PEAR

REDEFINING
ALLEGIANCE
& ACTIVISM

Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University

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PAPERS, ESSAYS, AND REVIEWS
Yonsei Journal of International Studies
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Redefining Allegiance and Activism

One of the joys of attending an international program is the opportunity to learn from students from all over the world. It's enriching and exciting to learn from the perspectives of others and get out of the bubble of your own experience. Through the journal, I have been able to not only learn from students within my program, but also international scholars from all over the world. This issue welcomes papers from countries as diverse as Sri Lanka, Singapore, the Philippines and the US. This diversity in background is reflected in the diversity of topics and outlooks published as well. This issue covers a lot of ground, from questions facing our international community such as mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies and the future of QUAD as well as cultural analyses of literature, translation and even romantic love. Additionally, this issue's interview features a former K-pop audition program contestant Leung Cheuk Ying (Cherena). As K-pop continues its ascent as a global force, the questions surrounding its integration of foreigners and foreign audiences will only become more and more relevant. As a Hong Konger auditioning for a Korean program, Cherena has many interesting insights to share.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the junior staff editors, Liam Quinn, Vanessa Le, Lo Wing Tung Bonnie, Aldrin Joseph Aldea, and Nazihatul Afifah Hamid for their hard work on this issue. Since it's my first semester being the Editor-in-Chief it was essential for me to have a good team to support me. Thank you for your dedication and willingness to put in the work so that these papers could be the best versions of themselves. It was a pleasure to work with you this semester.

Additionally, thank you to our contributors for giving us the opportunity to publish your work as well as working hard on your revisions. I wish you a fruitful career in academia, or whatever path you end up pursuing. Thank you for joining our community of international scholars, I hope you enjoyed the process and that you can learn something new from reading the papers of your colleagues!

Hannah Kim
Editor-in-Chief

MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS

Anshita Arvind Shukla

anshita.shukla.98@gmail.com

Anshita Arvind Shukla is currently a Master in International Affairs candidate at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. With a background in political science, her research interest lies primarily in understanding and analyzing the geopolitics of Asia Pacific through the lens of the Indian subcontinent.

Jonathan Lim

lim_jono@hotmail.com

Jonathan Lim is an Australian lawyer, cybersecurity analyst, and policy analyst. He holds a Bachelor of Arts and Juris Doctor from Monash University; a Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice and Master of Legal Practice from The Australian National University; a Graduate Certificate in Cybersecurity from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT); and a Graduate Certificate in Cybersecurity from Charles Sturt University. His areas of specialization span cyber affairs and critical technology, East Asian affairs, and international law.

Shakthi De Silva

shakthi721994@gmail.com

Shakthi De Silva is a visiting lecturer at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies and the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute in Sri Lanka. His publications have previously appeared in the South Asian Survey (SAGE Journals), Journal of the Indian Ocean Region (Taylor and Francis), and in The Diplomat and East Asia Forum. He is currently pursuing his postgraduate studies at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore.

Jun Kyu Baek

junkyub@gmail.com

Jun Kyu Baek is a Master of Global Affairs and Policy student at the Yonsei Graduate School of International Studies. His academic interests include security studies, East Asian geopolitics and strategy, and international relations theory.

Carlos Miguel Oñate

miggyonate@gmail.com / csonate@up.edu.ph

Carlos Miguel Oñate is finishing his Bachelor of Public Administration at the National College of Public Administration and Governance at the University of the Philippines. Recently, he received the grand prize in the 2021 Korea Essay Contest organized by the UP Korea Research Center and first prize in the essay competition, "Developments in Afghanistan" organized by the Association of Asia Scholars (AAS). He is also one of the winners of the KOICA COVID-19 essay contest and the essay writing contest organized by the Chinese Embassy Manila on poverty alleviation in China.

Adrineh Gregorian

adrineh.gregorian@cgu.edu

Adrineh Gregorian is a Ph.D. candidate in Cultural Studies at Claremont Graduate University. She has degrees from UCLA and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. For over 17 years, Adrineh Gregorian has been working on projects throughout Armenia, Turkey, and the Caucasus region. She oversees international and local human rights campaigns on issues ranging from women's leadership, health education, and disability rights, combining media tools, like documentary films, to promote social change and policy reformation. Her documentary films have reached over 50 countries and participated in 28 festivals across the globe including Short Film Corner at the Cannes Film Festival for "Bavakan" in 2013, and the Doc Film Corner at Cannes for "Back to Gurun" in 2015.

Chen Yue & Bai Yifan

chenyue@yonsei.ac.kr

Chen Yue is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English Language and Literature at Yonsei University. Her current research interests lie in Chinese-English translation, Corpus studies, science fiction, and film studies. As of 2022 she is working on the study of translation aesthetics in the English translation of Chinese classics, as well as the corpus study of the language of science fiction from a gender perspective.

Bai Yifan is a graduate student in the Foreign Language School at the Hebei University of Technology, majoring in English Translation. Her research interests include translation theory and practice, corpus research, and science fiction.

Song Mi Lee

dlthdal@gmail.com

Song Mi (Michelle) Lee is an independent scholar who recently received a master's degree in English from Claremont Graduate University in 2020. Michelle's interest primarily resides in Asian/Asian American literature, critical theory, and animal studies.

Hannah Kim

hannahkim885@gmail.com

Hannah Kim is a graduate student at Yonsei Graduate School of International Studies receiving her master's degree in Korean Studies. Her research interests include gender studies, literature, and translation.

Marie Brunet

mannebrunet@orange.fr

Marie Brunet is a Korean Studies graduate student at the Yonsei Graduate School of International Studies. Originally from France, she has been living in South Korea for five years and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Comparative Literature and Culture from Yonsei University Underwood International College (UIC). Her research interests encompass 1970s Korean literature and culture, as well as contemporary cultural content translation and linguistics. She is also the co-author of "An Analytical Research on Broadening Literary Exchange between France and Korea," available on the Underwood International College website.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Impact of Domestic Factors on Foreign Policy Outcomes: The Case of India's Disengagement from RCEP

Anshita Arvind Shukla

Master's candidate at the National University of Singapore

At the cusp of an economic reinvigoration of the Asia-Pacific region, India withdrew its membership from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. While the predominant narrative highlights the economic and geopolitical reasons behind this disengagement, this paper uncovers the strong bearing of domestic factors on the outcome of this decision. It analyzes the insufficiency of the current reasoning of geopolitical and economic factors used to explain New Delhi's final decision to disengage. Moreover, the paper will demonstrate how the central government was susceptible to strong lobbying of interest groups within the country, disallowing its participation in the economic bloc. The undertaken study will firstly highlight the strong retaliation of domestic interest groups and how they impacted the final decision of the Indian government. Secondly, the research uncovers the critical role played by domestic factors superseding the role of central leadership and bureaucracy in shaping foreign policy outcomes under certain conditions as in the case of India's decision to disengage from RCEP.

Introduction

After eight years and 31 rounds of negotiations, 15 countries from around the world came together on November 15, 2020, to sign the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Accounting for 30 percent of the global GDP, 45 percent of the world's population, and roughly 26 percent of global FDI flows, RCEP forms the world's largest trading

bloc, surpassing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).[1] The RCEP agreement between the ten ASEAN countries, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea, aims at consolidating the Asian market by facilitating free trade. It enables deeper economic integration by establishing a common set of rules for the 15 countries, eliminating tariffs on 90 percent of goods, providing greater market access, etc.

India has actively participated in the RCEP negotiations for eight years, since the partnership's inception in 2012. India entered the negotiations under the leadership of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh from the Congress Party, the main opposition party of the country today. Within two years, the leadership in India shifted to the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), under Narendra Modi who was elected to power with a sweeping majority. Modi and his government pursued RCEP negotiations with vigor, with Modi stating on several occasions—including during ASEAN summits—his willingness to successfully conclude the deal with a "comprehensive and balanced outcome" for all.[2]

In his first leg of foreign diplomatic tours, Modi visited the ASEAN countries, expressing his intent to establish a closer economic and strategic relationship with the region. As a means to this end, the Modi government transformed the "Look East policy" of India into the "Act East policy" signaling the country's proactive commitment to strengthening regional integration in the Asia-Pacific.[3] Providing thrust to the initial policy, the new policy concentrated on regular and intensive interaction in areas such as trade, defense, culture, and tourism. Additionally, attracting a greater flow of FDI to India was the cornerstone of Modi's foreign policy during his first term as Prime Minister. Around 30 reforms were introduced by the BJP government in multiple sectors to eliminate the barriers that foreign investors face in India, such as gaining

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1   Tobias Sytsma, "RCEP Forms the World's Largest Trading Bloc. What Does This Mean for Global Trade?," *The RAND Blog,* December 9, 2020, https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/12/rcep-forms-the-worlds-largest-trading-bloc-what-does.html.

2   The Economic Times, "India has put forward reasonable proposals for RCEP deal: Prime Minister Modi," *The Economic Time*s, last modified November 2, 2019, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-has-put-forward-reasonable-proposals-for-rcep-deal-prime-minister-modi/articleshow/71863809.cms?from=mdr.

3   K.V. Kesavan, "India's 'Act East' policy and regional cooperation," *Observer Researcher Foundation,* February 14, 2020, https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-act-east-policy-and-regional-cooperation-61375/.

permits and licenses.[4] This suggested that the foreign policy agenda laid out by the Modi-led government perfectly aligned with the outcomes sought by RCEP.

In the face of resistance during the RCEP negotiations, India redrew its demands to satisfy domestic and foreign audiences. The shift from a three-tier tariff reduction to a two-tier tariff reduction scheme is a case in point.[5] In the context of domestic concerns regarding flooding imports and RCEP member countries' demand for greater market access, the negotiators forwarded the auto-trigger mechanism (ATM) scheme.[6] The scheme would pacify both demands by allowing for market access while simultaneously protecting domestic markets by instituting safeguards when imports cross a certain threshold. More than 100 consultations were organized over eight years, engaging various stakeholders from key domestic interest groups to reach a negotiation outcome favorable for all.[7] This reflected India's willingness to accommodate and compromise to ensure a successful negotiation.

In 2019, the Prime Minister remarked, "When I measure the RCEP agreement with respect to the interests of all Indians, I do not get a positive answer. Therefore, neither the talisman of Gandhiji nor my own conscience permits me to join RCEP."[8] Subsequently, India disengaged from RCEP negotiations in November 2019 stating that its "outstanding and domestic concerns" remained unresolved. It is puzzling that despite

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4   Richard M. Rossow, "India's FDI Reforms Under Modi: Once a Fountain, Now a Drip," *Centre for Strategic & International Studies*, August 15, 2017, https://www.csis.org/analysis/india%E2%80%99s-fdi-reforms-under-modi-once-fountain-now-drip.

5   Asit Ranjan Mishra, "India's new stance at RCEP may benefit China," *mint*, last modified August 9, 2016, https://www.livemint.com/Politics/qGEPZqVoHO4U4YYvfBgCNP/Indias-new-stance-at-RCEP-may-benefit-China.html.

6   Rajaram Panda, "A Step Too Far: Why India Opted Out of RCEP," *Global Asia*, December 2019, https://www.globalasia.org/v14no4/feature/a-step-too-far-why-india-opted-out-of-rcep_rajaram-panda#:~:text=For%20the%20time%20being%2C%20India,the%20interests%20of%20domestic%20industry.

7   T.V. Narendran, "Premature membership of RCEP would not serve Indian interests," *mint*, last modified December 2, 2020, https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/premature-membership-of-rcep-would-not-serve-indian-interests-11606924603861.html.

8   The Statesman, "Neither Talisman of Gandhiji nor my own conscience permit to join RCEP: PM Modi," *The Statesman*, November 5, 2019, https://www.thestatesman.com/india/neither-talisman-of-gandhiji-nor-my-own-conscience-permit-to-join-rcep-pm-modi-1502817753.html.

this alignment of goals between the foreign policy agenda and the trade deal, as well as Modi's keen interest in successfully concluding the negotiations and the redrawing of win sets to accommodate Level I & II demands,[9] India still withdrew from the trade deal in the eleventh hour.

This paper attempts to address the pertinent question arising from this puzzle: "Why did India disengage from RCEP negotiations?" This question has been the focal point for various scholars who have put forth various explanations. The existing arguments can be grouped under the systemic level of foreign policy analysis. Under this umbrella, economic and geopolitical factors are popularly proposed as the answer to the aforementioned question. This paper will highlight the gaps in the existing arguments and propose a domestic-level factor that more accurately explains the subsequent foreign policy decision. Through the independent variable of domestic politics, characterized by the strong lobbying by interest groups, this paper seeks to explain the dependent variable of India's decision to withdraw from RCEP. An extensive review of existing literature, news reports, official documents, speeches, and public statements will be undertaken to conduct this research.

Systemic Factors

The two major ramifications of RCEP for India are "economic" and "geopolitical," which are the popular reasons cited for the country's exit. While both reasons are valid, they are insufficient in explaining the outcome, as will be discussed in the following sections.

A. Economic Factors

Under the paradigm of liberalism, commercial liberalism argues that economic interdependence does not ensure peace among states. Rather, it's the distribution of these economic gains that is critical. Commercial liberalism assesses the cost and benefits involved in transnational economic exchange, which subsequently curtails or facilitates the participation of individual states. Economist Dani Rodrik argued that "trade liberalization generates domestic

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9   Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988).

distributional shifts totaling many times aggregate welfare benefits."[10] It argues against the assumption that markets always incentivize states to cooperate. Commercial liberalists claim that it is the structure of markets and domestic distribution that will dictate the course of action-cooperation or protectionism.[11] The asymmetrical impact of free trade produces winners and losers which go on to shape state preferences and actions.

Commercial liberalism provides the rationale behind the arguments forwarded by scholars who state economic factors as reasons propelling India's decision. The economic argument revolves around India's experience with Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and the country's massive trade deficit. Out of the 15 RCEP countries, India registered a trade deficit of US$105 billion in FY 2018-2019 with eleven RCEP member countries, a substantial rise from US$54 billion in 2013-2014.[12] Keeping in line with the commercial liberalist argument, scholars argue that the asymmetrical market access ushered in by FTAs has resulted in a massive rise in imports, but sluggish Indian exports.[13] Scholars argue that a cost-benefit analysis of India's past FTAs has revealed unfavorable gains for the country. A positive correlation has been noted by Akarsh Bhutani between FTAs and trade deficits,[14] citing the example of bilateral trade agreements with ASEAN, South Korea, and Japan where the trade deficits have worsened post-signing of FTAs.[15] These past experiences have shaped India's averseness to RCEP, which was seen to further exacerbate this problem. Thus, it was the asymmetrical distributional impact on the domestic economy, as suggested

10   Dani Rodrik, "The Limits of Trade Policy Reform in Developing Countries," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (1992).

11   Andrew Moravcsik, "The New Liberalism," *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, September 2013, https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199604456-e-033#oxfordhb-9780199604456-bibItem-3025.

12   Chao Wang and Sharma Vinay, "India's RCEP Dilemma with China: Beyond the Legal Texts*," *Pacific Focus* 36, no. 1 (2021).

13   Sanchita Chatterjee, "Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership: Implications for India's Rules of Origin," Economic and Political Weekly 49, no. 45 (November 2014).

14   Akarsh Bhutani, "India's reluctance in joining the RCEP — A boon or a bane in the long-run?," *Observer Research Foundation*, February 10, 2021, https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-reluctance-joining-rcep-boon-bane-long-run/.

15   Panda, "A Step Too Far."

by commercial liberalists, that compelled India to withdraw from RCEP.

The economic argument has its merits, yet it is insufficient in explaining the outcome. First and foremost, as abundant research has established, trade deficits on their own are not necessarily negative or a point of concern.[16] Secondly, Arvind Panagariya in his study revealed that from 2007 to 2017 India's bilateral position vis-a-vis its FTA partners actually improved. He further added that although imports have risen substantially with partners under trade agreements, these imports still form only six to seven percent of India's total imports.[17] The graph below (Figure 1) undermines the positive correlation established between FTAs and trade deficits by showcasing how India's trade deficits went down in the presence of trade agreements. The only country where the trade deficit rose from 2007 to 2017 is China, with which India does not have an FTA. Lastly, if it is indeed FTAs that are the leading point of concern for India, this would suggest that the country would not pursue any other FTAs. However, as of 2021, India is currently pursuing an FTA with the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and even RCEP member countries, New Zealand and Australia. Thus, this establishes that FTAs and trade deficits could be at best subsidiary causes, rather than the leading cause behind New Delhi's disengagement from the trading agreement.

16   Robert W. McGee, "Why Trade Deficits Don't Matter," *Policy Analysis,* no.6 (July 1996); George Alessandria, "Trade deficits aren't as bad as you think," *Business Review* (2007).

17   Yogima Seth Sharma, "India must join RCEP: Arvind Panagariya," *Economic Times*, last modified June 3, 2020, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-must-join-rcep-arvind-panagariya/articleshow/76160939.cms.

FTAs are not the problem
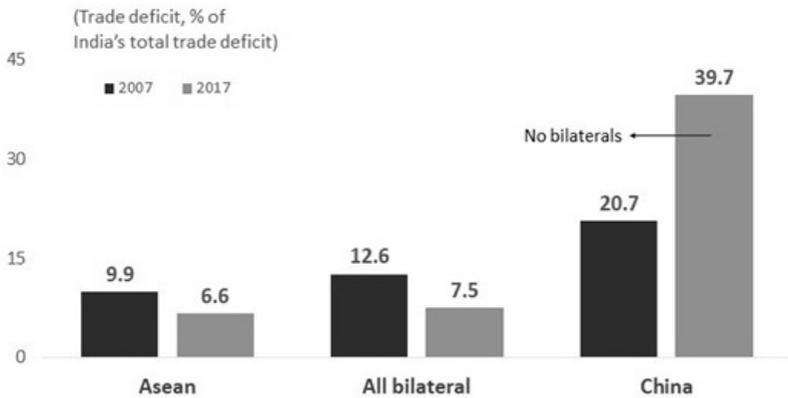
Figure 1. Trade deficit with RCEP countries vis-à-vis the presence of bilateral[18]

B. Geopolitical Factors

According to the realist school of international relations, states as unitary actors are guided by national interest. In an anarchic international order, realists argue that the primary goal of a state is to ensure survival through the means of accumulating and maximizing power. As John Mearsheimer explains, "states want to make sure that no other state gains power at their expense" and as a result, states value relative gains more than absolute gains.[19] Relative gains highlight how much one benefits in relation to the other as opposed to the absolute gain of both states.[20] This idea is critical in the realm of international trade, as disproportionate distribution of gains in trade inhibits complete cooperation between states because according to realists, the international order is a zero-sum game.

18   Sunil Jain, "Get competitive, don't blame RCEP: Why India's exports haven't grown as fast as China's or Vietnam's," *The Financial Express*, November 17, 2020, https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/get-competitive-dont-blame-rcep-why-indias-exports-havent-grown-as-fast-as-chinas-or-vietnams/2129784/.

19   John J. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

20   Robert Powell, "Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory," *The American Political Science Review* 85, no. 4 (December 1991).

The central tenets of realism provide a segue into the geopolitical factors put forward by scholars to explain India's withdrawal. Various scholars have emphasized the "China factor" of RCEP. Out of the 15 RCEP countries, India already has an FTA with 12, and is currently pursuing trade agreements with New Zealand and Australia. The only country with which India currently does not have a bilateral trading agreement is China. China's participation in the trade agreement has been a great cause of concern for India since the initiation of the negotiations.[21] A long-standing border dispute has created tension between the two countries, and this has been further aggravated by the recent border skirmishes. Moreover, out of all RCEP countries, India has the largest trade deficit with China.[22] Domestic manufacturers feared that market access under RCEP would lead to Chinese imports flooding domestic markets and domestic products not being granted symmetrical access to China's markets.[23] As argued by realists, the higher relative gains of China, as opposed to India, inhibited New Delhi's cooperation in RCEP.

The looming presence of China in RCEP was a great cause of concern for India. Yet, the arguments are inadequate in explaining its final foreign policy decision. As argued above, trade deficits exclusively are not a point of concern unless they result from massive government borrowing. Secondly, although the two countries may have tense relations, India continues to rely heavily on China economically, with a bilateral trade of roughly US$91 billion, making it improbable to decouple the two economies.[24] Contrary to the concerns stated, scholars have argued that in the absence of FTA, the RCEP negotiations would have provided a formal opportunity for India to negotiate greater market access, especially in areas of its comparative advantage—

21   Amitendu Palit, "Domestic politics force India's withdrawal from RCEP and broader trade disengagement," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, no. 494 (November 26, 2019).

22   Harsh V. Pant, "The China factor in India's RCEP move," *The Hindu*, November 9, 2019,https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-china-factor-in-indias-rcep-move/article29925057.ece.

23   Brahma Chellaney, "The China Factor Behind India's Pullout from RCEP," *Stagecraft and Statecraft*, February 7, 2020, https://chellaney.net/2020/02/07/the-china-factor-behind-indias-pullout-from-rcep/.

24   Press Trust of India, "India-China trade volumes on course to touch record $100 billion-mark," *Business Standard*, October 13, 2021, https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-china-trade-volumes-on-course-to-touch-record-100-billion-mark-121101301244_1.html#:~:text=The%20bilateral%20trade%20between%20India,released%20by%20the%20Chinese%20customs.&text=The%20Indian%.

pharmaceuticals and IT services.[25] Analysts from ICICI Securities remarked, "The fear of imports from China is relatively unfounded and, if witnessed, can be better addressed by staying within the RCEP framework vis-a-vis staying out."[26] Thirdly, the graph below (Figure 2) shows that over the past couple of years, the trade deficit with China has significantly declined. Thus, it would be counterintuitive in this context to suddenly pull out of RCEP in 2019. The argument of a massive trade deficit with Beijing would hold validity if New Delhi had decided to withdraw earlier during a period of fluctuating deficit.
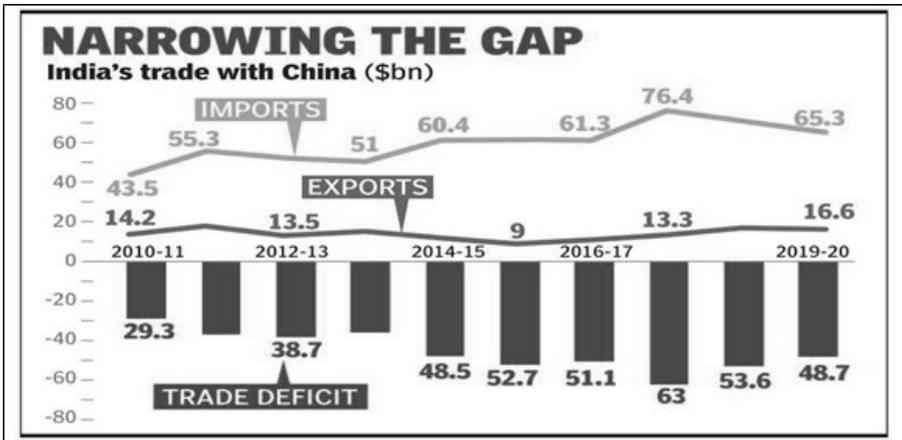
Figure 2. India's trade with China[27]

Domestic Factors

Since the systemic factors are insufficient in explaining India's withdrawal from

25   Panda, "A Step Too Far."

26   Vatsala Gaur, "Inclusion of steel in RCEP talks worries industry captains," The Economic Times, September 19, 2019, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/inclusion-of-steel-in-rcep-talks-worries-industry-captains/articleshow/71193969.cms?from=mdr.

27   The Times of India, "India's trade deficit with China at 5-year low," *The Times of India*, June 23, 2020, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/indias-trade-deficit-with-china-at-5-year-low/articleshow/76521335.cms.

RCEP, the next level of analysis that needs to be explored is the domestic factors. Domestically, the main opposition against India's decision to engage in RCEP negotiations arose from varied interest groups. A study conducted by two trade specialists, Ram Singh and Surendar Singh, revealed that eight interest groups in India had a high impact on the government's RCEP negotiations. Three of out these eight were farmers associations (Swadeshi Jagran Manch, Confederation of Indian Farmer Associations, and All India Kisan Sabha), three were industrial associations (Confederation of Indian Industry, Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Indian Stainless Steel Development Association), one was a dairy board (National Dairy Development Board), and the last was the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM). Out of these eight, only one argued in favor of liberalization—NASSCOM. The remaining seven argued for the protection of their sectors and goods.[28] Each of these sectors registered their protest against the government's involvement in RCEP publicly. Due to the limitations of space, the following section will delve deeper into the grievances of two major interest groups—the dairy and steel sectors.

A. Dairy Sector

The dairy sector in India vociferously condemned the country's participation in the RCEP negotiations as it would be most adversely affected by joining the agreement. Unlike in other RCEP countries, the dairy farmers of India are more fragmented as they largely operate independently, and their production is not channeled through cooperatives or dairy companies. This is well reflected by the fact that the country has roughly 150 million dairy farmers, with most of them owning only two to three buffalos.[29] The sector has historically operated under a very protected trade regime. For instance, the trading pact with ASEAN (2009) in which most dairy products were placed on the exclusion list. A similar pattern can be observed in FTAs with Japan (2011) and South Korea (2010).[30]

The participation of New Zealand, Australia, and China in RCEP

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28   Surendar Singh and Ram Singh, "Domestic Sources of India's Trade Policy Preferences in RCEP Negotiations," *Jorunal of World Trade* 54, no. 4 (2020).

29   Harekrishna Misra, "Why India needs to protect its small dairy farmers," *Financial Express*, September 9, 2019, https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/why-india-needs-to-protect-its-small-dairy-farmers/1700001/.

30   Panda, "A Step Too Far."

was a cause of great concern for India. Out of the 15 RCEP countries, India has pre-existing FTAs with ASEAN, Japan, and South Korea under which most dairy products have been excluded.[31] New Zealand and Australia are top dairy exporters worldwide with a highly organized dairy sector under large multinational corporations (MNCs). The graph below (Figure 3) compares the milk production of India, New Zealand, and Australia, with their share of exports of processed goods to RCEP countries. India's large-scale milk production is counteracted by its massive domestic consumption and does not translate into greater exports. Small and marginal dairy farmers will be driven out of domestic markets with RCEP providing market access to MNCs and substantially lowering tariffs on imports.
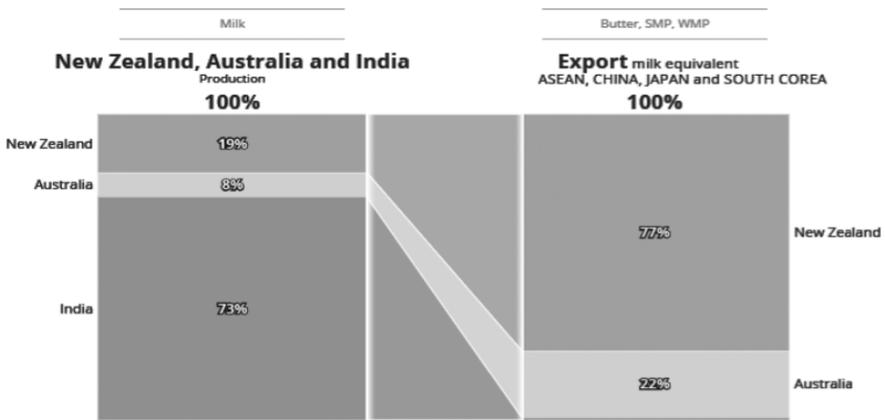
Figure 3. India's milk production and export to RCEP countries vis-à-vis New Zealand and Australia[32]

The dairy farmers were at the forefront of anti-RCEP protests organized nationwide on November 4, 2019. States such as Karnataka also saw protests from dairy farmers in October, during which the farmers blocked the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway to hold demonstrations. Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Limited, one of the biggest dairy cooperatives in India, filed a written complaint to the Commerce Ministry, stating the devastating

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31   Singh and Singh, "Domestic Sources of India's Trade Policy Preferences."

32   Ibid.

implications of RCEP on the dairy sector in India.[33] The Confederation of All Indian Traders urged the Indian government to exclude dairy products, stating that "import of dairy products under RCEP agreement would be detrimental to Indian dairy industry and may create huge loss to milk producers of India and the dream of doubling farmers' income would be shattered."[34] Thus, the demand and concerns of the dairy sector were effectively and explicitly voiced.

B. Steel Sector

The steel industry of India is oligopolistic with a few key players dominating the market—Steel Authority India Limited, Tata Steel, Jindal Steel Works (JSW) Steel, Essar Steel, and Ispat Industries, which account for 80 percent of the total steel production of India.[35] Akin to the dairy sector, the steel industry operates under high protection from the government with a recent increase in import tariffs and the introduction of "minimum import price" on steel and steel products.

The concerns of the steel sector stem primarily from China. China is the world's largest steel producer with roughly 993 metric tons of total production every year, in contrast to India's meager annual output of 111 metric tons.[36] A Joint Plant Committee report revealed that in 2019, steel was more expensive in India than most other international suppliers. This protectionism provided by the Indian government allowed the domestic steel industry to become a net exporter of steel for the first time in 14 years. However, opening up domestic markets to China would effectively drive down prices and curtail profits made by the Indian steel industry. Under RCEP, "India will become a dumping ground for all goods through this 'Open Door Policy' approach by the government, thereby destroying the manufacturing sector in India, resulting in losses of jobs and investor confidence in India," as

33   National Herald, "RCEP: Amul warns Modi govt, letter to Piyush Goyal likely to fall on deaf ears," *National Herald*, November 2, 2019, https://www. nationalheraldindia.com/india/rcep-amul-warns-modi-government-letter-to-piyush-goyal-likely-to-fall-on-deaf-ears.

34   Press Trust of India, "CAIT urges PM to exclude dairy products from RCEP," *Deccan Herald*, October 4, 2019, https://www.deccanherald.com/business/business-news/cait-urges-pm-to-exclude-dairy-products-from-rcep-766317.html.

35   Singh and Singh, "Domestic Sources of India's Trade Policy Preferences."

36   Nachiket Kelkar, "India turns net exporter of steel to China for the first time in years," *The Week*, September 21, 2020, https://www.theweek.in/news/biz-tech/2020/09/21/india-turns-net-exporter-of-steel-to-china-for-the-first-time-in-years.html

argued by Abhyuday Jindal, the Managing Director of Jindal Stainless.[37] This concern was sparked due to past experiences of FTAs with Korea and Japan. The fear is that competition would shift the market away from an oligopoly to a free market where uncompetitive firms will be driven out of the market.

During the inter-ministerial consultations, the key players of the steel industry collectively and separately issued statements suggesting their discontent with the inclusion of steel in RCEP negotiations. Tata and Jindal were at the forefront of protesting against the inclusion of steel products stating, "If RCEP negotiations are finalized, the Indian steel industry, which has suffered in the past even under the current FTA arrangements with 13 countries, should be excluded from its purview."[38] Aruna Sharma, Secretary in the Ministry of Steel India, echoed this sentiment post these meetings in his remark, "We are very clear as far as steel is concerned it should be out of RCEP."[39] These concerns made their way to the top due to a sizable amount of political funding made to the government by the steel industry. A study conducted by Harry Stevens and Aman Sethi revealed that the majority of political funding in India is sourced through electoral trust companies. In the years 2018-2019, BJP received 75 percent of its funding from Tata Group's Progressive Electoral Trust.[40] For this reason, it is challenging for any Indian government in power to circumvent the demands and concerns of the steel industrialists.

The other key interest groups mobilizing protest against India's involvement were the agricultural sector and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch. Small and marginal farmers with less than two hectares of land comprise 82 percent of all farmers in India. Much like the concerns of the dairy sector, the

37   Jindal Stainless Steel, "Media Statement by Abhyuday Jindal, Managing Director, Jindal Stainless On Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement," *Jindal Stainless*, November 13, 2018, https://www.jindalstainless.com/press-releases/media-statement-by-abhyuday-jindal-on-rcep-agreement/.

38   Gaur, "Inclusion of steel in RCEP talks worries industry captains."

39   Deepshikha Sikarwar, "Steel ministry against inclusion of finished products in RCEP," *The Economic Times*, August 21, 2018, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/steel-ministry-against-inclusion-of-finished-products-in-rcep/articleshow/65481392.cms?from=mdr.

40   Aishwarya Paliwal, "BJP received 75% of its donation from Tata Group's Progressive Electoral Trust," *India Today*, November 13, 2019, https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/bjp-received-biggest-donation-from-progressive-electoral-trust-1618401-2019-11-13.

opening up of markets to foreign products and reduction in tariffs on imports would leave small farmers highly vulnerable. Farmers from all key agricultural states in India—Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Haryana—organized a nationwide protest on November 4, 2019, against RCEP. Farmers' unions—Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers' Movements, All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, Confederation of Indian Farmer's Associations, and All India Kisan Sabha—all united to represent the interests of the Indian farming community.[41] The grievances of the farming sector had a decisive impact on the ruling party, as they comprise the single largest voters block with 500 million voters.[42]

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) is the non-political affiliate of the ruling party, BJP. It is a subsidiary body of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the parent body of BJP.[43] The body represents the interest of small and marginal farmers, artisans, businesses, rural industries, etc., and advocates for self-reliance or "*swadeshi*"[44] for India. The group organized an eleven-day nationwide protest from October 11, 2019, against RCEP, mobilizing the agriculture and dairy sectors.[45] Since coming to power in 2014, this is the first time any faction of RSS has publicly protested against a government decision.

The domestic opposition posed by interest group lobbies was further compounded by BJP's poor performance in the state elections of 2019 in Maharashtra and Haryana (both key agricultural states of India), widespread clamor over the poor financial state of the country, and a crucial winter session

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41   Singh and Singh, "Domestic Sources of India's Trade Policy Preferences."

42   Maroosha Muzaffar, "How 500 million farmers became India's swing voters," *OZY*, April 24, 2019, https://www.ozy.com/news-and-politics/how-500-million-farmers-became-indias-swing-voters/93768/.

43   Gyan Varma, "RSS affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch starts 10-day nationwide protest against RCEP," *Mint*, October 10, 2019, https://www.livemint.com/news/india/rss-affiliate-swadeshi-jagran-manch-starts-10-day-nationwide-protest-against-rcep-11570705535646.html.

44   A Hindi term that calls for the boycott of foreign goods and promotes reliance on domestic products

45   Press Trust of India, "SJM to hold nationwide protests from October 10-20 against RCEP," *The Economic Times,* October 10, 2019, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/sjm-to-hold-nationwide-protests-from-october-10-20-against-rcep/articleshow/71517485.cms?from=mdr.

of parliament that was approaching.[46] It is evident that this dissatisfaction posed serious pressure on the government based on the Indian negotiators' request for the postponement of concluding the terms of the RCEP agreement and its subsequent signing from 2018 to 2019, post-India's general elections.[47]

After evaluating the role played by economic, geopolitical, and domestic factors on the country's decisions to disengage from RCEP, the only variable unaddressed until now is the role of leadership preferences and bureaucratic politics in explaining India's protectionist stance toward RCEP. Pre-RCEP, as far back as the Doha Ministerial Declaration (2001), India opposed the demands of the US and EU to liberalize agricultural and industrial sectors.[48] Past FTAs with ASEAN, Japan, and South Korea showcased a high level of protection for agriculture and textile products signed under the Congress party.[49] The only sector extensively liberalized was the service sector. During RCEP, under BJP, this pattern lived on with a demand to keep agriculture, dairy, and steel products out of the ambit of the negotiations. Post-RCEP, the inclusion of dairy products in the FTA with the EU was a point of contention that led to the suspension of negotiations in 2006. These negotiations were reinitiated in 2021.[50] India is currently under negotiations for an FTA with Australia wherein most finished agriculture and dairy products have been left outside the purview of the trade deal.[51] This brings forth a

46   Satyam Sharma, "Wake up call for BJP, return of regional satraps: Quick takeaways from Maharashtra, Haryana polls," *The Economic Times*, October 25, 2019, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/elections/assembly-elections/maharashtra/wake-up-call-for-bjp-return-of-regional-satraps-quick-takeaways-from-maharashtra-haryana-polls/articleshow/71744057.cms?from=mdr.

47   Kentaro Iwamoto, "India sought to delay RCEP deal beyond general election," *Nikkei Asia*, November 14, 2018, https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/India-sought-to-delay-RCEP-deal-beyond-general-election.

48   Singh and Singh, "Domestic Sources of India's Trade Policy Preferences."

49   Nandini Sarma, "Free Trade after RCEP: What next for India?," *Observer Research Foundation*, April 6, 2020, https://www.orfonline.org/research/free-trade-after-rcep-what-next-for-india-64163/.

50   Rutam Vora, "Dairy players oppose free trade pact with EU," *The Hindu Business Line*, March 26, 2021, https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/dairy-players-oppose-free-trade-pact-with-eu/article34172561.ece.

51   Kritika Suneja, "India, Australia likely to resume FTA talks soon," *The Economic Times*, June 6, 2021, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-australia-likely-to-resume-fta-talks-soon/articleshow/83265110.cms?from=mdr.

pattern of exclusion and inclusion in India's trade deals irrespective of changes in central leadership and bureaucracy, thus establishing that all governments and bureaucracies in India are highly susceptible to the demands of key interest groups during trade deals, irrespective of their composition.

Conclusion

Traditionally, theories of international relations assume the state to be a primary and unitary actor behind foreign policy decisions. However, an extensive analysis of distinct foreign policies unpacks the various actors—the central leadership, bureaucracy, public opinion, etc.—within a state that influence its foreign policy. In the undertaken case of India's disengagement from RCEP, the study evaluates the role of a multitude of factors to reveal the predominant cause behind the outcome. While the paper recognizes the crucial role played by economic and geopolitical reasons, it reveals the centrality of the domestic factor of internal lobbying by interest groups in shaping the outcome of disengagement.

The paper begins by analyzing the pre-existing causes identified by scholars—economic and geopolitical factors—behind New Delhi's final decision to withdraw from RCEP. Under economic factors, the country's history of unfavorable gains under FTAs which result in trade deficits are popularly cited as reasons behind India's decision to disengage. However, the study reveals the positive impact of FTAs on trade deficits which is further highlighted by India's sustained efforts to sign more trading agreements with the European Union, New Zealand, Australia, etc. in the past couple of years. This undermines the centrality of economic factors in the foreign policy decision of India. The second reason forwarded by scholars is the geopolitical concerns arising from China's looming presence in RCEP. The massive trade deficit that India registers with China and the fear of the latter making unfair gains at the cost of the former are cited as primary geopolitical causes. However, in recent years, India recorded a diminishing trade deficit with China. Additionally, the RCEP framework provides a better opportunity for India to negotiate for better market access to China, thus disallowing unfair gains.

This paper puts forth the strong lobbying by domestic factions as the principal cause behind India's decision to withdraw from RCEP. Various interest groups such as the dairy industry, steel industry, farming community, and Swadeshi Jagran Manch collectively mounted a nationwide protest against the Indian government's decision to engage in RCEP negotiations. The paper

delves deeper into the grievances of the Indian steel and dairy industries, both of which have historically operated under protectionism. The oligopolistic nature of the former and the fragmented characteristic of the latter leave the two sectors uncompetitive. Under RCEP, the opening up of domestic markets to foreign competition would render the Indian firms vulnerable and threaten their survival, hence their resistance to the agreement. Given that these domestic firms comprise huge vote banks and massive electoral funding, the government becomes highly susceptible to the dissent of these interest groups.

By highlighting the gaps in the prevalent reasons identified behind India's disengagement from RCEP, the study uncovers the critical role played by domestic factors. The undertaken case study goes against the assumptions of traditional IR theories to reveal the complexities of foreign policy making which is influenced by multiple actors within a state. Despite the recognized benefits of the engagement, the willingness of the central leadership, and the efforts of the bureaucracy in concluding India's membership into the RCEP trading bloc, the government had to withdraw after eight years of negotiations. The paper reveals the vulnerability of states, under certain conditions, to the demands of internal interest groups in shaping foreign policies.

Australia-Korea Cyber Diplomacy – Advancing Bilateral Cooperation on Cyber and Critical Technologies

Jonathan Lim

Australian lawyer, cybersecurity analyst, and policy analyst

This paper analyzes the bilateral relationship between Australia and South Korea in cyber and technology from a geopolitical perspective, considering the convergence of shared values and principles surrounding the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). This assesses how ideological influences and subjective geopolitical conditions have shaped national approaches to Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology (CACT). The potential for value-based disagreements surrounding democratic principles, human rights, and ethics in the use of technology arises from subjective national historical contexts, social conditions, and political experiences. These underscore divergent approaches in CACT governance and values across Canberra and Seoul, highlighting the necessity for concordance and cooperation across several areas in driving the responsible, trusted, and transparent use of technology under the elevated Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP). Australia and South Korea face persistent challenges in alignment upon common norms and practices surrounding ICTs. These have manifested in response to the growing influence of Big Tech, differing approaches to human rights, and internet censorship. Premised upon "shared values," deepened diplomatic relations on CACT is central in advancing democracy and human rights across the region. This is presented through the opportunity to bolster security cooperation from a human rights-based perspective, in supporting liberal-democratic ideals and safeguarding the international rules-based order.

Keywords: Australia, South Korea, Cyber, Technology, Shared Values, Indo-Pacific

Introduction

The ongoing effects of globalization and information and communications technologies (ICTs) upon regional stability underscores the significance of Australian-South Korean bilateral cooperation in advancing the transparent, secure, and resilient use of technology across the Indo-Pacific. Herein, alignment upon the expanded nature of shared values across Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology (CACT) provides a firm foundation for future bilateral relations—upholding the trusted, transparent, and accountable use of technology in: A) supporting liberal democratic values; and B) advancing a free, open, inclusive, and prosperous region.

The sixtieth anniversary of Australian-South Korean relations in 2021 symbolized a critical juncture, noting the mutual desire for intensified bilateral engagement.[1] South Korea's bond with Australia originated from wartime cooperation during the Korean War— recognizing Australia's commitment of 17,000 military personnel toward ensuring South Korea's continued existence, and to protect freedom and democracy on the Korean peninsula.[2]

This relationship has since blossomed through agreements on energy, mineral resources cooperation, international development, and regional security. In 2021, President Moon Jae-in described Australia as an "eternal friend," reflecting South Korea's continued interest in collaboration across national infrastructure and defense to support joint contributions to peace across the region.[3] As like-minded industrialized middle powers, both nations exist as US allies and significant

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1   Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Commonwealth of Australia, "Ambassador's Greetings," *Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Commonwealth of Australia*, last modified 2022, https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/au-en/wpge/m_3301/contents.do.

2   Bae So-hee, "[KESC] 60 years of Australia-South Korea relationship," *The Korea Herald*, last modified January 3, 2022, http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220103000687>.

3   Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Commonwealth of Australia, "Opening Remarks by President Moon Jae-in at Korea-Australia Summit on Sidelines of G7 Summit," *Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Commonwealth of Australia*, last modified June 12, 2021, https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/au-en/brd/m_3312/view.do?seq=761321&page=1.

trading and investment partners linked by a Free Trade Agreement.[4]

While the international trade and proliferation of ICTs has catalyzed economic transformation and disruption across social, legal, and political systems in the Indo-Pacific,[5] it also presents new and emergent challenges for the future of the bilateral relationship. Within the bilateral relationship this has increasingly manifested around two-way ICT trade and developments in emerging technologies, semiconductors, and critical minerals.[6] South Korea's reputation as an innovative economy—combined with its high-technology capability across aerospace, automotive, shipbuilding, electronics, machinery—has heightened interest in new opportunities in AI, IoT, healthcare, cybersecurity, and fintech. While Australia can benefit from South Korea's achievements, the foundation for future collaboration must derive from a common understanding of shared and underlying values.[7]

This paper analyzes Australian-South Korean bilateral cooperation in CACT from a diplomatic and geopolitical perspective[8] by exploring the convergence of shared values and principles in the use of ICTs. This anticipates the continuing potential for divergent ideological principles, and foreign policy responses to geostrategic

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4   Bill Paterson, "Missed opportunity: an appraisal of Australia-Korea relations," *Asialink*, last modified March 15, 2021, https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/insights/missed-opportunity-an-appraisal-of-australia-korea-relations.

5   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Australia's International Cyber and Critical Tech Engagement Strategy," *DFAT*, last modified April 2021, https://www.internationalcybertech.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/21045%20DFAT%20Cyber%20Affairs%20Strategy%20Internals_Acc_update_1_0.pdf, 5.

6   Kristen Bondietti, "Trade Opportunities for the Australian ICT Services and Creative Industries sector - Australia's North Asian FTAs," *RMIT*, last modified September 6, 2017, https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/documents/college-of-business/industry/apec/aasc-ict-services-handout.pdf, 4-5.

7   Alice Dawkins and Xiaoyi Kong, Lydekker, "Australia should learn from South Korea's homegrown tech success, *East Asia Forum,* last modified July 1, 2021, https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/07/01/australia-should-learn-from-south-koreas-homegrown-tech-success/.

8   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Blueprint for Defence and Security Cooperation between Australia and the Republic of Korea 2015," *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, last modified September 11, 2015, https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/republic-of-korea/Pages/blueprint-for-defence-and-security-cooperation-between-australia-and-the-republic-of-korea.

challenges, to spur disagreement and conflict surrounding CACT.[9] [10]

This paper reflects upon the relationship's shared objectives through analysis of diplomatic exchanges, ministerial statements, and foreign policy documents. This contextualizes bilateral CACT diplomatic engagement across several bilateral initiatives. The paper then focuses upon values-based differences surrounding human rights and the ethics of critical technology. Finally, the paper advances mutual policies in advancing future engagement through the trusted, transparent, and accountable use of technology.

