese government has shown an increasing propensity not to expel activists, but to imprison them. Most recently, South Korean Reverend Choi Bong-II was arrested assisting North Korean refugees and was sentenced by a Chinese court in Yanji to serve a nine-year sentence.⁶⁷ China even imprisoned a *New York Times* photographer for shooting pictures of North Korean refugees attempting to escape.⁶⁸ Due to the danger, both activists and refugees attempt to be discrete. Refugees are constantly moving from safe house to safe house and trying to stay inside whenever possible.⁶⁹

Another unfortunate consequence of the North Korean refugee crisis is human trafficking. Approximately 75 percent of all recent North Korean refugees are women. These women are often exploited after they

arrive in China. Women are raped in the workplace since they cannot report the crime to authorities. Some become sex slaves at the mercy of “bride traffickers.” These bride traffickers often rape the women and then sell them to other men, who are ostensibly seeking brides; however, these men typically sell their “bride” off to someone else.⁷⁰

Due to the precarious situation in China, the ultimate goal of many refugees is to eventually make it to South Korea, though only a small number actually attempt to leave China.⁷¹ This can be accomplished generally by one of two methods. The first is to simply rush into a foreign embassy or consulate. This method is very ineffective considering the fact that Chinese police heavily patrol

these areas.⁷² Additionally, making it into an embassy or consulate is no guarantee of safety, since Chinese police will often enter the compound and drag the refugees out.⁷³ Furthermore, even if a refugee is granted safe haven in the embassy or consulate, a series of

negotiations and international pressure is often required for the Chinese government to allow the a refugee to leave China.

The second method of ferrying North Koreans out of China is through the “underground railroad” that is operated by

“**MAKING IT INTO AN EMBASSY OR CONSULATE IS NO GUARANTEE OF SAFETY, SINCE CHINESE POLICE WILL OFTEN ENTER THE COMPOUND AND DRAG THE REFUGEES OUT.**”

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Korean Pastor Jailed for Aiding Refugees,” *The Korea Herald*, December 11, 2003, <http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2003/12/13/200312130031.asp>.

⁶⁸ Robert Marquand, “China Holds Journalist Captive,” *Christian Science Monitor*, April 22, 2003, <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0422/p06s01-woap.htm>>.

⁶⁹ Seymour, 30.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ This is partly due to the fact that the total cost of bribes, shelter, transportation, false papers, and cost for guides runs from US\$10,000 to US\$30,000, as reported by recent asylum seekers. NGOs and activists often help with these costs.

⁷² Reportedly the Chinese government has tightened security around foreign embassies by increasing patrols and erecting barbwire cordons. Additionally, China has used diplomatic memoranda to warn foreign embassies of asylum seekers according to Human Rights Watch.

⁷³ Presentation at the Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University. Chinese police have been recorded and photographed entering the Japanese consulate in Shenyang and dragging out five North Korean refugees. See also, <<http://www.chosunjournal.com/editorial29.html>>.

NGOs and human rights activists.⁷⁴ This system is not one large consolidated network, but a loose connection of individuals who serve as guides for ferrying North Koreans out of China.⁷⁵ The underground railroad generally leads refugees out of China via two main routes: either over the Mongolian border, or to Yunnan and over the border to the Mekong River, usually transiting through Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and sometimes Burma before eventually reaching Thailand.⁷⁶ Thailand is a preferred destination because it treats North Koreans as asylum seekers.⁷⁷ Though the destination of refugees generally remains the same, the actual paths constantly change due to interdiction by Chinese security forces.⁷⁸

The underground railroad, though clandestine, does expose refugees to a high degree of risk because they are required to travel within China. Since North Korean refugees do not have *hukou* registration cards or other forms of government documentation, traveling in China is very risky.⁷⁹ Kim, a North Korean refugee now in Seoul, said, “A *hukou* is the one thing that every refugee wants, but they are very expensive, about RMB 2,000. Those [North Korean refugees] that traveled on trains but did not have *hukou* would pretend to be asleep and hope that the person checking would not wake them.”⁸⁰ Kim further added, “Some of the higher profile refugees or those with family in South Korea would occasionally try to buy fake passports and fly out of China, but the passports are even more expensive, costing about RMB 60,000.”⁸¹

Travel within China is not the only danger faced by those using the underground railroad. Another threat to refugees consists of informants who receive cash awards for notifying the Chinese police regarding movements of North Korean refugees. Peters related one particular incident: “Members of the underground railroad had arranged for approximately sixty North Korean refugees to be taken by boat from Yantai to South Korea. The Chinese security forces were tipped off, however, and the refugees were detained . . . We think the person that tipped the Chinese off was an ethnic Korean living in China who probably couldn’t pass on the money.”⁸² Tarik Radwan, a law professor in South Korea, reports that China offers a “bounty of approximately one month’s salary on the head of each North Korean captured . . . and a further bounty of approximately ten times that – one year’s salary – is offered on the head of anyone found providing assistance to these refugees.”⁸³

Refugees escaping China through the underground railroad usually attempt to make it to a third country where they then locate a South Korean embassy or consulate and declare their desire to defect. The journey out of China requires traveling thousands of miles, and besides the danger of informants and security police, the physical hardship of traveling through hostile environments can prove fatal. One defector shared his experience:

Our group consisted of 12 people. We all gathered together and were told we

⁷⁴ Interview with Timothy Peters, 18.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Presentation at the Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Interview with Timothy Peters, 18.

⁷⁹ *Hukou* registration cards are required for Chinese citizens to travel within China.

⁸⁰ Interview with Kim, North Korean refugee granted asylum in Seoul, South Korea, October 23, 2003.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Interview with Timothy Peters.

⁸³ Tarik Radwan, “China’s Impermissible Abuse of North Korean Refugees,” The Jubilee Campaign, November 15, 2002, <<http://www.jubileecampaign.co.uk/world/mark10.htm>>.

