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Edited by Seiko Yasumoto and Jason Bainbridge

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Beryl Hawkins is a former radio journalist, talk show host, professional voiceover artist/narrator and producer who worked in news and talk show entertainment for more than five years at a leading news radio station in Washington D.C. As a media strategist in New York City, she has developed a number of national media campaigns throughout her public relations career, working with national leaders and cultural and advocacy groups. She also teaches Broadcast Voice Training and other journalism courses at Temple University Japan in Tokyo.

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Dr. Seiko Yasumoto teaches East Asian media and popular culture at the University of Sydney. Her primary research includes Japanese government media policy and broadcasting media within the domain of popular culture. The scope includes transmission of content, textual analysis, copyright, media industries, adaptation theory, youth culture, audience analysis and trans-national media cultural flows in Japan and East Asia. She was co-editor of the scholarly journal *Ilha Do Desterro* 2006 and guest editor of *The Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* special edition on Global Media 2010 and on a number of editorial boards. She is currently the Editor in Chief of the Journal of Asian Studies which is affiliated with The International Academic Forum (IAFOR). She was the Japan and North, East Asia regional representative of the Asian Studies of Association of Australia (2009-2012).

Introduction
Jason Bainbridge, Associate Editor

Hello and welcome to the first issue of the IAFOR Journal of Asian Studies.

Our aim is for this to be a progressive journal that takes a holistic approach to Asian studies. An interdisciplinary journal that brings together cutting-edge scholarship from new voices, the best papers from IAFOR's associated conferences and pieces commissioned from leaders in the field.

Our remit is to analyse, interrogate and navigate what is increasingly being referred to as the Asian Century. To explore the social, economic, political and cultural trends emerging through the increasing connectivity of cultures in Asia. To unpack the notions of cultural citizenship such a convergence creates. And to embrace the regional empathy and conviviality of harmony and hybridism produced along the way.

As such, the journal will present views from across a broad range of areas such as cultural mobility, cultural arbitration and understanding, citizenship beyond borders, migration and identity (national, cultural and diasporic), belonging and sharing, media trade, national branding, 'soft-power competition' and popular culture.

Together with our Editor Dr Seiko Yasumoto, Associate Editor Professor Jason Bainbridge, our Advisory Editors Professor Michael Curtin, Professor Terry Flew and Professor Michael Keane and our extended editorial board we want to give a voice to all of the scholars working across Asian studies.

This first issue provides a taste of the diverse range of topics we intend to cover. From Hawkins and Natusch's quantitative content analysis of Abenomics, to Flew and Hartig's exploration of China's Confucius Institutes initiative through a network perspective; from Hyland's examination of Taiwan's contested political identity as represented in contemporary Taiwanese cinema, to Pletnia's interrogation of the tensions in intraregional integration and collective memory of the Pacific War; from my own study of Japan's Pokemon franchise as object network and cultural practice to Yasumoto's evaluation of the media flows around pan-Asian exports of Japanese television drama, we truly cover the full spectrum of Asian culture - be it popular, news, institutional, historical, political or regional.

Subsequent issues will continue this mix, with papers sourced from the Asian Conference on Cultural Studies and the Asian Conference on Asian Studies, open calls and special issues dedicated to specific areas, like the upcoming special edition on current trends in Chinese Cinema following on from the Post Olympics Chinese Cinema Symposium held at the Bader International Study Centre last December.

We welcome you to submit your work for peer review and hope that you find the papers in this issue as challenging, insightful and thought-provoking as we did when putting them together.

Best,
Jason

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Japan's "Abenomics" Media Coverage:
A Comparison between Print and Social Media

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Abstract

Mass media and social media shape public perceptions, and in turn, this brings about an increasing level of public awareness and citizen participation in the flow of news and information. The impact of Japan's recent economic policy shift, Abenomics, set off an avalanche of national and international news stories throughout 2013 in both print and social media.

A quantitative content analysis of the print and social media coverage of the Abenomics news story is explored using the comparative approaches of Galtung and Ruge (1965). Print publication data from 12 countries were analyzed for content and classified into Positive, Neutral and Negative categories. Comments and discussion were drawn from news aggregators and blogs then classified into a taxonomy partially derived from Warner (2010), Churches (2009), Jin (2012) and Cardon and Prieur (2007).

The conceptual design guiding this research focuses on the interplay between previously separated channels of news communication (print and social media), resulting in a technological convergence. This integration creates a new dialogic model of news dissemination.

While the parameters of this evolving dialogic model of news dissemination have yet to be rigorously defined, it suggests a new paradigm for public awareness and understanding of complex issues through the news media.

Keywords: Abe, Abenomics, Japanese economy, content analysis, social media, news reporting

From Reaganomics to Japan's Abenomics

Today social media users play an increasing role in the news dissemination process. Traditionally, however, news only flowed in one direction. Another way to describe the one-way flow of news information could be called a monologic model of news dissemination, similar to what James Carey describes as a transmission model or sending messages to receivers through a contact (Carey, 1976:15). The reporting of news events is filtered to audiences through gatekeepers in news organizations, typically handled by reporters, news editors and other members of the news gathering staff. Only a rudimentary feedback system has ever been in place for audiences to contribute their opinions. This traditionally took the form of letters to the editor, call-in guests during talk shows as well as letters or phone calls appealing directly to media organizations.

A marked departure from this monologic information flow has recently emerged and we are now witnessing the increasing role of social media in shaping public perceptions. Increasingly, the Internet offers an entirely different role for media audiences, which we are describing as an emerging dialogic model of news dissemination (see Figure 5). Some commentators agree that this new form of citizen empowerment is largely attributable to Web 2.0, which Lily Canter describes as opening the gates "to journalism for online audiences, which increasingly participate in the production, dissemination and response processes of news" (Canter, 2012:604).

Newer media technologies, particularly mobile digital technology, are adding another dimension to citizens' level of participation. The ability to participate instantaneously, in the moment, is the strongest feature of this new technology, thus allowing an even more expansive way for citizens to engage in this process. This dialogic model of news dissemination diverges from the monologic model after the news event is picked up by journalists, bloggers and photographers. In the second phase, mainstream media outlets are continuing to disseminate their stories, but at the same time, aggregators (alternative online news websites which gather stories from a variety of sources) and social media networks are actively engaged in the process. The news dissemination loop returns to the second phase as more social media users and bloggers generate their own content and feed in more comments. The proliferation of newer stories and comments in turn affects the ongoing dissemination of the story and at the same time it breathes "new life" into an existing story, hence the story continues as part of the public debate for a much longer period of time than stories have in the past.

A further examination of this emerging dialogic model of news dissemination can best be understood by applying it to a single story. This converging relationship between print and social media is examined using a single Asian story as reported in the international press and social media. The specific focus of this study was the international and domestic media coverage of Japan's "Abenomics" story in print and social media as an illustration of this dialogic model.
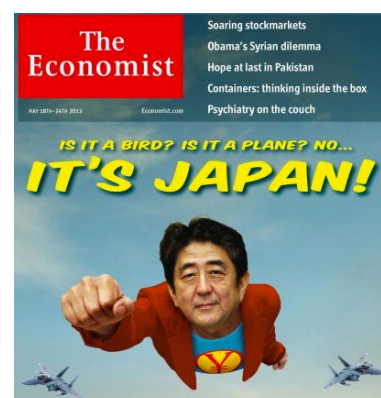
Reaganomics

The term "Abenomics" originally came from U.S. President Ronald Reagan's economic policy in the 1980's, which was nicknamed by the media as "Reaganomics". Reaganomics led to a serious shift in U.S. economic policy. Corporations applauded the policy's objectives of increasing military spending, deregulating the domestic market and reducing income and capital gains taxes. In contrast, many average citizens deplored the policy's deep cuts in government social spending (Niskanen, 1993). It was a period of intense strife between the pro- and anti-Reaganomics factions. The mainstream media covered the public debate by parading out a host of financial and political experts to support the pro-Reaganomics faction, but at the same time they covered the ongoing mass demonstrations, town hall meetings and other social protest events occurring on the local, statewide and national level sponsored by the anti-Reaganomics faction. In the midst of this fray, radio and television talk shows reached an unprecedented level of popularity as the newest citizen participatory forum. Both factions could freely air their sentiments, sometimes resulting in blustering, fiery debates. These talk shows can be considered as a precursor to the social media phenomenon that we are witnessing today because these programs also allowed citizens to actively engage in the "Reaganomics" debate.

Abenomics

About 30 years later Reaganomics has resurfaced again in the form of Abenomics in Japan. Stirring up as much controversy and public debate as its U.S. predecessor, Abenomics has also become one of the most prominent economic stories in the news. Any complex economic policy requires a simplistic explanation to ensure the general public will grasp the basic meaning. In the case of Reaganomics, the policy was popularly known as "trickle-down economics".

Abenomics is typically summarized as being a 'three arrows" policy, taking its name from a traditional Chinese story which tells of a man at the end of his life who was trying to teach his three sons a lesson about working together. He asks each of them to take an arrow, and snap it, which they all do. He then tells them to take three arrows and try to snap them. They cannot. The moral of the story is that while one arrow can easily be broken, three cannot.

The three arrows of Abenomics are flexible fiscal policy, aggressive monetary policy and growth strategy. The economics is actually more complicated than this but the three arrows policy provided a simple summary of the Liberal Democratic Party's economic policy through 2013.
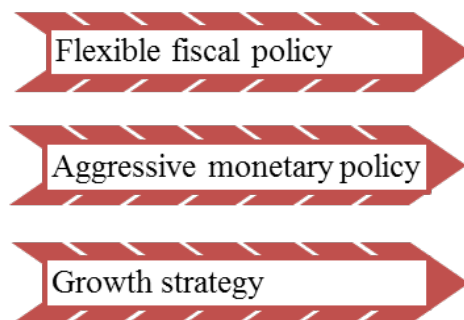
Figure 1: The Three Arrows of Abenomics

Rationale for Abenomics Story

The reason for choosing the Abenomics story as a case study was predicated on the fact that in Japan certainly, and to some extent beyond Japan, it was a big story throughout 2013, as established through applying the Galtung and Ruge (1965) analysis. Galtung and Ruge (1965) devised a list describing what they believed were significant contributing factors that can determine why a news story is selected. Their theory argues that the more an event matches these criteria, the more likely it is to be reported on in a newspaper. Criteria include ones associated with Impact (Threshold, Frequency, Negativity, Unexpectedness, Unambiguity), Audience Identification (Personalization, Meaningfulness, Reference to Eliteness, Consonance and Continuity with Stories) and Pragmatics of Media Coverage. The Abenomics story scored highly on all these criteria, and was thus chosen as a story which was likely to have staying power among media audiences in both print and social media.

Impact
Threshold: Big impact
Frequency: Since 2012
Negativity: Mix of bad news and good news
Unexpectedness: Somewhat expected
Unambiguity: Three Arrows metaphor reduced ambiguity

Audience identification
Personalisation: Abe is a celebrity politician
Meaningfulness: Related to everyone in terms of economics
Reference to elite nations: Japan and trading partners
Reference to elite persons: Abe

Pragmatics of media coverage
Consonance: Somewhat expected
Continuity: Momentum since January 2013
Composition: Japanese news and implications for other economies

Figure 2: Twelve Characteristics of the Abenomics News Story according to Galtung and Ruge (1965)

Methodology

Print Media
Following the general methodological approaches to qualitative analysis of Trew (1979), Krippendorff (1980), Schlesinger (1987) and Jensen (2002), and more specifically the approach of Tang (2012), who studied leading Chinese newspapers through a content analysis, the present study followed a content analysis approach of print media and social media using online databases accessed using LexisNexis.

Print data (stories on Abenomics) were taken from mainstream print mass media using LexisNexis specifying the following terms as search words: Abe, Abenomics, Japan, economy, Japan, economy, yen, deflation, inflation.

Table 1 lists the countries and numbers of news sources which were captured in the search. To establish an even playing field for analysis, and to avoid problems relating to translation between languages, only articles published in English were used.

	Quarter 1 Jan 1 – Mar 31 2013	Quarter 2 Apr 1 – Jun 30 2013	Quarter 3 Jul 1 – Sep 30 2013	Total
Japan	30	13	7	50
China	0	13	6	19
Singapore	6	19	10	35
Thailand	2	3	4	9
Korea	0	3	1	4
Malaysia	1	0	1	2
U.K.	10	30	14	54
U.S. /Canada	3	20	6	28
Aus./N.Z.	2	16	3	21
Total # of Articles	54	117	52	222

Table 1: Number of Articles by Country

Table 2 lists the publications and countries from where articles were drawn as found by LEXISNEXIS. News articles about Abenomics were collected from the international press from January 1 to September 30, 2013. These were then classified and rating procedures were established. Two independent raters read the Abenomics news items, then classified each article as "Positive", "Neutral", or "Negative". Inter-rater reliability was found to be a high 0.9 correlation rate. Results of these ratings are summarized by country in Tables 3-11.

Asia	U.K./U.S. Canada/Aus./N.Z.
The Daily Yomiuri (Japan)	The Daily Telegraph (U.K.)
The Japan Times Weekly	Investment Adviser (U.K.)
The Nikkei Weekly (Japan)	The Independent (U.K.)
Global Times (China)	The Times ((U.K.)
China Daily	The Irish Times
China Economic Review	The Observer (U.K.)
South China Morning Post (Hong Kong)	The Herald (Glasgow)
The Straits Times (Singapore)	City A.M. (U.K.)
The Business Times Singapore	The Banker (U.K.)
The Nation (Thailand)	telegraph.co.uk
Korea Times	thetimes.co.uk
New Straits Times (Malaysia)	The Guardian (U.K.)
	The New York Times
	The International Herald Tribune
	Business Monitor Online (U.S.)
	Automotive News Print Version (U.S.)
	Institutional Investor (America's Edition)
	The Globe and Mail (Canada)
	The Australian
	Australian Financial Review
	The Advertiser (Australia)
	Weekend Australian

Table 2: Names of Publications

Social Media
Social media data (posts and comments) were taken from news aggregators and blogs. For analyzing qualitative data the ideas of Fowler (1985) and Fielding and Lee (1991) were followed, while the classification of blog comments such as those proposed by Cardon (2007), Warner (2010) and Wei (2012) were considered. Finally, however, a tailor-made genre-based taxonomy to classify comments about Abenomics-related posts and comments was designed and used in Tables 11 to 14.

Discussion of Print Media Results

The news items were found to be generally classifiable as supportive or critical. Examples of Positive news items were "Abe's second honeymoon – (New Straits Times Malaysia, February 1, 2013), or "Japan's urban rich loving Abenomics" (The Nikkei Weekly, Japan, April 29, 2013), or "'Abenomics' is big in Japan as economy takes upturn" (The Daily Telegraph, London, July 8, 2013).

Examples of Negative news items were "Abenomics isn't trickling down yet" (The Japan Times, March 5, 2013), "The dangers of Abenomics" (South China Morning Post, April 8, 2013), "Fate of Japan's PM hinges on economy: Failure to deliver growth may rapidly erode support" (The Straits Times, Singapore, July 22, 2013).

The quantitative data (number of articles summarized in percentages) from print media is graphed in Tables 3-10, and qualitative data, comments in blogs and aggregators, presented in Tables 12-14.

In the case of Japan (Table 3), positive articles dominated in Quarter 1 but by Quarter 3, these were decreasing. Negative articles were much fewer in Quarter 1 but by Quarter 3, these had increased. In the aftermath of the election success of the Liberal Democratic Party on December 16, 2012, a mood of optimism appeared in the news stories together with the hope that the economy might recover with the implementation of the Abenomics policies. In the second quarter a major correction to the stock market occurred which appears to have coincided with some skepticism in the news reportage after that.
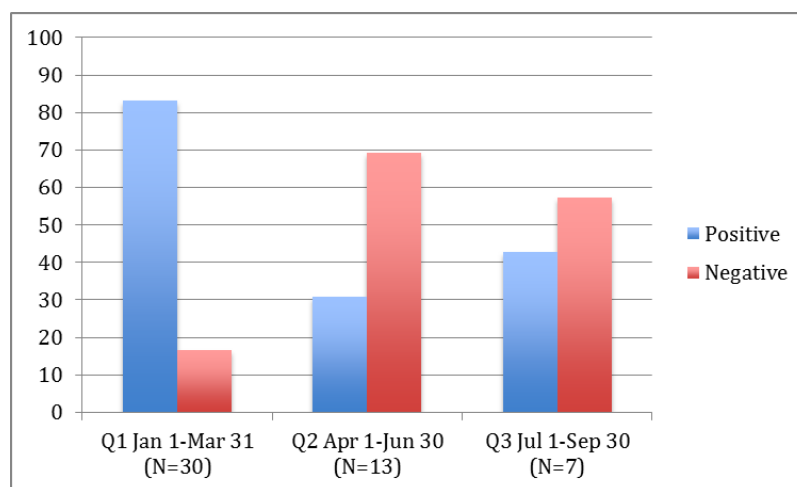
Table 3: Abenomics Japanese Positive and Negative Reportage in English Quarter 1 to 3, 2013

In contrast to the reportage within Japan, internationally (Table 4), more of a balance of positive to negative articles can be observed from Quarter 1 to Quarter 3. It could be argued that international reporting on the Japanese economy may not be as driven by political agendas as inside Japan. However, this trend of balanced reporting was not universal, as can be understood through a survey of individual countries.

Excluding Japan, the selection of articles from the international press is taken from four major geographical areas: United Kingdom (Great Britain, Ireland and Scotland), North America (United States and Canada), Australasia (Australia and New Zealand), and Asia (Singapore, Thailand, China and Hong Kong, South Korea and Malaysia).
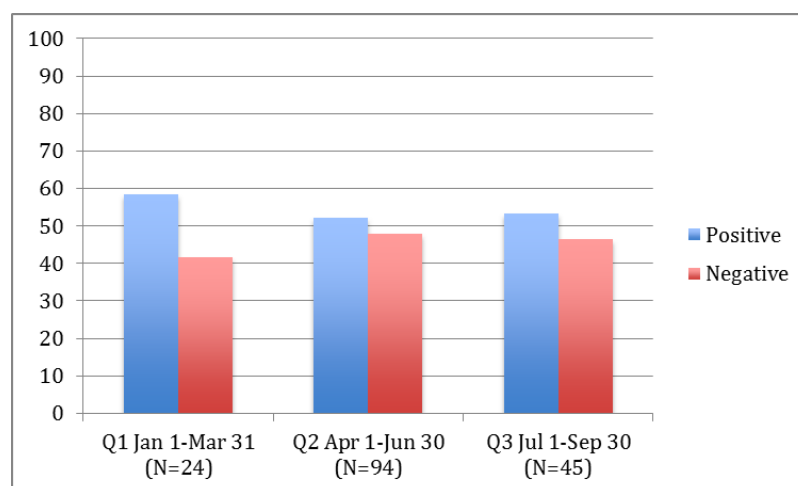
Table 4: Abenomics International Overall Positive and Negative Reportage in English, Quarter 1 to 3, 2013

The United Kingdom articles included some from Great Britain, Ireland and Scotland (Table 5). The reportage began with a somewhat higher proportion of positive news stories about Abenomics, but reached a balance of positive and negative reportage on this issue in Quarter 3. Several of the articles discussed implications in Abenomics for coping with the ongoing European economic malaise.
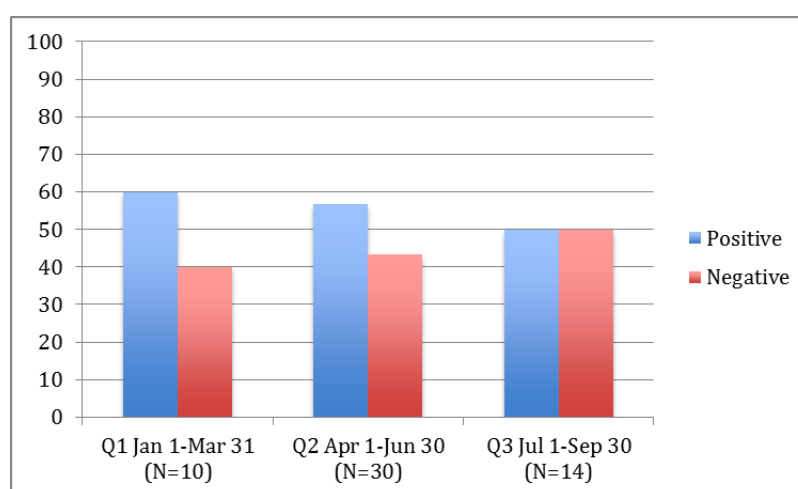
Table 5: Abenomics U.K. Positive and Negative Reportage in English Quarter 1 to 3, 2013

In North America (Table 6), there was greater initial enthusiasm about the effect of Abenomics policies. By the second and third quarters, however, more of a balance was being struck between positive and negative articles. Possibly, with Japan being part of the G8 member nation group, there was concern about how Abenomics would pay off its internal deficit. Perhaps also, there was some reluctance among G8 delegates to directly criticize a member nation, resulting in an overall balance of positive and negative discussion. Other political factors, such as the Obama administration being under increasing pressure to manage federal spending, were referred to in the Abenomics articles.
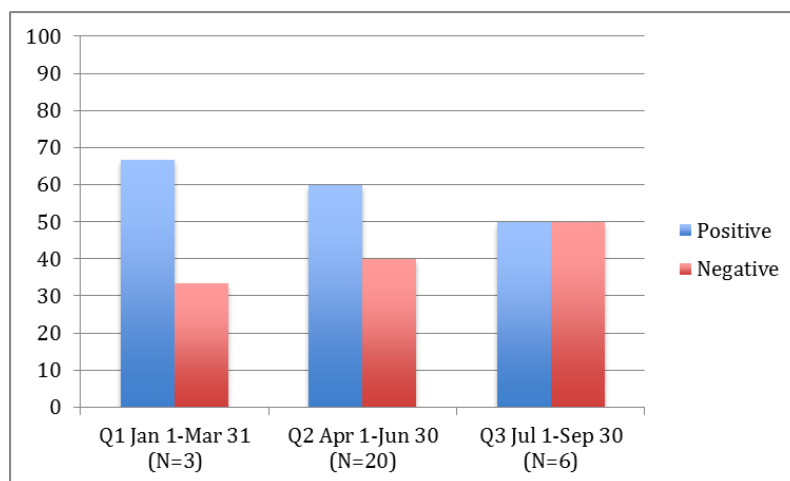
Table 6: Abenomics U.S./Canada Positive and Negative Reportage in English
Quarter 1 to 3, 2013

Australasian countries (Table 7) depend on trade with Japan considerably and watch
economic developments in Japan closely because it directly affects their trade
relationships. For example, if Japanese consumer spending was reduced substantially
through Abenomics, primary goods exports (farm and agricultural products) could be
affected. Furthermore, Australia depends on China and Japan for exports of raw
materials so any downturn in those economies will affect the Australian economy. A
fairly positive trend was apparent in this region for Abenomics policies at the
beginning of 2013, with a rise in negative reports assessing the impact of Abenomics
appearing as the year progressed.
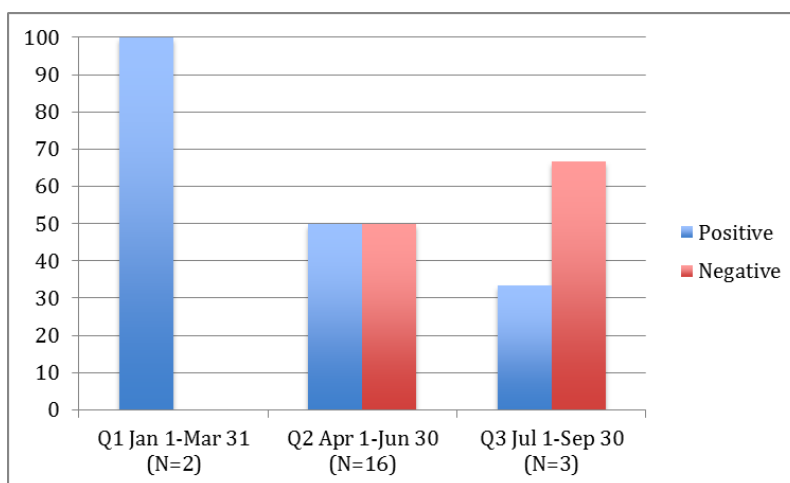
Table 7: Abenomics Australia and New Zealand Positive and Negative Reportage in
English, Quarter 1 to 3, 2013

The Singapore press carried a number of Abenomics stories (Table 8) and contrary to
other countries showed a greater number of positive reports and a declining number of
negative ones during the year. This is possibly reflected in Japan and Singapore's
generally cordial relations with each other, and fewer territorial or trade disputes than
Japan's closer Asian neighbors.
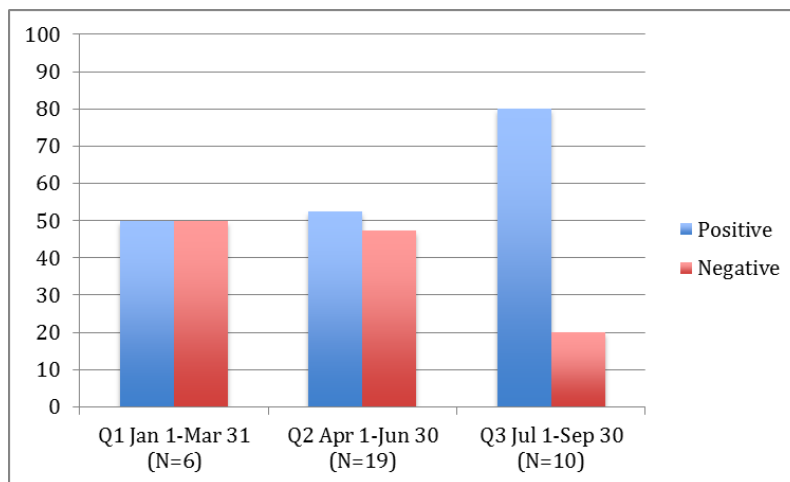
Table 8: Abenomics Singapore Positive and Negative Reportage in English, Quarter 1 to 3, 2013

Thai newspapers produced a relatively small sample of news stories (Table 9) and showed an increasingly positive reportage of Abenomics news over the three quarters. Japanese companies have a strong presence in Thailand and the country depends also on Japan for industry such as tourism which may have some connection with the largely non-critical approach in reporting on Abenomics.
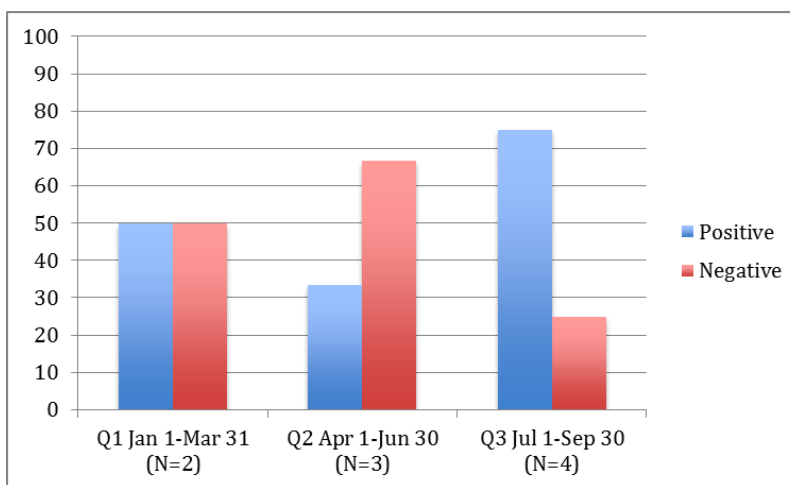
Table 9: Abenomics Thailand Positive and Negative Reportage in English

Initially, there was little English coverage of the Abenomics story in Chinese media. Most articles came from the 2nd and 3rd quarter and were overwhelmingly negative (Table 10). An investigation of the content of the articles suggested that it could be that China was not interested in Japan's economic success, was even jealous of it, or that China was having a struggle with Japan over territorial issues in the South China Sea (Senkaku Islands) during this period. A combination of these reasons could explain why there was so little coverage of Abenomics in the English language media of Japan's close neighbor.
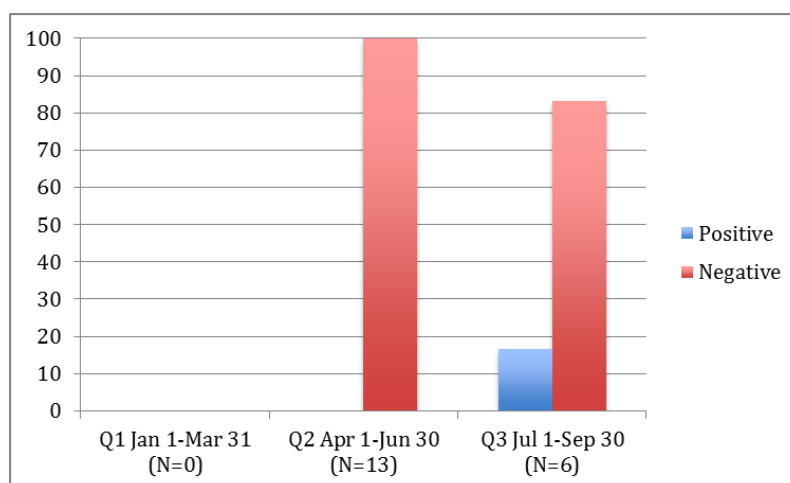
Table 10: China Abenomics Positive and Negative Reportage in English, Quarter 1 to 3, 2013

There were not enough Abenomics news stories reported in the South Korean newspapers (4 negative stories in Quarter 2 and 3) and in Malaysia (1 positive story in Quarter 1) to be tabled, but the Korean result might suggest an attitude of reserve in the South Korean press towards Japan, similar to the somewhat adversarial reporting stance of China.