Context

Background

The positive status of Australian-South Korean bilateral relations is attributed to the depth of their trade and diplomatic engagement. This enhanced trading relationship between the two countries emerged following the 2014 Korea Australia Free Trade Agreement—improving market access and tariff liberalization for cross-border merchandise trade. This would be further reinforced during the 2021 2+2 Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting (2+2 Meeting).[11]

South Korea is Australia's fourth largest two-way trading partner, with two-way trade increasing from AUD600 million to AUD49 billion from 2003-2018.[12] The scale of common trade interests and mutually beneficial interests spanning manufacturing, defense, and energy demonstrates mutual trust and commitment to joint progress; and emphasizes the need

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9   Gilford John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West," *Foreign Affairs*, last modified February 2008, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2008-01-01/rise-china-and-future-west.

10   Matt Henry and Matthew Carney, "China and the US are locked in a superpower tech war to win the 21st century," *ABC,* last modified July 8, 2021, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-07-08/trump-facebook-twitter-china-us-superpower-tech-war/100273812.

11   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Republic of Korea country brief," *DFAT*, last modified 2022, https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/republic-of-korea/republic-of-korea-south-korea-country-brief#trade-investment.

12   Australian Trade and Investment Commission (ATIC), "Export Markets – Republic of Korea," *ATIC*, last modified 2022, https://www.austrade.gov.au/australian/export/export-markets/countries/republic-of-korea/market-profile.

for enhanced foresight across anticipated bilateral engagements in CACT.

From a geostrategic perspective, such overlaps in foreign policy and national interests catalyze cooperative relations.[13] During the 2020 Seventh Australia-ROK Strategic Dialogue, the bilateral relationship was described as "underpinned by shared values, a common strategic outlook, complementary economies, and people-to-people links,"[14] the idea being that enhanced cooperation in security, people-to-people relations, and economic cooperation would facilitate common support for a stable and prosperous region.[15]

Consequently, the 2+2 Meeting and its joint statement attest to the strong cooperative bilateral relationship—expressing a common desire for cooperation on shared interests in achieving a "free and rules-based multilateral trading system" wherein "the flow of goods, people and ideas promotes prosperity and stability."[16] Furthermore, the statement's strong language on human rights in Afghanistan demonstrates a "strong commitment to promoting and protecting universal human rights, and [agreement] to support the United Nations and other international organizations in their efforts to promote and protect human rights across the Indo-Pacific."

The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

In 2021, Australian and South Korean leaders jointly declared the "Australia-ROK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" (CSP).[17] The CSP joint statement embodied a deepening of the bilateral relationship, predicated upon strong

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13   Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Commonwealth of Australia, "Ambassador's Greetings."

14   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Seventh Australia-ROK Strategic Dialogue," *DFAT*, last modified November 11, 2020, https://www.dfat.gov.au/news/media-release/seventh-australia-rok-strategic-dialogue.

15   Ibid.

16   Minister for Foreign Affairs, "Joint Statement: Australia-Republic of Korea Foreign and Defence Ministers' 2+2 Meeting 2021," *Minister for Foreign Affairs*, last modified September 13, 2021, https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-release/joint-statement-australia-republic-korea-foreign-and-defence-ministers-22-meeting-2021.

17   Prime Minister of Australia, "Australia-ROK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership – Joint Statement," *Prime Minister of Australia*, last modified December 14, 2021, https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-rok-comprehensive-strategic-partnership.

cooperation and trusted dialogue in driving enhanced cooperation across: 1) strategic and security; 2) economic, innovation and technology; and 3) people-to-people exchange. Most relevant within the CSP's contents was its explicit reference to "shared values of democracy and universal human rights." This was further alluded through the CSP's assertions toward "deepening cooperation om human rights", focusing upon gender equality. The CSP thus displays expanded bilateral focus on human rights including economic, social, and cultural matters tied to civil and political issues.

In alluding to shared values and liberal democratic interests, the joint statement also highlights a joint commitment to an international rules-based order where international law/rules/norms would: A) guide cooperation on common challenges; B) drive economic prosperity; C) promote the peaceful resolution of disputes; and D) ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Cooperation under this framework would be pursued through multilateral rules and institutions in promoting free and open international trade, particularly in terms of clean energy technology and critical minerals.[18]

The CSP thus references the importance of shared values in the context of CACT, underscoring a "shared vision of an open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful cyberspace that drives economic prosperity, protects national security, and promotes international stability." This was affirmed in reference to: A) The 2021 Australia-Korea Memorandum of Understanding on CACT (MOU);[19] and B) The 2021 Cyber and Critical Technology Policy Dialogue.

Memorandum of Understanding on Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology

The adoption of the 2021 MOU symbolized a watershed moment for enhanced alignment on technology for Australian-South Korean relations. The MOU underscored the need to expand upon the depth of shared values and common ideals across CACT, a view elevated by the sixtieth

18   Prime Minister of Australia, "Australia and Republic of Korea sign new deals on clean energy tech and critical minerals – Media Release," *Prime Minister of Australia*, last modified December 13, 2021, https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-and-republic-korea-sign-new-deals-clean-energy-tech-and-critical-minerals.

19   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Australia and the Republic of Korea sign new MoU on Cyber and Critical Technology Cooperation," *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,* last modified September 14, 2021, https://www.internationalcybertech.gov.au/Australia-and-Korea-sign-MoU.

anniversary of diplomatic ties, and subsequently reaffirmed under the CSP. The MOU set forth a common definition of critical technology: "current and emerging technologies with the capacity to significantly enhance, or pose risks to, the two countries' prosperity, social cohesion and national security."[20]

However, when considering its relevance in relation to common values and principles in technology, the MOU remains silent on shared values, democracy, human rights, or freedom. While the MOU asserts the common desire "to promote an open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful cyberspace," this is only stated in the preamble which points to its relative lack of importance.[21] These points highlight the MOU's intentional emphasis upon economic development, security, and multilateralism as leading elements across CACT.

Shared Values

Complementary assertions in diplomatic dialogues emphasize the mutually reinforcing and future-oriented relationship of Australia and South Korea. This can be seen by the proclamation of "shared values" and common interests, referencing alignment across socio-political and ideological outlooks. In exploring continued bilateral cooperation and elevated relations within CACT, stakeholders must determine the precise character and content of such shared values.

Analysis on the prevailing definition of "shared values" focuses upon the contents of diplomatic exchanges. Firstly, the 2014 Vision Statement for a secure, peaceful and prosperous future between the Republic of Korea and Australia outlined common values and a strong commitment to "democracy, the rule of law, and market based economies."[22] Second, the 2+2 Meeting extolled the shared values of freedom, democracy, universal human rights and rule of law.[23] Finally, the 2021 Inaugural ROK-Australia Cyber and Critical Technology

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20   Ibid.

21   Ibid.

22   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Vision statement for a secure, peaceful and prosperous future between the Republic of Korea and Australia 2014," *DFAT*, last modified 2022, https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/republic-of-korea/vision-statement-for-a-secure-peaceful-and-prosperous-future-between-the-republic-of-korea-and-australia.

23   Minister for Foreign Affairs, "Joint Statement: Australia-Republic of Korea Foreign and Defence Ministers' 2+2 Meeting 2021."

Policy Dialogue referenced "shared democratic values to achieve common goals of security and prosperity," in the context of enjoined commitment to an "open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful cyberspace." These exchanges contribute to a definitive definition of shared values as encompassing: [24]

- Democracy
- Democratic values
- The rule of law
- Freedom
- Human rights
- Market-based economies

This definition of shared values within CACT is particularly significant in the context of China's rise.[25] Where China's digital ambitions challenges the realization of an open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful cyberspace; the contents of shared values in the bilateral relationship extols the ideological merits of liberal democratic values across CACT.

Second, noting the similarly intimate relations shared by both nations vis-à-vis the US, the scope and character of shared values is crucial toward: A) continued cooperation and coordination with Washington across CACT; and B) upholding the existing rules-based international order. The US's position as an ideological counterpoint to China evolved from concentrated restrictions and tariffs on the cross-border flow of technology.[26] Since positive relations with Washington presents a common concern, continuing values alignment is central for trilateral economic, security, and diplomatic cooperation.

Finally, shared values play a paramount role in national soft power influence. When a common perspective on shared values is applied interoperably across multilateral institutions and foreign policy, this elevates the ability of both nations to exert international influence as like-minded middle powers to facilitate greater economic growth, encourage innovation,

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24   Jeffrey Robertson, "More than Old Friends? Narrative in Australia's Relationship with Korea," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 63, no. 1 (2017): 28.

25   Wilson Center, "China vs. Western Values: Xi Jinping's Ideology Campaign," filmed at the Wilson Center, posted on April 21, 2015, video, 6:07, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/china-vs-western-values-xi-jinpings-ideology-campaign.

26   Claudia Canals and Jordi Singla, "The US-China technology conflict: an initial insight," *CaixaBank Research,* last modified November 5, 2020, https://www.caixabankresearch.com/en/economics-markets/activity-growth/us-china-technology-conflict-initial-insight.

and realize the full benefits of ICTs while protecting against the risks of their misuse to regional stability and prosperity.[27] Clarity across shared values performs several important functions:[28]

- In the provision of moral authority and building confidence;
- In reviewing and directing future bilateral cooperation toward common goals;
- In counteracting opposing values and principles advanced by adversaries; and
- In advancing international influence/prestige.

Elevated bilateral engagement and alignment in CACT under the CSP may be pursued through the broader conception of a "free and open" Indo-Pacific. Such a pivot within diplomatic lexicon will: 1) reaffirm the importance of democracy and human rights; and 2) reconceptualize the stated objective of the bilateral relationship within CACT as the common pursuit of a "free", open, inclusive, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Analysis

Comparative Approaches

A. Digital and Online Privacy

South Korea's CACT policy perspectives may be analyzed through the government's relationship with digital and online privacy. This follows the conception of privacy as a national security priority and a litmus test for governments—through the treatment of citizens and respect for civil liberties.[29] This is reinforced by the advent of data-intensive technologies, which has increasingly driven a digital environment wherein state and non-state actors are increasingly able to track, analyze, predict, and manipulate individual

27   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Blueprint for Defence and Security Cooperation between Australia and the Republic of Korea 2015."

28   Jan-Philipp N.E. Wagner, "The Effectiveness of Soft & Hard Power in Contemporary International Relations," *E-International Relations*, last modified May 14, 2014, https://www.e-ir.info/2014/05/14/the-effectiveness-of-soft-hard-power-in-contemporary-international-relations/.

29   Katherine Mansted and Eric Rosenbach, "The Geopolitics of Information," *The Australian National University*, last modified January 31, 2022, https://nsc.crawford.anu.edu.au/department-news/14338/geopolitics-information.

behavior to an unprecedented degree. The increasing pace of technological developments threatens human dignity, autonomy, privacy, and the exercise of human rights.[30]

South Korea's approaches to digital and online privacy are informed by Articles 16, 17, and 18 of the Constitution—providing that the privacy of citizens must not be infringed upon, that all citizens must be free from intrusion into their place of residence, and the privacy of the correspondence of citizens must also not be infringed upon.[31] These align with international human rights standards in tracking Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 17(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Although data protection is not explicitly stipulated in the Constitution, the nation's Constitutional Court has recognized the existence of the right to self-determination of personal information as a fundamental right.[32]

Issues surrounding data sharing were highlighted in 2021 during an AI project managed by the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Science. Controversy arose after the government provided 170 million photographs of citizens and foreigners to a private company to train AI algorithms, drawing criticism over the compromise of biometric information and privacy rights. Such indiscriminate biometric data-sharing underscored the government's lack of consideration for international human rights norms surrounding privacy.[33]

South Korea's COVID response using technology underscores issues surrounding the collection, storage, and distribution of public data. The constant receipt of SMS from local authorities, detailing the places and travel routes of confirmed cases, reinforced public perceptions on the

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30   UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "OHCHR and privacy in the digital age," *UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, last modified 2022, ohchr.org/en/issues/digitalage/pages/digitalageindex.aspx.

31   World Intellectual Property Organization, "South Korean Constitution," *WIPO,* last modified 2022, wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/kr/kr061en.pdf.

32   Nohyoung Park, "A Korean Approach to Data Localization," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, last modified August 17, 2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/08/17/korean-approach-to-data-localization-pub-85165.

33   Cheon Ho-sung, "S. Korean government provided 170M facial images obtained in immigration process to private AI developers," *Hankyoreh,* last modified October 21, 2021, https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/1016107.html.

overriding authority of the state to surveil citizens.[34] These practices have raised numerous privacy concerns, including the government's surveillance capabilities as well as the increased instances of online bullying.[35]

An academic study highlighted several examples, including: A) an instance where online rumors circulated that an infected man was having an affair with a woman after their travel routes were made public; and B) where a municipal government leader posted on Facebook that a woman had transmitted the virus to her boyfriend after an evening visit.[36] In these cases, transparency in risk communications and unnecessary information disclosure led to privacy concerns and the risk of engendering social unrest. The revealing of too much personal information could result in unexpected social problems and incite political figures craving the media spotlight to echo unfiltered public demand to collect and disclose more personal information.

These concerns were echoed in the 2021 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy.[37] The report criticized South Korea for its privacy-intrusive approach in handling COVID-19 pandemic, noting the government's invasive efforts to combat the pandemic through massive testing, data-intensive contact tracing, and social distancing. Specifically, concern was raised that the government's use of cell phone location data, CCTV cameras, and its tracking of debit, ATM, and credit cards to identify cases as well as its creation of a publicly available map for people to check whether they have crossed paths with infected individuals, infringed upon the general right to privacy.[38] The rapporteur focused on establishing whether the privacy-intrusive

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34   Human Rights Watch, "South Korea – Events of 2020," *Human Rights Watch*, last modified 2022, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/south-korea.

35   Mark Zastrow, "South Korea is reporting intimate details of COVID-19 cases: has it helped?," *Nature*, last modified March 18, 2020, https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00740-y.

36   Younsik Kim, "Uncertain future of privacy protection under the Korean public health emergency preparedness governance amid the COVID-19 pandemic," *Taylor & Francis Online*, last modified January 4, 2022, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2021.2006393.

37   UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "Report of the Special Rapporteur on right to privacy," *OHCHR,* last modified June 25, 2021, ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session46/Documents/A_HRC_46_37_Add_6.docx.

38   Ibid., 5.

measures taken in South Korea during the pandemic fulfilled several best-practice principles: A) being provided for by law; B) being necessary according to the circumstances; and C) being proportionate in a democratic society.

While the privacy intrusive measures employed to counter the pandemic generally did have a legal basis under domestic legislation, it remained unclear whether such measures were necessary and proportionate within a democratic society. The report concluded that a significant amount of personal data collection in the name of combating COVID-19 was neither necessary nor proportionate for certain periods of time, especially in the period between January-June 2020.[39]

Conversely, Australia's performance during the pandemic underscores divergent approaches across privacy-related issues. The government refrained from the publication of personal contact tracing, only revealing de-identified pieces of information in public notices concerning pandemic exposure sites.[40] This general sentiment against the public disclosure of personal and identifying information (PII) from contact tracing was also impressed upon businesses, with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) instructing businesses on the collection of personal information for contact tracing.[41] However, criticism arose over attempts to integrate technology with government contact tracing efforts, such as the proposed use of facial recognition technology and geolocation for home quarantine apps. The government sought to assure the public by stating that any collected data is encrypted on submission and stored on an Australian server, and moreover will not be destroyed until "the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic unless required for enforcement purposes for any alleged breach of a direction by [the

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39   Ibid., 10.

40   Yasmin Jeffery, "The five hallmarks of successful contact tracing during the coronavirus pandemic," *ABC News,* last modified October 18, 2020, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-18/contact-tracing-coronavirus-australia-five-hallmarks-succcess/12759068.

41   OAIC, "Guidance for businesses collecting personal information for contact tracing," *OAIC,* last modified May 29, 2020, https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/guidance-and-advice/guidance-for-businesses-collecting-personal-information-for-contact-tracing.

subject individual] under the Emergency Management Act 2004."[42] However, civil society groups questioned the duration for data retention especially since it's unclear when the government would deem the pandemic as concluded. The government also faced criticism over attempts to access COVID check-in data for law enforcement purposes, which had primarily been gathered for contact tracing purposes.[43] However, the OAIC's decision to restrict data access from law enforcement helped to reinforce public trust in the government.[44]

Analysis of each nation's approach to digital and online privacy highlights differing approaches in the right to privacy and maintaining public trust. The South Korean government's unnecessary disclosure of personal information and widespread collection and use of personal data during the pandemic reflects the Korean people's lack of self-determination around their personal information and stands in opposition to the democratic values of social justice and the rule of law. Understandably, South Korea's practice of thick communitarianism comes from the government's desire to avoid the mistakes of previous pandemics.[45] Conversely, Australia's demonstrated aversion to the disclosure of PII across contact tracing, informed public submissions process, integration of diverse civil society perspectives, and focus upon maintaining public trust demonstrates adherence to the democratic values of social justice and the rule of law.

42   Josh Taylor, "Home quarantine apps spark privacy fears over facial recognition and geolocation technology," *The Guardian*, last modified October 13, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/oct/13/home-quarantine-apps-prompt-privacy-and-racial-bias-concerns-in-australia.

43   Graham Greenleaf and Katherine Kemp, "Police access to COVID check-in data is an affront to our privacy. We need stronger and more consistent rules in place," *The Conversation*, last modified September 7, 2021, https://theconversation.com/police-access-to-covid-check-in-data-is-an-affront-to-our-privacy-we-need-stronger-and-more-consistent-rules-in-place-167360.

44   Scott Ikeda, "Australian Privacy Watchdog Looks to Ban Police From Accessing Contact Tracing Data for Unrelated Investigations," *CPO Magazine*, last modified September 10, 2021, https://www.cpomagazine.com/data-privacy/australian-privacy-watchdog-looks-to-ban-police-from-accessing-contact-tracing-data-for-unrelated-investigations/.

45   Kim, "Uncertain future of privacy protection under the Korean public health emergency preparedness governance amid the COVID-19 pandemic."

B. Online Censorship

South Korea's national regulatory bodies have exhibited a failure to operate in a free, fair, and independent manner on censorship when it comes to online activities. Domestic law prohibits the type of content one may circulate through an information and communications network, including "obscene content," which is not defined under the law. Moderated by the Korean Communications Commission (KCC) and the Korean Communication Standards Commission (KCSC), providers of information and communication services may be ordered to reject, suspend, or restrict offending information.[46] This can be seen in the KCC's restrictions on South Korea.[47]

Following several national high-profile digital sex crime cases, the government has renewed efforts to restrict access to sexually explicit material through blanket bans and regulations.[48] While this has been viewed as detrimental to free speech and individual freedoms, the government has also been criticized for its failure to address the core issues behind such cases.[49] This is furthered by the lack of legal grounds to prosecute individuals watching or storing pornography in which only adults appear.[50]

Most recent was the adoption of the "Nth room prevention law," a revision to the Telecommunications Business Act requiring internet platforms with sales over 1 billion won, or over 100,000 daily users, to self-censor and remove illegal content from their servers. The law drew public opposition over its perception as increased government censorship and a violation of free speech online, and from platform companies

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46   Human Rights Watch, "My Life is Not Your Porn - Digital Sex Crimes in South Korea," *Human Rights Watch*, last modified June 16, 2021, https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/06/16/my-life-not-your-porn/digital-sex-crimes-south-korea#_ftn149.

47   Korea Bizwire, "South Korea Bans Access to Porn Sites," *Korea Bizwire*, last modified February 20, 2019, http://koreabizwire.com/south-korea-bans-access-to-porn-sites/132882.

48   Haeryun Kang, "2021 in Review: South Korea's Battle with Digital Sex Crimes," *Korea Economic Institute,* last modified December 29, 2021, https://keia.org/the-peninsula/2021-in-review-south-koreas-battle-with-digital-sex-crimes/.

49   Jason Bartlett, "South Korea's Constant Struggle With Digital Sex Crimes," *The Diplomat,* last modified January 26, 2022, https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/south-koreas-constant-struggle-with-digital-sex-crimes/.

50   Korea Bizwire, "South Korea Bans Access to Porn Sites."

struggling with its implementation requirements.[51] Most notable was the law's impact upon chat platform KakaoTalk, subjecting chatrooms to moderation and storing chat records for a mandatory period of three years.[52]

Likewise, South Korea restricts online access to North Korean content.[53] Article 7 of the NSL forbids the distribution and possession of North Korean material with a maximum sentence of seven years imprisonment. Despite assurances that the law would be applied minimally and would refrain from limiting fundamental rights, it has been repeatedly wielded for political purposes by targeting the sale of North Korean books, parodies on social media, and music.[54] The law has been criticized internationally[55] for its limitations on freedom of speech and expression, overt censorship, condescending view on the ability of citizens to critically and responsibly manage materials pertaining to North Korea, and as a counterproductive attempt to keep citizens ignorant about North Korea.[56]

Meanwhile, the NGO "Freedom House" noted Australia's increasing restrictions on the internet. This has focused on websites that offer illegal services such as interactive gambling, which may be blocked or filtered

51   Ko Jun-tae, "[Newsmaker] Nth room prevention law draws fire for censorship, invasion of privacy," *The Korea Herald*, last modified December 13, 2021, http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20211213000626.

52   Fit_Progress_947, "Starting tomorrow, censorship will begin in every Internet community and open chat room on Kakaotalk with more than three people participating. All types of gifs and videos must be checked by AI and the records are kept for 3 years," *Reddit,* last modified December 9, 2021, https://www.reddit.com/r/korea/comments/rcffvi/starting_tomorrow_censorship_will_begin_in_every/.

53   DBpedia, "About: List of north Korean Websites banned in South Korea," *DBpedia*, last modified 2022, https://dbpedia.org/page/List_of_North_Korean_websites_banned_in_South_Korea.

54   Martin Weiser, "South Korea's needless censorship of North Korean material," *East Asia Forum,* last modified June 26, 2021, https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/06/26/south-koreas-needless-censorship-of-north-korean-material/.

55   Including by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Opinion and Expression.

56   Doug Brandow, "South Korea Should Embrace Liberty in Confronting Pyongyang," *National Interest*, last modified May 10, 2021, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/korea-watch/south-korea-should-embrace-liberty-confronting-pyongyang-184531.

under a narrow set of circumstances.[57] Under the *Online Safety Bill 2021* (Cth),[58] the government broadened its ability to censor online content by A) ordering websites/apps to remove serious harmful content, B) blocking websites hosting abhorrent, violent and terrorist content, and C) implementing a "restricted access system" which may force citizens to prove their age though identifying documents or facial recognition.[59] This has been decried by civil society for empowering the government's moderation of online sexual material, and in promoting self-censorship among various stakeholders.[60]

The growing abuse of Australia's legal system by individuals and organizations who stifle online speech has also been criticized. Established precedent compels social media companies to limit an offending user's ability to create accounts/posts, and to proactively monitor and prevent the future publication of offending material on their websites. The practice of censorship under the flag of defamation has also facilitated "libel tourism," wherein non-citizens file local defamation cases to take advantage of Australia's favorable legal environment.[61]

Reviewing each nation's approach to online censorship highlights differences surrounding criminal penalties for activities considered protected under international human rights standards. This is exemplified with the NSL's restrictions on online content praising or expressing sympathy with North Korea, thus threatening liberal democratic principles and fundamental human rights in the form of political debate and freedom of expression. Additional differences are evident within South Korea's recognition of

57   Freedom House, "Freedom on the Net 2021 – Australia," *Freedom House*, last modified 2022, https://freedomhouse.org/country/australia/freedom-net/2021.

58   Parliament of Australia, "Online Safety Bill 2021," *Parliament of Australia*, last modified 2022, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_LEGislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bId=r6680.

59   Cam Wilson, "Parties unite to deliver greater internet censorship powers to government-appointed official," *Crikey*, last modified June 23, 2021, https://www.crikey.com.au/2021/06/23/parties-unite-to-deliver-greater-internet-censorship-powers-to-government-appointed-official/.

60   Zahra Zsuzsanna Stardust, "New online safety bill could allow censorship of anyone who engages with sexual content on internet," *UNSW*, last modified February 19, 2021, https://www.unsw.edu.au/news/2021/02/new-online-safety-bill-could-allow-censorship-of-anyone-who-enga.

61   Freedom House, "Freedom on the Net 2021 – Australia."

criminal defamation charges for spreading online rumors,[62] compared to Australia's treatment of defamation as a civil wrong. Consequently, common respect for fundamental human rights and democratic values surrounding online discussion and content is crucial in facilitating the trusted, transparent, and accountable use of technology under the CSP.

C. Government versus Big Tech

The relationship between democratic governments and Big Tech is a contentious issue. There is conflict between the governmental interest in regulating the activities of private companies in the public/national interest and the objective of businesses to maximize profit and meet shareholder obligations.[63] This conflict has fueled debate on competition, content accountability, privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and the online protection of civil rights and liberties.[64] This has only intensified during the pandemic, where intensified public reliance upon Big Tech has contributed to their perception as facets of critical infrastructure.[65]

Highlighted by the 2014 Vision Statement, Australia and South Korea are committed to a market-based economy.[66] Both countries actively support an economic system uncontrolled by a central authority, based on voluntary exchange, where supply and demand direct the production of goods and

62   Bak Guk-Hui, 헌재, 온라인 허위사실 명예훼손 처벌은 합헌(Constitutional Court Says Online Fraud Defamation Punishment Is Constitutional), *Chosun Ilbo*, last modified April 4, 2021, https://www.chosun.com/national/court_law/2021/04/04/N6YWZYCIPFAQNDHFZ62JVI52SI/.

63   Anika Gauja, "Digital Democracy: Big technology and the regulation of politics," *UNSW Law Journal* 44, no.3 (2021): 963, unswlawjournal.unsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Issue-443_final_Gauja.pdf.

64   Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, *Big Tech and Democracy: The Critical Role of Congress*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, April 2019), https://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/BigTechDemocracy.pdf.

65   John Naughton, "Australia shows the way. It's the job of governments not big tech to run democracies," *The Guardian*, last modified February 21, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/feb/21/australia-shows-the-way-its-the-job-of-governments-not-big-tech-to-run-democracies.

66   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Vision statement for a secure, peaceful and prosperous future between the Republic of Korea and Australia 2014."

services.[67] This reality underscores the importance of responsible and reasonable regulation in facilitating sustainable economic growth, equality of opportunity, and innovation within a free and competitive marketplace.

In South Korea, the presence of *chaebol* business conglomerates and Big Tech presents significant governmental challenges, given their immense political influence and dominant status within the economy.[68] This complex "pay to play" government-*chaebol* relationship is where the president or their associates receive financial opportunities afforded by their proximity to political power. [69] Consequently, all presidents of the democratic era have encountered corruption scandals, whether personally or by their close friends and family.[70] While not all Big Tech companies are necessarily *chaebols*, many *chaebols* may be viewed as Big Tech.

Surprisingly, South Korea has visible steps to regulate Big Tech. Firstly, in November 2020 the South Korean Personal Information Protection Commission (PIPC) fined Facebook USD6.06 million after a probe determined that the PII of 3.3 million South Korean Facebook users was unknowingly provided to third-party operators. The PIPC also sought a criminal investigation over Facebook's conduct.[71] Secondly, in September 2021, the Korea Fair Trade Commission (KFTC) fined Google USD177 million for forcing Samsung and other manufacturers to use only approved versions of the Android operating system, ruling that the company's actions restricted

67   National Geographic, "Resource Library | Encyclopaedic Entry – Market Economies," *National Geographic*, last modified 2022, https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/market-economies/.

68   Eleanor Albert, "South Korea's Chaebol Challenge," *Council on Foreign Relations*, last modified May 4, 2018, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/south-koreas-chaebol-challenge.

69   Jaylia Yan, "South Korea's Moment for Chaebol Reform is Now," *The Global Anticorruption Blog*, last modified November 16, 2020, https://globalanticorruptionblog.com/2020/11/16/south-koreas-moment-for-chaebol-reform-is-now/.

70   BBC, "Why South Korea's corruption scandal is nothing new," *BBC*, last modified November 24, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38078039.

71   Joyce Lee, "South Korean watchdog fines Facebook $6.1 million for sharing user info without consent," *Reuters*, last modified November 25, 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-facebook-southkorea-fine-idUSKBN2850YW.

market competition and constituted an anti-competitive practice.[72] Finally, in August 2021 the National Assembly approved a bill which would ban major app store operators (e.g., Google and Apple) from requiring developers to use only their payment systems to process the sale of digital products and services.[73] The KCC has indicated plans to impose a monetary penalty of up to two percent of an offending company's South Korean market revenue. [74]

However, South Korea's relationship with *chaebols* has not affected regulatory action against Big Tech.[75] Both the judiciary and regulatory bodies have demonstrated impartiality when overseeing such cases,[76] [77] with six companies including Microsoft and South Korean Ground1 receiving fines in 2021 for their lax privacy controls and PII leaks.[78] South Korea's approach has been commended by commentators for striking a balance between

72   Kate Park, "Second, in September 2021 the Korea Fair Trade Commission (KFTC)," *TechCrunch,* September 14, 2021, https://techcrunch.com/2021/09/14/south-korean-antitrust-regulator-fines-google-177m-for-abusing-market-dominance/.

73   Saheli Roy Choudhury and Sam Shead, "South Korea passes bill limiting Apple and Google control over app store payments," *CNBC*, last modified August 31, 2021, https://www.cnbc.com/2021/08/31/south-korea-first-country-to-curb-google-apples-in-app-billing-policies.html.

74   The Straits Times, "South Korea weighs monetary fines to rein in app store operators like Apple and Google," *The Straits Times*, last modified November 18, 2021, https://www.straitstimes.com/tech/tech-news/south-korea-weighs-monetary-fines-to-rein-in-app-store-operators-like-apple-and.

75   William Pesek, "The world should cheer South Korea's battle against Big Tech," *Nikkei Asia*, last modified September 16, 2021, https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/The-world-should-cheer-South-Korea-s-battle-against-Big-Tech.

76   CNN, "Apple, Samsung both lose in South Korean court," *CNN Business*, last modified August 24, 2012, https://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/24/business/korea-apple-samsung/index.html.

77   Jeong-Ho Lee and Sohee Kim, "Big Tech Replaces Chaebol as Enemy No. 1 Before South Korea Vote," *Bloomberg*, last modified October 1, 2021, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-30/big-tech-replaces-chaebol-as-enemy-no-1-before-south-korea-vote.

78   Jenny Lee, "Microsoft, Kakao's Ground 1, four other companies fined by South Korean regulator for personal data leaks," *mlex,* last modified June 9, 2021, https://mlexmarketinsight.com/news/insight/microsoft-kakao-s-ground-1-four-other-companies-fined-by-south-korean-regulator-for-personal-data-leaks.

public and private interests, as well as state and market-based approaches.[79]

Within Australia, government conflict with Big Tech can be observed across new reforms and legislation that seek to control online content.[80] First, the *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth) empowered the government to order online content providers to remove offending content within 24 hours, to block websites hosting harmful content, and to adhere to a set of Basic Online Safety Expectations.[81] Second, there is the pending adoption of an online privacy bill which introduces new requirements for social media platforms to verify their users' ages, new requirements for handling PII, and increased fines for serious privacy interferences.[82] Third, there are ongoing reforms to Australia's defamation laws to hold social media companies liable for defamatory content if the company refuses to identify the responsible party.[83] Fourth, there is the introduction of a voluntary code to address disinformation and misinformation which assists users of digital platforms to more easily identify the reliability, trustworthiness, and source of news content.[84] Finally, ongoing review of online competition under the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) Digital Platforms Services Inquiry, which

79   Evan A. Feigenbaum and Michael R. Nelson, "Introduction: How Korea Can Unleash the Power of Data," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, August 17, 2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/08/17/introduction-how-korea-can-unleash-power-of-data-pub-85162.

80   Josh Taylor, "What is the Australian government doing to crack down on big tech, and why?," *The Guardian,* last modified October 29, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/oct/30/what-is-the-australian-government-doing-to-crack-down-on-big-tech-and-why.

81   Melissa Fai, Jen Bradley, and Meaghan Powell, "Online Safety Bill - The Enhanced Regime," *Gilbert + Tobin*, last modified June 9, 2021, https://www.gtlaw.com.au/knowledge/online-safety-bill-enhanced-regime.

82   Philip Catania and Viva Swords, "Changes to Australia's privacy laws: what happens next?," *Corrs Chambers Westgarth,* last modified November 8, 2021, https://www.corrs.com.au/insights/changes-to-australias-privacy-laws-what-happens-next#_ftn1.

83   CNBC, "Australia looks to revise laws after court rules publishers can be liable for defamatory comments," *CNBC,* last modified October 7, 2021, https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/07/australia-moves-to-update-defamation-laws-after-court-ruling.html.

84   Lesley Sutton, Samantha Karpes, and Claire Arthur, "Fake News: A look into the Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation," *Gilbert + Tobin*, last modified June 25, 2021, https://www.gtlaw.com.au/insights/fake-news-look-australian-code-practice-disinformation-misinformation.

facilitated the News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code (NMDPMBC), highlighted anti-competitive practices surrounding web browsers and general search services, and advanced recommendations to limit market dominance/monopolization across online advertisement.[85]

The NMDPMBC sought to force online platforms to pay news media publishers/organizations if they hosted their content on their platform.[86] This law arose following complaints from Australian news outlets about the role of online digital platforms in the decline of journalism and their business models. Initial response saw several platforms threaten to reduce or remove their services in Australia, with Google threatening to block Australian users from accessing its search engine[87] and Facebook moving to block news from being shared to Australian users.[88] This resulted in a negotiated outcome, with the government providing added flexibility in the application of the Code in instances where the digital platform can demonstrate it has signed enough deals with media outlets to pay them for content.[89]

Opportunities for bilateral exchange in regulating Big Tech are evident through the enforcement actions of South Korea's regulatory agencies, curtailing Big Tech's ability to maintain financial monopolies and in penalizing negligent and reckless privacy practices. Conversely, Australia has focused upon legislative approaches toward moderating online content,

85   Jacqueline Downes and Melissa Camp, "The ACCC's Ongoing Digital Platforms Inquiry: Choice Screens and the ACCC's Plan for an Ex Ante Regime for Digital Platforms," *Competition Policy International,* last modified January 24, 2022, https://www.competitionpolicyinternational.com/the-acccs-ongoing-digital-platforms-inquiry-choice-screens-online-retail-marketplaces-and-the-acccs-plan-for-an-ex-ante-regime-for-digital-platforms/.

86   Parliament of Australia, "Bills of the current Parliament," *Parliament of Australia*, last modified 2022, parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;page=0;query=BillId:r6652%20Recstruct:billhome.

87   Rahel Klein, "Google vs. Australia: 5 questions and answers," *DW,* last modified January 25, 2021, https://www.dw.com/en/google-vs-australia-5-questions-and-answers/a-56340697.

88   Sara Morrison, "Why Facebook banned (and then unbanned) news in Australia," *VOX,* last modified February 25, 2021, https://www.vox.com/recode/22287971/australia-facebook-news-ban-google-money.

89   Amanda Meade, Josh Taylor, and Daniel Hurst, "Facebook reverses Australia news ban after government makes media code amendments," *The Guardian*, last modified February 23, 2021, theguardian.com/media/2021/feb/23/facebook-reverses-australia-news-ban-after-government-makes-media-code-amendments.

promoting online safety, and reforming online news media. These responses underscore the opportunity for bilateral CACT dialogue and consultation in mitigating the harms inflicted by Big Tech on society, supporting the realization of a free and open market-based economy, and driving the trusted, transparent, and accountable use of technology under the CSP.

Barriers to shared values

A. South Korea's democratic development

The enduring legal and institutional legacies of past military regimes in South Korea continue to influence Seoul's inconsistent application of liberal democratic functions. Combined with the desire of leaders to advance their goals vis-à-vis North Korea, this has contributed to intermittent examples of egregious abuse and rights violations such as 1) limitations on freedom of expression to contain political opposition, 2) the expansion of NSL and use of intelligence agencies for the purpose of political coercion and interference with the political process, and 3) the ongoing corruptive influence of *chaebols* upon politics which leads to frequent mass demonstrations by groups who have been left behind by inept government policies.[90]

Having only democratized in 1988, South Korea has become one of the several leading consolidated democracies in Asia.[91] However, it has been argued that the nation's ideological shift from "right" to "left" takes more time than the shift from "left" to "right,"[92] and it could be argued that South Korea is not on par with the model of democracy that Australia upholds. While democratization of political institutions is often achieved over a short period of a few years, the democratization of mass political thinking persists

90   Jong H. Pak, "North Korea's long shadow on South Korea's democracy," *Brookings Institute*, last modified January 22, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/north-koreas-long-shadow-on-south-koreas-democracy.

91   Sook-Jong Lee, "The Contentious State of South Korean Democracy: Pitfalls and Hopes," *Council on Foreign Relations*, last modified January 25, 2022, https://www.cfr.org/blog/contentious-state-south-korean-democracy-pitfalls-and-hopes.

92   Doh Chull Shin and Byong-Kuen Jhee, "How Does Democratic Regime Change Affect Mass Political Ideology? A Case Study of South Korea in Comparative Perspective," *International Political Science Review* 24, no.4 (2005): 394, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192512105055806.

as an intergenerational phenomenon that requires decades for realization.[93]

While South Korea has encountered such stressors as income inequality and deep political divides, overall support for democracy remains strong. Since the mid-2000s, multiple surveys highlight an increasing preference for democracy over authoritarianism among South Korean citizens. Between 2006-2020, the number of South Koreans who prefer democracy unequivocally has increased from 42.7 percent to 69.6 percent. Despite differences, all generations of South Koreans display a strong support for democracy. From a demographic perspective, ensuring inter-generational support for democracy will be contingent upon providing viable economic futures for the youth and meeting the material needs of the older generations.[94] However, increasingly sluggish economic growth and demographic difficulties in securing the well-being of a rapidly aging society will present significant hurdles to its democratic resilience over the following decades.

South Korea's ability to engage in the trusted, transparent, and accountable use of technology under the CSP faces obstacles amid the nation's democratic transformation. The opportunity to further South Korea's progression as a liberal democracy is thus contingent upon the government's ability to foster democratic resilience in supporting freedom of speech and expression online, to counter the adverse political and economic influence of Big Tech and *chaebols*, and to leverage technology in support of equality, minority rights, and social integration.

B. Foreign Policy Differences vis-à-vis China

Differences in foreign policy vis-à-vis diplomatic engagement with China inhibits the opportunity for CACT engagement under the CSP. South Korea has long engaged in a "balancing" act—a hedging strategy between the US and China. This strategic ambiguity in foreign policy seeks to cope with regional uncertainties and mitigate the downside risks associated with preferring one regional power over the other. As a result, Seoul augments

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93   Ibid, 393.

94   Sook Jong Lee, "Generational Divides and the Future of South Korean Democracy," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, last modified June 29, 2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/06/29/generational-divides-and-future-of-south-korean-democracy-pub-84818.

its economic and historical cooperation with Beijing, while simultaneously maintaining its close defense and security ties with Washington.[95]

China retains significant influence over South Korea in the form of economic relations, North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear threats, and the potential for future Korean reunification.[96] China is South Korea's largest trading partner, comprising 27 percent of its total exports in 2021, during which both countries maintained close economic engagement under the 2014 China-South Korea Free Trade Agreement and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.[97] This has contributed to ambiguous statements over Hong Kong's National Security Law and Seoul's muted stance on Taiwan during President Moon Jae-in's 2021 visit to the US.[98] South Korea appears intent on continued neutrality, stepping outside of the China-US rivalry as a non-aligned middle power.[99]

Conversely, Australia's more distanced relationship with China, in favor of closer alignment with Western nations, has caused the Chinese government to sanction Australian trade—costing $20 billion annually.[100] This has been driven by diplomatic conflict over democracy in Hong Kong and Taiwanese independence, Beijing's hostage diplomacy, Canberra's vocal statements supporting Uyghurs, cancellation of Victoria's Belt and Road MOU, and Australia's probe into the pandemic's origins. Accordingly, Australia has pursued closer alignment with regional democracies and the

95   Jahyun Chun and Yangmo Ku, "Clashing Geostrategic Choices in East Asia, 2009-2015: Re-balancing, Wedge Strategy, and Hedging," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 18, no.1 (2020): 35.

96   Ibid.

97   Santander Trade Markets, "South Korea Foreign Trade in Figures," *Santander Trade Markets*, last modified 2022, https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/south-korea/foreign-trade-in-figures.

98   Yosuke Onchi, "South Korea's tiptoeing on Taiwan avoids Beijing backlash," *Nikkei Asia*, last modified May 29, 2021, https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/South-Korea-s-tiptoeing-on-Taiwan-avoids-Beijing-backlash.

99   Jeffrey Robertson, "Coming soon: A neutral South Korea?," *The Lowy Interpreter*, last modified November 4, 2020, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/coming-soon-neutral-south-korea.

100   Peter Hartcher, "Australia paid a high price for unsatisfying report into global tragedy," *ABC*, last modified April 6, 2021, https://www.smh.com.au/national/australia-paid-a-high-price-for-unsatisfying-report-into-global-tragedy-20210405-p57gke.html.

US under the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) and the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) Security Pact, intent upon securing a free and open Indo-Pacific.[101]

South Korea has faced increasing pressure to realign amid US-China competition. Maintaining both major power relationships without giving offense appears increasingly difficult, particularly as strife and military confrontation increasingly dominate US-China relations.[102] As the room for strategic ambiguity on human rights, security, and technology becomes increasingly smaller, hedging no longer presents a viable strategy, as observed across several CACT matters. First, in the case of semiconductors, China represents South Korea's biggest market for computer chips—accounting for 60 percent of total exports.[103] While South Korean semiconductor manufacturers expand investment and presence in China, US concerns regarding supply chain cybersecurity has pressured Seoul to decouple its technical cooperation with China on critical technologies.[104] Second, in the case of advanced telecommunications technology, the ongoing US-China conflict over Huawei's 5G networks presents South Korea with a security-trade dilemma. US efforts to restrict Huawei internationally due to security concerns has contributed to China's significant loss in global market share in 5G-related spinoff technologies. Despite national security concerns, South Korean leaders have expressed a reluctance to restrict trade with Huawei. This follows concerns of a potential trade dispute which would jeopardize ICT-related trade between South Korean and Chinese companies, where Huawei accounts for 17 percent of South Korea's electronic parts exports to China.[105]

101   Jeffrey Wilson, "Australia Shows the World What Decoupling From China Looks Like," *Foreign Policy*, last modified November 9, 2021, https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/11/09/australia-china-decoupling-trade-sanctions-coronavirus-geopolitics/.

102   Doug Bandow, "Which Will South Korea Choose: The U.S. or China?" *National Interest,* last modified December 6, 2021, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/korea-watch/which-will-south-korea-choose-us-or-china-197568.

103   Laura Zhou and Eduardo Baptista, "Will South Korea's chip sector have to take sides in the China-US tech war?," *The South China Morning Post*, last modified May 6, 2021, scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3132357/will-south-koreas-chip-sector-have-take-sides-china-us-tech.

104   Song Jung-a and Christian Davies, "South Korea's SK Hynix caught in US-China semiconductor battle," *Financial Times,* last modified November 5, 2021, https://www.ft.com/content/58e68061-5c37-4526-aba0-132d7e5eded5.

105   John Hemmings and Sungmin Cho, "South Korea's Growing 5G Dilemma," *CSIS*, last modified July 7, 2020, https://www.csis.org/analysis/south-koreas-growing-5g-dilemma.

Although faced with such dilemma, South Korea must align with Australia in joining democratic coalitions designed to limit China's assertiveness, in supporting liberal democratic values, and in advancing the trusted, transparent, and accountable use of technology across the Indo-Pacific. The maintenance of a hedging strategy demonstrates a lack of strategic clarity, and Seoul could experience detrimental effects upon its credibility and the stability of the Australia-US-ROK alliance framework. Since US is building coalitions with like-minded democracies, continued balancing could ultimately leave South Korea isolated from either party and vulnerable to both.[106]

C. Human rights diplomacy

Measured against its commitment to shared values and democratic principles under the CSP, South Korea has demonstrated an inconsistent approach to human rights abroad. First, South Korea's human rights diplomacy underscores its predominant focus on economic, social, and cultural rights. This includes its varied achievements in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, the protection of children, upholding refugee rights and protections, and respecting persons with disabilities.[107]

While Seoul has adopted a multilateral approach within its international promotion of democracy as a human right, it has pursued the realization of liberal democratic values primarily through economic, social, and cultural means. This is illustrated through its ongoing contributions to the UN Democracy Fund to assist societies in the development of democratic institutions and values, and involvement with the Community of Democracies.

Second, South Korea has refrained from proactive advocacy in support of certain civil and political human rights issues. Recently, South Korea added its name to the Open Societies Statement during the G7 Summit, joining other advanced Western economies in pledging a joint response to "rising authoritarianism" and "politically motivated internet

106   Shin Ji-hye, "[Herald Interview] Balancing act between China-US not in Korea's interest: Victor Cha," *The Korea Herald*, last modified January 6, 2022, http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220105000681.

107   Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Human Rights Diplomacy," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs,* last modified 2022, https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m_5648/contents.do.

shutdowns."[108] Additionally, South Korea participated in the US-led 2021 Summit for Democracy, where President Moon Jae-in expressed concerns over the rising threat posed by the pandemic, fake news, corruption to democracy, diminished public trust, and the importance of ensuring social transparency. However, Moon's statement declined to single out any country involved in such violations, and refrained from referencing the right to freedom of speech and expression in terms of political repression.[109]

Third, South Korea has refrained from calling out China and North Korea for their human rights violations. Concerning North Korea, while both South Korean conservative and progressive elements emphasize the improvement of human rights, conservatives focus upon political rights and the right to liberty,[110] while progressives focus upon economic, social, and cultural rights.[111] President Moon's administration has aimed to minimize human rights within diplomatic discussions in the effort to improve North-South relations. This can be seen in Seoul's refusal in 2019 to cosponsor annual UN resolutions calling for human rights improvements in North Korea, the banning of balloon leaflets sent across the DMZ border, and the involuntary repatriation of North Korean fishermen.[112] South Korea's passive approach has elicited international pressure, with governments and NGOs calling upon President Moon to maintain "a strong and principled approach toward

108   Lee Wan, "S. Korea's elevated status as G7 observer means more responsibilities are coming, foreign policy experts say," *Hankyoreh,* last modified June 15, 2021, https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/999495.html.

