

THE PRINCETON JOURNAL OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES

VOLUME XIV

FALL 2018

THE PRINCETON JOURNAL OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES

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FANTASY, FRUSTRATION, AND THE EMERGENCE OF TAIWANESE CONSCIOUSNESS IN *Orphan Of Asia*

Mingxue Nan

ABSTRACT

In Wu Zhuoliu's ground-breaking autobiographical novel Orphan of Asia, the protagonist Hu Taiming's relationships with two women, Japanese dance teacher Hisako and Chinese Suzhou beauty Shuchun, can be read allegorically as the occurrence of fantasies and frustrations while the Taiwanese "self" encountering the Japanese and Chinese "others." This paper explores Taiming's colonial experience through his relationships with Hisako and Shuchun, as Hisako is the projection of Taiming's desire to disavow colonial difference and claim Japanese-ness, and Shuchun is the projection of his desire to rejoin an imagined Chinese community. The unfulfilled courtship of Hisako and failed marriage with Shuchun serve as two major revelation points of the differences between the Taiwanese "self" and its Japanese and Chinese "others." The shift of power from fantasy to frustration alludes to the shift of power from an interpellated triple-splitting colonial identity to a self-conscious postcolonial Taiwanese ego, re-orienting Taiwan as the orphan of Asia from the attempts of colonial and cultural mimicry to the recognition of a self-conscious ego under the disappointment and disillusion of both metropolitan Japan and mainland China.

Completed in 1945, Wu Zhuoliu's autobiographical novel *Orphan of Asia* recounts the protagonist Hu Taiming's life experience as an intellectual born and raised in colonial Taiwan who is estranged from Taiwanese, Japanese, and Chinese cultures.¹ Japanese colonial discourse scholar Leo Ching criticizes current readings of Wu Zhuoliu's autobiographical novel *Orphan of Asia* for being "trapped" in the politics of identity which implies the struggling between a prescribed binary of being either "Chinese" or "Japanese," thus dismissing the notion of "identity formation."² Ching then proposes to read *Orphan of Asia* as the emergence of Taiwanese consciousness, following Hegel's definition of consciousness as a process of knowing rather than being.³ While Ching's interpretation of identity struggle as a static determinism might be somewhat rigid,⁴ the emergence of consciousness is undoubtedly a key concept which can be incorporated into the dynamic process of the formation of a Taiwanese identity. In *Orphan of Asia*, the protagonist Hu Taiming's relationships

with Japanese dance teacher Hisako and Chinese Suzhou beauty Shuchun can be read allegorically as the occurrence of fantasies and frustrations while encountering the others, particularly the feminine others who are the projections of various desires. Taiming pursued Hisako out of the desire to disown his colonial heritage and to assume the identity of a Japanese man, and later Shuchun, out of the desire to rejoin an "imagined community"⁵ and supposedly regain his identity as a member of the Chinese nation. His unfulfilled courtship towards Hisako and failed marriage with Shuchun serve as two major revelation points of the differences between the Taiwanese "self" and its Japanese and Chinese "others." These failed attempts of becoming Japanese or Chinese allude to the ultimate shift of power from an interpellated triple-splitting colonial identity to a self-conscious postcolonial Taiwanese ego.

Hisako: The Colonist's Gaze and the Colonized Gazing Back

Critical theorist Homi Bhabha identifies, in a European context, that the colonist is usually preoccupied with a narcissistic fetishism, to turn the colonized subject into “a reformed and recognizable totality” which is “at once an ‘other’ and yet entirely knowable and visible.” To put it another way, under the colonist’s gaze, the colonized transforms into a tightly controlled subject, who is simultaneously maintained as an exotic lure while removed as a threat. Interestingly, the position to gaze at the colonized subject reciprocally puts the colonist into a position subjected to the colonized subject gazing back. In other words, while being fantasized by the colonist as a “reformed and recognizable” other, the colonized subject also fantasizes about the colonist as a “knowable and visible”⁶ other in return. This power dynamic often plays out in the mechanism of gender roles, as can be seen in Frantz Fanon’s depiction of the non-European man who desires to marry into “white culture, white beauty, white whiteness” and fantasizes that “when my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine.”⁷ In the context of colonial Taiwan, Kimberly Kono observes that marriage is a commonly used trope by Taiwanese male characters as the signifier of Japanese subjecthood since they can “publicly declare their ties to Japan and access the knowledge and status of Japanese through their spouses.”⁸

Hisako, the Japanese “other,” serves as the projection of Taiming’s desire to assume a Japanese identity. Within European Colonial Empires, colonial subjects often were “unable to be assimilated, unable to pass unnoticed” due to physical and visual differences between the colonized subjects and the colonists. However, given the racial ambiguity among East Asian ethnic groups, a colonial Taiwanese intellectual can seemingly pass with a façade of a Japanese name, Japanese clothes, and an impeccable Japanese accent.

Hisako, the Japanese “other,” serves as the projection of Taiming’s desire to assume a Japanese identity. Within European Colonial Empires, colonial subjects often were “unable to be assimilated, unable to pass unnoticed” due to physical and visual differences between the colonized subjects and the colonists.⁹ However, given the racial ambiguity among East Asian ethnic groups, a colonial Taiwanese intellectual can seemingly pass with a façade of a Japanese name, Japanese clothes, and an impeccable Japanese accent. However, he still wishes to seek acceptance as a Japanese person in the colonist’s eyes through a romantic association with a Japanese woman. This sentiment is illustrated in Taiming’s first close contact with Hisako during their rehearsal. When Hisako danced to the music of the celestial nymph, Taiming was deeply aroused:

“Ah! Ah, those white legs!” Taiming observed to himself. He felt dizzy and shut his eyes. The skirt did not spiral downward under his eyelids, where the white legs went on voluptuously flexing more enchanting curves. The plump and fragrant legs of a Japanese woman—and how like a butterfly, how charmingly her hands hopped from breeze to breeze!¹⁰

Given the “unbridgeable abyss” between a Taiwanese man and a Japanese woman, Taiming found out that “the more she aroused him, the more depressed he felt,” and it tormented him that even if he could marry Hisako, he would not be able to provide her with “the high standard of living that a Japanese woman naturally expected.”¹¹ Paradoxically, the more unachievable Hisako was, the stronger her “inexpressible allure” became,¹² and it is in this light that Hisako became “the spotless gown of the celestial nymph, the perfect woman, almost an idol” although Taiming was clearly aware of “the real Hisako” being a hypocrite whose “arrogance fed on ignorance”

with “heedless stupidity.”¹³

Leo Ching identified with grief that “for the orphan, modernity-coloniality means, above all, the state of being deprived of its subjectivity,”¹⁴ and Taiming’s desire for Hisako is the desire to gain Japanese subjectivity with access to the Japanese prerogative associated with higher status of economics and class. It is a desire stemming out of the cruel colonial reality to disavow colonial difference and is widely observed in colonial Taiwanese writings. A notable example is the sentiment Long Yingzong attributed to the protagonist Chen Yousan in his short story “Papaya no aru machi” [The Town with the Papaya Trees], that he wishes for the luck to marry a Japanese girl, or even better, to become an adopted son of Japanese parents, because joining a Japanese home registry will immediately boost his salary by sixty-percent while providing other assorted benefits.¹⁵ When male Taiwanese intellectuals fantasize about the Japanese feminine “other,” they are largely fantasizing about the equal state of being Japanese and enjoying high standard of living conditions in modernity.

Unfortunately, however, frustration hit Taiming hastily. Although it had seemed that Hisako felt affection for Taiming as well, and Taiming was welcomed heartily by Hisako’s parents, the school principal soon relocated Hisako after he insinuated Taiming into revealing his feelings toward Hisako.¹⁶ When Taiming decided to confess his love to Hisako, he went from wanting “to cry with gratitude” because “she, too, seemed to feel as he did” in the afternoon, to feeling “shriek of despair” in the evening when Hisako hesitantly but clearly refused his courtship by stating that they are “different.”¹⁷ The unfulfilled courtship of winning Hisako’s heart but still cannot be together, is allegorical to Taiwanese as imperial subjects to be “almost the same, but not quite.”¹⁸ The attempted disavowal of colonial difference is frustrated, and frustration serves as a signifier of the difference between

the colonized Taiwanese and the colonizing Japanese, a revelation point that Taiwanese cannot gain Japanese subjectivity.

The fantasy and frustration Taiming experienced with Hisako led to a primitive emergence of Taiwanese consciousness, that being, Taiwanese is different from being Japanese despite his passport stating otherwise. Later when Taiming was in Japan for higher education, he rejected a fellow Taiwanese student Lan’s suggestion to deceive others into believing that they were Japanese for the sake of convenience and respect. When Lan made Taiming the accomplice of his lie of being from Fukuoka, Taiming felt pain, shame, and annoyance.¹⁹ He did not want to help another Taiwanese pretend to be Japanese, because he believes that no Taiwanese ought to pretend to be Japanese given the unbridgeable colonial difference. As a result of the previous frustration of “becoming Japanese” in Taiwan, Taiming stated it clear in Japan that he “had intended to identify himself as Taiwanese.”²⁰ Also, when Taiming encountered Tsuruko, another Japanese feminine “other,” although he stated that her beautiful profile “was forever imprinted on the film of his soul,” comparable to how Japanese colonialism has an enduring mark on postcolonial Taiwan, Taiming was not fantasizing about gaining Japanese status through marrying her.²¹

Shuchun: From “imagined community” to “real community”

Aware of the impossibility to assume a Japanese identity, Taiming followed the call of the continent and went to the Chinese mainland to seek another identity in hopes of escaping his colonial Taiwanese status. He was feeling a sense of belonging to the “cultural China,” given his education of Chinese classics as insisted by his grandfather. His first stop was Shanghai, and the dazzling scenes of cosmopolitan modernity were vastly different from Taiming’s cultural imagination of China, therefore he was “quite willing to

escape the monstrous city”²² when he departed for Nanjing, the capital of the Republic of China at that time, the endearing city along the Yangtze River where the largest and richest mausoleum of Taiming’s family was located. It was among the willows that were the “sole evidence of the Six Dynasties culture” that Taiming re-encountered the Suzhou beauty Shuchun, his Chinese feminine “other.” Shuchun in Taiming’s “passionate, if not feverish” fantasy was solely an image constructed by her name meaning “gentle spring,” which alluded to traditional Chinese feminine beauty. Taiming “trembled with gratitude” when he learned Shuchun’s name, stating that it was a name he would never forget and “the meaning of his life.” In this light, Shuchun can be read as Taiming’s fantasy of a mythical ethnical identity origin, the projection of Taiming’s desire to rejoin the “imagined community” of China.

The notion of “imagined communities” proposed by Benedict Anderson is celebrated by Homi Bhabha for paving the way for examinations of the cultural construction of “nationness” by identifying a possibility that the “symbolic structure of the nation” functions as “the plot of a realist novel” that connects individuals “on the national stage who are entirely unaware of each other.” To Hu Taiming, as well as many colonial Taiwanese intellectuals of his time, China is an “imagined community” to which they belonged through textual affiliations passed down by their grandfathers who immersed themselves in Chinese classics. Leo Ching points out that Taiming’s name is “an allusion to the Ming Dynasty, the last Han Chinese empire before the Manchu rule” based on Wu Zhuoliu’s autobiography *Wu hua kuo* [The Fig Tree: Memoirs of a Taiwanese Patriot] where Wu explicitly expressed that the “China” with which Taiwanese identified with was not the Ch’ing Dynasty, but rather the Han China of the Ming. Cross-Strait literature scholar Ji Birui revisits the history of Taiwan and identified an interesting parallel: both at the beginning of the Manchu

rule and the launching of Japanese colonial scheme, there were similar fevers among Han Chinese intellectuals on the island to reserve Confucian culture in order to strengthen a Han Chinese cultural identity which will never submit to a foreign ethnic group’s ruling.²³ In the face of a more powerful “other,” Manchu or Japanese, some Taiwanese intellectuals such as Taiming’s grandfather chose to spiritually retreat to the “imagined community” of Han China.

However, Taiming’s cultural imagination of being Chinese was partially frustrated when Lan brought him to a lecture by the Academic Association of China in Japan. Apparently, Chinese students from the Mainland did not include the colonial Taiwanese into their “imagined community” of China, as Taiming was immediately treated as a spy instead of a compatriot when he revealed his home town as being in Taiwan.²⁴ The Taiwanese instructor Zeng lamented to Taiming that “we’re deformed—fate’s monstrous children,”²⁵ and later Taiming’s Chinese brother-in-law Li also commented sarcastically that Taiming as a Taiwanese, is a deformed child, “a sort of misfit.”²⁶ As Leo Ching dismissively identifies, “the subtext here is that after being colonized by the Japanese, the Taiwanese are no longer the ‘true’ or ‘untarnished’ Chinese”, but a deformed variant which is “contaminated and condemned to untrustworthiness.”²⁷

What happened then, when a colonial Taiwanese intellectual followed “the call of the continent” with the genuine hopes of sacrificing for the new China that was taking form? Was he purified as a true Chinese in this “pilgrim’s progress,” as argued by Ji Birui, that when he went to the Chinese mainland and turned the “imagined community” into a real community, his construction of national and ethnical identities (as Chinese) is finally completed? ²⁸ Taiming clearly had a desire to turn the “imagined community” into a real community and to become truly Chinese, as he felt so endearing when he put on

a Chinese robe and “no one stared at him when he went downtown; he was one of them.”²⁹ He wished to claim a Chinese identity by marrying the seemingly traditional beauty Shuchun, although just as in Hisako’s case, he was not unaware that the “real Shuchun” who wanted to go out with at least thirty boyfriends before marriage was typically one of those “new woman—formulaic and superficial.”³⁰ Still, Taiming and Shuchun hastily married, and to Taiming, “Shuchun was the answer to all his problems.”³¹

Again, unfortunately, frustration almost immediately ensued. Their happiness did not last long because Shuchun went into politics and was not interested in discussing traditional Chinese literature with Taiming anymore.³² Also, instead of being a good housewife as Taiming wished, Shuchun became a “queen” among various men and “did not care what her husband thought or felt.”³³ The frictions eventually led to Taiming’s frustration and Taiming decided to end the struggle. “My wife is my wife, and I am I,” Taiming concluded, “I must recover the old self that I gave up when I married.”³⁴ The failed marriage is a signifier of the cultural difference between Taiwan and the Mainland, and is a point of revelation for Taiming that “true Chineseness” only exists in discourse and imaginations, and that Taiwanese identity cannot be easily subsumed under the category of being Chinese. After Taiming was apprehended by the Metropolitan Police as a Taiwanese spy and had to flee back to his homeland, he and Shuchun do not reunite in the novel, just as postcolonial Taiwan did not reunite with the PRC Mainland. Furthermore, Taiming barely spared a thought for their daughter Ziyuan, a child of his failed attempt to absorb his Taiwanese identity into a grander Chinese identity, during the political tempest surrounding him.

