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## Letter from the Editor

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**G**lobal Politics Review's first issue, titled *Perspectives on non-Western IR Theories*, is dedicated to opening up a cross-cultural comparative dialogue about International Relations (IR) by presenting non-Western IR theories and case studies on Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The field of study of International Relations is to date enjoying a period of "theoretical peace" where the debate among scholars is no longer shaped by theoretical paradigms, but instead focuses on finding new theoretical tools of analysis that better explain international affairs. In this collective effort, Global Politics Review (GPR) looks at the most recent non-Western scholarship to find out some of the latest methodological and theoretical innovations in IR.

The first paper in this issue, written by Phoebe Gardner, represents a comprehensive investigation in the field of International Relations Theory (IRT) that pragmatically underlies trends, biases and limitations in the study of IR. The reader will find her critiques of non-Western IRT particularly interesting and, most notably, her suggestions on the future developments of IRT.

Moving away from IRT, David Tibor Teszar offers meticulous historical research set to expose a hidden historical connection. Teszar's paper links the 1956 Hungarian revolution to the People's Republic of China and assesses the impact of the Revolution on Mao's domestic policies in the late 1950s. Teszar's study greatly contributes to academia and it is of particular value to any sinologist and historian of IR.

The third paper, written by H.M.S. Amanda Herath, analyses leadership and identity in Singapore. Herath uses existing theoretical models to analyse and categorize the leadership style of Lee Kuan Yew, in the effort of finding generalizations that could be applied to other leaders. Herath's paper contributes to the field of leadership studies as well as to regional studies of South East Asia by offering a different perspective on Singapore's governance.

The fourth paper, written by Camilla Crovella, addresses the role of the People's Republic of China on the African continent. Crovella surveys the recent scholarship on the topic and assesses the means and scope of Chinese cooperation with African countries. The paper's multidisciplinary approach touches on themes in the sphere of economics, law, development and IR. Crovella's work is an interesting piece that adds concepts and interpretations to the existing debate among scholars over the role of China in Africa.

The last paper, authored by Minju Kim, does in-depth research on the regulation of agreements on subsidies in international law. The study is set to explain the rationales for a legal inconsistency in the asymmetric ruling of the WTO subsidies regime between

agricultural and non-agricultural products. The paper goes beyond its jurisprudential nature and has implications in the field of international cooperation and development, as it seeks to explain why developed countries have been entitled with rights to distribute more subsidies to their farmers than those of developing countries.

The first essay, written by Samyel Lee, is a thought-provoking multidisciplinary study on the role of cinema in South Korean society. The essay discusses the role of native cinematographic productions in shaping public opinion and it shows how cinema has evolved into an interpretative medium that redefines and reinterprets Korean history and foreign policy. Lee's article is a refreshing post-positivist study that, thanks to its methodology and findings, contributes to the fields of IR and Korean studies.

The second essay, written by Daniel Foulkes, tests South Korea's applicability of Israeli deterrence measures in relation to North Korea and provides insight on how nuclear powers substantiate their threats. Foulkes' essay is comparative in its nature and should be read by any IR scholar interested in non-proliferation studies and East Asian security.

I want to express my deepest gratitude, on behalf of the Editorial Board, to the authors that have contributed with their writings to this first issue. It is thanks to their quality research and in-depth studies that GPR is worth reading. I also want to thank our advisers for their generous support and guidance during the preparation of this first volume. I also would like to extend special thanks to Pietro Raviola and Maximillian Ernst for their hard work as members of the Association for Research, Innovation and Social Science, which made the publishing of GPR possible.

I sincerely hope the readers will find our articles interesting and useful for their studies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cesare M. Scartozzi', written in a cursive style.

Cesare M. Scartozzi  
*Editor in Chief*

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## About the Journal

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**G**lobal Politics Review (GPR) is a peer-reviewed journal of international studies published twice a year by the Association for Research, Innovation and Social Science (ARISS). The Journal was founded in 2015 by the Association through a sponsorship of the University of Turin. GPR publishes high quality research papers, interviews and essays that survey new contributions to the field on international studies, with a focus on alternative and non-western theories of international relations.

The Journal aspires to achieve a two-pronged goal: to provide the opportunity for distinguished scholars and graduate students to publish unconventional and innovative researches, and to be a vehicle for introducing new ideas while encouraging debate among the academic community. Global Politics Review aims to make a distinctive contribution to the field of international studies and serve the academic community as a whole.

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**PAPERS**



# Transnational Theory, Global World: Theory Matters, Not Geography

*Phoebe Gardner*

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**Abstract:** The tools designed to analyse a globalising world ought to be specifically designed to address problems presented by that global world, rather than settling for those engineered for the century prior. The study of International Relations (IR) is dominated by mainstream problem-solving International Relations Theory (IRT), which tends to describe rather than explain phenomena. Analysis is hindered by dependence upon rigid concepts such as the nation-state and the balance of power. However, IR has witnessed an analytical shift toward concepts that utilise culture by engaging with the discipline's strength: its interdisciplinary nature. Unfortunately, recruiting non-Western and alternative perspectives has become equated to an exercise designed to simply tick-off a certain amount of nation-states from a quota. In this sense, IRT ought to aspire to be transnational in nature, in order to effectively engage with problems presented by the global world in which it exists. Therefore, as this article suggests, in pursuing alternative cultural perspectives, it is the integrity of the theory itself that matters, rather than the geographical origin.

**Keywords:** International Relations Theory; Critical Theory; Transnational Approach; Non-Western Approach; Cultural Perspectives; Power-Knowledge Relations.

## Introduction

Despite evaluating the global, International Relations Theory (IRT) is, as Alex Young describes, “produced in western nations by western authors for western readers.”<sup>1</sup> This Western bias has created privilege, which has in turn produced disparities within IRT, particularly against non-Western IRT.<sup>2</sup> This results in the production of inadequate understandings of international relations, predominantly because analysis is hindered by hegemonic Western approaches, both epistemologically and institutionally.

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1 Alex Young, “Western Theory, Global World: Western Bias in International Theory”, *North America, Perspectives, Science & Technology, Security, World in Review*, (2014): 36.

2 It is worth noting that “non-Western” is understood in these discussions in its simplistic form, meaning anything that is not geographically or ideologically Western.

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Phoebe Gardner gained her Masters of International Relations at Leiden University, the Netherlands, after receiving a BA in History and International Relations at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. Currently she volunteers at E-International Relations as a Managing Editor. Her research interests include International Relations Theory, Identity Politics, World Orders, Norm Diffusion, the “Responsibility to Protect” and Human Security.

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In this sense, non-Western approaches are required in order to diversify perspectives and subsequently counterbalance the incredibly narrow Euro/Western-centric understanding of international relations. Of course, it is imperative to avoid implying that all mainstream Western IRT is decisively Eurocentric; or deny the impact that non-Western intellectuals, academics and events have had upon them. For example, consider the role played by European born Marxism in Asian and Latin American perspectives: Mao and the Chinese Revolution, as well as Mariátegui, Allende and Guevara in the twenty-first century Socialism of Venezuela and Bolivia. Therefore, as Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey argue, it is crucial to acknowledge the “mutual constitution of Europe and the non-European world and their joint role in making history.”<sup>3</sup> Young considers this, and suggests a pluralism of perspectives, “in order to craft diverse international theory for a diverse international world.”<sup>4</sup>

This suggestion is further strengthened when considering how oversimplifying is as dangerous as overcomplicating, as it can potentially convey a false impression of the world. Christian Reus-Smit describes this excessive abstraction as “‘Cinderella syndrome’, where the IR community attempts to squeeze an ugly and oversized world into a beautiful theoretical glass shoe”.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is worth advocating a multitude of transnational paradigms in order to positively develop IRT. This will be demonstrated by, firstly, exploring the reasons why scholars have often argued that non-Western approaches are required. During which, problems encountered in pursuing non-Western IRT will be evaluated. Finally, an approach which emphasises the integrity of theory and is devoid of geographical requirement will be explored, with reference to the 2014 Ebola Crisis. In doing so, this article will advocate a critical approach designed to combat problems presented by a globalising world, which focuses on the relationship between power and knowledge. Beforehand, it is worth exploring what is integral in a theoretical framework.

### The IRT Landscape

While analysing IRT, it is worth noting Robert Cox’s assertion that “theory is always for someone and for some purpose.”<sup>6</sup> This is evident as theories are produced by history’s victors; as a form of propaganda for aspiring great powers and hegemonies. Moreover, theories are used to address the adequacy of foreign policy, explain the causes of conflict, assess regimes, institutions and leadership, as well as evaluate security threats and analyse social inequality and injustice; and often utilised in order to inform governmental and non-

3 Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey “The postcolonial moment in security studies,” *Review of International Studies*, 32 (2006): 330.

4 Young, “Western Theory, Global World: Western Bias in International Theory”.

5 Peter Schouten, “Theory Talk #27: Christian Reus-Smit on IR Cultures, Re-thinking IR and Bridging the Normative-Empirical Divide.” *Theory Talks* (2009).

6 Robert Cox, “Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory”, *Journal of International Studies*, 10, no. 126 (1981), 128.

governmental policy. Seemingly they resemble guidelines for analysis. However, due to the sheer dynamic enormity of the discipline, analysis is multileveled and incorporates the state level of traditional theories (classical liberalism and realism), a supranational level (observing all international actors, including non-state entities), a sub-state level (for bureaucratic and individual), an intra-state level (for example, migration and nuclear security) and normatively (ideas and norms, such as nationalism). Often these levels are mutually exclusive which results in narrow analysis; therefore, a theory which engages all levels and encourages dialogue between the levels is required.

L. H. M. Ling and Anna Agathangelou describe how the current oppressive and parochial ‘House of IR’ utilises and defines Western tools, such as sovereignty, the nation-state and anarchy, so as to serve the powerful, usually white, bourgeois male. Through using their powerful analogy of a dysfunctional household, they explain how mainstream problem-solving approaches (which, on the contrary, do not provide solutions), such as Realism and Liberalism, are accused of being state-centric, hyper-masculinised, self-fulfilling and, crucially, Western-centric. Ling and Agathangelou recommend decentralising through the use of “Worldism” (a theory considered as post-Western and post-hegemonic) which intends to address the troubling principals belonging to the “House of IR” (hierarchy, legitimacy and power). In doing so, the “poises of IR” are unleashed by focusing upon the institutionalisation of social structures, processes of agency, subjective identity and accountability of self to other.<sup>7</sup> Whilst it offers a fascinating alternative perspective, Worldism is excessively vague and romanticised as it does not provide guidance on how to create such an ideal. Nonetheless, it is the very sentiment surrounding the “poises of IR” that is central to form alternative perspectives and approaches. The poises would present a challenge to Western hegemony, epistemologically and institutionally, and would subsequently encourage the lively dialogue required for intellectual development.

Consider for instance how mainstream problem-solving theory struggles to sufficiently account for sensitive phenomenon, such as state-failure in the twenty-first century. It is important to acknowledge that state failure is not a new phenomenon and has traditionally been understood as the product of an anarchical structure, where nation-states are competing for power and resources. So that motivations toward external state-building attempts, and subsequent failures, are reducible to self-interest and power procurement. This problem-solving explanation is unsatisfactory as it simply evaluates within given parameters, using understandings within the context of twentieth century of great powers such as UK and France as points of reference for the nation-state. Therefore, it fails to question epistemology (particularly its anarchical structure) and limited by its structure-agency dependency. Notably, mainstream approaches are entrenched with dichotomies of “us” and “them”; so that “we” (out of self-interest, a sense of moral obligation or

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<sup>7</sup> L. H. M. Ling, and Anna Agathangelou, “The House of IR: from family power politics to the poises of Worldism”, *International Studies Review*, 6, no.4 (2004): 45.

requirement to balance power) ought to help “them” contain and attempt to resolve “their” calamitous problem. This dichotomous approach is reproduced within state-building policy, and resonates in the language invoked by the international community. For instance, reports on the very possible Grexit in light of the most recent EU debt talks have tended to associate “we” (the international community, specifically the EU) with positive achievements and a sense of duty, whilst tending to associate negative connotations and the requirement to improve the Greek partnership. In order to transcend absent-mindedly “othering” (by identifying its production) as well as to overcome the shortcomings of mainstream problem-solving theories, it is worth adopting an approach which critically engages with epistemologies, by evaluating structural influence and attempts to provide agency to those who it has been denied. Evidently, the current IRT landscape requires re-thinking, in order to decentralise Westphalian definitions, which are currently restraining the emergence of non-Western approaches.

Notably, non-Western approaches are needed in order to decentre the hegemonic nature of Western approaches as the gate-keepers of knowledge. Ole Wæver developed upon Stanley Hoffman’s hypothesis that IR is “an American social science”<sup>8</sup>, through evaluating how American hegemony influences the nature of theory; by analysing the geographical residence of authors in leading American and European Journals between 1970 and 1995.<sup>9</sup> Although the data is outdated, it is indicative of why non-Western approaches, such as Indian, Indonesian and Chinese, are struggling to develop within Western discursive frameworks, where standards are defined by the hegemon; be that appropriate topics, language of publication or favourable treatment to those attending prestigious educational institutions. Moreover, Takashi Inoguchi illustrates that the methodological problem resides with how theory is conceptualised; as by American positivistic standards, a Japanese approach does not exist, yet if the conceptualisation includes normative and legalistic theories, like that adopted by the European sector of the discipline, then it does exist.<sup>10</sup> Evidently, American scholars (and to a certain extent European scholars by extension) can be considered as the gate-keepers of the discipline, as they legitimise and define knowledge by insisting upon a positivist methodology and Westphalian conventions. It is imperative that varying epistemological and ontological approaches are appreciated in order to encourage a cultural methodology and discourage an epistemological hegemony.

This desire to expand the discipline by attempting to incorporate a multitude of cultural and identity perspectives helps to explain how, in recent years, IRT has begun

8 Stanley Hoffman, “An American social science—International Relations”, *Daedalus*, 106, no. 3, (1977) 41–60.

9 Ole Wæver, “The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations”, *International Organization*, 52, no. 4 (1998): 698.

10 Takashi Inoguchi, “Why are there no non-Western theories of international relations? The case of Japan” in Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (eds.), *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010: 62).

to experience a sort of renaissance of area studies; whereby its scholars have helped to enrich a field of study that is grappling with the changes of a globalising world. Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan provide a fantastic survey and discussion of the current state of non-Western IRT in their 2010 book *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives On and Beyond Asia*. Their book iterated how it is expected for each leading power or hegemon to attempt to formulate its own national IRT by drawing upon its own cultural and political history; in this sense these theories cannot be entirely devoid from national subjectivity. Again, this complicates the application of a nation-state-centric IRT; consider for instance how Western IRT struggles to comprehend non-Western phenomena. In this case, a Chinese IRT would follow the same pattern of struggle if applied to a phenomenon in the Netherlands, for example. Furthermore, Acharya and Buzan provide a comprehensive review of non-Western IRT, sharing perspectives from South East Asia, however they can plausibly be accused of cherry picking theories to add a bit of sparkle to IRT, rather than attempting to truly represent the current state of the discipline. At times, discussions surrounding non-Western IRT feel like an exercise designed to simply tick off a certain amount of nation-states from a quota. Therefore, non-Western approaches ought to provide a variety of different perspectives, evaluations and answers, which are not necessarily geographically rooted, as an alternative to the limited and predictable ones offered by Western-centric approaches. However, that is not to say that scholars ought to completely abandon Western-centric thought.

For example, Postcolonial theory is concerned with the utilisation of dichotomies, and borrowed from studies of literature, and is heavily influenced by Edward Said's 1978 work *Orientalism*, where he argues that whilst "direct colonialism has largely ended", colonialism still manifests itself.<sup>11</sup> Said explores how 'history... just as it can also be unmade and re-written, always with various silences and elisions, always with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated, so that "our" East, "our" Orient becomes "ours" to possess and direct.'<sup>12</sup> Similarly to other critical-theories, Postcolonial theory derives a heavy influence from postmodern understandings of the relationship between power and knowledge, and how that is then subjugated and reproduced. It should be noted, that through insisting on non-Western IRT, academics are maintaining the Western/non-Western binary that it is trying to eliminate.

This considered, there is hope that non-Western approaches would be, at least, partly free from the influences of imperialism; otherwise non-Western approaches would simply reassert Western norms imposed by colonial history, predominantly Western historicism. Julian Saurin expands on Branwen Gruffydd Jones' recommendation of decolonising the discipline by suggesting adopting an anti-imperialism focus rather than identifying colonial influences.<sup>13</sup> However by adopting an "anti-position" there is a danger that a

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11 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003): 8.

12 Ibid., 14.

13 Branwen Gruffydd Jones, "Introduction: International Relations, Eurocentrism, and Imperialism"

dichotomy will be produced which will simply recreate the current hegemonic division, thereby it would be more beneficial to identify how colonialism has influenced non-Western thought and knowledge. Seemingly, it is important to acknowledge that non-Western approaches will not be wholly free from subjective thought and will unavoidably reproduce Western ideals given the interconnectedness of, and Western hegemonic status in, international history. Ching-Chang Chen identifies this and recommends incorporating post-Western approaches instead, which would aim to decolonise the discipline as a joint effort of both non-Western and Western.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, it is worth considering cultural ideals in mechanisms that transcend, or are not subject to, Westphalian structures, in order to avoid further issues of subjectivity and counter-hegemony. Giorgio Shani explores the possibility of post-Western approaches, by assessing contributions from Islam and Sikhism.<sup>15</sup> He evaluates how ideals such as Umma and Khasla Panth, which refer to the collection of spiritual and cultural communities, provide alternatives to the nation-state structure. It is this kind of thought and imagination that Navnita Chadha Behera describes as being central to constructing a “non-hegemonic space.”<sup>16</sup> Thereby, approaches which interweave both the Western and non-Western historic experience, thought and culture ought to be sought, in order to effectively engage with the truly global environment of international relations.

### **Theory matters-not geography**

Crucially, the tools designed to analyse a globalising world ought to be specifically crafted, rather than settling for those engineered for the century prior. While mainstream IRT struggles to explain using rigid concepts such as the nation-state and the balance of power, analysis has shifted toward methodological concepts which utilise culture, like Critical Theory, Critical Constructivisms, Postmodernism, Postcolonialism, Feminisms and Queer Theory (this is by far not an exhaustive list). Increasingly, postgraduate courses, academics and resources have begun to borrow or be inspired by the interdisciplinary nature of IR: looking towards related disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and psychology. For instance, consider how articles published on *E-International Relations*, which is one of the world’s leading open access website for students and scholars of international politics, has evolved to incorporate discussions relating to neuroscience, corporate branding and popular culture; the latter containing topics regarding comedy, music and computer games.

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and Julian Saurin, “International Relations as the Imperial Illusion; or, the Need to Decolonize IR” in Branwen Gruffydd Jones (ed.) *Decolonizing International Relations* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006).

14 Ching-Chang Chen, “The absence of non-western IR theory in Asia reconsidered,” *International Relations of the Asia Pacific*, 11 (2011): 17.

15 Giorgio Shani, “Toward a post-Western IR: The Umma, Khalsa Panth, and critical international relations theory,” *International Studies Review*, 10, no.4 (2008): 722–734.

16 Navnita Chadha Behera, “Re-imagining IR in India” in Acharya and Buzan, *Non-Western International Relations Theory*: 111.

In order to create a transnational IRT that engages with the problems presented by this globalising world, epistemology ought to focus on rectifying inequality and injustice, and seek theories from those forgotten, hidden or side-lined by history; this means not relying on history's victors to write the history books. Nevertheless, it remains crucial to uphold a critical analysis of whose interests are being served when analysing or applying an IRT, as Cox illustrates. Moreover, critical theories attempt to avoid reproducing agency/structure by understanding underlying processes of power and knowledge production, however like mainstream theories they are applied to non-Western international relations with the assumption of universalism. A pluralism of transnational theories would transcend this critique, as paradigms would be designed to focus upon certain cultures and identities, while transcending borders. Furthermore, when combined, the paradigms would create a dialogue, which is considered crucial to the discipline's healthy development.

Rather than geographically categorising IRT according to regional or national discourses, it is worth pursuing a paradigm that is designed to effectively engage with the problems presented by a globalising world. This opens up discussions regarding how the rise of transnational society has affected both collective and individual rights, freedoms and responsibilities; be it gender, race, religion, or an issue relating to fair trade, the environment, cyber and health security. Most prominently, is the seeming disenchantment with national identity, and by extension the nation-state. The modern nation-state, which emerged following the Treaty of Westphalia, tends to be used as the point of reference in mainstream problem-solving IRT. Consider for instance how mainstream IRT is limited to describing issues of transnational identity and security (which in turn becomes global), such as issues relating to gender inequality and injustice as well as the success of ISIS. The power of IRT analysis has suffered from an intra-state fever following a series of international crises that undermine IRT by transcending the role of the Westphalian understanding of the nation-state; this is best illustrated through the 2014 Ebola Crisis.

### *Pathogens of Power*

The Ebola 2014 Crisis has exposed the inadequacies and shortcomings of the World Health Organisation (WHO). This has resulted in members of the international community intensifying their calls for further WHO reform, in order to re-calibrate a more effective approach to transnational health threats. Emphasis has been placed on the requirement for "an effective and universal system of global health governance that has the authority and power to harmonize objectives, establish priorities, coordinate activities, set budgets, execute programs, and monitor progress."<sup>17</sup> Crucially, these suggestions predominantly focus on the agency of the WHO, and relate to its lack of ability to set its own economic global agenda and the increasing politicalisation of the special agency demonstrated

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<sup>17</sup> Howard Markel, "WHO: Past, Present and Future: Worldly approaches to global health: 1851 to the present", *Public Health* 128 (2014): 127.



throughout the crisis. Moreover, considering that the WHO responds to, within and dependent upon a context of neo-liberalism, it is unsurprising that it is associated with neoliberal implications. Multilateral health responses in the modern-era have endorsed this characteristic; the First International Sanitary Conference, Paris in 1851, was designed by the Great European Powers and discussed maritime quarantine in order to contain health threats, primarily to secure the integrity of the trade industry. In this sense, a global health threat is exacerbated by a focus on power politics, whereas analysis (as a quest for solutions) requires an approach that evaluates the power-knowledge dynamic. An adoption of this perspective would encourage a critical analysis of the relationship between the “three UNs” as outlined by Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij and Thomas Weiss, which serves to find solutions rather than descriptions.<sup>18</sup> Their categorisation refers to the understanding that the global institution is constituted of and functions through the interaction between three distinctly separate agencies: its member states, the secretariat as well as the sector of expertise and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

### Conclusion

The shift toward an IRT that fairly and effectively engages with global problems by recruiting non-Western and alternative perspectives has become equated to an exercise designed to simply tick off a certain amount of nation-states from a quota. Whilst it is evident from the literature reviewed that non-Western IRT is required in order to provide fresh perspectives, and subsequently encourage dialogue amongst the plurality, it is the integrity of the theoretical paradigm that ought to be valued and sought, rather than ensuring that every geographic location is represented. Analysis has demonstrated that an IRT characterised by national representation is insufficient, as these “fresh” perspectives are guilty of all the problem-solving traits they have been designed to transcend. It has been argued that as a response to the limitation of Western IRT, and the problems associated with seeking non-Western IRT, it is worth encouraging a turn to what many perceive as the disciplines greatest strength: its interdisciplinary nature. Continuing to look towards studies of history, psychology, philosophy and sociology, especially the focus upon power-knowledge relations, ought to help facilitate dialogue between a multitude of transnational theories, which are not obsessed with geography and transcends this problem-solving dilemma; whilst maintaining the purpose of a theory: to solve global problems, rather than describe. By extension, through rethinking IRT and designing new perspectives and tools appropriate to analyse global problems at the transnational level, it is hoped that IR as a discipline is re-thought to reflect a critical pedagogy. Therefore, reiterating that it is theory that matters- not geography. **GPR**

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18 Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij and Thomas Weiss (eds.) *UN Ideas that Changed the World* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2009): 32-33.