112 *North Korean Human Rights*

Korea

would have to walk for almost two days through a desert to make it to Mongolia. . . We started walking and it was very hot. All of us had bloody feet from walking so long and from the heat. We finally made it, but a little boy who was in our group died in the desert.⁸⁴

South Korean Balancing Act: Human Rights, Nukes, and Unification

This article has focused on North Korea thus far; however, the country that may be the most influential regarding the North Korean human rights situation is South Korea. Unfortunately, human rights issues are often subsumed by the tension surrounding North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Indeed, the sensitive geopolitical balance in the region relegates human rights to the backseat. This is further compounded by the fact that most South Koreans are either ignorant or apathetic toward the current human rights situation in North Korea.⁸⁵ Due to the lack of domestic pressure, the South Korean government has tried to tread lightly around the topic.⁸⁶ Peters states, "If 'hostile' is the word to describe China's attitude toward North Korean human rights, then 'passive' is the word to describe South Korea."⁸⁷

Despite conflicting views in the South Korean government – as well as within South Korean society⁸⁸ – regarding what should be done to solve the human rights situation in North Korea, there has been growing activism

by the government to assist those refugees who have fled the North and have successfully made it to South Korea. With this goal in mind, the Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea was amended in 2001 (hereafter referred to as the Act).⁸⁹ The purpose of the Act "is to provide such matters relating to protection and support as are necessary to help North Korean residents escaping from the area north of the Military Demarcation Line, and desiring protection from the Republic of Korea, as quickly as possible to adapt themselves to and settle down in all spheres of their lives, including political, economic, social, and cultural spheres."⁹⁰

This Act is important for two major reasons. First, it lays out a concrete procedure by which North Korean refugees can petition for protection. Article 7 of the Act states, "Any person who has escaped from North Korea and desires to be protected under this Act, shall apply for protection to the head of an overseas diplomatic or consular mission, or the head on any administrative agency."⁹¹ Though this procedure still requires that refugees risk being captured by traveling to or entering an embassy, it does provide concrete legal protection under South Korean law once someone has applied for protection. Thus, it guarantees that North Korean refugees will have safe travel to South Korea and will not be repatriated.

⁸⁴ Presentation at the Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University.

⁸⁵ I conducted informal interviews during the summer of 2003, and uniformly interviewees responded with one of two answers, either: 1) I didn't know the problems in North Korea was that bad; or 2) I really don't care about what is going in North Korea. Those that responded with the first answer were often middle-aged and married. Those that responded with the second answer were overwhelmingly university-aged and single.

⁸⁶ Seymour, 36.

⁸⁷ Interview with Timothy Peters.

⁸⁸ Historically, South Korean news outlets have been discouraged from reporting on the situation in North Korea. This has changed in the last few years as major Korean television channels have aired documentaries detailing the hardships of North Koreans in China.

⁸⁹ The Act is relatively recent, having been promulgated in 1997. It has been amended three times, most recently in 2001.

⁹⁰ Act on the Protection and Settlement Support of Residents Escaping from North Korea, Article 1, South Korean National Assembly, May 24, 2001, <<http://www.klri.re.kr/lawdb/cgi>>.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Article 7.

Second, the Act provides financial means and support in assisting North Korean refugees to become quickly acclimated and self-supporting once they arrive in South Korea. Article 10 of the Act provides that the “Minister of Unification shall set up and operate settlement support facilities to provide protection,” and Article 11 states that refugees may be given “money and other articles” as deemed necessary.⁹² After leaving the settlement support facility, individuals are provided with financial support for up to five years.⁹³ Additionally, Article 15 of the Act provides education in order to facilitate social adaptation to South Korea, while Article 16 allows for vocational training.⁹⁴ The Act even affords employment opportunities to defectors and gives employers subsidies for employing North Koreans.⁹⁵

The support aspect of the Act provides tangible assistance to North Korean refugees.⁹⁶ When North Koreans first arrive in South Korea, they are housed in a government sponsored resettlement center called the Hanawon. Though the Hanawon is supported by government funds, many of the workers who assist the refugees come from various NGOs and human rights groups in Seoul. North Korean defectors are kept in the

center for approximately three months. While there, they receive training on life in South Korea, including learning such things as how to use the subway and the Internet.⁹⁷ Most of the refugees I spoke to felt the Hanawon was a beneficial experience that eased their transition to life in South Korea.⁹⁸

While at the Hanawon, the government provides refugees with food, lodging, and other living expenses. After leaving, refugees are provided with a home as well as funds to cover bills and other expenses. Kim explained to me, “The money is enough for us [Kim and his mother] to survive. It pays for the house and bills—like electricity and phone. We get a living allowance that allows us to get by. The rest of the money we need, we earn by working.”⁹⁹

“**THOUGH THE SOUTH KOREAN CONSTITUTION RECOGNIZES ALL NORTH KOREANS AS KOREAN, THE ONLY EFFORTS EVER MADE BY THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT TO LEGITIMIZE THIS POLICY HAVE BEEN EXERCISES IN POLITICAL RHETORIC.**”

The Act is a potentially profound step toward North-South reconciliation. Though the South Korean constitution recognizes all North Koreans as *Korean*, the only efforts ever made by the South Korean government to legitimize this policy have been exercises in political

rhetoric.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the Act represents the first concrete piece of legislation that attempts to assist North Koreans in reaching a similar status as South Koreans. The US Committee for Refugees reports that “once South Korea

⁹² Ibid., Article 10 & 11.

⁹³ Ibid., Article 5.

⁹⁴ Ibid., Article 15 & 16.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Article 17.

⁹⁶ Michael Paterniti wrote an article for the *New York Times* entitled, “The Flight of the Fluttering Swallows.” The article provides a wonderful overview of what North Korean refugees experience when they arrive in South Korea. He discusses both the Hanawon as well as the benefits provided by the South Korean government. The article can be found at <<http://www.chosunjournal.com/fluttering.html>>.

⁹⁷ Interview with Kim.

⁹⁸ These observations are based on discussions I had with both North Korean refugees as well as with activists that work at the Hanawon. There have been uncorroborated reports, however, that the refugees undergo intense debriefing by the South Korean government to determine whether they are spies. As one particularly opinionated person explained to me, “They [North Koreans] are brainwashed there [at the Hanawon].”

⁹⁹ Interview with Kim.

¹⁰⁰ Choi, “Human Rights in North Korea in the Light of International Covenants,” 302.

114 *North Korean Human Rights*

Korea

determines that a North Korean is eligible for protection, the North Korean seems to be regarded as a South Korean national and is given an identification card.”¹⁰¹

Additionally, recent decisions by the South Korean government re-confirm the Act’s purpose of assisting North Koreans that make it to South Korea. Based on the almost 600 percent increase¹⁰² of North Korean refugees that have come to South Korea over the last four years, the government announced on November 10, 2003 its plans to enlarge the Hanawon center.¹⁰³

The effort and commitment by the South Korean government in assisting North Korean refugees who come to South Korea is laudable; however, its ambivalence toward those refugees before they apply for protection at a South Korean embassy or consulate is appalling. The South Korean government’s unwillingness to pressure China, North Korea, and to a lesser extent, Russia,¹⁰⁴ is the product of political gamesmanship. Simply put, South Korea has a limited amount of political capital with which it can influence its regional neighbors. The majority of this political capital is expended on forming a multilateral policy to deal with North Korea’s nuclear threat. Thus, there is little leverage remaining that could be used to

create a regional policy to cope with the North Korean human rights situation.