In summary, reporting of Abenomics in the print media stories showed differing results across these countries. This may be attributed to several factors such as the attitude of reporters towards the Japanese government (see Table 3 and 10 for contrast between Japan and China). Secondly, reporting might reflect the shared economic problems between other countries and Japan (see Tables 5 and 6 for North America and the United Kingdom). Third, reporting in other countries might be affected by a dependent trade relationship with Japan (see Tables 7, 8 and 9 for Australasia, Singapore and Thailand).

Discussion of Social Media Results

In the previous section, which focused on quantitative data, changing attitudes towards the Abenomics news items could be observed between Quarter 1 to Quarter 3, 2013. In this section a sampling of qualitative data from blogs and aggregators will demonstrate the dialogic nature of the conversations and highlight the difference between quantitative and qualitative content analyses.

Following a story by accessing a variety of print and social media underscores the fact that different methods of analysis are required to approach contemporary content analysis. Print media, with its basis in rational argumentation, can be analyzed in terms of traditional discourse-based content analysis, whereas social media, may be better understood by using a social media communication model.

Tables 11 to 14 present comments on posts about Abenomics on blogs and online news articles accessed through news aggregators. The categories of comments fall into four main groups: Positive Comments, Negative Comments, Discussion Comments, and Other. Each main section is divided into self-explanatory subsections.

Paul Krugman's February 4, 2013 post in the New York Times "Rate Expectations (Wonkish)" attracted 39 comments, with examples in major categories shown in Table 11. The comments were mainly technical arguments including statistics to support the viewpoint, suggesting that the readership appears to have been a mix of informed professional economists and finance practitioners. There were instances where discussion between the commentators themselves occurred. Some posts could not be unequivocally classified into a single category.

Type of Comment	
Positive Blog Comments	
Adding to or supporting post	Stats on Japan: Population growth rate -0.077% (2011 est.) Birth rate 8.39 births/1,000 population (2011 est.) Death rate 9.15 deaths/1,000 population (July 2011 est.) Net migration rate 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2011 est.) THEY NEED TO GET TO WORK AND HAVE MORE CHILDREN! Adam Smith NY. Feb. 6, 2013 at 12:24 a.m
Supporting or defending subject of post	Say the inflation rises to 1.5% (hallelujah, I'd say, hallelujah) sometime in late 2013 or 2014, and the 10 year bond yield rises to 2.2%, from 1.5%. Should there be insufficient demand, the BOJ can step. Is it really worth worrying about this? Mikio Kumada, HKG, Feb. 7, 2013 at 1:32 a.m.
Negative Blog Comments	
Attacking view in post	I know nothing about economics never even having taken ec.1 but I wonder how any inflation will ever be sustained when the Elephants in the room,China,India,and even the Phillipines and Indonesia are there to hold down wages and prices.. Bob Titchell, Rochester, Feb. 6, 2013 at 12:24 a.m
Attacking subject of post	Really connected, smart creditors (read: Goldman Sachs) want to dip their proboscis into tax funds and government protection and will tolerate the minimal inflation that ensues... after they have taken home their billions. And they are, to some extent, right. Enobarbus37, Tours, France, Feb. 5, 2013 at 8:21 p.m
Discussion Blog Comments	
Adding to or clarifying one's own comment	Oops! Cite. Arbitrot, nyc. Feb. 6, 2013 at 12:24 a.m
Responding to another commentator	I realized I didn't fully reply to the post: those breakeven rates are from very illiquid instruments, so I'm not sure how much general inflation expectations are imputed in the price. Jason S. Japan. Feb. 5, 2013 at 6:02 p.m.
Other Blog Comments	
Praising poster personally	Everything Krugman says is right (about Kanno being wrong and he's right about expected inflation rising, real rates falling etc) but I doubt there is serious intention to bring about serious inflation, it's just talk to move the currency. Still, it's good for the country. RMH London Feb. 6, 2013 at 12:24 a.m
Attacking poster personally	Amazing. The chief Japanese economist at JP Morgan doesn't know s..t. How is that possible? I've read all your stuff about the economics profession. This is just gross incompetence on a global scale. Good thing you Drs are not (medical) doctors, just philosophers. Otherwise we'd all be dead. RBA DC Feb. 6, 2013 at 11:54 p.m.
Posting with Humor	Wonkish to say the least. Until now, I thought the JGB stood for the Jerry Garcia Band. My bad. Irwin I. WiklerNew York, NY. Irwin I. Wikler New York, NY. Feb. 5, 2013 at 4:36 a.m

Table 11: Sample of Blog Comments on Abenomics from Krugman at New York Times, Quarter 1, 2013
Source: http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/02/04/rate-expectations-wonkish/

The Economist post of June 15, 2013 "Abenomics: Not so super" attracted 25 comments with examples as shown in Table 12. A mix of informed commentary and discussion between posters generated a lively conversation. As with the Krugman post above, the readership appears to have been a mix of informed economists and financially knowledgeable professionals, with some comments leading to discussion between the commentators themselves.

Type of Comment	
Positive Blog Comments	
Adding to or supporting post	"A large portion of Mr. Abe government spending is financed by debt. Such anomaly can happen in Japan only because the debt market is over 90% held by Japanese banks including Bank of Japan itself (holding about 10%) and domestic Japanese savers, particularly pensioners." nkab, Jun 14th, 14:56 Recommend 29
Supporting or defending subject of post	"Have the Japanese people truly accepted the need for reform? We can only blame so much on Abe. " Ohio Jun 13th, 17:42, Recommend 15
Negative Blog Comments	
Attacking view in post	"Five years of Austerity not meeting it's targets and we are all just supposed to sit and wait." Generic Dave, Jun 15th, 09:12 Recommend 24
Attacking subject of post	Mr.Abe himself has no sense of fiscal discipline." Akiakich, Jun 18th, 00:25 Recommend 6
Discussion Blog Comments	
Adding to or clarifying one's own comment	"Japan's government debt is diminishing rapidly because Bank of Japan is absorbing them at a very fast pace." Mike Tyson Ironman in reply to Akiach, Jun 19th, 05:10 Recommend 4
Responding to another commentator	"Well. I think you should be more precise. It is the Japanese media that is against constitutional reform." Mike Tyson Ironman in reply to ShOm82, Jun 17th, 05:41 Recommend 5
Other Blog Comments	
Praising poster personally	"I think this article correctly observed that "it (Mr Abe's "third arrow" of structural reforms) is so wide of (off) the mark that one is left wondering if Abenomics has failed before it even properly began." nkab, Jun 14th, 14:56 Recommend 29
Attacking poster personally	"The pseudo scientific nonsense fails yet again and here comes the galore of justifications by the modern quacks, the mob stands in awe and reverence." Mberg, Jun 14th, 005:06 Recommend 1
Posting with Humor	"An awful lot of money and credibility is being invested in getting Mrs Watanabe to believe in the likelihood of any inflation at all. There are few signs yet that she is even paying attention." TomasHirst, Jun 14th, 11:04 Recommend 0

Table 12: Sample of Blog Comments on Abenomics from The Economist, Quarter 2, 2013
http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21579464-third-arrow-reform-has-fallen-well-short-its-target-time-shinzo-abe-rethink-not/comments#comments

The Guardian post of August 26, 2013, "Japan's pump-primed recovery proves US deficit hawks wrong", attracted 101 comments with examples as shown in Table 13. A mix of informed commentary and discussion between posters generated a spirited exchange and a number of comments attacking both the views and personalities of other commentators. As with both posts above, the readership appears to have been a mix of informed professional economists and finance practitioners. Perhaps because the comments came later in the year when Abenomics had become a prominent news story, the number of comments it attracted were in excess of the Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 posts.

Type of Comment	
Positive Blog Comments	
Adding to or supporting post	Yes, deficit spending can be stimulatory. But, it depends on how it is spent. For instance, bailing out pension funds, while certainly of benefit to pensioners, is not stimulatory. CautiousOptimist 26 August 2013 8:57pm
Supporting or defending subject of post	Hopefully Abe knows what he's doing. He's the only one even close at the moment. Fingers crossed he doesn't try to 'tackle the deficit' anytime soon. The printing money scaremongering that everyone seems to indulge in is a red herring and has been for over 40 years (1971 to be precise). The key here is to get things moving in terms of jobs, output and trade and that seems to be what he's focused on. My money's on Japan (literally) so Go Abe ! RandomAccountant 26 August 2013 5:14pm
Negative Blog Comments	
Attacking view in post	This article is a joke. You can argue your ponzi economics all you like but Japan cannot escape its economic problems without real economic growth. And where is that going to come from? They have the worst demographics going and refuse to allow immigration. Abenomics will result in the thing that will bankrupt the government: jncreased interest rates. There is no way out. You simply can't borrow against the future to the extent they have without having something great lined up in the future. And they just have a really old population lined up. Succulentpork, 26 August 2013 11:14pm
Attacking subject of post	The case against austerity, both in academia and experience, is now so overwhelming that no rational adult can possibly advocate it anymore. RedSperanza 26 August 2013 3:13pm
Discussion Blog Comments	
Adding to or clarifying one's own comment	yes, there is a certain nihilism embedded in anticapitalist views I have found. Funny how the human brain works. FunkyJunkie CautiousOptimist, 27 August 2013 2:52am
Responding to another commentator	Define austerity then. PeterS378 RedSperanza 26 August 2013 4:33pm No. I won't. Google it. RedSperanza PeterS378 26 August 2013 4:41pm
Other Blog Comments	
Praising poster personally	I will repeat AlbertaRabbit's comment: Jeremiah2000 AlbertaRabbit, 27 August 2013 4:46am
Attacking poster personally	I don't think jayant has the faintest idea. PeterS378 lukester 26 August 2013 4:25pm
Posting with Humor	As Winston once said, we can always be counted on to do the right thing, but only after trying everything else. Yank1948, 26 August 2013 4:31pm

Table 13: Sample of Blog Comments on Abenomics from The Guardian, Quarter 3, 2013
Source: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/26/japan-recovery-us-deficit-hawks#start-of-comments

Japan Today (Table 14) is a special example of a news aggregator because it is a site on which both native Japanese and foreigners living in Japan comment extensively. A number of reflective comments about Abenomics were found. Some of the posters, however, were highly engaged with each other, even to the point of hurling deprecatory remarks back and forth about the price and quality of local bread. The posters can also be quite loyal to the news site as illustrated by one poster who made it clear that he was a regular reader of the comments section.

Type of Comment	
Positive Blog Comments	
Adding to or supporting post	"...and yet Abe and his cohorts continue to promote Abenomics day after day ... especially on TV where it seems they are attempting to brainwash viewers into believing that all is well in Abeland. With the election coming up next month, we'll be swamped with "good words" about Abenomics. Just hope the voters take a glance in their wallets & coin purses before casting their votes. If they want more empty space in them, then go ahead and vote for the LDP & Komeito. As the Shukan Post article above says ... we'll be clobbered financially from all sides ..." edojinJUN. 10, 2013 - 04:35PM JST
Supporting or defending subject of post	"It's just another form of the famous trickle down economics. The weak yen benefits large international corporations who export goods so that hopefully the resulting cash flow will spread to the rest of the economy. Except no, there are tons of business that don't run on exports but on service that won't get much benefit out of this new economic strategy." BlueMindJUN. 10, 2013 - 09:55AM JST
Negative Blog Comments	
Attacking view in post	"The yen is not really "down" that much if you use a measure beyond two years. The yen settled decisively above the 90 yen to dollar level only as recently as April of 2011. At its current exchange rate in the mid 90's, it has regressed to the 5-year average level compared to the US dollar, ie, it hasn't really changed in value over this period of time." thywillbedoneJUN. 16, 2013 - 01:34AM JST
Attacking subject of post	Shukan Post chooses to fear the worst. What else would sell? sourpussJUN. 10, 2013 - 06:41PM JST
Discussion Blog Comments	
Adding to or clarifying one's own comment	It's just another form of the famous trickle down economics. Ever wonder why trickle down does not work in the US? It does not, because trade/labor union is weak there. If the trade union is strong, it will squeeze the money from the corporate. "We are the 99%" thing will continue until they re-invent the trade union. CH3CHOJUN. 11, 2013 - 10:20AM JST BlueMind
Responding to another commentator	StormRJun. 12, 2013 - 09:17AM JST "What a lot of rubbish, my loaf of bread is still 220yen and have not seen any price increases in daily products," DogJUN. 12, 2013 - 12:29PM JST "Why would it rise, when you're already being ripped off, if you're paying 220yen for your loaf of bread? A loaf of bread in Seiyu is 75yen.

	However, as usual, StormR missed the point that Pumpkin was making. The contents within his/her bread roll and the electricity used to make it have gone up. If you deny that, you're living in another universe, don't do the shopping or playing at living in Japan."
Other Blog Comments	
Praising poster personally	I agree Yubaru and a year down the line I reckon the average Japanese person won't be feeling too optimistic when they look at how out of pocket they are. SpankiJUN. 10, 2013 - 09:19AM JST
Attacking poster personally	"Ripped off at 220 yen for my loaf of bread? The 220yen loaf is far superior to the Seiyu loaf and I wouldn't eat that overly sweet crud. Your comments are always derogertory too by the way do you ever say anything that is positive or not rubbishing someone else? All your posts are either rubbishing japan or other posting you pieous full of yourself prat. I live in Japan successfuly for 20 years too and play most happily here, maybe i havent noticed price increases is because i do not have to count every yen nor watch where it goes, paying a little extra from time to time goes unnoticed, unlike some scrooges and poorpers who have to count evey last yen. Pity You. StormRJUN. 13, 2013 - 01:03PM JST
Posting with Humor	"...and yet Abe and his cohorts continue to promote Abenomics day after day ... especially on TV where it seems they are attempting to brainwash viewers into believing that all is well in Abeland. With the election coming up next month, we'll be swamped with "good words" about Abenomics. Just hope the voters take a glance in their wallets & coin purses before casting their votes. If they want more empty space in them, then go ahead and vote for the LDP & Komeito. As the Shukan Post article above says ... we'll be clobbered financially from all sides ..." edojinJUN. 10, 2013 - 04:35PM JST

Table 14: Sample of Blog Comments on Abenomics from Aggregator Japan Today, Quarter 2, 2013
Source: http://www.japantoday.com

In summary, as can be seen from the entirely different data in Tables 11-14, social media generates a markedly different news flow compared with print media. It is immediate, opinionated, individualistic, conversational, and sometimes idiosyncratic. It challenges accepted orthodoxy bordering on the adversarial. It is the democratization of news reportage where professionals engage directly with informed and uninformed readers.

Conclusion

Abenomics news stories followed a different pattern of attitude and tone across several different countries, according to the quantitative data. By contrast, the data in the social media blogs and aggregators revealed that users adopted a more performative approach towards engaging with the news.

The reportage of the Abenomics story in print media, with its basis in rational argumentation, can be well understood in terms of quantitative content analysis and a monologic model of news dissemination (see Figure 3). The data results overall indicated that in Japan, the number of negative articles increased from Quarter 1 to

Quarter 3. On the contrary, among international news publications, the balance of positive and negative articles held steady throughout the year. Looking back at the country-by-country analysis, the results were largely driven by the nature of relations between Japan and each specific country or region. In the U.K., for example, the news reportage focused heavily on whether or not Abenomics policies could exacerbate the European economic crisis. Australasian countries are most concerned about their trade relationship with Japan, so after closely monitoring Abenomics, they began to lose confidence in this policy as the year progressed. As might be expected, the Chinese media took a dim view of the Abenomics policy from Quarter 2 onwards, perhaps stemming from the deteriorating relations between the two countries over the Senkaku Islands territorial dispute.
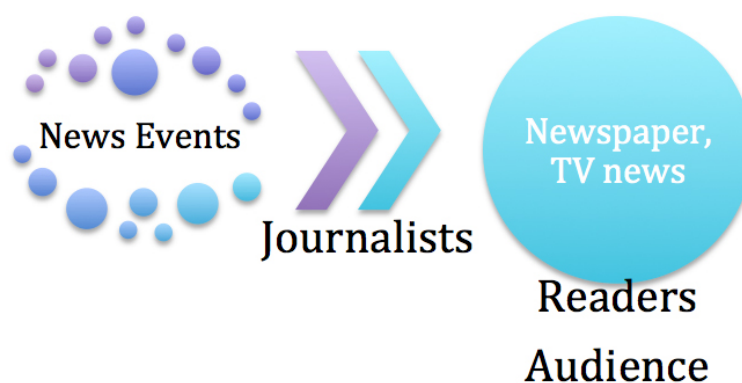
Figure 3: The Monologic Model of News Dissemination

The Abenomics news story as reported in social media, being more of the moment and mercurial, may also be interpreted by using a qualitative social media dialogic model (see Figure 4). The growing number of comments on blog postings in the U.S., the U.K. and Japan about Abenomics suggested a growing international public awareness of the steps being taken to revitalize the Japanese economy. The increasing number of discussion threads on Abenomics policies by informed readers also attested to this. The posters themselves, and the commentators, in defending their views, in giving more examples, in taking the discussion in other directions, in supporting and attacking each other, seriously and wryly, showed how engaged both writers and commentators became with the story. This appeared to lead writers and readers to a deeper understanding of the issues involved, perhaps more than a single long newspaper article written by a single expert might do. Much as Wikipedia has diminished the authority of traditional encyclopedias written by "experts" and democratized the process of encyclopedia-writing, the dialogic model of news dissemination has changed the reporting and discussion of news. Typifying this approach to engaging with news stories nowadays, Chris Anderson, editor of *Wired* comments that he receives news from "Twitter, in my inbox, on my RSS feed, through conversations. I read articles from mainstream media but I don't go to mainstream media directly. It comes to me. I pick my sources and I trust my sources." (Anderson, 2013).

This dialogic approach to news dissemination is not so new. Mikhail Bakhtin in the 1930s was describing a dialogic approach to literature where writers fed their creative

imaginations by responding to what others were writing (Holquist, 1981). As he put it:

"Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.110).

Figure 4: The Dialogic Model of News Dissemination

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Confucius Institutes and the Network Communication Approach to Public Diplomacy

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Abstract

Discussions of public diplomacy in recent years have paid a growing amount of attention to networks. This network perspective is understood to provide insights into various issues of public diplomacy, such as its effects, credibility, reputation, identity and narratives. This paper applies the network idea to analyze China's Confucius Institutes initiative. It understands Confucius Institutes as a global network and argues that this network structure has potential implications for the operation of public and cultural diplomacy that are perhaps underestimated in existing accounts of Chinese cultural diplomacy. In particular, it is noted that the specific setup of Confucius Institutes requires the engagement of local stakeholders, in a way that is less centralized and more networked than comparable cultural diplomacy institutions. At the same time, the development of a more networked for of public cultural diplomacy is challenged in practice by both practical issues and the configuration of China's state-centric public diplomacy system informed by the political constitution of the Chinese state.

Keywords: Political Communication, Government Communication, Confucius Institutes, Public Diplomacy, Soft Power, Culture; Network Society

Introduction

> *The Chinese culture belongs not only to the Chinese, but to the whole world.*
> (Chinese President Hu Jintao, address to the Australian Federal Parliament, October 2003).

In 2002, the Chinese government began to consider setting up institutions to promote Chinese language and culture overseas. One of the key elements of this policy of promoting Chinese language and culture internationally has been Confucius Institutes (CI). Modeled on institutions such as the British Council, France's Alliance Française and Germany's Goethe Institutes, the growth of China's Confucius Institutes has been one of the most important developments in 21st century public diplomacy. Between 2004 and 2012, China set up over 900 Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in 108 countries to promote Chinese language and culture. China now has the third largest number of national cultural institutes operating in other countries, after the United Kingdom and France.

Despite the rapid worldwide growth of Confucius Institutes, there is a lack of detailed analysis of their roles and functions, with a common assumption being that they are simply propaganda arms of the Chinese party-state. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) issued a statement in June 2014 expressing concern about the presence of Confucius Institutes on North American campuses, arguing that 'Confucius Institutes function as an arm of the Chinese state and are allowed to ignore academic freedom' (AAUP 2014). Such concerns find echoes in the academic literature on Confucius Institutes, with Brady (2008: 159) describing Confucius Institutes as 'China's foreign propagandists', while Niquet (2012: 81) has argued that Confucius Institutes are 'a part of efforts to modernize China's propaganda apparatus'. Critiquing the decision of the University of Chicago to establish a Confucius Institute on its campus, the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins argued that through such links, U.S. universities 'have become engaged in the political and propaganda efforts of a foreign government in a way that contradicts the values of free inquiry and human welfare to which they are otherwise committed' (Sahlins 2013).

This paper adopts a different approach, arguing that the rise of Confucius Institutes can be understood as occurring at the intersection of three debates, which have been of vital importance both internationally and within China: the significance of the concept of 'soft power' in international relations; the role of cultural diplomacy as an arm of public diplomacy and international communication; and the implications of new forms of network communications. In doing so, we note the inherent tension that arises in public diplomacy as to 'whether government-sponsored activities are manipulative "propaganda" or valid "public diplomacy"' (Zaharna 2004: 219). While our perspective is not a 'neutralist' one, presenting propaganda as a necessary evil in a complex global system of states (Taylor 2011), we would argue that an excessive focus upon the distinctiveness of China's form of government vis-à-vis other nations that engage in such public diplomacy on a large scale can obscure the degree to which the rise of Confucius Institutes is also associated with innovations within the field of public diplomacy, which have implications for its practice around the world.

This paper focuses on Confucius Institutes, which operate primarily through face-to-face interactions, and on cultural diplomacy rather than mass media or networked

communications. At the same time, it aims to illustrate ways in which these Institutes facilitate message exchanges and information flows, and can demonstrate a networked communication strategy in action, which involves the co-creation of credibility, mastering narratives, and identities by using - rather than simply disseminating - information (Zaharna 2010). Drawing upon case studies of Confucius Institutes in Australia and Germany, this paper discusses the network structure of Confucius Institutes, their network synergies and network strategy. It also considers the extent to which their success in achieving public diplomacy objectives is based around building relationships, identifying potential synergies between CIs and their host institutions, and incorporating diversity and flexibility into their everyday operations.

The paper draws upon a series of interviews conducted by the researchers with Managers and Directors of Confucius Institutes in Australia and Germany during 2009-12, which coincided with site visits to these Institutes. While sources have been anonymized in order to maintain confidentiality, interviews took place with the Directors of five Australian CIs, all of which were in the elite 'Group of Eight' universities. In Germany, interviews and site visits were conducted with Directors/Managers of five Confucius Institutes, at universities that all had a Department of Sinology or China Studies, and two of which are a part of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research's Excellence Initiative. Information on the interviews conducted is provided in Appendix 1.

The paper outlines these core debates, and considers the role, functions and future of Confucius Institutes through in-depth case studies of Confucius Institutes in Australia and Germany, particularly those established in partnership with host universities. These two countries provide useful sites for case studies as both countries have strong and fast-growing economic relations with China. Germany is China's largest trading partner in the European Union, and China is Germany's second largest trading partner after the United States, while China has now surpassed the United States and Japan as Australia's largest trading partner. These close economic relations, driven by high-technology manufacturing in the German case and minerals, energy and agriculture in the Australian case, have a variety of cultural and other spillovers, including growth in tourism, research collaboration, and educational exchanges. The two countries also have important differences that range from language to history, geography, foreign policy orientation and population composition, which inform their relations with China. For example, Germany has had a formal presence in China dating back to the 1860s, although the number of people of Chinese descent in Germany today is not high. By contrast, Australia had little formal contact with China prior to the 1970s, but has a large Chinese-Australian population, with about 5 per cent of Australians having some form of Chinese ancestry (including people of Taiwanese, Hong Kong and Macau backgrounds) (ABS 2012).

Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

China's commitment to bolstering its connections with the rest of the world has been a strong feature of its economic and foreign policies since 1978, after the death of Mao Zedong and the rise to power of Deng Xiaoping. Medeiros (2009) has argued that the concept of a 'peaceful rise' has a strong basis in China's international behavior, reflecting both the sense that strong international links are advantageous to China's rise as an economic power in the world, and the sense that China has a

historic mission to restore its status as a leading regional and global power, after the long history of depredations at the hands of foreign powers and the relative isolation of the Mao years. There is also the need to counter negative perceptions in the international community that the rise of China constitutes a threat to other nations, whether through concerns about its enhanced military power, or its growing economic significance as measured through trade and foreign investment (Broomfield 2003).

The concept of *soft power* has had considerable influence in China. First proposed by the Harvard University international relations theorist Joseph Nye, soft power refers to 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments'; it 'arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideas, and policies' (Nye 2004: x), and 'rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others' (Nye 2004: 5). For Nye, 'soft power' is associated with culture and values, in contrast to the 'hard power' of military force or economic might. Soft power initiatives are thus an important element of a nation's *public diplomacy*, or 'a country's engagement and communication with foreign publics' (Wang 2011: 3) and the promotion of national interests in international arenas. Cull (2008: 32-35) has observed that the practice of public diplomacy can be divided into five elements that he refers to as:

1. Listening: collecting information on international opinions, whether by legal or covert means i.e. spying and intelligence gathering;
2. Advocacy: promoting particular policies, ideas or interests to foreign publics, typically through one's own embassies in other countries;
3. Cultural diplomacy: promoting a nation's cultural resources overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad;
4. Exchange diplomacy: promoting reciprocal exchanges of people with other nations e.g. as students;
5. International broadcasting: the use of news bureaus, radio and television broadcasting, and Internet communication to engage with foreign publics.

Although the soft power concept was first designed as a guide for U.S. foreign policy strategies (Sparks 2014), it has had considerable influence in China. One reason for growing interest in China with the soft power concept has been the manner in which it addresses the apparent contradiction between China's growing economic centrality and its relative lack of influence in international relations (Ding 2008; Wang 2011; Blanchard and Liu 2012; Li and Hong 2012). Rawnsley has observed that 'China has embraced the concepts of soft power and public diplomacy with an enthusiasm rarely seen in other parts of the world' (Rawnsley 2012: 126). Brown (2010) has associated the growing interest in soft power in China with the rise of concepts such as 'peaceful rise', 'peaceful development' and a 'Harmonious World' among the Chinese Communist Party leadership in the 2000s, while Cabestan (2010: 3) has observed that 'the key objective of this new discourse has been to change the outside perception of China for the better, and build a positive image of China's contribution to the world'.

Public diplomacy has been seen in China as a means of countering the 'China threat' thesis, by projecting images of the 'real China' internationally, promoting a favourable image of China in other nations, and projecting China's national interests in international relations (Qiu 2009; Zhang 2009; Zhao 2012). China has invested heavily in cultural diplomacy over the last decade through arts and cultural exchanges, Confucius Institutes, the very large numbers of Chinese students abroad, growth in the

number of students from other countries studying in China, and the creation of foreign language services for China Central Television (CCTV), China Radio International (CRI) and the Xinhua News Agency. The hosting of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing as well as the 2010 Shanghai Expo could also be seen as exercises in cultural diplomacy and the projection of Chinese soft power throughout the world (Rawnsley 2009; Xin 2009; Brown 2010; Huang 2012).

At the same time, China possesses a significant problem in projecting its soft power through public diplomacy, arising from the perceived lack of distance between its media and cultural institutions and the government, in a one-party state that is seen as authoritarian by other nations. The perception of government control over the output of CCTV, the Xinhua News Agency or Chinese cinema constitutes an important barrier to the capacity of such institutions to have international influence. Cull has observed that 'like all forms of communication, the effectiveness of each form of public diplomacy hinges on credibility … international broadcasters know that the impression of an editorial connection to government runs counter to credibility [and] cultural organizations are able to flourish in places where a formal arm of the state would have no credibility' (Cull 2008: 34-35). An example of the problems China has faced in this regard is seen with the understanding of propaganda. In China, the concept has historically had a relatively neutral connotation, akin to terms such as publicity or public relations, whereas in the West it is 'associated with manipulation and … implies the secret exercise of power that is beyond our immediate control' (Rawnsley 2000: 69). Sparks (2014) has observed that perceptions of a lack of government transparency and media freedom constitute barriers to greater recognition of China as an emergent international leader, and the significance of such negatives is borne out in popular indices of 'soft power' such as those developed by the U.K.-based Institute for Government (McClory 2010).

Public Diplomacy and Networks

One of the major discussions in public diplomacy in recent years has been around the significance of networked approaches to public diplomacy. The concept of networks has been the subject of a growing debate in the public diplomacy literature (Brown 2010; Cowan and Arsenault 2008; Hocking 2005; Hocking *et. al.* 2012; Zaharna 2005, 2007, 2010; Zaharna *et. al.* 2013). Hocking (2005, 2008) has argued that there now exists 'two worlds' of public diplomacy: the traditional hierarchical approach, centered on intergovernmental relations and top-down communication; and the network-based approach, where 'public diplomacy [is] one facet of an environment in which international policy is increasingly conducted through complex policy networks' (Hocking 2008: 64). The network model of public diplomacy is seen by its advocates as providing 'a fundamentally different picture of how diplomacy works in the twenty-first century' (Hocking 2005: 37), emphasizing horizontal communication as well as multidirectional flows and exchange of information.

The two models of public diplomacy derive from different models of media and communication. The traditional approach draws from the mass communications tradition and the sender-message-receiver model, being based upon on what Zaharna has described as 'carefully crafted messages disseminated via mass media vehicles to a target audience with the goal of changing attitudes or behavior' (Zaharna 2010: 94). Publics in this setting are understood as the receivers of messages and images from

the 'sending' nation, rather than as partners engaged in dialogue with respective governments and its agencies (Hocking *et. al.* 2012: 39). By contrast, the networked communication approach is derived from technological developments associated with the Internet and social media, as well as new forms of modeling relations in both the natural and social sciences: as Newman *et. al.* (2006: 1) have argued 'networks are everywhere … the imagery of the network pervades modern culture'.

The sociologist Manuel Castells has contributed a highly influential series of works on the network society as 'the social structure characteristic of the Information Age' (Castells 2000: 5) where:

> The diffusion of Internet, wireless communication, digital media, and a variety of tools of social software has prompted the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time … [and] people (the so-called users) have appropriated new forms of communication … [and] built their own systems of mass communication (Castells 2009: 65).

For Castells, network communication gives rise to new modes of *mass self-communication*, It is mass communication as 'it processes messages from many to many, with the potential of reaching a multiplicity of receivers, and of connecting to endless networks that transmit digitized information around the neighbourhood or around the world', but is also self-communication because 'the production of the message is autonomously decided by the sender, the designation of the receiver is self-directed and the retrieval of messages from the networks of communication is self-selected' (Castells 2012: 6-7).

A key implication of network communication models is that it is increasingly difficult for central agents, such as national governments, to control communication networks or to manage information flows. As Castells argues, 'mass self-communication is based on horizontal networks of interactive communication that, by and large, are difficult to control by governments or corporations' (Castells 2012: 7). At the same time, public diplomacy theorists such as Cull have argued against a negative or 'defeatist' perspective on networked communication, arguing that new media technologies can 'not only wrong-foot the powers-that-be', but can 'create more opportunities … for public diplomacy, especially if the public diplomat is mindful of … the necessity for thinking in terms of building relationships' (Cull 2008: 53). Cowan and Arsenault have identified network communication as enabling 'a third form of engagement' based around 'collaboration—defined … as initiatives in which people work together on a joint venture or project—[as] an equally critical and, in certain cases, more effective approach to engaging with foreign publics' (Cowan and Arsenault 2008: 11). Similarly, Hocking (2008: 74) has argued that since 21st century public diplomacy is 'conducted in an environment where national and international knowledge networks are proliferating', there is a need for those engaged in public diplomacy to know 'how to connect to them, build alliances, and utilize these networks to exercise effective advocacy in support of policy objectives' (Hocking, 2008: 74).

Advocates of networked approached to public diplomacy, such as Zaharna (2010, 2012), have associated a network communication approach to public diplomacy with three inter-related dimensions: network structure; network synergy; and network

strategy. *Network structure* is about facilitating message exchange and information flow, because networks can enhance the flow of information and therefore increase the overall effectiveness of the whole network. *Network synergy* is concerned with the building of relationships and incorporating diversity into the network. Synergy occurs when individual efforts of the network members are combined as a force multiplier: the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. This happens through the combined processes of cultivating relationships and incorporating diversity in two ways. Firstly, internal relationship building through bonding among network members helps to transform a loose group of individuals into a dynamic team. Secondly, external relationship building, through bridging, is about coalition building that expands the network's resources and reach. This internal and external relationship building not only incorporates diversity, but also generates synergy. Finally, *network strategy* focuses on bringing together the diverse elements of the network in such a way that a shared narrative can emerge, not as a top-down construction, but out of processes of co-creation of knowledge (Castells 2005). In this regard the strategy generates appeal and momentum in order to engage and retain network members, attract new members, and hence enable the network to grow.

Chinese Public Diplomacy and the Growth of Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes became a central part of Chinese public diplomacy initiatives in the early 2000s. In 2004, the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), an organization under the authority of the Chinese Ministry of Education, began to set up Confucius Institutes around the world. According to the General Principles of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Confucius Institutes:

> Confucius Institutes devote themselves to satisfying the demands of people from different countries and regions in the world who learn the Chinese language, to enhancing understanding of the Chinese language and culture by these peoples, to strengthening educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries, to deepening friendly relationships with other nations, to promoting the development of multiculturalism, and to construct a harmonious world (Hanban n.d.).

Confucius Institutes have been among a number of initiatives undertaken by the Chinese government in the 2000s to enhance its international standing through public diplomacy. Observing that 'communications capacity determined influence', Li Changchun, the Chair of the Propaganda Committee of the CCP from 2008 to 2012, argued that:

> Strengthening the setup of our domestic and international communication capacity (*jiaqiang guonei guoji chuanbo nengli jianshe*) is related to the overall situation of China's reform and opening up and modernization; it is related to China's international influence and international status (*woguo de guoji yingxiang he diwei*); it is related to the upgrading of our nation's cultural soft power (*woguo wenhua ruanshili de tisheng*) and the role of our nation's media in the international public opinion structure (*woguo meiti zai guoji yulungejuzhong de diwei he zuoyong*) (Li, C. 2008).

Among the range of other public diplomacy and international communication initiatives undertaken by China during the 2000s were:

- Development of the English-language CCTV International 24-hour news channel, as well as channels broadcasting in French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic languages (Rawnsley 2012; Huang 2012);
- China Radio International (CRI) now broadcasting in 59 languages worldwide;
- Xinhua News Agency expanding its international news agency services, and providing subscribers with news in eight languages, as well as having over 1000 correspondents in 180 bureaus worldwide (Xin 2010; Wang D. 2012);
- Support for Chinese Culture Centres Abroad, as well as cultural exchange programs, including China Culture Years, such as the 'Year of Chinese Culture 2011-2012' in Australia, and the 'Year of Chinese Culture' in Germany in 2012, both sponsored by the Ministry of Culture;
- International education exchange initiatives, including rapid expansion of the role of the China Scholarships Council (CSC) in promoting Chinese doctoral study abroad, and the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) promoting student and academic exchanges.

In terms of their fundamental tasks and services of teaching language and culture to people in other nations, Confucius Institutes are comparable to international agencies such as The British Council, Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute and Spain's Alliance Cervantes. These institutes typically address a mainstream public audience that normally does not have any special knowledge about the country in question, through activities such as language courses, cultural events such as exhibitions and screenings, and public talks (Hartig 2012). Some debate exists as to whether Confucius Institutes are appropriately seen as being involved with the projection of Chinese soft power. As noted earlier, there also exist concerns about whether they constitute a threat to academic freedom. Paradise has noted that 'as Hanban and other education officials ventured out into the world, they found some resistance to the idea of setting up Confucius Institutes on university campuses because of concerns about Chinese interference in foreign academic life' (Paradise 2009: 659).

One important structural difference between Confucius Institutes and similar European institutions is their decentralized organizational structure. Rawnsley (2009: 285) points out 'Confucius Institutes are joint ventures, are located within a university, and the partner school in China sends teachers to participate'. This differs from the European institutes, which are typically stand-alone entities supported entirely by their home governments. Entities such as the British Council or Germany's Goethe Institute operate on the basis of a hub or star network, where network members communicate through a central position or hub which, as Zaharna (2010: 99) has noted, 'effectively controls the exchange of information'. The center of the network – the London headquarters of the British Council or the Goethe Institute headquarters in Munich – provides leadership, develops structures to plan and coordinate work, recruits and manages members, solicits funds, and channels resources. Confucius Institutes, by contrast, are most often a partnership between the Hanban, a Chinese university and a foreign university, where the Chinese side normally offers teaching materials, language teachers, a co-director and a share of the budget, while international partners provide facilities and local staff, as well as contributing to overall funding (Hartig 2012). It is this aspect of Confucius Institutes as involving

cooperative arrangements between Chinese and international partner organizations that is unique and important in terms of considering network approaches to public diplomacy.

Drawing upon Zaharna's (2010) three-fold typology of networked approaches to public diplomacy, we can evaluate Confucius Institutes in terms of their approaches to network structure, network synergy and network strategy. Confucius Institutes have been described as as 'a highly networked public diplomacy initiative' (Zaharna 2010: 208), and their organizational distinctiveness as compared with the European cultural institutes has been noted above, particularly in relation to their active engagement of host country institutional partners. This analysis draws upon empirical case studies obtained through field research in Australia and Germany over a period from 2009 to 2012, and the aim here is not to discuss differences between Confucius Institutes in different countries in depth, but to provide a mapping of their operations on the ground as viewed through the tripartite formation of network structure, synergy and strategy.

The network structure of Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes appear at first glance to take a similar hub-and-spoke form to comparable cultural organizations, with Hanban (Confucius Institute Headquarters) in Beijing as the hub and the individual CIs around the world as the nodes. In this structure, Hanban is responsible for circulating and exchanging information and for coordinating and monitoring relevant information across the distributed network of individual institutes. In the case of CIs, however, this simple hub-node structure is complicated by the joint venture structure involving foreign universities, so that the network becomes a potentially multi-directional one, complicating the flow of information from the hub to the nodes.

One way in which the resulting communication challenges are addressed is through regional and global Confucius Institutes Conferences. The first global CI conference was held in 2006 in Beijing, and these have become annual events held in December for individual CI Directors to 'meet like-minded others, share experiences, and exchange ideas … represent[ing] the addition of direct interpersonal communication in a global stakeholder engagement process' (Zaharna 2012: 11). Through such events Hanban serves as an indirect link for CIs around the world to connect with each other. One Australian director observed that 'even though there is a lot of Hanban in [these conferences], there is on the sideline a lot of opportunity for the directors to talk to each other' (I-A1), while a German director has described the annual conferences as a 'mini version of the United Nations' (I-G1). At the 8th annual conference in 2013, for example, there were over 2,200 attendees from over 400 Confucius Institutes in attendance.

While Hanban can spread and collect a lot of information via these conferences, the flow of information from the hub to the nodes on a daily or regular basis does not work that smoothly (Hartig 2012: 264). One Australian interviewee complained that '[w]e don't ever really receive any communication about the status of our applications and the timeframe for receiving our funding. That makes trying a program, trying to stick to a budget more complicated than it needs to be. Practically speaking, this is quite a challenge' (I-A1). In the Australian case, it was also notable that different CIs

had asked in various internal documents for better and more frequent communication and better guidance from Hanban in relation to a range of operational matters. Reports from the 6th Confucius Institute Conference held in Beijing in 2011 reveal that the newly-established La Trobe University Confucius Institute sought 'more guidance from Hanban, and [to] share experiences and lessons with other Confucius Institutes', while the University of Queensland Confucius Institute asked for continued support from Hanban for its programs and activities, such as research internship study tours to China, and CI fellowships to support staff exchange between the university and China (CICRM 2011).

Zaharna is correct pointing out that theoretically there is an intensive inter-weaving of relations because international partners are not only linked to Hanban and their Chinese counterparts, but also to other CIs in their home country or to other international organizations as they may have the same Chinese partner. For example, the CI at Heidelberg University in Germany has the same Chinese partner university as the CI at the University of New South Wales, namely Shanghai Jiaotong University. Similarly, the CI at the University is Sydney is partnered with Fudan University in Shanghai, as are the CIs at Frankfurt University and Hamburg University. At the same time, interviews with CI Directors suggest that this has not necessarily led to more intense communication or even exchange or cooperation between Confucius Institutes. One Australian CI Director described the process as follows:

> We are talking to each other, complaining about what's going on. We are having the same kinds of challenges in some way or the other. There is a little bit of networking, a little bit of knowing each other, and thinking of each other every now and again does pay evidence. It does happen, but on a fairly low-key kind of basis. (I-A1)

Another interviewee explained that 'there is no formal structure for institutes to work together and cooperate. It is happening more on a personal basis' (I-A2). Examples of collaboration identified by interviewees in Australia and Germany included common invited speakers (I-A2, I-A3, I-G2) and, in the case in Germany, a punk rock band to perform at two Institutes (I-G2). In Australia, some coordination happens in cities with more than one Institute in order to avoid competition and promote cooperation between individual institutions but, once again, this is not proposed by Hanban, but occurs more organically because key local personnel know one another and coordinate activities.

It can be said, then, that the overall structural setup of the CI project has the potential to make these institute a prime example of networked public diplomacy. In reality, however, a number of circumstances prevent the network structure to unfold its full potential. First of all, the CI network is simply too big: by the end of 2013, there were 440 Confucius Institutes and over 640 Classrooms all over the globe. As a result, Hanban has ongoing problems with disseminating information to all network nodes appropriately. Second, the CI network is more complex than similar organisations as its individual nodes are more complex due to the inbuilt cooperation between Chinese and international partners. If this cooperation functions well, this contributes to the overall network of CIs; if there is limited cooperation between the two partners (for example because the local and the Chinese co-director do not get along well with each other), this weakens the individual institute and thereby the whole network. Third, as

there is no institutionalized mechanism to bring the nodes together except the annual world conferences and more irregular regional conferences, the capabilities of this network potentially get lost.

The network synergy of Confucius Institutes

One of the perceived benefits of network structures is that they can enable network synergies to emerge. Network synergies are defined as arising from the interaction or cooperation of two or more elements in a network to produce a combined network effect that is greater than the sum of the individual parts (Newman *et. a,.* 2006: 234-36). For network synergies to emerge, one would expect to see evidence of: (1) building relations within the network; (2) building relations outside of the network, as others are attracted to the network which should incorporate diversity into the network (Zaharna 2012). With regard to building relations within the network, CIs can engage in internal bonding and team building, as they are involved in both teaching and cultural activities.

Looking for the potential synergy effects, the cases of CIs in both Australia and Germany illustrate important limitations. In some instances, the scope to achieve synergies arising from the pairing of language teaching and cultural activities is undermined by particular Institutes not offering both these activities. At least two Australian CIs did not offer their own language courses and saw their role more as a facilitator for other organizations to teach Chinese, either their own university or schools in the surrounding community. Moreover, many of the Chinese teachers and co-directors only stay for short periods of one to two years, which hampers ongoing team-building opportunities.

More generally, while network members contribute to relationship building and thus strengthen the network in most CIs, it is however not found in every single institute. In Australia, we found that not all CIs had language teachers sent from China at the time of the interviews, and some CIs not having a Chinese co-director (I-A4, I-A3, I-A5), while in Germany there was at least one institute which had a Chinese co-director only located in China (I-G5). This lack of dispatched staff from China clearly limits the synergy potential of individual institutes. Another aspect limiting the synergy effects became obvious in Germany where not all teachers from China spoke German (I-G3, I-G2), which again would negatively influence the assumed possibility of network synergy. The difficulties in achieving cooperation with outside organisations because of cultural differences was noted at the 8th Global Creative Industries Conference in December 2013 when Xu Lin, the general-secretary of Hanban, pointed out that about 110 CIs do not hold the required annual Board of Directors meeting, and that various Chinese co-directors complained about their personal situation abroad, mainly due to a lack of communication with local directors.

With regard to building external relationships, a particularly important issue for CIs has been to establish links to local communities. We found some evidence of this from case studies in Australia and Germany, with Confucius Classrooms being developed in cooperation with local schools, as well as enrolment in Confucius Institutes courses by interested public from the community, as well as staff and students form the host institutions. Another important set of external relations were with local businesses, and CIs in Australia had developed tailored language courses

for business people (I-A3), and also worked with local companies to be external sponsors for their programs (I-G2, I-A3).

The network strategy of Confucius Institutes

The third dimension of the network communication approach concerns network strategy, or the co-creation of credibility, master narratives and identity. One of the fundamental differences between the mass communication approach to public diplomacy and the network communication approach is that the first '*begins* with a pre-determined message' whereas the latter '*ends* with the message or story' (Zaharna 2010: 111). In this setting, 'networks *first* establish the structure and dynamics for effective communication channels, *then* members collaborate to craft the message. Because the message or story is co-created across cultures, it is not tied to any one culture. Rather than acting as a barrier or impediment, culture is incorporated into network dynamics and becomes a rich source of team-coalition synergy' (Zaharna 2010: 111 – emphasis in original).

It is precisely this assumption that networks may refine overall public diplomacy 'messages' that is of importance in the study of Confucius Institutes. Recalling that it is not enough simply to have a network of cultural institutes that disseminate top-down communication determined message from a central headquarters, there has to be a structure that enables collaboration in order to more effectively craft messages. This makes it important to study the joint-venture structure of CIs, which makes CIs a prime example of collaboration in public diplomacy, defined as 'initiatives that feature cross-national participation in a joint venture or project with a clearly defined goal' (Cowan & Arsenault 2008:10).

Having both local staff and staff dispatched from China, Confucius Institutes are theoretically predestinated to establish the structure and dynamics for effective communication channels with members collaborate to craft the program, and thereby the message, of individual institutes which is co-created across cultures. When a CI is in the position that is has both local and Chinese staff who work together very well, this cooperation helps to set up an appealing program with a variety of events and topics discussed. However, there are at least two broad limitations here. First, as mentioned above, not all Confucius Institutes actually have staff dispatched from China all the time which influences both the potential synergy effects within individual CIs but also the strategy. Taking this into consideration, it becomes clear that while Confucius Institutes have more potential to co-create a narrative than other comparable cultural institutes, what is also apparent is that this capacity very much depends on the actual situation on the ground. The fact that the CI network is still growing generates ongoing difficulties in resourcing individual CIs and in strategic coordination.

The second limitation concerns the question of credibility with the messages coming from Confucius Institutes. While it is undoubtedly the case that CIs have the potential to emphasise the value of learning Chinese and getting in contact with Chinese culture, the aspect of being the leading Chinese language teaching institution needs clarification. Not all CIs actually teach Chinese, and those that do often experience practical issues related to teaching materials and methods which may hamper CI credibility. It can also be noted that in most major cities, Confucius Institutes are only

one of a number of providers of Chinese language teaching. In these places CIs actually compete with sometimes long-established and well respected institutions in this field, and the fact that CIs are related to the Chinese government does frequently undermine their credibility, whether justified or not.

The bigger issue in terms of credibility however concerns the content provided by Confucius Institutes, especially through non-language events. Next to their task of introducing Chinese language to people abroad, Confucius Institutes also introduce Chinese culture and provide information about China. In order to do this, Confucius Institutes offer various cultural classes such as paper cutting, cooking courses or calligraphy, and organise film screenings, song contests or seminars and lectures dealing with various China-related topics and issues. In this context, it is apparent that some topics, such as the future status of Taiwan, the Dalai Lama, Falun Gong or the Tiananmen events of 1989 are normally off-limits for Confucius Institutes. As one Australian director put it, 'There are no restrictions, but obviously if I would pay the Dalai Lama to come to Australia with Hanban money they would not be happy. You don't have to be a genius to know that' (I-A3). The statement that Hanban does not restrict the daily work is made throughout many CIs, and in general terms that is an accurate observation. There are, however, instances where Beijing's long arm in form of local Embassies Consulates reaches for Institutes. In Germany, one director admitted that 'Our independence is limited regarding precarious topics. If topics like Tibet or Taiwan would be approached too critical, this could be difficult' (I-G2). Another director is sure that 'as long as I don't do anything anti-communist or pro Falun Gong, I don't think my Chinese co-director would intervene in anything I do' (I-G4).

Conclusion

There cannot be any doubt that public and cultural diplomacy have to be aligned with modern communication dynamics which favor horizontal, many-to-many relationships and exchange through networks, over one-directional and one-to-many mass communication approaches, where information was presumed to be sent to largely passive audiences in order to win their hearts and minds. Relational and networked approaches to public diplomacy clearly provide a new direction in this regard, however, as the case studies of Confucius Institutes illustrates, even these approaches are not a panacea. One promising way to go beyond top-down, one-way mass communications approaches lies in the networked structure of Confucius Institutes, which requires the engagement of local stakeholders who can much better contribute to programs offered by CIs. Nevertheless, as pointed out, this innovative approach of incorporating local parties is not automatically promising and in the case of China's cultural outposts this is hampered by two broader sets of issues.

On the one hand there are several practical components that limit the network dimension, including the outlined human resources issues that concern the network synergy or problems of teaching materials and methods affecting the credibility. On the other hand, there are limitations resulting from the political constitution of the Chinese state, which bear on the content of CIs and thereby also the credibility of the whole network. Although due to their unique structure one can describe Confucius Institutes as 'the most open-minded institution China has ever had' (Liu, H 2008:31), nevertheless CIs and people in charge are at times reminded that China's overall

public diplomacy system is still largely a state-centric endeavor and this innovative approach to include both local and Chinese staff in order to create a suitable program and narrative for these cultural institutes stretches its limits due to the authoritarian Chinese state which does not wish to discuss certain topics in public, a fact that partially affects the credibility of the whole project. And as credibility is an important source of soft power, as Nye reminds us (Nye 2004:106), this drawback cannot be offset by even the smartest approaches to public diplomacy.

Appendix

List of interviewees

Interview number	Position and Affiliation	Date of interview(s)
I-A1	Director, Australian CI	20 April 2011
I-A2	Director Australian CI	29 April 2011
I-A3	Director Australian CI	12 May 2011
I-A4	Director Australian CI	4 April 2011
I-A5	Director Australian CI	2 May 2011
I-G1	Director, German CI	13 December 2011
I-G2	Director, German CI	30 June 2011, 12 January 2012
IG-3	Director, German CI	16 January 2012
IG-4	Director, German CI	27 October 2009
IG-5	Director, German CI	11 May 2010

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Global Politics and a Cinema of Localism: Contemporary Taiwanese Film

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Abstract
In the opening sequence of Wei Te-sheng's Cape No. 7 (Hai Jiao Qi Hao) (2008), the lead character Aga smashes a guitar against a lamppost while shouting 'Fuck you Taipei.' He then leaves the city on his motorbike and turning his back on the metropolis, heads down Highway Number One toward the southern county of Pingtung. This is a brief moment of populist politics in the film, and Aga's rejection of a 'false' Taipei identity in favour of a more 'true' local identity relates to contemporary Taiwan's contested political identity.