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# The Hungarian Connection: the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and its Impact on Mao Zedong's Domestic Policies in the late 1950s

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**Abstract:** Despite being a highly relevant event in the history of the Cold War, the 1956 Hungarian revolution remains underanalyzed from the perspective of the People's Republic of China. The domestic policy changes in the PRC that were influenced by the Hungarian uprising are equally undertreated in scholarly literature. For these reasons this paper examines the PRC's changing perception of the nature of the 1956 Hungarian revolution and answers the question whether the Chinese leadership influenced Nikita Khrushchev and the Kremlin elite in favour of an armed intervention in Budapest. The second half of the article assesses the impact of the Hungarian crisis on Mao's domestic policies in the late 1950s, particularly to the Hundred Flowers campaign and the Anti-Rightist campaign.

**Keywords:** 1956 Hungarian Revolution; Cold War; Hungarian History; Mao Zedong; China; Soviet Union.

## Introduction

Despite its failure, the 1956 Hungarian revolution was a highly influential event in the history of the Cold War. It was analyzed by numerous historians, however, the perspective of the People's Republic of China rarely received attention, let alone the policy implications of the uprising in Budapest.

In this paper, firstly I aim to provide a brief national and international historical background before the 1956 Hungarian crisis and touch upon subjects such as the secret speech of Khrushchev during the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the workers' protest in the city of Poznan, the changes in Hungarian domestic politics and the so-called Polish October.

Secondly, I will analyze the Hungarian revolution from the Chinese perspective using a wide variety of primary sources from diplomatic cables to newspaper articles to speeches.

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I am especially interested in finding out the reasons why the Chinese leadership changed its position from advocating the withdrawal of the Soviet troops to urging Khrushchev to intervene militarily and crush the violent riots. Also, I will pay close attention whether this shift in the Chinese stance influenced the Soviet leadership in its decision to mobilize the Soviet military and suppress the anti-Communist “counterrevolution”. If it is the case, then to what extent did Mao influence Khrushchev? Did the Chairman’s opinion play a significant role in favour of a Soviet armed intervention?

Lastly, I will assess the impact of the Hungarian crisis on Mao’s domestic policies in the late 1950s, particularly to the Hundred Flowers campaign and the Anti-Rightist campaign. In addition, I will determine whether the Hungarian events contributed to the factors behind the Sino-Soviet split.

### **National and International Developments Before the 1956 Hungarian Revolution**

In February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev delivered his famous closed door speech during the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in which he criticized Stalin’s methods of rule and denounced his cult of personality.

The political upheavals in Poland and Hungary in the same year were direct results of the de-Stalinization process started by this speech. The first sign of destabilization of both the Polish and the Hungarian regimes appeared in the summer of 1956. In late June, factory workers of Poznan held demonstrations that escalated into a genuine uprising involving around one hundred thousand people, more than half of the population of the city. According to Andrew Walder, “Communist Party offices were set on fire, and demonstrators led by factory workers clashed with security forces and the Polish army, leading to at least seventy-four deaths and hundreds wounded.”<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile in July, Hungarian Communist Party (HCP) Secretary Mátyás Rákosi was forced by the Soviets to step down in the wake of Khrushchev’s February speech. He was replaced by Ernő Gerő. As a hardline Stalinist, Rákosi was responsible for a series of show trials and purges of party leaders labeled as “Titoist spies”, “reactionaries” and “rightist deviants”. Ironically, Rákosi was responsible for creating the Petőfi Circle in March 1955, a discussion forum for intellectuals that eventually turned against him and became one of the main driving forces behind the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

In October 1956, the general anti-Stalinist and nationalist atmosphere combined with the accumulated tensions of the workers’ uprising in Poznan “resulted in the election of a new politburo of the Polish United Workers’ Party (PUWP) excluding pro-Soviet, Stalinist leaders. The new PUWP leadership headed by Wladyslaw Gomulka also planned to remove Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, a Russian who had held the position as

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1 Andrew G. Walder, *China Under Mao – A Revolution Derailed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 131.

Poland's defense minister since 1949.”<sup>2</sup> Gomulka represented reform and national independence for the Polish people. Needless to say, the Soviet leaders were shocked to see their own reliable human assets removed from power without prior consultation, and viewed Gomulka as a threat to their dominance in Poland.

In the end, the Kremlin decided to use both political and military pressure on Poland: on 19 October a high-level Soviet delegation led by Khrushchev flew to Warsaw while the Soviet troops surrounded the Polish capital. Although full-blown military intervention was a real option, Gomulka managed to convince Khrushchev, amid anti-Soviet campaigns throughout the country, that he was willing to cooperate with the Soviet leadership and did not intend to leave the socialist camp. In the end, the Soviets chose to resolve the Polish problem peacefully and tolerated Gomulka's agenda pursuing a more independent policy concerning domestic affairs.

It is important to provide the Chinese view of the Polish October given that it indicates a shift in Mao's thinking and offers a nice comparison to his reaction to the upcoming events in Hungary. Author of the first book-length study of Mao's China and the 1956 Hungarian revolution, Zhu Dandan writes that on 21 October the Chairman summoned a Politburo Standing Committee meeting to discuss the Polish issue. In this meeting, he shared his reading of the events:

When the son fails to obey, the rude father picks up a stick to beat him. When a socialist power uses military forces to intervene in the internal affairs of a neighboring socialist country, this is not only a violation of the basic principles of international relations; this is also a violation of the principles governing the relations between socialist countries. This is serious *big-power chauvinism* [my emphasis], which should not be allowed in any circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

All the participants of the meeting opposed Soviet military intervention of Warsaw. This message was delivered personally by Mao to the Soviet ambassador to China, Pavel Iudin. According to Zhu, “Iudin immediately phoned Khrushchev to inform him of the Chinese position. However, when Mao's message reached Khrushchev, the Soviet leadership had already decided to make concessions to Gomulka and the Poles.”<sup>4</sup> The Polish October offered Mao an opportunity to express his discontent with the unequal relationship between China and the Soviet Union. He aspired to go beyond the “father-son” relationship with Moscow and become a superior voice in the international Communist movement regarding ideological and political matters in order to widen the sphere of Chinese influence. Mao clearly wanted China to occupy a more prominent position in the

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2     Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 146.

3     Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 147.

4     Dandan Zhu, *1956 – Mao's China and the Hungarian Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell East Asia, 2013), 107.

Communist bloc.

After receiving a telegram from Moscow, Mao summoned another Politburo Standing Committee meeting on 22 October. The Chairman informed his colleagues that the Soviets invited the Chinese leaders to Moscow to exchange views on the Polish events. As all members agreed on sending a high-level delegation to the Soviet Union, Mao selected his right-hand man, Liu Shaoqi, to lead the delegation and briefed him on their main task. He defined their agenda as “mediating the problems between the Soviet and Polish comrades by, on the one hand, criticizing the Soviet party’s ‘big-power chauvinism’ and, on the other hand, advising the Polish comrades to consider the overall interests of the socialist camp.”<sup>5</sup> The Chinese delegation arrived in Moscow on 23 October – the same day the Hungarian uprising started to unfold. This peculiar coincidence meant that a group of top Chinese leaders (Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and others) followed the developments in Hungary from Moscow along with Khrushchev and may have directly influenced the Soviet decision makers to intervene militarily in Budapest.

### **The 1956 Hungarian Revolution from Chinese Perspective**

China had four major channels to collect information on the Hungarian events: the cables sent from the Chinese embassy in Budapest, news reports, Chinese intelligence sources in the Eastern bloc and the delegation in Moscow.<sup>6</sup> Mao was informed of the spillover effect of the Polish October by a cable sent from the Chinese Embassy in Hungary on 23 October. This cable described that a major daily Hungarian newspaper, *Szabad Nép* (“Free People”) responded very positively to the election of Wladyslaw Gomulka as the new Polish party secretary and commented that the Polish events carry “decisive importance not only for the Polish people, but for the future path of the international communist movement.” The cable also mentioned a Polish paper’s (*Sztander Mlodych*) editorial that contained “Hungary and Poland are at the forefront of the de-Stalinization process and the restitution of popular power.” Lastly, it reported that on 22 October Budapest university students organized a demonstration expressing support for the Polish developments. It was attended by tens of thousands of people and their slogans were “independence, freedom, democracy”.<sup>7</sup>

The Chinese delegation was not familiar with the Hungarian events, and they were briefed on the deteriorating situation by Khrushchev himself after witnessing a phone call between the First Secretary of the CPSU and Marshal Georgy Zhukov who reported a mass riot on 23 October and forwarded the request of the Hungarian regime to mobilize

5 Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 150.

6 Zhu, *1956 – Mao's China and the Hungarian Revolution*, 137.

7 “Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Hungary, ‘The 8th Plenum of the Polish Party Central Committee Has Met with a Great Respons in Hungary,’ 23 October 1956,” accessed 25 May, 2015, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119971>.

the Soviet military forces stationed outside Hungary.<sup>8</sup> Khrushchev and the Presidium members agreed to send in the Soviet forces. The Soviet military entered the Hungarian capital with 6000 soldiers and 700 tanks on the dawn of 24 October.<sup>9</sup> After hearing this, Liu Shaoqi immediately made a telephone call to Mao to inform him on the situation in Budapest. Consequently, the Chairman received the news on the Hungarian uprising almost simultaneously with Moscow. From this point on, Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) paid close attention to the Hungarian crisis due to domestic and international considerations. The Chairman was interested whether the newly (24 October) appointed Prime Minister of Hungary, reformist communist Imre Nagy, had the ability to restore order in Hungary just like Gomulka did in Poland. Without determining this, the CCP leadership did not form an official position on the nature of the Hungarian events.

On 24 October, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping were invited to a plenary session of the CPSU Presidium held at the Kremlin. The second man of China, Liu, loyally stuck to Mao's agenda and argued that the tensions between the Soviet Union and Poland stemmed from Moscow's "big-power chauvinism."<sup>10</sup> On the same day, the Chinese embassy in Hungary sent a cable to Beijing stating that "yesterday's anti-Soviet demonstration turned into counterrevolutionary rebellion at eleven o'clock in the evening."<sup>11</sup> This was the first time a Chinese source called the Hungarian crisis counterrevolutionary in nature. Two days later, another cable from Budapest highlighted the increasing seriousness of the Hungarian uprising, reporting about "wild rattle of gunfire [that] did not cease the whole night."<sup>12</sup> However, these cables were not enough for the CCP leadership to induce a change in its stance – Mao still thought that the Soviets made an error and mismanaged their relations with weaker Communist satellite states.

On the evening of 29 October, Liu Shaoqi conveyed the message of Mao to the Soviet leaders that they should adopt a reformed policy toward other socialist states. He suggested not to interfere with other partner countries' internal affairs and recommended the high-level Soviet comrades to follow the five principles of *pancha shila* in handling with them. (This concept was introduced by a joint statement between India and China in June 1954. The five principles were the following: (1) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, (2) non-aggression, (3) non-interference in another country's internal affairs, (4) equal and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful coexistence<sup>13</sup>). The two sides agreed on these basic principles and Khrushchev ordered the immediate drafting of a new Soviet

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8 Zhu, *1956 – Mao's China and the Hungarian Revolution*, 199.

9 Walder, *China Under Mao – A Revolution Derailed*, 133.

10 Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 152.

11 "Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Hungary, 'Summary of the Counterrevolutionary Rebellion Taking Place in the Hungarian Capital,' 24 October 1956," accessed 27 May, 2015, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119972>.

12 "Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Hungary, 'The Situation in the Hungarian Capital Following the Outbreak of the Counterrevolutionary Rebellion,' 26 October 1956," accessed 27 May, 2015, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119973>.

13 Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 154.



declaration. This official government declaration became known as the “Principles of Development and Further Strengthening of Friendship and Cooperation between the USSR and Other Socialist Countries” and was approved and issued by the CPSU’s Presidium on 30 October in order to stop the violent riots in Hungary that, at that time, already spiraled out of control. The key sentence of this document must be highlighted: “Believing that the further presence of Soviet Army units in Hungary can serve as a cause for even greater deterioration of the situation, the Soviet Government has given instructions to its military command *to withdraw* [my emphasis] the Soviet Army units from Budapest as soon as this is recognized as necessary by the Hungarian Government.”<sup>14</sup> In addition, Khrushchev requested his special envoys in Budapest (Anastas Mikoyan and Mikhail Suslov) to transmit the declaration to the Hungarian government as an effort of peacemaking. At this point of time, the Soviets genuinely thought that this conciliatory gesture would lead to the cessation of fighting in Hungary. Along with the Chinese side, they also underestimated the severity of the situation.

As we can see, at first the Chinese were sympathetic to the Eastern European satellite states’ claim for more independence (within the political and ideological limits of Communism), and they heavily criticized and lectured the Kremlin elite. However, after getting to know two reports on 30 October, Mao fundamentally reconsidered his position on the Hungarian crisis. Firstly, he received a special report by the chief Hungarian correspondent of the *People’s Daily*, Hu Jibang, who wrote that “reactionary forces, with the support of international imperialists, were doing everything possible to overthrow the Hungarian [Communist] government.”<sup>15</sup> Secondly, the Chinese delegation was allowed to have access to the secret cables of special Soviet envoys (Mikoyan and Suslov) who described not only an anti-Soviet, but a bona fide anti-Communist atmosphere in Budapest.<sup>16</sup> Liu Shaoqi immediately phoned Mao and briefed him on the cables. After Mao consulted with the enlarged session of the CCP’s Politburo, he reached a conclusion that the potential of a “reactionary restoration” exists in Hungary due to a major “international imperialist plot.”<sup>17</sup> The Chairman therefore ordered Liu Shaoqi via telegram to express his opposition to the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary. On the evening of the same day (30 October) Liu repeated Mao’s stance to the Soviet Presidium members, however, the Soviets opposed the Chinese position given that they had already reached a consensus on the withdrawal of the troops and issued an official government declaration.

On 31 October, when the Chinese delegation arrived at the airport to return to Beijing, Khrushchev informed Liu Shaoqi that the Soviet Presidium decided to change its

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14 “Principles of Development and Further Strengthening of Friendship and Cooperation between the USSR and Other Socialist Countries,” accessed 27 May, 2015, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1956soviet-coop1.html>.

15 Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 155.

16 Zhu, *1956 – Mao’s China and the Hungarian Revolution*, 169.

17 Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 156.

position. Instead of a retreat, the Soviet military was authorized to use force to suppress the Hungarian revolt in order to defend socialism. What was the reason of the reversal of the Soviets' policy toward Hungary? Did the Chinese play a crucial role in their decision making process? Scholars who extensively covered this subject arrived to diametrically opposed conclusions concerning the case: on the one hand, Shen Zhihua argues that the Chinese delegation's involvement was *the* decisive factor, while on the other hand, Péter Vámos holds the view that the Chinese played no role whatsoever in the Kremlin's decision.<sup>18</sup>

In my view both scholars are wrong in their assessments. Vámos uncovered that the Chinese ambassador did not know a thing about the decision of the second Soviet intervention. Also, he argued that due to technical problems in the telegraph communication, Beijing did not receive any cables from the Chinese embassy in Budapest between 28 and 31 October.<sup>19</sup> Although these facts are true, his reasoning is spurious: as I explained, Mao used two other sources and did not make a decision on supporting the Soviet intervention based on the diplomatic cables coming from Hungary.

Shen Zhihua's exaggeration of the influence of the Chinese delegation on the Soviet leaders is also highly problematic. There were much more important factors to be considered by Khrushchev than Mao's take on the Hungarian events. The first one is the Suez crisis that started on 27 October and unfolded simultaneously with the Hungarian revolution. Khrushchev stated that "if we depart from Hungary, it will encourage the Americans, English, and French – the imperialists," and warned that "besides Egypt, we will give them also Hungary."<sup>20</sup> The second one is the United States' stance on Hungary: they did not look on Hungary as a military ally according to US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' speech delivered on 27 October.<sup>21</sup> This statement defused the Soviet fears that the USA would come to aid Hungary if Moscow intervened militarily. In addition to the two international factors, there was a domestic Hungarian variable as well: the situation further deteriorated when Prime Minister Imre Nagy proclaimed the restoration of a multiparty system on 30 October.<sup>22</sup> I consider these three elements more relevant for the Soviets than the weight of Chairman Mao's opinion. Interestingly, Vámos dismissed Shen's point using a different, perhaps more colorful reasoning that is worth contemplating nonetheless: "This argument is probably an attempt to cover up the fact that the Chinese

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18 Zhu, *1956 – Mao's China and the Hungarian Revolution*, 173.

19 Péter Vámos, "A magyar forradalom szerepe a Kínai Kommunista Párt politikájában." [The Role of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in the Policymaking of the Chinese Communist Party], in *Az 1956-os forradalom visszhangja a szovjet tömb országában*, [The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Soviet Bloc Countries' Reactions and Repercussions] eds. János M. Rainer and Katalin Somlai (Budapest: The Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, 2007), 157.

20 Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split – Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 59.

21 Csaba Békés, "The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Great Powers," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 13 (1997): 56.

22 Zhu, *1956 – Mao's China and the Hungarian Revolution*, 174.

merely conformed to the Soviets' decisions, because Mao did not feel the time yet right for an open confrontation with Moscow."<sup>23</sup> In sum, my view is that the Chinese influence was one of the many factors, and could be categorized among the less important ones.

On 1 November, Imre Nagy turned to the Chinese as a last resort to prevent a second Soviet invasion. He summoned to his office the Chinese ambassador to Hungary, Hao Deqing, in order to ask him (and indirectly Mao Zedong himself) to take a stand against the Soviet military intervention. The Hungarian Prime Minister was clearly not aware of the fact that the Chairman fundamentally shifted his position. Nagy still considered the Chinese as advocates for a more independent domestic policy within the socialist bloc. Such a false view was prevalent in Hungary, documented by the *Irodalmi Újság* ("Literary Gazette") which reported a day later that "the West and the East are on our side, America has proclaimed faith in our cause as clearly as have powerful nations like China and India."<sup>24</sup> A Chinese cable from Budapest sent on the very same day to Beijing also described the wishful thinking of the Hungarians: "The third edition of the Hungarian paper *Igazság* ('Justice') today published in bold letters: 'According to news from Warsaw, China views the Soviet army's intervention in the Hungarian revolution as imperialist aggression'."<sup>25</sup>

According to a cable sent by the Chinese embassy in Budapest, Nagy stated that "we are communists, we want social democracy. [...] The Soviet army intervened with tanks and other weapons. This led to the situation where the entire people turned against the Soviet Union. [...] The people demand as one that the Soviet army withdraw from Hungary."<sup>26</sup> The Chinese Embassy concluded that the leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party "had degenerated and that Nagy was especially suspicious politically. He is at the very least a careerist, which has become apparent judging by his words and action after the outbreak of the crisis."<sup>27</sup>

On the morning of 4 November, the suppression of the Hungarian revolution began. The Soviet troops entered Budapest and in the following days they killed approximately 2500 Hungarians. On 7 November, a new Soviet-backed government led by János Kádár was set in place that also satisfied the expectations of the Chinese leadership.

As we have seen, Mao's stance on the Polish and Hungarian case was identical with the Kremlin's position only in the beginning. He saw Poland's aspirations for autonomy

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23 Péter Vámos, *Sino-Hungarian Relations and the 1956 Revolution* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2006), 38.

24 János Radványi, "The Hungarian Revolution and the Hundred Flowers Campaign," *The China Quarterly* 43 (1970): 122.

25 "Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Hungary, 'The Hungarian Paper Justice Incorrectly Interpreted Our Statement,' 2 November 1956," accessed 1 June, 2015, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119975>.

26 "Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Hungary, 'On the Meeting Between Imre Nagy and Ambassador Hao Deqing,' 2 November 1956," accessed 1 June, 2015, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119976>.

27 Zhu, *1956 – Mao's China and the Hungarian Revolution*, 177.

an adequate tool to use against the Soviet Union and question the default pattern of big-power chauvinism of the country. However, the Hungarian events eventually played out differently, because the leadership in Budapest failed to restore order after the anti-Communist uprising. When the Chinese leadership realized that Nagy is not as skillful as Gomulka, and the unity of the Eastern bloc was at stake, they immediately changed their position and stood behind the Soviets (e.g. the description of the Hungarian events by the Chinese *People's Daily* is rather telling: first, the paper called the case a “riot”, then an “incident”, and finally, in early November, “counterrevolutionary” in nature<sup>28</sup>). Advocating Moscow’s military invasion indicated that Mao Zedong considered the integrity of the Communist camp more important to his interest than competing with the Soviet Union – at least at that particular point in time.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Impact of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution on Chinese Domestic Policies**

The Chinese delegation arrived in Beijing on 1 November and only a few hours later a CCP Politburo Standing Committee meeting was convened to hear the reports of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping on the Polish and Hungarian cases. Later that month (10-15 November: second plenary session of the CCP’s Central Committee), the Chinese leadership discussed and summarized the lessons of the Hungarian uprising. Mao concluded that:

the fundamental problem with some Eastern European countries is that they have not done a good job of waging class struggle and have left so many reactionaries at large; nor have they trained their proletarians in class struggle to help them learn how to draw a clear distinction between the people and the enemy, between right and wrong, and between materialism and idealism. And now they have to reap what they have sown; they have brought the fire upon their own heads.<sup>30</sup>

The Chairman heavily criticized the weak Hungarian leadership, but also highlighted three areas in which the Soviets contributed to the escalation of the Hungarian crisis. First, Moscow’s big-power chauvinism generated tensions between the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc countries. Second, Khrushchev’s secret speech led to profound confusion among the leadership throughout Eastern Europe. Third, the Kremlin did not have a correct understanding of the Polish and Hungarian riots and misread the events: Khrushchev mistakenly planned to intervene in Warsaw, and equally mistakenly wanted to withdraw the Soviet troops from Hungary.<sup>31</sup>

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28 Ibid., 214.

29 Ibid., 192.

30 Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 159.

31 Ibid., 159.

In order to avoid similar incidents in China, Liu Shaoqi suggested to avoid bureaucratic mismanagement in the CCP's leadership and expressed his view that the speed of industrialization should be slower. Zhou Enlai also addressed the unbalanced economic policies in Poland and Hungary that contributed to the crises. He recommended to raise the people's standards of living thereby focusing more on agriculture and light industry, and agreed with Liu to slow down the pace of industrialization.<sup>32</sup> Mao accepted the suggestions and readjusted the economic plan for 1957.