From Fantasy to Frustration: The Emergence of Taiwanese Consciousness

Ozaki Hotsuki views *Orphan of Asia* as the portrayal of the mental problems of Taiwanese

intellectuals pursuing a Chinese spirit under the Japanese colonial regime, provided that Taiming ended up as a madman who disappeared from the island and later was rumored to have become a broadcaster in Kunming.³⁵ I disagree with this reading, because this novel clearly implies to the emergence of Taiwanese consciousness, as the fantasies and frustrations during Taiming’s interactions with the feminine “others” enlightened him from the state of being to knowing, recognizing his unique Taiwanese identity. Sadly, recognition does not equal to reconciliation, and Taiming became a madman because he could not come to terms with the brutal colonialism imposed by the Japanese and the cruel rejection to re-enter the “imagined community” by the Chinese. By the end of the novel, Taiming still could not see a third way out for his native island, which, as I have analyzed, was to find its own position in the triangulation of Japan, China, and itself, by becoming its own political entity and accepting its postcolonial cultural hybridity, or in Leo Ching’s words, to recognize “that turbulence and intermixing as part of his being-in-the-world.”³⁶

If the madman Taiming lived to the February 28 Incident of 1947, the traumatizing peak of KMT’s intensely oppressive policy of “motherlandization” which proved the Taiwanese dream of “retrocession” an illusion,³⁷ Taiming might have reached the ultimate revelation point of the postcolonial difference between the “islanders” and “mainlanders.” Given that national identity is an ambivalent socially-constructed concept, when postcolonial Taiwanese people found out that KMT’s chauvinistic nationalism did not serve the interests of the island, the separation of a Taiwanese identity that is specific to the island’s inhabitants from a Chinese identity that attempts to incorporate the idea of “Taiwan” into a greater, imagined China became inevitable.

Overall, this paper explored Taiming’s colonial experience of encountering a sentiment

of otherness in his interactions with Japanese and Chinese characters throughout *Orphan of Asia*, and moreover the development of a Taiwanese sense of self through his romantic relationships with Hisako and Shuchun. The shift of power from fantasy to frustration is highly significant as it brings out the unconscious activity of ego to consciousness, re-orienting the orphan of Asia from the attempts of colonial and cultural mimicry to the recognition of a self-conscious ego under the disappointment and disillusion of both metropolitan Japan and mainland China. In this light, Taiming's failed attempts to become either Japanese or Chinese strongly imply the emergence of a Taiwanese consciousness which breaks through the agonizing interrogation of identity struggles between the prescribed binary, reconciling the Taiwanese "self" from a triple-splitting colonial identity to an integrated postcolonial hybridity.

This paper sets an example of interpreting the encounters of male characters with their female counterparts in colonial Taiwanese literature as allegorical to the process of the emergence of Taiwanese consciousness, positioning personal accounts of colonial experience in the grand historical narration. However, it is worth noting that, compared to when *Orphan of Asia* was read as a struggle between Japanese and Chinese identity and used for the Nationalist pro-unification discourse under KMT power, the reading of consciousness formation presented in this essay might be appropriated by the pro-independence discourse of Han Chinese politicians in contemporary Taiwan. Both methods of appreciating this autobiographical novel carry an equal weight of danger of identity politics in the ambivalent situation of cross-strait tensions, as they both fall into Han-centrism and do not contribute to a genuine reconciliation. In my opinion, Wu Zhuoliu's *Orphan of Asia* is a valuable account for the personal struggles of a Han Chinese Taiwanese intellectual amid the historical currents during the

first half of the 20th Century in East Asia, but it cannot be taken as a full representation of conflicts that have emerged out of Taiwan's multi-layered settler-colonial condition.

Endnotes

- 1 At the very beginning of this paper, I would like to state that it is important to bear in mind Taiwan's multi-layered settler-colonial condition. However, in *Orphan of Asia*, Wu Zhuoliu's usage of "Taiwanese people" mainly refers to the Han-Chinese settlers living in Taiwan prior to the Republic of China rule, and the existence of Taiwanese aborigines are largely overlooked in this novel. Due to limitations of the scope of my discussion, in this paper the notion of "Taiwanese" mainly refers to the Han-Chinese settlers of Taiwan following the narrator's perspective.
- 2 Leo T. S. Ching, "'Into the Muddy Stream': Triple Consciousness and Colonial Historiography in *The Orphan of Asia*," in *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2001), 185-94.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 195.
- 4 Despite the ongoing criticism of the identitarian postcolonialism in Taiwan for identity labels being inseparable from interpellation and representational privileges, the concept of identity formation cannot be easily dismissed as it is a dynamic process of creative transformations from unconsciousness to consciousness through the explorations of self-other relations. For a well-articulated rebuke of identity politics, see Chun-yen Chen, "Being-in-common in Postcolonial Taiwan," *Interventions* (14:3): 443-461.
- 5 This term is borrowed from Benedict Anderson's concept of nations as "imagined communities" in his 1983 book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1983).
- 6 Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 70-1.
- 7 Frantz Fanon, "The Man of Color and the White Woman," in *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto, 2008), 45.
- 8 Kimberly T. Kono, "Marriage, Modernization and the Imperial Subject," in *Romance, Family, and Nation in Japanese Colonial Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 99.
- 9 Fanon, "Man of Color," 46.
- 10 Wu Zhuoliu, *Orphan of Asia*, trans. Ioaniis Mentzas (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 28-9.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 29.
- 12 It is interesting to compare Taiming's different attitudes to the unobtainable "celestial nymph" Hisako and the readily available Taiwanese music teacher Ruie. Ruie made persistent advances, and when sitting by Taiming, her breasts were "so close that he could have touched them." However, Taiming was rather "annoyed" and fantasized that "if only that were Hisako just now..." See Wu, *Orphan of Asia*, 28.
- 13 *Ibid.* 29-30
- 14 Leo T. S. Ching, "Taiwan in Modernity/Coloniality: Orphan of Asia and the Colonial Difference," in *The Creolization of Theory*, ed. Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih (Durham: Duke UP, 2011), 205.
- 15 Long, Yingzong, "Papaya no aru machi" [The Town with the Papaya Trees] in Vol. 3 of *Nihon touchiki Taiwan bungaku Taiwan jin sakka sakubinshū* [Anthology of Taiwan literature under Japanese rule: Taiwanese writers and works], ed. Shimomura Sakujirou (Tokyo: Ryokuin shobou, 1999), 26.
- 16 Wu, *Orphan of Asia*, 34.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 49-51.
- 18 This expression is borrowed from Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 85-92.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *Ibid.*, 43.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 100.

- 23 Ibid., 93-5. When Taiming's friends and family were seeing him off, he was urged by Opium Tong to visit their family's largest and richest mausoleum at the mouth of the Yangtze River. Shanghai, Nanjing, and Suzhou are all cities located around the area and could be where Taiming's ancestors were from. However, Taiming felt rather ambivalent towards Mainland, as when he wrote the poem on the way with the last line, "A continent of kinsfolk nears," he felt a need to rephrase it, because "officially, though, he was on his way to a foreign people. As his passport said, Hu Taiming was a citizen of the Japanese Empire." He eventually finalized the poem as "These waves that wash my wounded eyes/ Will likely drown my orphan tears/ Before we greet the paradise—/ A continent for pioneers." By referring to Mainland as paradise and pioneers, and referring to himself as orphan, he is referring to the past of Taiwan being part of China then abandoned by China. Taiming as a rejected orphan desired to find a mythical past of his identity, re-entering the imagined community and get recognized as part of the new China.
- 24 Ibid., 113.
- 25 Ibid., 115.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Homi K. Bhabha, "Dissemination: Time, narrative and the margins of the modern nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 308.
- 28 Ching, "Into the Muddy Stream," 179.
- 29 Ji Birui, "Zhimindi chujing yu taiwan xinwenxue" [The colonial situation and Taiwanese new literature] in *Beizhiminzhe de Jingshen Yinji: Zhimin Shiqi Taiwan Xinwenxue Lun* [The colonial mark of soul left on the colonized: Discourse of colonial Taiwanese new literature] (Xiamen: Xiamen University Press, 2010), 22.
- 30 Wu, *Orphan of Asia*, 61-2.
- 31 Ibid., 98.
- 32 Ibid., 152. Leo Ching noted that the original text in both Zeng and Li's words was *kikeiji* meaning a deformed child. See Ching, "Into the Muddy Stream," 182.
- 33 Ching, "Into the Muddy Stream," 182-3.
- 34 Ji, "Zhimindi chujing," 37. Ji uses the biography of Taiwanese communist Ye Shengji to argue that for a colonial Taiwanese intellectual who suffers from an identity split due to "shuangxiang xinli" [double hometown complex], when he goes to Mainland China for a "chaosheng zhi lv" [pilgrim's journey] which turns the "imagined community" into a "real community," his construction of a national and ethnic identity (as Chinese) is finally completed.
- 35 Wu, *Orphan of Asia*, 103-4.
- 36 Ibid., 121.
- 37 Ibid., 124.
- 38 Ibid., 125.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid., 129.
- 41 Ozaki Hotsuki, "Jue Zhan xia de Taiwan Wen Xue" [Taiwanese literature under the decisive battle], in *Jiu Zhi Min Di Wen Xue de Yan Jiu* [The study of former colonial literature]. Trans. Pingzhou Lu and Aida Fusako (Taipei: Ren Jian Chu Ban She, 2004), 203.
- 42 Ching, "Into the Muddy Stream," 195.
- 43 For a detailed account of the lasting damage KMT's "motherlandization" left on the postcolonial Taiwanese people, see Wu Micha, "Taiwan ren de meng yu ererba shijian: Taiwan de tuo zhimindihua [The dream of the Taiwanese people and the February 28 Incident: the decolonization of Taiwan], in *Dangdai* 87 (July) 1993, 30-49.

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STABILITY MAINTENANCE IN UNEVEN PLAYING FIELDS: A DISCUSSION OF THE BONUS-POINT SCHEME FOR CHINA'S ETHNIC MINORITIES

Kai Ling Phyllis Ho

ABSTRACT

China's preferential education policies towards ethnic minorities were promptly reinstated after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). While affirmative action is practiced worldwide, what are the ideological underpinnings and practical considerations unique to the CCP that informed preferential policies in the reform era? Moreover, following China's market transition, how effective are such policies today in safeguarding the CCP's interests? In this regard, my paper focuses on the polemical gaokao jiafen policy, which has increased minority representation in Chinese universities by awarding bonus points to minorities in gaokao examinations. Supplemented by interviews with four minority undergraduates, my paper situates gaokao jiafen in the discourse of stability maintenance, and identifies an emerging policy dilemma between gaokao jiafen's twin goals of reducing Han-minority inequality and promoting national integration. Moreover, this paper finds that the extent to which higher education promotes EM integration and allegiance to the CCP-led sociopolitical system remains debatable. Therein, recent reforms to gaokao jiafen could reflect the CCP's recognition of China's social transformations, public sentiment and political will to resolve this underlying policy dilemma. Further research could thus consider exploring the nexus between poverty alleviation schemes, Han-minority tensions and gaokao jiafen reforms to evaluate the responsiveness of preferential policies in education.

Introduction

China recognises its 55 ethnic minority groups as one of the country's main societal circles (*jiebie*).¹ Till date, many of these minority groups reside in autonomous areas and retain their native language or indigenous religious traditions. For example, Xinjiang's Uyghurs have their own writing script, whereas several Bai communities in Yunnan province still practice their own native religion.²

Herein, integrating China's ethnic minorities into the party-led political system has been a key tenet of the ruling Communist Party of China's (CCP) United Front strategy of political engagement even before the party assumed political power in 1949.³ To this end, the CCP had introduced preferential educational policies in the form of subsidies, special provisions in university ad-

missions and remedial programmes.⁴ This paper mainly discusses one such policy, the *gaokao jiafen* (hereon referred to as the bonus-point scheme). It was reinstated in 1978, a period whereby Chinese universities were reopened following the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).⁵ Specifically, the policy seeks to increase ethnic minority representation in Chinese universities by awarding bonus points to minority students in the National Higher Education Entrance Examination, better known as the *gaokao*.

Scholarly articles have long recognised that the bonus-point scheme is a form of affirmative action and reverse discrimination.⁶ Du Shehui, for one, situated preferential policies for ethnic minorities as a "legal concept" that encompasses special measures to ensure the continuation and development of minorities' traditions.⁷ On the other hand,

Sam Huang labeled the bonus-point scheme a form of “quintessential discrimination” that violates Articles 4 of the Chinese Constitution, which prohibits ethnic discrimination and establishes the equality of all ethnic nationalities under the law.⁸ Nevertheless, the current discourse largely emphasises the developmental objectives of such affirmative action, namely to promote economic growth in minority-populated regions and, in so doing, reduce regional disparity.⁹ For example, whereas Bente Castro Campos and his research team have examined the relationship between educational attainment and Han-minority income inequality, Zang Xiaowei considers how preferential policies affect the job prospects of the Uyghurs vis-à-vis the Han Chinese.¹⁰

To this end, the broader political rationalities that undergird the bonus-point scheme remain under-explored. Thus, given the controversial nature of preferential policies, what ideological and practical considerations informed the CCP’s decision to enact the bonus-point scheme? Moreover, following China’s market transition, how effective are such policies today in safeguarding the CCP’s political interests?

