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Research Articles

Developing Social Science-based Chinese Studies in East Asia: Geopolitics, Discipline, Knowledge

*Claire Seungeun Lee**
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Abstract

For its neighbouring countries in East Asia, China has always played a vital role not only in politics, economics, trade, and cultural exchanges, but also in the development of the discipline of Chinese Studies. This paper, focussing particularly on social science studies on China, explores how geopolitical contexts play a significant role in constructing Chinese Studies as a discipline in Japan and South Korea. This study primarily argues that geopolitics influence both the development of Chinese Studies and its intellectual cohorts. This paper further argues that the field of Chinese Studies generates knowledge not only for scholars within the university domain, but also for public audiences in the non-academic public domain.

Keywords: Chinese Studies, South Korea, Japan, geopolitics, generations, knowledge

1. Introduction

The continued rise of China is widely recognized in tropes that point to its massive economy, high export levels, and deep interconnectedness with other countries; in particular, this is well recognized by its two East Asian neighbours – South Korea and Japan. Dynamic China, transformed from a developing socialist country to a growing post-socialist *global* power in the twenty-first century, is symbolically and materially important to both South Korea and Japan across history. The growing political and economic influences of China beyond this sphere have allowed Chinese Studies to develop as a prominent field in many more countries, as well (Ngeow, Ling, & Fan, 2014, p. 103). With the interconnected rise of China and emerging geopolitical shifts, the study of China has become particularly popular in East Asia.

This study argues that geopolitically-significant relations serve as a force behind the development of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea, and shape corresponding intellectual cohorts who influence the development of this field through the generation and distribution of knowledge. In this paper, “Chinese Studies” is defined as the field of social science-based area studies on China, excluding the humanities.¹ Focusing upon China vis-à-vis social science enables us to understand the inseparability of the discipline from geopolitics and the dynamics of current events. This article, in particular, investigates how local and geopolitical contexts play a significant role in constructing and disseminating Chinese Studies as a discipline in these two East Asian societies. The following questions are examined in the paper: first, how geopolitics influence the development of the discipline and its intellectual cohorts and, second, how knowledge about China and the field of Chinese Studies is understood and utilized as a public commodity. This study contributes to the burgeoning literature on the origins and development of Chinese Studies in Asia. Recent contributions in this area advance our knowledge of how Southeast Asian countries conceptualize Chinese Studies (Ngeow et al., 2014; Shih, 2014; Shih, Chou, & Nguyen, 2014); however, the East Asian context continues to merit serious examination.

Based on publications, documents, websites, as well as interviews with Chinese Studies scholars in Japan and South Korea, this article attempts to answer the two questions posed. This paper argues that the discipline of Chinese Studies is not only developed by geopolitics; geopolitics influences the scholars in the field and their training.

What are unique characteristics of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea? First, in terms of academic disciplines, these two countries possess strong Area Studies traditions and boast long histories of studying foreign countries. This particular context for Area Studies, which itself is not only an academic discipline but also an applied science and a public commodity, serves as an important base for the development of Chinese Studies as a disciplinary subfield. Second, as China’s two nearest neighbouring countries to the east, Japan and South Korea can easily be framed as witnesses to China’s dramatic transformations and economic upgrades. In addition, Japan and South Korea have shared cultural proximity and history, as well as high connectivity in regards to trade, economics, business, culture and education with China. Trilateral relations are inevitable; the three countries are economically interdependent. China is the largest trading partner for Japan and South Korea. Perhaps the most salient factor, geographical proximity has influenced the ways in which Japan and South Korea cope with China’s rise. For example, Japanese and Korean factories moved to China’s East Coast in the 1990s and 2000s to access China’s market and low-cost production.

With increases in labour wages, their factories recently relocated to western China, or even to other countries, for cheaper labour (Kim & Lee, 2016). As key informational sources, Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea were expected to provide solutions for addressing such changes in bilateral economic dynamics with China. Another factor that illustrates the strength of these connections is the flow of Chinese international students and tourists to Japan and South Korea being larger than those to any other country (Lee, 2013). Third, in the era of China's rise, it is important for neighbouring South Korea and Japan to prepare for and actively respond to developing geopolitical shifts. Under such conditions, "understanding contemporary China" along the field of Chinese Studies is particularly important for China's neighbours. As such, prime geographical position has given rise to the predictable development and dissemination of Chinese Studies.

This article is organized as follows. The research opens with an examination of data on Chinese Studies, first as a humanities subfield and more recently as a social sciences-based discipline. With two analytical lenses on the field, examining (a) disciplines and intellectuals and (b) knowledge as a public "good", discussion then addresses the ways in which geopolitics shape Chinese Studies as one of the largest and most influential foreign country disciplines in Japan and South Korea. Key similarities and differences are highlighted. The paper closes by discussing implications for Chinese Studies against the rise of China, and shifting geopolitical relationships along the "Taiwan factor".

2. The Emergence of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea

2.1. Social Science-based Chinese Studies and Area Studies

In the early production of scholarship on China as a field of knowledge, or discipline, a large number of scholars in South Korea and Japan tended towards concentrations in literature and linguistics.² This led to the creation of a Department of Chinese Literature and a Department of Linguistics, rather than a Department of Chinese Studies, in many South Korean and Japanese universities. Designated Chinese Studies departments, however, tend to include diverse social science disciplines, such as Political Science, Economics, Management and Sociology with a particular focus on China. Unlike the cases of Chinese literature and Chinese linguistics, the Chinese Studies departments with a social science base can be categorized into two strands: one is explicitly grouped with the China-related departments (i.e. stand-alone Chinese Studies Department); another is located under the traditional social science disciplines (i.e. sub-departmental branches of formal

disciplines like political science and economics). In the case of Japan and South Korea, Chinese Studies is often associated with the former, as most of the social science departments in Japan and South Korea primarily centre on local societies.

Inheriting such traditions, Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea initially emerged as studies of the humanist traditions of Chinese language, literature and culture, which are often understood in global context as “Sinology”, and a social sciences-based domain for Chinese Studies developed later.

The social science-based school of Chinese Studies, on the other hand, can be better explained in the context of the development of Area Studies. Asian Studies departments,³ offering interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary programs, can be found in many universities, particularly those located in the United States.⁴ This is by and large a legacy of an intellectual curiosity in Asia and Asian societies as “exotic others”, and, to a certain extent, a reflection of western colonial tradition. By contrast, Asian universities that have not inherited a western colonial legacy lack a tendency to maintain “Asian Studies” as a separate discipline.⁵ Area Studies programs by region and country, however, exist in East Asian universities; in part due to the general academic influence of the United States, but also due to the development of Area Studies⁶ as a colonial legacy of systematizing research on other countries and colonial “possessions”. The study of foreign countries as a social science, however, is a rather new phenomenon because traditional social science disciplines, including political science, economics and sociology, are still primarily home to the study of local societies.

In Japan and South Korea, Area Studies have followed similar footsteps. On the one hand, Area Studies⁷ (地域研究) in Japan started to appear in the 1950s, as an inquiry of knowledge about others during the Cold War period, and the discipline expanded in the 1980s and 1990s along with Japanese economic development. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies was the first university to offer such programs (Takeuchi, 2012, p. 10). On the other hand, in South Korea, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies has language- and area-based departments, and is home to foreign language and country studies program. Later, the Kim Young Sam government of South Korea (1993-1998), which rapidly embraced globalization (*segyehwa*) as a tenet of the state agenda, established a set of nine graduate schools for International/Area Studies in 1997.⁸ In addition, a shortage of experts on trade and international political economy provided the impetus to establish more Area Studies programs. These graduate schools have received substantial funding to foster a pool of talent with international capital, and over the years have become significant sites of knowledge production.

2.2. Existing Scholarship on the Development of Chinese Studies

Despite the impetus for the creation of the discipline of Chinese Studies in Japan, a systematic study of the trajectory of Chinese Studies from local researchers has yet to be found.⁹ Only one exception, an overall reflection on the status of Chinese Studies in Japan, has been offered by Kokubun (Kokubun, 2001). Otherwise, few Japanese scholars have attempted to discuss issues and problems encountered by those engaging with Chinese Studies in Japan (Ushijima, 2008; Yumino, 2009); rethinking Chinese Studies or scholarly work on China as a discipline has yet to be fully explored. However, unlike domestic Japanese scholars, Chinese scholars based in Japan working in Chinese Studies appear to focus on specific economics, politics or other issues to investigate the overall development of Chinese Studies. Several of these scholars have commented on the development of Chinese Studies in Japan: Yan (2009) made a speech on the future of Chinese Studies in Japan in the context of Japan-China cooperation; Shu (2012) offers an extensive account of the Japanese Association of Chinese Studies as an example of investigating Chinese Studies developments in post-war Japan.

In contrast with Japan, Chinese Studies in South Korea have been analyzed extensively, both in general and with respect to specific subjects, because Korean scholars were urged to become China experts within a short period of time after the normalization of relations between Seoul and Beijing in 1992. First, general overviews of the discipline of Chinese Studies were investigated by Chun (1998) and Kim and Chun (1996). These two scholars observe the origin and development of Area and International Studies in Korea. Second, the development of Chinese Studies is particularly well-discussed in the context of Chinese politics, arguably because a majority of these scholars come from relevant social science backgrounds. In addition, geopolitics plays a critical role in the emergence of Chinese politics as a prominent area of inquiry in South Korean academia. This is in accordance with the distribution of Korean scholars who study China's international relations and politics. Along the line of post-Cold War thinking, it became imperative for Korean scholars to learn more about socialist China to manage foreign relations with China. Studies on Chinese politics have also benefited from South Korea's understanding of North Korea (A8, Interview, December 2016).¹⁰ As a result of this, a large number of such Korean scholars have conducted research on China's international and domestic political issues. For instance, Chung (2000) investigated Chinese political science as a method and area of research. Chung et al. (2005) further investigated Chinese political science studies in South Korea by comparatively analyzing *Sino-Soviet Studies* (in Korean) – one of the most prominent journals on China – and *The China Quarterly* for sources, method and writing. In a similar vein,

Kim (2006) explored Chinese Studies vis-à-vis politics in South Korea by interviewing a number of scholars. It is noted that the abstract and title of Kim's article may give the impression that the paper attempts to focus on Chinese Studies in general. However, her discussion is restricted to Chinese politics, and only those that are in line with the investigation of Chinese Studies in South Korea. In a nutshell, Korean scholars subsume both macro level reviews of Chinese Studies and studies on Chinese politics are subsumed under "Chinese politics".

2.3. Intellectual Generations and Knowledge as a Public "Good"

Karl Mannheim's concept of "generations" as generational units is useful for understanding the multigenerational lineage of Chinese Studies intellectuals in Japan and South Korea. Mannheim notes, "The sociological phenomenon of generations is ultimately based on the biological rhythm of birth and death ... it possesses certain characteristics peculiar to itself, characteristics in no way borrowed from the basic phenomenon" (1952, p. 290). In this regard, "intellectual generations" are composed of people born in a same period with shared experiences of social, geopolitical and historical changes in society, that shape a similar basis for their scholarly training, production of knowledge, expertise, and sense of mission to address public needs. These interlinked factors contribute to ways in which Chinese Studies develops as a discipline, and how knowledge is produced as a public "good", or commodity. Intellectuals in the same cohort recognized the idea of being located generationally. This is echoed by "The fact of belonging to the same generation or age group, have this in common, that both endow the individuals sharing in them with a common location in the social and historical process, and thereby limit them to a specific range of potential experience, predisposing them from a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant action" (Mannheim, 1952, p. 291).

Chinese Studies with a social science focus is understood not only as an academic discipline, but more importantly it is also perceived as an applied science that offers a public good to local Japanese and South Korean societies. This is an established view of Japanese and Koreans scholars, universities and think tanks. For example, Tokyo University specifically indicates data and research projects that are tailored to be available for "public use". (Contemporary China Research Base, University of Tokyo, n.d.). The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) of Japan, the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) and the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) of South Korea aim at producing publically available knowledge and information on China.

Chinese Studies as a public good and a form of practical knowledge can be understood along characteristics of a “public good” – non-rivalrousness and non-excludability (Stiglitz, 1999). By nature, research centres at universities and public and private domains provide publications and information through free-of-charge services. No matter whether they are from a public domain – semi-governmental and government-funded organizations – or private organizations that do not receive government funding, this information contributes strongly to these societies. In Japan and South Korea, Chinese Studies programs are often understood as a type of public good, with regard to their contemporary and interactive characteristics. On the one hand, more like an area study field than a social science discipline, Chinese Studies needs to be synonymous with contemporariness. Rapidly changing Chinese society and its connections to those of Japan and South Korea are highly important for all three of these countries, not only for academic purposes but also for negotiating everyday state-to-state interactions with China and person-to-person interactions with Chinese communities. On the other hand, interaction, which serves as the base of a public good, illuminates the fact that some mutual understanding is required in order to link the “local” and the “foreign”. In a related vein, understanding Chinese people in South Korea and Japan, and Koreans and Japanese in China, is vital. These linkages are produced by university research centres and think tanks – public and private organizations – researching China.

The following two sections examine the development of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea, respectively. Focussing on the social science-based Chinese Studies, each section elaborates upon the ways in which Japanese and South Korean intellectuals have formed their generational cohorts, resulting in geopolitical shifts with China, and how Chinese Studies is produced as a public good in these two countries.

3. Chinese Studies in Japan: Forming the Discipline and Intellectual Cohorts

Japan is home to a long tradition of studying China as an academic discipline, from early Sinology (支那学, *Shinagaku*) to more contemporary Chinese Studies (中国研究). This could be attributed to the common use of Chinese characters in Japanese and Chinese written text. Due to this common feature of using Chinese characters (*Kanji*), Japanese scholars have enjoyed an easier understanding of Chinese texts than scholars from other countries.

Sinology in pre-war Japan was particularly associated with the literature, history and philosophy of China. In the early post-war period, the scholarly publication “支那学” from Kyoto Sinology Centre was discontinued. A

transition from “Sinology” to “Chinese Studies” (中国研究) was a rather gradual movement. Due in part to this, the Society of Contemporary China Research (日本現代中国学会, later The Japan Association for Modern China Studies),¹¹ which is the oldest and probably the most comprehensive association in this field, was established in 1951. The existence of such organization implies that research on China attracted a substantial number of Japanese scholars at the time, and also signals the continuation of Sinology from a different research angle. Scholars who benefited from partaking in the pre-war research tradition of Sinology are considered members of the first generation of a Japan-based Chinese Studies tradition (A1, Interview, December 2014).¹² The first generation also includes those who were involved in projects including the Manchuria Railway Research Team (旧満鉄調査部) and returned back to Japan, such as Amate Motonosuke (天野元之助).

As members of the Japan Association for Modern China Studies focus on post-1949 “contemporary” China (Sasaki, 2005), the generations of Chinese Studies scholars that follow are considered to be predominantly social science-based, and much more so than the first generation. The second generation consists of those who had an intellectual curiosity about socialist China, the Chinese Communist Party, the political transformation of China, and went to study in the US in the 1950s and 1960s (Sasaki, 2005).

The third generation consists of those who started studying China after the Sino-Japanese diplomatic normalization in 1972 (Takagi, 2004). Not only has the diplomatic relationship fielded an increasing number of Japanese scholars, but it has also encouraged Japanese scholars to go to China, learn the Chinese language, and pursue approaches to contribute their knowledge to Japanese society as a public good. Due to these numerous paths of opportunity, Chinese Studies in Japan matured much earlier than in South Korea. Although it was the initiative of Japanese Ph.D. graduates from American universities that started Chinese Studies in Japan (Oksenberg, 1993), local training in prestigious Japanese institutions also contributed to the advancement of the field. This connection to a western educational model also explains how the study of Taiwan as one of Japan’s colonies was leveraged as a motivation for establishing Chinese Studies in Japan.¹³

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the relaxation of tensions between Taiwan and the mainland, and democratization of Taiwan, coupled with the return of U.S.-trained Ph.D.’s and the rise of a new generation of scholars, stimulated contemporary Chinese Studies in Japan, which included the study of Taiwan. In the 2000s and 2010s, young scholars went to China or Taiwan to study Chinese language before continuing their study in prestigious universities in Japan or abroad. Like the case of South Korea, their scholarly training

is diversified. Due to the influx of Chinese students to Japan, an increasing number of Chinese graduate students started to participate in academic conferences and publish in Japanese and Chinese in the Japan-based Chinese Studies community. We can similarly observe this trend in South Korea with the inflow of Han Chinese and Korean Chinese students who travel either to study Korean language, or even to study their country of national origin (China) in South Korea.

Although Chinese Studies has long existed and contributed to Japanese society by introducing new information on China, Chinese Studies has only been institutionalized as a public good in recent years. Many universities in Japan have research centres that foster China scholars, but a recent move plays a particularly concerted role in developing Chinese Studies in Japan. In 2007, the Contemporary Chinese Area Studies of the National Institutes for the Humanities under the Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University was established with another six distinguished centres on China. The institutional effort was made by Keio, Tokyo, Aichi, Kobe and Hosei universities and Tōyō Bunko (Tōyō Publishing House) (Contemporary Chinese Area Studies, National Institutes for the Humanities, n.d.). Each institute has its own specific focus to produce a comprehensive Chinese Studies network for the public good. For example, Tokyo University has a focus on China's economic development. Hosei University works on grassroots movements and civil societies of China. The Research Institute for Humanity and Nature has an environmental and food safety focus. Tōyō Bunko has had a special relationship with the Contemporary Chinese Studies group since 2003 and continues to publish issues on China that are important additions to scholarship and pragmatic knowledge about the country (A3, Interview, November 2015).¹⁴

In Japan, think tanks, which include public organizations such as IDE and JETRO, and private research bodies, such as NIRA and Mitsubishi, usually conduct research on economic issues. JETRO has been particularly strong in producing pragmatic public goods for scholarly communities, as well as practical ones for those in need of such knowledge for business and everyday applications. JETRO has eight offices across China, in Beijing, Chengdu, Dalian, Guangzhou, Qingdao, Shanghai, Wuhan and Hong Kong. JETRO's research has been published in China's *Business News*, *Research Report*, and *Market Information*, and is a trusted legal information source. Not only business people, but also students and scholars benefit from obtaining information on a fast-changing Chinese society (A5, Interview, November 2015).¹⁵ Whereas JETRO provides economic, trade, business and legal information on an up-to-date basis, Mizuho, NIRA and Mitsubishi usually publish on the banking and economic sectors of China.

Table 1 Japan's Main Research Centres

<i>University-based research centres</i>	<i>Year established</i>	<i>Think tanks</i>	<i>Type</i>
Contemporary Chinese Area Studies, National Institutes for the Humanities	2007	Institute of Developing Economies (IDE, アジア経済研究所)	Public
Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University	2007	Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)	Public
Center for Contemporary China Studies at Keio	2007	National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA)	Private
Contemporary China Research Base, Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo	2007	Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)	Public
RIHN-Initiative for Chinese Environmental Issues, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), NIHU	2007	Institute for International Monetary Affairs (国際通貨研究所)	Public
Documentation Center for China Studies (DCCS), Tōyō Bunko	2003	Japan Institute for National Fundamentals	Public
International Center for Chinese Studies (ICCS) at Aichi University	2002	Mitsubishi Research Institute (三菱総合研究所)	Private
Institute of Grassroots China, Hosei University	2005	Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI)	Public
Contemporary China Research Base, Kobe University Interfaculty Initiative in the Social Science	2012		

Sources: Contemporary China Research Base, the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo <web.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/kyoten/>, retrieved 1 March 2017; Contemporary Chinese Area Studies, National Institutes for the Humanities <<http://china-waseda.jp/english/>>, retrieved 1 March 2017; Documentation Center for China Studies (DCCS), Tōyō Bunko <www.tbcas.jp/ja/>, retrieved 1 March 2017; Institute for International Monetary Affairs (国際通貨研究所) <<http://www.iima.or.jp/en/index.html>>, retrieved 10 March 2017; Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University <<http://china-waseda.jp/english/research-centers/kyoto-university/>>, retrieved 10 March 2017; Institute of Developing Economies (IDE, アジア経済研究所) <<http://www.ide.go.jp/English/>>, retrieved 1 March 2017; International Center for Chinese Studies (ICCS) at Aichi University <<http://ices.aichi-u.ac.jp/en/>>, retrieved 10 March 2017; RIHN-Initiative for Chinese Environmental Issues, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), NIHU <www.chikyu.ac.jp/rihn-china>, retrieved 5 March 2017; Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) <www.jetro.go.jp>, retrieved 1 March 2017; Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) <<http://www2.jiia.or.jp/>>; Japan Institute for National Fundamentals <<http://jinfn.jp/>>, retrieved 10 March 2017; Mitsubishi Research Institute (三菱総合研究所) <<http://www.mri.co.jp/index.html>>, retrieved 1 March 2017; National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA) <www.nira.or.jp>, retrieved 10 March 2017.

4. Chinese Studies in South Korea: Forming the Discipline and Intellectual Cohorts

Chinese Studies is organized according to the internal and international surroundings of China. In particular, research on China was inherently conflated with scholarship on a “communist” country, which led scholars to focus on Chinese politics and diplomacy. In the early postwar period, in the 1950s and the 1960s, foreigners could not go to Communist China to conduct research and the only choice was for them to go to Taiwan. In Japan, the tradition of studying China began earlier than in South Korea (see the later section). The normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972 also contributed to Japanese interest in China. In contrast with Japan, South Korean travel to China was also prohibited prior to the diplomatic normalization with China, because of the tension and ideological disparity between the two Koreas. Those who had attempted to read or have documents on communism could be seen as “anti-democratic” or undermining the South Korean government. It was only after the establishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and China in 1992 that South Koreans were able to go to China to study. It also gave them liberty and freedom to not only travel in and out of China, but to also research the country. Going into the field is important for Korean scholars and students to get firsthand information and find material. Prior to this, scholars either use published works in Japan or Hong Kong as alternative, but arguably the only accessible, data sources (A4, Interview, October 2015).¹⁶ Dominant research traditions, which emerge concurrent to the development of intellectual cohorts, have changed over time. The following is a chronological order of the different cohorts of Chinese Studies scholars in South Korea, based upon internal and external contextual factors in the development of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea,

The first generation of Korean Sinologists consists of those who studied in the 1970s (or even earlier in the immediate post-war period). In the 1970s and 1980s, when China was still under the communist regime and North Korea was still a clear ideological “enemy”, it was rather difficult for South Koreans to study China. At that time, studying China – one of the biggest and most isolated communist countries – had a negative connotation for Korean scholars who were often accused of leaning “left” and treating China as a cover to get closer to North Korea (A5, Interview, December 2015).¹⁷ Ideological differences in the post-Korean War period have impeded Korean scholars to engage academically with China. Along with such sensitivity towards China as a research object, South Korean scholars were simultaneously encouraged to learn about communist “others” – both China and North Korea. This is underlined by the knowledge that doing so could result in better preparation for the present and future. For that reason,

studies on the politics and international relations of China were popular and encouraged. Bringing research on the foreign relations of China, rather than domestic politics, to South Korea was seen as beneficial and important, particularly for the Korea Central Intelligence Agency (*jungang jeongbobu*) (A6, Interview, December 2015).¹⁸ Some scholars should have training before travelling to or conducting research on China, depending upon the requisite sensitivities and urgency of the research topic (A3, Interview, August 2015).¹⁹

Prior to the establishment of Sino-South Korean diplomatic relations, South Korean scholars could only enter “Free China” (Taiwan) and study in Taiwan. Given the aforementioned context, among the first and second generations of South Korean China scholars, the politics and international relations of China and Taiwan were the most popular areas of study. Economics²⁰ and sociology (and culture) were likely to be missing areas of research. The second generation, in particular, began conducting research in the mid-1980s and the majority studied abroad in Taiwan due to political circumstances.

In the 1990s, after the diplomatic normalization between China and South Korea, the third generation’s postgraduate destinations were diversified. In addition, major research areas within Chinese Studies began to diversify as economics and domestic politics became emerging areas of study. South Korean scholars who went to Taiwan and those who went to China began to coexist. Others chose training in South Korea, the US, the UK, or elsewhere. It is still important to note that diplomatic ties between South Korea and China have influenced the post-graduate choice of China over Taiwan for an increasing number of South Korean scholars. This is a significant change from the previous generation, for both the intellectual cohorts and the development of Chinese Studies. The disciplines of economics, finance, management and business emerged with the second cohort and enrolment numbers increased in the third and fourth generations of scholars.