However, the Chairman was more concerned with the ideological and political implications of the events in Eastern Europe. Fearing that similar revolts could break out in China, he adopted a peaceful, soft method to guide the political thoughts of various groups and displace incorrect ideas. In order to relieve tensions in China, he channeled social dissatisfaction into the Hundred Flowers campaign (1956-57) and an inner-party rectification campaign. Mao stated: "From now on, all problems among the people and inside the party are to be solved by means of rectification, by means of criticism and self-criticism, and not by force."<sup>33</sup> The Hundred Flowers campaigns allowed greater freedom of expression and independent thinking as a tool to monitor the consciousness of the Chinese intellectuals while the rectification campaign dealt mainly with the problem of sectarianism and bureaucratism within the CCP.<sup>34</sup> These policies were clearly influenced by the Hungarian revolution. Lawrence R. Sullivan goes as far as to say that the Hundred Flowers campaign "was a reaction to the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution."<sup>35</sup>

Although Mao expected that the Chinese intellectuals and non-Communist politicians would praise the CCP and their confidence in the Party would be soon consolidated, a flood of criticism ensued and the leadership failed to suppress the dissenters. Given that the Chairman's love child, the Hundred Flowers campaign turned out to be a spectacular failure, party criticism was labeled as a counterrevolutionary activity starting from June 1957. Such labeling signified the origin of the notorious Anti-Rightist campaign (1957-58), a vicious counterattack against revisionism and rightism, during which more than half a million people were punished "ranging from the rather mild penalty of a reduction in pay and rank for 'ordinary rightists' and 'middle rightists', to more severe retributions of dismissal from the Party and from employment and/or sentencing to labor camps to undergo 'thought reform' and 'reform through labor' for 'extreme rightists'."<sup>36</sup> Mao underestimated the strength of the intellectual class to disrupt socialism, but after this bitter realization, he believed that he acted as the Hungarians should have handled their domestic opposition in 1956.<sup>37</sup>

32 Zhu, *1956 – Mao's China and the Hungarian Revolution*, 203-06.

33 *Ibid.*, 221.

34 *Ibid.*, 246.

35 Lawrence R. Sullivan, *Historical Dictionary of the People's Republic of China* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2007), 260.

36 *Ibid.*, 70.

37 Vámos, "A magyar forradalom szerepe a Kínai Kommunista Párt politikájában," 165.

Mao Zedong watched the actions of the Chinese intelligentsia with increasing suspicion after he examined the details of the Hungarian crisis. In one of his speeches delivered on 27 February, 1957, he talked about the influence of a famous Hungarian forum for intellectuals, the Petőfi Circle: “Hungary’s university students are 60 percent the sons and daughters of workers and peasants. The sons and daughters of the workers and peasants are big on going on strike, big on demonstrating, listening to the orders of the Petőfi Circle.”<sup>38</sup> As Roderick MacFarquhar put it, “Mao became quite obsessive about the Petőfi Circle syndrome.”<sup>39</sup> Following the logic of the Hungarian example, Mao thought that the driving force behind a counterrevolution is the intelligentsia. For him, the reactionary elements denoted the Petőfi Circle itself.

However, the Chairman learned the lesson of the Hungarian revolution and did not surrender any measure of ideological and political control, so nobody could effectively challenge the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. In March, he confidently proclaimed at a conference for party cadres that “China is not Hungary; here the Communist Party and the People’s Government enjoy considerable reputation among the people.”<sup>40</sup> In another speech, he added that “big riots like those that took place in Hungary won’t happen in China. Perhaps only a few will make a fuss here and there and advocate big democracy.” Regarding the treatment of the rightist and reactionary elements, Mao proposed a rather simple method: “If there is anyone who wants to use big democracy of whatever form to oppose the Communist system, to overthrow the leadership of the Communist party, we should exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat on him.”<sup>41</sup>

The records of meetings between Chinese, Hungarian and other leaders also shed light on the CCP’s understanding of the Eastern European events of 1956. When Premier Zhou Enlai and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru met in December 1956, Zhou stressed that the “Hungarian leaders were biased in the process of correcting their past errors. [...] Hungarian reactionary forces aided by Western countries carried out subversive activities, deceived the masses, and led the masses to turn to Western countries.”<sup>42</sup> In January 1957, a Chinese government delegation led by Zhou Enlai visited Budapest at Prime Minister János Kádár’s request. The main purpose of the visit was to show Chinese support for the new Kádár regime. During the meeting Zhou told the Hungarians that “the characteristics of the Hungarian and Polish events were different. Gomulka’s leadership is fundamentally correct, while events in Hungary played out quite differently.” He emphasized that “the

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38 “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People, 27 February, 1957,” in *The Secret Speeches of Chairman Mao – From the Hundred Flowers to the Great Leap Forward*, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1989), 144.

39 *Ibid.*, 144.

40 “On Ideological Work, 19 March, 1957,” *ibid.*, 338.

41 Zhu, 1956 – *Mao’s China and the Hungarian Revolution*, 225.

42 “Cable from Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and the Central Committee ‘Discussion with Nehru on the Hungary Issue,’ 3 December, 1956,” accessed 4 June, 2015, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116534>.

situation here could not have been solved without the Soviet troops.”<sup>43</sup>

Arguably the most fascinating primary source turned out to be a meeting between Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Münnich and Mao Zedong in Beijing in the spring of 1959. Mao described the Hundred Flowers campaign the following way to the Hungarian delegation: “The Hungarian events happened in 1956, and in 1957 we followed your example, *creating* [my emphasis] more than 10 000 small-scale Hungarian events throughout the country. We forced the right-wing elements to strike wildly. These right-wing elements were the same as your Petőfi Circles.”<sup>44</sup> The Chairman made a particular mention of the Wuhan incident (1957). In Wuhan, students and professors attempted to change the discussions into street riots in order to capture the Party building of the city. However, learning from the Hungarian events, the local Party leadership retained full control, mobilized the workers and crushed the uprising in a two-day fight without calling in the army units. Mao referred to the Wuhan incident as “little Hungary”.<sup>45</sup> In his annual report of 1957, the Hungarian Ambassador to Beijing reported to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry about the clash in Wuhan (and other cities, such as Shanghai), and highlighted that the protesters frequently mentioned Hungary in their slogans.<sup>46</sup> The Chairman told Münnich that he urged Khrushchev to take military action against the Hungarian counter-revolutionists and claimed that he had dismissed the possibility of any armed intervention from the Western powers, let alone the USA, since America was a “paper tiger”.<sup>47</sup> In sum, the Chairman told his Hungarian counterparts that they provided good service to the international Communist camp and that the Chinese side profited a great deal from their experiences.

## Conclusion

The 1956 Hungarian crisis had a profound impact on the orientation of Chinese domestic policies from late 1956 to the end of 1957. As Zhu Dandan rightly put it, the Hungarian connection is “under-treated in historiography”<sup>48</sup>. However, after the Hungarian events, Mao adopted increasingly radical policies in the name of ongoing class struggle and continuous revolution. The Eastern European developments of 1956 also strengthened the belief of the CCP leadership that China should occupy a more prominent position within the international Communist movement.

Although during the Hungarian uprising China did not openly confront the Soviet

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43 “Minutes of a Meeting between the Hungarian and Chinese Delegations in Budapest, January 16, 1957,” in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. Csaba Békés et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002), 497-498.

44 Vámos, *Sino-Hungarian Relations and the 1956 Revolution*, 26, footnote 112.

45 Radványi, “The Hungarian Revolution and the Hundred Flowers Campaign,” 128.

46 Vámos, *Sino-Hungarian Relations and the 1956 Revolution*, 25.

47 Radványi, “The Hungarian Revolution and the Hundred Flowers Campaign,” 126.

48 Dandan Zhu, “The Hungarian Revolution and the Origins of China’s Great Leap Policies, 1956–57,” *Cold War History* 12 (2012): 465.

Union, because Mao considered bloc unity more important than the ideological differences between the two countries, the events after 1956 indicated an ever deepening rift between Beijing and Moscow. The Hundred Flowers campaign convinced Mao that “not only was de-Stalinization incorrect but, paradoxically, China also needed more political and economic development along revolutionary Stalinist lines.”<sup>49</sup> Starting from 1957, the ideological development of the Soviet Union and China took fundamentally different directions. For the first time in history, Mao made a clear distinction between the stance of the CCP and the CPSU: “the so-called de-Stalinization is nothing other than de-Marxification, or revisionism.”<sup>50</sup> After the Soviets abandoned the banner of Stalin, the CCP leadership felt the duty to play a central role in advocating true Marxism-Leninism. Thus, ultimately the 1956 Hungarian revolution indirectly influenced the relationship between China and the Soviet Union and contributed to the factors that eventually lead to the Sino-Soviet split. **GPR**

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49 Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split – Cold War in the Communist World*, 47.

50 Vámos, *Sino-Hungarian Relations and the 1956 Revolution*, 24.



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# A Big Frog in a Small Pond or a Giant of Asia? Understanding the Political Leadership Style of Lee Kuan Yew

*H.M.S. Amanda Herath*

**Abstract:** The passing of a national political leader, widely regarded as a world figure, marked the beginning of the year 2015. The long standing Senior Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew left an undeniably significant mark upon the political leadership sphere. In order to assess his intriguing leadership style I will be using three theoretical models namely; Kouzes and Posner Model (1995), Blondel Model (1987) and Simonton Model (1988). The paper will mainly focus on Lee Kuan Yew's attempts at building a new Singaporean Identity from a multiethnic pluralistic society. By this exercise I try to answer the question of whether another leader can adopt Lee Kuan Yew's leadership style as a guiding principle.

**Key Words:** Lee Kuan Yew; Singapore; Political Leadership; Identity; Leadership Styles.

## Introduction

Leadership is as old as mankind. It is universally present in every aspect of human society. From the smallest unit of family to the nation-state, leadership is omnipresent and inescapable. Among these leaders that we see in our day-to-day life, political leaders command much more attention than other leaders:

[a]mong the various aspects of leadership, political leadership, in particular in the nation-state, occupies a special position. It is not that it is intrinsically different in kind or character from leadership in other organizations, but it is vastly more visible and, ostensibly at least, vastly more important. Within each nation, political leadership can command and reach out widely and extensively, and the rulers of the most important nations have a resonance that carries an echo to all corners of the world. If one reduces politics to its bare bones, to what is most visible to most citizens, it is the national political leaders, both at home and abroad,

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that remain once everything else has been erased; they are the most universal, the most recognized, the most talked about elements of political life. <sup>1</sup>

The passing of one such national political leader, widely regarded as a world figure, marked the beginning of the year 2015. The long standing Senior Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew left an undeniably significant mark upon the political leadership sphere. When it comes to describing the Singapore's late Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, so many adjectives seem to be thrown around. They vary from a champion-of-the-state-guided capitalist to an authoritarian ruler; from a charismatic intellect to a big frog in a small pond. All these assessments create an intriguing picture as to Lee's political leadership style.

What sort of a leader was he? Was he an exemplary leader? Into which category of leaders does he fit in? These are the questions addressed in this paper. In order to assess his leadership style I will analyze his ideas and actions pertaining to one significant aspect of Singapore: the building of a new Singaporean identity from a multiethnic pluralistic society. By such an analysis the paper tries to answer the bigger question of whether another leader can adopt Lee Kuan Yew's leadership style as a guiding principle.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows; the next section will outline the theoretical literature on political leadership, which will guide the analysis of the rest of the paper. The third section will try to analyze the effective leadership characteristics displayed by Lee Kuan Yew, and will try to determine the leadership category that he belongs to. The paper will conclude by answering the main question as to whether it is possible to adopt the Lee Kuan Yew style leadership by another leader.

### **Literature Review**

Before moving on further it is better to clarify the term "political leadership" and the importance of studying it. What is meant by the term "political leadership"? According to Blondel (1987) it is essentially a phenomenon of power; it consists of the ability of the one or few who are at the top to make others do a number of things (positively or negatively) that they would not or at least might not have done. And more specifically the national political leadership is the power exercised by one or a few individuals to direct members of the nation towards action.

Due to the immense power that national political leadership can wield, most of the political theorists viewed political leadership as a Leviathan. A frightening beast that should be tamed and for which means should be discovered to diminish its effects. Therefore most of the political theorists viewed the study of political leadership as an examination of the mechanisms by which the actions of leaders could be sufficiently

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Blondel, *Political Leadership towards a General Analysis* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1987), 1.

constrained so as not to let them encroach unduly upon the lives of citizens. Yet it is worthy to pay attention as to how the power of leaders can be positively harnessed for the good of mankind. To see how it can be used to uplift, improve and develop. To see how this power can help to bring about a ‘better’ state of affairs in our societies. “Thus, while leadership may be a ‘beast’ which can frighten mankind, it can also be one of the most powerful means of leading to collective action, not just severally and in a discreet manner, but in a common endeavor over substantial periods: it can thus result in development for the whole society”<sup>2</sup>

In any of the studies pertaining to particular leaders, one of the most important questions would be whether that particular leader is an “effective leader”? This question obviously leads us to another practical problem as to how we can ascertain the effectiveness of a particular leader. Kouzes and Posner (1995)<sup>3</sup> developed a leadership model highlighting the characteristics of effective exemplary leadership. In this paper I will be using this framework to ascertain the effectiveness of Lee Kuan Yew’s leadership in developing a Singaporean identity.

Kouzes and Posner’s framework highlights five practices of effective exemplary leadership (Atwater, 1996)<sup>4</sup>, namely;

1. **Inspire a Shared Vision** – creating and sharing a positive vision of the future that appeals to all organizational members. Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become.
2. **Challenge the Process** – continuously looking for new and better ways to do things. This is one of the behaviors common to transformational leaders. Leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, they experiment and take risks.
3. **Model the Way** – serving as an example of how the leader expects other people to behave. Leaders establish principles concerning the way goals should be pursued. They create standards of excellence and then set an example for others to follow.
4. **Enabling Others to Act** – empowering organizational members to take responsibility and ownership. Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful.
5. **Encourage the Heart** – actively motivating organizational members to achieve their full potential. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize contributions that individuals make. In every winning team, the members need to share in the

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2 Blondel, *Political Leadership towards a General Analysis*, 2.

3 Leanne E. Atwater, “The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations.” *The Leadership Quarterly*, 1996.

4 Ibid.

rewards of their efforts, so leaders celebrate accomplishments. They make people feel like heroes.

We can determine the effectiveness of Lee's leadership style with the aid of the above model, yet we still have to find the precise leadership category that he belongs to. Was he a transformational leader? Was he a dictator? Or was he a global leader or a mere manager of a small city-state? Categorizing leaders into specific cohorts is a complex task due to various goals and environmental contexts that they operate upon. This complexity has given birth to various models of leadership categorizations, each model offering different categorization methods. Most of these models are based upon the organizational leadership styles of business managers. Even though these models may offer useful insights into the phenomena of leadership, political leadership has some unique characteristics, which sets it apart from the other types of leadership styles.

As mentioned in the introduction section, political leadership affects a whole nation rather than a single enterprise. Political leadership operates on two distinct levels namely; internal domestic affairs and international affairs. Political leadership is far more influential on the lives of its citizens and at the same time operates far away from its constituents. Due to these differences a unique categorization method is required for categorizing political leaders. In this paper I will be using the Two-dimensional Political Leadership Typology developed by Blondel (1987)<sup>5</sup> and the Personality-based Political Leadership Categorization developed by Simonton (1988)<sup>6</sup>.

Blondel's model of Political Leadership Typology categorizes political leaders based on two dimensions; the "scope of operation" and "magnitude of change envisioned." The "scope of operation" dimension analyzes the breadth of the policy intervention and the range of problems covered by leaders. This can range from a wide scope covering the whole nation to a specialized scope covering single policy areas. Between these two ends a number of combinations are also possible with varying degrees of breadth. "Magnitude of change envisioned" covers the amount of change that a leader is trying to bring about to the system. Some leaders may aspire to bring a revolutionary change to the existing system while some others may be satisfied with maintaining the status quo system. Between these two ends, we can yet again find infinite numbers of combinations. Blondel's model does not attach value judgments in its classification process. This means the leaders who are generally considered as "heroes" as well as leaders who are considered to be "cruel dictators" can all be classified under this model. Another note-worthy aspect of Blondel's model is that it allows for the time related changes that a leader may undergo during that person's tenure. A leader may start with a small scope and status quo aspirations but may

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5 Blondel, *Political Leadership towards a General Analysis*, 97.

6 DK Simonton, "Presidential Style: Personality, Biography, and Performance." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 55, no. 6 (1988): 928-36.



eventually move on to become a leader with a wide scope and revolutionary aspirations. An outline of Blondel's Model is given in Table 1.

Table 1.		Magnitude of Change Envisioned		
		<i>Maintenance of Status Quo</i>	<i>Moderate Change</i>	<i>Large Change</i>
<b>Scope of Operation</b>	<i>Wide Scope</i>	<p><b>Saviors</b> (Moses, Churchill)</p> <p>Those who appear to be able to solve a major problem facing the nation or the state — in many cases, the threat of total annihilation. Before the savior appears, the nation is on the verge of collapse; afterwards, the danger is avoided and peace and calm return to the community.</p>	<p><b>Paternalists/ Populists</b> (Bismarck, Stalin, Shah, Nasser)</p> <p>Wish to introduce some changes but do not want to upset the whole society, and they seek to accomplish this end either by 'integrating', rather than destroying, the existing underpinnings of the social structure, or by committing themselves to a 'middle way' in the introduction of new ideas.</p>	<p><b>Ideologues</b> (Mao, Lenin, Hitler)</p> <p>Sharply modify the basis on which society is organized; they usually do so through a revolution, since it seems that only by a revolution can a 'radical' change in the norms and modes of behavior be achieved.</p>
	<i>Moderate Scope</i>	<p><b>Comforters</b> (Eisenhower)</p> <p>Tries to 'comfort' a population worried by the speed of change; without being 'protectors' in the strong sense, because the system was not about to collapse, these leaders are concerned essentially with 'curing' and 'calming' the citizenry.</p>	<p><b>Re-definers</b> (Kennedy, Reagan, Thatcher)</p> <p>Wishes to 'redefine' the agenda, for instance in terms of the relationship between the population and the state, in order to 'make people stand on their own two feet' or to 'take the government off the backs of the people.'</p>	<p><b>Reformists</b> (Franklin D. Roosevelt)</p> <p>Concerned with reforming "an aspect" of the whole system which can have a huge impact to the overall system.</p>
	<i>Specialized Scope</i>	<p><b>Managers</b> (ministers who administer day-to-day problems)</p>	<p><b>Adjusters/ Thinkers</b> (ministers who modify an aspect of a policy)</p>	<p><b>Innovators</b> (new policy; land reforms)</p>
<p>Source – Blondel (1987)            * Change may mean "regressive" or "progressive" or a combination of both * Suggested examples were given by Blondel herself.</p>				

While Blondel's model is based on the actions and deeds of the leader, Simonton's model takes a psychological analysis method to evaluate the personality of political leaders. This model categorizes leaders into five categories, namely:

1. **Interpersonal-** allows Cabinet members considerable independence, encourages the exercise of independent judgment by aides, gives credit to others for work

done, endears himself to his staff through his courtesy and consideration, is flexible, emphasizes teamwork, is frequently in contact with his advisers and Cabinet, maintains close relationships with a wide circle of associates, is willing to make compromises, relies on working in a staff system, deciding among options formulated by advisers, keeps members of his staff informed on matters concerning other departments, knows his limitations, and supports constitutional government.

2. **Charismatic-** finds dealing with the press challenging and enjoyable, enjoys the ceremonial aspects of the office, is charismatic, consciously refines his own public image, has a flair for the dramatic, conveys clear-cut, highly visible personality, is a skilled and self-confident negotiator, uses rhetoric effectively, is a dynamo of energy and determination, is characterized by others as a world figure, keeps in contact with the public and its moods, has ability to maintain popularity, exhibits artistry in manipulation, and views the presidency as a vehicle for self-expression, and rarely is shy, awkward in public.
3. **Deliberative-** understands implications of his decisions; exhibits depth of comprehension, is able to visualize alternatives and weigh long term consequences, keeps himself thoroughly informed; reads briefings, background reports, and is cautious, conservative in action, knows his limitations, supports constitutional government, skilled and self-confident negotiator, characterized by others as a world figure.
4. **Creative-** initiates new legislation and programs and is innovative in his role as an executive, rarely is a “middle-of-the-roader”, is emphatic in asserting his judgments, encourages the exercise of independent judgment by aides, views the presidency as a vehicle for self-expression, not cautious, conservative in action, does not pay attention to his limitations.
5. **Neurotic** - places political success over effective policy and suffers health problems which tend to parallel difficult and critical periods in office, almost never has direct, uncomplicated approach, exhibits artistry in manipulation, consciously refines his own public image.

In Simonton’s model:

The interpersonal and charismatic presidents seem to be person-oriented, aiming their energies toward other human beings: the interpersonal executive toward his colleagues in government and the charismatic executive toward the people. On the other hand, the deliberative and creative presidents appear to be more task-oriented, with much less devotion to maintaining social relationships. This difference in orientation mirrors the common distinction in leadership research between person-oriented leaders who are social-emotional specialists, and task-oriented leaders who are problem-solvers. The neurotic president, however, is neither person- nor task-oriented, but rather self-oriented,

focused on maintaining a some-what fragile ego.<sup>7</sup>

## **Building a Singaporean Identity<sup>8</sup>**

### *Was Lee Kuan Yew an Effective Exemplary Leader?*

In 1965 Singapore suddenly found itself to be an Independent Republic thrown out of the Malay Federation. At the heart of the problem was the growing Malay nationalism of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) of Malaysia and the People's Action Party (PAP) and Lee Kuan Yew's push for a Malaysian Malaysia. The leading party of Malaysia –UMNO – wanted to build a country centered on the Malay nationalism, which represented the majority of the mainland Malaya. But in Singapore the majority were Chinese descendants and Lee Kuan Yew and his PAP party pushed for a multiracial Malaysia where every nationality would get equal opportunities. While the communal racial riots started to break out both in Malaya and Singapore, the Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew decided on a separation of Singapore from Malaysia. Hence on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1965 Singapore was declared to be an independent nation. A new nation came into being which did not exist in history. That independent nation inherited a racial mix of a Chinese majority followed by Malays and Indians as minorities.<sup>9</sup> Racial tensions were at its highest as the Malays found themselves at the mercy of a Chinese majority government, now without the protection of a sympathetic Malay government at the mainland. How did Lee Kuan Yew face this problem of racial tensions? Did he manage it effectively?

In fact the problem faced by Lee and his PAP government was not as simple as merely managing racial tensions. They had to invent a Singaporean identity for the newly created nation. An identity to which all the races can feel related to, to which all the races would subscribe. Lee's answer to this was, "we are going to have a multiracial nation in Singapore. This is not a Malay nation, not a Chinese nation, not an Indian nation. What we have can be preserved only if we together defend the integrity of our country and secure the interest of the whole community."<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, Lee Kuan Yew said that :

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<sup>7</sup> Simonton, "Presidential Style," 928–36.

<sup>8</sup> The ideal Singapore Identity seemed to combine a self-consciously tough-minded meritocratic individualism, in which individual Singaporeans cultivated their talents and successfully competed in the international economy, with an equally self-conscious identification with "Asian Roots" and "Traditional Values", which referred to precolonial India, China, and Malay world. Singaporeans were to be modern and cosmopolitan while retaining their distinctively Asian traditions. Racial differences were preserved but tolerated. Barbara Leitch Lepoer, ed. *Singapore: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> This structure remained as it is even in 2014. Singapore's 3,870,739 residents were divided into 2,874,380 Chinese (74.3 percent), 516,657 Malays (13.3 percent), 353,021 Indians (9.1 percent), and 126,681 others (3.3 percent) (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Alex Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore: Reprinted and Updated with the Lesson of Indochina*. (London : Angus & Robertson, 1976), 196-198.

the acid test of who was a Singaporean was whether the person was so committed to Singapore that he was prepared to stand up and fight for Singapore. An emotive definition, a qualitative not quantitative test, of a Singaporean was a person either by birth and upbringing or residence who felt committed to upholding the society as it was, multiracial, tolerant, accommodating, forward looking and was prepared to stake his life for that community.<sup>11</sup>[...] When Singapore was rejected by Malaysia some Chinese wanted Singapore to become a Third China. They wanted to make Chinese the official language. Lee stamped on the idea at once. Singapore would become a multiracial nation. There would be a Singaporean, not a Chinese identity.<sup>12</sup>

From the above quotations from Lee's speeches and from documents of his colleagues we can come to the conclusion that Lee took the initiative to inspire a shared vision of building a Singaporean identity based on multiracialism. According to Barr (1999)<sup>13</sup> Lee Kuan Yew himself harbored the notions of racial and cultural supremacists beliefs regarding the superiority of Chinese genes and culture above the Indian or Malay genes and culture. Then why did he take the initiative for implementing a Singaporean identity based on multiracialism?