109   Cheongwadae, "Summit for Democracy Participant Statement by President Moon Jae-in," *Cheongwadae*, last modified December 10, 2021, https://english1.president.go.kr/BriefingSpeeches/Speeches/1117.

110   William Gallo, "S. Korean Conservatives Vow to Get Tougher on China," *Voice of America*, last modified November 23, 2021, https://www.voanews.com/a/south-korean-conservatives-vow-to-get-tougher-on-china-/6324216.html.

111   Yumi Ko, "A South Korean Perspective," *The ASAN Forum,* last modified August 31, 2020, https://theasanforum.org/a-south-korean-perspective-7/.

112   Robert King, "North Korea Human Rights and South Korea's Upcoming Presidential Election," *Korea Economic Institute*, last modified January 20, 2022, https://keia.org/the-peninsula/north-korea-human-rights-and-south-koreas-upcoming-presidential-election/.

North Korea's grave human rights abuses for the sake of all Koreans."[113]

Concerning human rights and China, South Korea has increasingly hedged between China and the US. Concerning Hong Kong's National Security Law, South Korea declined to join 27 countries in a joint statement expressing concerns over the erosion of fundamental human rights and longstanding rights and freedoms of Hong Kong citizens, while continuing to refrain from any potentially offending statements.[114] Washington's decision to remove Hong Kong's special trading status has further intensified pressure upon Seoul to reduce its reliance on Chinese supply chains and uphold human rights as a liberal democratic country.[115] South Korea's restrained approach has been further illustrated through President Moon's reluctance to take a position on human rights violations in Xinjiang against its Uyghur minority.[116]

Washington has repeatedly pushed Seoul to publicly criticize China for its human rights violations, and to support Taiwan.[117] During President Moon's 2021 visit to the US, Seoul issued a token stance on Taiwan to satisfy Washington and avoid offending Beijing.[118] Where the South Korea-US statement saw both parties agreeing on the need for steps to counter China's increasing assertiveness, it refrained from any direct attacks on

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113   Human Rights Watch, "South Korea: Promote Human Rights in North Korea," *Human Rights Watch*, last modified December 15, 2020, www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/15/south-korea-promote-human-rights-north-korea.

114   Reuters Staff, "Britain and West urge China to scrap HK security law, open Xinjiang," *Reuters*, last modified July 1, 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-china-hongkong-security-britain-un-idUKKBN2412WY.

115   Park Chan-kyong, "Hong Kong national security law heightens South Korea's painful choice: US or China?," *The South China Morning Post*, last modified May 27, 2020, https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3086340/hong-kong-national-security-law-heightens-south-koreas-painful.

116   Ko, "A South Korean Perspective"; Dongwoo Kim, "The Politics of South Korea's 'China Threat'," *The Diplomat*, last modified April 5, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/the-politics-of-south-koreas-china-threat/.

117   Doug Brandow, "Which Will South Korea Choose: the U.S. or China?," *The Cato Institute*, last modified December 6, 2021, https://www.cato.org/commentary/which-will-south-korea-choose-us-or-china#.

118   The White House, "U.S.-ROK Leaders' Joint Statement," *The White House*, last modified May 21, 2021, whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/05/21/u-s-rok-leaders-joint-statement/.

Beijing.[119] Seoul has continued to refrain from independent and specific comments on China's internal affairs, in recognition of their "special relationship" and in the maintenance of regional peace and stability.[120] South Korea's approach is also attributable to ongoing concerns that trade in key and sensitive high-tech sectors, such as semiconductors and batteries, might suffer if the country chooses to align with one side over the other.[121]

Recommendations

A. Enhance information sharing, exchange, and consultation

This involves "sharing information on legislation, national cyber and critical technology strategies, policies, and threat assessments."[122] This alludes to bilateral opportunities in the ethical design, development, and use of critical technologies consistent with international law, and in addressing common concerns across privacy, online censorship, and Big Tech regulation.

Firstly, the notion of sharing best-practice approaches to the ethical design and use of technology centers upon the topic of AI. Outlined within the 2+2 Meeting and MOU,[123] both countries are committed to expanding cooperation in AI as a critical technology. Australia's 2019 formation of a voluntary ethics framework for AI[124] focuses on reducing the negative impact of AI applications and promoting fairer outcomes through eight defined principles. AI systems should respect, protect,

119   Hwang Joon-bum, "S. Korea-US joint statement mentions Taiwan, leaves China out,'" *Hankyoreh*, last modified May 24, 2021, https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/996426.html.

120   Yonhap, "S. Korea has refrained from comments on China's internal affairs: FM," *Yonhap*, last modified May 25, 2021, https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210525005500325.

121   Global Times, "US attempt to decouple China-S. Korea tech cooperation is doomed to fail: experts", *Global Times*, last modified May 22, 2021, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202105/1224166.shtml.

122   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Republic of Korea country brief."

123   Minister for Foreign Affairs, "Joint Statement: Australia-Republic of Korea Foreign and Defence Ministers' 2+2 Meeting 2021."

124   Stefan Hajkowicz, "Artificial intelligence in Australia needs to get ethical, so we have a plan," *CSIRO*, last modified April 18, 2019, https://algorithm.data61.csiro.au/artificial-intelligence-in-australia-needs-to-get-ethical-so-we-have-a-plan/.

and promote human rights, they should not undermine the democratic process and should enable an equitable and democratic society.[125]

South Korea's approach to AI ethics has guided various policy documents, including the 2016 Robot Ethics Charter and 2018 Ethics Guidelines for the Intelligent Information Society. These advance four positions: 1) the responsibility of users to regulate AI use; 2) the responsibility of AI providers in assessing the negative social impacts of AI; 3) the responsibility for AI developers to eliminate bias and discriminatory characteristics; and 4) the development of AI without antisocial characteristics.[126] Most recently, the 2020 AI Ethics Standards focused on the three pillars of human dignity, public benefit, and the rightful purpose of technology in guiding AI for humanity.[127] This was advised by 10 essential factors including human rights, privacy, diversity, infringement, pursuit of greater good, solidarity, data management, responsibility, safeness, and transparency. It was resolved that the development and use of AI must support various democratic values and international standards.[128]

Areas for bilateral cooperation in information sharing and consultation across AI ethics arise in promoting increased alignment across the shared values of democracy, democratic values, the rule of law, freedom, human rights, and market-based economies. There exists the possibility for bilateral exchange on the potentially detrimental effects that AI technology could have on the democratic process. AI could be leveraged to support an equitable and democratic society through the advancement

125   Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER), "Australia's Artificial Intelligence Ethics Framework," *DISER*, last modified 2022, https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/australias-artificial-intelligence-ethics-framework/australias-ai-ethics-principles.

126   Victoria Heath, "Perspectives and Approaches in AI Ethics: East Asia (Research Summary)," *Montreal AI Ethics Institute*, last modified November 10, 2020, https://montrealethics.ai/perspectives-and-approaches-in-ai-ethics-east-asia-research-summary/.

127   Kan Hyeong-woo, "Presidential committee lays out first ethical standards for AI," *The Korea Herald*, last modified December 23, 2020, http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201223000794.

128   Presidential Committee on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, "사람이 중심이 되는「인공지능(AI) 윤리기준」," (Human-centered artificial intelligence (AI) ethical standards), *Presidential Committee on the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, last modified December 23, 2020, https://www.4th-ir.go.kr/article/download/744.

of social diversity and inclusion, and offset the growing threat of AI to liberal democratic values via misinformation and online censorship. These will prove essential in upholding liberal democratic values through the sharing of best-practice approaches, in driving the application of critical technologies that uphold and protect democratic principles, and in opposing the use of technology to weaken democratic principles and processes.

B. Elevate multilateral coordination on norms and standards

This encompasses the development of government-private sector-academic links in advancing research and development (R&D), and identifying opportunities for engagement with the technology industry in the design, deployment, and use of secure and resilient technology. This focus was referenced during the 2+2 Meeting, where both countries were described as mature, likeminded democracies with shared strategic interests. This recommendation highlights two initiatives in promoting multilateralism in the responsible use of technology.

Firstly, concerning cooperative action on civil and political rights in the use of technology, continued misalignment on North Korea and China hinders the realization of a free, open, inclusive, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. Focus on civil and political rights issues elicits proactive support for democratic values, the rule of law, and human rights. South Korea's continuing indecision and balancing between its human rights and foreign policy priorities risks leaving the country isolated and vulnerable. As can be seen by its endorsement of the Open Societies Statement and commitment to countering rising authoritarianism, Seoul must fulfil its responsibilities as a liberal democracy and mirror Australia's diplomatic engagement across democratic coalitions such as the QSD, Blue Dot Network, and Clean Network.

Second, there is a need to regulate Big Tech and its adverse impact on democratic values, social stability, and the free market. This follows the continuing political and economic influence held by *chaebols* in South Korea, and ongoing disputes between Australia and Big Tech over the regulation of online content. Despite disagreements, the integral role of technology companies within a developed nation's economic development underscores mutual public-private cooperation in promoting economic prosperity, maintaining social cohesion, and upholding national security and sovereignty. This may be addressed through coordinated exchanges on regulatory challenges in maintaining a free and innovative market environment, as well

as reference to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This provides a global standard and guidance for the private sector on how they can prevent and address the risk of adverse human rights impacts linked to business activity.[129]

The potential for bilateral CACT cooperation across information sharing, civil and political rights issues, and Big Tech governance arises in the context of multilateralism and shared values under the bilateral relationship. This centers upon the need to safeguard democracy, uphold human rights, and maintain the stability of market-based economies by: 1) opposing the use of technology in a coercive manner; and 2) strengthening the economic/diplomatic/political capacity of likeminded democracies to fulfil their human rights obligations.

C. Bilateral cooperation and regional capacity building

This underscores information sharing upon capacity-building initiatives and identifying practical ways to coordinate efforts for building regional capacity in CACT. The ability for both nations to promote CACT, in a manner which upholds and protects democratic principles and processes, is contingent upon close cooperation with regional allies and likeminded democracies. This is predicated upon the following areas of focus: supporting the development of market-based economies, fostering the rule of law, and fostering a stable and prosperous environment conducive for democratic development.

Firstly, concerning CACT capacity building across ASEAN, this follows broad interest in advancing the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership. Under the 2020-2024 Plan of Action, all sides promoted the formation of training centers to elevate law enforcement capabilities via technology transfer, to promote sustainable and inclusive growth and prosperity through digital trade, enhancing cooperation on digital integration, and encouraging cooperation in science and technology. Incidental to this was the commitment to promote the exchange of best practices in promoting democracy and democratic institutions, in furtherance of good governance and human rights in the region.[130]

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129   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Australia's International Cyber and Critical Tech Engagement Strategy," 27.

130   ASEAN, "Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership (2020-2024)" *ASEAN,* last modified August 1, 2019, https://asean.org/plan-of-action-to-implement-the-asean-australia-strategic-partnership-2020-2024/.

South Korea has similarly pursued closer engagement with ASEAN under its New Southern Policy Plus (NSPP), representing an expansion upon the original 2017 New Southern Policy. Both policies are aimed at advancing ties with both India and ASEAN, and to build and diversify regional export markets. The NSPP focuses upon the three-pillar framework of people, prosperity and peace across seven key agendas including public health cooperation, education, cultural exchange, trade and investment, infrastructure development, future industries, and transnational safety and peace.[131] The NSPP's contents further reference the use of digital technology in facilitating bilateral cultural experiences, cooperative efforts on infrastructure development through the development of Agri-tech, and Seoul's commitment to embracing the common values of democracy, human rights, and the market economy.[132]

Common threads between Australia-South Korea's engagement with Southeast Asia present opportunities to drive shared values in the bilateral relationship, through cooperative support for regional development using technology. This was affirmed during the 2+2 Meeting, when leaders from both sides "reaffirmed their support for ASEAN centrality, ASEAN-led regional architecture, and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific region."[133] This would be expanded during the 2021 *Australia-ROK Senior Officials Policy Dialogue on our support for Southeast Asia and ASEAN*—aligning Australia's investment in regional comprehensive strategic partnerships and the NSPP. Herein, both countries committed to deepened cooperation in promoting a stable, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, through a coordinated effort in mitigating the regional impact of COVID-19; in supporting regional health and economic recovery plans; and in reinforcing

131   Sea Young Kim, "How the "Plus" Factor in South Korea's New Southern Policy Plus," *Korea Economic Institute*, last modified September 9, 2021, https://keia.org/the-peninsula/how-the-plus-factor-in-south-koreas-new-southern-policy-plus-can-ensure-sustainability/.

132   Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy, "New Southern Policy Plus," *Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy*, last modified 2022, http://www.nsp.go.kr/assets/eng/pds/NSPplus_Policy%20Statement.pdf, 12.

133   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Republic of Korea country brief."

maritime stability and engagement across the Mekong River/Delta.[134]

Second, in promoting cooperation within cybersecurity and cybercrime—the focus could be upon the common threat of ransomware to regional stability and economic prosperity. Herein, Ransomware presents a significant threat to regional economic prosperity and national security, with the incidence of ransomware having increased 600 percent over the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in total damage costs of $20 billion over 2021.[135]

Australia response through its 2021 Ransomware Action Plan sought to 1) prevent attacks through building cyber resilience, 2) assist in response and recovery, and 3) disrupt and deter cyber criminals.[136] South Korea's ransomware policy involves government-led efforts in strengthening cyber resilience across SMEs—offering data back-up, encryption, and restoration systems; in the provision of anti-ransomware software; and in auditing the vulnerability of critical infrastructure sectors.[137] Both Australia and South Korea participated in the US-led 2021 Counter Ransomware Initiative Meeting—pledging cooperation in boosting network resilience, elevating the capability of law enforcement agencies, and coordinating diplomatic efforts to promote rules-based behavior and encouraging states to take reasonable steps to address ransomware operations originating from within their territory.[138]

134   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), "Australia-ROK senior officials policy dialogue on our support for Southeast Asia and ASEAN," *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,* last modified February 25, 2021, dfat.gov.au/news/media-release/australia-rok-senior-officials-policy-dialogue-our-support-southeast-asia-and-asean.

135   UNODC, "Ransomware attacks, a growing threat that needs to be countered," *UNODC*, last modified October 18, 2021, https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/2021/10/cybercrime-ransomware-attacks/story.html.

136   Department of Home Affairs, "Cyber security – Australia's Ransomware Action Plan," *Department of Home Affairs*, last modified 2022, https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/cyber-security/strategy/australias-ransomware-action-plan.

137   Chae Yun-hwan, "S. Korea to step up support to fight ransomware attacks," *Yonhap News Agency*, last modified August 5, 2021, https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210805004000320.

138   The White House, "Joint Statement of the Ministers and Representatives from the Counter Ransomware Initiative Meeting October 2021," *The White House*, last modified October 14, 2021, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/14/joint-statement-of-the-ministers-and-representatives-from-the-counter-ransomware-initiative-meeting-october-2021/.

South Korea's experience with North Korea's ransomware activities further highlights the potential for bilateral coordination.[139] This includes information sharing on North Korea's cyber capabilities and activities, elevated cooperation between the Australian Cyber Security Centre and the Korea Internet & Security Agency, the formation of a joint-ransomware working group, and deepened cooperation between law enforcement and intelligence agencies. These advance the rule of law, drive expanded regional cyber capacity building, and elevate resilience within market-based economies.

Areas for bilateral cooperation in the furtherance of regional capacity building are demonstrated through increased alignment on ASEAN affairs and ransomware. This centers upon engagement across multilateral processes to shape global frameworks on critical technologies, and increased stakeholder communication in driving the ethical use of technology. There thus exist added opportunities for bilateral cooperation in driving regional development across various non-traditional areas and in upholding the rule of law through a common focus on countering the destructive and illiberal use of technology.

Conclusion

Aligned understanding on the expanded nature of shared values within the bilateral relationship is crucial for an enhanced bilateral engagement within CACT. Common agreement surrounding the responsible, trusted, and transparent use of technology under the CSP represents a key concern in supporting liberal democratic values and in advancing a free, open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Australia and South Korea demonstrate mutual intentions to deepen engagement in terms of strategy, security, innovation, and technology under the CSP. This necessitates added clarification on "shared values" and consideration of contextual differences within foreign policy realities. The analysis of bilateral diplomatic exchanges established a definitive definition of shared values as encompassing democracy, democratic values, the rule of law, freedom, human rights, and advocacy for market-based economies. The consequence of bilateral ideological misalignment on shared values was highlighted across subjective policy

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139   Jason Bartlett, "South Korea Commits to Combatting Increased Ransomware Attacks," *The Diplomat*, last modified September 22, 2021, https://thediplomat. com/2021/09/south-korea-commits-to-combatting-increased-ransomware-attacks/.

approaches to digital and online privacy, online censorship, and Big Tech.

In acknowledging such comparative differences, ongoing barriers to shared values in CACT were observed. These included South Korea's democratic development, foreign policy differences vis-à-vis China, and the impact of Seoul's continued foreign policy hedging upon its human rights diplomacy.

These conclusions resulted in several recommendations derived from the MOU. First is an enhanced information sharing and consultation on CACT issues such as AI, noting its potential to promote alignment across democratic values, the rule of law, and human rights. Second is multilateral coordination on norms and standards. Herein, support for cooperative action on civil and political rights issues in the use of technology and Big Tech regulation would help to safeguard democracy, uphold human rights, and maintain the stability of market-based economies. Third is driving shared values by supporting the trusted, transparent, and accountable use of technology throughout the region. This focused upon the potential for capacity building in ASEAN—conductive toward upholding the rule of law, supporting market-based economies, and countering the illiberal use of technology.

The evolving bilateral relationship provides a strong foundation for alignment within shared values across CACT and the CSP. Policymakers must reaffirm common support for democratic principles online and in the use of technology, hold states accountable to their international human rights responsibilities, and oppose the use of illiberal use of technology to interfere with democratic principles. As likeminded liberal democracies, both nations could prioritize liberal democratic values and human rights within the CSP—with a view to promoting fairness, equality and accountability across emerging and critical technologies.[140]

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140   Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), "Summary – Overview," *AHRC*, last modified 2022 https://tech.humanrights.gov.au/overview/summary#51CdN.

Quad 1.0 to Quad 2.0: Destined to "Dissipate like Sea Foam?"

Shakthi De Silva

Visiting lecturer at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies and the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute

This article builds on academic literature that identifies Australia's decision to leave the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ("Quad") in 2008 as the primary factor which led to the Quad's disbandment. It begins by briefly reviewing the Quad's inception and then employs Neoclassical Realism to analyze the structural and domestic determinants which influenced Australia to pull out of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue 1.0 (2007–2008). By assessing the objectives envisaged by the four parties at the time and the factors which contributed to its early demise, this article also draws attention to the staying power of the revived Quad 2.0 (2017–).

Keywords: Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Neoclassical Realism, Australian foreign policy

1. Quad 1.0: From Idea to Reality

When queried about the United States' (US) intention to establish a mini-lateral security network in the Asia-Pacific, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi scoffed that such efforts were destined to "dissipate like sea foam."[1] To the US and its Asian allies however, the growing incidents of traditional and non-traditional security challenges in the Asia-Pacific necessitated closer cooperation and interoperability. Mini-lateral initiatives such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue—the object of Beijing's derision in recent

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1   Wang Yi, "Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China,* last modified March 9, 2018, accessed July 4, 2021, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/201803/t20180309_678665.html.

years—have been painted by its constituent members—the US, India, Japan, and Australia—as facilitating the synchronization of their defense and foreign policies to collectively tackle regional security challenges.

This paper delves into the Quad, a contemporary mini-lateral initiative which has oscillated between dormancy and animated dynamism. In 2008, a year after it was formally underway, the initiative crumbled. Nevertheless, by 2017, its former constituents resurrected the Quad. In order to distinguish between the two, we identify Quad 1.0 as the first adaptation which lasted from 2007–2008, and Quad 2.0 as its second avatar which emerged in 2017.

This article builds on academic literature that identifies Australia's decision to leave the Quad in 2008 as the primary factor which led to its disbandment. By employing Neoclassical Realism, we trace the structural and domestic determinants which influenced Australia to pull out of Quad 1.0, thus providing a novel theoretical contribution to existing scholarly research on the initiative's inception and sudden demise. This assessment also draws attention to the staying power of the revived Quad (2.0) and whether the variables which contributed to the dissolution of Quad 1.0 can influence the trajectory of Quad 2.0.

Quad 1.0 did not emerge in a vacuum. The initiative's antecedent, The Tsunami Core Group (2004–2005), arose in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. It was tasked with coordinating the responses of Australia, Japan, India, and the US in the aftermath of the devastating December 26, 2004 tsunami which was triggered by a 9.0 Richter scale earthquake off the coast of the Sumatra Island in Indonesia. The core group, according to US Ambassador Marc Grossman, was credited for having effectively directed emergency humanitarian responders to locations ravaged by the tsunami as well as in the speedy provision of "dozens of helicopters, cargo ships, and transport planes" to rescue those trapped in inaccessible locations.[2] The initiative also prevented overlap and duplicative humanitarian aid provision among the core group members. Grossman adds that the initiative was not "just part of an effective response to a humanitarian disaster but also a further experiment in a new way of making diplomacy work in the twenty-first century."[3]

The Tsunami Core Group was one of several initiatives which served

2   Marc Grossman, "The Tsunami Core Group: A Step toward a Transformed Diplomacy in Asia and Beyond," *Security Challenges* 1, no. 1 (2005): 11.

3   Grossman, "The Tsunami Core Group," 14.

as a springboard for stronger ties between its constituents. It was preceded by the 2002 Trilateral Security Dialogue between the US, Japan, and Australia which generated mini-lateral consultations on countering terrorism in Asia, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as dealing with the rise of China.[4] The Trilateral Security Dialogue was followed by the Security and Defense Cooperation Forum in 2007[5] and the Malabar maritime exercises in September 2007 comprising the US, Japanese, Australian, Indian and Singaporean navies.[6] Abe Shinzo, then Japanese Prime Minister, proposed the continuation of close cooperation through an alternative institutionalized apparatus—the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue.[7] The Quad was expected to strengthen ties between "like-minded states" which share democratic values,[8] reinforce multilateral cooperation to tackle traditional and non-traditional security challenges, as well as facilitate discussions on potential measures that can be adopted to balance against the rise of China.[9]

Consultations between US Vice President Dick Cheney, Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Japanese Prime Minister Abe, and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh laid the foundation for the mini-lateral's inception.[10] The first Quad summit took place on the sidelines of the ASEAN

4   "Trilateral Strategic Dialogue Joint Statement," *US Department of State Archive,* March 20, 2006, accessed August 21, 2021, https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/63411.htm.

5   Tomohiko Satake, "Shaping the Future: The US-Japan-Australia Strategic Triangle," 11th Berlin Conference on Asian Security, Berlin, last modified September 7-8, 2017, accessed August 21, 2021, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/arbeitspapiere/BCAS2017_Paper_Tomohiko_Satake.pdf.

6   Mahmud Ali, "New 'Strategic Partnership' against China," *BBC News,* last modified September 3, 2007, accessed August 21, 2021, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6968412.stm.

7   Kevin Rudd, "The Convenient Rewriting of the History of the 'Quad'," *Nikkei Asian Review*, last modified March 26, 2019, accessed May 4, 2021, https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/The-Convenient-Rewriting-of-the-History-of-the-Quad.

8   Kurt Campbell, Nirav Patel, and Vikram Singh, *The Power of Balance: America in Asia* (Washington D.C.: Center for a New American Security, 2011).

9   William Tow, "Minilateral Security's Relevance to US Strategy in the Indo-Pacific: Challenges and Prospects," *The Pacific Review* 32, no. 2 (2019): 232–244.

10   Ashok Rai, "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue 2 (Quad 2.0) – A Credible Strategic Construct or Mere 'Foam in the Ocean'?," *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 14, no. 2 (2018): 138–148.

Regional Forum in 2007[11] with discussions revolving around humanitarian and disaster relief operations as well as Asia-Pacific military and strategic developments in the backdrop of China's rise.[12] At the time, the initiative was expected to add an extra layer of cooperation to the US bilateral hub-and-spoke alliance system by bolstering the regional security order as well as helping monitor, and where necessary "collectively" counter, aggressive Chinese behavior in the maritime sphere.[13] Given the conspicuous benefits of the initiative, why did Canberra withdraw from Quad 1.0 in 2008?

2. The Dissolution of Quad 1.0

2.1 Kevin Rudd: Faint at Heart?

Regional organizations are often spurred into action following a significant regional or global event. The fall of Saigon and the rise of a "Communist Vietnam" in 1975 served as a catalyst for the first ASEAN Heads of State summit in 1976, nine years after the organization was formed. Recollections of two World Wars roused France, (West) Germany, and other European states to initiate the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952 with the goal of improving relations between former belligerents. Article Five of the NATO was invoked, 52 years after the organization's establishment, in the aftermath of a terrorist attack on the United States. Similarly, the 2004 Tsunami spurred Australia, Japan, India, and the US to set up the Tsunami Core Group. The group's evolution into the Quad, however, is chiefly predicated on the rise of

11   Dhruva Jaishankar, "It's Time to Resuscitate the Asia-Pacific Quad," *Brookings Blog,* last modified January 9, 2017, accessed May 12, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/01/09/its-time-to-resuscitate-the-asia-pacific-quad/.

12   Frederick Kliem, "Why Quasi Alliances Will Persist in the Indo-Pacific: The Fall and Rise of the Quad," *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2020): 271-304.

13   Smruti Pattanaik, "Indian Ocean in the Emerging Geo-strategic Context: Examining India's Relations with its Maritime South Asian Neighbors," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 12, no. 2 (2016): 126-142.

China and the emergence of non-traditional security threats in the region.[14]

As the Quad's inception has been comprehensively reviewed in scholarly work,[15] our assessment will chiefly focus on why Australia withdrew from the security dialogue in 2008. This section discusses first image explanations,[16] tying Australia's decision to Prime Minister Rudd's idiosyncrasies and perceptions of Australia, the Quad, and China. The next section outlines the justifications posited by the Prime Minister as to what motivated his decision and evaluates other international and structure-level variables which may have contributed towards Australia's withdrawal and the Quad 1.0's subsequent collapse.

Although the Quad appeared to be a partnership between "like-minded democratic states" focused on addressing common strategic concerns, such as managing the rise of China in the Asia-Pacific region, it foundered in 2008 as a result of Australia's withdrawal. Canberra's decision is largely ascribed in scholarly literature to the worldview of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. Some academics contend that Rudd "sank Quad 1.0" as he

14   Rory Medcalf, "Balancing Act: Making Sense of the Quad," *Australian Foreign Affairs*, no. 10 (2020): 30–48; "Commentary: US Dreams of Asian NATO," *China Daily*, last modified July 13, 2003, accessed May 2, 2021,

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-07/18/content_246008.htm; David Envall, "The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue: Towards an Indo-Pacific Order?" *RSIS Policy Report* (2019); John Calabrese, "Assuring a free and open Indo-Pacific – Rebalancing the US approach," *Asian Affairs* 51, no. 2 (2020): 307-327.

15   Aurelia Mulgan, "Breaking the Mould: Japan's Subtle Shift from Exclusive Bilateralism to Modest Minilateralism," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 30, no. 1 (2008): 52-72; Yin Chengde, "New Posture of US' Asia-Pacific Strategy," *China International Studies* 10 (2008): 41-57.

16   The author adopts the first/second/third image classifications outlined by Waltz (1959). According to him, the first image consists of the perceptions and nature of human beings (in other words the domestic intervening variable of leader image falls into this category and first image is therefore used interchangeably with leader image in this article), the second image consists of the internal organization of states (in this sense, domestic intervening variables such as strategic culture, state-society relations and domestic institutions outlined in Neoclassical Realism fall into this category) and the third image involves the anarchic international system and international developments such as changes in power polarity which transpire on the international plane. For more, see Section 3 and Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

was overtly predisposed towards China.[17] They flag Rudd's determination to "reverse a decision to sell Australian uranium to India" and his visit to Beijing ahead of Tokyo as emblematic of his inclination towards China.[18]

The optics of the Labor government's behavior was thrown into sharp relief when its foreign minister, Stephen Smith, "assured Beijing that Canberra would pull out of the Quad."[19] Rudd was also chastised for a speech he delivered at the Peking University in 2008 where he pronounced Australia as "China's *'zhèngyǒu'* or 'true friend'."[20]

The Rudd Labor government insisted that Quad 1.0 was "unduly provocative to Beijing" and was vague on its short and long-term objectives.[21] Devoid of clearly distinguished areas of cooperation, it was also believed to jeopardize Canberra's robust economic ties with China (see Figure 1). Sophie Eisentraut and Bart Gaens argue that Canberra's high export dependency with China may have also factored into Rudd's decision-making, heightening his apprehensions over Australia's vulnerability to a potential coercive economic response from Beijing.[22]

17   Graeme Dobell, "The Quantity and Quality of Quad Questions," *ASPI Strategist,* last modified February 25, 2019, accessed April 13, 2021, https://www.aspistrategist. org.au/the-quantity-and-quality-of-quad-questions/; Nick Bisley, "Australia's American Alliance and the Networking of Forces in East Asia," *International Politics* 57 (2020): 208224.

18   Daniel Flitton, "Who Really Killed the Quad 1.0?," *Lowy Institute,* last modified June 2, 2020, accessed May 20, 2021, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/ who-really-killed-quad-10.

19   Indrani Bagchai, "Australia to Pull Out of 'Quad' that Excludes China," *Times of India,* last modified February 6, 2008, accessed May 17, 2021, https:// timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Australia-to-pull-out-of-quad-that-excludes-China/ articleshow/2760109.cms.

20   Nicholas Thomas, "The Economics of Power Transitions: Australia between China and the United States," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 95 (2015): 861.

21   Brendan Taylor, "Contested Concept: Unpacking Australia's Indo-Pacific Debate," *Asian Politics & Policy* 12, no. 1 (2020): 79.

22   Sophie Eisentraut and Bart Gaens, *The US-Japan-India-Australia Quadrilateral Security Dialogue,* 5.
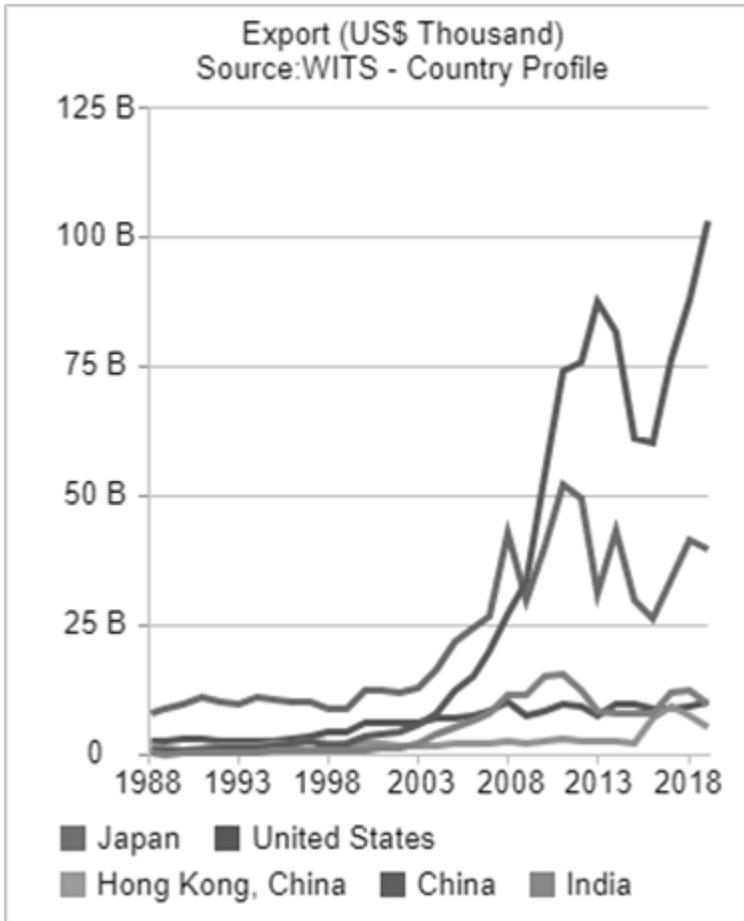
Figure 1. Australian Exports to Japan, US, China, and India from 1988-2019[23]

China registered exponential growth following Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms in 1979. The three decades since 1979 showcased an average annual GDP growth rate of 9.8 percent, followed by a rate of 10.5

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23   Fig 1. Australian Exports to Japan, US, China, and India from 1988-2019, Chart by World Integrated Trade Solution, "Australia Exports by country in US$ Thousand 1988-2019," from World Integrated Trade Solution, https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/AUS/StartYear/1988/EndYear/2019/TradeFlow/Export/Partner/BY-COUNTRY/Indicator/XPRT-TRD-VL#.

percent between 2002 and 2007.[24] In order to alleviate apprehensions on its potential to upend the regional and international order, President Hu Jintao (2003–2013) introduced the concept of "peaceful rise" which countersigned Beijing's intention to create a "harmonious world" without destabilizing the international order or seeking hegemony.[25] To quote the Chinese President, "the very purpose of China's foreign policy is to maintain world peace and promote common development."[26] Against this backdrop, an institutionalized framework to counter an overtly benign China may have appeared to be gratuitous to Rudd, prompting him to withdraw from the initiative during his tenure.

China's vocal opposition against the Quad was another factor which may have influenced Rudd's decision. Beijing described the initiative as an "Asian NATO" and declared that the Quad would destabilize regional security and intensify inter-state tensions.[27] The Chinese government also issued a *demarche* seeking an explanation from the Quad countries on the formation and purpose of the initiative.[28] *The Economist* concludes that Rudd, "discomfited

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24   Yu Yongding and Naved Hamid, "China's Economic Growth, Global Economic Crisis and China's Policy Responses," *The Pakistan Development Review* 47, no. 4 (2008): 338.

25   Hu Jintao, "Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity – Statement by the President of the People's Republic of China at the United Nations Summit New York," last modified September 15, 2005, accessed September 22, 2021, https://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/statements15/china050915eng.pdf; Bonnie Glaser and Evan Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of 'Peaceful Rise,'" *The China Quarterly*, no. 190 (2007): 291–310; Yu Xintian, "Harmonious World and China's Road of Peaceful Development," *China International Studies* 6 (2007): 11-29.

26   Hu Jintao, "China's Development is an Opportunity for Asia," speech delivered at the opening ceremony of the Bo'ao Forum for Asia 2004 annual conference, *China Daily*, last modified April 27, 2004, accessed September 22, 2021, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-04/17/content_356441.htm.

27   Mrittika Sarkar, "China and Quad2.0: Between Response and Regional Construct," *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 16, no. 1 (2020): 2; "US Dreams of Asian NATO," *China Daily*, last modified July 13, 2003, accessed May 2, 2021, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-07/18/content_246008.htm.

28   Rahul Mishra, "An Indian Perspective," *The ASAN Forum,* last modified July 2, 2018, accessed September 22, 2021, https://theasanforum.org/an-indian-perspective/#a12.

by China's prickly reaction," believed that it was not in Australia's interests to augment China's resentment and consequently withdrew from Quad 1.0.[29]

Some claim that the Prime Minister was motivated by his desire to maintain a balanced relationship between the US and China. At the time, the United States was facing the brunt of the Global Financial Crisis while China emerged relatively unscathed from long-term negative economic ramifications.[30] Accordingly, an estrangement with the next potential global economic hegemon owing to a security alliance with Washington and its allies could have been perceived by Rudd as an impolitic decision.

Moreover, tensions had begun to flare up in the early 2000s between Washington and Beijing over the island of Taiwan. William Tow posits Rudd's apprehension over the possibility that Australia would have to intervene militarily to support the US, in the event a conflict erupted in the Taiwan Straits or East China Sea, as influencing him to abandon Quad 1.0 prematurely.[31] Michael Cohen sums up the Labor government's position by stating that Rudd was "uneasy about tilting too closely to Washington and adopting too hard a line towards China."[32]

This section illustrated first image explanations as to what may have motivated Rudd to exit Quad 1.0. The Prime Minister's predisposition towards China, his apprehensions of potential negative ramifications on the Sino-Australian bilateral trade relationship, his desire to avoid engendering resentment among Beijing's policymakers, and his aspiration to balance between the US and China have been advanced as justifications vindicating his decision. However, a few observers, including the former Prime Minister himself, voiced alternative explanations for Australia's withdrawal from Quad 1.0. These accounts move away from the unit-

29   The Economist, "An Indo-Pacific Club Builds Heft", *The Economist,* November 21, 2020, 60, https://www.economist.com/asia/2020/11/19/an-indo-pacific-club-builds-heft

30   Richard Iley and Mervyn Lewis, *Global Finance After the Crisis: The United States, China, and the New World Order* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013).

31   William Tow, "Asia's Competitive 'Strategic Geometrics': the Australian Perspective," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 30, no. 1 (2008): 43.

32   Michael Cohen, "Political Parties, Australia and the US Alliance: 1976-2016," *Asian Security* 16, no. 3 (2020): 335.

level and instead, outline structural causes for the downfall of Quad 1.0.[33]

2.2 Alternative Contributing Factors?

This section calls into question conventional wisdom on the Quad's dissolution. Rudd argues that Quad 1.0 was a futile endeavor as "there was no clear consensus of what the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue" entailed.[34] Descriptors including "an alliance, an axis of democracy, a security diamond or a way to contain China" which were ascribed to Quad 1.0 may have contributed towards its early demise.[35] As a comprehensive outline of the initiative's objectives was not laid out and because the initiative was portrayed by some media outlets as a Western-led approach to contain the rise of China, policymakers from Japan and India may have harbored a reticence to back the initiative.[36]

Moreover, Rudd adds that Abe's successor, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda was lukewarm towards Quad 1.0.[37] Some observers concur with Rudd's assessment. For example, Vindu Chotani describes Fukuda as a leader with a "pro-China tilt"[38] while Ram Madhav insists that the Prime Minister did not wish to jeopardize Japan's robust economic ties with China.[39] An absence of enthusiasm towards Quad 1.0 and the belief that it was "unnecessarily provocative towards China"[40] may have contributed towards a shift in perception

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33   For more on the three images, see footnote 16 and Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001): 16-41.

34   Rudd, "The Convenient Rewriting of the History of the 'Quad.'"

35   Tanvi Madan, "The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of the 'Quad,'" *War on the Rocks,* last modified November 16, 2017, accessed January 15, 2021, https://warontherocks.com/2017/11/rise-fall-rebirth-quad/.

36   Richard Leaver, "Issues in Australian Foreign Policy: January to June 2008," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 54, no. 4 (2008): 600.

37   Rudd, "The Convenient Rewriting of the History of the 'Quad.'"

38   Vindu Chotani, "Leading from the Kantei: Japan and the Quad," *Tokyo Review,* last modified October 5, 2020, accessed May 20, 2021, https://www.tokyoreview.net/2020/10/leading-from-the-kantei-japan-and-the-quad/.

39   Ram Madhav, "Quad Must Be Built on Agendas, Not Emotions. Can't Afford to Become Another NATO," *The Print,* last modified October 16, 2020, accessed May 20, 2021, https://theprint.in/opinion/quad-must-be-built-on-agendas-not-emotions-cant-afford-to-become-nato/524749/.

40   Tow, "Asia's Competitive 'Strategic Geometrics,'" 32.

of the Quad's expediency in Tokyo and Canberra, contributing to its "quiet death."[41] Rudd claims that in light of these international developments, the blame for having dismantled the Quad should not be placed on his shoulders.

While structural factors, including Fukuda's reluctance to strengthen Quad 1.0 and the absence of a cohesive strategy may have hampered the Quad's development, it does not appear to be the proximate causal factor which led to Quad 1.0's collapse. Although Fukuda displayed some degree of hesitation, the lack of enthusiasm of one secondary-level constituent member (assuming that the United States, owing to its capabilities and global reach, is a primary level constituent) may not have substantially persuaded other member states to alter their perception of the Quad. Moreover, the argument that the Quad is nebulous in character insufficiently explains why a member-state would withdraw from an initiative that is comprised of long-standing allies and is geared towards tackling non-traditional and traditional security threats.

Furthermore, since an organization's focus develops over time as a result of exogenous and endogenous variables, it is a *non sequiter* to conclude that Rudd's decision to withdraw from the Quad was solely on the basis that it was vague in its short-and long-term objectives. Consequently, this article, while acknowledging the structure-level justifications offered by Rudd and others, positions the perception of the mini-lateral as the principal causal factor influencing Rudd's decision to withdraw. By applying this process tracing method, we arrive at a more lucid unfolding of why Australia withdrew from the initiative in 2008.

Structural theories such as Neoliberal Institutionalism and Neorealism discount first image descriptions as a casual explanation for changes in state behavior. Both theories take the state as the unit of analysis and conjecture that states withdraw from institutions owing to issues related to misinformation and relative gains respectively. However, as we have discussed above, discounting first and second image explanations generates the following puzzle: why was Australia the only state that withdrew from Quad 1.0? Why was India, with its traditional disinclination to deviate from nonaligned foreign policy, not the first state to withdraw?

Constructivism, as argued by Alexander Wendt, contends that

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41   William Tow, "Minilateral Security's Relevance to US Strategy in the Indo-Pacific: Challenges and Prospects," *The Pacific Review* 32, no. 2 (2018): 241.

interaction between states, even within institutional settings, shapes their identities which consequently molds their interests. In the case of the Quad, this would imply that Australia's participation and enhanced interaction with other members within the institution would lead to an alignment in regional aspirations and further the necessity of enhancing ties *through* the institutionalized process to maintain regional stability. However, as discussed above, this was not the case.

Therefore, theories that disregard unit level variables[42] cannot corroborate what transpired in 2008. Neoclassical Realism, on the other hand, utilizes unit and structure level explanations to deduce the reasons states alter their foreign policies, often in contravention of the optimal option. Before proceeding to the next section, which analyzes Australia's perception of Quad 1.0 using the Neoclassical Realist framework, a caveat is in order. Although Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell delineate three distinct types of Neoclassical Realist approaches, this article adopts the Type I variant of Neoclassical Realism.[43]

3. Neoclassical Realism and Australian Foreign Policy

Neoclassical Realism is a theoretical perspective which is employed to explain the foreign policy of states. It combines the Neorealist emphasis on systemic pressures and stimuli with the *innenpolitik* of Classical Realism to account for a state's foreign policy. Neoclassical Realists contend that "systemic pressures" are "translated through intervening variables at the unit level" when a state adopts a foreign policy posture.[44]

Neoclassical Realism also helps explain why "often against the perceived underlying structural incentives, states ended up pursuing a particular foreign policy."[45] According to Randall Schweller, "complex domestic political processes act as transmission belts that channel, mediate,

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42   Unit level variables include the 'first image' and 'second image' as outlined by Waltz (1959).

43   Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

44   Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 146.

45   Nicholas Smith, "Can Neoclassical Realism Become a Genuine Theory of International Relations?," *The Journal of Politics* 80, no. 2 (2018): 743.

and (re)direct policy outputs in response to external forces."[46] In contrast to Neorealist analysis which overlooks unit level intervening variables, Neoclassical Realists, while underscoring the salience of international power polarity and anarchy, argue that domestic unit-level variables are causally important when explaining the foreign policy of states. In other words, "systemic variables have causal primacy," but domestic-level intervening variables ultimately shape and mold the state's foreign policy.[47]

Scholarly work on Neoclassical Realism has distilled four domestic intervening variables which tend to influence a state's foreign policy. They include leader images, strategic culture, domestic institutions, and state-society relations. Each of these (unit-level) domestic intervening variables influences different stages of a state's policy making process.
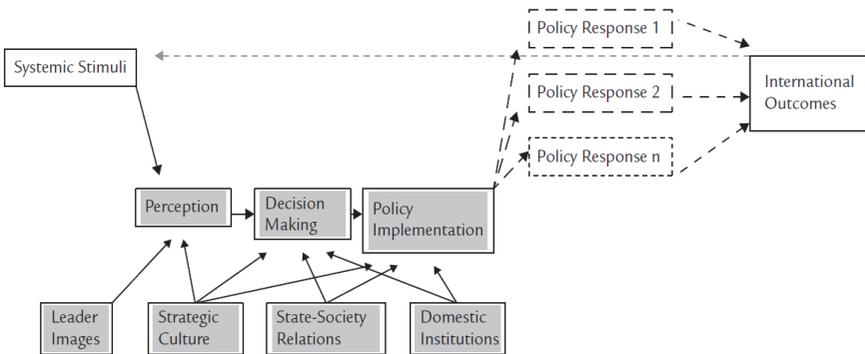

Figure 2. Neoclassical Realist Model[48]

46   Randall Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing," *International Security* 29, no. 2 (2006): 164.

47   Jeffrey Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2006): 466.

48   Ripsman et al., *Neoclassical Realist Theory,* 34

Although, at the time, China had not adopted aggressive measures in the South China and East China seas or initiated the Belt and Road Initiative, it had begun military modernization at a rapid pace.[49] Moreover, scholarly debate on China in the 1990s to early 2000s revolved around several antithetical positions. Some argued that China's behavior manifested early signs of a revisionist great power.[50] Others interpreted Beijing as a status-quo power that did not pose a threat to the regional security architecture, as a conservative power that did not exhibit any intent to contest the US-led international order, or as a state bandwagoning with the United States.[51] In retrospect, it can be posited that China's behavior in the early 2000s may have not acted as a strong coagulant to bind the four members within the Quad framework. Consequently, the conviction in some capitals that Beijing would not pose an immediate or medium-term threat may have weakened the resolve of Quad members to position the initiative as a measure to contain the rise of China.

