

The 13th Asian Conference on Asian Studies

May 19-22, 2023 | TOKYO, JAPAN

A C C S

A C A S

2 0 2 3

**OFFICIAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

Organised by The International Academic Forum (IAFOR) in association with the IAFOR Research Centre at Osaka University and IAFOR's Global University Partners

ISSN: 2187-4735



“To Open Minds, To Educate Intelligence, To Inform Decisions”

The International Academic Forum provides new perspectives to the thought-leaders and decision-makers of today and tomorrow by offering constructive environments for dialogue and interchange at the intersections of nation, culture, and discipline. Headquartered in Nagoya, Japan, and registered as a Non-Profit Organization (一般社団法人), IAFOR is an independent think tank committed to the deeper understanding of contemporary geo-political transformation, particularly in the Asia Pacific Region.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERCULTURAL

INTERDISCIPLINARY

**iafor**



# ACCS/ACAS Programme Committee

**Professor Umberto Ansaldo**

Curtin University, Australia

**Professor Yasue Arimitsu**

Doshisha University, Japan

**Dr Sue Ballyn**

University of Barcelona, Spain

**Keiko Bang**

Bang Singapore Pte Ltd., Singapore

**Dr Darlene Machell Espena**

Singapore Management University, Singapore

**Professor Lorna Piatti-Farnell**

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

**Professor Gerard Goggin**

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

**Dr Joseph Haldane**

The International Academic Forum (IAFOR), Japan

**Professor Donald E. Hall**

Binghamton University, United States

**Professor Baden Offord**

Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University, Australia & Cultural Studies Association of Australasia

**Professor Seiko Yasumoto**

University of Sydney, Australia



The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023

Official Conference Proceedings

ISSN: 2187-4735



© The International Academic Forum 2023  
The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)  
Sakae 1-16-26-201  
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi  
Japan 460-0008  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)





## Table of Contents

<i>The Chinese Language Teacher Competencies in the Eastern Economics Corridor of Thailand</i> Phattharamanat Srirakul	pp. 1 - 13
<i>Portrayals of Modern Girls' Desires in Uno Chiyo's and Suat Derviş's Literary Works</i> Aslı İdil Kaynar	pp. 15 - 25
<i>Masculinities in Doraemon: A Critical Discourse Analysis</i> Zhouyan Wu Zhaoxun Song	pp. 27 - 37
<i>Deoli Days: The Internment of the Ethnic Chinese of India, the Overseas Chinese Identity and Nation-Building in South Asia</i> Joita Das	pp. 39 - 49
<i>China's Global Maritime Expansion: Between Its Grand Dream and External Trends</i> Najla Alzarooni	pp. 51 - 61
<i>Persuasive Strategies in Debates on Japan's Constitution and Article 9: The Gulf War Case Study</i> Anastasiya Polishchuk	pp. 63 - 78
<i>The Effects of Gender in Second Language Acquisition: A Study on Bangladeshi Adult EFL Learners</i> Laila Noor Suvrodeb Bepari	pp. 79 - 94
<i>The Poem "Ordinary Days" by Ý Nhi and the Picture of the "Imagined Community" in Modern Vietnamese Literature</i> Nguyễn Hồng Anh	pp. 95 - 103
<i>The Takhi, The Bear, The Dragon, and The Eagle: Mongolia's Historic Foreign Policy Challenges</i> Michael Allen Lake Joseph E. Lake	pp. 105 - 117
<i>Decision-Making Reasons of Thai People to Put Elderly Parent in Nursing Home</i> Sauwaluck Koojaroenprasit Sumaree Pumpinyo	pp. 119 - 126
<i>A Women Leader and Kyrgyz Nomadic Society: Ethnographic Re-consideration of Life of Kurmanjan Datka in the 19th-Century Silk Road</i> Takuya Soma Aizada Tynyeva Yumi Takahashi	pp. 127 - 137

*Between West and East: Japanese Mangas as World Literature*

Alexandra Goitia

pp. 139 - 145

*Teaching the Notion of 'Civil Society' Through Classroom:  
How Can Teachers in Tajikistan Use the Ethical Pathways to Human  
Development Module to Instil the Notion of 'Civil Society' Amongst  
Secondary Students?*

Ganjina Shamirova

pp. 147 - 158

*The Chinese Language Teacher Competencies in the Eastern Economics Corridor  
of Thailand*

Phattharamanat Sritrakul, Burapha University, Thailand

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This research aimed to (1) survey the problem of Chinese Language Teachers development in EEC area, (2) create the Chinese Language Teacher's Competencies for the EEC area, and (3) provide the guidelines for developing Chinese Teacher's Competencies for the EEC area. In order to achieve the research purpose, the research methodology was divided into parts. In the first part, content analysing of literature review for formulating questionnaire and surveying were applied to examine the problems and current competencies of Chinese Language Teachers in EEC area. In the second part, analyzing the content related to workforce skill sets and teacher's competencies of Chinese Teacher was applied to design the components of Chinese Language Teacher's competencies for EEC area of Thailand. Then, the questionnaire was formulated to survey Chinese Language Teacher's Competencies in EEC area. The third part was doing the focus group discussion which is the collecting data technique to provide recommendations for Chinese teacher competencies development. Finding was divided into three sections; the survey of Chinese Language Teacher development situation, it was evidenced that teacher has a high score in creating teaching innovation and classroom activity; there are eight components of Chinese Language Teacher's competencies for EEC area; the result of group discussion was suggested that schools should co-operate with other sectors for planning the training programme for teachers that should be in the form of on-the-job training and mentoring.

Keywords: Chinese Language Teacher, Eastern Economic Corridor, Teacher Competencies

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction of the study and its importance**

From the concept of “Industry 4.0,” the Royal Thai government has set a twenty-year strategy for Thailand to achieve high-income status by 2037. The aim was to unlock the country from economic challenges for innovative and value-based industry; with an emphasis on twelve fields such as automation and robotics, aviation and logistics, biofuel and biochemicals, and digital so that Thailand aims to achieve prosperity, security and sustainability for the country’s progress and development.

Moreover, this plan includes a wide range of top-down initiatives; especially in infrastructure and people development, transforming Thailand to be a more knowledge-based economy, which can shift Thailand to be an Economics Hub in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the government is developing new growth hubs by starting the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) area which covers Rayong, Chonburi, and Chachengsao provinces; located in the Eastern part of Thailand. This area lies at the heart of the Thailand 4.0 scheme (Eastern Economic Corridor Office, 2019).

The EEC is developed from the well-known Eastern Seaboard where for the past thirty years, numerous business developers have experienced a rewarding investment and exceptional achievements. The EEC development plan is a significant transformation of both physical and social development for leveling up the country’s competitiveness. The objectives of the government are to accelerate the area’s readiness to support all aspects of investment and economic growth; and fully expects that the EEC will be an important center for trading, transportation, and a strategic gateway to Asia (Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau, 2022).

From the statistics of 2022 from the Thailand Board of Investment (BOI), it shows that Chinese Citizens who are businessmen have the highest ratio of investors at 19%. This is because the Chinese government has implemented the One Belt One Road project for cooperating with the Mae-Kong River Countries; such as Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia; by enhancing the investment of industry. This creates opportunity for Economic growth from China in Thailand (Thailand Board of Investment, 2022).

## **The Role of Education in EEC**

The uplifting of the economy in the area attracts a high number of Chinese citizen investors. Therefore, the Chinese Language has played an important role for schools in the EEC area as the tool of communication (Wuyao Zheng, 2021). Ministry of Education of Thailand has expanded the cooperation in various ways with China for developing teacher’s Chinese language abilities aiming to improve the teaching standards and techniques of this. For example, setting up Human Capital Excellence Management Center (HDEMC) for Chinese teachers; and cooperating with HANBAN for providing teacher’s training programs, arranging field trips to China, and promoting Thai and Chinese Education research work (Ministry of Education Thailand, 2020). However, the research papers related to the Chinese teaching situation in Thailand of five sources: Tian Xin (2022), Lim Chong Ewe and Feng Min (2021), Jiani Tan (2022), Huilin Luo and Pimurai Limpapath(2016), Narueporn Wittiphan and Yang Ting (2013). These sources concluded as followed:

1. Teachers lack a variety of new teaching techniques in language, because they are unaware of how to apply the language and the methods of teaching students as a foreign language.
2. Teachers are overburdened with many school-related tasks, and they don't have sufficient time to improve themselves.
3. Teachers lack mentoring in Chinese Language knowledge and teaching since there are a limited number of professionals in the area.
4. School principals don't enhance or emphasize the importance of Chinese Language studies in school, so teachers and students don't have more effective learning opportunities for their future horizons.
5. Schools don't implement the policy of creating community-based learning in any language course as teaching is still based on textbooks.
6. The Chinese teacher's system does not produce the suitable needs of schools in the EEC area, so they cannot create any innovation of teaching in the Chinese Language.
7. There is no consistent development of programs to improve their teaching abilities.

From the above, considering the necessity of the Chinese Language and EEC area in Thailand; it should create competencies for Chinese Language Teachers for preparing students to be a highly skilled manpower of the EEC area with a high proficiency of Chinese Language; as well as provide a recommendation for policy makers. This topic was to explore how Chinese Language teachers should be improving students' language abilities to serve the Eastern Economics Corridor of Thailand

### **The purpose of the study**

1. To survey the problem of Chinese Language Teachers development in EEC area.
2. To create the Chinese Language Teacher's Competencies for the EEC area.
3. To provide the guidelines for developing Chinese Teacher's Competencies for the EEC area.

### **Definition of Terms**

1. Eastern Economics Corridor: the special industrial area which covers Rayong, Chacheongsao and Chonburi provinces in the eastern part of Thailand.
2. Chinese Language Teacher: Teacher who are responsible for Chinese courses in public schools for the secondary sector in Rayong, Chachoengsao and Chonburi provinces.
3. Chinese Language Teacher's competencies: competencies for teachers who teach Chinese as a foreign language including linguistics, psychology, teaching, technology, basic knowledge of China, cross-cultural management, and classroom action research skills.

### **Methodology**

This research project was divided into three parts, and the Research Committee of Burapha University, Thailand approved the ethical research. It was conducted by integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods.

In the first part, content analysis from research works related to Chinese Teacher's teaching problem was used for creating the survey of problems of Chinese language teachers'

development. The aim is to explore the problem of the lack of abilities of teachers in Teaching Chinese. The respondents were Chinese Teachers in secondary sector of public schools in Rayong, Chacheongsao and Chonburi provinces; with the cooperation between the Faculty of Education and Educational Office Area in all three provinces. The selection was purposive sampling all 102 teachers from 79 schools who are responsible for Chinese courses. The questionnaire was approved by the IOC from three professionals in education and Chinese linguistics. The  $\bar{x}$  and S.D. were used for analyzing the statistics and survey results.

In the second part, after the results of the first part, data for problems of teacher development was analyzed together with the study on related teacher competencies of Thailand; and Chinese for teaching Chinese as a foreign language designed for the Chinese Language Teacher's Competencies for Eastern Economic Corridor. Then the survey for Chinese Teachers was created as a check list and an open question. In this part, Exploratory Factor Analysis was implemented, to determine the factor structure of a measure and to examine its internal reliability (Creswell, 2014).

The surveying group was also Chinese Teachers in secondary sector of public schools in Rayong, Chacheongsao and Chonburi provinces from 79 schools. The questionnaire was approved by the IOC from five professionals in education and Chinese linguistics. The statistics analysis of data was by  $\bar{x}$  and S.D. as well as content analysis in the open question section.

In the third part, the focus group discussion technique was used by inviting the 10 participants from education offices, universities, public schools, and vocational schools to find the guidelines for Chinese Language Teacher's Competencies development recommendations. An interview was conducted by using open questions to ask the experts a specific situation that relevant to Chinese teacher's competencies improvement. The content analysis was used for analyzing the data (Nimer, 2023).

The specialists are from a variety of sectors, including:

1. The directors of educational office of Chonburi-Rayong Area, and educational office of Chacheongsao Area.
2. The expert of teaching Chinese as a foreign language from Assumption University.
3. The lecturer of the Chinese major, Faculty of Education, Burapha University.
4. A teacher from vocational school in Chonburi.
5. Teachers from public schools in Chonburi.
6. Employees from companies in Chacheongsao and Rayong province.

## Findings

According to the research purposes of this study, the research finding was divided into three sections.

### 1. Problems of Chinese Teachers' competencies development

Initially, content analysis was developed from the relevant literature of Chinese Teaching and the Chinese Language Teacher's competencies problem as well as EEC area development information, for formulating questions of a questionnaire about problems of Chinese language Teacher's competencies. Using Exploratory factor analysis, 24 items were retained.

The structure of instrument design was five rating scale. There are 86 respondents out of 102 Chinese language teachers in EEC area (84.31%), answered the questionnaire in this part. The result of the current situation of Chinese Language teachers is shown below in table 1.

**Table 1: The results of responses questionnaire about the problem of Chinese Language Teachers development in EEC area**

No.	items	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
1	Teacher has a self-study for gaining general information of EEC area development for intergrading in teaching Chinese language activity.	3.20	0.80
2	Teacher was trained by government or university sectors about preparing the education for EEC area.	3.20	1.00
3	Teacher has a participation in school planning relevant EEC area development.	3.20	1.00
4	Teacher participated in the English training program for self-improvement.	2.51	1.00
5	Teacher used teaching aids integrating with technology for arranging teaching activities.	2.51	0.98
6	Teacher was trained by 21 <sup>st</sup> century thinking skills for improving student's competencies in Chinese courses.	2.51	0.98
7	Teacher was trained annually for moral and professional ethics	3.44	0.93
8	Teacher builds an inspiration for learning Chinese to every student.	3.44	0.81
9	Teacher enhances students by arranging the acceptance of integrity among classmates in religious and culture aspects.	3.44	0.83
10	Teacher promotes the language communication in Chinese among native speakers and students.	3.14	0.86
11	Teacher arranges the careers and continuing guidance related to Chinese for students.	3.14	0.92
12	Teacher was trained related to Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language in teaching techniques.	3.14	0.95
13	Teacher studies and arranges Professional Learning Community (PLC) in Chinese Courses and integrating with other courses.	3.39	1.00
14	Teacher has attended related language and culture of Chinese and Thai in the past year.	3.39	0.99
15	Teacher understands in applying Second Language Acquisition in teaching.	3.39	0.90
16	Teacher builds the Chinese teaching activities for practical daily routines.	3.53	0.82
17	Teacher improves Chinese language course curriculum for preparing students towards EEC area development.	3.53	0.89
18	Teacher develops teaching innovation in Chinese Language Teaching class and certification in teaching.	3.53	0.91
19	Teacher creates learning community among students from other schools in the nearest area.	2.88	0.95
20	Teacher takes students to survey Chinese business companies and Chinese enterprises in EEC area.	2.88	1.12
21	Teacher conducts classroom action research in Chinese course to improve students' learning in Chinese.	2.88	0.98
22	Teacher applied evaluation technique that has emphasis on performance of student's language ability	3.41	0.79

No.	items	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
23	Teacher applied Sufficiency Economics Philosophy in teaching Chinese for leveling up student's learning outcomes	3.41	0.86
24	Teacher provides the guidelines of studying in China to students	3.41	0.88
Overall score		<b>3.26</b>	<b>0.99</b>

From the table 1, it can be concluded that, schools have prepared the curriculum for adjusting the education towards EEC area development; including creating teaching innovation and classroom activity which has a highest average score. In the teaching profession aspect, the teacher builds the inspiration to learn Chinese and arrange the mutual understanding of students from different backgrounds and this was ranked second on the average scores. Moreover, the third ranked was both Teacher focuses on leveling students' language ability and learning outcomes; and guiding students for going to study in China.

On the other hand, the lowest average is improving skills of teachers such as English language skills, integrating technology, and thinking skills for teaching. The next lowest was teacher does not frequently create community learning and arrange the activities with other schools in promoting learning Chinese. Finally, the third lowest was Teachers conduct classroom action research project related to Chinese language teaching to solve student's problem in the low rate.

Overall, the situation in Chinese Teacher's competencies development was in the medium level (3.26 out of 5).

## 2. Chinese Language Teachers for the Eastern Economic Corridors

In this part, at the beginning, content analysis was conducted from three parts; EEC working skills set, Teacher's competencies for Thailand, and Chinese Teaching as a Foreign Language Teacher's competencies. Then formulating items for the questionnaire was from the analyzing content results by applying using Exploratory factor analysis for designing five rating scale questionnaires. There are two parts for designing the component of Chinese Language Teachers' Competencies.

### Part 1 Content analyzing data from 3 components as follows:

#### (1) EEC working skills set

EEC is the special industrial area for enhancing the investment of industry. The start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been marked by a significant change in the global economic landscape. It is one of the Thailand 4.0 strategies to promote sustainable economic growth based on the so-called "New S-Curve" industries with research, innovation, and the digital economy at their core. The EEC aims to bring innovation to improve the quality of living through "7 Smarts" solutions: Smart Mobility, Smart People, Smart Living, Smart Economy, Smart Governance, Smart Energy and Smart Environment. In order to reach the aim of EEC area, there are three main activities in the EEC development area project: (1) Upgrading of Thailand's transport and logistics infrastructure in order to provide a solid connectivity platform to link the EEC region with markets of the Asia Pacific, the Indian Ocean Rim, and beyond, (2) Establishing areas of concentration for investments in the "New S-Curve" industries, such as "EECi" to promote innovation, and "EECd" to promote digital economy, and (3) Creating areas for sustainable economic and social development through the use of new and environmentally-



friendly technologies to enhance quality of life. So, it is important to explore the skills set of working towards the future for further enhancing the productivity of its workforce to be ready to take advantage of new opportunities emanating from the growth industries of the future.

In order to explore the skills set in EEC's workforce, it started with examining the essential skills from 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, of UNESCO, EEC requirement skills by EEC Human Resources Development Center, OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030, Future of Work skills from World Economic Forum, and Future Job skills 2025. It can be concluded that the essential skills for EEC area workforce includes critical thinking, Emotional Intelligence, cross cultural understanding, digital literacy and ICT, communication, problem-solving skills, building partnership and learning community, and compassion and disciplinary. Then the essential skills for EEC area in the forum of comparative table is shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2: The results of content analyzing for the essential skills for working in EEC area**

<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills</b>	<b>EEC Requirement Skills</b>	<b>OECD Future of Education and Skills</b>	<b>Future of Work skills</b>	<b>Future Job Skills for 2025</b>	<b>Results</b>
Critical Thinking	-	Critical Thinking	Critical thinking and analyzing skills	Critical Thinking	<b>Critical Thinking</b>
Creativity and creating Innovation	-	Creativity	Creativity, and creating innovation		<b>Creativity, and icreating nnovation</b>
Collaboration Teamwork and Leadership	Teamwork	-	Emotional Intelligence	Emotional intelligence	<b>Emotional intelligence</b>
Cross-cultural understanding	English and Chinese	Global Competency	Leadership and social influence	Cross-cultural	<b>Cross-cultural Mangaement</b>
Computing and ICT	Technology STEAM Coding and Digital Literacy	-	Technology design and programing	Digital Tech attitude Tech Management Skills	<b>Computing and ICT</b>
Communication	-	Reading Science Mathematics	Complex, problem-solving and ideation	Out-Centric Leadership Principles	<b>Communication Complex, problem-solving</b>
Career and Learning	Partnership		Active learning and learning strategy	-	<b>Partnership Career and Learning community</b>
Compassion			System analysis and evaluation	Inter disciplinarily	<b>Compassion disciplinarily</b>

*Sources:* 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills (UNESCO,2017), EEC requirement skills by EEC Human Resources Development Center(Thaipost,2022) , OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 (OECD,2019), Future of Work skills(World Economic Forum,2023), and Future Job skills 2025(Barbala Palmer,2020)

## (2) Teacher's competencies for Thailand

Exploring Teacher's essential competencies for teaching profession in Thailand was divided into 3 sources; Ministry of Education, Thailand (2017) has regulated teaching profession's competencies for teachers; Education Commission Council (2018) has set the competencies for teachers towards Thailand 4.0 scheme; and skills set and role of teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century of Thailand (Sumai Binbai,2015). Then, the content analysis by integrating EFA method is shown on the table 3 below;

**Table 3: The results of content analysis of teacher's competencies of Thailand**

Teaching profession's competencies for teachers	Competencies for teachers towards Thailand 4.0 scheme	Skills set and role of teachers for 21 <sup>st</sup> century of Thailand	Results
1. Core Competencies 1.1 Focusing on the outcomes of work 1.2 Service-mind 1.3 Self-improvement 1.4 Teamworking 1.5 Being Ethical in profession of education 2. Functional Competencies 2.1 Curriculum and teaching management skills 2.2 Improve learners' ability. 2.3 Classroom management 2.4 Critical analysis and research to improve learners. 2.5 Leadership 2.6 Building partnership and relationship with community	1. General knowledge and ability 2. Professional knowledge and understanding 3. Professional skills 4. Attitude and Values 5. Professional Practice 6. Professional Engagement	1. Knowledgeable in content of teaching 2. Computer Integration 3. Being constructionist in providing self-directed learning teaching style 4. Connectivity 5. Collaboration 6. Communication 7. Creativity in teaching 8. Caring for students and Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service-mind and caring students</li> <li>• Teamwork and Collaboration</li> <li>• Ethical profession</li> <li>• Content of teaching for improving curriculum and teaching</li> <li>• Professional Practice</li> <li>• Computer and digital skills</li> <li>• Communication and partnership</li> </ul>

*Sources:* Ministry of Education, Thailand (2017), Education Commission Council (2018), and Sumai Binbai (2015).

From the table 3 of content analysis, from three sources, it can be concluded that Thai teachers should include competencies; Service-mind and caring students, Teamwork and Collaboration, Ethical profession, Content of teaching for improving curriculum and teaching

techniques, Professional Practice, Computer and digital skills, Communication and building partnership.

### (3) Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language teacher's competencies

In the last part of content analysis, exploring for teaching Chinese who teach Chinese as a foreign language's competencies was from the study of four sources: P.Duff and P.Lester (2008), Ying Lan hua (2018), Guo Rui (2010), and Simon Brog (2018). These sources concluded that Chinese Language Teachers who teach a foreign learners' competencies contained: Chinese Linguistics, Educational Psychology, Pedagogy, Educational Technologies, general knowledge about China, Cross Cultural Management and Classroom Action Research skill.

In conclusion of content analyzing, it can be summarized that Chinese Language Teachers for Eastern Economic Corridors of Thailand consists of eight components: general basic knowledge of EEC area development, Moral and Ethical in Teaching Profession, Improving students 'ability, building the relation with the community Chinese Linguistics, Educational Psychology, Language Pedagogy, and Research skills for student's improvement.

### Part 2 Qualitative method for surveying

The content analysis of this study has concluded the study domain of Chinese Language Teacher's Competencies in EEC area. After the items were rearranged by IOC (Index of items objective congruence) from five experts for formulating questionnaire, the tool has achieved adequate validity and reliability. The questionnaire was designed in five rating scale form and the respondents were also Chinese Language teachers in EEC area. Data was analyzed by using  $\bar{x}$  and S.D. as a statistical result. So, table 4 below shows the results of each component.

**Table 4: The result of surveying in Chinese Language Teacher competencies for EEC area of Thailand**

No.	Components of Chinese Language Teacher competencies	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
1.	Applying general basic knowledge of EEC area development	3.18	0.87
2.	Chinese Linguistics	3.86	0.88
3.	Educational Psychology	3.74	0.93
4.	Moral and Ethical in Teaching Profession	4.08	0.87
5.	Improving students 'ability	3.89	0.85
6.	Language Pedagogy	3.87	0.89
7.	Building relationship with the community	3.31	0.88
8.	Research skills for student's improvement	3.71	0.85
	overall	3.68	0.93

From table 4, it can be seen that Teacher has a highest rate competency in moral and understand ethical in teaching profession, next teacher understands the operation of pedagogy in language and knowledgeable in Chinese linguistics respectively. On the other hand, it is significant that most teachers do not apply much about general knowledge of EEC area development to the classroom, so it was the lowest rate. Following this, Building the relationship with surrounding community in the area. Whereas teachers understanding educational psychology and language pedagogy were in the middle ranks of component.

### **3. The recommendations of improving Chinese Language Teacher's Competencies for EEC area of Thailand**

In this part, the methodology was conducted with the focus group discussion technique. There are ten participants from various sectors such as local educational government, universities, basic educational schools, a vocational school, and Chinese enterprises in EEC area. They suggested that most schools in EEC area have been operating Chinese Course, and they do emphasize on Chinese Language teaching and learning. But there is no link between school and EEC area sectors, so schools have no direction on how to implement Chinese Teaching for preparing students as a workforce in EEC area. To plan the guidelines for developing competencies of Chinese Language teachers; schools should start from the school planning to cooperate with local government sectors, universities, and Chinese citizen companies for school planning Chinese course curriculum to arrange the activities related to enhance the understanding of EEC area's development. Consequently, local government sectors should cooperate with universities or private sectors to arrange long term planning for Chinese Language Teachers' competencies improvement about their language pedagogy, lesson plans, classroom action research and creating activities with the community to enhance Chinese Language learning for students in the form of on-the-job training and mentoring. Moreover, schools should design the local curriculum that students can apply in their daily life, together with emphasis on teachers to create teaching innovation in Chinese class as well as arranging communication in cross cultural experience with Chinese people.

#### **Conclusion**

This research is conducted by using the EFA method which is based on examining the relevant literature of Chinese Language Teacher's competencies; to explore the problem and components of Chinese Language Teacher's Competencies for EEC area of Thailand. It can be clearly seen from the main finding, that Chinese Language Teachers in EEC area of Thailand, mostly face the problem of cultivating thinking skills and applying technology in Chinese Language class. Because technology and thinking skills are essential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these will transform the way of traditional teaching style to constructivism which would ensure that teachers facilitate effective classroom activities. Moreover, they lack conducting classroom action research for improving students' language abilities. It is interesting to note that schools do have a plan for creating the curriculum, which is linked between Chinese course and local development, but students lack building relationships with the communities and the opportunity to perform their language's ability with other students from other schools. Whereas teacher has the highest rate in preparing the curriculum for preparing students toward EEC area development's workforce, creating teaching technique and arrange the activities in the classroom. From the argument of teacher's teaching, schools have well-prepared in-school curriculums but in teaching in practical terms; are not based on the curriculum that links with local development.

Language teachers have difficulties in integrating educational technologies and thinking skills in Chinese classes which would allow students to be more engaged in their language learning (Ratna Rintaningrum, 2023). Moreover, teachers usually only adhere to the content in the textbooks that students cannot apply to their surrounding context and routine usage of the language (Monica and Vianty, 2019).

According to the survey for the questionnaire, the component of Chinese Language Teacher's that teacher practices as the least building relationship with the community and applying EEC

knowledge in Chinese class. These points relate to the above results, and this is because the local government sectors pay attention to basic education by driving policy that may not be practiced or implemented in the classroom situation. Furthermore, teachers seldom develop classroom action research for improving students, due to the lack of training and implementation from school and authority sectors, as well as the limitation of school's cooperation with communities and other sectors. However, teachers have high moral standards and the motivation to improve student's abilities. Consequently, teachers should be trained for creating the local curriculum and research skills (Turner,K; Garvis,S., 2023, and Anderson-Butcher et al., 2022).

In conclusion, from the problem of the current situation in developing Chinese Language Teacher's competencies and their readiness for preparing students towards EEC area of Thailand, the participants of the focus group interview suggested the development of competencies from of on-the-job training and mentoring of research skills with the collaboration of other sectors.

### **Acknowledgement**

This research project was funded by the Faculty of Education, Burapha University, Thailand.

## References

- Anderson-Butcher, D.; Bates, S.; Lawson, H. A.; Childs, T. M.; Ianchini, A. L. (2022). The community Collaboration Model for School Improvement. *Education Science*. 12(12), 918.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design : Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London : SAGE Publication.
- Education Commission Council. (2018). *Thai Teacher's Competencies towards Thailand 4.0*. Bangkok: Education Commission Council
- Guo Rui. (2010). *Development of Chinese Language Teachers*. Beijing: Beijing Language and Culture University Press.
- Huilin Luo and Pimurai Limpapath. (2016). Attitude towards Chinese Language Learning: A Case of Thai Senior High School Students at a Private School in Bangkok. *BU Academic Review*. 15(2):110.
- Jiani Tan. (2022). The Comparative Study of Chinese Learning Achievement of Grade 7 Students Using Chinese or Thai as a Medium of Instruction in Chinese Language Class at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand. *Scholar: Human Science, ISSN 2586-9388*. 14(2):489.
- Lim Chong Ewe and Feng Min. (2021). Teaching Chinese Language Outside of China: The Case of Chinese Teachers in Thailand. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*. 21(4):149.
- Monica, S., & Vianty, M. (2019). Developing Local Content-Based Instructional Graded Reading Materials for Reading Level Three Students. *Linguistic, English Education and Art (LEEA) Journal*, 3(1), 1-16.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31539/leea.v3i1.792>
- Narueporn Wittiphan and Yang Ting. (2013). The Study of Thailand Chinese Teaching Policy in Chinese Teaching of the Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University. *Journal of Education Khon Kaen University*. 36(1):16-23.
- Nimer, B. (2023). *Research Methods: Workbook*. Cotabato: Notre Dame of Kidapawan College.
- OECD. (2019). *Education 2030: Future of Education and Skills 2030*. Paris : OECD Publishing
- P. Duff and P. Lester. (2008). *Issue in Chinese Language Education and Teacher Development*. British Columbia : Center for Research in Chinese Language and Literacy Education.
- Ratna Rintaningrum. (2023). Technology integration in English language teaching and learning: *Benefits and challenges, Cogent Education*, 10:1, DOI: 10.1080/2331186X.2022.2164690

- Simon Brog. (2018). *Teacher's Development and TCSOL*. Beijing : Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press
- Sumai Binbai. (2015). *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills for Thai Teacher*. Bangkok: Ministry of Education
- Tian Xin.(2022).The Training Mode of Local Chinese Language Teachers in Thailand : An Exploratory Analysis. *Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies*.7(2):57.
- Turner,K; Garvis,S. (2023). Teacher Education Wellbeing ,Stress and Burnout, *Education Science*. 13(4), 351.
- UNESCO. (2017). *Education and Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Report*. Santiago : UNESCO.
- Wuyao Zheng. (2021). Thailand's Response to One Belt One Road Policy.*Journal of Rangsit Graduate Studies in Business and Social Science*.7(1):116
- Ying Lan Hua. (2018). *The Core Competencies for Chinese Language Teachers in Taiwan : A Multiple Criteria Decision Making Approach*.Ed.D.,University of Missouri-St Louis,USA.

## Resources

- “Enhancing Chinese Language Education of Thailand” by the Ministry of Education,Thailand. (2017): <https://www.moe.go.th/websm/2017/dec/439.html>
- “Future Job Skills” by World Economic Forum.(2023):  
<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report2023/digest/#:~:text=Analytical%20thinking%20and%20creative%20thinking,core%20skills%20reported%20by%20companies>
- “Future Job skills 2025” by Barbala Palmer. (2020): <https://www.pcma.org/top-job-skills-2025/>
- “The initiative of EEC area and the important” by Eastern Economic Corridor Office (2019): <https://www.eeco.or.th/th>
- “TCEB and EEC for Thailand 4.0” by Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau. (2022) <https://www.businesseventsthailand.com/en/press-media/news-press-release/detail/1450-tceb-x-eec-empowering-to-thailand-40>
- “Thailand ‘s2021 Investment Pledges Up 59% to 19.5 Billion on FDI and BCG Boost” by Thailand Board of Investment (2022):[https://www.boi.go.th/index.php?page=press\\_releases\\_detail&topic\\_id=131040&language=tw](https://www.boi.go.th/index.php?page=press_releases_detail&topic_id=131040&language=tw)
- “10 EEC training partnership for EEC towards new future” by Thaipost (2022): <https://www.eng.rmutt.ac.th/10-new-eec-learning-centers-for-the-better-future>





## *Portrayals of Modern Girls' Desires in Uno Chiyo's and Suat Derviř's Literary Works*

Aslı İdil Kaynar, The University of Queensland, Australia

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

The figure of the modern girl emerged in Turkey and Japan in the 1920s. Modern girls' Westernised looks and progressive lifestyles made them a popular subject for authors and the media. However, the portrayals of modern girls by male authors and media outlets often relied on stereotypical depictions. This paper argues that the figure transcends the limited representations of the male gaze, emphasising the need for a comprehensive understanding through exploring desire and self-representation in women authors' literary works. Although modern girls played an important role in feminist history as a transnational phenomenon, there is a lack of comparative literary studies dedicated to this figure. While Japanese modern girls (*modan gaaru* or *moga*) have been compared to their counterparts in Korea, China, and the West, Turkish modern girls (*modern kız*) have received limited scholarly attention globally. Exploring the portrayal of Turkish and Japanese modern girls in literature provides valuable insights into the influence of Westernisation on non-Western societies and contributes to the understanding of intersections in women's lives. This research focuses on the representations of modern girls in Japanese author Uno Chiyo's (1897-1996) and Turkish novelist Suat Derviř's (1905-1972) selected literary works. It adopts feminist desire theories as a framework to demonstrate the complexity of the modern girl figure and expand the discussion beyond its mere resemblance to Western ideals.

Keywords: Modern Girls, Comparative Literature, Gender Representation, Women Authors

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Modern girls emerged in an era where consumerism and commodity culture were on the rise. Godeau (1996) explains commodity culture as the “eroticisation of the objects in which the feminine image operates as a mirror of desire” (p. 113). Modern girls, regarded as the epitome of this culture, were heavily commercialised and transformed into desirable objects for promoting products. They came from diverse backgrounds, including middle-class flappers and young, working-class women; the urban life brought them together. They challenged conventional beauty standards with their youthful, slender, almost “boyish” but also feminine qualities (Nicholas, 2015, p. 40). Their characteristics involved short hair, makeup, and Western clothes. In the 1920s, as women increasingly participated in public spaces, they became more exposed to the public eye. Prior to the emergence of capitalism, gender divisions and their associated spheres created a clear separation between men and women in terms of sexual desire. However, in the 1920s, these boundaries began to blur as women started liberating themselves from the imposed notions of “correct” sexuality and gender roles (Takemura, 2002, p. 55). Modern girls, the most visible among them, faced harsh criticism and were sometimes mocked by the media.

The Japanese modern girl was a controversial figure who challenged traditional gender roles and the Meiji ideology of the “good wife, wise mother”. This concept emerged in the late 19th century as part of the national agenda to build a modern state that emphasised domestic roles assigned to women. Japanese intellectuals’ views on modern girls varied greatly, with some expressing positive sentiments but the majority leaning towards negative perceptions. A study on 1920s women’s magazines reveals a woman intellectual’s remarks on the topic, describing New Women<sup>1</sup> as “kindred spirits” due to their novel ideas, but she believed that there was little depth to explore in the thinking of modern girls, whereas a prominent feminist figure Hiratsuka Raichō commented on Japanese modern girls as “the daughter of the New Woman” (Sato, 2003, pp. 55-57). According to Driscoll (2010), Marxist journalist Ōya Sōichi characterised *moga* and *mobo* (modern boy) as individuals driven by “superficial desires for cheap new sensations” (p. 145). The reactions to Japanese modern girls were mixed, but the discourse surrounding them mostly emphasised their association with the capitalist culture.

The Turkish modern girls elicited similar reactions within society. In Turkey, the Westernisation process started in the Tanzimat Era (1839-1876). As the Ottoman Empire had significantly weakened by the nineteenth century, it was believed that adopting Western European practices and culture was necessary to enhance the empire's security and keep up with the advancements of the Western world. The figure of the modern girl emerged around 1923 when the Turkish Republic was established. For reformists, she represented a figure with greater agency, symbolising a welcome change. However, Islamist groups held negative views towards modern girls. In popular novels, Turkish modern girls were often portrayed as either nationalists or Western degenerates. The term “Turkish modern girls” refers to young women who resided and worked in major cities, deviating from the idealised image of the Republican woman, as the latter was expected to fulfil her maternal duties akin to the Meiji Government's “good wife, wise mother” ideology.

As there are multiple perspectives on modern girls, defining and identifying them, particularly in literature, presents a challenge. However, certain common traits can be

---

<sup>1</sup> New Women group emerged in the 1910s, primarily consisting of intellectual, middle-class women who played a significant role in Japanese feminist history. Unlike modern girls, the New Women were an organised group and established a magazine called *Seitō* (Bluestockings).

observed among modern girls, including their engagement in urban environments and active participation in public spaces. This study identifies and explores modern girls based on their lifestyles, shedding light on their significant role in feminist history. It deviates from scholars of the modern girl discourse who primarily emphasise the consumerist aspects of modern girls, suggesting that they adopted a more passive stance regarding feminist movements. By delving into the multifaceted aspects of modern girls' desires in women authors' works, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of their experiences.

In this paper, interpretation of the texts is rooted in desire theories with a feminist approach. It is informed by the work of influential feminist theorists, such as Cixous (1991) and Irigaray (1985), who argue that writing can serve as a means for women to express their desires, which have traditionally been portrayed as passive. The framework also draws on Felski's (2003) ideas, who emphasises the significance of examining women's experiences and voices in literary texts, asserting that female subjectivity is constructed through self-discovery in novels.

Aligned with these approaches, this study aims to identify recurring patterns in the portrayal of modern girl characters within the works of Derviş and Uno. It explores the origins of the characters' desires, the relationship between characters, and their divergence from stereotypical depictions. By employing this theoretical framework as a foundation, the analysis delves into the multifaceted experiences of modern girls, delving into their relationships and exploring the complex nature of these figures.

Uno Chiyo's *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi* (The Story of a Single Woman, 1971) and Suat Derviş's *Kadın Aşksız Yaşamaz* (A Woman Does Not Live Without Love, 1935) serve as the primary texts for the discussion in this paper. These works are chosen due to their basis in the authors' personal experiences as modern girls. Additionally, reference is made to other texts by Uno and Derviş that exhibit similar patterns and themes. Among the other texts that are mentioned are Uno's *Iro zange* (serialised in *Chūō Kōron* from 1933 to 1935 and translated into English as *Confessions of Love*), "Shifun no kao" (Painted Face, 1921), and Derviş's *Kendine Tapan Kadın* (The Woman Who Worships Herself, 1947), *Fosforlu Cevriye* (Cevriye the Glamorous, 1948) and *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanıdır* (This is the Novel of Things That Happen, 1937).

### **Japanese and Turkish modern girls: The myth and the female experience**

The act of looking involves relationships of power, encompassing difficulty, unpleasantness, and even danger. Once the gaze fulfils its duty, the process of representation begins, where meaning is constructed through language and images. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these representations might not fully capture reality, as "labels and images produce meaning yet cannot fully invoke the experience of the object" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2018, p. 9). Images are shaped by the dynamics of social power and ideology. The dynamics of power and representation find resonance in the case of Turkish and Japanese modern girls during the 1920s and 1930s. The voyeuristic male gaze constructed an objectified image influenced by commodity fetishism and the dominant consumer culture.

Initially viewed as fashion icons, Japanese modern girls became associated with loose morals during the *ero guro nansensu*<sup>2</sup> movement of the 1930s. This perception was partly shaped by their presence in cafés, where modern life unfolded in streets and social spaces. Cafés, bars, restaurants, dance halls, and cinemas were extensions of the modern city, symbolising liberation for women and changing dynamics between men and women (Tipton, 2000, p. 119). Within this context, modern girls working as *jokyū* (café waitresses) and coming from various socio-economic backgrounds represented alternative possibilities for women. However, they lived in difficult conditions, and low wages made them dependent on tips to make ends meet. As a result, some of them succumbed to erotic services, and waitresses became objectified figures. Male authors such as Hirotsu Kazuo, Takeda Rintarō and Nagai Kafū depicted the waitress figure in their works, often expressing pessimism and discontent. In contrast, Japanese women authors like Uno Chiyo, Hayashi Fumiko, and Sata Ineko offered their perspectives and experiences as waitresses, allowing readers to access the uninterrupted female experience and the realities of being objectified by the male gaze.

In Turkey, music halls, restaurants, and casinos established by White Russians in Istanbul served a similar purpose to Japan's cafés, which were frequented by intellectuals, modern girls and modern boys. However, unlike the Japanese case, there is limited information about Turkish waitresses. Turkish authors, primarily focusing on urban life, either explored nationalist ideas or turned to people living in rural areas to address issues like inequality in their texts. It is important to note that there were fewer working-class women authors in Turkish literature of that period compared to Japan. This was mainly caused by the difference between modernisation in Japan and Turkey during the 1920s. Japan's modernisation in the 1920s was less state-led compared to the Meiji Era (1868-1912) (Tipton & Clark, 2000, p. 7), whereas Turkey's modernisation resembled the Meiji Era with significant state influence. Japan's education system was more improved and modernised, resulting in higher literacy rates and greater access to education for women. In contrast, Turkey faced challenges in raising literacy rates due to the transition from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet in 1928. Most Turkish women authors were from middle or upper-class backgrounds, who seem to bear more resemblance to the figure of the New Woman. However, working-class women became the subjects of Derviş's novels; she differed from her contemporaries by portraying women in urban settings and giving voice to their experiences. Both Uno's and Derviş's literary works offer valuable insights into the female experience, providing perspectives that differ from the dominant male-centered narratives, which deems them important in understanding the figure of the modern girl better.

### The authors

Uno Chiyo, born in 1897 in Iwakuni, experienced a significant loss at a young age with her mother's death. However, her stepmother became a cherished figure in her life, contrasting with her father's mostly negative and dominant presence (Copeland, 1992). Uno demonstrated a keen interest in makeup and fashion, regularly applying powder to her face and attracting attention in her hometown with her flashy, purple *hakama* (Copeland, 1992, p. 12). Despite her aspirations to study in Tokyo or Kyoto, Uno's economic circumstances compelled her to remain in Iwakuni and work as an elementary school teacher. Eventually, she was able to relocate to Tokyo after marrying her cousin. Uno took on various part-time

---

<sup>2</sup> (Eng.) Erotic grotesque nonsense. An artistic and literary movement that emerged in the 1930s and promoted eroticism, cross-dressing, sexual freedom, queer sexuality and 'strange' fantasies, usually including gore (Freedman, 2011, p. 46). Cafés were associated with *ero guro* culture and thus marked as 'dangerous' places (Silverberg, 2006).

jobs, including hotel maid, waitress, model, tutor, and bookkeeper. These experiences in Tokyo served as a rich source of inspiration for her novels and short stories. While Uno gained popularity as an author, the majority of her works remain untranslated into English.