Lee may have pursued communal neutral multiracialism due to two reasons. Firstly, due to the internal and external political conditions assuming a Chinese identity would have been a threat to the stability of the new and fragile Singapore. Lee regarded Chinese culture as a threat to Singapore's stability because it was so closely associated with Chinese chauvinism, Chinese communism and loyalty to the People's Republic of China. Also, Lee considered that allowing even the appearance of creating a Sino-centric culture in the 1960s or 1970s would have heightened tensions between Singapore and its Malay neighbors<sup>14</sup>. Secondly, Lee had developed a utilitarian view of culture during his years of study at Cambridge. His studies at Law School, his involvement in Labor politics, and his private reading led him to believe that cultural identity was a tool to be used or discarded at need in the building of a new society.<sup>15</sup> As his paramount need at the time of separation was to establish cohesion among the various races without provoking any communal riots, the most politically shrewd path was embracing the multiracialism.

To implement the multiracial Singapore identity, his first step was to challenge the existing emotional attachment to monolingual mother tongue education. He wanted every Singaporean to be bilingual, fluent in English and one other national language (Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil). English language was designated to be the language of business

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11 Ibid.,198.

12 Ibid.,199.

13 Michael D. Barr, "Lee Kuan Yew: Race, Culture and Genes." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 29, no. 2 (1999): 145-66.

14 Ibid.

15 Michael D. Barr, "Lee Kuan Yew in Malaysia: A Reappraisal of Lee Kuan Yew's Role in the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia." *Asian Studies Review* 21, no. 1 (July 1997): 1-17.

while other languages were kept as official languages. English language education was promoted as a means to create linkages between races that spoke different languages and also as a means to access western knowledge. Mother tongue education was encouraged as a means to protect the “Asian Values” of respective cultures. Lee also embarked on a “Speak Mandarin” campaign to bring the Chinese speakers into a common dialect. As a result of these campaigns the Nanyang University, which was wholly conducted in Chinese had to be amalgamated with the University of Singapore due to the lack of employment opportunities for Chinese graduates. National University of Singapore (NUS) was born as a full English language university.

Language policy was not the only aspect he challenged. As an independent nation Singapore was in dire need of its own defense forces. Building a defense force became a difficult task due to the cultural propensities of the races. The Chinese tradition that good sons do not become soldiers, plus the fact that most of the Singapore Indian communities were from non-warrior castes was disadvantageous in recruiting soldiers. He initiated a Nation Building National Service (military training), which was mandatory for young men to join for two years. According to Josey (1980)<sup>16</sup> this was a successful experiment in developing Singaporean identity among the youngsters of all races who were hitherto concerned with their own interests and not of the interest of the country.

Lee’s methods of enforcing a Singaporean identity started to encroach upon the market practices as well as upon the private spheres of life. He initiated a government housing project to provide a house for each Singaporean family. In doing so he decided to scatter and mix the races to prevent them from being congregating according to their race. To prevent the house recipients from selling and re-congregating he imposed nationality quotas on neighborhoods thus affecting the market mechanisms and also the cultural and family ties of the residents.

Lee’s idea of a Singaporean identity was based on meritocracy. “Singapore is a meritocracy. And these men have risen to the top by their own merit, hard work and high performance.” (Josey, quoting Lee Kuan Yew, 1980)<sup>17</sup> His idealistic view of an efficient, educated Singaporean citizen pushed him to the practice of eugenics. When he recognized that most of the educated women were not getting married due to the cultural practice of men marrying down and women marrying up he initiated a government matchmaking service, the Social Development Unit, to encourage young educated men to marry young educated women. His reasoning was that if the educated women were not marrying and not reproducing, the brightest of the genes will not be passed down and since the less educated women got married and had 3-4 kids the mediocre genes will be the only ones remaining. He initiated various policies to encourage educated women to get married and have 3-4 kids. Some of these policies were not warmly welcomed by the other ministers

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16 Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore*, 219-220.

17 *Ibid.*, 202-203.

or the general public.<sup>18</sup>

This forced creation of a Singaporean identity was pursued even to some comical lengths. Official actions were taken by the police and government servants to discourage hippie-ism. Long untidy hair was considered to be the badge of hippie-ism. Immigration authorities could deny the entry to the Republic if they considered someone with long untidy hair to be a hippie. In government offices posters were displayed showing illustrations of a 'reasonable' hairstyle. According to the government definition, long hair is hair that falls across the forehead and touches the eyebrow, or covers the ears, or reaches below an ordinary shirt collar.<sup>19</sup>

To provide an example by action he himself started to learn Mandarin and Malay. "Most days with a teacher he polishes his Mandarin and his Malay, for it is of vital importance in a multiracial nation that the leader should be able to communicate directly with as many of the people as possible, and more people in Singapore speak Malay and Chinese than English."<sup>20</sup> He sent all his children to Mandarin Chinese schools and later to English universities. In his autobiography Lee mentions this fact as a political advantage for him to expound his ideals. "Those born and bred in homogeneous societies may not understand why the language medium in which I chose to educate my children had political implications. I had the political strength to make those changes in Nanyang University because, unlike many champions of the Chinese language who sent their children to English schools, my three children were completely educated in Chinese Schools."<sup>21</sup> His sons also served in the military after their university studies. He himself was married to Kwa Geck Choo, a bright Singaporean lawyer. He showed the path that he wished his fellow citizens would take by modeling the way himself.

So far we were able to find three effective exemplary leadership characteristics shown by Lee Kuan Yew in his efforts to build a Singaporean identity, even though some of the practices remain questionable. What about the other two characteristics of the Kouzes and Posner model?

Josey describes the personality of Lee Kuan Yew as follows:

his puritanical streak emerges every time, as does the scarcity of genuine humor. He is more the fussy scoutmaster, the finicky schoolmaster, the precisian, the heavy intellectual, and

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18 Scientists have a long held debate regarding the importance of genes when it comes to intelligence and by extension the importance of ethnicity for intelligence. The scientific evidence are also mixed. But the widely accepted notion is that genes is only part of the equation in explaining the intelligence of a person. Family environment, nutrition level, social exposure, education facilities, teaching methods can also have an impact on nurturing an intelligent human being. Hence there is no guarantee that an educated mother will have intelligent children and a less educated mother will have stupid children. The outcome could be drastically opposite as well. ("The Role of Genetics in IQ and Intelligence." A to Z of Brain, Mind and Learning. Accessed August 14, 2015. <http://iq-test.learninginfo.org/iq03.htm>).

19 Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore*, 233.

20 Ibid. 5-6.

21 Lee, Kuan Yew. *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story, 1965-2000*. 1st ed. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000,152

the stern father, than the dictator. He sees himself the elected leader, the man charged with the task of setting the pace and leading the way, pointing out the errors, correcting mistakes, praising where necessary (he is not very good at this, he finds it hard to compliment people for what he feels they should have done anyway), bollocking (his word) those deserving of censure, and keeping an eye in things generally (from a dirty lorry exhaust to damaged shrubs on highway dividers).<sup>22</sup>

Tom Plate also described Lee as: “Mostly inaccessible, almost deliberately inept with small talk, but brilliant in a quietly intimidating way.”<sup>23</sup>

According to the above descriptions Lee Kuan Yew does not seem to be a leader who encourages the heart of the people around him. More or less he seems to be a strict disciplinarian demanding the tasks to be done rather than coaxing the followers to do something. He applied the same principles when dealing with the citizens. Rather than using motivational methods to encourage higher levels of industrial participation, he simply passed legislation setting down longer working hours and limiting fringe benefits for Singapore workers, and he lectured the state’s organized workers to tamper their proletarian longings, lest they price Singapore out of the competitive Asian labor market. According to him Singapore workers want more work and more money for more work, not more leisure to spend the inadequate sums they earned.<sup>24</sup> Viewed like this the workers were deemed simply as machinery of the nation building rather than human beings.

Did he enable the others to act? As long as the subordinates and his cabinet members shared his views of Singaporean identity they were given the chance to act according to the guidance of Lee Kuan Yew. He even listened to the opinions of his cabinet ministers if he was sure about the loyalties of those people towards the common Singaporean interest. At the earlier periods almost all of his cabinet ministers were PAP party members and his long-term friends both in political life and private life. As a result there was a higher degree of goal and philosophical cohesion between Lee Kuan Yew and his inner political circle. The most prominent members of this inner circle were, Goh Keng Swee, S. Rajaratnam, Hon Sui Sen, Lim Kim San, Eddie Baker, Toh Chin Chye, Ong Pang Boon and Othman Wok. But a close analysis of his personality reveals that Lee Kuan Yew was not a leader who easily accommodated people. Josey Alex wrote that:

He (Lee Kuan Yew) usually wants his own way in an argument, he is no dictator and does not want to be and in any case, even if he did, his colleagues would not permit him to dictate. Abrasive and aggressive by nature, he believes he is right, but he hates sycophants, though by his manner and behavior he tends to create them, especially among some of the

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22 Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore*, 203.

23 Plate, *Giants of Asia; Conversations with Lee Kuan Yew Citizen Singapore; How to Build a Nation*. (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International Ptd, 2010), 36.

24 Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore*, 250-251.

civil servants with whom he comes into contact.<sup>25</sup>

Lee's intolerance of opposition ideas – especially those alternative ideas which were critical of him or his policies – were widely known. Yet he would still use the democratic method when dealing with the opposition leaders even if he wanted to suppress their ideas. PAP was notorious for bringing the opposition to the court through the “Anti-defamation laws” and would completely bankrupt the opposition leader.<sup>26 27</sup> . Some were jailed without trial through the operation of “temporary law”<sup>28</sup>. According to Lee, these opposition ideas, by spreading political violence, will tear away at the fabric of race cohesion and Singaporean identity by fanning racial tensions. PAP government was not cruel in its treatment to the imprisoned opposition members. They were properly treated but were not allowed the political freedom<sup>29</sup>.

Another group of people who got the same level of limited freedom was the media of Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew made himself a prime target of criticism of press freedom movements of the West by closing down three Singaporean newspapers on the ground of suspicious foreign ownership and hidden agendas, which he called “black operations”.<sup>30</sup>  
<sup>31</sup> “Singapore reporters are free to criticize in Singapore newspapers, but no one is free to use the Singapore press to sabotage or thwart the primacy of purpose of an elected government” (Josey quoting Lee)<sup>32</sup>. Lee's dubious description of press freedom leaves us no room but to identify press freedom in Singapore as merely sycophancy.

According to above evidence Lee Kuan Yew was not a leader who enabled the critical thinking of his citizens. What he created as Singaporean identity was a set of mechanized and routinized human beings capable of achieving a high-level of productivity within the guidelines provided by the government.

This leads us to the conclusion that Lee Kuan Yew did not exhibit all of the characteristics of an exemplary, effective leader. Too often we tend to look at the achievements of a leader when deciding his/her effectiveness. Hence if we merely looked at the GDP growth rates of Singapore brought about by Lee Kuan Yew, without a doubt he would be an effective, magnificent leader. But if we analyze his leadership practices through a different qualitative lens we cannot deny that his effectiveness as an exemplary leader falls short

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25 Ibid., 203.

26 Barr, Michael D. “J.B. Jeyaretnam: Three Decades as Lee Kuan Yew's bête Noir.” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33, no. 3 (2003): 299–317. doi:10.1080/00472330380000201.

27 Andrews, Sally. “Soft Repression: The Struggle for Democracy in Singapore.” *The Diplomat*, February 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/02/soft-repression-the-struggle-for-democracy-in-singapore/>.

28 Josey, Alex. *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore : Reprinted and Updated with the Lesson of Indochina*. 3rd ed. Angus & Robertson, 1980. 232

29 Ibid.121

30 Kuan Yew Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story, 1965-2000*. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000), 188.

31 Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore*, 268.

32 Ibid., 264.



of expectations.

### *Which Leadership Category does Lee Kuan Yew belong to?*

#### **Blondel Model**

When Lee Kuan Yew became the first Prime Minister of Singapore in 1959, his major aspiration was to merge Singapore with Malaya to create the Malaysian Federation. He was prepared to be a prime minister of a small city under the rule of the Malaysian government. Hence at this stage his operative scope was moderate and his aspired change was also moderate. Therefore we can say that Lee Kuan Yew began as a Redefining Leader, who wanted to redefine the state organization after the independence from the British.

Right after the separation from Malaysia in 1965, he found himself in the position of a Savior without even planning to be there. He had to save this small city-state from hostilities of the neighboring Indonesia and Malaysia. Also he had to make sure that the country would not collapse into communal chaos. He had to find a new identity to rally around the people of that small country that he was entrusted with.

Later on as he progressed with his own idea of Asian style democracy and Singaporean identity he moved on to become an Ideologues leader aspiring to change a wide spectrum of the nation with large scale sweeping changes. Generally, ideologues leaders are widely remembered due to the massiveness of their impact on the humankind. Even though Lee may not have staged a revolution as Mao, building up a third-world insignificant city-state in to a First World luxurious hub ranks him among the giants. Most of the time Lee Kuan Yew mentioned that he did not subscribe to a particular ideology, but rather tried to find a workable solution to the problems of nation building<sup>33 34</sup>. According to Plate (2013)<sup>35</sup> this “utilitarian pragmatism” is by itself an ideology. Hence we can credit Lee Kuan Yew as an Ideologues Leader who practiced this particular ideology to the fullest extent. Even though we have doubts pertaining to the exemplary characters of his leadership style we cannot deny that Lee Kuan Yew made a lasting impact in the modern history of mankind.

#### **Simonton Model**

According to the analysis thus far, the strongest personality characteristics shown by Lee Kuan Yew neatly categorize him into the “Deliberative” leadership style. Lee is widely regarded as a bright intellect who can almost never be defeated in arguments. Even from the conception of the Singaporean identity concept he showed cautious, shrewd decision making abilities. He always knew his limits in oppressing his opponents. He never used violent or cruel punishments towards his political opponents. No matter how controversial

33 Lee, *From Third World to First*, 212.

34 Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore*, 23.

35 Plate, *Giants of Asia*, 44.

his ideas were, almost all the leaders of the world were willing to pay heed to his counsel.

### Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to study the leadership style of one of the controversial leaders of Asia. Lee Kuan Yew achieved a great feat in his lifetime that most other developing nations are envious of. Some of the developing countries are actually clamoring for a leader similar to Lee Kuan Yew. Hence the biggest question will be: can another leader emulate Lee Kuan Yew style leadership?

As a general rule, emulating another personality is a difficult task simply because of the vast differences in circumstances faced by each leader. What Lee Kuan Yew faced in 1960s is completely different from today's world.

If we just forget about these contextual differences then comes the question of how much worthy were those qualities to be replicated? Out of the five characteristics of an effective exemplary leader, Lee lacked two characteristics, which are broadly relevant as interpersonal skills. He neither was a good motivator nor was he a good accommodator. Therefore to a great extent he appears to be a cold-hearted disciplinarian. Should a modern day leader become a cold-hearted disciplinarian?

Another problem with adopting Lee's style is that Lee was able to literally oversee almost all the aspects of the polity given the fact that he was presiding over a population of only 2 million and 716.2 km<sup>2</sup> of land area. Will that level of intervention and scrutiny be possible in a large country with a much larger population?

According to some scholars<sup>36 37</sup> the PAP government established by Lee was a de-facto soft authoritarian regime rather than a parliamentary democracy as he popularly claimed. Hence if a leader in a democratic country adopts Lee style leadership strategy it will be a regressive change rather than a progressive change in the political freedom.

Finally we come to the most significant of arguments as to why Lee Kuan Yew style leadership can be a dangerous approach overall. Lee Kuan Yew's leadership style shares common characteristics with other hardline dictators and authoritarians. He shares the same leadership space as Mao and Hitler. Even though Lee never bent on abhorrent cruelty as Hitler, another political leader can simply move on to that dangerous zone after adopting the Lee style leadership practices. As for Lee Kuan Yew, his moral compass and education gave him boundaries of operation. But what if the other leader does not possess such moral boundaries and education refinements? What can act as a restraint on such a leader to keep him from moving from soft-authoritarianism to hard-authoritarianism?

This brings us to another important research area of political leadership. The role of

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36 Denny Roy, "Singapore, China, and the 'Soft Authoritarian' Challenge." *Asian Survey* 34, no. 3 (1994): 231-42.

37 Kenneth Paul Tan, "The Ideology of Pragmatism: Neo-Liberal Globalisation and Political Authoritarianism in Singapore." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 42, no. 1 (2012): 67-92.

ethics and moral in political leadership is a noteworthy area for further research. The study of moral and ethical boundaries of national leaders will enrich the study of political leadership. **GPR**

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# The Asian Gold Rush: a Critique of the Win-Win Chinese Strategy Towards Africa

*Camilla Crovella*

**Abstract:** Africa has observed an impressively growing Chinese presence in the last 20 years. Signals of this can be identified in the strong investments the Asian country has carried out on the continent, always depicting such attitude as a business partnership, where the former exploits African raw materials and favours the economic and social development of the latter in return. Indeed, China supports its interest in the African continent on the ground of the *win-win* strategy, as this partnership would bring advantages to both parties. However, several voices have raised on the international scene, denouncing a Chinese predatory attitude and a form of exploitation, which can be compared to the Western Colonialism. Even if it can be stated that the current situation is not comparable to colonialism in Western conception, it is also undeniable that Africa is being shaped by the Chinese following the model of their own economic, financial and social system. So stated, it is clear that the *win-win* strategy does no longer suit to such scenery. For this reason, it should be renamed as a *win-through* strategy, to describe how China is making this partnership successful by turning Africa into a big reproduction of its own system.

**Keywords:** China; Africa; Sino-African relationship; *win-win* strategy; *going out* strategy; non-interference.

## Introduction

The increasing Chinese presence in Africa has recently and considerably marked the current world order. China's economic interest and investments in Africa have particularly been under scrutiny. While it is undeniable that the investments of the Asian economic giant have given new breath and horizons to the African continent, the fear of a neo-colonialist exploitation is expressed by several voices.

The common criticism is that the People's Republic of China has a neo-colonial predatory attitude, as it monopolizes enormous wealth, raw materials and mineral resources. Since the whole issue started, Chinese authorities have always refused this kind of attacks on the ground of the so-called *win-win* strategy. Such approach plants its roots in the idea that the relationships so far established are mutually beneficial and mainly focus on the five principles of peaceful coexistence, especially non-interference in the internal affairs of individual countries. While it can be stated that colonialism on the path of

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the Western one is not being shaped, it is also undeniable that the Chinese presence in Africa is overcoming a basic business partnership. Indeed, the Chinese are exporting their own economic, financial and social system and their own lifestyle towards their recent commercial partners. Nevertheless, a strong migratory flux from China to African countries has been registered in the last few years.<sup>1</sup>

This essay seeks to demonstrate how the *win-win* strategy is no longer appropriate to portray the Chinese attitude towards Africa. Firstly, the historical development of the Sino-African relationships will be analyzed. Secondly, the *win-win* theory and its consequences will be explained, and finally, a new name for the strategy under examination will be provided: no longer *win-win* but *win-through* strategy, in order to underline how China successfully established a long-lasting commercial partnership with the African countries by shaping and turning the latter ones into an extension of its own social, economic and financial setting.

### **China and Africa: Historical basis**

The first phase of Chinese engagement with Africa began during the Bandung Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in 1955. Piet Konings, in his essay “China and Africa: building a strategic partnership,” states that, when the ties between China and the Soviet Union became weaker, the former started to look for new possible allies, such as the African countries, to balance the power of the Soviet Union and that of Western Imperialism.<sup>2</sup> With the African countries on its side in the diplomatic dispute with Taiwan,<sup>3</sup> China had seen them as strategic partners since the 1950s. It funded many construction projects and supported independence struggles between the 1960s and 1970s.

After a decade of silence on such front, because of the Chinese withdrawal from the international scene in order to focus on its domestic situation and with regard to the sanctions compiled after Tienanmen Square students’ protest (1989), the 1990s saw a new era of strong re-emergence in Africa. This is when the *going out* Chinese strategy originated; this means that the country, after realizing that it was no longer self-standing in terms of raw materials and natural resources, developed a network of international relationships, which could be able to provide its industrial system with such elements.

China’s global expansion found a particularly fruitful evolution in Africa. Such partnership widened on various fields, including trade, investments, economic development assistance, technology transfer and labour training. These areas witnessed increased

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1 Malia Politzer, “China and Africa: Stronger Economic Ties Mean More Migration,” *Migrationpolicy*, last modified August 6, 2008, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/china-and-africa-stronger-economic-ties-mean-more-migration>.

2 Piet Konings, “China and Africa: Building a Strategic Partnership,” *Journal of Developing Societies* 23, no 4 (2007): 343.

3 *Ibid.*, 347, “China recognized the importance of African countries’ in its diplomatic struggle with Taiwan. It realized that independent African countries were a key voting bloc within the United Nations (UN) and could help resolve to its advantage the diplomatic feud with Taiwan”.



activities and investments from the Chinese state-owned enterprises.<sup>4</sup> According to their own intention, the Chinese did not set their presence in Africa following the path of Western colonialism: non-interference in the country's internal and governmental affairs has always been the key issue, together with a mutual aid relationship. In this sense, two should be the advantages brought to African countries: the building of a capillary system of infrastructures and low-interest loans to local governments.<sup>5</sup>

The China-Africa Forum, taking place every three years since 2000, resembles the importance assigned by China to its tight ties with the African countries. The most impressive one so far was held in 2006 in Beijing. The city was completely decked out with flags and huge posters depicting lions, giraffes, elephants and banners with slogans praising this new partnership. On that occasion, the leaders of 48 African nations were invited and the event was unprecedented: no Western country, neither European nor American, had ever organized such a celebration during their rule on Africa; no European nation had ever shown such a general attention to the entire continent, its people and its interests.

On the same path should the several official visits paid by Chinese authorities to African countries be located; the one to be considered as the most relevant in this sense is that of President Xi Jinping a few weeks after his nomination by the National Assembly of the People's Republic of China. He visited several nations and participated in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) meeting in South Africa.<sup>6</sup> The symbolic and concrete importance of such a trip does not need to be underlined, as the BRICS resemble 40% of the global population, 17% of global trade, and they have deliberated on tripling their investments in Africa by 2015.<sup>7</sup> According to GITM (Global Investments Trade Monitor), "foreign investment from the BRICS into Africa reached 25% of Africa's inflows in 2012. Furthermore, most FDI projects in Africa funded by the BRICS are in manufacturing and services. Only 26% of the value of such funded projects is in the primary-goods sector."<sup>8</sup>

Although this phenomenon of Sino-African ties has been deeply analysed and investigated over the last ten years, it is not easy to collect recent academic sources describing the situation in 2014 and 2015. This could be because China assisted to a slower economic growth in 2013 and consequently its import-export and its investments

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4 Deborah Brautigam, *The dragon's gift: The real story of China in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 31.

5 *Ibid.*, 46.

6 "Tour with win-win results. President Xi Jinping arrived in Beijing on Sunday morning after visits to Russia, Tanzania, South Africa and the Republic of Congo", *Chinadaily-Africa*, last modified April 1, 2013, [http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-04/01/content\\_16362792.htm](http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-04/01/content_16362792.htm).