Nevertheless, while the structural stimuli (the potential threat of China) may not have contributed towards the Quad's development along the lines of stronger security bonds, it cannot account for the dissolution of the initiative. Quad members also "took pains to characterize their cooperation as directed towards collectively providing public goods rather than aimed at any particular country."[52] Consequently, the Quad's potential in tackling traditional and non-traditional security challenges—similar to the Tsunami Core Group (2004-2005)—underscores the benefits it could have generated had Australia not left the initiative.

Domestic intervening variables such as public opinion and parliamentary opposition, in addition to structural variables as depicted in

49   William Callahan, "How to Understand China: The Dangers and Opportunities of Being a Rising Power," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 4 (2005): 705.

50   Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro, "The Coming Conflict with America," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (1992): 19; Bill Gertz, *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America* (Washington D.C.: Regnery, 2000): 199; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).

51   Zheng Bijian, "China's Peaceful Rise to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (2005): 18-24; Robert Ross, "Beijing as a Conservative Power," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (1997): 33-44; William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 5-41.

52   Lavina Lee, "Abe's Democratic Security Diamond and New Quadrilateral Initiative: An Australian Perspective," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 30, no. 2 (2016): 7.

Figure 2, tend to play a significant role in a country's foreign policy. In the case of Australia's withdrawal from the Quad however, this does not hold true. Australian public opinion polls conducted in 2008 reflected a decline in trust of China. A 2008 *Lowy Institute* poll for instance, concluded that China was the least trusted great power while the United States shared the most trusted great power status alongside Japan.[53] The number of Australian respondents identifying China as a threat also jumped from 25 percent in 2006 to 34 percent in 2008.[54] Public opinion therefore appeared to be conducive towards Australia's continued participation within the Quad.

Likewise, Parliamentary opposition (domestic institutions) did not play a part in the decision. Members from the Liberal Party strongly opposed the possibility of retreating from the Quad. For instance, Andrew Robb, representing the Liberal Party, asserted that "the quadrilateral dialogue of democracies was clearly abandoned to appease China."[55] Nor did members of the Labor Party appear to influence Rudd's decision to leave Quad 1.0. Instead, members of the Labor Party sought to justify the outcome based on the tepid behavior of Japan and India (structural variables) as well as the potential negative ramifications on Australia's economy.[56] However, what needs to be remembered is that these justifications were first voiced by Rudd himself and merely echoed by members of his political party. Consequently, one finds it difficult to contend that public opinion or Australia's domestic institutions (the Parliamentary opposition or the Labor Party) played a significant role in Australia's perception of Quad 1.0.

The literature reviewed above (sections 2.1 and 2.2) demonstrates that Australia's decision to withdraw from Quad 1.0 was not primarily motivated by structural dictates, nor was it influenced by public opinion (state-society relations) or domestic institutions. Consequently, the next

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53   Fergus Hanson, *Australia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (Canberra: Lowy Institute*,* 2008): 7.

54   Ibid., 10.

55   Commonwealth of Australia House of Representatives, *House of Representatives Official Hansard*, no. 7 2008, 4463, last modified June 4, 2008, accessed July 4, 2021, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/ parlInfo/download/chamber/hansardr/2008-06-04/toc_pdf/5895- 12.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22chamber/ hansardr/2008-06-04/0102%22.

56   Ibid., 4464-4468.

section employs the "leader image" and "strategic culture" intervening variables, as denoted in *Figure 2*, to examine whether Australia's departure from Quad 1.0 was a result of a change in Canberra's "perception" caused by either/both of the two domestic intervening variables.

3.1 Strategic Culture and Leader Images

Which factors account for Australia's change in perception under the Rudd administration? Was Australia's decision to leave the Quad impelled by its strategic culture? Or instead, should "leader image" be held accountable? This section begins by outlining Australia's unique strategic culture and the degree of influence this may have had on the Labor government's decision. It then discusses the "leader image" of Prime Minister Rudd and examines whether it explains why Australia withdrew from Quad 1.0.

Strategic culture, according to Neoclassical Realists, "can influence the way the state perceives and adapts to systemic stimuli and structural shifts in material capability" as it often takes root among elites and the general public.[57] A country's strategic culture is contingent on its "history, geography and identity."[58] Australia's strategic culture is fostered by its identity as an Anglo-Saxon outpost in an Asian spatial context. This engenders a sense of vulnerability among Australian policymakers and the public. Australia's strategic culture is also reflected by its tendency to align with Western great powers (the United Kingdom till the 1940s and the US since then) to protect its territory from hostile external actors.[59]

Prime Minister Howard's decision to join Quad 1.0 was influenced by the perception that an alignment with the United States and other democratic states would enhance Australia's defensive position. In that sense, his decision to align with a Western nation (the US) and other Asian nations which ascribe to common democratic values (India and Japan) aligns with a strategic culture

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57   Ripsman et al., *Neoclassical Realist Theory,* 66.

58   Michael O'Keefe, "Teaching Australian Foreign Policy through the Lens of Strategic Culture," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 73, no. 6 (2019): 532-538.

59   Alex Burns and Ben Eltham, "Australia's Strategic Culture: Constraints and Opportunities in Security Policymaking," *Contemporary Security Policy* 35, no. 2 (2014): 187-210.

explanation. Furthermore, Australia's concern of China's power projection capabilities and its robust economic engagement with several Pacific Island states exacerbated Australia's apprehension and sense of insecurity.[60] Thus, strategic culture helps explain why Australia was inclined to join Quad 1.0.

However, Prime Minister Rudd's decision to pull out of the initiative, particularly one with defensive overtones, does not validate the strategic culture explanation of Australia's enduring sense of vulnerability. Nor does strategic culture explain why Australia withdrew from an initiative that included a close defense ally such as the US. Consequently, it can be argued that strategic culture does not explain why Australia withdrew from Quad 1.0 in 2008.

According to Taliaferro, leaders pursue foreign and security policies "based on their assessments and calculations of relative power and other states' intentions."[61] Section 2.1 illustrated the diverse perspectives postulated by scholars as to what may have motivated Rudd to exit Quad 1.0. They outlined Rudd's worldview (leader image) as having been influenced by a) his bias towards China, b) his anxiety of upending Sino-Australian economic ties, c) his desire to prevent Chinese antipathy against Canberra, d) and his aspiration to balance ties with the United States and China. The Prime Minister's risk aversion and the factors outlined above colored his worldview of the geopolitical and geo-economic struggle between Washington and Beijing. It also prompted Rudd to perceive the Quad as yielding more costs than benefits, stretching his "political comfort level to snapping point."[62] As a result, evidence points to Rudd's "leader image" as having been the most significant determinant influencing Australia's perception of Quad 1.0 and its decision to leave the initiative. The next section assesses whether the revived Quad (2.0) will be able to sustain its momentum or instead encounter similar problems to those of Quad 1.0.

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60   Denghua Zhang and Stephanie Lawson, "China in Pacific Regional Politics," *The Round Table* 106, no. 2 (2017): 197-206.

61   Jeffrey Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism," 486.

62   Euan Graham, "The Quad Deserves Its Second Chance," in *Debating the Quad*, ed. Andrew Carr (Canberra: Australian National University, 2018), 4-7.

4. Has the Ship Sailed for Quad 2.0 or was Quad 1.0 just ahead of its time?

China's Belt and Road Initiative spurred the United States and several Asian allies to develop an Indo-Pacific strategy. In conjunction with this strategy, the United States and its Asian allies also revived the Quad "security platform in opposition to China's expansionism."[63] Both initiatives appear to be driven by the apprehension that China "wants to change the international order to suit its expanding interests, and lay claim to territory over which others are willing to fight."[64] The Quad (2.0), relaunched in 2017, was backed by the active participation of Australia, India, Japan and the United States. Policy documents from Tokyo, Washington, Canberra, and New Delhi also referenced the salience and synergy of the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the Quad.[65]

China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region since the early 2010s acted as a stimulant, channelling the centrifugal perspectives of the four members towards a more centripetal position. "Australia's concerns over China's strategic posture in the Indo-Pacific have been reinforced by revelations of interference by Beijing in Australian domestic affairs."[66] Chinese restrictions on beef, barley, and wine exports from Australia, and Xi's efforts to deter Chinese students from studying at Australian universities exacerbated bilateral tensions. Similarly, India adopted a stronger stance against Beijing following the latter's incursions into contested territory along the Indo-China border. Repeated clashes between their armed forces have therefore, reinvigorated New Delhi's threat perception of Beijing's hostile intentions. Commodore Ashok Rai of the Indian Navy sums up the necessity for a stronger military stance stating that "there is no denying that China is

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63   Sung Jung, Jaehyon Lee, and Ji-Yong Lee, "The Indo-Pacific Strategy and US Alliance Network Expandability: Asian Middle Powers' Positions on Sino-US," *Journal of Contemporary China* 30, no. 127
(2021): 53.

64   Rory Medcalf, *Contest for the Indo-Pacific: Why China Won't Map the Future* (Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 2020).

65   Zhang Jie, "The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and Reconstruction of Asia-Pacific Order," *China International Studies,* no. 74 (2019): 55-73.

66   Andrew O'Neil and Lucy West, "The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and Indo-Pacific Minilateralism: Resurrection Without Renewal?," in *Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific: The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism, and ASEAN*, eds. Bhubhindar Singh and Sarah Teo, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020): 27-41.

exhibiting signs of being an assertive—if not aggressive—revisionist power."[67] In East Asia, Japan was witness to the "vastly increased 'gray-zone' coercive behavior by China's Coast Guard and maritime militia vessels" following the nationalization of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands.[68] In response, the Quad was reinstated as part of a wider conversation over how to manage China's rise. In an attempt to signal the rising congruence between the Quad members, President Biden also hosted the first Quad Leaders' Summit in March 2021.

Although on the structural-level, China's behavior appears more threatening than in the early 2000s, and on the unit-level, meetings at senior official and head of state level have been uninterrupted since 2017, it remains to be seen whether Quad 2.0 can deliver on its objectives. In particular, dissimilar conceptualizations of the Indo-Pacific region's geographical space coupled with a reluctance to jeopardize trade ties with China may hinder deeper security engagement within Quad 2.0.

Moreover, despite efforts to expand Quad 2.0 to Quad Plus, it remains to be seen whether other Indo-Pacific countries would be inclined to jeopardize their vibrant economic ties with their indispensable regional partner—China— to engage with Quad 2.0. In case they do not, will the inability to increase Quad partners/allies derail the momentum of the initiative? Disagreements among the Quad members escalating to the level of a breakdown of cooperation is also conceivable. For example, US Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs), which were hitherto chiefly directed at China, were conducted in April 2021 in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone without informing New Delhi. The move resulted in a public outcry from Indian policymakers and was criticized as a US attempt to lump India into the same basket as China.[69] The delay in the provision of medical assistance to India following a surge of COVID-19 deaths, despite having pledged—during Quad virtual meetings—to coordinate the provision of vaccines and medical assistance,

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67   Ashok Rai, "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad 2.0): A Credible Strategic Construct or Mere 'Foam in the Ocean'?," *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 14, no. 2 (2018): 145.

68   Patrick Buchan and Benjamin Rimland, *Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue* (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2020): 4.

69   Rahul Singh and Rezaul Laskar, "Concern in Delhi as US warship Transits its Economic Zone," *Live Mint*, last modified April 9, 2021, accessed May 25, 2021, https://www.livemint.com/news/world/concern-in-delhi-as-us-warship-transits-its-economic-zone-11617992295963.html.

also reflects negatively on the ability of the Quad to effectively tackle non-traditional security challenges even in the territory of one of its members.[70]

5. Conclusion

This paper examines why Australia withdrew from the Quad (1.0) in 2008, only a year after joining the initiative. It utilizes Neorealist, Neoliberal Institutionalist, Constructivist and Neoclassical Realist lenses to assess whether domestic and/or structural factors played a significant role in Australia's decision. Neorealism and Neoliberal Institutionalism, with their emphasis on structural variables, fail to accurately explain why Australia withdrew from the Quad. Structural factors such as the threat posed from China in the early 2000s (even though Australia's threat perception was not as high as it is at present) coupled with the growing incidences of non-traditional security threats incentivized Australia to remain within the Quad. Similarly, interactions between Australia and other Quad members—through a common institutional platform—enhanced existing ties, especially given the commonality of threats each member encountered in the region. Be that as it may, Australia withdrew from the Quad a year after it was formed. As a consequence of Australia's withdrawal, the Quad institutional framework ceased to exist until it was revitalized in 2017.

If structural factors do not account for Australia's decision, what motivated the sudden reversal? In order to identify the proximate causal factor contributing to Australia's decision, this paper scrutinized how each of the four domestic intervening variables (i.e., leader images, strategic culture, domestic institutions, and state-society relations) may have had an effect on Australia's decision. By doing so the paper concludes that Rudd's "leader image" played the most significant part in Australia's decision to leave the Quad in 2008.

The final section of this paper appraised the inception of the reinvigorated Quad (2.0) and briefly assessed whether it also suffers from the problems which impeded the progress of Quad 1.0. It concluded that Quad 2.0 may have greater staying power in contrast to Quad 1.0 owing to a changed strategic setting, characterized by increasingly ambitious Chinese behavior. Nevertheless, prevailing points of contention, particularly at the domestic

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70   Derek Grossman, "India's Brittle Confidence in America," *The Rand Blog,* last modified May 21, 2021, accessed June 6, 2021, https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/05/indias-brittle-confidence-in-america.html.

level, must be addressed if the Quad (2.0) intends to play a robust role in the Indo-Pacific. Hence, the article concludes that the primary determinants propelling the initiative (Quad 2.0) forward is the escalating incidence of China's bellicose international behavior as well as the political unity between the Quad members. However, if domestic intervening variables play a major role in influencing the foreign policies of the Quad nations to move away from the initiative, we may see a recurrence of the Quad's demise in the near future.

Cyber Does Not Transform International Security and War:
Understanding Cyber through Existing Theoretical Tools in International Relations

Jun Kyu Baek

Graduate student at the Yonsei Graduate School of International Studies

Though it may be understandable to view cyber and information technology as disruptive and even transformative for a wide range of domains of modern civilization, this preconception doesn't necessarily apply in the context of international security and war. This essay argues that the advent of cyber does not fundamentally transform security and war; it reasons that cyber has not shifted the fundamental goals of security nor the reasons why wars are fought. The essay first looks at the literature on international relations and cybersecurity to synthesize three propositions supporting the counter-position that cyber transforms security and war. After evaluating these three propositions in turn, the essay finds them all to be debatable and inconclusive. Having thusly contended that international security yet remains untransformed by cyber, the essay subsequently demonstrates that it is possible to understand cyber in international security via theories used for traditional security affairs. An alternative explanation of cyber in international security is subsequently provided, where existing conceptual tools in international relations—such as information warfare, the offense-defense balance, and deterrence theory—are utilized both to account for the use of cyber in international security and to show that cyber is not so transformative that it precludes the use of existing theories in international security. Cyber may change how wars are fought, but not why they are fought, and can therefore still be interpreted using traditional conceptual tools.

1. Introduction

While the impact of cyber and information technology can be observed across various domains of modern civilization, a distinction should be made between "change" and "transformation". [1] This distinction asks if cyber is so fundamentally disruptive that existing modes of thought will be unrecognizably altered, or whether traditional paradigms can even be applied in the age of cyber. This essay responds to these questions by examining the impact of cyber over a subdomain of international relations: international security and war.

Explaining *why* wars are waged—or, in other words, the causes of war and the logic underlying international security—is a lengthy discussion separate from the focus and scope of this essay. Given the issues this essay seeks to address and for the sake of brevity and convenience, the essay will utilize abstractions such as "politics", "policy", and the pursuit of "survival", "security", or "the national interest" within the uncertain environmental conditions of international politics, as shorthand to explain away the reasons why international actors sometimes elect to wage war.

Utilizing this language, this essay argues that cyber will not transform international security and war, holding that cyber does not significantly alter the underlying, fundamental policy/strategic goals of security and war. Though cyber may change *how* wars are fought, it is unlikely to transform the fundamental reasons *why* they are fought. Since these underlying reasons remain unchanged, it is feasible to incorporate cyber into existing tools and paradigms for understanding security and war.

To develop this argument, this essay will first critique common propositions suggesting that cyber will "transform" security and war. Each of these propositions are found to be implausible, which suggests that security and war have not been transformed by cyber. Building upon the argument that security and war have remained fundamentally unchanged, the second part of the essay will describe how to validly incorporate cyber into existing tools and concepts for understanding security and war.

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1   "The Impact of Digital Technologies", United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/un75/impact-digital-technologies; Martin Mühleisen, "The Long and Short of The Digital Revolution", *Finance & Development* 55, no. 2 (June 2018): pp.4-8; Charles Weiss, "How Do Science and Technology Affect International Affairs?" *Minerva* 54 (2015): pp. 411-430.

2. Not Very Transformational

To transform security and war, cyber should irrevocably alter their policy and strategic dimensions. In doing so, cyber must buck existing tools and paradigms used to understand security and war.[2] It is insufficient to point to the altered methods or novel expressions of warfare as evidence of transformation. Rather, this essay presupposes that real transformation occurs when leaders alter how they think about security, or when the underlying political and strategic drivers of war have been changed. [3]

In this section, the essay will illustrate how cyber lacks such transformative qualities. First, the essay will critique the extent to which cyber should be conceptualized as a goal versus a means through which larger strategic goals are achieved. Second, the essay will review the basic defining traits of cyber as it relates to international security affairs. These traits will be used to synthesize and then evaluate three commonly-held beliefs about cyber's ostensibly transformative impact on international security and war.

2.1. A New Way of Warfighting?

Increasing concerns about the role, utility, and risks of cyber in war have intensified the call to operationalize cyber as its own distinct military domain, alongside land, sea, air, and space. US Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) actively conceptualizes cyberspace as the fifth operational domain of the

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2   To illustrate, Thomas Rid writes that to be classified as "war", an act must fulfill three criteria: it must be violent (i.e., lethal), coercive (i.e., must intend on bending the adversary to one's will), and political (i.e., war is always motivated by political purposes). See Thomas Rid, "Cyber War Will Not Take Place", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 35, no. 1 (2012): pp. 7-10.

3   Examples of novel expressions of so-called "cyberwarfare" can include zero-day cyber-physical attacks, cyber-espionage, cyber terrorism, and cyber information warfare.

military, a domain in which USCYBERCOM strives to achieve dominance.[4] USCYBERCOM no longer believes it is sufficient to treat cyber as merely an asset—superiority in the cyber-realm is the goal, and attaining it may require new kinds of capabilities,[5] innovations, and concepts.[6] Here, the claim is made that cyber has somehow meaningfully changed security and war, to such an extent that the US military now pursues unique distinct capabilities

4   USCYBERCOM specifies cyberspace superiority as "the degree of dominance in cyberspace by one force that permits the secure, reliable conduct of operations by that force, and its related land, air, maritime, and space forces at a given time and place without prohibitive interference by an adversary". USCYBERCOM's view of cyber as a distinct domain is also apparent in how it vows to attain superiority through persistent and forward-pushing (as opposed to reactive and singular) engagement in cyberspace: "Cyberspace persistence is the continuous ability to anticipate the adversary's vulnerabilities, and formulate and execute cyberspace operations to contest adversary courses of action under determined conditions". See United States Cyber Command, *Achieve and Maintain Cyberspace Superiority: Command Vision for US Cyber Command*, (April 2018), https://www.cybercom.mil/Portals/56/Documents/USCYBERCOM%20Vision%20April%202018.pdf, pp. 6. For more on the US' operationalization of cyber as a military domain, see Jacquelyn G. Schneider, et al., "Ten Years In: Implementing Strategic Approaches to Cyberspace", pp. 5-6. For more on cyber persistence theory, see Michael P. Fischerkeller and Richard J. Harknett, "Cyber Persistence Theory, Intelligence Contests and Strategic Competition", Institute for Defense Analysis, (June 2020): pp. 1-11.

5   For example, capabilities like boots-on-the-ground soldiers may prove less important than computer-savvy cyber specialists when pursuing superiority in the cyber domain. Building these capabilities requires policies that nurture and attract the relevant talent (e.g., policies that improve technical education and linkages with civilian groups at the forefront of the technology industry), as opposed to policies that help train a less-useful traditional soldiery. Indeed, the NATO Industry Cyber Partnership (NICP) has worked since 2014 to bolster civilian-military cooperation in the cyber domain through the exchange of best practices, review of NATO's cyber-exercises, and sharing of information about new or upcoming innovations. See Jamie Shea, "Cyberspace as a Domain of Operations: What is NATO's Vision and Strategy?", pp. 147-148.

6   For example, NATO views cyber as an operational domain of war and a paradigm-breaking force due to its unprecedented capacity to induce volatility. This view stems from cyber's ability to achieve desirable outcomes with relative ambiguity, frequency, and rapidity compared to conventional means; to disrupt state control over once-secure processes such as elections, critical infrastructure, economy, etc.; its availability to a wide range of actors; and other such distinctive characteristics. The volatility of cyber has spurred NATO to reshape its organization, policies, and resources to better prepare for aggression and defense in cyberspace. Ibid, pp. 140-141, 148-149.

and stratagems to thrive in a discrete domain of military-cyber affairs.

This claim is problematic firstly because the pursuit of "cyber-superiority" can be simply envisaged as a new way of achieving the unchanged, underlying policy goals of war. Superiority over the cyber domain is a valuable goal, not necessarily because it galvanizes the military towards the goal of superiority, but because cyber-superiority serves the larger policy and strategic goals of the national interest. While cyber-superiority admittedly represents a novel method of achieving said policy goals, there is little to suggest that the logic that drives politics and policy itself have changed,[7] nor is there much strategic validity in treating cyber operations as an end unto itself.[8] Put in other words, cyber has not affected the security/self-help logic that guides policy/strategic decisions. Building up cyber capabilities to better compete in the cyber domain may be a novel expression of that underlying logic, but does not equate to having transformed it.

Furthermore, even if cyber capabilities are a novel means of achieving the policy goals of war, conventional means are still necessary to achieve those goals. Cyber has not supplanted or substituted conventional forces. Rather, cyber is often used as a force multiplier or a complement to existing, conventional means—all of which are utilized to achieve strategic ends.[9] In

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7   USCYBERCOM states that its goal of attaining attain cyber-superiority is rooted in the desire to "defend [US] interests and protect [US] values… to improve security and stability". In other words, cyber-superiority is not viewed as USCYBERCOM's end-goal. (See United States Cyber Command, Achieve and Maintain Cyberspace Superiority: Command Vision for US Cyber Command, pp. 2.) Second, NATO's emphasis on cyber is predicated on the belief that cyber will help it fulfill its function as a collective security pact between 30 different nation-states – an agreement maintained out of the participants' goal of maximizing national security. As long as the operationalization of cyber is driven by the enduring strategic goal of maximizing national security, then one cannot say that the operationalization of cyber has transformed war. See: Jamie Shea, "Cyberspace as a Domain of Operations: What is NATO's Vision and Strategy?", pp.133-134 and North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Cyber Defense Pledge", press release, July 8, 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133177.htm.

8   John Sheldon makes the latter point clear. See John B. Sheldon, "Deciphering Cyberpower: Strategic Purpose in Peace and War", pp. 102-103.

9   John B. Sheldon, "Deciphering Cyberpower: Strategic Purpose in Peace and War", pp. 99-100; P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 128-132, 146.

war, a strategic effect—that which has meaningful consequences for policy—is achieved via coercion, which is easiest with the application of conventional kinetic force (e.g. the destruction of enemy forces or occupation of strategically important territories). The reason for this is simply because international actors live in a three-dimensional physical space. Coercion is most effective when survival is threatened, and survival is best threatened when the threats are physical, present, and existential. Cyber, on the other hand, does not coerce on its own but *facilitates* coercive physical actions, such as by disabling the cyber-based command-and-control systems that coordinate physical attacks.[10]

An example of this is Operation Orchard, when Israel hacked into the Syrian air defense network and fed it false images. This prevented the Syrian radar from detecting the Israeli air-fighters sneaking into Syrian airspace, which facilitated Israel's bombing of the Syrian nuclear complex at Al-Kibar.[11] This example illustrates cyber's value as a complement to conventional force and its limited ability to achieve strategic effects on its own, rather, it was the conventional Israeli bombers that outputted the coercive strategic effect. Conventional weapons yet retain their primacy in war, and thus, cyber may not be as transformative for war as believed.[12]

2.2. Cyber: Basic Traits

Cyber is characterized by traits that are commonly believed to be destabilizing. These traits are claimed to be transformative for war and international security by allegedly introducing unprecedented levels of instability in inter-state security affairs. These cyber-defining traits

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10   John B. Sheldon, "Deciphering Cyberpower: Strategic Purpose in Peace and War", pp. 99.

11   P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, pp. 126-127.

12   A potential counterargument to this point presents itself in the advent of *kinetic* cyberweapons (cyber assets as seen in the Stuxnet incident that can inflict physical damage). This view holds that, if cyberweapons like Stuxnet can inflict serious kinetic damage, then cyber can achieve strategic effects and will thus revolutionize war and security. However, even with the damage inflicted by Stuxnet upon Iranian centrifuges, Stuxnet was ultimately unable to coerce the Iranians into shutting down their nuclear program. This casts doubt on the ability of kinetic cyberweapons to independently achieve strategic effects, and therefore, its potential to revolutionize war and security.

are established in this essay as ambiguity, availability, and plasticity.

First, cyber is *ambiguous* in the sense that it is inherently difficult to identify the perpetrators of cyberattacks. The fact that the majority of major cyberattacks up until 2010 have been unattributed serves to reinforce this point.[13]

Cyber is also widely *available* and ubiquitous. Logically, the more wired a country and its individuals are, the more vulnerable they are to cyberattacks and malware. As information technologies proliferate, cyberweapons become increasingly available to a larger number of actors and can be used to attack a greater number of increasingly "wired" targets. This is compounded by the relatively low costs of entry for cyberattacks (i.e., the costs of learning how to conduct cyberattacks or how to use malware). For example, Skygrabber, the software that was used by Iraqi insurgents in 2009 to hack into and spy on the digital video feeds of US drones, was available to download online for as cheap as USD $29.95. Such relatively low entry barriers make cyberweapons available to a larger number of actors in an increasingly digitally interconnected, and thus target-rich, environment.[14]

Finally, cyber is *plastic,* meaning that it can fulfill multiple purposes. The multifaceted, fungible, and viral qualities of cyber mean that it is difficult to manage perceptions and expectations regarding cyber-intrusions. In other

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13   Eric Talbot Jensen, "Cyber Deterrence", *Emory International Law Review* 26, no. 2 (2012): pp. 785-787. The problem of attribution compounds when considering the non-geographic nature of cyber, which enables (potentially) any cyber-actor to perpetrate cyberattacks on anyone or anything, anywhere in the world. The ambiguity inherent to cyber not only explains why actors (particularly weaker actors that face conventionally stronger opponents) are attracted to the use of cyber, but also creates an "attribution dilemma" for victims of cyberattacks, where the benefits of casting blame on an ambiguous perpetrator must be weighed against the political downsides of doing so. See: Stephen Blank, "Web War I: Is Europe's First Information War a New Kind of War?" *Comparative Strategy* 27, no. 3 (2008): pp. 241; John B. Sheldon, "Deciphering Cyberpower: Strategic Purpose in Peace and War", *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 2, (Summer 2011): pp. 99-101; and P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 72-76, 145-146.

14   Siobhan Gorman, Yochi J. Dreazen, and August Cole, "Insurgents Hack U.S. Drones", *Wall Street Journal*, December 17, 2009, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB126102247889095011; P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, pp. 150-153; and John B. Sheldon, "Deciphering Cyberpower: Strategic Purpose in Peace and War", pp. 97-98.

words, it is difficult to determine whether a cyberattack should be treated as a relatively inoffensive transgression or a deliberate, meaningful provocation. This makes it difficult to predict how victims of a cyberattack might respond, as demonstrated during the 2017 NotPetya ransomware attack. Initially afflicting Ukrainian organizations via Ukrainian tax-filing software, the NotPetya virus quickly spread across Europe and the US. With the damage adding up to an estimated $53 billion, the US and the UK blamed Russia for the attack and called for international sanctions.[15] While it is difficult to fully know Russia's intentions behind the cyberattack, assuming that Russia was indeed the perpetrator, it is unlikely that Russia deliberately set out to directly antagonize the US, Germany, France, and other major European stakeholders and incur their collective wrath. It is more plausible to think that the attack was intended to harm Ukraine, but unintentionally spread to Europe and the US.[16] Here, the plastic nature of cyber is illustrated. The NotPetya cyberattack unexpectedly went beyond its intended target and triggered unexpected and undesirable responses from others. This shows the difficulty of controlling the effects of cyberattacks and managing perceptions and expectations in cyber.

15   Jamie Shea, "Cyberspace as a Domain of Operations: What is NATO's Vision and Strategy?", *MCU Journal* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2018): pp. 139; Suzanne Barlyn, "Global cyber attack could spur $53 billion in losses: Lloyd's of London", *Reuters*, July 17, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyber-lloyds-report-idUSKBN1A20AB; "Global ransomware attack causes turmoil", *BBC News*, June 28, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-40416611; and "UK and US blame Russia for 'malicious' NotPetya cyber-attack", *BBC News*, February 15, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-43062113.

16   Several facts about the 2017 NotPetya cyberattack reflect the likelihood that the attack was primarily intended to affect Ukraine, and likely only Ukraine. First, the attack coincided on Ukraine's Constitution Day on June 28; second, 80% of all systems infected by the NotPetya malware were in Ukraine; and finally, the cyberattack took place amidst the backdrop of ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Jane Wakefield, "Tax software blame for cyber-attack spread", *BBC News*, June 28, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-40428967; Ellen Nakashima, "Russian military was behind 'NotPetya' cyberattack in Ukraine, CIA concludes", *The Washington Post*, January 12, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/russian-military-was-behind-notpetya-cyberattack-in-ukraine-cia-concludes/2018/01/12/048d8506-f7ca-11e7-b34a-b85626af34ef_story.html.

2.3. Unprecedented Instability?

The above traits combine to create three general beliefs about the destabilizing impact of cyber in security-military affairs. These beliefs conceive cyber as a common source of instability and of engendering more inter-state conflict and war. In short order, the three propositions are that cyber favors and enables military/strategic offense over military/strategic defense, that cyber emboldens and empowers conventionally weaker states to engage in asymmetric warfare, and that the cyber-attribution dilemma undermines deterrence and therefore stability.[17]

The first of these beliefs holds that cyber will shift the offense-defense balance to irrevocably favor the offense.[18] Here, it is argued that cyber incentivizes persistent cyberattacks due to cyber's relatively lower barriers to entry, the ability to accrue gains irrespective of geography and physical limitations, the ambiguity of cyber-attribution (and thus the theoretically reduced risk of facing retaliation), and the strategic ineffectiveness of cyber-defenses.[19]

Though the offense-favoring nature of cyber has been argued to be transformative for war and security, the dominance of the offense is not historically abnormal, nor does it always generate instability. The Napoleonic

17   "The emerging literature on the Cyber Revolution is uneven, but three widely held beliefs can be identified. Together these can be taken as a thesis that critical economic and military infrastructure is dangerously vulnerable because the internet gives militarily weaker actors asymmetric advantages, offense is becoming easier while defense is growing harder, and the difficulty of attributing the attacker's identity undermines deterrence." John R. Lindsay, "Stuxnet and the Limits of Cyber Warfare", *Security Studies* 22, no. 3 (2013): pp. 369.

18   According to the offense-defense balance, war is more likely when the offense is advantaged, and conquest is made easy; war is less likely when the defense is favored, and conquest is difficult. The notion that cyber advantages the offense therefore implies that cyber is more conducive to war and instability. See: Stephen Van Evera, "Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War", *International Security* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1998): pp. 5-6; John R. Lindsay, "Stuxnet and the Limits of Cyber Warfare", pp. 375-377; P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, pp. 154.

19   Jacquelyn G. Schneider, et al., "Ten Years In: Implementing Strategic Approaches to Cyberspace", *Newport Papers* 45, (2020): pp. 48-49. Indeed, the US Air Force's 2014 budget shows that it spent 2.4 times as much on cyber offense research as compared to cyber defense. See W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, pp. 137.

Wars were characterized by offense dominance, and yet the decades following them were peaceful despite no clear evidence of military innovations that might have shifted the balance towards the defense, therefore making it difficult to say that offense-dominance regularly leads to conflict.[20] Crucially however, shifts in the offense-defense balance do not change the underlying political and strategic drivers of war. Generally speaking, Napoleonic France's invasion of Europe was the result of the desire to maintain and expand its power in the face of a competitive European geopolitical environment.[21] Here, the political or strategic goals that might have initiated the Napoleonic Wars were informed less by the offensive/defensive character of the military technologies of the time, and more by abstract yet fundamental notions of the national interest, security, and survival. Shifts in the offense-defense balance do not necessarily overshadow this fundamental driver of geopolitics. Likewise, the belief that cyber shifts the balance in favor of the offense does not transform the underlying logic of war and security.

Second, there is the belief that the asymmetrical nature of cyber empowers weaker states against stronger states, thus leveling the playing field across international politics.[22] Weaker states (states with weaker *conventional* capabilities than others) may find it cheaper and easier to adopt cyberweapons than conventional weapons due to the relatively lower entry barrier of cyberweapons. Such cyberweapons provide weaker states with the means with which to conduct asymmetric warfare against conventionally-powerful rivals. Cyberweapons provide certain strategic advantages for weaker countries, such as allowing them to launch attacks from a position of relative safety (due to the aforementioned problem of identifying the perpetrators of cyber-attacks). Cyber also provides weaker states with a more target-rich environment consisting of powerful states increasingly dependent on digital infrastructure for their prosperity. As a result, weaker actors empowered by cyberweapons would pose more of a threat to

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20   James D. Fearon, "The Offense-Defense Balance and War Since 1968" (unpublished manuscript, April 8, 1997): pp. 29-30.

21   Gunter E. Rothenberg, "The Origins, Causes, and Extension of the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (Spring 1988): pp. 771-772.

22   John R. Lindsay, "Stuxnet and the Limits of Cyber Warfare", pp. 375.

conventionally strong actors, thus raising instability in inter-state affairs.[23]

Yet, stating that cyber mostly favors weaker actors and asymmetric warfare is debatable. Kinetic cyberweapons like Stuxnet feature high barriers to success that could only have been surmounted by powerful actors such as the United States. The attention that Stuxnet-level cyberattacks can attract can also be undesirable for conventionally weaker actors. As such, while low-level cyber-irritants are admittedly profuse,[24] cyberweapons can also compound the already formidable strength of the strong as opposed to unilaterally favoring the weak.[25] But more importantly, the question of whether cyber favors the weak or the strong does little in changing the fundamental drivers of war and security. Cyber little changes the fact that a state, regardless of its strength, will tend to respond to its political and strategic environment with whatever available means. The main thing that changes with the introduction of cyber is the probability of cyber operations being selected as the policy tool of choice. Cyber does little to change the underlying logic generating these policy responses in the first place.

Finally, deterrence theory can be seen as inapplicable to cyber due to difficulties with attribution in cyber, the limited utility of cyber-defense and cyber-retaliation strategies, and how deterrence in cyber is undermined rather than facilitated by the signaling of one's awareness of an adversary's actions.[26] Rather than deterring adversaries which promote stability by disincentivizing aggression, cyber triggers destabilizing security dilemmas in the form of cyber arms races.[27] To make deterrence work in a traditional context, credible and guaranteed threats must be clearly signaled to known threatening actors;

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23   Weaker actors can be advantaged when considering how less "wired" they are compared to stronger actors. Former NSA expert Charlie Miller claimed in 2011 that North Korea would need only three years and $50 million to defeat the US in a cyberwar. Part of this claim was made on the basis of North Korea's lack of digital infrastructure, and thus fewer vulnerabilities, compared to the US. Mark Clayton, "The Cyber Arms Race", *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 7, 2011, https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2011/0307/The-new-cyber-arms-race.

24   "Script kiddie" DDoS attacks being one example.

25   John R. Lindsay, "Stuxnet and the Limits of Cyber Warfare", pp. 385-389.

26   Taddeo explores the problems of applying deterrence theory to cyberspace on these grounds. See Mariarosaria Taddeo, "The Limits of Deterrence Theory in Cyberspace", *Philosophy & Technology* 31 (2018): pp. 343-352.

27   John R. Lindsay, "Stuxnet and the Limits of Cyber Warfare", pp. 376-377.

almost none of these requirements are met in cyberspace.[28] Instead of deterrence, the persistence and offense-advantaged nature of cyberattacks would encourage actors to engage in cyber arms races with their rivals, thus leading to instability.[29]

The Stuxnet incident in the context of U.S.-Iranian relations may be interpreted either as a failure or a success of cyber-deterrence. On the one hand, Stuxnet may be viewed as an example of how deterrence is inapplicable to cyber, as the U.S. was able to escape culpability for at least a year after launching their virus. It also seems that once evidence of the U.S.' offensive cyber capabilities became apparent, they were unable to deter Iran's alleged cyber-retaliations, which came in the form of alleged Iranian Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks against U.S. banks and the employment of the Shamoon virus against Saudi Aramco in 2012. On the other hand, deterrence may have prevailed in the Stuxnet case, given the restraint practiced by the U.S. and Iran. For the former, the design and execution of Operation Olympic Games (which deployed Stuxnet against Iran) was characterized by caution, uncertainty, and corresponding attempts to limit the damage Stuxnet would inflict. In the case of the latter, Iran's cyber-retaliations in the aftermath of Stuxnet amounted to irritants, constituting modest and unsophisticated attacks that resulted in no real lasting damage or significance.[30]

In any case, it is problematic to argue that cyber necessitates new paradigms for understanding war and security simply because cyber is incompatible with deterrence theory. Either cyber *is* understandable through deterrence frameworks (in which case cyber is understandable through traditional security frameworks, cannot have transformed security, and doesn't necessitate new paradigms for security), or cyber

28   P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, pp. 144-147.

29   Ibid., 156-162.

30   For a discussion of how the theoretical notion of cyber-deterrence could pertain to the Stuxnet incident between the U.S. and Iran, see John R. Lindsay, "Stuxnet and the Limits of Cyber Warfare", pp. 397-401.

cannot act as deterrents and will instead initiate arms-race escalation,[31] a concept that also has precedent in traditional security thinking.[32] In either case, existing frameworks can be used to comprehend the use of cyber, which is reflective of how cyber has changed only the superficial aspects of war and security while leaving their fundamental drivers intact.

Overall, it is debatable whether cyber is truly a source of instability. However, it is clear that cyber does not alter the underlying reasons why actors choose to go to war because cyber is offense-dominant, asymmetric, and deterrence-incompatible, which makes it have little bearing on the underlying drivers of war and security thinking.

3. New Tools, Same Game

This essay has thus far established that cyber has *not* changed the fundamental drivers of policy and security, and that the beliefs which hold that cyber is transformational for international security and war are in fact debatable and inconclusive.[33] This suggests that international security and war likewise have not been fundamentally transformed, which would also imply that existing tools for understanding security and war are still viable in a cyber-infused world. This section explores this implication further by demonstrating how cyber can be understood through the use of existing concepts and tools.

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31   A "cyber arms race" is observable in the relationship between the U.S. and China, in which each country is attempting to identify and hoard zero-day vulnerabilities in each other's systems whilst escalating the volume, frequency, coordination, and competence of various kinds of cyberattacks – from phishing to intellectual property theft – against each other. Nicole Perlroth, "How China Transformed Into a Prime Cyber Threat to the U.S.", *The New York Times*, updated July 20, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/19/technology/china-hacking-us.html.

32   P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, pp. 156-162.

33   These "fundamental drivers" of policy and strategy, as described elsewhere in this essay, can arguably be defined as the pursuit of security within the self-help conditions of international politics. For further reading on what the nature and motivations behind war and security thinking, see: Ivan Briscoe, "Conflict, security and emerging threats", in *Clingendael Strategic Monitor 2014*, ed. by Jan Rood (Clingendael Institute, 2014), pp. 146-147; Jack S. Levy, "The Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace", *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998): pp. 145-151.

Understanding cyber in terms of "information warfare" (IW) provides the first case in point. Information warfare is "the deliberate use of information by one party on an adversary to confuse, mislead, and ultimately to influence the choices and decisions that the adversary makes".[34] Examples of this include the apocryphal Trojan Horse, the 1870 Ems Telegram incident, [35] the 2007 cyberattacks on Estonia, and Operation Orchard in 2007.[36] While cyber-IW combines cyber with traditional IW to generate new characteristics, cyber-IW remains a tool for achieving policy and strategic goals through deception and influence. [37] The case of Russia's cyber-IW operations in Georgia in 2008, for example, can be understood as a means of achieving Russia's overall

34   Herbert Lin and Jackie Kerr, "On Cyber-Enabled Information/Influence Warfare and Manipulation", Center for International Security and Cooperation, Working paper, August 2017, pp. 4-5.

35   The Ems Telegram refers to the incident in 1870 in which Otto von Bismarck of Prussia manufactured a diplomatic crisis between Prussia and France. Bismarck released a statement to the Prussian media that gave off – as was Bismarck's intention – the impression that the French ambassador was more demanding than he had been to the Prussian king, and the Prussian king more insulting than he had been to the French ambassador. This deception worsened Prussian-French relations and presaged war between the two countries, all as desired by Bismarck.

36   Thomas Rid argues that cyber-incidents popularly trumpeted as examples of "cyber war" (e.g., the 2007 Estonian cyberattacks, Operation Orchard, Stuxnet, and others) are merely sophisticated examples of old activities in warfare: sabotage, espionage, and subversion. Rid further argues that sabotage, espionage, and subversion are not themselves examples of standalone "war", and rather, are auxiliary activities for military operations. As such, for Rid, cyber-incidents observed to the present day cannot be called "cyber war". See Thomas Rid, "Cyber War Will Not Take Place", pp. 16-29.

37   New characteristics such as: the rising number of actors willing to utilize cyber-IW due to the ambiguity inherent in cyberoperations; the ease with which cyber-IW operations can be conducted due to the low costs of conducting such operations and the non-geographic nature of cyber; and the relative attractiveness of cyber IW due to the highly-connective (and therefore target-rich and vulnerable) nature of the Internet. See Herbert Lin and Jackie Kerr, "On Cyber-Enabled Information/Influence Warfare and Manipulation", Center for International Security and Cooperation, pp. 11-14.

goal of occupying the territory previously owned by Georgia.[38] This shows that the Georgia incident does not change the fact that IW, whether traditional or cyber-enabled, serves as an instrument of policy goals. Russia's other cyber-IW operations, such as the cyber operations during the annexation of Crimea in 2014 as well as during the U.S. elections in 2016;[39] are also examples of information warfare being utilized to achieve policy goals.

Another view holds that cyber information warfare is somehow transformative because of the simplicity of conducting information warfare through cyber. This view holds that because the modern world is dependent on Internet hyperconnectivity for its prosperity, the world has become a more vulnerable and target-rich environment wherein people who spread disinformation and agents of psychological warfare can ply their trade. However, this view can also be understood through the concept of offense-defense balance. As explained previously, shifts in the offense-defense balance do not constitute a transformation in security and war. The fact that cyber can be understood in terms of the offense-defense balance demonstrates how cyber can be incorporated into an existing paradigm of war and security.[40]

A final example of how cyber can be understood in terms of existing

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38   Russia's cyberattacks against Georgia disabled Georgian websites, which hampered the government's ability to communicate with the public even as Russian forces invaded the country. The case thus demonstrates cyber as a complement, or force multiplier, for conventional and coercive military force. See David Hollis, "Cyberwar Case Study: Georgia 2008", *Small Wars Journal* (2011): pp. 1-5.

39   Russia's use of cyber to conduct information warfare is argued to be part of the country's overall strategy to utilize cyber and other "cognitive-psychological forms of influence" to wage a kind of asymmetric, hybrid warfare against conventionally powerful adversaries. Termed the "Gerasimov Doctrine", this strategy underscores how cyber capabilities are viewed as tools in the service of policy/strategy goals – in this case, those goals being Russia's national security in the face of geostrategic and technological challenges. Herbert Lin and Jackie Kerr, "On Cyber-Enabled Information/Influence Warfare and Manipulation", pp. 15-16.

40   It should also be noted that it is difficult to definitively say that cyber favors the offense. While cyber does possess characteristics that seemingly favor the offense, the defense is by no means helpless in cyber: the presence of "cyber kill chains" can significantly slow down and mitigate the efficacy of cyberattacks, while conventional military or diplomatic tools can be used to deter cyberattacks. See: John R. Lindsay, "Stuxnet and the Limits of Cyber Warfare", pp. 394-395 and P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, pp. 155-156.

theories lies in the debate on whether cyberweapons can be used as stabilizing deterrents or will be used to provoke destabilizing arms races. Since both deterrence theory and arms races are existing frameworks in security and war, cyberweapons can thus be understood through either of these existing frameworks. Determining which side of the debate cyberweapons fall under, deterrence or arms race, is irrelevant for the purposes of this essay's argument. The point this essay makes is that there are existing ideas—ideas grounded on a traditional understanding of security and war—that can be used to theorize about the nature and use of cyberweapons.[41]

These three examples demonstrate the viability of incorporating cyber into existing tools and concepts. Moreover, this compatibility illustrates the nature of "cyber warfare" as just another tool for fulfilling the policies and strategies representing the "national interest".[42] If the national interest is understood as the desire to provide for one's security and interests in the face of environmental uncertainty, then the national interest is less-malleable and less unaffected by the advent of cyber technologies.[43] If so, then cyber warfare, as viewed through the prism of the higher-order political and strategic goals constituting "national interest", may also be understood through or incorporated into already existing concepts used to understand security and war.