The fourth generation consists of those who studied in the 2000s with a more diverse background than the previous generation. In the 2000s, politics and economics were still dominant areas of study among Korean scholars in Chinese Studies. In the past decade, many recent Ph.D. graduates have obtained academic positions in economics programs as Korean universities realize the need for experts on the Chinese economy. Whereas education was primarily focused on economics in the 2000s and 2010s, some young scholars have started to turn their attention to Chinese sociology. Social science scholars in the second and third generation cohorts have studied the society and culture of China, yet they form a very limited minority. Therefore, the “sociology of China” subfield of Chinese Studies in South Korea almost always diverges into subcategories, under “other” or “leftover” domain labels (A2, Interview, April 2015).²¹

In recent times, “China” has appeared as a subject of study not only in the Chinese Studies community, but also among the social science disciplines. For example, scholars without Chinese language training, or specific educational backgrounds in the country or region, have also started to select China as the research subject of their postgraduate degrees. Such scholars have begun to close the gap between country-specific scholars and those with general social science training.

Taken together, Chinese geopolitics have influenced the ways in which Chinese Studies has developed. Through early engagement with China, Japan’s Chinese Studies field has been developed comprehensively, aided by local and international scholarly training as well as diversified research areas. In contrast with Japan, South Korea’s Chinese Studies field emerged more as a result of the state’s geopolitical relations with China. The discipline in South Korea has undergone criticism of being tied to ideological inclinations, which were often (mis)represented as a doorway to studying North Korea, before it vastly expanded research domains, from international relations and politics to economics. The ways in which Chinese Studies is managed and taught in Japan and South Korea have their commonalities as well as differences, producing disciplines and intellectual cohorts that are strongly influenced by geopolitical situations.

The China Research Institute at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and the Institute of Chinese Studies at Hanyang University are the oldest China-focused research centres in South Korea. Latecomers Kookmin University and Sungkyunkwan University have extensively developed their own comprehensive domains of knowledge about China through programs that educate students on Chinese politics and diplomacy, respectively. The second-generation scholars are the main contributors to universities’ research centres, extended by the recent contributions of third-generation scholars to the production of fresh academic capital in Chinese Studies. As the development of Chinese Studies has been disproportionately heavy on politics and economics, many academic functions and publications are largely centred on these issues.

Public organizations and think tanks, such as KIEP, KOTRA, KDI, KITA and IIT, are more concerned than university research centres with issues of economics and trade. This shows that South Korea’s economic interdependence with China is high, not only in terms of China’s import and export markets, but also in terms of China’s role as an overseas production base (Kim & Lee, 2016). KIEP has two teams focused on China – one addresses macroeconomic issues and the other regional issues. KOTRA has 18 offices across China in Beijing, Changsha, Chengdu, Chongqing, Dalian, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai, Shenyang, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Wuhan, Qingdao, Xiamen, Xi’an, Zhengzhou and Hong Kong. These field offices in China, as well as a main office in Seoul, publish information on

Table 2 South Korea's Main Research Centres

<i>University-based research centres</i>	<i>Think tanks</i>	<i>Type</i>
China Research Institute, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies	Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)	Public
Sungkyun China Research Institute	Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA)	Public
Academy of Chinese Studies, Incheon University	Korea Development Institute (KDI)	Public
China Humanities Research Institute, Kookmin University	The Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security (IFANS)	Public
Institute for China Studies, Seoul National University (Asia Center)	Korea International Trade Association (KITA) Institute for International Trade (IIT)	Public
Institute of Chinese Studies, Hanyang University	East Asia Institute	Private
	Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU)	Public

Note: Research centres on China with a humanities focus are not included for the scope of this paper.

Source: Homepages of each institute's website. Academy of Chinese Studies, Incheon University <www.aocs.inu.ac.kr>, retrieved 15 March 2017; China Research Institute, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies <www.china114.or.kr>, retrieved 15 March 2017; East Asia Institute <www.eai.or.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Institute for China Studies, Seoul National University (Asia Center) <<http://snuac.snu.ac.kr>>, retrieved 17 March 2015; Institute of Chinese Studies, Hanyang University <<http://ics.hanyang.ac.kr/index.php?userAgent=PC&>>, retrieved 15 March 2017; Sungkyun China Research Institute <www.sicsdev.skku.edu>, retrieved 15 March 2017; The Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security (IFANS) <www.knda.go.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea Development Institute (KDI) <www.kdi.re.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) <www.kiep.go.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) <www.kinu.or.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea International Trade Association (KITA) <www.kinta.net>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) <www.kotra.or.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017.

trade, investment and business. Regional offices in China serve to offer valuable and up-to-date data to intellectuals and the public, which KOTRA publishes online as part of *China Window*, the *China Investment News* series and informational handbook. KITA and IIT, with a specific focus on trade, offer sector-specific informational products with potential value and trade information. These organizations produce survey and statistical analyses that provide avenues for discovering new research topics with high value (A7, Interview, December 2016).²²

As discussed earlier, North Korea is another factor in the development of Chinese Studies in South Korea that cannot be ignored. The negative connotation that was once associated with studying China does not exist now, but China continues to be viewed implicitly (or explicitly) as a window into investigating North Korea, and potentially touches upon controversial topics such as Sino-North Korean issues and the unification of the Korean peninsula. KINU, which is under the South Korean Ministry of Unification, has a research division on China-North Korean issues for this reason.

Mobility, exchange and collaboration between academic and public domains occur at a high frequency. Quite a substantial number of researchers from other organizations, particularly scholars of Chinese business and economics, have transferred to universities to co-produce work in Chinese Studies with educational institutions and think tanks as a public good. Scholars who study China and other foreign countries are expected to produce publications and up-to-date current affairs reports (A6, Interview, December 2015).²³ This is not only the case of think tanks, but also of universities; the time-sensitive “contemporariness” of a public good in Chinese Studies is important.

5. Conclusion

This research traces developments of Chinese Studies in its neighbouring countries to the east – Japan and South Korea – by exploring the connections between geopolitics, intellectual cohorts and knowledge capital. As the top trading partner of both Japan and South Korea, and being their largest neighbouring country, China is important not only at the state level but also at the societal level. I argue that these countries perceive Chinese Studies as a valuable channel for institutionalizing accumulated knowledge on China.

In both Japan and South Korea, the field of Chinese Studies started by and large from studies on language and literature, and later expanded to include the social sciences. Such a commonality between these two countries largely mirrors other countries’ experiences and research traditions, as well as demands for information at the public and state levels. The key points of this paper can be summarized as follows. First, the *development of disciplinary*

configuration explains the development of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea as processes of knowledge production and dissemination, which are underlined by geopolitical events and institutional support. In the case of Japan, the field of Chinese Studies was established earlier, by way of reflection upon a longer history of Sino-Japanese relations. In South Korea, due to the ideological “war” with neighbouring North Korea, the study of China faced significant criticism prior to the normalization of diplomatic relations between Seoul and Beijing. In both countries, the process of studying China has witnessed both change and continuity as the number of dedicated researchers and institutions increases. Second, *geopolitics and intellectual generational cohorts* are two factors that have powerfully mobilized Chinese Studies. In the case of Japan, rather than studying in China, academic training at prestigious domestic Japanese institutions has been the mainstream approach. In the case of South Korea, educational migrations along geopolitical shifts are well represented in scholars’ backgrounds. In other words, many Korean scholars who are current faculty members at universities have benefited from academic training in Taiwan. Yet, due in large part to China’s rapid economic growth and geographic proximity most scholars produce knowledge on China for pragmatic reasons, regardless of their training environments. Third, the paradigm of *Chinese Studies as a public good* is evidence by the institutionalized production and public application of information about China. In Japan and South Korea, university-based research centres, public and private research organizations, and think tanks on China-related topics produce knowledge not only for public consumption, but for intellectual communities, as well.

In a nutshell, developments in Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea demonstrate the ways in which knowledge is produced and managed along geopolitical shifts. The discipline of Chinese Studies in these countries will be sustained and even expanded as China continues to rise and develop. The study of China is in demand proportional to its continuous economic rise and social development, as well as to the scale of its potential impact on Japan and South Korea.

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Notes

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1. A humanities-tradition of Chinese Studies is mentioned in order to give a better history of developing Chinese Studies in Section 2.
2. It is noted that this is a general trend in other area studies disciplines in Japan and South Korea.
3. See Goh (2011) on Southeast Asian Studies.
4. Asian Studies Programs and Centers in the United States can be found at <<http://aas2.asian-studies.org/programs/general.shtm>>. Retrieved 15 March 2016.
5. It is noted that research institutes on Asia in general are available.
6. In this regard, the British tradition of Developmental Studies is noted here as a similar reasoning.
7. Area Studies started in the 1950s Cold War era in the United States.
8. The list of nine graduate schools with International (Area) Studies that opened with the government's funding in 1997 include: Chungang University, Ewha Womans University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Hanyang University, Seoul National University, Sogang University, Korea University, Kyunghee University and Yonsei University (alphabetical order). The first round of setting up these graduate schools was in 1997, to receive government funding for five years, with a total amount of 760 billion Korean Won (Lee, Shin, & Song, 2010, p. 16).
9. On the contrary, the discipline of area studies in journals focuses on research traditions, methods and practices (Kajitani, 2007), but not on the development of Chinese Studies in Japan.
10. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese politics in Taiwan in the early 1990s.
11. The Japan Association for Modern China Studies (formerly Society of Contemporary China Research). Retrieved 15 September 2013 <<http://www.genchugakkai.com/gakkaigaiyou.html>>, in Japanese.
12. Interview with a Japanese scholar who studied Chinese economics.
13. The scope of this paper is restricted to Chinese Studies, I do not explicitly pay attention to Taiwan as a separate subject matter. Yet, there is a difference in treating Taiwan as a subject matter in the context of Japanese and South Korea academies that stems from their geopolitical relations and local academic culture. In Japan, Taiwan, as a former colony of Japan, is continuously studied to a certain extent. In South Korea, although many scholars went to Taiwan to study largely due to the lack of access to China, they have a tendency of studying China through the lens of Taiwan during and after their degrees.
14. Interview with a Japanese scholar who studied Chinese Studies.
15. Interview with a Japanese scholar who studied Chinese economics.
16. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese economics.
17. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese politics.
18. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese politics.
19. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese politics.
20. For convenience, "economics" here includes economics, business, commerce and finance.

21. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese society.
22. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese economics.
23. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese economics.

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The 1990s Chinese Debates Concerning the Causes for the Collapse of the Soviet Union among PRC Soviet-watchers: The Cases of Brezhnev and Stalin

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Abstract

The breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991 has had a profound impact on China. The Soviet dissolution has had a variety of significant repercussions on Chinese politics, foreign policy, and other aspects. However, many myths about post-1991 Chinese research on the Soviet Union have been circulated and perpetuated by a body of secondary literature written by Western scholars. Some issues have been unclear or misunderstood in previous studies, and one of these inaccuracies has to do with Chinese perceptions of the role of the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

A number of the secondary sources argue that, after 1991, because of their impact on China's 1989 pro-democracy movements as perceived by the Chinese communist regime, most Chinese Soviet-watchers considered Gorbachev and his liberalization to be the fundamental catalysts in triggering the collapse of the Soviet Union. The literature seems to agree that those Chinese scholars were univocal in assessing Gorbachev's individual actions and failings, and that they overstated the implications of Gorbachev and his liberal programs for China.

This research reveals that since the mid-1990s, many Chinese Soviet-watchers have traced the roots of the tragedy back to the administrations of Leonid Brezhnev and Joseph Stalin, arguing that the conservative forces and the rigid communist system were the decisive factors in bringing it about – rather than the figure of Gorbachev alone. Their writings confirmed and legitimized the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's post-Tiananmen agendas of opposing leftism and saving Chinese socialism by speeding up the reform and open door policy. By depicting that Brezhnev's stagnation and Stalin's rigid centralization as the primary causes of the collapse, their writings suggested that state legitimacy comes more from economic results than democratic

politics. They justified that economic prosperity, not political reform, which is the reigning principle for the survival of Chinese socialism after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Keywords: *Deng Xiaoping, Chinese Soviet-watchers, Post-Tiananmen, Leonid Brezhnev, Joseph Stalin*

1. Introduction

The breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991 has had a profound impact on the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Soviet dissolution has had a variety of significant repercussions on Chinese politics, foreign policy, and other aspects. However, many myths about post-1991 Chinese research on the Soviet Union have been circulated and perpetuated by a body of secondary literature written by Western scholars. Some issues have been unclear or misunderstood in previous studies, and one of these inaccuracies has to do with Chinese perceptions of the role of the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

A number of secondary sources written by Western scholars (Rozman, 2010: 464-470; Marsh, 2005: 111; Shambaugh, 2008: 48-56; Wilson, 2007: 272) argued that, Chinese Soviet-watchers began making positive comments about Gorbachev immediately after he assumed power in 1985. However, these Soviet-watchers turned against the last Soviet leader soon after the Tiananmen Incident in 1989. The existing secondary literature seems to have exaggerated the impact of Gorbachev on China. Previous scholarship also suggests that after the mid-1980s Chinese Soviet-watchers identified Gorbachev's concept of *glasnost* (openness) and his political reform with Western democracy, and used Gorbachev and his ideas to push the Chinese regime towards political democratization on the eve of the Tiananmen Incident. Moreover, some authors (such as Gilbert Rozman and David Shambaugh) indicate that most Chinese Soviet-watchers after 1991 considered Gorbachev and his liberalization to be the fundamental catalysts in spelling the collapse of the Soviet Union. The literature seems to agree that Chinese Soviet-watchers were univocal in assessing Gorbachev's individual actions and failings, and that they overstated the implications of Gorbachev and his liberal programs for China, both in the 1980s and 1990s.

Previously, the author has published two articles in challenging the views of existing scholarship on Chinese debates concerning Gorbachev and the Soviet Union. In my first article (Li, 2016), I argued, firstly, most Chinese academic articles concerning the USSR did not present positive views on Gorbachev in and after 1985. Many of them remained suspicious and wary

of the new Soviet leader, and some of them even challenged the sincerity and feasibility of his policies. Only after about a year with Gorbachev at the helm did Chinese Soviet-watchers begin to review his *glasnost* and political reform positively. This is when three major obstacles (the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; its large troop deployment along the border of China; and Moscow's support of Vietnamese military intervention in Cambodia) plaguing Sino-Soviet relations began to resolve and bilateral relations gradually improved.

Secondly, a full-fledged Chinese attack on Gorbachev did not appear either in the wake of the Tiananmen Incident or after the Soviet disintegration. Instead, strong Chinese criticisms emerged in early 1990, when Gorbachev was elected as the President of the USSR and initiated the process of terminating the power monopoly of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in March 1990. After that, China became aware of the negative ramifications of such a move against PRC communist one-party rule.

Thirdly, few Chinese Soviet-watchers used Gorbachev and his programs to put pressure on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to introduce some form of political Westernization. Instead, most Soviet-watchers manipulated the symbol of Gorbachev to support the reformist wing led by the former CCP Secretary General Zhao Ziyang in his factional warfare against the Party conservatives leading up to Tiananmen. In short, Chinese Soviet-watchers did not regard Gorbachev and his programs as having the potential to transform the political landscape of the PRC; rather, they perceived Gorbachev and his agenda as a tool that could be used to define, create, and legitimize a reformed communist system on their own terms. Chinese Soviet-watchers interpreted *glasnost* in a way designed to serve their own purposes, and that this interpretation was quite different from democracy in the Western sense. They embraced *glasnost* as a type of "democracy under socialism," and saw it as being equivalent to the "neo-authoritarianism" of Zhao Ziyang that championed pluralism under a strong government. The Chinese definition of *glasnost* remains circumscribed by China's own mentality and history, reflecting the traditional Chinese understanding of human values and political culture.

Last, in contrast to the secondary literature suggesting that Chinese criticisms of Gorbachev after Tiananmen were to do with his role in embracing democratization and the disruptive repercussions this brought to China, the article has shown that the negative attitude of Chinese Soviet-watchers towards the last Soviet leader after 1989 was largely the result of Gorbachev's failure to use tough measures to prevent socialism in Europe from collapsing. Their criticisms of Gorbachev served to justify the Chinese government's brutal crackdown on civilian protests in Tiananmen and to glorify the Party's role as a bastion of state unity and stability. Many Chinese

Soviet-watchers were seemingly mounting efforts in defence of Deng's iron-fist policies, which had successfully preserved socialist rule and propelled China down the road to prosperity since the 1990s. They compared this with the faltering Soviet state that would eventually lurch into disorder and break down under Gorbachev's liberalization and hands-off approach. The conclusion was that strong authoritarian rule that ensured political stability was far preferable.

In fact, Chinese perceptions of Gorbachev throughout the 1980s and 1990s were quite evolutionary. Views changed in response to domestic and international politics, and Sino-Soviet (later Sino-Russian) relations. For instance, Chinese Soviet-watchers evidently had a good impression of Gorbachev's concepts of humanistic socialism and *glasnost* after the mid-1980s. This positive assessment was owing to the open political climate in China at the time, and the need of the CCP to initiate its own political reform in order to facilitate economic modernization. Some scholars even demanded that the Chinese government learn from Gorbachev in doing political and economic reforms simultaneously. After the collapse of European and Soviet socialist regimes in the early 1990s, Chinese Soviet-watchers changed suit and attacked Gorbachev's method, arguing that economic rejuvenation should precede political reform. However, after Sino-Russian relations consolidated in the mid-1990s, Chinese criticisms of Gorbachev gradually subsided.

In my second article (Li, forthcoming in 2018), I present another issue that has also been rarely mentioned by the existing scholarship on post-1991 Chinese research on the USSR. Apart from Gorbachev, Chinese debates on the Soviet Union were focusing on different Soviet leaders in and after 1991, particularly on the first Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin, who featured prominently in Chinese writings and claimed equal importance to Gorbachev.

I indicate that the foreign policy of Lenin started to draw the attention of Chinese Soviet-watchers in and after 1989, when China became a political pariah owing to the ruling Communist Party's brutal military crackdown on civilians during the pro-democratic Tiananmen demonstrations in the summer of that year. Chinese perspectives in the wake of the Tiananmen Incident argued that the PRC might learn from Lenin's policy in War Communism (1918-1921), when the newly-born Soviet Union was besieged by imperialist military encirclement and the country's external environment was similar to China after Tiananmen, when the regime was facing international sanctions. Back then, Lenin adopted a foreign policy that encouraged engagement in formal relations with the West, while concentrating on economic development and maintaining a proletarian dictatorship. Such principles were akin to Deng Xiaoping's post-Tiananmen agendas of buying time and keeping a low profile while finding a way out of the Western sanctions and re-connecting with the world.

Lenin's foreign policy and his rule during the early Soviet Union were selected as examples, as they had gone well with the stance and interest of China after Tiananmen – that is, since both regimes were bound by the shared traumas of Western sanctions and the common aspirations of rising to be global powers amid international hostility. Chinese Soviet-watchers' use of Lenin to promote socialism – like exploiting past foreign humiliation in order to fan anti-Western nationalist fervour – was an effective measure to strengthen the Chinese communist regime when it was experiencing domestic difficulties.

At the time, Chinese Soviet-watchers used the interpretation of Lenin's writings to bring vigour to the weakening legitimacy of Chinese socialism after the Tiananmen suppression and the demise of world communism, and to give a new impulse to Deng's policies and future reforms against the post-Tiananmen leftist offensive. By upholding the work and teachings of Lenin, Chinese Soviet-watchers not only attempted to support the Chinese communist regime after the Tiananmen crisis, they also made an effort to safeguard and legitimize Deng Xiaoping's position in China after 1989, when the Party conservatives launched a series of attacks on his reform and open door policies taken since 1978. According to those Chinese Soviet-watchers, Deng's long-standing policy represented what they saw as the true Leninist legacy of building socialism by combining economic liberalization and the political one-party rule, which was the best way to weather the post-Tiananmen challenges, as well as the future direction of world socialism after the end of the Cold War.

In the forthcoming and third article, the author would like to delve into the last under-researched issue in post-1991 Chinese study on the Soviet Union. As noted above, in reality, Chinese writings never excoriated Gorbachev in the 1990s, and the torrent of attacks had gradually subsided by the middle of the decade. Moreover, Chinese Soviet-watchers presented a much broader historical view and offered a more systemic analysis of the multiple reasons for the collapse, rather than being preoccupied by the so-called "blame game" targeting Gorbachev.¹ Gorbachev and his liberal programs were by no means the only, or even the most significant, factor in the USSR's dissolution, as represented in Chinese analysis in and after 1991.

The coming article will reveal that after the demise of world communism in the early 1990s, many Chinese academic writings appeared to excite debates on the two Soviet leaders – Leonid Brezhnev and Joseph Stalin. Many Chinese Soviet-watchers have traced the roots of the Soviet demise back to the administrations of Brezhnev and Stalin, arguing that the conservative forces and the rigid communist system were the decisive factors in bringing it about – rather than the figure of Gorbachev alone.

Many scholars blame the legacies of these two Soviet leaders as the cause of the collapse in 1991. According to them, after Stalin took power, the

Soviet Union started to deviate from what they saw as true Leninism. These writings contrasted the legacies of the two Soviet leaders with Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's pragmatism, and served to shore up Deng's post-Tiananmen line of accelerating economic development and anti-leftism, which he promoted during his 1992 southern tour. However, while Chinese Soviet-watchers criticized the negative policies of the USSR, they did not condemn socialism. They targeted the imperfections of the Soviet economic apparatus rather than its political repression. Their conclusion confirmed the CCP's post-Tiananmen policy of liberating economic force while keeping a tight leash on political control. They argued that economic prosperity, not political reform, was the reigning principle for the survival of Chinese socialism after the fall of the USSR.

2. Methodology and Sources

With respect to primary sources, it should be mentioned here that this research is based primarily on the "national core journals" (*Guojiaji hexin qikan* 国家级核心期刊) published in the People's Republic of China (PRC), and mainly on the following four categories of journals.

The first are those journals focusing on research in the humanities and social sciences in general (*Shehui kexue yanjiu* 社会科学研究 Social Science Research, *Shijie jingjiyu zhengzhi* 世界经济与政治 World Economics and Politics). Second are those journals dealing with problems of socialism or communism in the world (*Dangdai shijie shehui zhuyi wenti* 当代世界社会主义问题 Problems of Contemporary World Socialism, *Shehui zhuyi yanjiu* 社会主义研究 Socialism Studies). The third group forms the core of this study; they concentrate on questions and issues relating to the former Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation and other Commonwealth Independent States after 1991) (*Sulian dongou wenti* 苏联东欧问题 Matters of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, *Eluosi yanjiu* 俄罗斯研究 Russian Studies). Lastly, the research scope also included relevant articles in various university journals (*Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yanjiu shengyuan xuebao* 中国社会科学院研究生院学报 Journal of Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao xuebao* 中共中央党校学报 Journal of the Party School of the Central Committee of the CCP).

All the journals selected for this research accept submissions from all over China.² Most (but not all) of the contributors are academics, and the journals maintain acceptable quality standards and have a good reputation in the Chinese academic world. Some of them, such as *Sulian dongou wenti* (Matters of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe 苏联东欧问题) and *Shehui zhuyi yanjiu* (Socialism Studies 社会主义研究), are the very best PRC journals in their fields.

In order to clear up previous misunderstandings about Chinese research on the Soviet Union, the researcher has chosen a different approach to re-examine the field. First, the article will focus on the publications in the bimonthly official journal of *Sulian dongou wenti* (Matters of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe or MSUEE 苏联东欧问题) as the primary source for analysis. The journal is published by the Institute of Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies (*Eluosi dongou zhongya yanjiusuo* or IREECAS 俄罗斯东欧中亚研究所), which is the largest powerhouse in research of the former Soviet Union in the PRC. The institute is affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) – China's most prominent organization specializing in the humanities and social sciences and under the control of the State Council and Party supervision. The IREECAS journal not only publishes articles written by the IREECAS' employed scholars, but also accepts submissions contributed by other scholars across China. It can thus be used as a medium that reflects the historical development of Soviet studies in China.