Uno's novels are commonly regarded as "the smaller world of personal heartbreak" (Birnbaum, 1999, p. 167). However, *The Story of a Single Woman* also offers an insightful portrayal of Japanese society in the late 1920s. The modern girl assumes multiple roles in the novel, embarking on a quest for a new identity and exploring alternative lifestyles. The narrative follows Kazue's journey from birth to her encounter with the painter Tanabe. While *The Story of a Single Woman* draws from Uno's life story, its narrative voice adopts a spectator's perspective, distinguishing it from her other autobiographical works.

In contrast to Uno Chiyo, Suat Derviş hailed from a privileged background as a member of an upper-class family of intellectuals. Having been homeschooled, she pursued higher education in Berlin before returning to Istanbul following her father's passing in 1932. Derviş embarked on a career as a reporter and translator, both in Turkey and Europe, and some of her stories were translated into German and featured in literary magazines.

While Derviş's earlier works predominantly revolve around the romantic affairs of middle or upper-class women, often incorporating gothic elements, her later novels shed light on the lives of working-class women, including factory workers and sex workers. This shift in focus can be attributed to Derviş's career as a reporter and her involvement with a leftist political party. During the 1930s, she interviewed workers and women engaged in marginalised professions. Derviş noted that her experience as a reporter and her interactions with various individuals influenced her transition toward writing more realistic novels, which she grew to cherish more than her earlier works (Oğurel, 2020). Derviş's novella, *A Woman Does Not Live Without Love*, is set in 1930s Istanbul and draws inspiration from her personal experiences. The novella revolves around the protagonist Cavide, a single woman working as a translator and living with her feline companion Şirin.

### **Analysis and findings**

Uno Chiyo's *The Story of a Single Woman* and Derviş's *A Woman Does Not Live Without Love* share common themes and patterns, such as loneliness, the desire for freedom, and the challenges women characters face in the workplace. Uno and Derviş depict their characters navigating a world where their desires and aspirations clash with societal norms, resulting in isolation and longing for connection. This analysis highlights the transformative potential of desire as a source that enables the characters to assert their agency in pursuing their aspirations.

### **Objectification, women as active desirers and desire to be free**

Uno's experiences with relationships served as both a wellspring of inspiration and an internal struggle as she grappled with the conflicting roles of being an obedient daughter or wife and a free-spirited woman aspiring to be a writer. A notable passage that captures Kazue's perspective on relationships further elucidates the complexities she grapples with:

She just could not understand why, when there was a relationship between a man and a woman, someone had to be hurt. Throughout her life she had been the victim any

number of times. But she never once held a grudge against the one who hurt her. (Uno, 1992, p. 125)

This passage reflects Kazue's enduring confusion and internal struggle as she navigates the ambiguous terrain of relationships and contemplates the enduring pain they often entail. In another example, Kazue becomes the target of a suitor's assault; she initially resists his advances, yet a part of her questions whether this is what she truly wants. Kazue's innate desire to please others leads her down a path of self-objectification, as she unwittingly accepts and internalises the roles imposed upon her, often blurring the boundaries between her desires and the expectations of others.

However, Kazue resists objectification by actively pursuing her desires in the novel. She challenges societal norms by questioning the institution of marriage, expressing herself through her clothing choices, and striving to earn her own money. Even in the face of harsh criticism, such as male characters labelling her heavy makeup as deceptive, Kazue remains steadfast in following her path. In another story titled "Painted Face," Uno tells the story of waitress Osumi whose lover loses interest in her when he sees her without her working clothes and makeup. The woman in her makeup and waitress uniform suggests the stereotypical modern girl or the object of desire. However, her true identity, stripped from all the modern girl commodities, poses a threat to patriarchy. For Kazue, makeup serves as a transformative disguise, simultaneously fascinating and terrifying. It becomes a mask that grants her the freedom to become someone else, enabling her to navigate the complexities of her existence.

Her restlessness further exemplifies Kazue's modern and liberal lifestyle. After being fired from her job due to her involvement with a fellow teacher, she leaves for Korea. Upon returning, she starts living with her cousin Jōji in Kyoto before eventually moving to Tokyo. Despite expressing her reluctance to marry, valuing her freedom, Kazue eventually does marry the writer Nozaki. However, their marriage is far from traditional, as Kazue sees it as a means to "wander" and explore rather than conform to societal expectations.

Uno's *Confessions of Love* is another fruitful work for exploring the experiences of the modern girl. The novella tells the story of Tōgō Seiji's affairs before he met Uno. Through portraying the male protagonist, Uno critiques the male perspective on the modern girl. Yuasa Jōji is depicted as passive, weak, and selfish, while the novel presents several powerful and modern women. These female characters challenge the stereotypical portrayals of modern girls in literature and subvert traditional gender roles. Instead of conforming to assigned roles, they undergo personal development and do not rely on Jōji to determine their futures. While these characters move on and adapt to modern Japan, Jōji experiences a sense of loss.

Similarly, in Derviş's *A Woman Does Not Live Without Love*, the depiction of modern girls exhibits similar qualities to Uno's modern girls. In the novella, Cavide is portrayed as strong and independent. Male characters repeatedly comment on Cavide's life as a single woman. Her boss assumes marriage is the key to her happiness, but she asserts that she has never considered marrying, even though she eventually does. Cavide is both the subject and object of the male gaze. Interactions between characters occur in entertainment venues such as cafés, bars, and music halls. At the beginning of the novel, Cavide goes to a café with her coworker Fahri, who persistently tries to hit on her and monitors her every action. Meanwhile, Cavide's gaze is directed at other men, such as a blonde foreigner at the café, whom she thinks is beautiful. Another instance involves her going to a Western-style bar with

her married boss. She is aware that he views her merely as a beautiful object, while Cavide sees him as a handsome man who can provide the life she desires. Cavide is torn between her desire for wealth and her love for her childhood friend, who cannot offer her the same lifestyle as her boss.

The recurrent pattern of being forced to choose between love and financial security can be observed in Derviş's other novels that depict modern girl characters. In *The Woman Who Worships Herself*, the initial portrayal of the protagonist suggests a materialistic woman who chooses marriage based on financial considerations, only to suffer the consequences of not prioritising love. In contrast to Cavide, Sara comes from a low-income family, and yearns for the wealth she never had, believing that greater financial resources would grant her freedom. While this novel can be interpreted as Derviş's critique of the capitalist system, it also unveils the internal conflicts and desires experienced by the commodified modern girl. The protagonist engages in a perpetual cycle of consumerism, constantly acquiring new possessions to fill an emotional void yet paradoxically experiencing increasing emptiness with each acquisition.

### **Longing for a better life**

Although Kazue enjoys wandering from place to place, her economic situation before meeting Nozaki forces her to work at several jobs. She takes jobs as a hotel or café waitress in Tokyo. Kazue barely has time to take care of herself; she calls herself "a doll dressed in rags" and "the object of pity" (Uno, 1992, p. 85). She does not live the glamorous life of a moga; she is a hard-working woman trying to survive in Tokyo while dreaming of becoming an established writer. However, Uno's portrayal of Kazue as a café waitress deviates from the predominantly negative depictions by male authors, who often presented café waitresses as self-sacrificing figures destined to be abandoned by their lovers. Kazue's chosen path enables her to succeed in various aspects of her life, despite her traumatic experiences.

The protagonist Cavide, living in Istanbul and trying to survive on her own, shares similar sentiments with Kazue. The story reveals that she has previously enjoyed a life of relative affluence, but after her father's death, she and her family struggle to make ends meet. Throughout the novella, Cavide yearns for the past, exemplified by her desire to get her hands on a bottle of perfume that is beyond her financial means, reflecting both her longing and consumerist tendencies. However, Cavide is also depicted as a hard worker who becomes weary of spending long hours writing, especially when translating texts that hold no interest to her. Additionally, she faces challenges when her coworker Fahri spreads rumours about her relationship with the director out of jealousy. Despite her confrontational nature, Cavide encounters hardships and begins to feel self-conscious at work, ultimately leading to her dismissal. "It is indeed difficult for a man to make a living, but women experience horrible things. Do men ever have to deal with things like this?" she asks (Derviş, 2019, p. 344). Derviş thus exposes the difficulties faced by working women and their desire for consumption as a means of envisioning a better life. In *This is the Novel of Things That Happen*, Nazlı, another modern girl character, harbours dreams of a brighter future while toiling in a challenging factory environment. One day, she defies her father's demands for money, instead choosing to spend it as she pleases, indulging in alcohol and seeking solace by the sea. As a consequence, her father subjects her to physical abuse, prompting her to flee from home.

These narratives illuminate the shared experiences of Kazue, Cavide, and Nazlı as they navigate the complexities of their lives, grapple with economic hardships, and yearn for personal fulfilment. Their stories reveal the enduring resilience and aspirations of the modern girl in the face of societal challenges and personal struggles.

### **Loneliness and desire to be loved**

Loneliness is a prominent theme in both Uno's and Derviş's works. In *The Story of a Single Woman*, Kazue experiences a profound sense of isolation stemming from a lack of understanding from her romantic partners. As her marriage with Nozaki begins to crumble, she increasingly feels discarded and neglected. After Kazue cuts her hair short, she questions whether she sought to emulate the youthful appearance of a girl she once observed sitting beside her husband. While short hair symbolises liberation for modern girls, Uno imbues it with a more personal significance. In Derviş's novella, Cavide enjoys the freedom of living alone. On the other hand, she constantly feels afraid of being alone in a big city. Derviş portrays an urban woman's loneliness who has lost her father like the author and struggles to survive in a city that is described as "full of possibilities" with an "uncanny" atmosphere.

Unlike Cavide who only receives emotional support from her mother, Derviş's most popular novel about a sex worker, *Cevriye the Glamorous* involves examples of solidarity between women. While Cavide chooses to marry her childhood friend to end her loneliness, Cevriye and her friends find solace in one another. The novel sheds light on the challenges and struggles faced by women with marginalised jobs in Istanbul. Through her encounters with clients, police officers, and other characters, Cevriye confronts the social and economic realities of her world while pursuing her desires. Even in death, Cevriye remains a symbol of resistance and dignity for those who knew her, and her legacy lives on in the memories of the other women who worked alongside her.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study highlight the significance of portraying modern girls as active desirers in literary works, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of their identity and inner worlds. Through the exploration of modern girls' experiences, readers are exposed to the inherent challenges that accompany a liberal lifestyle. Moreover, the interactions among the characters illustrate the diverse range of reactions modern girls faced.

In her literary works, Uno redefines concepts associated with the modern girl, such as short hair and makeup, imbuing them with a deeper emotional meaning. In contrast to the objectifying lens of the male gaze, Uno's narrative sheds light on the struggles and complexities that arise from the objectification of the modern girl figure. On the other hand, Derviş's narratives navigate the urban landscape, capturing the dreams and desires of modern girls. Their works depict the struggles and sacrifices these characters encounter in their relentless pursuit of happiness, challenging societal norms and presenting a more authentic portrayal of modern girls.

The common themes of longing for love and freedom reverberate throughout the literary works of both authors, actively challenging and expanding upon the stereotypical portrayals often associated with modern girlhood. Despite the cultural differences between the Japanese and Turkish modern girl characters depicted in Uno's and Derviş's narratives, their stories illuminate the complexities of women's desires. This analysis emphasises the necessity of



conducting a comprehensive exploration of modern girls in women authors' literary works, thereby unravelling the multifaceted nature of their identity.

## Primary sources

- Derviş, S. (2018a). *Kendine tapan kadın*. İstanbul: İthaki.
- Derviş, S. (2018b). *Bu roman olan şeylerin romanıdır*. İstanbul: İthaki.
- Derviş, S. (2019). *Kadın aşksız yaşamaz*. In B. A. Kapak (Ed.). *Emine* (pp. 288–376). İstanbul: İthaki.
- Derviş, S. (2020). *Fosforlu Cevriye*. İstanbul: Doğan Kitap.
- Uno, C. (1990). *Confessions of love*. (P. Birnbaum, Trans.). London: Peter Owen. (Original work published 1971).
- Uno, C. (1992). *The story of a single woman*. (R. L. Copeland, Trans.) London: Peter Owen. (Original work published 1933-35).
- Uno, C. (1999). *Shifun no kao*. Tokyo: Yumani Shobō. (Original work published 1921).

## References

- Birnbaum, P. (1999). *Modern girls, shining stars, the skies of Tokyo*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1991) The laugh of Medusa. In R. R. Warhol & D. R. Herndl (Eds.) *Feminisms: an anthology of literary theory and criticism*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Copeland, R. L. (1992). *The sound of the wind: the life and works of Uno Chiyo*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Driscoll, M. W. (2010). *Absolute erotic, absolute grotesque*. New York: Duke University Press.
- Felski, R. (2003). *Literature after feminism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Freedman, A (2011). *Tokyo in transit: Japanese culture on the rails and road*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Godeau, A. S. (1996). The other side of Venus. In V. De Grazia, & E. Furlough (Eds.) *The sex of things: gender and consumption in historical perspective* (pp. 113-151). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Irigaray, L. (1985). *This sex which is not one*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Nicholas, J. (2015). *The modern girl: feminine modernities, the body, and commodities in the 1920s*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division.  
<https://doi.org/10.3138/j.ctt14bth3g>
- Oğurel, Ç. İ. (2020). *Suat Derviş'in romanlarında kadınlar ve yoksulluk*. (Unpublished master's thesis). İstanbul University.

Sato, B. (2003). *The new Japanese woman: modernity, media, and women in interwar Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Silverberg, M. (2006). *Erotic grotesque nonsense: The mass culture of Japanese modern times*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sturken, M., & Cartwright, L. (2018). *Practices of looking: an introduction to visual culture* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Takemura, K. (2002). *Ai ni tsuite: aidentiti to yokubō no seijigaku*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Tipton, Elise K., & Clark, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Being modern in Japan: culture and society from the 1910s to the 1930s*. Australian Humanities Research Foundation.

**Contact email:** [a.kaynar@uqconnect.edu.au](mailto:a.kaynar@uqconnect.edu.au)



*Masculinities in Doraemon: A Critical Discourse Analysis*

Zhouyan Wu, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong SAR  
Zhaoxun Song, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This study conducts a critical discourse analysis of the masculinities of male characters in Doraemon, a famous Japanese manga series. It aims to explore the masculinities in Doraemon from three perspectives: text, process, and society. The content analysis of the male characters in terms of their appearances, characteristics, behaviors, and values reveals major masculine traits such as the maintenance of patriarchy, the pursuit and yearning for fame and fortune, competition, and aggression. The process analysis identifies corresponding masculinities of the creators of Doraemon through their life experiences. The social analysis of Doraemon attributes the masculinities in the manga to Japanese culture, which has been deeply influenced by Confucianism, androcentrism, and Bushido. This study sheds light on the masculine traits rooted in Japanese culture and invites audiences to reflect on the male characters in Japanese artworks.

Keywords: Manga, Cartoon, Doraemon, Masculinities, Critical Discourse Analysis

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum

[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## 1. Introduction

The Doraemon series of cartoons and manga, created by Fujiko F. Fujio, have been popular in Japan and other East Asian and Southeast Asian countries for many decades. The core story focuses on the time-traveling cat robot, Doraemon, who assists a boy named Nobita with his daily life by drawing on advanced technological items from its dimensional pocket. Entrusted by Nobita's grandson to improve the family situation, Doraemon travels through the time tunnel to Nobita's primary school era. The artwork also reflects many of the social issues relevant to the time period when it was created (Lin, 2004).

Doraemon has been broadcasted in many countries and has a wide influence, making it a valuable subject for research. This study applies Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze and discuss the masculinities of male characters in the Japanese cartoon Doraemon. Through text, process and social analysis, the study draws attention to how gender traits are strongly influenced by the author's early life experiences and the era he was living in. It examines which parts of Japanese social culture could have had an influence on the artwork during its production process and why the author shaped the male characters in this particular way.

## 2. Literature Review

Previous research (e.g., Wu, 1994; Lin, 2004; Hu, 2007) has shown that the Japanese cartoon series Doraemon is not only entertaining but also has an educational purpose. It was determined that the author intended to convey his educational concepts through entertainment, in effect making it another "textbook". Furthermore, cartoon characters often become virtual identity objects for children when images and patterns appear in their lives regularly, in addition to family, school, and society. Additionally, the most preferred programs for both boys and girls to watch were determined to be cartoons.

In Japan, gender traits of men and women are different, with men being more dominant and women being more obedient. Men are more independent, competitive, criminal, dominant, superior, focused on the big picture, and concerned with things, while women show dependence, receptivity, shame, obedience, inferiority, attention to small things, and concern for people (Kunimoto & Yoshikawa, 2000). Extant research (e.g., Lin, 2004; Huang et al., 2010; Su, 2014) on Doraemon includes investigations of its characters and their settings, gender norms and stereotypes, relationship dynamics, and any potential political context. One particular example is Lin (2004), who identified the main female characters as traditionally feminized wives and mothers, with Nobita's mother appearing most frequently as a dutiful caregiver. Her prominence reflects the traditional family values in Japan, which view the family unit as a suitable stage for such roles.

Research has found that the characters of the Japanese manga series Doraemon, particularly Nobita, demonstrate gender stereotypes. Huang, Wu and Zeng (2010) conclude that Nobita is successful in escaping stereotypical male roles while other male characters fit most of them. Su (2014) studied the interactions among Nobita, Suneo and Goda, and the reason why their friendship can be maintained under bullying. Also, the author uses conflict theories and social exchange theories to describe peer relations, and many of the pictures and language in the manga present scenes of negative emotions, aggression, directing others and money-oriented ideas.

Napier's (2005) research into masculinity in Japanese animation and manga has found a wide variety of symbols, ranging from contemporary society to forms of dreams coming true. In the cartoon *InuYasha*, for example, the sword is seen as a symbol of potential masculinity, but *InuYasha* disliked it at first. Male characters in *Wolf's Rain* are often divided and confused by the past, while *Howl* in *Howl's Moving Castle* is portrayed as an emotional character with a strong and dark masculinity. These characters represent various ways masculinity is viewed in Japanese animation and manga.

Results from research conducted by Dohrmann (1975) and other relevant studies have confirmed that television presents distorted and stereotyped gender roles and that there is a possible relationship between watching television and the development of gender roles in children. This relationship has been found to be equal for boys and girls, regardless of age. Furthermore, McGhee & Frueh (1980) discovered that children who watched more television had more gender stereotypes held by adults than those who watched less.

### **3. Research method**

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a critical theory that regards the use of language as a form of social practice. It addresses questions relating discourse to relations of power, such as how the text is positioned, whose interests are served, whose interests are denied, and what are the consequences of such positioning (Fairclough, 1989). On the one hand, CDA allows researchers to focus on the symbols that form the text, specific language choices, juxtaposition, order, and layout. On the other hand, researchers need to be aware of the historical judgment of these choices and understand that these choices are closely related to the likelihood of this expression. In other words, texts are instances of socially normative discourse, and the processes of production and reception are socially conditioned (Janks, 1997; Fairclough, 1989, 1995).

Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (1989, 1995) consists of three interrelated analytical processes linked to the three interrelated dimensions of discourse, each requiring a different analysis.

1. The first dimension is text analysis, which involves descriptions of verbal, visual, or verbal and visual texts.
2. The second dimension is process analysis, which interprets the process of producing and receiving objects by human beings, such as writing, speaking, listening, reading, and viewing.
3. Finally, social analysis is the third dimension, which explains the socio-historical contexts in which these events took place.

This study adopts CDA as the research method. It enables us to view the cartoon from both a macro perspective (historical and social environment) and a micro perspective (personal experiences of the author). By revealing what influenced the author to create the male characters and their masculinities, a more comprehensive understanding can be gained.

### **4. Findings of the analysis**

The CDA analysis yields the following findings at the three levels.

#### **4.1 Text analysis**

The text analysis focuses on exploring the masculinities (appearance, speech, behavior, personality, and value, etc.) of the main male characters in Doraemon, including Doraemon, Takeshi Goda, Suneo Honekawa, Nobita, and Nobita's father.

Doraemon is an imagined product of 22nd-century robot and does not belong to the human community. However, the authors inevitably substitute gender stereotypes as part of the imaginary robot personality. Doraemon exhibits certain masculine qualities. He holds a large number of high-tech products and can skillfully use them, which is more in line with the public's stereotype that high-tech users are mostly male. As a friend who can accompany Nobita at home day and night is male, not a female.

When comparing Doraemon's appearance with that of his sister, Dorami, Doraemon's masculinity in design becomes apparent. Doraemon has a simple design, with his main color being blue, a cool color, and his obtaining bag being pure white. He has no long eyelashes but has whiskers on his face. When laughing, his mouth becomes quite wide, and the shape of his mouth is almost semi-round, creating a bold and generous image. In contrast, Dorami was designed in warm colors such as yellow, red, and pink. She has more feminine factors, such as a pink and white checkered pattern on her obtaining bag, long eyelashes, and a flushed face. When she laughs, her mouth is much smaller than her brother's, and the shape of her mouth is similar to a small triangle, showing her restrained and self-command personality traits. Such appearances cater to traditional gender stereotypes of men and women.

Doraemon's body is made of metal, and his obtaining bag always contains high-tech products to overcome danger, which, combined with his intelligence, can solve Nobita's difficulties, and provide entertainment, encouragement, and education for Nobita. Doraemon is also a character who rescues people from danger when necessary. However, Doraemon's mortal personality, such as his preference for dorayaki and fear of mice, somewhat diminishes the robot's cold, flawless, and almighty competence. This does not diminish Doraemon's brilliance but makes his image more approachable.

Another male character Goda's sitting posture and body position indicate that he is very confident, likes to be on top and thinks that he is far superior to Suneo. In Goda's mind, people who are lower than him cannot be on an equal footing with him. Secondly, Goda values power very much. After learning about Suneo's plan for the game, he attacked Suneo until Suneo showed fear and stopped talking about it. By attacking Suneo, Goda controlled Suneo's words and behaviours within the acceptable range of Goda's situation, and he did not allow Suneo to do anything against his will.

The specific manifestation of aggression in Goda is that he often beats his companions. Goda's behaviour of beating up weaker companions can strengthen his masculinity, vent his anger, and consolidate his dominant position among his companions. Goda builds a terrifying reputation by bullying his peers in exchange for his own safety, which is an act of self-preservation. At the same time, Goda gains recognition for his masculinity by bullying his less masculine peers.

Among the main characters, Goda is the one who excels the most at playing sports. Previous studies have explained that being good at sports is also proof of possessing masculinity. According to Manzenreiter (2013), the perseverance of male domination is outstanding in



sports that value mental and physical characteristics closely related to traditional notions of masculinity, such as fighting spirit, leadership skills, willpower, aggressiveness, and strength.

Suneo Honekawa is a main figure in the social network of Goda and Nobita. He is smart and good at bargaining. Additionally, he loves to praise himself, show off what he has, and flatter others. Every time he encounters danger, such as when Goda was about to beat him and Nobita, Suneo can often change Goda's attitude and mind instantly through words. In the end, only Nobita was beaten. Here, Suneo's behavior is not only adaptable but is also based on his knowledge of Goda, especially that Goda easily gets angry and tends to deal with things with violence, as well as the things that Goda hates the most. By saying these words, Suneo can get himself out of Goda's threat range and successfully turn Goda's contradictory attention to Nobita. In this case, Suneo can think calmly and get himself out of danger, which shows that he has strong analytical abilities.

Nobita Nobi is the only child in his family and a fourth-grader in elementary school. He is kind-hearted, compassionate, helpful, timid, and not good at sports. Among the male characters in Doraemon, Nobita is considered the least masculine. However, no matter how many setbacks he suffers, he still wants to become a better person. Nobita often rethinks his behaviors, and although he changes back to the original after rethinking, he still wants to do better than before. From this point of view, Nobita's also exhibits his male strength and toughness. Moreover, Nobita was disappointed with his ancestor, who hunted gentle animals and will run away when encountering ferocious animals. While the ancestor of Suneo was a brave general, who was rewarded and held high posts. Comparing in any way, Nobita feels that his ancestor is inferior to others. It can be seen that Nobita wants his ancestors to be people with amazing accomplishments, so that he can reduce the arrogance of Suneo on this topic, and overturn the negative stereotypes and biases of Goda about Nobita himself and his ancestor. Although Nobita is young, he has a clear awareness of pursuing fame and wealth. In addition, the ancestors the boys mentioned were all in the line of male ancestors. No boys ever traced or mentioned the history of female ancestors, which shows the lack of female presence under the patriarchy. It can also be revealed that they are defending patriarchy, and one day they will also become the ancestors of their future generations, and they will also be the representatives of patriarchy in the future society. Therefore, to defend the status of male ancestors is to defend their own interests.

Nobita's father Nobisuke grew up in a poor family and wanted to pursue painting, but his family could not afford it due to financial problems. Despite this situation, he refused a rich man's financial support and marriage to the rich man's daughter because he wanted to rely on his own efforts for success, not money and power. He firmly believed that the ideal of becoming a painter could not be bought with money. Nobisuke has high expectations for his son and hopes that he will bravely pursue his dreams.

Through the analysis of the drama episodes, masculinities such as aggression, competitiveness, confidence, sportiness, toughness, pursuit of fame and wealth, maintenance of patriarchy, ambition and morality can be found in male characters in Doraemon.

#### ***4.2 Process Analysis***

In the process analysis section, we explore the influence of personal experience and characteristics of the artist on the creation of the work, the reasons why he integrated

masculinity into the artwork, and the potential understanding of the masculinity of anime characters by readers.

Fujimoto Hiroshi whose pen name was Fujiko F. Fujio, was the cartoonist of Doraemon. he was born on December 1, 1933, in Japan. The Doraemon manga was first published in December 1969, and the cartoon was first aired in April 1973. Since then, more and more episodes and films of Doraemon were produced, gaining popularity in Japan (Lin, 2004).

Fujimoto Hiroshi's childhood experiences were also the source of his creation of Doraemon. He achieved outstanding results in science and related subjects during his secondary school years, and after further studies, he chose to study electrical engineering at the College of Technology (Ling, 2004). In people's stereotypes, engineering has always been considered a profession where men are more competent than women.

Fujimoto Hiroshi was kind and had a sense of justice. He hated classmates who bullied or looked down on others. With a high sense of responsibility and care for his family, he would try his best to rest on holidays to spend time with his family, which is the most important thing (NHK, 2004). His actions were in line with Confucian values of devotion to family and hard work.

As a child, Fujimoto was often immersed in the world of science fantasy, and he loved to read comic books, draw comics, and explore. Osamu Tezuka, known as “the Father of Manga” in Japan, had a profound influence on Fujimoto's creation. The storyboard and ambitious story of Osamu Tezuka's manga deeply attracted the two manga fans, and they aspired to become manga artists. Later, the shared pen name taken by the two, “Fujiko Fujio”, which is a male name, was also inspired by Osamu Tezuka . (Ling, 2004). Osamu Tezuka's male identity inadvertently establishes a positive and professional presence in Fujimoto's heart during his youth. Fujimoto's intense admiration for Osamu Tezuka, due to his love of drawing and reading manga, unconsciously led him to learn and imitate Osamu Tezuka's personality traits. The pen name, style and technique of creating manga, and personality traits of Osamu Tezuka all contained the masculinity of a male manga artist.

In the society in which the author lived, boys were encouraged to engage in more intense and physically demanding activities such as playing football, while such sports were not encouraged for girls. On the other hand, girls were not encouraged to engage in more physical games like football. Additionally, girls are more likely to cry and express their emotions, and this behavior is not appreciated by boys. The author may have wanted to use this comic to encourage readers to reflect on the impact and constraints of gender stereotypes on people's lives.

Some of Fujimoto Hiroshi's characteristics are consistent with the traditional concept of masculinity in terms of his childhood experiences, studies, character, hobbies, and creation concepts. However, he also had the consciousness to introspect and challenge existing gender stereotypes in creating characters, so readers could see someone like Nobita, who is not traditionally masculine, as the protagonist. Additionally, Fujimoto's wild imagination is on display in the story of male and female personality switching, questioning what kind of society would result.

In Doraemon, Fujimoto organized his own childhood experiences into comic stories, bringing the characters to life for the audience and making them relatable to children's daily lives. This

approach increased the opportunity for readers to empathize with the characters and created resonance between the author and readers.

### **4.3 Social Analysis**

Social analysis aims to analyze the influence of Japanese social environment and culture on Fujimoto and to reveal the factors that affected his construction of male figures in Doraemon. This section will discuss three pillars: Confucianism, androcentrism, and Bushido spirit.

Japan is a highly hierarchical society in which relationships are defined by subordination, especially for men who work in companies. The strong root of Confucianism ethics may also influence their personality development, since Confucianism puts great value on rules and the royalty for power. This can also be interpreted as obedience to parents, teachers, bosses, and companies (Yoko Sugihara & Emiko Katsurada, 2000). Reischauer & Craig (1973) also pointed out that Confucianism is an idea originated from China, which emphasizes the hierarchy of society, assumes male dominance, and advocates the intrinsic qualities of man, such as integrity and justice.

The influence of Confucianism is easily seen in Doraemon. Regarding obedience to parents, Fujimoto was too obsessed with drawing manga as a child, and after his family dissuaded him, he gave up. In the episode *Helping Dad Fulfill His Wishes*, when Nobita's father was making life decisions, Nobita's grandpa said to grandma privately, "Nobisuke is still a child, in short, he must first listen to his father, that is, my opinion." The older generations think that they have a higher status than the younger ones and should take the responsibility of taking care of the younger generations. On the other hand, although the younger generation has personal opinions, they are afraid of the seniors and believe that the final decision is in the hands of seniors.

The ethics of diligence and high responsibility were also incorporated into post-industrial society in Japan. As the main laborer, men should work outside for long hours, while women remained doing housework and looking after children at home. Therefore, mothers and children were left behind without males, and the mother is the custodian of the child and the authority to discipline the child, thus showing a feminine image with both feminine and masculine qualities. Furthermore, Japanese women expected males to present masculinities and femininities at the same time, and children may also learn and internalize the various expectations towards men from their mothers. The condition of Nobita's family can well explain this phenomenon, with a father only coming home at night and working long hours during the daytime at the company, and a mother in charge of cooking, washing, any other housework, and looking after Nobita. To some extent, Nobita may internalize his mother's expectation towards men through staying with his mother day and night. In Doraemon, Nobita is a typical character who combines femininity and masculinity. He has both feminine traits such as shyness, gentleness, submissiveness, less dominant, and less harsh words, as well as masculine traits such as loyalty, integrity, tenacity, and morality.

Androcentrism refers to theories and practices based entirely on males' experience. Gilman (1914) pointed out that male life patterns and masculine mindsets are considered universal, while female life patterns and feminine mindsets are seen as biased.

Japanese society is not exempt from androcentrism in its culture. Through acculturation, both men and women internalize cultural expectations of each gender and androcentrism in society.

By learning the gender-polarizing approach to view reality, boys and girls are shaped as gendered males and gendered females (Bem, 1993). Males are expected to be aggressive, independent, objective, dominant, competitive, confident, and analytical. They are expected to become leaders, risk-takers, and decision-makers. Women, on the other hand, are expected to be intelligent, gentle, affectionate, sensitive to others' feelings, quiet, and not use harsh words (Azuma, 1979). These gender-related personality traits are considered the normal, healthy, and adjusted personality reflection of Japanese society. Healthy and adjusted mature women are considered less dominant, independent, and adventurous, and they are more subjective, conceited, and weaker than men (Azuma, 1979).

Unlike Nobita, Suneo and Goda embody more masculinities accepted by Japanese society, such as confidence, analytical skills, aggression, and competitiveness. They represent the expectations held by society universally, as "qualified" men. Although they bully Nobita and other peers quite often and solve problems with violence, which presents a negative image of them to readers, Suneo and Goda still go their own way after making mistakes. In comparison, Nobita possesses fewer masculinities. For example, he feels upset about what others say, self-examines, is less dominant, and is bullied by Suneo and Goda very often. Born as a boy yet lacking the masculinities expected by society, Nobita deviates from male life patterns and thinking patterns. Therefore, androcentrism in society has caused men like Nobita to be frequently frustrated and not welcomed by people like Suneo and Goda.

Bushido can be translated as the principles that soldiers, knights, disciplines, and samurai must observe in their daily lives and professions; in short, "the precepts of the samurai," the aristocratic obligations of the samurai class. As an ethical system in Japan, Bushido is not a written law. More often than not, it is a code without verbal and non-verbal words, showing strong binding force through practical actions and inscribed laws. It is not original to a talented person nor based on the life of a prominent figure, but the result of decades and centuries of samurai's life (Inazō, Wang & Yu, 2019).

As a privileged class and a brave race that fights, the samurai class absorbed the bravest and most adventurous warriors in the war-torn years. Previously researchers described them as people who are full of manliness and are beastly strong. When samurai had great honour, privilege, and responsibility, they found that a common code of conduct to restrain their group's misconduct behaviours was necessary. Elements like rectitude or justice, courage (the spirit of daring and bearing), benevolence (the feeling of distress), politeness, veracity and sincerity, honour, and duty of loyalty are contained in Bushido (Inazō, Wang & Yu, 2019).

In Doraemon, the most athletic, strongest, and brave character, Goda, may represent the spirit of Bushido. However, due to the frequent use of violence to solve problems, the character of Goda is less popular in real life (Lin, 2004), which may hint at a change in the perception and status of the Bushido spirit in modern Japanese society. Moreover, Goda pays less attention to Shizuka than the less athletic Nobita. And Bushido believes that people who are engaged in sports should not pay too much attention to women, which may also reflect that Bushido is the element that influences the author to shape Goda.

In summary, a social analysis of Doraemon reveals that Confucianism, androcentrism, and Bushido had the most profound impact on the Japanese view of gender at the time.

First, the hierarchical structure of Confucianism, which emphasizes loyalty to rules and regulations and all powers, is reflected in the life and works of the author, Fujimoto Hiroshi.

Whether it is Hiroshi's abandonment of comic painting at the behest of his parents or Nobita's father in Doraemon, who lacks autonomy in the face of parents and superiors, and is busy with work and rarely at home, Confucianism had a significant influence.

Second, Japanese society was influenced by male centrism, which had expectations for men's lifestyles and thinking patterns. As the saying goes, "Those who submit will prosper, and those who resist will perish." Suneo and Goda, who meet society's general expectations, have done many bad things, have not corrected their mistakes, and are still boldly active in the social circle. Nobita, who deviates from society's general expectations, often suffers.

Third, Bushido, as an ethical system, had a strong binding and leading role on people, and even requires men engaged in sports activities to weaken their feelings for women. Goda, who has the spirit of Bushido, does not pay much attention to Shizuka. In addition, Goda's excessive violence, despite his Bushido spirit, may indicate that the original noble spirit of Bushido has declined in modern Japan's status.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study conducted a text analysis of Doraemon and found that the male characters in the series exhibit characteristics such as aggression, competitiveness, confidence, sportiness, analytical skills, toughness, ambition, morality, high expectations for future generations, defenses of patriarchy, and pursuit and yearning for fame and wealth. The study also analyzed the author Fujimoto's childhood experiences, study, personality, hobby, and creation concepts, which showed that some of his traits are consistent with traditional masculinity. However, out of his gender consciousness and skepticism, he presented readers with a less masculine character, Nobita, and made him the main character. Finally, the study explored the social influences on the author's understanding of masculinity and the shaping of male characters, including Confucianism, androcentrism, and Bushido.

This study provides valuable insights into the gender characteristics of Doraemon comics and animation works, from the text to the process and social context. By understanding how authors shape characters and masculinities, and the influence of authors on their personal understanding of gender, we hope to draw more attention to the setting of gender traits in comics and animations for children. This awareness can then be applied to real-life situations outside of comics and animation. Moreover, this study can deepen the understanding of creators of children's animation and comics about gender role settings. We hope that this study inspires comic creators to think more about gender when designing characters for children and create more characters that are free from gender stereotypes in a society that is increasingly calling for gender equality. Television stations can also choose animations that promote gender equality.

## References

- Azuma, K. (1979). *Seisa no syakai shinri gaku. Social psychology of gender*. Tokyo: Dainippon Tosyo.
- Bem, S. L. (1993). *The lenses of gender: Transforming the debate on sexual inequality*. Yale University Press.
- Dohrmann, R. (1975) A gender profile of children's educational TV, *Journal of Communication*, 25, pp. 56-65.
- Fairclough Norman. (1989). *Language and power*. London and New York: Longman.
- Fairclough Norman. (1995). Critical discourse analysis. *The Critical Study of Language. Language in social life series*.
- Gilman, C. (1914). *The Man-made World or, Our Androcentric Culture*. (3d ed.). New York: Charlton.
- Hu Wei-zhen. (2007). A Study on the Identification of Television Cartoon Characters by Kindergarten Children: A Case Study of Doraemon Institute, *National Taipei Institute of Nursing*.
- Huang Ji-jun, Wu Yu-ping, Zeng Rong-hua. (2010). A Study of Gender Stereotypes in the TV cartoon Doraemon. *Gender Studies*, 1(1), 21-42.
- Inazō Nitobe, Wang Si-ying, & Yu Kai-han (2019). *Bushido*. Bu Er Jia Chu Ban.
- Janks, H. (1997). Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329-342.
- Kunimoto & Yoshikawa. (2000). *The Altar of the Sexes: The Psychology of Modern Male and Female Marriage*. Jiangxi People's Press.
- Lin Su-zhen. (2004) *Research on Doraemon*. National Taitung University, The Graduate Institute of Children's Literature.
- Ling Ming-yu. (2004). The Father of Doraemon: Stories of Fujiko F. Fujio. *Wen Jing Children's Library*. Taipei: Wen Jing Press.
- Manzenreiter. (2013). No pain, no gain: embodied masculinities and lifestyle sport in Japan. *Contemporary Japan (Berlin, Germany)*, 25(2), 215–236. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cj-2013-0010>
- McGhee, P.E. & Frueh, T. (1980). Television viewing and the learning of sex-role stereotypes, *Sex Roles*, 6, pp. 179-188.
- Napier, S. (2005). *Anime from Akira to Howl's moving castle: Experiencing contemporary Japanese animation* (Updated ed., [Rev. ed.], ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

NHK. (2004). *The Father of Doraemon: I am Fujiko F. Fujio*. NHK.

Reischauer, E. O., & Craig, A. M. (1973). *Japan: Tradition and transformation*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Su Wei-lan. (2014). A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Relationship between Peers in the Doraemon manga: Take the two stories of Bottle Collector and Neglect Bug as examples. *Degree thesis, Department of Education, National Taipei University of Education*, 1-174.

Wu Cuizhen. (1994). A Preliminary Study of Children's TV Interpretation Models. *Journalism Research*, 001-041.

Yoko Sugihara & Emiko Katsurada. (2000). Gender-role Personality Traits in Japanese Culture. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 24(4), 309-318.

**Contact emails:** joanngcy@gmail.com  
howardsong@hsu.edu.hk





***Deoli Days: The Internment of the Ethnic Chinese of India, the Overseas Chinese Identity and Nation-Building in South Asia***

Joita Das, National University of Singapore, Singapore

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Chinese migration to South Asia (India) was part of the same trade and indentured labour diaspora that brought Chinese to Southeast Asia between the 18th and 20th centuries. While there is considerable scholarship on the overseas Chinese of Southeast Asia, there is comparably less work done on their counterparts in India. This paper examines the state-sponsored persecution of the ethnic Chinese in the Republic of India during the 1962 border conflict between China and India, popularly referred to as the 1962 China-India War. As a result of the 1962 China-India War, approximately 3000 ethnic Chinese residents of India were arrested and interned in concentration camps in Deoli by the then Indian government on suspicion of having links to Communist China. The internment of the ethnic Chinese is a less widely known fact of India's postcolonial history. What does the persecution of overseas Chinese communities in South Asia tell us about nationalism and state-building in postcolonial India? My research method combines existing literature with oral historical accounts of former Deoli internees. During this war, the Indian government brought into effect draconian measures of persecution which, this paper argues, enforced a particular image of the Indian nation-state along ethnic lines. The 1962 China-India War and the exclusion of the overseas Chinese identity from India's national imaginary illustrated an ethnicization of the nation.

Keywords: Chinese-Indians, Internment, Overseas Chinese, Deoli, Ethnicity

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Today, there are over forty million Chinese living overseas. Nearly 75% of these overseas Chinese live in Southeast Asia (Tan 2013, pp 1-12). Chinese migration to South Asia (Kolkata, India) was part of the same trade and indentured labor diaspora that brought Chinese to Southeast Asia between the 18th and 20th centuries. While there is considerable scholarship on the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, there is less work done on their counterparts in India who came and settled down in British-ruled Bengal towards the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This paper focusses on the ethnic Chinese of India (known colloquially as the Chinese-Indians) during the 1962 China-India War.

The 1962 China-India War and the general distrust of Communist China among countries in Southeast Asia towards the latter half of the twentieth century saw the overseas Chinese having to negotiate their Chinese identities in significant ways amidst a flood of anti-Chinese sentiments. The 1962 China-India War demonstrates how the overseas Chinese in India were subject to similar forces of communalism, nationalism and state-sponsored persecution as their Southeast Asian counterparts. China's response to these persecutions were also similar across South and Southeast Asia and involved repatriating thousands of ethnic Chinese from India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam on grounds that the ethnic Chinese were being mistreated in these regions. This research aims to bring the Chinese-Indians into conversation with the larger Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia. It specifically focuses on the state-sponsored persecution and internment of nearly 3000 ethnic Chinese in India by the then Indian government.

It was because of the 1962 China-India War that several ethnic Chinese who had historically resided in Kolkata, a former capital of British India and currently the capital of the state of West Bengal in eastern India, were arrested and transported across the breadth of the Indian subcontinent and interned in Deoli, a small town in the western desert state of Rajasthan. Between 1962 and 1967, the Indian government arrested ethnic Chinese from Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kolkata and Makum – all in northeast India-and sent them to internment camps on very flimsy and superficial grounds. Simply because this community 'looked' Chinese, had Chinese-sounding surnames or had Chinese spouses, they could have affiliations with enemy China and thus needed to be detained (Omar, 2017, pp181-196). Internees sometimes spent up to four years in the internment camp, being released only in 1967 although the China-India War ended in 1962 itself and the reasons which arguably necessitated the Chinese's internment no longer existed.

The internment of the ethnic Chinese is a less widely known fact of India's postcolonial history. What does the persecution of overseas Chinese communities in South Asia tell us about nationalism and state-building in postcolonial India? This essay will first summarize the events leading up to the 1962 China-India War (Part 1). It will then look at oral histories of former Deoli internees, many of whom have gone on to write autobiographical accounts of their time in the internment camp (Part 2). Finally, it will look at what the persecution of the Chinese reveals about India's postcolonial nationhood (Part 3).