7 "How are Brics economies faring?" *BBC News*, last modified March 24, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-21901997>.

8 UNCTAD, "The Rise of BRICS FDI and Africa," GITM (Global Investments Trade Monitor), last modified March 25, 2013, <http://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=436>.

abroad did not increase as expected.<sup>9</sup>

### **China and Africa: the win-win strategy**

The Chinese attitude of making business in Africa has been driven by the increasing need of raw materials that the country has in order to feed its industrial system, forecasting an unstoppable and restless growth. Theoretically, the funding scheme of this partnership is the so-called *win-win* strategy. This is a branch of the traditional and well-known *Game Theory*, where no economic agent is an island, living and acting independently from the others. According to the definition provided by *The Economist*, “regulators try to make sure that companies operate on a level playing field, and competition is a series of games;” a possible state of equilibrium reachable in such business games is indeed the *win-win* situation “where both parties end up as winners; for example, a merger between two companies where synergy genuinely allows them to become more than the sum of their parts.”<sup>10</sup>

On its concrete application to the Sino-African relationship it has, in the Chinese assumption, started and strengthened a situation of mutual help and advantages for both sides. The German daily newspaper *Der Spiegel* dedicated an investigation to such *status quo* in Tanzania. What emerged, according to the words of a Chinese entrepreneur working on spot, is that:

China, Asia’s economic superpower, is hungry for natural resources, energy, food and markets for its products. Africa can offer all of these things: about 40% of global reserves of natural resources, 60% of uncultivated agricultural land, a billion people with rising purchasing power and a potential army of low-wage workers.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, the Chinese contribution to African development sets on two levels, at first: the building of infrastructure and low-interest loans to the local Governments. As the World Bank reported, after the first wave of Chinese investments in Africa, the number of people living in poverty on the continent was reduced from 84% (1981) to

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<sup>9</sup> According to the annual report “East Asia Economic Update” published by the World Bank on October 7, 2013, East Asian economies’ growth slowed down in 2013, reaching a total of rate of 7.1 % per annum instead of 7.5 % of the previous year. China achieved a growth of 7.5 % in 2013. See: The World Bank, “East Asia Pacific Economic Update-October 2013-Rebuilding Policy Buffers, Reinvigorating Growth,” last modified October 7, 2013, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eap/publication/east-asia-pacific-economic-update-october-2013>. For further details concerning the current Chinese slower economic growth and the factors behind it, see: “China’s economy-Coming down to earth,” *The Economist*, last modified April 18, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21648567-chinese-growth-losing-altitude-will-it-be-soft-or-hard-landing-coming-down-earth>.

<sup>10</sup> Tim Hindle, “Idea-Game Theory,” *The Economist*, last modified November 24, 2008, <http://www.economist.com/node/12669299>.

<sup>11</sup> Bartholomäus Grill, “Billions from Beijing: Africans Divided over Chinese Presence,” *Der Spiegel*, last modified November 29, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/chinese-investment-in-africa-boosts-economies-but-worries-many-a-934826.html>.

15.9% (2005)<sup>12</sup>.

According to data collected by Deborah Brautigam in her essay “The Dragon’s Gift”, half of Chinese assistance is classified as official aid. Actually, the volume of Chinese aid to Africa has grown from a total of US\$ 800 million in 2005 to US\$ 10 billion between 2009 and 2012<sup>13</sup>, and the loans and aids seem not to have decreased in the following years. As a matter of fact, in spring 2013, Bagamayo (Tanzania) was the focus of a story in international business news. Indeed, China made a low-interest loan of US\$ 10 billion, available for the construction of a modern container terminal 15 kilometres (9 miles) south of the city, and also planned to fund the establishment of a special economic zone in the hinterlands behind the harbour.<sup>14</sup>

Another important element for the consolidation of the Chinese presence in Africa has been the purchase of 20% of the South African Standard Bank by the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC). This action (US\$ 5.5 billion) is strategic, as the former has 500 branches in 17 African countries and therefore offers a good network of financial expansion to support investment and economic activity in Africa.<sup>15</sup> So stated, it is possible to realize how the Chinese presence in Africa is expanding and diversifying. State-owned enterprises, those managing oil, gas and strategic raw materials, are no longer the only ones acting, but also some Chinese private stakeholders have been added and operate in infrastructure and manufacturing fields.

China is putting strong efforts in defending itself against the criticism of setting up a *creeping neo-colonialism*, as Hillary Clinton, former US Secretary of State, defined it in 2011, during an official visit to Zambia.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the most common criticism is that China is exploiting the African raw materials and the population, developing a form of neo-colonialism this way. Beijing defends itself juxtaposing the above mentioned *win-win* strategy, mutually beneficial and based on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the respective countries. This, in the Western nations’ opinion, frustrates the latter’s interests, because, on the ground of these core principles of non-interference,

12 The World Bank, “Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.25 a day (PPP) (%population),” accessed May 28, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY/countries/CN?display=graph>.

13 It was not possible to obtain official data about Chinese aid to Africa from governmental sources; data here reported was estimated by Brautigam, Deborah. *The dragon’s gift: The real story of China in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

14 Bartholomäus Grill, “Billions from Beijing: Africans Divided over Chinese Presence”.

15 “Standard Bank Group Chief Executive Jacko Maree welcomed the opening of the ICBC representative office. ‘ICBC’s purchase of a 20% stake in Standard Bank was the largest Chinese investment in Africa and signalled ICBC’s clear commitment to Africa. We are working closely with ICBC to identify new business opportunities across the continent,’” Standard Bank, “ICBC opens first African representative office in Cape Town,” last modified November 25, 2011, [http://standardbank.com/Article.aspx?id=-137&src=m2011\\_34385466](http://standardbank.com/Article.aspx?id=-137&src=m2011_34385466).

16 “Secretary Clinton did not identify any alleged culprits, but a day earlier she had urged scrutiny of China’s investments and business interests in Africa so that the African people were not taken advantage of,” Suisheng Zhao, “A Neo-Colonialist Predator or Development Partner? China’s engagement and rebalance in Africa,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23, no 90 (2014): 7-12.

China would protect the so-called *rogue states*<sup>17</sup> in Africa, allowing them to escape from Western control.

To conclude, since the beginning of the Sino-African commercial partnership, China, on the ground of the *win-win* strategy, has started and settled on a system of import of raw materials and other resources, supporting the infrastructural and economic local development through a strong program of investments and loans, always appointing the principle of non-interference in individual countries' internal affairs. Instead, Western nations accuse China of setting a form of neo-colonialism in Africa. If it is undeniable that this is not a form of colonialism in the Western conception, it still has to be demonstrated that the Chinese presence in Africa is not creating any kind of inference and interference at all.

### **Africa and China: the win-through strategy**

While Chinese investments in Africa have considerably improved the economic situation of the continent, some structural and radical changes are taking place in the African society, on the stream of the tight ties with the Asian giant. This section first aims to demonstrate that Chinese and African business relationships have given such fruitful mutual results because China is actually exporting and developing its own image in Africa, in terms of economic system and of social structure. Secondly, if this can all be assumed, it is evident that the *win-win* strategy is no longer suitable to describe such a phenomenon. Therefore, a new kind of strategy could be suggested to the case: the *win-through* strategy.

The picture portrayed in the former section provides the idea of a much more widely spread Chinese presence than in the concept of *creepy neo-colonialism*. Many Africans do not only see China as an economic partner, but also as a country offering a new and alternative development model. A huge expansion project of the Chinese economic model is taking place, claiming to become a driving force of development for the whole African continent. A model that is quite different from the Western one, which was always perceived by the Africans as colonialist, which never tried to bring Africa out of its troubles, but rather multiplied these troubles and only aimed at the colonizers' enrichment.

This happens mainly due to two aspects: the transfer to Africa of the Chinese economic system of Special Economic Zones (SEZs)<sup>18</sup> and the investments from Chinese individual

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17 A *rogue state* is a state that defies, partially or totally, international Laws and Conventions, does not consider itself bound by the major treaties and conventions, World Court decisions, in fact, anything except the interests of its own leadership and the forces around the leadership that dominate politics. This way, it gets isolated by the international community, operates according to its own logic, it does not face the other members of the diplomatic community, and therefore can cultivate fears of persecution and dangerous ideas of attacking in advance for self-defence. The notion has been used for the first time by US President Reagan to define Libya under Gheddafi's dictatorship, who promoted Muslim terrorism against USA (1980). It now appoints a series of countries appearing in a list compiled by US authorities.

18 Areas created within the national borders, introduced in China from the 1980s-on, where business and trade Law is different from the rest of the country, in order to favor a quicker development of trade and industrialization.

private stakeholders in branches different from infrastructure and raw materials.

Concerning SEZs, Deborah Brautigam, Thomas Farole and Tang Xiaoyang observed that such a system is extremely beneficial to the Chinese, as they can import their own machinery and equipment. Most importantly, it allows the production of *Made in Africa* manufactured goods to be exported to Western countries as such, exploiting subsidies granted to African products this way, which is not possible for *Made in China* products.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, if stated that the Special Economic Zones should also be a factor for African economies to start a virtuous cycle of economic development, it is also evident that China is shaping the African economic and trade structure in its own resemblance. Additionally, private Chinese operators are now investing in China, especially in the field of manufacture, without tie to the state-owned enterprises. A bright example of this can be identified in the Chinese investment in South African wine, brought out as a joint venture (*Perfect Wine of South Africa*) between Hein Koegelenberg from *Leopard's Leap* and *La Motte* and *Perfect China* in 2011.<sup>20</sup>

*Der Spiegel* describes the last ten year situation as an *Irruption from China*. In the above mentioned journalistic enquire it is written as follows, “there are now more than 2,000 Chinese companies and well over a million Chinese citizens in sub-Saharan Africa.” They live in the major cities as well as on economically strategic spots (such as oil fields)—adds the German newspaper— and belong to several different social categories. Their presence is made more evident by the fact that they are not only building infrastructure for the countries, but also shaping the cities on the image of their own metropolis.<sup>21</sup> In such a cultural mixture, it is not to be excluded that the new African ruling class will develop a Chinese way of thinking in making business and organizing the institutional structure.

On the ground of these statements, it is impossible to deny that a Chinese inference is actually taking place. Even though Beijing does not officially influence the governmental choices of African countries, it is still shaping Africa on the resemblance of its own economic and social system. This special kind of foreign attitude is not so well resembled

19 Deborah Brautigam, Thomas Farole, Tang Xiaoyang “China’s Investment in Special Economic Zones: Prospects, Challenges, Opportunities”, *Economic Premise, The World Bank*, no. 5 (2010): 2-5.

20 “The *L’Huguenot* brand was born out of this joint venture and has already been responsible for the export of 2.8-million bottles of wine to China in 2011 and 2012-amounting to about 25% of the total annual South African wine exports to China, *Perfect China, Perfect Wines of South Africa* and *Val de Vie* said in a joint statement on Thursday.” “China invests in South African wine,” *SA info*, last modified August 2, 2013, [http://www.southafrica.info/business/investing/wine-020813.htm#.VWdO7s\\_tmko](http://www.southafrica.info/business/investing/wine-020813.htm#.VWdO7s_tmko).

21 “They (the Chinese) can be encountered in the major cities, in mining centres and oil fields, on plantations and even in the most remote jungle villages. They include managers and military advisers, doctors and agronomists, engineers and importers, itinerant traders, small business owners and contract workers employed on countless construction sites. [...] The Chinese are building conspicuous signs of their presence everywhere: presidential palaces, ministries, military barracks, conference centres, museums, stadiums, broadcasting companies, hotel complexes and large-scale agricultural operations. They are renovating railroad lines, paving thousands of kilometres of roads and building airports, dams, power plants and hospitals. Indeed, the Chinese are modernizing a large segment of the continent’s infrastructure.” Bartholomäus Grill, “Billions from Beijing: Africans divided over Chinese presence,” last modified November 29, 2013.

by the *win-win* strategy. Therefore, a new kind of strategy needs to be created to describe a such situation; the suggestion could be a *win-through* strategy.

Indeed, the interest of one country, China, is reached not together with the mutual current interest of the others, the Africans, but through the creation of a system similar to the Chinese one, so that the latter will end up having the same needs and interests of the former one. China will then be a double winner; it will reach the most suitable solution to its own needs neither by simply exploiting the African countries, as the Western colonialists did, nor by finding an agreement in order to satisfy the current and real needs of the Africans, as the *win-win* strategy would mean. Instead, it is achieving this goal by shaping a system which resembles the Chinese one and which will eventually and naturally have the same necessities and interests. On the ground of these statements, this new particular situation could indeed be described with the notion of *win-through* strategy.

Therefore, as it is evident that the Chinese situation in Africa is dissimilar to the concept of Western colonialism, it appears clear that the Chinese influence stands on a deeper level than just business relationships. Indeed, the Chinese SEZ system has been exported to Africa, many Chinese private entrepreneurs are investing in African manufactures and a strong migratory flux has raised from China towards Africa. For this reason, it is evident that a *win-through* strategy is being set: China tries to reach its best interest by giving Africa an economic and social shape resembling its own.

### Conclusion

The Chinese interest in Africa has become a relevant issue in the current international scenery. With its historical origin in the 1950s, it has shown a strong and increasing process of development from the 1990s on.

What is undeniable is that the Chinese presence in Africa is nowadays deeply planted in the territory, on several levels. Even though accusation of colonialism came from Western voices, China has always opposed to these the idea of behaving on the ground of the *win-win* strategy. This describes the mutual help established on both sides: raw materials from Africa to China and building of infrastructure, big investments and low-interest loans the other way around, without any interference in African countries' internal affairs.

Although all of this incontestably happened, other factors characterize such partnership: big and increasing investments carried out by Chinese individuals in African manufactures, a strong migratory flux from China towards its business partners and the increasing resemblance of African cities to the Chinese ones.

After this statement, it is evident that the *win-win* strategy is no longer suitable to describe such a situation. This is why this work suggests the creation of the *win-through* strategy, to describe how this partnership has been fed by transposing the Chinese economic and social structure to the African countries. **GPR**

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# Convergence or Divergence in Future? Comparative Analysis between the WTO SCM Agreement and the Agreement on Agriculture

*Minju Kim*

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**Abstract:** The World Trade Organization (WTO) has treated agricultural subsidies as exceptional. Under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994, subsidies are in general regulated under the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (the SCM Agreement) while agricultural subsidies are regulated under the Agreement on Agriculture (the AoA). This paper delves into the historical backgrounds of diverging regulatory patterns of the two by referring to the legal documents from the ITO Havana Charter in 1948 to the GATT 1994. Along with the historical review, rationales for justifying the exceptional status of agricultural products are thoroughly examined. This paper concludes that convergence of the SCM Agreement and the AoA is required in the long-run for strengthening the legal consistency and fairness of the WTO subsidies regime.

**Keywords:** WTO; Subsidies; Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures; the Agreement on Agriculture; Convergence.

## Introduction

For the last two decades, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has played an enormous role in organizing the world trade system. WTO not only constructed a multilateral trade institution, but also became equipped with highly binding enforcement mechanisms to pressure its member countries to adopt trade policies that are consistent with the WTO's rules. A subsidy issue, one of the most controversial issues in the world trading system due to its trade-distorting nature, has also been ruled by the WTO under the two separate agreements: the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (the SCM Agreement) and the Agreement on Agriculture (the AoA).

Interestingly, the SCM Agreement strongly deters its member countries to use trade-distorting subsidies. On the other hand, the AoA, the subsidies agreement tailored

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to agricultural products, is relatively lenient by allowing member countries to take protectionist measures through its regulatory loopholes. How did the WTO happen to come up with these seemingly asymmetric regulations under the separate agreements? Should this divergence be encouraged or discouraged in the ongoing Doha Round negotiation?

A number of previous studies individually analyzed the texts of the SCM Agreement (Ahn, 2003) and the AoA (McMahon, 2006). However, few studies had been conducted so far in analyzing the relationship between the two agreements except Desta (2005), which pinpointed the interconnected structure of the two agreements. Research on prospective convergence or divergence of the two agreements is at an incipient stage. Connor (2005) and Haberli (2005) argued that the AoA's total integration into the SCM Agreement will not be possible in the foreseeable future, but these analyses more focus on feasibility rather than necessity of the convergence.

In this paper, historical evolutions of the WTO the SCM Agreement and the AoA will be thoroughly examined. Legal comparison between the two agreements will follow afterward. Ultimately, this paper aims to thoroughly understand diverging regulatory patterns of the SCM Agreement and the AoA, thereby guiding a long-term direction of the WTO subsidies regime.

### **Nature of Agriculture in the World Trading System**

Agriculture has occupied a unique status in the world trading system. Special treatment of agriculture products different from that of ordinary goods in the world trading system is largely attributed to the widespread recognition that agriculture possesses a number of distinguished characteristics. Multifunctionality and inelasticity of demands are two representative characteristics of agriculture.

#### *Multifunctionality*

The fundamental assumption of separating treatment of agricultural products from other goods is multifunctionality of agriculture. Multifunctionality refers to the multiple goods and services provided by agriculture and the contribution that these goods and services make to the achievement of domestic non-food objectives.<sup>1</sup> Non-food objectives in multifunctionality are also known as non-trade concerns. The range of non-trade concerns is very wide, namely environmental services, natural resource protection, rural landscape and recreation areas. Fulfilling societal goals like viability of rural areas and their development, decentralised settlement of the territory, food security, and preservation of cultural heritage are also the components of the non-trade concerns.<sup>2</sup> Especially, food security and environment protection are stipulated as the non-trade concerns in the

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1 OECD, Multifunctionality: a Framework for Policy Analysis, OECD, AGR/CA (98)9, Paris, 1998: para. 7.

2 WTO, G/AG/NG/W/36/Rev.1, Attachment 1, para.16.

Preamble of the AoA. Even though the word ‘multifunctionality’ does not appear in any of the existing WTO agreements, this word has been continuously used as a means for justifying the existence of the AoA.

### *Inelasticity in Demand*

Inelasticity in demand is another logic that justifies the relatively lenient subsidy regulations on agricultural subsidies over the others. Therefore, each country should be equipped with measures to secure the equilibrium between supply and demand of agricultural products. Article 55 of Havana Charter for an International Trade Organization reflects the related concern. Article 55 provides that:

The Members recognize that the conditions under which some primary commodities are produced, exchanged and consumed are such that international trade in these commodities may be affected by special difficulties such as the *tendency towards persistent disequilibrium between production and consumption, the accumulation of burdensome stocks and pronounced fluctuations in prices*. These special difficulties may have serious adverse effects on the interests of producers and consumers, as well as widespread repercussions jeopardizing the general policy of economic expansion. *The Members recognize that such difficulties may, at times, necessitate special treatment of the international trade in such commodities through inter-governmental agreement.*

### **Historical Evolutions of the SCM Agreement and the AoA**

Analysis of the previous legal documents helps to understand how agriculture became separately regulated under the current WTO subsidies regime. Before the establishment of the WTO, there were discussions on to what extent agriculture should be treated differently from ordinary goods.

#### *The Havana Charter for an International Trade Organization*

The history of agricultural subsidies regulation goes back to the Havana Charter for an International Trade Organization (ITO)<sup>3</sup> in 1948. The Havana Charter stipulated prohibition on the export subsidies and the notification duties on any subsidy including any form of income or price support in Article 26.1 and Article 27.1, respectively. Article 26.1 prohibits ‘any subsidy on the export of any product,’ but subsidies on primary commodities are exempt from the prohibition under Article 27.1.

Article 26.1 provides that:

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3 ITO is an intellectual precursor of the WTO. ITO could not be established because the US Congress did not ratify the Havana Charter. Nevertheless, the efforts to establish the ITO triggered the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (the GATT) into being. See Richard Toye, “The International Trade Organization” In *The Oxford Handbook on The World Trade Organization*, edited by Amrita Narlikar, et al. (New York: Oxford Press: 2012).

No Member shall grant, directly or indirectly, any subsidy on the export of *any product*, or establish or maintain any other system<sup>4</sup>, which subsidy or system results in the sale of such product for export at a price lower than the comparable price charged for the like product to buyers in the domestic market, due allowance being made for differences in the conditions and terms of sale, for differences in taxation, and for other differences affecting price comparability.

Article 27.1 provides that:

A system for the stabilization of the domestic price or of the return to domestic producers of a *primary commodity*, independently of the movements of export prices, which results at times in the sale of the commodity for export at a price lower than the comparable price charged for the like commodity to buyers in the domestic market, *shall be considered not to involve a subsidy on export within the meaning of paragraph 1 of Article 26, ...*

The above articles clarify the contrasting treatment of subsidies on a primary commodity and that of a non-primary commodity under the Havana Charter. A primary commodity in this context means “any product of farm, forest or fishery or any mineral, in its natural form or which has undergone such processing as is customarily required to prepare it for marketing in substantial volume in international trade.”<sup>5</sup> Rather than clear-cutting the sectoral line between agriculture and non-agriculture, the Havana Charter gave exceptions based on a product-by-product basis.

### *The GATT 1947*

Even though ITO could not be established in the end, the GATT 1947 reflected the institutional legacy of the Havana Charter. The GATT drafters certainly did not have a clear intention to separate subsidies regulations on agriculture from other sectors as there was no separate agreement tailored to agriculture in the GATT provisions. This means as far as the relevant provisions are concerned, agriculture was a nearly “normal” sector in the GATT until 1994.<sup>6</sup> General principles of the GATT were fully applicable to agriculture. Yet, the GATT Article XI:2(c), Article XVI explicitly or implicitly acknowledge the unique status of agricultural products. Article XXV:5 was not the rule for preferencing agricultural products, but it weakened the regulatory power of the GATT 1947 including

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4 The text note of Ad Article 11:2 (c) narrowly defines the term ‘in any form’ as “an early stage of processing and still perishable, which compete directly with the fresh product and if freely imported would tend to make the restriction on the fresh product ineffective.” This means to meet the terms of the interpretative note, it would be necessary before an imported processed product could be restricted that it was in an early stage of processing, perishable, in indirect competition with the fresh product; and necessary to restrict it to prevent the restriction on the fresh product from being ineffective.

5 Havana Charter for ITO Art. 56.1.

6 Daniel L. M. Kennedy, James D. South. *The Political Economy of International Trade Law, Essays in Honor of Robert E. Hudec*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002: 257.

the rules governing agricultural products.

First, the only clause where agriculture is explicitly mentioned as an exception to subsidies regulation is stipulated in the GATT Article XI:2 (c). It regulates that “any agricultural or fisheries product, imported in any form” is not subject to prohibition on import restrictions. On the contrary, in the case of non-primary products, prohibitions or restrictions other than duties, taxes, or other charges, whether made effective through quotas, import or export licences or other measures are not allowed under Article XI.1. Originally the GATT Article XI:2(c) was not designed to allow protectionist measures on agriculture and fishery products, but to respect policy space of individual GATT Contracting Parties.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the GATT contracting Parties continuously attempted to justify their import restrictions on agricultural or fisheries product by bringing up this exception clause as in the cases of *European Economic Community – Restrictions on Imports of Dessert Apples*<sup>8</sup> and *Canada-Restrictions on imports of ice cream and yoghurt*.<sup>9</sup>

Second, Article XVI was another provision that differentiated treatment of agricultural products from others under the name of ‘primary products.’ It is legally analogous to that of Article 27.1 of the Havana Charter for the International Trade Organization. The coverage of this exception is not restricted to agriculture products, but also fishery products and minerals as well.<sup>10</sup> Yet, processed agriculture products are excluded from this exception.<sup>11</sup>

Article XVI Section B paragraph 3 provides that:

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7 This intention of the GATT drafters are well reflected in the text note of Ad Article XI:2(c) as well. the GATT drafters prevented future abuse of this exception by enunciating rigorous conditions for allowable import restrictions. To illustrate, The text note of Ad Article XI:2 (c) narrowly defines the term ‘in any form’ as “an early stage of processing and still perishable, which compete directly with the fresh product and if freely imported would tend to make the restriction on the fresh product ineffective.” This means to meet the terms of the interpretative note, it would be necessary before an imported processed product could be restricted that it was in an early stage of processing, perishable, in indirect competition with the fresh product; and necessary to restrict it to prevent the restriction on the fresh product from being ineffective.