4. Conclusion

Carl von Clausewitz once described war as "the continuation of politics by

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41   As insinuated elsewhere in this essay, the debate is ongoing over the question of whether cyber can act as a deterrent or arms-race escalator. For an example of the former, Borghard and Lonergan make the case that cyber can act as a deterrent if properly framed through "deterrence-by-denial" logic. See Erica D. Borghard and Shawn W. Lonergan, "Deterrence by denial in cyberspace", *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2021): pp. 1-36.

42   Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray, "Lessons of War", *The National Interest* Winter 1988/9, no. 14 (Winter 1988/9): pp. 83.

43   For the purposes of this essay, the "national interest" is an abstraction, perhaps best defined as that which attempts to provide for one's own security or self-interest in the face of uncertain environmental conditions. This conception of the national interest opposes the notion that the national interest can be supplanted by or significantly altered by cyber. Here, cyber can be understood as a tool which serves the ends of security and self-interest; it is not an end itself.

other means."[44] The above analysis shows that the inclusion of cyber does not change the role of war as an instrument of policy, nor does it transform the fundamental drivers of politics and strategy. The goals of policy and strategy are more or less given to international actors, the most fundamental of which is possibly the nation-state's desire for survival in the face of environmental adversity and uncertainty. Since security and war are understood in terms of unchanging political and strategic drivers, it is, therefore, possible to incorporate and understand cyber using the old paradigms of security and war.

The thesis that cyber has fundamentally changed the nature of security and war is not so obvious given the debatable validity of its supporting arguments, which are that cyber is itself so important that it could be viewed as an end rather than a means, and that cyber creates unprecedented levels of instability. Neither of these arguments are conclusively true, which leaves room to explore how cyber might be explainable through existing, traditional theoretical tools. Accordingly, this essay has applied theories grounded in traditional security—such as information warfare, the offense-defense balance, and deterrence—to cyber. The essay has thus demonstrated that cyber can be understood through the language of traditional theories of international security and war, and in so doing, it has intimated that security and war have not been so altered by cyber that the study of cyber in international security precludes the use of existing theories.

The timeless and enduring drivers, goals, and purpose of security and war are exactly that — timeless and enduring. Technological sophistication in the form of cyber is ultimately superficial. Cyber may well change the form, means, and manner in which war "fighting" is conducted, but it will do little to change the fundamental purpose, which is the larger policy and strategic dimensions of security and war.

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44   Hugh Smith, *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political Ideas*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 98-99; Online Library of Liberty, "Clausewitz: War as Politics by Other Means", *Liberty Fund Network*, accessed October 5, 2021, https://oll.libertyfund.org/page/clausewitz-war-as-politics-by-other-means.

The March to Immunity or Impunity:
The Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policies
in Asia and their Human Rights Implications

Carlos Miguel Oñate

Undergraduate student at the University of the Philippines

In the global race to herd immunity, several Asian nations have implemented the mandatory vaccination of their citizens against COVID-19. Central to this mandate is the seminal human rights issue of balancing individual liberties vis-à-vis the society's right to health. In this light, this paper conducted a case study on the mandatory vaccination policies of nine Asian nations clustered according to the six major regions of the continent to encompass the vastness and diversity of Asia. Through a discussion infused with causal layered analysis (CLA), which comprehensively oscillates from the systemic causes to the civilizational perspectives, the case studies have shown that the oft-mentioned phenomenon of vaccine hesitancy and the invocation of police powers of the state have deep-seated legal, social, political, cultural, and civilizational human rights contexts— authoritarianism, militarization, and religious philosophies, among others. In turn, the mandatory vaccination policies of these countries are generally marked by vastly disproportional penalties of hefty fines and heavy-handed sanctions, the absence of enabling laws, and their adherence to the securitization of the pandemic. In response, this paper advocates that mandatory vaccination must instead be recognized as a policy of last resort. Ultimately, should the nations of Asia continue to pursue mandatory vaccination, just legislation combined with absolute transparency must be at the heart of such pursuit to ensure that the path to herd immunity is not a path of impunity.

Introduction

In the face of the unrelenting wrath of COVID-19, which has already infected millions and claimed hundreds of thousands of lives in Asia, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is equally unrelenting in his populist bravado—"if you're a person who's not vaccinated and a potential carrier, to protect the people, I have to sequester you in jail."[1] Less severe than incarceration, Indonesian President Joko Widodo's presidential regulation zeroed in on the denial of social welfare services and the imposition of fines on vaccine refusers.[2] These contemporary public pronouncements and policies have renewed the discourse and debate surrounding mandatory vaccination, which can be traced as far back as two centuries ago.[3]

In the mid-nineteenth century, the practice of compulsory vaccination started in Europe, particularly in England, as a response to the threat of smallpox. Due to the relatively lower fatality rates recorded in regions where such a mandate is in place, many countries eventually followed suit—from Europe to America.[4] Throughout the years, there were key instances wherein the fundamental issues surrounding mandatory vaccination were discussed and settled, such as the United States Supreme Court landmark case *Jacobson v. Massachusetts* in 1905,[5] which "established the constitutionality of state compulsory vaccination laws when they are 'necessary for the public health or the public safety,'"[6] and the recent decision of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) which ruled that mandatory vaccination can be regarded as "necessary in a democratic society" most especially

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1   Andreo Calonzo, "Philippine President Duterte Threatens to Jail People Who Refuse COVID-19 Vaccine," *Time*, June 22, 2021, https://time.com/6074668/duterte-jail-refuse-vaccines-philippines/.

2   Usman Hamid, "Mandatory vaccination will not solve Indonesia's Covid-19 problem," *Indonesia at Melbourne,* February 23, 2021, https://indonesiaatmelbourne. unimelb.edu.au/mandatory-vaccination-will-not-solve-indonesias-covid-19-problem/.

3   Rajaie Batniji, "Historical evidence to inform COVID-19 vaccine mandates," *Correspondence* 397, no.10276 (2021): 791, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00267-1.

4   Batniji, "Historical evidence to inform COVID-19 vaccine mandates."

5   *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, 197 U.S. 11 (1905).

6   "Toward a Twenty-First-Century Jacobson v. Massachusetts," *Harvard Law Review* 121, no.7 (2008): 1820, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40042718.

if voluntary immunization proves to be futile in reaching herd immunity.[7] However, these decisions were promulgated in the West—with a different context, a different public health issue, and a different set of vaccines as opposed to the present-day Asia under the lingering threat of COVID-19.

Many leaders in Asia have expressed their willingness to mandate vaccination against COVID-19. In fact, there are already countries in the continent implementing the said mandate. Such a compulsory approach is defended as a justifiable state action in response to rampant vaccine hesitancy[8] and the worrisome pervasion of anti-vaccine sentiment that was first prevalent in the West and has now reached Asia.[9] This vigor to vaccinate as much as possible also stems from the earnest hopes of returning to a pre-pandemic world. This is the underlying higher cause of all these efforts—the attainment of the necessary herd immunity for the advancement of public health and safety. However, should this mandatory vaccination policy be adopted by the entire region, it would have sheer magnitude and far-reaching human rights implications since majority of the world remain unvaccinated. This establishes the case that the balancing of the individual liberties of billions of Asians vis-à-vis the collective right to health is an emergent issue that warrants evaluation through the lenses of international studies and human rights.[10]

This paper endeavors to contribute to this discourse by conducting a case study on the Asian countries which mandate vaccination against COVID-19, from the vantage point of human rights. Due to the vastness of Asia, this study sampled and clustered these countries according to their geographic regions as presented in Table 1. The diversity of these countries and the fact that there are already several Asian nations mandating vaccination

7   Jorge Liboreiro & Christopher Pitchers, "How a Court Ruling Lays the Ground for Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination," *Euro News,* April 22, 2021, https://www.euronews.com/2021/04/13/how-a-court-ruling-lays-the-ground-for-mandatory-covid-19-vaccination.

8   Yen Lee, "Charts Show Asia is Far Behind the U.S. and Europe in Covid Vaccinations," *CNBC*, June 4, 2021, https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/04/covid-vaccine-hesitancy-in-asia-which-lags-us-europe-as-cases-surge.html.

9   Andreo Calonzo & Kwan Tan, "Anti-Vaxxer Propaganda Spreads in Asia, Endangering Millions," *Bloomberg,* July 1, 2021, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-30/anti-vaxxer-disinformation-spreads-in-asia-endangering-millions.

10   Jose dos Santos et al., "Collision of Fundamental Human Rights and the Right to Health Access During the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic," *Frontiers in Public Health* (2021), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.570243.

raise both the representativeness of and urgency for this exploration.

Table 1: Asian Countries that Mandate COVID Vaccination (Clustered by Region)

Region	Countries
Central Asia	Tajikistan, Turkmenistan
East Asia	China and its special administrative region Hong Kong
South Asia	Pakistan
Southeast Asia	Indonesia, Cambodia
Western Asia	Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates
North Asia	Russia

A deeper human rights perspective on these policies and practices is infused through a discussion based on the causal layered analysis (CLA), which comprehensively oscillates through various levels of analysis—from the relatively superficial layers of litany and systemic causes to the intimately deeper layers of worldview and myth and metaphor.[11] It is the integration of these layers, especially the civilizational and cultural perspectives, that makes this paper a novel contribution to the growing scholarly literature on compulsory vaccination.

In this paper, each case study commences with the introduction and contextualization of the region and its human rights situation and then proceeds to discuss the vaccine mandates imposed by the sampled countries—tracing its antecedents, scrutinizing its mechanism, and delving into the relevant social, political, and cultural perspectives with the end in view of delineating the human rights implications of these measures. The commonalities of these implications are noted in a review of the proposed human rights frameworks for mandatory vaccination. Guided by these principles, this paper closes with a set of policy recommendations for a more human rights-friendly vaccination campaign in Asia.

11   Sohail Inayatullah, "Causal Layered Analysis: Poststructuralism as method," *Futures* 30, no. 8 (1998): 815-829, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-3287(98)00086-X.; Sohail Inayatullah, *The Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) Reader: Theory and Case Studies of an Integrative and Transformative Methodology* (Taipei: Tamkang University Press, 2004); Sohail Inayatullah, "Six pillars: futures thinking for transforming," *Foresight* 10, no.1 (2008): 4-21, https://doi.org/10.1108/14636680810855991.

Central Asia

This region comprises five former Soviet Union states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, which underwent a significant social, political, and economic transition, albeit diverse in their levels of transition. Scholars noted that Central Asia is interesting to study because of its rich but understudied history and background.[12] Unfortunately, the human rights situation in this region has been a frequent subject of criticism from the global community. Much of these are due to the ruling authoritarian regimes in these countries, which perpetuate the remnants of the bygone Soviet era.[13] During this public health crisis, the Human Rights Watch lambasted the region for failing to remain steadfast to human rights standards in their pandemic response, particularly in the aspects of transparency, free speech, and mobility. From this region came two of the first countries which mandated their citizens aged 18 and above to be inoculated against COVID-19.[14]

Tajikistan announced the move in light of a new outbreak and lagging voluntary vaccination uptake.[15] Looking back, the Tajikistan government has long delayed the recognition of the threat of COVID-19 despite experiencing spikes in pneumonia cases. This state practice of denial had set the stage for the uncovering of the systemic defects in their health care infrastructure which are further exacerbated by the pandemic.[16] This is borne out of the country's decades of crisis of ineffective governance under the strongman

12 Uuriintuya Batsaikhan and Marek Dabrowski, "Central Asia at 25," *Bruegel Policy Contribution*, no. 13 (2017): 1-22, https://www.bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/PC-13-2017.pdf.

13 Amina Afzal, "Human Rights in Central Asia," *Strategic Studies* 24, no.1 (2004): 152-176, http://www.jstor.org/stable/45242500.

14 Human Rights Watch, "Central Asia: Respect Rights in Covid-19 Responses 2020," *Human Rights Watch*, April 23, 2020, https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/23/central-asia-respect-rights-covid-19-responses.

15 BNO News, "Tajikistan Becomes First Country to Make COVID-19 Vaccines Mandatory," *BNO News,* July 3, 2021, https://bnonews.com/index.php/2021/07/tajikistan-becomes-first-country-to-make-covid-19-vaccines-mandatory/.

16 International Partnership for Human Rights, "Human Rights Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Response in Tajikistan," *International Partnership for Human Rights* (2020), https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Covid-19-TAJ-final-upd.-2.09-1.pdf.

Emomali Rahmon who has been ruling the country since the 1990s.[17] His grip on power is so tight that even the religion of Tajikistanis is not exempted from it. Rahmon has always zeroed in on the marginalization of Islam in the name of secular politics.[18] This could have severe implications on their mandatory vaccination efforts since the *halal* status—the permissibility of a product under Islamic law—of the vaccines is one of the leading concerns of Muslims.[19] In addition, Kadri pointed out that such Islam-related hesitancy also stems from the suspicion of Muslims on the hostility of significant personalities towards Islam.[20] Therefore, it is clearer communication and information, not an imposition, that will increase the vaccination uptake, as affirmed by Klassen et al., who researched about childhood vaccination hesitancy in Tajikistan and concluded that "in this traditional culture, there is a strong need for tailored communication campaigns to address vaccine hesitancy while continuing to address systems-level barriers."[21]

In Turkmenistan, the compulsory vaccination policy is branded by its health ministry as a preventive action since the country remains one of the very few that are yet to record a single COVID-19 positive case.[22] However, there are various accounts debunking this claim, such as the case of the Turkish diplomat assigned in the country—Kemal Uchkun, who

17   Philip Shishkin, "Central Asia's Crisis of Governance," *Asia Society*, (2012): 1-40, https://asiasociety.org/files/pdf/120215_central_asia_crisis_governance.*pdf*.

18   Erica Marat, "National Ideology and State-building in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan," *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program* (2008), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/105092/January%2008.pdf.

19   Associated Press, "Halal Status of COVID-19 Vaccine Worries Muslims," *Voice of America*, December 20, 2020, https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/halal-status-covid-19-vaccine-worries-muslims.

20   Sadakat Kadri, "For Muslims Wary of the Covid Vaccine: There's Every Religious Reason Not to Be," *The Guardian,* February 18, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/feb/18/muslims-wary-covid-vaccine-religious-reason.

21   Ann Klassen et al., "Formative Research to Address Vaccine Hesitancy in Tajikistan," *Vaccine* 39, no. 10 (2021): 1516, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2021.01.033.

22   Agence France Presse, "Turkmenistan Orders Compulsory Vaccinations," *Barron's,* July 7, 2021, https://www.barrons.com/news/turkmenistan-orders-compulsory-vaccinations-01625640606.

died after exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms.[23] While his widow is blaming Turkish officials for their supposed negligence, one column posits that it is the very healthcare system of Turkmenistan that must be held accountable for ignoring the crisis itself in the name of reputation.[24] Turkmenistan's authoritarian president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, a dentist by training and a former health minister, even denied the very existence of COVID-19 and, worst, prescribed numerous unscientific remedies.[25] To be fair, this is not specific to Berdimuhamedow, but is, in fact, an abhorrible extension of the established detrimental link of dictatorship with health outcomes manifested in the two areas that remain relevant today amid the pandemic: the state's secretiveness to the extent of denying the crisis and a neglected public health system which began with their first president.[26] In this context, the absence of data on COVID-19 could be interpreted as the Turkmenistan government's nonrecognition of the right to health of its citizens.[27] It is then confusing why a country, which reportedly arrests people on the basis of uttering the word "coronavirus"[28] is mandating the vaccination of all its citizens against COVID-19. One plausible explanation is that the various informal accounts are true—Turkmenistan is being ravaged by the pandemic, especially the more contagious coronavirus variants. And the government sees the draconian mandatory vaccination policy as a desperate move to bail out of the consequences of refusing to grasp the gravity of this crisis, even at the

23   Bruce Pannier, "Why Is the World Allowing Turkmenistan to Deny It Has the Coronavirus?" *RadioFreeEurope RadioLiberty,* January 1, 2021, https://www.rferl. org/a/turkmenistan-coronavirus-fiction-turkey/31029363.html.

24   "Turkmenistan: The deadly price of lies," *Eurasianet*, December 22, 2020, https://eurasianet.org/turkmenistan-the-deadly-price-of-lies.

25   Amy Mackinnon, "Turkmenistan's Secretive Strongman Remains in Denial About the Pandemic," *Foreign Policy,* April 10, 2020, https://foreignpolicy. com/2020/04/10/turkmenistan-coronavirus-pandemic-denial-strongman-berdimuhamedov/.

26   Bernd Rechel and Martin McKee, "The Effects of Dictatorship on Health: The Case of Turkmenistan," *BMC Medicine* 5, no. 21 (2007): 1-10, doi:10.1186/1741-7015-5-21.

27   Aynabat Yaylmova, "COVID-19 in Turkmenistan: No Data, No Health Rights," *Human Rights Journal* 22, no. 2 (2020): 325-327, https://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2469/2020/12/Yaylymova.pdf.

28   Sophie Lewis, "This Central Asian Country Will Reportedly Arrest You for Saying the Word "Coronavirus"," *CBS News*, April 1, 2020, https://www.cbsnews. com/news/coronavirus-turkmenistan-bans-word-coronavirus-arrest/.

expense of its citizens' human rights, which it has consistently taken for granted.

In general, vaccination efforts are progressing slowly in the Central Asian region due to the scarcity of vaccine supplies, poor vaccination campaigns, and vaccine hesitancy.[29] As the pandemic continues to exacerbate poverty and inequality in Central Asia through trade disruptions resulting to the declining consumption, investment, migrant remittances, oil export revenues, and gross domestic product (GDP) in its entirety,[30] the utilization of the authoritarian political macro-structure to boost vaccine uptake would seem to be a noble exercise of state police power. However, with the long record of human rights abuses in the region,[31] there is a high risk that these mandatory vaccination policies would result in the lengthening of that record.

East Asia

This region is the home of China, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, and Mongolia.[32] It is often said that East Asia has its own salient human rights perspective distinct from that of the Western view, which is conceptualized without due regard to the input from this region.[33] However, in 2018, Amnesty International flagged the deterioration of human rights in the region marked by the repression of the civil society, particularly the defenders of human rights.[34] From this region, China and its special administrative region,

29   Catherine Putz, "Vaccinations Progress Slowly in Central Asia," *The Diplomat,* May 7, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/vaccinations-progress-slowly-in-central-asia/.

30   George Bouma & Sheila Marnie, "COVID-19 and Central Asia: Socio-economic Impacts and Key Policy Considerations for Recovery," *United Nations Development Programme,* 2020, https://www1.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/COVID19report_CentralAsia.pdf.

31   Mitch Riding, "COVID-19 in Central Asia: A Dictator's Dream?" *Human Rights Pulse,* July 2, 2020, https://www.humanrightspulse.com/mastercontentblog/hspot0kq2kp6fueinl8omnc7cb22s0.

32   Michael Kort, *The Handbook of East Asia* (Minneapolis, Lerner Publishing Group: 2005), 7.

33   Daniel Bell, "The East Asian Challenge to Human Rights: Reflections on an East West Dialogue," *Human Rights Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1996): 641-667, http://www.jstor.org/stable/762475.

34   Amnesty International, "Rights Today in East Asia – 2018," *Amnesty International,* 2018, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2018/12/rights-today-2018-east-asia/.

Hong Kong, have instituted certain degrees of mandatory vaccination.

When the world first confronted COVID-19 and struggled to address its earlier phases of outbreaks, China, despite being the original pandemic epicenter, epitomized recovery as their reported cases and fatalities were remarkably low—close to zero—although some were skeptical. For instance, Wang opines that this success could be attributed to the country's disregard for human rights, such as how the tight control on dissent rendered a subservient populace to government orders.[35] Nevertheless, China's fast recovery could also be due to its staggering vaccination pace, which McGregor unpacks as a manifestation of the advantages of its authoritarian governance that places not as much primacy on individual liberties compared to the United States wherein such values are contributing to vaccine hesitancy.[36] It is in the localities of China that we can see vaccine mandates imposed, albeit not uniformly. There are provinces that deem a vaccinated family as a requirement for a child to return to school physically. At the same time, other localities prohibit the unvaccinated from going to leisure venues such as hotels and restaurants.[37] The director of Peking University's Research Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law questioned the legality of these policies and referred to them as "de facto mandatory vaccinations" due to the absence of an enabling law.[38] Even the public protested on China's social media site *Weibo* against these measures in light of local reports that some were being forced to get the jab in their workplace despite reasonable personal concerns such as pregnancy.[39] These local policies were eventually

35   Yaqiu Wang, "China's Covid Success Story Is Also a Human Rights Tragedy," *MSNBC,* January 26, 2021. https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/china-s-covid-success-story-also-human-rights-tragedy-n1255618?icid=msd_topgrid.

36   Grady McGregor, "How China Went from Laggard to Leader in Distributing COVID-19 Vaccines," *Fortune,* May 27, 2021, https://fortune.com/2021/05/27/china-vaccination-rate-herd-immunity-campaign/.

37   BBC News, "Chinese Authorities Say Unvaccinated Parents Can't Send Children to School," *BBC News,* July 16, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-57859356.

38   Ben Wescott, "Unvaccinated People in Parts of China to Be Denied Access to Hospitals, Parks and Schools," *CNN,* July 16, 2021, https://edition.cnn.com/2021/07/15/china/vaccine-china-restrictions-zhejiang-jiangxi-intl-hnk/index.html.

39   John Feng, "China Forcing People to Take Vaccines against Their Wishes, Reports Suggest," *Newsweek,* March 31, 2021, https://www.newsweek.com/china-forcing-people-take-vaccines-against-their-wishes-reports-suggest-1580116.

rebuked by the central government.[40] This turn of events could be regarded as a manifestation of the hierarchical trust in China, wherein the "central government aims to boost its own authority, direct popular discontent toward local governments, resolve social conflicts, reinforce central control of subordinate governments, and ultimately maintain the regime's stability."[41] In this sense, the vaccine mandates imposed by the local governments could be seen as a pilot test on the people's reception to it, which brought to light the central human rights issue in this case—the freedom of choice.

In Hong Kong, the compulsory vaccination policy governs workers in the civil service, education, and health sectors. Low voluntary vaccine uptake motivated its imposition as its chief executive Carrie Lam believes that non-health-related reasons for vaccination refusal cannot be tolerated by a responsible government.[42] In May 2021, after a domestic worker tested positive of a particular COVID-19 variant, city officials further enhanced the mandatory vaccination policy to encompass foreign domestic workers such that vaccination and testing became grounds for the renewal of their contracts. This became a subject of criticisms due to its discriminatory tendencies and was instead immediately reviewed.[43] However, in response to the recent surge of cases in February this year, Hong Kong finally shifted its strategy from "vaccine bubble," wherein workers in certain establishments are required to be vaccinated, to "vaccine pass" which requires that all who are entering public premises be vaccinated except if one is ineligible to get the jabs due to age or health reasons validated by

40   Global Times, "China's Top Health Authority Rectify Local Mandatory Vaccination Orders, Stressing Voluntary Principle," *Global Times,* July 17, 2021, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202107/1228884.shtml.

41   Zhenhua Su et al., "Constructed Hierarchical Government Trust In China: Formation Mechanism And Political Effects," *Pacific Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2016): 794, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44874326.

42   Channel News Asia, "Hong Kong Announces Compulsory COVID-19 Vaccines for Key Sectors," *Channel News Asia,* August 2, 2021, https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/hong-kong-announces-compulsory-covid-19-vaccines-key-sectors-2083991.

43   Chloe Lo & Felix Tam, "Hong Kong Reviews Mandatory Vaccination for Domestic Workers," *Bloomberg,* May 4, 2021, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-04/hong-kong-reviews-mandatory-vaccinations-for-domestic-workers.

a doctor.[44] This policy was challenged in court which in the end upheld the vaccine pass as it rests on a "reasonable balance" between the government's duties of safeguarding public health and respecting individual liberties.[45]

The rhetoric that a responsible government is worthy of imposing mandatory vaccination appears to work both in Hong Kong and China. Ma suggests that this stems from the fundamental distinction between the Chinese and Western conceptions of human rights, with the former placing primacy on the collective as opposed to the latter's emphasis on individual civil and political rights.[46] This constitutes the case for a Confucian perspective on human rights that "underscores self-cultivation, family cohesiveness, economic well-being, social order, political justice, and cultural flourishing."[47] Although Confucianism eroded during the New Culture Movement and the Cultural Revolution, it was never eradicated in China as its values remain integrated into the traditional culture and everyday way of life of the Chinese, and its influence on molding the East Asian cultural sphere remains evident.[48] This deeper civilizational perspective echoes the urgency expressed by

44   Hong Tran & Jennifer C.W. Tam, "The COVID-19 'Vaccine Pass' and Proposed Amendments to the Hong Kong Employment Ordinance," *Mayer Brown,* February 9, 2022, https://www.mayerbrown.com/en/perspectives-events/publications/2022/02/the-covid-19-vaccine-pass-and-proposed-amendments-to-the-hong-kong-employment-ordinance.

45   Candice Chau, "Covid-19: Hong Kong court dismisses application to appeal against vaccine pass," *Hong Kong Free Press,* https://hongkongfp.com/2022/03/30/covid-19-hong-kong-court-dismisses-application-to-appeal-against-vaccine-pass/.

46   Phil Ma, "Human Rights Regime: A Chinese Perspective," *The Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University,* May 11, 2019, https://kenan.ethics.duke.edu/the-human-rights-regime-a-chinese-perspective/.

47   Tu Weiming, "Joining East and West: A Confucian Perspective on Human Rights," *Harvard International Review* 20, no. 3 (1998): 44-49, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42764005.

48   Ruichang Wang & Ruiping Fan, "Tracing Confucianism in Contemporary China," *Journal of East-West Thought* 9, no.4 (2019): 1-21, https://www.cpp.edu/~jet/Documents/JET/Jet33/JET%2033%20whole%20file%20(final).pdf; Sebastien Billioud & Christopher Storey, "Confucianism, 'Cultural Tradition,' and Official Discourse in China at the Start of the New Century," *China Perspectives*, no. 3 (71) (2007): 50–65. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24053279; Chen Lai, "Historical and Cultural Features of Confucianism in East Asia," in Roger T. Ames & Peter D. Hershock (Eds.), *Confucianisms for a Changing World Cultural Order*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 102–111, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv3zp05k.10.

Powles that such conception of human rights must be closely understood.[49]

If the government effectively harnesses this salient cultural sense of human rights, it is highly likely that a mandatory vaccination for all Chinese people will seamlessly proceed with very few exceptions. There will certainly be doubts, however, on the manner by which the People's Republic of China (PRC) delicately balances individual rights and the society in light of the Confucian view that "the enhancement of liberty, economic efficiency, development, individual interests, and rights are highly desirable, but to pursue these values exclusively at the expense of equality, social justice, stability, the public good, and duty is ill-advised."[50] Who decides the common good? As Cerna cautions, these states cannot always invoke these historical social, and cultural contexts as a pretext for the deprivation of individual liberties demanded by the public.[51]

South Asia

This region is composed of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, which all share the colonial experience under the British rule. Due to this colonial exploitation, these societies are economically disadvantaged, predisposing them to issues of poverty, violence, and human trafficking, among others.[52] The pandemic further exposed these systemic deficiencies, pushing their poorest sectors further into the margins, and leaving their healthcare workers unequipped in combatting COVID-19. This is the fatal combination of a neglected public health system and inadequate social safety nets.[53] Instead of urgently

49   Michael Powles, "Perspective on Human Rights in China," *New Zealand International Review* 36, no. 2 (2011): 2-5, http://www.jstor.org/stable/45235441.

50   Weiming, "Joining East and West: A Confucian Perspective on Human Rights," 49.

51   Christine Cerna, "East Asian Approaches to Human Rights," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law)* 89 (1995): 152-157, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25658904.

52   Shveta Dhaliwal, "Development of South Asian Human Rights Culture: The Role of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 69, no. 3 (2008): 565-575, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856445.

53   Amnesty International, "South Asia: COVID-19 Hits Marginalized Hardest as Pandemic Used to Escalate Repression," *Amnesty International,* April 6, 2021, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/04/south-asia-covid-19-hits-marginalized-hardest-as-pandemic-used-to-escalate-repression/.

resolving these pressing concerns, several South Asian nations took advantage of this crisis as evidenced by their weaponization of security forces and infringement on the freedom of expression supposedly to combat fake news.[54] As South Asia continues to grapple with vaccine scarcity,[55] one country from this region imposes vaccine mandate to a certain degree—Pakistan.

Vaccination has become a requirement in both public and private workplaces in Pakistan.[56] The National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC), a military-run organization that heads the country's pandemic response, also announced that the unvaccinated would be prohibited from entering establishments such as malls and schools starting August 2021. The sectors of education, public transportation, and retail have also been mandated to get vaccinated.[57] There was even one Pakistani province that threatened to block the cellphone SIM cards of the unvaccinated. Worse, in response to the sudden spike of cases at the end of January 2022, one needs to be fully vaccinated to enter the mosques for praying which earned the ire of religious leaders and worshipers.[58] These measures are claimed to be a response to the problematic vaccine hesitancy, which is so rampant

54   Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, "Human Rights in South Asia in Times of Pandemic," *FORUM-ASIA* (2020), https://www.forum-asia.org/uploads/wp/2020/11/Forum-Asia_Human-Rights-in-South-Asia-in-Times-of-Pandemic_November-24.pdf.

55   Emily Schmall et al., "Despite the G7 Pledge of Global Aid, South Asian Countries Still Scramble for vaccines," *The New York Times,* June 17, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/17/world/south-asia-covid-vaccines.html.

56   Sana Jamal, "COVID-19: Pakistan Makes Vaccination Mandatory for Private, Public Sector Staff," *Gulf News,* June 9, 2021, https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/covid-19-pakistan-makes-vaccination-mandatory-for-private-public-sector-staff-1.79789388.

57   Shankhyaneel Sarkar, "Pakistan Says Covid Vaccination Must for Air Travel; Announces New Restrictions," *Hindustan Times,* July 29, 2021, https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/pakistan-says-covid-vaccination-must-for-air-travel-announces-new-restrictions-101627565331876.html.

58   Zia ur-Rehman, "Pakistan says only fully vaccinated people will be allowed in mosques," *The New York Times,* January 23, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/23/world/asia/pakistan-says-only-fully-vaccinated-people-will-be-allowed-in-mosques.html.

that polio remains endemic to the country.[59] This hesitancy, however, stems from deeper historical narratives such as the fake vaccination drive launched by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) wherein hepatitis B vaccines were administered to Pakistani babies for the purpose of extracting blood samples in an effort to trace Osama bin Laden's family through their DNA.[60]

Therefore, it can be inferred that these high rates of vaccine hesitancy are chiefly fueled by the government's failure in its information campaign[61] and the lack of public trust in the country's healthcare system.[62] As the government fails to combat disinformation and launch effective information dissemination, the vaccine mandate would merely be a band-aid solution to the rampant vaccine hesitancy in Pakistan.

Southeast Asia

This region is comprised of a diverse set of eleven countries—the 10 ASEAN states and East Timor, with the former taking part in the international human rights framework articulated in the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD).[63] Despite these human rights instruments, Hooi observes that human rights violations in the region are becoming more rampant, particularly in Indonesia and the Philippines, for there is a noticeable trend toward authoritarianism and

59   Asif Shahzad, "Threats of Cellphone Blocks, Work Bans Boost Pakistan's Vaccination Rate," *Reuters,* August 5, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/threats-cellphone-blocks-work-bans-boost-pakistans-vaccination-rate-2021-08-05/.

60   Karina Shah, "CIA's Hunt for Osama bin Laden Fueled Vaccine Hesitancy in Pakistan," *New Scientist,* May 11, 2021, https://www.newscientist.com/article/2277145-cias-hunt-for-osama-bin-laden-fuelled-vaccine-hesitancy-in-pakistan/.

61   Maria Usman, "Millions of Pakistanis Threatened with Cell Phone Cut-Off if They Don't Get a COVID vaccine," *CBS News,* June 14, 2021, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/pakistan-covid-vaccine-punjab-threat-cell-phone-cut-off-no-vaccination/.

62   Asad Hashim, "Vaccine Hesitancy in Pakistan Heightens Risk of COVID Resurgence," *Al Jazeera,* March 5, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/5/in-pakistan-vaccine-hesitancy-heightens-risk-of-covid-19-resurge.

63   Anthony Langlois, "Human Rights in Southeast Asia: ASEAN's Rights Regime after Its First Decade," *Journal of Human Rights* 20, no. 2 (2021): 151-157, https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2020.1843144.

militarization in their pandemic response despite being democracies.[64] Aaron refers to this as "securitization," which advances the view of the "pandemic as a national security threat" and, in turn, leads the government to enforce repressive measures which could spill over to their mandatory vaccination efforts.[65]

Through President Joko Widodo's presidential regulation, Indonesia has already made vaccination against COVID-19 compulsory for its citizens, thereby sanctioning those who would refuse the vaccines with fines and/or deprivation of social welfare aid.[66] Since discretion on the amount of fines is afforded to local governments, its capital Jakarta charges as much as five million rupiahs (US$356.89).[67] The contrast is stark when compared to the national poverty line set by Indonesia as of 2015, which is at a consumption outlay of 302,735 rupiahs (US$25) per month per person.[68] This highlights the dimension of inequity in a policy with such exorbitant penalties. Furthermore, the Islamic concern about the *halal* status of the vaccines stirs the vaccine hesitancy in the country where 90 percent are Muslim.[69] This is capitalized on by the anti-vaccination movements in the country spearheaded by religious micro-influencers who bolster vaccine hesitancy through conspiracy theories. The government, meanwhile, counteracts it through censorship, leading to

64   Khoo Hooi, "Southeast Asia's Pandemic Politics and Human Rights: Trends and Lessons," *London School of Economics,* October 1, 2020, https://blogs.lse. ac.uk/seac/2020/10/01/southeast-asias-pandemic-politics-and-human-rights-trends-and-lessons/.

65   Elisha Aaron, "Coronavirus Shows the Need for a Human Rights–based Approach to Public Health Crises," *Freedom House,* August 3, 2020, https:// freedomhouse.org/article/coronavirus-shows-need-human-rights-based-approach-public-health-crises.

66   Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja, "Indonesia Makes COVID-19 Vaccines Compulsory, Allows Private Vaccination," *The Straits Times,* February 16, 2021, https://www. straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-makes-covid-19-vaccines-compulsory-allows-for-private-vaccination.

67   Reuters Staff, "Indonesia Capital Warns of Big Fines for Refusing COVID-19 Vaccine," *Reuters,* May 7, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-indonesia-vaccines-idUSL4N2KO1ZD.

68   Priasto Aji, "Summary of Indonesia's Poverty Analysis," *Asian Development Bank,* (2015): 3, https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/177017/ino-paper-04-2015.pdf.

69   Beh Yi, "Jakarta Will Fine People Who Refuse COVID Vaccines. Will It Work?," *Thomas Reuters Foundation News,* February 23, 2021, https://news.trust.org/item/20210223133903-1yqor/.

the further alienation of the concerned sectors of the Indonesian society.[70] The potential of such censorship being weaponized is deleterious to freedom of expression, as exhibited by several countries in their fight against fake news.

In Cambodia, Prime Minister Hun Sen decreed mandatory vaccination for civil servants and other professions, corresponding to high infection risks identified by the health ministry. Severe penalties, such as administrative or legal action, await vaccine refusers except those with health conditions that prevent them from being vaccinated.[71] Moreover, Sen deployed military medical officers for the compulsory vaccination of those in the "red zones" or the high-risk areas.[72] The spokesman of the justice ministry defended the government's actions on the grounds that mandatory vaccination is proportionate to the ill effects of unmanaged COVID-19 situation that could infect hundreds and claim tens of lives each day.[73] Nonetheless, it should be noted that in the context of Cambodia, legislative efforts, supposedly oriented towards curbing the spread of COVID-19, also advance the threat of curbing people's freedoms. A case in point is a law that fines a maximum of US$5,000 for those who will break out of the imposed lockdown.[74] Announcing the additional penalty of up to 20 years of imprisonment for violating quarantine regulations, the prime minister himself made a blunt excuse: "I accept being called a dictator,

70   Resty Yuniar, "In Indonesia, Anti-vaccine Messages Come with a Dose of Religion, Anti-Chinese Sentiment and Conspiracy Theories," *South China Morning Post,* June 28, 2021, https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/health-environment/article/3138932/indonesia-anti-vaccine-messages-come-dose-religion.

71   Long Kimmarita, "COVID-19 Vaccination Now Obligatory," *The Phnom Penh Post,* April 11, 2021, https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/covid-19-vaccination-now-obligatory.

72   Aun Chhengpor, "Cambodia to Use Military for Mandatory Vaccinations in 'Red Zones'," *VOA*, April 29, 2021, https://www.voacambodia.com/a/cambodia-to-use-military-for-mandatory-vaccinations-in-red-zones-/5871321.html.

73   Long Kimmarita, "Officials: Mandatory Jab Policy Standard Practice in Pandemic," *The Phnom Penh Post*, July 13, 2021, https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/officials-mandatory-jab-policy-standard-practice-pandemic.

74   Sarah Johnson, "Cambodia Accused of Using COVID to Edge towards 'Totalitarian Dictatorship,'" *The Guardian,* April 19, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/apr/19/cambodia-accused-of-using-covid-to-edge-towards-totalitarian-dictatorship.

but I will also be admired for protecting my people's lives."[75] This is but one manifestation of Sen's tightening grip on power, thanks to the pandemic.

Western Asia

This region consists of a plethora of nations including a majority of Middle Eastern states. With regards to international studies, Shah notes that this region's strategic location makes it a potent venue for geopolitics.[76] With regard to human rights, Devitt posits that the compatibility of Islam vis-à-vis the international human rights framework should be the first agenda in discussing human rights in this region.[77] The belief of incompatibility between Islam and human rights is motivated by the notion of human rights as a "Western colonial concept"—a claim constantly harnessed by the undemocratic regimes in the region. Nonetheless, the existence of public debates on democratization is a sign of positive development in the transition towards the appropriation of human rights in this part of Asia.[78] However, amid the pandemic, this transition seems to be running in the opposite direction as Amnesty International reported that the six member-states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), all of which are Western Asian countries, are weaponizing the threat of COVID-19 by curtailing free speech through its blanket prohibitions on disinformation, among their many other potential human rights violations.[79] In fact, three GCC member-states—Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—are not parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).[80]

75   Luke Hunt, "Cambodia and Its 'Dictator' Struggle with the Pandemic," *The Diplomat,* April 14, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/cambodia-and-its-dictator-struggle-with-the-pandemic/.

76   Syed Shah, "West Asia: Its Problems and Emerging Patterns," *Pakistan Horizon* 41, no. 1 (1988): 86-95, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41394479.

77   Rebecca Devitt, "Human Rights in the Middle East: Questions of Compatibility and Conflict," *E-International Relations* (2011): 1-9, https://www.e-ir.info/pdf/7870.

78   Devitt, "Human Rights in the Middle East."

79   Amnesty International, "GCC: Flawed Laws Exploited in Pandemic to Further Crush Freedom of Expression," *Amnesty International,* October 15, 2020, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/10/gcc-flawed-laws-exploited-in-pandemic-to-further-crush-freedom-of-expression/.

80   Amnesty International, "GCC: Flawed Laws Exploited in Pandemic."

The lurking threat of Delta first prompted Saudi Arabia to ponder on vaccine mandates.[81] In both public and private workplaces, all employees must be inoculated to attend work.[82] Refusal of the jab, a Saudi Arabian lawyer noted, is tantamount to gross misconduct that could lead to the outright dismissal of the employee. Businesses are forced to implement this measure because their leniency could result in penalties.[83] The relevant legal provision is Article 80 of the labor law of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which could penalize vaccine refusal with justified dismissal on the basis that he/she "fails to perform his/her essential obligations arising from the work contract or to obey legitimate orders" since it is a "reasonable management request" in accordance with government policy.[84] Starting August 2021, all unvaccinated citizens are also not permitted to enter any establishment and ride any public transport.[85] Vaccination has also become a requirement for those who wish to take part in Umrah which is a pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims must perform at least once in their lives.[86] Even in the midst of Saudi Arabia's easing of COVID-19 restrictions in March 2022, these mandatory vaccination measures, particularly as a requirement to enter establishments, ride public transport, and board domestic flights, still remain and are supplemented by the requirement of a booster shot for entering public places.[87] In essence, being unvaccinated has become an overarching hindrance in one's work, travel, and faith.

81   Stephen Kalin, "Saudi Arabia to Impose Covid-19 Vaccine Mandate," *The Wall Street Journal,* July 27, 2021, https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-to-impose-covid-19-vaccine-mandate-11627402754.

82   Reuters, "Saudi to Make COVID-19 Vaccinations Mandatory for all Workers," *Reuters,* May 7, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-make-covid-19-vaccinations-mandatory-all-workers-2021-05-07/.

83   Samir Salama, "Saudi Arabia: COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitants Risk Sacking," *Gulf News,* August 2, 2021, https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/saudi/saudi-arabia-covid-19-vaccine-hesitants-risk-sacking-1.81210422.

84   Sarah Lawrence, Habib Saeed, & Turki Radain, "Employers in Saudi Arabia: Be Prepared COVID-19 Vaccinations to Be Made Mandatory From 1 August for Employees to Attend the Workplace," *Lexology,* June 9, 2021, https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=525d78e2-fa7a-4595-9c8a-80489db29012.

85   Salama, "Saudi Arabia: COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitants Risk Sacking."

86   BBC News, "Saudi Arabia to Allow in Vaccinated Umrah Pilgrims," *BBC News,* August 9, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-58135756.

87   "Saudi Arabia: Authorities ease most COVID-19 restrictions as of March 6 / update 18," *Crisis24,* March 5, 2022, https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2022/03/saudi-arabia-authorities-ease-most-covid-19-restrictions-as-of-march-6-update-18.

In Cyprus, there is *SafePass* which is essentially a vaccine mandate. By virtue of Ministerial Decree No. 16 of 2021, the government instituted *SafePass,* which requires everyone over the age of 12 to have at least one of the following: 1) a negative COVID-19 test in the past 72 hours; 2) a COVID-19 vaccination certificate; or 3) a certification of recovery from COVID-19 within the last six months.[88] At least one of these must be presented before entering any establishment. To further pressure the unvaccinated, the government's provision of free rapid tests was halted.[89] Therefore, the vaccination certificate emerges as the most feasible option, especially for those in the lower socio-economic strata. A Cyprus Mail column calls this "another erosion of personal liberty" through government policy in the name of public health,[90] while the Cyprus Bar Association argues that it is unconstitutional.[91] Some citizens of Cyprus expressed their outrage against this vaccine mandate through a demonstration that turned into a riot.[92] In response, the health minister of Cyprus made the case that this measure is also implemented in other countries and that it is a requirement for the reopening of the country.[93] As such justification principally banks on riding the bandwagon of several countries imposing vaccine mandates, the logic of such reasoning is faulty, if not missing. As one news aggregator thread curiously puts it, "*SafePass*: surreptitious compulsory

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88   Nicholas Ktenas, "Cyprus: "Safe Pass": Is Cyprus Making Concessions To The Protection Of Personal Data Under The GDPR To Deal With COVID-19?," *Mondaq,* July 15, 2021, https://www.mondaq.com/cyprus/data-protection/1091654/safe-pass-is-cyprus-making-concessions-to-the-protection-of-personal-data-under-the-gdpr-to-deal-with-covid-19-.

89   Deutsche Welle, "Cyprus Vaccine Drive: 'SafePass' Mandatory, No More Free COVID Tests," *Taiwan News,* July 13, 2021, https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4247507.

90   Cyprus Mail, "Our View: We've Moved from One Set of Restrictions to Another," *Cyprus Mail,* May 7, 2021, https://cyprus-mail.com/2021/05/07/our-view-weve-moved-from-one-set-of-restrictions-to-another/.

91   Annie Charalambous, "Cyprus Bar Association Insists Coronavirus 'Safepass' is Unconstitutional," *In-Cyprus,* May 12, 2021, https://in-cyprus.philenews.com/cyprus-bar-association-insists-coronavirus-safepass-is-unconstitutional/.

92   Tasos Kokkinidis, "Protestors Against Mandatory Vaccination Ransack Cyprus TV Station," *Greek Reporter,* July 19, 2021, https://greekreporter.com/2021/07/19/protestors-against-mandatory-vaccination-ransack-cyprus-tv-station/.

93   Charalambous, "Cyprus Bar Association Insists Coronavirus 'Safepass' is Unconstitutional."

vaccination in Cyprus?"[94] The answer is clear—yes, it is. In fact, beginning March 2022, Cyprus lifted travel restrictions only for those fully vaccinated.[95]

North Asia

There is only one Asian country that comprises this region—Russia. Russia's vastness spans two continents, Asia and Europe, hence it is remarkably European in terms of culture and politics but also geographically Asian. Although Russia underwent a radical transformation from the ashes of the Soviet Union, its transition to democracy is a failure.[96] Likewise, while there is progress in human rights in the country compared to the Soviet Union, the human rights situation in Russia remains dismal compounded by the lack of transparency and the weakness of the opposition and civil societies.[97] On the backdrop is Russian society's continuous struggle in confronting a health crisis for many years now, even before the pandemic struck, due to the defects caused by government ineptitude, corruption, and faulty policies[98] which are further exposed and exacerbated by COVID-19. Meanwhile, expressing dissent can be charged with spreading false information and punished with hefty fines and/or imprisonment of up to three years, compounded by the Russian government's personification of the Orwellian "Big Brother" through its utilization of applications and surveillance cameras to monitor the location and mobility of its citizens.[99]

94   Eurotopics, "Safepass: Surreptitious Compulsory Vaccination in Cyprus?," *Eurotopics,* May 10, 2021, https://www.eurotopics.net/en/260958/safepass-surreptitious-compulsory-vaccination-in-cyprus.