Second, the investigator will also examine other PRC humanities and social science publications regarding the research on the USSR, mostly focusing on the four categories of journals previously classified. By engaging these publications (either from the IREECAS journal or others) the study will not be limited to those publications merely learning lessons from the Soviet collapse after 1991. Instead, it will pay attention to various thematic research projects diverging in focus and analysis between the late 1980s and the end of the 1990s. Such a methodology may reduce a certain bias on Soviet research in China and instead direct the audience to review the field from a more objective perspective.

Moreover, the article intends to examine the thinking of Chinese Soviet-watchers against the backdrop of political and social changes in 1990s China. The study will be based not only on the analysis of primary sources already undertaken, but will also attempt to locate the developments of Chinese Soviet research amid the rapid changes in the social and political environment of China. Therefore, in order for this research to be successfully located in the rich fabric of the intellectual activities of contemporary China and in the changing environment, the investigator has also identified the following three kinds of documents that may be beneficial to the research:

- *Articles in PRC official newspapers and journals concerning aspects of the former Soviet Union*: *Renmin Ribao* (人民日报 *People's Daily*, owned by the CCP Central Committee); *Guangming Ribao* (光明日报 *Guangming Daily*, published by the CCP Central Propaganda Department); *Beijing Review* (China's only national English weekly news magazine published in Beijing by the China International Publishing Group), etc.

- *Writings and speeches of PRC officials and leaders on the matters of the Soviet state*: such as those of Mao Zedong (毛泽东) and Deng Xiaoping (邓小平), and other contemporary Chinese leaders' related speeches scattered among the current Chinese newspapers.
- *Chinese and English translations of works and speeches of Soviet leaders from Lenin to Gorbachev*: as Chinese scholars always cite the words of Soviet leaders (such as works of Lenin and Stalin and memoirs of Khrushchev and Gorbachev) to support their arguments in articles, it is important for the researcher to check the accuracy of those quotations.

The use of the term “Soviet-watchers” (or Sovietologists) in this article for those who study and research the state of the USSR is based on Christopher Xenakis' definition. Xenakis defines US Sovietologists broadly, to include “political scientists, economists, sociologists, historians, diplomats and policy makers, working in academia, government, private think tanks, and the media” (Xenakis, 2002: 4). He uses the terms “Sovietologists”, “Soviet experts”, “foreign policy analysts”, “Cold War theorists”, and “political scientists” interchangeably, citing the examples of George Kennan, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Pipes, and Strobe Talbott. These individuals are both Soviet-specialists and policy makers, while Hedrick Smith and Robert Kaiser are also Soviet-watchers and journalists simultaneously (Xenakis, 2002: 4). For the sake of conforming to the Chinese context and the convenience of narrative, the author will use the term “Soviet-watchers” (instead of Sovietologists) throughout the article.

In terms of this elastic definition of the field and the diversity of scholars' backgrounds, the situation in China is generally similar to the situation in the US as described by Xenakis. For example, as we shall see, although some Chinese scholars specialize in either Soviet or world communism, most of those mentioned and quoted in this paper are generalists rather than specialists in Soviet studies. Their articles often express more political zeal than scholarly expertise or analytical insight. Generally speaking, the descriptions by Xenakis of US Sovietologists could also be applied to the Chinese situation. Chinese Soviet-watchers are a diverse group, rather than representatives of a single school of thought or central theory. Their publications never imply a complete homogeneity of views. However, although their academic training is in different disciplines and by no means confined to Soviet studies, their research and publications are relevant to Soviet research in one way or another.³

Almost all Chinese Soviet-watchers included in this article come from the following three kinds of institutions: the first is IREECAS in CASS and it carries a great deal of weight in Soviet studies in China. IREECAS is also

the headquarters of the Chinese Association of East European and Central Asian Studies (CAEECAS), which administers the membership of Chinese Soviet-specialists across the country. Second, the research scope also pays attention to scholars in Soviet studies from other institutions in CASS, such as the Institute of World History and Institute of Marxism-Leninism. Last, the investigation includes Chinese Soviet-watchers from provincial academies of social sciences and other universities (including the party schools), particularly to those with units, departments, and journals devoted specifically to research on the USSR.⁴

In researching this article, the investigator has obtained most of the essential primary sources listed above from a two-month fieldwork in the University Service Centre at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), or it has been downloaded from the Digital Library Service at CUHK. Both sites contain a large quantity of PRC official and unofficial reading materials, as well as a substantial amount of Chinese scholarship on the Soviet Union.

According to the topic of this article, the investigator was meant to undertake fieldwork in mainland China, rather than in Hong Kong. In fact, the investigator applied to CASS in Beijing in the summer of 2014, in order to obtain permission to interview scholars and peruse archives there. However, CASS declined the application and did not provide a written explanation for such denial. Therefore, as a foreign scholar, the investigator was unable to apply for a visa to enter the PRC. It is the investigator's guess that the application was denied due to the project's politically sensitive nature. As such, the investigator has chosen to do the fieldwork in Hong Kong instead, without an opportunity to interview the relevant people. It is worth noting that the CASS administrator warned the investigator in a prior conversation that the Academy does not have any official or secret archives stored within. A researcher would thus be forced to rely on two methods – interviewing the scholars there or reading their journal articles. Besides, many CASS academics indicated to the investigator that they did not accept e-mail questionnaires as an alternative form of interview, due to the strict disciplinary requirement of CASS.

As a result, the author has not had at his disposition all the necessary materials. He has had to study the subject by sifting through the documents, but without meeting the essential people and getting first-hand information. The work has been written outside the country to which the subject relates. A certain degree of limitation is perhaps impossible to avoid, inasmuch as the author is merely an interpreter of the writings of Chinese scholarship, rather than an on-the-spot witness of the events and situations described. Having said this, it is hoped that the research still retains a stamp of originality.

3. Revival of Research on Brezhnev

In 1997, Chen Zhihua (陈之骅), a researcher in the Institute of World History at CASS and a prominent scholar on Leonid Brezhnev, commented that Chinese research on Soviet history had overwhelmingly focused on the periods of Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Gorbachev, while overlooking the 18-year rule of Brezhnev, which was “the time when the Soviet Union started to decline”, and “the key to understanding the historical lessons of the Soviet downfall” (Chen, 1997: 12).⁵ Chen’s remark is not altogether correct. In reality, Chinese research of Brezhnev and his administration had flourished in the 1990s.

Throughout the 1980s, many Chinese Soviet-watchers did not have positive views on Brezhnev, because his conservative thinking was running afoul of China’s reform and open door policies. Some articles examined the bureaucracy and life-long tenure cadre system under Brezhnev, and remarked that the Soviet ruling machine had become more ossified and less efficient since the 1970s (Dong, 1982: 42; Chen, 1985: 54; Chen, 1986: 23-24). Others concentrated on the analysis of Brezhnev’s concept of “developed socialism”. They compared the living standards between the USSR and the West, and concluded that the Soviet Union was by no means a developed country with an advanced economy and material abundance. The articles criticized the notion of “developed socialism” as a utopian belief and a political calculation to keep the Soviet Union as the leader in the communist camp (Wu, 1983: 48-50; Wang, 1986: 95-96; Liu, 1986: 44). However, the social and economic stagnation under Brezhnev had not fallen within the purview of analysis until the 1990s.

In 1992, Deng Xiaoping embarked upon a trip to China’s southern provinces, where he repeatedly urged the need for learning from capitalism and rekindling China’s all-round economic development – particularly after the setback of Tiananmen, in which the Party conservative force attempted to attack and quash Deng’s policies taken after 1978. Deng stressed that it was “the achievements of the reform and the open policy” that had helped China to weather the Tiananmen crisis. He argued that the PRC should “make socialism develop in a healthier direction”, in order to overcome the panic caused by the worldwide defeat of socialism. He especially emphasized that he could not tolerate “slow growth” and “stagnation”. He pointed out that “it is necessary to fundamentally change the economic structure”, and “to establish a vigorous socialist economic structure that will promote their development” (Deng, 1995f: 358). Deng seemed to fully understand that, after having squandered what legitimacy communism had in the brutality of 1989 and the Soviet demise, the only resource of the CCP regime was economic performance, which meant putting more food in the shops and improving the living standard of the Chinese people.

Moreover, another important purpose of Deng's 1992 southern tour was to win the factional warfare and succeed in having his reform strategy prevail after the Tiananmen backlash. The fact that his trip at first received no official media coverage and the *People's Daily* did not publish anything about it until one month later was a testament to the strength of CCP leftist opposition. In his talk, Deng asserted that the reason for the failure of European socialism had little to do with democracy, and more to do with the lack of security and prosperity. During the trip, Deng attempted to make moves against the Party conservatives, saying those insufficiently enthusiastic for reform should go (Deng, 1995f: 363).

In response to Deng's messages, on 4th June 1992, three years after the Tiananmen Incident, the *People's Daily* published an article saying that China should "give up the highly centralized socialist economic system borrowed from other countries before", and "overcome the problem of the leftist thinking" (*People's Daily*, 1992: 2).⁶ On the same day in 1993, another article in the *People's Daily* indicated that "leftism is the biggest enemy of socialism" (*People's Daily*, 1993: 2).⁷ In scholarly writings, Wu Xingtang (吴兴唐), vice-president of the Chinese Association of International Communist Movement Studies, praised Deng's speech in early 1992 as "the guiding principle for studies in international relations and the communist movement". Wu sneered at the leftist thinking, which put blame on "the excessiveness of reforms and insufficient class struggle" as the main factors for causing the Soviet demise. He concluded that the real intention of leftism was for "obstructing Deng's reformist line" (Wu, 1992: 3-4).⁸ Gao Fang (高放), a professor of international relations at Renmin University and an expert in the history of world communism, in another article also strongly attacked the leftist tendencies. The author attributed the failure of Soviet socialism to economic, not political, factors. He said that "leftism was the true gravedigger of the USSR, while rightism was only putting a nail in its final coffin" (Gao, 1992: 10).⁹

In and after 1992, many pieces of academic work seemed to lavish attention on the Soviet Union under Brezhnev (E, 1992: 27-33; Liu, 1992: 8-12; Huang, 1993: 39-46; Chen, 1993: 53-57; Ma, 1995: 59-63). Unlike the 1980s writings presented above, which focused on the aspects of ideology and political administration under Brezhnev, in the 1990s Chinese scholars were targeting his obsession with the status quo and ignorance of true reality, which made the Soviet economy lag behind the West more and more. The commentaries meshed with Deng's emphasis on economic growth and anti-leftism after the Soviet demise. As IREECAS scholar E Huancheng (鄂焕成) wrote, "Comrade Deng Xiaoping once remarked that the priorities of development are scientific technologies and the productive forces, and such remark inspires us to seek the true reason of Brezhnev's failure."¹⁰ The author

concluded that the Soviet problems had surfaced under Stalin and escalated in Brezhnev's time, which he termed as "the long medieval ossified rule".¹¹ He said that the Brezhnev administration had rendered subsequent reforms launched by Gorbachev insufficient to rescue the Soviet system (E, 1992: 31).

Another IREECAS scholar, Liu Guanghui (刘光慧), described the USSR after the 1970s as "a pool of lifeless and stagnant water". He found that the biggest reason for Brezhnev's unwillingness to take up reforms was his predecessor Khrushchev's rashness in improvising the reform programs that had contributed to the chaotic economic situation – thus causing the CPSU to become tired of such adventure and to itch for stability. He concluded that the lesson from Brezhnev was that socialism should "persist with reforms forever" (Liu, 1992: 10-11).¹² After criticizing the Brezhnev administration for being "conservative and rigid",¹³ Huang Zongliang (黄宗良), vice-director of the Russian Studies Institute at Beijing University, concluded that a socialist country should always find a balance between reform and stability. While a stable environment could ensure the success of reform, nonetheless reform should always be prioritized in order to maintain stability and prosperity (Huang, 1993: 44-45).

In the late 1990s, IREECAS senior researcher Xu Kui (徐葵) retraced Brezhnev's early life and trajectory to power, and studied his personal attributes and characters, such as "mediocrity, lack of innovation, being pleasure-seeking and vainglorious". He argued that these explained why the Soviet Union since the 1970s had been fraught with personality cults, incorrigible bureaucracy, and economic deterioration. He commented that the era of Brezhnev was "the turning point when the Soviet Union went from prosperity to decline" (Xu, 1998: 27).¹⁴ In late 1998, Chen Zhihua (in his new book funded and published by CASS) re-examined Brezhnev and his time. At the beginning of the book, Chen wrote that his analysis was in accordance with the motif of Deng's speech in 1992, which was the theoretical framework of the project (Chen, 1998: 1). The author said that the rule of Brezhnev was not only the dividing line for the USSR's turn from strength to weakness, but also "the bane of the final demise in 1991". In his view, "Studying Brezhnev's period is a must in finding out reasons for the downfall" (Chen, 1998: 4-5).¹⁵ He finally contended that the crumbling of the USSR was not historically inevitable. The state under Brezhnev was ripe for reforms, but he slept through it, as it were. Brezhnev might have helped the Soviet Union survive, but he had missed the chance to transform the sorrow into strength in the 1970s (Chen, 1998: 24).

As noted in the Introduction, a number of secondary sources written by Western scholars pointed out that Chinese Soviet-watchers after 1991 almost unanimously blamed Gorbachev and his reform programs as the major factors in capsizing the Soviet Union (Rozman, 2010: 464; Marsh, 2005:

111; Shambaugh, 2008: 48, 56, 81; Wilson, 2007: 272). David Shambaugh even suggested that this so-called “blame game” persisted throughout 1990s Chinese writings (Shambaugh, 2008: 48). Those works have obviously overlooked the revival of research on Brezhnev in Chinese writings since 1992. Unlike the 1980s’ sporadic inquiries on Brezhnev presented above, the 1990s writings were more divergent in views and had a focus, pertaining to the state agenda set by Deng Xiaoping during his southern tour in 1992.

First, the renewed discussion on Brezhnev was a product of a more open political milieu resulting from Deng’s 1992 landmark speech. Accordingly, Chinese intellectual debates became, to a limited degree, more lively and animated than the dreary period after 1989. In the wake of Deng’s southern tour, the spirit of “seeking truth from facts” was re-emphasized to give a new impulse to the study of socialism (Deng, 1995f: 369-370). Although the general political climate in China was still uncertain, this modest progress had made it possible for scholars to discover more objectively the problems of the USSR, and to diversify the roots of the collapse. It provided encouragement to reinterpret and challenge the prevalent one-sidedly views that were mainly concerned with the cause of Gorbachev.

Second, unlike the post-Tiananmen official and academic analysis, which argued that the peaceful evolution engineered by the West had played a prominent role in jolting Eastern Europe and the USSR, the debate on Brezhnev and the moribund economy under his administration marked the termination of the peaceful evolution thesis, which seemed to be an exaggerated accusation that the Soviet collapse was simply a victim of Western subversion.¹⁶ The doctrine of peaceful evolution was more a propaganda trick than a genuine academic argument. The Party hard-liners had used the threat of peaceful evolution as the justification to shut down reforms.¹⁷ The first PRC leader Mao Zedong once said that “the fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal” (Mao, 1965a: 313). Some Chinese Soviet-watchers also remarked that putting blame for the Soviet downfall on external factors such as the peaceful evolution was either “superficial” (E, 1992: 8) or “one-sided and noxious” (Chen, 1993: 53).

Seen from his 1992 speech transcript during the southern tour, Deng believed that the chief cause of turmoil in socialism was not the imperialist peaceful evolution. The problem lay with the internal factors, such as poverty and the under-developed economies in many socialist countries. In his view, the only way for China to survive after the Soviet dissolution was to continue the open door policy and reform the past economy characterized by centralized control and enforced egalitarianism. He argued that abandoning the path of reform set in 1978 would only lead the country to the sort of catastrophe befalling the USSR (Deng, 1995f: 370). In Deng’s mind, to admit that the socialist system itself has fundamental flaws was more important than

to blame foreign machinations. Instead of giving the excuse of the so-called peaceful evolution and ignoring true problems, China after 1991 should face up squarely to reality and meet the challenges ahead.

As Joseph Fewsmith demonstrated, firstly, after the Tiananmen Incident and the Soviet demise, Deng needed to rely on economic development to convince those who no longer believed in socialism, and to restore the Party legitimacy through its ability to “deliver the goods” (Fewsmith, 2001: 70). Moreover, following the ouster of Zhao Ziyang, the former CCP Secretary General who was in sympathy with the 1989 Tiananmen protest, the conservative faction was clearly directed at Zhao’s former patron Deng Xiaoping and attempted to undercut his reform policy, which was being criticized for neglecting politics and ideology and concentrating merely on economic development. Deng would interpret the conservative manoeuvre as an effort to challenge his position in China and have the country revert to the old days of Mao. To strike back, Deng must ensure the reform process would become “a national rallying cry” and survive his own death (Fewsmith, 2001: 71). Since 1992 some scholars also concluded that, if the impact of Gorbachev’s *glasnost* (openness) and the peaceful evolution were rational explanations for the collapse, then it was because the inherent weakness of the Soviet socialist system that had made it become unable to resist the restoration of capitalism and democratization (Chen, 1993: 56; Lu, 1997: 14). By dispelling the assertion of peaceful evolution, Deng won the power battle over his Party rivals, ensuring a state-wide consensus to embrace his strategy of faster growth, enhanced economic reform, and greater interaction with the outside world. Similarly, the research on Brezhnev in the 1990s also signalled the return of a down-to-earth and critical approach in studying the Soviet demise, and the repudiation of seemingly non-scholarly and irrelevant official rhetoric.

Last, as we have seen, there was a distinct change in Chinese writings in the 1990s, from attacking Gorbachev’s liberalization to condemning Brezhnev’s conservatism. After that, Gorbachev became the lesser of two evils and was rarely seen as the cardinal source of the downfall.¹⁹ In and after 1992, when China had come out of the shadow of Tiananmen and the Soviet demise, and was at the height of campaigning for anti-leftism, the practice of criticizing Brezhnev’s orthodoxy instead of attacking Gorbachev’s liberalization was instrumental in encouraging more innovation to keep the socialist regime vital. The discussion of Brezhnev played a role in affirming and promoting China’s market-oriented path, thereby revivifying the pace of reform that had slowed in the wake of the 1989 repression. Chinese writings intended to take advantage of the study of Brezhnev to give credit to the ethos of Deng’s 1992 speech, and to enlist support for his future vision for China in the post-communist world.

There is one more illustrating example demonstrating that Chinese scholars had taken advantage of the use of Brezhnev, in order to give the Chinese regime the extra push that was needed for the acceleration of reforms in the 1990s. In 1996, CASS funded and published a book “*Yuzongshuji tanxin*” (与总书记谈心 Chatting with the Secretary General).²⁰ The book is a collective project written and edited by a group of CASS scholars, which consists of more than 20 academics from different institutes at CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 2-3). The book title is quite misleading. In reality, it is not a record of face-to-face interview with then Party Secretary General Jiang Zemin; instead, Jiang appears as the *dramatis personae*, which the authors use as a form of communication to channel their views on the future development of China.

The book starts with the full text of Jiang Zemin’s 1995 speech “*Zhengque chuli shehuizhuyi xiandaihua jianshe zhongde ruogan zhongda guanxi*” (正确处理社会主义现代化建设中的若干重大关系 To Correctly Handle Certain Important Relations in Building Socialist Modernization).²¹ The content of the speech is in fact no different from Deng’s 1992 southern tour talk, both of them espousing the goals of technological innovation, acceleration of economic modernization, and further opening to the outside world (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 1-17).²² The authors commented that China at the time was at a crossroads and its reforms were facing a bottleneck, in which economic disparity and corruption were rampant across the country. As a result, many people doubted if the market economy was still compatible with socialism, and whether the third generation of the CCP leadership led by Jiang was able to maintain the economic growth and Party dictatorship in the post-Deng era (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 3-4).

The solution given by the authors was “reforms, reforms, and reforms”, since this was the only way and “China has no choice” (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 12).²³ To elaborate the point, the authors presented the example of the Soviet Union under Brezhnev in the following section entitled “*Lishi jiaoxun: cengjing youguo yige bolieriniefti*” (历史教训：曾经有过一个勃列日涅夫 A Historical Lesson: Once Upon a Time There Was the Person of Brezhnev) (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 16).²⁴ According to the section, there were three critical moments in Soviet history. After the first wave of Khrushchev’s incomplete reforms, his successor Brezhnev balked at “the knot and complexity of the social and economic structural problems”.²⁵ He, therefore, chose to eschew reforms. He wanted to preserve the status quo and was reluctant to move forward. When the last wave of reforms came in the 1980s, the last Soviet leader Gorbachev had to employ “the radical method of liberalization” to reshuffle the moribund system. Unfortunately, such measures brought “the counter-effect of instability and

the ultimate collapse” (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 17-18).²⁶ The authors warned:

Absolute stability does not exist. The lesson of Brezhnev was that not to push reforms, not to persist in reforms, not to carry reforms through to the end means only that the Party, state, and socialism will not be able to have genuine security, and that the final result will be a thorough instability (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 19).²⁷

Unlike what Jeanne Wilson remarks that the book was to “commend Jiang’s vision of reform based on a 1995 speech” (Wilson, 2007: 275), upon a closer reading, the tone of the authors appears to be more like an admonition. They argued that the reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping should not be stalled or slowed down once Deng retired, otherwise China might face the fate of the USSR ahead. China specialist Willy Wo-Lap Lam reveals that in the late 1990s, Chinese intellectuals increasingly felt unsatisfied about the dearth of initiative and the roll-back of reform, and “there were signs that the more liberal among Jiang’s advisors were urging the president to take bolder steps in reform” (Lam, 1999: 83). According to the book authors, unlike other Chinese scholars, who tended to “wait and annotate” the speeches of the leaders in their research, this time these CASS academics would like to “use a new way of thinking to tackle leaders’ theories” in this project. As such, in this book they decided to “invite Secretary General Jiang Zemin and the third generation leadership for heart-to-heart talks,” and “contribute our limited knowledge to finding solutions to China’s present problems” (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 8-10).²⁸

Indeed, unlike the previous Chinese writings presented in this research, the book reflected a change – namely, that these Chinese scholars were attempting to take the lead rather than follow the tide in drawing the lessons of Soviet socialism and its implications on China’s future to influence the government.²⁹ Their eagerness for making the Party leadership hear their voice demonstrated the anxiety of those scholars. They seemed to worry that post-Deng China would become the USSR under Brezhnev, which was content with the status quo and losing momentum for bolder reforms in the face of economic uncertainty. It might eventually result in the equivalence of the Soviet failure in China. They argued that the third generation of Party leadership should not just accommodate Deng’s legacy to move on, as “a politician with broader vision and greater historical sense will choose the deepening of reforms” (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 16-17).³⁰

Moreover, the discussion in the book was not only about examining the negative lessons of the Soviet demise, but also about presenting an important message for China’s future direction in moving towards the path of state-led capitalism. The authors argued that amid the economic difficulties at

the time, China might confront two possibilities: going back to orthodox socialism (symbolized by Brezhnev's rule) or slipping into wholesale capitalism (represented by the Gorbachev administration), and that either way, China would probably end up getting nowhere (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 144-147). Instead, they recommended a third option, in which China should practise *laissez-faire* economy under a strong state control. They advised that China should not go too far in economic privatization and liberalization, drawing on the negative example of the USSR under Gorbachev.³¹ They argued that maintaining public ownership was still the key to the future success of reforms (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 147-154). Their advocacy of a state-led capitalism as the future direction of the Chinese party-state, in which the state is the principle actor in directing the market and economy, was not only a lesson drawn from the pre-1991 Soviet Union.³² It also resonated with the thesis of the Chinese new-left movement, which became an intellectual trend from the 1990s onwards. The themes of the new-left are common to this approach: reassertion and expansion of the role of the state, appeal for the self-renewal of the Party authority, the need for strong governmental intervention in a market economy, and a scepticism, if not outright hostility to, China's integration into the Western political system.³³

4. Re-assessment of Stalin

Apart from Brezhnev, another Soviet leader had become the subject of avid study in 1990s China. Joseph Stalin has long been a controversial figure in China. After the founding of the PRC, Mao Zedong glorified the Soviet Union led by Stalin, saying that it had guided China in the struggle for national liberation, and regarded the USSR as leader of all the oppressed countries in the world (Mao, 1965b: 62-63). In fact, Stalin personally disliked Mao and always gravely misunderstood the situation of Chinese socialist revolution. For example, according to Beijing University professor Niu Jun, Stalin had belittled CCP military strength and repeatedly requested that the CCP make a compromise with the Guomindang (Republican Party) led by Chiang Kai-shek during the Chinese Civil War period (1946-1949), which deeply irritated Mao (Niu, 1998: 62). Mao also profoundly sensed the distrust of the Soviet leader, and was not able to challenge Moscow's authority in the socialist camp until Stalin's death in 1953.³⁴ Although having harboured grievances against Stalin, Mao still refrained from criticizing him in the wake of the new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev mounting an attack on his predecessor at the 20th CPSU Congress in 1956. This was because he understood that consigning Stalin to purgatory was detrimental to the unity of the socialist world as well as his rule in China. Mao remarked, "It is the opinion of the Central

Committee that Stalin's mistakes amounted to only 30 per cent of the whole and his achievements to 70 per cent, and that all things considered Stalin was nonetheless a great Marxist" (Mao, 1965c: 304).