8 The Panel judged that the EC’s import restriction on apples were not “necessary” because the apple production surpluses were not “temporary” as required by Article XI:2(c) (ii) but were the logical consequence of the EC’s Common Agricultural Policy that facilitated apple production by applying domestic prices higher than world prices. (Panel Report, *European Economic Community – Restrictions on Imports of Dessert Apples*, 18 April 1989, L/6491- 36S/93, para.12.19.).

9 Canada claimed that its import restriction is necessary to ensure the maintenance of Canadian quotas on raw milk production. The Panel concluded that the Canada’s import restriction on yoghurt and ice cream was not “necessary” since there is no sufficient evidence that future imports of ice cream and yoghurt would significantly affect Canadian producers ability to market raw milk. (Panel Report, *Canada- Import Restrictions on Ice Cream and Yoghurt*, 5 December 1989, L/6568-36S/68, para. 81.).

10 The interpretative note of the GATT Article XVI Section B provides that:

For the purposes of Section B, a “primary product” is understood to be any product of farm, forest or fishery, or any mineral, in its natural form or which has undergone such processing as is customarily required to prepare it for marketing in substantial volume in international trade.

11 In *European Economic Community - Subsidies on Export of Pasta Products*, EEC’s pay export refunds on pasta was not justified under the GATT Article XVI as the GATT viewed pasta as a processed industrial product which is not covered by the “primary product” exemption. (Panel Report, *European Economic Community - Subsidies on Export of Pasta Products*, SCM/43, adopted on 19 May 1983, para. 4.4.).

Accordingly, *contracting parties should seek to avoid the use of subsidies on the export of primary products*. If, however, a contracting party grants directly or indirectly any form of subsidy which operates to increase the export of any primary product from its territory, such subsidy shall not be applied in a manner which results in that contracting party having *more than an equitable share of world export trade* in that product, account being taken of the shares of the contracting parties in such trade in the product during a previous representative period, and any *special factors* which may have affected or may be affecting such trade in the product.

Article XVI Section B paragraph 3 provides that the use of subsidies on the export of primary products ‘should be avoided,’ and granting such subsidies should not be applied in a manner which results in that contracting party having more than an equitable share of world export trade in that product. This means the use of export subsidies on a primary product is not completely prohibited. On the other hand, the usage of export subsidies on a non-primary product is rigorously regulated. In regards to ‘a non-primary product,’ Following paragraph 4 requests ceasing to grant any direct or indirect export subsidies. The vagueness of the conditions attached to the provision such as ‘more than an equitable share of world trade’ or ‘special factors’ meant that it opened a huge hole in the GATT legal framework, allowing this notorious element of agriculture trade policies to go easily unrestrained.<sup>12</sup>

Third, the GATT Article XXV:5 seriously weakened the binding power of the GATT in general, including agricultural products. According to the GATT Article XXV:5, contracting parties was able to waive an obligation imposed upon them provided that any such decision shall be approved by the two-thirds majority of the votes cast and that such majority shall comprise more than half of the contracting parties. In the 1950s the US demanded the GATT waiver that would allow it to use import quotas for agricultural products that had price supports.<sup>13</sup> The US threatened to withdraw from the GATT if the waiver was not granted, so the other members of the GATT had no other choice but to agree to the waiver.<sup>14</sup> This waiver implies that the GATT did not have a sufficient enforcement mechanism to regulate agricultural subsidies of the contracting parties.

### *The Kennedy Round*

Compared to the high protectionist agricultural policy in the 1950s, the emphasis of American agricultural policy changed in the 1960s. The US started to promote agricultural trade liberalization under the GATT. This change in policy emphasis led to another launch

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12 *Supra* note 7, 258.

13 According to the the GATT ruling of *Dairy Products from Holland* in 1952, the US had to abandon its restrictions on milk imports.

14 Hathaway, Dale E. *The Impacts of US Agricultural and Trade Policy on Trade Liberalization and Integration via a US-Central American Free Trade Agreement* (Buenos Aires: Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean IDB-INTAL, 2003), 17.

of multilateral negotiation—the Kennedy Round. Though the result of the negotiation was not successful, this round of negotiation was the first attempt in history to multilateralise agricultural negotiations in the WTO. From the Kennedy Round, the WTO took a sectoral approach in regulating agricultural subsidies.

During the Kennedy Round, there was a conspicuous structural conflict between the European Communities (EC) in pursuit of maintaining existing level of support and the US in pursuit of pro-liberalization. To be specific, EC actively persuaded the GATT contracting parties the necessity to compare the guaranteed domestic support price with the price of the product on the international market during the negotiation. EC also proposed to bind the levels of domestic support for future negotiations on agriculture.<sup>15</sup> However, the Kennedy Round failed to reach an agreement because the contracting parties viewed the EC's proposal as an attempt to ensure international acceptance of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EC's domestic agricultural subsidies system. Moreover, the proposal failed to gain support from the US. The US sought arrangements for expanding international agricultural trade, but EC's proposal provided only limited trade expansion through securing present levels of support.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Tokyo Round (the Subsidies Code)*

From the 1960s, developing countries actively incorporated subsidies for their economic development strategy. However, the GATT 1947 Article XVI was too simple to regulate all the subsidizing behaviour of the GATT contracting parties. Therefore, the first attempt to establish an agreement tailored to subsidies was made during the Tokyo Round. Agreement on Interpretation and Application of Article VI, XVI and XXIII of the GATT (the Subsidies Code) was completed in September 1978 and came into effect in January 1980. The Subsidies Code confirmed the prohibition of export subsidies on non-primary products. Compared to the previous the GATT document, the illustrative list of export subsidies was provided and the procedures for countervailing duties investigation became more clarified in the Subsidies Code. However, the Subsidies Code was a plurilateral agreement, meaning that a country which did not sign the Code was not bound by the newly regulated subsidies rule and could remain to be bound under the GATT 1947. This has created a “forum shopping” problem within the WTO subsidies regime. Against this backdrop, the GATT contracting parties initiated discussions on establishing a multilateral subsidies rule under the following Uruguay Round.

### *The Uruguay Round*

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, international markets were challenged by a strong

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15 McMahon, Joseph A. *The WTO the Agreement on Agriculture: A Commentary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006: 7.

16 Ibid.

period of economic turbulence, and the rising EU-US trade conflict worsened the impact of the global recession on trade balances.<sup>17</sup> The US—the world’s number one exporter of agriculture products and number two importer of agriculture products—competed with the EC—the world’s number two exporter of agriculture products and number one importer of agriculture products—through accumulation of surpluses and a headlong race to subsidies.<sup>18</sup> Other exporting countries joined this subsidy which pulled down the world prices of agriculture products. Consequently, every participant in the Uruguay Round negotiation agreed with the necessity to reduce the uncertainty and instability that plagued world agricultural markets.

Regardless of the consensus made by every participant to bring agriculture into the GATT, the process to reach an agreement in how to reduce the uncertainty and instability in the world agriculture market was arduous. Especially, the interests of the US and EU had paralleled for a long time. After a series of negotiations, the US and EC finally succeeded in compromising their views on agricultural subsidies through the Blair House Accord of 1992. Political backgrounds of the two countries pressured the two countries to quickly finish the negotiation. EC was under pressure from the Americans who were threatening trade sanctions in the soya case<sup>19</sup> to push for an agreement on the agricultural negotiation. The US administration also wanted to quickly reach an agreement because the President Bush was standing for election and an international success would help him in the US presidential elections scheduled for November 1992.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the first multilateral agricultural negotiation was able to be concluded in the Uruguay Round under the name of Agreement on Agriculture in Brussels on 6 December 1993, just nine days before the end of the fast track procedure of the US administration.

### **Legal Comparison between the SCM Agreement and the AoA**

After the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, subsidy issues have been ruled under the two different WTO agreements according to a product at issue. As the WTO dispute settlement cases dealing with subsidies and agricultural subsidies issues comprise nearly half of the total WTO dispute settlement cases, understanding the structural similarities

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17 Tomas Garcia Azcarate, Marina Masstrostefano. “Agriculture and the WTO True Love or Shotgun Wedding?” In *Essays on the Future of the WTO: Finding a New Balance*, edited by Kim Van der Borcht, Eric Remack, Jarrod Wiener. London: Cameron May, 2003:131.

18 Fabian Delcros. “The Legal Status of Agriculture in the World Trade Organization, State of Play at the Start of Negotiations.” *Journal of World Trade* 36, no.2. 219-253: 227.

19 The soya case refers to *EC—Payments and subsidies paid to processors and producers of oilseeds and related animal-feed proteins*. The Panel found that the Community Regulations providing for payments to seed processors conditional on the purchase of oilseeds originating in the Community are inconsistent with Article III:4 of the General Agreement, according to which imported products shall be given treatment no less favourable than that accorded to like domestic products in respect of all regulations affecting their internal purchase.. (Panel Report, *EC—Payments and subsidies paid to processors and producers of oilseeds and related animal-feed proteins*, 25 January 1990, L/6627 – 37S/86, para. 155-156.).

20 *Supra* note 20, 230.



and differences of the two agreements is pivotal. The below comparative analysis of the two agreements indicates that the two agreements are fundamentally different in their structures even though the both agreements regulate subsidies in essence.

### *The SCM Agreement*

#### **Definition of a Subsidy**

The definition of a subsidy in the SCM Agreement is in Article 1:1: “A subsidy shall be deemed to exist if there is a financial contribution by a government or any public body within the territory of a member country or there is any form of income or price support in the sense of Article 16 of the GATT 1994 and a benefit is thereby conferred.” Therefore, validating any form of government intervention or existence of a conferred benefit is a key process in defining a subsidy. When access to the subsidy is limited, explicitly or in fact, to certain enterprises, specificity criterion in Article 2 is fulfilled. Restricted to the subsidy which fulfilled specificity criterion, WTO allows its member country with adverse effects to levy countervailing duties to the other member countries.

#### **Categories of Subsidies**

The framework of the SCM Agreement is based on the traffic-light approach. All the subsidies are classified into the red, yellow, and green light subsidies. Each is subject to different treatment in terms of quantities of mandatory reduction and lengths of allowed grace periods. The red light subsidy is a prohibited subsidy.<sup>21</sup> Both export subsidies and import substitution subsidies constitute the red light subsidy. Compared to the GATT 1947, the scope of prohibited subsidies is broad in a sense that it includes import substitution subsidies in addition to export subsidies. Developing and least developed countries (“LDCs”) are preferentially treated because they are granted with extended grace periods and exemption from particular types of the red light subsidy.

The green light subsidy, known as non-actionable subsidy, is expired on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1999. Hence, only prohibited and actionable subsidies currently exist in the traffic light classification. The green light subsidy was allowed under the SCM Agreement and had not been subject to countervailing duties as well.<sup>22</sup> R&D, regional development, and environment subsidies were the examples of non-actionable subsidies.<sup>23</sup>

The yellow light subsidy, also called as actionable subsidy, is not prohibited yet subject to countervailing measures. The yellow light subsidy is the subsidy that is not subject to red or green light subsidy. Country A can challenge country B’s actionable subsidies through a multilateral dispute settlement mechanism or through a countervailing measure against an adverse effect to the interests of the country A. Adverse effect is substantiated in

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21 The SCM Agreement Art 3.

22 The SCM Agreement Art. 8.

23 The SCM Agreement Art. 8:2.

case there is an injury to domestic industry caused by subsidized imports in the territory of the complaining Member, serious prejudice, nullification or impairment of the benefits accruing under the GATT 1994.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Agreement on Agriculture**

The outline of the AoA is laid out in the Punta del Este Declaration in 1987.<sup>25</sup> The AoA concluded in 1994 is the most complete attempt to date to frame explicit multilateral rules for agricultural trade.<sup>26</sup> Export subsidy, market access, and domestic support are the three pillar of the AoA.

### **Export Subsidy**

Rather than completely eliminating export subsidies, the WTO member countries agreed to cut both the amount of money they spend on export subsidies and the quantities of exports subsidies. Given 1986-1990 as the base level, developed countries are to cut their values of export subsidies by 36 percent over the six years starting from 1995. Developing countries are subject to 24 percent cut on their values of export subsidies over the ten years.

### **Market Access**

The Uruguay Round set a 'tariff only' rule, meaning that tariff should be the only trade-restrictive measure in agricultural trade. In other words, usage of import quotas or other non-tariff measures are highly discouraged. Developed countries promised to cut the tariffs (the higher out-of quota rates in the case of tariff-quotas) by 36 percent over the six years from 1995. Developing countries reached an agreement to cut the tariffs by 24 percent over the ten years from the same year. Least-developed countries are not subject to tariff reduction.

### **Domestic Support**

The domestic support mechanism of the AoA is often explained by the "boxes system."

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24 The SCM Agreement Art. 5.

25 Part 1-D the GATT Punta del Este Declaration in 1987 The CONTRACTING PARTIES agree that there is an urgent need to bring more discipline and predictability to world agricultural trade by correcting and preventing restrictions and distortions including those related to structural surpluses so as to reduce the uncertainty, imbalances and instability in world agricultural markets. Negotiations shall aim to achieve greater liberalization of trade in agriculture and bring all measures affecting import access and export competition under strengthened and more operationally effective the GATT rules and disciplines, taking into account the general principles governing the negotiations by:

(i) improving market access through, inter alia, the reduction of import barriers;(ii) improving the competitive environment by increasing discipline on the use of all direct and indirect subsidies and other measures affecting directly or indirectly agricultural trade, including the phased reduction of their negative effects and dealing with their causes;(iii) minimizing the adverse effects that sanitary and phytosanitary regulations and barriers can have on trade in agriculture, taking into account the relevant international agreements.

26 World Trade Report 2006:193.

The boxes system is categorized into the green, blue, and amber boxes according to the level of distortion on world trade. Domestic support reduction commitments are expressed in terms of an Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS) and entered into Members' Schedules of Annual and Final Bound Commitment Levels, with the exception of the subsidies in blue, green, and S&D boxes.<sup>27</sup> Thirty-four WTO Members who made a commitment to reduce total AMS in the Uruguay Round negotiation bear an obligation to reduce amber subsidies according to their reduction schedule (Table 1). In any year of the implementation period, the Current Total AMS value of non-exempt measures must not exceed the scheduled Total AMS limit as specified in the schedule for that year.<sup>28</sup> This means WTO bounds the maximum levels of such support.

Green box subsidies are defined in the Annex 2 of the Agreement on Agriculture. Green box subsidies are known to have most minimal trade-distorting effects or effects on production.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, green box subsidies are exempt from the reduction commitments as long as the support in question shall be provided through a publicly-funded government program not involving transfers from consumers and the support in question shall not have the effect of providing price support producers. They are usually decoupled from current production levels or prices.<sup>30</sup> Subsidies for food security purposes,<sup>31</sup> structural adjustment assistance provided through producer retirement programmes,<sup>32</sup> and regional assistance programmes<sup>33</sup> are classified as green box subsidies, thereby not bound to the reduction commitments.

Blue box subsidies are "amber box with condition." This means amber box subsidies would be re-classified as blue box subsidies as long as there is a promise of reduction on production.<sup>34</sup> They are originally designed to relieve the WTO member countries' pain of dramatically removing amber box subsidies. Blue box subsidies are not subject to the reduction commitments analogous to that of green box subsidies.

Amber box subsidies are all the domestic support subsidies except green and blue box subsidies. Amber box subsidies are known to substantially distort world trade, thus it falls into the scope of the reduction commitments as stipulated in the Article 6. Measures to

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27 Ibid.

28 WTO, Agreement on Agriculture Explanation ([https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/agric\\_e/ag\\_intro03\\_domestic\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/ag_intro03_domestic_e.htm)).

29 The Agreement on Agriculture, Annex 2, part. 1.

30 The Agreement on Agriculture, Annex 2.6.

31 The Agreement on Agriculture, Annex 2.3.

32 The Agreement on Agriculture, Annex 2.9.

33 The Agreement on Agriculture, Annex 2.13.

34 The Agreement on Agriculture, Art. 6:5 provides that: (a) Direct payments under production-limiting programmes shall not be subject to the commitment to reduce domestic support if: (i) such payments are based on fixed area and yields; or(ii) such payments are made on 85 percent or less of the base level of production; or(iii) livestock payments are made on a fixed number of head (b) The exemption from the reduction commitment for direct payments meeting the above criteria shall be reflected by the exclusion of the value of those direct payments in a Member's calculation of its Current Total AMS.

support prices or subsidies directly related to production quantities are the examples of amber box subsidies. Developed country members with a Total AMS have to reduce base period support by 20 per cent over six years. Developing country members with a Total AMS have to reduce it by 13.3 per cent over ten years.

S&D box and *de-minimis* support are content-wise supposed to be classified into the amber box, but are excluded from a Member's amber box subsidies calculation. Similar to the SCM Agreement, the AoA endows preferential treatments to developing countries. Subsidies encouraging agricultural and rural development of developing countries are not classified as amber box subsidies in the name of S&D box. In addition, domestic support which its portion is minimal is categorized as *de-minimis* support and thus exempt from amber box subsidies. Either product-specific or non-product specific domestic support which does not exceed 5 percent of a member country's total value of production is called *de-minimis* support. For developing countries, the *de-minimis* percentage extends to 10 percent.<sup>35</sup>

Table 1) The AoA's Structure of the Domestic Support

Total Domestic Support	Amber Box (measured by AMS Index)	To be Reduced (20 percent or 13.3percent)
	Product-Specific <i>de minimis</i>	Ceiling (5 percent or 10 percent of AMS)
Non-product specific <i>de minimis</i>		
(Total AMS)	Blue Box	Must not exceed 1992 levels No reductions required
	Special and Differential Treatment Box (S&D Box)	
	Green Box	No ceiling No reductions required

Source: WTO

### The Peace Clause

Article 13 of the Agreement on Agriculture, so called the peace clause shows the interrelation between the AoA and the SCM Agreement. The Peace Clause was inserted into the AoA almost at the last minute of the Uruguay Round negotiations as a temporary reassurance mechanism against action based on certain non-agriculture agreement rules of the WTO.<sup>36</sup> This clause exempts domestic measures on agricultural products from imposing countervailing duties and actions based on Article 5 and 6 of the SCM Agreement. This clause was effective for eight years and lapsed in December 31<sup>st</sup> 2003. Opinions diverge whether the peace clause is *de facto* effective after its official expiry date, but many WTO Members except the Cairns Group countries<sup>37</sup> agree that the provisions

<sup>35</sup> The Agreement on Agriculture. Art. 6:4.

<sup>36</sup> Desta, Melaku Geboye. "The Integration of Agriculture into the WTO Disciplines, Agriculture in the WTO Law." In *Agriculture in the WTO Law*, edited by Bernard O'Connor. London: Cameron May, 2005: 37.

<sup>37</sup> The Cairns Group is the coalition of agricultural exporting nations lobbying for agricultural trade

that make exceptions for agricultural subsidies will continue to apply even after the peace clause is expired.<sup>38</sup>

### Comparison of the two Agreements

The following is the comparison between the two agreements based on the legal analysis conducted above. The two agreements are linked in a sense they share the definition of a subsidy. The two agreements are differently treated in the WTO subsidies regime in terms of objectives, treatments of domestic support, and export subsidies.

### Definition of a Subsidy

The AoA nowhere defines what is a ‘subsidy.’ Instead, it borrows the definition from Agreement on SCM in Article 1.1. In *Canada-Milk* case, the Appellate Body confirmed that all the components of a subsidy as defined by the SCM Agreement must exist to determine whether a subsidy exists within the meaning of Agreement on Agriculture.<sup>39</sup> This implies that Agreement on SCM lays down the legal basis of the AoA by lending its definition of a ‘subsidy.’

### Differences in Objectives

Whereas the SCM Agreement aggressively regulates distorting subsidies through the traffic-light classification, the AoA’s long-term objective is “to establish a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system.”<sup>40</sup> This difference stretches into sectional allowance of countervailing measures. The SCM Agreement allows retaliatory actions against prohibited or actionable subsidies by allowing ‘countervailing measures,’ but the AoA is devoid of such retaliatory mechanism. Compared to the highly-regulated SCM Agreement, the AoA is now at a rudimentary stage to regulate agricultural subsidies at a multilateral level.

### Treatment of Domestic Support

The concept of domestic support is unique in the Agreement on Agriculture, meaning it is “a category with no roots in the GATT.”<sup>41</sup> This implies that regulations on domestic subsidies were never subjected to any strict disciplines under the GATT. Desta (2005) argues that the fact that one half of the AoA is devoted to discipline domestic support measures is due to the drafters’ strong message to exempt agricultural domestic subsidies

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liberalization. The Cairns Group countries maintain that the all agricultural subsidies will fall under the common ruling of the SCM Agreement as the peace clause is void after its expiry date.

38 *Supra* note 20, 250.

39 *Appellate Body Report, Canada- Measures affecting the exportation of dairy products and the importation of milk (Canada-Milk)*, WTO/DS103/AB/R, WT/DS113/AB/R, adopted on 27 October 1999.

40 Preamble, the Agreement on Agriculture.

41 *Supra* note 43, 23.

from rulings of the SCM Agreement.

Some scholars argue that the domestic support regulations on the AoA is unbalanced and biased in favour of developed and exporting countries because developed countries' internal support during a 1986-90 base period was larger than those of developing countries.<sup>42</sup> This justified developed countries to continuously subsidize their agricultural product albeit at a decreasing annual rate. On the contrary, developing countries or net importing countries, even though given special and differential treatments stipulated under the Article 9.4 of the Agreement on Agriculture, do not have many AMS quotas for subsidizing their agricultural products as much as those of developed countries.

### **Treatment of Export Subsidies**

The SCM Agreement prohibits any kind of export subsidies. On the other hand, the AoA allows export subsidies unless the total amount does not exceed the budgetary outlay and quantity commitment levels.<sup>43</sup> Analogous to the domestic support regulations, the export subsidy regulations have been criticized for granting more preferences to developed countries. By permitting past users of export subsidies to maintain these subsidies subject to certain reduction obligations, while prohibiting the introduction of the new subsidies, the regulations on export subsidy is condemned as institutionalizing the unfair competitive advantage held by developed country producers.<sup>44</sup>

Table 2) Comparison between the SCM Agreement and the AoA

	the SCM Agreement	the AoA
Commonality	Definition of a Subsidy	
Product Coverage	Non-Agricultural Products	Agricultural Products
Objectives	Prohibition of Trade-Distorting Subsidies	Establishment of a Fair and Market-oriented Agricultural Trading system
Countervailing Measures	Allowed	Not Allowed under the Peace Clause
Export Subsidy	Prohibited except S&D	Allowed (But to be Reduced)
Domestic Support	-	Amber/Green/Blue/S&D/De-minimis

### **Divergence or Convergence in Future?**

As the historical analysis in the previous section has shown, the regulatory patterns on agricultural and non-agricultural subsidies have diverged since the discussion on ITO

42 National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Republic of Korea. "Coexistence of Diverse Forms of Agriculture in the DDA Agricultural Negotiations." Paper presented at the WTO Public Symposium, Geneva, Switzerland, May 25-27, 2003: 3.