Supplemented by interviews with four ethnic minority undergraduates, two arguments are presented. Firstly, I posit that the CCP’s preoccupation with stability maintenance (*weiwèn*) forms the overarching rationale behind the bonus-point scheme’s developmental objective of reducing Han-minority inequality and political objective of promoting national integration.¹¹ For the purposes of my argument, inequality is conceptualized in terms of disparities in income and access to education. Following which, I argue that the policy’s effectiveness in advancing stability must be qualified in lieu of the current post-reform era. In this regard, I illustrate an emerging policy dilemma in which the bonus-point scheme’s developmental objective conflicts with its political imperative. In other words, the bonus-point scheme has

contributed towards a more equal society. However, in so doing, the policy has served to undermine national integration and, by extension, stability. This paper concludes with a discussion on policy lessons, research limitations and future directions.

Background

Policy details

Affirmative action policies during Deng Xiaoping’s reform era only grew explicit around the mid-1980s. Thus, this paper will focus on policy developments from the period 1984 till present-day.¹² The discussion is also limited to the practice of awarding points on the basis of ethnic minority status, seeing as bonus points are also awarded to non-minority students with outstanding academic or sporting achievements, returning overseas Chinese and children of martyrs. These non-minority groups account for just 10% of the bonus points awarded to China’s *gaokao* candidates every year, while minorities constitute the other 90%.

The bonus-point scheme is made up of two components. The first is more widely implemented and discussed – it involves adding points to minority students’ raw scores in the *gaokao*. The second policy component essentially entails lowering the cut-off points of selected universities for minorities to gain admission. It is possible for a minority student to be eligible for, and benefit from, both components of the scheme, depending on the student’s residence.¹³ Herein, the student admissions offices of participating universities and provincial education examination authorities revise the bonus-point scheme annually after the central government establishes the university quotas.¹⁴ Currently, minority students may receive 3 to 80 bonus points out of a maximum score of 750.¹⁵ Some 156,000 minority students, which constitute 2.75% of *gaokao* candidates across 16 provinces, obtained bonus points in 2015.¹⁶ The national total, while undisclosed, is conceivably several times greater,

given that the 156,000 figure excludes China's five autonomous regions where 75% of the ethnic minority population resides.¹⁷

However, depending on the educational schemes that minorities partake in or are eligible for, there are limits to how much benefit they can claim from the policy. As Table 1 illustrates, only minority students in the general scheme have their inflated scores ranked alongside the Han candidates' results in the provincial rankings utilised by universities to formulate their admissions decisions. By extension, only minority students in the general scheme compete for university quotas that include Han candidates and, in so doing, directly undermine the latter's educational opportunities. As for minority students in the "Bilingual (*shuangyuban*)" and "*minkaohan*" schemes, all boats rise together such that the addition of bonus points has no bearing on their university prospects. In other words, all minority students within these scheme receive bonus points, such that each student's ranking in the *gaokao* remains constant. Moreover, although the State Council announced in 2015 that the scheme will be retained going forward, recent reforms have even rendered minority students in certain regions ineligible for bonus points to begin with.¹⁸ Minority students who opt for the *minkaohan* track also experience the added inconvenience of having to complete a year-long, pre-university course (*yuke*).¹⁹

(Refer to Table One in the Appendix on page 21)

Policy goals

Admittedly, policy papers that specifically document the policy objectives of the bonus-point scheme are limited. However, it is possible to infer from official rhetoric and China's broader ethnic policies that the scheme could be designed to uphold the CCP's overarching priority of stability maintenance (*weiwēn*). First articulated by then-leader Deng Xiaoping in 1990, *weiwēn* is primarily concerned with sociopolitical stability.²⁰ In this regard, the bonus-point

scheme was envisioned to preserve stability by reducing Han-minority inequality and promoting national integration. Given the hegemonic nature of the CCP's political consolidation and social reach, the general consensus amongst scholars is that national integration entails ethnic minorities developing political loyalty towards the CCP, and interacting extensively with other societal groups.²¹

Historically, party leaders do recognize the implications of ethnic minorities' socioeconomic grievances on *weiwēn*. The strategy of "economic development in exchange for political loyalty" (*fazhan huan zhongcheng*) has thus informed China's policy towards ethnic minorities since the 1960s. Substantively, affirmative action was regarded as a means to promote allegiance and, by extension, minimize dissent.²² Recent events arguably served to reinforce the narrative that Han-minority inequality increases the propensity for social unrest. An oft-cited, albeit extreme, case involves the 2009 riots in Xinjiang's provincial capital, Ürümqi, which saw 184 lives lost and were purportedly triggered by Xinjiang's Uyghur Muslims who regarded themselves as "victims of Han exploitation."²³

On a related note, party leaders have also consistently perceived ethnic unity and minority integration to be central to *weiwēn*.²⁴ Underlying this political imperative of minority integration is the recognition that China's ethnic minority population of 114 million, who occupy a disproportionate 64% of territory, are a potent sociopolitical force, particularly within Autonomous Regions.²⁵ Summarily, the CCP's fear of instability is rooted in the fact that ethnic minorities are culturally distinct from the Han, susceptible to foreign influence given the Autonomous Regions' geographical location, and potentially harbor separatist tendencies.²⁶ As Deng mentioned in 1950, "If ethnic minority issues are not properly resolved, our defense issues will not be properly resolved."²⁷ Hu Jintao

echoed this view at the Central Nationalities Work Conference in 2005 by affirming that national integration underscores stability.²⁸ More substantially, these views have translated to a combination of affirmative action and disproportionately larger spending on domestic security in Autonomous Regions such as Tibet, thereby demonstrating the perceived need and importance of “pacifying” minority populations.²⁹

In light of these considerations, the state and its representatives have consistently situated the bonus-point scheme as a necessary measure to bridge inequality and advance national integration. Wu Shimin, deputy director of the National Civil Committee, announced in 2009 that the policy would be enforced insofar as minority-populated autonomous regions are underdeveloped.³⁰ This was reiterated as late as 2015, when Mao Liti, director of the education ministry’s Department of Ethnic Education, clarified that the state has no timetable in mind when it came to abolishing the scheme.³¹ Song Hua of the National Advisory Committee on Education added that the scheme embodied a crucial social function of extending “timely assistance” (*xuezhong songtan*) to ethnic minorities.³² On another level, ethnic-based education policies – affirmative action notwithstanding – has been framed as an attempt to “promote ethnic unity, uphold social stability in minority-populated areas and safeguard national unity.” This was explicitly conveyed in a State Council document issued in 2002. Notably, the document opened with a brief exposition of the growing collusion between “extremist influences” and ethnic separatists to radicalise younger generations, concluding that ethnic education was key to counteracting this trend.³³ Accordingly, the party envisioned the university education afforded by the bonus-point scheme as a platform for winning hearts and minds, and such is evident from how educational institutions were tasked with facilitating inter-ethnic mixing and cultivating political loyalty.³⁴

Policy evaluation

Reducing Han-minority inequality

At face value, it is difficult to show the full impact of the bonus point scheme on income inequality between minority populations and the Han. Such is because there were concurrent, extensive policies during China’s transition that exacerbated relative poverty by driving rapid economic development in Han-populated coastal areas.³⁵ Hence, it would be prohibitively impossible for a singular policy such as the bonus-point scheme to counteract this overall trend of widening inequality. Consequently, figures comparing the economic situation of Han-populated and minority-populated areas do not reflect a reduction in Han-minority inequality. In 1996, 143 of the 311 poor counties identified by the State Council are also minority-populated areas.³⁶ Prior to this, the Han-minority rural income gap across 19 provinces had grown from 19.2% in 1989 to 35.9% in 1995.³⁷ In 2010, ethnic minorities remain disproportionately concentrated in impoverished and underdeveloped regions.³⁸

However, upon closer scrutiny, the bonus point scheme has showed more positive effects in reducing *educational* inequality, rendering it premature to conclude herein that the bonus-point scheme is unproductive. Indeed, university admission statistics denote that a larger proportion of ethnic minorities now have access to higher education, with the number of minority undergraduates recording a year-on-year growth of 11.65% from 1978 to 2008.³⁹ In 2011, ethnic minorities formed 8.49% of China’s population and 7.81% of its undergraduates (see Table 2). Although this development is partly attributed to the expansion of *minzu* (ethnic) universities that enroll predominantly minority students, quantitative analysis affirms that obtaining bonus points were key to university acceptance in many instances – in the northern provinces of Gansu and Qinghai, some 40% of minorities would not qualify for university had they not obtained bonus points.⁴⁰ More importantly, the main

beneficiaries were relatively disadvantaged demographics, namely minority groups with smaller populations, lower Mandarin proficiency, or who study in non-elite high schools.⁴¹ This phenomenon suggests that the bonus-point scheme has advanced equity in education, instead of merely entrenching the interests and privileges of affluent ethnic minorities.

(Refer to Table Two in the Appendix on page 21)

Furthermore, one may further argue that improvements in educational inequality have translated to better economic outcomes for ethnic minorities in the long run. On one level, increasing accessibility to higher education has facilitated upward socioeconomic mobility amongst ethnic minorities. Education levels, for one, correlate positively with earned income – an additional year of schooling potentially raises Han and minority earnings by approximately 14% and 27% respectively.⁴² In other words, education helps minorities to “catch up” with the Han as the former gains more from comparable inputs in education. In fact, minorities are already outperforming the Han in urban settings, taking up disproportionately more professional or managerial appointments.⁴³ University education afforded by the bonus-point scheme, for instance, provided greater job security and employment opportunities, enabling the formation of a “minority middle class.”⁴⁴ Such is because degrees are pre-requisites for cadre promotion and key roles in the civil service. Ergo, between 1985 to 2014, the proportion of minorities assuming technocratic roles in Autonomous Regions grew from 34.4% to 58.4%, correlating positively with the number of minorities eligible for such appointments.⁴⁵

On another level, minorities who received higher education are more empowered to contribute towards local economic development in minority-populated regions, which have traditionally lagged behind Han-populated areas. Many minorities who moved

to urban areas to attend school, for instance, have made donations to their locality. Others even proved willing to return to their hometowns – 89% of Hebei Province’s ethnic cohort of 1990 returned to eastern China’s poorest province upon graduation, with many engaging in poverty alleviation efforts.⁴⁶ Admittedly, most minorities in subsequent cohorts chose not to return, but this change has more to do with new incentive mechanisms following higher education reforms in the mid-1990s, vis-à-vis an outcome of affirmative action policies.⁴⁷ Therefore, bonus-point scheme has conceivably played a role in bridging educational and, by extension, socioeconomic disparities between the Han and minority populations.

Undermining national integration

However, the bonus-point scheme has also stoked Han-minority tensions and ethnic divisiveness. For one, the policy appears to increasingly polarize Han-minority opinion and perpetuate anti-minority sentiments. In China Youth Daily’s 2014 survey, whose sample was conceivably dominated by Han respondents, 84.3% supported eliminating *gaokao jiafen* entirely – up from 57.4% in 2009 – while 64.3% found the policy unfair.⁴⁸ This sentiment of unfairness is also prevalent in online forums such as Zhihu, owing to the fact that most Han Chinese do not fully understand how the policy works. For example, they fail to recognize that *minkaohan* students “only occupy the university places afforded by the *minkaohan* quota.” Hence, they are likewise unaware that only the general *gaokao* scheme for minorities – rather than the bonus-point scheme in its entirety – is “unfair” to Han students.

Another source of tension arguably stems from the perception of the scheme’s facilitation of corruption, as put forth by 83.62% of respondents in a 2014 online study.⁴⁹ This has been echoed by academics, policymakers and the general public, who periodically questioned the policy’s legitimacy following

reports of fraud and abuse of power – by 1990, there were over five million applications to obtain ethnic minority status, and officials have been disciplined for approving some of these false claims.⁵⁰ In one high-profile case in Chongqing Municipality, 31 students falsified their ethnic status to secure bonus points, one of whom was the son of a leading cadre in a local county's student admissions office.⁵¹ Despite the media publicity, incidences of fraud to gain access to prestigious universities are not widespread.⁵² Nevertheless, corruption, coupled with lack of understanding towards policy specifics, has worsened tensions. It has fueled perceptions that ethnic minorities are a “privileged class,” and allowed for the scheme to “become a tool used to attack ethnic minorities.” As such, James Leibold's qualitative overview of Han netizens' reactions to the bonus-point scheme in the period after the Chongqing scandal highlighted the Han's substantial “Othering” of, and resentment towards, minority populations arising from the policy.⁵³

At this point, one may then argue that the bonus-point scheme could be inculcating gratitude, and by extension, political loyalty amongst ethnic minorities by promoting access to university. Indeed, this appears to hold true for interviewees who credited the scheme for bridging socioeconomic disparities between China's western and eastern regions. Specifically, the scheme has been lauded for exposing minority populations to the “societal transformations” taking place in eastern and central China, and for ensuring that a proportion of minorities will become “highly competent (*youxiu*)” and return to develop their hometown.⁵⁴ In fact, the scheme might not even compensate for the disadvantages that some minority populations have incurred during the course of their schooling years. By implication, the scheme was perceived as a crucial stop-gap measure insofar as the external circumstances in minority regions have yet to catch up with the rest of the country.⁵⁵

Correspondingly, an essay featured on a Xinjiang government agency website also affirms the possibility of cultivating political loyalty via affirmative action – Parhat Polat, an Uyghur cadre working in research, conveyed his appreciation towards preferential policies, the bonus-point scheme notwithstanding. More notably, albeit unsurprisingly, Polat called on minorities to be politically loyal by upholding ethnic unity in their own capacity.⁵⁶ Even in the case of ethnic minorities who were admitted into Nationalities (*minzu*) universities on account of their inflated scores, these institutions were nevertheless mandated to actively promote patriotism and inter-ethnic solidarity.⁵⁷ Thus, it appears likely that university education could cultivate more individuals similar to Polat and the returning minority cadres who have successfully integrated into party norms and structures.