After the passing of Mao, against the trends of cleansing the remnants of the Gang of Four and opposing leftism symbolized by the Maoist legacy, Chinese Party organs in the early 1980s started to mount their criticisms on Stalin and his policies. In 1981, an article in *People's Daily* remarked that Stalin's cult of personality was oppositional to Marxism-Leninism, and equated the cult with the kind of fanaticism occurring during the Cultural Revolution (Ma, 1981: 3). A half year later, a commentator in *Beijing Review* contrasted Stalin's "grievous deviations" with Lenin's "tremendous contributions". He wrote that Stalin had violated "the principle of collective leadership and the system of democratic centralism", and practiced "great-nation chauvinism and again interfered in the internal affairs of certain countries" (Yin, 1982: 19). It should be noted that in the early 1980s, several articles appraising Stalin published in various Chinese academic journals not only criticized Stalin for creating an ossified political and economic system, but also showed contempt for Stalin's inappropriate moral conducts; these included being conceited and arrogant, as well as having a propensity for the use of violence (Zhou, 1980: 43-44; He, 1984: 5-9; Bi, 1985: 64-71). Zhou Biwen (周必文), a researcher at the Central Party School, stated that "it is time for China to stop treating Stalin as God" (Zhou, 1980: 44).³⁵

After the second half of the 1980s, the image of Stalin in the minds of Chinese scholars was gradually transformed from deity to human, and eventually from human to a devil-like villain. Many academic articles in the late 1980s began to attack almost every aspect of Stalin: from his attempt to seize the Chinese territory through the post-war Yalta Agreement (Hu, 1987: 3-4), a disastrous agricultural policy (Xu, 1988: 8-11), a rigid political system (Wang, 1989: 4-6), failed economic planning (Wang, 1987: 11-15), and his problematic writing on Philosophy (Jin, 1989: 43-46). Wu Wenjun (武文军), president of the Lanzhou Academy of Social Sciences, in his 1989 article even undertook research on Stalin's childhood, which is rare in Chinese writings. The author revealed the tense family relations in which Stalin had grown up, and explained his later cruelty by the abusive treatment he endured as a child (Wu, 1984: 113-115). Most importantly, while Chinese scholars in the early 1980s were bold to remark that Stalinism was the distortion of Leninism, in the late 1980s some writings were not shy to point out that Stalinism was equal to feudalism and a legacy from Tsars, which had nothing to do with what they saw as true socialism at all (Su, 1986: 12-13; Wang, 1988: 11-15; Li, 1999: 15-18).

These intensified criticisms of Stalin in the late 1980s were mainly owing to the following three factors. First, as IREECAS scholar He Li (何

力) revealed, while having many problems, the Soviet model established by Stalin was nonetheless accepted by Chinese academic circle in the early 1980s as the universal yardstick of socialism. At the time, Chinese scholars still recognized that the Soviet model was synonymous with Stalinism, but the model needed a fundamental fine-tuning to adjust to the modern society (He, 1984: 9). However, after the late 1980s, China started to deepen its economic reform and launched a war on the Soviet model that had harmed China in the past. As Deng Xiaoping announced in 1988:

Frankly, when we were copying the Soviet model of socialism we ran into many difficulties. We discovered that long ago, but we were never able to solve the problem. Now we are solving it; what we want to build is a socialism suited to conditions in China (Deng, 1995e: 256).

Second, Moscow's re-assessment of Stalin under Gorbachev held great appeal for Chinese scholars. It coincided with the relaxed political climate since the mid-1980s generated by the liberal-minded CCP leaders Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, and more importantly, the popularity of Gorbachev's *glasnost* in China.³⁶ Some scholars were truly impressed by Gorbachev's determination to face the past and demanded that China learn from him (An, 1987: 5-6; Wu, 1988: 134-136). CASS President Hu Sheng (胡绳) remarked in 1988 that China in the past had never engaged in genuine research of Stalin, therefore "we do not have good ideas on many questions". Right now, "when the Soviet Communist Party decided to reverse the verdicts on many previous unjustly charged cases under the impact of *glasnost*", he urged Chinese scholars to "follow suit and conduct research into such issue" (Hu, 1988: 6-7).³⁷

Last, although China had embraced reform and open door policies after Mao's death, the relaxation was more about economic liberalization than political democratization, and Chinese people were not allowed to criticize Stalin's counterpart in China – Mao Zedong. Chinese studies of Stalin still operated in the shadow of the many remaining statues to Mao. In 1980, Deng Xiaoping said that China "will not do to Chairman Mao what Khrushchev did to Stalin" (Deng, 1995a: 344). But things changed in the late 1980s when, motivated by Gorbachev's challenge to the orthodox hagiography of Stalin, the Chinese started to question Mao's own brutality – though this was by no means a large scale open attack. In 1989, Shantou University history professor Zheng Shaoxin (郑绍钦), who had studied at the University of Leningrad in the late 1950s, wrote that the cult of personality created by Mao "had wreaked havoc in China and exacted an enormous human toll on Chinese people. The depredations were many times than those in the 1930s USSR" (Zheng, 1989: 6).³⁸

Two weeks prior to Gorbachev's state visit to China and one month ahead of the Tiananmen Incident, *Beijing Review* conducted an interview for several IREECAS scholars. All of them blasted Stalin and expressed aversion to his monocracy, when the Chinese authorities had not officially reappraised the former Soviet leader. It is noteworthy that one of the scholars Wu Renzhang (吴仁彰), an expert on the Soviet economy, said in an interview that he recommended that Stalin's portrait be removed from Tiananmen Square, because "his status is different from that of Marx, Engels, and Lenin", and "is not on the same level as the other three are" (*Beijing Review*, 1989: 7-8).

Since 1976 China has consistently superimposed Mao Zedong's profile next to those of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin in official discourse, in the form of oft-reproduced group portraits – the so-called *Maen liesimao* (马恩列斯毛 Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao), for demonstrating their equality in ideological terms and significance, whitewashing Mao's past misdeeds, and legitimizing the post-Mao Chinese communist regime. Both Mao and Stalin were officially canonized as the successors of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, as the best disciples of the dead communist sages. Both of them were depicted as incarnations of Marxist-Leninist wisdom and omniscience. However, as evident from Wu's words, the Soviet-watcher omitted Mao's name in this context and it was certainly at variance with the regime's ideological discourse. He obviously hinted that both Stalin and Mao were the same, but that their conducts were not in tune with the norm of true communism created by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Both of their standings were not in the same league as those of the other three. Moreover, we should remember that it was Mao who had vigorously opposed Khrushchev's 1956 secret speech and praised Stalin's legacy. The 1980s negative Chinese assessment of Stalin ironically demonstrated Chinese scholars' unstated admission of Mao's mistaken judgment about Khrushchev in the 1950s, which led directly to the later Sino-Soviet schism and a series of disastrous Maoist policies that had left a deep scar on China.

In the wake of the Tiananmen Incident and particularly after March 1990, when Gorbachev ordered to abolish the CPSU power monopoly, criticisms of Stalin in Chinese writings became silent. After Deng Xiaoping's southern tour in early 1992, China began to reflect on its past inefficient socialist economic system, for the take-off of a new wave of reforms after the backlash of Tiananmen. In late 1992, the new CCP Secretary General Jiang Zemin delivered an opening speech at the 14th CCP Congress. He remarked:

This new revolution is not going to change the nature of our socialist system; instead, it is a self-improvement and a further development of socialism. However, it is also not a simple repair to our economic structure, but a fundamental reform of it. The past economic system was born under the special historical circumstances, and it had once played a key role in

our socialist construction. However, as time goes on, the system becomes increasingly unfit for the requirement of modernization (Jiang, 2006a: 212).³⁹

Jiang's words revealed that after Tiananmen and the perdition of European communism, China had no intention to change its political system to adjust to the post-communist world. However, the CCP was eager to tackle its economic institution in order to make the regime more viable after the worldwide crisis of socialism.

Encouraged by the official announcements, Li Zongyu (李宗禹), a researcher in the Institute of Studies of the International Communist Movement at the CCP Central Bureau for the Compilation and Translation, reactivated the attacks on Stalin in late 1992. In his article published in *Dangdai shijieyu shehui zhuyi* (当代世界与社会主义 Contemporary World and Socialism), the author made the point that all problems of the former Soviet Union had originated from the Stalinist model after Lenin. He contended that such a model had overly excluded the capitalist elements and obstructed the productive forces and economic development, when Soviet socialism was still in its infancy – thus contributing to the subsequent dissolution of the state. In his opinion, both Deng's theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics and the goal of the 14th Congress in establishing a socialist market economy, were “a breakaway from Stalin's formulaic understanding of Marxism and the highly centralized plan economic system founded by Stalin, respectively” (Li, 1992: 23).⁴⁰

In his book published by CASS in 1994, the well-known Soviet historian and independent scholar Shen Zhihua (沈志华), by quoting the classics of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, pointed out that socialist agriculture needs to be privatized and complemented by capitalist management methods, thereby criticizing Stalin's notion that only collectivization was socialist in nature and the state was the owner of the land (Shen, 1994: 21). Throughout the book, Shen stated unequivocally that building socialism needs to be guided by the line of state capitalism. He argued strongly that Stalin had overturned Lenin's liberal approach to Soviet agriculture initiated during the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1922-1928) period. Such a move paved the path to not only the subsequent disastrous rural famine in the 1930s, but also the final collapse of Soviet economic and political system in 1991 (Shen, 1994).

Afterwards, throughout the 1990s, numerous articles appeared in various academic journals and studied the Stalinist model for helpful lessons in building socialism in China. Most of them resembled the tone of Li Zongyu's article; they were criticizing Stalinism as a distortion of Leninism and socialism, the origin of leftism in the international communist movement, and a fundamental cause of the Soviet demise (Zhao, 1993: 3-9; Yu, 1994: 64-69; Zheng, 1995: 7-12; Zuo, 1996: 57-63). In the late 1990s, several

articles generated new arguments and went further to attack the Stalinist model. Unlike some erstwhile Chinese writings, which justified that the Stalinist economic institution was absolutely essential during the period of war, but not necessary in the time of peace (Wang, 1989: 58; Kong, 1990: 29-34; Zhang, 1990: 188), Wu Kequan (武克全), a researcher at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, dismissed the historical inevitability of the Stalinist model and concluded that such a highly militarized but inefficient system was by no means a measure of building socialism under any circumstances (Wu, 1998: 13-17).

Both Wen Yi (闻一) (a researcher in the Institute of World History at CASS) and Li Zongyu challenged China's long-time assumption that industrialization is equal to modernization. They argued that the Soviet economy under Stalin was actually not modernization but a strange form of industrialization, which was extremely wasteful and at the expense of people's livelihoods. In their opinion, the Soviet Union was a paradox of industrial plenty in the midst of consumer poverty. They criticized that China since Mao had followed such a wrong path in constructing socialism, and made it clear that the USSR had never realized modernization up to the day of its demise (Wen, 1999: 49-52; Li, 1999: 118-119).

Unlike Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin at the 20th CPSU Congress, which detailed and gave examples of how Stalin engaged in physically torturing his enemies, most of the time, Chinese scholars in both decades did not delve into Stalin's crimes against humanity. This was because such an action would open the door to denouncing his Chinese analogue of Mao, which was a forbidden zone in China at all times. On the other hand, both Khrushchev and Chinese scholars criticized Stalin as a person, and some flaws of his policies; however, they only made efforts to condemn the man but not the system, and did not display an undercurrent of heterodox thought. They rarely touched the fundamentality of the institution established by Stalin, and were concerned about not socialism itself but its problems.⁴¹ While the 1980s Chinese writings manifested their distaste for the tyranny of Stalin and the problems of the Stalinist political system up to a point, the 1990s articles mainly focused on the imperfection of Stalin's economic apparatus. In a nutshell, Chinese scholars were more direct and bolder in criticizing some negative elements of Stalinism prior to Tiananmen, although this was by no means an attempt to question the dynamic of socialism that had produced such a leader.

The post-1991 Chinese re-evaluation and criticisms of Stalin should be analysed in a broad spectrum after Deng's southern tour in 1992. In a book on Stalin's political life published in 1997, the authors Jiang Changbin (姜长斌)⁴² and Zuo Fengrong (左凤荣)⁴³ wrote in the Epilogue (*Jieshuyu* 结束语) that the project was inspired by Deng's 1992 talk. It was Deng's remarks on the

nature of socialism and the Soviet model that had made the authors “become enlightened”. They decided to use Deng’s theory as the “guiding principle” in conducting research into Stalin (Jiang and Zuo, 1997: 623).⁴⁴ According to them, the Soviet model, which had consigned the country to the ash heap of history, was, in fact, the Stalinist model – and this model should hold the responsibility for the downfall. They contrasted the lethargic and inflexible Stalinist model with the pragmatic Deng model, which focused on combining Marxism with China’s peculiar conditions (Jiang and Zuo, 1997: 624-625).

Many Chinese writings after Deng’s southern tour also pointed out that the rightist tendencies practised by Gorbachev in the late 1980s were, in fact, an outcome of Stalin’s leftism. Gorbachev’s restoration of capitalism was a bounce-back to the long history of stagnation and self-seclusion caused by Stalin. At the time, the last Soviet leader had no choice but applied extreme methods to save the falling USSR (Wang, 1993: 38; Ma, 1998: 29; Lu and Jiang, 1999: 142-143). Such a conclusion accorded with the ancient Chinese proverb *Wuji bifan* (物极必反), which means when things are forced to become worse they begin to go to another extreme for retaliation. While some 1980s Chinese writings targeting Stalin might in fact be indirectly blaming Mao’s political repression in China (Zheng, 1989: 6; *Beijing Review*, 1989: 7-8), the 1990s criticisms on the ossification of the Soviet model created by Stalin could also be considered as a foil to attack Mao’s past leftist economic (not political) policy. This policy was similar to that of Stalin, as both leaders favoured heavy industrialization and exploitative economy as their repertoires.⁴⁵

Post-1991 Chinese Soviet research put the Stalinist economic model and the discredited leftism in 1990s China on an equal footing. By arguing that Stalinism was the root of the Soviet demise and retracing its damage on China under Mao, scholars justified Deng’s 1992 statement that leftism has done more harm than good to China, and like rightism, it could also destroy socialism (Deng, 1995f: 363). Therefore, they used their writings to defend China’s post-Tiananmen policy of accelerating economic reform and open door policy, and to assist the CCP reformers’ efforts to thwart the comeback of the leftist offensive.

5. Conclusion

The revival of research on Brezhnev and the re-assessment of Stalin’s model in 1990s Chinese Soviet research are two sides of the same coin. They are the two components of the principle that argues the decline of Soviet socialism had originated from Stalin and had been exacerbated by Brezhnev’s stagnation. The final demise of the country was due to the post-Lenin leaderships’ deviation from Lenin’s principle of building socialism.

Chinese Soviet-watchers tended to highlight the intrinsic relations between the two leaders. While Xu Kui defined the Brezhnev administration as “Neo-Stalinism” (Xu, 1998: 33),⁴⁶ Gao Fang described that the USSR under Stalin was already “a patient with early symptoms of cancer”, and Brezhnev later aggravated the situation that led the country into “the terminal stage of cancer”.⁴⁷ As a result, when Gorbachev came to power, the Soviet Union had no hope of recovery at all and it became a totally spent force (Gao, 1998: 79).

Both research trends not only served to checkmate the resurgent leftist thinking after Tiananmen, but their rationales could also be explained in the following ways. First, the research outcomes justified Deng’s consistent understanding that the problem was not socialism but the outdated Soviet model (Deng, 1995c: 143; 1995d: 180). The underlying concept of Chinese writings is that there was nothing wrong with socialism itself and the problems lay with the people who operated the system. The Soviet leaders achieved the opposite of what they intended. They had involuntarily destroyed this good system.

Second, after the demise of the USSR, Deng re-emphasized during his southern tour that China is still in the primary stage of socialism and it should make use of any means necessary to build socialism. Therefore, he announced “the more elements of capitalism will be introduced and the more capitalism will expand in China” (Deng, 1995f: 361). The writings of Chinese Soviet-watchers were also pertinent to Deng’s call. Through analysis of the rules of Brezhnev and Stalin, a common judgment appeared that argued that self-complacency, sheer immobilism, and rigid economic planning are fatal to socialism. By observing the lessons of Moscow, China should not be constrained by the orthodox mode of development. It should be more open to innovative experiments. It should learn something new from a market economy and replace the problematic Soviet model – developing the so-called “Chinese-style socialism” underscored by Deng (Deng, 1995f: 360).⁴⁸

Third, according to James Etheridge, before 1989, the Chinese leadership attempted to push the price reform, in order to accelerate the process of dismantling the plan economy and establish the market mechanism. Unfortunately, the experiment failed and resulted in skyrocketing inflation, rampant corruption, and an extraordinary sense of uncertainty concerning what the reforms would lead to, which created widespread frustration and fear among the people. Moreover, the economic crisis led to a deep division within the Party leadership. The reform-minded leaders led by Zhao Ziyang were facing fierce challenges from the Party old guards, who believed that the price reform had damaged the CCP’s control of China’s political power and undermined the legitimacy of the Party. These setbacks resulting from the price reform brought all the accumulated societal problems to the surface and piled up the people’s resentments. Most seriously, it greatly increased

the faith crisis among everyday Chinese by directing it towards the CCP's qualification and capacity to rule the country. After witnessing the rapid rise of pro-democracy tides in Eastern Europe and Gorbachev's promotion of *glasnost* in the Soviet Union, many Chinese, particularly intellectuals and university students, became increasingly convinced that it was time to shift the emphasis of China's reform project to the political sphere, exploring the prospect of transforming the party-state structure and creating new political institutions with checks and balances. They believed that doing so could ensure the better management of the state economy and a cheerful prospect of Chinese people's livelihood.⁴⁹

In sum, the economic situation in the late 1980s was also a factor in touching off the Tiananmen crisis. As such, by holding out the negative example of the Soviet economies under Stalin and Brezhnev and using the discussion to their advantage, Chinese scholars created a rallying point for urging and supporting the CCP's post-Tiananmen efforts, in order to normalize the distressed economy and revive its reform process in the shortest possible time. As we have seen in their discussion above, it was not just an economic issue for the Chinese leadership, but it was also a major political issue concerning the legitimacy of the Party – especially given its unwillingness to implement political reform and its decision to brutally crack down on the pro-democratic Tiananmen demonstrations. Thus, the CCP would desperately seek to regain its weakened legitimacy in China by fixing the past economic disorder and catalysing a new round of economic take-offs, after the wholesale collapse of world communism.

Fourth, the 3-year period between the Tiananmen Incident and the disintegration of the Soviet Union was an earth-shaking period that nearly convulsed the CCP regime. The Chinese reformist leadership led by Deng Xiaoping understood very well that only by successfully carrying out the reforms would the Chinese communist state be able to regain the legitimacy that it had lost. They were eager to explore a new way of dispelling tough resistance by the hardliners and make a breakthrough. They needed to regenerate the Party that was still in a coma after experiencing a heavy blow by the Tiananmen crisis and the ensuing collapse of communism in Europe.

As seen in this article, it is apparent that Chinese Soviet-watchers were trying to use the re-assessments of Brezhnev and Stalin to create new momentum. They intended for this momentum to revive China's reform and open door policies, and to further the cause of socialist modernization that had been championed since 1978. The discussion of the two Soviet leaders was a means to rally support for the forces of pro-reform. Afterwards, China was bolder in embracing economic liberalization while still refusing to transform its quasi-Leninist political system. Especially after Deng's southern tour in 1992, the CCP formally adopted the concept of "socialist market economy"

(Deng, 1995f: 361). China then registered unprecedented economic growth and experienced profound social transformation throughout the rest of the 1990s, a phenomenon that continued in the 21st century. As Chen Jian comments, “The Tiananmen tragedy remains a knot that must be untied and a barrier that must be removed in China’s continuous advance towards modernity” (Chen, 2009: 126). The use of Brezhnev and Stalin after Tiananmen was seen to be the best way for China to untie the “knot” and remove the “barrier”.

Last, in the 1980s many Chinese Soviet-watchers had thought highly of Gorbachev’s inspiration in undertaking political reform for facilitating economic modernization. However, in the 1990s most of them dismissed such an idea as one of Gorbachev’s weaknesses and a precipitating cause of the Soviet breakup (Li, 2016). The changing tone of Chinese writings tied in with the shake-up of the CCP in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Incident, when Deng made a comeback and reasserted his supreme position in China. While both Zhao Ziyang and Gorbachev championed the notion that economic reform is a product of political restructuring, Deng consistently remained wary of such a concept and emphasized political stability but not political pluralism. He found it good enough to have economic prosperity under the one-party rule, and felt there was little need to tackle the communist institution (Deng, 1995b: 129-130). This was particularly evident after Tiananmen, when the CCP became simply a delivery vehicle for material progress or a self-preservation machine, claiming the modern mandate of heaven with no greater purpose than to hold on to power.

While stressing reform and open door directions, Deng in his 1992 talk did not forget to defend “the dictatorship of the proletariat” and “the Four Cardinal Principles” (Deng, 1995f: 367). Chinese examination of Brezhnev and Stalin after 1990 was a response to the return of such Deng’s orthodox line, which focused on the sheer survival of the communist regime by economic means. It also disregarded any political demands, while making it clear that the policy of prioritizing political liberalization did not comport with socialism, and was not a future direction of the PRC in the post-communist world. In the 1990s, Chinese Soviet-watchers concentrated on the economic aspects of Brezhnev and Stalin while ignoring their political policies, and such a tendency was in tune with Deng’s 1992 guidelines. That the research focused on economic problems suggested that scholars seemed to have believed that the breaking apart of the Soviet Union was mainly due to economic illness but not the deficiency of political institutions. Having observed the economic troubles in the times of Stalin and Brezhnev, the writings appear to suggest that state legitimacy comes from economic results and consumer satisfaction, and socialism would be going down the wrong road if it could not deliver economic benefits to the people. The findings gave credibility to Deng’s faith that only a strong one-party rule could

ensure the effective implementation of rapid economic development. They justified the post-1991 China's state agenda of taking precedence in economic modernization while downplaying the importance of political restructuring. Their conclusions conveyed a message that it is economic affluence, not political reform, that matters the most for the survival of Chinese socialism after the fall of the USSR.

To conclude, the 1990s Chinese debates about Brezhnev and Stalin revolved around the backgrounds of the aftermath of Tiananmen and the collapse of world communism. The discussion confirmed that Deng Xiaoping's 1992 agendas involved renouncing the past Soviet model of economic development, opposing leftism, and saving Chinese socialism by speeding up the pace of reform and open door policy.