43 The SCM Agreement Art.3:3, Art. 8.

44 Gonzalez, Carmen G. "Institutionalizing Inequality: The WTO the Agreement on Agriculture, Food Security, and Developing Countries." *Columbia Journal of Environmental Law* 27, no. 2, 433-90: 464.

establishment in the 1940s. In order to assure that the subsidies regime is consistent, there should be legal consistency between the two agreements. The regulatory asymmetry between the two agreements has generated confusion among WTO Members as well as the Members' dissatisfaction toward the subsidies regime. To strengthen the legal consistency of the WTO subsidies regime, attempts to converge the AoA and the SCM Agreement should be accompanied in the following rounds of multilateral negotiations.

Separation of the AoA from the SCM Agreement is lack of a solid reasoning. The historical analysis of the trade agreements vindicates that the exception on agricultural products was initially given on a product-by-product basis, not on a sectoral basis. Agriculture is known for unique features such as multifunctionality and inelasticity in demand, but there should be contemplation on whether the special treatment of agriculture within the WTO subsidies regime can be justified solely with these features. Under the *status quo* division of the two agreements, the preferential treatment of agriculture is likely to be further strengthened in the future given that the two agreements currently do not share a unified legal framework for regulating WTO Members' subsidizing behaviours.

Besides legal inconsistency, the asymmetric ruling of the WTO subsidies regime between agricultural and non-agricultural products is quintessentially related to the fairness of the regime. The convergence of the two agreements is necessary to respond to the growing complaints of developing countries that current the WTO subsidies regime is institutionalizing global inequality. As explained in the previous section, developed countries have been entitled with rights to distribute more subsidies to their farmers than those of developing countries because of their 1986-90 base period subsidies amount. Gradual attempts to converge the two agreements would alleviate the complaints of developing countries as the convergence would trigger agricultural subsidies to be regulated under a unified regulatory mechanism.

### Conclusion

The WTO subsidies regime lacks legal consistency as there is a clear discrepancy in the rulings on agricultural and non-agricultural subsidies. Currently the rulings on agricultural subsidies and non-agricultural subsidies are bifurcated into the AoA and the SCM Agreement. This regulatory divergence is not a sudden outcome of the Uruguay Round negotiation but is the result of gradual historical evolution from the Havana Charter. Multifunctionality and inelasticity of the demand have been the prevailing rationales of justifying different treatment of agricultural products from others, yet whether these features are sufficient to justify preferential treatment of agriculture within WTO is contested.

To ensure the legal consistency and fairness of the WTO subsidies regime, the convergence of the two agreements is to be encouraged in the long-run. Specific modalities for the convergence of the two agreements are to be covered in subsequent research. Attempts

to converge the two may provide a potential clue to break the Doha Round negotiation deadlock. **GPR**



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**ESSAYS**



# The Power of Cinema on the Korean Peninsula

*Samyel Lee*

**Abstract:** The Korean peninsula is constantly in a dynamic discussion of identity and direction. For South Korean society, it is no surprise that the Korean War and the existential threat that North Korea poses loom large over its collective conscience. Although mostly disregarded within scholarly discussions in international relations, cinema has always been, and continues to be, an insightful, powerful, and transformative forum.

This essay discusses the ways in which cinema as an art form has been able to impact the way that South Korean society evolves, especially as an interpretative medium that argues for the ways in which the Korean demos should understand its own history as well as the the ongoing struggle with the enigma that is North Korea.

In particular, the essay examines two movies in detail – *Brotherhood* and *Welcome to Dongmakgol* – to reveal how the same socio-political discussions are going on beneath the surface of two seemingly completely different genres of Korean War movies. Led by these persuasive works of art, the essay argues, Korean society is already moving in a post-modern and humanist direction and suggests that as a democracy, Korean society should embrace the power of cinema in both internal and external affairs.

**Keywords:** Cinema; Film; North Korea; Welcome to Dongmakgol; Post-modernism; Korean War.

## Introduction

### *Art as a Social Force*

**M**ovies are not direct representations of reality. Everyone knows this. Unless they claim to be documentaries, it would be a stretch to argue that movies have any responsibility to be historically accurate in the same way that novels wouldn't be required to adhere to such strict standards since they are not works of journalism. At the same time, it is evident that movies have a special place in a society's socio-political discourse. Governments and interest groups have always been very sensitive to cinema – much more than people would assume. Today, even the general public is very responsive to the smallest details in historical fiction movies. Why is it a big deal, for example, that Christian Bale is playing Moses? Why did the descendants of general Bae Seol feel the need to charge the producers of *Roaring Currents* for defamation? Don't we all understand that they are "just movies"?

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Pablo Picasso once said: “We all know that Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand.”<sup>1</sup> The best of art is communicable and worth talking about for many people because it carries elements of truth in it. Artists have long philosophized that art is often more *true* than tangible reality. Whether this is true or not, this much is clear: art has always had the potential to be provocative, insightful, inspiring, accusatory, consoling, propagandistic, and even incendiary precisely because it has a unique power to persuade.

Art, however, derives its social power from the fact that it has the imperative force to demand that we think, feel, and believe in a certain way. As the most multisensory art, cinema does this very effectively. Turkish scholar Sengul argues: “Film is probably the most technologically sophisticated and narratively complete form of aesthetic fiction and a profound medium of inculcating in us a larger symbolic order [...] they show us and tell us who we are supposed to be by presenting an ideology that conveys an attitude toward everything from the trivial to the profound, from what we eat for breakfast to whether we should go to war.”<sup>2</sup>

### *The Unique Character of Historical Fiction*

Historical fiction is unique because it places itself within a specific context that existed as a matter of fact, blurring the distinction between what part of the story is historically true and what is not. At the same time, because it is allegorical, historical fiction always contains within it the potential to be polyvalent. As was said in the Middle Ages: “*littera gesta docet, quid credas, allegoria*” - that is, “the literal sense teaches the facts; the allegory what you should believe.” The set, the characters, the story may all be historically accurate but it is the allegory that makes a narrative relevant to the contemporary audience. It also reflects the personal tastes, interests, and beliefs of the director, which are applied both consciously and subconsciously. Ironically, this is no different from what historians do: they gather hard evidence and write a narrative according to their own interpretation of what would have been closest to the truth.

### *The Evolving Public*

With the passage of time and the help of archeologists and historians, our understanding of historical events draws ever closer to their original complexity and sophistication. This in turn provides greater breadth for artists to reinterpret and recast events to reveal hitherto hidden truths or imbue them with new meaning. An important element in this process that also evolves with time is the public’s willingness to open up and accept new perspectives.

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1 Pablo Picasso, “Statement to Marius De Zayas 1923”, accessed September 20, 2015, [http://www.learn.columbia.edu/monographs/picmon/pdf/art\\_hum\\_reading\\_49.pdf](http://www.learn.columbia.edu/monographs/picmon/pdf/art_hum_reading_49.pdf).

2 Ali Fuat, Şengül. “Cinema and Representation in International Relations: Hollywood Cinema and the Cold War.” (M.S. diss., Middle East Technical University, 2005): 5.

Generational transition as well as changing circumstances has a lot to do with this but new narratives and perspectives greatly contribute to challenging existing ways of viewing history and the world. This constant evolution in the collective conscience is reflected in works of art because artists themselves are members of the public, both limited by the same circumstances as well as open to the same potentialities.

### *A Serious Mistake*

Unfortunately, cinema has largely been neglected in discourses about international relations. Mainstream political science tends to condescend on popular culture in general as unworthy of serious consideration when discussing international relations.<sup>3</sup> This is a serious mistake especially since decision-makers do care about, and often regulate, cinema. “Lenin called cinema ‘the most important art.’ And whenever the American government had a difficulty in solving problems, the same machine would be at the service of it.”<sup>4</sup> Decision-makers understand that cinema is an important tool in communicating with, indoctrinating, and influencing the public. Films also “contribute to the reproduction of foreign policy discourses” and they “produce consent.”<sup>5</sup> What also gets lost in macro-political discourse is the fact that decision-makers are also members of the public. This implies that the same medium of film can be used to raise questions and objections to those in power, thereby inspiring a different set of values and propagating a different direction of policy.

### **Cinema in Korea**

Led by movies such as *Old Boy*, the Korean filmmaking industry and moviemakers have achieved world recognition. The Korean public is also a very enthusiastic movie-going public, which has made the cinematic landscape in Korea very unique. With the politicization of the mainstream media especially in recent years, cinema has become an alternative forum for social and political discussion and even indictment; appealing directly to the public to raise awareness about issues the media may be negligent of.

The greatest example is *Dogani*<sup>6</sup>, a movie based on a novel, which was itself based on a true story about the abuse of hearing-impaired children at a school in Gwangju. This movie is an interesting case study because it led to direct legislation bearing its name in the same year. It not only raised moral outrage against what had actually happened but also raised questions about why it had not been investigated by mainstream journalists to begin with. This case is also noteworthy in that a film based on a novel had provided unprecedented impetus for action on the part of otherwise lethargic legislators.

3 Engert, Stefan & Spencer, Alexander. “International Relations at the Movies: Teaching and Learning about International Politics through Film.” *Perspective* 17, no. 1 (2009).

4 Ali Fuat, Şengül. “Cinema and Representation in International Relations,” 1.

5 *Ibid.*, 2.

6 *Silenced*, D-Cinema, directed by Dong-hyuk Hwang (2011; Seoul: CJ Entertainment, Film).

### *The Korean War Narrative*

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, there were an incredibly large number of movies produced about the Korean War but its content was unsophisticated.<sup>7</sup> According to the Korea Creative Content Agency: “the Korean War movies during the 1960s to the 1980s depict North Korea as the perfect enemy. With no tears or blood, they are simply human weapons threatening South Korea. On the other hand, these movies emphasize the loyalty and sacrifice of [South Koreans] fighting for their nation.”<sup>8</sup> In 1973, the Park Chung-hee government created the Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corporation mainly for the purpose of censoring movies but also to produce government-backed anti-communist films. Prominent award ceremonies even had a separate category for anti-communist movies. Those were different times, however, and these measures should not be judged by contemporary standards. Still, within this historical context, there could be no real investigative works dealing with the truth of the war. While it was well known by historians, for example, that atrocities were committed on both sides, only the North Korean crimes were highlighted whereas those of the South Korean and United Nations (UN) Forces were ignored. To some extent, opening up to the wartime atrocities on this side of the peninsula is still a sensitive topic but this is neither surprising nor hard to understand. War wounds do not heal easily.

### *Wave of Change on the Korean Peninsula*

From the end of the 1980s to the early 2000s, there were huge changes taking place on both sides of the peninsula and the world. South Korea was preoccupied with economic development and democratization while the North continued to fall behind. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, finally bringing the Cold War to an end. Meanwhile, Kim Young-sam was elected president in South Korea in 1993, the first civilian president after three decades of presidents from military brass. Perhaps most notably, Kim Il-sung died in 1994, ushering the last prominent Korean War figure into the pages of history. Despite the fact that North Korea still remained a serious existential threat to the South, these changes took away the force of the ideological threat of Communism. Communism had been defeated - this much seemed undeniable. Indeed, the entire world has been waiting for North Korea to collapse ever since. Put another way, it was no longer the formidable threat it used to be but has been exposed as an impoverished pariah state clearly on the losing side of history. All of these things combined produced new confidence in South Korea to talk more boldly about the war and the North. Often overlooked, the financial crisis of 1997 was another important turning point because it broke confidence in government and leadership. It is

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7 73 movies were released in the 1960s alone and another 40 were produced in the 1970s. The number decreases in the ensuing decades with 18 during the 1980s and only 11 since the 1990s.

8 “How Korean Movies have been Depicted Over the Years,” Korean Content, last modified June 25, 2013, <http://koreancontent.kr/1552>.



worth noting that the government at the time was the first civilian government coming on the heels of a hard-fought process of democratization. In the economic turmoil that ensued, many people felt abandoned by society and this led to an increased sense of instability and mutual distrust. Leadership in particular lost the confidence of the people. The once seemingly all-powerful state had exposed its vulnerability and ineptitude.<sup>9</sup> But overall, with the stabilizing situation in South Korea and the warming of Korean relations culminating in the first Inter-Korean Summit in 2000, it was now appropriate to revisit the history of the war. Moviemakers did just that.

### *Brotherhood (2004)*

*Taegeukki (Brotherhood)* by Kang Jekyu was the first “Hollywood-style blockbuster” movie dealing with the Korean War but it was not his first movie dealing with inter-Korean relations. *Shiri* in 1999, a story about North Korean spies in South Korea broke the record set by *Titanic* in South Korea with 6.5 million at the box office. *Shiri*’s success was a turning point in Korean cinema as well as public discourse because it proved that people were still capable of taking great interest in a subject that had seemed exhausted. What was particularly interesting was the fact that this public was now one that remembered the Korean War as history rather than as experience.<sup>10</sup> *Brotherhood* was released in 2004 with even greater success, attracting 11.74 million. *Brotherhood*, however, was normatively very different from even Kang’s own previous film.

Even in *Shiri*, the unfeeling, soulless image of the North Korean could still be recognized in some of the characters. But in *Brotherhood*, this icon of the North Korean is completely absent. Interestingly enough, there isn’t a prominent North Korean character at all until Jintae joins the North Korean forces. *Brotherhood* is unique in that it takes a war that was long described as fratricidal and makes it literally that. The brothers are not extensions of the state or any ideology but normal people who live simple lives. From the beginning, this story is not about the two Koreas as political entities. The macro-political view is already, or finally, being put aside for a more humanist approach to the history of the Korean War.

When the war is imposed on the brothers’ family, they appeal to the fact that there must be some misunderstanding. They don’t see a nexus between them and the war. The brothers are not aggressors or patriotic defenders of their state but victims of a decision beyond their reach. There is no nationalistic rallying around the flag – reflected in the subtle sarcasm of the Korean title “*Taegeukki Hwinallimyeo*,” which literally means “while waving the [national flag].” Some members of the older generation apparently were turned off by the title because they thought it was another propaganda movie.

<sup>9</sup> Kim, Kyoung Wook. “A Study on Historical Changes and Genre Reconstructions of Representing Korean War in Recent Korean Cinema” (Sejong University, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

Ironically, the title was playing on just this kind of expectation.

From the very beginning, everyone's goal is to get home safely. The centrality of this theme is expressed through the slogan on the main poster, "We must get home alive." The end goal is life, not victory, and this life reverberates throughout the movie as peaceful memories of family and the quotidian. The battlefield is a hellish juxtaposition of this longing. There is no glory or heroism here, only suffering and death.

None of the soldiers have a clear understanding of why they are fighting the North Koreans. After the first battle together as a platoon, two South Korean soldiers witness a severely wounded comrade and have an altercation:

*Soldier 1: They haven't given us food or water for days!*

*Soldier 2: We'll die an honorable death.*

*Soldier 1: Soldiers are human, too! Where's the honor in starving to death?*

*Soldier 2: You crazy bastard, you'd go to [the other side] for a piece of bread!*

*Soldier 1: It's better than starving to death! Who gives a shit about who wins! I don't know what ideology is but is it so important that brothers have to point guns at each other? At least against the Japanese, we fought to save the country, but what the fuck is this for!*

*Soldier 2: You damn commie!*

This conversation foreshadows what is to come. With the entire country being taken and retaken by the opposing forces, the people caught in the middle do whatever they can to survive. With food lacking, many including Jintae's wife sign up for the communist party and volunteer at rallies for rice rations. This later becomes the reason many civilians are slaughtered, which is historically true. Soldier 1 says he doesn't know anything about ideology and indeed, the ideological reasons behind the war are unaccounted for in the movie. Nobody explains or advocates any ideology. It also turns out that Soldier 2 hates the North so viciously only because communists slaughtered his entire family. Even his reason for fighting is love for family, not ideology.

Family is placed at the front and center of the entire movie, especially throughout the evolution of the older brother Jintae and this reflects the changing focus of the people from the state unit to the family as the dominant community structure. As the newly wed leader of his family that includes his mute mother, Jintae fights so he can earn a medal and send his younger brother Jinseok home. As Jintae gets drunk on violence and militaristic glory of war, it is his brother who keeps him sane, acting as the voice of conscience and humanity.

In a gladiatorial scene, Jintae is abusing North Korean prisoners of war, forcing them to fight each other for food, but the two prisoners are reluctant to fight against their fellow comrade. As the South Korean platoon demands blood and entertainment, Jinseok jumps into the pit and replaces one of the prisoners of war, laying bare the uncomfortable truth that these North Koreans are just like them, literally their *brothers*, and just as reluctant

to fight the war as they are.

The fratricidal nature of the war and the irony of the central place of family become most apparent when Jintae joins the North Korean forces. The only reason he joins the North is because he believes that the South Koreans have murdered his wife and his brother. For the same reason Soldier 2 was fiercely antagonistic towards the North, Jintae now is towards the South. When Jinseok finds Jintae on the battlefield, Jintae has drastically changed: he is the manifestation of the classic image of the soulless North Korean soldier.

We have to linger on this final scene just one more moment because there is much more going on here than simply a sad ending. Through Jintae, *Brotherhood* turns the classic image of the North Korean soldier on its head. The ferocious North Korean soldier is not some ideological fanatic: he is a victim of war. It is only when Jinseok appeals to Jintae's memory of the good life and his family that he comes back to his senses. The humanist perspective is most prominent here where you realize that the so-called killing machine is actually your own brother who has simply lost his way and is in need of redemption.

### *Welcome to Dongmakgol (2005)*

This story takes place in a hidden village in the mountain during the Korean War. Two South Korean soldiers and three North Korean soldiers end up staying at the same village under the hospitality of a community that knows nothing about the war. The movie depicts an Eden-esque village. The name Dongmakgol itself, a character explains, means to "live carelessly like children."

Questions have been raised about what exactly this village is since it is not historical. Some have suggested that it is a utopian pre-modern society and the only thing that is important is that it is conceivable.<sup>11</sup> Others have also pointed to the possibility that it represents the world after death. These are interesting discussions but neither holds up when we consider other evidence in the film itself. Unlike an ephemeral existence, the village people can, and do, come in contact with people from the outside. People in this village not only physically die; they actually have a history of coming in contact with the outside world. The father of the little boy left for the world under the mountain and the villagers are aware of historical invasions from the Japanese and the Chinese. Therefore, the village is not completely fantastic but rather a depiction of the purely peaceful elements of Korean society and what Korean society today aspires to – a community hospitable for all and a life of peace and harmony.

The premise of the movie is that war is imposed on innocent people who are simply trying to live their normal lives – a theme already familiar to us through *Brotherhood*. The main concern of the people is whether they will have enough to eat for the coming winter. The movie carries within it a very pacifist and post-modern argument that people

11 Kim, Kyoung Wook. "A Study on Historical Changes and Genre Reconstructions of Representing Korean War in Recent Korean Cinema."

really don't care for political-ideological conflict and that they are perfectly happy in their peaceful civilian lives if the integrity of that life is undisturbed. When the North Korean officer asks the village elder how he is capable of exercising such strong leadership without ever speaking, the elder replies nonchalantly, "Feed them well." Scholars point to this scene as Korean society's fatigue and distrust towards leaders who don't understand the leadership the people want.<sup>12</sup> People don't want ideology, they want bread.

One of the most important scenes is when Moon, the younger South Korean soldier, is explaining to the villagers about the war below the mountain. The villagers ask whether it is the Japanese or the Chinese that have come this time, to which he has trouble explaining because he cannot decide whether North Korea is a "different country" and he also doesn't have an accurate understanding of why they are fighting. The only thing he knows is that the National Defense Forces are fighting the North Korean 'puppet army,' which is a term he clearly got from his authorities. The villagers are left confused.

It is just then that the North Korean soldiers appear. Immediately, a chaotic situation ensues. The villagers get caught in the middle with both groups of soldiers essentially treating them like hostages, a miniature version of the situation on the Korean peninsula. Rounded up in the middle, the villagers begin talking to one another about a wild boar that has appeared in their potato field, threatening their crops. Both groups of soldiers try to recover the villagers' attention but the villagers are uninterested. They remain in this awkward position until the next morning and one by one the villagers get up to move on with their daily chores while the soldiers remain in their ridiculous standoff.

After what seems like an entire day, the two groups grow tired and a grenade is accidentally dropped, exploding none other than the storage where the village had been gathering crops for the winter. In the meaningless distrust and enmity, it is the innocent people and their livelihood that suffer. Who could miss the allegorical message here of the half-century standoff between the two Koreas taking the people hostage and threatening the livelihood of both?

The soldiers decide to work together to restore the crops for the villagers. It is in this process that they develop a deep friendship and later give their lives to save the villagers - that is, they do what 'Korean' soldiers are supposed to do. The movie, therefore, suggests a new direction for Korean relations - one of reconciliation *through* reconstruction.

One more thing that should be pointed out is that the eventual enemy is the South Korean and US forces. The soldiers come into the village assuming that there are communist units hiding in the village. They are right in that there are North Koreans there but the demonic communists they have in their militaristic fantasy do not exist in any real sense. The true threat to the village is militarism and the perpetuation of a fabricated image of the enemy.

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12 Kim, "A Study on Historical Changes and Genre Reconstructions of Representing Korean War in Recent Korean Cinema."

### *A Postmodern Collective Conscience*

It is difficult to argue that these movies are the primary movers in inter-Korean relations, especially since the influence of cinema on the public is nearly impossible to quantify. But because cinema is both a projection of already existing sentiments as well as a presentation of a new direction, movies have a significant impact on molding the collective conscience. The success and high regard for *Brotherhood* and *Welcome to Dongmakgol* is also a democratic representation of how the people feel about their history as well as their consent and support for these post-modern perspectives.

On the flip side, the failure of a recent movie like *R2B: Return to Base* also demonstrates what the people do *not* empathize with. *R2B* was a movie heavily supported by the air force and was meant to be a sequel to *Red Muffler*, a successful movie in 1964 that brought many to the Air Force Academy. *R2B* had many elements that could have made it successful including a cast made up of famous celebrities and relatively impressive action scenes. However, the movie was by all accounts a failure at the box office and was ridiculed by many as being corny and militaristic. Indeed, the depiction of North Korea was too simplistic and devoid of sophistication for a public already thinking within a postmodern framework. Just as much as this sort of Cold-War narrative is bound to fail at the box office, a politician who espouses policies in the same vein will also find it very difficult to garner support, especially from the younger generation.

The changing ways in which North Korea, the Korean War, and war in general are viewed are making war a nearly impossible option for South Korean decision-makers. When we look back at the past decade, there were many incidents in which military escalation was possible. North Korea committed regional provocations most notably in 2002 and twice in 2010 with the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island. But in spite of the fact that the latter two were some of the most detrimental and provocative in a long history of North Korean provocations, there was no social push for retaliation beyond limited reciprocation. Although the entire country was outraged after the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan, president Lee was highly criticized for war mongering when he claimed that he was “not afraid of war.” For better or worse, there has developed an adamant unwillingness on the part of the South Korean public to support militaristic policies. As movies such as *Brotherhood* and *Dongmakgol* both projected and newly illustrated, people now recognize all too clearly that it is their sons, brothers, and their peaceful lives that will be threatened.

### **Conclusion: The potential of cinema in Korean relations and beyond**

As all moviemakers know, no movie can be successful if it does not tell a story that the public can empathize and relate to. At the same time, it also has to have an element that is new for the public to be stimulating. In this way, cinema has the power to both illuminate

thoughts and sentiments that already exists within the collective conscience while also focusing and funneling them into a particular direction, a particular logic. This is why governments and political leaders have long been both weary and attracted to the medium.