### Part 1. The 1962 China-India War: Causes and Consequences

The 1950s marked the heyday of China-India congeniality (Ghosh 2017, p.698). Mainland China had just fallen to Communism. India, on the other hand, had recently gained independence from British colonial rule in 1947 and was set to become the leader of the postcolonial world under Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime-Minister. The

atmosphere between the two countries was marked by cultural and intellectual vibrancy (Passin, 1961).

Despite having rich cultural exchange, however, the political scene between the two countries was strife. First, there was great interest among the larger global community to see which country would emerge as the leader of the post-colonial world (Luthi, 2017, pp.29-47). Perhaps that is why in spite of this apparent India-China bonhomie, there may have been a sense of competitiveness and a mutual suspicion brewing between the two countries. Second, there had always been border disputes between India and China dating back to the colonial times. Indian political scientist, Ashis Nandy explains that “China and India were...civilizations which overlapped in a great measure. Culturally, China was partly inside India and India was partly inside China,” (Ghosh, 2017, p.703). This indicates that the two countries historically had very fluid boundaries. As India and China both sought to define their territories more stringently, in the twentieth century the historical fluidity of areas and permeability of borders was overlooked. British India did not have clearly territorially circumscribed borders either (Luthi and Dasgupta, 2017, pp.1-26). As such, the postcolonial Indian nation-state inherited what were essentially regions without clearly delineated borders from its colonial predecessors. Sustained border issues between India and China was one of the main causes of the 1962 China-India War.

One of the main triggers for the 1962 War was the contentious McMohan Line. Chinese forces advanced into India and occupied territories south of the McMohan Line, which was the historical frontier between Assam in India and Tibet (that China claimed suzerainty over). China did not recognize the McMohan Line as the true border between British India (and later independent India) and Tibet. Even though by 1959 a line had been clearly drawn delineating which territories belonged to China and India, both India and China were pre-empting areas which they considered to be of strategic or practical value to them. China had started building a highway across the Aksai Chin region, which India claimed fell under its sovereignty (Mehra and Mehra, 1970, p.412). Tensions had already been high between India and China since India agreed to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama in 1959. India aiding him was seen by China as a betrayal of the earlier ‘Hindi-Cheeni bhai-bhai’ period (translated: ‘India and China are brothers’). China’s building of the highway further exacerbated tensions between the two countries. China began setting posts along the China-India border. India followed suit in a Forward Policy which could have been the ultimate trigger for the war. China attacked India on 26 October 1962. India suffered a humiliating defeat. On 19 November 1962, the Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai declared a ceasefire. The War affected India’s international standing and marked an important juncture in India’s post-colonial history. The repercussions of the War were felt for several years after especially among the Chinese-Indian community.

In 1962, India declared its first state of emergency as a newly independent nation. A state of emergency is issued during wartime or during periods of external aggression, armed rebellion or internal disturbances (Omar, 2017, pp.181-196). In 1962, it was because of perceived external aggression against China that the newly independent Indian nation-state declared its first state of emergency. During this national emergency, several branches of the Indian government were granted permission to pass orders that may have been detrimental to Indian citizens’ constitutional rights. This included suspension of a person’s right for assembly, movement and their freedom of speech (Omar, 2017, pp.181-196). The emergency period lasted from 1962 to 1969 even though the China-India War itself ended in 1962. The war disproportionately affected those Indians who were of ethnic Chinese origin.

During the War, the Defence of India Ordinance was promulgated in October 1962 (Zhang, 2022, p.417). Along with the Ordinance, the Defence of India Act, 1946, as well as the Foreigners Law Ordinance, was used to imprison and intern ethnic Chinese from India's border areas in northeast India. The Defence of India Act, 1946 allowed the Indian government to "detain...any person engaging in acts prejudicial to India's defense and safety," (Luthi and Dasgupta, 2017, p.21). The Foreigners Law Ordinance similarly required all foreigners, defined as "any person not of Indian origin who was at birth a citizen or subject of any country at war or committing external aggression against India," (Roy, 2007, pp.186-87) to undergo a registration process. As a result, Chinese in India's north-eastern border areas had to periodically report to their neighbourhood police stations. A further ordinance stated that people of 'hostile origin' could be apprehended without a warrant by relevant authorities (Omar, 2017, pp.181-196). A person of 'hostile origin' was defined as follows: "any person who, or either of whose parents who, or any of whose grandparents was, at any time a citizen or subject of any country at war with, or committing external aggression against India." (Roy, 2007, p.187). In 1962, this definition branded all ethnic Chinese in India as 'hostiles' since most members of the community did have ancestral links to China. In January 1963 India passed yet another order – Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order- which listed the areas in which 'foreigners,' (in this context almost exclusively referring to the Chinese residents of India), were not allowed entry. Restricted areas included all of the states of Assam and Meghalaya and several parts of the state of West Bengal (Zhang, 2022, p.417). These were places where the Chinese had historically resided.

Therefore, the Chinese community in India had severe restrictions put on their movement during the 1962 War. They required permits if they wished to stay out of their registered address for more than 24 hours. These curtailments were in effect till the 1980s and was completely removed only in 1996. During this time, everyone who was of Chinese descent had to continuously report to the Indian authorities for some form of registration and assessment (Bannerjee, 2017, pp.215-232). Government orders during the 1962 War thus enabled the arrest and internment of several second and third generation ethnic Chinese. There were about 2,100 Chinese interned at Deoli although the total number of Chinese who were detained nation-wide was much higher and could be closer to the 10,000 mark (Omar, 2017, pp.181-196).

Now, arguably, the mass arrests of the Chinese during wartime may have been standard operating procedure (Ma and D'Souza, 2020). Nevertheless, India's continued internment of the Chinese after 1962 violated several articles of its own penal code and international law, which dictated that all "restrictive measures taken regarding protected persons shall be cancelled as soon as possible after the close of hostilities," (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.292) and that every internee should be released "as soon as the reasons which necessitated his internment no longer exist" (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.292). Arguably, the initial mass arrests of the Chinese could be attributed to the state's perceived threat of an invasion or a war, and its need to then swiftly move and intern a potentially dangerous group of people because there was no time to examine individual cases. However, this did not justify India's continued internment of the Chinese well after the War had ended (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.292).

Ethnic nationalism and anti-Chinese sentiments got codified in state policies during the 1962 War. Scholars note that a "state's...codification of exclusions and expulsions were...stamped on to the blue-print of national belonging through a suspension of various civil liberties, mass arrests...deportation, and finally, internment in detention camps," (Bannerjee, 2017, p.215). The Chinese-Indians' internment of Deoli was one instance where the Indian state codified its exclusion of the Chinese from its national imaginary. The Chinese-Indians were being treated

like Chinese prisoners-of-war. In addition, the Chinese who were not interned in Deoli were still subject to harassment, larceny, arson and even physical assault by the ethnic majority of India during the 1962 War. These constituted what Payal Bannerjee calls the “‘extra-judicial’ corollaries of the state’s discriminatory actions,” (Bannerjee, 2017, p.215-232). During the 1962 War and following the arrests of many landed and propertied Chinese-Indians, there was also mass-scale asset-appropriation exercises. There were also forcible deportations taking place during this time. Many Chinese-Indians, even though they had no relationship with China, were sent to Madras in southern India, put on ships and sent away to China. When the last prisoners were released from Deoli in 1967 (several years after the China-India War had ended), many were still denied citizenship rights and had to deal with property and job losses (Luthi and Dasgupta, 2017). Whilst a *jus soli* criteria for citizenship was reinstated after the War, there were still many restrictions imposed on the Chinese community in India and these stayed in effect till the 1990s. Some Chinese remained stateless. They were issued residence permits, to be renewed annually (Zhang, 2022). Therefore, even though the 1962 China-India War was rather short-lived, the consequences of the war especially with regards to how it affected the lives of ordinary Chinese-Indians were felt for several years thereafter. The following section explores how ordinary Chinese-Indians who had been interned in Deoli during the War recount their experiences of 1962.

## **Part 2. Arrests and Internments: Anecdotes from Former Deoli Internees**

Oral histories are particularly important to help shape the history of the Chinese-Indian community. The Chinese-Indians are a numerically small and politically weak community. This has meant that their voices often don’t get reflected in historical records. That is why projects like the one undertaken by Joy Ma and Dilip D’Souza in *The Deoliwallahs* that provide anecdotal evidence of the interment of Chinese-Indians, is important.

Joy Ma, who co-authored *The Deoliwallahs* with Dilip D’Souza, an award-winning Mumbai-based journalist, is a member of the Chinese-Indian community. Although she did much of her schooling in India, she moved to the U.S. for graduate school and has since settled down in California. She was born in the Deoli camp in Rajasthan when her parents were taken prisoners during the 1962 China-India War. Joy Ma’s family was arrested on the day of Chinese New Year on 25 January 1963 and released four and a half years later on 29 June 1967. But even after their release, she remembers her father being constantly harassed by the Crime Investigation Department, even being jailed for six months after he was released from Deoli (Ma and D’Souza, 2020, p.126).

*The Deoliwallahs* consists of interviews Ma conducted with members of the Chinese-Indian community, at the time settled in North America. Most of Ma and D’Souza’s interviewees were part of the Association of India Deoli Camp Internees 1962 (henceforth referred to as the ‘AIDCI’). The AIDCI hope to raise awareness about the internment of Chinese-Indians by the Indian government in 1962 and are currently lobbying from Canada, demanding reparations from the Indian state. The Indian state has not issued any apology for the atrocities committed against the Chinese community in 1962. Neither has the state issued any material evidence to these internees of their arrests and detention further making it difficult to write an archival history of this community’s internment. It is in light of this that Ma and D’Souza’s work is so revealing. Ma and D’Souza draw parallels between the internment of the Chinese-Indians at Deoli by the then Indian government led by Jawaharlal Nehru, and the similar internment of Japanese-Americans in the U.S. during World War 2, under Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was several years later that the American government acknowledged the atrocities committed

against the Japanese-Americans, apologized for this injustice and even mobilized funds for reparations (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.12). The Japanese-Americans found strong lobbyists and supporters in the U.S. Congress to support their demand for reparations. The Chinese-Indians don't enjoy the same support in India and it is unlikely that their demands for an apology or reparations will be addressed soon. Nevertheless, it is important to document the voices of the Chinese-Indian community-dispersed as they may be now across India, the U.S. and Canada-given that the 1962 War and the community's internment is a less widely known aspect of India's postcolonial history.

The Deoli camp had been used previously to house prisoners of war, but never civilians until the internment of the Chinese there. During the Partition of India in 1947, many Sikhs took refuge in this camp, as well. In 1962, when 3000 Chinese-Indians were housed there, it came to be called a 'Chinese camp' (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.103). Although not as severe of an incarceration as the Jews by the Nazis, the Deoli camp definitely fits the bill of a concentration camp. Historian Andrea Pitzer states that concentration camps are "places of forced relocation of civilians into detention on the basis of group identity," (qtd. in Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.103). Furthermore, the detention is usually because of a community's "racial, cultural, religious, or political identity, not because of any prosecutable offence" (qtd. in Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.103). The internment of the Chinese at Deoli agrees with Pitzer's definition of a concentration camp. The laws and ordinances promulgated during the War ended up denying the hundreds of Indian citizens, who happened to be of Chinese descent, proper citizenship rights and subjected them to the same restrictions as Chinese foreign nationals in India (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.275). Internment, as already mentioned before, was based on very arbitrary parameters. It was based on police officers' discretion and whether they considered a person's name or their outward appearance 'Chinese enough' to warrant an arrest and internment. Below, I summarize the stories of three Deoli internees who recounted their experiences of being taken prisoners by the Indian state during the war.

Ying Sheng Wong lived with his family in Shillong in northeastern India during the time of the 1962 China-India War. On 19 November 1962, policemen entered the Don Bosco school where Wong was studying and arrested several Chinese students, including Wong. In the Shillong jail, Wong met other Chinese families who had been brought down to Shillong from the neighboring states of Assam and Meghalaya. Wong reunited with his family in the jail. From there, Wong and his family boarded the train to Rajasthan. Wong recounted the harrowing train journey to Rajasthan. Crowds of people would gather at the train stations and throw rocks at the train carrying the Chinese internees. The words 'ENEMY TRAIN' had been written on the side of the compartments, presumably by mobsters (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.34). When Wong's family returned to Shillong several years later, their property and assets had been seized. Wong and his family later migrated to Canada in 1993 (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.34-43).

Andy Hsieh was another Chinese interned at Deoli. He was the former President of the AIDCI. Initially, Hsieh and his brothers attended a Chinese school in Kolkata, the Kinkuo Hok Hao, before moving further east to Assam for high-school (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.54-61). There were several Chinese schools in West Bengal and other parts of northeast India. Many of these schools were funded by the Chinese and Taiwanese governments (Xing, 2010). Hsieh recalled how the Chinese community in Assam was very diverse. It included those whose parents and grandparents had migrated to India from China several decades ago. It also included Kuomintang soldiers who had helped fight off the Japanese in Assam and parts of West Bengal. Like Wong, Hsieh was also taken by policemen from his school in Assam and sent to Deoli. He and his family were only released in 1966.

Finally, Steven Wan was also taken from his home on 19 November 1962. Wan's father had escaped Chengdu during the Japanese invasion of China and settled down in Shillong. The Japanese invasion had triggered a migration out of China and although most made their way to Southeast Asia, some, like Wan's father, came to India. Wan remembers that when he and his family were arrested, his father was put in solitary confinement for several days when he failed to declare the family's assets properly. When the family was finally released on 9 September 1964, they were not allowed to return to their home in Kalimpong and were sent to Kolkata instead. Wan and his family also left India for Canada (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.68-74).

What becomes increasingly evident through all these anecdotes is the complete isolation and alienation of the Chinese from the Indian state. Even though the then Home Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri had visited the Deoli camp and assured the internees they would be able to return to their homes soon, for the most part there was very little aid provided by the Indian government. In addition, India even prevented the Chinese Embassy from visiting its own interned nationals (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.303). Despite Shastri's promises, it was several years before the internees returned to their homes and for most of them there wasn't much of their 'home' left to return to. This turned many internees bitter and against the Indian state.

The Chinese Red Cross on several occasions did provide humanitarian aid to the internees at Deoli. Yin Marsh's *Doing Time With Nehru* is another autobiographical account of the author's experience of being taken prisoner in Deoli in 1962. She recounted how it was precisely because the Chinese Red Cross and government were providing relief support and even arranged for boats to repatriate internees, that many internees felt compelled to go to China instead of staying on in Deoli. They felt the Chinese government cared more for the plight of the Deoli internees than did their own Indian government since the former had been more proactive in sending aid. During the War, India repatriated over 2000 Chinese (and their dependents) to China (Marsh, 2015).

The Chinese during the 1962 War occupied a rather precarious position. On one hand, places like Chinatowns were arguably ethnic ghettos that led to the further re-enforcing of their ingroup Chinese identity. However, on the other hand, most Chinese in India during the War had little to no connection with the People's Republic of China. In fact, during the 1962 China-India War, many Chinese found that they were being forced to demonstrate and assert their 'Indianness' in the face of widespread persecution. For example, the Chinese community publicly condemned Communist China, pledged their loyalty to India and even contributed to India's Defense Fund (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.276).

The internment of the Chinese during the War demonstrates how 'citizenship' is ultimately a process of systematic inclusion and exclusion. In 1962, the Chinese-Indian identity was excluded from the Indian national imaginary because of racial and ethnic differences between the Chinese and the rest of the ethnic majority of India. The 1962 China-India War accelerated the "ethnicization of the nation," (Roy, 2007, p.186), i.e. imagining the Indian nation-state exclusively in ethnic and racial terms. The 1962 War and incarceration of the Chinese raises questions about the nature of India's post-colonial, national identity, who it considered a foreigner and by extension, who it left out of its national imaginary. The 1962 China-India War in many ways marked a point of no return for the Chinese-Indians. It cemented the community's distrust of the majority ethnic population of India and the Indian government. There has been an exodus of Chinese-Indians to Toronto, Canada following the War. Toronto currently has a sizeable Chinese-Indian community.

### Part 3. Imagining Nationhood: The Ethnicization of the Nation

The nation-state has had many iterations. Benedict Anderson most famously described the nation as an ‘imagined community,’ brought together via some shared sense of horizontal camaraderie. In Anderson’s theorization the nation is “imagined as both limited and sovereign,” (Roy, 2007, pp.1-32). But the 20<sup>th</sup> century and persecution of the Chinese presents us with different iterations of the nation-states-ones that were not necessarily territorially limiting but rather transnational in character.

While I have focussed thus far primarily on Indian nationalism and India’s response to its ethnic Chinese in the light of the 1962 War, it is also important to look at China’s involvement with the ethnic Chinese in India during this time. The persecution of the ethnic Chinese in India (and other parts of Southeast Asia, as well) towards the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and China’s response to these events revealed a particularly aggressive brand of Chinese nationalism that was at play during this time. China practised a form of long distance nationalism where it considered the overseas Chinese as still part of China (Levitt and Schiller, 2004, pp.1002-1039). The Chinese state evacuating ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia and South Asia citing anti-Chinese hostilities and unfair treatment of this community at the hands of the governments of these countries, poses interesting questions about the links between ethnicity, diasporic identity and nationality. China labelling its repatriates from Southeast Asia (and presumably those from South Asia that China repatriated as well although there is significantly less scholarly work done on these repatriates) as ‘returnees’ instead of ‘refugees’ similarly suggested that the Chinese state considered overseas Chinese as ultimately being an extension of the Chinese national Self (Ho, 2012, pp.599-611). For overseas Chinese repatriated by the Chinese state in the twentieth century-including those from India, none of whom had any prior links to China and were mostly second or third generation descendants of Chinese immigrants to these regions in the preceding centuries-their movement back to China constituted counter-diasporic migration. Arguments about co-ethnicity and extra-territorial kinship were used to justify the ‘return’ of overseas Chinese to China. Nation here was understood not as a political entity. Rather, it alluded to more of a spiritual or cultural continuity -much like the idea of Israel-between the overseas Chinese and the ancestral land (Godley, 1980, p.46).

Furthermore, national identity is based on people understanding the importance of territorial location and history in the formation of a cohesive national identity (Martin 2005, pp.97-102). Anyone who stands outside that location or does not share the same history is othered. The events of 1962 in India points to the ethnicization of the nation, i.e. imagining the nation, nationhood and national identity exclusively in ethnic and racial terms. In 1962, the Chinese-Indian identity was excluded from the Indian national imaginary because of racial and ethnic differences between the Chinese and the rest of the ethnic majority of India. The exclusion of the overseas Chinese identity from the larger Indian national imaginary got codified in state ordinances and policies. The war was what Srirupa Roy calls a “structuring event,” (Roy, 2007, p.27) that attempted to establish new idioms for the idea of a nation-state. The war led the State to ideate on who it considered an ‘ideal’ citizen along ethnic lines. Therefore, during the China-India War, the Chinese-Indian community’s hybrid identity (where many were Indian citizens but of Chinese ethnicity) became a basis for their exclusion from the Indian national imaginary.

Certainly during the 1962 War it becomes evident that the State is seminal in selecting and transforming group identities such that they fit into its own conceptions of nationhood (Roy, 2007). In that matrix, only certain group identities (non-ethnic Chinese) were recognized as constituting the larger ‘Indian’ identity. What is important to note, however, is that it is precisely



during moments of tension, i.e. during war, when the nation-state is encountered that the idea of nationhood and a national identity is formed. Therefore, the arrest and internment of the Chinese at Deoli was not merely a result of the monocultural aspirations of the nation-state, i.e. not merely *based* on the conception of a nation as being for a particular race or ethnicity. Rather, the internment of the Chinese *brought into existence* and actualized a race and ethnicity-based notion of nationhood.

## Conclusion

The Chinese-Indian community was at its peak in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, numbering at about 50,000 across the entire South Asia (Xing and Sen, 2015, p.205-226). But the community's numbers have rapidly dwindled after the 1962 China-India War and there are only a few thousand that remain in the city today. The exodus of Chinese from Kolkata to mainly Canada was almost a direct result of the 1962 China-India War and the internment of this community at the hands of the Indian government at that time. Many Chinese-Indians feared that racial and ethnic differences would continue to ostracize the Chinese from the ethnic majority of India (as they had during the war) and thus chose to relocate. This paper has summarized the events that led to the 1962 China-India War and provided anecdotal evidence of the harsh measures the newly independent Indian nation-state took to protect itself during wartime that included the mass arrest and internment of about 3000 ethnic Chinese in Deoli. These measures ultimately ended up reinforcing India's national identity along racial and ethnic lines.

Finally, a note on interdisciplinarity (the main theme of the 13<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Asian Studies) and the discipline of Asia and Area Studies. In recent years, there has been a key shift in Area Studies research. Increasingly, scholars are trying to move beyond the nation-state, land and territory as the only meaningful units of analysis in area studies work and instead look at migrations, flows, seas, maritime networks and borderland areas as worthy of study as well, especially when looking at global and regional connections. A community like the Chinese-Indians with their own unique history of immigration and subsequent emigration into and out of India lends itself to this kind of theoretical framework. I hope my research and this paper is an important first step in this newly emerging field of comparative and interdisciplinary Area and Asia Studies.

## Acknowledgements

This paper is based on research that I had conducted between August and December, 2022 as part of my PhD coursework under the guidance of my supervisor, Dr. Jayati Bhattacharya, at the National University of Singapore. I would like to thank Dr. Bhattacharya for her detailed feedback on previous drafts of this paper and her continued support throughout these past few years of my PhD candidature.

## References

- Banerjee, P. (2017). The Chinese in India: internment, nationalism, and the embodied imprints of state action. In Lorenz M. Luthi and Amit R. Dasgupta (Eds), *The Sino-Indian dispute of 1962: New perspectives*, (pp.215-232). London: Routledge.
- Cohen, J.A. & Leng, S. (1972). The Sino-Indian Dispute over the Internment and Detention of Chinese Nationals. In J.A. Cohen (Ed.), *China's practise of international law: Some case studies*, (pp.268-320). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Ghosh, A. (2017). Before 1962. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 697-727.
- Godley, M. (1980). A summer cruise to nowhere: China and the Vietnamese Chinese in perspective. *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 35-59.
- Ho, E.L.E (2012). 'Refugee' or 'returnee'? The ethnic geopolitics of diasporic resettlement in China and intergenerational change. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38, 599-611.
- Levitt, P., & Schiller, N. G (2004). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*, 38, 1002-1039.
- Luthi, L. M. (2017). India's relations with China, 1945–74. In Lorenz M.L and A.R. Dasgupta (Eds), *The Sino-Indian war of 1962: New perspectives*, (pp.29-47). London: Routledge.
- Luthi, L.M. & Dasgupta, A.R. (2017). Introduction. In Lorenz M. L. and A.R. Dasgupta (Eds), *The Sino-India war of 1962: New perspectives*, (pp.1-26). London: Routledge.
- Ma, J. and D'Souza, D. (2020). *The Deoliwallahs: The true story of the 1962 Chinese-Indian internment*. New Delhi: Pan Macmillan Publishing.
- Marsh, Y. (2015). *Doing time with Nehru: The story of an Indian-Chinese family*. Zubaan.
- Martin, J. (2005). Identity. In D. Sibley, P. Jackson, D. Atkinson, & N. Washbourne (Eds), *Cultural geography: A dictionary of key concepts*, (pp.97-102). London: I.B. Tauris.
- Mehra, P. and P.L. Mehra (1970). India's China war. *India Quarterly*, 410-416.
- Omar, I. (2017). Constitution of India and the 1962 war emergency: institutional re-alignments. In Lorenz. M.L. and A.R. Dasgupta (Eds), *The Sino-India war of 1962: New perspectives*, (pp.181-196). London: Routledge.
- Passin, H. (1961). Sino-Indian cultural relations. *The China Quarterly*, 85-100.
- Roy, S. (2007). *Beyond belief: India and the politics of postcolonial nationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Tan, C.B. (2013). Introduction. In Tan Chee-Beng (Ed), *Routledge handbook of the Chinese diaspora* (pp.1-12). London: Routledge.

Xing, Z. (2010). *Preserving cultural identity through education: The schools of the Chinese community in Calcutta, India*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Xing, Zhang & Tansen Sen (2013). The Chinese in South Asia,” In T. C. Beng (Ed), *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Diaspora* (pp.205-226). London: Routledge.

Zhang, L. L. (2022). The Deoliwallahs: the true story of the 1962 Chinese-Indian internment. *Asian Ethnicity*, 417-418.

**Contact email:** [dasjoita@gmail.com](mailto:dasjoita@gmail.com)



## ***China's Global Maritime Expansion: Between Its Grand Dream and External Trends***

Najla Alzarooni, Trends Research and Advisory, United Arab Emirates

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

China's dream to become a global maritime power is a controversial element of China's global growth. Its expansion of maritime lines has been shaped by internal needs and external trends. The expansion has alarmed the world and raised the uncertainty about China's potential to become the world maritime power in mid- 21st century. Despite the continuous debates on the risks associated with China's global maritime expansion, little attention was paid to the Chinese literature and understanding of being a global maritime power. This paper analyzes China's thinking, planning, and constructing of its maritime power. It looks at the geopolitical, commercial, and military application of China's maritime strategy to become a world power with its celebration of 100 anniversary of the PRC. Internal needs, such as sovereignty threats, energy security, and growing population have pushed China to expand its maritime lines and achieve its grand dream. However, external trends such as destabilized commercial lines, great power competition and external perceptions hindered the process of achieving its dream. Borrowing from the Mahanian and Harmonious schools of thought is helpful when looking at the Chinese global maritime accounts. Whether China has been categorized as a No. 2 or a No. 1 Sea Power, it has focused its ambitions on achieving a speedy maritime power's growth. It aims to construct a new modality of increasing involvement overseas, expanding deterrence lines, and securing wider oceanic checkpoints.

Keywords: Maritime Security, China's Rise, External Trends

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

The blue expansion of great powers over the past centuries continues to be of great attraction to researchers. How great powers enhance their sea capabilities and maritime security strategies are key to the study of contemporary history of great powers' rise. In national plans, protecting sea lines and exploiting sea resources are not limited to securing the coastal lines and nations' food and energy supplies. Exploring new waters is essential for securing national economies and enhancing maritime security. When a researcher evaluates the intentions and strength of a great power's maritime security, the study is not limited to the assessment of maritime strength at the national borders. It is important to look at how the rise of a new maritime power may bring changes to the international structure. It is also key in this task to deeply explore how great powers' maritime views differ from each other when comparing and contrasting strength with other maritime powers.

China's ambition to become a global maritime power is a highly debated element of its global comprehensive rise. Its extension of maritime lines and influence has been driven by internal requirements and external trends as a growing global power. The speedy expansion has alarmed the world and other great maritime powers. There is a general ambiguity about China's motivations to become a global maritime power in the decades to come. Nevertheless, there is an underestimation of what the Chinese mindset, literature, culture, and understanding of its approach to maritime power may offer when studying China's maritime power. The plethora of Western alarming interpretations that are more centered towards China's "Threat Theory" limits one's understating of China's maritime power from the Chinese standpoint. Many Western skeptics associate China's global maritime ambitions with the view of China as a "Dragon Slayer" and thus 2049 is the maritime dominance year by the Chinese "Dragon" (Wearden, 2010).

Many studies looked at the contemporary maritime powers in comparison to the traditional American and British colonial maritime power. For centuries, the United States and the Great Britain have dominated the seas. The dominant form of their maritime expansion was through wars and colonial actions, supported by a favorable environment to adopt this form of maritime rise. Their maritime narrative was shaped by a different path of China's current maritime rise. The Chinese path is designed under different circumstances and motives. The Chinese maritime narrative suggests that China's maritime rise should not follow the American or the British maritime trajectory. China current position and ambitions are shaped in different regional and international dynamics of US's or Great Britain's' at the time of their rise. Chinese officials hold the view that China's maritime rise should not have militaristic characteristics. It must maintain a peaceful and developmental path with Chinese attributes, away from emulating the colonial maritime history. From China's standpoint, its maritime rise should be projected as a contributor to the global maritime stability by introducing fairer and sustaining choices to the global maritime and the third world states (Bo, 2020).

This paper explores the Chinese approach to constructing its national maritime power and in its involvement in the global maritime security. It borrows from the traditional main school of thoughts (Mahanian School) examining sea power and the relevant Chinese stream (Harmonious School) to the study of China's maritime expansion. The paper looks at China's national maritime strategy evolution to address its internal concerns, such as coastal protection. Then, exploring how China has elevated its maritime capabilities to position itself as a global maritime power compatible with its China's rise strategy. However, the journey to build China's global maritime power faces considerable limitations to its rise. On the one

hand, global changing trends pose obstacles to the elevation of Chinese maritime power. On the other hand, some global opportunities were advantageous to the Chinese Navy to further its global involvement in maritime security. The paper concludes that harmonious school of thought is more relevant in studying China's involvement in the global maritime security of the twenty-first century.

### **The Main Schools of Thoughts on Sea Power**

China's global maritime power expansion has been highly debated in the recent scholarly discussions. Some scholars, such as James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara (2010), looked at China's sea power through the Mahanian approach in relation to the increasing naval sea-lines and permanent checkpoints overseas. This stream holds that the Chinese navy adopted an assertive strategy, especially in South China Sea. Moreover, China has shown assertive actions in addressing the regional disputes. When it comes to the far seas, it has exercised global influence to dominate the seas. This side of the debate is driven by the beliefs developed by Alfred Mahan on constructing sea power in the twentieth century. The other side of the debate, such as Edward Chan (2021), finds the harmonious stream a sufficient approach to comprehending China's current maritime rise especially when evaluating its development path of the twenty-first century. This is not to imply that the Mahanian approach is irrelevant to China's maritime expansion; it remains a key stream for researchers and policy makers. Yet, it is significant to widen the scope of analysis by borrowing from the thoughts that the harmonious school introduces to frame a comprehensive picture and a more relevant understanding of China today. This is because limiting the study of China's sea power to the traditional lens of navy's size prevents a researcher from exploring multidimensional framework of diplomatic, economic, and global governmental efforts that China incorporates in its building of sea power.

Mahanianism holds that when a sea power expands its sea capabilities, it aims to control the most important sea lines. The core belief behind big powers expansion of new waters is to gain more influence. In this regard, the naval elevation of power is the most suitable form of accomplishing the aimed control (Jamison, 2022). China has increased its naval territorial and influential outreach over the past decades. Chinese state affiliated companies own and/or operate 96 ports in 53 countries, in all continents (except Antarctica) (Kardon, April 2022). However, acquiring a blue navy equivalent to the American navy was not the main mode of expansion of the People's Liberation Army Navy (中国人民解放军海军) (PLAN). The Chinese navy has not grown yet in a parallel degree of its global economic size. China's military strategy (2015) states that the far-seas protection is key to China's development, but it should not be implemented through maritime dominance. The increasing external trade and growing Chinese exports through shipping lines worldwide necessitates establishing bigger escort capabilities in the sea lines of communications, according to the strategy. However, China gray-zone operations in some maritime disputed areas remain suspicious even if the Chinese official writings stress on that the operations are only to preserve the national rights and are part of natural expansion. "Over the past decade, China employed nearly 80 different gray zone tactics across all instruments of national power," according to research analysis conducted by RAND researchers (2022). In addition, they find the Chinese activities as a tool to impose more pressure on other countries to serve China's interests overseas and thus enhancing greater domestic economic, security and political objectives.

Studying China's maritime expansion in terms of traditional blue navy and gray zone capabilities is insufficient. The Chinese navy has exhibited more cooperative activities, which

makes the Chinese approach to national and global maritime growth incomparable to the British or American sea expansion in the past centuries. Edward Chan (2021) believes that researchers underestimate the diversity of China's maritime approach that makes the Mahanian approach insufficient in explaining China's sea expansion (p. 39). That said, what is the more relevant stream of evaluating China's contemporary maritime growth! As the current Chinese officials pay huge attention to the non-traditional maritime issues (as stressed by the Military Strategy of 2015), the harmonious school supports that China can enjoy a great maritime strength beyond the traditional military policies. Edward Chan (2021) provides an explanation of this stream. The harmonious school suggests that China has the potential of promoting harmony in the near and far seas. And among other sea powers. The reason behind this belief is that Chinese global maritime activities go beyond the simple understanding of protecting its interests overseas. It has carried out considerable global maritime initiatives that are not looked at by Mahanian believers. Harmonists provide a better alignment between 1- the Harmonious school, 2- the contemporary understanding of China's development path, 3- China's maritime activities. The Chinese grand dream of the twenty-first century presents China's modern perception of global maritime security that is not limited to traditional naval capabilities (P.42-45). The non-traditionality that Chinese officials promote in the policy thinking emphasizes the need for non-military forms of maritime arrangements, such as: diplomatic, legal, and economic dimensions. This thinking explains why Chinese approach seems to be ambiguous when analyzed by traditional frameworks.

### **China's National Maritime Strategy and Global Involvement**

China's maritime power has elevated through several phases. Takeda Jun'ichi, a foreign policy and national defense journalist, identifies these phases in the following: 1- the primary footing of China's maritime conception following the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, 2- incorporating the market component to the national maritime policies, inspired by China's opening up to the world market in the 1980s 3- the growing global interconnectedness that resulted in a clear shift toward protecting China's interests worldwide, 4- the current elevation of Chinese naval capabilities construction (2014). When Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic of China, almost all aspects of the Chinese nation-state has been revived in a way or another, including the maritime power. Mao Zedong introduced the early inspiration of a modern China and maritime infrastructure. The Chinese navy adopted modern policies to develop marine transportation, shipbuilding, ports establishment, scientific research, and other essentials to China growth. The Chinese government established new bodies relevant to China maritime growth to promote maritime research, marine technologies, and others. Ten years later, marking the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the PRC, China planned to extend the sea routes; they expanded up to 12 nautical miles from all borders, including its islands (Kumar, 2022). In the Chinese standpoint, the expansion serves security purposes to address regional risks and concerns. Several colleges and academies followed to equip the Chinese officials with needed knowledge and expertise.

The Deng Xiaoping's China integrated the economic element of the nation-state in all aspects of China's development during its opening to the world. The maritime expansion was no exception; it was highly orientated towards the greater economic interests. Prior to the PRC foundation, the coastal activities were limited to the near shore (近岸). With the opening phase and the regional destabilization within East Asia, the PLAN was reformed. Liu



Huaqing (刘华清) inspired the reform of the naval policies as he was promoted to the PLAN's Commander in 1982. His strategy put huge emphasis on the need to manage surrounding waters that are shared with other regional neighbors. He stipulated that PLAN should secure access to these sea lines. Subsequently, Liu contributed to shifting the focus on coastal lines and near shore to extend the maritime operation to the far-seas (远海). Moreover, he promoted the early thinking of co-shouldering the regional responsibilities of addressing the surrounding maritime challenges. Prior to this thinking, the Chinese Army and naval policies were targeted towards conflict management and addressing security and political concerns during war times only. Little attention was paid to the significance of the regional waters and how the state may benefit from the huge wealth and commerce during peace times. With Huaqing's inspirations, the PLAN realized the importance of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs). The PLAN encouraged a coherent change accordingly to gain political and security influence and to exercise further commercial and communication activities through the seas (Sun & Payette, 2017). Wang Shuguang (2004), the former director of the States Oceanic Administration, states that China's maritime power ought to be advancing the marine economy, aiming to contribute to more than 10% of China's GDP. This objective safeguards China's economic interests abroad accordingly. The marine strategy serves a sustainable economic development domestically and internationally and enriches China's grand strategy. These new objectives gained a higher value besides the traditional maritime security essentials to equip China with the maritime strength and proactivity for its opening to the world.

In the early twenty-first century, the Communist Party widened the focus of its naval strategy by producing a cohesive national framework as the country's position and challenges changed. These specific concerns should be taken into consideration when analyzing great powers' maritime expansion. Chinese oil imports and product exports pass through two key oceans. In 2005, the PLAN introduced the "Two Ocean" Strategy (双海战略) to re-gain its surrounding waters. The core geographic focus of the strategy covers the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. A very early version of the strategy focused on China's coastal lines, Tianjin in particular. Years later, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) facilitated the implementation of the Two Ocean Strategy (Sun & Payette, 2017). Chinese officials had to secure these two passages for external markets and increase its market resilience. After all, possible war blockades or embargoes are key obstacles to China's survival. Growing piracy is another problem that China addresses in the Two Ocean Strategy. The piratic activities destabilize China's fleets operations and thus it is in China's best interest to have a point of operation that would ensure the smoothness of ships routes. From the Chinese perspective, the protection of these two oceans stabilizes the region and, thus, the world. The strategy enhances maritime security and freedom of navigation away from any disruption.

Moreover, the global economic influence of China contributes to shaping its bilateral and multilateral maritime relations with other countries and units. For three decades, China grew, at the rate of 10 percent annually, marking the miracle growth of China's contemporary history (Wearden, 2010). Even when China's economic growth slowed, its global economic interactions remained significantly large. Considering this growth, Naughton (2020) examines two key policy initiatives through which China sought a wider economic influence: Renminbi (RMB) Internationalization (人民币国际化) and the Belt and Road Initiative (一带一路). Besides increasing lending to developing countries, these policies strengthened domestic economy, promoted the creation of new markets abroad, enhanced the economic

interconnectedness of states with China, and contributed to its prestige as a global maritime power.

The internationalization of the Renminbi (RMB) was an ambitious policy to increase China's international financial influence. This new status as a global power needed a cornerstone financial policy. It stems from China self-image of its financial strength and from the need to address the domination of the US dollar. The policy promotes China as a strong candidate to play with new financial cards internationally. It gained strong support from the Communist Party. Between 2009 and 2020, China signed bilateral currency swap agreements with 41 countries, with total amount exceeding \$554 billion (Tran, 2022). In October 2016, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) launched the new Special Drawing Right (SDR) valuation basket that included the Chinese renminbi (RMB) (IMF, 2016). The internationalization of the Renminbi (RMB) has contributed to China's maritime involvement in other regions.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is another initiative that China has advocated to achieve its grand dream and enhance its maritime strength. Announced in 2013 and shaped by President Xi's thinking, this initiative was designed to promote China internationally. It is described as Jinping's foreign signature (Gries, 2020). The initiative started with infrastructure constructions lines and then expanded to other means of cooperation, such as maritime linkages, communication infrastructure, service, and hardware production. As of March 2022, 146 states and 32 international organizations had officially joined the BRI (Green Finance and Development Center, 2022). Many scholars describe the initiative as the practice of infrastructure diplomacy (基础设施外交) (Naughton, 2020) leading to higher maritime presence worldwide. However, these projects have raised concerns and suspicions, especially in the manner China is tying other countries. China has been blamed for hurting oceans and coasts worldwide. To support the initiative, China has established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) (亚洲基础设施投资银行) in 2016. By the end of 2020, it had 103 approved members (AIIB, 2023). It was viewed as another hegemonic strategy in that China controls 30% of the fund and can impose its policy on member states. Others believe that the initiative with its supporting bank reflect China's desire to become a regional power (Yuriko, 2015).

The growth of China's maritime power was also coincided with a military growth. The Chinese government empowered its People's Liberation Army (PLA) (人民解放军) as it recently became a regional power of East Asia. China currently has the second largest defense budget in the world following the United States. To understand the PLA's policies, it is essential to comprehend where it has been positioned in China. Unlike the common structure of countries, the PLA is viewed more of an armed wing of China's Communist Party rather than an independent state military. This allocation of the Chinese military grants an efficient protection of national security as well as an enhanced military expansion abroad. As such, state diplomacy combines the Party Diplomacy (党的外交) and the Military Diplomacy (军事外交) (Zhao, 2020). This structure allows tighter control of the military by the state party and subsequently more consistent external behavior. To further strengthen the structure, some military officers took part in the Politburo Standing Committee (政治局常委). In doing so, both state diplomats and military officers represent China's interests with one consolidated voice overseas.

In coordination with the PLA Navy, scientific teams also expanded their activities. They carried out polar observation missions such as the China's Antarctic Program. China established its first research station, called the Great Wall Station on 1985 (Wang, 2019). Soon, with the increasing number of observation missions, China was able to introduce observation bases, such as Huanghe Station on Norway's Svalbard Island (Jun'ichi, 2014). In 2001, the International Seabed Authority granted China the right to widen its exploration to the Pacific and Southwest Indian Ocean. These explorations raise the likelihood of China being the maritime power of the future. Marine exploration requires a cooperative framework. Widening the scale of the exploration requires a huge allocation of money, employees, technological advancement, and resources. China alone cannot be at the top of the exploring powers. With the growing economic interdependency and China's external economic strength, it can be a global economic maritime power. The economic foundation and the export of goods, services, and human resources open new floors for China's exploration. It is, thus, destined to be a global sea power.

When looking at what the abovementioned schools of thoughts offer in understanding China's maritime power, Chinese policy makers hold a different understanding of being a global maritime power from that of the West. Maritime security is thematic area in which there is clear difference in perception and projection of China's self-image from traditional hegemonic narrative. Western powers have warned the world that China is taking over maritime power through its gradual expansion. In particular, the United States has convinced other regions that China's ulterior motive is to build an upper hand over maritime routes. This understanding is driven from the American belief in the zero-sum game; thus, the rise of China as a maritime power will result in the loss of Western powers. According to the Navy League of the United States (2020), two-thirds of global container traffic flow through Chinese owned or invested ports worldwide, a fact that stems from China's strength as the world's largest trading nation and exporter. The increasing number of China's logistics nodes abroad raised concerns that these nodes are clear manifestations of China's attempt to control the world and the freedom of international trade.

From the perspective of Chinese officials, there is nothing to hide in their pursuit of maritime power; after all, historically, Chinese leadership has announced maritime goals in various Communist Party's meetings and official white papers. In the Eighteenth National Congress, the Communist Party stated that making China a maritime power is a means to enhance the marine economy and marine ecological environment. This directive serves and defends China's rights and interests as a maritime power. The director of the Oceanic Administration clarifies the Chinese standpoint of being a maritime power. The acquisition of maritime strength is a requirement for China's development. Maritime power provides China with protection and management of its surrounding sea as a global power (Jun'ichi, 2014). In 2012, the Chinese government announced to its own citizens and the world that its maritime policy and strategy seeks to embody objectives in its external interactions with states and seas. Furthermore, China intends to develop its marine industry, capacity building, oil and gas resources, and manufacturing to widen its maritime presence and serve national needs (China Ocean Development Report, 2012). Becoming a maritime power goes beyond the limited and traditional understanding of the typical Mahanian maritime expansion.

Both sides of the debate on China's maritime security engagement with the world are polarized. China's explanation of its maritime endeavor is to introduce a harmonious approach to global maritime security through safeguarding a peaceful collective economic

development as a national right. Readers outside of China overemphasize the Mahan-dominant roadmap away from the Chinese win-win approach. In both narratives, China's pursuit of international power -- whether through economic maritime power or security dominance -- remains a key feature of its projected power. Regardless of how China presents its rationale on national development and win-win cooperation, its maritime activities are linked to the global distribution of power. The Chinese perspective has also to be defined in an association with global maritime patterns and dynamics.