The People's Republic of China, which officially considers Taiwan a province of the mainland, insists that the world deny Taiwan independent nation status in international venues, considering Taiwan as encompassed by China under a 'One China, Two Systems' policy. In Cape No. 7, Aga's cry becomes a means of denying that reductive imago of Taipei as province of China/Taipei as representative of all Taiwan. By translocating its story to Pingtung's ethnically diverse and linguistically polyglot local communities, the film articulates a comprehensive and encompassing conception of Taiwan that is posed in opposition to Mandarin speaking 'Chinese Taipei'. The film promotes a Taiwanese identity that consists of a diversity of political and cultural forms: Han Chinese as well as Hokklo, Hakka, aboriginal and immigrant. This paper explores the search for 'the local' in contemporary Taiwanese populist cinema.

Keywords: Taiwan, sovereignty, nationalism, cinema studies, politics, localism, zhonghua studies

Introduction

In the opening sequence of Wei Te-sheng's *Cape No. 7* (*Hai Jiao Qi Hao*) (2008), the lead character Aga smashes a guitar against a lamppost while shouting 'Fuck you Taipei.' He then leaves the city on his motorbike and turning his back on the metropolis, heads down Highway Number One toward the southern county of Pingtung. This moment of rage against Taipei struck a chord with contemporary Taiwanese, as it symbolized in the film the character's splitting allegiance from cosmopolitan Taipei to a more rural/local experience of *Taiwaneseness*. This is a brief moment of populist politics in the film, and Aga's rejection of a 'false' Taipei identity in favour of a more 'true' local identity relates to contemporary Taiwan's contested political identity.

The *People's Republic of China*, which officially considers Taiwan a province of the mainland, insists that the world deny Taiwan independent nation status in international venues, considering Taiwan as encompassed by China under a 'One China, Two Systems' policy. Lowell Dittmer (2004) discusses Taiwan's contested status:

Taiwan's case is distinctive, for despite having some of the features of a nation-state, its quest for sovereignty has been vigorously contested by the People's Republic of China (PRC), which claims the island as a long-lost Chinese province.

Dittmer continues, citing Beijing as being 'unhappy with Taiwan's quest for national identity" (475). Part of this denial of Taiwan's quest for national cultural identity, is to insist on the depiction of Taiwan in international venues as a subordinate province of China, called *Chinese Taipei*. Such was the case in the 2008 and 2012 Olympics in Beijing and London respectively. Taiwan was even forced to substitute the flag of the *Republic of China* (ROC) with a dedicated *Chinese Taipei* sports flag. The imposed term, *Chinese Taipei* has the double function of reducing the entire island to a single city and then subsuming that city into greater Chinese national and cultural identities, thereby denying Taiwanese *cultural* specificity. Under such rhetoric, Taiwan becomes stripped of political national identity and cultural mythos.

In *Cape No. 7*, Aga's cry becomes a filmic means of challenging the orthodox presentation of Taipei as synecdochic of the entire country of Taiwan. Taiwanese news media during the time of the Olympics became dominated by the debate regarding Taiwan's right to a national identity, and the population became agitated by this diminishment of Taiwanese cultural autonomy in the international arenas of sport and pageantry. In *Cape No. 7,* Aga's cry becomes a means of denying that reductive imago of Taipei as province of China/Taipei as representative of all Taiwan. By translocating its story to Pingtung's ethnically diverse and linguistically polyglot local communities, the film articulates a comprehensive and encompassing conception of Taiwan that is posed in opposition to Mandarin speaking 'Chinese Taipei'. The film promotes a Taiwanese identity that consists of a diversity of political and cultural forms: Han Chinese as well as Hokklo, Hakka, aboriginal and immigrant. Through its focus on the local experience of a diverse group of Taiwanese identities, the film contests the enforced signification of Mainland China's one nation, two systems ideology as perpetuated by the totalizing *Chinese Taipei* moniker.

Taiwan is currently at a crossroads, a not-quite-a nation, with two potential identities. Domestic politics can be split neatly into two 'camps:' the Kuomintang (KMT) party and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The two camps have differing ideologies regarding Taiwan's status, which can be roughly characterized in the following way. The first, favoured by the KMT, is that Taiwan is a political entity officially known as the *Republic of China* (ROC) which was politically separated from the Mainland during the Communist revolution of 1949 and should be considered as historically and culturally contiguous with China. The second, favoured by the DPP, is that the island should be considered an autonomous political entity known as Taiwan, and which has a modern history and culture that is unique and distinct from that of Modern China. But the question of reunification is problematized by cultural affiliation, and while the KMT has a propensity to favour Mandarin Chinese cultural identification, the DPP has promoted a more pluralistic conception of Taiwaneseness that includes Hakka, Hokklo and aboriginal identifications. The film *Cape No. 7* while avoiding overt politicization, through its emphasis on the pluralism engendered in Taiwan's local communities, ultimately engages in a discourse of identity politics. The film, because of its popularity, triggered a number of subsequent films that similarly investigate Taiwanese pluralism by siting their stories in local communities outside of the Metropolis Taipei.

Cape No. 7, produced after the DPP era of Taiwan-centric campaigning, struck a chord with local audiences and went on to become the highest grossing Taiwanese film. According to the *Taipei Times, Cape No. 7* generated domestic revenue of 530 million Taiwanese dollars – approximately $17 million US ("Night Market Hero to Wow China." 2013, p. 2). The film failed to replicate that same success in either the Mainland or Chinese communities of the diaspora, in large part, because much of the film's politics seems to appeal predominantly to elements of Taiwanese society that do not similarly appeal to other Chinese speaking or Chinese heritage communities. It seems the film, in its attempt to articulate a specifically *Taiwanese* local experience, failed to appeal to non-Taiwanese, Chinese language communities. The film's domestic success was big enough, however, that it triggered a small flurry of films that similarly occur outside of Mandarin Chinese speaking Taipei and have a concern for local issues among rural Taiwan's culturally and linguistically heterogeneous population.

Cape No. 7 and the several similar films produced in its wake, if not posing a case for political sovereignty, belong to a movement that attempts to articulate Taiwanese national/cultural identities as distinct and separate from those of the mainland. This paper argues that an emphasis on pluralism and localism in Taiwanese culture is part of a *discourse of localism* that is in direct opposition to the global community's insistence on Taiwan's undefined political status. As Beijing promotes a global myth of Taipei/Taiwan as part of a One China policy, this new cinema of localism is part of a proto-nationalist Cinema that emphasizes a uniquely Taiwanese set of national/cultural tropes derived from (shared) local experiences that exist outside of the metropolis of Taipei. In many of these films, Taipei is seen as the centre of the Kuomintang Sinicization policies and it is outside of the administrative capital that a grassroots campaign promoting Taiwanese local identities is being mounted. Much contemporary Taiwanese cinema, made in the aftermath of the administration of former President Chen Shuei-Bian (2000-2008) and the Democratic Progressive Party's emphasis on Taiwanese localism, is highly political in its construction of

Taiwaneseness and articulation of Taiwan as a pluralistic cultural entity separate and distinct from the mythic homogeneity promulgated by both mainland China and the previous and contemporary Kuomintang governments. This article explores the imagined Taiwanese local identity as expressed through a series of films released after *Cape No. 7*, most notably *No Puedo Vivir Sin Ti* (*Bu Neng Meiyou Ni / Cannot Live Without You*) (2009) *Monga* (2010) and *Night Market Hero* (*Ji Pai Ying Xiong*) (2011).

Taiwan is Not a Sovereign Nation

On Saturday June 29, 2013, the former Premier of the Republic of China Hau Pei-tsun, speaking at a forum organized by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy addressed the room and boldly declared that '*Taiwan is not a sovereign nation*,' ultimately rejecting the name *Taiwan* and insisting that unification between *The People's Republic of China* and the *Republic of China (Taiwan)* was an inevitability. The insistence that Taiwan is *not* a sovereign nation is a contentious one because Taiwan is a *de facto* sovereign political entity with democratically elected leadership and a sovereign economy. While Taiwan does indeed enjoy both economic and political autonomy, Taiwanese 'nationness' is problematized because Taiwan is not recognized by the United Nations and is yet to achieve officially approved nation status within the global community. Sigrid Winkler (2011) reports that Taiwan's 23 million people have only been granted observer status by the World Health Organization and do not contribute to global health policy, as do other recognized nations (1). The Taiwanese political identity is one that is routinely diminished in global fora, with mainland China insisting on Taiwan being considered a special administrative region, but none-the-less a province of China. Wang and Liu (2004) discuss the reunification question.

Unlike the Korean and the German models of unification in which each side treats the other substantially as an equal, the PRC model, known as 'one country two systems,' considers Taiwan only as a local government under Beijing's command, like Hong Kong and Macao, but one that will enjoy a high degree of autonomy. (568)

But this ambiguous political status is not only contested in international arenas, but also by factions within the island itself and is regularly made manifest in charged political debate, as evidenced by Hau's contentious statements. Lowell Dittmer argues there are three possible futures for democratic Taiwan:

(1) The formation of a national identity as an independent and sovereign Taiwan, eventually a Republic of Taiwan with its own constitution and flag.
(2) The retention of the identity of the Republic of China, tracing its legitimacy (and sovereignty) back to the 1911 Xinhai Revolution. While no longer claiming to be the sole representative of 'China' in the world, this option continues to adhere to the 'one-China principle,' in the sense that there is said to be only 'one Chinese nation' but, for the time being, two separate states, whose reunification might eventually be negotiated under mutually acceptable conditions.
(3) The status quo, which is no real 'solution,' but merely a protraction of the current identity crisis, consisting of de facto autonomy without either reunification or independence. (Dittmer, 2004, p. 477)
    The Kuomintang government has long promoted the second option and has similarly promulgated the one China two systems policy that posits eventual re-

unification as not only a desired goal, but as an inevitability, a position vocalized by Hau.

Hau, in his lecture continued, arguing that to call the Republic of China, *Taiwan,* and to insist upon its political sovereignty were both 'forms of self-depreciation'(Shih, 2013, p.1). In his speech, Hau argued that the world does not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation, and that any such campaigning toward sovereignty would undermine cross-strait unification, the end goal of the previous Kuomintang administration under Chiang Kai-shek, and often feared by the Taiwanese nationalists to be the final motive of the current KMT administration under President Ma Ying-Jeou. Hau is quoted as stating "There is no democratic country in the world that has two different democratic systems. When people of both sides of the Strait have a consensus on their political system, unification will come to fruition naturally" (Shih, 2013, p.1).

For the 95 year old Hau, his conception of the ROC is rooted in the ideology of the Kuomintang party as promulgated by former dictator Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo that posited the People's Republic of China under Mao Tse-tung was an illegitimate government and that Taiwan was the seat of the ROC in exile. Such an argument also posits both historical and cultural superiority of Han Chinese over those who are born as indigenously Taiwanese, arguing that to promote Taiwanese distinctiveness or to reject the one China principle are to 'deprecate the self.' Hau's language is a language of hierarchies, in which Chinese political affiliation and consequently Chinese cultural affiliation are superior to local identities, thereby himself deprecating Taiwanese Aboriginal, Hakka or Hokklo identifications, identifications that *Cape No. 7,* as does much contemporary Taiwanese cinema, celebrates. Hau's is a conception of Taiwan that stems from the Chiang Kai-shek era of an enforced Sinicization program.

For Hau and the KMT, the Republic of China is understood to be a nation that is culturally and historically contiguous with that of the mainland, but this is not the case for many Taiwanese. For many Taiwanese who speak the southern dialect Hokklo, a derivative of Hokkien and a language that is not homologous with Mandarin Chinese, cultural identification comes from a Taiwan centric ideology. Further, Taiwan also comprises Hakka, who migrated from Guangdong, and many aboriginal peoples who do not identify with a Mandarin based Sinocentric ideology. Such a diversity of people appears in the film *Cape No. 7,* with representative Hakka, Hokklo, Aboriginal and Christian characters. The film creates a contrastive conception of Taiwan that is opposed to the reductive Sinocentrism promoted by Hau and old-guard KMT. While Hau is correct in identifying the problem of Taiwan's political status as being contingent on approval by the global community – and indeed Taiwan does not enjoy Nation status – his conceit of Taiwan being politically at one with China predicates his (mis)conception of Taiwan as a *cultural* entity which is concomitantly morphologically at one with the Mainland. His discourse is to actively deny the local cultural distinctiveness of Taiwanese pluralism, pluralism which contemporary Taiwanese cinema aggressively promotes through characterization and celebration of local identity and custom.

Hau's conception of Taiwanese nationalism as a form of 'self-deprecation' is one that has become anachronistic and no longer conforms to the beliefs of the majority of the

nation, but is one that is still held by many in the Kuomintang party. Under the Democratic Progressive Party administration of former President Chen Shui-bian (2000-2008) Taiwan was swept by a nationalist movement that spread awareness of the need to create greater political and cultural sovereignty. Writing in that period, Wang and Liu contend that desire to assert cultural and political independence from China, a new Taiwanese national identity has been engendered, stating "this identity rejects the idea that Taiwan and China are one nation and that all ethnic Chinese must be ruled by a single government within the same state." (2004, p. 570)

In 2004, Wang and Liu conducted a survey of current trends in self-identification in Taiwan with a telephone survey of 1, 115 respondents, asking the respondents questions of self-identification. In their research, Wang and Liu conclude that while many Taiwanese identify as culturally descended from Chinese, concluding that most don't identify as politically Chinese with only one fourth viewing Taiwanese culture as distinct and different from Chinese culture (p. 575). However, despite the feeling of shared cultural heritage, the majority of Taiwanese do not feel politically affiliated with the mainland:

Despite intensive efforts to re-Sinicize the island's residents in the 1948-1988 period, very few of the island's residents currently subscribe to the idea of greater Chinese nationalism. The majority of the populace now sees the island as an independent political entity from the Chinese mainland. More important, half of the island's residents now carefully distinguish their political identification from their cultural orientation. (p. 578)

While the majority see Taiwanese culture as descended from Chinese culture, a quarter of the population feels otherwise. And though most contemporary Taiwanese are happy to acknowledge a common Chinese heritage, they identify themselves as politically Taiwanese. Further, there is a significant proportion of the society that does not identify itself as of Chinese heritage at all, and instead identify as aboriginal and who belong to one of the fourteen recognized aboriginal tribes. Wang and Liu conclude their findings:

This research has shown that Taiwan-centered national identities, including both the Taiwanese nationalist identity and the pro-Taiwan identity, are now dominant on the island. While those who hold such identities are divided in views of their cultural heritage, they all exhibit a psychological attachment to a political community known as Taiwan that is separate from the Chinese mainland. More important, a substantial number of island residents now believe they can be both Chinese culturally and Taiwanese politically. (Wang &Liu, 2004, p586)

Contesting Taiwan: One Nation, Two Systems / Separate Histories, Separate Nations

Taiwanese political and cultural affiliations have been contested continuously for several centuries. Taiwan is a small island off the coast of mainland China, whose indigenous people can trace their roots to present day Malay tribes-people. Ming-Yeh T. Rawnsley (2011) writes that it wasn't until the 13th century that Chinese settlements appeared in Taiwan. The island was claimed by the Portuguese in the 16th Century, who named the island *Isla Formosa* and who were followed by the Spanish

and the Dutch, all of whom were ejected in 1662 by Zheng Chenggong who was himself at war with the mainland Qing dynasty. Taiwan became a part of the Qing Dynasty with the defeat of Zheng Chenggong in 1683, but did not become an official province of China until 1875. Only twenty years after that, Taiwan was ceded to the Japanese in 1895, where it was administered by Japanese colonial rule for the next fifty years (197). Prior to the arrival of the Japanese, the Chinese inhabitants of Taiwan had emigrated from the Southern provinces and spoke a language derived from Hokkien, a language that was not homologous with the official Mandarin of the Qing court. With the Japanese colonization of Taiwan, the island became further linguistically and culturally separated from Mainland China. The Japanese modernized agrarian Taiwan and brought with them industrial farming practices and heavy machinery. They also built technological and transportation networks and imposed Japanese education, language, customs and culture. In 1945 the Japanese occupation came to an end and Taiwan was ceded to the Mainland, which had recently come under Kuomintang rule lead by Chiang Kai-Shek. This transition, however, was fraught with difficulties. Rawnsley describes disappointment in the people, when "the Nationalist government appointed people from the mainland to almost all administrative and managerial posts in the provincial government" (Rawnsley, 2011, pp. 197-198). Wang and Liu (2004) characterize the transition to Chinese Governance.

The mainland troops sent to take control of the island were viewed by the locals as beggars and thieves. KMT officials in turn viewed the islanders with suspicion, owing to Japanese colonial rule of Taiwan for half a century. After all, they had been on different sides during the war. By 1947, the animosity between the KMT government and Taiwan's residents culminated in an island wide uprising, known as the '2/28 incident,' during which thousands of local people were massacred by KMT troops. This outbreak of violence solidified the local perception of the KMT as a new alien occupying force, and the ethnic cleavage between 'mainlanders' *(waishengren)* and 'Taiwanese' *(benshengren)* became the major division within society. (571)

Compounding the local/mainland divide were linguistic and cultural differences. The *benshengren* had been educated in Japanese as the official language, but in private and domestic spheres spoke the southern Hokklo dialect; whereas the KMT military personnel and government administrators, coming from the Mandarin speaking mainland, could speak neither of the local languages. This ideological/cultural division was further compounded in 1949 with the KMT on the mainland being defeated by the communist troops, resulting in Chiang Kai-shek leading an army of two million further *weishengren* to Taiwan to establish the seat of the exiled ROC government in order to retrench and prepare their armies in the attempt to recover the mainland. Wang and Liu argue:

Taipei's ruling elite imposed harsh authoritarian rule, coupled with intense propaganda efforts to 're-Sinicize' local residents. A variety of measures were enforced to foster a 'greater China identity,' in an attempt to make local residents accept the view that both Taiwan and the Chinese mainland were parts of China and that China was their motherland. (2004, p572)

Wang and Liu argue that among the measures of fostering China centred ideology were the imposition of China-related curriculum in schools, a prohibition against the

teaching and speaking of local languages and the restricting of television and radio broadcasts to Chinese Language programming and were practices that continued until the lifting of Martial Law in 1987.

Daniel Lynch makes reference to Chang Yen-hsien, who argued that the Sinicization project had the further effect of *peripheralizing* the Taiwanese subject. Lynch writes "Chang argues that by means of political, economic, and cultural peripheralization, the Qing, Japanese, and Republican Chinese rulers were able to cultivate precisely the passive and 'tragic' mind-set among the Taiwanese" (2004, 513-514). The depiction of Taiwaneseness as secondary to China and Japan, it was feared, would inculcate and indoctrinate the Taiwanese into a hegemonic mindset that would cause willing subjectification to further colonial interests. The Sinicization propaganda campaign was wide-spread and far reaching and such Sino-centric attitudes are still evident today in certain factions of the contemporary KMT, as evidenced by the former Premier Hau Pei-tsun's speech to the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, that any ideology other than a China-centric belief was to self deprecate.

With the lifting of Martial Law in 1987 and the transition to democracy, came increased debate about identity politics. Wang and Liu report 'When Lee Teng-hui became the first native-born president in 1988 and later the chairman of the KMT, exiled advocates of Taiwanese independence were allowed to return to the island and openly espouse an independent Taiwan" (2004, p.572). The increased debate about a politically autonomous Taiwan triggered debates about cultural identity and minority rights. The researchers state that to "maximize electoral votes" and "mitigate the ethnic tension" KMT politicians advocated communalism and harmony with simple sloganeering, championing the 'collectivity of common fate' and 'the rising new nation' (*xinxing minzu*) (572), concluding that "This discourse integrated all residents on the islands into the more ethnically inclusive identity of 'the new Taiwanese' (*xin Taiwanren*)" (Wang & Liu, 2004, p. 572). This *new Taiwaneseness* was promulgated by the newly formed DPP, who targeted the disenfranchised and incorporated Taiwanese cultural pluralism into its electoral campaigning, arguing that Taiwan's pluralism and history are independent of China.

The policies of de-Sinicization eventually made their way into education reform in the1995, with a committee approving a new high school history curriculum titled 'Knowing Taiwan' (*Renshi Taiwan*) (Lynch 2004 p. 516), in which 'Greater Han chauvinism' was replaced with a Taiwan focussed curriculum (2004, p.516). These changes to curriculum challenged the primacy of the mainland and inevitably created a Taiwan centric ideology and local identity founded on minority discourses including Taiwaneese, Hakka and aboriginal concerns. Lynch makes reference to Lee Chiao, President of the Taiwan Pen association, who implores the Taiwanese people reject Sinocentrism, jettisoning it outright in order for a new Taiwanese culture to be erected in its place. "The primacy of this task results from the fact that accepting Chinese culture *by definition* peripheralizes and dwarfs (*aihua*) Taiwan," (Lynch, 2004, p. 520). While Lee's insistence on the *total* eradication of Sinocentrism is not shared by the majority of the Taiwanese as demonstrated by Wang and Liu's survey, Lee's insistence that Taiwan invest in cultural and ideological distinctiveness had a profound effect and much contemporary Taiwanese cinema is invested in cultural excavation and promoting indigenous heritage and cultural product.

Lynch argues that for Taiwanese nationalists, through the process of imagining and articulating Taiwan as a culturally autonomous entity, it would follow that Taiwan would become a politically autonomous entity and nation status would inevitably be granted. Lynch (2004) argues:

The Taiwanese nationalist project is uniquely 'Post-Andersonian' in that its proponents pursue their quest in the transformed intellectual terrain that developed in the wake of the 1983 publication of Benedict Anderson's contemporary classic, *Imagined Communities*. In this extremely influential book, Anderson argued that no nation is essential and all are constructed through processes of collective imagining. Such a conception of nation-building gives politically engaged Taiwanese intellectuals and other activists' unusually strong self-confidence in their ability to transform Taiwan into a bona fide nation-state. (p. 513)

In short, if nations are themselves an imaginary construct, the Taiwanese should be able to imagine themselves into a national identity. Through harnessing a population with a shared conception of imagined Taiwaneseness as culturally blended, diverse or pluralistic; in direct opposition to the sinocentric policies of the KMT, the DPP hoped to galvanize support for a campaign of political sovereignty. The current film movement is exactly such a project to construct a contrastive iteration of *Taiwaneseness* as culturally distinct and separate from the Mainland, through focussing on local identities and the pluralism of the cultural landscape outside of Sinocentric Taipei. Indeed, Lynch makes reference to Shih Cheng-feng, a political scientist, who goes so far as to state "the Taiwanese Nation (*Taiwan minzu*) refers to all people who love Taiwan, identify with Taiwan, and are willing to struggle for Taiwan regardless of race, ethnicity, or provincial background; the stress is on loving Taiwan, not on the blood and cultural ties of 'the Chinese Nation' (*Han minzu*)" (Lynch, 2004, 526). This sentiment appears clearly in the film *Cape No. 7*, which has Taiwanese, Hakka, Hokklo, and Mandarin speakers as well as the character Tomoko, a Japanese expatriate who is seen initially working on a photo-shoot, barking orders in English to a group of Anglo-European models working in Hengchun. Through the course of the film, all the characters learn to love Taiwan and the film ends with a concert that is itself a spectacle of pluralism and cultural blending, incorporating indigenous instruments, Japanese and Taiwanese folk music, and the band's diverse people are brought together in song. The film posits that it is precisely this pluralism that comprises the New Taiwan.

No Puedo Vivir Sin Ti tells the story of a Kaohsiung single father Li Wu-Hsiung, a dock worker and diver who raises his daughter outside of 'legitimate' society. In order to register himself as the girl's father, he requires the signature of the mother who had disappeared many years earlier. Li makes several unfruitful visits to both the Kaohsiung and Taipei registration and council offices to plead his case. Faced with the prospect of his child being taken by social services, Li attempts a protest demonstration and climbs a bridge that spans a busy intersection. He threatens to jump off the bridge, taking the child with him, if the administrative blocks aren't removed. He is arrested and jailed while the child is taken to be raised by social services. The film ends with a coda in which Li spends two years searching for the girl. The film ends at the point of their reuniting.

Despite the apparent melodramatic narrative, the film is highly political in its construction of alternative Taiwanese local identities. Li is a Hakka who lives on Cijin Island in the southern county of Kaohsiung. His existence within Taiwanese society is continually being tested and he exists on the periphery of approved 'Taiwaneseness.' As a part of the Hakka community on harbour edge of Kaohsiung he is situated on both the physical and cultural periphery of Taiwanese society; but this also causes linguistic liminality. He speaks both the Hakka and Hokklo languages used in his local neighbourhood, but his Mandarin Chinese is limited creating a further barrier to his ability to navigate the bureaucratic systems of official Taiwanese society, symbolized by his fruitless meetings in Taipei. He lives in an illegal squat and because of the nature of his seasonal and occasional work he is economically deprived, forced to live on the margins of fiscal security. This peripherality threatens to pass to the future generation through his daughter, who is unregistered and faces a similar future of linguistic, cultural and economic liminality. But the film becomes highly political in the construction of Taipei as officious, restrictive and unsympathetic to the needs and concerns of Taiwan's diverse population of local peoples: Taipei is constructed as insensitive and ultimately failing in its adherence to 'Policy', policy which doesn't recognize or fully appreciate the complexity of contemporary Taiwanese with multiple competing cultural, linguistic or political identifications.

The film opens by establishing several binary oppositions that are fundamental to the unfolding of narrative events. The film begins with an off-screen voice, speaking in officious Mandarin providing a television breaking-news broadcast. The announcer states that in Taipei a man is holding a child hostage on a bridge. The image track, however, shows a diverse crowd of workers in the southern city of Kaohsiung, smoking and watching the news broadcast on a small television. They begin commenting on the Mandarin news broadcast. In contrast to the audio track, the men are speaking in Hokklo and making bets on whether or not the man will jump. The film then cuts to the bridge in Taipei as he prepares to jump, as reporters and spectators mill about watching the terrified man shouting 'this is an unfair society'. While the scene is unfolding, the sound fades to temple drums beating and the film then cuts to black and a title card stating 'Kaohsiung, two weeks earlier.' The film fades into a scene in Kaohsiung where Li and another man performing a trance dance as part of a ritual ceremony to bless a new boat. The two men self-flagellate while dancing in a trance mode as fireworks explode against their bare skin. Through their dance, they channel the spirits of gods who have come to bless the boat. The opening immediately sets a number of oppositions: Taipei is shown as a middle class media capital, while Kaohsiung comprises powerless working class observers; the Mandarin news broadcast is contrasted with the Hokklo news receivers; and there is also a contrast in the two scenes between diverse forms of knowledge – there is the television broadcast as a knowledge dissemination system, contrasted with the local knowledge inherent in the spectacle of the religious ceremony.