Conclusion

Simply stated, the North Korean human rights situation is grim. The countries in the region are apathetic, inimical, or unable to help improve the human rights situation in North Korea. Human rights activists operating in China are understaffed, underfunded, and generally lack technical expertise. Though American and European media outlets have begun to report on the situation, it is still the loose network of humanitarian groups that provides the most aid and does the most in disseminating information about what is going on in North Korea.

On a recent trip to Seoul, I had the opportunity to spend some time with a North Korean defector who had been in South Korea for about two years. He seemed acclimated to Seoul’s frenetic pace, and after being together for a few hours I realized how much he had to say. I appreciated his banter, not because it was interesting, but because I knew that before coming to South Korea he was nearly dragged out of a foreign consulate by Chinese police. Indeed, his voice had been stifled for far too long. It was finally time for him to be heard and his story told.

¹⁰¹ United States Committee on Refugees, “Country Report: North Korea, 2002,” <http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/easia_pacific/2000/south_korea.htm>.

¹⁰² Based on numbers compiled by various NGOs, there were slightly less than 200 North Korean defectors in 1999, 312 in 2000, 583 in 2001, and nearly 1,200 in 2002.

¹⁰³ “South Korea Enlarges Resettlement Center for North Korean Asylum Seekers,” *Yonhap News Agency*, November 10, 2003, <<http://www.yonhapnews.net/Engnews/20031110/30010000020031110155845E1.html>>. In the story, a government official is quoted as saying, “Recently, an ever-growing number of North Koreans have come to the South and it was necessary for us to extend residences and training rooms for them.”

¹⁰⁴ Russia also has a role in the North Korean human rights situation. Though most North Koreans cross over into China, a few refugees decide to escape to Russia. Russia is generally safer for refugees since the UNHCR has greater influence there and they can monitor the border area, unlike in China. As such, the Russians are generally more willing to allow the UNHCR to assist refugees in making it to South Korea, instead of repatriating them to North Korea.

Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Balikatan Exercises in the Philippines and the US 'War against Terrorism'

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The Philippines serves as a good example of a country dealing with "terrorist activities."² One of the longest running histories of terrorism and conflict in the world, the Moro-Christian clash in the Philippines began with the establishment of the Spanish Fort Pilar in Zamboanga in 1718.³ This directly challenged the autonomy of the Muslim indigenous communities, and a series of anti-Christian campaigns took place throughout the next couple of centuries to retaliate against the virtual enslavement of Muslims by the Spanish. Thus began the nearly 450-year war between Christians and Muslims in the country. This conflict was to serve as one of the factors that contributed to the colonization of the Filipinos by the Spanish and eventually by the United States in 1898.

The United States, under international and domestic pressure, granted the

Philippines its independence in 1946 with the Tydings-McDuffie Act. However this was not until after the US had effectively constructed the liberal-democratic political foundation, the public educational system,⁴ and the socioeconomic infrastructure of the country. With this in effect, in addition to its past relationship with the United States as a colony, the Philippine government to this day remains one of the staunchest allies of the United States. Furthermore, with the existence of bilateral economic and military arrangements between the two nations, and in spite of the withdrawal of US troops from Philippine soil in 1991, the Philippines continually sides with US policy and supports American overseas involvement.⁵

This is not a one sided relationship. The Philippines is of strategic interest to the US. Situated on the western edge of the South China Sea, the country serves as a perfect

¹The following paper is the product of six months of field research conducted in the Philippines from July to December of 2002, while I was based at the University of the Philippines, Diliman in Quezon City. The materials compiled for this research paper come from various sources. These sources range from meetings with professors and government officials to attending conferences and community education events on developments in Basilan. Additionally, visits to non-governmental, community based organizations, the Batasan, House of Senate, and the various libraries of the University of the Philippines helped supplement the project greatly. Sincere thanks to Professor Aileen Toohey and Professor Stephen Shalom for their comments on previous drafts.

²Although the term "terrorism" is used here, this is not meant to be an evaluative statement in regards to the activities of true Moro liberation movements. The quotation marks are used here by the author to cite the fact that recently activities are being labeled as conducted by "terrorists" regardless of whether or not this is true.

³"Moro" was the Spanish term applied to Philippine Muslims. Since then it has been adopted as the term used to describe the Muslim population in the Philippines. See Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 8th ed. (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 1990), 114-115.

⁴According to Professor Barbara Gaerlan of UCLA's Department of Southeast Asian Studies, while the Americans can be held responsible for the introduction of public education to non-Spanish controlled areas, in fact, the Spanish had created locally based elementary school system that taught in the vernacular.

⁵Stephen R. Shalom, *The United States and the Philippines* (Manila: New Day Publishers, 1986), 103-110.

116 *Terrorism in Southeast Asia*

Southeast Asia

launching point for military intervention into Southeast Asia, as well as Northeastern Asia and the Middle East. In addition, the Philippines is of economic and political importance to the United States.⁶ Recognizing the strategic importance of the island nation in the region, the United States made sure that before the country was freed from American control that the succeeding administration would sign a series of defense treaties that would provide the United States with exclusive access to its national territory.

In light of the Filipino colonial mentality, US strategic interests in the Philippines, and the long history of Moro-Christian conflict in the region, the Philippines seems to serve as an excellent site to launch the second front to the war on terror.⁷ However, this argument ignores the importance of public sentiment, which has persistently had an anti-US position. Furthermore, the pro-US front in Filipino politics has become highly fragmented.⁸ Also, the alliance of anti-US nationalists which had, after the People Power Revolution of 1986, united to remove one of the most ubiquitous signs of neo-colonial control in the Philippines – the US military bases – has made conducting military operations in the country very difficult. Since neither this nationalist spirit nor the enduring sentiment opposed to US neo-colonialism has abated, an all out war in the region would not be possible. Thus, as the United States launched its “war on terrorism” in Southeast Asia via the Philippines, it had to be very savvy in approaching this complicated situation. With a Philippine House of Representatives and

Senate that was split by ideological positions, motivated by the desire for reelection, possessing genuine anti-US sentiment, and facing a largely anti-US public, the United States had to draw upon existing bilateral military agreements as well as lean on the staunch support of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo when it began its military intervention in the Philippines.