95   "Cyprus Lifts Entry Rules for Fully Vaccinated & Recovered Travellers," *Schengen Visa Information,* March 1, 2022, https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/cyprus-lifts-entry-rules-for-fully-vaccinated-recovered-travellers/.

96   Alfred B. Evans, "The Failure of Democratization in Russia: A Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): 40-51, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2010.10.001.

97   Marija Petrović, "Human Rights in Russia: Challenges in the 21st Century," *ICRPR Human Rights Issues Series* (2014), http://culturalrelations.org/Resources/2014/ICRP_Human_Rights_Issues_2014-01.pdf.

98   Chaney Kalinich, "Russia: The Sickness of a Nation," *The Yale Global Health Review,* December 21, 2016, https://yaleglobalhealthreview.com/2016/12/21/russia-the-sickness-of-a-nation/.

99   Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2021: Russia," *Human Rights Watch,* 2021, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/russia.

Although Russian President Vladimir Putin rhetorically denies support for mandatory vaccination,[100] proof of vaccination has become a requirement in the workplace particularly in service industries, thus making vaccination practically mandatory as the price for refusing the jab is dismissal from the job.[101] In light of the more contagious variants, health officials advocated for mandatory vaccination. A chief immunization coordinator remarked that consideration of radical policy solutions is justifiable because there can be no compromise when public health is on the line.[102] Furthermore, taking into account the weaponization of emergency laws legislated for a different context and the proposal of constitutional reform during the pandemic, the circumstances of COVID-19 became an affirmation of the unbridled powers of the Russian government.[103]

Towards a Guiding Human Rights Framework for Mandatory Vaccination

While the case studies represent the diversity of Asian practices of vaccine mandate, several key commonalities can be observed. First, implementing governments tend to defend vaccine mandates as the invocation of police power, formally defined as "the right of the state to take coercive action against individuals for the benefit of society."[104] Police power, indeed, is at the heart of balancing the rights of the individual and the society. However, the substantiation of such broad invocation is often deficient, hence the lack of parameters in the exercise of police power in the vaccination campaign.

100   Agence France Presse, "Vladimir Putin Rejects Mandatory Covid Jabs As Russia Sees Record Deaths," *NDTV,* June 30, 2021, https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/vladimir-putin-says-he-opposes-mandatory-covid-vaccinations-2476077.

101   Zahra Ullah and Anna Chernova, "Russia Says People Can Decline Its Vaccine. But for Many, They'll Get Fired If They Do," *CNN,* June 29, 2021, https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/29/europe/russia-vaccine-voluntary-compulsory-cmd-intl/index.html.

102   Euractiv, "Serbian Health Officials to Announce New Vaccine Incentives," *Euractiv,* July 21, 2021, https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/serbian-health-officials-to-announce-new-vaccine-incentives/.

103   Kirill Koroteev, "A Year of Zeros? Legal Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Russia," *Verfassungsblog,* March 1, 2021, https://verfassungsblog.de/a-year-of-zeros-legal-responses-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-russia/.

104   Edward Richards and Katharine Rathbun, "The Role of the Police Power in 21st Century Public Health," *Sexually Transmitted Disease* 26, no. 6 (1999): 350.

Second, the pandemic response of these countries, including compulsory vaccination policies, subscribes to the logic of securitization, which frames COVID-19 as a security threat through the metaphors of war, thereby calling for draconian yet faulty interventions.[105] What is worse is that the people, not the pandemic, end up being treated as a threat. Third, most vaccine mandates do not have enabling laws and instead rely on the reappropriation of old legislation or the decrees rashly produced according to the whims of their respective leaders, many of which are strongmen. This is of utmost importance since the rule of law is one of the bulwarks of human rights. "Respecting the rule of law," Jaraczewski wrote, "requires state authorities to act within the bounds of law and to enact laws in a manner consistent with domestic standards."[106] Fourth, a sense of disproportionality can be gleaned from the penalties imposed on the unvaccinated—exorbitant fines and heavy-handed sanctions. The penalties far outweigh and overshadow the incentives for being inoculated. Fifth, considering the historical, regional, religious, and cultural peculiarities, among others, underlying all these is the salient Asian perspective on human rights that places relatively more emphasis on the welfare of the community and the society as a whole compared to the West's seminal focus on individual civil and political rights.[107] This is worryingly coupled with an emerging trend of authoritarianism and militarization characterized by the preference for a "stick" over a "carrot" in handling the pandemic. To address these human rights implications, potential guiding principles and frameworks are discussed in the following.

In his *Principles for the Justification of Public Health Intervention,* Upshur listed three principles that can be employed in analyzing ethical issues concerning public health: 1) the *harm principle,* which requires that the chief objective of the state intervention is to prevent harm; 2) the *least restrictive or coercive means principle,* rooted as well in the Siracusa

105   India Wright, "Are We at War? The Politics of Securitizing the Coronavirus," *E-International Relations* (2021), https://www.e-ir.info/2021/01/10/are-we-at-war-the-politics-of-securitizing-the-coronavirus/.

106   Jakub Jaraczewski, "Emergency Measures, Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Face of COVID-19," *Global Campus of Human Rights,* August 4, 2021, https://gchumanrights.org/preparedness/article-on-emergency-measures-human-rights-and-the-rule-of-law-in-face-of-covid-19.html.

107   Asoka De Zoysa Gunawardana, "An Asian Perspective of Human Rights," *Singapore Journal of Legal Studies*, (1994): 521–30. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24866722.

principles which hold "that restrictions of liberty must be legal, legitimate, and necessary and use the least restrictive means that are reasonably available…[and with] no discrimination in their application;"[108] and 3) the *reciprocity principle,* which obligates the state to support and compensate for the repercussions borne out of the restrictions.[109] Furthermore, Savulescu conceptualized an algorithm model for mandatory vaccination based on the gravity of the threat to public health, the public confidence in the safety of the vaccines alongside its effectiveness, the expected utility of mandatory vaccination vis-à-vis that of the alternative measures, and the proportionality of the corresponding penalties (See Figure 1).[110]

108   Ross Upshur, "Principles for the Justification of Public Health Intervention," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 2 (2002): 102, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6979585/pdf/41997_2002_Article_BF03404547.pdf.

109   Upshur, "Principles for the Justification of Public Health Intervention."

110   Julian Savulescu, "Good Reasons to Vaccinate: Mandatory or Payment for Risk?," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 47 (2020): 78-85. doi:10.1136/medethics-2020-106821.
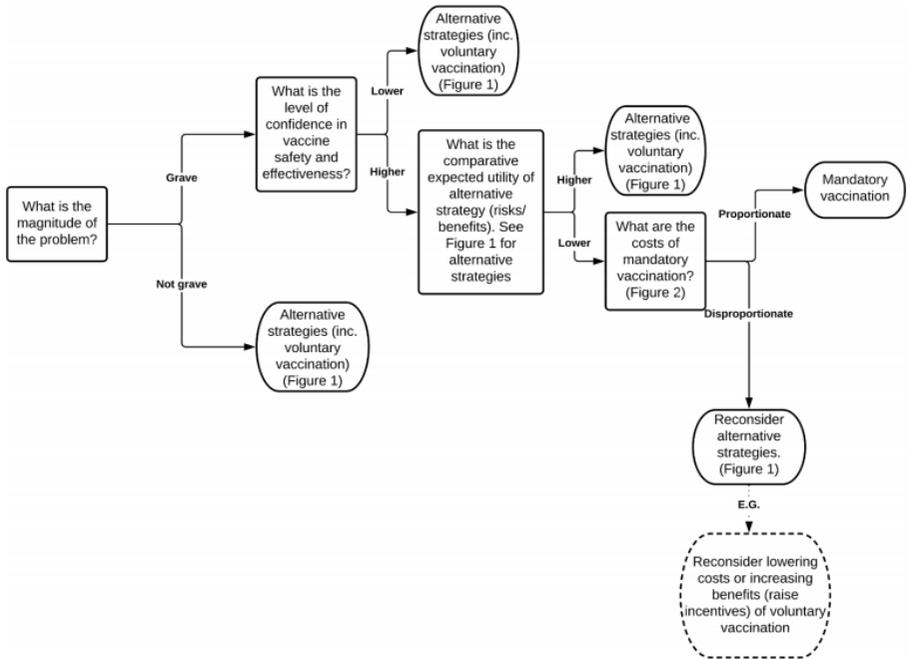
Figure 1: Algorithm Model for Mandatory Vaccination

While Asia has relatively fared well in its management of the pandemic, the gravity of COVID-19 and its more contagious variants cannot be understated. Although the vaccines are certified safe by regulatory institutions and backed by scientific evidence, public perception is mixed due to the aggressive peddling of misinformation and other social, political, and cultural variables mentioned above. Equally unfortunate is the fact that a comparative examination of the utility of vaccine mandates vis-à-vis other measures was left out in the same way that the scrutinization of the proportionality of the penalties was taken for granted. With these considerations in mind, the following policy recommendations are formulated.

The necessary starting point is to pay more attention to an effective information campaign before pondering on mandatory vaccination, cognizant that "the much larger hesitant population does respond to

information campaigns."[111] Censorship must be out of the question due to the high risk of curtailing freedom of expression. Instead, in accordance with Eysenbach's observation that the major problem is not merely the prevalence of misinformation but knowledge translation, governments must produce effective, informative, and factual materials to counteract disinformation and not merely suppress it.[112] Therefore, mandatory vaccination must be considered a policy of last resort—only when all other alternatives, such as the aforementioned information campaigns, have failed. Should it be deemed necessary, such mandatory vaccination must be legislated to establish a legal framework that governs the conduct of this policy. Through legislation, relevant key stakeholders are consulted, the proportionality of the penalties is fine-tuned, and necessary accountability mechanisms are instituted. In terms of implementation, the securitization of the pandemic response and the increasing militarization of mandatory vaccination efforts, as particularly evident in the case of Cambodia, must be scrutinized because in Asian nations with eroded civil societies, COVID-19 could be weaponized as a catalyst of the preference for the military rule as opposed to civilian supremacy.[113] Moving forward, these mandatory vaccine measures must proceed transparently so that human rights stakeholders are empowered to flag abuses, propose recommendations, and ensure that individual liberties are not sacrificed in the name of the society's welfare.

Conclusion

Herd immunity is seen as the ultimate path out of this pandemic. That is why several Asian countries resorted to implementing mandatory vaccination against COVID-19. This paper has sought to unpack the multilayered human rights context and implications of these mandatory vaccination policies as implemented by selected countries from the six major geographical regions of Asia. The case studies have shown that the oft-mentioned phenomenon of vaccine hesitancy and the invocation of police powers of the state, which

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111   Liam Drew, "The Case for Mandatory Vaccination," *Nature* 575 (2019): 60. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-03642-w.

112   Gunther Eysenbach, "How to Fight an Infodemic: The Four Pillars of Infodemic Management," *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 22, no. 6 (2020): 1-6. doi:10.2196/21820.

113   Euan Graham, "The Armed Forces and COVID-19," *International Institute for Strategic Studies,* April 8, 2020, https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2020/04/easia-armed-forces-and-covid-19.

dominate the discourse on mandatory vaccination, have deep-seated legal, social, political, cultural, and civilizational roots: authoritarianism, militarization, and religious philosophies, among others. In turn, the mandatory vaccination policies of these countries are generally marked by vastly disproportional penalties of hefty fines and heavy-handed sanctions, the absence of enabling law, and their adherence to the securitization of the pandemic. In response, this paper advocated that mandatory vaccination must instead be recognized as a policy of last resort if and only if all other measures, such as an effective information campaign, have already failed. But should the nations of Asia finally pursue or continue to pursue mandatory vaccination, just legislation combined with absolute transparency must be at the heart of such a pursuit.

CULTURAL STUDIES

Driving Social Changes Through Virtual Space: An Analysis of Armenian Women Activists' Adoption of Social Media

Adrineh Gregorian

Ph.D. candidate at Claremont Graduate University

The purpose of this paper is to illuminate the work of women activists based in Armenia and investigate how these women are producing a voice in the public sphere by using digital media as an avenue for activism. Following the example of India's "Selfie with Daughter" campaign, aiming to celebrate daughters by sharing photos on social media, Sose's Women's Issues NGO from Armenia implemented a similar project, the #SelfiewithDaughter Media Advocacy Campaign. Between February 1-14, 2016, the project encouraged parents to post selfies with their daughters online with the hashtag "#SelfiewithDaughter." The campaign is an example of digital activism with the goal of spreading awareness and to decrease the rate of sex-selection abortion in Armenia by 1) balancing society's preferences towards boys and girls and 2) involving entities beyond the non-profit sector, specifically media, to become more engaged in issues related to sex-selection and son preference. The findings of this study will contribute to media studies research on women activists.

Introduction

In 2016, posting selfies of oneself on social media became a worldwide phenomenon, and Armenia was no different. Making the most of this trend, a civil society organization in the south of Armenia, Sose Women's Issues NGO (Sose's Women), wanted to encourage the sharing of selfies to spread awareness about gender-based violence in society. Sose's Women is a women's rights advocacy organization run by a small staff led by Liana Sahakyan that designs education campaigns to engage large target groups, including men and women in rural and urban regions, through digital outreach programs. Their initial intention transformed into the "#SelfiewithDaughter Media Advocacy

Campaign" (#SelfiewithDaughter) which ran from February 1-14, 2016. During this campaign parents from communities all over Armenia shared selfies with their daughters on social media using the hashtag #SelfiewithDaughter.

This project was inspired by the "Selfie with Daughter" campaign in India, a social media campaign against sex-selective abortions that was aimed at "dealing with the problems arising out of gender imbalance."[1] The campaign encouraged families in India to show pride in their daughters and post selfies with them on social media using the hashtag, #SelfiewithDaughter. Like India, Armenia has a skewed sex-at-birth ratio, which has been increasing exponentially since the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s with the introduction of ultrasound which allowed pregnant women to know the sex of their child.[2] The issue of girls being unwanted epitomizes a form of gender-based violence in Armenian society. To address this problem, Sose's Women began integrating marketing insight from Braind Branding, a design company in Yerevan, Armenia, to launch the #SelfiewithDaughter. Since Twitter was new to Armenia at the time, people were excited to use hashtags in this campaign.

The #SelfiewithDaughter became a seminal project for Sose's Women because of its scale and the rate of participation by people in Armenia. In the past, their projects had integrated digital activism, such as creating viral videos and animated infographics, but this campaign became the largest-scale project they had created to date. The nationwide participation rate of 3.4 million people over the two weeks of the campaign far exceeded the initial target goal of 1 million people, and celebrities and elected officials also took part in the campaign.[3] The #SelfiewithDaughter in Armenia illustrates that digital activism has become an effective tool to create awareness about an issue. It also demonstrates why it is important to take a closer look at the work of women activists in Armenia and how they are using digital spaces to advance women's rights.

This paper investigates how social media platforms are used to make changes under conditions of social disparity. Women in Armenia are producing a voice in the public sphere and using digital media as an

1   "About the Campaign," Selfie with Daughter Foundation, accessed on May 27, 2019, http://selfiewithdaughter.world/about.aspx.

2   "Gendercide in the Caucasus; Sex-selective abortion," *The Economist*, September 21, 2013, https://www.economist.com/europe/2013/09/21/gendercide-in-the-caucasus.

3   Prudence Chamberlain, *The Feminist Fourth Wave: Affective Temporality* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 109.

avenue for their activism. This paper will first discuss the definition of social media and social change and argue that technology is empowering voices that are missing from the global stage. Digital users are becoming increasingly dependent on networked spaces as a primary mode of communication. These virtual platforms have become spaces for networks driven by women's advocacy work and are sites of civil society engagement. By examining social media activism by women's civil society organizations in Armenia, this paper seeks to illustrate how they are creating visibility within digital spaces and enacting changes in their country. This paper will then further unpack how Armenian women addressed the problem of sex-selection in Armenia with the #SelfiewithDaughter campaign from 2016.

Influence of Digital Media Tools on Social Activism

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have employed many forms of social activism to advocate for social issues, such as representation and reproductive health rights. Their efforts have led to direct impact, where individual transformation occurs through education and awareness as well as to the transformation of groups, institutions, and systems through policy reform and public discourse. Traditionally, social changes are mainly driven by mobilizing group resources to advocate for change or policy reform through rallies, marches, and strikes.[4] However, CSOs have recently incorporated more contemporary methods of social activism, which include the use of digital media tools such as online platforms, social media networks, hashtag activism, and digital content to create awareness and call for action.

CSOs and grassroots movements are impacted by information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as digital media tools. As Jodi Dean et al. writes, CSOs have impacted political reform and policy change with the use of digital tools. Even with their possible limitations, such as restricted internet access and lack of technological hardware and equipment, this decentralized access and equality of voice, participation, and representation has allowed smaller groups to develop power and increase the extent of their impact. With this in mind, Jenkins examines youth movements as they scale up in power through digital spaces. In *By Any Media Necessary*, he focuses on how youth exercise their agency through social media activism.

4   Tracey Friesen, *Story Money Impact: Funding Media for Social Change* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 18.

He calls these activities "participatory politics" occurring in the margins of political institutions while still engaging in ideas and making demands of the establishment. Like Dean, Jenkins points out that these new alternatives enhance "civic imagination possibilities," where the opportunities to create desired outcomes are conceived and expanded upon. This research shows us what interaction, reform, and representation can look like in digital spaces.

Within these digital spaces, users are also connected in new ways, resulting in increased visibility of users and collective action by tethered groups. As such, digital networks are becoming "a space of civil society," according to media scholar Arista Fotopoulou.[5] In this new space, users bypass temporal or geographic obstacles to connect instantly, thus allowing users who live in both urban cities and the margins to gain access to technology and connectivity, which amplifies their voices and extends their audience reach. To further understand how digital spaces are engaging users and resulting in collective action, Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together* demonstrates how convergence culture has made digital consumers pool their resources and build a dependency on communications technology. When depending on communications technology, Turkle argues that users have become tethered to each other through networked connections. Turkle expands on this by claiming that consumers are "always on," meaning always connected, through their digital devices and that as a result this is affecting people, communities, and personal relationships. Consumers are now attached to their new devices, and to each other, and therefore making information more easily accessible and sharable. Turkle calls these devices "a phantom limb" and "a second self, a mirror of mind" because they give people a means to always stay connected within communities.[6] This connectivity allows communities to be linked to each other, making the promotion of activism and social changes more obtainable.

Furthermore, as a result of convergence culture, politics and participation are being reformatted in new networked societies. Networked spaces have transformed how people protest and use virtual platforms to organize. Media scholar Henry Jenkins uses the term "clicktivism" (click activism) to describe the phenomenon where digital activism complements

5   Aristea Fotopoulou, *Feminist Activism and Digital Networks: Between Empowerment and Vulnerability* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 37.

6   Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 16.

traditional activism in general.[7] Click activism leads to democratization of participation in social movements by more groups and grants informal power to individuals or groups who have not had formal institutional power because of their religion, gender, class, or economic or social status.

It is in digital spaces that traditionally marginalized communities can find their voice within transnational networks, as alternatives to political spaces. Twitter is just one example of a social media platform which is widely used to shape political and social movements. It has been a source of disseminating thoughts, opinions, and information on social issues. According to Dhiraj Murthy's *Twitter: Social Communication in the Twitter Age,* even before the rise of Twitter and other social media platforms, activism for social change existed and people still organized movements, such as by protesting in the streets. However, with social media, activists are able to reach and engage far beyond their target audiences. Connectivity allows for communities to expedite grassroots organizing, interact with stakeholders, and rapidly share experiences.

Regarding social media's impact on social activism, Murthy acknowledges that from Twitter's inception, "the medium has been prominently associated with wide-ranging forms of sociopolitical activism."[8] Jenkins also observed youth participation through social media activism and notes that when youth fight for social justice, they gain a renewed sense of "symbolic power."[9] They lean on new media tools for asserting their voice as they are pushing back against traditional restraints which limit marginalized voices in public spheres. These digital spaces are becoming dominant spaces for activism in addition to offline street protests, and these movements grow organically, without a central organizing structure. Therefore, Jenkins argues this decentralized organizational structure encourages participation in social activism.

Additionally, just as Dean focuses on civil society organizations and cites their success in using digital tools, the movements Jenkins observes are loosely organized groups following a similar road map and making impact, such as the 1960s protest movements in the United States, which created a pop counterculture. These movements were a culmination of pushing back

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7   Henry Jenkins, et al, *By Any Media Necessary* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 9.

8   Murthy, *Twitter: Social Communication in the Twitter Age*, Chapter 6.

9   Jenkins, et al., *By Any Media Necessary*, 2.

against the mainstream to fight for social justice and promoted the participation and political engagement through shared voices. Modern day digital activism builds upon this legacy of forming decentralized groups to shape policies and call for action. As a result, this form of activism also encourages openness and democracy by being a space for enhancing representation of the participants. As such, digital activism enhances the work of traditional activism.

Digital Spaces and Women's Advocacy Work

According to Sarah Banet-Weiser, "social media has exploded with feminist campaigns" in recent years.[10] These digital advocacy campaigns integrate new fourth-wave feminist mechanisms that embrace technological advances. The fourth wave of feminism is defined by its digital activism. In *The Feminist Fourth Wave: Affective Temporality,* Prudence Chamberlain examines how themes central to the fourth wave include online feminism, humor, intersectionality, and inclusion. Since the number of women using online resources is increasing, more digital feminist campaigns are being launched. Social media allows these users to challenge sexism and misogyny, creating a new environment where feminism can directly engage with opposing forces. Additionally, the conversations occurring on these platforms also create a sense of solidarity.

Online feminist activism is contributing to network building and advocacy work for women. Advocacy work is the "process of working for a particular position, result or solution" within a political, economic, social systems.[11] Moreover, there are different approaches to advocacy work and social change; for example, bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up change begins at the individual level among personal networks and relationships. Top-down change addresses the system by targeting public policy and legal reformation and attempting to improve formal structures of society. Bottom-up resources at the grassroots level can also shore up the potential for top-down change, "if the masses at the 'bottom' are activated, and bottom-up change is finally entrenched when the 'top' is converted."[12] Using digital spaces and media as tools for advocacy work incorporates both top-down

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10   Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 8.

11   Gillian Caldwell, "Using Video for Advocacy," in *Video for Change: A Guide for Advocacy and Activism*, ed. by Sam Gregory (London: Pluto Press in Association with Witness, 2005), 4.

12   Friesen, *Story Money Impact*, 139.

and bottom-up approaches to social change. Because women's groups have had to stand up against heteronormative gatekeepers, "feminists have long recognized the importance of self-managed, alternative media."[13] Media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, for example, "have enabled a visibility of feminisms that have long struggled for a broader space and place in culture."[14] Information sharing on these platforms can shed light on marginalized issues and bring attention to social injustices on a national level.

Although the use of social media allows for connections and transnational networks to be built, it also creates challenges, such as an increase in reactionary sexism, misogyny, and rape culture. Along with more women using the internet to connect and to promulgate their activism, there are also more anti-feminist campaigns being launched online. Additionally, some scholars have pointed out that social media activism can be a disadvantage to women's groups that are underresourced, lack access to digital technology, or are behind on up-to-date technologies.[15] In her book on British women's activists, *Feminist Activism and Digital Networks*, Fotopoulou observes that feminist organizations heightened their digital engagement by utilizing transnational communication but that there "was also a lot of anxiety about catching up with technologies."[16] She cites age, lack of resources, and media literacy as the three most prominent factors that hinder participation. Fotopoulou notes that these become new types of exclusions that limit "access to publicity and recognition."[17] But she also argues that it is within these globally networked spaces that feminist groups are legitimized on the same level as other civil society actors.[18] Fotopoulos' findings epitomize the setbacks that accompany dependency on technology, but though technology is not a perfect antidote, it is important to take note of its benefits. In lieu of the obstacles, the positives are still adding value to the work of CSOs.

13   Ricarda Drüeke and Elke Zob, eds., *Feminist Media: Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014), 12.

14   Banet-Weiser, *Empowered*, 9.

15   Fotopoulou, *Feminist Activism and Digital Networks*, 37.

16   Ibid., 44.

17   Ibid., 51.

18   Ibid., 41.

Armenian Women and Activism in Digital Spaces

The case of Armenia demonstrates how digital spaces are changing women activists' way of organizing social activism. Past advocacy work by women's organizations included marching and protests. However, by employing new methods such as sharing stories and photos on social media platforms, Armenian women have revolutionized their voices in the public arena and found avenues for participating in social activism on a national and regional level. As such, digital spaces have created platforms for activism and visibility.

According to DataReportal, as of January 2021, the total population of Armenia is 2.9 million, with 63.4 percent of the population living in urban cities. There are 2.02 million (68.2 percent of the population) internet users and 1.80 million (60.7 percent of the population) active social media users. The number of internet users in Armenia increased by 107,000 (+5.6%) between 2020 and 2021. Additionally, there was a 20 percent increase in active social media users from January 2020 to January 2021, which amounted to over 300,000 new users. Of the 1.8 million social media users, 1.76 million are accessing content via mobile phones, representing 97.5 percent of all users. Mobile phones have made digital technology even more accessible since it is available in the palm of one's hand, overcoming obstacles of connection and limited access. These statistics make social media activism more relevant, because it is reaching beyond a handful of beneficiaries to a significant portion of the population.[19] Using digital media for advocacy exposes large audiences ranging from people surfing online to people communicating with others in online groups. Digital platforms enable users to voice opinions about issues that matter to them, speaking to audiences who are intentionally or incidentally listening based on algorithm outputs. Activists and civil society groups use this resource for advocacy and to promulgate educational messages. The assembly and exchange of ideas create a space that is used as a public forum.

However, online activism reaching such large audiences comes with a cost. Several problems are caused by the use of social media as a platform to promote social activism. There is a risk of speaking to an audience that already agrees with what one is saying and creating an echo chamber. The purpose of social change education campaigns is to encourage people not

19   Simon Kemp, "Digital 2021: Armenia," *Data Reportal*, February 22, 2021, https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-armenia.

to insist on their predisposed opinions, but to the change minds of those that might be previously unaware of certain issues. Additionally, another obstacle that may arise in sharing ideas on digital media includes negative reactions from those with contrasting opinions. As Chamberlin mentioned, anti-feminist hate speech online also poses a threat to Armenian women doing advocacy work. In 2013, the Women's Resource Center in Armenia was harassed online for their support of domestic violence legislation and providing reproductive health information for women over 18.[20] In 2019, Lara Aharonian, co-director of Women's Resource Center in Armenia, received death threats, threats of rape and violence, and bullying from anti-feminist and anti-LGBTIQ+ hate groups on Facebook after posting about her organization's work on women's issues and human rights. These hate groups not only disliked her posts and left pejorative comments, but they also shared her picture on social media along with invocations for violence. Aharonian is not alone; human rights activists in Armenia, especially those working for marginalized groups such as women and LGBTIQ+ communities, face increasing pressure, smear campaigns, and perpetual abuse.[21] These examples of harassment represent obstacles that emerge when women participate in social change on digital media platforms.

In spite of these risks, women's organizations in Armenia have been employing new digital methods to advance social change in the form of policy reform, social ideology shifts, and gender parity. One example of activism in digital spaces was the #SelfiewithDaughter Media Advocacy Campaign. The project was aimed at changing the perception that daughters are unwanted by their families by showing photos of families who take pride in their daughters. The goal was to break the cycle of sex preference by targeting parents, especially fathers, and their children. The long-term goal of the campaign was to shift the underlying assumptions society had towards having daughters. The overall aim of Sose's Women is to develop communities by supporting women and families. Their work focuses on addressing health, social, and women's issues in Goris and the surrounding region with agendas ranging from workforce training, health education, environmental awareness, and

20   Gohar Abrahamyan, "Women's Resource Centre becomes target of abuse even though it wasn't actually involved in drafting a gender equality law hated by conservatives," *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, September 20, 2013, https://iwpr.net/global-voices/armenian-womens-group-threatened.

21   "Receives death threats for working with women's rights," Norwegian Helsinki Committee, March 22, 2019, accessed January 19, 2021, https://www.nhc.no/en/receives-death-threats-for-working-with-womens-rights/.

empowerment. The organization conducts extensive trainings on health, sex education, and the environment and incorporates digital media elements, such as animated infographics and documentary films, which are shared widely on social media platforms. Since 2013, they have completed two nationwide media advocacy campaigns: one on sex-selection abortion, *Bavakan* (*Enough*) Documentary and Education Outreach Campaign, and another one on gender-based violence, *Huys Ka* (*There is Hope*).[22]

Addressing the Problem: Sex-selection in Armenia

Sex preference before birth has resulted in the rise of selective abortions in Armenia. According to data from the National Statistical Service of Armenia, 3,000 more baby boys were born than girls in 2012, making the ratio 114 boys to 100 girls.[23] A 2013 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Armenia report sited that this unbalanced ratio has been consistent since 1993.[24] This unbalanced sex ratio has had severely negative consequences for the country's demographic future, with demographic imbalances, increased migration, trafficking, and sexual abuse.[25] In a 2012 United Nations report, 88.2 percent of women in Armenia said they were pressured to terminate pregnancies based on sex-selection by their husbands and mother-in-law.[26] The cause of sex-selective abortion in Armenia is due to the lack of reproductive health education, financial troubles, familial pressures, and a patriarchal society that deprives women's right of participating in the decision-making process

22   Bavakan (@bavakandoc), "Bavakan's Facebook Page," Facebook, February 5, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/bavakandoc;

Huys Ka (There is Hope), "Անհաջողություն (Failure)," Vimeo video, 1:01, April 30, 2014, https://vimeo.com/88217045.

23   United Nations Population Fund, Armenia, *Prevalence of and Reasons for Sex-Selective Abortions in Armenia*, 2012, https://armenia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Sex-selective_abortions_report_Eng_0.pdf.

24   Christophe Z. Guilmoto, *Sex Imbalances at Birth in Armenia: Demographic Evidence and Analysis* (Yerevan, Armenia: United Nations Population Fund, 2013), https://armenia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Sex_Imbalance_report_Eng_final-with%20cover-final.pdf, 27.

25   International Center for Human Development, *Monitoring Public Policy and Programmes to Prevent Gender-Biased Sex-selection and Sex-Selective Abortions in the Republic of Armenia: Combating Gender-Biased Sex-selection in Armenia*, Yerevan, 2016, https://ichd.org/?laid=1&com=module&module=menu&id=8, 7.

26   United Nations Population Fund, Armenia, *Prevalence of and Reasons for Sex-Selective Abortions in Armenia*, 27.

in abortion. In addition, lack of access to adequate reproductive education and information has made abortion the primary form of contraception in Armenia since its legalization in 1955 during the Soviet Union period. Rather than leading to increased birth rates, unreliable contraceptive methods, such as the rhythm or withdrawal methods, have resulted in roughly 50 percent of pregnancies ending in abortion, many of which have gone unreported.

Son preference is widespread in Armenia because of its deep patriarchal culture. The 2013 UNFPA Armenia report stated the top four reasons for son preference are: 1) sons continue family lineage, 2) sons are inheritors of property, 3) sons are guarantors of material well-being, and 4) boys are defender of the homeland. All these reflect the widespread traditional norm where families prefer boys to continue the family name, as well as to ensure that their child is more valued in the society.[27] The son-preference culture represents an antiquated cultural paradigm that is having a detrimental effect on the country's population and future birthrates. By 2016, Armenia's rate of sex-selection was ranked 3rd highest in the world per capita.[28]

#SelfiewithDaughter in Armenia

Every aspect of the #SelfiewithDaughter viral photo sharing campaign, from sharing photos to broadcasting a public service announcement on television, was aimed at creating audience amplification. In Armenia, it was feasible to use both online and traditional media platforms because close to 60 percent of the Armenian population was online in 2016, and over 90 percent of the Armenian population watched TV regularly.[29] Therefore, media and television outlets collaborated in support of the campaign. To encourage #SelfiewithDaughter posts, the campaign launched with 20-second advertisements on social media and terrestrial television showing celebrity fathers with their daughters. The campaign also evolved into an online flash mob to raise awareness on sex-selective abortions in Armenia on a public and legislative level. The use of social media allowed the campaign to reach the largest audience possible, and as a result, the campaign maximized the

27   Andrew Jack, "'Our community loves boys more.' Armenia's missing girls," *Financial Times*, October 10, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/a4ecb4a2-713f-11e7-93ff-99f383b09ff9.

28   International Center for Human Development, *Monitoring Public Policy*, 6.

29   "Armenia, Country Profile," The World Fact Book, accessed on May 27, 2019, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/am.html.

potential of creating a shift in the value families in Armenia place on daughters.

The hashtag #SelfiewithDaughter in Armenia went viral on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Odnoklassniki ("Classmates," the Russian social media platform) because it combined a pressing issue with the use of a timely trend. The online visibility of the campaign was boosted with paid sponsored ads on Facebook, reaching 3,000,000 impressions by users in the target group connected to "Armenia" and "Armenian."[30] Sose's Women Facebook page alone surpassed 85,105 active post engagements (likes, shares, and comments) between February 2 and February 8, with the largest audience being women between the ages of 25 and 34. In addition to the social media campaign, the 20-second advertisement was aired on primetime television continuously on the top ten major broadcasting stations across Armenia garnering over 2,700,000 total number of impressions by viewers.[31] *Designing for Spreadability*, when a community's collective attitude towards an issue is heightened at a specific point in time, this phenomenon encourages the spread of content.[32] Because sex-selection abortion had reached epidemic proportions in Armenian society, it captured the "sentiment of the moment."[33] Sharing photos became an easy way to participate in the movement and show support to end sex-selection abortion.

Because sex-selection is not solely a women's issue, but an issue of national concern, the campaign even caught the attention of the Armenian government and resulted in legislative change. Alongside the participation of Armenian celebrities, the Minister of Education and other Members of Parliament also posted photos in support of their daughter. The new law stipulates that, "a woman seeking an abortion must attend a counselling session with her doctor and then wait for three days for the procedure."[34] Though this provision is very difficult to regulate, and women's rights organizations have criticized this approach because it may encourage anti-abortion measures, the new legislation is a sign that the government is attempting to address this

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30   Google and Facebook analytics.

31   Analytics from report.

32   Henry Jenkins, et al., *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2013)*,* 215.

33   Jenkins, et al., *Spreadable Media*, 215.

34   Florence Low, "Law to cut sex-selective abortions in Armenia 'putting lives at risk'," *The Guardian*, October 21, 2018, https:www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/21/law-to-cut-sex-selective-abortions-in-armenia-putting-lives-at-risk.

issue. There is still, however, a lot of work that needs to be done to eliminate son preference in Armenia. According to the head of UNFPA Armenia, Garik Hayrapetyan, "We (Armenia) need more work in overcoming the inequality between the values [placed on] girl and boy children. This would be key to defeating this bitter practice."[35] By 2016, the sex ratio in Armenia dropped to 112 boys per 100 girls, and the latest data provided by Armenia's National Statistical Services from 2017 showed ongoing progress, with 110 boys per 100 girls. Though the sex ratio at birth in Armenia is still high, the gradual decrease seen over the past few years signifies that raising awareness on sex-selection and the promotion of gender equality is resulting in positive changes.[36]

As demonstrated in this section, #SelfiewithDaughter in Armenia is an example of successful activism in the digital age. The campaign used digital activism to raise awareness on sex-selective abortion and mobilize groups through different channels including social media, media coverage, television broadcast, and group discussions. The campaign was successful in mobilizing diverse segments of Armenia's population to speak up against sex-selection on a national level. In doing so, the campaign boosted larger audience numbers than had the project focused solely on educational workshops or community outreach.

Conclusion

This paper sought to demonstrate that digital activism is an effective tool to create awareness about social issues by embracing online spaces to amplify their voices, mobilize group resources, and influence social change. It explored the example of women's groups in Armenia incorporating more contemporary methods of social activism, which include the use of digital media tools, such as online platforms, social media networks, hashtag activism, and digital content. With social media campaigns like #SelfiewithDaughter, it has become common practice for civil society organizations in Armenia to use

35   Nina Teggarty, "How Armenia Is Trying to Stop Sex-Selective Abortions," *Huffington Post,* April 17, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/how-armenia-is-trying-to-stop-sex-selective-abortions_us_58f4d45ae4b0b9e9848d2731.

36   International Centre for Human Development, *Monitoring Report: of the State Policy and Programs Aimed at Preventing Gender-Biased Sex-selection in the Republic of Armenia*, 2018,

https://armenia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Monitoring%20report_English.pdf.

digital platforms to spread awareness on and advocate for social issues. As seen in the example used in this paper, social media has the potential to drive social changes. New technologies are empowering marginalized women who have long been missing from the public eye. Networked spaces and virtual platforms have become spaces for issue-driven networks and the sites of civil society politics, specifically for women in Armenia. Digital components are making women's work visible, for example, the women were successful in influencing change at different levels of society, along with policy reform that should spur a decrease in sex selection abortions. Looking forward, there is further need to eliminate barriers to women's participation in decision-making processes. Until then, digital spaces have allowed women to put a spotlight on their visibility and their voices.

Ha Jin's Critique of the Political Allegiance in *War Trash*

Chen Yue & Bai Yifan

Ph.D. candidate at Yonsei University; Graduate student at Hebei University of Technology

The Korean War as part of the Cold War has been ignored for years and very few writers have shed light on this war through literature. While other novels focus on the soldiers and the mass victims of the war, Ha Jin chooses a special group of people—the prisoners of war (POWs)—to satirize the cruelty of the war. Contrary to other Chinese writers who glorify the war as a victory for China, Ha Jin denies the political rightness of the war. This paper argues that by focusing on the plight of the POWs rather than that of soldiers, Ha Jin critiques political allegiance as meaningless, and brings in more of an anarchic view. Having the anarchic view in the backdrop, the following discussion will be divided into two sections on two subjects—the persecution of political institutions and the suffering of POWs—to examine how Ha Jin illustrates the cruelty of war and the inhumanity of political regimes. The first section starts from the national perspective to examine how the ideological machine gave illusory promises to POWs while their sacrifice turned out to be meaningless in the end. The second section focuses on the POWs to explore the mental torment they experienced as a result of their political allegiance as well as how their faith became invalid in the prison camps.

Keywords: *Political allegiance, War Trash, POWs, Ha Jin, Korean War*

Introduction

Since the end of the Korean War in July 1953, a few literary works have been published about the war to discuss its influence on people in the involved nations (China, North Korea, South Korea, and the US). These novels include *The

Martyred (1964) by Richard E. Kim, *Silver Stallion* (1990) by Junghyo Ahn, and *The Foreign Student* (1998) by Susan Choi. Starting in the 21st century when the ideological divisions imposed on writers were not as intense as during and directly after wartime, writers began to turn back to the battlefield to ponder the influence of this war on soldiers and non-soldiers in a bolder way, such as with *The Guest* (2005) by Hwang Sok-yong and *The Surrendered* (2010) by Lee Chang-Rae. While most of these novels depict either the miserable outcome of the Cold War friendship between South Korea and the US or the trauma of Korean or American individuals, Ha Jin cast his eye on a special group of underrepresented actors—the Chinese prisoners of war (POWs). In his Pen/Faulkner Award-winning work *War Trash*, Ha Jin tells the story of Chinese soldiers sent to North Korea to fight against American armies, who were captured as POWs. Narrated by the protagonist Yu Yuan in a fictional memoir format, most of the story happens in the POW camps where the POWs are terrorized, and political conflict and struggles take place frequently.

The academic discourse on this novel can be organized in three main categories. The first group of scholars examines the "documentary manner" of this book and its authenticity in relation to real events. In his notes at the end of the book, Ha Jin includes a list of references to claim that "most of the events and details are factual."[1] This fictional novel engrosses readers with a strong sense of realism. Book reviewer Russell Banks commented that Ha Jin's application of two traditional Western literary methods— "the novel in the form of a nonfiction memoir, and the nonfiction memoir as prison narrative"— adds to the reader's confusion between what was invention and what was reportage.[2] What's more, the similarities between the story in *War Trash* and Zhang Zeshi's biography, led to Ha Jin being accused of plagiarism, which does make the story seem more plausible and fact-based. The second group of scholars approaches this work from a diasporic perspective and states that, as an immigrant writer, Ha Jin occupies a middle zone between two cultures. His writings are full of nostalgia for the native culture while also identifying with immigrant culture. Wang Shanmei argues that different from Chinese American writers like Amy Tan or Maxine Hong Kingston, who were born in America, Ha Jin is a new migrant writer who lives in the dissonant condition of remembering his home country while reconstructing his new

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1   Ha Jin, *War Trash*, (Vintage Books, 2004): 351.

2   Russell Banks, "View from the Prison Camp," New York Times, October 10, 2004.

identity in the immigrant country.[3] Sun Chao states that diasporic writers like Ha Jin are lost in heterogeneous cultures and therefore are easy to be marginalized, but the marginalized position can also give them a unique perspective for observing the world.[4] In this conflict, Ha Jin tends to blend and form a complex cultural identity. However, previous studies by Chinses scholars only center on Ha Jin's cultural conflict, without recognizing his resistance to political ideology. Therefore, this paper argues that what Ha Jin tries to do is not to reconcile two cultural and political systems, but to distance himself from both by critiquing the inhumanity of the war. The third group of scholars represented by Yumi Lee and S. Sabitha discuss personal identity and human rights in terms of the political background of the novel. Sabitha claims that Jin's characters mainly suffer as a result of alienation and identity crisis, while still believing that there was humanity in the war camp, primarily with the American doctor character, Dr. Green.[5] However, this so-called humanity disappears when Dr. Green leaves, and the pen that he gifted Yu Yuan is subsequently broken by other American soldiers.

This paper argues that, by focusing on the plight of the POW rather than a soldier, Ha Jin critiques political allegiance as meaningless and brings in more of an anarchic view. With the anarchic view as the backdrop, the following discussion will be divided into two sections on two subjects—the persecution of political institutions and the suffering of POWs—to unfold how Ha Jin displays the cruelty of the war and the inhumanity of political regimes. The first section starts from the national perspective to examine how an ideological machine imposes illusory promises onto POWs since their sacrifices ultimately turn out to be meaningless. The second section switches the focus to the individuals in the prison to examine through the mental torment of the POWs experience as a result of political allegiance and how their faith becomes invalid in the prison.

3 Wang, Shanmei, "Liusan yu guilai: kuawenhua shiyuxie de Ha Jin yanjiu 流散与归来:跨文化视阈下的哈金研究 [Emerging or Merging: Study on Ha Jin from the Cross-Cultural Perspective]" (Phd Dissertation, Jilin University, 2018), 42.

4 Sun, Chao, "Cong Ziyoushenghuo tantao Ha Jin de lisan xiezuo从《自由生活》探讨哈金的离散写作 [Research on the Diaspora Writing of a Free Life by Ha Jin]" (MA Thesis, Harbin Normal University, 2011), 25.

5 Sabitha, S. Politics of Identity on Ha Jin's The War Trash. *Literary Endeavour*, 435.

Illusive Political Commitment

In *War Trash*, Ha Jin firstly shows readers how political forces manipulate the masses during wartime. Shirley Quan says that Ha Jin's work "illustrates the difficulties that one faces when living in an oppressed society."[6] Political oppression in this novel can be observed from how the Communist party treats POWs when they were in American prisons and then when they are repatriated to their home country. In the prison, political movements were carried out at the expense of the POW's lives. When they were repatriated to their home country, even when they were politically loyal or honored, their state viewed them as useless "trash".

Anarchists claim that all forms of government rest on violence and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.[7] Anarchists believe that no political or governmental power is necessary because they think that a country is a power machine that protects the interests of the ruling class by oppressing people, and that the nation is nothing but an excuse used by the state to destroy the freedom and equal communication of human beings. According to anarchists, the political institution is a tool used to create contradictions among oppressed people in order to maintain the ruling order. In the prison camp in *War Trash*, political force is represented through the character of Pei Shan, the Commissar of the 180th Division of the People's Liberation Army. He has the highest rank in his squad, and spares no efforts in maintaining the rule of the Communist party in the prison camp.

Pei Shan and his squad were separated from the rest of their division at the start of the war, and they had to wage guerrilla war in the mountains for months, waiting for the opportunity to return to North Korea. Unfortunately, however, most of his soldiers were captured by the enemy. As the highest-ranking officer in the camp, Pei Shan became the backbone of the Communist Party. Everyone regarded him as the embodiment of the Party and believed that being obedient to him equaled being loyal to the Party: "These men had no gods to worship, so they could only project their religious feelings on a leader, a human being, whose return to us might have been a fluke."[8] Under the leadership of Pei Shan, two movements (or

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6   Shirley N Quan, "Review of Ha Jin Waiting," *Library Journal*, October 15, 1999, 105.

7   Emma Goldman, *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader* (New York: Schoc-kenBooks, 2011), 21.

8   Ha, *War Trash*, 208.

contradictions) take place as a means of protecting the interests of the party.

The first political movement in the camp involves "raising the national flag". Before Pei Shan is discovered by American soldiers to be the leader of the Communist Party, he establishes the United Communist Association in the camp with the help of Hao Chaoling in order to enlarge the association and strengthen their leadership. In order to unite and organize the association members in the camp, they drafted and announced a Constitution[9] under the leadership of Pei Shan. Later, when his identity is revealed, he organizes a "raising of the national flag" movement by giving directions to people outside the cell via "The Pei Code".[10] All decisions during this movement were made by Commissar Pei solely, and he made the decision to raise the flag in order to improve the morale of the others in the camp. The narrator Yu Yuan believes that this decision will enrage the Americans and put the lives of the whole camp in danger. But for Commissar Pei, the death of some of the prisoners is a necessary evil and also the most effective way to get the attention of the outside. Despite the loss of some prisoners' lives, this action is declared as a "glorious victory" by Commissar Pei to maintain public morale. Furthermore, he gives everyone a second-class merit citation, though these ironically prove to be useless after the war. The Commissar declares all sacrificed comrades to be "Hero Fighters",[11] but compared to the damage in casualties, this illusory award was nothing but a proof of control by political regimes. The true nature of this political regime, as implied in the physical condition of Pei Shan, is one of extreme impotence. Pei suffered from stomachaches caused by an ulcer and was unable to physically take part in the movement. Similarly, political forces are unable to guarantee the life of their followers, rather relegating them the real action while they take a backseat from active participation.