### **External Trends: Opportunities and Obstacles to China's Global Maritime Power**

The trending pivot to the East has accelerated China's global maritime expansion. Pakistan and Sri Lanka enabled China to utilize Gwadar and Hambantota Ports to conduct commercial activities. Their contracts involved terms and conditions that allowed China to protect regional trade and maritime security respectively. The Persian Gulf States and Iran also realize China's concern to protect the national and global passages of products and energy supplies. With the growing investments of mutual interests, China extended its maritime security footprints through its commercial lines. Likewise in Africa, African countries have benefited from China's development projects and commercial activities. Therefore, China had to safeguard its activities in Africa. In fact, China's Djibouti operation base was later turned into a military base; from there various Chinese anti-piracy operations provided China with a higher security access internationally.

The external commercial activities have played a key role in enabling China to become a global maritime power. Analysts categorize Chinese economic and commercial activities into two categories: soft and hard activities (Ljuslin, 2021). Soft economic activities are conducted with China's trade deals, currency swap agreements foreign direct investments, and others. These activities later resulted in a harder narrative of commercial exercises. It enabled a more consolidated and tougher practice of commerce through physical commercial infrastructure, bigger trade volumes and a monopoly of Chinese goods in foreign markets. This strategy constituted an interface for the PLAN to gradually expand its footprint to protect Chinese SLOCs and to establish more economic/military support points, adding to the Road element of the BRI.

Regional trends within East Asia have also constituted challenges/opportunities to China's maritime expansion. Regional attitudes and perceptions of China's maritime expansionist plans have also constituted a challenge/chance to achieving a linear growth. The regional and international intolerance -- mainly the United States and its East Asian allies-- restrict China's maritime plans. Chinese officials have sought new alignment of national plans with other countries to correct this selective perception through promoting joint development objectives rather than utilizing growing maritime power. Regional actors, such as India, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam, as well as international powers, particularly United States, have pushed China to adopt a hardline approach to face their challenges. Regional neighbors enjoy strategically geographic positions that makes China's position unfavorable. The surrounding environment littered with negative attitudes towards China's rise constitutes a key driver behind the Chinese government's building of its sea power. Regional powers, in return, have shown more suspicions and resistance to China's maritime rise.

The growing maritime terrorism and piratic activities have also posed challenges to China's maritime expansion. China's sea lines of communications (SLOCs) are subject to a high degree of piracy. These lines are mainly concentrated in the Gulf and the Gulf of Aden, East

Africa and the Red Sea, the Bay of Bengal and Southeast Asia. Great powers take relevant measures to ensure the protection of the shipping lines and the deployment of larger numbers of escort ships. Yet, the issue of pirate activities has not been fully addressed by the international community. Naval deployment in such locations act as a deterrent mechanism against any blockade or conflict, and China has implemented many naval assignments to protect its shipments beyond the First Island Chain. China has been criticized in that it gathers intelligence information as well as counter piracy. China's national security strategy urges the need to execute more protection in key locations of the shipping paths. It also believes in sharing global responsibility, alongside other great sea powers, stemming from its dual role in international affairs.

Recently, China has shown a collective active defensive deployment, especially in cases of crises and incidents. It has the experience of evacuating citizens (Libya), escorting vessels (Gulf of Aden), chemical weapons transportation (from Syria), international maritime investigations (attacks on Fujairah Port), search operations (Malaysian Airlines Plane), and some other cases. These incidents reflect China's determination to maintain the international safety of the seas through collaborative actions. In these cases, it projected some military sea power. On the military material basis, Chinese Navy provides active large-scale service of 052D destroyers and type 054A frigates, along with other wide oceangoing vessels. These capabilities are also supported by the Y-20 large air freighter from the Chinese Air Force (Bu, 2020). Nevertheless, the PLAN has not yet deployed adequate defensive forces equivalent to its growing maritime economic rise. In theory, it lacks the compelling high-scale plan outside its mainland and First-Island Chain when compared to the United States and the United Kingdom. It could be that China presents a different understanding of overseas defensive forces. It is evident that China is still in its journey to exercise more military capabilities globally through a comprehensive armed forces package. Nevertheless, China is not yet well experienced in combating large, hostile terrorist groups that are transnational in scope. Such a threat demands China to widen military exercises of its overseas troops by showing hard power rather than be limited to peacekeeping missions and reliefs. In this aspect of maritime security, China has to show more military obligations towards international maritime security.

## **Conclusion**

Although the commercial expansion of maritime checkpoints of great powers may not be a highly controversial issue, the commercial/military conversion raised growing global concerns over China's speedy global maritime expansion. When studying China's maritime expansion, the Harmonious school of thought is more relevant to the imagined China's global maritime power of the 21st century than limiting the understating to the Mahanian stream. China maritime power elevated from defending the coastal lanes to sustaining China's interests overseas to involving in the global maritime governance. However, global trends have laid out the floor for new opportunities and/or limitations to China's aimed global maritime power. The discussion on China's real motives and intentions remains of great interest to contemporary researchers.

## References

- Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank. (2023). *Introduction*. Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank. <https://www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/index.html>
- Bo, H. (2020) *Chinese maritime power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Strategic planning, policy, and prediction*. Routledge.
- Chan, E. (2022) Beyond Mahanianism: the evolution of China's policy discussion on sea power development, *Asian Security*, 18:1, 38-55, DOI:10.1080/14799855.2021.1949583
- China's Ocean Development Report (2012), p.363.
- Green Finance and Development Center. (2022). *About the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)*. Green Finance and Development Center. [https://greenfdc.org/belt-and-road-initiative-about/#:~:text=Road%20Initiative%20here\),- ,Countries%20of%20the%20Belt%20and%20Road%20Initiative%20\(BRI\),cooperati on%20agreements%20for%20the%20BRI](https://greenfdc.org/belt-and-road-initiative-about/#:~:text=Road%20Initiative%20here),- ,Countries%20of%20the%20Belt%20and%20Road%20Initiative%20(BRI),cooperati on%20agreements%20for%20the%20BRI).
- Gries, P. (2020). Nationalism, social influences and Chinese foreign policy. In D. Shambaugh (Ed.), *China & the world*. (pp. 63-84). Oxford University Press.
- International Monetary Fund. (2016, September 30). *IMF Launches New SDR Basket Including Chinese Renminbi, Determines New Currency Amounts* [Press release]. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2016/09/30/AM16-PR16440-IMF-Launches-New-SDR-Basket-Including-Chinese-Renminbi>
- Jamison, T. (2022). Alfred Thayer Mahan: "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History" as Strategy, Grand Strategy, and Polemic. *Classics of Strategy and Diplomacy*. [Essays and Reviews]. <https://classicsofstrategy.com/2022/02/09/alfred-thayer-mahan-the-influence-of-sea-power-upon-history-as-strategy-grand-strategy-and-polemic/>
- Jun'ichi, T. (2014). China's rise as a maritime power: Ocean policy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping. *Review of Island Studies*. (pp. 1-37). <https://www.spf.org/islandstudies/transfer/research/docs/a00011r.pdf>
- Kardon, I. (2023), "China's Military Diplomacy and Overseas Security Activities," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 26, 2023.
- Kuamr, A., (2022), "Why Chinese Maritime Expansion Is A Threat To The World," Outlook. Retrieved From: <https://www.outlookindia.com/international/why-chinese-maritime-expansion-is-a-threat-to-the-world-news-226573>
- Lin, B., Cristina L. Garafola, Bruce, M., Jonah B., Jeffrey W. Hornung, Karen S., Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Paul O., Dennis B., Sarah W. Denton, and Jason C., *A New Framework for Understanding and Countering China's Gray Zone Tactics*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RBA594-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RBA594-1.html)

- Ljuslin, L. (2021). *China's Use of Soft- and Hard Power Under the Leadership of Xi Jinping*. Uppsala University. Retrieved From: <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1629476/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Naughton, B. (2020). China's global economic interactions. In D. Shambaugh (Ed.), *China & the world*. (pp. 113-136). Oxford University Press.
- Navy League of the United States* (2020). China's Use of Maritime for Global Power Demands a Strong Commitment to American Maritime. [www.navyleague.org](http://www.navyleague.org)
- The State Council (2015, May). *China's National Military Strategy*. [http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white\\_paper/2015/05/27/content\\_281475115610833.htm#:~:text=China%20will%20unswervingly%20follow%20the,never%20seek%20hegemony%20or%20expansion](http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2015/05/27/content_281475115610833.htm#:~:text=China%20will%20unswervingly%20follow%20the,never%20seek%20hegemony%20or%20expansion)
- Sun, T. & Payette, A. (2017). China's Two Ocean Strategy: Controlling waterways and the new silk road. Institute De Relations Internationales Et Strategiques. *Asia Focus*, 31 <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Asia-Focus-31.pdf>
- Tran, H. (2022). *Internationalization of the Renminbi via bilateral swap lines*. The Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/econographics/internationalization-of-the-renmibi-via-bilateral-swap-lines/>
- Wang, S. (2004). *A Discussion on China's Oceanic Management*. China Ocean Press.
- Wang, S. (2019). China's Antarctic Program and the Antarctic Treaty System. *Italian Institute for International Political Studies*. Commentary published on 19 July 2019. Retrieved From: <https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/chinas-antarctic-program-and-antarctic-treaty-system-23526>
- Wearden, G. (2010, August 16). Chinese economic boom has been 30 years in the making. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2010/aug/16/chinese-economic-boom>
- Yoshihara, T. & Holmes, J. (2010), *Red Star Over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy*. Naval Institute Press.
- Yuriko, K. (2015, May 27). *The AIIB and Chinese Strategy*. Project Syndicate. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/aiib-chinese-strategy-by-yuriko-koike-2015-05>
- Zhao, S. (2020). China's foreign policy making process: Players and institutions. In D. Shambaugh (Ed.), *China & the world*. (pp. 85-112). Oxford University Press. <https://www.outlookindia.com/international/why-chinese-maritime-expansion-is-a-threat-to-the-world-news-226573>

**Contact email:** [najla\\_alzarooni@trendsresearch.org](mailto:najla_alzarooni@trendsresearch.org)





***Persuasive Strategies in Debates on Japan's Constitution and Article 9:  
The Gulf War Case Study***

Anastasiya Polishchuk, Waseda University, Japan

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This article presents a qualitative analysis of persuasive strategies used in debates on Japan's security policy, related, in particular, to Article 9. The study examines the Japan Diet deliberations during the Gulf War, focusing on the Budget Committee of both Houses. Two hypotheses are tested: the first one suggests that threat perception arguments are more persuasive, while the second hypothesis proposes that sentiment-based arguments hold greater sway. The findings reveal the importance of seeking international recognition, feeling anxiety, taking pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9, and anxiety management in driving or preventing security policy changes. The study emphasizes the need for a balanced approach that incorporates both sentiment-based and rational arguments in constitutional debates, providing insights for policymakers and stakeholders.

Keywords: Article 9, Gulf War, Persuasive Rhetorical Strategies, Sentiment-Based Arguments, Threat Perception-Based Argument

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which renounces war and prohibits Japan from maintaining military forces, has been a contentious issue since its establishment in 1947. However, for several decades, questioning Article 9 and its interpretation was considered anathema among Japanese political elites. The perception began to shift with the onset of the Gulf War, which served as a pivotal moment for Japanese elites to reassess their thinking regarding Japanese security policies and cooperation.

What happened exactly at the dawn of the post-Cold War era that made Japanese politicians and public change their stance? There is a plethora of scholarship attempting to explain the changes and lack thereof in Japanese security stance in the 1990s, varying from neorealist claims to constructivist arguments. Overall, one may agree that it may be impossible to pick just a single factor which would be of utmost influence or create a holistic model which would comprehensively explain the direction of security policies and logic of decision-making among Japanese politicians. Yet, it is more than possible to uncover how Japanese elites framed their reasoning and which factors they perceived as the most persuasive in order to effect or hinder a change to Japanese security stance and vision of Article 9.

Hence, the present research asks which rhetorical approach, threat perception (rational) or sentiment-based arguments, is more persuasive in driving change or amendment in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9. By delving into the effectiveness of these two argumentative strategies, this paper seeks to shed light under what political circumstances which of these strategies was preferred by the politicians in their discussions on Article 9-related issues.

The first approach revolves around threat perception, wherein proponents argue for the necessity of modifying or amending Article 9 based on perceived threats to national security. These arguments typically underscore the changing and uncertain geopolitical landscape, emerging security challenges and the necessity to maintain a robust defence posture for provide for national security. When resorting to this approach, politicians, who advocate the change, may claim that an overly rigid perception of Article 9 may impede Japan's ability to respond effectively to security threats or may threaten Japan's survival in general. Those who resist any modifications may refer to the lack of security threats or attempt to undermine any threatening events or scenarios.

On the other hand, sentiment-based claims draw upon emotional and societal aspects associated with Article 9. Opponents of changes tend to emphasize the sentiment of pacifism, historical memory of Japan and the symbolic value of Article 9 as an embodiment of a nation's commitment to peace and rejection of war. They hold that any attempts to amend or weaken Article 9 would undermine its core principles, diminish public and international trust and lead to the repetition of the bitter experience of launching a war. Proponents of alterations accentuate the value of international cooperation and sense of responsibility which Japan bears as a major economy. They also stress the importance of seeking a proper status for Japan on the international arena by trying to frame changes and alterations as within the scope of Article 9 and Japanese Constitution.

By investigating the persuasive power of these two rhetorical approaches, the present study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics within debates of Article 9.

Furthermore, it strives for unveiling insights into the factors which can potentially relate to the Japanese sense of ontological security and empower or hinder decision makers in their attempts to amend or preserve Article 9.

To achieve this objective, this research utilizes a qualitative content analysis of the transcripts of parliamentary debates. This article represents a case study focusing on the Gulf Crisis and Guld War historical periods. Such an analysis endeavours to provide nuanced insights into the relative strengths and weaknesses of threat perception and sentiment-based arguments, contributing to informed dialogue and decision-making regarding the future of Article 9.

The subsequent sections will delve deeper into the existing literature, highlighting key concepts, explain our research methodology, and present and discuss the potential implications the results of a study. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of how to effectively communicate about Article 9 in the context of Japan's changing security environment, and may have broader implications for the analysis of rhetoric in political contexts more generally.

## **Literature Review**

The debates surrounding Article 9 and its potential alteration have been the subject of significant scholarly attention. This literature review will explore three main themes: the historical background of Article 9, Japan's security posture in international relations academia, and the role of rhetoric in shaping these debates.

### ***Historical Background of Article 9***

Born in the aftermath of World War II, Article 9 became a point of contention among Japanese political groups from the very beginning. While conservative right-wing politicians were eager to revise the no war clause and meet the US demands about remilitarization, pragmatists and left-leaning elites opposed such action. Moreover, feeling deceived by the previous government, the Japanese society did not show much enthusiasm about rebuilding the army under the hawks, many of whom were previously detained as A-class war criminals (Dower, 1993).

The 1960 U.S.-Japan Security Treaty revision, which allowed the United States to maintain military bases in Japan, sparked widespread protests and heightened the debate surrounding Article 9. These protests, often led by student activists, reflected the deep-rooted pacifist sentiment within Japanese society and their determination to preserve Article 9's principles. Although the ruling LDP party had set the revision of Article 9 as its primary goal due to the provision's foreign nature, it had to shelve the issue in the 1960s in order to maintain its grip on power, prioritizing economic growth and even adding more limitations to Japan's anti-militarist and anti-nuclear posture (Kapur, 2018).

The discussions on Japan's security stance became more heated throughout the 1970s and 1980s as the aggravation of regional threats and economic growth of Japanese economy inspired questions regarding Tokyo's involvement in international security affairs. Some continued prioritizing the preservation of a peaceful image while others lobbied for building up defence capabilities, commensurate with Japanese economic power (Auer, 1990). Nevertheless, the LDP, which had dominated Japanese politics for much of the post-war period, prioritized economic growth and domestic stability, recognizing potential social and

political backlash of pursuing a constitutional revision. As a result, Article 9 remained intact during this period, albeit with varying interpretations and ongoing discussions.

The early 1990s witnessed the collapse of the bipolar world order and elimination of geopolitical tensions between the US and the Soviet Union. The conclusion of this era had an impact on Japan's security environment, prompting a reassessment of the national defence posture and of the US-Japan alliance. The positive outlook, caused by the end of the Cold War, was clouded by the Gulf Crisis which later developed into the Gulf War. The Gulf War had a significant impact on Japan's foreign and security policy decision-making, raising questions concerning Japan's response to such crises and wars. Japan's limited involvement in the war, primarily in the form of financial contributions rather than military deployment, sparked debates about the extent to which Article 9 allowed for Japan's participation in collective security efforts through financial, material and human resources.

### ***Japan's Security Posture in International Relations Academia***

The sturdiness of Japan's Constitution, in particular, Article 9, has spurred debates among international relations. The neorealist tradition has placed Article 9 at the centre of Japan's pragmatic approach towards its security policies. According to some theories, Japan has employed Article 9 to avoid involvement in the regional arms race and maintain the status-quo military balance, relying on the US security umbrella (Midford, 2002; Twomey, 2000). Following this logic, once the US support has vanished, Japan will rearm and become a "normal" state. Another realist explanation, related to the alliance dynamics, states that Japan uses Article 9 as a "buck-passing" tool: Tokyo dodges the burden of providing for its own security, conferring as much responsibility as possible on the US shoulders (Heginbotham & Samuels, 1998; Lind, 2004).

While neorealism deciphers some patterns of Japan's security behaviour on the international arena, it fails to provide coherent elucidation, inter alia, of Japan's turn towards internationalism in the 1990s, Tokyo's readiness to support the United States after the 9/11 attacks or Abe's build-up of defence capabilities against the background of reaffirming the US-Japan alliance. Moreover, if one looks at neorealist approaches towards explaining Japan's security, most of them follow the existing national narratives, blurring the neorealist theoretical framework.

The second major explanation of the Article 9's sturdiness stems from the constructivist paradigm. Constructivists look at Japan's security stance through the lens of identity and normative theories, traditionally emphasizing Tokyo's pacifism, peacefulness and anti-militarism (Berger, 1993; Hagström & Gustafsson, 2015; Katzenstein & Okawara, 1993). The normative approach proponents underscore the importance of Japan's normative and institutional constraints. The relational identity constructivists tend to delve into the very process of Japanese self-imagining against other states. While both constructivist approaches seem to complement each other and explicate some links between Article 9 and identity formation, they rarely explain particular changes in Japan's security policy or the lack thereof.

The research at hand acknowledges the intricate nature of the international environment and inherent limitations in conducting controlled experiments within the realm of international relations. Accordingly, this study does not aim to definitively ascertain the dominant factors that influence Japanese security decision-making. Instead, the focus lies in examining the

underlying rationale employed by politicians when defending Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution or advocating for its revision. Consequently, this research views threat perception-based rhetorical devices as indicative of realist perspectives, while the employment of emotionally charged speeches are regarded as manifestations of constructivist-based reasoning.

### ***Role of Rhetoric in Shaping Debates on Article 9***

Within the realm of Japanese political discourse, numerous studies have been conducted to analyse the speeches and rhetoric employed by political elites (Feldman, 2021; Pope, 2017; Samuels, 2013; Teraoka, 2020). However, it is noteworthy that the majority of these studies have predominantly focused on examining the political positions and ideological stances adopted by political leaders and legislators, thereby limited attention to an in-depth exploration of their rhetorical strategies. However, research within the field of political behaviour suggests that emotive appeals have been found to enhance political participation, activate existing loyalties, mobilize support for populist ideologies, shape information interpretation, and even sway public opinion. Studying rhetorical devices, employed by political leaders, promises to help master a better comprehension of politicians' actions and interaction with voters (Arceneaux, 2012; Feldman, 2020; Osnabrügge, Hobolt & Rodon, 2021; Westen, 2008).

There exist a number of studies analysing speeches and rhetoric of Japanese political elites, as indicated above. Nevertheless, most of the studies concentrate on the political stance of political leaders and legislators rather than on their rhetorical strategies. Thus, this study aims to address this gap by undertaking an analysis of political rhetoric in the Japanese Diet, specifically juxtaposing rational and sentimental rhetorical devices.

### **Hypotheses**

To answer the question, "Which rhetorical approach, threat perception (rational) or sentiment-based arguments, is more persuasive in driving change or amendment in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9?" the current research offers two logical hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1.* Threat perception arguments are more persuasive in driving change or amendment in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9.

This finding would imply that politicians and policymakers who employ threat perception arguments have a higher likelihood of garnering support for amendments or changes to the Constitution, particularly in relation to Article 9. The implications may indicate that concerns over regional security dynamics, geopolitical shifts, or internal threats have a significant impact on shaping the discourse and potential revisions to Japan's constitutional provisions.

*Hypothesis 2.* Sentiment-based arguments are more persuasive in driving change or amendment in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9.

This finding would imply that politicians and advocates who utilize sentiment-based arguments, such as appeals to historical narratives, cultural pride, or shared values, are more likely to sway public opinion and drive support for constitutional amendments or revisions. The implications may indicate that public sentiment and emotional resonance play a crucial role

in mobilizing support or opposition to changes in Japan's Constitution, particularly concerning Article 9.

## Methodology

To test the aforementioned hypotheses, this study employs qualitative content analysis (QCA) to investigate the deliberations of the Japan Diet during the Gulf War (October 1990-February 1991) as a case study. Specifically, given its significance in shaping Japan's policy directions (Hisanaga & Nakazaki, 2019), the analysis focuses on the deliberations conducted by the Budget Committee of both Houses of the Japan Diet. The transcripts of deliberations are retrieved from the National Diet Proceedings Search System website (国会会議録検索システム Kokkaikaigiroku kensaku shisutemu, n.d.).

Given the concept-driven nature of QCA in the present paper, the research coding framework is built inductively. Nevertheless, the research does allow for data-driven additions, if proven necessary, during the coding phase. Although the collected data has been processed and coded manually, the present research uses Quirkos software to manage coding as well as to accumulate and analyse the codes.

Analysis of the coded data entails examining the frequency, patterns, and variations of the identified categories within the transcripts. The goal is to discern the prevalence and effectiveness of threat perception arguments and sentiment-based arguments in driving change or amendment in the debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9.

As the present research examines speeches, it appears reasonable to regard sentence clauses as a unit of coding. As a sentence clause represents the smallest fraction of language which expresses a complete thought regarding a certain entity in the world and has easily definable boundaries in writing, establishing clauses as coding units makes the analytical algorithm clearer and more reliable. Although regarded as relatively rare, if any repetitions take place, they are treated as separate units of coding, as the current research aims at assessing the strength of opinions expressed in the Diet deliberations. In case of a difficulty to comprehend the meaning of a given sentence, paragraphs act as context units to which one can refer to clarify a connotation of a coding unit.

The coding process is to be carried out as follows:

1. The first step involves searching for instances of the word “constitution” (kenpō 憲法) in the selected data sources.
2. Upon identifying relevant passages, a thorough reading is to be conducted to extract and summarize information pertinent to the study.
3. The next phase entails categorizing the sentence clauses based on their content and relevance to the research.
4. In cases where existing categories do not adequately cover certain passages, new categories are to be created. These new categories should be defined and subsequently applied to the previously coded passages, ensuring a comprehensive coding framework.

The hierarchical structure of the coding frame for the present research comprises the main categories and categories as indicated hereunder. The categories, designated for coding, can be subcategorized as follows:

- High Threat Perception
  - Agent
  - Weapon
  - Scenario
    - Threat of being cut from trade/resources
    - Endangering US-Japan Alliance
    - Armed invasion During Unarmed Neutrality
    - Global/Regional Uncertainty
- Low (Lack of) Threat Perception
  - Agent
  - Weapon
  - Scenario
    - Threat of being cut from essential resources
- International Recognition
  - Sense of Responsibility
  - Status-seeking
  - Shame for Being Passive
  - Fear of Isolation and Criticism
  - Safe Future for Next Generations
- Anxiety
  - Anxiety among People
  - Re-Living the Past, Ignoring History
  - Lack of Trust to the Executive Authorities
  - Fear of not Being Recognized as Peaceful
  - Lack of Willingness Among JSDF
  - Fear of Breaking the Oath
  - Concerns about Sovereignty
- Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9
  - Maintaining Peace in Asia
  - Repenting the Past
  - Withstanding the Test of Time
  - Importance for Japanese People
  - Japan's Status as a Contributor to Peace
- Anxiety Management
  - Building a New World Order
  - Ability to Explain Constitutional Changes to Asian States
  - Japan Has Learnt Its Lesson
  - Japan's Commitment to Peace

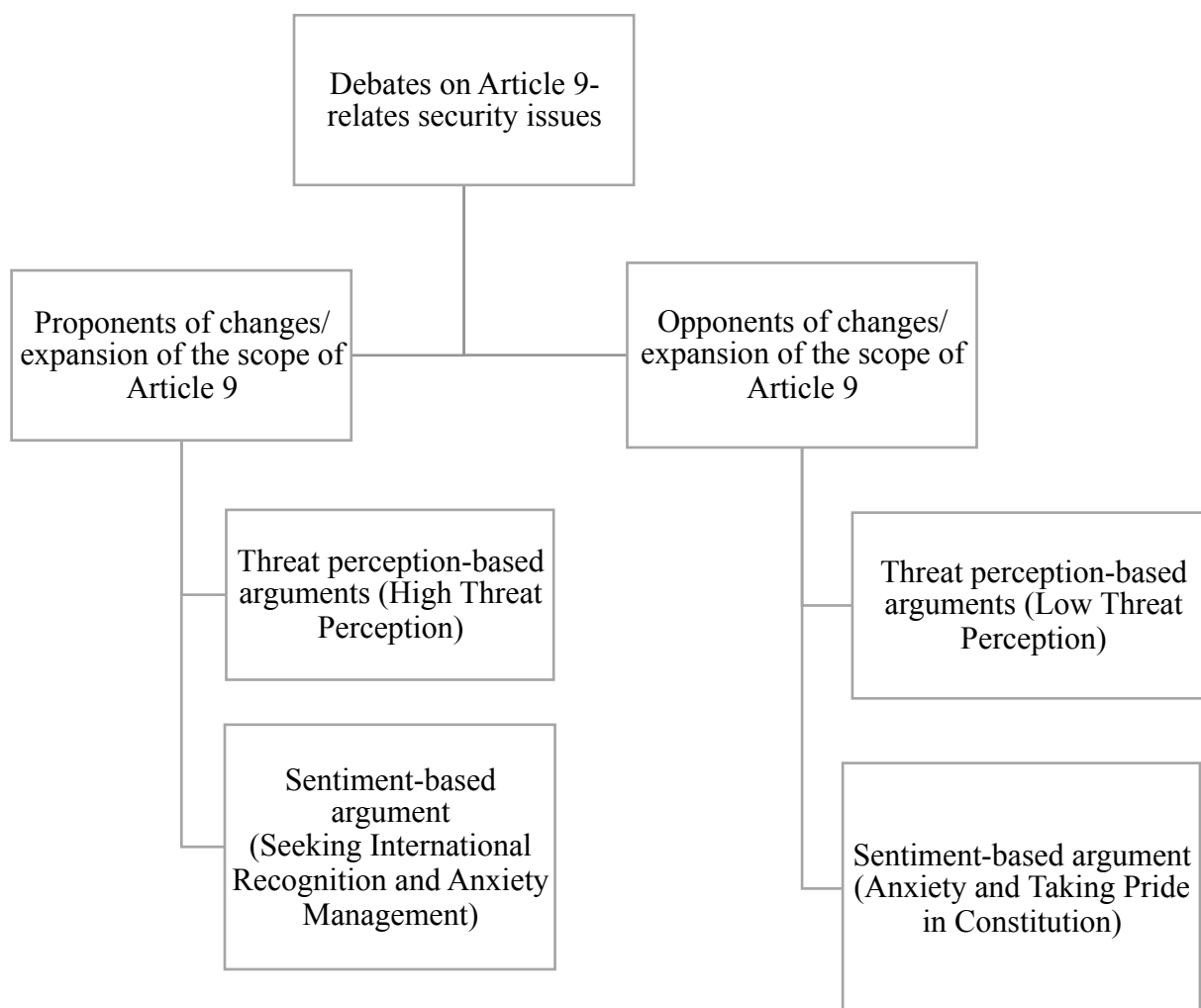


Figure 1. General Coding Frame.

### ***Terminology: Amendment and Alteration of Article 9***

In this study, alteration or change of Article 9 is defined as any modification that affects the effective scope or interpretation of this constitutional provision. It is important to note that not all constitutional modifications encompass Article 9, but when they do, they are considered relevant to this analysis. In turn, amendment of Article 9 entails a legislative rectification process that involves parliamentary proceedings and subsequent approval through a national referendum.

It is important to mention that during the Gulf War, the Japanese political elites did not formally propose any legislation to directly amend the text of Article 9. However, the legal regulations discussed during that period were interpreted, at least by some political figures, as altering the essence or broadening the interpretation of Article 9.

### ***Rational and Sentiment-Based Arguments***

The concept of rationality encompasses multiple interpretations and is not necessarily devoid of emotions. However, for the purpose of this study, rationality is examined from the



standpoint of diverse realist traditions that prioritize state survival, i.e., the minimization of threats to national security, as a crucial factor in making optimal political choices.

Conversely, sentiments may frequently appear rational and logically coherent. Nevertheless, they predominantly originate from personal values and carry emotional significance. While arguments can contain both rational and emotional components, this study categorizes them based on their dominant aspect.

## Results

### *Overall Results*

The qualitative content analysis conducted in this research aimed to explore the persuasive power of threat perception (rational) and sentiment-based arguments in driving change or amendment in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9. The coding results, consisting of 35 categories and a total of 190 codes, provide valuable insights into the prevalence and significance of these arguments within the context of the Japanese Diet deliberations during the Gulf War (October 1990-February 1991).

Categories Title	Parent	Grandparent	Total Codes
<b>HIGH THREAT PERCEPTION</b>			<b>8</b>
Agent	High Threat Perception		0
Weapon	High Threat Perception		0
Scenario	High Threat Perception		8
Threat of being cut from trade/resources	Scenario	High Threat Perception	3
Endangering the US-Japan Alliance	Scenario	High Threat Perception	3
Armed invasion During Unarmed Neutrality	Scenario	High Threat Perception	1
Global/Regional Uncertainty	Scenario	High Threat Perception	1
<b>LOW (LACK OF) THREAT PERCEPTION</b>			<b>1</b>
Scenario	Low (Lack of) Threat Perception		0

Threat of being cut from essential resources	Scenario	Low (Lack of) Threat Perception	1
<b>INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION</b>			<b>98</b>
Sense of Responsibility	International Recognition		55
Status-seeking	International Recognition		20
Shame for Being Passive	International Recognition		6
Fear of Isolation and Criticism	International Recognition		16
Safe Future for Next Generations	International Recognition		1
<b>ANXIETY</b>			<b>33</b>
Anxiety among People	Anxiety		2
Re-Living the Past, Ignoring History	Anxiety		9
Lack of Trust to the Executive Authorities	Anxiety		3
Fear of not Being Recognized as Peaceful	Anxiety		7
Lack of Willingness Among JSDF	Anxiety		1
Fear of Breaking the Oath	Anxiety		1
Concerns about Sovereignty	Anxiety		10
<b>TAKING PRIDE IN JAPAN'S CONSTITUTION/ ARTICLE 9</b>			<b>15</b>
Maintaining Peace in Asia	Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/ Article 9		1

Repenting the Past	Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9		3
Withstanding the Test of Time	Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9		2
Importance for Japanese People	Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9		2
Japan's Status as a Contributor to Peace	Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9		7
<b>ASSURANCE (ANXIETY MANAGEMENT)</b>			<b>35</b>
Building a New World Order	Assurance (Anxiety Management)		12
Ability to Explain Constitutional Changes to Asian States	Assurance (Anxiety Management)		3
Japan Has Learnt Its Lesson	Assurance (Anxiety Management)		3
Japan's Commitment to Peace	Assurance (Anxiety Management)		17
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CODES</b>			<b>190</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CATEGORIES</b>			<b>35</b>

Table 1. Coding Results.

The analysis revealed that the categories related to high threat perception captured a total of eight codes. These categories encompassed mainly scenarios associated with perceived threats. Within this group, the category “Threat of being cut from trade/resources” received the highest number of codes (three), highlighting concerns over potential economic repercussions and resource scarcity, if Japan fails to act in response to the Gulf War potentially expanding the scope of Article 9. The category “Endangering the US-Japan Alliance” also received considerable attention, suggesting that the perceived threat to the strong bilateral relationship between Japan and the United States played a role in shaping the discourse on security decision-making.

The category “Low (Lack of) Threat Perception” only accounted for one code, specifically related to denying the threat of being cut from essential resources. Although limited in representation, this category suggests that concerns over essential resources did not play a significant role, as rhetorical tool, in shaping the discourse on security policy changes during the Diet deliberations.

On the other hand, the analysis identified a significantly broader range of categories associated with sentiment-based arguments. The category “International Recognition” accounted for the highest number of codes (98) among all the categories. This indicates the prevalence of the arguments centred around seeking international recognition in the discussions about constitutional amendments. Within this category, sub-themes such as the sense of responsibility, status-seeking, shame for being passive, fear of isolation and criticism, and the desire for a safe future for the next generations emerged. The subcategory “Sense of Responsibility” garnered the most codes (55), suggesting that the appeal to a shared responsibility for global stability and security was regarded as a powerful rhetorical device to resonate with policymakers and legislators.

The category “Anxiety” comprising 33 codes, indicates the presence of emotional appeals and concerns over various aspects such as anxiety among the people, re-living the past and ignoring history, lack of trust in the executive authorities, fear of not being recognized as peaceful, lack of willingness among the JSDF, fear of breaking the oath, and concerns about sovereignty. The presence of these anxieties indicates the emotional undercurrents that influenced the perception and interpretation of Japan's constitutional provisions, particularly Article 9. At the same time, they also involve attempts to rationalize the sentiments towards Japan's commitment to peace and its international image.

The analysis also highlighted the category “Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9,” which received a total of 15 codes. This finding suggests that arguments emphasizing the importance of maintaining peace in Asia, repenting the past, and Japan's role as a contributor to peace through Article 9 were deemed as potent rhetorical tools to prevent changes in Japan's security posture.

Finally, the category “Assurance (Anxiety Management)” encompassed 35 codes and represented the rhetoric aimed at managing anxieties and providing reassurance in order to promote proactive security policies by Tokyo. Within this category, subcategories such as “Building a New World Order” and “Japan's Commitment to Peace,” despite, or better to say, through the change offered by the government, received notable attention. Those arguments reflect attempts to alleviate anxieties and address potential objections or criticisms, expressed in the categories “Anxiety” and “Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9.”

The above results indicate a notable presence of sentiment-based arguments, particularly in the categories of “Seeking International Recognition”, “Feeling Anxiety,” and “Taking Pride in Japan's Constitution/Article 9.” This suggests that sentiment-based arguments may hold greater persuasive power in driving change or amendment in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9, at least in October 1990-February 1991.

However, it is important to note that rational arguments were present as well, particularly in the “High Threat Perception” category. This indicates that threat perception arguments, based on tangible facts and potential risks, can also be viewed as contributing to persuasiveness of pro-revisionist arguments.

### ***Contextual Results***

The graph provided below showcases the coding results pertaining to the months in which the Diet deliberations took place. The data is structured into four distinct categories: “Threat Perception Based (P),” “Sentiment-based (P),” “Threat Perception Based (O),” and

“Sentiment-based (O).” In this context, “P” denotes proponents of change, while “O” represents opponents of change. The values within each category represent the count of codes for each respective month.

Contextually, it is noteworthy that the political stakes were higher in February 1991 compared to October 1990. Specifically, in early October 1990, the Kaifu Cabinet presented the UN Peace Co-operation Bill to the Diet, urging the Japanese parliamentarians to consider the cooperation of Japanese Self-Defense Force (SDF) personnel with United Nations peacekeeping forces. The bill, which appeared to lack popular support, was subsequently rejected by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in early November, citing insufficient deliberations. However, the debates surrounding the discarded bill laid the foundation for future discussions on alternative means for Japan to actively support the United Nations, beyond financial assistance. In January 1991, the Cabinet decided to circumvent the customary legislative process and instead passed an ordinance granting permission for SDF aircraft to provide assistance in transporting refugees. Although this ordinance had not yet been implemented, its introduction sparked intense debates among politicians, thereby increasing the stakes for the Japanese legislators involved (Dobson, 2003).

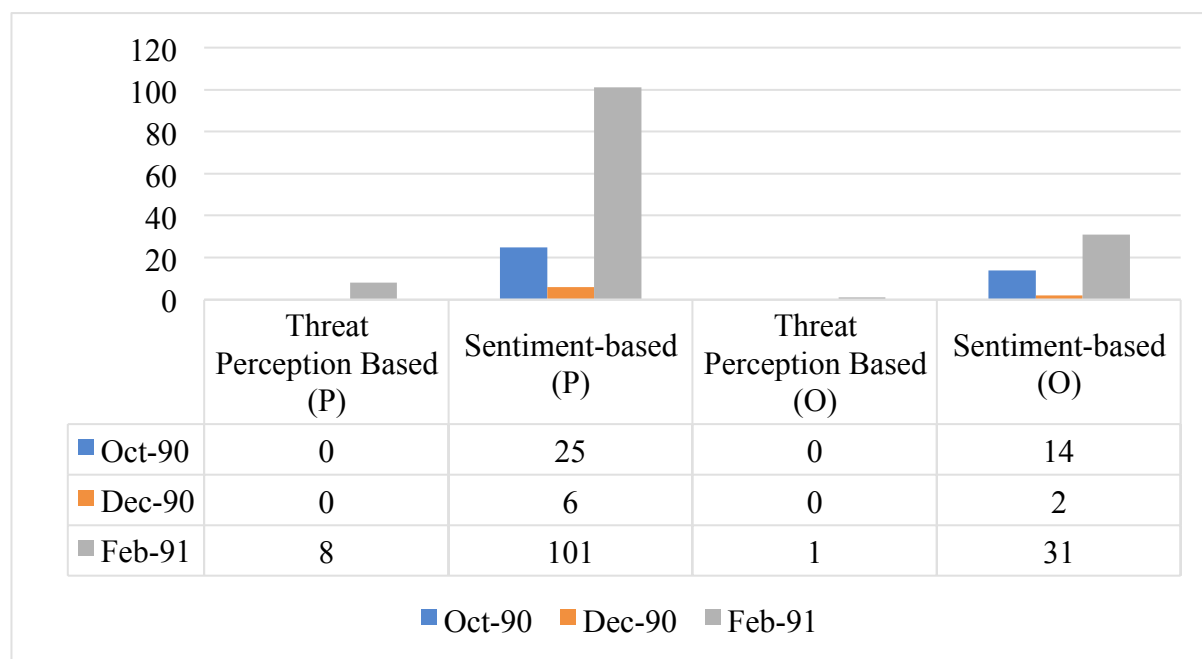


Figure 2. Temporal Analysis of Coding Results by Month.

When analysed against the previously mentioned hypotheses, the findings reveal that there were no instances of threat perception-based arguments (P) recorded in October 1990 and December 1990. However, during the heightened stakes in February 1991, eight instances of threat perception-based arguments (P) were identified. Additionally, only one instance of threat perception-based arguments (O) was recorded in February 1991. These results suggest that as the discussions intensified and the stakes became higher, threat perception arguments started gaining prominence.

The results likewise show a broader usage of sentiment-based arguments to drive change in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9 during the Gulf War period. In October 1990, there were 25 instances of sentiment-based arguments, which decreased to six instances in

December 1990, and then significantly increased to 101 instances in February 1991. Similarly, sentiment-based arguments (O) were used in all three time periods, with 14 instances in October 1990, two instances in December 1990, and 31 instances in February 1991. These findings provide strong support for Hypothesis 2, suggesting that sentiment-based arguments were deemed as more persuasive by the Diet members.

The difference in the political significance of the Diet deliberations is reflected in the number of codes for each month. Although it likely influenced the intensity and frequency of both threat perception and sentiment-based arguments, it is worth noting that the proponents of change resorted to emotionally charged claims much more during the period of fiercer contestation. Given Figure 2, one may say that threat perception arguments during this period were relatively insignificant and played a supplementary role in the discussions.

The implications of these findings suggest that a combination of both rational and sentiment-based arguments may be viewed as necessary for effective persuasion in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9.

### ***Limitations***

It is worth noting that the results of this qualitative content analysis are specific to the selected case study, which focused on the Japan Diet deliberations during the Gulf War (October 1990-February 1991). Further research incorporating a broader range of cases would enhance the generalizability and robustness of the findings.

### **Conclusions**

The analysis of parliamentary debates regarding Japan's Constitution and Article 9 during the Gulf War period sheds light on the persuasive power of different rhetorical approaches. The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics within these debates and the factors that influence political rhetoric around Article 9 and security policies.

The first hypothesis of the present research has posited that threat perception arguments are more persuasive in driving change or amendment in debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9, while the second hypothesis has stressed the importance of sentiment-based reasoning. The results of this study suggest that sentiment-based arguments were consistently more persuasive in driving change or amendment in the debates about Japan's Constitution and Article 9. However, threat perception arguments gained prominence as the stakes intensified during the deliberations. These findings highlight the significance of emotional resonance and public sentiment, as well as certain influence of perceived threats, in shaping the discourse surrounding potential revisions to Japan's constitutional provisions. As mentioned above, one must consider the limitations of this study, such as the focus on a specific time period and the use of qualitative content analysis. Further research incorporating a greater variability of cases could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the persuasive power of different rhetorical approaches in constitutional debates.