The performed trance dance is a significant moment in the film. While Li is powerless to navigate the official channels of registration and law in Taipei – his pleas to council offices and social workers fail to be heard, and he has difficulty understanding their official mandarin, further obstructing his progress – the boat blessing ritual sequence demonstrates Li's powerful *local* knowledge. As part of a fishing community, the deadly threats of the ocean and of the Goddess Matsu are held

in high esteem. Li's ability, through dance and knowledge of local custom, allows him to channel the gods and appropriately bless the ship ensuring for the fishing community, safety and prosperity. His is a local knowledge of religion and custom, but one that is alien to the Sinicized administrators of 'legitimate' knowledge in bureaucratic Taiwan. Indeed, they don't 'speak the same language,' literally or metaphorically: His is a world of ritualized custom, cultural practice and magic whereas theirs is a world of bureaucracy and law, and these two Taiwanese existences – urban versus local – are here proven fundamentally incompatible.

These cultural divides becomes crystallized in the figure of the daughter, who though raised by the father does not understand the Hakka language. Li acknowledges to a former classmate Lin, a Hakka who is now a government Legislator, that he stopped using that language as it no longer has any function in his daily life. Further, when he speaks to his daughter, she responds to his Hokklo speech with Mandarin Chinese. Her ability to speak Mandarin is contrasted with the father, who has a child's command of Mandarin – he has no difficulty understanding the daughter's responses – who is often bewildered when encountering the bureaucratic language of the social workers and councillors' obfuscating discourse. As part of a generation that is schooled in Mandarin, the bilingual daughter intuits that the Mandarin language of society has more purchase than the Hokklo language of her domestic space, a language that becomes a private but near obsolete discourse between her and her father. The film suggests that like Hakka has become for Li a defunct language, Hokklo too is threatened, reduced to a language of the market place but with little currency in the increasingly industrialized world of Modern Taiwan and it too is becoming a defunct language for the future generation. Significantly, when the daughter is seized by the social workers, she stops talking and becomes a mute. This becomes symbolic resistance, as the daughter understands that Mandarin is the language of the bureaucratic system that had oppressed her father and broken her family, and by refusing to speak she refuses to participate in the culture of the bourgeois oppressor. Her muteness becomes a form of political resistance against the forces that are deaf to the needs of Taiwan's culturally diverse population. By telling stories of minority oppression, the film becomes a part of the Taiwanese localism movement. It is through highlighting Taipei's deafness to the needs of Taiwan's non-Mandarin speaking communities (symbolically through the complacent system of bureaucracy) that the film resists Sinocentric policies. The film poses a case for reconsidering Taiwan as envisioned by proponents of the One China policy, a policy which inappropriately denies that such pluralism in Taiwan exists. The film suggests that such a one China Sinocentric ideology denies the Taiwanese cultural specificity that the sovereignty movement campaigns for.

Is Taiwanese Cinema a National Cinema when there is no Nation?

Several writers have characterized Taiwanese cinema as a National cinema. Douglass Kellner (1998), writing about the product of Hou Hsiao-hsien, Edward Yang and Ang Lee, describes *New Taiwan Cinema* as 'a Cycle of national cinema,' arguing that the films rebel against genre cinema and attempt to 'explore the realities and problems of contemporary Taiwanese society (101). Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie, in their work *The Cinema of Small Nations,* include a chapter on Taiwan, although they preface their definition, stating:

In this case, one has to qualify the terms 'nation' or 'national' with quotation marks. Taiwan may function, act and in many ways even thrive like a small 'nation' should, but most countries in the world do not recognize the island as an independent nation out of geopolitical obsequiousness towards its neighbouring behemoth, the People's Republic of China (PRC). (2007, p. 144)

They argue that the films of Taiwan do reflect a national character and are concerned with local identity and identity politics in a way that is akin to a national cinema, but are not particularly comfortable in their definition and are reluctant to emphasize Taiwanese 'nationness' because of its contested political status. Zhang Yinjing uses Crofts' typology of national cinemas in an attempt to highlight the difficulty of categorizing Chinese language cinema.

Chinese cinema, like Australian cinema, 'is a messy affair,' not the least because Chinese cinema is 'fundamentally dispersed' – historically, politically, territorially, culturally, ethnically and linguistically. The messy state of Chinese cinema means that the question of the 'national' will not go away if we substitute 'national cinema' with 'nation-state cinema'. Indeed the association with the nation-state is precisely what makes the term 'Chinese cinema' problematic. (p. 2)

Zhang's work subsumes Taiwanese cinema into a greater Chinese cultural practice, and diminishes and denies Taiwanese cultural and political autonomy, but his argument is sound in that Taiwan is a defacto, but contested, national identity but its cinema does not conform to the various codified definitions or characterizations of national cinema as do other conventional National cinemas. For Zhang, it is precisely because Taiwan, and for that matter China too have contested political boundaries that change and undermine their 'nation-ness. Jason Ho Ka-Hang (2012) goes further, problematizing 'Asianness' too as a contested, poorly defined categorization.

It is not easy to define Asianness, not to mention the term itself is subject to ongoing refinement and redefinition. Alongside changes, globalization, and Asianness, the nation and nationalism are two very much related terms that are subject to constant re-examination. (p. 2)

Again, for Ho it is precisely because of the various re-negotiations of what constitutes a national identity and even what constitutes Asianness itself, that analysis of Taiwanese cinema as belonging to specific cultural or political movements or identifications becomes problematic. He continues, stating "The newness inscribed in contemporary East Asian films precisely overrides and goes beyond the national cinema model, and trespasses or even transgresses the national and postcolonial discourse" (Ho, 2004, p. 2). Ho bypasses the problematic nature of "the National," arguing contemporary Taiwanese cinema to be a *Post-National* cinema, a cinema which looks beyond questions of the national to examine indigenous and minority concerns, issues that he argues are evident in *Cape No. 7*. "I assert that what is emerging is something less nationalistic/political and more humanistic/personalized in the form of belonging to a community" (2004, p. 2). In Ho's conception, the post-national text "dialogues with nationalism and reacts critically to globalization" and such responses "forge alternative approaches" and evoke "a different kind of individuality" (2004, p. 2). Ho argues that the local identity *is* the post-national self, and that 'if the national is beginning to fall apart, the local is able to recapture its

importance and gain substantial space in the search of a communal identity – Taiwaneseness in our case" (Ho, 2004, p.p. 2-3).

Ho is very astute in his reading of *Cape No. 7*, and in the global context of Post-nationalism, such sentiments are certainly felt within contemporary Taiwanese cinema: but Ho is too quick to conceive Taiwanese cinema as looking for the breakup of the nation. Rather, Taiwanese cinema should be considered a *proto-nationalist* cinema, which, borrowing the ideologies of localism inherent in post-nationalism, is part of a cultural sovereignty movement. In short, the contemporary cinema movement seems to view localism *as Taiwanese*. While it is looking to detach from the greater Pan Chinese nation and calling for the breakup of the ROC: it is hoping to re-constitute itself as a sovereign national identity (Taiwan). It is precisely a form of pre-nationalist cinema, in that it is calling for a redefinition of the Taiwanese nation, detached from pan-Chinese cultural chauvinism and fixated on questions of local identity as part of a reconstituted Taiwaneseness that is separate and distinct from the ROC's conception of the one China two systems policy. It is a cinema that is part of a greater movement which, as Daniel Lynch argues, is attempting to imagine for itself a new national identity – new Taiwaneseness. While Ho's argument and reasoning are correct – that is, Taiwanese cinema is certainly informed by the discourse of Post-nationalism, and contemporary Taiwanese cinema is contesting 'Taiwaneseness' – it cannot be seen as a post-national cinema (a cinema that moves beyond nationness), because a newly envisioned nationhood, nationhood that encompasses non-sinocentric history and culture, still remains the end goal. This contemporary Taiwanese cinema of localism is not hoping to maintain the status quo, that is, to ignore the question of sovereignty, but rather is derived from the post Chen Shui-bian nationalist era and is increasingly attempting to envision and articulate the Taiwanese nation as opposed to that of The Republic of China.

Proto-Nationalism in a Taiwanese Cinema of Localism

The night market has become a common trope in a number of contemporary popular Taiwanese films. The night market is an important site in contemporary Taiwanese culture, as it is a familiar space to contemporary Taiwanese, but also becomes a filmic shorthand for cultural blending. It is in the night market that Hokklo, Mandarin, Hakka and Aboriginal cultures meet and mingle, and it is particularly among the food-stalls that night markets express Taiwanese cultural pluralism, with aboriginal, Hakka, Taiwanese and Chinese foodstuffs being offered in equal measure. The film *Monga*, set in the summer of 1987, unfolds in the old Temple/market quarter of Monga, Taipei. While the film occurs within the city of Taipei, the setting of a 1980s working class quarter becomes a nostalgic local space, inhabited by a diverse mix of marginalized peoples, who discover security in gang life. The period setting of 1987 is significant, as it marks a symbolic moment of change from the martial law era and the dynastic rule of Chiang Ching-kuo, to Taiwanese fledgling democracy. The period marks a moment imbued with the potential to detach from old guard Chinese cultural superiority as exemplified by imposed rule under KMT dictatorship, to democratic local politics. However, the film provides a new external threat: The Taiwanese gangs of the Monga district are threatened by a new gang of wealthy and organized Chinese mainlanders with links to the Triad drug trade, symbolically substituting political Chinese hegemony as embodied by Chiang Ching-Kuo with economic Chinese hegemony, embodied by Shanghainese drug money.

The film begins with a depiction of the Monga district as a rough and tumble neighbourhood of diverse people from different ethnicities, though predominantly Hokklo speakers, who have minor squabbles and fights between competing gangs that have subdivided the Monga district into separate territories. The film starts with a new boy, the *weishengren* (mandarin speaking) Wenze, being invited into the Monga temple gang after he successfully fights off a group of bullies. The gang are themselves a group of *benshengren* (local Taiwanese) misfits: Monk, the son of a Buddhist devotee; Dragon, the mixed race son of the leader of the Temple gang; A-Po the son of a local butcher; and monkey, the son of a grocer. The film begins with a bucolic evocation of the past and a presentation of the streets of Monga as a cozy warren of temples, restaurants and shops, where the local community come together to live and to settle their differences. While the society is steeped in a culture of violence and perpetual fistfights, such ructions are seen as a means of solidifying brotherhood and testing and confirming loyalties among the community. The gangs have learned there are rules to maintaining an uneasy peace between the different factions and there is harmony in this violence. The uneasy status quo is challenged with the coming of a new gang of *weishengren* led by the Mandarin speaking Grey Wolf who has close links to the mainland drugs industry and introduces guns into the neighbourhood.

The film reaches a crisis with the Chinese gangsters, hoping to consolidate power throughout the Monga district, make the myriad local gangs subordinate to their ambitions. Grey Wolf plants seeds of sedition among the different gangs and the film ends with all out war and bloodshed. Even the members of the Temple gang aren't immune to Grey Wolf's manipulations and they too fight amongst themselves. While rough and with ructions the Monga district had been stable when left to its own devices and had found a solution that allowed for the pluralistic local society to maintain stability. However, it is with the introduction of the Chinese gangsters who seek domination with the importation of their ideologies of divide and rule that causes the film to inevitably end in tragedy. The message could not be clearer: Taiwan was better left to self rule and to sort out its own problems (as rough as that may have been) than with the intervention and imposition of Chinese rule that has no consideration for local needs and promotes dissention and bloodshed among the population. The film becomes a symbolic echo of the entrance of postwar Kuomintang rule and the 2/28 incident, but it can also be seen as allegorical for contemporary Taiwan which too is in an uneasy moment of status quo, with regular within the population and with the looming threat of Chinese intervention. The film seems to ask, what new bloodshed would reunification bring?

A final example of indigeneity in the contemporary Taiwanese cinema of localism is from the 2011 film *Night Market Hero*. This film too is set in a night market, which again is constructed as a bucolic site of cultural blending. Predominantly composed of *benshengren*, harmony is at first threatened with the introduction into their community of a young female *weishengren* middle class reporter who is immediately coded as an outsider and unwanted interloper into the *benshengren* cultural space. After a disastrous accident, she is forced to work in the night market as a form of community service, where she learns that she too can become a vital part of this pluralistic society and that she is in fact a welcome and productive member of the community, echoing Shih Cheng-feng's statement that "the Taiwanese Nation refers to all people who love Taiwan, identify with Taiwan, and are willing to struggle for

Taiwan, regardless of race, ethnicity, or provincial background" (Shih in Lynch, 2004, p. 526). The night market is seen as a site where the diversity of the Taiwanese population can all come and participate in Taiwanese culture, *weishengren* and *benshengren* alike. In the night market, there are two local cooks, *Madam Fried Chicken* and *Madam Beef Steak* who are in constant battle for epicurean supremacy, peppering their language with Chinese, Taiwanese and Japanese idioms. Both are represented by a popular Taiwanese street snack and both consider their food to be representative of the best of Taiwan. There is a brief sequence that relates to contemporary China-Taiwan relations. A tour group of Chinese nationals visits the night market (Taiwan had only recently approved visas for Chinese tourism) to experience an authentic Taiwanese environment. The workers of the night market fawn all over the Chinese guests, falling over themselves and trying to impress and please the Chinese visitors, hoping for the Chinese to try the cuisine which they all consider to be the best that Taiwan has to offer and to empty the deep pockets of the Chinese tourists. Madam Beef Steak and Madam Fried Chicken in particular insist the Chinese customers try their product. The Chinese state 'You Taiwanese are so honest in your business practice' (a statement that the night market workers are happy to agree with, although they are aware they can at times stretch the limits of that 'honesty'). The Chinese customers are encouraged to try the peppered steak first, and they marvel approvingly over its deliciousness, stating 'it's unlike anything that can be found in China.' They are then encouraged to try Madam Chicken's fried Chicken which they duly taste, at which point the Chinese diners fall into a dreamy state while the sound track plays a nationalist song with the lyrics 'Taiwan's great, Taiwan's truly great! Taiwan's such a great island, blessed with the warm ocean breeze and the great ocean wave and the beauty of A-li Mountain."

The night market workers then load the Chinese up with armfuls of Taiwanese products to take with them on their return to the mainland. In this sequence, China becomes an invited guest that discovers the beauty and quality of Taiwanese cultural product and cultural distinctiveness ('There is nothing like this in China'), where even the Chinese visitors consider Taiwan a foreign nation. The film looks to a future in which China and Taiwan can interact with each other as two nations do, with the Chinese guests enjoying what Taiwan has to offer, but ultimately afterwards, going home. The Chinese guests are coded as foreign, unlike the Taiwanese locals, who are coded as pluralistic and diverse but united by their deep love of Taiwan in its totality. The film becomes part of a movement of Taiwan centric cultural identity politics, promoting and developing Taiwanese pluralism as a cogent and unified political entity once again encompassed by the umbrella of loving Taiwan.

Contemporary Taiwan is still in a period of status quo, being neither an autonomous political entity, nor a part of greater China. That liminal position must come to an end. Increasingly, Taiwanese cinema seems to be looking to put the *Republic of China* as a political entity, to the past, and focus on *Taiwan*-centric political and cultural identities. This new populist cinematic movement, borrowing the politics of *post nationalism* and its focus on localism, is in fact a *proto-nationalist* cinema, imagining for Taiwan a coherent independent cultural identity founded on the Democratic Progressive Party's emphasis on pluralism and localism, and in opposition to the previous Kuomintang era of enforced Sinicization, an ethos which continues to haunt the KMT to this day.

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"Gotta Catch 'Em All!" *Pokémon,* Cultural Practice and Object Networks

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Abstract

The *Pokémon* franchise is over seventeen years old, a networked assemblage of heterogeneous elements (manga, gaming, toys, anime) that is also constitutive of new knowledges around both consumerism and commodification. This paper explores how all of the elements of this franchise, from the brand, to the various media platforms, to the Pokémon trainers, to the pocket monsters themselves (the non-human objects) as well as the designers and the consumers (the humans) function as objects in the construction of a social network. In so doing it seeks to understand not only how the franchise functions but also how the objects in this franchise (particularly the non-human Pokémon creatures and trainers) work in tandem to connect audiences to very specifically Japanese ideas of the "national imagination" (folklore, spiritualism, the supernatural) and environmental concerns (biodiversity, the struggle between conservation and containment) through the larger consumerist framework of acquisition and play structured as cultural practice. In this way, it is argued, that the *Pokémon* object network functions as a gateway into Japanese culture more broadly and a channel through which Japanese culture is itself mainstreamed internationally.

Keywords: Japanese culture - *Pokémon* – franchise – networks – popular culture

> "I raised Pokémon, which is why I feel a particular bond with it"
> (Kubo Masakazu of Shogakukan Inc, responsible for turning the *Pokémon* Game Boy into manga and overseeing the *anime* television and movie versions, qtd Allison, 2006, p. 193)

Introduction

In the January 2005 issue of *Nature*, Pier Paolo Pandolfi of the Memorial Sloan-Ketterling Cancer Centre in New York referred to the POK erythroid myeloid ontogeniuc gene that causes cancer by the contraction "Pokémon" (Maeda 2005). The metaphor was fairly explicit - the "Pokémon" gene was thought to act as a switch for cancer, responsible for the proliferation of cancer through surrounding cells. Similarly in 2005, *Pokémon* seemed just as prolific. As Hatakeyama and Kubo note, in their five-hundred-page book on *Pokémon*, "in the sense of its international commonness and the spectacular speed as well as breadth of its worldwide circulation, we could say that the phenomenon of Pokémon is unprecedented in human history" (Hatakeyama & Kubo 2000, p. 8). Indeed, by March 31 2013, more than 172 Million units of the video game alone have been sold since its debut in 1996. The total number of licensed and merchandised pocket monsters (Nintendo's *Poketto Monsuta,* abbreviated to Pokémon, that give the franchise its name) appearing in cartoons, toys, comics and clothing have increased from 151 to over 700.

Naturally where *Pokémon* went many would follow, rivals and imitators who adapted the idea of a world where wild creatures exist to be collected, trained and battle with one another in different ways. Perhaps most importantly then, the incredible success of *Pokémon* in the West has acted as something of an "on-switch" for more *anime* products to be screened on American, British and Australian television, from *Sailor Moon*, *Gundam* and *Teknoman* to that cycle of *Pokémon*-imitators *Digimon, Monster Rancher, Duel Masters, Bakugan* and *Monsuno*, each with their own attendant licensing and merchandising campaigns.

Distressed by the flood of "*Pokémon* causes cancer" headlines that followed the release of *Nature*, Pokémon USA threatened legal action and the contraction was dropped, with the gene being referred to by the less-catchy zbtb7 in all subsequent materials (Dennison 2005). However, this idea of *Pokémon* as a living network, an on-switch, aggressively expanding and proliferating throughout the mediasphere, remains a potent one that I want to explore in this paper.

Anne Allison has previously suggested that "encased in the form of popular culture, [*Pokémon*] is a vehicle of and for the national imagination transmitted through a currency of superpowers and lovable characters" (Allison 2006, p. 194). This is because the franchise is built on the concept of *monozukuri* "literally 'thing-making'" but defined in more detail by Roland Kelts as "a primary emphasis on tiny details, a love of production for its own sake, and a constant drive to find innovative ways of crafting the product itself" (Kelts 2007, p. 89). These 'non-human' 'things' operate as some of the most important elements in the social network that *Pokémon* constructs. This is because both the development of and engagement with the franchise (through play, spectatorship or some other form of consumption) is necessarily informed by the idea of *sodateru* (child raising) referenced in the quote that heads this paper: "an ability to relate personally, almost spiritually, with a product/mass-produced

imaginary" (Allison 2006, p. 193). This 'personal, almost spiritual' relationship with a mass-produced imaginary is what constitutes *Pokémon's* social network, connecting both Pokémon's creators and its audience not only to the national *imagination* of Japan itself but also to the particular *concerns* of that nation, its relationship to the environment and its larger place in the world.

All of the elements of the *Pokémon* franchise then, from the brand, to the various media platforms, to the Pokémon trainers, to the pocket monsters themselves (the non-human objects) as well as the designers and the consumers (the humans) function as objects in the construction of this social network. Building on the arguments that *Pokémon* develops "multiliteracies" for democratic participation (Cope & Kalantzis 2000), or teaching through "*learning how to learn*" (original emphasis, Buckingham & Sefton-Green 2003, p. 395), I want to understand not only how the franchise functions but also how the objects in that franchise (particularly the "non-human" Pokémon creatures and trainers) work in tandem to plug audiences into the national concerns of Japan. I want to explore how this "vehicle" functions and I suggest that one of the ways in which the *Pokémon* franchise's "currency of superpowers and lovable characters" can be analysed is as an object network of "cultural practice" (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2003, p. 379).

Pokémon's networked assemblage

Pokémon is currently seventeen years old. On the eve of its tenth anniversary in 2006 *Pokémon, Inc.* had made $25 billon internationally "the annual GDP of Bulgaria" (Kelts 2007, p. 89). But even more important than the profits it generates is "the influence *Pokémon* exerted in the domain of cultural production", for as was noted in Japan itself, the success of *Pokémon* was an indication that Japan was on "the road to becoming a character empire" (Kyarakuta okoku no michi qtd Kelts 2007, p. 89). *Pokémon* co-constructs and affects the creation of new social-technological configurations where the franchise itself is an assemblage of heterogeneous elements (manga, gaming, toys, anime) *as well as* constitutive of new knowledges around consumerism and commodification.

In this way, *Pokémon* functions not just as cross-media merchandising or 'integrated marketing' ("Pokémania" 1999, Kinder 1991, Sieter 1993) but rather as a truly immersive multimedia franchise, an exemplar of what Henry Jenkins terms "transmedia storytelling" running across computer games, anime, manga, toys and trading cards. By way of example, the first *Pokémon* television series sets up the events of the first *Pokémon* movie and the second *Pokémon* movie introduces new elements that are featured in subsequent seasons of the TV series (*Pokémon GS*) and the Game Boy releases *Pokémon Gold and Silver* (Patten 338). *Pokémon* therefore develops as a fully functioning multiplatform ecosystem, developing complexity through the addition of new layers of narrative, new challenges in gaming and new merchandising opportunities. The network grows as a child would grow, plugging the audience into an increasingly larger and more complex networked assemblage of artefacts.

As Kelts goes on to say, it is important to note that "the ideas, the beauty, the concepts, and the messages are somehow secondary to the finished product" (Kelts 2007, p. 89); anime and manga may be the "core products" when we think of

Japanese popular culture but they are "not necessarily the most lucrative ones, and certainly not the most successful when it comes to getting a global audience addicted" (Kelts 2007, p. 89). For *Pokémon*, it is these non-human objects - the character goods licensed through toys, cards and computer games that are the most "lucrative" and "successful" texts; the anime just fills in the textual details (the names, relationships and motivations of characters, similar to the function of *Masters of the Universe* and other toy-generated cartoons of the 1980s). Takazou Morishita, the head of Toei Animation's international division, confirmed the importance of these character goods when he noted that it was "the merchandising links between *Yu-Gi-Oh* and *Pokémon* [that] took it to the mainstream" (Kelts 2007, p. 101). This is what the theorist John Law might term the "relational materiality" of the franchise (Law 1992) or the socializing nature of things in practice (Van der Duim 2007) – things that require "doing" on the part of the audience. This is because the Pokémon are *active* things, things that encourage some sort of investment on the part of the audience, not just time or money, but activities around collecting, battling, evolving and learning aspects of the Pokémon and their world.

Kelts reads the model as working this way: "The anime was the market research, and that was what Nintendo, Bandai, and the others learned in Japan. The viewing figures and the toy sales are part of the same analysis. The characters that work will return for future episodes; the failures do not, making way for new species" (Kelts 2007, p. 97). This is natural selection in the *Pokémon* world those objects which function well in plugging audiences into the network survive. Those that do not are discarded. However, it is the internet that remains the key point of convergence here "enabling new generations of American fans to graduate from TV series and collectible cards to hardcore anime otakudom" (Kelts 2007, p. 179) or as author Patrick Macias puts it "a generation of kids… went from *Pokémon* to *Gundam Wing hentai* in a single mouse click" (qtd Kelts 2007, p.179)[i]. *Pokémon* therefore operates as both a gateway into Japanese culture and "a play that goes beyond the world of the game itself" (Allison 2003, p. 199). For Buckingham and Sefton-Green this means that Pokémon is

> "not merely a set of objects that can be isolated for critical analysis, in the characteristic mode of academic media studies. It might more appropriately be described, in anthropological terms, as a "cultural practice." Pokemon is something you *do,* not just something you read or watch or "consume". Yet while that "doing" clearly requires active participation on the part of the "doers", the terms on which it is performed are predominantly dictated by forces or structures beyond their control…. By the work of their [card and game] designers – and, indeed, by the operations of the market, which made these commodities available in particular ways in the first place" (379).

Pokémon is therefore a "discursively charged space" (Allison 2006, p. 206), drawing on the Foucaultian definition of discourse as "the cartography by which the world is mapped by values, relationships and power(s)" (Allison 2006, p. 206). This discourse is not only articulated through the guidebooks and texts Nintendo and its affiliated companies produce, but also through the interactive and communicative spaces Satoshi Tajiri built into his creation, the playground discussions and Game Boy exchanges, the taxonomies Foster (2008) refers to (see below) and the websites devoted to Pokémon discussion and explanation. We can therefore liken the franchise to what Pickering (1995) might refer to as "material performativity" in which things

"act" or "do" - in that they encourage action on the part of the consumer (through play, trade, knowledge) - but also in their gateway function, encouraging consumers to interact and engage with other elements of Japanese popular culture too. Just as the character goods (the Pokémon) function as objects networking *Pokémon* to the mainstream so too do they network audiences into Japanese culture more broadly, networking that into the mainstream as well.

The *Pokémon* Trainers

The most prominent and familiar aspects of *Pokémon* franchise's narrative come from the anime, revolving around a ten-year-old boy, Ash Ketchum (loosely modelled on Red from the games). His first name, Ash reflects an ongoing interest in nature (replicated in the names of the Pokémon professors, Samuel Oak, Felina Ivy, Elm and Birch) whereas in Japan he is called Satoshi, named after *Pokémon* own creator, Satoshi Tajiri. In the English dub his surname, Ketcham, has the franchise's first slogan, "catch 'em" built into it. He is intended to be a surrogate figure for the *Pokémon* consumer, largely absent of much in the way of motivation or development. But Allison also sees Ash as a somewhat more allegorical figure for Japan in the new millennium "one whose goals, more ambitious now, have moved from the domestic… to the global (becoming the "world's greatest Pokémon trainer")" (Allison 2006, p. 96).