The second movement orchestrated by Pei Shan was the abduction of American General Matthew Bell. In order to strengthen the leadership of the Communist Party and attract the attention of frontline leaders, the

9   The Constitution was composed of four parts—"Principles", "Organization", "Members", "Discipline"—to organize the members in the United Communist Association, but it turned out be a formalism with many of its rules broken by the Party members.

10   The Pei Code was composed of a booklet of simplified Morse Code and a Walking Telegraph Code. People inside the cell have a chance breathe fresh air every day. At that time, they can communicate secretly with the outside via The Pei Code by taking specified strides and decoding the code.

11   Ha, *War Trash*, 242.

Chinese and North Korean communists in the camp worked together to capture General Bell. This not only forces Bell to admit the American maltreatment of the prisoners, but also provides effective evidence for peace negotiations on the frontline, which was viewed as a huge victory along with the aforementioned "flag-raising" uprising. However, the narrator Yu begins to have doubts and says, "my enthusiasm about the collective struggle had begun to wane. At heart, I was starting to doubt the wisdom of abducting General Bell."[12] Though they were technically successful with the abduction, many innocent soldiers were killed in the process. Moreover, after the success of this movement, General Bell is dismissed from his position, and replaced by another general who continues to torture and persecute the POWs.

The persecution of political regimes persists when POWs are repatriated to their home country. Even if they were politically loyal or honored during the war, this all turns to dust upon their return. The party sees their captivity as a betrayal of their country and as the POWs recount, "the leaders in Beijing had washed their hands of us."[13] Many of them go out of their way to curry favor with the authorities, "expose" others, and degrade themselves even more. Some of them even admitted that they were indeed "cowards who helped the enemy".[14] Ultimately, all of the POWs were expelled from the party, and many were treated as traitors or spies and imprisoned once again. Important characters in the novel ended up with a miserable life: Ming, abandoned by his fiancée, was sent back to Szechuan, where he carried water to the public baths; Shanmin became a peasant in his hometown; Chaolin, who once had "merits" for his performance on the battlefield, was assigned to a steel workshop. After the war, Pei was dismissed from the military and expelled from the Party, becoming "war trash", with all of his oral commendations from the war becoming nothing. His experience shows the futility of political power and the meaninglessness of personal sacrifice for political belief. His ignorance of human rights for his political movements in the camp is criticized by Yu Yuan who finds it intolerable to "use men like beasts of burden, like burning firewood".[15] When individuals attempt to become masters of the political community, they are, in fact, mere cogs in the operation of the state machine.

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12   Ha, *War Trash*, 190.

13   Ibid., 341.

14   Ibid., 344.

15   Ibid., 72.

The Invalidity of Faith

The anarchist opposes all kinds of institutions, including the state, church, and society claiming that "their promises are null and void, since they can be fulfilled only through man's subordination."[16] *War Trash* deconstructs individuals' political and religious ideologies to present the meaninglessness of political allegiance. The following section will focus on the three kinds of individuals in the camp in order to examine the mental torment of POWs as generated by their political allegiance as well as explore how their faith becomes invalid.

The war took place among three groups of people, namely, American Christians (including US soldiers, officers, and clergymen), Communist Party members, and pro-Nationalists who were forced to the battlefield by the Communist Party and eager to be repatriated to Taiwan rather than mainland China. However, neither religious belief nor political obedience ultimately provided relief or salvation for any of these groups in facing the cruelty of the war.

For the American Christians, their clergyman failed to provide spiritual support to the prisoners. When his true identity as a spy of the American government was revealed, the ordinary followers' belief in Christianity was broken, turning religion into a "nightmare that oppresses the human soul and holds the mind in bondage."[17] Here, the clergyman was a repressive authority masked as a savior, who deceived his pious followers and drew them into a darker abyss.

Besides this false religious belief, the American soldiers suffered as a result of their political allegiance. For instance, Richard, one of the GIs, consistently curses the war in his talks with Yu Yuan. Later, Richard and other GIs even ask Yu Yuan for a "safety certificate", so that in the case that America loses the war, they can survive the Communists by dint of this certificate. Yu refrains from saying to him, "I am standing on Korean soil to defend my country"[18] because he thought that his political allegiance seemed ridiculous and meaningless at this moment. These soldiers, regardless of which country they were from, are fighting to protect their country, but are rewarded with the loss of their families and loved ones, and are often in danger of sacrificing their lives on the battlefield. Thus, Yu Yuan felt that it was inappropriate to talk about the patriotic commitment of "defend(ing)

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16   Goldman, *Red Emma Speaks*, 22.

17   Emma Goldman, *Anarchism: And Other Essays* (Massachusetts: Courier Corporation, 1969), 53.

18   Ha, *War Trash*, 139.

my country" because it sounded empty to individuals who were suffering as a result of the war. More than winning the war, the GIs care about their own safety and at times curse the war as meaningless: "I don't see why I'm here. Fighting for what?"[19] They directly demonstrate their fear of killing and being killed. Gradually, that fear and negation transforms into hatred toward Chinese prisoners, which they take out on them through maltreatment.

For communists, the lives of the soldiers and POWs are extremely difficult, and through this depiction of their hardships, Ha Jin satirizes the inhumane war and futility of superficial political allegiance. Particularly through the story of the tattoo below Yu Yuan's navel, Ha Jin shows the meaninglessness of the tattoo and its unreliability as an embedded ideological force, since the tattoo can be changed easily. When he was in prison, Yu had no intention of fighting with the two parties and only wanted to return home as soon as possible to reunite with his family. Before the Screening[20], Yu was knocked unconscious. He woke up to find his belly tattooed with two English words "FUCK COMMUNISM". The tattoo was supposed to be an impassioned, macho pledge of loyalty, but for Yu Yuan, it was humiliating. It serves to remove him from the pro-Communist camp and classify him under the pro-Kuomintang Nationalist banner. However, since tattoos are superficial, and their meaning can change depending on the situation and interpretation, it is inappropriate to judge the attributes of individuals solely through tattoos. Especially in this case, Yu Yuan was forced to be tattooed, and the tattoo comes to be interpreted in different ways in different periods. Over the decades, the tattoo on Yu's belly is changed two times, with its meaning overturning each time. After returning to China, Yu Yuan asks a clinic doctor to totally remove his tattoo, but the doctor and the disciplinary officer suggest that he just remove several letters and leave "FUCK…U…S…" The second change of the tattoo is made at the end of the story when Yu Yuan finds a doctor to remove the tattoo completely. Yu Yuan actually held no particular position on the struggle between the Nationalists and the Communist Party, so it is erroneous to judge his political attributes based on the tattoo. Because tattoos can be transformed, they neither represent separation or connection nor do they mark cultural or political differences. The use of tattoos is not necessarily unconventional, but sometimes refers to the pressure placed on individuals by bullying parties

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19   Ibid.

20   In *War Trash*, according to military treaties, both sides need to return the captives. During the Screening, the captive could choose where they want to be returned, the Chinese mainland or Taiwan. See Chapter 9 in *War Trash*.

and the fact that political attribute construction is full of inauthenticity and fickleness. Yu Yuan eventually asks the doctor to erase the tattoo because he wants to get rid of the political forces that had been imposed on him. His decision was not just about breaking away from physical marks; it is also about abolishing the national, political factions that divide people ideologically.

Ha Jin also portrays a group of cruel pro-nationalists, who want to be repatriated to Taiwan. In his depiction of this group of POWs, Ha Jin displays how they were dehumanized by their blind political allegiance to nationalism. Yu Yuan believes that hoping for a better life in Taiwan is impractical and has too many uncertainties. The Nationalists mercilessly persecute the POWs who are determined to return to mainland China. They create an atmosphere of terror in the camp, resulting in fighting and killing among the fellow Chinese prisoners. The head of the pro-nationalist group, Liu Tai-an, is a graduate of the Huangpu Military Academy, and he coerces and entices others to go to Taiwan to continue being loyal to Chiang Kai-shek. When the communist Lin Wushen shouts the slogan of "Long live the Communist Party! Long live our motherland"[21], Liu stabs him and "slit his chest, then pulled out his lungs and heart, all the organs quivering with steam. He cut out the heart and skewered it with the dagger."[22] The thrilling and bloody description unveils the mercilessness of the pro-nationalist who, as "a sick man", was "warped by the image of the fictional hero in classical Chinese novels". Liu was "proud of the analogy" and "relishes his ability to inspire terror".[23] To compare Liu with the macho hero, Yu Yuan implies that Liu and his fellow men were making a blind choice to believe in the existence of a paradise in Taiwan. His claim of "in Taiwan, you will live a free and happy life",[24] is nothing but a fantasy from the propaganda of his "Generalissimo Chiang". What is more, bystanders merely watch the tragedy, with no one daring to speak out to stop it. Long-term, isolated prison life and cruel ideological rule created a group of insane people. The inhuman violence by pro-nationalists in the prison can also be attributed to the Communist Party, who arbitrarily sent those rebels into the battlefield resulting in the spread of such a "virus" in the camp, shaking others' faith in the Communist party and persecuting the innocent who hoped for nothing but to reunite with their family in mainland China.

21 Ha, *War Trash,* 107.
22 Ibid., 108.
23 Ibid., 110.
24 Ibid., 104.

Overall, through the depiction of three groups of people involved in the war, Ha Jin portrays the meaninglessness of political allegiance and religious belief and unveils the inhumanity brought out by blind political worship.

Conclusion

While other soldiers were honored by their country for the efforts on the battlefield, prisoners of war had different experiences. When the other soldiers returned home, they were greeted with flowers and applause, and a recognition of their sacrifices. Though they may suffer from post-war trauma, they were supported by others to reduce this trauma. However, things were more complex for the prisoners of war. While imprisoned, they knew that they would likely be mistreated by their country following the war, so they attempted to prove their political allegiance to their party, with the hope that their party would forgive their surrender to the enemy. However, their attempted loyalty and allegiance ultimately turned out to be futile despite their suffering in prison.

In *War Trash*, Ha Jin expresses his opposition and aversion to political ideologies and institutions. From the perspective of political suppression imposed on POWs, in the first part, we found that in the prison, political machines wielded prisoners as a tool for achieving political goals. Returning back to the homeland, the good future of POWs that had been promised by political leaders turned out to be illusory, and the POWs became "war trash". In the second part, from the perspective of individuals, we found that individuals' political allegiance and religious belief are meaningless and lead to inhumane behaviors.

As the Korean War has been long neglected by people around the world, the study of the historical fiction novel *War Trash* can help people to look back on this history. It is a valuable literary work for readers and researchers to retrospectively look at the situation of POWs both during and after the war. As current studies on Ha Jin's work are limited, this paper hopes to shed light on the research on Ha Jin and the Korean War.

A Refusal of Consumption and an Ethics of Incorporation in Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*

Song Mi Lee

Master's Degree in English, Claremont Graduate University

Due to the success of Deborah Smith's English translation of Han Kang's The Vegetarian, the effects of her translation became a focus for scholarships surrounding the novel. Some celebrate how the translation of her works have allowed Korean culture and history to be made known globally. Some have criticized the many linguistic inaccuracies of Smith's translation of The Vegetarian. However, The Vegetarian simultaneously participates and resists consumption. Through an examination of the publishing and translation history of the novel, this paper proposes a criticism of the publishing industry, in the way it celebrates and participates in the violence of consumption. Meanwhile the novel's resistance to consumption is framed through the tension between incorporation and consumption, in which an ethics of incorporation arises. Incorporation implies embodiment of the body eaten by the body eating, while consumption suggests the destruction of one for the other. Yeong-hye, the main character of the novel, demonstrates a disavowal of participating in the violence inherent to consumption through her radical vegetarianism, and instead poses an ethics of incorporation with the animal Other. Through the literary analysis of the novel, this paper will demonstrate how the narrative content of the book presents a way to imagine an ethics of incorporation and refusal of violent consumption in publishing and translation practices rather than reproducing the same violence.

Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* is a novel published in 2007 about Yeong-hye, a typical and simple Korean housewife, gradually undergoing metamorphosis set in motion by her sudden vegetarianism. The novel is organized into three parts, "The Vegetarian," "Mongolian Mark," and "Flaming Trees,"

each narrated respectively through Mr. Cheong, her husband, the unnamed brother-in-law, and In-hye, her sister, observing Yeong-hye's transformation. The story begins with Yeong-hye becoming vegetarian because of a dream, despite strong opposition from her family and her husband, and her gradually escalating transformation by the end of the novel into something vegetal as she refuses to eat anything at all while institutionalized. Through Yeong-hye's radical vegetarianism, the novel puts forth an ethics of refusal as a response to the quotidian violence of consumption. It proposes incorporation of the Other, decentering the subject, instead of consumption, in which the Other is destroyed for the sake of the human subject, and imagines vegetarianism as a nonviolent mode of being and a refusal to participate in violence to its extreme. Yeong-hye's actions provide a critique of subjectivity based on distinction and identifiability and suggests that the human is always already not human. As the novel unfolds, she becomes more and more imperceptible and unidentifiable as a human subject.

While the narrative poses the refusal to eat and the refusal to be eaten as a mode of resistance, Deborah Smith's 2015 English translation of *The Vegetarian* made the book readily available and palatable, that is, consumable, edible, as a commodity object to the Anglophone audience. The book entered the global literary market, while the story and its ethical position simultaneously resists global capitalist consumption of South Korean cultural production.[1] The translation was published by Portobello Books during a time when Korean novels were starting to garner more interest. In the U.K., Smith's translation of *The Vegetarian* won the Man Booker International Prize in 2016, becoming the first Korean novel to win. Emmanuel Roman, CEO of Man Group, commented in a press release announcing the novel's win: "The sales of Korean books have risen from only 88 copies in 2001 to 10,191 in 2015, a reflection of the South Korea Market Focus at London Book Fair in 2014. This paper examines these two layers of the novel. The ethics present within the inner contents of the novel pose a contradiction and a response to the problems from the outer layer, the publication and translation history, of the book.

By refusing to eat meat, Yeong-hye enacts a becoming-vegetal

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1   I make the distinction of South Korea, as opposed to Korea, to make aware of the two countries' (North and South's) emergence as nation-states as a result of U.S. interventionist politics and imperialism during the Cold War. It is vital to keep that particular history in mind when thinking about North/South Korea as a product of U.S. imperialism.

that rejects consuming the animal Other and instead incorporates herself with it, becoming further enmeshed and entangled. "Incorporate" from the Latin *incorporāt,* meaning "to embody, include", is a transitive verb meaning "to combine or unite into one body or uniform substance; to mix or blend thoroughly together."[2] "Consume" from the Latin *consūmere* means "to destroy, wear away, to kill" and is a transitive verb for "to swallow up in destruction," "to eat or drink," or "to read (literature), watch (film) esp. voraciously, to absorb (culture, art, etc.)."[3] To place these two words within the context of eating prompts one to think about the interaction between the body eating and the body eaten. Incorporation allows for the body eaten and the body eating to become entangled, while consumption destroys and kills the body eaten for the body eating. Yeong-hye destabilizes that distinction between subject and object, active and passive, in her incorporation of the animal Other. Furthermore, incorporation/consumption can become a mode through which one can think about other relations and encounters with beings (not just eating). How is a body (of literature, animals, culture, women) prepared for consumption? How does one resist against being consumed *and* consuming others? What creates the conditions for incorporation to be possible?

The publishing industry participates in the violence inherent to consumption and examining the publishing history of *The Vegetarian* specifically unravels the ways in which this violence that is inherent to consumption manifests and complicates itself. On the other hand, the narrative within the novel, as explored through Yeong-hye's character, presents a radical disavowal of participating in the violence of consumption. Yeong-hye lays bare an ethics that refuses consumption, urging us to reject consumption and transform the consuming relationship between translator and Oriental text, reader and text. First, the paper will discuss the outer layer of the novel, the publishing history of *The Vegetarian*, and how the publishing industry produces a consuming relationship between the translator and the text. Next, it will explore the inner layer of the novel itself and how

2   "incorporate, v.". OED Online. March 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/93962?rskey=AEVeUG&result=3&isAdvanced=false (accessed March 16, 2022).'

3   "consume, v.1". OED Online. March 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/39973?rskey=Gaa8ZK&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed March 16, 2022).

the character Yeong-hye demonstrates a resistance against consumption.

A brief publishing history of *The Vegetarian*

Tracing the publishing history of *The Vegetarian* helps reveal the publishing industry and acts of translations as not isolated, but embedded within a historical and political context. This examination will reveal that the publishing industry encourages consuming the Oriental other in the form of translated literary works. In this case, translation becomes (among other things), a post-colonial tool for perpetuating Western hegemony, in which other foreign cultures' assimilation into a global market is a point of unquestioned celebration. The profitability of South Korean cultural production also legitimizes South Korea as a valuable and recognizable subject in the global market. Because of the increasing profitability and the economic benefit cultural production yields, Republic of Korea (ROK) also actively promotes dissemination of translated Korean texts through government funded programs such as the Literature Translation Institute (LTI). This poses a complication to the simple trajectory of the West consuming the East and points to a cyclical situation wherein the consumed East self-promotes itself as marketable and consumable. Simultaneously, when examined closely into the narrative within *The Vegetarian*, we see a refusal to participate in consumption through Yeong-hye's character. This tension of a consumed literary text with an anti-consumption ethics generates a way to imagine an ethical approach to translation practices.

To begin this brief publishing history of *The Vegetarian*, the three parts of the novel in Korean were initially published separately and serially as short stories in three different South Korean literary journals from summer of 2004 to winter of 2005. They were later collected and published as a single novel in 2007 by Changbi Publishers. Then Deborah Smith translated *The Vegetarian* into English, and it was published in 2015 by Portobello. Just as Emmanuel Roman had stated in the press release announcing *The Vegetarian*'s winning the Man Booker, the 2014 London Book Fair was focused on Korean writers. At this event, Deborah Smith attended and spoke as one of the few Korean-to-English translators in the U.K. This played a significant role in Smith's professional career as it led to her meeting the editor of Portobello/Granta which led to her book deal in translating *The Vegetarian*.[4] Deborah Smith

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4   Deborah Smith, "Allie Park interviews translator Deborah Smith (*The Vegetarian*)," interview by Allie Park, *Korean Literature in Translation*, 15 June 2014, http://www.ktlit.com/allie-park-interviews-translator-deborah-smith-the-vegetarian/.

translated it in 2015 after having learned Korean for only about six years.[5] In 2016, Deborah Smith's translation of *The Vegetarian* won the Man Booker International Prize, splitting the prize money of £50,000 between translator and author. It is pertinent to think about the timeline of these events because it informs the context of the publishing industry that made the publication of an English translation of *The Vegetarian* possible. Many South Korean scholars and critics celebrate the novel's winning the Man Booker International Prize as a momentous feat in which South Korean literature was globally recognized in the Anglophone literary market. Global recognition of South Korea as a culture producing academically noteworthy literature is politically charged. Through global consumption, South Korea is recognized and legitimized.

Deborah Smith's approach to translation is also crucial in contextualizing the material history of the novel. She studied Korean at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London. In an interview with Allie Park from Korean Literature in Translation (KTLIT), Smith explained that what motivated her to learn Korean was not the people nor an interest in Korean culture, but from discovering Korea as an untapped market with a potential for profit in translation. In the interview, Smith tells Park, "Part of the reason I chose Korean as that language was that I suspected it would provide certain opportunities for getting work as a translator, given the almost complete dearth of Korean literature available in English, and the fact that I knew Korea was a highly-developed, modern country with—presumably—a flourishing publishing industry."[6] What sets the stage, or the dining table, for *The Vegetarian* to be published and consumed in English are the neoliberal practices of the publishing industry, like the presumed limited competition for finding work as a Korean-to-English translator, the appetizing allure of a modernized but non-Western foreign country, and the pressure to make oneself marketable as a translator. By making Korean literature available and consumable to the Anglophone, and therefore global, audience, South Korea's cultural product becomes marketable and profitable. Smith states later in the interview, "Again, as I had no prior connection with, or investment in, Korea or Korean culture, it wasn't so much an ambition to promote Korean literature overseas as the sense that there was a (relatively) untapped niche that I

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5   Jiayang Fan, "Han Kang and The Complexity of Translation," *The New Yorker*, 8 January 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/15/han-kang-and-the-complexity-of-translation.

6   Smith, "Allie Park interviews translator Deborah Smith (*The Vegetarian*)."

could exploit to my advantage!"[7] Her relationship to the language is one that is motivated by economic gain in a neoliberal economy that rewards and demands individuality and one's marketable identity as a "London Koreanist."[8] Smith's approach to language and translation is one that is stripped of the material conditions of Korean people and instead one that participates in neocolonial relations with the Oriental Other. The publishing industry produces translators like Smith, encouraging and necessitating a parasitic, capitalist relationship between a dominant language and the profitable and marketable foreign Other. The capitalistic notions of property-value that engender the conditions in which Smith encounters and engages with the South Korean language fundamentally implies a violent and consuming relationship with the Other.

Numerous scholars and critics in South Korea as well as America have criticized Deborah Smith for the inaccuracies and omissions in her translation, despite Han Kang's approval of Smith's translations.[9] The inaccuracies that have been pointed out range from syntactical errors to cultural ones. Jiayang Fan from The New Yorker and Charse Yun from Korea Exposé have pointed out homonym errors, including how she mistranslates "pal [*arm*]" for "bal [*foot*]."[10] Smith also often misidentifies the subject of the sentence, which is particularly ambiguous in Korean because the sentence structures are not subject-verb-object (SVO), like British/American English, but subject-object-verb (SOV), with the subject and object often completely omitted and only implied in context.[11] Wook-Dong Kim in "The 'Creative' English Translation of *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang" conducts an extensive assessment of Smith's English translation choices from the source text and cites that, "According to a research paper presented at a conference at Ewha Women's University in October 2016, 10.9 percent of the first section of the book was found to be mistranslated, while another 5.7 percent of the original text was found

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7   Smith, "Allie Park interviews translator Deborah Smith (*The Vegetarian*)."

8   Deborah Smith's Twitter bio stated "London Koreanist" which since has been changed.

9   Fan, "Han Kang and The Complexity of Translation."

10   Charse Yun, "You Say Melon, I Say Lemon: Deborah Smith's Flawed Yet Remarkable Translation of 'The Vegetarian,'" *Korea Exposé*, 2 July 2017, https://www.koreaexpose.com/deborah-smith-translation-han-kang-novel-vegetarian/.

11   Hyejung Shin, "데버러 스미스(Deborah Smith)의 채식주의자 다시쓰기 번역 관점에서 본 문제점 및 향후 과제 [Deborah Smith's Rewriting of Chaesikjuuija: Thoughts from a Translation Perspective]," *Journal of Korea Contents Association* 17, no. 10 (2017): 659.

to be omitted."[12] How is it that the novel won the Man Booker International Prize specifically for its English translation when so many inaccuracies can be identified? It becomes clear that the Man Booker International Prize is not awarded based solely on merit and instead perhaps awarded strategically and politically. This is not to discredit the achievements of translators and authors who have won awards like the Man Booker, but a politics of the publishing industry is at play in the giving and receiving of awards. Who is awarded financial support for their work and who is not? Additionally, what is surprising to discover is that five years prior to the publication of Smith's translation, Janet Hong, a reputable Korean to English translator, had published a translated excerpt of part one from *The Vegetarian* in *Azalea*, an academic journal of Korean literature and culture.[13] Although it is unclear why Janet Hong did not go onto translating and publishing the novel in its entirety, we can speculate what could have happened if Hong had published *The Vegetarian* five years earlier in 2010. How would the English translation of *The Vegetarian* be discussed differently if it were translated by Janet Hong? Would the Anglophone audience receive this novel differently under a different translation and translator? Would it have caught the attention of the Man Booker committee?[14]

While some have defended Deborah Smith's translation by citing the fact that Han Kang had approved of the translation herself, using the author function to legitimize Smith's translation poses a limitation on the kind of discussion that can be generated. Roland Barthes in "The Death of the Author" states, "To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing… In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered…"[15] Forgoing authorial intent opens up the possibility for the novel to be discussed outside of measuring the (im)possibility of faithfulness of a translation to the original

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12   Wook-Dong Kim, "The 'Creative' English Translation of *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang," *Translation Review* 100, no. 1 (2018): 65.

13   Han Kang, "Excerpt from The Vegetarian," trans. Janet Hong, *Azalea: Journal of Korean Literature & Culture* 3, (2010).

14   Though it is important to note that the Man Booker International Prize awarding translated international books and not just books from Commonwealth began in 2016, making it obviously impossible for Hong's translation (if it had been published in 2010) to receive the award. But this speculative exercise still stands. Would it have caught the attention of an established award committees?

15   Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. S Heath, (London: Fontana, 1977), 147.

text and outside of analysis as an unveiling of a truth. Furthermore, some critics have ultimately defended her translation by celebrating the book for having opened up Korean literature to the world. Charse Yun in the same article in which they were critical of Smith concludes, "Instead of jumping on her errors in a 'gotcha!' kind of criticism, one could argue that it's impressive how much Smith got right for a relatively new learner of the language."[16] Yun continues, "And ultimately, Smith carried out perhaps the most important task of all: She successfully introduced a work of literature to people who might otherwise never have had a chance to read it. In that regard, Smith was faithful to the end."[17] Certainly, translations at its best can form connections across cultures and languages. However, Yun is arriving at this conclusion from the assumption that representation and visibility politics is unquestionably beneficial. Merely celebrating the novel's success based on it bringing more attention to Korean literature does not challenge the violence of consumption practices. Under this assumption, all consumption is positive and favorable. It is this assumption that this paper argues against, and Smith's translation needs to be discussed under new terms that question these assumptions.

Most assessments of translations are done by comparing the translated work against the source text. However, this effort to assess literality and faithfulness to the source text creates tension and begs the question whether an essence of a source text can be transported unscathed and perfectly from one language to another. If translations are necessarily failures, how can we rethink Smith's failures in translation differently, outside of measuring accuracy? In lieu of how Smith's politics of translation is also fundamentally informed by her relationship with foreign languages, the Other, what are the consequences of Smith's participation in the violence of consumption? What kind of ethics does this publication history reveal? Smith's failure in translation resides not in her linguistic inaccuracies, but in the unacknowledged participation in the violence inherent to consumption. While an individual translator, Deborah Smith, in this case, is not the sole perpetrator of this violence and no one is pure from the violence of consumption, there ought to be a way to take flight, refuse consumption, and imagine a new way to reconfigure relations produced in acts of translation

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16   Yun, "You Say Melon, I Say Lemon: Deborah Smith's Flawed Yet Remarkable Translation of 'The Vegetarian,'" *Korea Exposé*, 2 July 2017, https://www. koreaexpose.com/deborah-smith-translation-han-kang-novel-vegetarian/.

17   Yun, "Deborah Smith's Flawed Yet Remarkable Translation of 'The Vegetarian,'" *Korea Exposé*.

and publication. Again, the structures of the publishing industry produce translators like Smith, in which a neoliberal and consuming relationship with the Oriental Other is rewarded and profitable; however, individuals must be held accountable for their actions in an effort to transform the structural problems. Literature can be the space in which such exploratory and imaginative work can take place. The narrative contents of *The Vegetarian* present us with an ethics of incorporation that Yeong-hye demonstrates and enacts throughout the novel. Even through Deborah Smith's English text that we are given, Yeong-hye demonstrates an ethical and incorporating relationship with animals through her vegetarianism. Even through the consumed text, we are able to find an ethics that firmly resists consumption.

A refusal of consumption and an ethics of incorporation in The Vegetarian

Yeong-hye enacts a refusal to participate in the violence inherent to consumption and instead poses an alternative ethics, one of incorporating the Other rather than consuming it. She accomplishes this through her disavowal of eating meat. Her realization that she is already meat and is consumed by the men around her allows her to formulate an ethics of incorporation as a response to the violence in consumption. The novel presents an ethics through which translations and publication practices can then be reconsidered and transformed.

Yeong-hye describes how she accidentally cuts herself while cutting meat the night before she had the dream: "My hand, the chopping board, the meat, and then the knife, slicing cold into my finger."[18] Her hand becomes indistinguishable from the meat on the cutting board, and when she sticks her bloody finger in her mouth to stop the blood, it leaves her "strangely pacified."[19] In this moment, she is becoming both the meat consumed and the one consuming, and Yeong-hye realizes that she is entangled with the animal. When the blood from the meat and the blood from her hand meet and become indistinguishable, she finds herself already meat. She has already been meat, the flesh consumed, in her relationships with patriarchal figures in the family, her husband and her father. In *Thinking Through Animal*, Matthew Calarco writes, "To be human typically means to disavow the fact that we, too, are flesh—that we, too, are meat. But to acknowledge oneself as inhabiting

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18   Han, *The Vegetarian*, 27.
19   Han, *The Vegetarian*, 27.

a shared zone of exposed embodiment with animals is to recognize that we are in deep and fundamental ways *like animals*."[20] This decenters ontological claims from the human to other beings, and through this decentering, it causes "the displacement of the privilege of 'the human' as a subject position."[21] Her realization that she is meat transforms her relationship with animals and meat, as not one in which she consumes them for her own life. Instead, she derives her sense of self from incorporating animals into herself without consuming them. Her refusal to eat meat is a refusal to participate in violence. Instead, she repositions herself in relation to animals in which the boundaries between animal and her, human, are indistinguishable. When she sees her blood mix with blood from animal meat, she has a profound realization that she too has always already been meat. The violence against animals is not a metaphor for her oppression, but instead she *is* meat: she too suffers when animals suffer. Animal suffering is her suffering, and thus their liberation is her liberation. Rather than predicating her interconnectedness with the animal through sympathy, Yeong-hye profoundly realizes that she *is* meat, that she *is* animal as opposed to she is *like* meat, *like* animal. Her relationship with the animal is against metaphors. Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* write, "Metamorphosis is contrary of metaphor."[22] Her becoming is not a metaphor, but it instead blurs the distinction between animal and human.

Yeong-hye is not pure from violence, but her impurity does not pose a limit to her ethical response to violent consumption. Her complicity to violence is not contradictory to her ethics. Instead, it positions Yeong-hye as thoroughly entangled as both the one consuming meat and the one being consumed by those around her. In her dreams, boundaries that maintain distinction become indistinguishable, without reducing to the same: "Murderer or murdered… hazy distinctions, boundaries wearing thin. Familiarity bleeds into strangeness, certainty becomes impossible. Only the violence is vivid enough to stick."[23] She sees a face, something like hers but not hers, something familiar, in the blood from the meat. As a result, she decides to stop eating meat. Yeong-hye recalls a memory, in an italicized vignette, of her complicity in violence when

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20   Matthew Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals: Identity, Difference, Indistinction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 58.

21   Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals*, 57-58.

22   Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986), 22.

23   Han, *The Vegetarian*, 35.

her dad cruelly punishes a dog for biting her when she was a child. Not only is the dog tied to a motorcycle and is driven around until he dies, but the family also hosts a feast and consumes the dog. She remembers "the smell of burnt flesh" and the "two eyes that had watched [her], while the dog was made to run on, while he vomited blood mixed with froth, and how later they had seemed to appear, flickering on the surface of the soup."[24] Yeong-hye is not innocent nor clean from this violence: "The lives of the animals I ate have all lodged there. Blood and flesh, all those butchered bodies are scattered in every nook and cranny, and though the physical remnants were excreted, their lives still stick stubbornly to my insides."[25] It is from this position of impurity that she launches her ethical actions. They are stuck inside of her, their flesh inside hers, and the two, Yeong-hye and the animals, are entangled through violence.

Additionally, she realizes that she is consumed by the men around her. Men who have committed an act of violence against Yeong-hye, like her husband and her father, are associated with meat in the novel. Yeong-hye tells her husband that she smells meat from his body. She smells it "from the same place [his] sweat comes from."[26] When her husband forces himself on her in part one, he compares her to a "comfort woman" once she, according to him, gives in to his advances and passively lies in bed.[27] State violence and marital violence are interconnected under gendered patriarchal violence. Yeong-hye's father, who fought in the military during the Vietnam War, violently reacts to her refusal to obey his command, to eat meat, by force-feeding her meat with his hands at the dinner table. Won-Chung Kim in "Eating and Suffering in Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*" also marks this moment as a form of rape and her refusal as "an outrageous and unacceptable challenge to her father, a paragon of the patriarchal and androcentric man."[28] Yeong-hye's brother-in-law, obsessed with her unique Mongolian mark, fantasizes eating her and her Mongolian mark: "I want to swallow you, have you melt into me and flow through my veins."[29] Through gendered sexual violence, the distinction between her and meat is blurred. Just as the animal meat are sticky and stuck

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24   Han, *The Vegetarian*, 50.

25   Ibid., 56.

26   Ibid., 25.

27   Han, *The Vegetarian*, 38.

28   Won-Chung Kim, "Eating and Suffering in Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*," *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 21, no. 5 (2019): 5.

29   Han, *The Vegetarian*, 121.

inside of her, she is also stuck inside of men who have consumed her violently.

Through a disavowal of consumption, Yeong-hye demonstrates an ethics of incorporation, in which the animal is not distinguishable from her and instead she embodies the Other, the animal. Yeong-hye is able to enact this kind of ethical response to violence despite not being pure from the participation of violence. She recognizes that she too had consumed animals, consumed others, and in recognizing that just like animals she too is also consumed, she seeks to reject consumption in an effort to save herself and animals. Through literature, this novel imagines a radical vegetarianism and a rejection of consumption to its extreme. Even though, as discussed earlier, the publication history of the English translation of this novel is one fraught with the violence of consumption, and despite the criticisms about the accuracies of this translation, an ethics of refusal and incorporation still arises. Despite the consuming relationship (Deborah Smith and Korean language) from which the translation of *The Vegetarian* emerges from, the English translation still allows for this reading to be conducted, a reading that subverts the relation established by capitalistic consuming forces outside of it. This tension of a consumed text presenting an anti-consumption ethics generates a fruitful and productive imagination of what an ethics of incorporation and refusal can look like in translation and publication practices. It does not mean that translations are an impossibility, and it does not mean that white translators should not translate ethnic texts. Just as Yeong-hye is not pure from violence inherent to consumption, we are also not pure from the violence inherent to consuming works of literature. However, it is from that impure position that Yeong-hye is able to produce an ethics in which she is thoroughly entangled with the Other and is not seeking after ethical purity but instead refusing to participate in perpetuating systems of violence. It is not about whether she succeeds in not participating in systems of violence, but in the very act of refusal, she resists. In translation and publication practices, we ought to refuse to participate in the consuming relationship between a translator and foreign language in which translators consume foreign languages and cultures to make a profit. Instead, translators ought to reconsider how they are already entangled with the Other and the source text (whether they are outsiders of the source texts' culture or not) and complicate the necessary failure of translation acts. While it is not up to the responsibility of the individual to resolve structural violence, we must conduct acts of refusal despite the seeming impossibility of any resolution.

Conclusion

The publishing history of *The Vegetarian* reveals how the publishing industry participates and reproduces the violence inherent to consumption. While not diminishing the linguistic inaccuracies and the accomplishments of this translation, a criticism of Smith's translation can be articulated through a critical examination of her translation approaches and a lack of an ethical relationship with the Other, the Oriental text and language. On the other hand, the novel simultaneously presents an ethics of incorporation through Yeong-hye's refusal of consumption. Yeong-hye enacts this through her radical vegetarianism predicated not on her purity from violence but on an entanglement with the animal Other. What occurs within the contents of the novel then poses a critique of Deborah Smith's English translation that is not predicated on assessing its linguistic errors, but in challenging translation as a site of consumption. Smith's translation failures lie not in confusing homophones in Korean like "[bal]" for "[pal]" but from unquestionably reproducing the neoliberal consuming relationship between a translator and foreign language. While it is not solely her responsibility to change the structural problems of the publishing industry, Smith's willing participation in this violence must also be factored in when evaluating her translation practices. Furthermore, this examination urges us to reconsider the assumption that achieving global recognition and making a non-Western country's cultural production profitable and consumable is undoubtedly beneficial. Rather than focusing on profitability, translators ought to challenge assumptions within their methodology that they operate under when approaching translation projects. Translations can become a methodological approach that subverts such consuming relationships, like using translations as a preservation method for endangered languages or using translations to creatively challenge assumptions about language and the transferability of meaning. There is not one "proper" way of conducting translations, however the ethics we are able to derive from Yeong-hye in *The Vegetarian* urges us to imagine what an ethics of incorporation and acts of refusal could look like within the publishing industry and translation practices.

Romantic Love in Colonial Korea: Feminist Attempts at Liberation

Hannah Kim

Graduate student at the Yonsei Graduate School of International Studies

Romantic love, or *yeonae,* as a modern concept was introduced to Korea during the Japanese colonial period. It became a rich source of discourse during this time which revealed the contradictions and complexities of modern, colonial Korea. While both men and women actively participated in this discourse, Korean women in particular, saw the opportunity to seek liberation through these changing definitions of romantic love. This essay compares the different discourses on *yeonae* generated by two groups of women: the New Women and communist women. While the New Women emphasized education and free marriage, communist women advocated for "red love" and comradely love. The divergence between these two groups reflects differences in their political views and class backgrounds as well as the broad range of responses to the discourse on *yeonae.* However, ultimately neither group was successful in liberating themselves via a discourse on romantic love due to the subsuming of women's issues under nationalism and the reinforcement of a domestic patriarchy following Korea's liberation from Japanese colonization. This reflects the resilience of patriarchy in co-opting potentially liberating discourses.

Keywords: colonial Korea, romantic love, yeonae, women's movements

Introduction

In modern society, replete as it is with romantic comedies and love songs, the concept of romantic love as a private act between two individuals may seem like a given. However, this conception is neither a natural nor inherent idea, but rather a norm that has been constructed via certain sociohistorical contexts. In the case of Korea, modern conceptions of romance were

introduced in the colonial period during which Korea was exposed to an unprecedented level of Western influence, as mediated through the Japanese. During this process of bringing in Western modernity to Korea, themes of love, sexuality, and marriage became contested sites of discourse.

Women activists and intellectuals of this time seized upon and generated discourses of romantic love, *yeonae,* in an effort to liberate themselves from repressive patriarchal norms. Far from a monolithic feminist movement, however, these concerns were mediated through both class and political beliefs. The earlier wave of elite New Women thinkers was generally made up of educated, privileged women who attempted to wield romantic love as a way to gain sexual subjectivity and independence as an individual. On the other hand, the later wave of socialist and communist feminists brought in class analysis by propagating "red love", which sought to define a comradely love free from the shackles of a "property" mindset. Ultimately, however, both of these strains of thought on *yeonae* failed to bring about liberation for women due to male anxiety surrounding female sexuality. The colonial patriarchy's emphasis on nationalism proved to be an obstacle to reinventing a new model of a society that could sustain either female sexual agency or revolutionary sexuality. Through the reinforcement of the "wise mother, good wife" archetype, as well as the pretext of nationalism, men co-opted educated women as tools of the state and oppressed them once more under a new, modern patriarchy.

The New Women and Free Love

Underscoring how the modern conception of romantic love was a foreign import, the Korean word for *yeonae* originates from the English word "love".[1] Initially, *yeonae* was valued as a way for Korea to enter "civilized", modern society, by ending the so-called barbaric practices of early marriage.[2] As a result, people began to see the experience of love as tied to individual desire. Through this modern conceptualization of love, people were able to assert their individual values in the "private sphere".[3] It is precisely this point that the first wave of the New Women sought to capitalize on in order to assert their freedom.

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1   Chiyoung Kim, "The Conceptual History of 'Yeonae' (Love) in the Korean Colonial Period," *Acta Koreana* 16, no. 1 (2013), 115.

2   Chiyoung Kim, "The Conceptual History of 'Yeonae'", 118.

3   Ji-young Suh, "Collision of Modern Desires: Nationalism and Female Sexuality in Colonial Korea", *The Review of Korean Studies*, 5, (2), (2002), 114.

Korea's conceptualization of the New Woman materialized around the 1920s with the emergence of the first generation of educated Korean women. These women received modern, Western-style educations, often from Japan, and then brought their new ideas back to Korea, wielding them to challenge the traditional Confucian system.[4] The label of New Women was also often associated with Western styles of dress, vanity, and an obsession with consumerism.[5] These women were heavily influenced by the works of Western writers, like Ellen Key and Henrik Ibsen, and espoused a philosophy of free love (*chayu yeonae*), or the idea that romantic love should not remain within the purview of the state or traditional customs.[6] There was a newfound belief in love-marriages, or the idea that love should exist in a marriage, and that women should have agency in selecting their partners. Through these new conceptions of romantic love, New Women sought to exercise their individual agency and sexual subjectivity.[7]

Both male and female intellectuals participated in active discussions on the changing mores of romantic love and marriage and how to integrate them within the Korean context. Alternative forms of marriage and relationships were considered and debated, such as temporary separation, remaining single, and trial and companionate marriages.[8] However, for the most part, these ideas remained abstractions that were not actually put into practice. The distance between these abstract discussions and the lived reality in colonial Korea remained vast, particularly for women. On a logistical level, New Women had difficulty finding suitable marriage partners, since many of the educated men of their age were already married as a result of the practice of early marriage.[9] This led to situations where New Women became unofficial "second wives", a position that was essentially equivalent

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4   Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910-1945*. Berkley: University Of California Press, 2014, 73.

5   Ji-young Suh, "The 'New Woman' and the Topography of Modernity in Colonial Korea." *Korean Studies* 37, no. 1 (2013), 20.

6   Jooyeon Rhee, "'No Country for the New Woman': Rethinking Gender and Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea through Kim Myŏngsun", *Acta Koreana* 17, no. 1 (2014), 403.

7   Ji-young Suh, "Collision of Modern Desires", 116.

8   Keong-il Kim, "Alternative Forms of Marriage and Family in Colonial Korea," *The Review of Korean Studies* 11, no. 4 (2008), 61–82.

9   Jooyeon Rhee, "'No Country for the New Woman', 411.

to that of a feudal concubine.[10] Additionally, the double standard of the patriarchy meant that women's careers and reputations could be ruined by sex scandals, while that of their male counterparts remained unscathed.[11] For instance, in the case of the writer, Myeong-sun Kim, several of her male contemporaries derided her love life by using her as a thinly-veiled character for their stories.[12] Although concepts such as free marriage and free love were idealized in discourse, women who actually attempted to live by these values were punished with labels of promiscuity and moral bankruptcy.[13]

Modern concepts of *yeonae* also received criticism from other quarters. Socialist scholars were critical of *yeonae* because they saw it as a petit bourgeois love that was based on individualism, rather than the collective.[14] Additionally, while this first wave of New Women thinkers prioritized education, later socialist writers were more attentive to class differences.[15] Proletarian women writers shifted the focus away from love-marriages, a priority for the first wave of New Women, to more radical proletarian thought.[16]

Communist Women and Red Love

Just as the first wave of New Women was impacted by the writings of Ellen Key and Henrik Ibsen, socialist women were greatly influenced by the works of writers such as Alexandra Kollontai. With the translation of Kollontai's works into Korean in the late 1920s, socialist ideas were further dispersed by the popular press, leading to an active discourse in newspapers and magazines.[17] The concept of "red love" as an erotic sensibility provided a fundamentally different framework from the "free love" of the New Woman. While New Women attempted to assert their individuality by bringing romantic

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10   Ji-young Suh, "The 'New Woman' and the Topography of Modernity", 28.

11   Jooyeon Rhee, "'No Country for the New Woman', 412.

12   Ibid., 413.

13   Ibid., 412.

14   Chiyoung Kim, "The Conceptual History of 'Yeonae'", 129.

15   Sunyoung Park, *The Proletarian Wave: Literature and Leftist Culture in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*, Cambridge, MA: The Harvard University Asia Center, 2015, 198.

16   Elizabeth Grace, "Women Educating Women: Class, Feminism, and Formal Education in the Proletarian Writing of Hirabayashi Taiko and Kang Kyŏng-Ae," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* 48, no. 1 (2015): 7.

17   Ruth Barraclough, "Red Love and Betrayal in the Making of North Korea: Comrade Ho Jong-Suk," *History Workshop Journal* 77, no. 1 (2014): 91

love into the private sphere of their subjective sexuality, Kollontai claimed that love was not private, but rather, a "fundamentally social issue".[18] On this note, she argued that couples needed to look beyond themselves and toward the collective, rather than focusing their love only on one another.[19] At the crux of Kollontai's thinking was the need to move away from a love defined by property relations, to a more expansive, comradely love.[20]

Famous communist feminists such as Ho Jong-suk and Kang Kyeong-ae sought to synthesize their political activism with sexual freedom through "red love".[21] Writer and revolutionary Ho Jong-suk was notorious for her sexual promiscuity, and the public assiduously followed her exploits in the tabloids. Infamously, Ho Jong-suk dated another leading socialist while her husband was in jail, sparking consternation and debate in communist circles on the "nature of comradeship".[22] Though a core component of "red love" and comradely love was to decry ownership of one's partner, the discourse shifted in the 1930s to emphasize fidelity over revolutionary fervor as the most "desirable attribute" in a woman.[23] As socialist men served long prison sentences and sought the support of women on the outside, they began to emphasize a need for female loyalty, which led to changes in how the role of love was perceived within the party.[24] Ho Jong-suk was eventually purged in North Korea, and as a result, her story was often framed as a cautionary tale of the "sexually emancipated Communist woman who knew neither loyalty nor fidelity".[25] Essentially, her punishment was cast as the direct result of her sexual autonomy, further illustrating the distance between ideals in communist discourse and reality.