As part of ongoing military-to-military relations between the United States and the Philippines, the Balikatan Exercises served as a perfect opportunity to evade potential controversy that would have been associated with launching an all-out war in the region, while allowing the US to enter the Philippines militarily under the guise of a yearly, legally substantiated operation. This was done as a means to obscure the fact that the US intended to deploy troops in the Philippines with the purpose of launching the second front of the war on terrorism in order to weaken the Al Qaeda network.⁹ On January 15, 2002, the United States was able to send the first post-September 11 set of troops outside of Afghanistan to the Philippines.¹⁰ However, in order for actual warfare to take place, the US had to increase its realm of jurisdiction over the exercises. It was speculated that this had been done through the signing of a treaty between the United States and the Philippines, conducted in secret during President Arroyo’s visit to the United States in November of 2001.¹¹ This agreement, now identified as the Military Logistical Supports Agreement (MLSA), was rumored to be a document that

⁶ Richard E. Hull, “The South China Sea: Future Source of Prosperity or Conflict in Southeast Asia?” *National Defense University: Strategic Forum, Institute for National Strategic Studies*, no. 60 (1996), 1-6.

⁷ “War on Terror’s Second Front,” *Radio Nederlands*, January 31, 2002.

⁸ “Philippines not to support call for Cease-Fire in Iraq,” *The Philippine Star*, March 30, 2003.

⁹ Sheldon W. Simon, “Southeast Asia and the US war on Terrorism,” *NBR Analysis* (published by the National Bureau of Asian Research), vol. 13, no. 4 (2002), 1-3.

¹⁰ “Balikatan Report Card,” *Sun Start Cebu*, April 18, 2002.

¹¹ Juan V. Sarmiento Jr., “Macapagal denies secret pact with Bush in the works,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 19, 2001.

would allow the United States to return as a permanent military presence in the country.¹² Filipino Congresswoman Imee Marcos has called the MLSA a “Trojan horse,” which when combined with the controversial Visiting Forces Agreement of February 1998 would lead to the reintroduction of US troops in the Philippines.¹³ Senator Juan Ponce Enrile has been quoted as saying that although Malacanang (the presidential office) is claiming the MLSA to be simply an accounting contract, it is in fact a “basing right agreement.”¹⁴ Furthermore, as mentioned by Representative Marcos, when combined with the already existing Visiting Forces Agreement, the scope of jurisdiction that the US can enjoy in these exercises increases as well—thus shedding light on another document steeped in controversy. It should be noted that only after nearly a decade of revisions, the Visiting Forces Agreement finally passed on its third try on the Philippine Senate floor.¹⁵

Yet these controversial documents serve as merely a backdrop to the highly contentious Balikatan Exercises. Unlike past exercises, the most recent Balikatan Exercises took place in Basilan, an area that has been highly militarized since 2000 due to the presence of the kidnap-for-ransom bandits, Abu Sayyaf. Terrorist violence currently continues here.¹⁶ In its Terms of Reference (TOR), the

Balikatan Exercises were to last six months to a year, one of the longest training exercises ever held in the Philippines. A noted researcher of US military exercises in foreign countries, Roland Simbulan, declared that he “has never come across any ‘military exercise’ with that long duration.” Lastly, the amount of American military forces for a simple training exercise grew from the initial limit of 600 to over 2,500—the largest deployment of military personnel ever sent to the tiny island of Basilan.¹⁷ In fact, it has been the largest US military deployment engaged in actual combat against “real actual targets” on Philippine soil since the Philippine-American War of 1899-1901.¹⁸ As a response, two international fact finding / peace missions have visited Basilan to research human rights violations due to the heightened militarization.

For these reasons, the Balikatan Exercises have proven to be a converging point of several controversial issues. These exercises thus serve as an

excellent case example in analyzing international relations in light of the new “war on terrorism.” This article will, in particular, examine the issues of: 1) ongoing “terrorist” activities in the Philippines; 2) the neo-colonial relationship of the US to the Philippines and its effect onto policy decisions; and 3) the constitutionality of, as

“ [THE BALIKATAN EXERCISES HAVE] BEEN THE LARGEST US MILITARY DEPLOYMENT ENGAGED IN ACTUAL COMBAT AGAINST ‘REAL ACTUAL TARGETS’ ON PHILIPPINE SOIL SINCE THE PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR OF 1899-1901. ”

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “MLSA Denounced as a New Bases Pact: Malacanang Denies Imee Marcos’ Remarks,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 30, 2002.

¹⁴ “MLSA Fears Allayed,” *Manila Bulletin*, August 8, 2002.

¹⁵ The Visiting Forces Agreement was proposed in 1991 and adopted in the Senate in 1999. See “Agreement Between the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the United States of America Regarding the Treatment of United States Armed Forces Visiting the Philippines,” February 1998. Accessed in Legislative Library, House of Representatives, Manila, Philippines.

¹⁶ The Abu Sayyaf is identified by the US Department of State as an international terrorist organization.

¹⁷ Roland Simbulan, “A Personal Account from the Basilan War Zone,” March 2002, <http://www.yonip.com/main/articles/war_zone.html>.

¹⁸ Roland Simbulan, “The Renewed Phase of US Military Intervention in the Philippines,” January 15, 2002, <http://www.totse.com/en/politics/the_world_beyond_the_usa/166581.html>.

well as public reactions to, these exercises themselves. The first section will provide a brief sketch of the controversies associated with the legal documents that make the Balikatan Exercises possible. Next a brief discussion on the history of “terrorist” activities will serve as a backdrop to the final section which will discuss the effects of the Balikatan Exercises on the lives of those living in Basilan. Toward the end, hopefully the reader can draw a connection between the gradual loss of national autonomy and the rise of US militarization.

Visiting Forces Agreement

Drawing upon the precedence of the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 (MDT), the Balikatan Exercises are just one in a series of exercises that extend throughout the year. The purposes of these exercises are to enhance the skills and capabilities of the armed forces of the Philippines and the United States, improve the interoperability between the two nations’ armed forces, as well as upgrade the knowledge and equipment of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).¹⁹ These exercises are conducted pursuant to Article II of the MDT, which states that both parties would “separately and jointly by self-help and mutual aid . . . maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.”²⁰ As part of their mutual responsibilities as agreed upon in the MDT, the exercises help to upgrade the capacity of the AFP in case it is called upon to fulfill its obligation of engagement in battles related to

attacks on US property or territory. In addition, these exercises provide the United States with the opportunity to train its forces in the Philippines for greater operability in similar terrain.

The problem is, however, that while US troops engaging in these exercises could previously operate either within the jurisdiction of the military bases, or within a reasonable distance from these territories under US authority, this option was no longer possible with the withdrawal of these bases in 1991 and 1992. Joint US-Philippines military exercises that had taken place yearly since 1981 were also put on hold in 1995. As nationalistic forces applauded their victory in ridding the nation of US military bases, they

also led popular protests to stall the passing of a series of agreements or treaties that would have provided US troops with a legal status on Philippine soil. However, the US and pro-US Filipinos introduced the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in 1998, which was vigorously

opposed by several groups such as the “Junk the VFA” coalition headed by Roland Simbulan and Maria Soccoro Diokno. The VFA was regarded by anti-US groups as heralding the re-entrance of US troops into the Philippines a mere six years after their departure, but nevertheless passed the Senate with majority support.