Ash is accompanied by his friends (11 year old) Misty (Kasumi in Japan, later replaced by May and then Dawn[ii]) and (15 year old) Brody (Takeshi in Japan), together with Ash's primary Pokémon (and mascot of the franchise), the 'electric mouse' (Patten 2004, p. 337) Pikachu, who stores electricity in its cheeks and releases it when attacking. As Kelts explains this is an "onomatopoeic term… *Pika* is a sudden extremely bright light, such as lightning, and *don* is a thunderous blast, like fireworks exploding, or something very heavy falling to the floor" (Kelts 2007, p. 39). Interestingly, the Japanese word for the bomb that devastated Hiroshima (what the Americans referred to as Little Boy) was *pika-don.* It is the same *pika* that forms the prefix of Pikachu, referring to his ability to fire lightning bolts from his tail and the basis of his language "pikapika". The *chu* is "Japanese onomatopoeia for the sound of a mouse" (Kelts 2007, p. 39).

Opposing Ash and his friends are the largely camp and ineffectual Team Rocket – James, Jesse and their Pokémon Meowth – whose criminal mastermind boss Giovanni (like the *James Bond* villain Blofeld) remains largely off-screen and unseen, stroking his large feline Pokémon, Persian. All children in this world compete to capture and tame wild Pokémon in Poké balls; the Pokémon is then under the control of their masters to wage non-lethal battles against other Pokémon in what Allison terms a "bond" that "is a mixture of service and friendship" (Allison 2006, p. 195). It is this bond that is perhaps most instructive for Patten claims that "Ash set[s] out at first to grab these Pokémon for fame and glory, but through his developing friendship with Pikachu he gradually comes to recognise the animals as living creatures rather than mere possessions" (Patten 2004, p. 337). This is the major form of character development Ash demonstrates, a deepening appreciation of the Pokémon and the world he is a part of, leading to him being christened "the one who will bring balance" (in the third *Pokémon* film) and linked to the mythical Pokémon hero Aaron (it is claimed he has the same aura or "soul" in the eighth *Pokémon* film).

Allison notes that the "organising trope" for this narrative is "travel… the junior Pokémon trainers are constantly in motion" (Allison 2006, p. 196); *Pokémon* sutures the pleasures of travel to indoor entertainments, the virtual "play spaces" Henry Jenkins (1998) describes of computer games and watching television. Similarly, the story engine that promotes this travel is one that is shared by both the consumers and the central characters, the desire to acquire; while other Western franchises have thrived by building a desire to acquire into their fan bases (most prominently, *Star Wars*), *Pokémon* was one of the first franchises to make acquisition a central part of its narrative; those who acquire a full set of Pokémon (see below) also acquire the title of Master Pokémon Trainer.

In Japan, this is is the concept of *getto suru* ("getting"), becoming "gotta catch 'em all" in the US translation (Allison 2006, p. 197), informed by a strong ideology of capitalism – where Pokémon are "both thingified (valued economically) and personalised (cute monsters inspiring affection, attachment and love" (Allison 2006, p.197). This is what Allison calls "(only half facetiously) *Pokémon* capitalism… in which commodities double as gifts and companions" (Allison 2006, p. 197). It is even easier to think of these creatures as objects given the fact that they lack both gender (almost all Pokémon are simply referred to as "it") and speech (almost all Pokémon simply repeat aspects of their name, understandable to other Pokémon but only rarely to humans; Team Rocket mascot Meowth is a notable exception here, having sacrificed a fighting ability to learn how to speak). To drive the acquisition analogy home, Pokémon are "got" in a spherical Pokéball modelled after the Japanese gashopon balls that can be bought in machines, usually containing some small toy or mass produced "collectible"; indeed, as the *Pokémon* film *Arceus and the Jewel of Life* makes clear, the invention of the Pokéball is what makes these creatures "pocket" monsters. Before the Pokéball they were regarded as "magical" or "mystical" rather than natural.

Roland Kelts views Pokémon as being a central element in what he refers to as "a third wave of Japanophilia – outsiders' infatuation with Japan's cultural character" (Kelts 2007, p. 5)[iii]. This infatuation centres around what he terms "the eccentricities, spastic zaniness, and libertarian fearlessness of Japan's creators of popular culture – and of the mind boggling acquisitive Japanese consumers of that culture" (Kelts 2007, p. 6). Pikachu and his brethren therefore become iconic totems of Japanese culture just as sumo, sushi, *bushido* samurai and *ikebana* have been before them – emblematic of both the design aesthetics and consumptive practices that inform this third wave. Thus the materiality of the Pokémon (in cards and toys), their design and the design of the DVD collections, the films and manga series, all stimulate and order fan mnemonics of and in Japan. It is the *object* (the pocket monster, the trading card, the plush toy) that thereby becomes the nexus of fan sensibilities, needs and desires, the most important part of a network of goods and services.

The Kawaii Aesthetic of *Pokémon*

Pokémon: The First Movie (dir. Kunihiko Yuyama and Michael Haigney) was released in Japan in the summer of 1997, coinciding with the commencement of coverage of *Pokémon* in the west with a series of articles entitled "Pokémon sends children to the hospital." These related to the airing of the "Computer Soldier Porygon" *Pocket Monsters* episode in Japan on December 16, featuring a flash/strobe

lighting effect that caused some 700 children to have seizures (and later parodied by both *The Simpsons* and *South Park*). As Fred Patten (2004) notes, the response in America was largely dismissive of anime; Cartoon Network's vice president of programming Mike Lazzo reassured the American public that their children were safe as anime was not shown in America:

> "CBS, ABC, NBC, Fox, UPN and WB don't air… 'anime'. Nor do the major cable outlets for cartoon: Nickelodeon, The Cartoon Network and the Disney channel… Japanese animation is so different from what airs here. It's far edgier, adult and violent. Anime isn't very story-based and is driven by intense movements. The story is hard to follow" (qtd Patten 2004, p. 109)[iv].

Despite this, the only Westernization *Pokémon* underwent was being translated into English in time for its simultaneous launch in America in September 1998 as a Game Boy video game and a weekday syndicated series (debuting September 8, 1998). According to Ishihara this was despite market research conducted in the U.S prior to the games' release that found:

> "the characters were too childish to catch the fancy of Americans. However, we decided to introduce Japanese-designed characters without any modifications, which in fact captivated American children. This   means that we cultivated demand that had gone unnoticed until then. *Pokémon* had the power to change the market" (qtd Kelts 2007; 93).

And it did. As Patten notes: "As soon as the entertainment industry noted the mega-popularity of *Pokémon* and all its licensed merchandise, the criticism abruptly stopped. The same TV networks and cable channels that "don't air… 'anime'" hastened to sign up the American rights to *Pokémon* and such imitators as *Digimon* and *Monster Rancher*" (Patten 2004, p. 108). The moral panic around *Pokémon* – and anime as a whole – was replaced by a desire to become part of its success and the first indication of this was the series' move from syndication to the Kids' WB! Network six months later. *Pokémon* home videos started appearing in the US in 1998 and *Pokémon: The First Movie* (released in the West in 1999) "set new records for a November theatrical release, earning over $50 million in its first five days" (Patten, 2004: 336).

Given these figures, it is clear why Sanchez credits "*Pokémon's* rocket-like propulsion to the top of the mainstream culture… [as helping] lay the groundwork for the promotion of the anime medium, and has shown the possibility of its future integration into the culture" (Sanchez 2013). Kelts similarly credits the Pokémon franchise with "delivering" Japan to the U.S. market. He identifies three ways in which this happens: familiarization with Japanese anime aesthetics and themes[v]; the gradual introduction of new characters week by week (somewhat debateable given the similar strategies used in toy-based cartoons like *Masters of the Universe, GI Joe* and *Transformers* in the 1980s) and the idea of the "undying saga… both optimistic and pessimistic" - the sense that there will always be another monster, another master, another enemy to defeat (Kelts 2007, pp. 90-91).

It is the first of these that is perhaps the most important, this idea that *Pokémon* not only serves as a gateway activity into Japanese popular culture (a network that taps

into a greater cultural imaginary and set of related concerns, as noted above) but that it actually overturned preconceptions around anime to make it a more palatable, mainstream experience (a network that taps into the mainstream itself). It does this through its two story engines: the idea of collecting (which is a central part of its narrative, enacted by the trainers) and (as Kelts notes) the ongoing introduction of new species of intricately designed Pokémon, that draw on design elements from mythology (dragons), nature (horses, dogs), science (magnets), animation (ghosts) and occasionally witty one-liners; by way of example, Psyduck is a duck who rather than being psychic (as his name implies) simply has the ability to appear and sigh melodramatically.

In some respects, Pokémon are monsters in the yokai tradition (Japanese folkloric monsters and supernatural beings but more often used to describe any supernatural or unaccountable phenomena). This is true of animal creatures like Vulpix and Meowth, who resemble the *henge* (shapeshifters) of folklore like Kitsune (foxes) or Bakeneko (cats). But it is perhaps best exemplified by the class of Legendary Pokémon that have vast spiritual or supernatural power (such as Lugia, Mew and Celebi) introduced in each of the *Pokémon* feature films. Allison notes that *Pokémon* is therefore a "borrowing and reinvention of a Japanese cultural past (gift exchange, supernatural spirits, otherworldly aestheticism)" (Allison 197). Michael Dylan Foster (2008) similarly links *Pokémon* to the yokai tradition, not just in terms of individual characters, but in the way success is based on knowledge about these creatures:
"handbooks and catalogs list, illustrate, organise, and describe these creatures in classic hakubutsugaku-style: "Pokémon of the prairies", "Pokémon of the mountains", "Pokémon of the forests", and the like" endowing the Pokémon world with its own history and even an academic discipline reminiscent of yokaigaku, appropriately called "Pokémon-gaku", or Pokémon-ology." (Foster 2008, p. 214)

This taxonomy is even built into the franchise in the form of the Pokédex, an electronic device listing Pokémon 's statistics[vi]. For Foster, Pokémon becomes a collusion of ludic and encyclopaedic modes fostering a desire towards a kind of Linnaean taxonomy[vii] of categories, powers and abilities:

> "through which the denizens of an otherworld are named, located, defined, described, and made to come alive… By applying real-world signifying practices to things as elusive as yokai, we create an authentic, authorised systems in which they can reside: a doppelganger universe, fully rendered and complete but somehow separate from our own" (214).

This cultural practice of *Pokémon* therefore encourages its audience to think in terms of world-building, filling in the gaps, nurturing the universe, creating canons that link the various platforms of *Pokémon* together. But more importantly it connects its audience to the larger cultural imaginings and concerns of Japan, drawing them into larger frameworks of folklore and supernaturalism. Like Buckingham & Sefton-Green (2003, p. 388) and Allison (2006, p. 207), Foster argues that *Pokémon* is as much about collecting knowledge as it is collecting species – classification strategies, transferring knowledge between media platforms and discussing the details of this world (Buckingham & Sefton-Green 2003, p. 388-389), "directed to a fantasy world premised far more now on the invisible and unseen – what must be learned and charted through data" (Allison 2006, p. 207). Such knowledge is always contingent

upon objects, the Pokémon themselves; it is a series of embodied knowledges, embodied by creatures like Jigglypuff, Charmander, Mew and Pikachu, hybridised creatures that similarly inhabit a hybridised world of Japanese mythology, pure imagination and occasional real-world locations (as the Pokémon territories in each new expansion are based on a variety of locations in the real world)[viii].

Taking Pikachu as his case study, Kelts notes that the yellow Pokémon is unlike any Disney icon[ix] because he is not a conventional animal (be that mouse, duck or dog). Rather, he is "an animated representation of precisely nothing we know in our physical world" (Kelts 2007, p. 17) – the very definition of yokai -"unnatural", "out of the ordinary" (Foster 2008) and *igyo no mono* ("nonnormal things"). The closest equivalent, Kelts notes, would be the "animated inscrutability" of the Belgian-born *Smurfs* by Peyo (Kelts 2007, p. 17). But the major different between Pikachu and the *Smurfs* is that Pikachu is "but one of 395 [now over 700] different species, all of them fictional. Loosed from the gravity of realism, or even a finite fictional world, *Pokémon's* producers have been able to create what is now known as the multibillion dollar *Pokémon* media franchise" (Kelts 2007, p. 17). This is in part true, but the Pokémon do retain recognisable elements of mice, deer and even other cartoons to inform their design, making them at once familiar yet strange. *Pokémon* may therefore be better thought as an abstraction of the real world through which we can rethink the world and the organisms that inhabit it; as a seven-year-old-girl from the United States interviewed by Allison puts it: "the creators took ideas from nature, but they turned nature around. People care a lot for their Pokémon, but they also use them to fight other Pokémon" (Allison 2006, p. 205).

These asymmetries in both the design of the Pokémon and their world (strange but familiar, natural but unnatural, cute but violent) are part of their diegetic design (on the individual object level) but also part of the extradiegetic operation of the franchise (the network as a whole). Investment in the world of *Pokémon* requires significant amounts of money (for the games, the cards the toys). Similarly *Pokémon* operates as a global franchise, but remains informed by a very Japanese sensibility. It therefore operates as a network between the very Japanese imaginary and the consumerist mainstream.

For example, the continuous expansion of the world and its Pokémon is a fundamental part of the *Pokémon* model. As Tsunekazu Ishihara, president of Pokémon Co, describes it (to *Nikkei Shimbun* in April 2006) "the basic concept of *Pokémon* games has remain unchanged since the first release in 1996. But we have always strived to add new characters and upgrade games so that *Pokémon* fans will never feel they are approaching an end. That is the reason for the prolonged popularity" (qtd Kelts 2007, p. 17). Through this endless introduction of new locations, new species and new challenges, *Pokémon* offers what Buckingham and Sefton-Green term "a kind of economy of scale: the more there is, the more unavoidable it becomes, and so the more one seems obliged or compelled to pursue it" (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, p. 385). *Pokémon* therefore remains asymmetrical in its expansion.

More importantly, the "hyperbolically cute" (Hertz 1999) Pokémon rewrites some of the elements of yokai culture as kawaii culture, the "loveable", "adorable" or "cute" culture that has become a recurrent feature of Japanese popular culture since the 1970s[x]. Kawaii culture began as an underground literary trend in youth culture,

incorporating *burikko ji* (fake child writing) and *koneko ji* (kitten writing) that was then commodified by Sanrio, most notably in *Hello Kitty* (Kinsella 1995), and proliferated so that each Japanese prefecture and company today now has its own *yuru-kyara* ("funny mascots"), that "take part in cuteness competitions observed by expert judges" (Windolf 2009, pp. 124-125).

Ethnologist Konrad Lorenz suggested back in the 1940s that "infantile characteristics – big head, big eyes, the very round face – stimulate caretaking behaviour" (Windolf 2009, p.119). But *kawaii* here refers not just to design aesthetics (like a large head, stunted appendages, large eyes, small or no mouth, no nose and a disproportionately small body, see Allison 2003 or Kinsella 1995) but also to emotional qualities of *amae* (sweetness) and *yasashii* (gentleness). These are aesthetics and qualities that recur in most (if not all) Pokémon – and ones we can certainly identify in characters like Pikachu and Jigglypuff or Celebi and Shaymin. As Okada Tsueno notes, cuteness therefore registers for all people (Allison 2003); it becomes an important way of making Pokémon palatable as objects in these networks, both in terms of their economics and the ideas they present in part because they evoke a nostalgia for a more childlike and simple way of being. Cuteness therefore simultaneously becomes "something one both buys to consume and also cultivates in and as part of the self" (Allison 2003, p. 385); in this way cuteness is "not only a commodity but also equated with consumption itself" (Allison 2003, p. 387) reinforced by the possessive consumption of Pokémon's narrative – that first narrative story engine - "gotta catch 'em all".

As being cute also equates to puerility, an exhibition of kawaii culture is also an exhibition of a "yearning to be comforted and soothed" (Allison 2003: 387). This makes kawaii impliedly redemptive. By way of example, evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould noted the metamorphisis of Mickey Mouse in a 1979 *Natural History* article from "cackling rodent... to the high-voiced, plump-headed figure of the 1950s... as the Walt Disney Company grew more powerful and profitable, its public face grew cuter" (qtd Windolf 2009, p. 119). Cute culture can therefore serve as a kind of apologia for success. But more fundamentally Jim Windolf suggests that "social misery and cuteness are linked... A cuteness craze got started [in Japan]... in the defeated nation's bleak postwar culture of the 1940s and 1950s" (Windolf 2009, p. 122). Quoting Roland Kelts, Windolf goes on to argue that:

> "one theory, which has been proposed by a lot of Japanese artists and academics, is that, after the humiliation and emasculation of Japan in the postwar years, Japan developed this quasi-queer position of 'little brother' or 'little boy'. If you become 'little brother' or 'little boy', the only way you can get big brother's or fat man's attention is by being so cute or puppy-like that he has to take care of you... [a desire to] show the face of dependency" (Windolf 2009, p. 124).

To make the point clearer, Windolf points to the way America came up "with cute products and images to express its own sense of need in the wake of the hard times and lousy decisions of the go-it-alone Bush administration" (Windolf 2009, p. 124). I have previously suggested that in the present context, the *kawaii* aspects of *Pokemon* can be read as an apology for the environmental injustices and oversights in relation to biodiversity that have occurred in the past (Bainbridge 2013), where the cute face

of Jigglypuff can be read as indicative of a larger strategy behind *Pokémon*, to talk through often quite complex issues of environmentalism, biodiversity and control.

In a sense then, the yokai-like taxonomy of *Pokémon* identified by Foster is also an adaptation of E.O. Wilson's *Biophilia* hypothesis that "humans have an innate desire to catalog, understand, and spend time with other life-forms. This in turn provides a powerful aesthetic argument for combating the present extinction crisis" (Balmford 2002, p. 2367). Just as the narrative of *Pokemon* interrogates the balance between development and conservation (the very essence of sustainable development) so too does the *Pokemon* model articulate the very concerns to which Andrew Balmford refers, the notion that "as industrialization and urbanization reduce our direct interactions with nature, our interest in the variety of living things is perhaps becoming redirected towards human artifacts, with potentially grave consequences for biodiversity conservation" (Balmford 2002, p. 2367).

Patten suggests that in this way "*Pokémon* uses the mania to be 'in' with the latest electronic games to steer children towards a deeper relationship with animals and nature, as well as an appreciation for the responsibility of caring for pets and the importance of ecological awareness" (Patten 2004, p. 337). Here again, the network taps into the mainstream ("to be 'in'") while maintaining a connection to Japanese imaginings and concerns. Given the enormous investment that fans place in the franchise - economically, temporally and emotionally and more generally the "activity" (outlined above) that accompanies *Pokémon* consumption and engagement (Buckingham & Sefton-Green 2003, pp. 396-7) it is possible to view the users of *Pokémon* as, in Henry Jenkins' terms, a "learning community" (Jenkins 1992). *Pokémon* therefore becomes a way of theorising to children about environmental concerns through a multiplatform media franchise. More importantly, as this is a networked assemblage, the *Pokémon* franchise creates in them an embodied practice, for *Pokémon* offers a:

> "systematising of nature [that] carries this image of accumulation to a totalized extreme and at the same time models the extractive, transformative nature of industrial capitalism and ordering mechanisms that were beginning to shape urban mass society" (Pratt 1992, p. 36).

I would therefore argue that an important aspect of this *Pokémon* network is that it uses its media power to provide a virtual model for the environment that systematically celebrates, critiques and comments upon environmentalism, biodiversity, materialism and consumer culture (Bainbridge 2013).

Conclusion

The importance of the cultural imaginary was something that Oscar Wilde recognised over a century earlier when he stated that: "The whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country, there are no such people" and supported by Roland Kelts when he used Wilde's epigraph to open his book on *Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture has invaded the U.S.* in 2007 (Kelts 2007, p. vii). Most significantly popular representation was recognised by the Japanese government itself a year before, when Japan's foreign minister Taro Aso unveiled his government's new campaign to actively promote their pop culture abroad through Japan's global

embassies (Kelts 2007, p. 113), finally embracing Japan's "Gross National Cool", first suggested by American journalist Douglas McGray in his influential 2002 *Foreign Affairs* article.

In this way, Japan has turned away from manufacturing trades to cultural products – and because these products *are* cultural products they function not only as "soft power" (as Joseph S. Nye would suggest) but also as networks; for millions of children the world over, the world of *Pokémon* is Japan-as-metaphor, simultaneously as real and unreal as Oscar Wilde first suggested. As Allison describes it, "identity has become shifting and mobile in/for Japan, tied less to the geographic boundaries of place (and the customs and bloodlines attached to it) than to the production and circulation of virtual landscapes" (Allison 2006, p. 196). *Pokémon* therefore serves as the ultimate symbol of "Japan-as-metaphor" for "folded into a tale about imaginary beings… is an ideological one about Japan's place in the world, tallied on the basis of a science devoted to playthings: a commentary on Japan's rise to global prominence as producer of ("evolved") kids' goods" (Allison 2006, p. 208). Even more specifically, just as Linnaeus' *System of Nature* (1735) provided a taxonomic grid through which "Europeans could apprehend more of the planet as a whole" (Allison 2006, p. 212), what Pratt termed a "planetary consciousness" (1992, pp. 15-37) in its reflection on the environment, both textually and in the taxonomic model that it offers, *Pokémon* similarly provides its networked audience with a set of discursive tools to both reflect on and challenge prevailing notions of the environment, biodiversity, materialism and consumption (Bainbridge 2013).

Understanding the franchise as an object network of cultural practice enables analysis of the textual nuances of *Pokémon* and the way it uses its media power to articulate competing ideas of consumerism, nature, the popular imaginary and the national concerns of Japan. Crucially my goal here was to map the functioning of the multiplatform *Pokémon* franchise through textual analysis of several elements: to provide an affective and performative resonance of its constituent parts and the way they function as vehicles of cultural expression, interaction and media power. If a modern understanding of such media franchises assumes a well-defined distinction between individuals and institutions and their concomitant degrees of agency, the somewhat pre-modern approach of network theory allows recognition and critique of the hybridized objects that are becoming increasingly characteristic of popular media cultures in contemporary society.

As "a vehicle of and for the national imagination transmitted through a currency of superpowers and lovable characters" (Allison 2006 194), the *Pokémon* franchise operates as a complex network of objects - "lovable characters" - connecting very specifically Japanese ideas of the "national imagination" (folklore, spiritualism, the supernatural) and environmental concerns (biodiversity, the struggle between conservation and containment) to the mainstream through a larger consumerist framework of acquisition and play structured as cultural practice. In this way the *Pokémon* object network functions as a gateway into Japanese culture more broadly and a channel through which Japanese culture is itself mainstreamed internationally.

Endnotes

[i] As Kelts notes, this can also become a problem. See Kelts 2007, pp. 106-108.

[ii] Misty subsequently appeared in the spin-off anime series *Pokemon Chronicles* on Japan's "Pokémon Sunday". Dawn was based on the female protagonist of the *Pokémon Diamond, Pearl* and *Platinum* games.

[iii] Kelts suggests "[t]he first wave occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when European artists discovered a uniquely Japanese aesthetic, and the second in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when beatnik writers and poets were drawn to Japan's acetic spiritual traditions" (Kelts 2007, p. 5).

[iv] The original article quoting Lazzo appeared in *USA Today* December 19, 1997, p D1.

[v] Kelts provides a detailed list of these aesthetics and themes, some of which again seem debateable given the prevalence and popularity of anime earlier, like *Speed Racer*, *Kimba* and *Astroboy* but the list includes "the hairstyles, the big eyes, the stop frames, the complete visual transformation of facial expressions during emotional and dramatic peaks, and the attentiveness to minute details… the acceptability of the illogical and the ambiguous, the hero's sense of duty above all else, the concepts of child as hero and of unending quest, the undependability of a happy ending, and the fact that no individual episode ever satisfactorily ties up the various and addictive narrative threads" (Kelts 2007, pp. 90-91).

[vi] In the games, players add Pokémon to their Pokédex when they are caught. In the manga and anime the Pokédex is a form of exposition describing Pokémon statistics before they are caught.

[vii] From Linnaeus's *System of Nature* (1735).

[viii] Bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net notes that since *Pokémon Heroes* (the fifth film, released in the US in 2003) animators for the films have based them on a real-world location outside Japan.

[ix] With the possible exception of the alien Stitch, from *Lilo and Stitch*, himself so popular in Japan he has a Japanese-specific female equivalent. Interestingly, another popular Disney character in Japan is the white kitten Marie from *The Aristocrats*, one assumes, because of her stylistic similarity to *Hello Kitty*.

[x] For more on this idea see Nakazawa Shin'ichi whose book *Poketto no naka no yasei* (Wildness in the Pocket, 1997) is cited by Allison as suggesting "pocket monsters anchor this space as entities that hover between the known and unknown, visible and invisible, real and fantastic… these beings exceed phenomenal existence and fill in, imaginatively for its lapses and lacks (Allison 223; Nakazawa 1997:90)

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Asian Identity: Regional Integration and Collective Memory of the Pacific War in Contemporary Japanese Society

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Abstract

Ever since late 1980s possibility of strengthening intraregional integration and establishing common Asian identity have become one the reoccurring themes discussed in the region. Japan, due to its un-preceded economic success and its strong ties with Western countries, seemed like a natural leader. However, rise of China and slow decline of Japan's power have made relations in the region much more difficult. Japan is no longer widely considered a regional leader, and its cooperation with China has recently become strained. It seems impossible to imagine further Asian integration without participation of both China and Japan. There are of course numerous factors which influence international relations between those two countries and Japan's position in the region. However, in this paper I would like to explain how collective memory of the Pacific War in contemporary Japanese society, combined with Japan's deeply rooted conviction of being a natural leader in Asia, creates tension in the region, which is affecting any possibility of further regional integration.

European Union is often brought up as a model of successful cultural and economic integration, which led to creating common cultural identity in spite of region's tragic past experiences. Despite the numerous regional and trans-regional economic forums such as APEC, ASEAN or ASEM, situation in Asia seems to be much more complicated. What seems to be particularly important is the memory of the Pacific War in contemporary Japanese society, which manifests itself by Yasukuni controversy, Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute, and discussion regarding history textbooks, among others. However, it seems that these controversies are mere manifestations of much wider phenomena, which I believe can be traced back to initial years after the end of the war. Japanese perception of its past, combined with its deeply rooted conviction of being a natural leader in Asia, creates a tension in the entire region, particularly in international relations with China and Korea. Overcoming it through cooperation and discussion with regional partners might make future integration possible. However, how to achieve such reconciliation is a question that still remains unanswered.

Keywords: Collective memory, collective identity, the Pacific War, nationalism, contemporary Japan, international relations.