## References

- Arceneaux, K. (2012). Cognitive biases and the strength of political arguments. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(2), 271-285. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23187099>
- Auer, J. E. (1990). Article Nine of Japan's Constitution: From Renunciation of Armed Force "Forever" to the Third Largest Defense Budget in the World. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 53(2), 171-187. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1191849>
- Berger, T. U. (1993). From sword to chrysanthemum: Japan's culture of anti-militarism. *International Security*, 17(4), 119-150. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539024>
- Dobson, H. (2003). The Second Gulf War. In H. Dobson, *Japan and United Nations Peacekeeping: New Pressures, New Responses* (1st ed., pp. 60-94). Routledge.
- Dower, J. W. (1993). Peace and democracy in two systems: External policy and internal conflict. In A. Gordon (Ed.), *Postwar Japan as history* (pp. 3-33). Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Feldman, O. (Ed.). (2020). *The Rhetoric of Political Leadership: Logic and Emotion in Public discourse*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Feldman, O. (2021). Decoding Japanese politicians' rhetoric: Socio-cultural features of public speaking. In: O. Feldman (Ed.), *When politicians talk: The cultural dynamics of public speaking* (1st ed., pp. 203-220). Springer, Singapore.
- Hagström, L., & Gustafsson, K. (2015). Japan and identity change: why it matters in International Relations. *The Pacific Review*, 28(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2014.969298>
- Heginbotham, E., & Samuels, R. J. (1998). Mercantile realism and Japanese foreign policy. *International Security*, 22(4), 171-203. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539243>
- Hisanaga, R., & Nakazaki, T. (2019, July 3). *Kakuryō no kyū suru sugata o misemai to Kokkai no hanagata, yosan'i no kiki*. 閣僚の窮する姿を見せまいと 国会の花形、予算委の危機. Asahi shinbun dijitaru. 朝日新聞デジタル. Retrieved from <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASM6M6V94M6MUTFK01Z.html>
- Kapur, N. (2018). *Japan at the Crossroads: Conflict and Compromise after Anpo*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Katzenstein, P. J., & Okawara, N. (1993). Japan's national security: structures, norms, and policies. *International Security*, 17(4), 84-118. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539023>
- Kokkaikaigiroku kensaku shisutemu. 国会会議録検索システム. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/>
- Lind, J. M. (2004). Pacifism or passing the buck? Testing theories of Japanese security policy. *International Security*, 29(1), 92-121. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137548>

- Midford, P. (2002). The logic of reassurance and Japan's grand strategy. *Security Studies*, 11(3), 1-43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/714005337>
- Osnabrügge, M., Hobolt, S. B., & Rodon, T. (2021). Playing to the gallery: Emotive rhetoric in parliaments. *American Political Science Review*, 115(3), 885-899. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000356>
- Pope, C. (2017). *Bringing back 'Japan'? Prime minister Abe's political rhetoric in critical perspective* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield). Retrieved from <https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/17709/>
- Samuels, R. J. (2013). Japan's rhetoric of crisis: prospects for change after 3.11. *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, 39(1), 97-120. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24242587>
- Teraoka, T. (2022). Fragmented Legitimacy: The Rhetorical Construction of Constitutional Legitimacy in Postwar Japan. *Global Intellectual History*, 7(2), 346-372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23801883.2020.1855080>
- Twomey, C. P. (2000). Japan, a circumscribed balancer: Building on defensive realism to make predictions about east Asian security. *Security Studies*, 9(4), 167-205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410008429416>
- Westen, D. (2008). *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*. New York; Public Affairs.

**Contact email:** polishchuk.anastasiya@gmail.com



*The Effects of Gender in Second Language Acquisition:  
A Study on Bangladeshi Adult EFL Learners*

Laila Noor, University of Central Florida, United States  
Suvrodeb Bepari, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, Bangladesh

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The paper investigated the effects of gender on second language acquisition from sociolinguistics and a poststructuralist feminist approach. Data was gathered from sixty-nine EFL students from different departments at a private university on their performance in English language skills, which included listening, reading, writing, and speaking, and assessed using the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) measurement criteria. The data was collected through random sampling. The MNOVA analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students' English language skills, both in their individual skills and overall. This study fills a gap in the field of gender-based research in Bangladesh, as no prior research has employed using the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) measurement criteria. The findings also suggest that further research is needed with a larger participant pool and a focus on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary skills among EFL learners.

Keywords: Gender, Second Language Acquisition, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Students, English Language Skills

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction**

Learning a foreign language is a complex task and involves a huge number of factors and contexts taken into consideration during the second language acquisition process and gender is one of them. Over the past two decades, language and gender research has become even more dynamic and diverse (Ferri, 2008). The field of language and gender draws attention to linguistics and researchers, mainly after the feminist movement. During this time, this area has experienced twists and turns that gradually evolved as a dynamic and growing research area today and studies on Gender and second language acquisition. Research has explored the relationship between gender and language acquisition, with some studies indicating that gender plays a significant role in language proficiency and learning strategies (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Gabrielatos, 2018). However, the impact of gender on language acquisition remains a topic of debate in the field of second language acquisition. There is a lack of consensus in findings and discussions regarding gender influence in SLA. While some works claim that women are marginalized and negatively influence their second language acquisition, others argue that gender has no impact on the process of language learning second language acquisition and gender plays no role in the language acquisition process. Moreover, the majority of research on this topic has been conducted in Western contexts, with few studies focusing on non-Western contexts such as Bangladesh. This study aims to investigate the effects of gender on second language acquisition among Bangladeshi adult EFL learners. The study focuses on the performance of male and female learners on four English language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking, and will assess their performance based on the measurement criteria of the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) examination.

The current study builds on existing research on the effects of gender in language acquisition by focusing on the unique context of Bangladesh. This research is significant because there is a lack of studies that examine the effects of gender and language acquisition in non-Western contexts. Moreover, this study aims to provide insights that can inform language teaching practices in Bangladesh and beyond, as well as contribute to our understanding of the role of gender in language acquisition.

## ***Background of the Study***

In Bangladesh, English is taught as a foreign language. Gender, identity, and socio-cultural position are interlinked with each other. Even though Bangladesh has improved the lives of women and girls in the past 20 years, women are still marginalized and exercise less power in society. After the feminist movement, women's empowerment in Bangladesh shows an upward trend. Schooling is universal in Bangladesh. A remarkable increase in enrolment rates and the closure of the gender gap in primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education have been found (Haq & Rahman, 2008). With the advance of globalization, learning English is highly necessary for both men and women in Bangladesh to get their desired job or study abroad. Bangladesh learners mainly study English for instrumental motivation. In Bangladesh, female students do not have or get the opportunity to enrich their English. Lack of English proficiency prevents female students from comprehending the concepts taught in the classes (Habib et al., 2020). Rahman (2005) found that females are more integrative motivated than males in English learning. However, in Bangladesh, the public examination results showed the opposite scenario that female students are doing better than male students in higher and secondary levels. Although all over the world, many research works were conducted on gender and language use than gender and language learning, in Bangladesh

very few works were done in both areas, and we did not find any research work regarding the effect of gender in adult EFL learners in Bangladesh. As a result, research is needed to explore the effects of gender on learners' English language skills (Faruk & Saha, 2016).

### ***Significance of the Study***

In Bangladesh, no research was conducted to explore the effect of gender on EFL learners' English language acquisition at the tertiary level based on IELTS measurement criteria. After completing the tertiary level education, most learners will start their careers, and having a good command of the English language is a key factor in determining a good career at home and abroad. Because of this reason, gender effects on language learning should be explored. Some studies found that regarding the biological structure, the language learning properties are the same between men and women, and biological structure does not affect language learning (Wardhaugh, 2015). Furthermore, if gender impacts English language learning in Bangladeshi tertiary-level students, the difference may spring from the learners' socio-cultural, power exercise, or identity. It is important to explore the areas where male and female English learners may differ from each other and address the reasons for those differences. Firstly, in Bangladesh, we did not find any research work that examined the effect of gender on adults EFL learners' achievement on four language skills (i.e., speaking, reading, writing, listening). We found one research work on Bangladesh primary education where Ehsan et al. (2011) found that gender inequality impacts Bangladeshi primary-level education as the boys are getting more attention than the girls. In Bangladesh women are marginalized in society. This research will also contribute to understanding whether women's identity, gender, and socio-economic position have any impact on their second language learning.

There is strong research gap in the gender-based second language acquisition research in Bangladesh. Firstly, we did not find any research work that attempted to explore the role of gender in adult EFL learners' second language acquisition based on sociolinguistics and a poststructuralist feminist approach. Secondly, we did not find any research work in Bangladesh that was based on the IELTS proficiency tests. As a result, there is a strong research gap in this area. This study will contribute to identifying whether gender has any effect on Bangladeshi tertiary-level students in their English learning. The result will contribute to future research in this area.

To guide the investigation in this study, the following research questions are put forward:

1. Is there any significant mean difference in test scores between male and female EFL learners in their English language skills?
2. Is there any relationship among gender, socio-economic background and adult EFL learners' English language skills?

Based on the research questions, this study aims to investigate Bangladeshi EFL learners' relationship between English language learning and the effect of their gender identity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Ferri (2008) mentions that the research on gender and language mainly focused on the following areas: language usage and gender as opposed to language learning and gender. Researchers and linguistics have been exploring a wide range of areas and frameworks to analyze whether gender significantly impacts learners' second language acquisition. Warriner

(2004) mentions that such research concentrates on the different ways that ideologies (of language and of gender) mediate such social and economic interactions by taking into account gender as a composite of social and economic relations as well as a set of discursive practices. In this regard, some studies attempted to explore the theoretical frameworks, key theories, historical overviews, current trends, etc., that include TESOL and gender, others investigated the relationship among biological (Shakauri and Saligheh, 2012) social (Loesy, 1995; Juyong, 2018; Berhand, 2022), cultural (Loesy, 1995; Juyong, 2018), power and dominance (Zimmerman & West, 1975; Loesy, 1995; Shi, 2010), cognitive factors (Shi, 2010; Skapoulli, 2004; Juyong, 2018) and gender in second language acquisition.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on sociolinguistic and feminist theories that aim to investigate the effects of gender on second language acquisition among Bangladeshi adult EFL learners. This study is influenced by the social constructivist view that language is learned through social interactions and cultural contexts. The study also draws on the concept of the gendered nature of language learning and use, which suggests that gender differences in language use and learning are shaped by social, cultural, and individual factors. In the context of language acquisition, post-structuralist feminism emphasizes the importance of analyzing power relations in language and discourse. According to post-structured feminism, gendered language practices can impact on the experiences of Bangladeshi adult EFL learners. For example, in Bangladeshi adult EFL female learners may perceive themselves as “others”, and it may impact on their motivation and engagement in language learning.

Previous studies have shown that gender differences in language learning and use are complex and multifaceted. For example, studies have found that males and females have different learning styles, motivation, and attitudes toward language learning (Dörnyei, 2005; Rubin & Thompson, 1994). Other studies have found that gender differences in language performance are influenced by sociolinguistic factors such as language use patterns, socialization practices, and power relations (Holmes, 2008; Tannen, 1994).

Based on this previous research, the current study aims to investigate whether there are any significant differences between male and female Bangladeshi adult EFL learners' language performance.

## **Literature Review**

A bulk research work was conducted worldwide to explore the relationship between gender identity and learning a second language from various frameworks. While some research focused on the neurobiological structure between men and women and its impact on language learning, most research focused on the socio-cultural, political, feminist, and historical perspectives of gender and language learning. While previous research has explored the impact of gender on language learning, little is known about how gender affects second language acquisition among Bangladeshi adult English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. This literature review aims to examine existing research on the effects of gender in SLA, with a focus on studies that are relevant to Bangladeshi adult EFL learners.

### ***The Relationship Between Neurobiological Structure of Men and Women and Second Language Acquisition***

Kimura (1983, 1987), cited in Wardhaugh, 2015, found the different functions of women's and men's brains regarding lateralization. Lateralization denotes the specific function and

specialization of the right and left-brain hemispheres for specific purposes. Kimura observed that the linguistic functions in women's brains are more diffusely represented than in men's brains. However, some linguistics did not accept the result because of the weak research methodology. Apart from lateralization, some researchers claimed that girls learn a language quicker than boys as girls' neuro-circuits maturation in the brain occurs earlier than boys. However, this issue is also not beyond dispute.

Kaushanskaya et al. (2011) conducted research to examine whether gender differences in short-term memory tasks are related to the use of long-term memory during the learning process. To find out the answer, they did two experiments. In Experiment 1, men and women were compared on their ability to remember phonologically familiar novel words and phonologically unfamiliar novel words. And in Experiment 2, they used a within-subjects design to repeat Experiment 1 confirmed gender differences on familiar phonological stimuli but not on new phonological stimuli. The participants are sixty-eight (thirty-four male and thirty-four female). Experiment 1 exhibited that women outperformed men on phonologically familiar novel words but not on phonologically unfamiliar novel words. On the other hand, the Experiment 2 results showed that women are more prone than men to use their native language's phonological expertise when learning novel words.

### ***The Feminist Movement and The Postmodern feminist Approach***

To understand the role of Gender in SLA, we need to look back to the political movements and historical overviews that have changed over time. The political feminist movement is closely connected to gender study in linguistics and the TESOL area. This political movement shapes the new perspective on gender and language in academic areas and how the perception of gender and language changes across the world (Cameron, 2005). In the early 1970s, the feminist movement, a political movement, advocated the equal power exercise of men and women in all phases of life. The feminist movement influences almost all areas of life, and the applied linguistic area also feels the urge to study the relationship between gender and language. The postmodern feminist approach believes that gender is socially constructed. Cameron (2005) mentioned that gender identities and behaviours are produced ongoing. In addition, diversity is viewed as “gender identities or positions, inflicting or inflected by other dimensions of social identities, intra-group differences and intra-group similarities are as significant as differences between groups” (p.484).

### ***Relationship between Gender and English language skills***

There is no consensus agreement on whether men do better than women in second language learning or vice versa. Although English was known as a male language (Penelope, 1990; Spender, 1985) due to male dominance in all spheres of life, it was found that female students performed better in certain areas. For example, Richard and Lesley (2007) conducted a study to explore the impact of gender on the writing aptitude of learners. The results showed that female learners are better at descriptive writing tasks while male learners are better at opinion writing tasks. Regarding reading skills, women are found to be better and more capable readers (Kimura, 2006; Halpern, 1986). Apart from these, in grammar and spelling, women outperformed males (Kimura, 2006). However, Faruk and Saha's (2016) results did not align with the previous results. They conducted a study on writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills. The results found that females are not essentially better than males in English language learning. Regarding vocabulary skills, Kimura (2006) (cited in Piasecka, 2010) found that females' vocabulary range is vaster than males.'

### ***The Effect of Gender in Bangladeshi EFL learners' Second Language Acquisition***

In Bangladesh, we did not find any research work on the effects of gender on English language learning and achievement at the tertiary level. However, few studies have specifically examined the effects of gender on language learning among Bangladeshi EFL learners and there was no agreement in results. For example, a study by Sultana (2016) found that female Bangladeshi EFL learners tended to have higher levels of motivation and more positive attitudes towards English language learning than their male counterparts. In contrast, a study by Alam (2012) found no significant differences in language proficiency between male and female Bangladeshi EFL learners. Another study by Begum (2019) found that gender did not have a significant impact on language learning achievement among Bangladeshi EFL learners, but that other factors such as self-efficacy and motivation did have an impact. Similarly, a study by Chowdhury and Kabir (2017) found that while there were no significant gender differences in language learning achievement, female Bangladeshi EFL learners tended to have higher levels of motivation and greater use of language learning strategies. Regarding learners' motivation on English language learning, the same result was found by Rahman (2005). Rahman (2005) found that the undergraduate students in English language learning has found that females are more integratively motivated than males. Where males show more strong instrumental orientation than females.

Ehsan et al (2011) carried out qualitative research on primary level education in Bangladesh based on classroom observation and interviews from teachers, students and parents. The findings demonstrated that classroom participation and aim of studying English varies among boys and girls. The boys are more active in classroom participation, extracurricular activities and it positively impacts their English language learnings. On the contrary, girls are less active and more listening. However, regarding the aim of study the result aligns with Rahman's (2005) study that both male and female have different aim of learning English.

Faruk and Saha (2016) conducted a study on 123 students (80 male students and 43 female students) from higher secondary level (Grade 11) in Bangladesh to investigate whether gender has any role in EFL learners' language capabilities. The data was measured on the basis of two lowest levels of Bloom's taxonomy. The findings showed that there is no significance difference between male and female students regarding language learning.

Apart from these, with the advent of technology, English has been taught online. Gender plays a significant role when it comes to technological access. Regarding women's use of technologies in terms of learning English language, Alexandra Tyers (2012) has observed, patriarchal norms and constraints over mobility mean that in Bangladesh many females are confined to the domestic sphere and aren't able to visit a cyber cafe to use the Internet unchaperoned. Tyers eventually has found that learning English through these ICTs helped break down some of these obstacles. Firstly, it gave the women access, bringing the lessons and the learning into the domestic sphere, allowing them to combine domestic responsibilities with learning. It also made the women feel that they would be able to access and use the internet. Learning English through television or mobile opened up access to the internet by helping the women overcome the language barrier and at the same time increase their confidence in their own English ability and their own ability to use ICTs.

This research work will explore mainly the effect of gender in Bangladeshi EFL learners' English learning controlling technology variable that may impact the result. The students were provided equal technological access in the classroom throughout the course and during

their evaluation process. However, further research can be conducted on association of technology and gender in English language learning.

To alleviate the contraction, the researcher explores other variables that may have an impact on the relationship between gender and English language learning. For example, the researcher investigates the role of socio-economic status and cultural background from the demographic information of participants.

## **Methodology**

### ***Setting***

The study was conducted in a tertiary level educational institution in Bangladesh. Specifically, the research was carried out in the context of an English course, ENG-102: "English Sessional," at Bangladesh Army International University of Science and Technology (BAIUST), a private university in the country. The course was designed based on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), which is a widely recognized measure of English language proficiency. ENG-102 consisted of four modules focusing on speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and was taught by experienced language instructors. The research was conducted in this setting with the aim of understanding the effect of gender on the acquisition of English language skills among Bangladeshi adult EFL learners in a structured language learning environment.

### ***Participants***

The study involved first-year tertiary level students from various departments, such as Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE), and Civil Engineering (CE). The participants were enrolled in two basic academic English courses, and a total of 69 students took part in the study. Of these, 48 were male students and 21 were female students. The selection of participants was based on the availability and willingness to participate in the study, and all participants provided informed consent before taking part in the research. The study aimed to explore the effect of gender on the acquisition of English language skills among Bangladeshi EFL learners in a tertiary level educational context.

### ***Demographic information***

The participants are from different regions of Bangladesh, such as Dhaka, Cumilla, Chittagong, and Sylhet. 90% of students are from the Cumilla district. 6% of students are from Chittagong district, and the rest are from Dhaka and Sylhet. All female students came from upper-middle-class families and 40 male students were from upper-middle-class families, and the rest were from middle-class families. Here all female students are from strong socio-economic background, and their socio-economic status is equal to the male participants. For example, the average earning of female EFL students' parents is \$12000/year, while \$11500 for the male students' parents.

### ***Research design***

The focus of the study was to examine how gender impacts English language learning in EFL learners. The final achievement results of the participants in the four English language skills

(speaking, listening, reading, and writing) at the end of the semester were used as the data source.

### ***Sample***

The sample included the dataset on 276 observations of four variables.

### ***Sampling Method***

The sampling method for this study was simple random sampling. This means that every participant in the population had an equal chance of being selected to contribute one single data point to the dataset. Since each participant only contributed one time, there was no overlapping or multiple data collection from an individual.

### ***Instrumentation***

- Outcome variable: The four language skills' (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking) achievement scores of EFL learners are the dependent variables, which were obtained from their end-of-semester grade sheet.
- Explanatory variables: For the study, two explanatory variables, namely gender (male and female), were chosen.
- Analysis software: R software was used to run the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) statistical analysis.

To ensure accurate and reliable data collection, the following instrumentation protocols were followed:

- The standardized test was administered to all participants in a standardized manner, with clear instructions provided on how to complete each section.
- The R software was installed and configured according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Data were entered into the R software in a consistent and accurate manner, with appropriate data cleaning and validation procedures applied.
- The MANOVA analysis was conducted using appropriate statistical techniques to evaluate the effect of gender on the English language skill scores.
- Results were reported in a clear and concise manner, with appropriate tables and figures used to present the data.

### ***Statistical analysis***

In order to investigate the influence of gender on various skills, a MANOVA was carried out using quantitative scores of all skills as dependent variables and gender group as the explanatory variable, with two categories: male and female. The nature of the variables necessitated the use of a MANOVA to address the research questions, with a significance level set at 0.05. The data was analyzed using R software version 4.1.3.

$H_0$ : There is no difference in mean vector of male and female.

$H_1$ : There is a difference in mean vector of between male and female.



**Results**

Table 1: Summary of MANOVA table

SV	df	Wilk	Approx F	Num df	Den df	P value
Gender	1	0.93743	1.0679	4	64	0.3798
Residuals	67					

Note: Wilk’s lambda test for MANOVA. The results of the Wilk's lambda test for MANOVA show that the p-value is greater than 0.05, which indicates that we fail to reject the null hypothesis at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, we do not have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant mean difference in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills between male and female groups.

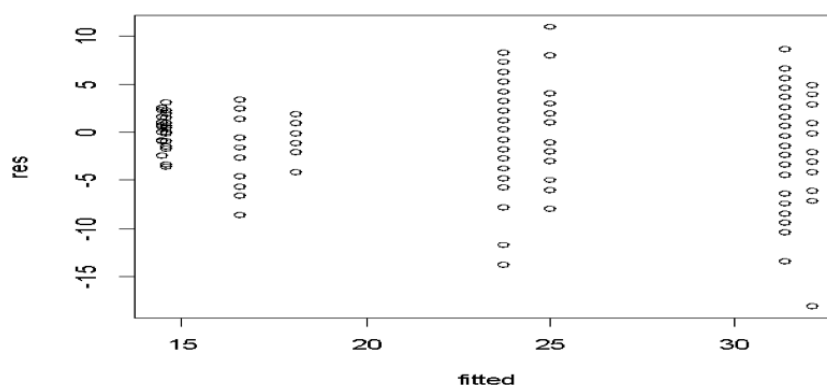
$$F_{(4,64)} = 1.0679, p\text{-value} = 0.3798, \text{Wilk's } \Lambda = 0.93743, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.06.$$

The F-statistic value is 1.0679, with a corresponding p-value of 0.3798, and Wilk's  $\Lambda$  value is 0.93743. The partial  $\eta^2$  value is 0.06, which suggests that the effect size of the multivariate analysis of variance is small, with less than 0.2.

Furthermore, the assumptions of normality, constant variance, and independence of observations were tested and met. The variance was found to be constant, and the normality was tested using a Q-Q plot of residuals, which showed a normal distribution. The observations were found to be independent.

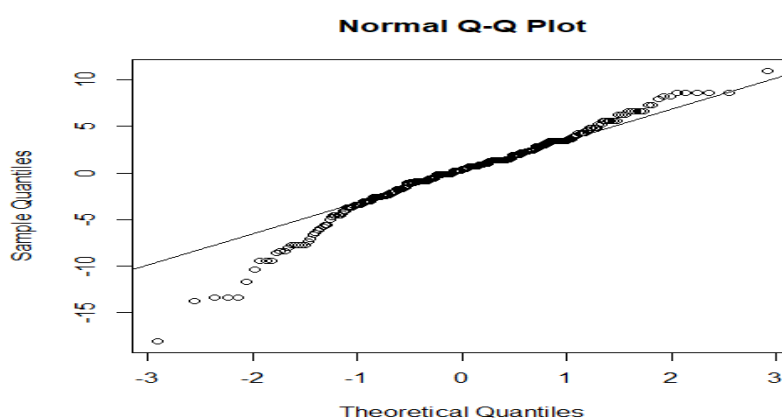
Overall, the results suggest that there is no significant difference in English language skills between male and female groups, and the effect size of the multivariate analysis of variance is small.

Figure 1: *Constant Variance Result*



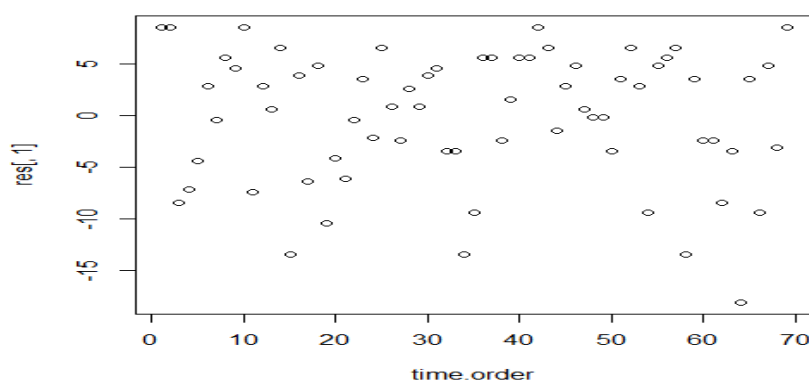
Note: the variation in male and female category is approximately same. We may conclude that the variance is constant.

Figure 2: *Normality Testing Result*



Note: From the q-q plot of the residuals, it is noticed that approximately all the points fall on the reference line.

Figure 3: *Independence Testing Result*



Note: There is no pattern in the above plot.

Table 2: *Summary of Treatment Mean Effect*

Gender	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening
Female	32.1	25	14.4	18.1
Male	31.4	23.7	14.5	16.6
Grand mean	31.75	24.35	14.45	17.35
F statistic	0.177	0.8943	0.0574	3.9814
P-value	0.6753	0.3477	0.8114	0.0501

Note: The results of the statistical analysis showed that the p-value for all skills was greater than the alpha level. As the  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ , we fail to reject the null hypothesis at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, we do not have sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant mean difference in reading, writing, speaking, and listening

skills between male and female groups. In other words, the results suggest that male and female groups do not differ significantly in terms of their English language skills.

## **Discussion**

The finding that gender does not affect English language learning outcomes for mature or tertiary-level Bangladeshi EFL learners is significant, as it challenges the notion that gender has a consistent and pervasive impact on language acquisition. The results of this study suggest that other factors such as motivation, language learning strategies, and language proficiency levels may be more important in predicting language learning outcomes than gender.

The fact that male and female students performed equally in all individual English language skills (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing) is also noteworthy. This finding indicates that there may not be significant gender differences in the specific language skills required for successful communication in English. Here all female students are from a wealthy family and have a strong socio-economic background. The result suggests that female EFL learners with strong social and economic background and their power dynamics are equal (i.e., socio and economic level) to males they have equal English language proficiency, and gender didn't impact their English language proficiency at any English language skills (i.e., Speaking, reading, writing, and listening). In addition, male and female EFL learners at the tertiary level in Bangladesh may have equal opportunities to develop their language skills, despite broader social and cultural factors that may limit girls' access to education and resources.

However, it is important to note that the results of this study may not be generalizable to other contexts or populations. The impact of gender on language learning outcomes may vary depending on factors such as cultural norms, educational systems, and individual learner characteristics. The study was conducted in a private university where almost all learners are from wealthy family and the female learners get enough social and economic support in their pre-tertiary level educations to develop their English language skills. Additionally, this study focused specifically on mature or tertiary-level EFL learners in Bangladesh, and the findings may not apply to younger or less advanced language learners.

Overall, the results of this study contribute to a growing body of research that challenges simplistic notions of gender as a universal determinant of language learning outcomes. By highlighting the importance of other factors such as motivation and language learning strategies, this study points towards more nuanced and context-specific approaches to understanding and promoting successful language learning among diverse populations.

## **Implications of the Study**

One of the most important implications of this finding for the educators is that besides providing equal opportunities for English language learners to all genders, the educators also keep in mind that it would be the best approach if the female and male adult learners were from equal socioeconomic backgrounds and power dynamics. The less advantaged group may require more opportunities and privileges to develop their English language skills. Educators should consider the socioeconomic background and power dynamics while designing syllabi, programs or policies. In addition, adult educators should consider the specific language skills required for successful communication in English and focus on

developing these skills equally for all learners, regardless of gender. The fact that male and female learners performed equally in individual English language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) suggests that there may not be significant gender differences in these skills.

In summary, the results of this study challenge simplistic notions of gender as a universal determinant of language learning outcomes and emphasize the importance of considering other factors such as motivation, language learning strategies, and language proficiency levels. Adult educators should focus on promoting effective learning strategies, providing equal opportunities for all learners, developing specific language skills required for successful communication in English, and considering the unique context and characteristics of their learners.

### **Limitations and Further Study**

The research has several limitations. The first limitation is the small sample size of 69 students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a larger population of Bangladeshi EFL learners. Future studies with larger sample sizes may be necessary to confirm the results of this study and to better understand the impact of gender on English language learning outcomes in Bangladesh.

Another limitation is that the data was collected from only one private university in Bangladesh. While this may provide insights into the experiences of a specific group of learners, it may not be representative of EFL learners in other contexts or educational settings. Future studies should aim to include a more diverse range of participants from multiple universities and educational contexts to better understand the impact of gender on English language learning outcomes in Bangladesh.

Finally, the study notes that each university in Bangladesh may have its own syllabus and course curriculum, making it challenging to measure English language learning skills in a standardized way. This may limit the ability to compare the results of this study with other studies conducted in different contexts or using different assessment tools. Future research could address this limitation by developing standardized measures of English language proficiency that can be used across multiple universities and educational contexts in Bangladesh.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study on the effects of gender in Bangladeshi adult EFL learners' second language acquisition found that gender does not have a significant impact on English language learning skills where the students are adults and have equal social-economic background and equal power dynamics. The results align with previous research (Magolda, 1992) that suggests that the influence of gender on language acquisition diminishes with maturity. However, the study also highlights the need for further research to explore the complex interplay between social, cultural, cognitive, and linguistic factors and gender in second language acquisition.

Moreover, future research should integrate feminist and post-modern approaches to gender in second language acquisition. These approaches can offer a more nuanced understanding of how gender operates within the complex web of power relations and cultural norms that

shape language learning outcomes. By taking a more holistic approach to gender and language learning, researchers can better identify the mechanisms that underlie gender differences in language learning and develop more effective strategies for promoting equitable and inclusive language education.

## References

- Alam, M. M. (2012). Effect of gender on the English language proficiency of Bangladeshi EFL learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 2(6), 163–171.
- Begum, N. (2019). The effect of gender, self-efficacy, and motivation on language learning achievement: A study on Bangladeshi EFL learners. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 29, 1–15.
- Bernhard, S. (2022). Gender differences in second language proficiency—Evidence from recent humanitarian migrants in Germany. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 35(1), 282–309, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feab038>
- Chowdhury, S. M., & Kabir, M. N. (2017). Gender, motivation and language learning strategies: A study on Bangladeshi EFL learners. *Journal of English Language and Literature*, 4(1), 1–12.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learner revisited*. Routledge.
- Ehsan, A. M., Shariar, H. M., Ashrafuzzaman, M. (2011). Gender equality and discrimination among the English language learners at the primary level education in Bangladesh. *NAEM Journal*, 7 (13), 53–59.
- Faruk, S. M. G., Saha, R. (2016). Gender disparity in second language learning: Reality or illusion? *Sino-US English Teaching*, 13(11), 860–868.
- Feery, K. (2008). Current perspectives on the role of gender in second language acquisition (SLA) research. *The ITB Journal*, 9(1), 32–51.
- Gabrielatos, C. (2018). *Corpus linguistics for ELT: Research and practice*. Routledge.
- Habib, A. M., Rahman, S., Kabir, M. N., & Rahman, R. M. (2020). English Language Learning at TVET Institutes of Bangladesh: Women’s Perception, Participation and Aspiration. *NAEM Journal*, 15(2), 102–114.
- Haq, M., Rahman, M. M. P. (2008). Gender disparities in secondary education in Bangladesh. *International Education Studies*, 1 (2), 115–128.
- Halpern, D. F. (1986). Cognitive differences between men and women. *Developmental Review*, 6(2), 131-150.
- Holmes, J. (2008). *Gendered talk at work: Constructing social identity through workplace discourse*. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Juyoung, S. (2018) “She needs to be shy!”: Gender, culture, and nonparticipation Among Saudi Arabian female students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 12, 1–25.

- Kaushanskaya .M, Marian .V, Yoo. J (2011), Gender differences in adult word learning, *Acta Psychological*, 137, 24–35.
- Kimura, D. (2006). Sex differences in the brain. *Scientific American Mind*, 16(1), 20-29.
- Losey, K. M. (1995). Gender and ethnicity as factors in the development of verbal skills in bilingual Mexican American women. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 635–661.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3588167>
- Mangola, B. M. (1992). *Knowing and reasoning in college: Gender-related patterns in students' intellectual development*. Jossey-Bass.
- Penelope, J. (1990). *Speaking freely: Unlearning the lies of the fathers' tongues*. Pergamon.
- Piasecka, L. (2010). Gender differences in L1 and L2 reading. In J. Arabski and A. Wojtaszek (Eds.), *Neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives on SLA* (pp. 145-158). Multilingual Matters.
- Rahman, S. (2005). Orientations and Motivation in English Language Learning: a Study of Bangladeshi Students at Undergraduate Level. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(1), 29–55.  
[https://asian-efl-journal.com/March\\_2005\\_EBook\\_editions.pdf#page=29](https://asian-efl-journal.com/March_2005_EBook_editions.pdf#page=29)
- Rubin, J., & Thompson, I. (1994). *How to be a more successful language learner*. Heinle & Heinle.
- Richard, J. C., & Lesley, T. (2007). *Interlanguage language placement test*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shakouri, N., & Saligheh, M. (2012). Revisiting age and gender Influence in second language acquisition. *Advances in English linguistics*, 1(1), 1–6.
- Shi, X. (2010). Intercultural language socialization of a Chinese MBA student in an American negotiation class. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 2475–2486. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.02.005>
- Spender, D. (1985). *Man made language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Sultana, N. (2016). Gender differences in motivation and attitudes towards learning English: A study of Bangladeshi tertiary level students. *Asian EFL Journal*, 18(1), 106–126.
- Tannen, D. (1994). *Gender and discourse*. Oxford University Press.
- Tyers, A. (2012). A Gender Digital Divide? Women Learning English through ICTs in Bangladesh. mLearn.
- Warriner, D. (2004). "The Days Now Is Very Hard for My Family": The Negotiation and Construction of Gendered Work Identities Among Newly Arrived Women Refugees, *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 3(4), 279–294.  
[https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jljie0304\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jljie0304_4)

Wardhaugh, R. (2015). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. Blackwell Publishers.

Zimmerman, D. & West, C. (1975). Sex roles, interruptions and sciences in conversations. In B. Thomas and N. Henly (Eds.), *Language and Sex* (pp. 105–129). Newbury House.



***The Poem “Ordinary Days” by Ý Nhi and the Picture of the “Imagined Community” in Modern Vietnamese Literature***

Nguyễn Hồng Anh, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Vietnam

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Community discourse in modern Vietnamese literature often expresses the proposition that community is associated with tradition, history and culture, especially in the war and post-war period. Ý Nhi (1944 - ) has such a creative poetic style that many literary critics of her generation consider it as a breakthrough amid the general trend. Although she found herself among the poets of the US-Vietnam War period, Ý Nhi soon followed a path of her own, innovating the art of poetry and bringing new ideas into her writings. Ý Nhi is one of the most famous representatives of modern Vietnamese poetry. Her poetry received international recognition from The Swedish Cikada Prize in 2015. The paper going to employ Benedict Anderson’s cultural theory of “imagined communities” proposed in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* as a tool to interpret one of the ideological innovations in her poetry. It is the construction of the community image, predominantly expressed in the poem “Ngày thường” (Ordinary Days). By applying this theory, this paper proves that “Ordinary Days” has built a popular imagined community, in contrast to the imagined community associated with the ideology of official nationalism in mainstream Vietnamese literature. The change in the concept of community as portrayed in the poem has advanced ahead of the Vietnamese literary dominant trend at that time, somewhat preparing the road for the shift of literary style in the later period.

Keywords: Imagined Community, Official Nationalism, Ý Nhi

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

The image of communities (ranging from family, to village, and to nation) in modern Vietnamese literature is closely linked with the wars between Vietnam and France (1945-1954), Vietnam and America (1954-1975), and with the post-war period. Therefore, discourses on communities in literature are always associated with the revolution and the nation in term of history, politics, tradition and culture. However, in the view of Benedict Anderson (1936-2015) in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, “community” and “nation” do not always go together without self-interests, especially in war, revolutionary and post-war contexts. Anderson’s concept of “official nationalism”, a model of the “imagined community”, suggests explaining the image of community that once dominated mainstream Vietnamese literature.<sup>1</sup>

In that general trend, the poet Ý Nhi<sup>2</sup> has emerged as a particular case because her modern poetic style proves to have done against Vietnamese mainstream literature. Of her contemporary critics, Huỳnh Như Phương (2019) calls her style “predictive” of the times (p. 6), Hoàng Hưng (2019) praises it “rare” (p. 706), and Lại Nguyên Ân (2022) “distinctive.” She became famous inside the country, beginning with the Vietnam Writers’ Association award in 1985 for the collection of poems *Người đàn bà ngồi đan* (A Woman Sits Knitting). Nowadays, Ý Nhi is a well-known poet. Her poetic art is representative of not only modern Vietnamese poetry but also modern Asian poetry as confirmed by the Swedish Cikada Prize in 2015 “in recognition of the way she in her poetry so well has defended the inviolability of life” (according to the letter of notice from the Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi, in 2015).

This paper will attempt to analyze the picture of the imagined community in Ý Nhi’s “Ordinary Days,” in contrast to the idea of a community of official nationalism, according to Anderson’s point of view. The poem is in the poetry collection of the same name, published by Da Nang Publishing House in 1987, but was composed in April 1985. It was an important milestone because the composition had come before the *Đổi Mới* (Renovation) began in 1986<sup>3</sup> in Vietnam, giving the poem more value in terms of modern thought, content, and pioneering innovation in the modern Vietnamese literature that spanned from 1945 to 1986.

The poem “Ordinary Days” was translated into English and published in the anthology *6 Vietnamese Poets* (Curbstone Press, 2002), along with 12 other poems by the same author. However, the English version of the poem used in this paper that is more consistent with the poem’s contents is an unpublished translation.

---

<sup>1</sup> The paper only examines the literature of Northern Vietnam, whose ideology had eventually become the mainstream of Vietnamese literature since 1975. Literature of Southern Vietnam before 1975 with a different ideology will not be covered in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Ý Nhi’s given name is Hoàng Thị Ý Nhi. She was born on September 18, 1944 at Quảng Nam Province. She had a degree in Vietnamese linguistics and literature from Hanoi University in 1968. For many years, she was a poetry editor at the *Tác phẩm mới* (New Works) Publishing House (now the Vietnam Writers’ Association Publishing House). She now lives in Ho Chi Minh City. She has published nine collections of poems, two collections of short stories and two anthologies. Her works have been translated into various languages: French, Russian, English, Japanese, and Swedish.

<sup>3</sup> *Đổi Mới* is a reform program in many fields (economic, political, cultural, and literary) proposed by General Secretary Nguyễn Văn Linh and implemented starting from the 6th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 1986. In literature, the *Đổi Mới* period marked the ideological untie for creation, from literature serving politics, and speaking out for the Communist Party, to literature expressing individuality, revealing the personal creativity of writers.

## Ordinary Days

Sounds of children cheering in the garden  
 Neighbors passing by the front gate  
 Early water morning glory climbing  
 While late spring flowers drop in prices  
 Someone opens an art gallery on Ngô Quyền street  
 A snake seller sits by Thuyền Quang lake  
 Dumbfounded people at the lottery counter  
 Others queuing to buy Sa Pa cigarettes

Swirling old book pages  
 Comments from the past years  
 Thick piles of collaborators' poems  
 Read from sunny season to rainy season  
 Child's pants hem needs letting down  
 Rice all out, busy lining up for more  
 Foliage drawing images on the window curtain  
 From day to night all green

The heart suddenly yearns  
 An unexpected knock  
 From behind the door.

4/1985

### 1. Official nationalism as imagined community in modern Vietnamese literature

According to Anderson, modern national communities are all imagined. “It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). That is, a community is an idea created for members to associate with each other. Therefore, there is no right or wrong community identity, only how we envision that community. It can be seen clearly in Vietnamese literary works that reflect particular historical periods, such as war-time literature. This literary tradition exalts patriotism and praises heroism. In literary works, the concepts of the nation and foreign invaders help to connect the characters to form the image of the national community. In addition, a community is also understood as readers, authors and characters sharing the same language, territory, culture, and history. A literary work evokes in the readers those same images, helping them connect with the characters, the author, and each other even though they have never had the same experience as the characters, do not know the author, and do not know other readers.

It was the national spirit that was highly promoted during the war that created favorable conditions for the birth of “official nationalism”. According to Anderson, it comes about when dynastic and aristocratic groups are in danger of being marginalized in the popular imagined communities (pp. 109-110). Therefore, these power-groups have attached national issues to the governance of the state to preserve their interests and maintain their power. By the time of the revolution and post-revolution, a new model has taken over, whereby revolutionary leaders control the state and the people based on the “imagined” national

mentality. For example, in Vietnam, it is patriotism, personal sacrifice for the common good, collective interests that stand above the individual, and individualism is counter-revolutionary. These social values are “serving the interests of the state first and foremost” (Anderson, 2006, p. 159), which is to keep the ruling party system afloat in the case of Vietnam. Therefore, according to this model, imagined communities, although ostensibly “the masses”, are actually the means of discourse by a powerful small group. This can be illustrated with the following two typical verses:

- (1) The country is the land where I went to school  
 The country is the water where you bathed  
 The land-water country is where we dated  
 The country is the place where you dropped the handkerchief in my silent  
 nostalgia<sup>4</sup>  
 (Nguyễn Khoa Điềm, “Mặt đường khát vọng” (The Road of Desire), 1971)<sup>5</sup>
- (2) The country follows you to the alley alone  
 The garden areca palm sheds an old leaf sheath  
 The country fifty million people tonight do not sleep  
 Peeling off the last calendar sheet  
 (Hữu Thịnh, “Đường tới thành phố” [The Road to the City], 1979)<sup>6</sup>

Although the two poems were composed in two different periods, the (1) during the American war and the (2) after the war, their ideas are still the same: the lovers’ feelings are placed in the frame of reference to “country” or nation. Stanza (1) is the nostalgia for a lover nestled in love for the homeland, and stanza (2) is the longing of a wife waiting for her husband to return from the battlefield, which is identical to the expectation of liberation of the people. Writers often use historical and national facts to express personal things because they are influenced by socialist realism. This communist ideology promotes collectivism and criticises individualism. It was the mainstream of Northern literature from 1945 and lasted until before Đổi Mới in 1986.

The next feature of an imagined community, according to the model of official nationalism, is thinking about time. In order to tie members of a community of many generations to a national ideal, historical awareness – i.e. thinking about time along the vertical axis – plays an important role. Anderson calls it apprehension of time in a “simultaneity” (p. 24), especially evident in religious communities. Anderson cites Auerbach’s example: the sacrifice of Isaac in the Old Testament and the sacrifice of Christ in the New Testament are explained as related in the following way: the former prefigures the latter, and the latter fulfills the former. This relationship is established by Divine Providence, so the events not only take place in a sequence, but are “simultaneous” always (p. 24). Simultaneity, in this sense, is “a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present” (Anderson, 2006, p. 24). That way of thinking about time is prevalent in Vietnamese revolutionary literature, for example, the image of Autumn in revolutionary poetry:

<sup>4</sup> In Vietnamese the word “country” (đất nước) is a combination of two words “land” (đất) and “water” (nước).