Especially in a democratic society like Korea, the public needs to understand that when they are going to the movie theater, they are participating in an inevitably political activity – they are voting with their movie tickets. Moviemakers should continue to make movies that discuss important topics and the public should actively go to the theatres, thereby also protecting the industry from having to turn to particular interests groups for survival. Especially movies that deal with North Korea are even more political today because of just how little we know of the country. This enigmatic quality of a country that is both mysteriously our brother and our greatest threat leaves our understanding of the country to the verdict of an internal discussion between competing interpretations that are politically radioactive. In other words, the debate is less about who North Korea is as a matter of fact but more about how we should be viewing them, which is fundamentally an internal discourse.

Korean society is still in the midst of a fierce debate about its identity, its rightful direction, the role of government, and the people's will, if there is one at all. Knowingly and unknowingly, cinema has been both a mirror and a forum for these debates. It is high time that we take this forum more seriously as a society and fully utilize it as a democracy. It has been, and can always be, more than just entertainment. **GPR**

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# Aspects of Israeli Deterrence With a View to South Korean Applicability

*Daniel Foulkes*

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**Abstract:** The situation on the Korean peninsula has shown to be in a stalemate, despite new levels of hostility and threats between both nations. It would seem that the North Korean regime has successfully gone through another power transition with Kim Jong Un. The issue of nuclear proliferation in the Korean Peninsula remains unresolved and tensions rise as the North Korean rhetoric increases, along with their efforts to develop new nuclear capabilities. South Korea has to consider alternative methods of nuclear deterrence, as the assurance of the nuclear umbrella from the United States has not stopped the North Korean intentions to become a nuclear country.

This essay considers South Korea's applicability of Israeli deterrence measures, their contexts are very different from one another but they also can provide insight as to how nuclear countries assert their power and substantiate their threats.

**Keywords:** Nuclear Deterrence; Israel; North Korea; South Korea; Iran; Risk Awareness.

## Introduction: Where Do We Stand?

As the signing of the Korean Armistice nears its 58th anniversary, the situation on the Korean peninsula has shown to be in a stalemate, despite new levels of hostility and threats between both nations. At a glance, it would seem that the North Korean regime has successfully gone through another power transition with Kim Jong Un, the third of the Kim dynasty to take power. However, the situation of isolation is still palpable, as the North Korean leader has yet to meet any other foreign leader. Yet, as information technologies filter through the black market into North Korea, the containment and isolation of its population is beginning to break down. Nevertheless, threats of attacks have been made by North Korea, including the non-direct exchanges of ammunition between the DMZ. Meanwhile, the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) was reopened after a surge in hostile dialogue by the North Korean leaders in 2013. At the same time, south of the 38th parallel, the Sewol ferry tragedy has shown a disconcerting image of South Korea's preparation towards human provoked disasters. The profile of such a tragedy and its political repercussions have had a direct effect on the heads of

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government, even provoking the resignation of the Prime Minister because of the handling of the rescue operations.

The US Command of South Korean military forces in case of armed conflict was effectively pushed beyond the December 2015 deadline, and there is a growing mistrust in Japan and its intentions for a stronger role for its defense forces. Moreover, as an additional source of concern, there are China's recent claims over the East and South China Sea.

Humanitarian concerns over the situation in North Korea are globally shared, as exemplified by the general support for the UN commission of inquiry to Human Rights in the DPRK. This growing impasse, with no clear path nor negotiations towards a stable peace, and de-escalation of the conflict and denuclearization of North Korea, has led South Korean scholars and policy makers to seek alternative ways to form and enact an effective nuclear deterrence policy. It is here that the Israeli experience comes into play.

As a nation with a bellicose history and confrontation with neighboring countries ever since its foundation in May 1948, Israel has had to enforce and actively defend its security. Because of the scope of this paper, the situation in the Middle East will be seen only in relation to specific actions by Israel regarding the other Arab nations and the United States. This is an exploratory approach to Israeli deterrence mechanisms in relation to the inter-Korean relations.

### **Israeli Measures and Response to Threats: Considerations for South Korea**

Israel is widely believed to have strong nuclear capabilities; it is a non-confirmed fact, since the Israeli leadership has chosen a path of neither confirming nor denying the existence of a nuclear arsenal. The reasons for its existence and the Israeli belief that it is a necessary cost to its security, have to be analyzed from the perspective of a nation that already has had to repel invasions and attacks from other nations in conventional warfare. Even though it did show superior capabilities during the Six Day and the Yom Kippur wars, Israel deals now mostly in an asymmetric war with hostile groups that are militarized and funded by other states, yet not directly an army against army scenario. The clear exception to this position has been Iran. With Mahmoud Ahmadinejad having a hostile approach to the mere existence of Israel, and supporting with weapons groups like Hizbollah. The moment that their nuclear research program was not certain to be for peaceful purposes only, Israel's security was again compromised. Recent changes in leadership have been met with skepticism by the Israeli leadership.<sup>1</sup>

To a greater extent, South Korea has also to deal with repelling hostile and destructive

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1 Isabel Kershner, "Israel Skeptical About New Nuclear Talks with Iran," *The New York Times*, last modified March 8, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/07/world/middleeast/israel-iran-nuclear-deal.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/07/world/middleeast/israel-iran-nuclear-deal.html?_r=0).

rhetoric from North Korea on a regular basis. During the early part of 2013, the levels of hostility and threats of nuclear attacks reached such a point that the international media started focusing intensely on the subject, whilst in South Korea nothing really changed from their ordinary routine. This is a specific point related to the nature of both countries that has to be stressed: the level of violence and reaction in times of hostile remarks are actually opposing in both the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula. When rhetoric is at its highest point of hostilities from North Korea, the actions amount to non-violent shows of resolve by the North Korean nation. Their strategy includes threats, scrapping of peace accords and suspension of the shared economic complex of KIC. All of this without actually incurring into full fledged hostilities. After years of such rhetoric (intensified by the closeness to the date of the birth of Kim Il Sung), the population of South Korea has chosen to ignore and simply coexist with its belligerent neighboring country, impervious to some of the threats. This even has led to a state where the reaction to threats has been severely questioned, as the delayed response to the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan navy corvette in 2010.

On the opposite side of the spectrum (at least when comparing social response) we have Israel, where even mild rhetorical threats by their foes are usually accompanied with missile strikes or even bombings in Israeli cities. This has led to a population living under constant stress of violent attacks, but also a more prepared one in emergency responses. Also, this constant state of alert has made it necessary for Israel to quickly mobilize their civilian population in case of conflicts. Israeli Defense Forces have seen active confrontations in recent years, with the incursion towards Lebanon in 2006 and the Gaza offensive in 2012. It is with these opposing backdrops of social response and attitude towards conflict that the measures of Israel and its deterrence must be reviewed if South Korea seeks to effectively place such measures.

### **Placing Foe Against Foe: Partnering With Iran Against Iraq**

Iran has not always been perceived as a threat to Israel, their partnership worked (with a remarkable rate of success) in a manner that was discreet but did in fact turn to be close. Iran gave de facto recognition to Israel from as early as 1950 and de jure in 1960. Provisions at the time went with Israel assisting Iran with intelligence, weapons and guidance with the United States in exchange for oil.<sup>2</sup> Their strategic partnership rested on the aim to counter the Arab influence, even going as far as providing enough weapons to maintain Iraq weak. This briefly shows the complexity within the middle east and the different factions that fight for power. Israel deliberately supported Iran with weapons as a method for keeping Iraq at bay. With the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the policy of western countries with Iran had to be re examined, yet even though Iran had a clear anti-

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<sup>2</sup> Donald Neff, "The Us, Iraq, Israel, and Iran: Backdrop to War," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (1991).

zionist agenda, the partnership with Israel continued. Israel had come to view Iraq as a primary threat, even destroying their Osirak nuclear facility in an unprovoked attack on June 1981. The Iran-Contra affair was meant to provide weapons to Iran through Israel, funding the Contras fight against Nicaragua.

South Korea does not have such an opportunity of having other players be the direct target of North Korean hostility as focus of its conflict. Whereas North Korea does include in its hostile remarks the United States, one of the main pillars of South Korean deterrence has been its alliance with the United States. Russia has recently foregone part of the historical debt from the Soviet Era<sup>3</sup>, and China is the main protector of North Korea. Japan has been placed at the sidelines recently by South Korea due to its own territorial conflict over the Liancourt rocks (Dokdo-Takeshima islets). It has recently begun to establish dialogues with North Korea related to their abducted citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, yet these issues are being handled without the involvement of South Korea. Japan's relations with the DPRK are still at a stalemate as it has extended its sanctions on the regime.

### **Israeli Shift to an Asymmetric War**

The 2006 conflict with Lebanon started as a show of military superiority and resolve by the Israeli leadership in retaliation for the kidnapping of two of their soldiers. The purpose was to strike and nullify the leadership of Hizbollah after their increase in violence and apparent relation to the Palestinian Liberation Army.<sup>4</sup> This war had a much different outcome, problems like overconfidence in their air force and delays in the mobilization of their armored units made the goals of the incursion harder to accomplish.<sup>5</sup> The Israeli offense was slow in the way that their objectives were not reached before the security council resolved the ceasefire resolution.

Hizbollah had also received ample weapons from Syria and Iran, leading to a stronger distrust with the other regional states. Hizbollah managed to strike a number of tanks during Israel's retreat from Lebanon, which was perceived as a win for the resistance to Israeli forces.<sup>6</sup> Exhaustion has been a problem in Israeli forces and society now that their opponents have found violence to be a method for reaching deals, after a certain human cost to both sides. This means that Israel has had to shift their military abilities towards one of asymmetric war, where the enemy is more atomized and able to create sporadic separate attacks seeking maximum visibility at a minimal cost. Fighting this kind of enemy means that conventional warfare is replaced for measures of containment and specific targeting. The immediate idea of an enemy has shifted within Israel, where this new level of defense also demands a different type of defense systems. South Korea

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3 Miriam Elder, "Russia Writes Off \$10bn of North Korean Debt.," *The Guardian* 2012.

4 Eyal Zisser, "Is Anyone Afraid of Israel?" *Middle East Quarterly* (2001).

5 Ze'ev Schiff, "Israel's War with Iran," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 6 (2006).

6 *Ibid.*

faces no such dilemmas nor active violence against its nationals or its interests. Its enemy is a single militarized state unlike the plurality of threats against Israel. There have been no terrorist attacks within South Korea since the turn of the century, excluding cyber terrorism claims, as Israel has experienced although in the past North Korea did manage to assassinate a South Korean president. There is no active cell of North Korean terrorists destabilizing South Korea since their actions could quickly lead to escalation of the conflict.

The possession of nuclear weapons by states has, including the unconfirmed case of Israel, generally led to the perception that if a nation becomes a nuclear armed power it is also considered a nuclear target.<sup>7</sup> Where right now Israel has invested heavily in modern missile defense systems, the cost of the offensive missile can be a fraction of what the defensive mechanism costs. This cost relation is not even perceived within South Korea since there is no active exchange of munitions between nations.

### **Targeting of Weapons Shipments**

In the matter of unilateral attacks on other nations, Israel has been clear that national sovereignty is not an impediment to strike weapons shipments directed to their enemies. The recent case of a shipment of missiles in the Lebanon-Syria border thought to be for Hizbollah, and the bombing of a Russian shipment of missiles within a Syrian government compound are other examples of the mechanisms to assert Israeli military power as well as containment capabilities within the region. Besides this being a clear show of force and a preemptive strike, it shows the reach and level of specification of Israeli intelligence. Something that has previously been recommended for South Korea.<sup>8</sup>

South Korea can not risk a preemptive attack on shipments of weapons to North Korea (even if they were identified and certain of the nature of the shipment) since they would very likely be Chinese weapons and a strike would have to be done either in Chinese or North Korean territory. The evident risk here is escalation and the reprisals that can come from such an attack are enough to be a deterrent for both nations, since the providing country is not another semi-periphery or peripheral country<sup>9</sup> but one of the two main hegemonic powers in the world and the region.

### **Nuclear Deterrence Through Nondisclosure**

Whereas Iranian authorities across the political spectrum have never been seen openly pushing for a weaponized military program, the International Atomic Energy Agency has

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7 Barry R. Posen, *Nuclear-Armed Iran: A Difficult but Not Impossible Policy Problem* (New York: Century Foundation, 2006).

8 Jang Ji-Hyang and Peter Lee, "Re-Thinking Seoul's North Korea Policy: Lessons from the Israeli Model," (South Korea: Asan Institute for Policy Studies, 2013).

9 Greg Cashman, *What Causes War?: An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict* (Rowman Littlefield Publishers, 2013).

not been able to verify its exclusivity of peaceful purposes. The question of proliferation within the Middle East is closely related to Israel's situation as an unverified nuclear power.

The fear of a nuclear-armed Iran is also placed to the fear behind a first strike by Israel in case of an armed conflict. When discussing the nuclear alternatives, the risk of volatility or an eventual implementation of a Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) doctrine involves all other countries in the region. Right now the Israeli nuclear arsenal can be thought to be the principal deterrent of conventional warfare, yet since this has not stopped weapons shipments in the asymmetric confrontation with Hizbollah and the PLA, Israel has been pushed to escalate its nuclear deterrence. Even the forging of alliances is criticized in relation of its efficacy by Huth who speculates that:

security strategy in which states rely largely on promises of military support from allies is an ineffective- or at least, inefficient- way of deterring adversaries in non crisis situations.<sup>10</sup>

Huth later extends his thesis, but asserts that alliances strengthen extended deterrence measures. This example of forging alliances and their role within nuclear deterrence is an important consideration for South Korea and its assumed protection under the nuclear umbrella defense of the United States.

North Korea is the nation that developed their own nuclear arsenal, withdrawing from the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty. Instead of using such weapons to gain a significant position in the region, its nuclear power has been used as a tool to sustain the status quo for as long as possible, in order to resist their growing international isolation. At this point, the measures for enforcing non-proliferation by the Six Party Talks have been met with stark opposition by the North Korean regime which pulled out of the process and hasn't returned to the negotiations, and the pressure is now starting to mount on China, whose tolerance is being tested more and more by the North Korean Regime, to pressure the DPRK to resume talks and start a real denuclearization process.

### **Israeli Lobby Efficacy**

The international pressure and lobbying campaign that Israel has can be considered as an active method of deterrence from conventional conflicts. The Israeli lobby within the United States political scenario is marked by strong support from both parties. Even during presidential elections in the United States, the complexity of Israeli security is strongly discussed.

Israeli lobbying practices are used both in an offensive and defensive manner. Israel is always on the offense where it does not flinch to hostile declarations against its sovereignty

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<sup>10</sup> Gerald L. Sorokin, "Alliance Formation and General Deterrence: A Game-Theoretic Model and the Case of Israel," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38, no. 2 (1994).

and integrity, making it seem that they are always ready if confrontations were to reach a higher level. The appearance of a prepared nation for a possible escalation has been a stance forged not only with words but also by the decisive action of the Israeli Defense Forces.

On the defensive side, Israel is also highly criticized on humanitarian grounds with its situation with Palestine and the occupied territories. This has led to a constant flux in the diplomatic sphere, where Israel has managed to secure a role of relevance over the years. Its interests in the nuclear dilemma of Iran for example, are constantly expressed and safeguarded by Israel and even other nations, while at the same time it receives criticism for humanitarian reasons in relation to Palestine.

For South Korea, its rapid development in the technology industry has given new sources of income for its companies and the country. The increasing amount of aid and bilateral cooperation from the South Korean government, through strategic partnerships or through their aid agency KOICA are symbols of a growing power that can also be augmented through strategic lobbying. This is one of the main points that Ji-Hang and Lee discuss as one of the actions for South Korea to assume.

South Korea should thus follow the Israeli example of lobbying multiple levels and branches of the US and, to a lesser extent Chinese governments to make its own opinions heard.<sup>11</sup>

### **Conclusion: is South Korea Able to Adapt Israeli Deterrence?**

Deterrence from aggression is a complex issue that can not be seen as a simple list of measures to implement universally to all cases. The reality of Israeli deterrence is different from the one experienced in the Korean peninsula. Whilst Israel has had to fight before to legitimize its own existence and recognition (whilst also going beyond the same treaties that formed it in the beginning), the region has also been, in comparison to the Korean Peninsula, more unstable in a sense that the region where Israel is has long been a source for confrontations of economic, historical and religious conflict. If we were to characterize Israeli deterrence as one of containment, the Korean deterrence could be then determined as one deflection of conflict. It is also worth mentioning that even though both countries claim to have an ultimate goal to reunify, their actions and deterrence mechanisms have led to a perpetuation of the current impasse. Even the Sunshine policy of the early 2000s has been source of debate, without a clear consensus of the efficacy of such engagement.<sup>12</sup>

This lack of tangible change in the situation over the past five decades has to be contemplated under a scope that considers several crucial factors, the disappearance of the Soviet bloc (not to mention Russia's forgiveness of debt to North Korea) and

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11 Jang Ji-Hyang and Peter Lee, "Re-Thinking Seoul's North Korea Policy: Lessons from the Israeli Model."

12 Stuart Smallwood, "Toward North Korean Engagement: The South Korean Sunshine Policy and West German Ostpolitik," *East Asia: Comparative Perspective* 11, no. 2 (2013).

South Korea's rapid development. Also, the recent Chinese assertiveness in the region by extending their claims over airspace identification zones and territorial claims in southeast Asia comes at the same time as the "Asian Pivot" of the United States is starting to take shape, including the plans to relocate the majority of their naval fleet in the Pacific and reinforcing the commitment of the United States in the region.

Asia is clearly marked to be the scenario where the world powers will come into play, and the Korean peninsula is the scenario that holds the highest risks of confrontation and possibility for escalation. Measures of deterrence have to be put in place for a coordinated de-escalation of the conflict, in order to prevent being a 21st century proxy for a world power confrontation between China and the United States. Making a simple comparative review, there are certain elements of Israeli posture that, it could be argued, are used more by North Korea instead of its southern neighbor. Israel and South Korea have a strategic partnership with the United States, with South Korea having a much bigger display of military closeness, troops deployed and shared military exercises than Israel. But if such a measure is to have a strategic partnership with a world power, North Korea has one with China in a fashion more in line with the Israeli-US alliance. What matters in this simple comparison is not the players involved in each action, but the nature of the action itself.

#### *Israeli Population Has a High Risk Awareness and Preparation*

South Korean population remains generally unprepared for conflict as it has become accustomed to the risk and rhetoric of North Korea, this can lead to a misperception of risk and a higher risk of ineffective responses. Whereas the South Korean military does have a high level of involvement with the U.S. forces with military exercises and chain of command, problems still surface like shortness of time for reserve troops to train and maintain updated knowledge in case of conflict, the high regulation of live ammo drills. The population largely ignores evacuation drills and other measures of preparedness in case of conflict. North Korea on the other side, has a general population living with food shortages and dangerous humanitarian conditions yet its whole organizational system is one of military first, where military deployment and measures are enforced with little consideration to the civilian population. This concerning factor can also lead to a better preparation and risk awareness than South Korea.

#### *Israel Has Played Interests to Weaken Foes and Turn Them Against Each Other*

South Korea has not played an active role by exercising its power with nations whom are friendly with North Korea at the same time that the North Korean regime has a level of international isolation that makes it harder to undermine South Korea's position. Nevertheless, if they can not turn other nations against each other, or have not actively



sought so, they can try to infiltrate and undermine the structure from within. South Korean intelligence services are in need of a reform<sup>13</sup> that provides them a more effective approach; while at the same time, North Korean spies are believed to have a deeper level of involvement within South Korea's structure than South Korea within the Kim regime.

*Israel's Shift in Military Power Towards an Asymmetric Confrontation*

South Korea has not had a unilateral action of aggression towards North Korea, even after attacking islands, boats and constant threats of engulfing Seoul in a sea of fire. North Korea on the other hand is believed to be constantly on the offensive in areas like cyberterrorism, hacking into South Korean institutions and organizations. Given the disparity of adoption of technological tools for the general population between North Korea and South Korea, cyber-terror attacks present a bigger threat to South Korea, and one that the North has exploited several times before.

Israel actively targets and eliminates weapons shipments that it believes will risk its own security, even beyond its national borders. Both South Korea and North Korea exercise no direct involvement or interference with each other's weapons programs.

*Israel Has Positioned Itself as an Assumed Nuclear Power Without Actually Having Admitted to It*

North Korea has already performed three nuclear tests to this day and threatens to undergo a fourth one. It is also believed that it has large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. South Korea acts in conjunction with the United States and depends on its nuclear arsenal as a deterrent, where it is through this strategy that the United States has prevented proliferation of nuclear weapons within its Asian allies.

*Re-assessing a Deterrence Approach: New Paths to Stability, De-Escalation and Peace?*

If viewed under the previous light, it could be perceived that whilst South Korea can consider Israeli deterrence measures, North Korea seems to be already on track with a more similar set of measures. Is North Korea closer to Israel? Should South Korea look to the other side for inspiration or maybe try to adapt a more conscious approach to reunification? Considering how some compromises are going to be demanded also from the South Korean society in the sense of economic support, creation of infrastructure and harboring refugees and restoring the rule of law in case of a North Korean collapse,<sup>14</sup> such crises would only be increased were the reunification happen after an armed

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13 Jang Ji-Hyang and Peter Lee, "Re-Thinking Seoul's North Korea Policy: Lessons from the Israeli Model."

14 Bruce W. Bennet and Jennifer Lind, "The Collapse of North Korea: Military Missions and Requirements," *International Security* 36, no. 2 (2011).

confrontation.

The relation stands that the nuclear power here is North Korea, and the policy attempts come from an approach of deterrence and perhaps even towards peace. Israel's policies do not consider at any point the giving up of their nuclear capabilities. Should South Korea be taking lessons from the Arab countries in the Middle East instead?

Greg Cashman<sup>15</sup> argued about the role of war in modern society, in that it is starting to be viewed as an uncivilized method of conflict resolution. I believe that it is through creative diplomacy that new options and perspectives may be considered and applied. But while the aspect of nuclear peril and armed conflict conform the greater part of the debate between both Koreas, the fact that not only the North but also South Korea will have to undergo drastic changes if it wants reunification to be a reality.

Democratic systems not only allow but require this sort of questioning towards the political actions and the process of policy making and their players. These will not only enrich such discussions with diversity and a greater solidity in the arguments that are finally chosen from a conscious and informed debate, but will also influence the policy makers themselves. Such tasks can not be relegated only to the press and think-tanks of those specific subjects; even universities have an important role as harbors of academic thinking and debate. And it should also be demanded that through political watchdogs, such as the media or academic discussion, the debate is also generalized and brought forward to the general population, for its articulation and engaging.

Proposing that the Israeli measures are more similar in approach and practicality, even though the nations are not directly related amongst each other, to those of North Korea than the ones of South Korea is not a popular idea. But if we place it in the sense of how to react to such type of deterrence, such theorization can bring forward new paths towards a resolution that can be, in the ideal and most optimal scenario, peaceful and with a growth of both nations in a successful reunification.

The need of a military preparation and readiness is rational when considering the historical background and current tension in the peninsula, yet still, proposals also have to be placed on the highest ideals of pacifism and diplomacy. Even if such mechanisms are ultimately non-viable, such theorizations can also shed light on aspects for a creative defusing of this long sustained conflict.

This essay started with the intention to consider South Korea's applicability of Israeli deterrence measures, yet concluded with a consideration of North Korea as a state that has already followed similar measures. This can lead to further explorations of new perspectives on the Korean conflict and hopefully, new ways of diplomacy to attain permanent peace. **GPR**

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15 Greg Cashman, *What Causes War?: An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict* (Rowman Littlefield Publishers, 2013).

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