Despite the most recent difficulties in international relations between Japan and China, the concept of strengthening Asian integration based on "Asian identity" and "Asian values" is a reoccurring theme when discussing the future of the Far East. Japan initially seemed to be a natural leader in the region, partially due to unprecedented economic success and partially due to strong ties with leading global powers such as the United States. It was Japan who along with Australia initialized the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, and has since been a crucial member. However, the rise of China and slow decline of Japanese power have strained relations in the region. Japan is no longer considered a natural leader, and its cooperation with China has become increasingly difficult in recent times. Although it seems that the dream of "Asian integration" is still alive, it has recently started to fade. It is impossible to imagine further regional cooperation without the participation of both China and Japan. There are of course numerous factors which influence international relations between the two countries and Japan's position in the region. In this paper I would like to focus on one often neglected factor which I believe is of particular interest. I would like to analyse how collective memory of the Pacific War in contemporary Japanese society, combined with its deeply rooted conviction of being a natural leader in Asia, creates tension in the region. This is strongly affecting any possibility of not only further economic and cultural regional integration, but also of any cooperation which might lead to establishment of a common "Asian identity", based on a shared set of "Asian values".

When discussing regional integration based on common values and economic cooperation it is impossible to abstain from mentioning the European Union. Despite the fact that numerous scholars believe that European style institutionalization is necessary in order to achieve legitimate integration (Breslin, Higgot, Rosamond, 2002, p. 13), I believe that drawing any direct comparisons would mean adopting a Eurocentric viewpoint, which should be avoided. There is no reason to assume that any further Asian integration would follow European style institutionalization. As Peter Katzenstein notes: "Theories based on Western, and especially West European experiences, have been of little use in making sense of Asian regionalism" (1997, pp.3-5). Despite this, the European Union is still the best example of successful economic and political integration, and is often brought up as an example even by Asian scholars. Naturally, it is not my intention to dwell upon the history of European integration. However, I believe that it is particularly important to mention one fact. It could be said that the European Union (or more precisely the European Coal and Steel Community as it was initially called, later renamed the European Economic Community before adopting its current name) was a child of its times. In many ways, it was the horrors of World War II which initialized integration. One of the crucial aims of the European Coal and Steel Community was to avoid the risk of any future conflicts at the core of Europe, particularly between France and Germany. Jean Monnet and Robert Shuman suggested initiating integration with two basic industries of coal and steel. They believed that if the mines and steel factories of both France and Germany were under international control, it would become impossible for those two countries to go to war with each other. Apart from France and Germany, the European Coal and Steel Community also initially included Belgium, Luxemburg, Italy and the Netherlands (Thody, 1997, pp. 1-4; Salmon, Nicoll, 1997, pp. 41-47). It is worth noting that right from its humble beginnings the European Union was not limiting itself only to economic integration, but also had a very clear political agenda. Furthermore, common culture and shared history played an important role in

facilitating institution-building processes which in turn have promoted cooperation and peace in the region (Friedberg, 1993-1994, p. 13).

When discussing any possible further integration in the East, it is important to mention already existing frameworks, which have already, at least partially, contributed to regional cooperation, but which also signify problems making such cooperation difficult. Japan's economic success was unprecedented in the modern history of the Far East. Japan was the first industrialized economy in Asia and its direct investments in the region had been expanding since the late 1960s. Therefore it was natural that Japan became a leader in promoting trade liberalisation and it had taken a very active role in promoting new Asian economic cooperation (Sang Ho, Wong, 2011, p. 157). As a result, Japan along with Australia initiated APEC, which at first included 12 other states. Due to political turmoil APEC initially excluded China, but since joining in 1991 became a crucial partner for all countries involved (Klintworth, 1995, pp. 488-490). That being said, even at that time Japan seemed to be divided between Asian identity and "western aspirations". At first it seemed that Japan would become a mediator between Eastern and Western members of APEC. This however, turned out to be problematic. Despite being one of the founding members of APEC, and a strong advocate of steady economic cooperation in the region, Japan's position has been challenged by what could be referred to as "legitimacy deficit", which is not only firmly connected with cultural differences in the region, but also with its troubled historical past. Moreover, Japan's strong ties with western powers, particularly with the United States have been sometimes understood as proof of lack of its dedication to Asian affairs (Klintworth, 1995, pp. 494-499).

Nevertheless, Japan's possible role as a leader in the region became visible again during ASEM meetings. ASEM was created as a forum to encourage trade relations with Europe, and it offered a further means through which information between Asian and European Union countries could be exchanged and discussed on a regular basis. Japan was initially reluctant to participate, partially due to prominence of ASEAN countries, which were responsible for creating this initiative (Gilson, 1999, p. 737; Gaens, 2008, p. 1). However, more significant for the Japanese government was the fact that the United States was quite obviously excluded from this new forum. Only after the Japanese government was persuaded by US to participate did it begin to play a more active role. ASEM has been described by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an opportunity for Japan to get to know its neighbours better. Due to its international position and economic success Japan became a natural leader in ASEM structures. During the Asian crisis, perception of Japan in the region changed due to its role in ASEM. Asian countries started to perceive Japan again as a natural leader who should take a greater political and economic lead, and were supportive of an increased role for Tokyo in the region. According to Julie Gilson, ASEM cooperation helped Asian states to realize that they have numerous common interests, and that strengthening cooperation in the region might lead to creating a common identity as well (Gilson, 1999, pp. 741-750). It is also worth mentioning other forums such as APT (ASEAN Plus Three), which is the most significant economic framework including only Asian countries. In addition to 10 ASEAN members it also includes Japan, China and South Korea. The first leaders' meetings were held in 1996 and 1997, and were connected with ASEAM talks. APT grew in importance during the Asian Financial Crisis, and initiated discussion regarding The Asian Currency Unit as

a means of stabilizing the region's financial markets (Stubbs, 2002, pp. 448-449). However, it is worth noting that while China has been pushing to strengthen cooperation within APT, Japan on the other hand has been more in favour of the so called East Asia Summit, which also includes the United States, Russia, India and Australia among others (Dent, 2008, p. 20).

Politics in the Far East has changed significantly since the late-1990s. The rise of China and stagnation of the Japanese economy significantly affected international relations in the region. Even if we assume that further regional integration based on common identity, understood as so called "Asian values" is possible, it is hard to imagine it without the inclusion of both China and Japan. There are of course numerous problems connected with that kind of integration. Most importantly; which countries should be included in that kind of framework? What should be understood as "Asian values"; and what purpose would that kind of integration have? However, I would like to focus on seemingly minor issues that influence Japan's position in the region, as well as its cooperation with China. That would be the collective memory of the Pacific War in contemporary Japanese society and the deeply rooted conviction of being a natural leader in the region. As I will hopefully prove, both of these issues are very strongly connected and shouldn't be treated as being separate. However, it is of course necessary to introduce the concept of collective memory itself. Maurice Halbwachs, who is widely regarded as being responsible for suggesting this idea, noticed that when individuals recollect events from the past, they do so within social boundaries. The process of individual recollection is strongly conditioned by interactions with other member of society. Those other members somehow stimulate each other to remember certain event from the past and forget others simultaneously. Halbwachs stated that we are constantly dealing with social boundaries of memory, which affect the way we remember the past in a very significant way (2008, pp. 3-8).

Building on Halbwachs ideas Jan Assmann introduced the concept of "cultural memory", which tries to incorporate into one theory three elements: memory, culture, and the group. According to Assmann cultural memory preserves knowledge from which the group draws its awareness of unity. Moreover, the objective manifestations of cultural memory can take the form of group self-identification, both in a positive sense (describing what the unique characteristics of a group are), or in a negative sense (what a group is not). He also noticed that cultural memory has a capacity to reconstruct, which means that it always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation (1995, pp. 126-127). Michel Foucault summed it up by stating that, historical memories are socially acquired and collective, and are constantly refashioned to suit present purposes. Individual memories gradually fold together into a collective memory of the group. Embedded in the social fabric, they become idealized memories and their ability to survive in the face of alternative memories, or counter memories, depends on the power of the group that holds them. Seen in this light, history and memory are in a fundamental state of tension (1980, p. 144).

Furthermore, collective memory is strongly connected with national identity and national myths. The concept of national myth that I would like to introduce here should be understood as described by Anthony D. Smith, as half-truth narratives and beliefs about the origins, identity and purposes of a nation, which form an integral part of the ideological and spiritual foundations for nation and nationalism (1999, p. 9). National myths, along with collective memory, as well as other factors such as

common territory and culture, constitute what is referred to by Smith as national identity (1999, p. 14). Taking this into consideration, collective memory, as a socially constructed phenomenon and as an important element of national identity, can be understood as a factor influencing normative and ideal structures which determine the interests of the actors according to constructivist theory of international relations. Constructivist theory stresses that such elements as cultural norms, ideas, and collective identities are changeable (Jackson, Sørensen, 2006, pp. 270-272). It is worth mentioning that according to Alexander Wendt constructivist theory is more interested in human consciousness and its role in international politics (1992, pp. 403-404).

When discussing collective memory of the Pacific War in Japan it is quite common to refer to Yasukuni shrine controversies, comfort women issues, discussions regarding history textbooks, or more recently, Senkaku/Diaoyu disputes. However, it seems that these controversies are mere manifestations of much wider phenomena, which I believe can be traced back to initial years after the end of the war. Conservative elites of that period, which due to the rise of the communist threat gained support from American occupying forces, were not interested in dealing with the past. Instead, they managed to create three main national myths that embodied a minimalistic approach to Japanese war guilt. First was the "myth of the military clique" which held only a small group of military leaders responsible for the war and claimed that the rest of the nation (including the Emperor, the majority of the conservative ruling class, and ordinary Japanese people as well) were nothing more than innocent victims of the war. Second, was the myth that Japan was the only country responsible for opening hostilities in the East. Third was the idea of "sacrifice as heroic", which gave Japanese soldiers special honour due to the fact that they sacrificed their lives for the nation. Since the end of the war until the end of American occupation, Japanese conservative elites were in control of the most important institutional tools, and were able to popularize these self-glorifying and self-whitewashing myths. Their actions were successful largely because their intention of historical mythmaking was in accordance with the American strategy of supporting a stable conservative government in Tokyo. The occupation authorities promoted the so-called Pacific War View of History (*Taiheiyō Sensōkan*) that emphasized the overwhelming superiority of American military power as the main cause of Japanese defeat and held only the Japanese military clique responsible for the war (Orr, 2001, pp. 24-35; Yinan, 2006, pp. 71-72). The first publication of photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki right after the nuclear bombings, which took place in 1952, only strengthened the myth of the Japanese nation as victim, as well as the view of Pacific War as a mainly Japanese-American conflict (Buruma, 1994, pp. 106-109; Saito, 2006, pp. 364-367; Willson, 2001, p. 130). This view of war history was not challenged until the 1970s, when numerous Japanese scholars, intellectuals as well as journalists drew attention to victims of Japanese Imperialism in Asia, as well as to numerous war crimes committed during this period (Wakabayashi, 2000, pp. 318-320).

Of course the construction of collective memory of the Pacific War in Japan has not been simple. There were controversies, such as the visits of Prime ministers Nakasone and Koizumi to Yasukuni shrine (Hardacre, 1991; Safier, 2001; Breen, 2008), but there were also numerous apologies, the most important of which made by Prime Minister Murayama (Togo, 2013; Yamazaki, 2006). In fact, I believe that one of the most significant characteristics of Japanese discussion regarding its war time past is

inconsistency. It seems that there is no consensus among political elites regarding interpretation of these historical events. Another characteristic worth mentioning is the still deeply embedded conviction that the Pacific War was essentially a conflict between Japan and the United States, and Japanese aggression in the Far East is often described as colonization, and not as occupation. This interpretation is also strongly connected to understanding of Japan's role in the East. The so called revisionists prefer to promote the point of view which argues that past military actions were necessitated by the threat posed to national existence by other great world powers; that Japan in certain ways destroyed the "myth of white supremacy" and prepared the way for the liberation of East Asia from Western colonial rule; and that Japanese imperialism was in many ways an improvement upon Western modes due to its emphasis on modern economic and social development (Hughes, 2008: p. 45).

Still, the biggest question remains, how this understating of the historical past is affecting Japanese cooperation in the region, and how it influences any possible regional integration. Firstly, there is still ongoing debate regarding Japan's belonging to the Far East. As mentioned before, when discussing possible regional economic cooperation, Japan is strongly advocating inclusion of countries which are not usually associated with the East, such as Australia, Russia or United States. This sentiment can be partially explained by the will to balance the power of China, if such a framework were to become reality. However, I would argue that there is also another explanation. Japanese identity seems to be strongly divided between the East and the West, and is strongly connected with the concept of hierarchy of civilizations, which can be traced back to the Meiji Period and to such intellectuals as Fukuzawa Yukichi. At that time, he described Japan as more "civilized" than other Far East countries, but not as civilized as Western powers. Moreover, according to Fukuzawa and other similar intellectuals, Japan should become more like those western empires (Schad-Seifer, 2003, pp. 50-52). Successful modernization which took place in the 19th and early 20th century, along with striking victory over China and then Russia, only strengthened and popularized the myth of cultural superiority over other countries in the region. One of the misconceptions regarding Japanese imperial policy, which was also an important part of Japanese propaganda of that period, was that Japan's intervention in the East was not only aimed at stopping western colonialism, but also to help other countries to become more developed and more "civilized" (Stronach, 1995; Paine, 2003; Rowe, 1939; Padover, 1943; Kushner, 2007). Even though this belief has been seriously challenged at least since the 1970s, due to the economic success of Japan which became especially prominent in the 1980s, belief in Japan's superiority over other Asian countries had been strengthened. Due to several misconceptions regarding migrant workers, Japanese people still tend to perceive foreigners from other Asian countries as belonging to the so called "lower class", while most Japanese themselves belong to the "middle class". Moreover, John Lie notes that the idea of Japanese superiority over other Asian nations is still present, and is visible in attitudes toward migrant workers (2001, pp. 32-34). As Lie sums it up "although outright expression of chauvinism occurs from time to time, what is more striking is the ways in which cultural confidence is often expressed indirectly and unintentionally" (2001, p. 45).

Japan's unique position in the region could be seen as an advantage, as it was during the first years of APEC or during ASEM meetings. However, this is contrasted by the still strong conviction of cultural superiority over other nations in the Far East, even if

it is expressed indirectly, just as Lie suggested. Even though this belief predates the Pacific War, I would argue that it is strongly connected with collective memory of this conflict, and how Japan perceives its intervention in the East. Therefore, it should not be surprising that even today there is a strong conviction among Japanese elites, that even though Japan is a natural leader in the region, it also has more in common with the so called West. Hence Japan's aspirations as a leader have been challenged by "legitimacy deficit", which is connected with Japan's imperial legacy in the region, as well as its strong ties with the West, especially with the United States. Furthermore, since the mid-1990s Japan's position in the region has been constantly challenged by the rise of China.

It is difficult to imagine any successful regional cooperation without the inclusion of both China and Japan. Unfortunately, relations between two countries are strongly affected by collective memory of the Pacific War. However, it wasn't until the 1980s, due to changes in strategic agendas as well as domestic power struggles in both countries that collective memory in both Japan and China had significantly changed. Conservative historiography, which promoted a more right–wing view of history and which emerged as a backlash against the progressive narratives, gained prominence at that time as well. Since the 1980s, the right-wingers have passionately attacked the government for making concessions to foreign countries, by for example including accounts of Japanese war atrocities in history textbooks. They believed that such a "masochistic" view of the nation's history would hurt national pride. Many neo-nationalist politicians during the last three decades have made unintentional mistakes which glorified Japan's involvement in Asia during the war, declaring that in reality Japan's engagement in the region was good and just, and that it was aimed at liberating Asian colonies from the West. The same groups have been very critical of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials as well (Yinan, 2006, pp. 76-77). Naturally, the most famous examples of right-wing views of Pacific War history are Yasukuni and the history textbooks controversies. At the same time, memory in China was also undergoing reconstruction. The new official focus on Japanese brutality and Chinese misery during the war simulated victim consciousness among the Chinese. Many even feel bitter about their government's previous concealment of Japanese war crimes and were offended by official propaganda, which promoted friendship between China and Japan. Even though the distinction between Japanese militarists and ordinary Japanese people is still present in official Chinese historiography, common understanding of the war has significantly blurred this difference (Yinan, 2006, pp. 81-83).

Initially Japanese public opinion reacted reluctantly to the rise of the Chinese economy. Japan's decade-long economic stagnation endangered its position as the leader among developing Asian economies, and led to a decline in confidence in Japan maintaining its position as the second economy in the world. Initially Japan was reluctant to acknowledge the astonishing developments in China. Many believed that it would take a long time for China to achieve a level of development equal to that of Japan. However, by 2001 it became obvious that China had become one of the world's great economic powers. As a reaction, numerous books that presented China as a threat were published in Japan. Furthermore, the increasing possibility of China creating an East Asian community with itself as a crucial member was also perceived as a threat to Japan's position in the region and its security (Noriko, 2006, p. 61). Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni shrine, combined with another history textbook controversy caused massive outrage in China, resulting in numerous

anti-Japanese protests. It should come as no surprise, that the reception of China in Japan and Japan in China changed significantly during that period. This change can be seen in a survey conducted in 2004. Over 58% of respondents in Japan felt "not friendly" toward China, while 53.6% of Chinese respondents felt the same about Japan. It is worth noticing that in a similar survey conducted in the 1980s most Japanese respondents felt "friendly" towards China (Ryōsei, 2006, pp. 21-22).

Even though there were clear signs of improvement in China-Japan relations during Shinzō Abe's first term as the Prime Minister, it seems that he decided to take a harder stance regarding Japanese relations with China and to return to a more nationalistic narrative regarding the Japanese war time past. It is worth mentioning that relations between both countries became so strained that commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of official international relations between China and Japan had been cancelled. The Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute also affected cooperation between them during the APEC summit, where both countries held no formal talks despite the fact that such a meeting had been scheduled (People's Daily, 2012; Pinghui, 2012; BBC News, 2012). Abe's insistence on revising Japan's constitution will without a doubt have an impact on Japan's relation with other Far East countries, particularly with China and South Korea.

The burden of history is still affecting relations in the region. To achieve reconciliation between China and Japan, the two parties crucial to any successful regional integration, both superpowers would have to recognize each other's genuine concerns and tackle the issues that have affected or may affect their bilateral relations. Their cooperation is also essential to regional stability. If they manage to overcome mutual distrust regarding each other's intentions, it might be possible for the two of them to establish some sort of co-leadership in East Asia. In particular, they should confront history-related problems rather than avoiding them or treating them as matters of internal politics, which often seem to be the case in Japan. Christopher Dent presented various possible configurations of regional leadership. As one of the possible patterns, he mentioned the possibility of *general co-leadership*. That would mean that China and Japan form an alliance similar to that of France and Germany in the European Union, which would focus on further advancing East Asian regionalism and representing East Asia in multilateral forums (2008, pp. 23-24). However, this would be only possible if China and Japan developed stronger and more harmonious relations. It seems that without resolving issues connected to collective memory of the Pacific War, such cooperation will not be possible. Moreover, without broad discussion regarding this topic within Japan, it will not be possible for the Japanese people to fully acknowledge its historically determined position in the Far East, as well as to understand what role Japan might play in the future. Another question still remains - is there any possibility of developing regional integration based on so called "Asian identity"? Even though Japan tended to attribute its economic success in the 1980s to certain Asian values, which were not present in the other regions of the world, it is still difficult to define what those values might be. Despite certain efforts to construct a sense of shared identity, nations in Asia lack not only recent memory of cooperation, but also a certain tradition of thinking of themselves as members of a larger cultural entity. Furthermore, the ongoing debate regarding Japan's belonging to the East or the West, not only undermines its position in the region, but makes further discussion regarding potential common values more difficult.

During his speech at Tokyo University, Professor Tsai Tung-Chieh from the Graduate Institute of International Politics of National Chung-Hsing University in Taiwan stressed the importance of developing a new Asian identity, which would focus on what he described as "Asian values". This goal could be achieved by further strengthening cultural, political and military cooperation, instead of focusing only on the economic dimension (2012). However, how to overcome political issues in the region, which recently became even more prominent, is a question that still remains unanswered. However, it is safe to say that such a process would be impossible without developing mutual trust and strengthening the will for cooperation between China and Japan. Nonetheless, developing such trust without solving historical issues first seems to be impossible. This is of course a task for all nations in the region, but I believe that due to its historical burden, Japan has a special role to play in this process.

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Popular Culture: Islands of Fandom in East Asia

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Abstract

This paper investigates and evaluates pan-Asian exports of Japanese TV drama in a variety of formats within the domain of popular culture. This component of media trade has allowed Japan's image to become attractive constituting a shift away from the negative image of an aggressor nation. The study argues that the regional distribution of Japanese media popular culture has contributed through fandom, to regional harmony in East Asia. Audience research has been applied, utilising questionnaires and ensuing focus group interviews to ascertain the extent of media influence of television drama in Taiwan, Japan and Korea, representations of Japan, and cultural proximity. Participants in the research comprised Taiwanese, Japanese and Korean university students studying in Australia. The study further argues that political changes in South Korea has created a step change in regional media flows towards the Korean Wave and its antecedent Hallyu, further reinforcing the process of regional fandom. The findings provide a gauge to ascertain the longer-term prospects for a consolidation of emerging regional harmony driven by a commonality of interest and values juxtaposed by historical antipathy.

Keywords: Japanese TV drama, popular culture, fandom, East Asia, Korean wave, regional harmony

Introduction

This paper investigates and evaluates pan-Asian exports of Japanese TV drama in a variety of formats within the domain of popular culture. This component of media trade has allowed Japan's image to become attractive constituting a shift away from the negative image of an aggressor nation. The ensuing audience reception and fandom has a positive sociological impact in the region. The study searched for representations of Japan and cultural proximity and argues that Japanese popular culture has contributed to regional harmony in East Asia. Harmony, in the context of this paper, is a sharing of cultural values across national divides with mutual respect and empathy. Audience research utilising questionnaires and focus group interviews has been used to ascertain the extent of media influence on a cohort of participants. The impact, within the confines of the study, is measured by the extent of shared values derived from cultural exchanges.

The study further argues that political changes in South Korea (hereafter Korea) has created a step change in regional media flows towards the Korean Wave and its antecedent Hallyu, further reinforcing the process of multilateral cultural exchanges. This counterpoise to the dissemination of Japanese popular culture has similarly reinforced the interaction of media trade in popular culture to the cross-cultural enjoyment of media content. Cultural flows and politics are not necessarily harmonised. Korean Japanologists, Lim and Park, interviewed in 2014 brought forward a conjoint opinion that cultural influences and political influences are treated on different platforms (Lim, 11 July 2014, interview; Park, 11 July 2014, interview). This opinion provides a gauge to ascertain the longer-term prospects for a consolidation of emerging regional harmony, driven by commonality of interest and values, juxtaposed by national political imperatives of the day overlaid with historical antipathy.

Japanese popular culture

Japanese popular culture is very diverse and in a constant state of flux. Television drama is a small but significant part of media trade within the Japanese content industry[1]. The domestic media industry, known in Japan as content industry (*kontentsu sangyô*) belongs to the realm of cultural entertainment, or accomplishment, created through human activity. Content includes television programs, films, music, drama, literature, photographs, *manga*, animation, computer games, lettering, shapes, colours, sounds, movements or visual images, or the combination of these, or information on them (METI, 2014). Popular culture has played a significant role in Japan and across Asia in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A number of scholars have written about the 1990s, suggesting that this decade was important in the development and distribution of Japanese texts in a plethora of content and formats (Chua, 2012; Nakamura & Onouchi, 2006; Sugiyama, 2006). Iwabuchi, in posing the question: 'Waning affection for Japan?' (Iwabuchi, 2002, p. 122), reflects on the pessimism of Japanese media industries in that period while noting that the pessimism was ill founded, a view which is supported by many researchers and commentators. He drew on the Taiwanese-American scholar Leo Ching, who noted

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[1] The definition of content industry, from a Japanese legal perspective, is in the Act on Promotion of Creation, Protection, and Exploitation of Content (*Content Promotion Act* promulgated in June 2004).

'throughout Asia, Japan is in vogue' (Iwabuchi, 2002, p. 123). Ching points out in the late 1970s and early 1980s, that Japan's popular culture was becoming influential in the East Asia region. This influence has proved to be a precursor to the 1990s decade, the period in which Japanese popular culture grew and increasingly crossed international borders. This early development can be observed as the platform which has created the opportunity from which islands of commonality, through the process of fandom, across East Asian national borders has emerged. Iwabuchi points out a 'gradual tilt towards Asia' (Iwabuchi, 2004, p. 151), the extent of this characterisation is arguable. Hara (2004) brings forward statistics from research carried out by the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute that illustrates, in the segment of television programs exported from Japan, that television output towards Asia was more dramatic than a tilt. The statistics showed 4,600 hours of television programs exported in 1980, growing to almost ten times the 1980 exports in the early twenty first century, with almost half directed to Asia (Hara, 2004). In 2001, 82 per cent of the output was in animation and drama, with animation predominant at 59 per cent (Hara, 2004).

Iwabuchi notes that globalisation in the 1990s resulted in asymmetrical cultural relations between Japan and other Asian nations coming into focus (Iwabuchi, 2002). Japan was aware that its growth rate in commercial media was greater than its East Asian neighbours. The dramatic growth in the export of television programs from Japan at the time added to this asymmetry. Since then there has been a rebalancing with counter flows from Korea into Japan, in particular the Korean Wave and, with music in the genre of popular culture increasing the volume of media trade. An example of this is 'Seven South Korean popular artists took top spots in the list announced by the Recording Industry Association of Japan (RIAJ) for the Japan Gold Disc Awards 2013, an annual award started back in 1987 to highlight the best-selling artists in Japan for the year'("K-Pop stars shine in Japanese music awards," 2013).

Historical impediments to media trade: An awakening.

The official distribution in Korea of Japanese popular culture has not always presented itself in the second half of the twentieth century. Taiwan also imposed restrictions on media transfers; this landscape has now changed dramatically. During the early part of the second half of the twentieth century, Korea actively discouraged friendly relations between itself and Japan. Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and maintained occupation until 1945. At the end of Japanese imperial policies in 1945 and since the partitioning of Korea into two countries in 1948, residual ill feeling between Japan and Korea has kept relations at a distance. As a result, there was little interaction between Japanese and Korean media for four decades. Prior to the 1990s, Korean government legislation restricted the import of television, music and film productions. However, from the 1990s, government legislation responded to technological changes and recognition of unofficial consumption of Japanese popular culture in Korea.