<sup>5</sup> Nguyễn Khoa Điềm (1943 - ) is a poet, politician, and former Minister of Culture and Information. The excerpt from the epic poem “Mặt đường khát vọng” (The Road of Desire) was composed in 1971 and first published by the Liberation Literature and Art Publishing House, Hanoi, in 1974.

<sup>6</sup> Hữu Thịnh (1942 - ) is a poet and former President of the Vietnam Writers’ Association. The excerpt from the epic poem “Đường tới thành phố” (The Road to the City) was first published by the People’s Army Publishing House, Hanoi, in 1979.

August comes in a fresh Autumn  
 Clouds lightheartedly float away  
 Today is such a beautiful day  
 Our clouds, our blue sky  
 The Democratic Republic of Vietnam!

(Tố Hữu, “Ta đi tới” (Let’s March Forward), 1954)<sup>7</sup>

Autumn is different now  
 In the middle of mountains and hills, I am listening with joy  
 To the wind blowing through the bamboo forest in rhythm  
 Autumn’s skies are putting on new clothes

(Nguyễn Đình Thi, “Đất nước” (The Country), 1948-1955)<sup>8</sup>

Those Autumns are always associated with joy and a bright future because they remind a specific Autumn in the past: the Autumn of the August Revolution of 1945, when the Viet Minh victory established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This type of time simultaneity connects generations into a shared history and creates a happy national destiny, regardless of reality. In other words, official nationalism has tied public thought to an imagined future in identification with the glorious past.

Paradoxically, the simultaneity-along-time, according to Anderson, belonged in the medieval period in religious communities and has been superseded in the modern communities (this paper will present the thinking of time in a modern community more clearly in section 2); it is still the dominant type of time in Vietnamese revolutionary literature. Vietnamese literature needs the next development step to change the apprehension of time in a modern way.

That development step can be found in Ý Nhi’s poem “Ordinary Days”, with innovative ideas of imagined community and time compared to mainstream literature at that time.

## 2. Imagined community in Ý Nhi’s “Ordinary Days”

After the *Đổi Mới* period, Vietnamese literature partly showed the escape from the old paradigm in the works of many talents such as Nguyễn Huy Thiệp, Bảo Ninh, Phạm Thị Hoài, and Dương Thu Hương. It will not be unusual for an innovative writing style to be born in that new atmosphere. However, the paper recognizes another milestone, the poem “Ordinary Days” by Ý Nhi, which appeared before *Đổi Mới* but was anti-traditional in how the author built an imagined community. The poem is a typical work for the picture of a new type of community.

The poem’s context is a general atmosphere of Hanoi during the subsidy period, with pale people, petty actions, and small events. And covering this whole social picture is poverty. Poverty makes two seemingly opposite images “early water morning glory climbing/ while late spring flowers drop in prices” have the same logic: water morning glory is a popular

<sup>7</sup> Tố Hữu (1920-2002) is one of the most typical revolutionary poets in Vietnam and was a member of the Politburo. The excerpt of the poem “Ta đi tới” (Let’s March Forward), from the collection of poems *Việt Bắc*, was composed and first published by the Literature Publishing House, Hanoi, in 1954.

<sup>8</sup> Nguyễn Đình Thi (1924-2003) is a poet, writer, playwright, and former Secretary General of the Vietnam Writers’ Association. The excerpt of the poem “Đất nước” (The Country), from the collection of poems *Người chiến sĩ* (The Soldier), was composed from 1948-1955 and first published by the Literature and Art Publishing House, Hanoi, in 1956.

vegetable, but the poor must pay attention to the price increase, and the price of flowers at the end of the season had to be lowered because they are probably listed as luxury goods that few people buy. Poverty also haunts “dumbfounded people at the lottery counter” looking for a chance to change their luck and people in long lines to buy Sa Pa cigarettes, the cheapest brand of cigarettes at that time. Poverty reduces the value of intellectual and noble activities such as opening galleries, reading books, and editing poems to the level of ordinary activities such as selling snakes and queuing to buy rice. True to the title “Ordinary Days”, the poem does not focus on building something big; on the contrary, it focuses on petty and trivial activities. But the new thing lies in connecting those little things to form a community picture.

The three stanzas draw two small pictures: (1) The first stanza is a group of characters appearing from near to far according to the persona’s observation position, from narrow to vast space (garden - gate - street - lake), with various activities (children playing, people passing by, exhibition, buying and selling, people watching and queuing). (2) The latter two stanzas return to the observer’s present position with personalized actions (reading, editing, looking) and thoughts (about sewing, lining up to buy rice, and a knock behind the door). At a glance, they are discrete pictures with details placed next to each other randomly: the characters have no relationship, appearing in the same segment of time and space according to the method of collage. But looking closely, the only connection between the objects is the gaze of the persona (observer). That look shows the attention to see the “dumbfounded” state of strangers, hear the cheering of children, notice a newly opened gallery, and be familiar with snake sellers and queue people. Therefore, it is an “omniscient” view, connecting individuals into a community in the observer’s imagination.

There is a transition in the second stanza: the persona looks at herself; that is, the subject becomes the object like the characters appearing in the first stanza. The most obvious is the detail “queuing”/ “line up” repeated in the first two stanzas, connecting each other into a common picture where the members have the same activities. Although the actions are more private (letting down the child’s pants hem), more personal (reading and editing poetry), and more psychological (the move is “swirling” that seems busy but still worry about other things that have not been done), but the persona in the second stanza has the same ambiguous identity (who is this person? what is her personality? what are her feelings?) as the characters in the first stanza. The verses in the second stanza continue to list activities that, like the rhythm of the first stanza, compel the reader to read it (and visualize it) in meaningful continuity with the first stanza.

This type of look can be explained as follows: The observer does not pay attention to the personal identities of the people appearing in the picture because what she looks at is not individual people but is typical activities of a specific context (Hanoi in the subsidy period), of which she is also a member. That is how the imagined community is formed: not by grand narratives relying on tradition, history, and culture like that of Vietnamese literature at the same time, but by random, collaged mini-narratives, no specific connection between one person and the others.

In addition, the community cohesion here is also supported by the idea of “homogeneous, empty time” (Anderson, 2006, p. 24). Anderson says: “[S]imultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar” (p. 24). “Prefiguring and fulfilment” is the type of time of religious communities with a dominant centre of power. “Homogeneous and

empty” time of clock and calendar is characteristic of the modern imagined community. Returning to the poem, the events in the two pictures occur at a certain time, appearing together in a brief gaze of the observer. This time is also absolutely not “simultaneity-along-time” with a past and a future. It is a regular, repeating time of the calendar “from sunny season to rainy season” and of the clock “from day to night”, so it has a completely “empty” meaning. As such, one connects with the others through the same activities, day by day; even though they do not know each other. But they know in certain days and hours, there are people doing the same things as they do. That connection differs from the simultaneous connection of the past, present, and future, which revolutionary literature often uses (as described in section 1).

Although the connections are “empty” and randomly collaged, the imagined community in “Ordinary Days” is still very closed and tight, causing the subject to transform herself into a character or member in the general picture. Here comes a second look – the reader’s look. Because when the subject becomes the character, the reader becomes a second omniscient view, far enough away to see the whole picture. As Anderson says, it is “the doubleness of our reading about [...] reading” (p. 32). Viewing or reading the picture created by the subject who now is the character makes an imagined community between the author, the characters, and the readers.

Community is almost broken in the last stanza when a “yearn” appears. A “yearn” is a feeling that belongs to an individual. It signals the subject from merging into the general picture to revealing a separate identity through her feelings. But it was only “almost” because the verse ended quickly with only 12 words split into three lines – too short and abrupt compared to the big picture covered above. Personal life is still engulfed in a common pattern, and no one has a name or face, only repeated actions, just like the title “Ordinary Days.” Unlike “A Woman Sits Knitting” – the most famous poem, shaping the poetic style of Ý Nhi – “Ordinary Days” does not place an imprint on individuality. Therefore, if comparing the “yearn” of “Ordinary Days” with the dichotomous mood of “A Woman Sits Knitting”, the latter poem has a more personal breakthrough. However, the purpose of “Ordinary Days” is not to express individual feelings but to imagine a society in miniature that is probably very familiar to anyone of the time since it is just “ordinary days.” And that visualisation pushes to the brink of breaking down the image of an old-fashioned community that belongs to official nationalism.

## Conclusion

The paper does not analyze the poem Ordinary Days’s uniqueness in terms of content or poetic style, as previous researchers have done. Still, it identifies the ideological innovation in a new cultural way: how to build an imagined community. This concept of modern culture can shed a strange light on literary analysis, particularly in this poem, when placed in the context of the poem’s composition: It disrupts the traditional community built up by official nationalism. On the surface, people and activities are depicted in the old way. Still, the idea of a popular community is new, especially in connecting members and thinking about an empty, homogeneous time. These innovations paved the way for new writings later, changing an era.

## **Acknowledgements**

We are very grateful to the translator, poet Nguyễn Đức Tùng, currently living in Canada, for helping us translate the poem “Ordinary Days” and some of the verses cited in the paper into English.

We are incredibly grateful to the translator Trần Ngọc Cư, now living in the US, for helping us edit the English version of the paper and translate some of the verses cited in the paper into English.



## References

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso Books.

Embassy of Sweden (2015). *Notification of 2015 Cikada award*. Letter via post to the winner, provided by Ý Nhi.

Hoàng, Hung (2019). Thơ Ý Nhi (Ý Nhi's Poetry). In Ý Nhi, *Ngọn gió qua vườn: Tuyển tập thơ, truyện ngắn* (*The Wind Through the Garden: An Collection of Poems and Short Stories*). HCMC: Vietnamese Women's Publishing House, pp. 705-707.

Huỳnh, Như Phương (2019). Ý Nhi và những bến bờ của sáng tạo (Ý Nhi and the horizons of creation). In Ý Nhi, *Ngọn gió qua vườn: Tuyển tập thơ, truyện ngắn* (*The Wind Through the Garden: An Collection of Poems and Short Stories*). HCMC: Vietnamese Women's Publishing House, pp. 5-20.

Nguyen, Ba Chung & Bowen, Kevin (2002). *6 Vietnamese Poets*. Connecticut: Curbstone Press.

Ý Nhi (1987). *Ngày thường* (Poetry collection *Ordinary Days*). Da Nang Publishing House.

Ý Nhi (2019). *Ngọn gió qua vườn: Tuyển tập thơ, truyện ngắn* (*The Wind Through the Garden: An Collection of Poems and Short Stories*). HCMC: Vietnamese Women's Publishing House.

## Resources

“Ý Nhi, từ thơ đến truyện (Ý Nhi, from poetry to stories)” by Lại Nguyên Ân:  
<http://baovanngh.com.vn/y-nhi-tu-tho-den-truyen-24667.html>

**Contact email:** anhnh@hcmue.edu.vn



*The Takhi, The Bear, The Dragon, and The Eagle:  
Mongolia's Historic Foreign Policy Challenges*

Michael Allen Lake, Independent Scholar, United States  
Joseph E. Lake, Independent Scholar, United States

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Despite multiple interactions between the United States and Mongolia over the course of 70 years, a formal relationship was not established until 1987. Much of that delay was because U.S.-Mongolian relations often took a backseat to other strategic interests including relations with China and the Soviet Union. Three years after the normalization of relations, a visit by Secretary of State Baker strengthened the relationship by raising the Third Neighbor concept, providing a strategic framework for future relations between the two nations. Drawing on the memories and memoirs of the American, Mongolian, Japanese, and Russian diplomats; and declassified records from the CIA and the State Department this paper provides insights and perspectives on the haphazard path that led to diplomatic recognition in the waning days of the Cold War. It also identifies challenges for Mongolia dating back to 1688 resonate in the post-2022 international dynamic.

Keywords: Mongolia, 20<sup>th</sup> Century History, U.S. Policy in Asia, Jebtsundamba Khutughtu

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

The authors see the story of the *takhi*<sup>1</sup> as symbolic of the story of Mongolia. The takhi is a unique Central Asian native declared extinct in the wild in 1969 before being reintroduced in 1992. Mongolia, like the takhi, reemerged unexpectedly into the world when it ended 69 years of Marxist isolation in March 1990. Both faced significant challenges – after their reemergence each has grown and prospered with international support and assistance in difficult times built on the foundation of their own strength and resilience. Both still have challenges that lay ahead of them.

In 1242 the Mongols ruled the largest contiguous land empire in history stretching from Korea to the outskirts of Vienna. After the empire broke up, Russia's gradual eastward expansion to the Pacific officially brought it to the northern border of twenty-first century Mongolia with the treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 (Krausse, *Russia in Asia. 1899*, pp. 33-40). However, the impact of Russia's eastward expansion was already being felt by the Mongols. In 1688 the Mongols of the Dzungar Khanate drove the Khalkha leadership from their homeland in modern Mongolian. At a meeting in Inner Mongolia, the exiled leadership debated whether to seek Russian or Chinese assistance to defend themselves (Onon and Pritchatt, *Asia's First Modern Revolution*, 1989, pp. 44-45). The Khalkha would need to choose whether to seek assistance from the Russian Bear or the Chinese Dragon.

It was not the first time the Khalkha had to decide how to manage relations with Mongolia's two modern neighbors. But it was the first time the choice had been so stark. This balance is still Mongolia's most critical challenge today. In 1691 at Doloon Nuur representatives of the Khalkha Mongols pledged allegiance to the Manchu emperor Kanghxi (Ewing, "The Forgotten Frontier", 1981, p. 179). However, Russian expansion to the Pacific continued as did their interest in Mongolia. As the Mongolian relationship with Beijing crumbled at the end of the Qing dynasty, Russia became increasingly important to Mongolia.

## Mongolia Today

Mongolia's 20th century history was marked by two key periods – 1911 to 1924 and 1984 to 1991. Given its history and its location as a central Asian landlocked country Mongolia's only two neighbors, China and Russia, were key players in both periods. Yet both times Mongolia reached out to a third power – the United States.

The focus of this paper will be on the second period 1984 to 1991. This period was marked by Mongolia's changing relationship with the old Soviet Union and its ultimate disintegration, the rapid rise of China, and finally 75 years after Mongolia's first approach to the United States the establishment of diplomatic relations.

## 1911 to 1921

Even before their proclamation of independence from China on December 1, 1911 (Onon and Pritchatt, 1989, p.15), the Mongols had sought support from Russia (Onon and Pritchatt, p.6). Russia and China made decisions based on their own interests and desires – a recurring challenge for Mongolia. After extended negotiations in both St. Petersburg and Khüree

---

<sup>1</sup> Also known as "Przewalski's horse".

(modern day Ulaanbaatar) on November 3, 1912, Russia and Mongolia signed a treaty which recognized Mongolia's "autonomous" status, but not its independence.

On November 18 the Mongolian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ch'in Van Khanddorj drafted a diplomatic note to the major powers other than China and Russia, but including the United States<sup>2</sup>, to inform them of Mongolia's independence and requesting the conclusion of trade and friendship treaties. On December 13, 1912, the American consulate in Harbin received a message written in Mongolian from the "Foreign Office of the Mongolian Empire" accompanied by a Chinese language translation. The Consulate translated the message from Chinese to English. Even though it was translated from Mongolian to Chinese to English, and is not identical, it is similar enough to the Mongolian record that we believe it is the November 18 message (Bold, *Independence and Recognition*, pages 70 and 374).

Historically U.S. policy in Asia had been driven by commercial interests and focused primarily on China. After the Spanish-American War, the U.S. became a colonial power with the acquisition of the Philippines. In 1911 the U.S. involvement in Asia was focused on China, Japan, and the Philippines. Thus, when the message arrived in Washington (Onon and Pritchatt, Page 166) it was viewed in the context of U.S. interests in China and Japan. The U.S. focus was on the collapsing Chinese empire, not Mongolia.

Mongolia's 20th century struggle for international recognition was once again dominated by the competing interests of its two giant neighbors – China and Russia – and affected by the internal problems in both nations. It was only after World War II that China achieved internal stability. As for Russia, after the 1917 seizure of power by the Marxist-Leninist in Moscow, it became preoccupied with its own internal challenges. But by 1921, after success in Siberia, Moscow was willing to support the ouster of Baron Ungern-Sternberg and the communist takeover in Mongolia. Inevitably after 1921 Mongolia considered the Soviets its protector from China. In the interest of its relationship with Moscow, the United States successfully pressured a reluctant China to recognize Mongolian independence after the end of World War II. Before 1990 the challenge for Mongolia was the same as its nobles discussed in 1688 – Russia or China (Onon and Pritchatt, p. 3)? It was only with the end of Mongolia's own Marxist-Leninist rule in March 1990 that the United States finally became an important player in Mongolia's changing presence on the world stage.

### **After 1921**

The U.S. showed episodic interest in Mongolia prior to 1987. In April 1921 the U.S. ignored political arguments for opening a Consulate in Ulaanbaatar and opened one in Kalgan (modern day Zhangjiakou) instead (Campi and Baasan, *The Impact of China and Russia on U.S.-Mongolian Relations in the Twentieth Century*, p. 84). Commercial interests remained the driving force as Kalgan had historically been a key gateway from Mongolia to Beijing. When the chaos of the Chinese civil war engulfed the region American missionaries and commercial firms fled and the Consulate was closed on April 18, 1927 (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1927*, The Minister in China (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State). After the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences the Soviet Union successfully pressed the United States to pressure China to recognize Mongolia's independence as part of its agreement to enter the Pacific Theater of Operations at the end of World War II.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Austro-Hungarian Empire, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

After World War II, three major changes would occur that impacted the United States' relationship with Mongolia. The United States began to play a significant role in international affairs and as a result the State Department bureaucracy began to address relations with countries of lesser interest such as Mongolia. The Korean War hardened American attitudes on numerous foreign policy issues – especially in Asia. And the presidential election of 1960 ushered in new ideas in Washington.

In 1961 the U.S. considered recognition of Mongolia as part of a broad policy initiative, but domestic politics in the U.S. and Chiang Kai-shek's government in Taipei successfully blocked any active initiative for normalization of relations (Lake and Lake, "Changing the Conversation"). However, the U.S. tacitly supported Mongolian admission to the United Nations that year by abstaining from both the Security Council and General Assembly votes. As the U.S. became increasingly engaged in Vietnam that conflict began to dominate Asia policy, so Mongolia continued to take a back seat. Mongolia remained a part-time responsibility for someone who worked on the mainland China desk at Foggy Bottom. The question of Mongolia was only kept alive based on occasional input from political appointees and feelers from Mongolia.

The February 1972 Shanghai communique changed the nature of U.S. relations with China, and Mongolia's place in the U.S. bureaucracy. The Office of Asian Communist Affairs was renamed the Office of China and Mongolia Affairs. Mongolia now officially existed in the bureaucracy. Unknown to the United States in October 1972, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP, the ruling Marxist party) authorized the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to establish formal relations with the United States (D. Yondon, *To Tell You the Truth*, 2016). On March 14, 1973, the White House approved negotiations with Mongolia in response to this overture. This time, however, it was Moscow which ended negotiations by literally stopping an instruction cable from the Mongolian Foreign Ministry to their United Nations Mission in New York. Moscow then finally made it clear to Ulaanbaatar that negotiations should not continue. The U.S. side heard only silence. A recurring theme in U.S.-Mongolia relations has been that neither side ever fully understood the other.

The U.S. official position of what transpired between March 1973 and November 1979 was there was "no real urgency" to normalize relations with Mongolia, but that "we remain interested" and would "welcome the opportunity to resume negotiations." The bureaucracy had given up.

### **The Beginnings of Change**

In the 1980s, leadership changes in Moscow and Ulaanbaatar altered the dynamic of the relationship. In Moscow the rapid shift over three years from Leonid Brezhnev (1982) to Yuri Andropov to Konstantin Chernenko to Mikhail Gorbachev (1985) was dramatic. No less dramatic was the 1984 removal in Ulaanbaatar of Yumjaagiin Tsedenbal after 32 years in office. However, the accurate story of the events of 1984 through 1987 in U.S.-Mongolian relations have remained obscured by secrecy laws, regulations, and efforts by key officials in both countries to work behind the scenes and off the record. Some authors writing about the period have also been misleading and provided inaccurate information. The story of this period is one of challenges faced by key Soviet and Mongolian officials seeking to bring change to their 65-year-old partnership, efforts. These efforts unfolded concurrently with Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* initiative in the Soviet Union and his initiation of a new East Asian policy seeking to improve relations with China.

In 1984 Moscow had concerns about Tsedenbal's failing health, the machinations of his wife Anastasia Filitova, and the possibility of a worsening situation undermining Soviet interests in Mongolia. On April 29, 1984, the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) passed a resolution that Tsedenbal should be encouraged to resign from all his leadership posts in both the government and the Party (Nadirov, *Tsedenbal and the Events of August 1984*, 2005, p. 92).

During their 1984 vacations in the Soviet Union, then Prime Minister Jambyn Batmónkh and fellow Politburo member D. Molomjamts were "invited" to Moscow on short notice to meet with key Soviet officials on August 9. This meeting was chaired by CPSU Politburo member Mikhail Gorbachev. Even though Chernenko remained in charge of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev was becoming the de facto leader due to Chernenko's failing health.

Tsedenbal's physician, Doctor Yevgeniy Chazov, briefed the attendees on Tsedenbal's medical situation. Gorbachev knew from the Soviet representatives in Ulaanbaatar that Tsedenbal was planning to convene a Plenum of the Central Committee of the MPRP in August to remove Batmónkh and Molomjamts from the Politburo. Gorbachev pushed for the immediate removal of Tsedenbal from his positions.

On August 17, just over a week after the initial meeting with the Soviet leadership, the MPRP Politburo recommended Tsedenbal's removal from all official positions. Six days later at the 8<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the MPRP Central Committee Tsedenbal was officially relieved of his duties. Batmónkh was elected to replace him as General Secretary (Nadirov, *Tsedenbal and the Events of August 1984*, 2005, p. 110).

### **The Johnson Visit**

By coincidence, on September 19, 1984, just 27 days after Tsedenbal's removal, Don Johnson from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing arrived in Ulaanbaatar. Johnson had suggested the visit. Although approved by the Department of State, Washington did not expect any significant result. Just prior to his return to Beijing on September 28 Johnson was granted a meeting with a Foreign Ministry Policy Planning official Jalbuu Choinkhor. A month after Tsedenbal's departure, Johnson became the first American official received officially by the Mongolian government since Vice President Henry Wallace had visited in 1944.

### **The Soviet Union and East Asia**

Soviet interests in China again had an impact on Mongolia. On March 10, 1985, Chernenko died and was quickly replaced by Gorbachev as General Secretary. Gorbachev immediately stated his desire for improved relations with China saying at an emergency CPSU Plenum on March 11, "We would like a serious improvement in relations with the PRC". When he met Chinese Vice Premier Li Peng on March 14, Gorbachev reiterated his call for "serious improvement" in relations (Mills, "Gorbachev and the Future of Sino-Soviet Relations" (1986). The significance of Gorbachev's public pronouncements about China could not have been missed by senior officials in the Soviet Union's oldest ally. One of the "three obstacles" to improved Sino-Soviet relations was the Soviet military deployment in Mongolia.

## **Asia Society Study Mission to Ulaanbaatar**

In another coincidence in October 1985 an Asia Society study mission headed by Dr. Robert Scalapino from the University of California at Berkeley visited seven Asian capitals and financial centers – including Ulaanbaatar. The visit to Ulaanbaatar was at the suggestion of one of the members of the delegation (Michael Allen Lake, personal correspondence, May 19, 2022). Although the significance of the Scalapino visit is obscured in American records, an early 1987 review of the normalization process conducted by the State Department’s East Asian Bureau identified this academic contact as one of the two seminal events for the United States (Department of State FOIA 199900358, 24 February 1987 Draft Dr. Gaston Sigur, “Request for Authorization to Open American Embassy Ulaanbaatar, Mongolian People’s Republic”).

Based on First Deputy Foreign Minister Daramiin Yondon’s book (Yondon, *To Tell You the Truth, Үнэн учрыг өгүүлбээс*, 2016.), the authors believe that key figures in the Mongolian government, including Batmönkh himself, saw the Asia Society visit as a gesture from the United States. And thus, it was a catalyst for Mongolian efforts to pursue normalization again despite the failure of the 1970’s attempt.

## **The 1985 Geneva Summit**

The November 1985 Gorbachev-Reagan Geneva Summit changed the tenor of U.S.-Soviet relations. In his November 27 report to the Supreme Soviet, Gorbachev made the following point:

The Soviet leadership attaches great importance to the Asian and Pacific region...It is extremely important to ensure that this region is not a source of tension and an area of armed confrontation. We stand for the broadening of political dialogue among all the States in the region, in the interests of peace, good neighborliness, mutual trust and co-operation. (“Report by Deputy Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary,” 4 December 1985)

Recognizing the change, Batmönkh had said at the November 26 meeting of the MPRP Politburo,

the positive beginnings achieved at the Soviet-American summit talks, ...paved the way for by the constructive initiatives and practical steps of the Soviet Union and other socialist community countries aimed at...improving the international climate. (“MPRP Issues Communique on Geneva Summit,” FBIS, 29 November 1985)

However, Batmönkh was not likely to forget that the attempt to develop relations with the United States in the 1970’s had been abruptly halted by Moscow. The Soviets had made it clear ever since that they would not support change in the Mongolian-U.S. relationship. Moreover, from Ulaanbaatar’s perspective Soviet support was crucial in facing their greatest threat – China.

## **Shevardnadze’s January 1986 Visit to Ulaanbaatar**

During his January 24, 1986, meeting with Batmönkh, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze took the initiative to raise normalization of relations between Mongolia and the



United States. The transcript of the Shevardnadze-Batmónkh meeting confirms a brief discussion of the topic. Shevardnadze made a strong statement saying that the question had been considered by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU and that establishing relations with the United States was in the common interests of the Socialist community. He said it was not about speeding things up, but diplomatic relations were possible and necessary (Joseph E. Lake, personal correspondence, 2021 and 2022).

Some Mongolian supporters of normalization saw this as encouragement to push forward. Others in the MPRP Politburo, however, were not happy with moving ahead quickly. Batmónkh and Foreign Minister Mangalyn Dүgersүren continued to express ambivalence. The U.S. was unaware of the discussion and remained disinterested.

### **January To May 1986**

The authors continue to research the key events between the January 1986 and the U.S. formal approach to Gendengiin Nyamdoo, Mongolia's Ambassador to the United Nations, in August 1986. The U.S. has so far declined to declassify and release seven documents in the normalization process. Because of Mongolia's secrecy laws we have been unable to obtain Mongolian documents and the Mongolian officials involved are reluctant to share information. There is contradictory information from sources on both sides (including First Deputy Foreign Minister Yondon) as to exactly what happened. Some of which the authors have been able to confirm as accurate, and some of which the authors can confirm is incorrect.

In early 1986, according to a well-informed source, Buyantyn Dashtseren the new Mongolian Ambassador to Japan, arrived in Tokyo. He instructed his staff to send the routine circular diplomatic note announcing his arrival and looking forward to continuing good relations to the U.S. Embassy. Such notes are normally not sent to an embassy of a country with which one does not have diplomatic relations. The same source also stated that Dashtseren would speak with U.S. Ambassador Mike Mansfield at events where they were both present. Similar to the situation with the diplomatic note, it is unusual for an ambassador to speak to another ambassador from a country with which they do not have diplomatic relations. The authors have found no record that any of these activities were reported officially to Washington, suggesting that Mansfield was using back channels, secure telephones, and stops by visiting officials in Tokyo to communicate about Mongolia. Such activity would not be surprising as the Reagan-Poindexter era National Security Council of the early 1980s was known for carrying out foreign policy via back channels and informal relationships. A classic example of this being the Iran-Contra Affair.

### **Johnson's 1986 Visit**

According to State Department records, in April 1986 the Japanese passed a message from the Mongolians to U.S. Embassy Tokyo expressing the "strong hope" that relations between the U.S. and Mongolia could be normalized. We do not know the content of the message nor who sent it. As the reporting cable has not been released, we can only speculate. We can confirm from other records that the United States government saw the approach as significant.

Eventually the Office of China Mongolia Affairs at the State Department, which had not been involved in earlier contacts, became aware of the Tokyo approach. The Mongolia Desk

informed U.S. Embassy in Beijing political officer Don Johnson volunteered to make his second trip to respond. He received a diplomatic visa and arrived in Ulaanbaatar on Thursday May 8.

Unfortunately, Johnson discovered that all Mongolian government offices were closed in honor of the Soviet bloc's May 9 celebration of the end of World War II in Europe. No one was available to receive him, and he returned to Beijing after three days.

### **Vladivostok Speech and Soviet Withdrawal**

Gorbachev changed the situation dramatically with his Vladivostok Speech on July 28, 1986. Batmönkh knew in advance about Gorbachev's speech and was concerned with the implications for Mongolia. Fifteen days after the speech on August 12 he discussed the withdrawal announcement with Gorbachev. In his papers, Batmönkh writes that Gorbachev said his intention was to withdraw only "one or two divisions" of Soviet troops. Batmönkh pointed out that despite this move the reason for inviting the Soviet troops to Mongolia in the first place had not been completely resolved – relations with China (J. Batmönkh, "My Perspective," 2001).

Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech was also read with interest in Washington. Assistant Secretary of State Gaston Sigur's interest was undoubtedly encouraged by Chinese Communist Party Secretary General Hu Yaobang's July 1986 conversation with former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski when Hu suggested that now was the time for the United States to normalize relations with Mongolia. This discussion was echoed in a direct approach to Sigur in Washington by Chinese Ambassador Han Xu. While the Chinese were acting in their own self-interest, coupled with the Vladivostok speech there was no doubt that the dynamics in East Asia were changing (Department of State FOIA 199900358 86.08.19 State 260137).

### **August to September 1986 Exchanges**

The only accurate record we have found of events during this period are the official records the Department of State has released thus far. Unfortunately, they are not complete in certain areas and the memories of the officers involved are starting to fade. We have relied on the clearly identifiable facts.

Secretary of State George Shultz directed Sigur to initiate talks with Mongolia. The United States repeatedly assumed that the official Mongolian position was to move ahead quickly. However Foreign Minister Dүgersүren was following a go-slow approach. The Mongolians were engaged in negotiations with the Soviets concerning the promised withdrawal of at least some of the Soviet forces stationed there. Washington did not understand the difficult situation faced by Ulaanbaatar (Batmönkh, "My Perspective," 2001).

### **Mixed Signals**

On August 28 Vernon Walters, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, approached Mongolian Ambassador Nyamdoo and proposed reopening the dialogue on normalizing relations. Nyamdoo responded on September 17 and said the Mongolian government agreed to begin negotiations at a mutually agreed time. Walters observed that Nyamdoo wanted the U.S. to propose a time to report back to Ulaanbaatar. In an apparent violation of his

instructions, Nyamdoo ultimately said that his government was prepared to begin talks any time before Dүgersүren's address to the United Nations General Assembly scheduled for October 2.

### **New York and Washington: September to December**

As discussed above, the U.S. was unaware of the negotiations on Soviet troop withdrawal, the tensions within the Mongolian government, or the increasing strains in Ulaanbaatar's relationship with Moscow. However, with the decision to send the August instructions, the Washington foreign affairs bureaucracy became engaged.

Sigur requested an analysis of why Moscow was sanctioning U.S.-Mongolian discussion of diplomatic relations. The authors believe the analysis was requested to put at least some of the backchannel information on the record following the official approach to Nyamdoo to shifting relevant record of contacts into regular diplomatic channels. It was also done in anticipation of the October arrival of the new Deputy Assistant Secretary of State (DAS) responsible for China and Mongolia, J. Stapleton Roy. Roy had been one of the first two Foreign Service Officers trained in the Mongolian language during the early 1960's. He was one of the Department of State's foremost China specialists and his arrival at this stage of the negotiations with Mongolia was coincidental yet important.

According to the CIA analysis, Mongolia had not made a direct and authoritative approach to the U.S. since Johnson's abortive May visit. The analysis also reflected how little the U.S. understood about what was transpiring in Ulaanbaatar. The analysis mischaracterized Foreign Minister Dүgersүren's presence in New York as an attempt to emphasize the high level of importance attached to the talks. In his as yet unpublished oral history interview Roy says that when he returned to Washington in October 1986 he found "desultory interest in reviving efforts to establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia" and said he gave the issue top priority.

On December 5 new instructions were sent to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York to approach the Mongolians about a round of negotiations. The Mongolians agreed and a new round commenced on December 12 with Roy negotiating on behalf of the United States.

The pace had changed in Ulaanbaatar, suggesting that negotiations with the Soviets were concluding. On December 17 Nyamdoo presented a Mongolian counterproposal based on the U.S. draft. What appeared to be normal negotiations dragged out the process, but on January 15 Mongolian negotiators proposed signing the final communique as early as January 20.

Probably not coincidentally, on January 15 a formal announcement was also made that the first Soviet troops would be withdrawn from Mongolia beginning April 24, 1987. Mongolia's strategic relationship with Moscow and the world outside the Soviet bloc had changed.

On January 27, 1987, Ambassador Nyamdoo and Secretary Shultz signed the memorandum of understanding to establish diplomatic relations. Seventy-five years after Mongolia first approached the United States the two countries finally normalized their relationship. Soviet support for Mongolia continued to decrease over the next three years as Moscow wrestled with its own international and domestic economic problems. Moscow's economic support to

Mongolia ended in 1991, leading to disastrous economic upheaval for Mongolia's first post-Marxist government.

The failure of the Mongolian and American governments to understand each other, and the U.S. indifference continued until Secretary of State Baker's 1990 visit. They have enjoyed a growing relationship since Baker's 1990 and 1991 visits firmly put Mongolia in the minds of key U.S. officials. In 1990 Baker suggested that the United States be Mongolia's third neighbor. This theme became an important part of Mongolia's strategy as it reached out to the non-communist world.

### **Conclusions: 2023 – The Bear and The Dragon: A New Dynamic?**

The February 22, 2022, Russian invasion of Ukraine dramatically changed the international dynamic. All of Russia's European neighbors reached out to NATO as China supported Russia. Even as Mongolia's economic relationship with China has grown, this changing dynamic is impacting its ties with both Russia and China. Has the relevancy of the relationship with the United States been impacted by this new dynamic?

On March 13 in his first speech after being elected to a third term as President by the National People's Congress, Xi Jinping implicitly reminded Mongolia that the U.S. as a third player is still relevant. This notion is only reinforced by the repeated references made by the Mongolian Foreign Minister Batmunkhiin Battsetseg to third neighbors in a recent interview (B. Battsetseg: *The Whole World Is Watching Us*, 08 May 2023).

Xi said, "bullying by foreign powers tore the country apart." The Communist Party of China has united and "led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in working hard for a century to put an end to China's national humiliation...China's national rejuvenation has become an historical inevitability." (*Xinhua*, 15 March 2023.) China has not forgotten that they consider Mongols as one of the traditional Chinese ethnic groups and, like Taiwan, they may consider Mongolia a part of China torn away by foreign powers.

Another reminder of China and Mongolia's intertwined past came on March 8 with the Dalai Lama's acknowledgement of a Mongolian 10<sup>th</sup> Jebtsundamba Khutughtu ("China on edge as Mongolian boy is hailed as new Buddhist lama", *The Times*, London, 22 March 2023) – the third highest ranking lama in the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy. The 8<sup>th</sup> Jebtsundamba Khutughtu had been the theocratic ruler of independent Mongolia from 1911 to 1924. His appearance has potential significance for China in its management of Tibet and implications for Inner Mongolia as reflected in Mongolian Foreign Minister Battsetseg's remarks after her early May visit to Beijing. (B. Battsetseg, *The Whole World Is Watching Us*, 08 May 2023) The 10<sup>th</sup> Jebtsundamba is also a potentially significant figure in the succession process for the next Dalai Lama. China's State Religious Affairs Bureau Order No. 5, "Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism" issued in July 2007 states that applications must be filed by all Buddhist temples before they are allowed to recognize individuals as tulkus (reincarnated teachers). (Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2007).

Unfortunately, the issue is even more complex. As the 10<sup>th</sup> Jebtsundamba Khutughtu was reportedly born in the United States, there are also potential challenges for the U.S.

The bear, the dragon, and the eagle have all played an important role in Mongolia's modern history. Looking to the future, the sturdy takhi once again faces significant challenges. The challenge for Mongolian policy makers have to manage these challenges.

### **Acknowledgements**

Due to limitation of space and requests for anonymity, we are unable to express our appreciation to all those who worked with us in our five years of research. For anyone not mentioned, we want to assure that you have our thanks; for those who requested to be anonymous, we have respected your wishes. We want to acknowledge the following individuals listed in alphabetical order: Secretary of State James A. Baker, Baasan Ragchaa, Bolor Lkhaajav, Ambassador Ravdan Bold, Ambassador William A. Brown, Susan Drost (Mongolia Society), Ambassador Enkhtsetseg Ochir, Ambassador Erdenechuluun Luvsan, Foreign Minister Gombosuren Ts., Kenneth Jarrett (U.S. Foreign Service Officer), Ambassador Curtis Kamman, Donald Keyser (U.S. Foreign Service Officer), Ambassador Steven Mann, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland, Professor Emeritus Ray Kierstead, Agiimaa Marina, Ambassaor Y. Otgonbayar, Ambassador Michael Senko, Ambassador Pamela Shultz, Tuvshinzaya Gantulga, and Ambassador Richard Williams.

## References

- Batmónkh, J. (2001). “My perspective”. *There will be no use of force under any circumstances* (D. Tsedev, Trans.). Unpublished Translation. (Original work published Ulaanbaatar, 2001).
- Batmónkh, J. (2001). “The memoirs, research works, and my impressions.” *There will be no use of force under any circumstances* (D. Tsedev, Trans.). Unpublished Translation. (Original work published Ulaanbaatar, 2001).
- Battsetseg, B. The whole world is watching us. (2023, May 08). *Baabar*, <http://www.baabar.mn/article/bbattsetseg-delkhii-niiteeree-bidniig-kharj-baina>.
- Bold , Ravdan, Independence and recognition. Mongolia in the Triangle of Interests: USA–Russia–China, 1910–1973, Независимость и признание. Монголия в треугольнике интере-сов: США–Россия–Китай, 1910–1973, Moscow, 2015.
- Campi, A. & Basan, R. (2009). *The Impact of China and Russia on U.S.-Mongolian Relations in the Twentieth Century*. Edwin Mellen Press.
- China on edge as Mongolian boy is hailed as new Buddhist lama. (2023, March 22). *The Times*, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/china-on-edge-as-mongolian-boy-is-hailed-as-new-buddhist-lama-cnqfl6csq>
- Congressional-Executive Commission on China. (2007). *Measures on the management of the reincarnation of living buddhas in Tibetan buddhism: State Religious Affairs Bureau Order No. 5 (ICT Translation)*. <https://www.cecc.gov/resources/legal-provisions/measures-on-the-management-of-the-reincarnation-of-living-buddhas-in-0>
- Department of State FOIA Request No. 199900431 for records that originated during Ambassador Joseph E. Lake’s tenure as Ambassador to Mongolia. Released December 14, 1999, personal collection of Ambassador Joseph E. Lake.
- Department of State, Freedom of Information Document Release Request 199900358, for documents pertaining to relations between the United States and Mongolia for the period January 1987- July 1990. Released February 29, 2000, personal collection of Ambassador Joseph E. Lake.
- Ewing, T.E. (1981) The forgotten frontier: South Siberia (Tuva) in Chinese and Russian History, 1600-1920. *Central Asiatic Journal*, 25(3/4). Pages 399 to 421
- Foreign relations of the United States: 1927 Volume II*, Document 385, The Minister in China (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State.
- Full text of Xi Jinping’s speech at the first session of the 124th NPC. (2023, March 15). *Xinhua*, [http://english.scio.gov.cn/m/topnews/2023-03/15/content\\_85168965.htm](http://english.scio.gov.cn/m/topnews/2023-03/15/content_85168965.htm)
- Fuller, J.V. (Ed.) (1942) *Foreign relations of the United States: 1927 (Vol. II)*. *United States Government Printing Office. Document 313*

- Krause, A. (1899). *Russia in Asia, A Record and a Study, 1558-1899 in Asia*. Henry Holt and Company.
- Lake, J.E. & Lake, M.A. (2021). Mongolia in transition: 1986-1990. In S. Wickhamsmith & P. Marzluf (Eds.), *Socialist and Post-Socialist Mongolia: Nation, Identity and Culture*. (pp. 188 - 201). Routledge.
- Lake, M.A. & Lake J.E. (2022, Oct. 22). *Changing the Conversation: How Bureaucratic Change in the Department of State Reflected Policy Shifts Towards Mongolia* [Conference Session]. Mongolia Society Annual Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, United States.
- Mills, W. D. "Gorbachev and the Future of Sino-Soviet Relations". *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 101, No. 4 (1986). pp. 535-557. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2150793>
- MPRP Issues Communique on Geneva Summit. (1985, November 29). *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report Asia & Pacific*, FBIS-APA-85-230.
- Nadirov, Sh. G. Tsendenbal and the Events of August 1984. *Occasional Papers of the Mongolia Society*, 25.
- Onon, U. & Pritchatt, D. (1989). *Asia's First Modern Revolution: Mongolia Proclaims Its Independence in 1911*. E.J. Brill.
- "Report by Deputy Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary", Letter dated 4 December 1985 from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations.
- Wangyal, P. Tribute to the Venerable Kushok Bakula Rinpoche. (2023, May 4). Tibet Foundation London. <https://fpmt.org/teachers/lineage-lamas/bakula/baktribute/>
- Xinhua*, 15 March 2023 "Full text of Xi Jinping's keynote address at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting, <https://english.news.cn/20230316/46287ba021164317ab578b18b447a0af/c.html>
- Yondon, D. *To Tell You the Truth, Үнэн учрыг өгүүлбээс*. (Various Unpublished Translations. Original work published 2016).





## *Decision-Making Reasons of Thai People to Put Elderly Parent in Nursing Home*

Sauwaluck Koojaroenprasit, Kasetsart University, Thailand  
Sumaree Pumpinyo, Kasetsart University, Thailand

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

This research aimed to study 1. To study the reasons and the desirable characteristics of the elderly nursing home 2. To study the financial feasibility to invest in the elderly nursing home and 3. To study the sensitivity analysis to invest in the elderly nursing home. The primary data are from both the interview the small and medium sizes of the elderly nursing home and also collect data from the consumers by using the questionnaire. The sample size was 200. A questionnaire survey was used. The sample was 200. It was found that the respondents were female and male of 70 percent and 30 percent, respectively. The majority respondents were in age group more than 50 years old, with income more than 47,000 baht per month. The results indicated that the most important reasons to put their parents in the nursing home are; safer to stay in the nursing homes than stay at home, there are medical specialist in charge, and 24-hour care, respectively. Person influencing decision making to choose the nursing homes for their parents is themselves, parents, relatives, and friends, respectively. The results showed that gender difference affected only one reason to put parents in the nursing home; the nursing home is near their residences. The age group differences affected the two reasons to put parents in the nursing homes; well-known nursing homes and want their parents to have friends at the same age. The financial feasibility study found that investing in a nursing home for the elderly is worth the investment.