However, other scholars such as Ma Rong posit that ethnic minorities' gratitude and, by extension, political loyalty is likely to be overstated and harbored by only a small proportion of minorities.⁵⁸ Unlike previous generations of minorities, these scholars argue that current generations have adopted a mentality of entitlement towards their privileges. Having said this, there also exist minority students who deem some aspects of the bonus-point scheme “redundant” and even counter-productive in the long run, due to its potential to cultivate dependency and complacency amongst some minority students.⁵⁹ In a separate article dated 2004, Ma further argued that China's ethnic policies and, by extension, its affirmative action policies for minorities, impede national integration by politicising ethnic difference and rigidifying ethnic identity.⁶⁰ By implication, although many ethnic minorities recognize the scheme's overall importance, the extent to which the scheme inspires gratitude and shapes political identity ought to be qualified.

Implications on Weiwēn

In contributing towards the reduction of Han-minority inequality, the bonus-point scheme potentially increases social stability in minority-populated areas, given that a positive correlation exists between income inequality and the frequency of mass incidents.⁶¹ Yet, conversely, the fact that the scheme has been perceived to threaten the Han's educational opportunities potentially undermines stability. As one of the three major societal concerns in China's transition, education is a focal point that has galvanized public opinion and spurred societal competition. Specifically, the *gaokao* examination is widely regarded as a "life-and-death" matter that determines one's future.⁶² By implication, anti-affirmative action and anti-minority sentiments relating to education have already translated into protests that undermine public order, particularly in Han-populated areas. For example, in May 2016, parents from the provinces of Jiangsu and Hubei protested against increasing provincial university quotas for students from rural central and western China where most ethnic minority groups reside.⁶³ The fact that authorities suppressed protesters and arrested seven of them attests to the incidents' potential to become a public security issue. The incident was paralleled in the capital itself – over 100 parents protested against the increase in the number of minority students allowed to take the *gaokao* in Beijing, as well as the continued provision of bonus points.⁶⁴ Such cases, coupled with the polarizing discourse over preferential educational policies that has translated into online vitriol against minority groups, exemplify the bonus-point scheme's potential to undermine ethnic unity and, by extension, national integration. These developments seemingly indicate that the bonus-point scheme has only advanced stability to a limited extent given its role in stoking unrest and anti-minority sentiments. On a broader level, they also conceivably reflect the CCP's policy dilemma. The Han-minority tensions indicate that the policy objectives of reducing socioeconomic

inequality and promoting national integration do not always complement each other, thereby challenging the party's initial presumption that socioeconomic improvement is a prerequisite for national integration. Deng had outlined the latter view in 1978, declaring that "lasting, ethnic unity" is only possible after ethnic minorities "develop and progress."⁶⁵

Further discussion: Policy lessons

In demonstrating the limitations of affirmative action, China's experience with the bonus-point scheme cautions against the employment of preferential policies as a blunt instrument to address socioeconomic disparities centred on historically-disadvantaged communities. To illustrate, in the early years of China's transition, the CCP had extended bonus-point privileges to all ethnic minority groups except the Bai people, who were deemed to share considerable cultural similarities with the Han.⁶⁶ Hence, Bing Sun's quantitative analysis found no correlation between an autonomous county's socioeconomic situation and local authorities' generosity in awarding bonus points.⁶⁷ Rather, in 2000, more points were awarded in areas with larger ethnic minority populations.⁶⁸ Such an arrangement was relatively adequate during the early years of reform leading up to the year 2000 because ethnic minorities were more concentrated in autonomous areas. However, with higher labor mobility following the work unit's (*danwei*) diminished role in social control, along with rapid, uneven economic growth concentrated in China's eastern regions, this practice of awarding bonus points has become increasingly inequitable.⁶⁹ As discussed earlier, many ethnic minorities prospered because they relocated to the urbanized, eastern regions. Thus, implementing affirmative action for all ethnic minorities becomes increasingly unjustifiable on the grounds of fairness – affluent minorities gain at the expense of poorer Han students who are thus further marginalized.

Indeed, the resultant dissatisfaction attests to the challenges faced by the CCP in attempting to create a level playing field amidst China's market transition. Herein lies the need for affirmative action policies to be flexibly employed and sensitive to societal changes. Having said this, recent reforms to the bonus-point scheme arguably reflect the CCP's recognition of China's social transformations and the party's political will to resolve the underlying policy dilemma. These reforms potentially address sentiments of unfairness that lie at the heart of Han resentment over the scheme. For one, following a 2014 document from the Ministry of Education that called on local governments to "reduce and streamline" the administration of bonus points, local authorities increasingly factored residence, existing academic performance and, by extension, the ethnic minority population's socioeconomic standing into bonus points adjustments each year.⁷⁰ Consequently, Beijing, Shanghai and Zhejiang Province are now awarding points solely to ethnic minorities based in rural or autonomous areas.⁷¹ To this end, Beijing's beneficiaries fell substantially from 6,391 in 2016, to just four in 2017.⁷² Notably, Shandong province completely abolished the scheme in 2017.⁷³

These reforms arguably constitute the CCP's attempt to address Han criticism of policy unfairness. For one, raising the eligibility criteria for bonus points addresses the concern that the scheme further marginalizes poorer Han students and perpetuates fraud – with ethnic identity no longer being the sole consideration, falsifying one's ethnic status effectively becomes insufficient to secure bonus points. Nevertheless, while these reforms could promote a more favorable view of the scheme amongst the Han, they might not translate to an improvement in Han-minority relations given the enduring ethnic exclusivity of these bonus points. Therefore, a possible solution could involve de-emphasising identity-based targeting, and a shift towards the adoption of income-based targeting for preferential policies similar to the

bonus-point scheme. Such a proposition is aligned with Huang's view that ethnic identity has become "an inaccurate proxy for low educational standards" in China, rendering ethnic minority status an inappropriate justification for "substantive distributive justice in reallocating social resources."⁷⁴ Another measure could be to devote more resources towards preferential policies that are less politically contentious, such as educational grants and improvements in educational quality in minority-populated regions. Doing so potentially minimises the dissatisfaction from non-beneficiary groups and its destabilising effects.

Limitations and future directions

This paper's primary limitation concerns data availability. Specifically, most minority students who were approached had declined to be interviewed, whereas quantitative survey data documenting minority opinions are mostly unavailable. Consequently, the generalizability of minority sentiments reflected in this paper has to be qualified. Moreover, given the concurrent expansion of poverty alleviation schemes such as the *xibu da kaifa* (Western Development Programme) launched in 2000, the bonus point scheme's relevance potentially diminishes in the medium-to-long-term as socioeconomic improvements render fewer minority students eligible for bonus points.⁷⁵ Hence, further research that incorporates a more representative sample could consider exploring the nexus between poverty alleviation schemes, inter-ethnic tensions and the bonus-point scheme to investigate the responsiveness of affirmative action policies in education.

Conclusion

Summarily, *gaokao jiafen* and, by extension, affirmative action, embodies a policy dilemma centered on *weiwen*. Indeed, uplifting disadvantaged ethnic minorities advances *weiwen* because it reduces Han-minority inequality. However, reverse discrimina-

tion has bred resentment and undermined national integration, thereby limiting the extent to which *gaokao jiafen* has contributed to *weiwen*. Ultimately, whether recent *gaokao jiafen* reforms have translated to increased satisfaction with China's education system and, by extension, party legitimacy, entails a premature conclusion. It remains to be seen whether both the Han and ethnic minority population perceive this policy to be equitable from their respective standpoints.

Appendix

Main schemes open to ethnic minorities	Receive bonus points?	Ranked alongside Han students in provincial rankings?
<i>Bilingual</i>	Yes	No, only ranked amongst ethnic minorities
<i>Minkaohan</i> : Only includes students from the 11 minority groups with their own written language ⁷⁶	Yes	
<i>Hankaohan</i>	No	Yes
General scheme: Ethnic minority groups excluded from the <i>minkaohan</i> scheme	Yes	Yes

Table 1: The bonus-point schemes for eligible ethnic minority students⁷⁷

Year	Ethnic minority students as a percentage of undergraduates (%)	Ethnic minorities as a percentage of national population (%)
1982	4.66	6.70
1990	6.6	8.0
2000	6.9	8.4
2011	7.81	8.49

Table 2: Ethnic minority representation in universities⁷⁸

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- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Kan, “Whiter Weiwen: Stability maintenance in the 18th Party Congress era,” 87; Bing Sun, *The Influence of Ethnic Minority Demographics on Provincial Preferential Policy Making in the Chinese College Admission System*, thesis, University of Michigan, 2015, 13.
- 12 Sautman, “Affirmative action, Ethnic Minorities and China’s Universities,” 77.
- 13 Yizhi Zhang, “Shenmeshijiafenhuojiangfentoudang[What do ‘jiafen’ and ‘jiangfentoudang’ mean?],” *People’s Daily*, January 13, 2009. <http://edu.people.com.cn/GB/8216/142395/142608/8668619.html>
- 14 Huang, “Reverse discrimination in National College Entrance Examination – Epitome of Preferential Ethnic Affairs Policies in China,” 125.
- 15 Huang claims that the maximum bonus points awardable can go up to 200 points. However, according to the most recent points scheme for the different localities made available by official sources, they range from 3 to 80 points. Three administrative units do not have a maximum score of 750 in the gaokao. They are Jiangsu province, Shanghai municipality and Zhejiang province. Ibid, 125; Sautman, “Affirmative action, Ethnic Minorities and China’s Universities,” 99; Zhang, “Shenme Shi Jiafen Huo Jiangfen Toudang [What do ‘jiafen’ and ‘jiangfen toudang’ mean?]” and Dan Ye, “2018 quanguo gaokao zongfen ji ge ke fenshu [2018 gaokao scores: overall and by subject],” *Gaosanwang*, February 28, 2018. <http://www.gaosan.com/gaokao/203416.html>
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THE SECOND HEGEMON: FINDING COMMON GROUND AND MITIGATING CONFLICT IN CHINA'S NEW WORLD ORDER

William Maclyn Reicher

ABSTRACT

As the People's Republic of China expands its political and economic influence among its Asian neighbors and to overseas states, politicians and professors alike have predictably raised the specter of war. Western diplomats fear that China's increased economic growth, military dynamism, and technological capability will engender Sino-American tensions and supplant the United States as global hegemon. Most preeminent East Asian scholars anticipate conflict, believing historical precedence, political inequality, and cultural prejudice to be intractable obstacles to cooperation. This paper argues, however, that the prevailing zero-sum perspective is flawed, and that the factors maintaining a peaceful coexistence between these superpowers outweigh the factors pushing them to the brink. Extreme economic interdependence, bilateral diplomatic objectives, and mutual vulnerability to potential conflict serve to reinforce a positive-sum outlook in the region. This paper maintains that America's differences with China are not insurmountable, and that, even facing a new global hegemon, competition doesn't equate to confrontation.

Introduction: China's Meteoric Rise and Its Implications

A famous Chinese proverb goes “*yishan burong erhu* (一山不容二虎).” Roughly translated, it states that “One mountain cannot sustain two tigers.” In the context of international relations, this simple adage carries an unsettling significance. The rise of the People's Republic of China as both a regional and global power raises profound concerns about the longevity of the current American-dominated world order. China is looking for a place on the mountain, and its ambitions could potentially impact global politics for decades to come.

Since the end of the Cold War, China has made seemingly impossible gains in political, economic, and technological capability. With the rise of Deng Xiaoping in 1978 came a massive restructuring of the Chinese economy, and the country shifted rapidly from Chairman Mao's centrally-planned system to a highly advanced market-based economy today.¹ With a new political dynamism and an increasing need for resources to support its 1.38 billion citizens, China has begun a strategy of assertion and influence among its neighbors in Eastern Asia and to far-flung countries overseas. Recently, President Xi Jinping announced a bold national enterprise called the “Belt and Road Initiative,” which aims to weave both neighboring and distant countries into a “Sino-centric network of economic, political, cultural, and security relations.”² Through numerous overseas infrastructure and investment projects, China works to establish relations with nations once dependent on American assistance and to promote its own vision of global governance. Scholars and statesmen alike agree that, whether for good or ill, America's relationship with an expansionist China is likely to be the most important bilateral international relationship of the 21st century.³

The bulk of academic argument on the Sino-American relationship, however, is defined by zero-sum pessimism. Drawing from a self-described “offensive realist” philoso-

phy, many distinguished scholars in Chinese international politics such as Graham Allison and John Mearsheimer paint the rivalry in terms of “great power politics” and see increased economic competition as a natural precursor to military confrontation.⁴ In this paper, I will examine the many flaws inherent to the prevailing zero-sum stance on China. Through analysis of “instigating” and “inhibiting” factors present in Sino-American relations – in other words, the factors bringing these superpowers closer to conflict versus those binding them to the status quo – I argue that a positive-sum perspective is still the most relevant approach to understanding the implications of China’s new hegemony.

The first section of this paper is dedicated to refuting a few of the largest “instigating” factors within in the current relationship. These factors include a historical proclivity for war between rising and status quo powers, tension created by differences in political ideology, and reduced inhibition to violence due to reciprocal racial and cultural prejudice. The second section of the paper will analyze a few “inhibiting” factors, including extreme economic interdependence precipitated by rising globalism, bilateral diplomatic and strategic objectives, and mutual vulnerability to the horrific costs of war. This paper asserts that, under current circumstances, the factors maintaining peaceful coexistence between the United States and China outweigh the factors pushing them to the brink. Even facing a new and increasingly unpredictable global hegemon, economic competition need not provoke military confrontation.