Daniel Schirmer has previously argued that there would be three important consequences of the passing of the VFA.²¹ Firstly, the passing of the VFA would lead to an inequality in the relationship between the

“ [DANIEL] SCHIRMER ARGUES THAT WITH THE PASSING OF THE VFA, THE ENTIRE TERRITORY OF THE PHILIPPINES CAN THEN BE USED AS A MILITARY BASE FOR US ACTIVITIES. ”

¹⁹ *Primer on the Balikatan: Joint RP-US Military Training Exercise* (Manila: Office of the Press Secretary Operations Center / Presidential News Desk, February 2002).

²⁰ Mutual Defense Treaty Between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States, August 30, 1951.

²¹ Daniel B. Schirmer, “VFA: Shape of things to come?” <<http://www.boondocksnet.com/centennial/sctexts/schirmer99b.html>>.

two states. Although the VFA grants equal benefits to both parties, in theory and in practice these token provisions are disproportionately beneficial to the US. For instance, although both nations may station troops in either country for the purposes of forward military operations, the fact is that Philippine military capacity and foreign policy make the deployment of Philippine troops on US soil highly improbable. Also, although US troops are allowed a clause in the VFA that exonerates them from prosecution by Philippines courts, if a Filipino soldier is caught conducting illegal activities in the US he merely gets a guarantee of his rights under the US constitution.

It is Schirmer's second point that has generated greater controversy. According to Schirmer, greater repression on Filipinos will result from the passing of the VFA. This is because although training between the two nations has been stated as for the purposes of protection against external attack, given the fact that the Philippines is not involved in any external conflicts as of this writing, the military training is not targeted toward existing external aggression, but toward the ongoing internal conflict. In a speech on his vote against the VFA, Vice President and former Foreign Affairs Secretary Teofisto Guingona reminded his colleagues that the US had failed to officially recognize the Philippines' claims in several international disputes. Therefore, even if external aggression were to arise, he continued, the US has not formally stated its intention to defend the Philippines' interests.²²

Finally, Schirmer argues that with the passing of the VFA, the entire territory of the

Philippines can then be used as a military base for US activities. With the shutdown of all US military bases in the Philippines in 1991, the United States lost its logistical facilities in the Philippines. Since then, the US has been looking for ways to regain the same type of privileges its forward strategy in the region depends on. Thus, according to Schirmer, with the passing of legislation such as the VFA, all that is needed is legislation that would allow for the presence of US logistical supplies. This type of legislation would then allow for the US to station its supplies anywhere in the country. Therefore, with the existence of legislation that allows for US troops to conduct activities anywhere in the country, along with legislation that allows for US supplies to be stationed anywhere throughout the country, the entire territory of the Philippines would serve as a military base for US operations in the country and in the region.

Mutual Logistics and Support Agreement

While the VFA helps construct the legal basis that allows US troops to operate on Philippine soil, legislation that regulated the transfer of materials was also enacted. The Mutual Logistics Support Agreement, Malacanang argues, is an accounting agreement that facilitates the transfer of materials and services from the United States to the Philippines and vice-versa in the cases of joint military exercises, international tension or national emergency, and under the United Nations.²³ According to the document, such materials or "logistical supplies" are defined as "food, water, petroleum, clothing, ammunition, spare parts, and components."²⁴ In regards to the

²² Philippine Senate Official Transcripts for Resolutions of the 11th Congress (July 27, 1998 - June 30, 2001), Resolution Number 18.

²³ Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (RP-US-01) Between the Department of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines and the Department of Defense of the United States of America, 2002, Section II (1)(a)(b)(c).

²⁴ *Ibid*, Section III (a)(1).

support and services rendered under the MLSA, these activities are defined as “communication services, medical services, base support operations, storage services, training services, repair and maintenance services, calibration services, and port services.”²⁵ The aforementioned supplies, services, and support requested by the receiving party are to be delivered upon by the requested party in exchange for currency, replacement-in-kind, exchange of supplies, or services of equal value. As part of the terms and conditions, both parties agree to “exert [their] best efforts, consistent with national priorities, to satisfy the requests from the other party.”²⁶

As argued in the preceding section, however, with the existence of the VFA in place, the passing of such legislation could effectively convert the entire country into a military base for US enterprises. Many Philippine scholars and activists recognized the implications of the passing of the MLSA. According to Guingona, there are two important ramifications of the Agreement. Firstly, the MLSA can be applied not just to the facilitation of transferring materials from the Philippines to the US and vice-versa, but also to operations associated with the United Nations, therefore altering the intent of the Mutual Defense Treaty by turning the bilateral agreement into a multilateral agreement. Under this condition, the Philippines no longer fulfills its responsibilities to the UN as a member-state, but under obligation to the United States. Secondly, Guingona argues that the MLSA can also be applied in times of “national emergency,” therefore legitimizing the actions of either states when conducting

operations against internal citizens. Since the likelihood of Filipino troops entering the United States to regulate the civilian population seems dim, this provision is one-sided, especially since US troops have been deployed throughout Philippine history to control popular movements such as anti-imperial and anti-dictatorial protests.²⁷

In her July 29, 2002 speech “Beware of the Trojan Horse,” Congresswoman Imee Marcos argued that the MSLA allows for the increase of US troops on Philippine soil, increasing the potential for nations with hostile relations with the US to target the Philippines. Guingona added that this situation may be problematic since the US has refused to recognize Philippines’ claims to the Kalayaan Islands or Sabah, which the country has been quarreling over with China and Malaysia respectively.²⁸ Furthermore, Marcos added that the MLSA may lead to the use of the Philippines as a springboard for US intervention in nations throughout Southeast Asia.

Lastly, although Malacanang may consider the MLSA as merely an accounting agreement, according to the Undersecretary of Planning in the Philippine Department of National Defense, the MLSA is actually an agreement that allows for the cross-servicing of US ships, planes, and troops on Philippine soil.²⁹ Therefore, with the MLSA in place, the US can enter any region of the country and receive the same type of services it would have on its own military bases—fulfilling Schirmer’s prophesy and effectively turning the Philippines into a huge military base.

After several months of debate, the MLSA was eventually signed in a very

²⁵ Ibid, Section (a)(2).

²⁶ Ibid, Section(a)(3).

²⁷ Roxanne Lynn Doty, “Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of US Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 3 (1993), 309-17.

²⁸ Philippine Senate Official Transcripts for Resolutions of the 11th Congress (July 27, 1998 - June 30, 2001), Resolution Number 18.