While ostensibly examining policies of the two Soviet leaders, in reality, Chinese Soviet-watchers were making pointed references to Chinese reality against the Soviet precedent. They not only learned the negative experience of the Soviet past, but also attempted to sum up lessons for China's future direction and the prospect of its communist regime. By depicting Brezhnev's stagnation and Stalin's rigid centralization as the primary causes of the collapse, their writings suggested that state legitimacy comes more from economic results and consumer satisfaction than democratic politics, and socialism would not be attractive to the people if it could not deliver economic benefits to them. As can be seen from the re-assessments of Brezhnev and Stalin in the 1990s, the major conclusion of Chinese Soviet-watchers also reiterated a thesis. Namely, the survival of Chinese socialism lies on good economic performance and political stability, but not dynamic transformation of the communist ruling institutions.

In the final words, in the eyes of post-1991 Chinese Soviet-watchers the example of the Soviet Union was not only a past lesson that should be learned from and a grave mistake that should be avoided, as claimed by most of the previous scholarship. As we have seen in the Introduction, since the 1989 Tiananmen incident and the 1991 Soviet collapse, the discussions of Gorbachev's political reform and Lenin's foreign agendas (as explored by my previous two articles) and the revival of research on Brezhnev and Stalin in the 1990s (as examined by this article) all demonstrate that Chinese Soviet-watchers viewed the former Soviet Union as both a warning from the past, as well as an image of a possible Chinese state in the future. After the collapse, Chinese Soviet-watchers argued that continued reform was the best way to revamp socialism. In their understanding, only a strong, stable, open, and wealthy state could ensure the survival of the socialist system in the long term. By examining the Soviet past, Chinese Soviet-watchers not only demonstrated concern for the survival of the CCP regime, but also attempted to envision the future direction and position of China in the post-communist world.

After the Soviet demise in 1991, Chinese Soviet-watchers switched to studying negative lessons of the collapse (such as the rigid economic policies of Brezhnev and Stalin presented in this research), with the aim of preserving Chinese communist rule, maintaining social stability, and seeking China's future position in the post-communist world. Seen from this article (and my previous two articles), the post-1991 Chinese research on the Soviet Union, therefore, could be considered as more of a rationalization of Chinese scholars' opinions about the legitimacy of Chinese socialism, China's domestic politics, and state agendas, than an academic attempt to reconstruct and discover the Soviet past. Scholars demonstrated the purported causal relations between the Soviet past and the political views they upheld for China's future. They mainly used their interpretation of the events in the USSR to speak for the political agendas that were believed to represent the correct directions of Chinese socialism and modernization, and to justify ongoing reform programs. Thus the post-1991 Chinese Soviet research served to render Party policies and principles understandable and plausible.

Seen from the article, Chinese Soviet research has thus failed to reveal much of the Soviet reality, but instead has resonated with Party ideologies and served to legitimate the political claims of those in power in China. The goal of the Soviet-watchers has been to address state policies and satisfy the ever-changing needs of contending political forces in China – rather than to seek accurate knowledge of the Soviet Union. They used their construction of analytical narratives and interpretations of the events in the USSR to justify PRC state policies, alter people's perceptions on socialism after 1991, and rationalize the communist one-party dictatorship in China.

The post-1991 Chinese Soviet research became a malleable tool that could be reinvented to serve different political purposes regardless of academic authenticity. By doing so, Chinese Soviet-watchers sought to make Chinese-style socialism meaningful and valued. Writings on the Soviet Union have largely reflected China's prevailing political climate as well as the current strategy of reform and open door policy. Although changes in the Soviet Union and in Sino-Soviet (and later Sino-Russian) relations have mattered, China's domestic concerns have been primary. We can say that Soviet research in China is an epiphenomenon of PRC politics.

When the former Soviet Union had turned into a relic of the past, the defunct country became less and less a subject of serious academic study in China, but remained a symbol for Chinese Soviet-watchers: reminding the domestic audience of the significance of deepening economic reform and open door policies as the key to keeping socialism vital, while upholding the fundamental importance of one-party dictatorship. For Chinese Soviet-watchers, this was the first and foremost lesson drawn from the failed experiments of the USSR, as presented in this study.

Notes

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1. The term "blame game" is coined by Shambaugh, see Shambaugh, 2008: 48.
 2. For a list of the 1980s PRC journals on the Soviet Union, see Rozman, 1985: 440-441.
 3. Similarly, Robert Desjardins in his book on post-war French Sovietology also includes not only the scholarship of French Soviet specialists but also the writings of French historians, economists and political scientists, whose works are orientated only incidentally towards the USSR. See Desjardins, 1988: 10.
 4. For a list of PRC institutes that have facilities for research of the Soviet Union, see Rozman, 1985: 444-445.
 5. The quotations are translated by the author.
 6. The quotations are translated by the author.
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 13. The quotations are translated by the author.
 14. The quotations are translated by the author.
 15. The quotations are translated by the author.
 16. Shambaugh also has a survey on the pre-1992 Chinese short-lived thesis of peaceful evolution, see Shambaugh, 2008: 55.
 17. Deng once indicated that the Soviet collapse could not be attributed to the peaceful evolution statement. He said, "Some theoreticians and politicians have used this thesis in an attempt to jettison the economic reform policy. Their thinking is not safeguarding but negating socialism." (Quotations are translated by the author) See Zong, 2007: 42.

18. The quotations are translated by the author.
19. On the evolving perceptions of Chinese scholars on Gorbachev from the 1980s to 1990s, see Li, 2016: 35-65.
20. The title is translated by the author.
21. The title is translated by the author.
22. On Jiang Zemin's original speech, see Jiang, 2006b: 460-475.
23. The quotations are translated by the author.
24. The title is translated by the author.
25. The quotations are translated by the author.
26. The quotations are translated by the author.
27. The quotations are translated by the author.
28. The quotations are translated by the author.
29. In the postscript, the authors revealed that there was a possibility they might present the research outcomes of the book in the form of a report to the CCP, for providing reference for future policy-making. See Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1996: 289.
30. The quotations are translated by the author.
31. Guan Guihai once revealed, that many 1990s Chinese Soviet-watchers had argued that one of the main causes of the fall of the USSR was the rush introduction of private ownership under Gorbachev. See Guan, 2010: 512.
32. On the rise of the thesis of China's state-led capitalism after the Tiananmen Incident and the fall of world communism, see Naughton 2011: 154-178.
33. On the rise and discourse of Chinese new-leftism, see Dongen, 2009.
34. For Sino-Soviet relations under Mao, see Luthi, 2008.
35. The quotations are translated by the author.
36. In his article, Su Shaozhi (苏绍智), director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism at CASS, compared Zhao Ziyang's endeavours to redress the wrongdoings of the Cultural Revolution with Gorbachev's efforts to sweep away the 1930s negative residue. See Su, 1988: 207.
37. The quotations are translated by the author.
38. The quotations are translated by the author.
39. The quotations are translated by the author.
40. The quotations are translated by the author.
41. On the 1956 secret speech in criticizing Stalin, see Khrushchev, 1963: 204-265.
42. Jiang Changbin was a professor of international politics at the Central Party School.
43. Zuo Fengrong was a PhD candidate in international politics at the Central Party School under Jiang Changbin's supervision.
44. The quotations are translated by the author.
45. On the comparison between Mao and Stalin in administering their own economies in China and the Soviet Union, respectively, see Li, 2006.
46. The quotations are translated by the author.
47. The quotations are translated by the author.
48. Zheng Yifan (郑异凡) (a researcher at the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau) once remarked that "the achievement of China's economic reform since

1978 is the best testimony to the incorrectness of Stalin's notion of 'socialism in one country'." (Translated by the author) See Zheng, 1995: 11.

49. For details, see Etheridge, 1990.

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Rethinking the Logic of Beijing's Divided Rules Policy toward Hong Kong and Taiwan: A Constructivist Explanation

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Abstract

The dynamic relations between mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan over the past few decades have attracted many scholars to explain and predict this interesting phenomenon using various theoretical approaches. Economic integration theory has received the most academic attention, anticipating that economic interdependence will generate a spillover effect on political integration. However, political reality has illustrated the inadequate explanatory power of this theory. Based on this understanding, the present article develops a new analytical framework derived from the revised social constructivism and argues that Beijing's policy toward Hong Kong and Taiwan is a mixed strategy incorporating three dimensions, namely force, interest and legitimacy; this is labelled the 'divided rules policy'. These three dimensions are working simultaneously and compatibly with different emphases, depending on Beijing's assessment and judgement on the specific political situation in Hong Kong and Taiwan. To elaborate Beijing's policy logic in realpolitik, this article considers two critical turning points that occurred in Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Hong Kong White Paper and 31 Measures, as case studies, and it predicts that the relations of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan will grow tighter than they were before.

Keywords: *Logic of Beijing's Policy; Beijing–Hong Kong Relations; Cross-strait Relations; Divided Rules Policy*

1. Introduction

Despite considerable differences in their political and social history, Hong Kong and Taiwan have become increasingly similar in recent years; this is because mainland China seeks to exert its political power on their domestic

politics by using a comprador policy as leverage, a policy that mainly focusses on using business connections to force political change and employing civic society to put pressure on politicians in Hong Kong and Taiwan, which is firmly consistent with its economic statecraft (Norris, 2016; Williams, 2005).

The growing similarity between Hong Kong and Taiwan, shaped by Beijing's policy, has attracted many scholars to explain and even predict the development of their relations. The most popular argument is economic integration theory, which is mainly based on neofunctionalism, arguing that the spillover effect generated by economic cooperation will eventually lead to political integration. While economic integration theory provides various insights into the relations of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, it is a single-attribution approach, and thus, it may miss other crucial perspectives (e.g. political aspects). This single attribution may propose several interesting questions, as follows: First, does economic integration provide a full picture for explaining the dynamic Mainland–Hong Kong–Taiwan relations? Second, what is the real logic behind Beijing's policy toward Hong Kong and Taiwan? Third, how does this logic operate in realpolitik?

The possibility of completely answering these questions in such a limited article is low; however, adopting a revised social constructivism as an analytical framework, this article argues that the logic of Beijing's policy towards Hong Kong and Taiwan does not have a single dimension, as supported by economic integration theory, but instead, it is a multidimensional policy incorporating the aspects of force, interest and legitimacy. More specifically, this article asserts that the Beijing government adopts a mixed strategy, labelled 'divided rules', by setting force as the basis for deterring so-called secessionists, using the economic interest as leverage to capture the hearts of Hong Kongers and Taiwanese people and considering legitimacy as the ultimate goal for reconstructing its authority in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Taiwan. These three dimensions work simultaneously and compatibly with different emphases, depending on Beijing's assessment and judgement on the specific political situation.

By conducting a theoretical revision on social constructivism, this new analytical framework offers a different explanation in the study of Beijing's policy logic toward Hong Kong and Taiwan, differentiating it from power-based realism and interest-driven economic integration theory. To support this argument, two typical turning points are employed as case studies in this article, as follows: the report titled 'The Practice of "One Country, Two Systems" Policy in Hong Kong Special Administration Region' (hereinafter, the 'Hong Kong White Paper'), which was officially issued by Beijing in 2014, and 'Measures to Promote the Economic and Cultural Exchange in Cross Strait Relations', released by the Chinese Taiwan Affairs Office of State Council (TAO) in 2018 (hereinafter, '31 Measures').

This article is organized into four sections. The first provides a brief literature review of studies on how the economic integration theory explains the dynamic relations between mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and presents the revised social constructivism as an analytical tool for re-examining Beijing's policy toward Hong Kong and Taiwan. Two empirical case studies are examined in the third section to assess what the logic behind Beijing's policy is and how the logic can operate in realpolitik. The final section presents conclusions drawn from the case study findings.

2. Theoretical Framework: A Revised Social Constructivism as an Analytical Tool

2.1. Political Integration through Economic Dependence?

The complexities and dynamics of mainland–Hong Kong–Taiwan relations has attracted many scholars to contribute their viewpoints and theories. Among them, economic integration theory has received the most attention. This is partly because the rise of China, especially the tremendous growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) over the past decades since Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening-up Policy of the 1980s, has exerted a powerful influence within and beyond the greater China region. Relying on its huge economic size and rapid growth rate, mainland China is widely regarded as a magnet that, beyond incorporating, can also create asymmetric economic dependence in both Hong Kong and Taiwan (Sung, 2005; Wang & Schuh, 2000).

Economic integration theory is mainly derived from *functionalism* or *neofunctionalism*, which is seen as a socially-centred approach in explaining the intraregional interactions. The viewpoint of functionalism argues that regional integration should be a top-down process, which requires the government to promote integration based on common interests and a social consensus (Hass & Schmitter, 1964). Two key arguments are especially illustrated by functionalists: First, the interdependence among different regions has the nature of expansion, which means that the cooperation between governments in one realm will generate a so-called spillover effect to develop more communication in other realms (Mitrany, 1966: 97). Second, the functionalists suggest that people's loyalty toward their nations will transfer to the new functional organization with the deepening process of regional integration (Dauherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1981: 419).

Related to the relations of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, existing literature mainly focusses on how mainland China uses the economic framework, referring to the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) as

economic leverage for exerting its political influence in Hong Kong and Taiwan. More specifically, in light of CEPA, some scholars have begun to question the real benefit this arrangement brings to Hong Kong society. Lui Tai-lok (2014), for example, examined the aspect of the changing relations between Hong Kong and mainland China in the course of national and regional integration, suggesting that Hong Kong is gradually finding itself with a decreased ability to further capitalize on the motherland's rapid economic growth. A more pessimistic viewpoint delivered by Samson Yuen (2014) is that Hong Kong's asymmetric dependence on mainland China cannot be merely interpreted through economic interest; it also provides an open platform for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to carry out the united front work, which may enhance the CCP's political influence in Hong Kong society. Brian Fong (2014) further elaborated on this point from patron–client theory. He observed that business elites have been increasingly overrepresented among the Hong Kong delegations to the National People Congress. Fong argued that the representation allows the Beijing government to 'undermine Hong Kong's relative autonomy', resulting in a state–business alliance.

With respect to the ECFA in cross-strait relations, a similar theoretical logic can be found in understanding the interactions between mainland China and Taiwan, which can be divided into the macro-level, medium level and micro-level (Hu, 2013). At the macro-level, Cal Clark (2003) tried to explain cross-strait economic integration based on the successful experience offered by the European Union. He asserted that mainland China and Taiwan have created a growing integration at the level of 'low politics' and 'people-to-people diplomacy'. However, after applying the EU's model in mainland China–Taiwan relations, Clark found that cross-strait relations are largely blocked by some key aspects (e.g. the dispute over sovereignty), which means that the EU's experience is not applicable to cross-strait relations. At the medium level, Beijing's economic interdependence is considered as a strategy for manipulating cross-strait relations. Miles Kahler and Scott Kastner (2006), for example, labelled the economic interdependence as 'engagement strategy', which aims at changing the foreign behaviour of target states or actors. Similarly, Karen Sutter (2002) proposed that a dynamism of business interests in the development of cross-strait relations may pull the government's policy along as policymakers struggle to keep pace with commercial reality, which means that the economic strategy could exert a powerful effect on the process of policy design and eventually shape the government's behaviour (Tsai & Liu, 2017).

At the micro-level, some scholars attempt to emphasize the role of agents, namely Taiwanese businesspeople (*Taishang*), in shaping the interactions between mainland China and Taiwan. Keng Shu and Gunter Schubert (2006) conducted an in-depth study on Taiwanese businesspeople, arguing

that Taiwan's growing trade dependence on mainland China and the high attractiveness of China's enormous market allow the Beijing government to 'use business to steer politics' (*yishangweizheng*) or 'use economics to promote unification' (*yijingcutong*). However, they also pointed out that the political significance of Taiwanese businesspeople is quite limited, which leads to the low efficacy of Beijing's strategy.

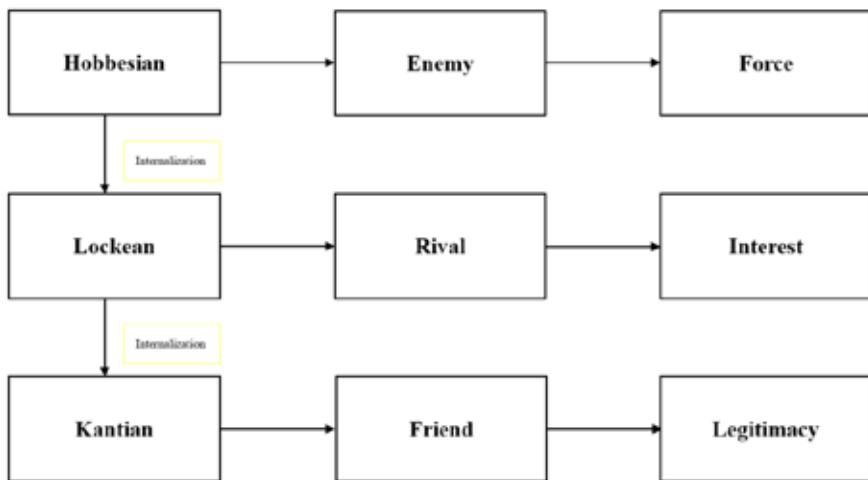
Relying on previous literature review, it is not hard to find that Beijing's similar economic strategy toward Hong Kong and Taiwan is far from its ultimate goal, that is, political integration. However, does the setback in the economic realm mean the complete failure of Beijing's policy toward Hong Kong and Taiwan? More precisely, does the economic integration theory accurately describe the full logic of Beijing's policy? While the economic integration theory provides various insights for researchers to understand the dynamic relations between mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, it merely reflects one of the logics in Beijing's policy design. In other words, economic integration theory only offers one aspect, namely interest, as clarified in this article's argument.

2.2. Social Constructivism: A Theoretical Revision

As discussed above, this article uses social constructivism as an alternative approach for re-examining Beijing–Hong Kong relations and cross-strait relations because economic integration theory merely provides a single dimension, leading to the misjudgement of Beijing's policy. Therefore, the multiple dimensions provided by social constructivism is incorporated to interpret the dynamic relations between mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Differing from Kenneth N. Waltz's single logic regarding international politics, in which anarchy is inherently a self-help system that produces military competition, a balance of power and war (Waltz, 1979), Wendt (1994) disagreed that anarchical international politics constructs states and instead argued that anarchy is what states make of it. Wendt (1999: 247) proposed that there are at least three anarchical cultures or structures in international society, namely the Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian. The constructs on which these structures depend determine the role, that of enemy, rival or friend, that is dominant in the system. Accordingly, Wendt (1999) created three pathways by which the same structure can be produced, as follows: force, price and legitimacy. In other words, relations between political entities mainly depend on the type of identity that they perceive the other to have; these perceived identities may influence the pathways that they use to construct their mutual identity under the three anarchical cultures (i.e. Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian). The logic of Wendt's social constructivism in understanding the strategic interactions between actors is summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Logic of Wendt’s Social Constructivism



Source: Summarized from Wendt’s *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999).

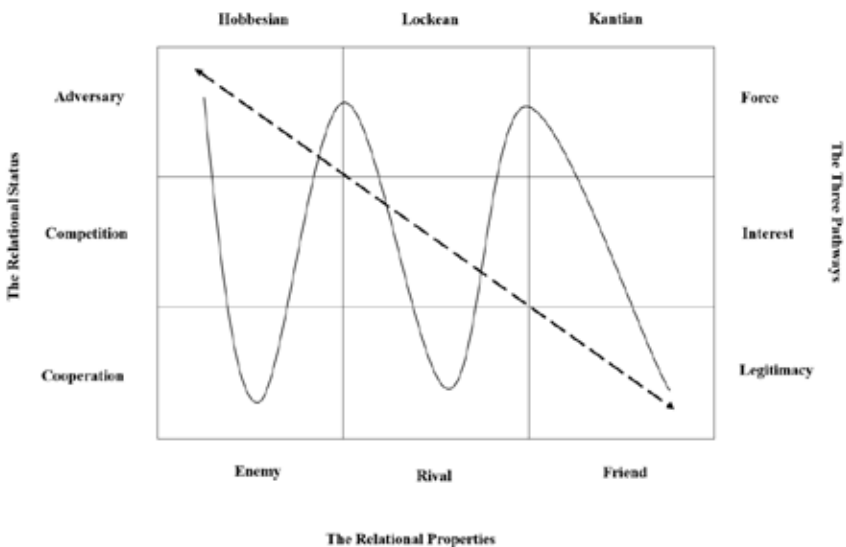
Wendt’s (1999) social constructivism is not without problems. Given his assumption that the different cultural structure decides the role and further shapes the behavioural pattern of the actors, he takes the one-on-one linear judgement, which can be summarized as ‘Hobbesian (adversary)–enemy–force’, ‘Lockean (rival)–competition–interest’, and ‘Kantian (friend)–cooperation–legitimacy’. However, related to the theoretical logic and political reality, such linear judgement has obvious flaws. For example, both enemies and friends exhibit competition and cooperation at the same time. Moreover, even if the two actors perceive themselves as ‘friends’ to each other, there are still many irreconcilable contradictions that may directly turn their relationship into that of enemies (e.g. the Soviet Union and mainland China in the Cold War period). In light of Hong Kong’s case, for example, it is reasonable for the researcher to define Beijing–Hong Kong relations under the Lockean structure, especially when the successful sovereignty transfer occurred in 1997, which means that the force pathway may rarely appear. Nevertheless, this inference is largely beyond political reality because the Beijing government has not given up using force on the ‘secessionist power’ in Hong Kong society. Likewise, there is a great difference in Beijing’s recognition of Kuomintang (KMT; rival) and the Democratic Progress Party (DPP; enemy), which indicates that there should be a mixed strategy for Beijing to deal with the Taiwan problem when different ruling parties come to power. Thus, Wendt’s (1999) social constructivism merely explains the nature of relations among actors; the researcher does not elaborate on how these actors may interplay with each

other in specific issues. Based on this understanding, this article attempts to conduct a theoretical revision on Wendt's (1999) categorization by adding two more specific dimensions, namely 'relational properties' and 'relational status'.

Liu Feng (2017), professor of international politics at NanKai University proposed a rigid definition of these two concepts. First, *relational properties* can be defined by the mutual perception of two actors that refers to their different roles, including that of enemy, rival and friend. More precisely, the core interests between enemies are basically irreconcilable, and fundamental conflicts exist in their major strategic interest. For rivals, the core interests are partly reconcilable, and there is no conflict in their major strategic interests. For friends, both the core interests and major strategic interest are reconcilable. Second, the relational status refers to the specific strategies for dealing with bilateral relations between two actors, which includes adversary, competition and cooperation relations. An adversary relation is defined as using conflict as a way of adjusting the difference of core interests, which is a zero-sum game calculation. Competition means that the actors may eventually reach a reconcilable consensus through negotiation and coordination, especially in terms of avoiding conflict caused by violence. Cooperation means that the two actors have formulated a peaceful way of coordinating their difference of interest.

Relying on the relational properties, relational status and three pathways, we can reconstruct Wendt's (1999) constructivist analytical framework as shown in Figure 2 below. This new constructivist framework has several

Figure 2 Revised Logic of Wendt's Social Constructivism



Source: Author (2018).

advantages compared with the traditional view created by Wendt (1999). First, it revises the theoretical logic of traditional constructivism that considers roles and strategic interactions as a linear relation. A more precise and specific curve is provided in the new analytical framework, suggesting that one pathway can cross different relational statuses and properties, while different pathways can be applied simultaneously and compatibly regarding one or more relational properties. For example, in the rival property, relations between actors may produce at least three types of interaction, as follows: rival with adversary (force), rival with cooperation (interest) and friend with cooperation (legitimacy). As such, the force pathway crosses all the cultural structures, relational status and properties.

Second, this new analytical framework is more dynamic because it enriches the possibility of interplay between actors, offering nine interactional models. Related to policy logic, this means that even if confronting one or more relational properties, the Beijing government has more choices for adopting a mixed strategy by combining force, interest and legitimacy, which depends on Beijing's recognition and perception of the political situation in HKSAR and Taiwan. This enables the Beijing government to conduct the divided rules policy by separating the groups in Hong Kong and Taiwan society and defining the different groups as friends (local people), rivals (the capitalist class) and enemies (secessionists).