Examination of Instigating Factors

Historical Precedent and the Thucydides Trap

As numerous prominent scholars note, the trend of power balancing between China and the United States parallels instances of political posturing throughout history in which economic rivalry engendered militant

belligerence. In the eyes of academics such as Allison, Mearsheimer, and the National University of Singapore’s Peng Er Lam, the emergence of tension between the two countries constitutes part of a much broader historical idea known as the “Thucydides Trap.”⁵ The political philosophy, named after the Greek historian Thucydides, documents “the attendant dangers when a rising power rivals a ruling power.”⁶ In recording the events of the Peloponnesian War between the rival city-states of Athens and Sparta, Thucydides observed a struggle between an Athenian desire for increased influence and a Spartan desire to preserve the status quo, which, in the historian’s viewpoint, “made war inevitable.”⁷ The tendency of nations toward Thucydidean warfare goes far beyond ancient Greece, however. Historical research led by Professor Allison at the Harvard Belfer Center concludes that conflict broke out in 12 of the 16 cases in the last 500 years in which “the relative power of a rising nation... threatened to displace a ruling state.”⁸ Warfare occurred when Napoleonic France challenged Great Britain for control of the oceans, when a rapidly modernizing Meiji Japan lashed out at Russia and China for East Asian dominance, and when a system of entangling alliances drove Britain and Germany into the trenches of World War I.⁹

Many of the factors that led the aforementioned powers to bloody conflict are also present in Sino-American relations. George Washington University professor Charles Glaser professed that “China’s growing strength... will lead it to pursue its interests more assertively, which will in turn lead the United States and other countries to balance against it.”¹⁰ The historical parallels are noteworthy. In the view of the scholarly mainstream, China is likely to use its newfound capabilities to dominate its neighboring countries, thereby pushing western influence out of Asia.¹¹ With such a tense military and political rivalry, even a small diplomatic event – say, a disagreement in the South

China Sea or a dispute over Taiwan – could set the dominoes tumbling toward war.

Under all this precedent, do the bonds of history predestine the United States and China for conflict? I would argue no. The prevailing zero-sum realist ideology drastically oversimplifies an extremely complex relationship between two highly interconnected nations. My rebuttal to this argument is twofold: A better explanation of the situation, and a deeper analysis of bilateral intention.

First, when comparing the particulars of historical conflicts with contemporary Sino-American competition, it is clear that the “Thucydides Trap” does not transfer across time, geography, and political-economic systems.¹² Stanford’s Karl Eikenberry states that “one is struck not by the similarities of historical cases with the current situation... but by the dissimilarities.”¹³ The clash of Athens and Sparta was a conflict between two relatively small cities that existed in virtual economic isolation, and the wars between 19th century powers also occurred independent of the economic ecosystems within participating countries.¹⁴ In today’s world of globalized trade and international corporate investment, the barriers to conflict are much greater. This trend is reflected in the data from Professor Allison’s own research. Three out of the four examples of Thucydidean rivalry that did not end in war also happen to be the three most recent instances, each one taking place in the second half of the 20th century.¹⁵ For modern states in the 1980’s and 1990’s, the cost of warfare far outweighed the possible harms of a loss in regional power or influence. In a climate where globalization reduces the need for territory or resource-based squabbles, it is difficult to imagine the United States and China engaging in a massive conflict of great power politics, a phenomenon that has gone exceedingly out of fashion.

Second, beyond the economic costs of he-

gemonic warfare, the argument of historical precedent is rebutted through analysis of national intention. Even with all the obfuscation and reversals in Chinese political speech, one thing Chinese leadership has made abundantly clear is that it does not want to take the role of the United States. Professor Kerry Brown of King’s College London writes that China wants to be known as a “status superpower,” desiring the “respect and space accorded to a superpower” without all the “trappings and responsibilities” that the United States has had to shoulder in recent decades.¹⁶ To avoid falling into the Thucydides Trap, President Xi has proposed a “New Type of Major Power Relations” (NTMPR) with the United States that strives for “a peaceful win-win approach... rather than the zero-sum game of great power rivalry and war.”¹⁷ Demonstrating his new approach, Xi sought cooperation with the United States on issues like Iran denuclearization, climate change, and cyber security.¹⁸ The extension of China’s “One Belt, One Road” policy also hints at China’s desire to avoid provocation of conflict with the United States; the plan concentrates on Central Asia and the coastline of East Asia to Africa, instead of extending to the Pacific region.¹⁹ By declining to challenge American dominance in the Pacific Ocean, China sends the signal that it aims to avoid a Thucydides Trap scenario with its main economic rival.

This pursuit of hegemony through bipolarity differs strikingly from the historical examples presented by Allison. While the situations and intentions of Ancient Athens, Prussian Germany, and Meiji Japan drove them to war against their competitors, the great powers of today no longer act according to Thucydidean logic. In this world of relative international peace and globalized economic trade, Washington and Beijing can peacefully pursue preeminence without fear of being dragged into war by the anchor of historical precedent.

Clash of Ideology and Political Inequality

Fears over increasing Sino-American tension contain more than just the realist theory of strategy and power balancing, however. A cohort of the academic mainstream views American relations with China through the liberalist lens of clashing ideologies for governance. Since the end of World War II, the United States has reigned over a world order based on the principles of economic and political liberalism, as well as commitment to building “free market democracies.”²⁰ The preservation of this liberal global regime relies on American power, both through political institutions and a preponderant military presence worldwide.²¹

To many observers, China appears to be a bastion of oppression in a rapidly democratizing world. American political commentators Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro describe China as a land seemingly antithetical to democratic ideals, saying that “In its entire 3,000-year history, China has developed no concept of limited government, no protections of individual rights, [and] no independence for the judiciary and the media.”²² The Chinese regime operates under a form of authoritarian Leninism, and maintaining CCP rule is the ultimate objective of all elements of Chinese policy, both foreign and domestic.²³ The Chinese people, alternatively, view the United States as a “crusading liberal hegemon,” determined to “remake the world in its own image” by undermining regimes of which it disapproves.²⁴ It is this vast disparity in Chinese and American governing ideologies, along with the United States’ history of interventionism in Asian, Latin American, African, and Middle Eastern countries, that many academics behold as an indicator of approaching conflict.

Relations between democracies and non-democracies, as described by Columbia University political theorist Michael Doyle, perpetually exist in an “atmosphere of suspicion.”²⁵ The view of authoritarian states within liberal democracies is that they act in a “permanent state of aggression against

their own people,” and are thus entitled to a lesser degree of legitimacy by the democratic global community.²⁶ Seen in the light of ideological superiority, the minor disputes between the United States and China over issues like censorship and religious freedom are not just superficial irritants, but symptomatic of much larger difficulties that reduce the possibility of a stable and diplomatic relationship.²⁷ As Princeton’s Aaron Friedberg writes, “To most Americans, China’s human-rights violations are not only intrinsically wrong, they are also powerful indicators of the morally distasteful nature of the Beijing regime.”²⁸ In this state of ideological suspicion and revulsion – with Americans condemning Chinese oppression and China mistrusting America’s inclination for foreign intervention – it is not difficult to see why many political liberals join the realists in ringing the alarm bells of war.

Once again, however, the forces of economic change tell a different story. Free-market reforms in China have created a population that is better paid, better educated, and more material than at any other point in the nation’s history, exemplified by explosive growth of the middle class and the rise in cellphone ownership.²⁹ As Mearsheimer states, “China is now hooked on capitalism, and communism holds little attraction inside or outside of [the country.]”³⁰

As China expands its economic ties with nations and institutions around the world, it will become necessary for the country to make some level of political reforms to maintain current levels of growth. In 1959, the political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset stated that “the more well-to-do a nation, the greater its chances to sustain democracy.”³¹ By seeking to increase its global economic prominence, China simultaneously provides the building blocks for democratic reform. With over 60% of GDP growth and 80% of jobs coming from the private sector, China has empowered its business class in order to foster economic productivity, a key indicator

of a liberalizing state.³² Additionally, the nation has begun taking its first steps toward open democracy, allowing small-scale “Vote for your Chief” elections for local village leaders and permitting businessmen to join the Communist Party.³³ On a larger scale, China’s implementation of agreements with the World Trade Organization (WTO) represents a national enthusiasm for integrating into the global liberal order; WTO membership forces the regime to present greater transparency, accountability, and market stability than ever before.³⁴ Many scholars dispute the idea of Chinese liberalization by pointing to current authoritarian trends, often referencing the country’s increasing censorship, ubiquitous surveillance, and plummeting Freedom House Score.³⁵ I maintain, however, that these regressions are merely temporary, and that a democratic system remains viable in the long-term. Griffith University professors Kai He and Huiyun Feng explain that, while China and the West hold “different understandings of democracy,” sustained economic development will be “most conducive” to incremental reform that establishes “rule by the people and rule of law” within the country.³⁶

This process of “creeping democratization” propagated by the Chinese Communist Party allows for more cordial relations with America and other major western powers.³⁷ As China opens up to economic and political liberalization, it slowly transforms from a revisionist to a status quo power, becoming integrated into the international community and cooperative within global institutions.³⁸ The process will not be quick, and the current regime is not likely to lose power in the near future, but China’s gradual democratization will replace its “atmosphere of suspicion” among western powers with the trust and cooperation required for a democratic peace. In a 1999 campaign speech, former president George W. Bush echoed these thoughts, declaring that “Economic freedom creates habits of liberty. And habits of liberty create expectations of democracy....

Trade freely with China, and time is on our side.”³⁹

Cultural Prejudice as a Catalyst for War

While not as significant a contributor to Sino-American tensions as the previous two “instigating” factors, the impact of cultural prejudice on both sides of the Pacific Ocean is still worth examining as a stimulant for war. Citizens in both the United States and China traditionally hold fierce antipathy for each other, but for very different reasons. Chinese enmity is fueled by nationalist fervor and an appetite for restitution, whereas America’s prejudice draws upon long standing orientalism and racial “otherization” of Asian peoples.

A strong trend in contemporary Chinese culture is a feeling of nationalist chauvinism. Harvard’s Alastair Iain Johnston notes that “among many... observers, it is largely taken for granted that nationalism in China has been rising since at least the early 1990s.”⁴⁰ While part of this sentiment is a celebration of Chinese heritage and culture, the main bulk of Chinese nationalism originates from a long history of national humiliation. The prevailing narrative in recent years has been one that represents China as a victim of aggression and mistreatment by the world’s great powers, especially Western or Japanese imperialists.⁴¹ Specific emphasis is placed on a time period from the atrocities of the Opium War (1839-1842) to the end of World War 2 (1945), a period that is known in Chinese history as the “Century of National Humiliation.”⁴² Lingering insecurities about foreign oppression have driven the country to view economically and militarily catching up with western powers as a spiritual issue in addition to a material one. Indeed, one of the stated goals of the regime’s foreign policy strategy has been to “cleanse National Humiliation.”⁴³ The demand for better treatment from the international community was particularly apparent, for instance, during China’s bid for the 2000 Olympics in 1993. The government’s propaganda campaign

emphasized a “unique national Chinese spirit,” and a slogan popular among citizens was “Give China a Chance!”⁴⁴ The eventual loss of Beijing’s bid to Sydney was seen as an offense to Chinese national pride orchestrated by “western bullies.”⁴⁵ More important than the Olympics, representations of a 2001 US spy-plane collision over the South China Sea exemplify the extent of Chinese nationalism.⁴⁶ To Beijing, the incident was much more than a simple violation of airspace; it was a moral affront to Chinese sovereignty and another example of western-inflicted humiliation. It is this type of incident that provides China with fodder for anti-western sentiment, potentially lowering Chinese inhibitions to conflict with the United States.

America, however, struggles with an entirely different breed of cultural prejudice – one that finds its roots in racial stereotypes and East Asian orientalism. Prefectural University of Hiroshima professor Steven L. Rosen describes western “orientalism” as biases toward Asian cultures which views them as “separate, passive, eccentric, [and] backwards, with a tendency to despotism.”⁴⁷ These racial stereotypes become impediments to cultural communication and catalysts to violence as long as the other culture is viewed as foreign and “wholly other.”⁴⁸ In his paper *The Color of Threat*, Drexel University professor Zoltán Búzás finds that racial prejudices can affect threat perceptions between states, writing that “difference in racial identity causes over-estimation of modest threats,” which facilitates discord among nations.⁴⁹ The most famous example of orientalism in action was America’s propaganda of the Japanese during World War 2, when Japanese soldiers and civilians were depicted as monkeys, rats, or vampires with an animalistic desire to kill westerners.⁵⁰ While not as dramatic for Chinese citizens as it was for the Japanese, American orientalism still has a tendency to otherize people of Chinese ancestry, leading American strategists to make uninformed judgments about their wartime proficiency, often

underestimating their power while overestimating their aggression. Harold Isaacs’s study of American opinions on China suggests, for example, that Americans failed to anticipate a Chinese attack during the Korean War in part because they misjudged China’s military capabilities. A high-ranking Eisenhower administration official said: “I was brought up to think the Chinese couldn’t handle a machine . . . [S]uddenly, the Chinese are flying jets!”⁵¹ It is this sort of dehumanization that lowers the barriers to war with China in the minds of many Americans. Indeed, Butler University professor Su-Mei Ooi and Skidmore Professor Gwen D’Arcangelis recognize the role that cultural stereotyping plays in the normalization of warfare against Asian countries, sarcastically questioning “If China is essentially a lawless bully, a thief, and a cheat incapable of learning international norms of acceptable behavior, what options besides the exercise of hard power does the United States have to meet its long-term security objectives?”⁵²

While the issues of racial or national resentment continue to impact Sino-American relations, the two countries seem to be making some headway toward bridging the cultural gap. From the start of Deng Xiaoping’s reforms in 1978 until 2008, China sent over 800,000 students to study abroad, making it the largest supplier of international students to countries around the world over the last decade.⁵³ Today, there are about 230,000 Chinese students studying in the United States and over 24,000 Americans studying in China. In an article for U.S. News, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Tiankai Cui said that these students “are learning far more than the material in their coursework, but also absorbing the best of the host country’s culture and will disseminate some very positive cultural traits from their home country.”⁵⁴ This kind of dialogue and understanding between cultures is essential if these two countries are to resolve their entrenched racial and national prejudices. While the issues of nationalist humil-

iation and orientalism may never disappear completely, both countries are working to making sure these cultural tensions do not become catalysts for greater political or military conflict.