In 1973, during a visit to Japan, the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), taken back to Korea and imprisoned, seized Kim Dae-Jung (Kim), who later became the President of Korea from 1998-2003. In his publication *Jail Correspondence*,

written while he was in prison, he formulated his three *hans*[2]: 1) Opposition to adverse feelings towards the Japanese; 2) Opposition to the use of military force, and 3) The use of a harmonious approach towards Japan (Maeda, 2007). I interviewed Maeda Yasuhiro, a former correspondence of Daily Mainichi in Seoul and an international journalist. He confirmed the significance of Kim Dae-Jung's vision to move from antipathy to acceptance of Japanese culture (Interview with Maeda, 2011). Kim was instrumental in leading the way to improved relations between Korea and Japan. He instigated four steps to open up the Korean door to Japan, leading to the entry of Japanese popular culture into Korea for the first time in 1998, and progressively in 1999, 2000 and 2003/4 (Ishii, 2001; Maeda, 2007; Yasumoto, 2013). This initiative has proved over time to be revolutionary in changing the balance of authorised media trade between Japan and Korea, progressively allowing the legal importation of Japanese media and cultural products into Korea for the first time. Kim was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000, confirming international recognition of the significance of his political leadership. Kim was a visionary with regard to the relationship between Korea and Japan confirmed by the outcomes deriving from his progressive trade initiatives.

In 1995, the then Japanese Prime Minister, Murayama, released his statement 'Apologies to Asian nations who suffered under the Japanese military'. This was a singularly important announcement from Japan and was an important precursor to the thawing of relations between Japan and its regional neighbours. Arguably this statement should have been made much earlier by the Japanese government but it did confirm that Japan was facing up to the consequences of its past colonial and military excesses.

Methodology: Audience analysis

Texts without an audience may be seen to have no attributed meaning. I have conducted a survey of age segmentation drawn from blog analysis in respect to the Japanese television drama *Hana Yori Dango*. This drama was selected because it retains ongoing audience appeal in Asia and beyond, confirmed by successive remakes for national audiences (Yasumoto, 2013). This information provided a measure of relevance of my selected cohort for audience analysis in respect to age in the context of the study. The predominant age group expressing their thoughts and views on *Hana Yori Dango* via the internet constitutes those in the age range of 10-14 years-old. The number of samples, with minor variations, decreased steadily from this age group to the oldest age group. Almost 25% of blogs were by people in the age group 20-29 years old. Gender was heavily weighted to females; of the 429 blogs, only three were male.

The research framework is illustrated in Diagram 1. Some of the data collected was beyond the scope of this paper and is not included in the findings. The research procedure comprised two stages.
- Stage 1: summaries of findings from the research questionnaires completed by three participant groups and ensuing focus group interviews.
- Stage 2: Discussion and conclusions drawn from questionnaires and focus group interviews.

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[2] Korean expression for a feeling of oppression or isolation.

Audience analysis: Research model Stages 1 and 2	Audience sample consists of three groups in Australia. Each group consists of participants of South Korean, Japanese or Korean ethnicity.

Stage 1	Australian survey Opinions	
Survey Content	Questionnaires	Focus group Interviews
TV dramas seen		
Appeal		
Does not appeal		
Emotional involvement		
Anticipation next episode		
Media influence		
genre		
Selected Texts read/seen		
Format		
Preference		
Appeal		
Does not appeal		
Technology		
Viewing format		
Government policies		
Awareness		
Source of information		
Cultural proximity		
share values		
not share values		
Japan in the global village		
Representations of Japan		
Globalization/Regionalization		

Cross analysis of findings

Taiwanese   Japanese   South Korean

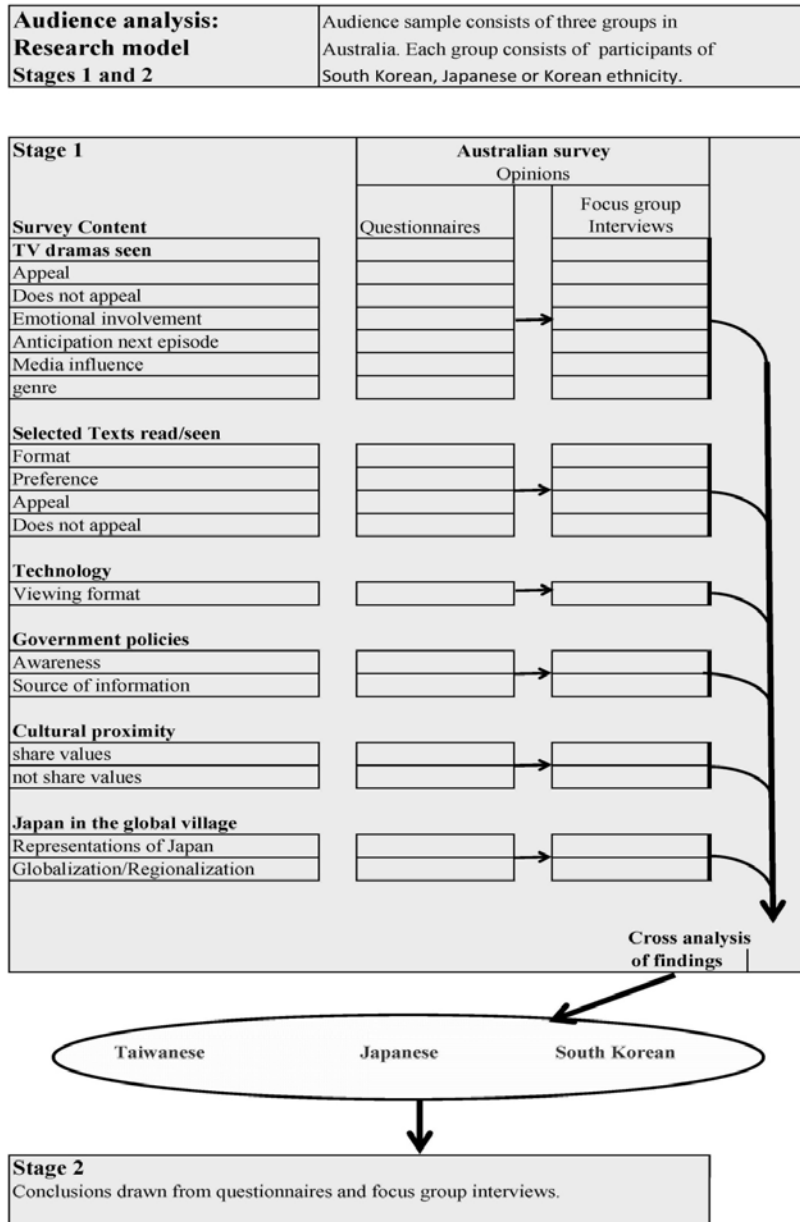| Stage 2 Conclusions drawn from questionnaires and focus group interviews. |
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Diagram 1 Research framework for audience analysis.

I administered the audience analysis by survey questionnaires, and focus group interviews. I was moderator for all data collection and focus group interviews forming the kernel of the methodology. Participants in the research comprised three tranches, being respectively Taiwanese, Japanese and Korean university students studying in Australia. Focus group interviews were commenced shortly after completion of the questionnaires. The age of the participants in the surveys and focus group discussions ranged from 18 to 30 years old falling across the 25% blog profile previously outlined. All participants remained anonymous.

Participants within each group shared a common ethnicity, the differentiation used was male and female participants who were coded M and F respectively. A

questionnaire was provided for each of the group participants at the commencement of the investigatory process. Each group was given forty-five minutes to complete the questionnaires; they were allowed to make notes if they so wished, as an aid for the subsequent focus group discussions. The participants in the focus groups were encouraged to talk freely, I asked questions from time to time to maintain continuity.

Morgan, Krueger and Vaughn et al, informed the structure of each focus group. They suggested that the ideal number of participants in focus groups should be no fewer than six and no more than ten. (Morgan & Krueger, 1998; Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996). Sternberg notes that it is better if participants know each other before the interviews so that they feel relaxed and can talk freely during the limited time of the interviews (Sternberg, 2005). I used the natural social setting of my study for the interviews, enabling a relaxed and intimate environment in order to solicit a natural response.

It is important to use focus groups if only to ascertain how people make sense of programming. Livingstone and Lunt note:

A common assumption is that people are not critical of television programmes in any informed or informative sense. They may be either accepting or rejecting, but not critical. However listening to ordinary people watch television programs shows that they routinely make a wide range of critical comments about what they see. (Livingstone & Lunt, 1994, p. 71).

Findings from audience survey

Group one: Taiwanese

The surveys elicited views about Japan and Japanese popular culture. Eight of the ten participants (3M + 5F) were fans of Japanese television drama and were regular viewers of it; the other two male participants were not fans but had seen Japanese television dramas. One of the female respondents claimed to be an avid fan: 'I watch heaps of shows such as *Nodame Cantabile, Hana yori Dango, Hanakimi, Gokusen, Nobuta,* etc.' Another female respondent had watched *Hana yori Dango, Meteor Garden* and *Nobuta*. What was striking about the television drama series, in whatever format they were viewed, watched by the participants was that they were mostly derived from *manga* that were remade into the television dramas. Some examples were *Nodame Cantabile, Hana yori Dango, Hanakimi, Meteor Garden, Gokusen* and *Team Medical Dragon*. The Taiwanese participants had access to the Japanese *manga* as well as the first remake, *Meteor Garden*, and subsequent remakes, the Japanese *Hana yori Dango* and the Korean *Boys over Flowers*. Seven of the participants had seen remakes of the *manga Hana yori Dango,* closely followed by *Nodame Cantabile*. Six participants said they had seen this. One male was not interested in Japanese television dramas and had only seen the Korean television drama *Winter Sonata*. All participants, with one exception, declared that they watched dramas on television. Two of the participants had seen *Hana yori Dango* on film, computer and video/DVD.

In determining elements of fandom for popular culture emanating from Japan, a number of core elements emerged. All participants were attracted to the story; they also deemed humour and characters as important. There was clear overall enthusiasm

for the dramas. Some participants expressed negative opinions, such as the dislike of particular actors, predictability of story, unpersuasive plots and fake dialogue, exaggerated storylines and rushed endings. Another response, illustrating the transfer and sharing of feelings from Japan to Taiwan, was how the audience became emotionally involved with the content and that they discussed it with their friends. All participants who had watched *Hana yori Dango* confirmed their emotional involvement with the story. One respondent said that she regularly talked about dramas with her friends. Discussion between friends was reported by other participants, which supports Livingstone and Lunt's finding that audiences are critically engaged with the content of television dramas (Livingstone & Lunt, 1994, p. 71).

When questioned about representations of Japan, both regionally and globally, a wider appreciation of the relationships between Taiwan and Japan emerged. Female participants, in particular, noted the positive effects of popular culture including the influence of television programs and *anime* on multiculturalism and current social issues. Other comments included: 'Japanese popular culture has been influential for a long time, not only in Asia': 'Japanese culture is in every culture'. There was less focus by males on popular culture and identified Japan's electronic products, its cinema, and even a perception of a 'positive strong country playing a significant role'. The ensuing focus group interview reaffirmed findings from the questionnaires.

Group two: Japanese

The eight participants in the survey (5M, 3F) were all consumers of Japanese original and remade television drama. From the surveys, I found that all had seen *Hana yori Dango,* while *Nodame Cantabile* and *White Tower* were also popular. The male respondent had viewed *Meteor Garden*, the Korean remake of *Hana yori Dango* and the Korean television drama *Winter Sonata*. The primary appeal of the dramas was the interesting stories, with characters also noted. Factors considered unappealing to the female respondents were: 'Too structured, can guess how the story ends'; 'I can guess the story development' and 'More focus on the celebrities than the story'. The male respondent did not like vague endings to television drama. Despite the negative views, audience engagement with the dramas was significant. The two female respondents reported emotional involvement with television dramas. One female noted 'Interesting stories makes me feel close to the characters'. They all looked forward to ensuing episodes, with the end of an episode drawing them in to watch the next episode. The male respondent commented on *Hana yori Dango* that he had become obsessed and emotionally engaged with the drama, always awaiting the next episode. Interestingly, he was not interested in other dramas.

The focus groups brought out more findings about cultural proximity. Participants were engaged with the East Asian region. One female responded: 'Yes, I feel friendliness towards Taiwanese because they watch Japanese dramas and know Japanese celebrities and we can share conversation'. Another said: 'I think an ideal character of a heroine is culturally proximate. The dedicated gentle women's type is likable in Japan and other Asia countries'. The male respondent drew attention to a global perspective in a regional context: 'Compared to American and European dramas I feel much closer to Korean and Taiwanese dramas'. One of the female respondents noted a lag in Korea compared to Japan in respect to television drama

content, from a cultural perspective, perhaps reflective of media regulation in Korea compared with contemporary Japan. She stated 'Parents often interfere with sons' and daughters' love relations in Korean drama'.

In respect to regional deregulation of popular culture trade, the survey comments recognised that Korean government policy had accepted a regional reality, with unauthorised media flows already occurring. Cultural exchange was viewed positively in improving regional relationships. A female respondent noted 'Cultural exchange brings mutual benefits. I think it is playing an important role in improving the historical negative image of Japan, from a Korean perspective'. She also drew attention to the importance of Japanese drama in creating regional harmony, noting the audience that it is created to serve: 'There is a generational gap between audiences for Japanese popular culture'.

The surveys mentioned representations of Japan viewed from outside of Japan in media content and production quality. A female respondent commented on "cute culture", such as the Sanrio character and *anime* and how production uses high quality technique for the creation of media content. The male noted how Japan has diversity in entertainment media production. Views were expressed in respect of Japanese popular culture affecting the regional and global markets, how Japanese culture is maintaining its identity among Japanese overseas through *anime* and *manga* and how Japanese media products portray Japanese society and social issues. The male respondent raised a significant issue in respect to the potential for television drama to contribute to the reshaping of a society: 'Japanese society is too formed, structured, and is a group society. With television drama, people can use their imagination and express their dreams. Scriptwriters and producers can create a world of utopia in their stories'.

The ensuing focus group, despite the non-attendance of the male participant, was reinforced by latecomers – one female and two males. The focus group confirmed the range of interest in Japanese original television drama as well as *manga* remade into television drama. One female respondent mentioned an example of media trade from Korea to Japan, 'The Korean *Winter Sonata,* it's my mother's influence. I got tired after a while and I didn't think it was as good as people say'. One male respondent illustrated the influence of *Winter Sonata* in Japan by saying, '… it's very much talked about and my mum liked it very much'. When participants watched television dramas, they became emotionally involved. A male respondent said, 'Yes, I get totally gripped; I cannot stop watching'. A female respondent agreed:

I start watching a drama because it is a topic of conversation with my friends or it is because of the actors and entertainers who appear in it. I start getting emotionally involved, if I feel empathy with relationship problems and the way they view love.

An emotional response to television drama was evident in both female and male participants, witnessed by the reactions to *One Litre of Tears* by a female respondent: 'I couldn't stop crying', and by one of the males who had joined in: 'It's embarrassing to admit, but I cried'. Humour is also an important ingredient of television drama. One female respondent said: 'Many of the dramas I watch are comedy; they all have something in them that makes me laugh'.

The discussion then turned to representations of Japan through popular culture. The female responses included: 'My American friend said that because Japan excels in robot culture and robotic technology there are many animation movies with a robot, such as *Doraemon* and *Astro Boy'* and 'I think it is wonderful that Japanese culture, such as animation movies, go to other countries for exchange of different cultures and international mutual understanding'. Finally, from the female viewpoint:

I also feel very happy about the way people outside of Japan accept Japanese culture.

Now that we have these cultural exchanges, the young people (outside of Japan) hold a very good image about Japan. Countries like Korea, especially among the older people, have a bad image about Japan, so I think there is a gap there. When we have cultural exchanges, we can have a good image towards each other's country.

The male participants were less forthcoming but one male respondent said, 'I feel very happy when a non-Japanese friend knows about Japanese productions'.

Group three: Korean

The six female Korean participants were all fans of Japanese television drama. The surveys found there were overall positive opinions of dramas; for example, in response to *Hana yori Dango* one of the respondents nominated the 'luxurious lifestyles that all audiences admire. In addition, their age is from 16–18 years, high school, which enhances fresh young concepts.' Another respondent said: 'It wasn't another love story but contained academic struggle and classical music. Cinderella emerged in the context of *Hana yori Dango*'. Another called it 'a modified version of Cinderella in modern times.' One respondent stopped watching *Hana yori Dango* towards the end of the drama because 'it strayed too far from the *manga*'. Another was somewhat critical of the Korean remake *Boys over Flowers* saying, 'They put too much scenes on the love story. Many boring parts'. The responses point towards emotion as an important element of the drawing power of drama. One respondent commented, 'The humour contributes to comical relief but also is a true reflection of our lives, in that there are always moments of relief between periods of tension.' Another replied 'I did get emotional. I cried when the heroin, Tsukasa, was bullied and assaulted by people'. Television was the participants' prime viewing source, and showed a mixed audience preference for the Japanese and Korean versions of *Hana yori Dango*.

Cultural proximity was evident; for instance, in the portrayal of romance in Japan and Korea, and respect for the elderly. I detected a softening attitude towards Japan from the focus group participants, though there were still unresolved issues between Japan and Korea, which participants saw as important.

There are many cultural flows, but I am aware that Japanese history textbook issues exclude many issues that have left Koreans hurt and frustrated. I believe forgiveness and a hope in the future is the only attitude that can change this.

It can be changed; political relationship is based on cultural history. Unless there is an official announcement about history, political relationship cannot improve.

I am in favour of the cultural exchange. Korea has been known to be the prey of "Japanisation", but with *Winter Sonata* and popular idols like *Toho Shinki* the cultural exchange is becoming bi-lateral and it is good to see, as a Korean.

Representations of Japan and Japan's standing in the regional/global arena from a Korean viewpoint were very clear and positive.

Japan's impressive display of technologies and popular culture, such as *anime, manga,* sends a very clear message that, such things advance the country, [which] is becoming more confident and more embraced by others. They represent themselves as stronger, enthusiastic and confident, [with] an active interest in entertainment. Some cultural displays involve the integration of technologies in normal day-to-day lives and views on romance, [which] have [been] dramatically transformed.

Other comments were:

It is amazing that Japan focuses on media to show their beauty and culture to other nationalities. Their oriental tea, *manga*, traditional cultures, all came towards us [as an] extremely fresh, new thing. In Korea, despite the fact of awkwardness in terms of political issues, teenagers love Japanese culture.

I think Japanese popular culture plays a big role in both globalisation and regionalisation, but in different ways. *Manga* and *anime* are major exports on the global stage, but these are texts that have been diluted of Japanese culture and values to appeal to a wider audience. On the other hand, dramas, TV formats and movies have been popular in the Asian region predominantly, as they portray Japanese values and ways of thinking, customs, etc., that are similar to those of the Asian countries, thereby strengthening the regional culture and relationship through consumption of similar products.

The focus group interviews confirmed interest in Japanese television drama. Further discussion covered differences in Japanese and Korean stories, such as those that portrayed homosexuality and bullying; Korean dramas tend to avoid such issues. These aspects were subject to editing through the remaking process to contextualise the issues in accordance with current Korean standards. As one participant said, 'I was supportive of Japanese popular culture content as it is more detailed'. However, when commenting on Korea media censorship said, 'Every time it's remade, they always water down or cut down something. It takes away a lot of things that I appreciate in the original'.

Japanese cultural values also excited discussion and drew out the significant role of Japanese culture in global and regional markets.

Manga and *anime* are not specifically culturally Japanese, like… all the hair is blond. They do not depict Japanese values… They appeal to the global audience, whereas dramas (TV) and movies are more culturally specific.

Even though *anime* and *manga* do not specifically talk about culture, they imply the interest in culture. I know many fans of *anime* and *manga* and they want to know

where all this is coming from. It means that as they are more interested they will end up liking Japanese culture.

Reception and Influence of Japanese Popular Culture

Replies to the survey questionnaires and focus group interviews were analysed in the light of Livingstone and Lunt's perspective that people 'are' critical of television programmes. Cues were also observed from non-verbal communication to better understand the discourse during the focus group interviews (Hall, 1990). Replies to the survey questionnaires and focus group interviews were analysed in the light of Livingstone and Lunt's perspective that people 'are' critical of television programmes. Cues were also observed from non-verbal communication to better understand the discourse during the focus group interviews (Hall, 1990). As Chua has noted from the perspective of Japan: 'It has a tendency to place the rest of Asia at a culturally-historically "backward" position' (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008, p. 80). This view is reflective of a historical reality fuelled by the benefits to Japan derived from the Meiji Restoration 'being in Asia but not part of Asia' (Chua, 2008, p. 80). Looking to the future, from the findings in the present, the majority view of the Japanese research participants was more pragmatic and regionally embracing, discounting the notion of superiority. Chua's observation is that 'a cultural-historical temporality defined by the level of development in capitalist modernity' (Chua, 2008, p. 80) is becoming evident in Japan. The research findings confirmed that the temporality is now finite and Japan is re-engaging with Asia. The spectacular modernisation of Taiwan, Korea has contributed to respectful perceptions of each other and the development of capital into a regional commonality.

The study confirmed the popularity of Japanese popular culture in Korea and Taiwan and illustrates a commonality of regional core values. 'Japaneseness' is not readily defined but its characteristics are understood by receptive audiences confirmed by opinions expressed through the research process.

In the focus group interviews that further explored issues arising from the questionnaires, it was apparent that the participants from Taiwan and Korea wanted to know more about Japanese culture and were very interested in what was happening among Japanese youth.

The study found remarkably similar opinions among the participants. This supports the idea that people in these countries share a sense of modernity that is linked to cultural proximity. The participants saw positive commonalities of interest in storylines and actors in television dramas. Some viewers saw predictability as a negative outcome. Koreans liked Japanese humour, which was not so evident in Korean drama productions. Emotional involvement in the popular television dramas was commonplace in the region. However, the Taiwanese appeared to be more circumspect, as their involvement depended on the story.

Fandom was strongly evident in all groups; viewers eagerly awaited the next episode in a drama and sustained a common interest in peer conversation. The Koreans particularly liked the freshness of Japanese television dramas, and the fewer episodes and faster moving stories. The influence of popular culture on participants was more significant and was evenly distributed across ethnicity. This, in part, confirms the

point made by Chua: 'This empirically highly visible cultural traffic allows for the discursive construction of an East Asian Popular Culture' (Chua, 2004, p. 202).

Advertising, usually on the internet, influenced the viewing habits of the Japanese and Koreans. In one Korean example, blogs were a prime source of information. Television was the preferred means of viewing drama. There was a consensus on cultural proximity. About popular culture products, the change in government policy in Korea was seen as beneficial. The Koreans saw it as a positive for cultural exchange and as confirmation of illegal and unauthorised access to Japanese media products. Later in the interview process, one of the Taiwanese respondents volunteered the view that Korean dramas were in Taiwan and that they had been placed in a later time slot to protect Taiwanese dramas. This may be seen as an adverse decision from a regional perspective given the progressive elimination of restriction on media culture flowing into Korea. As one Korean respondent commented, 'leave politics to the politicians'. The Japanese textbooks issue was a concern for both Korean and Taiwanese respondents, both pointing to the need for Japan to review this matter for the sake of regional harmony. The word forgiveness was used. The acceptance of the Korean production *Winter Sonata* by Japanese respondents was a very positive outcome for improved relations between Korea and Japan.

Impressions of Japan by the Korean and Taiwanese respondents included such concepts of cute culture, popular culture, technology, electronic products, beauty and cultural traditions, politeness and respect for seniors. Their perception of Japanese people was strong, enthusiastic and confident. There was a common opinion that Asian popular culture had piqued global interest. The responses suggest that the youth of three cultures are willing and open to embrace change and move on from historical prejudices.

Ang states that 'popularity is an extremely complex phenomenon.' (Ang, 1985, p. 5). The respondents demonstrated enthusiasm for Japanese popular culture. In this regard, popular culture is having beneficial outcomes in harmony, cultural exchange and mutual goodwill in the region. Youth acceptance of East Asian popular culture has brought a new awakening in Japan; the Japanese government has slowly appreciated the prospects for Japanese culture, not only in East Asia but globally.

Conclusion

One of the findings was that the combination of replies to questionnaires, allied with subsequent focus group interviews, was a valuable methodology for researching the influence of Japanese original and remade media in East Asia. The questionnaires elicited individual views, and the focus group interviews allowed for free flowing discussion which, while predominantly confirming the survey findings, drew out additional insights for me in what was discussed and also in non-verbal communication. These findings were not only popular culture related but also touched on regional issues.

There are two primary factors at work in Asia in respect to the dissemination of Japanese popular culture. One factor is the historical impact on consumers' perceptions of Japan in Taiwan and Korea as a result of past Japanese colonisation

passed on through generations. This has left unresolved issues which surface from time to time. The second is the attractiveness of Japanese popular culture in Taiwan and Korea and regional composite counter flows. Based on my findings the cultural milieu in East Asia is undergoing a change process where the move is from regional acrimony towards regional harmony bound by cross border influence of popular culture. The main finding of the study is the similarity of critical comment across the ethnic spectrum of Taiwanese, Korean and Japanese participants. This outcome confirmed Livingstone's view (2005) that audiences are not trivial and passive. Shared cultural elements far outweigh contrasting ones while not exhibiting a diminution of national identity. There was a commonality of enthusiasm for Japanese original and remade television serial drama and cultural interchange, particularly with female participants, although much less so with the males. There is a definitive reinforcement of Japan's identity in East Asia.

Overall, positive feedback on representations of Japan in Taiwan and Korea far outweigh the negative ones. Popular culture confirmed by study outcomes has an innate capacity for reducing prejudice based on nationality. The overall opinion of male participant opinions, bound by stereotypes of past Japanese military excesses, differentiated themselves from female opinion. Female participants, while not disregarding history, put past Japanese militarism and all that is good about contemporary Japan into a holistic perspective. Japanese popular culture positively influenced females, more so than males. The female research participants exhibited a more embracing and forgiving regional view. They also have a strong desire to move forward rather than dwelling in the past. I would argue that women would reshape East Asia in the future. East Asia is rebalancing, from not only media trade, and the Japanese need to revaluate their East Asian neighbours.

Japanese popular culture is an important component of the Asian century, and television drama can provide an important contribution to regional harmony, particularly when reinforced by regional media trade and, in particular, counter flows into Japan. The paradigm shift in relations between Korea and Japan was a key ingredient in freeing up media trade in East Asia and enabled a regional rebalancing of production resources. Much of the credit for this rests with Kim for progressively instigating four steps to open up the Korean door to Japan, leading, in 1998, to the entry of Japanese popular culture into Korea for the first time. The counterpoise benefits for Korea have been significant and have enabled the Korean Wave to prosper in Japan and migrate to the world. The rapidly increasing success of South Korean popular music sales in Japan, particularly from 2009, can only serve to improve cultural relationships in East Asia and in turn contribute to regional harmony. Online media networks are reinforcing the opportunity for enhancing this process and separating the political and cultural platforms.

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