²⁹ Interview with Antonio C. Santos, Undersecretary of Planning, Department of National Defense, Republic of the Philippines, November 20, 2002.

clandestine manner late into the evening of November 21, 2002. One hour before it was signed by Commodore Ernest H. de Leon (on behalf of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines) and Colonel Mathias Velasco (representing the Commander of the US Pacific Command), Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople presented the finalized MLSA to select members of the houses of Congress.³⁰ The privileged few who had access to this document were Senate President Franklin M. Drilon, Speaker Jose de Venecia, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator Manuel Villar, Chairman of the House Committee of Foreign Relations Apolinario Lozada, and Vice Chairman of the House Committee of Foreign Relations Imee Marcos—five people in all.³¹

Therefore, with the signing of the MLSA, the Philippines has arguably taken yet another step in the direction of becoming a permanent site of US military activities. Through reviving the Mutual Defense Treaty by carrying out the controversial provisions of the VFA and pushing forth with the signing of the MLSA, the Arroyo administration has exhibited an unparalleled drive to align the policies of the Philippines with those of the United States—making the re-entrance of the US into the Philippines only easier. These legal documents make it easier for the US to

“ **THROUGH REVIVING THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY BY CARRYING OUT THE CONTROVERSIAL PROVISIONS OF THE VFA AND PUSHING FORTH WITH THE SIGNING OF THE MLSA, THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION HAS EXHIBITED AN UNPARALLELED DRIVE TO ALIGN THE POLICIES OF THE PHILIPPINES WITH THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES.** ”

exploit the Philippines for its own interests. These also have produced severe and tangible effects onto the lives of regular Filipinos as well. The following section will explore the history and context of US militarization in the Philippines ending with a description of the activities associated with the Balikatan Exercises.

Terrorist Activities in the Philippines

As previously mentioned, the Philippines has experienced one of the longest running histories of terrorist activities in the world. Coincidentally, the ongoing conflict is one between Christians and Muslims—a relationship that mirrors conflicts elsewhere. The clash in the Philippines grounds itself in the history of Islam and of Christian Spain. Speculated to have been introduced in the southern region of the Philippines via Arab traders in the 1400s, Islam spread quickly amongst the previously animistic society.³² The arrival of the Spanish nearly 200 years later marked the beginning of a three century-long battle for control of the south. When the Philippines gained independence in 1946, the Moro community had hoped the Americans would grant them independence as well. In spite of this, Moro claims were overlooked and the fight for an independent state separate from the predominantly Christian north raged on.³³

³⁰ “SFA’s Statement during the briefing for leaders of Congress on the RP-US Mutual Logistics Support Agreement,” Malacanang Office of the Press Secretary, Press Release no. 283-02. November 22, 2002.

³¹ “No secrecy in MLSA-Ople,” Malacanang Office of the Press Secretary, Press Release no. 285-02, November 23, 2002.

³² Salah Jubair, *History of the Muslims in the Philippines: A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*, Second Edition (Lahore: Islam Research Academy, 1997).

³³ Professor Stephen Shalom has argued that socially, tension between the two groups has eased since the 1970s. However, I would argue that the hostility has manifested itself not in the form of vigilante groups such as was the case in the 1970s, but rather in the militarization of certain areas due to issues related to ethnic tension, either as a response to military campaigns launched by the government against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and vice versa (the MILF is a spin-off group of the MNLF) or other groups such as the Abu Sayyaf.

122 *Terrorism in Southeast Asia*

Southeast Asia

By the time that President Ferdinand Marcos rose to power in the 1960s, the situation for Filipino Muslims had deteriorated to a breaking point. According to Philippines census data, by the mid 1950s eighty percent of the Moro population was unemployed.³⁴ While Muslims once constituted the three-fourths of the population of Mindanao, state-subsidized migration programs had caused the Moro population to drop to twenty percent.³⁵ To complicate issues further, in order to put pressure on Malaysia to relinquish its claim for control over the southern state of Sabah, Marcos trained Moros as insurgents to operate in northern Borneo.³⁶ Launching a campaign of guerilla warfare, the Moro National Liberation Front was established in the early 1970s to advocate an independent state separate from the Philippines.³⁷ Since then, a series of spin-off terrorist groups have also staked claims to struggling for “Moro Liberation.” One of the most notorious groups that arose was the Abu Sayyaf—a kidnap-for-ransom group that emerged in the mid-1990s after many of the more established fronts had signed peace agreements with the Philippine government.³⁸

In May of 2001, the Abu Sayyaf had been held responsible for the kidnapping of twenty hostages from a high-end resort in Puerto Princesa, Palawan. Three of these

hostages were American while the remaining hostages were Filipino.³⁹ While 17 of the hostages were released after payment of ransom, of the three remaining hostages, all were American. Of these three, one was reportedly beheaded, while the other two—a Christian missionary couple—were kept captive until June of 2002, nearly a year after their kidnapping.⁴⁰ In a June 7, 2002 attempt to rescue the remaining hostages (the missionary couple, Martin and Gracie Burnham, and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap, who was kidnapped from a hospital in Lamitan) Martin Burnham and Ediborah Yap were caught in the line of the crossfire, and only Gracie Burnham escaped alive.⁴¹

Remarkably enough, the long and drawn-out efforts to rescue the remaining hostages had taken close to an entire year to conduct—and in the end only one hostage lived. This tragic public relations blunder served as a thorn in the side of President Arroyo who since November 2001 had been assuring the family members of the remaining hostages that rescue efforts were underway and would be successful.⁴² Questions remain as to why efforts had taken so long, and whether or not the perpetrators have been captured.

Providing the United States with the opportunity to “lean forward” with their military exercises in Southeast Asia, the

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³⁴ See Jubair, chapter 3.

³⁵ Philippines National Economic Development Authority, *Philippines 1980 Population, Land Area, and Density: 1970, 1975, and 1980 (Special Report No. 3)* (Manila: National Census and Statistics Office, 1980).

³⁶ CIA World Fact Book, “Philippines,” <<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rp.html>>.

³⁷ See Jubair, chapter 3. It should be noted that the MNLF was recognized by the Philippine government as the legitimate authority for Moro claims.

³⁸ Many would argue however, that the Abu Sayyaf are not fighting for an Islamic state but have engaged in its “terrorist” activities for the money.

³⁹ Julie Alipala-Inot, “GMA to Sayyaf: Force with force,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 29, 2001.

⁴⁰ Arlyn De La Cruz, “Burnham says government rescue not working,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 26, 2001.

⁴¹ Martin Marfil, “Martin Burnham was shot in the back,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 15, 2001.