3. Case Studies: The Hong Kong White Paper and 31 Measures

An examination of the empirical case studies should start by clarifying two definitions. First, although the actor in social constructivism typically denotes the state, its definition in this article is extended to the political entity because Hong Kong and Taiwan each represents a special type of greater Chinese region. Regarding Taiwan, although it is embroiled in a sovereignty struggle with the Chinese government, it can be viewed as a political entity from the perspective of international law. The case of Hong Kong is different because its sovereignty was legally addressed when it was transferred from the United Kingdom to China in 1997. However, because of the 'one country, two systems' formula, Hong Kong has a different political system, which makes it a special administrative region of mainland China. Consequently, it is reasonable to regard the HKSAR as a political entity without sovereignty. Second, because the dynamic relations among mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are based on the competing interaction of sovereignty, territory, and international recognition, the discussion in this article can mainly be classified under the Lockean structure, a culture that views the essence of actors' interactions to sovereignty and territory (Wendt, 1999). This section examines two recent cases to answer the proposed research questions.

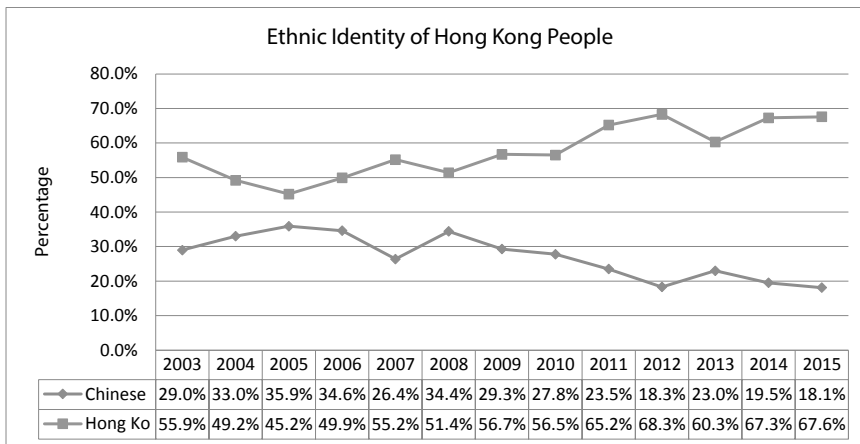
3.1. Beijing's Policy toward Hong Kong: The Hong Kong White Paper as the Turning Point

After the successful transfer of sovereignty in 1997, the Beijing government has generally adhered to the major principle of 'One Country, Two Systems', a formula left by Deng Xiaoping, because the sovereignty issue has been addressed, enabling Hong Kong people to maintain their original political institutions and social structure without intervention from mainland China. The handover of sovereignty indicates that Beijing's concern about secessionism, mainly referring to the Hong Kong Independents (港独), has largely been weakened. Based on this recognition, Beijing's divided rules policy shifts its emphasis on binding the hearts of Hong Kong people by appealing to their economic interest. This calculation is not only helpful for cultivating Hong Kongers' sense of Chinese identity to strengthen the legitimacy of central government in HKSAR, but it may also be beneficial for mainland China's development (Chiu, 2006). The sudden outbreak of SARS in 2003 gave the Beijing government the opportunity to materialize its plan.

Beijing calculated that enacting CEPA would provide substantial support to Hong Kong from the motherland during the sovereignty transition, and in return, garner appreciation for the central government from citizens of the special administration region. From 2004 to 2011, the HKSAR had an average economic growth rate of nearly 5%; this was twofold that of most economies, especially when compared with Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore, which, with the HKSAR, are called the Four Asian Dragons. This growth indicated that support from the Central People's Government not only saved Hong Kong from the SARS crisis but also created economic prosperity for Hong Kongers, with the anticipation that their sense of Chinese identity would increase along with their political trust in the motherland. However, this expectation has not been realized in the 15 years since the CEPA signing.

Beijing's traditional tactics have entailed using the mainland market's substantial profit and interest as economic leverage to bid for Hong Kongers' hearts. More specifically, this economic leverage has mainly been exerted on Hong Kong's business sector, as its leaders are willing to follow directives of the central government so that they can preserve and maximize their profits and interests in the mainland market. These partnerships between the Beijing and Hong Kong business sectors have enabled business elites, who have a direct effect on state sovereignty, to fundamentally change Hong Kong's relations with mainland China (Fong, 2014). Such economic leverage and partnerships are generally called the 'comprador policy' (买办政策). Nevertheless, investing primarily in business elites as a method for intervening in Hong Kong's affairs has not been as effective as China expected; this is demonstrated by the Hong Kong public's decreasing level of

Figure 3. Poll of National Identity in the Hong Kong Special Administration Region



Source: HKU POP SITE, 2016. https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/chinese/popexpress/ethnic/eidentity/poll/eid_poll_chart.html

Chinese identity (Figure 3). In the first 4 years of CEPA (2003–2006), their level of Chinese identity increased slightly, from 29.0% to 34.6%, which can reasonably be interpreted as CEPA’s partial success in bidding for the hearts of Hong Kongers. However, this level has subsequently begun to decline; in 2015, Chinese identity reached its lowest point (18.1%) since the CEPA signing, whereas the level of Hong Kong identity increased to 67.6%, its second highest level in the same period.

This changing attitude of the Hong Kong public shows that Beijing’s comprador policy has not been as successful as anticipated. The primary reason for the policy’s low efficacy can be observed from two perspectives. Targeting the business sectors was strategically consistent with Beijing’s economic orientation, as China considers Hong Kong’s global business networks and status as an international financial centre to be invaluable assets as China continues its efforts to build a more complete market economy (Yep, 2007, 2009); however, the thrust of this policy did not satisfy most Hong Kongers. Nevertheless, businesses are profit seekers, which drives them to maximize their economic profits, even at the cost of ordinary people’s interests. In other words, Beijing’s comprador policy is an impetus meant to increase profit-maximizing behaviour in business rather than facilitate redistributing unequal profit and income throughout Hong Kong society. For example, with CEPA’s endorsement, the mainland and HKSAR governments decided to launch the Individual Visit Scheme, which allowed mainlanders

who had obtained a pass from authorities in select mainland cities to travel to HKSAR on an individual basis. This scheme has resulted in substantially increasing the number of mainlander tourists, which totalled 18 million in 2011, a 26-fold increase compared with 2003. One result is that agents and private hospitals have taken advantage of visiting pregnant women, colluding to dramatically increase medical service fees in Hong Kong, at the expense of Hong Kongers' interests (Lee, 2016).

This economic integration implemented by comprador policy is rejected by some scholars, who regard the process as 'reluctant integration' and 'unwilling mainlandization' (Ping & Kwong, 2014; So, 2010). Worse still, the low efficacy of Beijing's economic interest-driven policy has not only further triggered the increasing intergroup conflicts between Chinese mainlanders and Hong Kongers in recent years (see Table 1), but also generates the space for the 'potential resistant power' to demonstrate their political appeals through

Table 1. Conflicts between Mainland China and Hong Kong since 2010

August 2011	•	A dispute happened between a Hong Konger and Mainlander over a subway seat, and sparked a furious discussion on mainlander's behaviour in Hong Kong.
October 2011	•	A Hong Kong student at City University of Hong Kong publicly announced mainland student as a "dog"
January 2012	•	A Hong Konger blamed a mainland mother for allowing Children eat on the subway.
January 2012	•	A professor of Beijing University called Hong Konger do not speak Putonghua as "British running dog".
September 2014	•	Occupying the Central and Umbrella Student Movement, which were considered as Hong Konger's great resistance to Beijing government.
November 2015	•	A FIBA World Cup Qualification Match between mainland China and Hong Kong. The Hong Kongers expressed their dissent by hissing when national anthem was processing. This directly pushes the central government to issue the "law of national anthem".
2016	•	The Mong Kok Riot. The Zhonglianban (中联办) defined the Mong Kok incident as a riot, which triggered the wide-spread dissent in Hong Kong society.

Source: Mingpao, Apple Daily, Dagongbao.

intergroup conflict, which may cause a wide-range resonance in Hong Kong society. For example, during Hong Kong's legislative election in 2012, many candidates deliberately demonstrated their strong 'anti-China' position to express suspicion on the integration between mainland China and Hong Kong, which indicated that the tension and confrontation of Beijing–Hong Kong relations have reached their peak (Ma, Ngok, 2015).

The low efficacy of comprador policy and the rise of Hong Kong identity, together with the resurgence of secessionism, have driven the Beijing government to change its emphasis by reaffirming the central government's authority and legitimacy on the HKSAR. Based on these considerations, the Beijing government issued the Hong Kong White Paper on 10 June 2014. The release of the Hong Kong White Paper immediately triggered a wide range of discussions, both at home and abroad and among all parties from the public to news media and academic scholars. Quick responses from several local newspapers pointed out the insight of this White Paper, suggesting that its newly defined main principles could be considered a turning point for Hong Kong's 'one country, two systems' formula. However, the more accurate articulation is that it is the turning point of Beijing's divided rules policy from the emphasis on interest to reconstructing its legitimacy and restarting its use of force on the resistant power defined by the central government. The White Paper is the first step in this policy transition. In the case of the White Paper, at least two aspects must be considered in understanding Beijing's reconstruction of legitimacy, as described below.

First, Beijing has redefined its conception of 'one country, two systems'. In the Hong Kong White Paper, the central authority reiterates that all Hong Kongers should have a complete and accurate understanding of 'one country, two systems':

'One country, two systems' is a holistic concept.... As a unitary state, China's central government has comprehensive jurisdiction over all local administrative regions, including the HKSAR. The high degree of autonomy of the HKSAR is not an inherent power, but one that comes solely from the authorization by the central leadership.... The 'one country' is the premise and basis of the 'two systems', and the 'two systems' is subordinate to and derived from 'one country'. But, the 'two systems' under the 'one country' are not on par with each other. The fact that the mainland, the main body of the country, embraces socialism will not change. With that as the premise, and considering the history of Hong Kong and some other regions, capitalism is allowed to stay on a long-term basis (State Council Information Office of PRC, 2014).

In accordance with its general principles, the Basic Law of the HKSAR never specifically defines the relations between the 'one country' and 'two systems', although it stipulates that Hong Kong is an indispensable part of

the People's Republic of China. The emphasis on the 'one country' as the premise and basis of 'two systems', as well as the subordinate position of the 'two systems', implies that the central authority of Beijing is the sole source of Hong Kong's administrative power and the only legitimacy of the 'one country, two systems' formula. Reconstituting its legitimacy by redefining relations between the one country and two systems, the central government legitimizes its behaviour in manipulating Beijing–Hong Kong relations. After the Hong Kong White Paper, the central government proposed the '8•31 Decision' (8•31决议) to block universal suffrage in Hong Kong's election; this directly caused the Occupying Centre and Umbrella Movement.

Second, apart from the redefinition of 'One Country, Two Systems' formula, the Beijing government attempts to address the identity issue in Hong Kong society, which is the major source of the central government's legitimacy. The former approach to building Chinese identity entailed conducting patriotic education in the HKSAR, a step similar to that taken in mainland China in the post-1989 era when the Chinese government launched a national patriotic education campaign to cultivate the strong nationalistic sentiment required to supplement its legitimacy (Shirk, 2008; Zhao, 2005). However, the HKSAR project suffered a significant setback in 2012, when there were large-scale demonstrations resisting 'brain-washing education'. When Xi Jin-Ping came to power, he proposed his China Dream to realize a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, attempting to unite mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Singapore and other overseas Chinese communities. The Chinese nation is a supranational concept, emphasizing that Chinese people, regardless of their region, share a common interest, identity and destiny, and thus, that all Chinese can participate in a community with a common future (命运共同体), striving for the great rejuvenation of their nation in the contemporary world. In this manner, the final two master variables (common fate and homogeneity) are generated in Beijing–Hong Kong relations as the confrontation between mainland and Hong Kong identities is resolved under the concept of the Chinese nation (中华民族), and the Hong Kong identity is homogenized into the Chinese nation as an inalienable part of pursuing the great national rejuvenation. Specifically, the future of rejuvenation becomes the common fate shared by mainlanders and Hong Kongers, as stated in the White Paper:

Firmly advancing the cause of 'one country, two systems' is the common wish of all the Chinese people, the Hong Kong compatriots included, and is in the fundamental interests of the country and people, the general and long-term interests of Hong Kong, and the interests of foreign investors.... Now, people all over the country are working hard with full confidence

towards the ‘two centenary goals’ ... strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious when the PRC marks its centenary in 2049, as well as the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (State Council Information Office of PRC, 2014).

More importantly, the Beijing government seeks to restart the ‘force’ to suppress the resistant power in the HKSAR. While the Occupying Centre and Umbrella Movement were ended by the HKSAR government, the central government’s redefinition of the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ formula still triggers potential resistance, such as among prodemocracy activists, nativists and Hong Kong independents. In line with Beijing’s divided rules policy, the force is designed to deter potential secessionists. For example, a strong pro-localist/independent party, called YouthSpiration (青年新政), was founded by two young leaders, Sixtus Leung (梁天琦) and Yau Wai-ching (游蕙桢), after the Umbrella Movement. Leung and Yau’s political appeals for rebuilding Hong Kong’s identity and self-determination of its destiny are regarded by the Beijing government as radical localism (激进本土主义), aiming at promoting Hong Kong’s independence from mainland China (*South China Morning Post*, 2016). In this sense, the central government exerts force on this resistant power by proposing the fifth interpretation of the National People’s Congress of the Basic Law (第五次人大释法). In the Hong Kong legislative election in 2016, while Leung and Yau were successfully elected, they were quickly disqualified because of their radical and non-rational behaviours during the oath taking, which triggered a wide-ranging, furious controversy in both mainland China and Hong Kong.

Beijing’s assertive posture toward the resistant power in Hong Kong society reflects its determination to conduct a divided policy. On one hand, by reaffirming the definition of the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ formula, the Beijing government has managed to reconstruct its absolute authority over the HKSAR. On the other hand, Beijing has used judicial force to suppress the rise of radical localism and nativism. Moreover, a new economic interest policy, called the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macau Greater Bay Area (粤港澳大湾区; hereafter, Greater Bay Area), is simultaneously being processed. Differing from the traditional comprador policy targeting the business elites, the Greater Bay Area project, signed in 2017 in Hong Kong, put much more emphasis on the ‘people-to-people’ benefit, which provides Hong Kong people with attractive human resource policy, job opportunities, easier promotions and higher salaries. Regardless of the actual efficacy of the Greater Bay Area project, Beijing’s changing economic interest policy toward local people, especially the young generation, reflects its introspection on traditional policy. This new economic policy, together with the Hong Kong White Paper and use of force on resistant power, constitute Beijing’s new divided policy toward Hong Kong.

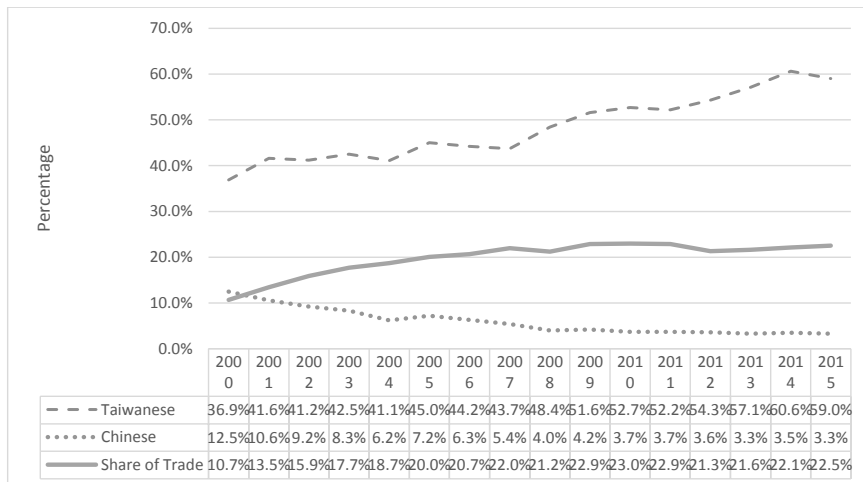
3.2. Beijing's Policy toward Taiwan: The 31 Measures as a Turning Point

The Chinese mainland's 31 Measures for Taiwan demonstrates a stronger case to elaborate on how Beijing's 'divided rules' policy works in the realpolitik. In the past few decades from the end of the military conflict in 1979, cross-strait relations have entered a relatively peaceful period, with deepening socioeconomic cooperation. However, the relief of military confrontation between mainland China and Taiwan does not mean that the Beijing government decides to abandon the use of force. More precisely, in Beijing's divided rules policy toward Taiwan, force is set as the last option, as well as the bottom line for achieving the ultimate unification, which depends on whether the Taipei government has a strong pro-independence stance. For instance, when both Lee Teng-hui's (李登輝) visit to Cornell University in 1995 and Taiwanese first presidential election in 1996 increased the possibility of Taiwan's *de facto* independence, the Beijing government immediately launched live ammunition manoeuvres to deter Taiwan's domestic pro-independence power, which directly triggered the 1995–1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis (Scobell, 2013; Yu, 1999). Likewise, to prevent Chen Shui-bian's (陈水扁) radical pro-independent actions during his second term, the Beijing government duly issued the 'Anti-Secession Law' (反分裂国家法) in 2005, aiming at strengthening the deterrence of the 'stick policy' (Zhao, 2006). All these signs illustrates Beijing's determination on using military force, if necessary, to resolve the Taiwan problem.

Although military action was designed to deter Taiwan's pro-independents, the Beijing government also realized that such aggressive behaviour is not conducive to earning the trust of the Taiwanese people. Meanwhile, the Anti-secession Law already drew the red line that would cause Beijing's military action. Based on these considerations, the Beijing government has transferred the emphasis of the divided rules policy from force-based to interest-driven. Similar to the economic policy towards Hong Kong, Beijing has adopted a comprador policy in Taiwan, using economic leverage over Taiwan's business sector as a long-term strategy for manipulating cross-strait relations. By using special provisions to control Taiwan's profits and interests in the mainland market, Beijing renders the elites of Taiwan's business sector as spokespersons who can influence and intervene in Taiwan's internal affairs (Chen, 2016).

China's political intention with Hong Kong and the lessons drawn from their interactions since 1997, however, should indicate that implementing a comprador policy in Taiwanese society will not be as effective as Beijing anticipates; this is reflected by the continually low levels of Chinese identity among the Taiwanese. As shown in Figure 4, cross-strait trade was 22.5% in 2015, representing a more than twofold increase since 2000 (10.6%). According to the neoliberalist perspective, this economic integration should

Figure 4. Change in Taiwanese National Identity



Sources: Election Studies Center, National Cheng-Chi University (<http://esc.nccu.edu.tw/course/news.php?Sn=166>); Mainland Affairs Council, ROC (http://www.mac.gov.tw/public/MMO/MAC/272_2.pdf).

have a spillover effect into other areas (e.g. national identity or politics); these cooperative and profitable economic relations should translate into an increase in Chinese identity. However, during the economic integration of 2000–2015, the sense of Chinese identity among the Taiwanese remained low, from 12.5% in 2000 to a low of 3.3% in 2015. Accordingly, over half the respondents (59%) maintained that they had only a Taiwanese identity. The upsurge in Taiwanese identity in this period implies that Beijing’s economic approach to winning the support and trust of the Taiwanese people suffered a large setback and that the comprador policy serves instead as a clear reflection of Beijing’s political intention, which has triggered a rise in Taiwanese identity and enhanced their regional consciousness.

This deeper cooperation and communication between mainland China and Taiwan has strengthened the anti-China movement on the island, especially during the post-ECFA period (Table 2), because an increasing number of business sectors are considered to be ‘puppets’ under the control of a ‘Chinese factor’ (Niou, 2008). To preserve profitable commerce with the mainland market, businesses follow Beijing’s instructions and influence Taiwan’s internal affairs at the cost of the people’s interests. For example, the Eslite chain of bookstores, one of the most powerful chain stores in Taiwan, has refused to sell *Assassination of the Buddha*, which was written by the exiled writer Yuan Hong-Bing (袁红冰). This action is related to Eslite’s new plan

Table 2. Conflicts on Both Sides During the Post-ECFA Period

Time	The Conflicts Happened in the Post-ECFA Period
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Media Monopoly Movement. People gathered around to resist the Tsai Eng-ming's plan to pursue Next Media, preventing Chinese government from controlling the freedom of speech in Taiwan.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Taiwanese singer, Deserts Chang, showed the national flag of ROC in her concert in London, which caused a fierce debate among the oversea students from mainland China and Taiwan
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sunflower Movement to resist the Service and Trade Pact along with the ECFA.
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Chou Tzu-yu incident".

Source: BBC News, *Taipei Times*, *Liberty Times*.

to expand into the mainland market, where the newest and largest branch of the bookstore will open in Shanghai. Consequently, Beijing's intention for using interest to internalize cross-strait relations fails to generate an ideal relationship with Taiwan, which would be one that fosters political trust among the Taiwanese people.

Given the similar frustration with Hong Kong's case, accompanied with the pessimistic prospect of the KMT's county, city and presidential election, which may release the space for a pro-independence party, the DPP, to come to power again, the Beijing government has begun to adjust the emphasis of the divided rules policy. In other words, it is urgent for the Beijing government to legitimize the peaceful and deepening cross-strait relations created by the CCP and KMT, avoiding the DPP emerging to break the *status quo*. This transition was foreshadowed in the meeting of Xi and Ma in 2015. Functionalists, mainly referring to economic integration theory, may argue that the Ma–Xi meeting was the result of long-term economic integration across the Taiwan Strait, with both sides needing to deepen the interaction to offer a more comprehensive cross-strait common market. However, deliberate timing appeared to factor into this meeting; because the KMT had lost decisively in the Nine in One local elections in 2014 and was likely to lose control of the presidency in 2016, Beijing's purpose behind the meeting was likely to

legitimize the *status quo* in cross-strait relations (i.e. maintaining the KMT as the ruling party) based on the 1992 Consensus. President Xi Jin-Ping made the following statement in his opening remarks:

People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait should make the right choice, which can be testified by the history, that is, deepening the interaction between mainland China and Taiwan based on the 1992 Consensus.... In this way, the Chinese people on both sides have the wisdom and capability to deal with our problems (Xi, 2015).

To make the 1992 Consensus more acceptable to the Taipei government, the Chinese government had to reinterpret the definition of the ‘one China’ principle. From Jiang Ze-Min’s eight-point formula (江八点) to Hu Jin-Tao’s six principles (胡六条) and Xi Jin-Ping’s China Dream, Chinese officials defined the ‘One China’ principle in a manner that avoided mentioning the ‘sole legal government’. This meant that the ‘one China’ framework had been enlarged during their interactions and China was neither the People’s Republic of China (PRC) nor the Republic of China (i.e. Taiwan) but had become a broader entity called ‘greater China’ (Li, 2014). In his statement at the meeting, Ma Ying-Jeou revealed that this reinterpretation had been positively received by the Taipei government:

The content of the 1992 Consensus is one China with a different interpretation ... the meeting between the top leaders of both sides creates a peaceful regime for the settlement of disputes, which should be consolidated and normalised (Ma Ying-jeou, 2015).

Accordingly, President Xi and his advisors have also attempted to reconstruct Chinese national identity, aiming at remediating the widespread ‘anti-China’ sentiment in Taiwanese society. This is proved by his actions. For example, before the formal meeting with Ma Ying-Jeou, President Xi first proposed that ‘the Anti-Japanese War is the common historical memory shared by people on both sides. It is thus necessary to promote the sharing of historical material, writing historical books, and safeguarding national dignity altogether’ (Zhao, 2015). This statement indicates that the leaders in mainland China intend to create a cross-strait-based consciousness, a supranational identity that is not divided into Chinese or Taiwanese, but instead, offers a common future in which Taiwan and mainland China are tightly bonded as the Chinese nation. Therefore, the homogeneity is produced in a newly imagined community constituted by ethnic Chineseness (Anderson, 2006). In the Xi–Ma meeting, President Xi Jin-Ping emphasized this common destiny:

The power of compatriots on both sides breaks through the military blockade.... There is nothing that can separate the relations of people between mainland China and Taiwan because we are family as closely

linked as flesh and blood, who have the common fate of striving for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Xi, 2015).

By involving the Taiwanese people in the task of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Xi's government intends to create a common fate in formulating a collective identity. However, this change of emphasis on legitimacy in the divided rules policy does not mean that Beijing has discarded the use of military force and economic interest. The divided rules policy became increasingly apparent when Tsai Ing-wen and her DPP won both the presidential and local elections. Although Tsai claimed that she acknowledged the historical fact of the meeting in 1992 and promised not to independently change the *status quo* of cross-strait relations, the Taiwan Affairs Office of State Council asserted that Tsai's inaugural speech was an 'Unfinished Answer' (Taiwan Affairs Office, 2016), indicating a 'rocky start' between the CCP and DPP.