Not limited to condemning feudal customs, such as arranged marriages or concubinage, women communists and socialists also drew

18   Maria Lind, Michele Masucci, and Joanna Warsza, eds. *Red Love: A Reader on Alexandra Kollontai*, Stockholm: Konstfack Collection, 2020, 37.

19   László Kürti, "The Wingless Eros of Socialism: Nationalism and Sexuality in Hungary," *Anthropological Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (April 1991), 57.

20   Michael Hardt, "Red Love," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (2017), 781.

21   Ruth Barraclough, et al., "Red Love in Korea: Rethinking Communism, Feminism, Sexuality,"*Red Love Across the Pacific: Political and Sexual Revolutions of the Twentieth Century*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY, 2015, 23.

22   Ruth Barraclough, "Red Love and Betrayal", 93.

23   Ibid., 95.

24   Ibid.

25   Ruth Barraclough, et al., "Red Love in Korea", 30.

attention to the plight of working-class women in factories.[26] In her works, author Kang Kyeong-ae wrote about the possibilities of red love, or "sexual fulfillment, intellectual companionship and shared political commitment" for proletarian women such as factory girls.[27] In her most famous story, *The Human Predicament,* she underscored class differences by depicting the ethical failings of the educated New Women character, Ok'chom.[28] This class analysis served to complicate notions of female solidarity, since Ok'chom shows no desire to help the tenant farmers under her father.[29] Additionally, while Ok'chom's character obsessively seeks heteronormative romance and a love-marriage, these are neither a possibility nor a priority for the working-class female character, Sonbi. This difference highlights how class and social status affected women's approach or access to romance and *yeonae* during this time.

Starting in the late 1920s, some socialist intellectuals came to view romantic love as a barrier to revolution and as a petit bourgeois vice.[30] This is a shift from the previously held view of socialist writers that romantic love and revolution go hand in hand.[31] This distinction between private and public spheres served to depoliticize gender issues as well as relegate women's issues to the irrelevant private sphere.[32] Kang Kyeong-ae radically counters this trend through her depiction of the male character, Sinch'ol, whose romantic infidelity is directly linked to his political infidelity. The character Sinch'ol is a bourgeois law student who is in love with Sonbi and spurns Ok'chom's advances. He is initially involved in the underground workers movement, but he loses his revolutionary fervor when he is imprisoned. After he is released from prison, he marries a bourgeois woman and moves to Manchuria, through the luxury of choice afforded him by his class status.[33] Kang's linkage of romance and politics through Sinch'ol makes it clear that "only a good lover can make a

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26   Ibid., 23.

27   Ibid., 31.

28   Samuel Perry, "The Context and Contradictions of Kang Kyŏng-Ae's Novel in'Gan Munje," *Korean Studies* 37, no. 1 (2013), 112.

29   Ruth Barraclough, "Tales of Seduction: Factory Girls in Korean Proletarian Literature," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 14, no. 2 (2006), 354.

30   Sunyoung Park, *The Proletarian Wave,* 226.

31   Ibid.

32   Ibid*.,* 227.

33   Samuel Perry, "The Context and Contradictions of Kang Kyŏng-Ae's Novel in'Gan Munje," 118.

good revolutionary".[34] This served to highlight that for women, the "personal is political", while also challenging the solidifying dichotomies of the public and private.[35] This dichotomization was just one of the many ways that men attempted to negate the revolutionary potential of women's ideas on romantic love.

Nationalism, the "Good Wife, Wise Mother," and a Modern Patriarchy

Korea's position as a colonial state contributed to male intellectuals' myopic view of nationalism as the most important priority, superseding other issues such as women's rights. As figures oppressed under Japanese colonial authority, Korean men sought to exercise what limited power they had over women, using the excuse of nationalism.[36] As a result, men demanded New Women to subordinate their feminism "in service of the nation"[37] and portrayed sexual freedom as "deviant morality" that directly threatened the nation-building process.[38] Women who participated in free love were considered decadent and selfishly focused on trivial private affairs rather than on the collective good of the nation. In tying women's sexuality to patriotism, the Confucian virtue of chastity was brought into the discussion of *yeonae* and portrayed as an integral part of nationalism. Starting in 1925, articles that mentioned both *yeonae* and chastity together began to appear more frequently.[39] In other words, *yeonae* started being associated with the control of women's sexuality, rather than as a space for free love and liberation. [40]

This focus on nationalism can also be seen in the reinforcement of the "wise mother and good wife" as a feminine ideal. Though this concept existed before the 1930s, it became even more conservative during the 1930s as a

34   Sunyoung Park, *The Proletarian Wave,* 226.

35   Amy D. Dooling, *Women's Literary Feminism in Twentieth Century China*. New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 104.

36   Haeseong Park, "Korean New Women Yim Youngsin in Feminist and Nationalist Contexts," Journal of the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies, 2015, 59.

37   Ibid., 54.

38   Jooyeon Rhee, "'No Country for the New Woman', 407.

39   Chiyoung Kim, "The Conceptual History of 'Yeonae'", 133.

40   Ibid., 134.

reaction to the New Women feminist ideologies of the early colonial period.[41] The concept of "wise mother and good wife" valued traditional feminine virtues, such as obedience, sacrifice, and chastity and defined women in relation to men.[42] Famous nationalist and writer Yi Kwang-su claimed that the goal of women's education was to prepare them to be mothers who will raise their children to become "sacred citizens".[43] In other words, women were expected to be educated, not for their own self-development, but to educate their sons, and thus "contribute to the national development".[44] In 1936, Yi Kwang-su said that if women follow the path from "chaste romance to sacred motherhood", then Korea as a nation will be prosperous and peaceful.[45] Here, chastity and motherhood are invoked as sacred and glorified as a panacea, while the role of the father remains conspicuously absent in these discussions. The preface to the 1933 issue of the magazine, *Sin Kajeong,* claims that the figure of the housewife held incredible social value because the successful maintenance of a home not only brought happiness to that individual household, but to Korean society and people as a whole.[46] The figure of the "wise mother and good wife" was attributed with a great deal of power to serve the abstract needs of the nation. Insidiously, this archetype incorporated modern elements to appeal to the newly educated women, while still containing them within "traditional gender boundaries".[47] For instance, the modern, "good wife" was encouraged to use modern technologies to her housewifely duties better, and while this gave her the opportunity to be educated in the latest scientific innovations of the household, the end result was that she was still confined to the domestic space. [48]

Though women aimed to structurally change their society through the discourse on romantic love and sexuality, they were instead subsumed

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41   Ji-young Suh, "The 'New Woman' and the Topography of Modernity", 28; Lim, Sungyun, "Affection and Assimilation: Concubinage and the Ideal of Conjugal Love in Colonial Korea, 1922-38," *Gender & History* 28, no. 2 (2016), 475.

42   Ji-young Suh, "The 'New Woman' and the Topography of Modernity", 30

43   Jooyeon Rhee, "'No Country for the New Woman', 410.

44   Yang-hee Hong, "Debates about 'a Good Wife and Wise Mother' and Tradition in Colonial Korea," *The Review of Korean Studies* 11, no. 4 (December 2008), 44.

45   Sunyoung Park, *The Proletarian Wave,* 217.

46   Ibid., 216.

47   Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea"*, 60.

48   Ji-young Suh, "The 'New Woman' and the Topography of Modernity", 29.

under a new form of patriarchy. Central to this problem lies the fact that these women paradoxically sought to be recognized as individuals in a society where individuality is defined by "patriarchal power…manifested in nationalism".[49] Moreover, while the concept of *yeonae* is predicated on equality between the two people in a relationship, women were not considered equals to men in colonial Korea, making it impossible for them to become sexual subjects. Without the ability for women to be sexual subjects, an "asymmetric gender structure" was maintained, and the word *yeonae* came to tamely denote the stage of dating before marriage, rather than a possible source of freedom or liberation.[50] Though women were seeking romantic intimacy with men as equals, this proved to be a futile effort due to the "sociohistorical realities of male hegemony" as well as the "asymmetrical relations of power" between men and women.[51]

This regressive phenomenon was not limited to Korea. In socialist Hungary, Kollontai's ideal of "winged eros", or comradely, collective love, never took flight. Following the fall of socialism in 1989, "heterosexual images, codes, and behavior" once again became dominant, just as they had been in the pre-socialist era. In other words, women were presented yet again with a paradigm for living within the restrictions of "male-dominated sexual politics."[52] Though this took place in a later time period from colonial Korea, it reveals a similar theme of the persistence and durability of patriarchy in surviving even revolutionary ideologies. Though *yeonae* played a key role in defining the "modern subject" for Koreans, neither free love nor red love was ultimately able to abolish the deep-rooted idea that women's sexuality was "something that had to be controlled".[53]

Conclusion

Romantic love served as a locus of discourse during the colonial period in Korea for both women and men as they sought to understand their position as new, modern subjects. For women, romantic love and the related issues of sexuality and marriage were a fraught site in which they experienced gender-based oppression, but also the potential for liberation. With the rise

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49   Jooyeon Rhee, "'No Country for the New Woman', 423.

50   Chiyoung Kim, "The Conceptual History of 'Yeonae'", 132.

51   Amy D. Dooling, *Women's Literary Feminism in Twentieth Century China*, 27, 29.

52   László Kürti, "The Wingless Eros of Socialism", 60.

53   Chiyoung Kim, "The Conceptual History of 'Yeonae'", 132.

of educated Korean women, different ideas of romantic love and partnership that challenged Confucian patriarchy were conceptualized. The first wave of New Women maintained a focus on education as a liberating force for women, alongside the modern ideas of free love and love marriages. On the other hand, communist women looked to "red love" as a model for comradely love that extended beyond private romance and incorporated the needs of the proletariat.

This period of modernization was a pivotal moment for Korean society during which it could have reconfigured its relationship to romance and gender, of course within the confines of colonial modernity. However, any opportunity for revolutionary change was ultimately co-opted by patriarchy in the service of nationalism. Male anxiety around female sexuality led to the reinforcement of the Confucian value of chastity, albeit repackaged in a modern veneer. Additionally, women's issues were consistently relegated to secondary importance to the nation-building project. As a result, the image of a chaste, sacrificial, and "good wife, wise mother" rose to even greater prominence as the feminine ideal. Far from suggesting women go back to their premodern state without access to education, the newfound patriarchy sought to harness the modern, educated woman as a tool for nation-building. This is a testament to the strength of male desire to control female sexuality, as well as the resilience of the patriarchy in resisting feminist ideologies.

Questioning the assumption that modernity is inherently liberating for subaltern figures like women, it is imperative to examine the hypocrisies that lie in the space between value and practice, as well as the ways in which the state and patriarchy co-opt these ideologies. Though much has changed in Korea since the colonial period, women's sexuality is arguably still policed by the state and the patriarchy to this day. The social mores and mechanisms of power have evolved, but the underlying rationale and the roots of patriarchal thinking remain unchanged. Rather than just a historical study, the analysis that this paper begins can be applied and extended to current day gender relations. By doing so, one can examine how conceptions of romance and sexuality have been changed and co-opted to reflect the needs of the state and patriarchy in both the past and the present.

Instrumentalization of the Media Industry and Rise of Popular Trot Music in South Korea under Park Chung-Hee (1961-1979)

Marie Brunet

Graduate student at the Yonsei Graduate School of International Studies

Recently, reality singing competition shows focusing on the music genre of *trot*, such as *Miss Trot* (2019), *Mister Trot* (2020), and *Voice Trot* (2020), have occupied screen time on South Korean television. Though the South Korean public opinion on *trot* may vary, especially among the younger generation who tends to view *trot* as an old-fashioned music genre, *trot* has been widely accepted, promoted, and marketed as a "pure" product of Korean culture for decades. However, the historical reasons behind the creation and popularization of the genre should be further investigated to better grasp the significance of *trot* as a quintessential product of Korean national culture. The origins of *trot* have been widely debated over time. This is because the genre emerged from Japanese *enka*, a popular music style of the colonial era from 1910-1945. In the 1970s, the Park Chung-Hee military regime implemented cultural policies as part of the Cultural Nationalism movement to galvanize a sense of national identity and patriotic sentiments among citizens through the creation and promotion of cultural products. Thus, the "*Koreanization*" of *trot* was undertaken to erase its tainted colonial origins. *Trot* became instrumental for the government in the creation of a national popular music and promotion of its ideology, as well as an essential channel to explore and reinvent "*Koreanness*," despite the heavy censorship imposed on the media industry at the time. The historical flexibility of the genre in itself allowed for its resurgence in the 1970s. Through the development of specific and recognizable musical and lyrical patterns combined with the government's cultural ideology, *trot* could then be finally (re)shaped as a "pure" Korean product which listeners got accustomed to and continue to enjoy in the present day.

The Park Chung-hee Era and Cultural Nationalism

Park Chung-hee came to power through a *coup d'état* in 1961 and remained the president of South Korea until his assassination in 1979. Often credited as the instigator of the "*Miracle on the Han"*, Park successfully pushed for the economic revitalization of South Korea, through the state-led development of heavy and chemical industries.[1] This was made possible by the creation of specialized and unskilled labor forces throughout the eighteen years of his authoritarian rule. Following in the steps of his predecessor Syngman Rhee, Park's regime remained highly authoritarian and militaristic, and by 1972, Park declared martial law along with the implementation of the Yushin Constitution which signified the beginning of one of the most repressive periods in modern Korean history.

In addition to economic growth, the state was concerned with finding ways to convey its ideology of anti-communism, nationalism, and self-dependence. As a result, it actively used and controlled the media and culture industries to promote its vision of a new, independent, and culturally unique Korea. The unique characteristics of Korean culture were to be developed under the scope of Cultural Nationalism, which aimed at promoting a homogeneous Korean national identity. However, some obstacles stood in the government's way and needed to be quickly eliminated to better promote a sense of shared identity solely based on culture. As pointed out by Haksoom Yim, there were three major obstacles to overcome. Firstly, the issue of "cultural identity", dated back to the Japanese colonial era from 1910-1945. The Japanese government had tried, over 35 years of colonial rule, to implement assimilation policies such as *bunka seiji* (Cultural Rule) after the March 1st Movement, 1919.[2] These policies consequently influenced the development of a modern Korean cultural identity highly tied to its past colonial legacies. Secondly, the division between South and North Korea in 1945 created cultural differences between the two nations and thus impacted the cultural identity of the peninsula as a whole. Thirdly, the influence of Western culture through the increased consumption of Hollywood cinema and foreign goods, especially after the Korean War (1950-1953), over time started to conflict with Korean traditional culture and ways of life. This persisted even after the 1970s, as Yim also mentions

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1   Eckert Carter, *Korea Old and New: A History*, (Harvard University, Korea Institute, Ilchokak Publishers, 1990), 359-367.

2   David, Brudnoy, "Japan's Experiment in Korea," *Monumenta Nipponica* 25, no. 1/2 (1970): 155–95. https://doi.org/10.2307/2383744.

that later during the 1990s, the emergence of information technologies and culture industries, which channel cultural globalization, also played important roles in the diverse cultural policies implemented across nations. [3]

The government's answer to these issues came in the form of cultural policies, heavy censorship, and the imposition of strict regulations on media, which allowed the state to fully supervise the production and promotion of cultural contents. Yim points out that:

> *"Even though excellence and access were seen to be the primary goals of cultural policy, a major priority objective of this plan was to establish a new cultural identity by highlighting a specific cultural tradition (Ministry of Culture and Information, 1973). For this reason, from 1974-1978, 70 percent of the total public expenditure on the cultural sector was distributed into folk arts and traditional culture (Ministry of Culture and Information, 1979, 228)."* [4]

In order to legitimize Park's authoritarian rule and establish his government as the ultimate power holder, the discourse on "specific cultural tradition" was shaped to appeal to the population who shared a collective memory of ancient national cultural *grandeur* and glorious military power. The goal was to efficiently tie Korean traditional culture under the scope of Cultural Nationalism, highly influenced by Neo-Confucian thoughts, with Park's "revitalization" process, which targeted rural areas and labor-intensive industries. The cultural policies *de facto* became an essential part of the government's newly implemented and constantly evolving economic policies.[5]

A key factor that contributed to the success of Park's cultural policy was the effective mobilization and instrumentalization of the media industry, which served as an essential channel to spread the government's ideology. With the implementation of the Yushin Constitution in 1972, the state exercised censorship and regulated the contents of major media outlets, such as the radio, journals, and television. Television channels in

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3   Haksoom, Yim, "Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy in South Korea," *The International Journal of Cultural Policy* 8, no.1 (2002): 39. doi: 10.1080/1028663029003242

4   Ibid, 40.

5   Ibid, 43-44.

particular participated in the promotion of *trot* singers, most notably through the national broadcast of the *Gayo Daejeon*, in which popular singers promoted their newly released hits. As pointed out by Kwon and Kim, the state's ideology incorporated the ideas of economic growth as well as military power into its daily discourse and used television broadcast as a major channel to promote its agenda. The authors also emphasize that by 1973, "Korea's three major broadcasting stations transmitted more than 600 programs promoting the Park military government."[6] The state-controlled broadcasting content was based on standards of morality, showing patriotism and support for the ruling government. Thus, television programs underwent severe censorship and only those approved by the government were aired. Moreover, in the 1960s and 1970s, the merging of small private industries and regional broadcasting operators into the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and the Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) strengthened the state's control over television broadcasting.[7] The political instrumentalization of television was an efficient move to spread the government's ideology, since by 1963 the number of television sets owned by Korean households reached 34,774 and continuously increased to 1.2 million in 1973 and 5.6 million by 1979.[8] It is within this context that television broadcasts introduced *trot* under the supervision of the government who purposely used the combination of media and culture to promote a sense of "*Koreanness".*

Rise and Popularization of Trot (1961-1979)

As previously mentioned, the historical origins of *trot* have been a subject of heated debate, due to its Japanese colonial origins. *Trot* was strongly influenced by Japanese *enka*, a popular genre of music that was, and still is, particularly enjoyed by elderly people and "stereotypically associated with rural areas and the working class".[9] Yet, despite the Japanese influence, Park's government was determined to erase the colonial past of the peninsula and focus on promoting the superiority of Korean culture over others, particularly Japanese

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6   Seung-Ho, Kwon and Joseph, Kim, "From censorship to active support: The Korean state and Korea's cultural industries," *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 24, no. 4 (December 2013): 520. https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304613508873

7   Ibid, 520.

8   Ibid, 519–521.

9   Deborah, Shamoon, "Recreating traditional music in postwar Japan: a prehistory of enka," *Japan Forum* 26, no. 1 (2014): 113. doi: 10.1080/09555803.2013.824019.

culture. *Trot* was an excellent tool to do so for various reasons. Firstly, it was already a familiar and popular music genre to the public. Secondly, the style of the music itself did not require heavy change, as it already had undergone modifications after Korea's independence. The musical composition shifted from the use of minor to major key, and the lyrics were used to convey Korean nationalist and patriotic sentiments.[10] Thirdly, with the creation of broadcast operators and the increased use of television, *trot* was able to be promoted on TV programs with visual elements such as costumes and haircuts following the government's standards of decency, which greatly assisted in popularizing the genre, as people were able to listen to popular music privately in their homes.[11]

The "Camelia Lady dispute" is a notable event that illustrates the government's strict control over the music industry. The 1964 "Camellia Lady" song by Lee Mi-ja was a hit, selling more than one million copies. However, it was banned in Korea due to its "Japanese color" as the song resembled *enka* in terms of its musical composition. Strangely, despite its lyrics being politically friendly, as they corresponded to the state-imposed censorship regulations, it was still considered "vulgar" according to the state's standards. Most importantly, the banning of "Camellia Lady" reflected the contradictions of postcolonial Korea, as it highlighted the complexity of reshaping a national culture, while simultaneously dealing with postcolonial social, economic, and political forces. Numerous foreign influences, along with Japan, participated in the creation of the *trot* nostalgia felt by the older generation of Koreans. This generation remembered the colonial period and still enjoyed listening to Japanese music. This was a reality that did not match with the one that Park's regime was trying to build. Those ambivalent feelings towards Japanese culture are important to acknowledge as Park Chung-Hee himself was never a complete anti-Japanese activist and even less a Western culture sympathizer. Lee also notes that the banning of the song was an extraordinary event at the time since never before had a popular song been subject to censorship and "purification".[12] The success of the song came in contradiction to the government's push for the creation

10   Yujeong, Chang, "A study on the traditionalism of "trot" – Focused on Yi Nanyŏng's "Tears of Mokp'o", *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 5, no. 1 (June 2016): 62, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.imic.2016.04.002.

11   Seung-Ah, Lee, "Decolonizing Korean Popular Music: The "Japanese Color" Dispute over Trot," *Popular Music and Society*, 40, no.1 (2017): 106, https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2016.1230694.

12   Seung-Ah, Lee, "Decolonizing Korean Popular Music", 107.

of an exclusively Korean cultural identity devoid of foreign influence.[13] This incident shows that Park's government actively shaped Korean culture of the 1960s and 1970s by defining the cultural objects which could be considered Korean and those that could not. Hence, *trot* was considered to be Korean under the strict supervision and approbation of Park's regime.

Within this context, Park's government started to introduce "healthy popular music" referred to in Korean as *geonjeon gayo*, which conveyed ideologies related to the country's economic success, values of work, and morals, which aimed at promoting a strong sense of national community.[14] *Geonjeon gayo* was a quintessential product of the 1970s cultural industry because it simultaneously promoted Park's vision of a new and economically independent South Korea while providing viewers with an entertaining experience, highlighting the importance of each individual in the creation of the new nation. Jungmin Mina Lee notes that *geonjeon gayo* includes two key values, namely *jaegeon* (reconstruction) and *jucheseong* (self-reliance), which were essential concepts for Park's regime. In 1970, Park Chung-hee had already started his *"revitalization"* campaign by initiating the New Village Movement referred to as "*Saemaul Undong*". This movement aimed at modernizing rural villages and dealt with the issue of "New Village Song" *(Saemaeul Undong Norae)*.[15] Even though the "New Village Song" is arguably not a typical *trot* song, its creation highlights the simultaneous effort of the government in promoting *geonjeon gayo* and the deliberate use of the media and culture industries to spread Cultural Nationalism as the state's primary ideology. Thus, the political climate of the 1970s concretely impacted the production of *trot* and it is under these strict regulations that it emerged as a popular and successful genre.

"Koreanization" and Popularization of Trot: Han and National Sentiments

The development of a cultural industry regulated by the state and the rise in mass media and technologies, coupled with "the increasing demand to

13   Ibid, 105-110.

14   Chang, Yujeong "A study on the traditionalism of "trot" – Focused on Yi Nanyŏng's "Tears of Mokp'o,"" *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 5, no. 1 (June 2016): 62, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.imic.2016.04.002.

15   Seung-Ho, Kwon and Joseph, Kim, "From censorship to active support: The Korean state and Korea's cultural industries," *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 24, no. 4 (December 2013): 519, https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304613508873.

produce "healthy popular music", led to the emergence of *trot* as a flexible medium that the government could manipulate through the "*Koreanization*" and popularization of the genre. Songwriters, as well as singers, participated in this national "renaissance" of *trot*, now technically free from foreign influences and produced exclusively in Korea, by addressing diverse topics in their songs, such as concepts related to traditional *Koreanness* like "*han*", meaning a sense of loss, unfairness, and helplessness unique to Koreans, as well as lighter topics regarding romantic, family and platonic relationships. Thus, analyzing singers whose songs were both a public success and significant in terms of their lyrics in promoting the government agenda, can shed light upon the characteristics of the *trot* genre during this time.

In 1972, Cho Yong-pil's song "*Come back to Busan Harbor*" became a surprise hit after having been the target of criticism from the government due to the "Japanese color" of the song. Despite this criticism, the song sold one million copies and has since been covered by many other popular *trot* singers, notably Na Hoon-a, who will be discussed in the following paragraph.[16] The song revolves around the port of Busan and a man who misses his brother lost at sea. As one of the characteristics of *trot* is the repetitiveness of lyrics, the song is easy to remember and thus was enjoyed by a large audience. An essential element that contributed to the success of this song is the universal sense of loss and longing, a recurrent theme in the genre. The association between the lost brother and the port of Busan is purposely made to appeal to the Korean audience who immediately visualize the port of Busan and can relate to the suffering of the man. The lyrics did not require censorship and also corresponded with the government's desire to appeal to a sense of community and shared culture, notably through the sense of "*han*" the song inspires. "*Han*" is an emotion unique to Korean people which cannot be shared with foreign nationals, thus the exclusive characteristic entailed in the term perfectly fit the goal of re-introducing *trot* as a pure Korean music genre.

As previously mentioned, *trot* was used as a tool to convey national and collective imagery of "*Koreanness*" due to its flexibility. This "flexibility" is intrinsically linked to the origins of the genre as "*enka*" was influenced by foreign music during its creation. Thus, the genre in itself had already shown its flexibility and fluidity in both welcoming foreign influences as well as

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16   More information on the release and complete album can be found on the *gayo album review* at https://terms.naver.com/entry. naver?docId=3378007&cid=60487&categoryId=60495.

receiving indigenous modifications throughout time. Yujeong Chang, mentions one major musical change that *trot* underwent after gaining independence from Japan in 1945. While *trot* was previously composed in minor key, an increasing number of songs began to be produced in the major key instead.[17] This hints at early attempts of "purification" of the genre from Japanese "*enka*". Moreover, Chang points out that *trot* had been well-loved by fans for decades but only because its subjects were based on rural, indigenous themes."[18] A concrete example of the exploration of those themes can be found in the work of Na Hoon-a, specifically the song "Far away hometown". In the song, Na Hoon-a tells the story of a man who dreams and thinks about his faraway hometown to which he cannot return to. Particularly, the use of the term *"cheonritahyang",* which translates as *"*thousand miles away from home", expressing the loneliness felt by people who left their hometowns to work in urbanizing cities or regions and were unable to see their family regularly. It is significant that the lyrics included this term as it was commonly used at the time in popular songs, and it resonates with the lives of many Koreans living in rural areas who were forced to participate in the country's revitalization process by working in factories far away from their hometowns. Notably in the South-East part of the peninsula close to the port city of Busan, where the government pushed for heavy and chemical industrialization as a way to achieve economic autonomy and independence. The sentiments of loss and melancholia are prominent throughout the song and participate in recreating the sense of "*han"* which characterizes a form of grief or helplessness said to be exclusively reserved and felt by Korean nationals. Thus, *"My Far Away Hometown"* is effective in establishing 'Koreanness' as it appeals to both collective memory and a shared sense of "*han".*

While the "New Village Song" might not have been directly categorized as *trot*, the movement still inspired artists to create songs supporting the New Village Movement. In 1972, Nam Jin released the song "With You/With Someone" (*"Nimgwa Hamkke")* which hinted at the movement's motto. The first sentence of the song goes as follows "I want to live in a picturesque house with my beloved ones for the rest of my life". This refers to the "Korean Dream" of the simple life promoted by the New Village Movement. Since the movement targeted the population living in rural areas, the "Korean Dream"

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17   Chang, "A study on the traditionalism of "trot" – Focused on Yi Nanyŏng's "Tears of Mokp'o"," 63-64.

18   Ibid, 62.

was linked to a return to physical and geographical national roots while also serving the country through labor and patriotism. In comparison to the two previously discussed songs, *"With You/With Someone"* is a joyful and uplifting song that suggests to South Korean listeners that under the new nation, a sense of community and brotherhood is prevalent and that this national sentiment ultimately brings people together, as they share the same goal of living a peaceful and humble life. This resonates with Park's emphasis on Cultural Nationalism and strong insistence on making all civilians participate in the effort of building the nation. Moreover, the image of the "picturesque house" hints at a return to more traditional values tied to Neo-Confucian legacies of filial piety and patriarchy, family-oriented society, and obedience to the ruler. In the 1970s, the state and Park Chung-hee embodied all of these legacies and was strongly advocating for a return to ancient traditional values which drastically came in opposition with modern Western lifestyles. Indeed, the Korean style of living, embedded in the symbolic value of the "house", and the central role of the family remained a priority in rebuilding the "new" nation under Park's regime.

Trot: a reflection on the "Dream of Koreanization"

The process of the popularization of *trot* appears to have been a rather smooth process since it was already popular and supported by the emergence of "healthy popular music". Moreover, the genre proved to be a channel for artists and the government to experiment and reappropriate trot as a "pure" Korean product free from foreign influences. Nonetheless, *trot* is still a hybrid genre in terms of how it was shaped, promoted, and marketed. Due to the heavy censorship imposed on the culture industry, the genre was not free from political pressure and was partly shaped by the government and its agenda. Therefore, the artistic agency of songwriters in producing *trot* can be questioned, yet they still enjoyed relative freedom in production and promotion, which allowed the songs and singers to become successful. The hybridity of *trot* resides in both its origins and flexibility, as it was re-adapted in Korea under Park's authoritarian regime. Successful in establishing the basis of a sense of "Koreanness", notably through lyrics focusing on collective memory, deep emotions, and familiar national places, 1970s *trot* has paved the way for the listeners of contemporary versions in the present day. Arguably, since the 1970s, *trot* has not drastically evolved in the same way it did after independence from Japanese colonization in 1945. Rather, hit songs that were released at the time have been covered numerous times. For example, Cho Yong-pil's "Come back to Busan Port" has been remade by over 10 different

singers since 1977 and repackaged multiple times in collection albums.[19]

Perhaps this non-evolution indicates that *trot* as a Korean cultural product—including the musical composition, lyrics' themes, and purification process—was finalized during the 1970s and galvanized by the popularity and market success of the songs produced at the time. The genre was and remains a concrete example of the instrumentalization of a cultural object in promoting "*Koreanness*". Hence, the need to reshape and/or modify specific elements has not been prioritized in the present day. Nevertheless, the pursuit of the "*Dream of Koreanization",* which characterizes the Park Chung-Hee era, has directly intervened in the evolution of *trot*, which has played a crucial role in developing diversity within the genre itself. Now considered a quintessential cultural object of South Korea, *trot* participated in the spread of a sense of "*Koreanness"* specific to the historical context in which it was developed. Therefore, *trot* in the Korean sense, is indivisible from "*han"* as previously discussed, while also being a vehicle for patriotic and nationalist messages. As pointed out by Chang, "although *trot* made its first appearance in the Korean popular music scene as a foreign song, it eventually became accepted as a traditional genre after it became 'naturalized'."[20] The naturalization and *de facto* "*Koreanization"* of *trot* ultimately appear to have served the national purpose of promoting a Korean cultural identity during the Park Chung-hee era.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to demonstrate the extent to which *trot* actively participated in promoting a sense of "*Koreanness"* during Park's authoritarian regime. The process of the popularization of *trot* in the 1970s has undeniably been influenced by the government's instrumentalization of the media and culture industries. However, it is essential to nuance this popularization process by considering the genre as an original hybrid that was progressively modified, manipulated, and reshaped as a pure Korean cultural product during the 1970s. The flexibility of the genre itself allowed for its musical re-composition, followed by a reappropriation of the lyrical content by the state, which needed to promote Cultural Nationalism as well as the songwriters who, despite censorship, were able to explore themes related to a sense of "Koreanness".

19   More information on the song can be found on Naver Dictionary at https://terms.naver.com/entry.naver?docId=3378007&cid=60487&categoryId=60495.

20   Chang, "A study on the traditionalism of "trot" – Focused on Yi Nanyŏng's "Tears of Mokp'o", 63.

The rapid popularization of the genre following these modifications demonstrate that it was indeed an efficient cultural object used by the government in promoting its ideology beyond the specifically designed songs such as the "New Village Movement Song". The state profited from the genre's familiar and popular origins and, through a heavy reliance on censorship policies and regulations, as well as the suppression of its colonial origins, reached the goal of re-creating and imagining *trot* as a pure Korean cultural object.

Trot is still a popular genre nowadays, and in rare instances would it be denied its Korean origins despite its tumultuous past. As previously mentioned, "*enk*a" was remembered and enjoyed by the older generation because it was the popular music during the colonial era. Similarly, it could be argued that listeners of today enjoy listening to 1970s *trot* with the same emotion, as the songs convey a form of melancholia and regret of a time that no longer exists.

INTERVIEW

The Journey of a Hong Konger Chasing K-pop Stardom:
Interview with Leung Cheuk Ying (Cherena)

The Journey of a Hong Konger Chasing K-pop Stardom

Leung Cheuk Ying (Cherena), Girl's Planet 999 Contestant

"I think K-pop is becoming more diversified and international. I just hope that every hard-working singer or idol gets an equal chance to show themselves and to be recognized."

Leung Cheuk Ying (Cherena) is a former contestant of the K-pop reality audition program Girls Planet 999 (2021). Born and raised in Hong Kong, Cheuk Ying dreamt of conquering the K-pop industry since the Korean Wave hit her homeland during her teenage years. After stumbling across a global audition advertisement on social media, Cheuk Ying decided to follow her lifelong dream of becoming a K-pop star and moved to South Korea to compete on Girls Planet 999. 99 contestants were selected out of 13,000 applicants and despite a lack of professional training prior to the competition, Cheuk Ying finished 18th among the Chinese-speaking contestants. Since then she has continued to pursue her dream of being a K-pop star with dedication and determination by posting dance cover videos on social media platforms. In this interview, we explore Cheuk Ying's journey thus far, from her love of K-pop and performing on stage, to her thoughts on the Korean Wave, foreigner representation in K-pop, and the language and cultural barriers faced by a foreigner navigating the K-pop world.

YJIS: Hello Cherena, so firstly, for any of our readers who are not familiar with you, can you please introduce yourself?

Cheuk Ying (CY): Hello everyone! I'm Cherena from Hong Kong. Some people may be more familiar with my original name, Cheuk Ying Leung. This is the name that I used in the audition program, *Girls Planet 999*, from Mnet. I turn 25 this year and I've been interested in K-pop since the age of 16. Ever since then, I had dreamed of becoming a part of the K-pop industry.

YJIS: You mentioned being from Hong Kong, so I would like to ask, how would you describe the music industry in Hong Kong?

CY: Ten years ago, as I remember, the Hong Kong music industry was not so vigorous or diversified. It was mainly dominated by solo singers, and slow love songs were mainstream at that time. However, in the last two or three years, the industry has changed a lot. For example, nowadays there are more idol groups. Also, fan culture is becoming unprecedentedly huge. So, I think the Hong Kong music industry is now experiencing great changes.

YJIS: What would you say were the main factors that prompted you to seek a music career in Korea?

CY: As I mentioned, I have been attracted to K-pop music since I was 16 years old. At that time, K-pop was super popular in Hong Kong. Quite a few of my classmates back in high school were K-pop fans and would play K-pop music videos and K-dramas during recess. Together we would talk about these videos and shows, making comments to each other like "Which group is having a comeback?," "He's so handsome!," "So have you seen the latest episode of the drama called '별에서 온 그대 (*My Love from the Star*)?" Back then, the Hong Kong music industry was dominated by solo singers, whereas K-pop was dominated by idol groups performing pop songs. I was attracted to the singing and dancing elements of K-pop, as well as the fancy, decorated stages idols performed on. I have loved dancing since I was small and have created a lot of dance covers. One day, my classmate asked me, "Why don't you try going to auditions and become a K-pop singer?" and that was how my dream started. Since then, I've gone to various auditions and K-pop events. Just last year I saw the news about *Girls Planet 999*, so I decided to audition, and eventually got into the program.

YJIS: How did your participation in *Girls Planet 999* change your perspective on the K-pop industry, if at all?

CY: Participating in this program definitely helped me see the K-pop industry in more depth. Participating in this program was like taking an express train, because I had never been a trainee before, so to experience a trainee's life, such as being onstage, and participating in music shows—I

did all these in a short period of time because of the program. And also, I had heard that the K-pop industry is stressful and not easy even before I joined the program, so while I was participating in the show I was like, "Yeah I expected this, I expected that" when I faced some stressful moments.

YJIS: Girls Planet 999 consisted of Chinese and Japanese contestants alongside Korean contestants. How did you cope with the language and cultural differences?

CY: I personally know Korean. I'd been studying Korean at Yonsei in 2018 for 6 months. So, that experience helped me a lot with communication and adapting to the cultural differences I experienced while on the show. In fact, most of the time I became the interpreter. I helped translate between the Korean and Chinese contestants. On the other hand, there were some Japanese contestants who did not speak much Korean, so I tried to communicate with them using body language together with some simple Korean. But, since I seldom got in touch with Koreans back when I was studying Korean, it was really the first time for me to spend a long time with Koreans, by living together with them. So of course, language problems still occurred from time to time. On the show, sometimes we got an instant translator device if it was a performance day or if we were on the main stage. However, when practicing alone in our room, we didn't have this and had to depend only on ourselves. Overall, I would definitely say that it was a great opportunity to improve my Korean.

YJIS: Have you had to make any sacrifices throughout your journey in pursuing a career in the K-pop industry?

CY: The K-pop industry is very big and competitive, and there are lots of good-looking, young, talented people out there. It can be difficult to navigate at times and I have had to make a number of sacrifices. One of the biggest sacrifices I made was quitting my job in Hong Kong in order to join *Girls Planet 999*. But I've also had to make sacrifices before that. When I was younger, I spent a lot of time practicing alone and canceled appointments with friends and family in order to prepare for auditions. Unlike in Korea, auditions in Hong Kong are overseas and occur just once a year, so I spent a lot of time preparing for each audition.

YJIS: What do you think has led to the huge success of K-pop/Korean Wave in Hong Kong and throughout the world?

CY: Before the Korean Wave hit Hong Kong, Hong Kong people enjoyed Taiwanese, Japanese, and local Canto-pop music more. But after the Korean wave hit, most people, even those who were not necessarily fans, became familiar with mainstream K-pop bands such as Super Junior, Bigbang, etc.

I would say the reason for the success of K-pop globally is that people are attracted to K-pop's fully-packaged idol system. Every idol trains for a long time to develop strong dancing and singing skills, to become a perfect, well-rounded idol. Also, K-pop has high-quality music, music videos, and stages. A lot of money is invested here. This is what has made me and, I think the global audience too, so interested in K-pop.

I also think including members of different nationalities, going on international tours, and releasing K-dramas on Netflix have attracted audiences worldwide and helped to spread K-pop and Korean culture. Recently, I have seen K-pop songs published in different languages, such as Chinese versions. More and more groups are publishing English songs too, in order to establish themselves in foreign markets. They've also begun to include different countries' styles of songs, including Latin-style music.

YJIS: Do you think the K-pop phenomenon will be able to sustain its current level of popularity, say maybe in 5 years from now?

CY: Actually, I am not sure about this because I have heard people saying, "Oh, K-pop is not as good as before", but I personally think the quality is getting better and better. It's becoming more international, but at the same time, more countries' local music industries are rising as well. For example, in Thailand, there is T-pop. So, although there might be a dispersion in popularity, I believe that in the next 5 years, the level of popularity will likely be sustained.

YJIS: What aspects of the K-pop industry do you wish were talked about more in public media?

CY: I think the behind-the-scenes of the idol's life should be talked about more, which includes online hate. Many idols receive negative comments and hateful messages on the internet. I think it's a serious problem that needs to be tackled.

It's important for the public to know about the effects of such words on the mental health of idols so that we can create a healthier environment for everyone.

YJIS: From your observation, how has COVID-19 affected the K-pop industry?

CY: Things switched from offline to online, and online became the new way to communicate. As for our show, *Girls Planet 999*, we didn't have a live audience, which was really a shame because we were just performing in front of the camera. Back in the days of the show before COVID-19, like the *Produce 101* series, they had a lot of live audiences, which I think must have been really different.

In Korea, offline concerts and fan meetings stopped for almost two years, and have just recently started again. International tours were stopped and international fans were not able to see their idols for a long time. I think because of this a lot of fans stopped liking their idols because they were not able to see them.

However, online concerts and one-to-one online fan meetings have allowed K-pop idols to keep in touch with fans. The main benefit of an online concert is that they don't have a seat limit and it's easier and more affordable for fans to engage, so I think there are still some benefits of the switch from offline to online.

YJIS: Over the recent years, there certainly have been changes in the K-pop industry. So, in what ways do you think the industry has changed in the past years, and are there any future changes that you would like to see in the K-pop industry?

CY: I think K-pop is becoming more diversified and international. There are more and more groups that were already popular before their debut, but there are also groups that have taken a long time to be recognized. The K-pop industry is definitely becoming more competitive than before. I just hope that every hard-working singer or idol gets a fair chance to show themselves and be recognized. I also hope future K-pop artists can continue to provide international music for international fans.

YJIS: You previously mentioned that K-pop groups are starting to include members of different nationalities. Now that there are more non-ethnic Korean K-pop idols in the K-pop industry, do you think Koreans are becoming more open to accepting non-ethnic Korean

K-pop idols? And do you think this trend will continue in the future?

CY: Yes, I think Korea is becoming more open in this regard. The K-pop industry actually started to include idols of different ethnicities a very long time ago–more than 10 years ago and it's becoming more and more common nowadays. From my experience as a foreigner being on a Korean show, I felt very welcomed by Korean people. In the comment sections, it seemed like the Korean audience was very appreciative of the foreign members because they could see us working so hard to join the K-pop industry and they appreciated us for trying to learn their culture and language, etc. As K-pop becomes more of a global phenomenon, I think this trend will definitely continue.

YJIS: What do you think are the common struggles that foreign trainees tend to face that are not frequently discussed or the general public may not be aware of?

CY: With regards to foreign trainees, there are two types. The first type is like me, an individual foreign trainee that doesn't have any company or agency. We just train by ourselves in our hometown and go to auditions. It's full of uncertainty and loneliness–this is the main problem. And you have no idea regarding "Am I doing it right?" or "Should I go on?" It's really hard for individual trainees to not give up and to keep pursuing their dream. Even for the other type, the foreign trainees who get into a Korean entertainment company, uncertainty can still be a major struggle for them. Sometimes I get direct messages from Hong Kong people that are now trainees in Korea, who say that they feel lost and are suffering from stress. There's also the struggle of adapting to Korean culture and getting along with the other trainees, most of whom are from different countries. The language barrier can also be a problem. I think these are the common problems that foreign trainees face. So, I think it's really important for foreign trainees to have a strong passion and a healthy mind.

YJIS: K-pop music has been dominating the Asian market and has paved the way for the rise of its "local version idol groups", particularly in Southeast Asia – T-pop (Thailand), P-pop (Philippines), and M-pop (Malaysia). Is there also a similar phenomenon in Hong Kong, and do you think this poses a threat to the contemporary cultural identity of these countries?

CY: Yes, obviously there's a rising number of local idol groups like MIRROR. Most of these idol groups came from audition programs too, so I think the K-pop culture is having a certain extent of influence here. I think this is a great thing though, because it's kind of a fusion of K-pop culture and local culture, and I think the local groups still have a strong local style. In Hong Kong, for example, they still have a strong Hong Kong style and culture in their music. I think combining these cultures can really help the music industry to grow.

YJIS: Do you think K-pop has helped Korea to establish good relations with other nations? In what ways would you hope that your aspiration as a K-pop idol would help to enhance the relationship between Korea and Hong Kong?

CY: Because of the Korean Wave, more people are interested in Korean culture and language, and as a result, more people travel to Korea. But in terms of country relationships, I have no idea about that. At this stage, I don't think I can help enhance the relationship between Hong Kong and Korea because I'm not in Korea and am not a K-pop singer, but I hope some other Hong Kong K-pop singers can do that. Let's say I debuted as a singer, then, I think I would like to introduce some local Hong Kong tourist spots to Koreans and also possibly introduce some places in Korea to people from Hong Kong.

YJIS: Do you see yourself being more active in Korea than Hong Kong as an idol, maybe in the near future?

CY: I would love to, but I believe age is a very important factor in becoming a K-pop idol in Korea. I am turning 25 this year, which is considered too old to become a rookie K-pop idol. Weekly auditions of the entertainment companies in Korea have an age limit, and yesterday I saw that the oldest age that you can be to join an audition is being born in 2006, which I was like "okay, it's none of my business". So, I would say it's very difficult for me to debut as an idol in Korea in the future. However, my experience on *Girls Planet 999* definitely gave me more inspiration and reminded me of my passion for being a singer and artist. So I think in the future, I will continue seeking opportunities to try different things, and I will not limit myself to only Hong Kong or only Korea. I will continue seeking different opportunities in different places.

YJIS: Now that there are some audition programs in Hong Kong like Good Night Show – King Maker from ViuTV, would you ever consider joining a show like this or even attempt to join a Hong Kong girl group?

CY: A lot of my friends encourage me to join the audition programs in Hong Kong, like King Maker. I have been thinking about it recently. I used to think that the Hong Kong and Korean music industries are pretty different, and I never considered becoming a singer in Hong Kong before, but now I am actually thinking about it, and if there are opportunities in Hong Kong, then maybe I will give it a try.

YJIS: In the future, will you continue to post dance videos and update your Youtube channel?

CY: Yeah, Youtube videos are one of the new things that I have been trying recently. But it's not easy. I am still trying because I can see that there are friends and fans that want to continue to see me, so I'm trying my best to create content such as dance videos. I will keep posting them because it is my hobby and dancing is one of the things that I really like to do.

YJIS: You mentioned earlier that passion is very important for people who want to join the entertainment industry, so apart from that, do you have any further advice for other non-Koreans like you who are interested in following in your footsteps?

CY: I do think passion and continuing to chase your dream are the most important tips I can give. You also have to be confident and believe in yourself. But equally, I think it's important for foreigners to learn about Korean culture and language to make sure that they can adapt to the industry in Korea. In my case, I started to learn about Korean culture and Korean language when I was 16, and then I went to Korea to live for a while to make sure that I fit in the culture. Knowing the language particularly helps a lot when you are alone in Korea.

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