Keywords: Nursing Homes, Bangkok, Decision-Making

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

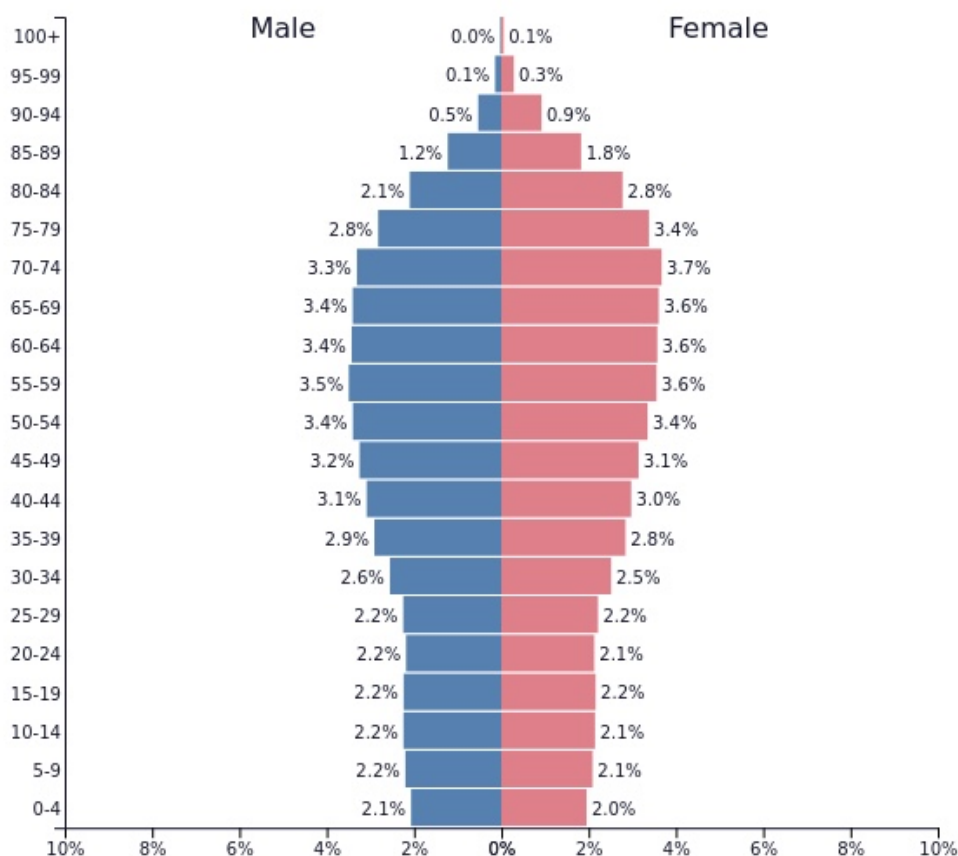
## Introduction

Thailand will rush into "aged society" when the percentage of the elderly reaches 22.7 percent in 2030 and will increase to 25.1 percent in 2035 (Thailand Population in the Future). Progress of modern medical technology has extended human life expectancy of Thai people from 62 years in 2009 to 75.4 years in 2017. Thai family structure changed from extended family to nuclear family. The fertility rate (average number of children per woman) declined from 4.9 percent in 1974 to 1.6 percent in 2017 and will decrease to 1.03 percent in 2033 and it is expected that the birth rate will be close to mortality rate in 2022 (Pramote Prasatkul, 2013). The Aging Index (the number of elderlies per 100 persons younger than 15 years old) will increase from 45 in 2005 to 174.4 in 2035 (table 1).

**Table 1: Number of Population by Age and Aging Index 2005-2035**

year	Number of Population (million)			Aging Index
	Total	Youth	Elderly	
2005	62.2	14.3	6.4	45
2010	63.7	13.2	7.5	57
2015	64.6	12.3	9.0	73.4
2020	65.1	11.2	11.0	98
2025	65.1	10.4	12.9	123.6
2030	64.5	9.8	14.6	149.9
2035	63.4	9.1	15.9	174.4

Source: Thailand Population in the Future

**Figure 1: Thailand Population Pyramid in 2050**

Source: populationpyramid.net

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the 62 million men and women in Thailand in 2050 by different age. This population pyramid is a 'constrictive pyramid' shape, which indicates the society with relatively high older population and with low fertility and mortality rates.

As the size of the elderly increases, family caregiving has become an important issue (Kong, 2007). Traditional culture for Thai society has taken for granted that the adult children take care of their parents. However, major changes in Thai society have altered traditional culture. Nowadays, Thai family structure is a nuclear family, especially in Bangkok. As a result, taking care of the elderly in the family tend to decrease and combined with various diseases that the elderly must face, in particular, chronic illnesses which are the health problems for the elderly, such as blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, paralysis etc., making the elderly more dependent. Many families have decided to put their parents in the nursing home. Placing a loved one to a nursing home is perhaps one of the most painful and difficult decision to make for family caregivers (Caron, Ducharme & Griffith, 2006).

### Objective

1. To study the reasons to put parents in the nursing home in Bangkok, Thailand and to examine the differences in sex and age on the reasons to put parents in the nursing homes
2. To study the financially feasibility to invest in the elderly nursing home
3. To study the sensitivity analysis to invest in the elderly nursing home

## Methodology

The study was done in Bangkok, Thailand. The samples were 200. The current study used a questionnaire survey as a primary data source. Data analysis applied both quantitative and qualitative methods. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part probed for personal data. The second part inquired about behavior of using the Nursing home service. The final part was used to determine on the use of consumer services. The questionnaire was tested for reliability and internal consistency. Its internal consistency was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha. Coefficients over 0.7 are considered acceptable, with coefficients greater than 0.8 considered good (Malthotra and Birks, 2006). In this study had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.915, indicating a highly reliable instrument.

The t-test and F-test were used for testing personal factors (gender, age) and the reasons to put parents in the nursing homes with the following hypothesis.

H0: personal factors (gender, age) affect the reasons to put parents in the nursing homes

H1: personal factors do not affect the reasons to put parents in the nursing homes

## Results

The respondents were female and male of 70 percent and 30 percent, respectively. The majority respondents were in age above 50 years old, the majority level of income more than 47,000 baht per month.

The reasons to put their parents in the nursing home were summarized in table 2. The most important reasons to put their parents in the nursing home are safer to stay in the nursing homes than stay at home, there are medical specialist in charge, and 24-hour care, respectively.

**Table 2: Reasons to Put their Parents in the Nursing Home**

Reasons	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level of Importance
24-hour care	4.29	0.848	The most important
There are medical specialists in charge	4.35	0.867	The most important
Well-known	3.76	0.909	Very important
Safer than stay at home	4.48	0.776	The most important
Do not have time to care of their parents	3.86	1.018	Very important
Want their parent to have friends at the same age	4.11	0.0007	Very important
The nursing home is near their residences	4.06	1.033	Very important

Notes:  $\bar{x}$ : 4.21-5.00 = the most important; 3.21-4.20 = very important; 2.61-3.40 = moderate; 1.81-2.60 = less important; 1-1.80 = the least important

**Table 3: Person Influencing Decision Making to Choose the Nursing Homes**

Person Influencing	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level of Importance
Themselves	4.07	0.086	Very important
Parents	3.91	1.062	Very important
Relatives	3.49	0.902	Very important
Friends	2.86	0.986	Moderate

Notes:  $\bar{x}$ : 4.21-5.00 = the most important; 3.21-4.20 = very important; 2.61-3.40 = moderate; 1.81-2.60 = less important; 1-1.80 = the least important

From table 3, person influencing decision making to choose the nursing homes is ourselves, parents, relatives, and friends, respectively.

**Table 4: Hypothesis test for Gender and Reasons to Put Parents in the Nursing Homes**

Reasons	t value
24-hour care	0.658
There are medical specialists in charge	1.311
Well-known	-0.61
Safer than stay at home	-0.58
Do not have time to care of their parents	-1.15
Want their parent to have friends at the same age	-1.64
The nursing home is near their residences	-2.17**

Note: \*\*\* denotes statistically significance at the 0.01 level

\*\* denotes statistically significance at the 0.5 level

\* denotes statistically significance at the 0.1 level

Table 4 shows that differences in gender do not affect all the reasons to put parents in the nursing homes except the reason that the nursing home is near their residences.

**Table 5: Hypothesis test for Age and Reasons to Put Parents in the Nursing Homes**

Reasons	F value
24-hour care	0.967
There are medical specialists in charge	0.136
Well-known	2.708**
Safer than stay at home	1.43
Do not have time to care of their parents	0.642
Want their parent to have friends at the same age	2.261*
The nursing home is near their residences	1.433

Note: \*\*\* denotes statistically significance at the 0.01 level

\*\* denotes statistically significance at the 0.5 level

\*denotes statistically significance at the 0.1 level

Table 5 shows that differences in age have the two reasons to put parents in the nursing homes; well-known nursing homes and want their parents to have friends at the same age. However, differences in age have not affect the reasons for 24-hour care, there are medical specialists in charge, safer than stay at home, do not have time to care of their parents and the nursing home is near their residences.

A cost-effectiveness study in the case of a small nursing home with only 10 beds, with the cost assumption as follows: 1. Build 10 single-detached houses or 1-storey villas. 2. Each house has a usable area of 36 square meters per house. Construction cost per square meter 12,000 baht per square meter (Standard price list per unit of greenhouses, Property Appraisers Association of Thailand 2020 – 2021) 3. Total construction area 360 sq.m. 4. Design costs account for 7.6 percent of the construction cost. 5. Investment uses 50 percent of private investment and 50 percent of borrowing. 6. Monthly rent increases by 5 percent per year and remains constant from the 5th year onwards. 6. Labor wages increase 5 percent per year according to inflation and stable from the 5th year onwards. 7. Project life 20 years 8. Medical equipment and exercise equipment replaced every 5 years 9. Salvage value is 2percent of investment expenses, excluding land. The cost structure of the elderly care business consists of: Investment expenses which are fixed costs of the project and operating expenses which are variable costs, capital expenditures, investment expenses land 3 rai at 4,000,000 baht per rai, total 12 million baht, Design cost accounted for 7.6 percent of the total construction cost of 340,000 baht. One-story house 36 square meters The average price per square meter is 12,500 baht, with a total of 10 rooms per square meter, including a construction cost of 4,500,000 baht. Construction of roads, garden areas and common areas 1,600 square meters, a price of 500 baht per square meter, a total of 800,000 baht, and furniture costs of 989,000 baht. Operating expenses include: Variable costs such as salaries, raw materials, water, electricity, taxes, etc. In this study, the following include: Wages for workers consist of: Salaries of all personnel working in nursing homes for the nursing home. Water, electricity about 1,000 baht per room 7 rooms, total 7,000 baht per month or 84,000 baht per year Water and electricity Central area accounted for 2 percent of revenue, equal to 109,200 baht/year. Cost of food, budget for purchase of food ingredients 800 baht/day, total 292,000 baht per year. 4. Repair expenses accounted for 2 percent of total revenue, equal to 109,200 baht/year. 5. Other miscellaneous expenses (such as escort to the doctor, cleaning

supplies, miscellaneous items) accounted for 3 percent of total revenue, equal to 163,800 baht/year. 6. Loan interest Principal 4,614,500 baht, loan term 10 years, monthly installments, interest rate 5.47 percent.

**Table 6: Summary of cost-effectiveness analysis nursing home with 10 beds**

Scenario	NPV (Baht)	IRR (%)	B/C ratio	SVTb	SVTc
Basic Case	19,869,831.63	20	1.47	24.13	35.59
Case:monthly rent reduction by 10%	13,012,105.39	16	1.34	17.51	23.52
Case:Cost increase by 10%	14,286,983.04	16	1.34	17.35	23.26
Case:Monthly rent reduction and cost increase	7,480,874.09	13	1.22	10.07	12.3
Case:No tax	28,687,750.23	23	1.75	61.02	34.84

Source: own calculation

The financial feasibility study found that investing in a nursing home for the elderly is worth the investment. In the case of houses, or 10 houses that can accommodate 10 elderly people. The project has a return of 20 percent. For analyzing the sensitivity of the project, the benefits are reduced by 10 percent, the total cost is increased by 10 percent, or the benefit is reduced by 10 percent and the total cost is increased by 10 percent. The project is also worth the investment. However, the return is not much compared to some businesses. This is because there is a high operating cost of personnel that require special expertise. So if the government has a tax exemption, the returns will increase, which will incentivize more people to invest in this business to accommodate the rapid rise of the elderly.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

The respondents were female and male of 70 percent and 30 percent, respectively. The majority respondents were in age group more than 50 years old, with income more than 47,000 baht per month. The results indicated that the most important reasons to put their parents in the nursing home are safer to stay in the nursing homes than stay at home, there are medical specialist in charge, and 24-hour care, respectively. Person influencing decision making to choose the nursing homes for their parents is themselves, parents, relatives, and friends, respectively. The results showed that gender difference affected only one reason to put parents in the nursing home; the nursing home is near their residences. The age group differences affected the two reasons to put parents in the nursing homes; well-known nursing homes and want their parents to have friends at the same age. The financial feasibility study found that investing in a nursing home for the elderly is worth the investment.

According to this study the most important reason to put parents in the nursing homes is the nursing homes are safer than stay at home and the person influencing choosing the nursing homes was themselves so the nursing homes should provide the nice, clean and attractive place to attract more clients.

## References

- Caron, C. D., Ducharme, F., & Griffith, J. (2006). Deciding on Institutionalization for a Relative with Dementia: The Most Difficult Decision for Caregivers. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, 25, 193-205.
- Kong, E. H. (2007). The Influence of Culture on the Experiences of Korean, Korean American, and Caucasian-American family caregivers of frail older adults: a literature review. *Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing*, 37, 213-220.
- Pramote Prasatkul (2013). "The Situation of the Elderly, Trend and Impact of Entry into the ASEAN Community" Paper presented at Conference of ASEAN Community and the Elderly at Miracle Hotel December 12, 2013.
- Thailand Population in the Future (Online) Retrieved 06/19/2018  
from [http://www.ipsr.mahidol.ac.th/JPSR/Annual ConferenceII/Article/Article02.htm](http://www.ipsr.mahidol.ac.th/JPSR/Annual%20ConferenceII/Article/Article02.htm)

**Contact email:** fecoslp@ku.ac.th



***A Women Leader and Kyrgyz Nomadic Society:  
Ethnographic Re-consideration of Life of Kurmanjan Datka in the 19th-Century Silk Road***

Takuya Soma, Kyoto University, Japan  
Aizada Tynyeva, American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan  
Yumi Takahashi, American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Kurmanjan Datka (1811-1907) is the most famous woman leader in Kyrgyz history who was dubbed “the Queen of the Alai Mountains” in the 19th century. Kurmanjan Datka was born in 1811 in a nomadic Muslim family in the Alai region, southern Kyrgyzstan. She left her first husband breaking Kyrgyz traditions and fled back to her family. Afterward, she married Alymbek Datka (1800-1863), a ruler of the Alai Kyrgyz tribes. After his assassination, she succeeded him as the first women leader of southern Kyrgyz tribes. She played a significant role in building diplomacy to protect her people from the Russian Empire's colonization of the Kyrgyz territories. The research explores not only her life history and political career but also contemporary consciousness about Kurmanjan Datka from three different aspects below; 1. Ethnographic analysis of the uniqueness of her life, figure, and socio-political roles from the nomadic animal pastoralists’ context. 2. Oral history documentation from her direct descendants in Osh, and the southern Kyrgyz. 3. Reevaluation of youth consciousness and her influences in contemporary Kyrgyz society, especially for women. Then, the research tries to re-evaluate her strong mind, will, and decision as implications for the solution of today’s gender issue and women empowerment in Silk Road societies. The presence of Kurmanjan Datka, the woman leader in the late 19th century, is very implicative as if an inserting light that will potentially bring about a socio-historical turn of the gender minds and old traditions in the Islamic and nomadic society across the Silk Road.

Keywords: Kyrgyz Pastoralist Society, Women Leader, Kurmanjan Datka

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## 1. Introduction: Women and Silk Road

### 1.1. Kurmanjan-Datka as a Heroic Women

**Kurmanjan-Datka** (Курманжан датка) (1811-1907) is a very much well-known figure in Kyrgyz, who became an ethnic leader in the southern Kyrgyz region, in a traditional nomadic society. She lived during the time of male dominance based on Islamic principles and managed to rule southern Kyrgyz tribes during the invasion of Russians. She could maintain half a century of “peace-building” in a very difficult region of ethnic diversion and political turbulences in the mid of “the great game” and/or “Pre-Socialist” era (АБЫТОВ 2011). She received the title of “*Datka*” (the ruler) from the Emir of Bukhara Muzaffar and Khudoyar Khan. Russian military officials also gave her the title of colonel, and later called Kurmanjan “*The Queen of Alai*”, and admired her intelligence and courage. Her presence still greatly influences Kyrgyz society and can serve as a driving force to advance gender modernity among other CIS countries. A recent example is Roza Otunbaeva, the ex-president of Kyrgyzstan in 2010, who was the first and only female president among CIS countries (see Appendix 1: Timeline). Kurmanjan Datka deserves a special mention in view of the fact that the world is still in preparation to achieve gender equality in every corner of social status. According to UN Women’s latest report (as of 1 January 2023), there are 31 countries where 34 women serve as Heads of State and/or Government; 11.3% of women heads of state (17 out of n=151), and 9.8% women heads of government (19 out of n=193) in this world. This is a reason said that gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years at the current rate (UN Women 2023a). Especially, as to women cabinet ministers, the religious affairs division is the lowest sector of women shared (7%, only 3 posts out of n=43) in 190 countries (UN Women 2023b). Although nowadays gender inequality is still a significant issue around the globe, the Kyrgyz nomadic community produced a superb women leader, Kurmanjan-Datka during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 1.2. Project design

This short paper focuses on the uniqueness of Kurmanjan Datka’s life course. This paper introduces her life and her unique leadership. The aim of the work is to announce this unique women leader out of Silkroad territory, then encourage Muslim women to re-think the meaning and significance of her life and presence. This research carries out three tasks below:

1. Ethnographic analysis of the uniqueness of her life, figure, and socio-political roles from the nomadic pastoralists’ context.
2. Oral history documentation from her direct descendants in Osh, and the southern Kyrgyz region.
3. Reevaluation of youth consciousness and her influences in contemporary Kyrgyz society, especially for women.

Then, the research tries to re-evaluate her strong mind, will, and decision-making as implications for solutions to today’s gender issues and women empowerment in Silk Road societies. The presence of Kurmanjan Datka, the woman leader in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, is very implicative as a good example of a role model that will potentially bring about a socio-historical turn of the gender minds and old traditions in the Islamic and nomadic society across the Silk Road.

The research is designed as a part of a whole **Women Empowerment Project in Silk Road** (WEPS), newly embarked in my laboratory (Dr. SOMA Lab) at Kyoto University. Across the Silk Road territory, in regards to the idea of gender equality and perception, we never feel sufficient and rarely found socio-communal backups yet. The project consists of 4 parts of categories related to women's studies in Silk Road [(i) Women Livelihood Studies in Silk Road/ (ii) Kurmanjan Datka's Life Researches/ (iii) Muslim Women Empowerment Project in Japan (Kyoto)/ (iv) Women depiction by Film, Photo, Manga-art]. The project is not only academic research-oriented, but also actual social contribution activities and media output such as film-making are included. This article reports a preliminary research activity and some potential results about Kurmanjan Datka. The topic will reconsider how the historic figure of Kurmanjan Datka can encourage women's participation in the society as a role model. We expected to create solidarity based on the more liberal view of gender perceptions, which Muslim women have, then crossing the boundary of "nationality" and "ethnicity."

## 2. Image and Imaginary of Kurmanjan Datka as a women leader

### 2.1. Life of Kurmanjan Datka

Future *datka*, **Kurmanjan Mamatbai** (1811-1907) was born in Orok (Orke) village in the Alai mountains near the city of Osh, in a family of Kyrgyz nomads from the Mungush tribe. When Kurmanjan was 18 years old, her parents arranged to marry her to a 21-year-old man. But she destructed her marriage by running away from her husband and returning to her father's house. Three years later, she married again to **Alymbek Datka** (1800-1863), a local feudal lord, the head of the Alai tribes. In the 29 years of their marriage, they had five sons and two daughters. In 1862, Alymbek was assassinated, and soon after she succeeded his position as the first women leader of southern Kyrgyz tribes. She played a significant role in a difficult period and peacefully ruled Kyrgyz tribes for a half-century during the Russian Empire's colonization of the Kyrgyz territories.

### 2.2. Kurmanjan Datka in visual images

One of the few very famous photos of Kurmanjan Datka for the Kyrgyz nation was taken in 1906 by Carl G.E. Mannerheim (1867-1951), a future president of Finland. The image still captures people's attention. Kurmanjan Datka was unnoticed in the era of the USSR. She was mentioned as a figure who was simply too cozy with the hated Russian tsarist regime and too much of a traditional aristocratic leader for Soviet tastes (Wachtel 2016: 11). As a counter-reaction, Kurmanjan's life history was immediately symbolized as a historic figure after the collapse of the USSR in the 1990s. After 2000, Kurmanjan Datka became a governmentally designated heroic figure, and related events were intensively held in 2011 (KNEWS 2011). Several monuments of Kurmanjan Datka were erected in the village of Gulcha in the Osh region and in the center of Bishkek. There are streets named after her in Osh City and Bishkek cities. "The Queen of Alai" is also depicted on a banknote of 50 Kyrgyz currency (KGS). Her life is also described in the novel "*Kelkel* (Келкел)" (1986) by **Tologon Kasymbekov** (Төлөгөн Касымбеков, 1931-2011) and collaboration with the play "Курманжан датка" by **Kochkon Saktanov**. After the collapse of the USSR, **Sooronbai Zhusuev** (Сооронбай Жусуев, 1925-2016) wrote a novel "*Kurmanjan Datka* (Курманжан датка: Ыр менен жазылган роман)" in 1994 (Жусуев 1994) which is also one of post-socialist literature to reevaluate Kyrgyz ethnic history.

The latest film “*Kurmanjan Datka: Queen of the Mountains*” (2014) directed by **Sadyk Sher-Niyaz** and produced by **Zhyldyzkan, Dzholdoshova**, became the first governmentally-oriented film of Kurmanjan’s life. The film also successfully promotes a gender-oriented narrative, prompting reflection on women’s role in the national processes (Anatova 2021: 106). The film is very implicative to analyze a process and a means for the “nation-branding” aspect of what the Kyrgyz nation wants to be regarded as, to try to escape involuntary outer image. Award-winning status (Best Feature Film at the 2014 Eurasian Film Festival) is also accelerating both internal and external nation-branding as the first successful case.

### ***2.3. Student’s Images Survey of Kurmanjan Datka***

To understand Kurmanjan Datka’s images held by young generations, we preliminary carried out a conditional survey to collect an impression of Kurmanjan Datka subjecting for students at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) (conducted in February 2023). The survey was to let students watch the latest film “*Kurmanjan Datka – Queen of the Mountains*” (2014), then collect an impression report with a maximum of 1000 words in English (specifics are below).

[Subject] Students at the American University of Central Asia. (n=29)

[Data] An impression report from students after watching the film. Collected 29 papers, summed up a total of 29,723 words.

[Analysis] AI text-mining Tool by User Local website. (<https://textmining.userlocal.jp/>)

Students wrote a report in English, which was not their native language. As a result, not so many adjectives expressing their views about Kurmanjan Datka appeared in their papers. But, the word “strong” was often mentioned by the students in the survey. The term is the 3rd highest usage in the whole text, except “Kyrgyz”. When calculating the correlative dendrogram cluster, the word “strong” is in the same group as “woman”, and “leader”. This means that the film presents Kurmanjan Datka as “the strong women leader” for young students. However, due to the participant’s mother tongue issue, not many adjectives appear in the impression texts. This was a short conditional survey in which only one visual film source was given, and therefore difficult to reach the deeper “substantial” perception although implicative in some points for further survey.

## **3. Ethnographic Considerations of Three Events in Kurmanjan’s Life Course**

When we reconsider the life of Kurmanjan Datka, it reminds us of three distinctive events in her whole life course, mostly characterized by “escape” as a keyword. On the one hand, escape from the first marriage sounds unusual; on the other hand, she also took a step backward from the political stage and dedicated sincere support to Alymbek Datka behind. During the conflict with Russian troops in 1871, she guided subordinate clan groups to evacuate from Alai territory which seems to fit well to the nomadic way of context.

### ***(1) Escape from her first husband***

Kurmanjan’s first escape was from her first husband which was apparently considered as an unusual attitude in the nomadic herders’ context. It is thought that strong influences from local shamanistic views, make a conventional Islamic marriage rule soften to avoid severe punishment (Плоских, Ж. Джолдошова 2011). Perhaps, the frequently happened bride-kidnapping custom (compared to the 20<sup>th</sup> century) also might be affected by her decision to

“escape.” In most societies observed, bride-kidnapping is a rule-governed practice, an alternative to more acceptable forms of marriage, such as arrangement (Bates et al: 1974). In fact, strong interest in bride-kidnapping (bride abduction) in the early 2000s deteriorated the gender modernity of the Kyrgyz community (see Human Rights Watch 2006). We fully understand the violent side of bride-kidnapping, nonetheless, a certain number of males and even females who experienced kidnapping surely affirm the positiveness of bride-kidnapping even nowadays. The contrary to the male-dominant marriage system such as bride-kidnapping or parental arrangement in the old days, the marriage custom might allow women a potential right to escape or choose their husband on the female side. If such a certain kind of systematic flexibility was acknowledged, her escape was bound to happen. Her strong will and energy were indeed the reason why Alymbek Datka had deep attention at the glance. As discussed by Borbieva (2012), an escape from the kidnap is not only a bride's side issue but rather a family issue that must be perseverance for embarrassment and ignominy.

### *(2) Leadership from behind her husband*

The second escape was that she supported her husband Alymbek Datka dedicatedly for 30 years of her life from behind. According to nomadic animal pastoralists' context, both males and females need to dedicate so much to animal herding, livestock care, mating management, food production, and survival in the steppe land. Both males and females need to commit their own work, males normally do daily grazing, livestock care, and hunting (even war affairs), then females do daily milking, food production, child care, and elders' nursing, etc. Females' daily calorie expenditure is easily in excess of 3,000cal/day even in contemporary Mongolian nomad families (Soma 2022). This work style should be a basis of mutual respectfulness between males and females. Therefore, elder women have been highly respected in nomadic pastoralist communities on Silk Road. Islamic conventionalism would not positively affect to the emergence of a women political leader such as Kurmanjan Datka.

### *(3) Evacuation from Alai during the conflict of 1875*

The third escape happened during the conflict in 1876 when the Russian Empire invaded the Kokand Khanate, and reached the Alai valley. Kurmanjan Datka, and her sons, reacted rebelliously against Russian troops and escaped to Kashgar about 400 km. Later, on the way to Afghanistan, she was caught and brought by Russian military troops to General **Mikhail Skobelev** (Михаил Дмитриевич Скобелев, 1843-1882), the future hero of the Turkish War of 1877. During the meeting with Skobelev, Kurmanjan Datka expressed her obedience to cease fire to Russians and made a promise not to persecute her sons and her Kyrgyz people (Плюских, Ж. Джолдошова 2011: 105).

Such long-distance mobility is quite common in a nomadic herding way of life as seasonal mobility and separate grazing “*otar*.” The mobility distance of seasonal transhumance in the Tianshan and Altai Mountains normally reaches more than 130km from the foothill to the higher pastureland. A traditional nomadic seasonal mobility carried out by nomadic families in Uvs Province reached up to 138km in a year and the annual moving frequency is summed up 15 times (Soma 2022). Mobility is also used as a means of evacuation from severe environmental conditions. Such a brave evacuation, not escape, is a very nomadic way of strategy even facing military affairs. Of course, accession of the Alai to the Russian Empire was not easy for her. But as a result, her decision might be highly possible that the capture of Kurmanjan Datka brought about a better “peaceful” result than an impromptu fighting reaction against the Russian army at the Alai Valley.

#### 4. Gender and the Nation-Branding

While violence against women is reaching emergency levels in Kyrgyz, on the other hand, women's participation as leaders of civil society is also extremely high (Handrahan 2001: 73). As a part, higher women's status in the pastoralist community might ascribe to the mythological <The beast-motherhood legend> of Silk Road nomads widely accepted by Kyrgyz people. As to the ethnogenesis of Turkish tribes, "A sky-color maned female wolf Asena helped a wounded boy. The boy had got 10 children between Asena wolf, then became the leading family Asena, the founder of the Göktürk Empire" (Sima Qian, *Siji*). The beast-motherhood legend is widely seen in the formation of ethnic tribal origin of nomadic people along the Silk Road. "Wūsūn nomads ruled around Ili River to Issyk-kul during 1~5<sup>th</sup> century, the founder Kummo was saved his life with meat brought by a hawk and milk given by a female wolf" (Sima Qian, *Siji*; Han Shu, Bangu). Similarly, the meaning of the term "Kyrgyz" ascribes to "kırk kız (кырк кыз)" which means forty girls who are the first progenitors of Kyrgyz tribes. A well-known beast-motherhood folktale < *The Deer Mother Legend* > "Bugu-ene (Бугу-Эне)" also implicates women's position in the local herder's community. In a sense, the gender-oriented beast-motherhood legend may be one ethnographic evidence that the Kyrgyz pastoralist community has a philosophical and ideological basis to accept the leader's motherhood.

For the recent 30 years of the post-soviet era, all CIS countries including Kyrgyz try to find a concept of "nation", not only the solidarity of ethnic groups but, the unity of the "Kyrgyzstan people". This was a very new discovery for the Kyrgyz people. The breakup of the Soviet Union has led to greater openness of the region to Western cultural and social influences (Agadjanian and Dommaraju 2011). These parallel, even if conflicting, processes have resulted in a unique mix of modernity and tradition in the region (Nedoluzhko and Agadjanian 2015: 862). Therefore, Kurmanjan Datka is not only a historic women leader, but rather now has become a necessary heroic figure for Kyrgyz national unity. On the one hand, the ethnic hero "Manas" provides a highly masculine, aggressive portrait of a national unifier, while Kurmanjan Datka lends pragmatism and statesmanship to the national imaginary (Wachtel 2016: 12). This suggests that the Kyrgyz nation still needs to look for a heroic figure to unite national identity that is (mis)considered as a rigid and fixed notion. However, the figure of Kurmanjan Datka makes such identity soften as a powerful and knowledgeable woman, and as a unique women leader in Muslim nomadic society. A widely known gendering the Deer Mother legend also made Kyrgyz people easy to accept the legendary Kurmanjan Datka figure as the nation-motherhood. Concepts of democracy, citizenship, and civil society are highly gendered, to the disadvantage of women, and all the more difficult in Islamic and classical nomadic societies (Handrahan 2001: 76). Nevertheless, Kurmanjan Datka tried to obey and break the traditional rule of the nomad's context at the same time with flexibility. Even though women are more communal and less agentic, that is reflected in their leadership style (Goethals and Hoyt 2017: xi). Therefore, in some parts, Kurmanjan Datka could decide to subordinate to the Russian Empire without unnecessary bloodshed or tragedy. Nowadays, her decisions regarding the flexibility to follow the rules and break them at the same time appeals a lot to the direction of the Kyrgyz people and nation proceeds.

According to women's participation as leaders of civil society, gender is more of a primary identity than ethnicity, and men view ethnicity more as a primary identity than gender (Kuehnast et al. 1997), and further women's sense of identity is bound up more with their gender than with their ethnicity (Handrahan 2001: 73). In the Silk Road area, Muslim women have their own solidarity beyond national or ethnic boundaries, rather to aware similarity of

femininity under the same situation in Muslim society. In their fellowships, Central Asian women draw on their own values and experiences to negotiate alternative and intermediate responses (Borbieva 2012: 307). If mutual influence brings about the solidarity of Muslim women, Kurmanjan Datka's life and figure will be accepted across ethnic and national boundaries.

## Conclusion

Even though Kurmanjan Datka passed away in 1907 at the age of 96, her life and figure are still so much attracting attention to gender issues, women's leadership, Muslim women empowerment, and so on. Today, it has been already difficult to search her words and emotions, however, her deep love for her sons and her people is clearly expressed in the poems she wrote in her later years (Aphorisme.ru 2007). Russian Orientalist writer and explorer Boris Tagaev (Борис Тареев) who was present during a conversation between Kurmanjan Datka and General M. Skobelev in 1876 as an army officer, later described her figure as "*a Kirghiz woman of short stature, though not young, but beautiful, dressed in a brocade coat trimmed with some fur...*" (Dronov 2016).

From an ethnographic point of view, Kurmanjan Datka's life story is summarized in three points below:

- She would not refuse to be a tribal leader of Southern Kyrgyz society but rather she decided to accept her status even in the classical nomadic social context.
- She performed both opposite sides of "rule-breaking" and "defending the honor" of nomads during her life.
- She still deeply contributes and keeps committing to the formation of the modern Kyrgyz view of "the women" over the ages.

Muslim women's goals vary depending on their cultural and historical contexts and do not always conform to the ideal of female empowerment articulated in Western feminist literature, which prioritizes freedom, agency, and economic and political power (Borbieva 2012: 294). In such a case, Kurmanjan's life and figure will turn into the Central Asian-made role model for social participation by Muslim Kyrgyz women. One important difference is consistent with women being more communal, more democratic, and participative, and perhaps somewhat more socio-emotional in their orientation to group roles (Goethals and Hoyt 2017: xi). Reference to such a women's social attitude brings a hypothetical sense that the emergence of women leaders may be highly probably correlated with the presence of those "role models" who can lead the women followers. The presence of a role model will provide a potential continuum to produce new female leaders in the future. If the Kyrgyz nations, especially Muslim women, keep finding value in Kurmanjan Datka's life and figure, her legend will continue further.

## Appendix 1: TimeLine

**1811:** Born in Torogul-biya, Kulseyita

**1829** (18- years old): She was married to Kulseit at the age of 18. But contrary to all the canons of Islam and the traditions of the East, Kurmanjan left her husband

**1832** (21- years old): Alymbek Datka married with Kurmanjan- Kurmanjan and Alymbek Datka had five sons and two daughters

- Kurmanjan had been involved in the political life of the Fergana state since 1840.

**1862** (51- years old): Alymbek Datka was assassinated.

**1863** (52- years old): Kurmanjan received the title of “*Datka*” from the Emir of Bukhara Muzaffar and Khudoyar Khan.

**1876** (65- years old): In 1876 Russian troops invaded the Kokand Khanate. Kurmanjan Datka, along with her sons, reacted negatively to the appearance of "White Tsar" troops in the Alai region, setting out to resist them.

**1893** (82- years old): In 1893, Kurmanjan Datka's two sons and two grandsons were accused of smuggling and murdering customs officers. For two years, they stayed in prison. A total of 21 people were arrested in the case.

**1895** (84- years old): Kurmanjan Datka witnessed the moment of death of her youngest son, Kamchybek who was sentenced to death.

- For her services, she was awarded a gold medal on a St. Andrew's ribbon and an annual pension of 300 rubles for life.

- Soon after Kurmanjan Datka became a recluse, she was reported to Emperor Nicholas II, who decided to give her a special royal gift - a gold ladies' watch with the image of the Empire's State Emblem, with a chain and a brooch, decorated with diamonds and roses. The best Russian jewelry masters worked on the watch. Accompanied by many mounted guards, the Osh district governor arrived in the village of Mady and solemnly presented the "Queen of the South" with the emperor's gift.

- She composed poems and signed them with the name of Zyinat.

**1907** (96- years old): On February 1, 1907, in the village of Mady the 96-year-old Kurmanjan Datka “The Queen of Alai” died.

After her death:

**1991:** The first national celebration after the proclamation of Kyrgyz sovereignty was the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kurmanjan Datka in the summer of 1991.

**1994:** Kurmanjan Datka's portrait was depicted on the newly issued 50-som bill.



- Kurmanjan Datka's portrait is visible on the front side of Kyrgyz 50 som of all three issues

**1995:** The Kurmanjan Datka Charitable Foundation was founded in 1995.

**2002:** A book about the Alai Queen was published in three languages.

**2004:** A monument to Kurmanjan Datka was erected on Erkindik Avenue in Bishkek city, and later in Osh city.

**2011:** During the presidency of Roza Otunbaeva, a "year of Kurmanjan Datka" was proclaimed, and numerous events were held in her honor.

**2014:** The historical epic film "*Kurmanjan Datka*" premiered on Kyrgyzstan's Independence Day on August 31.

## References

- Agadjanian, V., and Dommaraju, P. (2011). Culture, modernization, and politics: Ethnic differences in union formation in Kyrgyzstan. *European Journal of Population*, 27, 79-101.
- Aphorisme.ru. (2007). *Датка Курманджан - афоризмы, цитаты, высказывания и изречения*. <http://www.aphorisme.ru/by-authors/datka/?q=11419> (last accessed 21st June 2023).
- Atanova, S. (2021). Gendering of nation Branding in Kyrgyzstan: Kurmanjan Datka: Queen of the mountains. *Russian Review of Social Research*, 13(3), 88–110.
- Bates, D.G. (1974). Normative and Alternative Systems of Marriage among the Yörük of Southeastern Turkey. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 47(3), 270-287.
- Borbieva, N.O. (2012). Empowering Muslim Women: Independent Religious Fellowships in the Kyrgyz Republic. *Slavic Review*, 71(2), 288-307.
- Dronov, E. (2016). 205 лет со дня рождения Курманджан-датки Маматбай кызы (1811-1907), алайской царицы <https://www.bhu.kg/science/library/library-news/205-years-since-the-birth-Kurmanjan-Datka-Mamatbay-kyzy-1811-1907-Alai-queen> (last accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023).
- Goethals, G.R., & Hoyt, C.L. (2017). *Women and Leadership: History, Theories, and Case Studies*. Great Barrington: Berkshire Publishing Group LLC.
- Handrahan, L.M. (2001). Gendering Ethnicity in Kyrgyzstan: Forgotten Elements in Promoting Peace and Democracy. *Gender and Development*, 9(3), 70-78.
- Human Rights Watch. (2006). *Reconciled to violence: state failure to stop domestic abuse and the abduction of women in Kyrgyzstan* (issued: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006). <https://www.hrw.org/report/2006/09/27/reconciled-violence/state-failure-stop-domestic-abuse-and-abduction-women> (accessed 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023).
- KNEWS. (2011). Мероприятия, посвященные 200-летию Алайской царицы Курманджан Датки (Список) (31<sup>st</sup> August 2011 issue) <https://knews.kg/2011/08/30/meropriyatiya-posvyaschennyie-200-letiyu-alayskoy-tsaritsyi-kurmandjan-datki-spisok/> (last accessed 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023).
- Nedoluzhko, L. & Agadjanian, V. (2015). Between Tradition and Modernity: Marriage Dynamics in Kyrgyzstan. *Demography*, 52(3), 861-882.
- Soma, T. (2022). *Sougen-no-Okite (Rules of the Steppe Land)*. Kyoto: Nakanishiya Shuppan co.ltd.
- UN Women. (2023). *Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation* <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures> (last accessed 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023).

Wachtel, A. (2016). A Tale of Two Heroes: Kyrgyzstan in Search of National Role Models. *Regional Studies of Russia Eastern Europe and Central Asia* 5(1), 1-16.

Western Governors University. (2020). *Leadership theories and styles*.  
<https://www.wgu.edu/blog/leadership-theories-styles2004.html#close> (last accessed 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023).

Абытов, Б.К. (2011). Малоизвестные факты из жизнедеятельности Курманжан датки. Евразийское исторический сервер.  
[https://eurasica.ru/articles/kyrgyz/bk\\_abytov\\_maloizvestnye\\_fakty\\_iz\\_zh\\_iznedeyatnosti\\_kurmanzhan-datki/](https://eurasica.ru/articles/kyrgyz/bk_abytov_maloizvestnye_fakty_iz_zh_iznedeyatnosti_kurmanzhan-datki/) (last accessed 21<sup>st</sup> June).

Жусуев, Сооронбай. (1994). *Курманжан датка: Ыр менен жазылган роман*. Руханият, Бишкек.

Касымбеков, Төлөгөн. (1990). *Келкел*. Мектеп, Бишкек.  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20160401030932/http://www.bizdin.kg/ru/%D0%BA%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B3%D0%B8/item/532-%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%BB> (last accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023).

Плоских, В., & Джолдошова, Ж. (2011). *Курманджан - Алайская царица, Эпоха глазами современников и потомков*. Бишкек: Исследование Эссе Материалы Документы.



***Between West and East: Japanese Mangas as World Literature***

Alexandra Goitia, Illinois State University, United States

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The following essay proposes intertextuality in Japanese mangas as a bridge between Europe and Asia, it proposes the relationship betwixt texts as an overpass between dichotomies and socio-political space borders. In this sense and in virtue of focusing on interculturality and displaying a state of the matter as broad as possible, the following work seeks to part ways from the prevailing Eurocentrism in the academic field and to mention, both bibliographic sources and works and text fragments, from various countries and languages and cultivated by different authors (male and female). Hence, the intention of *Between West and East: Japanese mangas as World Literature* will be to show different examples of intertextuality present in mangas, recognizing this literary device as both a literary strategy and a path towards the understanding between cultures.

Keywords: World Literature, Intertextuality, Manga, Eurocentrism, Interculturality

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction: the age of globalization

In the era of cultural dialogue, the academic field has to bet on an intercultural canon that reflects social heterogeneity and, among others, helps us manage diversity both in and outside Academia. As researchers, we have to approach to a re-thinking of the canon that reimagines the established hegemonic structures and avoids the predominant Eurocentrism. Additionally, regarding the educational system, professors have to bet on an intercultural corpus that prepares students for social diversity and the socio-historical context in which they will be framed. In this sense, the following paper defends that literature, especially, World Literature, can be a way towards interculturality. Thus, next, I will suggest a reconsideration of the notion of World Literature and propose *mangas* (Japanese comics) as a way to decanonize the canon and approach to a re-thinking of the prevalent Eurocentrism in the Academia, understanding *mangas*' intertextual nature as a potential bridge between cultures.