Worse still, with the Sino-U.S. relations entering an era of high power competition after U.S. President Donald Trump defined mainland China as a revisionist power in his first National Security Strategy Report in 2017, the Taiwan problem is widely regarded as a strategic card for containing mainland China's rise. For example, during his elected term, Trump first broke the unspoken rule in Sino-U.S. relations to have direct 'hotline' with Tsai Ing-wen, and then asserted that the Washington government would not acknowledge the 'One China Policy' until the economic and trade issues between the United States and China were addressed (Bohan & Brunnstorm, 2016). In addition, to match his trade war with mainland China, Trump's government intentionally upgraded security with Taiwan by reappraising the possibility of berthing U.S. warships there and approving the Taiwan Travel Act. In this sense, the Washington government apparently links the Taiwan problem with trade issues as a bargaining chip, which may give space for Tsai's government to realize the *de facto* independence (Ye, 2018). While confronting the growing military relations between the United States and Taiwan, the Chinese government has demonstrated its determination to use force. In terms of military deterrence, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted a rare live firing drill around the Taiwan Strait on 12 April 2016, targeted at deterring the pro-independence forces in Taiwan society, as commented by the *Global Times*. After the military exercise, Beijing continued to show its muscle by sending the Aircraft Carrier Liaoning to move around Taiwan Island, with an increasing frequency of aircraft missions detected in the Taiwan Strait. All these responses demonstrate Beijing's strong will to deter Taiwan's pro-independence faction through the force pathway. In terms of Taiwan's foreign relations, the Beijing government has strengthened the pressure on Taiwan's international space by blocking Taiwan from

attending the World Health Assembly (WHA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and ending five of Taiwan's diplomatic alliances within two years.

Although cross-strait relations have entered a 'cold peace' at the political level since Tsai Ing-wen chose not to directly acknowledge the 'One China Principle', the Beijing government has not given up the pathways of economic interest and legitimacy. Realizing the low efficacy of the comprador policy, the Beijing government has adjusted the target from the capitalist class and business elites to the local Taiwanese people, thereby leading to the introduction of the 31 Measures. The 31 Measures, released on February 28, 2018, constitute two major parts (Taiwan Affairs Office, 2018). At the economic cooperation level, the 31 Measures not only provide Taiwanese enterprises with an attractive offer, involving 15% tax reduction and other related tax incentive policy, but it also expands its scope to cover Taiwanese people who work in universities and research institutes, which enables Taiwanese experts to apply for the national fund project supported by the Chinese government. At the people-to-people level, the Beijing government enhance the strength of support, ranging from education and cultural exchange to professional qualification certificates, for Taiwanese people who intend to study, start a business, or obtain employment in mainland China.

The 31 Measures is widely considered Beijing's intentional policy targeting ordinary Taiwanese people. Consider Taiwanese scholars, for example: The saturation of Taiwan's university market makes it hard for young scholars to find a stable job in universities, and the 31 Measures give these young people the chance to pursue their profession in universities and research institutes. As such, the universities in mainland China also exert a high attraction to Taiwanese students, because the ranks of these universities have been rapidly climbing in recent years to achieve the top 100 in the global ranking system. According to a survey conducted by *Global Views Monthly* (远见杂志), the percentage of pro-independence support has declined from 36.8% (2014) to 26% (2018). In addition, after the introduction of the 31 Measures, the positive attitude toward mainland China among the young generation recovered to 40%; nearly 60% of Taiwanese young people are willing to go 'westward' to mainland China (*China Times*, 2018).

In general, the 31 Measures aims at binding Taiwanese people's hearts and winning their trust; this, together with the Beijing government's strong determination to use military force for deterring the pro-independent power in Taiwan society, constitutes the latest divided rules policy toward Taiwan, which is also officially described as follows: 'the soft parts are much softer, but the hard parts are much harder' (软的更软, 硬的更硬). Beijing's official statement provides robust support to the logic of the divided rules policy.

4. Conclusion

Although there are significant differences in Hong Kong's and Taiwan's historical processes, these two special regions have been growing more similar because of their inevitable interactions with mainland China, a rapidly rising great power in international politics. To understand the dynamic changes in the relationships between mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the economic integration theory, mainly derived from neofunctionalism, asserts that the Beijing government intentionally uses economic interest as leverage to realize the anticipated political integration. Despite the valuable insights provided by the economic integration theory, political realities occurring in Hong Kong and Taiwan prove the low efficacy of Beijing's traditional comprador policy and insufficient explanatory power of the theory. Based on this understanding, this article argues that Beijing's policy toward Hong Kong and Taiwan cannot be merely interpreted from the economic perspective. Rather, Beijing's policy is a mixed strategy, labelled the 'divided rules policy', consisting of the three dimensions of force, interest and legitimacy. To explain the logic of Beijing's divided rules policy, this article borrows and conducts a theoretical revision of Alexander Wendt's social constructivism to formulate a new analytical framework.

Differing from the linear relations, like 'Hobbesian (adversary)-enemy-force', offered by traditional social constructivism, the new analytical framework presents a more precise curve in demonstrating the strategic interactions of actors in specific issues, which is highly relevant to the cases of Beijing, Hong Kong and Taiwan. More specifically, the new analytical framework indicates that there are three dimensions – force, interest and legitimacy – existing in Beijing's divided rules policy, in which the force aims at deterring secessionists, the economic interest is designed for binding the hearts of local people in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and the legitimacy involves maintaining Beijing's authority in these two regions. These three dimensions work simultaneously and compatibly, with different emphases in different periods, depending on Beijing's assessment and judgement on the specific political situation. To elaborate on the logic of Beijing's divided rules policy, this article identifies two critical turning points that occurred in Hong Kong and Taiwan, namely the Hong Kong White Paper and 31 Measures, respectively, as case studies.

In Hong Kong's case, after the Hong Kong White Paper, Beijing has not only restored its authority in the HKSAR but also enhanced the strength of using force to deter secessionist power by proposing the fifth interpretation of the Basic Law and disqualifying many pro-independence candidates from legislative elections. Moreover, the Beijing government has also delivered the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macau Greater Bay Area project as

a more comprehensive economic interest, mainly targeting Hong Kong's ordinary people. This project, together with the White Paper and the fifth interpretation of Basic Law, constitutes Beijing's new divided rules policy. Beijing's policy toward Taiwan provides a stronger case in elaborating the logic of the divided rules policy. For the pro-independence power, the Beijing government has strengthened the deterrence by military force, showing its determination to solve the Taiwan problem through martial unification. For the ordinary people, Beijing has increased the mainland's attraction via the 31 Measures, which directly benefit the Taiwanese people, especially in the young generation. The 31 Measures, accompanied by the Xi–Ma historical meeting and willingness to use military force, have become Beijing's latest divided rules policy toward Taiwan.

In general, this article suggests that the full picture of Beijing's policy should be analysed from three dimensions, rather than merely focussing on the economic perspective. Meanwhile, an important element that cannot be neglected is the connected effect of Beijing's policy. For example, after the Hong Kong White Paper and 31 Measures, the Chinese government issued a special certificate called 'Residence Permit for Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan Residents' (港澳台居民居住证) to make it more convenient for Hong Kongers and Taiwanese to develop their careers in mainland China. In this sense, a foreseeable future is that the relations between Beijing, Hong Kong and Taiwan will be increasingly tighter than before, because of the much stronger magnetic effect produced by Beijing's new divided rules policy on Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Note

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China-Zimbabwe Trade Relations in the 21st Century: An Analysis of the Trends, Patterns and Prospects

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Abstract

This study analyses the trends, patterns and prospects of Zimbabwe-China trade relations for the 16 years between years 2000 and 2016. The essence is to establish the direction of trade, trade intensity and trade composition of Zimbabwe-China trade as well as present a comparative analysis and assessment of the share of Zimbabwe-China trade vis-à-vis other trade partners. The study uses both primary and secondary data sources for analysis. The findings point to the fact that although Zimbabwe enjoyed a positive balance for the years preceding 2005, the country has since been recording widening trade deficits in its trade with China. With regard to trade intensity, the study reveals that on average, Zimbabwe's trade with China accounts for less than 5 per cent of Zimbabwe's trade with other African countries and the Rest of the World (RoW). In respect of trade composition, the study further found out that whilst Zimbabwean exports to China are largely dominated by the exportation of low value semi-processed and/or non-processed mining and agricultural commodities, China mainly exports high-end manufactures and consumer goods to Zimbabwe. As part of its recommendations, the study proposes the adoption of import regulation measures, export-oriented industrialization, establishment of China-Africa industrial capacity cooperation, and investment in manufacturing and industrial processing plants.

Keywords: *Zimbabwe-China, trade, exports, imports, industrialization*

1. Introduction

The socio-economic and political relations between China and African countries have been intensifying especially at the turn of the millennium. In terms of trade relations, China still ranks as Africa's largest trading partner,

surpassing the continent's traditional trade partners such as the European Union (EU), United States (US), India, and other Asian and Latin American countries. Just as many African countries, Zimbabwe's trade with China has also been rapidly booming especially after the year 2000. This has been accompanied by several socio-economic opportunities and challenges to both China and Zimbabwe. For the benefit of trade policy and political economy analysis, it is very pertinent to undertake a thorough empirical investigation of the trends, patterns and prospects of China-Zimbabwe trade relations. This is fundamental in providing an informed basis for trade policy review and reform in order to strengthen trade relations with a view to promote mutually beneficial trade between the two countries. This paper analyses the China-Zimbabwe trade relations in the 21st century, with a specific focus on the trends, patterns and prospects of the trade relations. In terms of sectionalisation, the paper is organized into the following sections: methodology, background, literature review, analysis of trends and patterns of China-Africa trade, conclusion and recommendations.

2. Methodology

This paper relies on both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. It utilizes trade data or statistics mainly from the United Nations (UN) Comtrade International Trade Centre Statistics Database, Trade Map and the National Bureau of Statistics of China. To build evidence based arguments, primary and secondary data sources are utilized. Primary data sources used are mainly pronouncements or policy statements made by government officials from either countries as well as official reports. On the other hand, secondary data sources used for the research comprise mostly journal articles, textbooks, newspapers and online media reports.

3. Background to China-Zimbabwe Trade Relations

Trade relations between Zimbabwe and China historically date back to around the 15th century when the Ming and Qing dynasties established trade and cultural contacts with the Munhumutapa Empire (Manyeruke and Mhandara in Zhang, 2014: 5). The relations were politically consolidated following material support rendered by the Chinese towards the liberation struggle against colonialism in Zimbabwe. The establishment of official diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1980 paved way for deeper trade and commercial relations.

At the turn of the new millennium, China-Zimbabwe trade intensified, as with other African countries, mainly due to the emergence of China amongst global economic giants, and the consequent strengthening of its foothold on

the African continent as it sought to expand its markets for raw materials and finished products at the back of rapid domestic industrialization (see Ado and Su, 2016; Brautigam, 2010; Carmody, 2017; Kim, 2017). Trade ties between the two countries were partially strengthened following the adoption of the “Look East Policy” as the Zimbabwean government sought to pragmatically engage China, and other countries in the Far-East in apparent response to deteriorating relations with the Western countries (see Stiftung, 2004; Youde, 2007).

Structurally, Zimbabwe and China have different economies and the two are at different levels of socio-economic development. A structural and historical analysis of the Zimbabwean economy would reveal that the country, which has an estimated population of 14 million, has been largely agricultural-based. Since independence, agricultural and mineral commodities have consistently contributed more than 60 per cent share of national exports (see Chigumira, 2015; Hawkins, 2009; Newfarmer and Pierola, 2015). However, when the economy shrank by more than 40 per cent in the decade preceding 2010, it resulted in reduced capacity utilization across all economic sectors (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012).

Zimbabwe’s subdued economy especially since the turn of the millennium has affected the quality of the country’s trade potential. This has continued to diminish the country’s export performance whilst increasing the import bill and widening the trade deficit. For instance, the National Budget for 2017 states that Zimbabwe’s total exports for 2016 totalled US\$3.365 billion, itself a 6.9 per cent reduction from the US\$3.614 billion recorded in the year 2015 (Government of Zimbabwe, 2017: 23). The World Trade Organization (2015) ranks Zimbabwe number 121 and 130 in terms of exports and imports, respectively. China remains among Zimbabwe’s top five largest trading partners.

The economic structure and economic profile of China, in contrast, depicts a different picture altogether. Having gone through challenges of underdevelopment until the late 20th century, China embarked on socio-economic reforms that resulted in rapid economic growth, accelerated industrialization, boosted productivity across all economic sectors, burgeoning international trade, and increased domestic consumption. This ‘growth miracle’, fuelled by increased productivity in China’s industries, increased the country’s appetite for energy and crude oil, minerals and metal products as well as huge volumes of other raw materials for its rapidly expanding industrial manufacturing base (Ado and Su, 2016; Brautigam, 2010; Busse *et al.*, 2016; Cáceres and Ear, 2013; Carmody, 2017; Johnston *et al.*, 2015). Africa became one of the sources of these raw materials as well as opportunity for new markets for China’s finished products.

With Zimbabwe being endowed with a diversity of mineral deposits, comprising more than forty different types of minerals that include diamonds,

nickel, gold, chrome, copper, lithium, and platinum, among others as well as several agricultural commodities, such as tobacco, cotton, sugar, fruits, and other products (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012), the trade partnership between the country and China has been fostered. However, China's trade dominancy, even at global level should be taken into context as one analyses the China-Zimbabwe trade partnership. In terms of world trade, China is now ranked the largest exporting country and the second largest importing country in the world (World Trade Organization, 2015). In 2016 alone, China recorded a total trade volume of US\$3.68493 trillion, made up of exports worth US\$2.09744 trillion and imports worth US\$1.58748 trillion, thereby recording a positive trade balance of US\$509.96 billion (MOFCOM, 2017).

The China-Zimbabwe trade relationship is regulated and facilitated by a number of trade agreements and existing institutional frameworks. The two countries trade under the Trade, Investment and Technical Cooperation Agreement signed in 2004. Most of the technical trade and market access issues are discussed within the framework of the Zimbabwe-China Joint Permanent Commission together with strategic issues of bilateral cooperation such as investments, and other cross-sectoral partnerships. In terms of trade policy regimes guiding the China-Zimbabwe trade relations, Zimbabwe is mainly guided by its National Trade Policy (2012-2016), National Industrial Development (2012-2016), and the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET, 2013-2018). Overall, in its policy, national vision and trade objective, Zimbabwe seeks to increase the volume, value and diversity of its exports through the maximum exploitation of its comparative and competitive economic advantage as well as engaging in high-end value addition, beneficiation and export-led industrialization so as to promote sustained economic growth and development.

On the other hand, China is broadly guided by strategic plans. As of now, the country has the 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development for the People's Republic of China (2016-2020), 13th Five-Year Plan for Boosting Foreign Trade (2016-2020), 13th Five-Year Plan for Trade in Service Development (2016-2020), and the 13th Five-Year Plan for Business Development (2016-2020). All the trade-related frameworks have the policy intention of comprehensively upgrading and transforming China's international trade performance and further deepening the country's integration into the global value chains (GVCs).

4. Literature Review

Whilst the trends and patterns of international trade have increasingly become very unpredictable, depicted by the boom and bust cycles, what can no longer be ignored is the rising trade influence of China on the continent as a trade

partner of most African countries especially at the turn of the millennium. As the China White Paper on China-Africa on Economic and Trade Cooperation (2013) affirmed, China is now Africa's largest trade partner, with Africa considered as China's "major import source". In the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018: 17), China and African countries agreed to "scale up trade and try to elevate the China-Africa trade volume to US\$400 billion in 2014" and maintain growth and ensure trade balance.

In explaining the trends and patterns of trade between China and several African countries, classical economic theories of absolute advantage and comparative advantage propounded by Adam Smith and David Ricardo respectively, as well as Heckscher-Ohlin neo-classical theory of trade have always been necessarily handy, although not very sufficient. In examining the determinants of international trade, a considerable number of studies by authors such as Bahmani-Oskooee (1986), Morrow *et al.* (1998), Warner and Kreinin (1983), and Gourdon (2009), have revealed that the main determinants of trade, trade flows and trade patterns are factor endowments, import and export demand and supply, trade intensity, technology differences, trade policy and/or supporting government policies, consumer preferences differences, costs of trade, persuasion and/or political and economic diplomacy, and exchange rates, among other factors. These determinants have different impact and influence on trade partners, as context of trade relations invariably differ.

When applied to trade relations between China and African countries, the main determinants have been natural resource endowments, China's raw materials demand dynamics and scale economics. In *China-Africa Trade Patterns: Causes and Consequences*, Eisenman (2012) explored the causes as well as the economic and political effects of trade patterns characterizing the trade relationship between China and African countries. The author identifies five factors causing trade between the two trade partners namely the comparative advantage of China with respect to labour- and capital-intensive production, Africa's vast natural resource reserves, accelerated economic growth in China, the infrastructure development model used by China in Africa, and the increasing economies of scale recorded by Chinese shipping and manufacturing firms (Eisenman, 2012). Consistent with the author's findings, Biggeri and Sanfilippo's (2009: 31) empirical exploration of the determinants of the China-Africa economic partnership found that China's increased economic activities on the continent was propelled by "strategic interaction among three channels (FDI, trade and economic cooperation)" and the factor that African countries have abundant natural resources and offer market potential.

The findings by Eisenman (2012) as well as Biggeri and Sanfilippo (2009), especially the 'natural resource endowment' factor, have been

consistent with several studies which have attributed the rising stock of China-Africa trade to the rapid industrial productivity and increased urbanization experienced gradually after the post-1978 economic reforms, and rapidly at the turn of the new millennium. This ‘growth miracle’, fuelled by increased productivity in China’s industries, increased the country’s appetite for energy and crude oil, as well as huge volumes of other raw materials for its rapidly expanding industrial manufacturing base (see Ado and Su, 2016; Brautigam, 2010; Busse *et al.*, 2016; Cáceres and Ear, 2013; Carmody, 2017; Johnston *et al.*, 2015; Zafar, 2007). For instance, Pigato and Tang (2015: 1) pointed out that “rapid urbanization and heavy industrialization continue to spur robust Chinese demand for coal, oil and natural gas” which has resulted in the rise of trade between China and African countries from a low level of 2.3 per cent recorded in 1985. This is not new in global economic history and international economics. Just like any other country, it is rational to expect China’s foreign economic and trade policy to be driven by strategic commercial factors to satisfy domestic demands.

The continued export of unprocessed raw materials by most African countries to China, and in return importation of finished products in the form of mainly consumer goods, however, has been a disturbing narrative. Pigato and Tang’s (2015: 5) analysis of China-Africa trade from the period 1996 to 2013 has revealed that African countries exports to China are increasing in both volume and value than its imports thereby “generating a large, positive trade balance”. The authors argued that most of the exports from Africa are largely primary commodities such as oil, minerals, timber products, coffee, cocoa and cashew nuts whilst the imports comprise mainly clothing and textiles, footwear, electronics and capital goods. As part of their recommendations to strengthen China-Africa trade relations, Pigato and Tang (2015) suggested that African countries should embark on intensive economic diversification and institute measures for economic competitiveness for their imports to compete with Chinese imports. Nevertheless, Eisenman (2012: 810) warned:

Given relative factor endowments of resources, labor, and capital there is little that can be done to reduce some African countries’ overwhelming dependence on natural resource exports to China or African consumers’ preference for low-cost, decent quality Chinese consumer goods.

This trade pattern is not very beneficial and sustainable on the part of Africa in terms of the continent’s industrial development aspirations. As Ademola *et al.* (2016: 69) suggested, African governments need to adopt “concerted policy measures” that are “carefully crafted” to allow for access into the Chinese market whilst also addressing “the binding supply response capacity constraints” in most African countries. However, as Eisenman (2012: 810) rightly observed, access into the Chinese market “remain a source of

frustration and concern” for those African countries that are not endowed with natural resources and intend to embark on export diversification. In addition, transforming from a commodity-export dependent economy, and let alone harnessing natural resources for socio-economic growth and development, requires comprehensive measures and political will. Venables’ (2016) study, for instance, revealed that developing countries need to secure judicious investments from the private sector within the extractive resource sectors and such processes should be guided by progressive fiscal and related policies to ensure success.

However, such undertakings usually require huge capital and sophisticated technology realizable through international investment capital. Perhaps, the implementation of initiatives similar to those affirmed in China’s Second Africa Policy (2015) and the FOCAC Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018) with regard to boosting industrial productivity capacity cooperation, industrialization, agricultural modernization, technology cooperation and knowledge sharing may be helpful.

Failure to address this, however, exposes exporting African countries to the vagaries and vicissitudes of global commodity price fluctuations. In *China and Africa: Expanding Economic Ties in an Evolving Global Context*, Pigato and Tang (2015), concluded that whilst the global economy has been slowing down, including the Chinese economy, trade between China and most African countries has continued to expand. However, the authors stated that African countries, which export mainly agricultural and mineral commodities to China, have been vulnerable to changes in global commodity prices and fluctuating demands in China’s domestic economy (Pigato and Tang, 2015). This has gradually reduce the African export share of Chinese market on certain products such as agricultural exports. However, at its peak in the first decade of the 21st century, China’s demand for natural resource commodities led to an increase in commodity prices, which led to the massive gross domestic product (GDP) growth in most Sub-Saharan African countries especially net oil exporters such as Angola, Gabon and Sudan (Zafar, 2007).

Contrary to this perspective that African commodity exports to China are spurring growth and consequently development in Africa, the trade pattern has given rise to what Johnston and Cheng (2015) called “fears of renewed African economic subjugation”, a view inclined to the ‘China neocolonizing Africa’ narrative (see the often cited Sanusi, 2013), or the establishment of what Maswana (2015) termed “China’s zones of influence”. However, for those African countries that are not endowed with natural resources, it has been difficult for them to benefit more from trade partnership with China. Findings from Ancharaz and Tandrayen-Ragoobur’s (2010) in-depth empirical study on the impact of China-Mauritius trade relations on the Mauritian economy revealed that African countries with abundant natural

resources will immensely benefit from the partnership as opposed to their resource-poor counterparts as their industrial products struggle to outcompete Chinese imports.

In terms of the political dynamics between China and its African trade partners, some studies have indicated that China has tended to trade more with countries with low ratings on the governance index. In *African trade dynamics: Is China a different trading partner?*, De Grauwe *et al.* (2012) used a standard gravity model to assess the quality of governance in 53 selected African countries trading with China, France, Germany, United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (USA) from 1996 to 2009. The authors' findings were that "only China is consistently willing to import more from African countries with a lower governance standing" (De Grauwe *et al.*, 2012: 15). Although this has been widely criticised (see for instance Bader, 2015; Dreher and Fuchs, 2015; Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small, 2008; Kishi and Raleigh, 2015), China maintains that it adheres to its foreign policy principle of non-interference. As stated in China's Second Africa Policy (2015),

The Communist Party of China stands ready to expand and deepen diverse forms of exchanges and cooperation with friendly political parties and organizations in African countries based on the principles of independence, equality, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs [...] This will also enable them to better understand and recognize each other's governance systems and philosophies, learn from each other, improve governance capacities together and contribute to the development of state-to-state relations.

A number of studies have been conducted on trade relations between China and some individual African countries. For example, Ayoola (2013) examined the Sino-Nigerian trade relations for the period between 2000 and 2010. The author revealed the existence of trade imbalance against Nigeria and recommended the imposition of restrictive tariffs by Nigeria in order to create a "level playing field" for Nigerian manufacturers, huge investments in export-oriented industries, extending cheap credits to manufacturers and building infrastructure to boost local industry competitiveness (Ayoola, 2013: 101). The author's proposal for the adoption and imposition of protectionist tariffs maybe noble, but will only be effective if preceded by a thorough analysis of the levels and rates of protection required by each industrial sector. Just like Ayoola (2013), findings from Ridnap (2015: 18) and Salter-Mthembu's (2009) studies on Nigeria-China economic relations both pointed to the fact that there was "excessive trade imbalance in favour of China" with Nigerian exports dominated by oil and that the poor state of infrastructure was impeding Nigeria's ability to compete with China, hence the need for diversification and infrastructure upgrading.