⁴² Dona Pazzibugan, “President Assures Burnham’s Family,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 23, 2001.

hostage situation gave the Balikatan Exercises live targets and real world situations.⁴³ This was not without consequence. Without a doubt, the presence of the US military in Basilan had added excess pressure on the kidnap-for-ransom group. The improved technology and effective monitoring techniques had led to the location and speculated assassination of Abu Sabaya, the spokesperson for the Abu Sayyaf.⁴⁴ Regardless of whether or not Sabaya is dead, the results of Balikatan 02-01 (the official military designation for the 2002 exercises) have been portrayed as “successful.” The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* reported that the “US forces in Basilan have brought local people an added sense of security and are also helping improve the area.”⁴⁵ In addition the Philippine government thanked the United States for gains achieved from Balikatan in August of 2002, claiming that with the “new sense of peace and security there will [be a reduction in] the cost of doing business, facilitat[ion of] the movement of goods and services . . . and a greater access to the province . . . entic[ing] back entrepreneurs and help[ing] . . . Basilenos.”⁴⁶ The United States reciprocated these sentiments in a speech delivered by Colin Powell to Asian journalists in Washington, DC. Powell recommended that “future ASEAN military exercises be modeled on the successful Balikatan . . . exercises between the United States and the Philippines.”⁴⁷ Local officials were also grateful. Maluso mayor Sakib Salajin stated that “now there are no armed bandits; if ever, they are in hiding.”⁴⁸

These encouraging words paint a picture of a very successful first half to the Balikatan Exercises. However, although it seems as if the consensus is one of support for the exercises, in actuality, many contested the claims of success. In fact, two international peace missions made their way down to Basilan to investigate claims concerning human rights violations committed during the exercises. Moreover, out of eight congressional inquiries into the Balikatan Exercises, five have been concerned with human rights violations issues.⁴⁹ Thus this “success” could very well be a “smoke in the mirror” case.

Bearing the Brunt of the Militarization: The Situation in Basilan

Under the thinly veiled excuse of “military exercises,” Balikatan 02-01 constitutes an actual war in the region. Considered the “second front” in the war on terrorism according to University of the Philippines Professor Randy David, “it’s a show of force, a show of determination to the world . . . it’s an attempt to warn the Muslim population in Southeast Asia, especially radical Muslims, that America is not going to just stand by if its interests are threatened.”⁵⁰

Beginning in January 2002, 1,650 US troops entered the tiny island of Basilan, which has only 332,828 inhabitants, to deliver this message.⁵¹ Coupled with the 3,800 Philippine troops sent to the island for training, the total amount of troops, if concentrated on the island at one time, equaled one soldier to every sixty residents.⁵²

⁴³ “US Leaning Forward to Help Philippines Fight Terror,” *Defense Department Report: Afghanistan, Philippines*, January 16, 2002, <<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/02011606.htm>>.

⁴⁴ “Abu Sabayaf, 2 others killed in shoot out; 4 captured,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 12, 2002.

⁴⁵ Simon Ingram, “US troops dig in on Basilan,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, April 29, 2002.

⁴⁶ “RP thanks US for gains achieved from Balikatan,” *Manila Bulletin*, August 8, 2002.

⁴⁷ Jennie Ilustre, “Balikatan effective, says Colin Powell,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 28, 2002.

⁴⁸ “It’s not good bye, Joe” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 31, 2002.

⁴⁹ US House Resolution 171, July 23, 2002; HR 364, July 22, 2002; HR 219, July 23, 2002; HR 240, July 23, 2002.

⁵⁰ Julie Chao, “Second Front: Waiting for the War to Begin,” *Manila Bulletin*, March 10, 2002.

⁵¹ “Yakans Dominated Basilan,” *Results from the 2000 Census of Population and Housing*, NSO, no. 2002-41, April 18, 2002.

⁵² Victoria Brittain, “Report from Basilan,” *Guardian*, April 1, 2002.

124 *Terrorism in Southeast Asia*

Southeast Asia

The explicit mission of the exercise was to eliminate the Abu Sayyaf and bring social stability to the region. According to the Philippine Defense Secretary, Balikatan 02-01 was a three-stage exercise that included live-fire operations against the Abu Sayyaf, referred to as “live test” or “field test.” These live fire operations were for the purposes of achieving the ultimate goal of the exercises: to recover kidnap victims Mr. and Mrs. Burnham and Ediborah Yap.⁵³ With live fire, actual targets, and an end goal, Balikatan 02-01 served as more than just a “training exercise.” These exercises took on the form of an all out civil struggle with the United States training Philippine forces in search-and-rescue missions in addition to anti-insurgency techniques. Unfortunately, civilians were the hapless victims: five seventy affidavits were signed by detainees arrested without warrant and a litany of unconfirmed reports of assassinations, rape, and murder at the hands of troops continue to be released. Two international solidarity missions had been sent to the region to research the effects of militarization. As a sign of the highly precarious situation, both of these missions received death threats in the process.⁵⁴

According to the film documentary “Basilan: the Next Afghanistan,” close to 5,000 people have been kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf, 47 people have been beheaded, and in total, an estimated 80,000 people have had their life threatened by the Abu Sayyaf. Nearly a quarter of the entire population has had a run-in with the Abu Sayyaf in one way or another.⁵⁵ With the introduction of military forces in the region, close to 13,400 families have been displaced by war.⁵⁶ In addition,

twelve confirmed casualties have been recorded during the course of “routine” exercises. One of the participants of the Akbayan peace mission has commented of the Basilenos: “there is a lot of disillusionment and demoralization, because they don’t know who to trust. And they will tell you: they cannot trust the government. They cannot even trust the church. They cannot go out. But for them, they accept that as a normal way of life . . . This thing has not only destroyed the economic capacity of the people . . . or the natural environment . . . it’s really the people being destroyed.”⁵⁷

In attempts to reconcile the problems of war, as well as establish rapport with the residents of Basilan, the US military engaged in a series of civil military projects to help improve dilapidated infrastructure while also upgrading the transportation capacity of the island. According to Assistant Secretary Ruel G. Lucentales from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Philippines through Project Kalahi had been addressing the poor infrastructure in the region since the mid-1990s. As part of the Balikatan 02-01, the US agreed to cooperate with the DSWD to help fund the repair and construction of infrastructure that Project Kalahi had already identified as needing “immediate rehabilitation.” After the DSWD presented the US with a list of projects, the US became involved in constructing a circumferential road, water wells in strategic areas, an airstrip, a port, and bridges. In addition to the US’ participation in the construction of this infrastructure, US troops also engaged in volunteer activities such as painting walls, building canteens, and renovating school houses.⁵⁸

⁵³ “Text of High Court Pleading re: VFA, Balikatan,” Bayan Public Information Department, January 27, 2002.

⁵⁴ These two international solidarity missions were conducted by Focus on the Global South and Bayan.