### “World” literature?

World Literature, as a literature that transcends space-cultural borders and contributes to the creation of a heritage and collective imagination shared by the inhabitants of the globe, is an ideal tool to counter contradictions and foster understanding between cultures. Or, at least, it should. However, does this image of World Literature as a literature that transcends borders and cultures and whose definition and delimitations are shared by all human beings really exist? That is to say, is World Literature really “universal”?

In his *magnum opus* *The Western Canon* (1994), Harold Bloom argued that current reality cannot be understood without the set of books that shape the literary canon. The American critic proposed a solid literary canon made up almost exclusively of male, white, Western and Anglophone authors, a catalog in which -based on a culture of elites- predominant Eurocentric aesthetics prevailed over the claim of, among others, non-hegemonic objects or minority cultures. As an object of power that functions as a reflection of the political ideas of our reality, the literary canon is, in truth, a tool that tries to universalize the particular, a discourse in which the literatures called alternatives or peripheral (thus establishing the canon as the center) have no place in it and which will be in charge of building and promoting the notion of World Literature (WL) that prevails today.

While several academics (Bhabha, 1994; Casanova, 2001; Henitiuk, 2012) wonder about how to restrict the meaning of a concept that "is still in the process of emerging" (Puchner, 2011: 256), and if it is possible to do so without falling into essentialization (Watroba, 2017), the canon faces a corpus that, far from reflecting the diversity of the world, remains completely Eurocentric. Namely, the main problem with WL is not that we do not know what “World Literature” actually is, if, for example, it means "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language" (Damrosch, & Spivak, 2003: 4), or quite the opposite: "world literature in the narrow sense of literature that circulates globally is historically complicit with the epistemic violence of imperialism" (Cheah, 2016: 18). The main problem with WL is that the only "universal" or “global” pieces that appear in academic books are Western ones, leaving out other important works from other cultures out of the canon.

To sum up, when Harold Bloom proposed his canon, he proposed a solid literary canon made up almost exclusively of Western authors. Why? Because the literary canon is not a non-political narrative but a tool that acts as a reflection of society. It can be described as a

discourse in which the Non-Western books have no place in, which is especially problematic because the canon is in charge of building and promoting the notion of World Literature that prevails nowadays. In other words, if the canon is Eurocentric, World Literature, despite its name, is also Eurocentric. That is why, the present paper is going to analyze a non-western genre: the *manga*.

### **Intertextuality in *mangas***

Comics have been defended by various authors as an effective instrument when it comes to: promoting visual literacy (Gillenwater, 2009; Del Mar, 2016), cultivating different disciplines: L2 language learning, mathematics, History... (Misrache et al., 2002; Toh, 2009; Caro, 2015; Serrano, 2019), developing students' critical thinking (Naghshineh et al., 2008; Segovia, 2012; Rovira-Collado, & Ortiz, 2015; Derbel, 2019; Ibarra, & Ballester, 2020) ... Still, what I'm most interested in when analyzing *mangas* and their contribution to World Literature is their capacity to establish intertextual references, understanding "intertextuality" as the dialogue between pieces (Kristeva, 1966). Therefore, next, I will first point out some intertextual references in the industry that I found interesting and then argue why I believe that the intertextuality in *mangas* (which can be understood as Japanese comics) can be good to renew the literary canon.

First, *Dragon Ball*. Known as the *manga* that shaped the *manga* industry as we know it today, Akira Toriyama's *Dragon Ball* (1984-1995) has influenced countless series and has been adapted into numerous other forms of media. Still, and even though it is true that the story of Son Goku and the Dragon Balls has become one of the most influential series of all time, it must be highlighted that the *manga* itself was influenced by other pieces too, for instance, *Journey to the West* (1592).

From the very first chapter, one of the most famous *manga* series in History has a lot of references to one of the most famous Chinese books in History. For example, we can find several intertextual allusions in the construction of the protagonist himself, Son Goku. Goku is based on Sun Wukong, the protagonist of *Journey to the West*. Among others, his own name is a reference to the character of *Journey to the West*, as "Son Goku" is how the name of "Sun Wukong" is pronounced in Japanese. Additionally, Sun Wukong is known as the "monkey king", which is the reason why Goku has a monkey tale and can transform himself into a giant ape. Furthermore, Sun Wukong has a staff that can stretch to any length, and a cloud that he uses to fly through the sky, and that is why Goku has a magic stick that can stretch a lot and a cloud named the Flying Nimbus.

As we can see, *Dragon Ball* has a lot of allusions to *Journey to the West*. Still, it isn't the only *manga* that uses intertextuality as a tool to develop their stories. Among others, *Magi: The Labyrinth of Magic* (2009-2017) establishes several references to the well-known *One Thousand and One Nights*. Shinobu Ohtaka's story follows the adventures of Aladdin, Alibaba Saluja, and Morgiana, as they explore a mystical world full of mysterious dungeons and Djinns. The series is set in a world similar to the Middle East during the Middle Ages, with several of its regions and peoples based on real-world counterparts.

Still, it must also be pointed out that *mangas* don't have to establish connections with just one book. That is to say, for example, Sui Ishida's *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011-2014) is a story that follows an undergraduate student as he struggles to adapt to his new life as a half-ghoul half-human, and has both direct and indirect references to several literary masterpieces, such as

Herman Hesse's *Demian* (1919), Osamu Dazai's *The Setting Sun* (1947) or Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) from the very first chapter. Moreover, the majority of characters of Kafka Asagiri's *Bungō Stray Dogs* (2012-) allude to famous literary protagonists and authors like Agatha Christie, Ranpo Edogawa or Akiko Yosano.

Other times, *mangas* don't seek to establish direct intertextual references to literary masterpieces, but rather tend to focus on developing more general literary topics. For instance, based on the world of alchemy, Hiromu Arakawa's *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2001-2010) develops several topics such as resurrection, the Philosopher's stone, homunculus ... This technique or tool is also used by Yasuhisa Hara, the author of the celebrated *manga* series *Kingdom* (2006-). Hara seeks to cultivate, on the one hand, a fictionalized version of the Warring States period of China, and, on the other hand, topics like the one mentioned on chapter 660. On chapter 660, Hara wonders about whether humans are good or bad, a discussion attributed to Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the West.

Sometimes, the references can be found, not in the original *mangas*, but rather in their adapted versions. In other words, some *mangas'* adaptations tend to establish literary references that were not found in the original *mangas*. For instance, in Hajime Isayama's *Attack on titan* (2009-2021), both versions (anime and *manga*) allude to Greek and Nordic mythologies by introducing scenes which hint at Atlas', Yggdrasil's, Atreus and Thyestes', ... myths. Still, in its anime version, in the second minute of the second chapter, the viewer can appreciate two direct quotes to Dante's *The Divine Comedy's* (1321) *Purgatory*, two sentences that, however, do not appear in the original *manga*. In this sense, it is important to note that intertextuality can also be related to interdisciplinarity.

One *manga* that focuses on the dialogue between disciplines is Tatsuki Fujimoto's *Chainsaw Man* (2018-). Based on the life of a teenager that seeks to keep surviving in a world full of demons (and eventually becomes a human-demon hybrid), *Chainsaw Man* develops literary topics such as the one about ignorance vs knowledge, still, it also establishes references with several disciplines. For example, on chapter 63, the reader faces a severed hand full of ants, a reference to Luis Buñuel's *Un chien andalou* (1929), and in the last panel of the chapter 95, Fujimoto draws the protagonist and the antagonist in a way that it reminds of Michelangelo's *La Pietà* (1499), furthering the transdisciplinary connection between *mangas* and other mediums.

This is something that is also deepened in *Chainsaw Man's* anime adaptation. The opening song of the animated version of the series refers to different cultural products, such as movies like Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994), or paintings like Gustave Doré's *Paradise Lost* (1866). Doré's painting can also be found in the *manga*, on chapter 81, and that's because *mangas* are also an appropriate medium to establish.

interdisciplinary references with paintings. A great example of this is yet another Japanese work: the *manga* of *Blue Period* (2017-). From its own very title (which is a reference to a Picasso's monochromatic period), Tsubasa Yamaguchi's *Blue Period* establishes numerous relations with several famous paintings, such as Tsuguharu Foujita's *Self-Portrait* (1929) on chapter 2, Evelyn De Morgan's *Clytie* (1887) on chapter 33, or Diego Velázquez's *The Three Musicians* (1618) on chapter 35.

With all of this in mind, one might wonder why are all these intertextualities (transdisciplinary or not) so interesting for the notion of World Literature. First, it must be



pointed out of their intercultural nature. To wit, what's so fascinating with the intertextuality in *mangas* is the fact that these dialogues between texts or disciplines are able to connect the East with the West. *Mangas* are a Japanese genre, a non-western object, but, at the same time, thanks to their intertextualities, they are able to connect different literatures and countries, including those Western and Eastern.

In this sense, another convenient thing about intertextuality in *mangas* is that it can help avoiding cultural shock. That is to say, as pointed by authors such as Fredric Jameson, Hans-Robert Jauss or Hans-Georg Gadamer, if the reader's knowledge and the knowledge required by the book do not coincide, the dialogue between the receiver, the work and the artist will be abruptly interrupted and the reader will reject the text. Therefore, regarding the present paper, if, as westerns, we are not used to read, for instance, books from determined cultures, once we start consuming them, we might reject them, as our knowledge might not match with the one required by the book. That's why intertextuality is so important. When referring to the Western reality, *mangas* give a familiar context to the reader and therefore are able to unite the East and the West.

## **Conclusions**

In the era of globalization, the literary canon keeps being Eurocentric; World Literature, despite its name, it's still Western-like. Hence, the present essay has defended that the *manga*, as a Japanese genre, has a potential to renew the corpus and the canon. The intertextual references present in *mangas* can be a way to connect different bodies, spaces and times, uniting the East with the West and approaching to a real understanding of what World Literature means.

## References

- Bhabha, H. "The location of culture Routledge." *New York* (1994).
- Bloom, Harold. *The western canon: The books and school of the ages*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.
- Caro, M. R. (2015). Los cómics como herramienta didáctica en el aula de traducción. *Opción: Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales*, (5), 763-777.
- Casanova, Pascale. "La república mundial de las letras, tr." *Jaime Zulaika, Barcelona* (2001). Cheah, Pheng. *What is a world?: on postcolonial literature as world literature*. Duke University Press, 2015.
- Damrosch, David, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Comparative literature/world literature: A discussion with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and David Damrosch." *Comparative Literature Studies* 48.4 (2011): 455-485.
- Del Mar, M. (2016). "La investigación y la didáctica de la historieta, como herramienta de aprendizaje enseñanza de adultos", *Opción*, vol. 32, núm. 7, pp. 559-582.
- Derbel, E. (2019). RETRACTED: Teaching Literature through Comics: *An Innovative Pedagogical Tool. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 8(1), 54-61.
- Gillenwater, C. (2009). LostLiteracy: How Graphic Novels can recover Visual literacy in the Literacy Classroom. *Afterimage*, 37(2), 83-97.
- Henitiuk, Valerie. "Optical illusions?." *CREATIVE* (2012): 3.
- Ibarra, N., & Ballester, J. (2020). El cómic en la formación de lectores: del descubrimiento de la lectura a la alfabetización. En G. De la Maya, & M. López-Pérez, (Coords.), *Del multiculturalismo a los mundos distópicos. Temas actuales de la didáctica de la lengua y la literatura* (pp. 195-205). Marcial Pons.
- Irwin, Robert. *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1,001 Nights: Volume 1*. Vol. 1. Penguin UK, 2010.
- Kristeva, Julia. "" Nous deux" or a (hi) story of intertextuality." *Romanic Review* 93.1/2 (2002): 7.
- Misrache, C., Lolas, F. & Alliende, F. (2000). *El "cómic" como estrategia educativa en bioética y ciencia*, *Revista Enfoques educacionales*, 3(1), Facultad de Ciencia Sociales, Universidad de Chile, 73-81 (2000).
- Naghshineh, S., Hafler, J. P., Miller, A. R., Blanco, M. A., Lipsitz, S. R., Dubroff, R. P. & Katz, J. T. (2008). Formal art observation training improves medical students' visual diagnostic skills. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 23(7), 991-997.

- Puchner, Martin. "Teaching Worldly Literature." *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*. Routledge, 2011. 226-233.
- Rovira-Collado, J., & Ortiz, F.J. (2015). Hacia un canon escolar del cómic. Tecnologías para su desarrollo, difusión y aplicación didáctica en el aula de lengua y literatura. En N. Ibarra; J. Ballester; M. L. Carrió, & F. Romero (Coord.), *Retos en la adquisición de las literaturas y las lenguas en la era digital* (pp. 503-508). Servicio de Publicaciones Universitat de València.
- Segovia, B. (2012). La adquisición de la competencia narrativa a través del cómic en la Escuela Primaria. *Revista complutense de educación*, 23(2), 375-399.
- Serrano, M. B. M. (2019). El cómic de ciencia como herramienta para contrarrestar la imagen popular de la ciencia y los científicos. *Tebeosfera: Cultura Gráfica*, (11), 14.
- Toh, T. L. (2009). Use of cartoons and comics to teach algebra in mathematics classrooms. *Mathematics of prime importance: MAV yearbook*, 230-239.
- Watroba, Karolina. "World Literature and Literary Value: Is "Global" The New "Lowbrow?"." *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 5.1 (2018): 53-68.

**Contact email:** agoitia@ilstu.edu



***Teaching the Notion of ‘Civil Society’ Through Classroom:  
How Can Teachers in Tajikistan Use the Ethical Pathways to Human Development  
Module to Instil the Notion of ‘Civil Society’ Amongst Secondary Students?***

Ganjina Shamirova, Institute of Ismaili Studies, United Kingdom

The Asian Conference on Asian Studies 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

It has been proved over the past that civically active youth have been a potent force for change. Yet, youth in newly established democratic regimes frequently suffer as a result of their civic participation. In order to help the younger generation, select safe chances for their civic involvement, it is necessary to explain the concept of CS critically. The purpose of the study is to examine how can Secondary Teaching Education Programme (STEP) teachers in GBAO, Tajikistan, implement the concept of Civil Society (CS) in the Ethical Pathway to Human Development (EPHD) module. Accomplished through the document, historical, and textbook analysis, and interpretation of sources on CS, AKDN, and related topics, the study is a desk-based research based on qualitative research examination of the literature. It looks at the historical development of the concept and determines the possibilities and limitations of using “communal” CS paradigm. Focusing on the communal model used by the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), and Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) initiatives, the research suggests socio-cultural opportunities to convey the meaning of CS to youth. Considering the AKF's objectives as an NGO can help students grasp a critical understanding of the term and reflect on the paradigms used in students’ context, however, it also informs about the socio-political limitations of teaching about CS in GBAO that often-become barrier to teach about CS. In terms of exposing students to safe civic involvement, the paper underpins the significance of teachers’ subject knowledge, which includes content, pedagogic and curriculum knowledge.

Keywords: Civil Society, Civil Participation/Engagement, Teaching, Aga Khan Foundation, Tajikistan

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction: Rational of the research**

Throughout history it has been proven that civil engaged young people have been a powerful force for change (UNICEF, 2020). However, often time youngsters in the just formed democratic states become victims of their civic engagement. Therefore, it is crucial to teach the notion of CS critically so that the younger generation choose safe opportunities for their civic engagement. Understanding the notion of CS is complex but it is crucial for youngsters to understand the concept based on historical, contextual, and political aspects. This research aims to identify the role of STEP teachers in educating the younger generation in Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) Tajikistan about the concept of CS so that they could make secure decisions in getting engaged with society to avoid conflicts.

## **Background: Civil Society evolvement and the Secondary Curriculum**

The term CS has evolved through history and context therefore can be an advantage for younger generation to be taught. Dating back to Greek philosophers the term CS was first mentioned by Aristotle mentioning about 'polis' as a "genuine participative community." Unlike subsequent views of civil society, Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle are more concerned with directing a city to virtue than with having a positive view of political freedom (Simpson, 2014). Most of sources associate the emergence of the notion of CS to 17th and 18th centuries back to enlightenment period. European thinkers, philosophers, and politicians were represented as authors and analysts at all historical periods of CS development. A public organisation, such as a union, is important to organise productive activity to defend personal freedom. The yearning of the individual for legal protection, the development of civic culture, self-governance, etc. can be seen throughout Europe's history (Azerbaiyev & Nurmanbetova, 2016). However, another body of scholars claim that the "societas civilis" of the Aristotelian tradition inspired the Muslim philosophers prior to the enlightenment era which is often underestimated. One of these Muslim scholars and philosopher was Al-Farabi (d. 950). Farabi constructed a cohesive theory of social organisation based on the political and ethical principles of Greek thinkers, particularly Plato and Aristotle, as well as social ideas from the ancient East (Suleimenov and Nurgaliev, 2019). Most of the prominent Muslim scholars, including Al-Farabi, are taught in the SC which makes it relevant to introduce their ideas on CS or social structure to the classroom.

The thinker identified the traits that make a person a good "citizen," known as virtues, and the traits that make a person a bad "citizen," known as vices ("Ignorant cities"). Religion and politics were not separated by Al-Farabi since religion at the time merely taught values (Parens, 2006 cited in Azerbaiyev & Nurmanbetova, 2016). Azerbaiyev and Nurmanbetova is one of the few scholars who in their philosophical interpretation define how the characteristics of the social structure of 'virtuous city' can be a mode of civil society (p.200). In his Virtuous City, Al-Farabi claims that the perfect and virtuous city and its residents of it depend on helping each other for happiness (Turgut, 2022. p.41) which indicates the complete antithesis of the European model of civil society, which is emphasized on individualism.

Interestingly, in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, CS theorist omits the virtue and moral aspects of ideas of the concept that has been defined by the Greeks and Muslim philosophers. Since 1970s onwards, scholars have continued to focus on the materialistic and individualistic aspects of civic participation which contradicted the earlier philosophers' claims of being civilised. Turgut (2022) mentions that according to the second teacher the ignorant virtues are

as follows: “Even if happiness is told to them, they neither understand nor believe it. The good things they know are physical health, wealth, sensual pleasures, respect, dignity and so on. Similarly, for them, helping each other also becomes obtaining material things such as health and wealth...” The Main Principles of Living Together in al- Farabi's Virtuous...”) Much of Al-Farabi ignorance is associated with today's interaction of people when “people interact with each other only in case of necessity and unite with each other only in case of need” (p. 41).

As discussed previously, the definition of CS changed in the first half of the nineteenth century because of the growing influence of capitalism and early industrialism, as seen in the writings of Hegel, Marx, and others. The term was precepted as referred to as “a system of needs and work, of the market and specific interests” mostly meaning the middle class of society playing a marginal role until 1980s. It became the core representation in anti-dictatorial criticism, and it was used the term to speak out against one-party dictatorships, Soviet hegemony, and totalitarianism. In the winning battle against dictators, who constituted the most severe denial of CS in the twentieth century, “civil society” has become popular (JU, R., 2004).

### **Civil Society defined in Tajikistan**

Many American and European scholars claim that CS is particularly common to Europe and its application to non-European contexts especially Muslim contexts is impossible or problematic (Gellner, 1994). In modern times, the advent of CS is seen as a reaction towards control and neoliberal marketization and CS is considered NGOs and CSOs which assume many roles of governments (Anjum, 2012). Gellner assesses the social order and origin of Ibn Khaldun work and makes an argument that Muslim countries are distinct from those in Europe and America due to the lack of separation of state and religion, resulting in no pluralism in Muslim societies, thus not leaving space for CS. He argues that tribal society is reflected in the Islamic law, which is hostile towards state authority preventing the emergence of stable state, democracies, and civil society (Gellner, 1994, p.195). In Gellner's work it is evident how civic participation and social structure were understood and formed differently. The image of civic society in the book is completely capitalist emphasizing that commerce but not virtue constitute civil society (Kurzman, 1995, p.346).

However, recent scholarship has proven the opposite as more study is done on Islam and modern trends such as CS. Contrary to widespread belief, Kamali (2001, p. 466) asserts that in Muslim cultures, civil society is not anti-pluralistic and a Western monopoly. Diversity was the foundation of Islamic civic society. There was diversity in terms of faith and way of life. Islamic communities were combinations of variety and pluralism made up of many ethnic, religious, and tribal groupings. Islam had been born in the religious pluralism of the Middle East (Armstrong, 2023), Also, concerts such as pluralism, civil society, and democracy has been used in the speeches of Aga Khan IV, the spiritual leader of Shia Ismaili and has references of his speeches in the EPHD module, which can be used in classroom. In this regard the topic of CS and Islam can be appropriate topic for discussion in education of the younger generation.

Civil Society has been defined and amalgamated with different theories which set framework to the civil participation of Muslims societies. In Tajikistan, this concept in its modern understanding, albeit different from the European/Western conceptual framework, is believed to be formed during the Soviet regime where civil society was considered as “civil

socialism.” It was a society in which the acts of every political organisation, social movement, and civic group were directed by a centralized party-state, and even volunteerism was officially recognized. Nonetheless, over the next decades, the SU woven an enormous social fabric that permeated every element of life via a network of state sponsored CSOs linked to the Communist Party (Shahrani, 1993, p.130). State-sponsored Soviet academicians provided terminology guidance, explained the subject matter, assessed how the state and its institutions interacted with it, and decided everyone's place in the socio-legal community (p. 16). Most of the scholarly source’s mention that after the collapse of the SU, Tajikistan’s CS transitioned to be perceived and engaged with through two main paradigms: the neoliberal and communal (or alternative) paradigm.

According to Freizer (2005), CS of Tajikistan is sharply split between communal and neoliberal forms, with the latter being most represented by NGOs and the former by traditional community organisations. Communal CS has a long history in the region, but neoliberal CS (influenced by the Western paradigm of CS) is primarily being formed from new (p.3). However, in recent years there has been also seen the ‘activism version’ of CS referred to as a space outside of political parties where people and organisations worked to democratise the state and reshape power instead of gaining control in the ordinary way (Kaldor, 2003). The conditions in Tajikistan post-independent periods indicates CS in the first form and second form (neo-liberal and communal) in many sources. However, little is mentioned about the third form (activist), due to the presence of totalitarian communist rule and military dictatorships, respectively.

### **Opportunities of EPHD module**

CS is a fluid term and has been defined differently in academia through history shaping the political ideologies. Therefore, giving STEP teachers an opportunity to teach this notion while teaching the EPHD module would be an asset. The module encompasses the works of the AKDN institutions and most importantly the Islamic ethics represented in the work of the AKDN agencies therefore proving the presence of ethics within civic engagement. Also, the textbook includes the guidance and speeches of the Aga Khan IV proving the importance of CS and its presence in the Muslim world.

Even though there is not direct reference to the concept of CS, there are myriads of information related. First, the module takes a step-by-step approach explaining the challenges and responses Muslim face in the modern and contemporary periods. It provides a bigger picture of the issues and the diverse responses to the challenges Muslim face helping students to engage with discussions. As the Teacher’s Guide states: “The topics and issues in the curriculum are often of a complex nature, revealing multiple sets of meanings. They require to be approached from different viewpoints to arriving at the better understanding of them” (IIS, 2010, p. 40). Similarly, the concept of CS which has various meanings and theories can be a relevant discussion of topic to look at its meanings and evolvment when discussing related topics.

Moreover, there are many examples of the civil participation similar to other structures of Muslim life which were present in Muslim communities. However, it has been a matter of debate in modern scholarship whether civil society was present in Islam or not, which indicated shortage of scholarly research in Muslim societies. The engagement of Muslim or Islam with CS would also be a relevant topic for the classroom discussion. The first chapter of the module also has some connection of introducing challenges of the contemporary period



such as “In 1991, the end of Cold War with the fall of the SU, countries in that region became independent. One of these countries was Tajikistan in which a civil war followed” (p.11) and “An important goal for the new, independent nations was to become industrialized as soon as possible. They began to place great emphasis on economic growth. However, it soon became clear that the economy by itself could not solve all the problems of a country. Some of these problems were of a political nature, others dealt with social issues, and yet others were to do with cultural needs” (p.15). These introduction points make it easy for teachers to set the backgrounds for understanding the emergence of the concept of CS (NGOs or CSOs) and its need in the context.

Teachers can refer to them when explaining the notion of civil society. Students can also be inspired if the concept of CS can be linked to the Muslim past, such as the concepts of *assabiyyah* (social solidarity) of Ibn Khaldun or *al-madina al-fadila* (The Virtuous City) of Al-Farabi. These scholars' impressive ideas can inspire students to think more critically about the contemporary paradigms of CS and how those could be mobilised to create better future. Having discussed different historical perspective on the notion of CS can help students analyse their own context. Students, for instance will be able to define what form of CS they had in the past (the soviet *ghrazhdanskoe obshestvo*) and what is the connection or impact in the present (communal CS). Some of the terms which students heard such as *kolkhoz* and *komsomol* and used in students' daily life such as *mahala* and *avlod* can make it easy to follow the understanding the meaning and the historical evolvement of CS.

In addition, once introducing the idea of Muslims questioning the decline of Muslim civilization in comparison with European advancement in many fields, the module provides how Aga Khan III as a Muslim leader played a significant role in responding to the challenges of “modernity” and contributing to reforms in his community to shape their lives in modern times, while emphasizing to the Ismailis to be guided by the principles and ethics of their faith. For instance, Aga Khan III constantly reminded his followers that “for Muslims the practice of the faith was intricately linked to their activities in the world” (p.19). Also, there is the reference to the speeches of Aga Khan IV who not only play a role for guidance but also set an example for “his humanitarian work, based on the ethics of Islam, provides a valuable example of integrating faith and the world. It shows how Islam as spiritual inspiration and intertwined with the worldly can be used to help people improve their quality of life” (p.19). In his speech Aga Khan IV (2007) says, “By civil society, I mean a realm of activity which is neither governmental nor commercial institutions designed to advance the public”. Through the work of the AKDN the Aga Khan has concluded that the most crucial component of the development equation is CS (IIS, 2010). This indicates that his highness gives emphasis to the social and economic development that can elevate standard of living. Along with this aim for development, the definition of CS is illustrated within the ethics of keeping balance of *din* and *dunya*, inclusiveness, education, compassion, sharing and self-reliance which are the foundations of the AKDN's ethical framework.

Furthermore, the module covers an extensive information about ethics of Islam with further chapters emphasizing on the AKDN institutions and their role in different countries. The AKDN is a network of non-profit, non-religious, private development organisations that serve the most underdeveloped regions of Asia and Africa (Aga Khan, 2004). According to Daryush Muhammad Poor (2012) the AKDN has a unique model of leadership and can be regarded as an NGO which shares many commonalities with other types of organisations or leadership (p. 101). According to Poor (2012) the AKDN stands out from other NGOs due to its dedication to its ethical component which is the outcome of one interpretation of Islam

with Ismaili features, as well as its long-term investments and sustainable growth (cited in Daftary, 2020, p. 190) mentions that the AKDN, although sharing certain traits with both, is neither a faith-based charity nor an international development-focused NGO. Poor (2012) also emphasize that The AKDN NGOs' function as mediators between local autonomy and efficient national and international leadership with a general perspective on organisations (p.103). The above-mentioned claims hint how the AKDN as an NGO is compatible and at the same time uniquely distinct that can become a source of creating a model of Muslims Civil Society.

The module covers the importance of *din* and *dunya*, the ethic of Islam in explanation of the traditions and cultures of different contexts. Despite being a secular organisation the AKDN NGOs follow the ethical framework based of principles of Muslim faith such as self-help, creating various institutions to benefit for all, and speeches/*farmans* of the Imams (IIS, 2010, p. 31). In parallel with this the EPHD module illustrated some traditions from the context of Tajikistan such as “*kryar* in Badakhshan Tajikistan”. This tradition illustrates “volunteering service across traditions” which are tightly linked with defining CS in relation to Muslim traditions. These traditions in turn are linked to the traditions of the Prophet and the Imams which can inspire youngsters. This gives an opportunity for teachers to dive deeper into discussion of ethics, virtue, and morality which have an immense value in both the Greek and Muslim philosophers' work when they talk about social structure or co-existence.

The younger generation who may not have deep awareness of AKDN as a CS entity become confused when it comes to taking decision relying on the moral aspect of their faith. Thus, making the CS notion clear to them through the module, more precisely through the communal paradigm, which the AKDN is promoting in the area, can be valuable awareness and transforming experience in terms of choosing how to act in the authoritarian regime as citizens.

### **Limitations of the module**

There are some limitations within the module and the context of Tajikistan, which make it difficult to approach the concept of CS to be taught. First, the module does not provide a separate chapter or topic on discussing the notion which assigns the job to teachers' self-organisation and interpretation. Some teachers, who do not have grounded knowledge about the term may find it therefore challenging to prepare materials, plans, and activities as there is also not reference to the concept in the Teachers Guide. Therefore, when STEP teachers refer to the notion, they should have a sound knowledge of the concept with a great emphasize on the context where it is taught.

Even though unit 3 touches upon the AKDN agencies and their operation in different contexts with few references to Tajikistan, it is not enough for students to reflect on their own actions and decision as citizens of their country. For instance, teacher can use all the above-mentioned opportunities and approach CS through Islamic principles embedded in the AKDN institutions such as sharing, voluntarism, caring, and brotherhood (IIS, 2010). However, the textbook does not provide alternative theories on CS which need to be elaborated and compared. Moreover, in the case of using AKF work in Tajikistan can be used an example of promoting the communal paradigm of CS in Tajikistan which can help teachers explain only one notion of CS in current times. In addition, as mentioned earlier there are also the two others, the “neo-liberal” and “civil society activism” which exist within the context which are present and may leave students in confusion when not being explained,

therefore, the role of teacher in explaining the notion of CS is crucial. Third, the engagement with the module and connecting it to the lived experiences of students may often be overly sensitive topic. As mentioned in the Teachers' Guide, while the material of the Student's Reader serves as a major resource in the classroom, references are also made to the youth's experiences, interests, and concerns (IIS, 2010, p.20). When interpreting this idea into the context of adolescents in Tajikistan in current time, the module may not represent some of the sensitive concerns for the youth. In the recent months CS projects were effectively eradicated and hence will be safe to discuss in the classroom. CSOs are now pushed as the authorities accept all proposals as a danger to themselves. Thus, it may show the module has some external effect thus pinpointing teacher's vital role what information should be relevant to deliver.

### **Teachers' role when teaching CS in Tajikistan**

Teachers are essential in helping students comprehend the historical context of current concerns and the historical tendencies that correspond to the IIS SC goals. The IIS SC (2010) aims to encourage students to engage in the social and ethical issues that modern Muslim communities, religious traditions, and cultures are experiencing; it also aims to encourage students to discover significance in and inspiration from their faith, as well as to become sensitive to the spiritual aspect of human existence (p.9). Even though the EPHD module does not speak about the bigger trends in the Student Reader such as modernization, industrialization, or globalization, it does not mention a lot about their products such as the emergence of civil society, NGOs, or CSOs. Therefore, teachers would benefit from having a sound knowledge of the developments and key trends in the modern period leading to contemporary contexts. Hattie (2009) meta-analysis suggests that teachers' subject knowledge has a significant impact on student achievement. Shulman (1986) categorized subject knowledge into three types: content knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and curricular knowledge, which will analyse the role of STEP teachers in accordance to teaching the notion of CS.

### **Content knowledge**

Content knowledge is an important accountability of a teacher according to Pollard (et al., 2004). Teachers' knowledge gained from trainings, college and university courses, or independent study and interest is referred to as content knowledge as per Schwab (1978). Thus, it is crucial for STEP teachers to have a deep understanding of each trend or concepts of the modern period so that students learn better. The EPHD module has notes on the terms of content such as the examples from the work of AKDN or AKF in Tajikistan, which STEP teachers can relate to their contemporary activities in the area and make classes more meaningful for adolescents. Beside the conceptual understanding it is crucial for students to be aware of the cultural or traditional values and social structure of their context. Without the theoretical understanding of various forms of CS and the context where CS is functioning there would not be full understanding of CS.

Knowledge of the social structure of the Western scholars, Muslim philosophers, and experts on CA is a key for STEP teachers illustrating an example of content knowledge in history. Having a clear understand of these theories, the teachers can discuss problems and topics that have an impact on humanity as a whole and the larger society (IIS, 2010, p 9). Moreover, teachers can inspire students to learn more about some of the related areas that have not been much studied. For instance, Islamic philosophers such as Ibn al-Sina (d.1038), Ibn al-Rushd

(d.1198), and Imam Ghazali (d.1111) debated the connection between Islamic government and civil society (Kamali,2001). Much of the work of these thinkers is understudied which can inspire the younger generation for further exploration on the topic. To inspire the young minds, it would therefore be an advantage to pursue further research for STEP teachers in this area too. Unfortunately, STEP practitioner gains the primary knowledge from their master level courses and restrict themselves to further research of the topics of their interests: It would be an advantage for teachers to partake in further professional qualification development, local, or international conferences (Day et al., 2006), which in turn can help teachers encourage students and inspire them how to partake in their civic life.

### **Pedagogic content knowledge**

Shulman (1986) defined pedagogical content knowledge as subject matter knowledge for teaching. The Teachers Guide of the EPHD module proposes project work for teachers to implement in the classroom: “Project work can be presented in a variety of formats. It can be textual, audio-visual, or multimedia based. It can be in the form of an essay or a series of posters. It can incorporate a range of ideas from diverse sources, as well as the pupils’ own original work” (IIS, 2010, p.38). The TG mentions all types of project work except project participation which also can be embedded in the SC as service learning (Rhoads and Howard, 1998) which is characterised as an educational approach that consciously combines academic study with useful community service. Adolescent project participation has been encouraged by many international organizations including the Aga Khan Foundation, which can be an asset for STEP teachers to bring it classroom once learning about CS. Along with-it students can participate in civic activities via other international NGOs. UNICEF also encourages adolescents to actively take part in their families, peer groups, communities, local and national organizations, and policy arenas (both offline and online) to impact choices that affect them. Adolescents can take on duties and build abilities as educators, volunteers, activists, and advocates through civic participation (UNICEF, 2007). Similarly, the AKF is promoting projects such as “Local Impact” promoting new employment opportunities and young organizations by helping high growth sector entrepreneurs with their technical needs (AKF, 2022). Similar projects should be therefore encouraged by teachers as they promote leadership, civic engagement of youth in the context. As per the AKF assessment there is a shortage of leaders within the community to support their initiative projects (Rijabekov et al., 2018). Therefore, getting students to involve in those projects would set a starting point to the civic engagement of CS and fill the gap of encouraging more leaders in their communities. Another exercise that teachers can implement is to study and analyze existing projects AKDN or even non- AKDN CS organizations/groups by creating portfolios/case studies for students. These actions will not only engage students in the projects participation and contributing to their communities as citizens but also teach them and feel proud of their ethical actions made.

### **Curriculum knowledge**

According to Pollard et al (2014), curriculum knowledge refers to the programs of study, syllabi, work plans, resources, technology, and instructional materials used to achieve curricular objectives. Gulayozova (2012) defines the SC as a centralized curriculum with similar learning objectives for students all over the world which has not been narrowed by country. Even though several references are made to the context of Tajikistan, most of them either do not have a direct connection with the topic of CS or not relevant for discussion. Thus, teachers need to apply more contextual approach when making their plannings.

However, this can be at risk if teachers do not have subject matter expertise, therefore a much broader intervention should be proposed to the curriculum authors. Nevertheless, as the curriculum is global curriculum it may become too specific creating more issues, thus altering the main paradigms of CS to the module would be a better choice. One of the aspects of contextualization of the curriculum is the importance of place which includes the local traditions, needs, and conditions as per. Teachers also need to be careful and selective in terms to meet the needs of the political ideology to avoid tension when conveying the curriculum. Thus, contextualizing the curriculum, teachers need to consider all aspects of their planning.

## **Conclusions**

CS has been interpreted through history in diverse ways gradually being distanced from ethics and virtue which considered to be crucial for the Greek philosophers. Like the Greek thinkers, Islamic scholars have emphasized virtue and ethics in social structuring, but unfortunately little attention of scholarship has been in this regard. The work of the Aga Khan agencies can be a proof of the existence of CS in Muslim Words as they are embedded in ethical framework of Islam proving their action as a long tradition. Teaching about the historical account and contextual aspect of CS can indeed benefit students in many ways. Teachers who play a vital role in spreading knowledge of CS certain things need to be followed. First, it is crucial for STEP practitioners to have a sound knowledge of the concept based on their educational experiences. Teachers background knowledge gained from their MA course may not be enough as the module itself does not refer to the term of CS specifically. Thus, teachers cannot restrain themselves to independent research on the topic. Second, due to having broad and complicated historical and contextual scholarship on SC, teachers need to implement best pedagogies of experiencing how CS works. The research proposes CS engagement through the projects of AKF which can be introduced to adolescents so that they be both aware of existing such opportunities and take a chance to participate in them to meet the needs of the community projects. Third, teachers' knowledge of the curriculum demands all sort of consideration to make efficient impact on delivering the notion of CS so that students can be critical as well as safe in interpreting its meaning. Overall, teaching about CS in the context of Tajikistan has multiple means, however, there are factors that teachers need to be aware of, therefore, subject knowledge should be the main weapon for teachers.

## **Acknowledgement**

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Zamira Dildorbekova, for her support and encouragement which contributed to the completion of this piece of study. My deepest appreciation goes to Dr. David Bennet for keeping us on track throughout tutoring sessions, which offered checks and stimulated our attention for this project. Again, I owe a great deal to the entire staff at the Institute of Ismaili Studies for their diligent efforts during the search for the documents. God bless all my colleagues and friends who have been a part of this journey.

## References

- Aga Khan IV. (2003). Annual Meeting of The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. 5 May, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. <https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/resources/speeches/annual-meeting-european-bank-reconstruction-and-development-tashkent-his-highness-the-aga-khan>
- Aga Khan IV, (2007). The Enabling Environment Conference, Kabul Speech, 4 June 2007. available at <https://www.akdn.org/speech/his-highness-aga-khan/enabling-environment-conference-kabul>
- Aga Khan, A. (2004) Keynote Address to the Governor General's 2004 Canadian Leadership Conference: 'Leadership and Diversity' (Gatineau, Canada), The NanoWisdom Archive. Available at: <http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/> (Accessed: 13 May 2022).
- AKF, (2022). *LOCAL IMPACT*, Khorog: Aga Khan Foundation. <https://www.akfusa.org/local-impact/>
- Anjum, T. (2012). Civil Society in Muslim Contexts: The Problématique and a Critique of Euro-American Perspectives. *Islamic studies*, pp.27-48.
- Armstrong, K. (2001). *Holy war: The Crusades and their impact on today's world*. Anchor.
- Armstrong, K. (2023). *Muhammad: biography of the Prophet*. Hachette UK.
- Azerbaiyev, A.D. and Nurmanbetova, J.N. (2016). Al-Farabi's virtuous city as the prototype of the civil society. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 12(6), pp.199-209.
- Daftary, F. (2020). *Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Day, C., Stobart, G., Sammons, P., Kington, A., Gu, Q., Smees, R. Mujtaba, T. and Woods, D. (2006) *Factors that make teachers more effective across their careers*.
- Freizer, S. (2004). *Central Asian Fragmented Civil Society: Communal and Neoliberal Forms in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan*, in Glasius, M., Lewis, D. and Seckinelgin, H. (eds.) *Exploring Civil Society: Political and Cultural Contexts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).
- Freizer, S. (2005). Neo-liberal and communal civil society in Tajikistan: merging or dividing in the post war period. *Central Asian Survey*, 24(3), pp.225-243.
- Gellner, E. (1994). *Conditions of liberty: Civil society and its rivals*. Hamish Hamilton.
- Gulayozova, F. (2012). *How STEP Teachers Use the Teacher's Guide of the Ethical Pathways To Human Development and Implementing the Strategies in Their Teaching Practices in the Context of Khorog, Tajikistan?* (Doctoral dissertation, Institute of Education).

- Hattie, J. (2009). The black box of tertiary assessment: An impending revolution. *Tertiary assessment & higher education student outcomes: Policy, practice & research*, 259, 275.
- Institute of Ismaili Studies. (2010). *Secondary Curriculum: Ethical Pathway to Human Development (Student Reader)*. London: Islamic Publication limited.
- Institute of Ismaili Studies. (2010). *Secondary Curriculum: Ethical Pathway to Human Development (Teachers Guide)*. London: Islamic Publication limited. IIS.
- JU, R. (2004). Civil society from a historical perspective. *European Review*, 12(1), pp.65-79.
- Kaldor, M. (2003). Civil society and accountability. *Journal of human development*, 4(1), pp.5-27.
- Kamali, M. (2001). Civil society and Islam : a sociological perspective. *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 42(3), pp.457-482.
- Kurzman, C. (1995). [Review of Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals., by E. Gellner]. *Social Forces*, 74(1), 344–347. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2580639>
- Muhammad Poor, Daryoush. (2012). *Revitalising the Stillborn Politics in the Pamirs. IIS (Institute of Ismaili Studies) unpublished.*
- Pollard, A., Black-Hawkins, K., Cliff-Hodges, G., Dudley, P., & James, M. (2014). *Reflective teaching in schools: Evidence-informed professional practice*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Poor, D. M. (2014). *Authority without territory: The Aga Khan development network and the Ismaili Imamate*. Springer.
- References: Researchers. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK.
- Rijabbekov, K, Okhoniyo V, and Amin Beg G. (2018). *Participatory Assessment of Mahalla Committees and SUDVOs in Tajikistan*. Unpublished.
- Rhoads, R. A., & Howard, J. P. (1998). *Academic service learning: A pedagogy of action and reflection*. Jossey-Bass.
- Schwab, J. (1978) 'Education and the structure of the disciplines. In Westbury, I. and Wilkof, N. J.
- Shahrani, Nazif. (1993). Soviet Central Asia and the Challenge of the Soviet Legacy. *Central Asian Survey* 12, 2: 123-135.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.

- Simpson, P. (2014). Book review: Reflections on Aristotle's Politics, written by Mogens Herman Hansen. *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought* 31, 2, 450-451, Available From: Brill <https://doi.org/10.1163/20512996-12340028> [Accessed 14 August 2021].
- Suleimenov, P., & Nurgaliev, K. (2019). Socio-Political views of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi. *Вестник КазНУ. Серия философии, культурологии и политологии*, 68(2), 75-81.
- Turgut, A.K., (2022). The Main Principles of Living Together in al-Fārābī's Virtuous State. *İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi*, (57), pp.38-45.
- UNICEF, (2007). Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation-MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CONSULTING WITH CHILDREN.
- UNICEF. (2020). Young people's participation and civic engagement. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/documents/young-peoples-participation-and-civic-engagement> (Accessed 24 June 2022).

**Contact email:** [shamganj@gmail.com](mailto:shamganj@gmail.com)







©The International Academic Forum 2023  
The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)  
Sakae 1-16-26-201  
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi  
Japan 460-0008  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)