In a Policy Briefing on Sino-Egypt trade and investment relations, Scott (2015) reveals that although trade relations between the countries are growing, there has been a trade imbalance which is increasingly worsening in favour of China since the 1980s. In terms of product analysis, China exports high-end value-added manufactured goods to Egypt whilst China's imports from Egypt comprise unprocessed primary goods and "light products" (Scott, 2015). As part of possible corrective measures, the author suggested that China and Egypt may partner to establish joint ventures for the production of value added goods to address the trade imbalance. Similarly, Abu Hatab *et al.*'s (2012) exploration of Egypt-China bilateral trade, using qualitative research methodologies found out that trade complementarity between the two countries was increasing but Egyptian exports to China were declining whilst Chinese exports to Egypt were on the increase. The impact of this on the Egyptian industry, if not corrected, may not be very desirable.

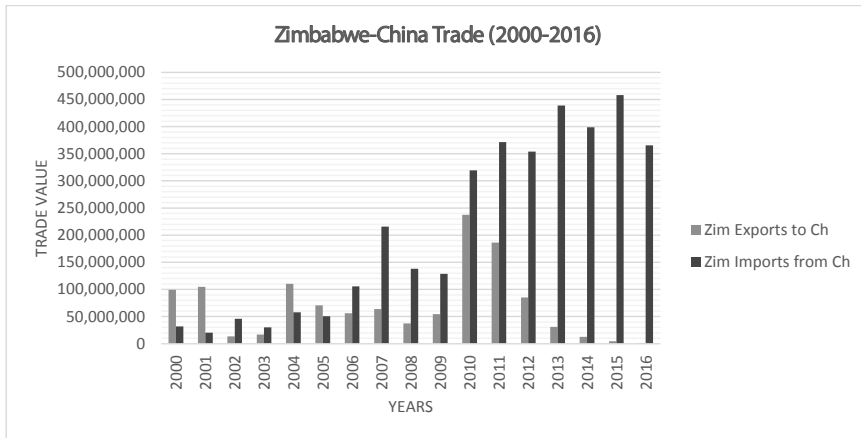
When it comes to relations between Zimbabwe and China, the subject of trade has always been dominated by arguments of the existence of asymmetric relations, suffocation of domestic industries by the influx of comparatively cheaper imports from China, proliferation of what consumers regard as 'low quality' Chinese products, and overdependence of Zimbabwe on the exportation of tobacco and mineral products to China (see for instance Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2004; Zhang, 2014; Matahwa, 2007). Describing the China-Zimbabwe trade partnership, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (2004: 2) hinted that it is "characterized by the classical pattern of trade between developing and developed economies".

Zimbabwe's overall trade performance has been argued to be still suffering from the economic contraction experienced prior to 2009. In *Zimbabwe's Foreign Trade Performance during the Decade of Economic Turmoil: Will Exports Recover?*, Kaminski and Ng (2011) argued that Zimbabwe's exports have been falling since 1997 due to poor economic performance. There has been less diversity with natural resources exports dominating trade (Kaminski and Ng, 2011). To revive national exports, the authors recommended the Government of Zimbabwe to implement measures that attract investments to revive private sector business, improve the cost of doing business to enhance competitiveness, among others.

5. Analysis of Trends and Patterns of China-Zimbabwe Trade (2000-2016)

Figure 1 presents statistics of trade between Zimbabwe and China from the year 2000 upto 2016. From the graph, it can be noted that Zimbabwe has been recording negative trade balances except for only four years, that is in 2000, 2001, 2004 and 2005. Specifically, Zimbabwe has been consistently importing

Figure 1 China-Zimbabwe Trade from 2000-2016 (US\$)



Source: Author’s compilation based on data extracted from the UNCOMTRADE Database (2017) except for imports for the year 2000 and trade data for the year 2003 which was extracted from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2017).

more from China than the country exported to China, for the decade between 2006 and 2016, thus essentially recording a significant positive trade balance for that period.

There is a steep rise of Chinese exports into Zimbabwe in years 2006 and 2007, wherein China exported products worth US\$105,457,998 and US\$215,895,172, respectively. However, there was reduced Chinese exports to Zimbabwe in the years 2008 and 2009, with China exporting products worth US\$138,061,357 and US\$128,760,413, respectively. This was a remarkable surge considering that Chinese exports to Zimbabwe had reached a peak of US\$215,895,172 in the year 2007. The surge in Chinese exports to Zimbabwe in the two years of 2008 and 2009 may have been triggered by the knock-on effect of the global financial crisis experienced in 2008.

As further depicted on the graph, Chinese exports to Zimbabwe have been increasing exponentially, albeit in a non-consistent fashion, between the years 2010 and 2015, before surging in 2016. The highest Chinese exports to Zimbabwe were recorded in the year 2015 when the total value of exports reached a massive US\$458,160,013; with a trade balance of US\$453,724,162. This was a 22.38 per cent increase from the total Chinese exports to Zimbabwe recorded in the year 2001.

With respect to Zimbabwe’s exports to China, Figure 1 shows that Zimbabwe recorded a positive trade balance for four years, that is, in the years

2000, 2001, 2004 and 2005. The country recorded its highest positive trade balance of US\$84,329,370 in the year 2001.

From 2004 upto the year 2008, Zimbabwe's exports to China depict a gradual decrease before picking up in the years 2009 and 2010. Perhaps, this may be explained by the deteriorating economic conditions and low productivity and production across all sectors, which constrained national exports.

For the period under review, Zimbabwe's exports to China recorded a peak of US\$237,339,658 in 2010. From that year upto the year 2016, the country's exports to China declined precipitously, perhaps reflecting the de-industrialization and gradual reduction of industrial capacity utilization in the country coupled with liquidity challenges. To this end, Zimbabwe's exports to China recorded the lowest level of US\$882,504 in 2016, with the highest negative trade balance of US\$364,613,985.

6. Analysis of China-Zimbabwe Trade Composition

In terms of trade composition, specifically structural and sectoral distribution of traded products as shown in Annex 1 depicts the top five products traded between China and Zimbabwe from 2000-2016. It can be noted that Zimbabwe's exports to China are mainly in the form of mineral products and agricultural products. For the period under review, the most traded products forming part of Zimbabwe's exports to China are tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; iron and steel; salts and sulphur, lime and cement; raw hides and leather; machinery and mechanical appliances; ores, slag and ash; vegetables plaiting materials and vegetable products; precious stones and metals; works of art; electrical machinery and equipment; and articles of leather and animal gut.

These products, as revealed in their description under the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) Code on the ITC Trade Map Database (2017), are mainly exported in their raw and semi-processed form. This may be a crystalline reflection of the lower levels of industrial development in Zimbabwe, lack of technological sophistication, and relatively limited manufacturing value-added index of the country when compared to China, its trading partner.

On the contrary, the frequently traded products that constitute China's exports to Zimbabwe for the period under consideration, as presented in Annex 1, are mainly high value machinery and mechanical appliances; vehicles and accessories; organic chemicals; electrical machinery and equipment; articles of iron or steel; fabrics; plastics; and chemical products. This may explain the existence of high-end manufacturing, advanced industrialization and superior manufacturing value-added index in China as compared to Zimbabwe.

7. Comparative Distributional Trends and Patterns of China-Zimbabwe Trade

As shown in the pie charts below, it can be noted that Zimbabwe-China trade as a share of the country’s trade with other African countries and the Rest of the World (RoW) has declined from six per cent in 2001 to four per cent in 2005. This can be explained by the fact that during this period there were limited trade flows between the countries. As explained above, this was at a time when the Zimbabwean economy was still experiencing high turbulence and economic contraction.

However, Zimbabwe-China trade as a share of Zimbabwe’s trade with African countries and the RoW doubled by the year 2010 before recording a two per cent reduction in 2015. This was partly due to the economic recovery experienced from the year 2009 following the dollarization of the economy and adoption of cross-sector economic reforms under the Inclusive Government which boosted exports. In addition, the phenomenon can also be explained by the accelerated growth of the Chinese economy which resulted in the country’s massive exportation to the whole world, including Zimbabwe.

Figure 2 Trends and Patterns of China-Zimbabwe Trade for Selected Years between 2000-2016 (US\$)



Source: Author’s compilation using Trade Map – International Trade Centre (2017).

In the overall, for the period under review, it can be deduced that Zimbabwe-China trade remain relatively low as the country trades more with other African countries as shown by the peak in 2010 when Zimbabwe's trade with its African trade partners constituted 62 per cent. It has to be pointed out, however, that even the four per cent that constitutes Zimbabwe-China trade share of the country's trade with other African countries and the RoW is as a result of Zimbabwe imports from China as evidenced by huge trade deficits recorded from the year 2006 upto 2016. Thus, as at 2015, African and the RoW accounted for 96 per cent of Zimbabwe's trade, with China's share standing at 4 per cent.

The trends and patterns depicted on the pie charts reveals the trade potential between Zimbabwe and China. Whilst China remains an important trade partner to Zimbabwe, its share of trade compared to other players, namely Africa and the RoW, remains relatively low. Evidently, there is scope for Zimbabwe to expand and raise its trade stock, especially with respect to exports which may improve the share of Zimbabwe-China trade.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Zimbabwe-China trade is characterized by a trade deficit in favour of China. The share of Zimbabwe's exports to, and imports from, China continue to be relatively low when expressed as a percentage share of China's total trade with Africa and the Rest of the World (RoW). China continues to export more diversified, high-end manufactures, fabrics and capital goods whilst Zimbabwe's exports to China are dominated by unprocessed and/or semi-processed mining and agricultural commodities without substantial transformation, value addition and/or beneficiation. Although Zimbabwean exports to China are dominantly unprocessed and/or semi-processed commodities from the agricultural and mining sector, there is high trade potential in these traded products. By regional, continental and global comparisons, it is concluded that on average, Zimbabwe's trade with China accounts for less than 5 per cent of Zimbabwe's trade with a huge share of the country's trade being realized with other African countries and the Rest of the World. On the basis of these findings, five recommendations are suggested.

Firstly, the Government of Zimbabwe needs to direct efforts at restoring the positive trade balance with China that it used to record prior to 2005. More fundamentally, it is prudent to develop and implement strategic measures to attract substantial investments in all the productive economic sectors with a view to enhance capacity utilization for industries to export. Since the National Trade Policy (2012-2016), and National Industrial Development (2012-2016) have outlived their lifespan, and the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIM-ASSET, 2013-

2018)'s implementation period will be lapsing in not more than three months' time, it is recommended that the Government of Zimbabwe identifies the implementation gaps inherent in all these policies and develop better policy and implementation mechanisms that boost industrial capacity and national exports. The policies should embody measures that regulate imports in a way that complements the facilitation of domestic industrialization within the scope and confines of trade agreements and other related obligations committed to at regional and international level.

Secondly, it is also recommended that joint venture investments with Chinese firms be secured and targeted at the manufacturing sector, agro-processing and minerals processing. In this light, a minerals beneficiation and value addition strategy is needed for Zimbabwe to fully exploit its comparative and competitive advantages so as to export high value-added precious metals. As a strategy, the Government of Zimbabwe may take the opportunity to exploit the window for industry capacity cooperation with China facilitated by the FOCAC Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018) and now the FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021) in order to benefit from technology transfer and industrial upgrading. It is worthwhile to note that China is already increasing its investments into Zimbabwe. For instance, it was reported that Zimbabwe received US\$46.53 million from China as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the period between January and November 2015 and that China accounted for over 70 per cent of FDI received in Zimbabwe during the first half of 2015 (*The Sunday News*, 17 January 2016).

Thirdly, whilst these investments were reportedly directed to mining, infrastructure development, agriculture, tourism and services sectors, it maybe recommended that FDI be channelled towards re-industrialization in the manufacturing sector and establishment of processing plants for mineral ores and agro-processing factories. This will boost the value and volumes of Zimbabwe's exports. The reported formation of Beiqi Zimbabwe – a joint venture between Beijing Automobile International Corporation (BAIC), Willowvale Motor Industries and Astol Motors – that will assemble vehicles, initially targeting 3,000 units in three years should be encouraged as the right form of export-oriented FDI that is critical for export growth and import-substitution (*The Herald*, 28 March 2017). This is fundamental in improving the quality of Zimbabwe-China trade.

Fourthly, to lock in export-oriented FDI, export-promotion incentivization are also recommended. With respect to this, competitiveness-oriented complementary initiatives such as infrastructure development, incentivization of exporters through broadening initiatives such as the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Export Incentive Schemes, are highly recommended. However, this may be better supported through intensive negotiations for its potential exporters to access the Chinese market.

Lastly, given the new regional and global trends and patterns in industrialization, created by initiatives such as the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Industrialization Strategy (2017-2016) at regional level, the Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the African Union Agenda 2063 (2015-2063) at continental level, and the quest for South-South trade cooperation as well as the renewed vigour for deeper integration into the global value chains (GVCs), Zimbabwe may take advantage to forge partnerships and industrial production networks that boost the export capacity of its firms. In a nutshell, what is needed is a regional integration strategy for Zimbabwe that will ensure that the country is strategically positioned to secure optimum trade benefits from its membership to regional economic communities.

Annex 1: China-Zimbabwe Trade from 2000-2016 (US\$)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Zimbabwe Exports to China</i>	<i>Zimbabwe Imports from China</i>
2000	99,243,008	31,910,000
2001	104,802,448	20,473,078
2002	13,320,950	46,054,568
2003	16,708,000	30,270,000
2004	110,452,352	57,995,517
2005	70,660,805	50,642,868
2006	56,029,683	105,457,998
2007	63,780,258	215,895,172
2008	37,464,041	138,061,357
2009	54,203,795	128,760,413
2010	237,339,658	319,453,240
2011	186,156,926	371,378,784
2012	85,042,438	353,994,101
2013	30,903,125	438,686,302
2014	12,608,194	398,815,981
2015	4,435,851	458,160,013
2016	882,504	365,496,489

Source: Author's construction based on data extracted from UNCOMTRADE Database (2017) except data for imports for the year 2000 and trade data for the year 2003 which was extracted from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2017).

**Annex 2: Top Five Products Traded between
China and Zimbabwe from 2000-2016 (in terms of value)**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Zimbabwe Exports to China</i>	<i>Zimbabwe Imports from China</i>
2000	–	–
2001	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Iron and steel; Salts and sulphur, lime and cement; Vehicles and accessories; Explosives, pyrotechnic products; and pyrophoric alloys	Machinery and mechanical appliances; Vehicles and accessories; Organic chemicals; Electrical machinery and equipment; Fabrics
2002	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Nickel; Salts and sulphur lime and cement; Iron and steel; Cereals and milk products	Machinery and mechanical appliances; Cereals; Electrical machinery and equipment; Fabrics; Chemical products
2003	–	–
2004	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Iron and steel; Cotton; Salts and sulphur, lime and cement; Raw hides and leather	Electrical machinery and equipment; Articles of iron or steel; Aircraft, spacecraft; Footwear; Vehicles and accessories
2005	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Cotton; Raw hides and leather; Ores, slag and ash; Meat and edible meat offal	Vehicles and accessories; Aircraft, spacecraft; Electrical machinery and equipment; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Articles of iron or steel
2006	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Electrical machinery and equipment and parts; Salts and sulphur, lime and cement; Cotton; Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts	Fertilisers; Electrical machinery and equipment; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Articles of iron or steel; Vehicles and accessories;
2007	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Cotton; Ores, slag and ash; Iron and steel; Salts and sulphur, lime and cement	Fertilisers; Vehicles and accessories; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Electrical machinery and equipment; Chemical products
2008	Cotton; Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Vehicles and accessories; Ores, slag and ash; Wood and articles of wood; wood charcoal	Vehicles and accessories; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Electrical machinery and equipment; Articles of iron or steel; Plastics
2009	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Ores, slag and ash;	Electrical machinery and equipment; Vehicles and accessories; Machinery

Annex 2: (continued)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Zimbabwe Exports to China</i>	<i>Zimbabwe Imports from China</i>
	Inorganic chemicals and compounds of precious metals; Salts and sulphur, lime and cement; Works of art	and mechanical appliances; Textiles; Articles of iron or steel
2010	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Iron and steel; Ores, slag and ash; Cotton; Vegetable plaiting materials and vegetable products	Electrical machinery and equipment; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Articles of iron or steel; Vehicles and accessories; Plastics
2011	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Vegetables plaiting materials and vegetable products; Ores, slag and ash; Cotton; Iron and steel	Electrical machinery and equipment; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Vehicles and accessories; Articles of iron or steel; Rubber
2012	Precious stones and metals; Cotton; Works of art; Live animals; Machinery and mechanical appliances	Machinery and mechanical appliances; Electrical machinery and equipment; Vehicles and accessories; Articles of iron or steel; Rubber
2013	Precious stones and metals; Works of art; Animal products; Mineral fuels, mineral oils and mineral waxes; Tools and utensils of base metal	Electrical machinery and equipment; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Vehicles and accessories; Medical equipment and accessories; Articles of iron or steel
2014	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Precious stones and metals; Works of art; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Raw hides and leather	Electrical machinery and equipment; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Medical equipment and accessories; Vehicles and accessories; Rubber
2015	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; Works of art; Live animals; Articles of leather and animal gut; Machinery and mechanical appliances	Electrical machinery and equipment; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Vehicles and accessories; Medical equipment and accessories; Articles of iron or steel
2016	Precious stones and metals; Aircraft and spacecrafts parts; Electrical machinery and equipment; Articles of leather and animal gut; Machinery and mechanical appliances	Electrical machinery and equipment; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Articles of iron or steel; Vehicles and accessories; Plastics

Source: Author's construction based on data extracted from Trade Map – International Trade Centre (2017).

**Annex 3: Zimbabwe-China Trade Share of
Trade with African and RoW Trade Partners**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Zimbabwe's Total Trade with China</i>	<i>Zimbabwe's Total Trade with Africa</i>	<i>Zimbabwe's Total Trade with the Rest of the World</i>
2001	125,275,526	1,274,298,000	1,399,573,526
2005	121,303,673	2,398,455,000	2,172,896,804
2010	556,792,898	5,584,758,000	2,909,947,102
2015	462,595,864	5,479,812,000	2,763,920,136

Source: Author's construction based on data extracted from Trade Map – International Trade Centre (2017).

Note

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Book Review

Book Review

Tom Miller, *China's Asian Dream: Empire Building along the New Silk Road*, London: Zed Books, 2017; xii + 292 pages with bibliography and index. ISBN 978-1-78360-923-9 (paperback)

In *China's Asian Dream*, Tom Miller takes his readers on a trip across China's border regions and remote parts of Asia. Along this journey, he interviewed dozens of people residing in those terrains, both locals and Chinese expatriates, investigated the Chinese-backed infrastructure investment projects and analysed the roles China is, and will be, playing towards the Asian region. As a product of a two-year comprehensive research, this book is a fine account of detailed description on China's grand mission towards its return of national dignity and self-respect.

As suggested by its title, a central theme running through the entire volume is with regard to China's dream of building a 'community of common destiny' in Asia or, as the author posits, 'Asian Empire' with China at the apex. Primarily by virtue of its mega project 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI) or alternatively named 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR), China's leadership targets to convert its economic capability into a political clout in Asia and substitute the present US-administered regional order with a Chinese-led one. The book starts with a vivid fictional illustration of a dystopian future of Europe in 2050 – where the once most affluent and advanced civilisation on earth shrinks to a minor player in a global order led by Asia-Pacific nations – in an approximation of what happened to China during the 'Century of Humiliation' – a period spanning from the start of the Opium War in 1839 until the Chinese Communist Party consolidated power in 1949. Combining the past disgrace with today's phenomenal economic capability, the Party's current leader Xi Jinping finds it legitimate to abandon its traditional humble approach in foreign policy in an attempt to flex its muscles overseas. This anecdotal prologue beautifully attracts the readers with a hook and cast a noticeable milestone to the entire work.

The first chapter concentrates on the 'Belt and Road Initiative' and the founding of its pertinent organizations, particularly the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund. These mechanisms are planned to play pivotal roles in developing infrastructure and increasing connectivity among Asian states, which will benefit China's economy and influence projection in return. Nevertheless, their emergence is inevitably

poised to challenges from former establishments such as Japan and the US. Beijing's ambition also raises much concern among its neighbours of its intention for regional hegemony. Despite some countries showing signs of bandwagoning, impulsive resistance from the others seem inexorable. The rest of the book is divided into five chapters according to geographical classification: Chapter 2 is on dynamism in China's Western regions, entailing Xinjiang and Central Asia countries; Chapter 3 is on Beijing's relatively successful economic leverage in the Mekong River areas, namely Laos and Cambodia; Chapter 4 is on China's failure to obtain a sea exit via Myanmar; Chapter 5 is on the fear and mistrust of South Asian states towards China; and Chapter 6 is on China's dispute and diplomatic tensions with Vietnam over the South China Seas.

Based upon the overall findings, Miller's book ends with a short, yet concise, revisit to President Xi Jinping's new proactive, or 'reactive', foreign policy towards China's dream of building an Asian Empire, in collaboration with the 'Chinese dream towards national rejuvenation'. The author argues that China will indeed become a much more manifest player across Asia in the upcoming decades. But the crux of matter is that in protection of its interests and pursuit of its dream, sacrifice of its steadfast 'non-interference' axiom can be deemed essential. China may be obliged to act in a way the other great powers do. Moreover, in terms of overall regional security, the Beijing government still need to struggle with formidable security tasks that lie in the Asian security system hitherto dominated by the US. 'But as China pursues its vision of national rejuvenation, something has to give,' concludes Miller, '[i]f it does not, the "Chinese Dream" could tragically morph into an Asian nightmare' (p. 248).

There are three main points to be appreciated in this contribution. Firstly, Miller's work is timely. Not only has the 'Chinese Dream' been at the centre of attention among academics and government strategists around the world for recent decades, but China's strategic moves since Xi Jinping claimed presidency have always made the headlines. Despite its primary focus on Asia, Miller's evaluation of the rise of China as an Asian power can be used as a tool to comprehend its ambitions towards the world. Secondly, the discursive nature of the book means that it provides numerous observations on both specific and broad issues. *China's Asian Dream* performed excellently in conveying essential information to a wide variety of audiences, ranging from academics and government practitioners to the general public having interest in China studies. Thirdly, finely nuanced data sources of Miller's research, covering intelligentsia, business tycoons, political elites and laypeople such as sales assistants, workers and taxi drivers, clearly reflect practical insights of the subject.

Even good books like this can certainly be criticized. In this case, I have only two disappointments with regards to Miller's story-telling. For the first point, I wish to understand a wider context of China's roles and rationales towards Asia as stressed in the title, as well as other dimensions of China pertaining to the main theme, including domestic politics and cultural aspect. China regularly employs Confucius thoughts, for instance, as a theoretical/spiritual foundation in policy making and even exports them to the wider world. Yet they are completely omitted in this book. In addition, although the title is *China's Asian Dream: Empire Building along the New Silk Road*, other neighbouring countries in Asia are, albeit not directly related to the New Silk Road, undeniably significant in deciding China's success in yearning for its dream. Japan is often considered a main geopolitical arch-rival in East Asian security. Issues in the Korean peninsula; in particular, nuclear proliferation in the North and US military presence in the South also deserve spotlights when discussing the responsibility of a rising China within the region. Giving more analysis on these points could be beneficial to the readers in understanding international politics and relations in Asia.

Second, the author mentions the 'Century of Humiliation' discourse to discuss China's underlying motive for the 'Chinese Dream' quest, maintaining that "[w]ithout China's "century of national humiliation" in mind, it is impossible to understand the resonance of President Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream"" (p. 8). This statement is true, but the readers should be reminded that other factors in policy making; to name but a few, international environment and competition among Great Powers, are also worth taking into account. Likewise, relationship between the 'Century of Humiliation' and the historical context of specific regions presented in each chapter still lacks thorough scrutiny.

Despite the comments above, I recommend this worthwhile book to those interested in Chinese foreign policy, particularly in the Belt and Road Initiative, and Asia watchers. All in all, this book can help readers grasp how the rise of China really mean to the world.

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Economic and Financial Markets in China: Asian Perspectives

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