Examination of Inhibiting Factors

Economic Interdependence and Globalized Trade

Arguably the largest argument in favor of Sino-American coexistence is one of economic interconnection. For the first time in human history, innovation in transportation and increase in efficiency has made overseas manufacturing more economical than production in the U.S., allowing for significant outsourcing to countries like China. Research by the Northwestern University School of Management found that low wages enticed American companies to move 5 million jobs overseas between 2001 and 2011, with over a third of those jobs outsourced to China.⁵⁵ The office of the United States Trade Representative reports that China is our current largest goods and services trading partner, with a total trade value of \$710.4 billion in 2017.⁵⁶ As Johns Hopkins China Studies professor David Lampton writes, “institutional and economic interdependence dampens impulses toward conflict” because it provides nations with “incentives to keep conflict with major partners manageable.”⁵⁷ Because of their robust trade and investment, these two superpowers would have far more to lose from war than any material or strategic gain could possibly compensate.⁵⁸ Princeton’s Thomas Christensen maintains that transnational production chains and trade routes make it obligatory for an aggressor state to “persuade a diverse set of foreign investors, suppliers of key components, and logistics companies to continue doing business” after the state has invaded a territory.⁵⁹ The difficulty of achieving this may not guarantee against war, but it is still a “major force for peace.”⁶⁰

The extent of America’s economic interde-

pendency with China has diminished somewhat in recent months due to the current administration’s implementation of trade tariffs. President Trump’s steel and aluminum tariffs alone may ultimately increase costs to Americans by \$9.15 billion⁶¹ and risk over 2 million U.S. jobs.⁶² The economic costs to China, however, have been much more significant. A 2018 paper from EconPol Europe concludes that the greatest share of the tariff burden falls not on American consumers or firms, but on Chinese exporters. America has, according to the European researchers, “strategically levied import duties on goods with high import elasticities,” transferring approximately 75% of the tariff burden onto Chinese exporters and reducing Chinese exports of the affected goods to the United States by around 37%.⁶³ As legitimate and perceived grievances cause tensions between Washington and Beijing, reciprocal tariffs have reduced trade volumes and squeezed supply lines, harming shared bonds of interdependence and raising fears that this trade war could escalate into military conflict.

This outcome seems improbable, however. China remains our largest and most important economic partner, and fiscal responsibility will likely subdue nationalist indignation to prevent the trade war from escalating. Already suffering disproportionately under American-imposed export restrictions, China is loath to provoke further retaliation from the Trump Administration, and the Communist government has already offered the olive branch to Washington officials multiple times. Most recently, as private sector business leaders have become increasingly cautious about making new investments within the country, top Chinese economic policymakers promised in March of 2019 that Beijing was ready to open up their economy to more market-based competition and international trade, a move that American officials have long pushed for.⁶⁴ Speaking at the March 2019 meeting of the China Development Forum, People’s

Bank of China governor Yi Gang pledged to encourage foreign access to trust banking, financial leasing, car financing, money brokerage, and consumer financing by the end of 2019. In addition, the cap on foreign stakes in financial asset investment will be lifted, while limits on the business scope of foreign-funded banks will also be greatly reduced.⁶⁵ As the Chinese economy slows under the Trump Administration's trade war, fiscal obligations have driven Beijing to look for ways to lift American tariffs and resume exports to the United States.

In response to Chinese overtures, U.S. officials have signaled a willingness to find an end to the current trade tensions as well. In February of 2019, President Trump delayed a deadline to increase tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese exports to 25% from 10%, citing "substantial progress" in trade talks between American and Chinese officials. The president, who has been eager to "cut a deal" with Beijing, said the negotiators had forged a compromise on key issues, including China's requirement that American companies surrender intellectual property and technology as a condition of doing business in the country, as well as purchases of American agriculture and energy products.⁶⁶ US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin visited Beijing in March 2019 to discuss sticking points in the text of a potential US-Chinese trade agreement, and Chinese Vice-Premier Liu He, Beijing's chief trade negotiator, is due to visit Washington in early April to continue, and possibly conclude, the negotiations.⁶⁷ While resentment over intellectual property theft and trade deficits remains, both China and the United States currently seek to hammer out a compromise that removes current tariffs and ends the trade dispute. In seeking economic openness over protectionist sentiment, Washington and Beijing signal their desire to maintain their deep ties of economic interdependence, reducing the threat of escalation and shrinking the shadow of conflict.

Shared Interests and Bilateral Objectives

While not as critical a disincentive as economic concerns, the existence of common diplomatic goals between China and the United States works in favor of normalizing relations. As Thomas Fingar and Jishe Fan explain, "shared objectives have been important since the earliest days of rapprochement, when having a common enemy provided the rationale for limited cooperation in a 'united front against Soviet hegemony.'"⁶⁸ Even though the United States and China no longer share a common Russian enemy, they do share many common interests and challenges in the realm of international relations. Opportunities for bilateral progress may include international terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, failing states, consequences of climate change, and other threats to development and prosperity.⁶⁹ Such issues may be less "compelling" than the threat of annihilation by the Soviet Union, but these challenges are indeed serious, and cannot be addressed by Washington or Beijing acting alone.⁷⁰

A good example of such an issue is the question of nuclear nonproliferation in Iran. Given its role on the Security Council and its position as the largest importer of Iranian oil, China was critical to the success of the Iran Nuclear Deal.⁷¹ China had significant incentive to work with the United States on this issue, as non-cooperation could lead to a U.S. military offensive in the region that could threaten China's oil supply.⁷² On this issue, the objectives of China and the United States overlapped, and the two superpowers were able to make genuine progress toward combating the Iranian threat and maintaining global nonproliferation by working together. Collaborative dialogue toward action on complex issues such as these have been and will remain difficult, and disagreements over policy priorities will arise, but the result of this diplomatic propinquity will be increased understanding and greater strategic stability on both sides of the Pacific Ocean.

Mutual Vulnerability and a Nuclear Peace

Above the entire discussion of economic entanglement, ideological divides, historical precedent, and cultural grudges sits the horrific idea of a war between two nuclear-armed hegemony. The nuclear peace theory is widely debated by scholars, but it has held up throughout decades of widespread proliferation. One of the largest advocates of this postulate, the late U.C. Berkeley and Columbia professor Kenneth Waltz, argued that “the slow spread of nuclear weapons will promote peace and reinforce international stability.”⁷³ This idea has been supported and validated by a number of political scholars, including U.C. Santa Barbara’s Robert Rauchhaus, who quantitatively evaluated the effect of nuclear weapons on the probability of warfare. His study found that there is “strong empirical support for [Waltz’s] claims that nuclear powers are less likely to fight one another.”⁷⁴

In the context of U.S.-Chinese relations, nuclear deterrence constitutes a large factor in the prevention of large-scale warfare. According to the Federation of American Scientists, the United States currently has an inventory of 6,850 nuclear warheads, while China possesses 280.⁷⁵ Although this disparity may sound overwhelming, many academics agree that sheer nuclear stockpile is inconsequential. Even though China’s absolute nuclear force does not equal those of the former Soviet Union or the United States, Beijing still possesses the capability to cause unacceptable destruction to American citizens or interests in a conflict with Washington.⁷⁶ Xuetong Yan of Tsinghua University, in reference to this perceived imbalance, writes that “The configuration of power in East Asia changed from [Soviet-American] balance to asymmetry after the Cold War, but the nuclear deterrence in this region remained unchanged.”⁷⁷ This situation constitutes an instance of “mutual vulnerability,” where both powers possess the ability to launch nuclear-tipped missiles across the Pacific Ocean at the other, potentially killing

millions of civilians.⁷⁸ China has said it considers its ability to use nuclear weapons as essential in its ability to deter Washington from engaging Beijing in conflict, while the United States argues it has no intention to attack China with any sort of weapon, nuclear or otherwise.⁷⁹ Stability is thus preserved in the arms of the nuclear peace theory. The monumental human cost of invasion by either side would be far too great to justify any superficial gain. I therefore argue that coexistence is the most likely alternative; a peace sustained underneath the threat of falling bombs.

Conclusion: Avoiding the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

After articulating the western strategy to contain Soviet expansion in 1946-1947, American diplomat George Kennan warned Washington not to engage in a self-fulfilling prophecy when negotiating with Stalin’s successors.⁸⁰ “Make no mistake,” he admonished, “If Washington treats the Kremlin’s new leaders as if they are inexorably committed to aggressive policies, they will have no choice but to act according to our predictions.”⁸¹ In preparing for “the worst” in the American-Soviet rivalry, the United States would ensure that it came to pass. 75 years later, Kennan’s warning has become valuable once again.

In this paper, I have discussed why a viewpoint of zero-sum pessimism is not relevant to predicting a shared Sino-American future, and why a liberalist, positive-sum outlook should prevail in both Washington and Beijing. I first refuted the argument of historical precedent for conflict by examining the differences in situation and intention between the warring nations of the past and the economically integrated states today. Second, I illustrated how an ideological clash between democracy and authoritarianism is unlikely due to China’s rapid abandonment of Leninism and embrace of free-market Capitalism, democratic baggage included. Finally,

I discussed how programs for mutual understanding and cultural exchange curtail deep-rooted prejudices among both Chinese and Americans, reducing their ability to catalyze a clash of civilizations. After challenging three of the largest pessimist arguments supported by mainstream political scholars, I explained three major disincentives to a U.S.-Chinese conflict, including robust economic interdependence, bilateral opportunities for cooperation, and mutual vulnerability to atomic annihilation. Through careful analysis of both “instigating” and “inhibiting” factors, I conclude that competition in a Sino-American bipolar order can exist independently of confrontation. The likely stimulants for tension are avoidable, and the deterrents substantial.

For decades, China has made it profoundly clear that they do not want hegemonic warfare with the United States. After a century of humiliation and decades of insecurity, the nation seeks security in its region the way America secured the Western Hemisphere from colonizing European powers in the 19th century. While their domestic policies are scarred by censorship and human rights abuses, nothing in the regime’s current foreign policy indicates a desire to challenge the United States for global supremacy. Yet a large number of vocal academics, the current administration, and even a sizeable percentage of the American people seem to believe the two nations are destined for conflict. In November of 2017, the Center for Strategic and International Studies held a debate on the proposition of “a growing risk of war between the U.S. and China.” At the end of the debate, 51% of the audience voted in favor of the resolution that the United States and China are inclined toward war. Before the debate had even started, 40% of the audience had already expressed their support for the measure.⁸² Although admittedly a small sample, this suggests that an alarming portion of Americans view hegemonic war with China as inevitable. Much like Kennan warned, the popular belief that

a rising China will threaten American security could become a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁸³ If the Thucydides Trap becomes the mainstream philosophy in the U.S. international relations establishment, Washington may adopt overly competitive foreign and military policies toward China, which in turn may reciprocate with policies that America will view as threatening.⁸⁴ The result may be a downward spiral driven not by legitimate security concerns the states face but by their own “exaggerated insecurities.”⁸⁵ While the many economic and diplomatic ties linking America and China to a shared destiny remain strong, they are not unbreakable. War does not have to be the final outcome for these two great civilizations, unless we choose for it to be so.

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THE COLORS OF EMPIRE: MONGOL INFLUENCE ON COLOR IN YUAN DYNASTY PORCELAIN

Margaryta Golovchenko

ABSTRACT

When one examines porcelain, it is often the imagery that is privileged, whereas color is relegated to the background as a decorative element used to enhance the design. This paper will attempt to counter this perception by arguing for the importance of color in Cizhou, Longquan celadon, and Jingdezhen blue and white wares produced in the Yuan dynasty under Mongol rule. It will examine these ware types in the socio-cultural and economic context of the time period, paying special attention to the key colors in these three ware types. In this paper I will argue that color has the ability to retain meaning and connotations that have cultural significance. At the same time, unlike imagery and pictorial designs, it more readily absorbs and represents new concerns and tendencies, whether cultural or economic. For this reason, this paper will stress the importance of color, demonstrating that it is worthy of standing alone as a defining feature of a piece of porcelain rather than being relegated to the visual peripheries upon examination.

Introduction

Color has a complex place in society that varies from one group to another, making it difficult to firmly assert *what* it is without simply resorting to a definition through chemical composition. This paper will propose an alternative way of thinking about color and will address the importance of color in Cizhou, Longquan celadon, and Jingdezhen blue and white wares by looking at the colors that characterize each ware type, namely white, black, blue, and the characteristic “celadon” shade. It will look at the cultural meaning attributed to these colors by considering their mythological, auspicious, and aesthetic significance that was attributed to them. It will then examine the way political and economic factors played a role in determining which wares and colors were desirable and profitable. The paper will then address the role that form and decoration played in enhancing or suppressing color, especially in wares that rely more heavily on imagery. The goal of the paper, therefore, is to “find meaning” in color, to perform an analysis of it the way one would perform an

iconographic analysis of an image by situating it in its historical context. This reliance on history and material culture will attempt to give insight into why, despite the lack of direct academic studies today, color played a role worth examining, and why, when imagining the ideal porcelain, individuals like Shih Tsung, in his porcelain indent, wrote that it should “be blue as the sky, clear as mirror, thin as paper, resonant as jade.”¹

Auspicious Indicators: Color as a Social Construct

For the Mongols and the Chinese, color was a means of conveying a world view and hierarchical societal structure even before the Yuan dynasty. Moreover, it did not always function as a strictly visual or decorative form. Rather, color existed in a tight relationship with language, assuming a written equivalent that was able to convey the necessary semiotic and cultural ideas. A notable example is the Mongolian *paiza* (Figure 1) with the inscription: “By the strength of Eternal Heaven, an edict of the Emperor [Khan]. He who has not respect shall be

guilty.”²

The correlation between the literal sky and spiritual and political power suggests that color was first conceived as a mental concept before attaining a verbal and a physical form. In this regard, it becomes possible to reference political or spiritual ideas without resorting to pictorial representation.