⁵⁵ “Basilan: The Next Afghanistan.” Documentary produced by Focus on the Global South (Manila and Quezon City, 2002).

⁵⁶ Romel Bagares, “International Peace Mission to Report Violations,” *Kilosbayan-Bantay Katarungan*, vol. 9, no. 9 (2002), 1-3.

⁵⁷ Interview with Cora Fabros, People’s Rural Reconstruction Movement, November 11, 2002.

⁵⁸ Interview with Ruel G. Lucentales, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, November 22, 2002.

According to DSWD Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, the infrastructure projects funded by the US helped restore a “new sense of peace and security.”⁵⁹ By increasing access to markets, the new infrastructure also allowed for the easier movement of products from the countryside to the cities. Transportation costs for residents were decreased. The positive impact of these projects can be seen as undeniable as even the harshest of critics admitted that such infrastructure projects helped improve the livelihood of the people in the region.

Regardless of the positive benefits to the projects themselves, several questionable overriding issues can be derived from their success as well. For instance, while Project Kalahi had existed in Mindanao since the mid-1990s, Balikatan 02-01 was the first time the project had reached the island of Basilan, demonstrating a level of governmental neglect. This fact counters statements that President Arroyo continually makes concerning the interrelation between terrorism and poverty—implicating her own and preceding administrations in fostering the environment from which terrorist activities spawn. Thus, if the terrorist activities of Basilan had drawn the joint military exercises to the region, why were poverty issues not addressed on the island prior to Balikatan 02-01? Secondly, although the infrastructure built on the island can be categorized as a “godsend” to many of the residents, what is the underlying intention of

the building of these projects? By renovating the harbor and the airport to be able to receive transport planes as large as a C-130, what purpose would such a massive runway serve residents once Balikatan is over?

According to many activists, such as Jean Enriquez from the Coalition Against the Trafficking of Women, these exercises have aimed at taking over the “hearts and minds of the people.” By providing the residents with much needed resources, the US has in effect embarked on a very lucrative public relations campaign to win over the sentiments of a very skeptical public.⁶⁰ However, according to some, this is a very deceptive act. According to Cora Fabros of the People’s Rural Reconstruction Movement:

“ BY PROVIDING THE RESIDENTS [OF BASILAN] WITH MUCH NEEDED RESOURCES, THE US HAS IN EFFECT EMBARKED ON A VERY LUCRATIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN TO WIN OVER THE SENTIMENTS OF A VERY SKEPTICAL PUBLIC. ”

Support only happens where military operations are going, and people are affected . . . But it is an insult . . . people are being made to believe that they are being helped . . . but at the same time, the problem that is being created, is being created by no less the people who are giving them this

aid. What’s worse is that they are being led to believe that it is being done on their behalf . . . ⁶¹

Therefore, as actual military operations take place, infrastructure that facilitate war continues to be built, and attempts to win over the sentiment of the residents persist, the question of whether or not the Americans intend to return must come to mind. In a briefing provided by Major Jacinto Bareng, the Department of National Defense claimed

⁵⁹ “RP thanks US for gains achieved from Balikatan,” *Manila Bulletin*, August 2, 2002.

⁶⁰ Interview with Jean Enriquez, Coalition Against Women Trafficking, November 10, 2002.

⁶¹ Interview with Cora Fabros, People’s Rural Reconstruction Movement, November 11, 2002.

that the Balikatan Exercises in its present form will not return to Basilan or even the region itself. What will take place, however, is Project Bayanihan—a follow-up project with the United States to have taken place in January 2003. As a special project, Bayanihan was to implement and assess the trainings of Balikatan 02-01. In addition, training for pilots, infantrymen, and even Special Forces would continue. This project, which was originally supposed to have started in October of 2002, was postponed due to funding constraints. It is to last up to six months.⁶²

Without a doubt, the conditions surrounding Balikatan 02-01 as well as the situation of people living in Basilan paint a very poignant picture as to the end result of such heightened “anti-terrorist” policies. If not obvious already, the interconnectedness between these issues should be undeniable. For instance, the Balikatan Exercises would never have been possible if the VFA were not already in place. Moreover, through the controversial passing of the VFA, according to Schirmer, a series of very serious threats to civil liberties would follow. In this heightened “anti-terrorism” atmosphere, several propositions are being circulated in Congress that have the potential to infringe on basic rights guaranteed by the constitution. Also, through the passing of the VFA, the US would receive the legislative basis on which it could then expand its military arrangement with the Philippines. According to Schirmer, the US had been searching for an opportunity to expand the level of military coverage in the Philippines through the passing of a logistical agreement. As seen with the signing of the MLSA, this prerogative has been established. Finally, with the introduction of US military

expertise, tools, and troops to a highly militarized region of the Philippines to engage in “training,” US-Philippines political and military relations have begun to resemble that of the Marcos era (many dubbed the regime the “US-Marcos Dictatorship”). Unfortunately, it is the residents of the region that are forced to bear the burden of and the resultant heightened militarization.

Conclusion

Although the US has attempted to evade controversy by using the legally justified yearly operation of the Balikatan Exercises as an excuse to engage in real battle in the Philippines, overt militarization betrays the cause of secrecy. Furthermore, grounding itself in the legal mainframe of the VFA and the MLSA, the US has further raised questions over the issue of Philippine sovereignty. The Balikatan Exercises therefore serve as an ill-disguised attack on Philippine sovereignty that does not represent an event out of sync with history. Demonstrating the continuity of a neo-colonial relationship, one-sided policies (which in spite of perpetual protest from steadfast activists continue to be imposed) suspiciously continue to pass in the Philippine houses of Congress. This situation only helps to lay the foundation for further expansion of US interests, paving the way for any operation the US chooses to engage in. Through the war on terrorism, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and now Iraq have all been forced to endure the expansion of these interests.

This article aimed to explore the controversy associated with the Balikatan Exercises in an attempt to demonstrate the neo-colonial relationship between the two nations. This neo-colonial relationship

⁶² Interview with Major Jacinto Bareng, Department of National Defense, Republic of the Philippines, November 20, 2002.

facilitates US interests. As bombs continue to rip through the cities of Zamboanga, Cotabato, Davao, and General Santos—areas where these military exercises have taken place—it is justifiable to say that the training exercises have failed to accomplish the task of restoring peace and providing the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) with effective techniques to protect Filipino citizens. Moreover, even if the AFP had been prepared to deal with terrorist activities, this

would only be done through war as opposed to peaceful means. Therefore, it can be argued that the US is not in the Philippines for the sake of its citizens. The US is just pursuing its militaristic aims to expand its presence in the region—raising the larger question of how US militarization will affect Southeast Asia. The Philippines is therefore one of the first victims in this war on people—with the innocent residents of Basilan bearing the burden.