The Mongols’ national origin story begins by stating that “[a]t the beginning there was a blue-grey wolf, born with his destiny ordained by Heaven Above. His wife was a fallow doe. They came crossing the Tenggis. After they had settled at the source of the Onan River on Mount Burqan Qaldun, Batačiqan was born to them.”³

By qualifying the image of the wolf with the idea of “blue-ness,” *The Secret Life of the Mongols* creates a precedent for future references to the color, giving it mythological and historical weight. A similar example exists within Chinese culture that adds numerology to make its point evident. The concern with order and hierarchy can be found in the very first divination in the *I Ching*. Qian, from the first diagram, states that “[t]he sky is naturally auspicious and strong; it is good for predicting the future.”⁴ By developing a correlation between a physical object or natural force and a cultural idea or belief, color emerges as an integral part of society. Although the signifier is not always referenced directly, ceramics should be understood as texts themselves. They embody auspicious and cultural beliefs that are both depicted and made evident through the way they are used and the “reputation” they have in terms of demand.

One can begin exploring these concepts by comparing the two Cizhou ware pieces of a wine bottle with lotuses and admonition (Figure 2) and the lidded jar with floral scrolls (Figure 3), which embody the subtler cultural implications this paper focuses on. The difference in production date is certainly a factor to consider but it is not the only

explanation for the visible difference in the way color is used in these pieces. While both pieces embody the characteristic monochromatism of this ware type, the choice of the colors themselves is worth examining. While black and white are individual symbols in Chinese cultures — black’s role as the dynasty color of the first Emperor of China, Shi Huang-di, and association with the North,⁵ white representing the West, the Shang Dynasty, and old age⁶ — brown and beige do not appear in Wolfram Eberhard’s *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols*. This may partially be due to the production process itself. While in the previous Song and Jin periods the process included the application of both a white and black slip,⁷ it was simplified in the Yuan “by cutting through one layer of brown glaze to expose a beige clay body before firing.”⁸ However, there are greater cultural implications to black and white which may have a greater bearing on this decision, such as their associated with shamanism and Buddhism respectively, especially after the Second Conversion when “shamanism became known as the *kara shashiin* [...] or the Black Faith, connoting that it was crude and unenlightened.”⁹ Black and white also reference geographical and social order, as the phrase “black realms of Tibet”¹⁰ and the term “white-boned or the *chaghan yasun*,” used to refer to nobility, demonstrate.¹¹ Both pieces of porcelain do not overtly reference these ideas, nor can one firmly state that it was their intent to be considered in that context. However, the ability to *make* these connections, as well as the existence of cultural ideas *about* color, demonstrates that color does not exist in isolation, nor is it merely a stylistic component in a piece of porcelain. The decision to either emphasize the monochrome in the lidded jar or to make brown the overpowering color in the wine jar points to the visual transformation as a result of certain cultural and social changes.

A similar case can be made with Longquan

celadon wares. Unlike Cizhou ware, their characteristic color exists within an aesthetic framework, adhering to a kind of “standard of desirability” and demand. In this case, the changes made to the color result in the ware type falling out of favor. Whereas in the preceding Song dynasty *qingxi* green stoneware was often used in imperial court ceremonies,¹²

there was a move away from the elegant “kingfisher” color to an olive green. This, along with the adoption of a thick-walled style and lower quality process, was frowned upon by individuals such as Cao Zhao in the 14th century.¹³ Pieces like the vase with Peony scrolls (Figure 4) exemplify these changes. The Chinese equate green with life, spring, and happy dreams,¹⁴ whereas the Mongols make no mention of it, despite their constant contact with the vast, green plains. The relationship between image and color is especially significant in the peony vase, as the flower is made more realistic and “lively” by the equally vibrant green. The Mongols, on the other hand, seem to dismiss the very *concept* of greenery in their culturally important works. There is no mention of words such as *flowers* while *field* appears in a military rather than auspicious context in *The Secret Life of the Mongols*. The Mongols also do not reciprocate the Chinese love of jade, which up until the Yuan dynasty was a material associated with status and power.¹⁵

Just as Cizhou ware was characterized by its use of color, the use of a pleasing green-blue shade made Longquan wares culturally significant and desirable. Longquan’s fall from favor later in the Yuan dynasty can therefore be interpreted as a suppression of Chinese cultural and aesthetic ideas through color itself. By losing its original meaning and value, color became the very reason for the devaluation of the porcelain itself.

Jingdezhen blue and white ware, commonly considered to be an example of the Mongols’ positive influence on porcelain production, also has a complex socio-cultural signifi-

cance as blue was culturally important for the Mongols. By developing a connotation of wealth and economic desirability, blue and white wares usurped the pride of place previously held by Longquan celadon, signaling a change in priorities and correlating aesthetic standard with material gain. The use of color in pieces such as the bottle from the British Museum (Figure 5) can be understood as a carrier of *ideological function*, according to Halliday’s theory, denoting people and general ideas.¹⁶

Made towards the end of the Yuan dynasty, its unusual yuhuchun pear shape will not appear surprising next to the larger flasks or dishes in blue and white. Rather, it is the visible return to a more measured application of pigments in the pronounced, realistic details of the petals and leaves that invoke a kind of emotional return to the nomadic Mongol lifestyle. The color blue, which arguably underwent the greatest change due to its role in establishing relations with the Ilkhanate and increasing the demand for porcelain, nonetheless always maintained its connection to the eternal blue sky and grey-blue wolf. By threatening and then displacing Longquan celadon ware from its position as the desirable ware type, color’s relationship with porcelain’s physical form becomes the factor which determines the ware type’s popularity. The result is a “battle for existence” in which cultural and social notions take advantage of the flexible semiotic possibilities of color, seeking to redefine it for their own benefit.

Yeh Shao-Weng, a poet in the late twelfth-early thirteenth century, captures the tension between color and its meaning in one of his poems, writing:

It is proper to hate the marks of shoes
on the green
moss;

Of ten that knock at this brushwood
gate, nine cannot
have it opened.

Spring's colors fill the garden but cannot all be contained,

for one spray of red almond-blossom peeps out from the wall.¹⁷

Color, as the various examples used so far demonstrate, is not simply a decorative element that is applied as an afterthought. Rather, it works as part of the greater network of elements that are found in each piece of porcelain, used to either strengthen or undermine things such as form, decoration, and thickness or thinness. Shao-Weng's poem is one example of how color is understood within a culture by correlating purity with uniformity. The green moss in the poem is interrupted by a literal foreign presence, while the natural evolution of meaning that is attributed to color is similar to the natural change of the seasons described by Shao-Weng. It is for this reason that the three different ware types can each be understood differently. Cizhou wares invoke the political tension between the Mongols and the Chinese both semiotically and allegorically. Longquan celadon and Jingdezhen blue and white wares, on the other hand, demonstrate how color can either manifest or change personal and cultural beliefs through aesthetic and materialist-based ideas. Color is therefore capable of having a voice of its own that can speak separately from the material object. Nonetheless, this voice is shaped according to the needs of whichever cultural group decides to integrate it into itself.

Profitable Aesthetic: Color in Economic and Political Relations

Decorative arts such as ceramics can help create a sense of unity and engage in nation building at times when a violent event, such as the Mongol invasion, threatens to destroy it. The decorative arts are also capable of subtly referencing individual displeasure or tension by resorting to the less threatening,

non-pictorial means of color. Yet the emotional well-being of the nation is not the only factor that impacted porcelain production. Economic prosperity and the constantly fluctuating material and stylistic demands were equally influential, forcing the wares to satisfy trade demands while remaining conscious of buyers' stylistic and practical needs. Historical precedents such as the writings of Marco Polo attest to this. Most notable are his accounts of the Khan's birthday feast, when "fully 12,000 [*sic*] barons and knights robe themselves [...] in a similar color [gold] and style [...] [t]hese robes [...] given to them by the Great Khan,"¹⁸ and the white festival, when all the Khan's subjects presented him with an "abundance of fine white cloth, so that throughout the year their lord may have no lack of treasure and may live in joy and gladness."¹⁹

Both instances demonstrate how the economic aspect is capable of overpowering the cultural and determining what is considered to be culturally proper in the situation.

In the Mongol empire, external demand proved to be as significant as internal relations *within* the empire in the development of the three ware types discussed. It is worth noting that craftsmen were prone to moving around in the Mongol Empire. Those in the Near East were often sent to the central khanate and vice versa, while European craftsmen who came to Mongolia brought an entirely different skill set and relationship with porcelain.²⁰ This cross-pollination added a layer of technical change on top of the cultural one. While color can be consciously chosen based on certain cultural ideas or desires to convey a certain meaning, the technological approach to handling this very same color can be more unpredictable, as is often the case with handmade processes and craftsmanship. The changes that color underwent should be understood as a combination of new ideas with new technologies, with craftsmen taking advantage of new means of production and materials to satisfy economic demands. The

change in the physical appearance of Cizhou ware distances it from the social-ideological framework presented earlier. The ware type is now less likely to be understood as an *ideological* manifestation rather than as a *stylistic* one. With pieces such as the large jar (Figure 6), the monochromatic nature of the ware is redefined by its economic value in trade and local commerce. This large jar is more likely an example of the pieces that were popular “among people living in affluent non-Chinese residential districts”²¹ than it is a utilitarian vessel, which were the specialty of Cizhou kilns. The jar acquires a new meaning as an artistic object, where the subdued color draws attention to the innovation in technique and craftsmanship, influenced by “Iranian late-thirteenth- or fourteenth-century luster-painted ceramics [with] dark painting on a white slip.”²²

Rather than relying on the immediate and overpowering force of raw color that targets the senses and emotions, the viewer is meant to engage with the piece by closely examining the fine details and variations in color. The introduction of shading and gradation in the ware type is one of the reasons for this new perception, enhancing one’s impression of the design while decreasing the prominence of the pigment itself. Kress and Leeuwen explore the semiotic implications of this change by noting that “hue has been seen as a relatively unstable and unreliable aspect of color.”²³

This can also be understood as a reflection of the political diversity in the Mongolian empire.

While Cizhou ware had previously to work with the fact that colors like brown and beige did not have any strong cultural associations with them the way black and white do, the use of shading helps satisfy cultural needs through a technical approach. By borrowing the visual language from various traditions, in this case adopting “the phoenix[es] and dragon[s] [from] tiles [at] Takht-i Sulaiman [and establishing] their importance as symbols of the dynasty’s power,”²⁴

color is forced to work within the same continuously shifting political narrative by acknowledging its dependence on imagery. Color loses its ability to stand alone in pieces such as this Cizhou jar, thereby redefining the perception and demand for the ware type. Even though they were not the dominant export object, Cizhou ware porcelain has been found in archaeological sites west of China.²⁵ For this to occur, a retailoring of the ware’s visual language was necessary in order to compete with prominent kilns like Jingdezhen,²⁶ compromising tradition with novelty.

The relationship between the cultural implications of color and its influence on the desirability of a ware type has already been discussed in Longquan celadon, since color was the defining feature of this ware type. Longquan celadon was especially influenced by trade and demand on a material level, to the point where the ware type lost its original “ideological value.” The famed green-blue color never returned to its former glory and lost its place as the defining characteristic of the ware type, just as the monochrome nature of Cizhou ware was redefined to the point of bordering on something entirely new. This change is evident when examining works such as the bowl with plum blossom and crescent moon (Figure 7) and Meiping vase with Eight Daoist Immortals (Figure 8). The innovation in craftsmanship becomes the new prominent feature of both pieces, suggesting that there was no longer a concern with capturing the correct shade of celadon. It is within this ongoing economic dialogue that one finds “flat-rimmed dishes in either celadon or blue-and-white [...] the initiative of Near Eastern merchants”²⁷ and the influence of metal work and the technique of molding, which “lends itself to mass production.”²⁸

Both of these points are illustrated by the bowl and Meiping vase respectively as quantity and demand became the new focus. They speak to a desire to produce enough wares not only to satisfy current market needs but also to a willingness to engage in

a mutually beneficial economic relationship.

After one glance at the bowl one begins to see the consequences of a conveyor-like process. The attention to color appears to have been sacrificed due to the clearly visible body of the porcelain. This was partially due to the high level of technical ingenuity and great expense involved in the ware's production, at a time when "Jozhou, which produced decorated wares, came to the fore, to be overtaken later by Jingdezhen, when the latter began to adopt painted decoration on its white porcelain."²⁹

In the bowl with plum blossoms and crescent moon, this was a result of the change in production method at best and an example of a growing carelessness in the worst case. In the Meiping vase, however, an innovational design was more clearly intended. By leaving the individual panels as unfired biscuit, the vase now directs the viewer's attention to a very specific part of itself. The panels transform the vase from the aesthetically-appealing ware that was previously favored by literati to a more pictorial form that takes the Daoist figures "not so much [as] objects of worship as of entertainment and decoration."³⁰ Whether the result of foreign or local change in taste, the simultaneous coexistence of more "traditional" Longquan celadon pieces, such as the peony vase, with those like the Meiping octagonal vase attests to a demand for two different versions of the same ware type. The possibility of choice invokes a kind of technological open-mindedness, suggesting that, while money dictated what was produced, it was not the only voice that was listened to by the kilns.

Blue and white Jingdezhen ware is the best example of the power the economy had on the decorative arts. In this case, foreign cultures acted a source of inspiration wares in part because they were also functioned as a ready market for the finished products. Examining blue and white ware draws on what Kandinsky considers to be one of the two types of

affordances of color: the question of providence, a preoccupation with the 'where.'³¹ The answer to this question is not as evident in every piece of blue and white the way it is in the plate with a carp (Figure 9). A close visual inspection of the plate is enough to distinguish the areas of darker blue executed in the "heaped and piled" technique. A chemical analysis is only necessary to then precisely identify the cobalt pigment types used. "Blue-ness" existed in Mongolian and Chinese culture before the Yuan, as mentioned earlier, and it was at this time that the concept acquired a material form. This occurred when new cobalt pigments were used to produce blue and white ware and the "introduction of cobalt [in Jingdezhen] constituted a break with local tradition."³²

The expanded variety of cobalt pigments, such as the high quality Mohammedan blue (also called Muslim blue and "Sumali" blue)³³ and "Su Ma Li Qing" (Samarra-blue),³⁴ added greater artistic complexity and freedom to the porcelain wares.

As was the case with the Cizhou ware jar earlier, these changes allowed for more realistic representation and put more emphasis on pictorial forms. Jingdezhen blue and white wares combine the new production methods with more traditional artistic practices "[b]ecause there was no tradition of painted decoration in Jingdezhen before the Yuan, the decoration on underglaze blue [...] porcelain [...] drawn from many sources, mostly woodblock prints."³⁵ In the covered Meiping vase depicting theatrical figures (Figure 10), the attempt to combine the traditional with the novel results in an oversaturation that speaks to the very concern voiced by Taoist Lao Tzu some centuries earlier, stating: "[t]he five colors cause men not to see [...] The race and the chase drive men mad, / And rare goods lead them astray[.]"³⁶ The significance of the number five in Chinese culture is applicable to the vase even though it does not contain all five of the traditional colors. The Meiping vase demon-

strates that it is possible to achieve the kind of overwhelming sensorial effect that Tzu warns his reader of by using only *two* colors, with the white functioning as the vase's "natural" color. More than simply showing off their artistic and technical skills in invoking a complex scene, the flowers on the shoulder of the vase elicit an auspicious and spiritual abundance that is echoed by the abundance of cobalt pigment. The pictorial language of the vase, especially the shading technique seen in some places, is therefore dependent on the color blue, which makes the resulting effect possible in the first place.

Although auspicious and cultural meanings still inadvertently find their way into the various wares, there is a noticeable divergence in what the "priority" of porcelain is considered to be. Wares that are clearly conscious of their place in a greater global trade network coexist with wares that continue to speak to the emotional needs of people. Weltz' argument, which relates Taoist principles to food and the five flavors, can also be applicable to the shift in the use of color examined in the two sections of this paper. Craftsmen, and by extension the wares themselves, appear to have been trying to prevent the ignition of desire that "would be a violation of the maxim of moderate consumption."³⁷ Economic forces work against the earlier culturally-driven perceptions and uses of color, not only tempering it but, at times, literally giving it form through new technologies and materials. As a result, imagery came to dictate the context of porcelain wares in a way that color did previously. The increased reliance on imagery transformed wares into objects that have been gutted of their previous cultural significance, which now waited to be inscribed with meaning by their new owners.

Conclusion

The material and immaterial rely on each other in order to capture and convey emotional and psychological ideas. For this rea-

son, porcelain is a way of writing the cultural and historical narrative of a culture in the form of an object, doing so not only through imagery but, more importantly, through color. It would be unfair to assert that either the material object or its immaterial, often unspoken, value is more important. Similarly, it is difficult to point to either only the social or the economic forces as the primary influencer of porcelain production in the Yuan dynasty. Instead, it is a combination of these factors that should be used when analyzing pieces from one of the three ware types examined in the paper. More importantly, this kind of nuanced approach can help viewers when they come across more complex and unusual examples like the blue and white model of the porcelain yurt (Figure 11). Just as the essay has done with analyzing examples from Cizhou, Longquan celadon, and Jingdezhen blue and white wares, so too is it possible to situate more unusual pieces such as the yurt within the same semiotic approach. The desire to *recreate*, rather than to simply destroy, can be found to some extent in all the stylistic decisions involved in the porcelain making process. Understanding this helps one realize that porcelain production is, in fact, cyclical, and that new wares always subconsciously echo and respond to the past while attempting to grasp the always-approaching future.

Appendix

Figure 1:



Safe Conduct Pass (Paiza) with Inscription in Phakpa Script. Yuan dynasty, late 13th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art. From: Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/39624> (accessed November 6th, 2017)

Figure 2:



Wine bottle with lotuses and admonition. Yuan dynasty, 13th-14th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art. From: Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/647271> (accessed November 6th, 2017)

Figure 3:



Lidded Jar (Guan) with Floral Scrolls. Late Jin dynasty or early Yuan dynasty, c. 1200-1300. Los Angeles County Museum of Art. From: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, <https://collections.lacma.org/node/230005> (Accessed November 6t, 2017)

Figure 4:



Wine bottle with lotuses and admonition. Yuan dynasty, 13th-14th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art. From: Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/647271> (accessed November 6th, 2017)

Figure 5:



Bottle. Yuan dynasty, c. 1330-1368. The British Museum. From: The British Museum, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=260684&partId=1&searchText=Yuan+blue+and+white&page=1 (accessed November 6th, 2017)

Figure 6:



Jar. Yuan dynasty, 1271-1368 AD. Royal Ontario Museum. From: Royal Ontario Museum, <http://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/317605/jar?ctx=5b4cc58c-9c5c-441e-8722-08ef0c7d506b&idx=11> (accessed November 6th, 2017)

Figure 7:



Bowl with Plum Blossom and Crescent Moon. Yuan dynasty, late 13th-14th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art. From: Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/73805> (accessed November 6th, 2017)

Figure 8:



Vase (Meiping) with Eight Daoist Immortals. Yuan dynasty, mid-14th century. Philadelphia Museum of Art. From: Philadelphia Museum of Art, <http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/60218.html?mulR=998285142|5> (accessed November 6th, 2017)

Figure 9:



Plate with Carp. Yuan dynasty, mid-14th century. Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art. From: Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/39638> (accessed November 6t, 2017)

Figure 10:



Covered meiping-shaped vase with blue-and-white decoration of theatrical figures. Yuan dynasty, mid-14th century. Museum of Fine Arts Boston. From: Museum of Fine Arts Boston, <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/covered-meiping-shaped-vase-with-blue-and-white-decoration-of-theatrical-figures-18439> (accessed November 6t, 2017)

Figure 11:



Model of Mongolian Yurt. Yuan Dynasty, 1345-1355s. The State Hermitage Museum. From: The State Hermitage Museum, http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital_collection/10.+porcelain%2c+faience%2c+ceramics/450486 (accessed November 6th, 2017)

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MEASURING IMPACT OF FEMALE LEADERS ON EDUCATION INVESTMENT IN INDIA FROM 2003-2014

Timothy Lann and Yongsuk

ABSTRACT

In this continuation of Esther Duflo's in depth research from 1998-2008 on the impact of female leaders in India, the goal was to measure whether regions with a female Chief Minister (head of state) has resulted in an increase in education investment compared to the regions where men have remained dominant in leadership roles. To do this, six regions in India with female Chief Ministers are analyzed and six with male Ministers are analyzed for comparison. Regional government education and investment expenditure data from the Indian Government is used for analysis across states in India from 2003-2014. It is determined female leadership increases education investment at a statistically significant level ($P\text{ Val} = .1$).

Introduction

The topic of female leadership and gender equality in government is one of the most talked about issues in the world. Many people argue that creating a gender equal society is one of the most important issues of our generation. India is an ideal location to study the effects of gender equality in leadership because it has been one of the worst countries in the world statistically when it comes to gender equality. Ranked 87 out of 136 countries for the GenderGap Index (GGI) in 2016 (Forum) and 132nd out of 148 countries for the Gender Inequality

Index (GII) in 2012 (Program), India still has major improvements that need to be made. India however, is making large strides to improve equality. India moved up from 101 to 87 on the GGI scale from 2012 to 2016 (Forum) and research on women in India has documented changing perceptions throughout the country. With research continuing to show that organizations and governments with more women leaders are more successful (Anderson), a reflection on the impacts of India's gender equality improvements

should reveal some interesting results.

Background

Research from the early 2000's by J-PAL documented the changing perceptions of female leaders and how these changing views of powerful women were the key to unlocking greater educational achievement by women and society as a whole (Pereira). Many non-profits working in India, such as Asha For Education, base their work off the hypothesis that educating women and working for more women leaders will result in better education and education investment across the country (Asha). Now almost 10 years after much of the influential research from Duflo, looking at the data on education investment will allow us to test the hypothesis that having women leaders results in better education outcomes.

R e - s e a r c h Q u e s - t i o n

Does having a female Chief Minister in a state in India result in an increase in investment in education and females passing the

high school literacy exam?

Literature Review

Most of the research centered around women leaders in India and education were during the time period of 1998-2010. It was during this time that India started to transition to a more gender equal society. Initiatives such as instituting an “affirmative action” policy that created quotas for the number of women leaders in a region helped create more positive perceptions of females in power and increased the aspirations of young girls (Duflo).

A 2013-2016 study by J-PAL (Field) evaluated government incentives and the impact they had on women’s labor force participation. By offering women individual bank accounts and thus more control of their financial future, researchers found an increase in women’s labor force participation. A 2003-2006 study by J-PAL (Jensen) found that an increase in labor market opportunities and labor force participation resulted in women having children later in life and marrying later, both key indicators of individual well-being and economic growth. A 1998 to 2008 in depth study by J-PAL (Beaman) reviewed 495 villages and found that when quotas were created for female leaders in government, positive perceptions of female leaders increased and women’s electoral chances in general improved. The one question about this study is that little is known about how this will affect perceptions of women leaders in the long run. Hopefully, these positive perceptions will continue to grow and more great female leaders will emerge. Finally, a 2006-2007 study by J-PAL (Beaman) found that in the same 495 villages studied in the 1998-2008 research, when a female was in charge, parent’s aspirations for their daughters increased and adolescent girls had higher aspira-

tions for themselves. This research was done through surveying. This research is a follow up to the work of Duflo and Beaman. This team showed the perceptions of female leaders was changing in India and seemed to show causality between female leadership and education for girls. Does the government investment data back up the psychological results shown by J-PAL? My research seeks to prove this.

My research differs from the current literature because of two main factors. First, my research is a summary and analysis instead of an RCT and controlled experiment. Most developmental research today tests a hypothesis through these methods, but I don’t have the timeframe or resources to do an RCT. Also, my research will incorporate economic growth indicators and data into the analysis whereas most of the J-PAL research and tests focus on surveying.

Methodology and Research Design

Does having a female leader increase education investment? To answer this question, we look at 12 states in India. 6 of these states had female Chief Ministers during the time period of 2000-2016. 6 additional states with male Chief Ministers during the same time period were randomly selected. Data on India was gathered for comparison from the World Bank.

Figure 1 (Author)



Figure 1 serves as a geographic reference for the states we will be analyzing.

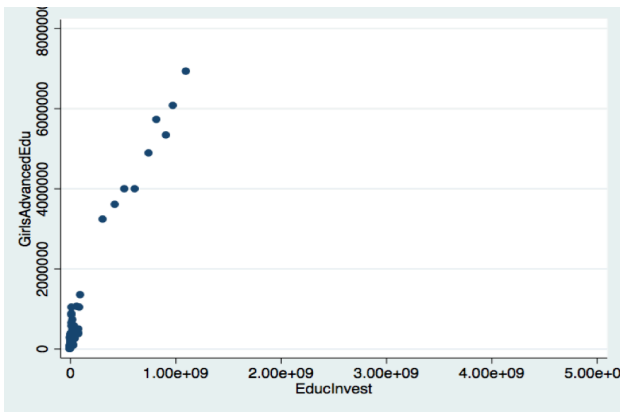
Investment and data on the number of girls passing the high school literacy exam every year was gathered from the Government of India Department of Statistics and the Department of Human Resources. The six states analyzed because of a female leader were (consult Figure 1): West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The randomly selected states with a male leader were: Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha (or Orissa), Tripura, Sikkim, and Mizoram. For each state, five significant columns of data were collected. A dummy variable was created signifying a female leader; 0 representing a male leader for the given year and 1 representing a female leader. The second column was the number of girls for the year who passed the end of high school literacy exam in the state. An additional column was created that measured the percent change in the number of girls passing the exam year to year. The fourth column was the total state investment in education (in Rupees). The final column measured the percent change in state education investment from year to year. Initially, the goal was to acquire data from 2000 to

2016, however limitations from the Indian Government's Departments resulted in data only available from 2003 to 2014.

The effect of female leadership on education in India will be addressed through three main quantitative analyses. A regression will be run with percent increase in girls advancing using female leadership as the comparison variable. This regression will factor in district fixed effects and yearly fixed effects to control for the differences between states in India. A second regression will be run with the same controls for district and yearly fixed effects on the percent increase in education investment once again using female leadership as the comparison variable. These regressions will be evaluated on the coefficient on female leadership as well as the p-value signifying the significance of the result. The final part of the quantitative analysis will be a variety of scatterplots made to show the differences in both education outcomes in states with and without female leaders. These graphs will not have controls but will simply be plots of raw data from the Indian Government. This methodology will help with answering my research question due to the quality of data on states with female leaders. Thankfully, female leaders have existed in small portions in India for a long enough time period to allow for regression analysis. Stata's built in controls for district and year fixed effects will also help increase the robustness of my study.

Results

Figure 2 (Author)



Y - Axis = Number of Girls Passing Literacy Exam

X - Axis = Government Investment In Education

In Figure 2 we compare a linear-linear graph of Education Investment on the x-axis and Girls Advanced on the y-axis. The graph shows a clear, consistent upward trend starting around three million girls advanced. This makes sense as an increase in educational investment should result in an increase in number of girls advancing past a high school level. The one interesting result shown in this graph is the rapid increase in number of girls advanced hovering around a very low level of education investment. This shows us that in India, even a slight increase in education investment will have very large results for the poorest areas. This is consistent with most developmental economic theory that states that the largest increases in development will occur when a country is at its poorest level.

